

# HYPOCHONDRIAC

by Kamron Klitgaard

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*A Comedic Duet*

by **Kamron Klitgaard**

**SYNOPSIS:** Rowan, a hypochondriac, has called on a doctor who makes house calls for a diagnosis. When the doctor explains that Rowan is in perfect health, emotion takes over and Rowan attacks the doctor's intelligence and complains about mortality and death. The doctor then proposes a rather unconventional way of treating the problem.

**TIME:** Present day.

**SETTING:** Rowan's living room.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 either)*

ROWAN (m/f) ..... Irritable hypochondriac. *(64 lines)*

DOC (m/f) ..... Logical and patient. *(67 lines)*

**SET:** The set should be simple. A chair would do, just to give the sense of a living room. A sofa would work too.

## COSTUMES

ROWAN – A robe, scarf, slippers and pajamas

DOC – Normal clothes for a house call.

## PROPS

- doctor's bag
- stethoscope
- a pill
- a paper
- a pen

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES:** The actor playing Rowan should not act sick, rather just complain about being sick.

**AT START:** *ROWAN sits in the chair as DOC bends over to listen to ROWAN'S heart with a stethoscope.*

**DOC:** Deep breath...

*ROWAN breathes in.*

**DOC:** ...and out.

*ROWAN breathes out.*

**DOC:** Hmmm.

**ROWAN:** Well? Tell me the truth. I can take it. What is it? What do I have? Is it Cystic fibrosis? Pneumonia? Congenital heart disease? Cancer? Is it cancer?!

**DOC:** No. You don't have any of those.

**ROWAN:** What is it then? Is it bad?

**DOC:** It isn't bad at all. It's actually really good. Your temperature is normal, your breathing is normal, you have a strong heart, your throat is clear, sinuses clear, your ears look great, your pulse is strong—

**ROWAN:** Look, Doctor, I appreciate you making a house call, but I don't need to know what I don't have. Can you please just tell me what I do have?

**DOC:** You don't have anything.

**ROWAN:** Then why do I feel so rotten all the time? What about this swelling feeling in my chest? Why can't I sleep? Why do my cuticles feel sore? What about all that?

**DOC:** All that is psychological.

**ROWAN:** Are you trying to tell me it's not real?

**DOC:** Well, it's real in your mind.

**ROWAN:** You think I'm making it all up? Why would anyone do that?

**DOC:** Rowan, you're a hypochondriac. You feel better when you're sick.

**ROWAN:** Don't be ridiculous. The definition of sick is not feeling good. And you say I feel better when I'm sick? That's a contradiction of... definitions.

**DOC:** It's a contradiction, alright. You simply aren't sick. But you want to be.

**ROWAN:** Again, ridiculous. Why would I want to be sick?

**DOC:** I don't know. But you do.

**ROWAN:** No, I don't. That's why I called you.

**DOC:** (*Puts stethoscope away in bag.*) You called me to confirm what you want to be true.

**ROWAN:** You're saying that I'm only sick in my mind?

**DOC:** (*Grabs ROWAN'S hand and examines it.*) There's nothing wrong with you. Your cuticles are fine. Your aches and pains are imaginary. You can't sleep because you're worrying about your cuticles.

**ROWAN:** (*Pulls hand away and searches cuticles, then points to a finger.*) What about that?!

**DOC:** (*Looks at the finger.*) That's nothing. You are very healthy.

**ROWAN:** And you are a doctor! You went to school, how many years? Eight? And then you have to work in a hospital for how long and do that... what do you call it?

**DOC:** Residency. It's actually two years internship and two more residency.

**ROWAN:** See?! That's twelve years it took for you to become a full-fledged doctor and start your own practice, and this is what you have for me? It's all in my mind? You might as well be a voodoo witch doctor. Do you have a doll of me in that case of yours? You probably take it out at your office and stick it with pins. You cause my pain with your voodoo doll and then come over here and charge me a hundred bucks to tell me it's psychosomatic!

**DOC:** Rowan, your attitude is making you feel worse.

**ROWAN:** My atti... My attitude is making me feel sick when I'm really not? ...Which I am! I hope you have a death certificate in that bag because you can take it out and sign it right now. I am dying!

