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Heirs to a Headache

IN New York City real estate, death is the ultimate leveler, evicting the residents of 16-room duplexes as well as those in fifth-floor walk-ups. It doesn't matter whom you know.

"You would think it would be easy because there's money at the end of the rainbow, but there are more problems than you would think," said Adam Leitman Bailey, a Manhattan real estate lawyer.

"This is one of those cataclysmic events that really shake everybody up. It's just like in a divorce, where you don't use your brain — you use your emotions. So you're hurt, you're not thinking clearly, and a lot of the time the person that dies is the one who used to give you advice."

"This is their chance to get the attention they always wanted, to get the revenge they always wanted, and for the youngest child to finally show that they matter," Mr. Bailey said.