

PATIENT X

a one-act play

by Brent Englar

2124 Heritage Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21209  
(443) 414-3202  
[brent.englar@gmail.com](mailto:brent.englar@gmail.com)  
[www.brentenglar.com](http://www.brentenglar.com)

CHARACTERS

MOLLY RODNEY, the spirit of a deceased woman (80-ish)

TAMARA, her granddaughter (35)

DONALD CONE, the spirit of a recently deceased man (60-ish)

JON, his son (32)

TIME

The present.

Eternity.

PLACE

The afterlife, from which Molly and Donald observe:

- An examination room in the clinic where Jon works as a general practitioner.
- An examination room in the hospital where Tamara works as a radiologist.
- Briefly, Jon's home.

Transitions between scenes are fluid. The same table and chair(s) represent each interior. The afterlife may be simply a few platforms, framing the present.

***SCENE: Jon’s exam room.***

*At lights, TAMARA fidgets on the table. MOLLY and DONALD watch from the afterlife.*

MOLLY  
That’s my grandchild, Tammy.

DONALD  
Is she sick?

MOLLY  
Nothing serious, I’m sure.

DONALD  
Why?

MOLLY  
Rodney women are blessed with good health. I lived to see eighty-five. And I smoked!

DONALD  
What about Rodney men?

MOLLY  
They die young.

*JON enters in his doctor’s coat.*

JON  
What can we do for you, Ms. Rodney—

TAMARA  
—About time! Do you know how long I’ve been sitting here?

MOLLY  
And we hate to wait.

JON  
What’s the problem?

TAMARA  
My eyes.

JON  
What about them?

TAMARA

I’ve developed X-ray vision.

JON

You realize I’m a general practitioner.

TAMARA

I’ve already seen ophthalmologists. They’re no help at all.

JON

Have you considered a psychiatrist?

TAMARA

In your coat pocket is a pen, two sticks of gum, and forty-seven cents.

JON

What flavor gum?

TAMARA

How the hell do I know flavor? It’s linty.

JON

Ms. Rodney—

TAMARA

—Tamara. Christ, you make me sound like my Gramma.

MOLLY

I raised her from a baby—ever since her mother . . .

*MOLLY sighs. JON hands TAMARA a specimen cup.*

JON

Tamara. We’ll need a urine sample.

TAMARA

The problem’s my eyes.

JON

Who’s the general practitioner? Down the hall, twelfth door on the right.

*TAMARA exits with the cup. JON takes the pen, gum, and coins from his coat pocket. He places the pen behind his ear, slips half the coins and one stick of gum into his pants pocket, and returns the rest to his coat pocket. He thinks for a moment, then chews off a fingernail and*

*drops it into his coat pocket. As this happens, DONALD and MOLLY converse.*

DONALD

What happened to her mother?

MOLLY

Never mind.

DONALD

I thought you said “good health”?

MOLLY

She’s plenty healthy. Enough to run off with an airline steward when Tammy was two.

DONALD

I was an airline steward.

MOLLY

Cheats and liars, the lot of ’em!

DONALD

Excuse me—

MOLLY

—What?

DONALD

The preferred term is “flight attendant.”

*MOLLY snorts.*

DONALD (Cont’d)

What was your daughter’s name? Tammy’s mother?

MOLLY

Why?

DONALD

I don’t remember. . . . Strange.

MOLLY

Not strange. There’s lots here you won’t remember.

*TAMARA re-enters with the filled specimen cup.*

TAMARA

Here.

*She thrusts the cup into JON's hand and stares at his coat pocket.*

TAMARA (Cont'd)

One stick of gum, still linty, and twenty-four cents. And a fingernail.

JON

That's unbelievable! How?

TAMARA

I woke up one day, and when I looked at things I saw through them. It was my birthday.

JON

That doesn't—what do you want me to do?

TAMARA

I want you to cure me, doctor.

JON

I don't know how to cure—people would kill for this gift!

TAMARA

Mister, I've seen things no one should see.

JON

*skimming through her chart*  
You're a radiologist?

TAMARA

Yes.

JON

You work with X-rays.

TAMARA

This isn't an occupational hazard!

JON

You work at a hospital?

TAMARA

YES! I already wrote all this on the—

JON  
—Calm down.

TAMARA  
Don’t tell me to—

JON  
—All I mean is you must know doctors more qualified than me to—

TAMARA  
—I can’t tell people I know! Why do you think I’m talking to you?

JON  
A mutual patient recommended me?

TAMARA  
Your office is literally the farthest I can drive during lunch.

JON  
You can’t beat the rent.

TAMARA  
Stop joking and HELP ME!

JON  
I DON’T KNOW HOW!

TAMARA  
Shock. Well, at least you got my piss.

*She starts to exit.*

JON  
Tamara. Ms. Rodney—

TAMARA  
—I will NOT be recommending you.

*She exits. JON sighs, makes a few notes, and exits.*

MOLLY  
Typical useless doctor.

DONALD  
Jon is my son.