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## I like a view

by Miriam Silver

“Here we are then, happy families,” Jamie the youngest, as usual making a somewhat tactless remark, added, “dropped us in it as usual, not even left a few bob to cover all this.”

“Please, don’t go on,” Irene, now a grandmother herself pleaded, “never knew his grandchildren of course.”

“I suppose old misery knows it’s booked for 10?” Jamie went on determined to stir an already fraught situation.

“Just because he made something of his life you don’t have to be so rude, anyway his name’s Richard,” his sister reminded him as the aforementioned joined them.

“Personally, I am dreading it, so let’s pretend, just for a little while,” said Alan always keen to expound his fears, would have gone on but was interrupted by Richard, “terrible traffic,” the eldest of them arrived wearing a black tie excused himself while looking with disdain at his brothers who were, in his opinion not dressed suitably.

“You boys could at least have worn something else, those hoodies and jeans look awful,” adding, before he could be stopped, “although I like a view I hope you will excuse me if I sit with my back turned away from what we’re about to witness” sounding his usual pompous self.

“Are you still the little wallflower then?” Jamie sneered, “hide behind the sofa do you?”

Before a sibling war broke out, Irene beckoned them to follow her.

Although once upon a time the four siblings lived under the same roof, fed and watered by a single mother, whose resentment to their absent father pervaded their growing up, they all knew this would be their final quarrel.

That much was clear, through their emails, which had been brief and to the point. Living in the four corners of the country, they never met, using demands of family and work as an excuse, in reality they never did have much in common.

Reluctantly they followed their sister into the chapel at the allotted time, where they listened to an anonymous celebrant intone the few meaningless words that had been given to him, no one had discussed the content of service, so they stood in front of the gates as the coffin disappeared then wandered outside looking vaguely around until Jamie broke the ice,

“How about the pub then, as long as Richard pays, I haven’t got a bean, spent the last getting here.”

“We have to decide what to do with the ashes before we go anywhere,” Irene reminded them, ignoring him.

“Didn’t know anything about him, must say don’t want to be involved,” began Alan, “I can’t help, you know I’m trying to get work, no luck yet.”

“He obviously didn’t like travelling,” Jamie offered lightheartedly.

“Oh! Stop now, can’t quarrel here,” Alan said.

“Alright, ok I’ll deal with it all,” Richard said sounding weary.

“Thanks Richard,” Mary at least had some manners, “must rush promised to collect grandchildren.”

Standing there, in the sunshine, all four wondering what to do next, Jamie jeered,

“Hope he appreciated we gave him a good send off.”

“Hm! You never know,” added Richard solemnly.

