

DEAD GIVEAWAY

By Daniel Guyton

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DEAD GIVEAWAY**By Daniel Guyton**

SYNOPSIS: Robert buys his wife an unconventional gift for Valentine's Day, which leads to an awkward conversation about love after death.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(1 female, 1 male)*

ROBERT (m).....(29 lines)

DENISE (f)(29 lines)

DURATION: Approximately 10 minutes**AWARDS**

SEMI-FINALIST in the Short + Sweet Queensland Festival, 2016

WINNER of the Best Writing Award from the A.R.T. Valentine's Day Playwriting Competition, 2015

WINNER of the End of the Road New Play Festival Judges' Choice Award, 2015

SEMI-FINALIST in the Minnesota Shorts Festival of Plays, 2015

HONORABLE MENTION in the Storefront Theatre's Playwriting Competition, 2015

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Dead Giveaway premiered at the Almost Random Theatre (Chris Sivewright, Producer) in Oxford, UK in February 2015, where it won the Best Writing Award. The play was produced twice each night, with two separate casts. The director for both casts was Chris Sivewright. The casts were as follows:

Opening Performance:

ROBERT Chance Gallagher
DENISE..... Barbara Treen

Closing Performance:

ROBERT Frank Dolan
DENISE..... Mary Saunders

Dead Giveaway was subsequently produced by Onstage Atlanta (Barbara Cole Uterhardt, artistic company manager) in Atlanta, GA in March 2015, as part of their *Spring Shorts* festival. The director was Cathe Payne. The cast was as follows:

ROBERT Daniel Guyton
DENISE..... Kate Guyton

This play is dedicated to Mary and Eddie West, the best in-laws a guy could ask for!

AT RISE: *DENISE* stares at a piece of paper in her hand. Her husband *ROBERT* stares at her proudly.

ROBERT: Well, what do you think?

DENISE: I... don't know what to say.

ROBERT: Are you surprised?

DENISE: Of course!

ROBERT: Happy Valentine's Day, sweetheart.

He kisses her on the forehead.

DENISE: Well, it's just... you know. I was kinda hoping for flowers, or... candy. But a funeral arrangement?

ROBERT: Well, sure. Don't you want to know that your future is secure? Our future? *(He shows her the pamphlet.)* Look honey, we'll be buried right next to each other. In the lover's plot. The gravestone will be a large heart, with both of our names engraved upon it, with the words, "For they so loved each other, that true love will never die."

DENISE: But that's a little creepy, don't you think?

ROBERT: No, I think it's romantic.

DENISE: And what if we don't die together? What if... you know, you die first and I remarry? Or I die first and you remarry? What if...?

ROBERT: Would you want to remarry? Because I don't. You... You're the only woman I've ever loved.

DENISE: Aw, that's sweet, sweetheart. But, statistically speaking, men do die earlier than women and...

ROBERT: And?

DENISE: And I'm not sure that I want to die alone.

ROBERT: Oh.

DENISE: I'm sorry. But... It's just...

ROBERT: No. No that totally makes sense. I... guess I never really thought of it that way. I just... thought... "Until death do us part" and...

DENISE: And what?

ROBERT: And I hadn't really considered what would come after that. I... guess it makes sense that you would move on.

DENISE: Don't take it like that, honey. It's not like I *want* that to happen, it's just... I'm being realistic.

ROBERT turns away sadly.

Well listen, what about you? What will you do?

ROBERT: (*Dejected.*) Well, statistically speaking, I'll probably be dead.

DENISE: This is true. But if you weren't? If I died first, would you...?

ROBERT: I don't know. I... guess. If you wouldn't be upset about it?

She takes his hand.

DENISE: Of course not, Robert. I would want you to be happy. Always.

ROBERT: (*Starting to get excited.*) Well... ok then. Yes! In that case, I think I would. In fact, there's this one lady at work I've been talking to...

DENISE: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Excuse me?

