

TREATMENT

Written by

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Based on, Happy Place

INT. PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE - DAY ROOM - DAY

Circular tables are spread out in a large room. The walls are white, no pictures or windows.

PATIENTS sit at the tables, or shuffle throughout the room.

DAY-SHIFT NURSE, 45, plump and self-assured, goes over charts with YOUNG TECH, 23, handsome and casual, behind a counter. Behind them is a locked door, no access to patients.

ALEX, 30, slim and pale, temporary psych-ward patient, colors with crayons: a farmhouse, white picket fence, two children play in the front yard with a dog.

CARA, 30, Alex's identical twin, visitor, watches Alex.

MALE PATIENT, 35, long-term psych-ward patient, draws at the same table. A pile of broken crayons beside him.

Alex looks for the color she needs, it's not there. She reaches for a plastic bin of crayons. Fingers touch the bin--

Male Patient yanks the bin away.

MALE PATIENT

Mine.

ALEX

I need red.

Alex tightens her grip. She pulls, but not strong enough.

Male Patient grabs with both hands. Crayons fly out.

MALE PATIENT

Mine!

He slams his hands down.

MALE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Don't touch! Mine!

He bangs his head.

Day-Shift Nurse, with a cup of medication, and Young Tech appear beside Male Patient.

DAY-SHIFT NURSE

You need to calm down. Here.

Alex grabs a red crayon from the floor. She returns to her artwork and colors in flames around the house.

CARA
Why make your art destructive?

ALEX
It's my happy place.

Cara studies Alex's work.

CARA
Where's our parents?

ALEX
Don't remember.

CARA
Heard you stopped taking your meds.

ALEX
So, that's why you showed today.

Cara motions to a folded piece of paper near Alex.

CARA
Happy birthday.

ALEX
Oh, right. Thank you.

Alex pretends there's gift wrap, fingers careful as they unfold the paper. She reveals a picture of a birthday cake, with unlit candles.

CARA
Couldn't bring the real thing. You don't like sweets anyway.

ALEX
This is great.

Alex grabs a few crayons: red, orange, and yellow. She colors flames on the empty wicks.

CARA
Make a wish.

ALEX
It's your birthday, too.

CARA
Together?

ALEX
Okay.

CARA
One. Two. Three!

At the same time, Cara and Alex blow at the make-belief candles. Spit sprays from their mouths in laughter.

ALEX
Happy birthday, Sis. Sorry I don't have a present. Didn't think I'd see ya today.

CARA
What did you wish for?

ALEX
I wish you would stay with me.

CARA
You need to get well, Alex. It's time to go home.

A shadow is cast over the birthday cake by Day-Shift Nurse.

DAY-SHIFT NURSE
You didn't show for morning meds.

ALEX
Don't you see I have a visitor?

Day-Shift Nurse makes a note in her paperwork. Her free hand clutches a plastic cup, filled with blue liquid.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Doc don't trust me with pills anymore, huh?

She glances at Male Patient.

He's passed out, drool spills from his mouth, his eyes are open and glossy.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I told Doc that shit ain't right. Makes me feel weird.

Day-Shift Nurse thrusts the cup into Alex's face.

Alex looks to Cara.

CARA
Take the medicine, Alex.

Alex takes the medication. She drinks it, spills some on her chin, coughs from the foul taste.

Satisfied, Day-Shift Nurse moves on to her next victim.

ALEX

Don't I get a cup of water?

Alex lifts the collar of her shirt and wipes her chin.

CARA

Are you afraid?

A silent moment passes between them.

Patients clear tables and move chairs to form a circle for the next group.

Male Patient rests his head, drool streams from his open mouth like a broken faucet.

Alex and Cara stare at the picture of their burning home.

CARA (CONT'D)

Have you told them what happened?

ALEX

I show them pictures. They take notes. Think they get it?

CARA

Not if you don't tell them.

Alex yawns and wipes away drool.

ALEX

Damn this shit. What did you wish for? I'll have it next time.

Patients sit in a circle. GROUP THERAPIST, 33, plays music from a portable CD player.

CARA

Draw me something beautiful. A new happy place.

Day-Shift Nurse hovers over the table like a vulture.

DAY-SHIFT NURSE

Alex. If you're not joining group, Doctor Gomez would like to see you.

ALEX

I have a visitor.

Day-Shift Nurse marks her clipboard.

DAY-SHIFT NURSE

Let's go.

Alex folds the birthday cake and tucks it into her pocket. She gathers her artwork. When she looks up, Cara is gone.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Another room with white walls, no windows or pictures. It's a small room with one desk and two chairs.

DOCTOR GOMEZ, 45, short and dismissive, sits in the corner of the room, at the desk.

Day-Shift Nurse and Alex enter.

Day-Shift Nurse hands Doctor Gomez her charts.

DOCTOR GOMEZ

Ah, your sister was here. Did you take your medication today?

ALEX

Cara told me to.

DOCTOR GOMEZ

I see.

He motions to the chair on the opposite side of the desk and prepares his pad and pen.

DOCTOR GOMEZ (CONT'D)

What pictures do you have today?

Alex crumbles her artwork into a ball and shoves it into her pocket. She takes a seat.

ALEX

I'll tell you.

THE END.