

SHRINKING

Comedic Duet

by
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CHARACTERS

MELINDA GARDNER early 30s, writer, dresses haphazardly
DR. BONTEMPS 40s or 50s, psychiatrist, wears an ascot and tap shoes

SETTING

Dr. Bontemp's office, a cramped space covered with piles of books, magazines, papers and files, as well as various pharmaceutical marketing paraphernalia and samples. Lots and lots of samples.

At Rise: DR. BONTEMPS prances around his office taking notes and organizing piles of books and papers. MELINDA enters.

MELINDA: Hello? Dr. Bontemps?
DR. BONTEMPS: Yes? C'est moi!
MELINDA: I'm Melinda Gardner. We talked on the phone. This is the correct time for my appointment, yes?
DR. BONTEMPS: I hope so!
MELINDA: Oh thank goodness. Nice to meet you.
DR. BONTEMPS: Why don't you have a seat? I'll pull out your file to jog my memory from our last session.
MELINDA: But this is our first meeting.
DR. BONTEMPS: That's right! Your premiere! Bienvenue! Let me give you some fancy paperwork to fill out.
MELINDA: I have the forms. You mailed them to me to fill out in advance.
DR. BONTEMPS: And you actually followed procedure! How unusual. What an interesting patient you're going to be!
Most are so incredibly boring, so I pin lots of hope on the new cases. Let's get started. How are you feeling today?
MELINDA: The same.
DR. BONTEMPS: The same as what?
MELINDA: As when we talked on the phone.
DR. BONTEMPS: Melissa, I talk on the phone all the time. Jabber jabber jabber. Who can remember it all?
MELINDA: Melinda. My name's Melinda.
DR. BONTEMPS: Let me grab a pencil and some paper. I'll make a note of that. "No problems with self-identification!"
Just so you know... I don't believe in being secretive with my patients, so I read aloud whatever I'm writing in your folder in order that the lines of communication may remain open and healthy. So let's get down to business. What's troubling you?
MELINDA: What's that sound?
DR. BONTEMPS: "Has trouble focusing."
MELINDA: No. What's that click-click-click sound?
DR. BONTEMPS: "Can be obstinate."
MELINDA: Stop writing. What's that noise?
DR. BONTEMPS: "Claims to hear strange voices."
MELINDA: Your shoes. It's your shoes.
DR. BONTEMPS: You like them? I had them custom made!
MELINDA: You're wearing tap shoes?
DR. BONTEMPS: I've got class right after this session. Want to warm up the feet. Savion Glover wears his all the time so I thought I too could show my dedication. Want to see some of my moves?
MELINDA: No.
DR. BONTEMPS: "Kills joy when she finds it." You know, I practice quite diligently. I find it lifts my spirits. ***(The phone rings.)*** Excuse me, Melissa. ***(into phone)*** Hello, Dr. Bontemps! Yes, Mrs. Cilluffo. I thought we went over that. Ignore the instructions on the bottle and take as many pills as needed till you feel better. That's right. Goodbye, Mrs. Cilluffo. Toodles! ***(to MELINDA)*** Now where were we? Oh yes, you wanted to see some of my tap steps.
MELINDA: No, I didn't.
DR. BONTEMPS: "Very forgetful."

MELINDA: I'm not forgetful, Doctor. I'm depressed.

DR. BONTEMPS: We all have our dark moments. This morning, for example, I burned three pieces of whole-wheat toast. It bummed me out.

MELINDA: I'm really depressed. And not in a bad breakfast kind of way.

DR. BONTEMPS: Well, okay, let me ask you some questions and we'll see how I can be of help, all right?

MELINDA: Okay.

DR. BONTEMPS: How old are you?

MELINDA: 32.

DR. BONTEMPS: Married?

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