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Dramatic Publishing

OLD GOAT SONG

by
JULES TASCA



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(OLD GOAT SONG)

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OLD GOAT SONG

A One-Act Play
For One Man and Three Women

CHARACTERS

BILL FAST 70 years old

CORA WOOD his sister

OLD DANIELLE Bill's wife

CARA MOSS a pretty, 17-year old waitress

YOUNG DANIELLE (played by same actress who plays Cara)

TIME: The present and the past.

PLACE: A small suburban American town. _____

OLD GOAT SONG, winner of the Drama Critics Award,
was first produced at the West Coast Theater Ensemble
with the following artists:

Bill Fast *Edmund L. Shaff*
Cora *Jeanette Miller*
Old Danielle *Carol Louise*
Cara/Young Danielle *Michelle Mikesell*

Directed by Toni Wilson

OLD GOAT SONG

SCENE: *The play takes place in a circle of light. Beyond the light in the shadows, actors wait for their entrances and exits.*

AT OPENING: *BILL FAST lies in bed. A hospital chart hangs on the end of the bed. He sits up.*

BILL *(to audience).* I've always been afraid to die, all my life, I dreaded it. But now that I'm going to, I'm not afraid. No. Not at all. And I am going. I can feel it. I sold my last car long ago. I played my last game of golf a year ago. I took my final walk to the diner a week ago. It's all behind me now. I can hardly move my arms without a whole lot of effort. All I can do is lie here and cavort like a porpoise in the ocean of old memories...

(CORA WOOD pushes a table and two chairs into the light. BILL gets out of bed and joins CORA at the table, as the bed is pulled off into the dark. BILL pushes his plate away.)

CORA. What's the matter, Bill?

BILL. Cora, for crying out loud. Boiled string beans, boiled chicken? Again?

CORA. Last night we had carrots.

BILL. Boiled carrots.

CORA. My stomach's such that it won't take nothin' but properly boiled food.

BILL. I like a meal with pizzazz.

CORA. Your wife cooked pizzazz and you had a heart attack.

BILL. When Danielle died I ate my last good food.

CORA. You had a heart by-pass. This is the kind of food you should eat.

BILL. You're my sister, Cora, not my doctor.

CORA. I get tired easily now. I'm not about to cook two different suppers, Bill.

BILL (*rising*). Well, I can't eat this. It's like eating a cut out picture of food.

(As CORA continues to simulate eating, OLD DANIELLE appears from the dark. She is dressed in summer clothes and wears a wide-brim hat.)

OLD DANIELLE. Slow down, Bill Fast.

BILL (*to audience*). That's what Danielle used to say to me.
(*To DANIELLE.*) Danielle, why did you have to die?

DANIELLE. You don't really want an answer to that, do you, Bill?

BILL (*crossing to her*). Guess not.

DANIELLE. You're lying in a hospital bed dying yourself right now.

BILL. Dying and thinking. Over a year sitting across the table from my sister. Oh, I didn't mind having Cora living with us, Danielle. Never...But until you died, I never really saw her. What a lonely, empty broken tea cup of a woman she is. She's never had a full day in her life, since Joe Wood ran off on her.

DANIELLE. She made a choice.

BILL. Which was no choice. When her husband ran off she was still in her twenties. Instead of starting over, she sat here like a zombie. Now she comes into the hospital every day and cries at the foot of my death bed. Over what?

DANIELLE. What in hell do you want poor Cora to do? Start partying and shooting off cherry bombs?

BILL. I know. I know, Danielle, but it's...it's like living with death itself. Boiled carrots. After a man's dead, I believe they feed him boiled carrots and boiled string beans. And he likes it. That's how he knows he's dead, because he actually likes boiled vegetables. Danielle, help me.

DANIELLE. Slow down, Bill Fast. I can't help you any more. I'm just a memory.

BILL. An important memory...*(DANIELLE steps back into the darkness. BILL crosses past CORA.)*

CORA. Where're you going?

BILL. I'm going down to that diner to get a bite to eat.

CORA *(rising and picking up two plates)*. Watch what you put in your stomach.

BILL *(as CORA exits into the darkness)*. Right. If I swallowed some real food, my body wouldn't know what in hell to do with it.

(CARA MOSS enters. She wears an apron that has "Oasis" printed on it. She spreads a red tablecloth on the table and sets down a menu.)

BILL *(to audience)*. The Oasis diner is a local eatery. Every so often I'd come by here for some chicken Parmesan or prime rib or pork chops. That girl is Cara Moss, a seventeen year old waitress. *(BILL sits and speaks to her.)* You must be new.

CARA. First night.

BILL. Well, well. This is an occasion then.

CARA. Not really. But you are my first customer.

BILL. Good Lord, I hope I do everything right. (*She laughs.*)

CARA. Oh, I'm sure you'll do okay, sir.

BILL. I'm Bill Fast. Say, you don't want to call me sir.

People'll think I'm an old goat. And your name is?

CARA. Cara...Cara Moss.

BILL. Cara. C-A-R-A?

CARA. Yes.

BILL. My sister's name is Cora. C-O-R-A.

CARA. How about that. One letter different. Cora. Cara.

BILL (*picking up the menu*). But no more like you than mustard is to meringue.

CARA. Pardon?

BILL. That's what my wife used to say when comparing things that didn't compare. Mustard to meringue. (*He hands her the menu.*) Here, take this. My reading eyes're not so good. You bring me a dish of...of whatever you would order if you were gonna eat supper here tonight.

CARA. You want me to...

BILL. Yep. You pick out your favorite.

CARA. I'd order steak and mushrooms if I ate here tonight.

BILL. Then that's what I'm having. Bring it on.

CARA. You want the whole dinner with the mashed potatoes and...

BILL. The whole shootin' match. Yes. (*To audience as CARA goes off.*) She reminded me so damned much of Danielle when I first met Danielle. (*He rises. Forties music comes up softly.*) God, that smile. That smile that said life was beautiful and will never end. That white beacon light smile...