

HIDDEN TREASURES

A Ten-Minute Dramatic Duet

by
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CAST: CASSIE and SALLY

(SALLY is tucking in a blanket on a hospital bed when CASSIE enters)

CASSIE: You must be new to this floor. I've never seen you here before.

SALLY: I've only been here a few weeks. And I'm usually on the morning shift. **(offers her hand)** I'm Sally.

CASSIE: **(shakes her hand)** I'm Cassie. So, are you a student nurse?

SALLY: Yes.

CASSIE: Well, what happened to Carmen? Was she switched to another floor?

SALLY: No. Carmen quit.

CASSIE: Quit? Just like that?

SALLY: She decided that nursing wasn't her thing after all. When you leave the classroom, you find out pretty quickly if you're cut out for this type of work.

CASSIE: I know I couldn't do it. So...how's Richard?

SALLY: Pretty much the same. But I think he has a little more color in his face today, don't you?

CASSIE: He looks the same to me. **(squints and peers at him)** Yeah, the same. I don't know why I bother to ask. There never is any change.

SALLY: Are you a relative?

CASSIE: Not exactly. I am...I was...his fiancée.

SALLY: Am? Was?

CASSIE: **(holds up ring)** Was. I've...I've come to say goodbye. And to leave this.

SALLY: You mean, you're walking out on him? When he's like this?

CASSIE: **(is torn between telling her to mind her own business and dealing with a guilty conscience)** Wait a minute! This is *my* life! You don't know anything about me!

SALLY: You're right. It's none of my business.

CASSIE: Two months. He's been like this for two months. And to be honest, I don't think he's ever going to wake up.

SALLY: Cassie, don't say that!

CASSIE: And there are so many things going on in my life right now. How could anyone expect me to put things on hold, especially when he's just lying there in a coma!

SALLY: But he'll come out of the coma. He will!

CASSIE: You know, for a student nurse on the job for only a few weeks, you sure are quick to offer your expert medical opinion! Listen, some of the hospital's best doctors don't even know if he's going to recover!

SALLY: **(pause, then quietly)** Mine wasn't a medical opinion. It's hope. Maybe I haven't been around hospitals all that much, but I've seen people recover. And I believe in the power of positive thought. That's all I meant. Don't give up hope.

CASSIE: You want to know something else, Miss Nightingale? Even if he does wake up, the doctors don't know if he'll be...*normal*.

SALLY: Normal?

CASSIE: You know...brain damage! The doctors have said it could go either way. Either way! A fifty percent chance that he'll be normal. And a fifty-percent chance that he won't be able to speak, move, or remember anything! So I'm sure it's easy for you to stand here and be so sure as to how I should handle my dilemma!

SALLY: I didn't mean that. I just think it's important to have some hope and not give up on...

CASSIE: **(holds up ring)** *This* was hope. At one time this engagement ring was all the hope I needed. Hope for love, hope for a future, for a family. My life sparkled like the diamond on top of this ring. Then in one motorcycle crash on a slick highway, everything changed. See why the ring's off? There is no more hope. I've run out of hope. When Richard first got here, I came every day and stayed for hours and hours. I'd say, "Richard, it's me." Silence. There was never any change, no movement. And so, then I didn't stay as long, and I didn't come every day. *You* don't know what it's like.

SALLY: I know what it's like. **(pause)** My mother had cancer. It was a slow, painful death.

CASSIE: I'm sorry.

SALLY: That's when I decided to become a nurse.

CASSIE: That's good and I'm glad you did, but you see...all your hope and wishing that things could be different couldn't change the situation. That's what I mean.

SALLY: That's not what this is all about. I can't stop people from dying. No one can. But we can give them good medical attention, and we can give them hope for the future, even if it doesn't always come out the way we want.

CASSIE: That's what I think is going to happen...It's *not* going to come out the way I want it to. You know, sometimes I want to shake Richard and demand that he wake up! Sounds silly and cruel, doesn't it?

SALLY: No. I know what you mean. I felt the same way with my mother. I prayed. I cried. I even got mad at her for not getting well.

CASSIE: And with all that, nothing changes. Well, I'm moving back home to help take care of my parents. They need me now, not...whenever... (*motions toward Richard*) And they live a thousand miles from here.

SALLY: I see. So you're breaking off your engagement?

CASSIE: Look! Don't you think I feel guilty about this? I mean, here I am breaking up with the man I was going to marry! And if that's not bad enough, he can't even respond!

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