

Holding On To Time

by

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Cast of Characters

MORRIS:

60's

PATRICIA:

20's

Place
Attic

Time
Early morning hours

Setting: The play takes place inside of a large attic space. There are maps, globes, dusty furniture scattered about including a single couch, chairs, workbench, random piles of toys and things like records and other collectible items that could be worth money or considered junk. A large window is center stage and the light illuminates the attic. Cobwebs and dust decorate the atmosphere in a poignant fashion.

At Rise: The play opens up with Morris deeply involved in studying mathematical graphs, when his daughter Patricia knocks from the room's entrance.

MORRIS observes mathematical graph.

MORRIS: Was up...ten thousand in January...spiked, and then...February, was..it dipped down to seven, seven thousand, but, spiked in March with a whopping fourteen thousand high...peaked...why did you peak? Sales were up too. Sales doubled. Sales were good in March. Then they...then they...

Knock on the door.

Yes??

PATRICIA: DAD? Dad, are you alright?

MORRIS: I'm alright dear.

PATRICIA: May I come in?

MORRIS: Sure, come in.

Enter PATRICIA.

Hello, darling.

PATRICIA: How are you doing today?

MORRIS: I'm fine. And you?

PATRICIA: I was thinking of going for a walk in the park. Would you like to come with me, get some fresh air?

MORRIS: Oh, no, no, I'm going over the numbers today.

PATRICIA: You go over the numbers every day.

MORRIS: Today is different.

PATRICIA: Why is today different?

MORRIS: I'm getting close to figuring out why things went south.

PATRICIA: I think fresh air will be good for both of us.

MORRIS: I'm nice and cozy in the attic.

PATRICIA: I never understood why you like being up here all the time. So many cobwebs and dust.

MORRIS: It's quiet. It's away...

PATRICIA: Away?

MORRIS: Yes. It's nice to be away sometimes.

PATRICIA: I'd like to go away.

MORRIS: Would you?

PATRICIA: I've always wanted to visit Australia.

MORRIS: Australia's nice.

PATRICIA: Or Japan.

MORRIS: Japan is nice as well.

PATRICIA: Or Tibet.

MORRIS: I very much liked Tibet.

PATRICIA: Where haven't you traveled?

MORRIS: Your mother and I saw quite a bit together...

PATRICIA: Do you have a favorite place?

MORRIS: With your mother?

PATRICIA: Mm-hmm.

MORRIS: My favorite place is looking into her face whenever we'd go on our walks. It needn't matter where we were located, the mountains, the lakeside, the garden...the view was always the same, looking into her face with a different background was all.

PATRICIA: That's so sweet dad.

MORRIS: Oh, yeah. I can't remember much more than that I'm afraid. I think that's all I care to remember anyway. If that goes, I'll go.

PATRICIA: What about me?

MORRIS: You'll get on alright.

PATRICIA: I have no one else.

MORRIS: You have youth. When you have youth you have time to carve out your own life, which, by the looks of it you better get started on soon.

PATRICIA: Why?

MORRIS: Time runs out for all of us, dear.

PATRICIA: I have time. You just said---

MORRIS: Ahhh, time is the great pretender. It makes you think you have forever, especially when things move slowly, but (snaps his fingers) just like that, you find yourself being an old man with a dead wife and a few vague memories left to carry you through to your end.

PATRICIA: That's...life isn't over until it's over.

MORRIS: I agree.

PATRICIA: You can't stay cooped up here everyday.

MORRIS: Why not?

PATRICIA: It isn't healthy.

MORRIS: You a doctor now?

PATRICIA: I may not be your doctor but I'm your daughter and have a say.

MORRIS: I'll give you that.

PATRICIA: And I say you need to see the sun.

MORRIS (pointing to window): It's right there. I see it.

PATRICIA: It's been weeks.

MORRIS: Don't pester me.

PATRICIA: Weeks. You've been in the same ratty robe...when was the last time you took a shower?

MORRIS: Don't insult me!

PATRICIA: I...

MORRIS: I'll shower when I damn well please! I'll go out when I damn well please!

(pause.)

PATRICIA: You look pale.

MORRIS: I've always been pale.

PATRICIA: You've lost weight.

