

Toy Trains

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Synopsis:

We lose each other in a variety of ways. Sometimes we don't even know how long the tether has gotten.

Characters:

Cafeteria Worker- Female any age

Mona-Elderly care home resident, female 75-90

Abraham-Elderly care home resident, friend to Mona, male 75-90

Robert- Nurse, male 20s-30s

Scene opens to two women on stage. One woman, the Cafeteria Worker at Sunny Springs Elder Care Facility, is tending to her food area. She is wiping the counter, maybe moving things around. Mona, a care home resident, is seated on a bench off center and in the dark until Cafeteria Worker points her out and the lights go up on her.

Cafeteria Worker (*dressed in Cafeteria Uniform, wiping a counter*):

That's Mona. Every day she wakes up here at Sunny Springs and has breakfast in the cafeteria at 6:30 a.m. She doesn't do a whole lot of talking the rest of the day. She gets it in here. She sits down at a table with Abraham and tells him how the day is going to unfold. First she puts two sweeteners in her black coffee and stirs while Abraham tells her that this day is going to be no different than any other day. Abraham has lived at our retirement care home for two years. Mona has been here for 5. She does the same things every single day. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's 12 year ago. She does pretty good with her routine as far as I can tell. After she eats, she goes to her room and starts to put herself together. She comes out in basically the same outfit every time. Gloves. Pill box hat just so. Dress straight out of 1953. Stockings. Heels. And she slowly sits herself down on that bench just outside the door by the valet station. She doesn't say a word for the rest of the day. Mona has been convinced that her son was coming to visit for the past five years and two months. Every. Day. So she waits.

Stage lights dim to black as cafeteria lady wipes the counter. Lights up and a year has passed. We see Cafeteria Worker arranging things on her cafeteria counter. She is the only person with lights on her. Mona is off stage left in the dark until she starts her lines.

Cafeteria Worker (*dressed in Cafeteria uniform*):

Today Mona forgot what month Christmas is in. Abraham told me when he got up to refill his orange juice. She says today is the day her son is coming. For Christmas. She hasn't missed much more than a few days due to being sick since I told you about her a year ago. She is starting to forget her favorite nurse, Robert. He's the sweetest young man. She can only place him about half the time. Since its July

now, it's really hot outside in Prescott. Robert brought a fan out to the curb and glass of water that she hasn't touched. She refuses to come in. She says Jonathan will be here any minute. Sometimes I wish Jonathan would come only because I am startin' to wonder if he is real. The saddest part is that no one has come to see Mona in all of her six years except a nephew once. He is a priest. She spent the whole visit talking about how Jonathan was on his way. The nephew stayed through dinner and cut her salisbury steak for her before he gave her a blessing and left. But there she is sitting by the curb. Gloves on. Hat just so. Dress straight out of 1953. I know he isn't ever coming. But what's worse? Letting her hope in vain or taking the last thing she is hoping for?

Lights up on Mona, who is seated on a bench with some belongings, as she awaits her son.

Mona (to the audience from her bench):

When Jonathan was little, he was very sick. I took care of him and stayed by his bed for weeks upon weeks. Every hospital stay, I would bring him his toy train. (She pulls train from her purse). I thought he might want it for his boy. When he comes I'm going to give it to him. I love my son. He was always such a good boy. He should be here any minute.

Lights down on Mona. Stage is dark. Lights up on Cafeteria Worker in her uniform. Another year has passed. Cafeteria worker gestures to where Mona is in the dark. Mona sits motionless until lights go up on her for her lines.

Cafeteria Worker:

Mona has had those wrapped Christmas presents in her lap for Jonathan for the past six weeks. It won't be Christmas for another two months. At least this year she waited 'til September to start preparing for Christmas. God knows she had more patience than Walgreens when it comes to busting out holiday stuff early. I don't know if she wrapped a new present from the gift shop or is using the one he never came for last year. I guess I'll never know. Part of me wants to call this guy myself and tell him what's doing with his mom, but I know it wouldn't do any good. Plus, I'd probably get fired. It's been strange to watch her go through this the past seven and a half years. One thing Jonathan might want to know is she is starting to forget his name.

Lights down on Cafeteria Worker, lights up on Mona who now has a bag of treats for her son.

Mona (to the audience from her bench):

I bought David some Macadamia nuts for his stocking. He might be too old for a stocking...but I can't remember...exactly...when....his....birthday...is....

Lights down. Mona exits the stage in blackout. Lights up on Cafeteria Worker in street clothes. She is to be standing in some unknown hallway at Sunny Springs with a bag in her hands that contains the toy she references. Cafeteria Worker should pull the toy out at the end to show the audience. She is narrating a scene that is presumably in the midst of unfolding as she speaks-sight unseen.

Cafeteria Worker:

I figure even though another year has passed, you might want to know what happened today. Mona had stopped waiting on the curb about two months ago. She just started to abandon doing one thing and then another. She forgot that she sits with Abraham every morning for coffee and breakfast. So

Abraham had to track her down and bring her to their table, gently by the elbow. That became a regular thing for awhile... him gettin' her in her forgetful state. What she wore started to change too. First the gloves went, then the hat, then she didn't bring her purse out anymore at all. One day she looked at Robert and told him it was too hot to be outside. He brought her to her room and she stayed there. I just got a call from Robert, which is against the rules, saying he was pretty sure Jonathan was in the building. It's my day off, but I couldn't resist. I came anyway. Jonathan's handsome. About 50. According to Robert, Mona has no idea who he is. None. She's been telling Jonathan that her son David will be coming soon. I wonder if Mona danced with her son at his wedding? Or if she struggled in childbirth? Or if she was patient when she made him dinner? Maybe she was one of those moms that sat in the bleachers for all of his games. Maybe Mona knows every song from some childhood movie Jonathan watched on repeat. Did she put his artwork on the fridge? From what Robert says, the son just keeps looking at his phone and hasn't said much. I've never seen Robert cry before, but he was in tears, and he handed me this train. (Reveals the train from within a paper bag). He told me to give it to Jonathan, because if he has to give it to him, he is going to beat him with it. So... I'm just waiting to give the man his train.

Blackout

The End