

"The Legacy"

I ACT PLAY

By

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A Deceasingly, Comic, Dilemma;
Sparingly Played
in a Ten Minute Drama.

THE LEGACY
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Cast of Characters

Sol Z. Lowbury: [Pronounced Solzee]

Funeral Director, 30-50's, intelligent, slick but smooth, polite to a fault. Neatly attired in a black polyester suit, white shirt and a red/white/blue rep tie with white sneakers and socks to complete the ensemble.

Mag Nymficient:

Secretary 20-40's, bright, college student, pretty, well coifed, shapely, foxy with black mini-skirt [leather?]. Wears corsage [it's her birthday, everyday is...compliments of the boss].

Frank' N. Stein:

Director's Asst., man Friday, 20-40's, scruffy, deep set eyes, lanky Department of Sanitation worker [with insignia over left pocket & back]. He works here part time; is attired in a neat khaki jacket & pants with work shoes but a white shirt and black bow tie; average intel.

Mrs. Harriet Goodsole:

Wife of the deceased, 30-50's; outgoing, friendly, loyal, faithful, average-to-low intel, down to earth, dowdy.

Scene

The office of Sol Z. Lowbury Discount Mortuary.

Time

The present. [Summer]

“The Legacy”

Scene I

Setting:

A waterfront warehouse built on an abandoned dock with a large sign: Sol Z. Lowbury Discount Mortuary, out front. The office is painted cheery gray with everything 3rd hand: plastic, potted palms on either side of desk, a smattering of plastic chairs and bucolic prints decorating the walls. Folding picnic table, w/cloth, center.

At Rise:

It’s morning of a bright, sunny Summer’s day...The funeral director Sol Z is at his desk U.R.C.... Mag the receptionist is seated at her desk D.R... busy doing nails and Frank his assistant U.L...is sweeping the concrete floor that has a few decorative rugs scattered about. Back door deliveries, U.C. We hear a noisy truck pull up, Mrs. Harriet Goodsole hurriedly walks in through the front door [D.R. in 1] goes right to the secretary’s desk.

Mrs. Goodsole

Good morning! I’m Mrs. Harriet Goodsole...are you Ms. Mag Nymficient the receptionist I spoke to earlier on the phone?

Mag

Yes!...[Warmly]. Good morning Mrs. Goodsole!

Mrs. Goodsole

Please just call me Harriet!

Mag

[Ingratiatingly] I will! I will!...Harriet, you said on the phone you would like an economical but still beautiful funeral for your newly deceased husband...It was Rob wasn't it?

Harriet

Yes it was or he was. Mag, you have such a good memory...Yes he always said what he couldn't steal he would *rob*. You see it's really a nick-name, get it, but he always kept his word and was a good provider.

Mag

Yes he must have been a wonderful, wonderful man.

Harriett

No, Mag no! He was a good provider, stole what he could; but he wasn't such a wonderful guy. No! he drank too much, rarely worked, snored like crazy. I went deaf on the right side, cause he slept there!...On my right side!

Mag

But he was good hearted!

Harriet

Well if you call leaving his dirty laundry in a neat pile on the floor... Piling his dirty dishes in the sink and wiping his muddy shoes on the living room rug to keep the rest of the house clean, then he was good hearted!

Mag

[She busts out laughing] I'm sorry Harriet [still trying to salvage the situation]. It sounds like he was a joy to live with and funny.

Harriet

Joy!?...Hardly...Funny!? Hah! he was funny all right! Drank all that beer over our happy 25 years together and never once threw out or returned a can; just kept heavin' them in the ga-rage...It got so bad if you opened the ga-rage door all the beer cans would roll out. Sorta like Fibber Magee & Molly's closet of the old radio days.

Mag

He was quite a guy!

Harriet

But enough of the eulogies for Ole Rob; we need to get him in the ground where he'll be Comfy. It's *hot* out there!

