

STUPID OLD DETECTIVE

A Park Bench Play

by

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A Short Play by L. Lewis Stout

A park. A park bench.

A man is lying on a park bench, a book covers his face.

A boy rolls in on a skateboard, flips his board into his hands and removes a stick from between the wheels. The man speaks from beneath his book.

MAN

You pretty good on that, Mister Davey?

BOY

I'm not Davey, I'm Alan.

MAN

You don't live in the green house over there?

BOY

That's Jen's place.

MAN

Jen's not your big sister?

BOY

Big sister, heck no. She's only eight years old and she's not my sister. Why you asking?

MAN

Someone told me Alan O'Connell has a big sister named...

BOY

I'm not O'Connell.

MAN

I meant O'Donnell.

BOY

I'm not "O" anything. I'm just plain Ogilvie. Besides, how'd "O" Ogilvie sound? Stupid, huh.

MAN

Especially If your middle name was Orville, then you'd sound like honking at a pretty girl.

(MORE)

MAN (cont'd)

Oh Oh Ooogle.

(He sits up.)

Oh Oh Oooglive. Oh Oh Ooogilvie.

BOY

You're weird.

MAN

Not as much as the people who live in that blue house over there. I hear they're really strange. Weird kid too.

BOY

Hey, that's my house. You don't talk about my family like that.

MAN

But your big brother, Timmy...

BOY

Jimmy.

MAN

He's weird... So I hear.

BOY

Yeah, okay, he's weird, but he's still my big brother.

MAN

Takes after his old man does he?

BOY

Don't you start talking about my dad.

MAN

Why, he gonna beat me up or something?

BOY

He's dead, that's all. And you're not supposed to talk about dead people like that.

MAN

But you gotta admit, it wasn't nice what he did to your... you know... you...

BOY

How'd you know about Mom.

MAN

I didn't say anything about her.
Why would I?

BOY

Everybody thinks that he...

MAN

You brother Jimmy?

BOY

Not Jimmy. He'd never do that.

MAN

But Dad...

BOY

I don't believe. He liked me.

MAN

Sure he did, almost like his own
son.

BOY

That's not true.

MAN

He didn't like you?

BOY

That I'm not his own son. I don't
care what they say.

MAN

When people say that, I bet it sure
got your dad really mad, I mean
like really mad. It'd make me wanna
hit someone they said that about
me...her.

BOY

Oh, Dad was really really mad. Man,
he punched a hole in the door the
size of his...

MAN

Fist?

BOY

His foot. Kicked right through.

MAN

That must have scared your Mom.
Made her cry, I bet.

BOY
How'd you know she cried?

MAN
Women. You know, they cry about things like that. Especially when they get...
(Gestures to his face indicating a possible black eye.)
You know, then they use a lot of make up. Women stuff. Happen a lot?

BOY
Not a lot. Hey, I gotta go.

MAN
Yeah, you go home. I'll be here.

BOY
You not gonna tell anyone about that are you?

MAN
Who'd I tell?

BOY
I don't care who tell, you don't even know who I am.

MAN
You? You mean your not Alan Ogilvie, who lives with his Mom and older brother Jimmy in the blue house across the street?

BOY
Yeah.

MAN
Alan whose Dad died in a, really bad car accident right?

BOY
Yeah. I still don't believe he was driving drunk.

MAN
Me either. After all, all he'd ever had was... was what... coffee, pop, maybe a beer, two, three?

BOY
Okay, he drank. A lot.

MAN

And you're not always sad he died
are you?

BOY

Sure I am. I loved him.

MAN

Even when you were just a little
afraid of him?

BOY

Even then. But I wasn't afraid.

MAN

And Jimmy wasn't was he? He could
take care of himself around your
dad. Bet he stood up for you.

BOY

Jimmy. Do something for me? Get
real.

MAN

Older brothers, year, I know. Had
too many of them myself. What about
the baby?

BOY

What baby?

MAN

Oh, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have
said anything. Your Mom wouldn't
have...

BOY

I know about little Elsie.

MAN

You ever see her?

BOY

Sure, I saw her. But I was kinda
young, just a kid.

MAN

Not like now. And nobody lets
little kids hold babies much.

BOY

I got to hold her. She used to
squeeze my finger. Real hard.

MAN

Too bad about Elsie. I know.

BOY

It wasn't Dad's fault. He didn't mean to do anything.

MAN

I know. You're Mom probably told you it was an accident.

BOY

It was accident.

MAN

A couple beers and accidents happen. Like when your Dad was driving and the road turned and...and...I don't know. Same thing with Elsie.

BOY

You sure know a lot about me, mister.

MAN

I don't know anything. We're just talking. You know, a couple stupid old guys hanging in the park just talking.

BOY

I'm not no old guy and I'm not stupid.

MAN

Not stupid at all. Sharp I'd say. A survivor. Real survivor.

BOY

Survivor? Me. What'd I survive?

MAN

An older brother. A baby sister who you loved got, hurt, died, accident. Dad too. Gotta make you sad doesn't it? You're sad you're dad was killed while drunk in his own car. Who wouldn't be. Are you?

BOY

Sure I am.

MAN

All the time? Maybe just sometime, maybe when you don't see him and your mom not fighting. Sometime feeling kinda of mixed up about it all.

BOY

Yeah, mixed up. But you don't tell anyone?

MAN

Hey, Alan Ogilvie, the nice kid who lives in the blue house, I don't even know you. And you don't know me.

BOY

I know you.

MAN

You know me? Who am I?

BOY

You're a stupid old guy on a stupid old bench asking a lot of stupid old questions, that's who you are.

MAN

See, I knew you were a sharp kid. Too sharp for me.

He gets up and moves to leave.

BOY

Where you going?

MAN

I know when I've in over my head. Know when I met my match.

BOY

You gonna come back?

MAN

You want me to come back.

BOY

Nay, a I gotta get home.

MAN

Me too.

BOY
You coming here tomorrow. It's not
a school day.

MAN
No school? Yeah, it's Saturday.

BOY
So.

MAN
So what?

BOY
You coming back tomorrow?

MAN
You want me to?

BOY
If you want to.

MAN
Then maybe I will. Maybe.

BOY
Me too, maybe.

MAN
Maybe we just be a couple of stupid
old guys talking in the park.

BOY
Except I not an old guy.

MAN
And you're not stupid

BOY
You bet I'm not.

MAN
I bet.

BOY
Tomorrow? You coming?

MAN
Yeah, maybe. Maybe for sure.

BOY
Same here.

The boy mounts his board and exits.

MAN

For sure.

The Man exits.

After the Man leaves, the boy return and sees the Man has left his book on the bench. The Boy sits next to it. Looks at it a moment before picking it up. He thumbs through and then reads the title page aloud.

BOY

The Mysterious Stranger.

The Boy kicks back on the bench and begins to read the book.

THE END

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