

**THE NURSE' S JOKE**

**by**

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COLD OPEN

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM

ELIZABETH sits on an uncomfortable-looking waiting room chair. A Disney movie plays on the television. A child runs in front of her, knocking into her knees. Her face is passive.

NURSE, looking around while holding a clipboard,

"Elizabeth Daily?"

ELIZABETH stands up and approaches the nurse.

NURSE, smiling, yet not making eye contact, as if searching for someone,

"And where's the little girl?"

ELIZABETH, tilting her head,

"What? Oh, no! I'm her. I'm Elizabeth."

NURSE

"Oh, I'm so sorry! I just assumed..."

ELIZABETH

"Yeah, I don't have a kid. My insurance makes me come here."

The NURSE has already started leading her down a hallway. The NURSE stops in front of a scale. They go through the motions of taking the weight and height. The NURSE then shows her into a patient room. It has a penguin motif. ELIZABETH gets onto the table and looks out of place in the bright fluorescent light.

NURSE

"So what brings you here?"

ELIZABETH

"I have a sore throat."

The NURSE takes out a thermometer and puts it into her mouth mid-sentence. ELIZABETH unconsciously bites down on it.

NURSE

"Don't bite down on it!"

ELIZABETH makes a murmuring noise and looks up at the ceiling, where a stuffed penguin is dangling from a string.

After a short moment, the NURSE removes it.

NURSE, as if accusing her,

"98.7. You don't have a fever."

ELIZABETH

"Oh."

NURSE, looking at her chart,

"Are you still on Prozac?"

ELIZABETH, wriggling her legs so that they accidentally make a banging noise on the cabinets below the table,

"Yeah."

NURSE

"Are you on any other kind of medication?"

ELIZABETH

"No."

NURSE

"Are you allergic to any medications?"

ELIZABETH

"Uhm, no."

The NURSE goes over to the sink and begins to wash her hands. She starts to laugh, to herself at first but then louder and louder, awkwardly so. ELIZABETH shifts her eyes to the door, as if wanting to make an escape.

NURSE

"You know, maybe if they put Prozac in the water, we'd all be happier!"

ELIZABETH, with a slight laugh,

"Huh."

The NURSE turns to look at ELIZABETH, staring just a half-second too long, and then finishes washing her hands and dries them with a paper towel.

NURSE

"The doctor will be right in."

ELIZABETH

"Okay, thanks."

The DOCTOR enters the room, preceding her appearance with a knock at the door.

DOCTOR, having to look at the chart to get the name right, and with a nonchalance to her demeanor that is off-putting,

"Hello, Elizabeth. How are you?"

ELIZABETH

"Well, I'm okay..."

DOCTOR

"Of course, if you were great you wouldn't be here."

ELIZABETH

"Right."

DOCTOR

"So what is bothering you?"

ELIZABETH

"I've got this sore throat, and basically, I've just been tired so much."

The DOCTOR stares at her, as if expecting more.

ELIZABETH

"I'm here mostly because my school requires a doctor's note."

DOCTOR, after a pause,

"Well, let's take a look at your throat."

ELIZABETH

"Okay."

The DOCTOR approaches ELIZABETH with her instrument.

DOCTOR

"Say 'Ahhhh'."

ELIZABETH

"Ahhhh."

DOCTOR, after a brief moment of examination,

"I don't see any inflammation or redness."

ELIZABETH

"Oh."

The DOCTOR sits down and pens a short note on a slip of paper.

DOCTOR

"Here's your doctor's note. I'll be right back with your invoice."

ELIZABETH

"Thanks."

The DOCTOR passes the NURSE who is noticeably grinding up white pills into a powder. She dumps them into a cup of coffee. She stops. The NURSE hands her the cup.

DOCTOR

"Thanks. Did you put in an extra dose?"

NURSE

"Just like you asked."

DOCTOR

"Good. I can already tell it's going to be a shitty day."

The NURSE laughs.

DOCTOR

"Maybe I should offer some of this to the girl in Room 2."

The NURSE considers this for a moment.

"Isn't she already on a prescription for it?"

DOCTOR, shrugging,

"Is she?"

The DOCTOR walks back into ELIZABETH's room and hands her the invoice, sipping from her coffee.

DOCTOR

"Is there anything else I can do for you?"

ELIZABETH

"No, I'm fine. Thank you!"

DOCTOR

"Have a nice day."

ELIZABETH

"You too."

The DOCTOR leaves and ELIZABETH examines the invoice before getting up. Under "Total" it reads "\$70.00."

ELIZABETH closes her eyes for a few seconds, allowing the buzzing from fluorescent lights to get louder and louder. Before it completely consumes the scene, she opens her eyes and folds it up, placing it in her purse. She walks back to the waiting room, which is loud with chattering mothers and screaming children.

CUT TO:

An empty Room 2. The penguin dangles lazily in a slight breeze.

END CREDITS