MORRIS: I feel the same.

PATRICIA: You've become gaunt.

MORRIS: Oh, now, will you let me be.

PATRICIA: I can't leave you alone like this.

MORRIS: I'm fine. Doing my research.

PATRICIA: What good will any of that do you?

MORRIS: I need to know.

PATRICIA: What?

MORRIS: Why everything I worked so hard and long for, crumbled.

PATRICIA: It wasn't your fault. The economy tanked because of the pandemic. We've spoken about this a million times.

MORRIS: I am not a man to make excuses.

PATRICIA: You can't hold yourself responsible for a global virus.

MORRIS: Why not?

PATRICIA: Because you aren't God.

MORRIS: No, I'm not..thank God I'm not God.

PATRICIA: Can't you ever let it go?

MORRIS: You may not understand that your mother helped me build the company...without her, I'd be nothing. She inspired me to work my soul to the heavens. For years. Don't you see...I've already lost your mother, but not entirely, I could still hold on to her...I could still find a way to hold on to her. If I accept the loss of the company...I can't accept the loss of the company is what I'm trying to explain to you because...I won't, I won't do that...I can't, I can't do that Patricia...there's still a pulse that breathes...I feel it, sometimes I can feel its warm breath on my neck, egging me to push forward...even if I have to pretend, let me pretend because it's all I have left to keep on.

PATRICIA: You have me.

MORRIS: You are my daughter, Patricia, and I love you, but I am talking about something different...a reason to exist, perhaps.

PATRICIA: ...Why am I not enough for you?

MORRIS: I didn't mean to come off sounding---

PATRICIA: You did. I mean you do. All the time. Even when Mom was alive. I always felt second place at best, usually third place. First was your work, then Mom, then me I believe.

I always felt like I was a part of your leftover notes that doesn't ever really get any attention, but I'm there, sitting directly in front of you, ignored...tossed aside. Why is that? I know you love me. I'm your daughter, how can you not love me? You just never picked me up in your arms and told me. I never felt like we...it's like whatever closeness we could have, was always kept at arm's length...for a long while I thought it was because you simply didn't like me, but as time went on, I discovered that's just your nature, at least with me, not with Mom, with Mom you were complete, warm, gentle...with me you were always there but distant, never truly available. I could never access you, the way I wished I could. I can't even access you now and Mom is no longer with us. It's just you and me, and you still...when will I ever...I'm your daughter.

MORRIS: I always imagined we had a loving relationship. I never knew you felt like this.

PATRICIA: I thought you were aware. The fact that you're not, proves my point.

MORRIS: What am I supposed to do?

PATRICIA: That's up to you.

MORRIS: I don't treat you well?

PATRICIA: You do, you were just never there. I don't think you really know who I am.

MORRIS: You aren't an agent spy are you?

PATRICIA: No.

MORRIS: Are you secretly conspiring to assassinate me?

PATRICIA: No, of course not.

MORRIS: So what's the problem?

PATRICIA: Don't you care?

MORRIS: There isn't a thing I wouldn't do for you.

PATRICIA: You won't even go to the park.

MORRIS: Is that it? Will that make you happy?

PATRICIA: Yes, but...

MORRIS: But, what?

PATRICIA: It's not the bigger picture.

MORRIS: And what is the bigger picture?

PATRICIA: Forget it. I sound pathetic, don't I? Feel like I'm crying to my therapist or something. For a while there, you were getting well again, but now, I see you slipping back into your old habits and I am worried. There's a lot going on with me and I want to talk to you but at the same time I don't know if I can.

MORRIS: We're talking now, aren't we?

PATRICIA: Are we?

MORRIS: Why don't I take a shower and change into some fresh clothes and we can take that walk in the park that you so want to go on...would that be a good idea?

PATRICIA: I don't want to force you into it.

MORRIS: You aren't forcing me.

PATRICIA: You swear?

MORRIS: Yes, dear.

PATRICIA: Okay, would you like some tea before we go? It's a bit cold outside.

MORRIS: I'd love a cup of tea. I didn't know it was cold.

PATRICIA: We're entering a new season.

MORRIS: Yes. Yes, I believe we are...

END OF PLAY