

INHERIT

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PROMPT – Hank Boland: Grandpa breaks down his stamp collection for inheritance

We enter the playing space – an old, grey colonial home in New England that has seen better days. A strange, middle-aged man (the butler) wearing a gray and dingy tweed suit guides us down a dimly lit parlor holding a lantern. He never speaks. He invites us into a dark room and the suddenly closes the door. Lights rise revealing the ghastly horror! The room is covered in blood, white parchment, black ink, pillow feathers and thick, fly-ridden, rotting turkey legs. And on the floor, in the center of the horror sits a very old man, dressed in a white soiled nightgown. He has a gaping wound on his right leg. He sticks a feather into the wound and with his own blood writes his will on a piece of parchment as he speaks.

EPHRIM

You're here early; you must be with the morgue. Come to collect me, eh? Well, sorry to disappoint but I'm not quite dead yet. Give me a breath however and I'm sure I'll croak any minute NOW. May I offer you something to drink? My boy makes the most excellent spirits for winter nights. You will sit won't you? Standing makes me nervous. Go ahead, right where you are – take a load off. I don't believe in chairs – they have too many legs – it's not natural. And please pardon the mess, I haven't had time to tidy up since my fall. I told the world I fell from my horse but in truth my wife stabbed me with a pitchfork. I have cleaned the wound in days and now I'm going to die from infection. I find it to be a noble way to die though. It's like I've served in the war and lost a limb and now I'm dying from infection – but I'm not. She was going for my groin – my wife but she missed and cut into into my leg. Her eyesight has always been poor. But her blood is rich, which is why I married her. That and the fact that she's witty. Even after she cut off half my leg, she told the most delicious limerick - made me laugh till I spat blood. Poor dear found me in the hay with her niece Madeline (we were doing medical research of course) and in a fit of anger, the wife stabbed the fork

toward my groin and when she missed she screamed “nuts!” Isn’t that just delicious? Of all the words in the world.... she is a comedic genius my wife. I suppose I’ll leave her the house. It is falling apart but so is she. Is it snowing yet? I always knew it would snow on my last day. My, how I love to watch the moon burn light onto the soft, white powder. It’s the only thing in this world that reminds me God is pure. I have had such a monstrous wrestle with Him – Our Father in Heaven. Has the world told you he took my first-born in a fever, my second in the pox, and my third from mindless grief? And the saddest part of it all, is that He left me no one to pass my stamp collection down to. Can you just imagine? Collecting stamps for 60, (70 years if we are rounding to the nearest ten), and having no one to leave them to? Well. God won’t win this war. I decided, in a fit of rage, to leave my stamps to you! To strangers. Aren’t I diabolical? Strangers are strange my wife says. But I could care less. I’ve always reveled in the kindness of strange beings. This is why you are here – you are strange.! That’s’s why I am leaving my fortune. Each of you will get several pages of stamps worth over several hundreds of dollars. Yes, the house goes to the wife, and my body goes to science but my stamps goes to all of you. Aren’t I just a gas!

He laughs.

Each stamp reflect a places that I’ve visited before, places that I went to, to avoid my wife. These stamps are all I have left. They are the pieces of my life, my flesh. They are my ashes. I give them to you because I want you to live. With the money that you make from these stamps – you can visit all the places that I’ve been. You can see the world. You can make your own collection.

The old man rises. His wound trickles blood. He limps to a window and opens it. A wind hurls in through the window and snatches his soul. Lights fade to black as the window slams shut in the dark.