Mag

[Uses the intercom to call Mr. Lowbury who is only a few yards away]. I hope I'm not disturbing you Mr. Lowbury but I have a very special customer that needs your valued assistance. You know...the one I told you about, that called earlier this morning, Mrs. Harriet Goodsole?

Mr. Lowbury

Not disturbing me at all, glad to help in a time of need. Of *course* I remember...Bring her right over! Even though I'm extremely busy, I'll just put aside this pile of funeral orders. [*Visibly* puts aside racing form]. [Almost to himself] Mrs. Goodsole, poor soul!

Mag

Mrs. Goodsole he'll see you immediately even though he's swamped with funerals this time of the year...with the summer flu and allergic reactions to bee bites etc. [She rises gracefully]. Mrs. Goodsole follow me please! Mr. Lowbury will take good care of you. [She ceremoniously walks over to Mr. Goodsole]. Mr. Lowbury this is the bereaved Mrs. Harriet Goodsole. [Mag crosses back to her desk, sits.]

Mr. Lowbury

[Rises, comes from around the desk; puts arm around the bereaved]. I'm so sorry for your loss Mrs. Goodsole. Please sit down.....Wait!...Wait!! Frank N. Stein! Please! Oh please!! Sweep up around her chair before she sits!

Frank N. Stein

[He's sweeping a few feet away deeply absorbed in the proceedings, he rushes over, brushes off her chair and starts sweeping around it]. Excuse me Mam, sorry about this. It's never happened before because I take pride in my work. [Breathlessly], I'll bet you didn't know that my regular job, this one I

love because I get to meet all kinds of people, big and small, live or dead, has been and continues to be, working for the Oakland Department of Sanitation where I happen to be one of their most valued employees. I'll do anything for them folks; clean up a fish kill in the Bay, a toxic waste dump, landfill and even some really foul sewers; all of which I've done in my time [sweeps dirt into a dust pan].

Mrs. Goodsole

That's marvelous Frank perhaps in your line of work you might'a run into my husband or run over him...sleeping off a drunk? And by the way you swept up real nice! Thank you.

Frank N. Stein

Well when we bring the Corpus Delecti in if you don't mind me callin him that, you see I was watchin' a Detective show on TV last night and I thought I might incorporate that expression in my line of work. I promise to take a good look and let you know.

Mrs. Goodsole

Thank you! Why you are a very bright man, no I don't mind at all...In fact so far...I'm just so pleased with all you folks! Is it all right if I sit now?

Frank N. Stein

Surely Mrs. Goodsole. [He crosses to waste basket dumps dirt, sweeps further away].

Mr. Lowbury

Mrs. Goodsole as I started to say before [smiles] the *big sweep*...[Mag, Frank (slaps his knee), break into hysterical laughter; it's expected] I'm genuinely sorry for your loss.

Mrs. Goodsole

You ain't sorry and neither am I...but I appreciate the sentiment don't get me wrong. But I like the arm around me, that was a nice touch.

Mr. Lowbury

Oh but *I am*, so sorry, and thanks but that too is right from my heart. Now how can we best serve you?

Mrs. Goodsole

Well it's hot out there and I figure the sooner we do this thing the happier ole Rob will be...He never did like the heat.

Mr. Lowbury

I really understand your feelings on that...Now Mrs. Goodsole let me explain our various plans: we have the Super Deluxe Economy Discount Burial where we include an all aluminum, guaranteed not to rust, fully plastic lined with a quaint floral-design casket. Specially designed plastic flower arrangements that don't require any watering. If you want you can take home the flowers after the ceremony. A special guest notebook with a hard cover design in black and white, the type that school children use, only in the better schools. And the use of our special black, shiny, just been waxed, one year old pick up truck for the trip to the cemetery for the...Mag whats that term again?

Mag

Interment Mr. Lowbury. [She's studying her English Grammar book while she does her nails and drinks coffee].

