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PREVIEW: MY NEMESIS AND DUCKS

By

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Cast of Characters

Jessica
Dora
Edith

Synopsis

Two women in a palliative care facility form a friendship over their shared experiences. While the circumstances of their friendship may not have been the best, at least now they won't have to die alone.

SCENE 1

Two hospital beds, with white sheets and pillows. Bedside tables on the outer facing sides of the beds. Stage right table has a vase of flowers. A relatively comfortable, armed chair is down stage left.

Edith is sitting on stage right hospital bed, propped up on a pillow, reading a book, with her legs covered by the white blanket.

The other bed is empty.

Dora is wheeled in a wheel chair by nurse Jessica from stage left, towards the empty bed.

Jessica helps Dora into the bed, props her against the pillows, and tucks her in with the blanket.

Dora leans back against the pillows, closing her eyes in discomfort, before breathing out and relaxing.

Jessica

Do you need anything before I go?

Dora

No, I think I'm okay.

Jessica

I'll come check on you a bit later. Dinner is at 5 o'clock.

Dora

Thank you.

Jessica smiles at Dora, nods her head at Edith who is still reading, and walks off stage left.

Dora puts her hands in her lap, looking down at them, playing with her fingers.

Edith bookmarks, closes, and puts her book down on her lap, looking towards Dora.

Edith

First day?

Dora looks up at Edith, surprised.

Dora

Yes

Edith

Nervous?

Dora

How'd you know?

Edith

Common problem. Try not to worry about it, everyone gets nerves in their first week, it'll pass.

There's an awkward silence between the two, Dora feels the need to fill it.

Dora

The doctors say I-

Edith holds up a hand, cutting Dora off.

Edith

You don't need to tell me. Not if you don't want to.

Dora breathes out in relief.

Dora

Thank you... It's nice to forget sometimes. I suppose there's no chance of that now, if there ever was.

Edith

There are ways, don't worry too much.

Edith picks up her book and begins to read again.

Dora plays with her hands, looking around the room nervously, trying to calm herself down.

She looks over to Edith.

Dora

What are you reading?

Edith

Nemesis, Agatha Christie.

Dora

I've never been much of a reader, is it any good?

Edith

One of my favourites. Jessica gets me new books every now and again, but I always come back to Christie.

Both smile

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP

Dora and Edith are still in their beds.

Edith is reading and Dora is holding a get well soon card in her hand.

Dora

A get well soon card? Yeah right. She'll be out of the job if I do.

Edith looks up from her book, her eyes lingering on the page while her face turns. She looks at Dora.

Edith

Hmmmm?

Dora

Oh, the new pianist at my old orchestra sent me a get well card. Does she not understand the meaning of terminal or is she being deliberately obtuse?

Dora laughs, putting the card on her bedside table. The laugh turns into a cough and she rubs at her chest before sighing.

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Dora drops her hand, gets up, hobbles over to her bed, gets in with some effort, and looks down into her hands, contemplating what Edith said.

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE 7

LIGHTS UP

Jessica is fussing over an unconscious Edith, tucking her in, and checking her vitals.

Dora stirs and wakes up in her own bed. Breathing in, and licking her dry lips, taking in her surroundings, and groaning in discomfort.

From this point on she looks more tired, and lacks energy. Her eyes are half lidded, and her blinking, and breathing are slower, but it is not overwhelmingly obvious. She notices Jessica.

Dora

Good morning Jessica, is something wrong?

Jessica looks up at Dora when she speaks, stops fiddling with Edith, and faces Dora fully, moving towards her.

She smiles sadly, taking Dora's hand.

Jessica

I'm so sorry Dora, but Edith slipped into a coma last night. I know you're close, so let me know if there is anything I can do to make things easier.

Dora squeezes Jessica's hand, and looks over to Edith.

Jessica

We'll move her into another room once I get someone to help-

Dora looks back at her suddenly.

Dora

No, please don't. I promised her. I won't let her be alone,

Jessica

If you're sure?

Dora

I am.

They sit for a moment in silence, Dora looking at Edith.

Jessica

Do you need anything before I go? Morphine?

Dora looks at Edith and sighs, smiling sadly.

Dora

You know what?... Yes please.

Jessica

Okay, I'll be back in 15.

Jessica nods at Dora, and exits stage left.

Dora waits for her to leave before opening her blanket, and slowly moving to Edith's side of the room.

She opens the top draw, shuffles around until she finds the Nemesis book, closes the draw, sits in the chair, and begins to read.

Dora

In the afternoons it was the custom of Miss Jane Marple to unfold her second newspaper. Two newspapers were delivered at her house every morning....

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE 8

LIGHTS UP

Edith is gone, and the bed is made.

Dora is asleep, leaning on the arm of the chair, with Nemesis in her hand.

Dora wakes up slowly, looking around the room until her eyes land on the bed, seeing Edith is missing.

She breathes out a shaky breath and wipes away a tear.

She stands, moves over to the vase, takes a couple of flowers, and pulls off the petals.

She scatters the petals over the bed sheets sadly, then places Nemesis on the pillow, leaving her hand there for a moment Dora walks slowly back over to her bed, gets in, and leans back against the pillows, closing her eyes.

Dora

Ships that pass in the night, and speak to each other in passing; only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness.

LIGHTS DOWN

END



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