

Four-Points

By Rachael Carnes

CHARACTERS

Allison            A woman in her 40's, daughter to Bonnie.  
Bonnie             A woman in her 60's, Allison's mom.  
Betty               A woman in her 20's, hired by the facility.

SETTING

A hospital room

TIME

Christmas

*BONNIE sits in a hospital chair, her wrists and ankles bound with padded leather straps. Across the floor from her is a good-sized puddle. ALLISON brushes BONNIE's hair, as BETTY enters.*

ALLISON

My mom had an accident. I didn't know how to change –

BETTY

*(Cleaning hands with antibiotic gel.)* Good morning, Miss Bonnie. *(Putting on plastic gloves)* Let's get you some –

ALLISON

I – It happened there, but I – Should I clean it up?

BETTY

*(Pushing button.)* I'll call maintenance. Let's get these –

ALLISON

I don't want her to have to look at it.

BETTY

These pants are so cold. *(To Allison.)* Where's your dad?

ALLISON

My stepdad. He went home.

BETTY

Okay, Bonnie. Your top seems fine. I have to call the nurse – I'm not allowed to take the – Did you sleep last night?

ALLISON

She's mismatched – They put her in two kinds of –

BETTY

It's true – You're wearing two kinds of plaid, Miss Bonnie! And who sent your flowers? Do you have a boyfriend?

ALLISON

Her work sent them.

BETTY

You have to sleep. *(Tearing open the bath package.)* What kind of work does she do?

ALLISON

She's a writer –

BETTY

But her chart says she can't read or -

ALLISON

I called the nurse when it happened - I'll just go get -

BETTY

Bonnie, I'm going to give you a sponge bath. Why do they call it a 'sponge bath' when we don't use a sponge?

ALLISON

I'll get a mop for -

BETTY

I read that when we sleep, little brooms clean our brains. All the feelings, all the events. You could go to a birthday party and at night - tiny brooms sweep the bad stuff away. It's like blueberries - Antioxidants.

ALLISON

Can't you undo her ankle restraints?

BETTY

I'm not allowed to. What's this TV show?

ALLISON

It's Howdy Doody - I thought it might help.

BETTY

Does she like it?

*BONNIE becomes agitated, flexing her hands.*

BETTY (CON'T)

What do you want, Bonnie? Is this show upsetting you?

ALLISON

Can somebody deal with her mess?

BETTY

Bonnie, you want something?

ALLISON

What do you want, mom? Why can't you undo them?

BETTY

The hospital hires us to be with – to monitor – in case of emergency. (*To BONNIE.*) Want something on your hands?

ALLISON

Isn't *this* an emergency?

BETTY

Howdy Doody has gloves on, doesn't he, Bonnie?

*BONNIE pulls on her restraints.*

BETTY

Okay, Miss Bonnie – Take it easy now. (*Pulling purple medical gloves out of her pocket.*) You want these?

ALLISON

Can she have her meds now?

BETTY

(*Checking chart.*) Not for another half-hour. Howdy Doody has gloves – Do you want gloves, too? Here you go. Let me help you. Do you like those? You like those gloves? You do!

ALLISON

How long will they keep her like this?

BETTY

She hit a nurse? (*Washing BONNIE's neck.*) Is that nice?

ALLISON

I came back from – and she was like this –

BETTY

I'm going to wipe your arms. Now what's this show about?

ALLISON

He's a puppet – Where's the nurse?

BETTY

They have her in – It's known as chemical restraints.

BONNIE

Finish your show and go outside –

*BETTY and ALLISON ignore BONNIE.*

BETTY

Benzodiazepines, antipsychotics, dissociative anesthetics, they'll all do the trick. I'm learning about it in school -

BONNIE

No buts, mister! Take your brothers with you -

ALLISON

She pulled all the cabinet doors down -

BETTY

Did you do that, Bonnie? So strong! Now, I'm going to wash your face.

ALLISON

We left like that - Drove here -

BETTY

Your skin's so soft, Bonnie -

ALLISON

Dinner's still on the table -

BONNIE

Well, *I* think you're old enough -

BETTY

Don't you have a neighbor who could? -

BONNIE

A paper route is a big responsibility!

ALLISON

I've been wearing the same clothes since -

BETTY

Bonnie, other arm - Thank you. You both need sleep.

ALLISON

Do you think she'll get better?