**DOC:** You're the healthiest patient I have.

**ROWAN:** Is there a draft in here? Did you open a window or something? I feel a cold coming on. You're letting germs in.

**DOC:** There's no window open. Besides, some fresh air would do you good.

**ROWAN:** You want me to go outside, where all the sick people are? You want me to catch something from them even though you know my life expectancy is about fifteen minutes. Why don't you just leave. Let me die in peace.

**DOC:** Sure thing. Goodbye, Rowan.

**ROWAN:** (*Stands up.*) Wait, what? You can't just leave me here!

**DOC:** I don't know what you want me to do. You won't accept my advice. (*Turns to leave.*)

**ROWAN:** Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Let me ask you something.

**DOC:** (*Turns back.*) What is it?

**ROWAN:** Why do we have to die?

**DOC:** Well, because our cells die. Billions of cells in our body do different jobs and when they're through they die to make way for new cells. In each cell, there are telomeres at the end of the chromosomes which contain genetic information that is diminished with each cell division.

**ROWAN:** That was very scientific. I could've asked Google if I wanted that kind of answer. I mean, why does it all happen? Why do the cells have to die? Why can't we just live forever. Why did God, if there is such a person, or science, if there is such a thing, make us so we die?

**DOC:** Maybe you should talk to a priest or a philosopher about that.

**ROWAN:** I mean, how long do people live? Seventy, eighty years? It's just not fair. We take sixty of those years getting to where we finally enjoy life and poof! We're gone.

**DOC:** Maybe that's your problem, you're not enjoying the journey.

**ROWAN:** My problem is that I have a temperature!

**DOC:** You don't have a temperature.

**ROWAN:** 98.7! You said so yourself! My temperature should be 98.6. Everyone knows that.

**DOC:** 98.7 is perfectly normal.

**ROWAN:** It's high!

**DOC:** That's not high. Our temperature can fluctuate a few one-hundredth of a degree throughout the day. It's perfectly normal.

**ROWAN:** Perfectly normal. Hmph. Oh, go on! I'm almost dead and you say that's perfectly normal. Go on. Get outta here.

**DOC:** Alright, but Rowan, your problem isn't being sick, your problem is that you're afraid to die.

**ROWAN:** Of course, I'm afraid to die. Everyone is.

**DOC:** Not really. You see, that's why we have more problems with our bodies when we get older. Eventually, as we enter old age, our bodies have gone through so much that we welcome death. We greet him like an old friend.

**ROWAN:** Well, I found my philosopher! Welcome death. You're a sadistic bone saw-er.

**DOC:** You don't have to believe me, but if we always felt great, we'd be terrified of death.

**ROWAN:** People die and the world goes on. We should be able to live a thousand years. Our time is microscopic compared to the world. It's not fair.

**DOC:** Fair or not, that's the way it is.

**ROWAN:** You're not helping.

**DOC:** There's nothing I can do to help you... I wish there was. Goodbye, Rowan. (*Turns to leave.*)

**ROWAN:** If you want to help, you could invent some way to make me immortal.

*DOC stops, thinks, then turns back to ROWAN.*

**DOC:** What would that be worth to you?

**ROWAN:** What do you mean? Like in money?

**DOC:** No, I mean, what do you have that you'd be willing to give up to be immortal?

**ROWAN:** Like my clothes? My car? My house?

**DOC:** Something more personal.

**ROWAN:** My hair? I'd give up my hair if it meant I could live a decent amount of time. I'd rather be bald than stuck in the cold ground.

**DOC:** And don't forget all the worms.

**ROWAN:** Exactly, I don't wanna be worm food. Why are you talking about worms and giving up stuff?

**DOC:** I think you're ready.

**ROWAN:** Ready for what?

**DOC:** I've been watching you. Yes, watching you for a long time.

**ROWAN:** If you call a ten-minute house call a long time, then—

**DOC:** Oh, I've been watching you for longer than that. A lot longer. That's why I decided to pay you a visit tonight.

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