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Dramatic Publishing



Rocks in the Bed

by
Kathleen Warnock

From...

35 in 10

Thirty-Five Ten-Minute Plays

Compiled and Edited

KENT R. BROWN



Dramatic Publishing

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ROCKS IN THE BED

By
Kathleen Warnock

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Rocks in the Bed was first produced in 2003 by En Avant Playwrights at Hunter College in New York City. It was directed by Peter Bloch, and featured Joanne Joseph, Chance Muehleck and Campbell Bridges.

CHARACTERS

MRS. PERRY (Maisie): A very old woman.

THE YOUNG MAN (Wally): In his 30s.

PHOTOGRAPHER (Cliff): In his early 30s.

SETTING: A cramped bedroom in the first-floor apartment of an old house in Greenwich Village, New York City. It is distinguished chiefly by the fact that there are small, round white rocks everywhere: on the bed, on the bureau, on the bedside table, on the floor. In the corners.

TIME: Some years ago. Late morning.

ROCKS IN THE BED

AT THE CURTAIN: *MRS. PERRY enters, slow, but businesslike. She leads two young men, one with a camera, one with a notepad.*

MRS. PERRY. ...he lasted a long time, he did. Not one of those quick and easy ones: like an execution or fall down the stairs break your neck. Not long overall, I mean in a lifetime...a year out of seventy, but a long time if you're there every day.

THE YOUNG MAN. And you were here for all of it?

MRS. PERRY. Scrubbing the steps outside, all those visitors tracking in mud. Cooking soup, washing him when he couldn't make it to the toilet by himself. I didn't sign up for that! But the man had no family. Friends... he had friends, if you call 'em that, all the day and the night. Lot of poets. I never would have let him have a room if I knew he was a poet.

THE YOUNG MAN. What did he tell you he was?

MRS. PERRY. He didn't. But with his hands, you know. They were all rough, and he didn't say much, and he didn't talk like an educated man. I thought he worked in a factory, maybe on the docks. He paid the rent. If he had something to drink, it was the way a working man drinks, he made it to work on Mondays. He paid his rent on Fridays before he hit the bars.

THE YOUNG MAN. So you had no idea who he was?

MRS. PERRY. A man lives with you twenty years, you get a very good idea who he was.

THE YOUNG MAN. I mean his work.

MRS. PERRY. The poems. I been given copies of the books. You people. Students, writers, you come by here and tell me the stuff I didn't know. Didn't need to know. Didn't have to know.

PHOTOGRAPHER. Wally, what kind of shots are you looking for?

THE YOUNG MAN. How's the light?

PHOTOGRAPHER. Not good. But I don't want to use a flash.

THE YOUNG MAN. Yeah. I agree. Natural light.

MRS. PERRY. No flash. Makes my eyes hurt. Washes out the faces in the pictures.

THE YOUNG MAN. People take a lot of pictures here?

MRS. PERRY. Oh yes. Some take 'em for themselves. I'm in a book, too. The man sent it to me.

THE YOUNG MAN. What does it mean to you?

MRS. PERRY. A picture of me in a book? Means he gave me some money to use it. Means I see myself on the postcard stands in some of those fancy bookstores. I get the postcards from the people who come here.

PHOTOGRAPHER. I know the photo you're talking about. You're holding a picture, and standing behind the bed. It's very good.

MRS. PERRY. You know the photo...

PHOTOGRAPHER. ...but I don't know you. I know. But I like it as a record. Of a time. Of a person. I like the mystery of it.

THE YOUNG MAN. Some mystery.

MRS. PERRY. Mystery to some. Pain in the ass to others, pardon my French.