Mr. Lowbury

Thank You sweetheart...Mag...It pays to have a college educated person around...

Mrs. Goodsole

Mr. Lowbury just so you know right up front. I can only afford your 'Basic, Basic, but Absolutely Beautiful Discount Funeral' that Mag briefly mentioned in our conversation on the phone early this A.M. Because my dear departed didn't leave me with much...so to speak...Except in the way of bills.

Mr. Lowbury

Well in that case lets cut right to the *chase!* What do you think of that expression Mag?

Mag

Very English and distinguished, just like we practiced this morning.

Mr. Lowbury

I'm telling you Mrs. it's a real pleasure findin' this treasure. She's in her second year at community college, a real find and so smart too!

Mag

Thank You Sol Z [Solzee]...er..Mr. Lowbury.

Mr. Lowbury

Now my dear let's talk about the arrangements for your dear departed husband. First and foremost we're giving him the most elaborate sendoff, given the parameters of our 'Basic-Basic-but-Absolutely-Beautiful-Discount Funeral.' Number 1. We will pick up Rob with dignity with our shiny new pick up truck and deluxe cap. 2. We will prepare him as if he were going to his high School prom, including free pompadour, if he has hair. 3. Including a smart, dark blue, low-mileage polyester suit guaranteed not to wrinkle with a spotlessly laundered, second hand polyester white shirt and a secondhand, silk-rip tie, tied with a fore-in-hand-knot, hair neatly combed, and patent leather shoes just his size, so he's not uncomfortable. All from the hardly used shop of our local thrift emporium. So he'll look his best for his "Last Great Hurrah!" As they say!

Mag

That's beautiful...[She applauds loudly]. That was brilliant I told you that was a good line.

Mr. Lowbury

And you are too!...Thank you again Mag but let's not give Mrs. Goodsole the impression we rehearsed this ...Believe me Mrs. it's spontaneous ...right from the moment and the heart.

Mrs. Goodsole

I don't care where it came from I loved it! Say it again!

Mr. Lowbury

So he'll look his best for his "Last Great Hurrah!"

Mrs. Goodsole

[Applauds]. Oh I love it, love it, it's touching, almost makes me want to cry.

Frank N. Stein

[Stops sweeping to say]. Go right ahead and cry your little heart out!

Mag

It's all right Harriet cry as much as you want to, we understand.

Mrs. Goodsole

I said *almost* makes me want to cry!

Mr. Lowbury

Of course...

Mrs. Goodsole

If you only knew the nights I stayed awake waitin' for him to come home, *plastered*. At least sometimes he had the decency to get drunk in our living room where I knew he was safe; then I'd only have to drag him to the couch. And oh his snoring, that pardon the expression, would wake the dead...The only reason I might cry is because I would miss all that...Tears of *joy*!

Mr. Lowbury

Yes I think I understand then...All right, so getting back to our arrangements. He's all dressed lookin' great in a fine aluminum casket that will be his new home forever; all pretty and all with that floral design. And picture this... delightful palms and flower arrangements that never wither because there made of expensive plastic, no watering required...And you are free to take them home as a memento of the occasion from us to you, at no additional charge.

Mrs. Goodsole

So far you're talkin' my kinda talk. Now Mag over there said you have your own private perpetual care cemetery that overlooks the sea. Him bein' an old navy man and all...it would be nice if he could see the sea. If you know what I mean?

Mr. Lowbury

Yes I do, and he can...Our own private planting field or our cemetery as others call it, is located just two blocks away. You'll have no trouble locating it when you go to visit the grave site because it's right next to the tall incinerator chimney, with the recycling plant, town dump and waste plant just the other side of it. And a phenominal view of the Bay where you can just watch the ships plying their way out to sea. And there's more; wait till you experience the big surprise when you see our engraved metal marker, rust and stain resistant, as everlasting proof Rob is staying put in that spot.

