

The Last Will and Testament of Eleanor M. Ashcombe

To my dear family,
By the time you read this, I will be gone and knowing you all as I do, I have no doubt you are already eyeing my possessions. So let me make my final wishes perfectly clear.

I leave everything I owned to the four of you, together. But I attach three conditions, and my lawyer is instructed to enforce every one of them:

1. Nothing may be sold, given to strangers, or thrown away. Every item on the list must go to one of you.
2. You must divide everything by unanimous agreement. I will not have lawyers or judges carving up my life's belongings — you will do it yourselves, at one table, and you will all agree.
3. The division is final only once all four of you have signed below. Until then, no one inherits a thing. I always hoped you would learn to talk to one another. Consider this my last attempt to make it happen.

With love (and a little mischief),
Aunt Eleanor

The estate

1. The 1974 Porsche 911: dark green, fully restored, and worth a small fortune.
2. Bruno, Eleanor's elderly golden retriever: devoted, but he needs daily care and expensive medication.
3. The seaside cottage at Rosehaven: small and a little run-down, but right on the coast.
4. The grand piano: beautiful, antique and enormous.
5. A collection of first-edition novels valuable to collectors, dull to everyone else.
6. Grandmother's diamond jewellery: the one truly sentimental heirloom in the family.
7. €45,000 in a savings account: the only cash in the estate.
8. An oil painting, said to be by a famous artist, possibly priceless, possibly a fake.
9. A fully stocked wine cellar: over two hundred bottles, some of them very rare.
10. Eleanor's allotment garden and greenhouse: worth little, but a peaceful place to spend a morning

These ten items must be divided among the four of you. Remember: every item must go to someone, and all four of you must agree.



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Role cards

Cut out. One card per student, keep your own card secret.

ROLE 1 The Dog Lover

You adore Bruno, and you are the only one here who will truly look after him. You want to take him home, whatever it costs. You honestly don't care about the money or the valuables; you'd happily give every last one of them away to secure the dog.

Your secret: if the others sense how much Bruno means to you, they'll use him as a bargaining chip. Stay calm. Don't let them see how badly you want him.

ROLE 2 The Rival

Honestly? You don't need a thing from this estate. You're comfortable, and you find the whole scramble rather grubby. There is only one outcome you cannot stand: whichever sibling fights hardest for the Porsche must NOT end up with it. Old wounds die hard.

Your secret: block them from the car by any means: claim it yourself, trade it away, hand it to someone else but never admit that spite is your only real motive.

Role cards

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ROLE 3 The One in Trouble

You are quietly in serious financial difficulty, with debts you have told no one about. You desperately need the 45 000 €, and ideally the Porsche and the wine cellar too, which you could quietly turn into cash.

Your secret: if the family senses you're broke, they'll pity you or take advantage. Argue for the money and valuables as if it were a matter of principle, not need.

ROLE 4 The Sentimental One

Money means nothing to you. What matters are the things that hold memories: Grandmother's jewellery, and the old oil painting you sat in front of every childhood Christmas. Here's the twist: you're fairly sure that painting is a worthless fake. But you'd rather not let the others find out, because you want it anyway.

Your secret: quietly talk the painting's value down, while making absolutely sure it ends up with you.