

*The Play*

# THE UPPER ROOM

*Feast*

Pentecost

*Characters*

Matthew  
John

Peter  
Mary



*Props*

A scrapbook.  
Some old photographs.  
A pressed lily.

*Suggestions*

This is a "reader's theater" piece. Four people simply read their parts from podiums. There is very little action. Matthew is the narrator. He relates a story which becomes a flashback. John can have the scrapbook with the lily and the photographs. If Mary stands near him, she can relate to the prop as well.

*Running Time*

8 minutes.

MATTHEW

My name is Matthew. A few years ago, my two brothers, my sister and I had come home for the funeral services of our mother. Since our father had died several years before, we had the unpleasant task of cleaning out the house. Our mother was a saver. Nothing ever seemed to be thrown out. Old issues of *Life* magazine from the 50's, scraps of this and that. We had been working for days, cleaning up the vestiges of our parents' lives. We wanted the whole thing to be over, to put it all behind us, close the book on this chapter of our lives. The house itself would be sold. We had no use for it.

We were nearly finished. Each worked in separate rooms of the house, more efficient that way, we thought. "Let's get this over with. Why make more of it. It's just a life that's ended." But, we had forgotten the upper room, the attic. One of us had to go to the upper room and begin the clearing process there. Since no one elected to take that task on alone and we had all finished previous tasks, we reluctantly decided to go to the upper room together. We were greeted by the stale smell of a musty attic. The small windows had not been opened in years, and there was so much "junk." My older brother, Peter, asked:

PETER

Do we have to go through all this? It'll take forever.

MATTHEW

Yes, let's just throw it all out. There can't be anything of any value up here.

JOHN

That's all that matters to you isn't it? What's it worth—the inheritance thing.

MATTHEW

Why not, John, it's due us. We might as well get something from this.

MARY

Calm down. Each of us will get our fair share of the inheritance.

MATTHEW

Look, you know how I feel. I've never felt I belong to this family.

JOHN That was your own choice, Matt. You were always so defiant. You never gave them a chance to understand you.

PETER You would say that, John. You were always Mama's boy. She always doted on you. You were the favorite just because you were so sensitive and fragile—always needing to be protected.

JOHN At least you had a relationship with Dad. He never knew what to do with me.

MARY Will you please stop. Let's just get this over with.

MATTHEW Yeah, and then we can go our separate ways.

JOHN Hey, what's this? It's a scrapbook, filled with photographs and memories. Look at this picture of Mom and Dad. They were so young when they got married.  
*John holds up the scrapbook.*  
*He takes out a picture.*

MARY That look of love—I don't think it ever changed. They were always in love with each other.

JOHN Look at this.  
*He finds the pressed flower.*

PETER What is it?

MARY You don't know? It's a "Lily of the Valley." It was Mom's favorite flower. Dad gave them to her all the time on special occasions.  
*Mary takes the flower.*

Look at this picture; they're in the woods somewhere and there are these little flowers all over. There's something written on the back. "To my Beloved, I give you these 'Lilies of the Valley' as a sign of my love. This precious white flower, so fragile, so beautiful is only a shadow of my desire for you. You are so precious to me, the most precious gift God could ever give me."

MARY

And look, here are the words to the songs they used to sing: "Why Do I Love You," "We Could Make Believe." You know, they really were in love all those years. You could see it in the way they looked at each other.

MATTHEW

*He trails off  
and then pauses  
so he can shift into  
the narration.*

Look at this picture of the four of us at the beach. Was my hair really that blonde? Do you remember the time . . . .

All of a sudden there was a flood of memories of childhood, storytelling, times shared, birthdays, celebrations, fights and reconciliation, laughter and tears. Memories shared, a common inheritance, the inheritance of a father and mother's love.

PETER

Why don't we open these windows.

MATTHEW

When we did, a strong, cooling breeze blew through that upper room. Our hearts were opened to love, to forgiveness, to the richest inheritance imaginable.

The four of us would go our separate ways, to lead our own lives, but now there was something . . . remembered, rediscovered, reborn in us . . . a living memory of those who had lived and loved us.