Mag

[Applauds]. Magnificent, just magnificent boss you're just getting to be a regular poet.

Mr. Lowbury

Thank you Mag and it's all due to your tutelage...now all this is available to you for 699.95...Now doesn't that sound reasonable to you Harriet ?

Mrs. Goodsole

Oh my goodness I didn't know it would cost that much. Do you have anything cheaper. I don't have that kind of payment?

Mr. Lowbury

Yes we will bend over backwards for you Harriet. We know you don't. Have a lot; and can arrange something more economical...As long as say you prefer something more natural in a casket; like the all weather plywood with plain lining, in a quiet yellow plastic, with the same quality wardrobe and a simple, but nice flower arrangement, though smaller in nature. And topped off by a properly engraved natural, water resistant plywood grave marker of mildew proof material, as the coup de resistance. And something I failed to mention earlier, we will say the appropriate prayers of whatever denomination is your preference. We have proper prayers of all beliefs from Christianity to Hinduism and everything in between in a special book entitled: "Proper Prayers For All Beliefs At Trying Moments In A Sometimes Trying Life."

Mrs. Goodsole

Well that sounds touching but I only have \$356.55 I'll bet that doesn't come up to your expectations?

Mr. Lowbury

Why you're amazing that is the exact price of the funeral. That's a sign you're doing the right thing...Isn't it absolutely amazing, Mag and Frank.

Mag

To the penny, amazing!

Frank N. Stein

She is absolutely Psychic! Absolutely!

Mr. Lowbury

Stupendous! Brilliant, here's the form. I keep it handy and all you have to do is sign by the X...[Hands her the contract]. Payment is expected either prior to the funeral or a deposit of 50% down will do with the remainder in 30 days.

Mrs. Goodsole

Oh I fully intend to pay in full at the funeral. I like to get things done, I'll have my brother in law come by with the payment at the ceremony. When will you be pickin' up Ole Rob?

Mr. Lowbury

Frank after lunch will you pick up Ole Rob! We'll get the address for you from Mrs. G. And Frank be sure and use the new black pickup with the cap; to thwart the stares of curious onlookers. And please use the appropriate heavy duty, leaf bags...was he a large man Mrs. G?

Mrs. Goodsole

6 foot, kinda skinny but he had a bit of a paunch from all the beer he drank.

Mr. Lowbury

Frank bring the extra large, heavy duty leaf bags then! And take one of the Migrant workers to give you a hand. Make sure he has his green card!

Frank N. Stein

Will do...Probably be around at 2 PM, Harriet.

Mrs. Goodsole

That's a good time; give me time for a little lunch and I can water the flowers which I haven't had a chance to do since Ole Rob bought the farm.

Mr. Lowbury

Thank you then Mrs. G. The funeral will be at high noon tomorrow. [Breaks into a few measures of “High Noon,” “do not forsake me oh my darlin.” Mag & Frank applaud]. Invite all your friends and relatives. I’m sure they’ll be quite pleased with the ceremony and eulogy which I will be happy to read if you’ll provide me with the necessary information.

Mrs. Goodsole

I’ll give your man Frank a copy hand writ because I don’t type and as for the relatives and friends, there aren’t any cept me and I wasn’t to friendly towards him...But, he had a pet dog, a hound, a course...is it all right if I bring him?

Mr. Lowbury

Though I would like to say yes, a state law says no. They feel you might transmit disease or fleas to the deceased which wouldn’t bode well for him moving on to the next world and all!

[He rises offers his hand, Mrs G., rises shakes his hand...Mag comes over and gives her a warm hug and Frank does the same, broom in one hand. She exits D.S.R.]

All

Goodbye Mrs. Goodsole.

Mrs. Goodsole

Goodbye!

