

The Abundance of the Heart

A New Play

by  
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*In the dark we hear a normal heart beat. BRENDA anxiously sits on a hospital bed. The bed is catty cornered and there is a single wall behind the bed. On the wall is a white board. We see the white board show BJ for Brenda's initial, vital signs, and the name "Nurse Becky" at the bottom. Beside it is a phone on the wall. There is an open curtain sectioning off her bed area.*

*Brenda sits with her legs covered, and reading a Bible. MAYA sits in a chair by the bed. She's focused on her phone.*

*There's a long awkward silence between them. Every once in a while Brenda looks at her watch then over at Maya. Maya is aware that is Brenda trying to get her attention but ignores her. Brenda goes back to reading.*

*Maya looks up from her phone but not in Brenda's direction. Brenda goes to open her mouth to speak but decides against it.*

*There's another long awkward silence between them. Brenda looking over Maya who is still focused on her phone. Brenda stares at Maya for a moment and closes her Bible shut.*

BRENDA

*(Impatient)*

Where's your brother?

MAYA

He said he was on his way.

BRENDA

That was an hour ago.

MAYA

He's coming from Greensboro. That's an hour away, Ma.

BRENDA

Well, call him.

MAYA

Ma, just try and relax okay?

BRENDA

The phone is already in your hands.

*We hear a heart beat increases in speed then slows back down to normal. Brenda winces in pain a little bit. She sits up a little. Maya puts her phone down and stares at her a little concerned.*

MAYA

You alright?

BRENDA

Yea. I've been having these weird muscle spasms in my back *all day*.

MAYA

What part of your back?

BRENDA

My upper back. Between that and this terrible indigestion.

MAYA

Shouldn't we call for someone

BRENDA

Just hand me my tums.

MAYA

Is it like the pain from your back injury?

BRENDA

I don't know this feels a little different.

*Maya begins rubbing her back.*

MAYA

What do you think is causing it?

BRENDA

I don't know. Maybe I ate something bad.

MAYA

That has nothing to do with your back.

*Maya continues to rub. Brenda winces a little bit again. Heart beat increases and stays for a moment then slows again.*

MAYA

I think we should call someone.

BRENDA

*(Ignoring)*

The bottle is in my purse.

MAYA

Ma, you can't just ignore whatever this is.

BRENDA

Girl, I'm fine.

MAYA

You're in the ER.

BRENDA

*(Matter of fact)*

For dizziness and nausea.

MAYA

Yea, but you're still in the ER. Ginger ale and saltine crackers wont help this.

BRENDA

*(Scolding)*

Maya.

MAYA

Fine. But I'm still telling the nurse when she gets back.

*She goes to Brenda's purse. She digs for a moment and pulls out a bottle of tums. She looks at it and looks at her mother. She hands her the bottle. Brenda reaches for it.*

*Maya holds it. They look at one another for a moment.  
Maya is not backing down.*

BRENDA

Okay.

*We hear the heart increase in speed. Brenda struggles to  
open the bottle. A few pills fall out as her hands shake.  
Maya stands up to help her.*

MAYA

Ma, what's wrong?

BRENDA

*(Worried)*

I don't want to die in here. Not yet.

MAYA

Mommy, you're not going to die in here.

BRENDA

My mother did- my grandmother. Your Auntie Linda and Uncle Henry. All died in here. Just one trip to the ER and they never came home. I don't want that, I just want to go home.

MAYA

Mommy, I know you don't want to be here but we have to at least find out what's going on. Try to relax. Take a few deep breaths.

*Maya demonstrates deep breaths and Brenda follows. We  
hear the increased heart beat slow down. Brenda takes the  
pills. She begins to chew. Maya begins rubbing her back  
again.*

MAYA

There you go. Now don't think about them. Think about something else.

*Maya goes back to her seat. There's silence for a moment.*

BRENDA

You know what I've been thinking about lately?

MAYA

What?

BRENDA

It would be nice to have some grandbabies.

MAYA

Think about anything else but that.

BRENDA

Some of the ladies bring their grandbabies to our volunteering events and it would just be nice if-

MAYA

Anything. Else.

*(Beat)*

BRENDA

How's James?

*Maya rolls her eyes.*

MAYA

Non existent.

BRENDA

What does that mean?

MAYA

It means he's not around and wont be at my birthday party.

BRENDA

Well, why not?

MAYA

Because I don't have time for his games.

BRENDA

Baby, all men play games. You have to decide which ones *you* want to play?

*Maya stops rubbing Brenda's back. She look at her confused and shocked.*

MAYA

That is the dumbest, most old school thing I've ever heard.