BONNIE

Valedictorian! What a nice ring that has!

ALLISON

My lungs feel like -

BONNIE

Ice!

BETTY

Ice! Did you hear that? She said, "Ice"!

ALLISON

What, mom? What is it? Where's the nurse?

*BONNIE fades again.*

BETTY

Does she part her hair on this side or?

ALLISON

I don't know! I already combed it.

BETTY

They're ruling things out now?

ALLISON

Where is maintenance? I'm just going to clean –

BETTY

Then everything is fine.

BONNIE

Everything is *fine*.

ALLISON

What could I be doing?

BETTY

You're –

ALLISON

No one's telling me –

BONNIE

Jimmy's gotten into a very good school.

BETTY

On Howdy Doody, what do they *do*, exactly?

BONNIE

My little boy is getting married!

ALLISON

It's almost seven – I wanted to be here for rounds –

BETTY

You're a good daughter.

ALLISON

I brought the nurses some candy –

BETTY

Miss Bonnie, how 'bout some Chapstick?

ALLISON

Maintenance?

BETTY

These cuffs – one-time order –

ALLISON

Why is it so cold in here?

BONNIE

We're so proud of you: A college graduate!

ALLISON

How long does she have to sit here next to this puddle?

BONNIE

And you're getting married? Oh, what news!

ALLISON

Can she have her pill now? Look at her – She's suffering!

BETTY

Not time – (*Checking chart.*) I'm just a companion –

ALLISON

She hugged me –

BETTY

See? She's getting better.

ALLISON

She held me and said, "Just a baby, just a baby."

BETTY

A mother's love doesn't live in her mind – it's in her bones. It's who she is.

BONNIE

Your father and I have tried *everything*.

ALLISON

But I never said goodbye –

BETTY

She's still here –

ALLISON

But she's mismatched.

BETTY

She's beautiful. (*Looks at TV.*) Now who's this guy? The host? Wow – Kids used to be a lot cleaner, didn't they?

ALLISON

She used to read to me at night before bed.

BONNIE

She's beautiful! Our first grandchild!

ALLISON

I'm just going to get some paper towels and –

BONNIE

Stop this nonsense! You're better than this!

BETTY

Miss Bonnie, would you like me to brush your teeth now?

ALLISON

If they're coming to clean, where are –

BETTY

(*Pausing before opening BONNIE's mouth.*) She bit a nurse?

ALLISON

She tried – That's when – We've been waiting all –

BETTY

I should wait for – Bonnie, we'll brush your teeth when –

BONNIE

Did you get the card we sent for your birthday?

ALLISON

Hi, mom! She was there – Did you see her eyes change?

BETTY

When they let you out of these, let's work on those nails –

ALLISON

They say she can hear me – Do you know that one song?

BETTY

What song?

ALLISON

My Bonnie lies – Something – She used to –

BONNIE

*(Humming tune.)*

BETTY

There you go, Bonnie! That's the way!

ALLISON

Mom? Turn the TV off.

BETTY

How about I mute it? She seems to like the pictures –

ALLISON

My Bonnie lies – What the fuck is the name of it?

BETTY

Maybe you can find it on YouTube?

ALLISON

I can never get a good signal in here – My – My pillow –  
What the fuck? My Bonnie – My Bonnie lies over – Lyrics –

BETTY

Do you like that song, Bonnie? Maybe find a video.

ALLISON

I can see it but it won't play – It's just doing that –

BETTY

Spinning circle?

ALLISON

I can't play it –

BONNIE

*(Singing.)* – lives over the ocean, so bring back my –

*ALLISON and BETTY can't hear her.*

BETTY

It was a good idea –

ALLISON

I'm just going to get the paper towels off your cart and this disinfectant and I'm going to mop up this puddle!

BONNIE

*(Singing.)* Bring back, bring back –

ALLISON

She doesn't even know the words –

BONNIE

Oh – bring back my Bonnie to me.

ALLISON

They said they would peel off the chemical restraints to see what happens – but I don't want there to be a huge puddle of her own pee sitting here when they try!

BONNIE

We're leaving. It's up to them now.

ALLISON

I have a fresh outfit for her to put on – New red pajamas. *(She takes them out.)* Will you help me put them on her before the doctor gets here?

BETTY

I can't – We need the nurse –

BONNIE

*(Singing.)* Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me.

*Lights fade out.*