

CARLA 2nd sc.

VIVIAN

Why did they kick you out of hospice?

CARLA

Because my mom died in January, instead of June!

VIVIAN

Is that something that should make sense to me?

CARLA

Stupid fucking Lois.

VIVIAN

You shouldn't do this to a demented person.

CARLA

Sorry...My mom died six months ago. And you're not allowed to volunteer until a whole year after a loved one dies.

VIVIAN

Well that's a dumb rule.

CARLA

I know! We were having this nice conversation about Lois's dogs and how she hopes she'll be reunited with them when she dies.

VIVIAN

Scintillating.

CARLA

And she says, "Have you ever lost a pet?" And I said "no, I never had any." And she says, "oh, death is hard, one day you'll see." And I bit my tongue, because I have restraint, I know that it's not about us during these visits. But then SHE is the one, she asked me point blank, "Has anyone you know ever died?" And I answered SIMPLY, "yes, my mom." And she says, oh you poor dear and starts to ask me all these questions about it. And I felt SAFE in sharing, even though I don't normally talk about it, and then I guess she narc'd on me!

VIVIAN

Ugh! She did?

CARLA

Yeah, in the feedback, the survey. She wrote in the comment box that she thought it was so special that I was doing this such a short time after my mom's death. So they dug into it and now I'm blacklisted.

VIVIAN

I'm sorry. Aren't there other hospices in the sea?

CARLA

Yeah, but they told me they share information. I'm basically banned from any dying people within ninety miles.

VIVIAN

Well, I'm dying.

(off CARLA's hesitant look)

I know, not quickly enough, but you aren't banned from me.

CARLA

Thanks.

(An awkward pause.)

VIVIAN

There's gotta be someone else actively dying in this complex.

CARLA

Oh, now you're trying to hook me up?

VIVIAN

Don't worry, we'll find someone new for you. Maybe you can walk around and talk to some people.

(VIVIAN goes up to the front window and peeks out.)

CARLA

Hospice isn't something you offer door to door.

CARLA (cont'd)

(exasperated:)

I should be around dying people right now. It's all I can think about anyway. And nobody else wants to talk about death.

VIVIAN

What about a therapist?

CARLA

Oh please, Dr. Sable? She's patronizing. And one time I caught her falling asleep when I was talking.

VIVIAN

Oof. What about a support group?

CARLA

I want to be proactive, not just sit around and whine.

VIVIAN

(approvingly)

Old school.

CARLA

But that doesn't mean I want to ignore that it happened. The problem is, when I tell most people, I get blank looks, or they give me "oh, I'm so sorry" with nothing behind the words then quickly change the subject.

VIVIAN

I know exactly what you mean. People will do anything to avert the topic.

CARLA

Anyway it's a dumb rule! I mean, people who've recently lost someone are used to helping without flinching. Of not being cowed by death.

VIVIAN

Your mom was really lucky to have you.

(Carla starts to speak, but stops herself, frustrated.)

It's okay. I'm not going to ban you for being mad.

CARLA

She didn't want to burden me.

VIVIAN

Sounds like love.

CARLA

She honestly didn't seem to want me around too much at the end. We had this hospice volunteer, Wanda? She was cool, she was kind to me, she did whatever my mom wanted during her visits. But I just...my mom was always suggesting that I go out.

She said she wanted me to enjoy my last year of high school. As if! Sure, cropping these photos of the Wrestling Team in Yearbook Club is totally making me forget that my mom lost control of her bowels this morning. Yeah, this basketball game is way more important than being with the person who birthed me on her last ever March 24th.

She thought I should go to the prom! The fucking prom. With my friends Marni and Char. Just single, the three of us, and "have a good time." I mean, Marni and I weren't even talking anymore, and Char had just come out and was taking Lindsey MacIntosh. She had no idea what was going on, and she never asked.

VIVIAN

Maybe she was in too much—

CARLA

Too much pain, that's what I thought at first, but when Wanda came, she seemed to perk up somehow and have all sorts of questions.

I probably sound terrible.

VIVIAN

No. You don't.

CARLA

It's just—I had such little time left with her, and here she was asking Wanda, a woman she'd just met, how her family was doing, about her son in the military and her daughter who was like, a newspaper writer or something, two people she's never met in her life!! Spending the little energy she had laughing about Wanda's ex-husband's name—Mitch Mitchell ha ha hilarious. Eating the cookies Wanda had made, but when I offered to

CARLA (cont'd)

make her dinner she said I should order in for myself because she was too nauseous to eat anyway.

So then Wanda had some kind of family emergency and stopped coming...and maybe it was a coincidence but it just seemed like after that she really started to fail. She stopped talking and couldn't smile anymore. And the nurses started giving her more and more drugs to help her cope with the pain, which made her super groggy. And I knew I was losing her. And I tried to do some of the things Wanda would do, like tell stupid jokes and get popsicles...But. (Pause) She died at 4:07am.

(Vivian puts her hand on Carla's arm. Doesn't look away. Doesn't speak. Just emits empathy.)

VIVIAN

You were right there when it happened.

CARLA

No. She waited to die until I was in the bathroom.