

LIFE DIES, AND THEN YOU SUCK

A One Act Stage Play

by

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Cast of Characters

Dan D. Kaye: Terminally ill man
Linda Hand: Hospice female nurse
Polly Graf: Dishonest female servant
Barbie Dahl: Polly Graf's daughter

Scene

A room with a bed (or long couch) and a table.

Time

The present.

SETTING: A bed (or long couch) and a table.

AT RISE: DAN D. KAYE is lying on the bed.

DAN

Polly? Is my garlic soup ready?

POLLY GRAF enters carrying a bowl with a straw.

POLLY

Coming, Mr. Kaye. Barbie is bringing your wine.

DAN

(takes the bowl and grunts)

A sure sign I'm about to kick the bucket. Eating through a straw because my teeth all fell out. It won't be long, Ms. Graf, before you and your daughter inherit all this.

POLLY

(celebrates, then composes herself)

The legend of Dan D. Kaye will live forever. You have built a wonderful legacy.

DAN

How long have you managed the staff here?

POLLY

Twenty years, sir. It's been an honor to serve you. Loved every minute of it.

(whispers to self)

Now hurry up and die. So this can all be mine.

BARBIE DAHL enters, carrying a glass of red wine. She puts it on the table.

BARBIE

Here's your wine, Mr. Kaye.

DAN

Thank you, Miss Dahl. Red wine is my last civilized indulgence. What do we say to the doctors who disapprove?

BARBIE

We say *too bad*. Now, I told you like a million times. My friends call me Barbie.

DAN

And I told you to call me Dan.

BARBIE

Whatever you say, Mr. Kaye. I overheard you, Mommy. You want someone to die?

POLLY panics and hugs BARBIE.

POLLY

No, dear. You must have misunderstood.

BARBIE frowns. There is a knock on the door.

DAN

That must be Linda. Please show her in.

POLLY escorts LINDA HAND into the room. LINDA rushes to DAN.

LINDA

How are you feeling today?

DAN

If it isn't my favorite hospice nurse, Ms. Linda Hand. Your arrival always cheers me up.

LINDA

(gives DAN a long hug)

I'm sorry I'm late. I picked up a special order for you.

DAN

No worries. I'm not going anywhere. Besides, Polly takes good care of me.

LINDA glares at POLLY, who sneers. POLLY sees BARBIE watching her, and switches to a smile.

LINDA

I have an amazing surprise. A cure for you.

BARBIE

(excited)

A cure for Mr. Kaye? That's awesome!

POLLY

(panicked)

Yes. Awesome.

DAN

Linda, you know my many diseases have no cure.

POLLY

That's right. You shouldn't give him false hope.

LINDA checks DAN'S pulse.

LINDA

You have such soft skin.

POLLY

Seriously?

DAN

(laughs)

My skin is like filo dough. You're confusing translucent for soft.

LINDA

And your eyes. So gentle. When you're back on your feet we'll go dancing.

DAN

Dancing? I think you've been dipping into my medical marijuana stash. My kidneys don't work.

POLLY smiles

DAN (CONT)

My liver is failing.

POLLY pumps her fist.

DAN (CONT)

My arteries are so clogged, blood moves like a traffic jam at rush hour.

POLLY raises her arms. DAN, BARBIE, and LINDA stare at POLLY, who lowers her arms.

BARBIE

Mother, why are you happy Mr. Kaye is sick? He's always taken care of us. Now it's our job to take care of him.

POLLY

Of course it is. I just had a muscle spasm. You believe me, don't you?

BARBIE

(to LINDA)

Sometimes adults are confusing. They say they'll do something, but then do something else.

LINDA

Your mother would do well to recognize the conflict that arises from the inconsistency between her dishonest behavior and her desire to maintain a positive moral image.

BARBIE

My poly sci teacher calls that ethical dissonance. I wrote a term paper on it.

POLLY

Ethical dissonance? Who would ever give an assignment on that? And, for your information, I do nothing of the sort.

BARBIE

She says people do that because they can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time. And that's good enough.

POLLY

(irritated and concerned)

Can we get back on topic? Ms. Hand, what's this nonsense about a cure?

