



DEATH BY ZOOM

By Neil Rathmell

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A play for Zoom

CHARACTERS

Mum - an old lady

Penny, Amy and **Caroline** - her daughters

*(Characters join the Zoom session one by one in various settings as appropriate. **MUM** is the first to join. She is in bed, her head resting on a pillow, cover pulled up to her neck, as if sleeping. A few moments later, **PENNY** joins.)*

PENNY Hello, Mum! Mum! Can you hear me? Mum?
(AMY joins.)

AMY Hi, Penny!

PENNY Oh, hi!

AMY How is she?

PENNY I think she's sleeping.

AMY Has she said anything?

PENNY Not yet.

AMY Mum? Hello! Can you hear me? Can she hear us?

PENNY I don't know. There she is anyway.

AMY What's she using to get online?

PENNY One of the nurses put a laptop on the meal tray for her. She said she would leave it on.

AMY Mum wouldn't know what to do, would she? Poor old thing!

PENNY She's gone very thin since the last time I saw her.

AMY What did they tell you? You know...

PENNY I know, yes. They said it could be any time.
(Pause.)
Mum?
(Pause.)

AMY You're sure she isn't...

(CAROLINE joins.)

CAROLINE Hi, everyone! Sorry I'm late.

AMY No worries. We weren't expecting you for at least half an hour. And there's no need to pull faces, Caroline. It doesn't do anything for your appearance.

PENNY Let's all try to be nice to each other, shall we?

CAROLINE Must we?

PENNY Yes. For her sake.

CAROLINE Is she asleep?

PENNY I think so.

CAROLINE Are you sure she isn't...

PENNY Let's just be quiet for a minute and watch.

(Pause.)

AMY It's like watching a sleeping child.

CAROLINE I wouldn't know.

PENNY Look!

AMY What?

PENNY You can see her breathing.

AMY Can you?

PENNY The cover. Every so often you can see it go up and down. Like the boats in a harbour when everything's calm.

CAROLINE Very poetic, darling, but can we do something else now? Something a bit less morbid than watching our mother for signs of life?

PENNY Only you would think there was anything morbid about watching mum in her last days.

CAROLINE Days! Did you say days?

AMY Mum? Would you mind hurrying up, please? Caroline's in a hurry.

PENNY Take no notice, mum. We're here for you. All of us.

AMY They ought to have a camera on her all the time, like they do in nature reserves.

CAROLINE There's CCTV wherever you go. The common man's paparazzi.

AMY I don't mean like that.