Blackout

Scene II

[Next day...Funeral directors office, on center table sits a picture of the deceased and plastic flower arrangements on either side. Mr. Lowbury is near the center table he is at a small podium containing the brief eulogy. Gathered around are Mag in her black mini skirt with plastic corsage, her arm around Harriet in black, with red silk scarf. Frank, is in working uniform, baseball cap in hand, the other arm around her]. Mr. Lowbury

[Starts eulogy]. Mrs. Goodsole, friends of the deceased, and his faithful hound dog Sarge who couldn't join us in this service...Our sentiments are with you today, a sad but at the same time *happy* day... We're sad to see him go but happy that he goes on to his just rewards. Only to be welcomed by a higher power on the other side for his fine deeds and humanitarian and loving ways...The wonderful way in which he treated his wife Harriet; staying out of her hair as much as possible by spending most of his time out of the house...Coming home late and passing out on the front porch, so as not to wake her...At other times drinking himself to sleep at the house but dutifully lining up the beer cans in neat rows on the kitchen counter...always making it just a little easier for her to do her daily chores. Then leaving his dirty dishes in a convenient place right where he sat at the kitchen table so they could readily be found and picked up by Mrs. Goodsole...He was such a *Saint, one* who actually left his dirty laundry in neat piles in various corners...in various rooms in the house. [The rumble of a dump truck is heard out back, temporarily interrupts eulogy, parks]. Hmm! what was that? ...[They all shrug it off]. Oh well! [Continues]. And the most commendable thing you'll hear about Ole Rob and that which makes him the current rage of the age. [Visibly enjoys that as does Mag]. He almost always put the toilet

seat down to prevent any embarrassing mishaps by Mrs. Goodsole. A true gentleman. In closing, a dog note from Sarge...who if he could speak would praise Rob for feeding him on time and keeping his water bowl full ...when he was sober. Who always saw to it that he had his walks, even if he was a little late and Sarge left small reminders on the precious, simulated Persian rugs from Homart. To those who knew him it was a real blessing... We salute you Ole Rob! [Mag pops bottle of Bubbly Apple Drink, pours into plastic champagne glasses for everyone, including Sarge and a symbolic one for Ole Rob].

Mag

Raise your glasses on high everyone, and drink a toast of this fine, fizzy, frothy, apple nectar of the gods to a beautiful man who shall be missed dearly. The two glasses on the table represent Ole Rob and the second is for his ole dog Sarge who couldn't be here today [They drink, then place glasses on the table].

Mrs. Goodsole

[She weeps]. Oh wonderful! Wonderful, you did that beautifully [applauds].

All

[Applaud, Mag, & Frank also cry].

Mr. Lowbury

That *was* good wasn't it, almost brought me to tears. [They all hug.] I'm sorry I didn't mean to make you weep Mrs. Goodsole.

Mrs. Goodsole

Oh I wasn't weeping...my eyes were running from my mascara!

Mr. Lowbury

Oh, of course, of course. Oh dear Harriet, I didn't want to bring it up earlier but the necessary payment, we haven't done that part of the transaction yet..

Mrs. Goodsole

Oh I didn't want to interrupt the proceedings. My brother in law is out back with it...Just a minute [crosses to rear door U.S.C, opens it, yells.] Joshua you can make the payment now!

[Horrendous noise is heard like that of a dump truck depositing \$356.55 of deposit beer cans].

Mr. Lowbury

My goodness!....What! was that???

Mrs. Goodsole

I always did like to save the best for last!!! That was my payment to you for that lovely funeral...\$356.55 to the nickle and all in ***ree--deemable beer can deposits*** at your local beer can redemption center and my **Legacy** from Ole Rob...thank you so much!!! And goodbye! [Exits quickly thru main exit D.S.R. We hear her car motor and hear her screeching off as the others stand around stunned].

Mr. Lowbury

[We hear truck pulling away fast. He rushes to the back door opens it...looks]...Screams in disbelief]. AAAAAHHHHHH!!!

Mag and Frank

[Rush to back door right behind Mr. Lowbury...look out and laugh **hysterically**].