LINDA

(pulls out a vial of red liquid)

It's not nonsense. It's the cure. An unorthodox one, but it's my job to save him, and I will.

POLLY

It's your job to make him comfortable while he dies. And I'm certain that isn't on his approved prescription list.

LINDA

True. But it *is* the cure.

POLLY

Now who's being dishonest? You're giving him false hope. You're after his money.

BARBIE

I think she's just trying to save him.

DAN

Linda, I can't take that. You could lose your license.

LINDA

I don't care. Just drink this, and you'll be better soon.

POLLY

What if it kills him?

(has an epiphany)

Never mind. Carry on.

BARBIE

Mother! I'm so mad at you right now.

DAN

What's in it? Stem cells?

LINDA

Sort of.

DAN

Where'd you get it?

LINDA

I ordered it off the dark web.

BARBIE

The dark web? Like for criminals and illegal stuff?

LINDA

Yeah. But it's the only place you can get this. Short of flying to Eastern Europe.

DAN

My parents were from Romania. A superstitious pair, they were. Believed in all the local folklore.

LINDA

Do you believe?

DAN

In what?

LINDA

The legends of your culture. In particular, vampires.

BARBIE

Vampires? Cool.

POLLY

Oh, come on.

LINDA

(holds up the vial)

This is vampire blood. Enough to turn you.

POLLY

Sir, you can't drink that.

LINDA

Because it might work? You might lose your precious estate?

DAN

I don't know, Linda. I don't really want to be a vampire.

LINDA pulls out a second vial.

LINDA

I'll go with you. We can be a couple.

BARBIE

That's so romantic.

DAN

No! You've got your whole life in front of you. I won't let you ruin it.

LINDA

Then you drink it. At least I can save you.

DAN takes the vial, pauses, then drinks it. POLLY is irritated. DAN'S eyes grow big. He sits up.

DAN

Ooh, that's strong.

(smacks his lips and cocks his head)

Taste's like chicken.

LINDA, BARBIE, and POLLY stare at the empty vial, then at each other with puzzled expressions.

LINDA

Do you feel different?

DAN

Something. Hard to describe. I feel a little . . .

DAN grabs his chest and falls back on the couch.
LINDA rushes in and checks his pulse.

LINDA

He's gone.

POLLY

Hallelujah.

BARBIE

Mother! That's what I was talking about. You're being a dishonest phony.

POLLY

Don't you see? This is best for everybody. He's out of his misery. And we get his money.

BARBIE

Now you're just rationalizing your bad behavior. You're making it worse.

POLLY

Some day, when you're a grown up, you'll understand how the real world works.

BARBIE

If being a grownup means you have be bad, all the while fooling yourself that you're good, you can keep it.

LINDA

I really thought it would work.

DAN suddenly exhales, then sits up.

POLLY

You've *got* to be kidding me.

LINDA

Dan! You're alive!

DAN

Alive? Not so much. But I feel marvelous!

LINDA

It worked! Now you'll get to live in your estate forever!

POLLY

Oh, bite me.

DAN

Trust me, there's nothing I'd rather do . . . But I still have no teeth. What's up with that?

POLLY

You can keep your estate. Come on, Barbie.

BARBIE

And miss this? Are you nuts?

POLLY backpedals, then freezes and makes a cross with her fingers. DAN gives her a quizzical look, then laughs. BARBIE takes a photo on her phone.

BARBIE (CONT)

Wait till my friends see this on Instagram.

(checks the picture out)

Hey. You've got no face. Like you're invisible. Lame.

DAN

Sorry. Occupational hazard. Linda, I am *powerfully* thirsty.

LINDA

What can I get you? I have the other vial.

DAN

I'm a vampire, not a cannibal. Now, what's that smell?

BARBIE

My bad. I was chopping garlic for your soup.

DAN

Damn. I'm going to miss garlic.

BARBIE

What about your red wine there? You love that.

DAN

Red wine is so 2016.

BARBIE

What will you drink instead?

DAN

(smiles at the audience)

I'll think of something.

(FADE TO BLACK)