

LIFE

A DRAMATIC DUET

by
Maia Akiva



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(Lights up.)

INT. ROOM - ANYTIME

Two women, MEL and SARA, are on opposite sides of a room.

SARA is leaning down next to a chair, cleaning it; MEL sits on the floor. MEL is sad and lifeless; SARA is happy and full of life.

After a moment, SARA turns around. SHE notices MEL. SHE stands up and walks over to her.

SARA: Hi.

MEL: Hi.

SARA: I've been in here for a while, but I only just now noticed you.

MEL: I've been here for a while, too, and I've never seen you before.

SARA: I'm Sara.

MEL: Mel.

(A beat.)

SARA: So, how long have you been in this room?

MEL: Thirty-one years. You?

SARA: Thirty-five years. Do you like it in here?

MEL: *(looks around)* It's a tough room.

SARA: It's a room. The rest is what you make of it.

MEL: Do you like it?

(SARA walks around, touching the walls.)

SARA: I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

MEL: Why? What's so great about this place? Look at it. It's just walls with nothing inside. It sucks.

SARA: No. Look at this place. Look at all the space and the four corners. Each corner is different from the others. It's so interesting.

MEL: They all look the same to me. *(SHE walks over to one corner.)* This one is a corner. *(SHE moves to another corner.)* And this is another corner -- exactly the same as the other one. This room is so empty. No matter what I do, I just end up in a corner.

SARA: Haven't you ever started walking to a corner, but then stopped because you weren't sure if you were going to the right one, and then tried another corner? There are so many options and possibilities in this room. It's a great place.

MEL: *(getting sad and upset)* Yes. I do it all the time. That's why this place is so hard. I don't even know which corner I want to go to. How can I be sure? What if I get to this corner, *(points to a corner)* and it's not the right corner for me? There are so many corners in this room -- how can I just choose one and then go there?

SARA: Well, I'm sorry you feel that way. I get sad and frustrated here sometimes, but it's part of being here.

(SARA grabs the broom and starts sweeping a corner of the room. SHE starts singing a song. MEL looks at her, aggravated.)

MEL: What are you so happy about?

SARA: Me. You. This room. Everything. What are you so upset about?

MEL: Me. You. This room.

SARA: Why? You're here. You're healthy.

MEL: It's not that simple.

SARA: I know it's not simple. But it's great. Look at it. This room is great. We're having a conversation. We both can sit down if we want to. Or we can stand up if we want to.

MEL: What do you know about what I'm going through? You have a chair! You don't have to sit on the floor all the time. And eat on the floor. And worry all the time about not having a chair.

SARA: It's just a chair.

MEL: Yeah, said the woman who HAS a chair. *(to herself)* I hate people like you.

SARA: It's just a chair. Yeah, it's more comfortable to sit on than the floor, but it's all still the same. I still have to sit down; I still have to clean; and now, in fact, I have more responsibility, because I have to take care of my chair. You know -- fix it and move it around.

MEL: I would take those "responsibilities" any day for a chair. My life would be so much better if I had a chair. *(Beat. MEL sits down on the floor, sad)* I'm probably never going to have a chair, or a desk, or even a rug.

(SARA puts the broom away and sits on the floor next to her.)

SARA: You don't know that.

MEL: I feel so lonely in this room.

SARA: I'm here. You're not completely alone.

MEL: You're just going to leave at some point.

SARA: I don't know what's going to happen. Maybe I will; maybe I won't. But there are other people who come to the room.

MEL: They always leave to go somewhere. I want someone to stay. Forever.

SARA: *(smiling)* It's a room. People come and go.

(A beat. MEL keeps silent. SARA stands up.)

I have to go move my chair again.

(SHE grabs her chair and moves it around to another corner. SHE takes the broom and starts cleaning the now-empty corner.

MEL starts watching SARA. A few moments pass by.)

MEL: So this is what you do all day?

SARA: Yes. I move my chair away from a corner and then clean the corner.

MEL: Everyday?

SARA: Yes. And at the end of the week, I just sit on my chair in the corner. And once a year, I move the chair to the middle of the room and sit there for a longer time.

MEL: And you never get bored?

SARA: Yes. But that's the room.

(SARA moves her chair to another corner and starts to clean the corner the chair was just in. MEL watches her, confused.)

MEL: Don't you ever wonder why you're here, in this room?

SARA: Sure. Sometimes. But most of the time I just enjoy it. I'm here.

MEL: But don't you ever wonder if there is more to this room than just cleaning? Do you really think we're here just to keep up the room and that's it?

SARA: I don't know. Look, that's what everyone does and that's what we need to do to be here. The room gets dirty, so we need to clean it. I can't live in a dirty room.

MEL: But don't you want to know why we're here? What are we supposed to do in here? What's it all about? Are we supposed to just sit here all day? Should we keep looking for the door? Do we need to try to open the door if we find it? Why should we keep cleaning this place if it just gets dirty again? Being here can't be just about maintenance.

(SARA stops cleaning.)

SARA: You ask too many questions.

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