BRENDA

Maybe you should call him and work it out.

MAYA

How's the games with Deacon Clayton?

*Brenda is silent. She huffs and moves her shoulders from Maya. Maya sighs knowing she hurt her mother.*

MAYA

I'm sorry, Ma. Besides I'm already stressed out planning my 30th and I don't have time for a man who doesn't know what he wants. I'm worth more than that.

BRENDA

Why are we planning another birthday party? Shouldn't we be planning a wedding?

*Maya stares at Brenda for a moment, hurt. She gets off the bed. And sits back in her seat. She grabs her phone and becomes focused on the screen of the phone.*

BRENDA

Maybe I can find a nice man for you?

MAYA

No.

BRENDA

What about one of those websites? You know there's a nice young man at church-

MAYA

God, No! Ma, please.

*Brenda watches her.*

BRENDA

*(Abrupt)*

You don't want to end up alone. What kind of life is that? Maybe you should just try a little harder to find someone.

*They both look at one another for a moment. Brenda knows that she's hurt Maya. Brenda looks at Maya for a while longer. Maya stays silent focused on her phone. Brenda picks her Bible back up. She opens it. There is a tense silence between them.*

BRENDA

Call and see where your brother is, please.

*Maya picks her phone back up. She dials. Places the phone to her ear.*

MAYA

Where you at? Because Mommy told me to call you. Yes, again.

*(To Brenda)*

He said he's close.

BRENDA

What's close?

MAYA

*(In phone)*

She said what's close?

*(To Brenda)*

He said about less than 2 minutes out.

BRENDA

Okay good.

MAYA

Alright, see you in a-

BRENDA

Wait, tell him to stop at that burger place on the corner.

MAYA

Absolutely not.

BRENDA

Excuse me.

MAYA

*(To phone)*

She wants a burger.

*(To Brenda)*

He said no.



BRENDA  
I'm hungry.

MAYA  
*(To phone)*  
Well, grab a salad from down stairs.

BRENDA  
I don't want a salad.

MAYA  
*(Giggles)*  
He said too bad.

BRENDA  
Tell him I said-

MAYA  
*(To phone)*  
See you in a bit.

*She hangs up. Puts her phone down.*

MAYA  
You're in the emergency room. You don't get to make demands.

*Brenda opens her Bible back up. Maya stands looking at Brenda. Brenda doesn't respond. She flips through the pages of her Bible. Maya pulls her phone back out. After a few seconds. NURSE KARIMI walks in. Brenda stares at him approvingly.*

NURSE KARIMI  
Ms. Jones-

BRENDA  
Dr. Jones.

NURSE KARIMI  
*(Sincere)*  
Oh, I'm so sorry.

BRENDA

It's okay. You can call me Brenda.

NURSE KARIMI

My name is Karimi and I just wanted to come in and check on you . I'm the RN coming in on a new rotation.

*Nurse Karimi looks at the white board for a moment. He erases Nurse Becky's name and write his own.*

BRENDA

We'll it's very nice to meet you, Nurse Karimi. *This* is my daughter Maya.

*He nods in Maya's direction. Maya doesn't acknowledge him back.*

NURSE KARIMI

I see you came in because of dizziness, nausea and you fainted.

BRENDA

Yeah. I wasn't feeling too great earlier but I'm feeling okay now. I just want to get out of here.

NURSE KARIMI

Well, I'm going to check your vitals. I know Becky checked a few hours ago.

BRENDA

Yea, we've been here almost 5 hours.

NURSE KARIMI

I'm sorry about that. Something about Fridays makes people do the craziest things.

*Nurse Karimi pulls out a stethoscope. He places it on her chest. Maya puts her phone down and steps towards the bed to watch.*

BRENDA

A'int that the truth. Did you hear-

*He pulls it off for a moment as she speaks and places it back on.*

NURSE KARIMI

I'm sorry, Ms. Brenda. I want you to focus on breathing for me.

BRENDA

Am I too loud?

NURSE KARIMI

It's hard to hear your lungs and heart when your speaking.

BRENDA

Oh, of course.

NURSE KARIMI

Take a few deep breaths for me.

*Nurse Karimi moves the stethoscope around in a few different places as Brenda takes deep inhales. We hear an increased heart beat it stays at the same pace.*

NURSE KARIMI

*(Concerned)*

Are you having trouble breathing?

BRENDA

Not really. Well, just a little bit, but taking big breaths helps.

MAYA

And she's having muscle spasms in her back.

NURSE KARIMI

Hm. Okay. Let's get you all checked out.