ROBERT: Oh no, no! I'm not... I mean... we were talking about *her* situation. I'm not... No, no, no, she lost her husband a few years ago. And now she's remarried. And so we were talking about what that's like. And... it never occurred to me to think like... you know... about *us*. But now that you bring it up, she does seem really happy. I mean, like, really, *really* happy. I've never seen her this hap-

DENISE: (*Getting nervous.*) Ok, let's not get ahead of ourselves here.

ROBERT: I mean, not happi*ER*, per se, just... happy. For the first time in a long time, I think. And... the more she and I talk about it, the more I realize that... maybe there *can* be life after one of the partners dies.

DENISE: That's right. I'm... glad you see it that way, Robert. I'm...

ROBERT: (*Lost in a distant daydream.*) Tell me again about these statistics?

DENISE: What?

ROBERT: Well, you said, you know, "statistically speaking, I'll probably be dead." But... you know, are we talking *long* odds, or...?

DENISE: Ok, listen. Just... listen. Whatever you do, just please make sure she's not *prettier* than me. Ok? I don't... think I could handle that.

ROBERT: But you'll be dead, sweetheart.

DENISE: Yes, but... I will haunt you from the grave. Seriously. You have my permission to remarry, but the woman *must* be a troll.

ROBERT: Oh. Um. Ok. (*He considers this.*) What about your sister?

DENISE: What?!

ROBERT: I mean, she's single. She's not...

DENISE: No, no, no! Oh no. No, no. You will not *touch* Christine. You will not *date* Christine. You will not even fantasize about Christine, or so help me, I will rise up like a phoenix from the ashes and I will cut your balls off. Understand? (*She holds up the paper.*) You will be lying in this coffin next to me so fast, it'll make your head spin.

ROBERT: Whoa. Jesus. I just figured she was biologically similar to...

DENISE: Don't even finish that sentence.

ROBERT: All right. I'm... Fine. Christine is off the table. I... (*Beat.*) I'm just trying to think of women I know that...

DENISE: Robert! You are not supposed to plan this in advance! I don't have any guys in my mind! I just know... that if something ever happened to you, I'd want to marry again. Not right away. Not even in the next five years! Just... someday. So I don't have to be alone. That's all. And besides, this is all purely hypothetical anyway. We're both probably gonna die together in some horrible plane crash or something. So there's no need to even talk about this.

ROBERT: But I'm afraid of heights, so...

DENISE: As well you should be! Since that's the way we're both gonna die together. (*Small pause.*) Eventually. (*Small pause.*) Way off into the future. (*Small pause.*) Now listen, Robert. I love you very, very much. And you're very thoughtful, in... your own way, to get me this. (*She holds up the paper.*) But I wish you had talked with me first about it, that's all.

ROBERT: It was supposed to be a Valentine's Day surprise.

DENISE: And it was. Believe me, I was *completely* surprised. (*She stands and looks at him.*) But if it makes you feel any better, I will accept this gift. Ok? And if we die together, then yes. I would love nothing more than to be buried next to you for all eternity. (*She drapes her arms around him, seductively.*) But if you die first, then I am outta here. I'm selling my half of this plot to the next highest bidder,

and I am moving on. (*Beat.*) I just hope the person I sell it to is not a snorer.

ROBERT: Right. Or more beautiful than you.

She pulls away.

DENISE: Bitch, ain't no one more beautiful than me.

ROBERT laughs and pulls her in again.

ROBERT: All right, all right. That's true. Well, listen, if you die first, then I will promise you this, ok? I will go out and find a woman who is... uglier than you. Not *too* much uglier, but... slightly. And I will move on down the road as well. Do you have any restrictions on how well she can cook?

DENISE: No.

ROBERT: Good. So... kinda ugly, but... excellent chef. Got it.

DENISE: Hmm... that sounds kinda like *you*.

She plays with his nose. ROBERT laughs.

ROBERT: Well, I guess there's only one solution then.

DENISE: What's that?

ROBERT: We're both gonna have to live forever.

She smiles seductively.

DENISE: I like the sound of that.

They kiss.

THE END