

THREE PADDED WALLS

A short drama by
Hillary DePiano

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOCTOR, in charge of Jenny's care. Male or female.

MRS. JONES, Jenny's mother.

JENNY, a young woman.

SETTING

A psychiatric hospital. The present.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Three Padded Walls was first performed at EF Academy International Academy in Thornwood, NY on November 20th, 2015. It was directed by Shambhavi Singh with the following cast:

DOCTOR – Martin Pfaff

MRS. JONES – YingXue Du (Christie)

JENNY – Clarissa Arnaudo

Stage Manager – Pham Khanh Van Le (Trace)

Lighting – Seonghon Park (Eric)

Sound – Gabriela Rosati

Artistic Producer – Ginny Borton

Three Padded Walls premiered at The Bridge Theatre at Shetler Studios in NYC on February 20th, 2016. It was produced by Blue Pearl Theatrics and directed by Eric Leeb with the following cast:

DOCTOR – Lucius Bryant

MRS. JONES – Arlene McGruder

JENNY – Janelle Stein

DEDICATION

I first wrote this play in high school in a wonderful Creative Writing class taught by Dr. Claire Brown, to whom I dedicate the final product.

(A young woman, JENNY, sits with her back to the audience. The DOCTOR and Jenny's mother, MRS. JONES, confer quietly.)

MRS. JONES: No. I won't allow it.

DOCTOR: Mrs. Jones, you must understand. We don't have a choice when it gets this bad.

MRS. JONES: It's not going to come to that. I won't let it.

DOCTOR: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is —

MRS. JONES: I can get through to her. This time will be different.

DOCTOR: You can't reason with a fractured mind.

MRS. JONES: My daughter isn't broken. She's just confused.

DOCTOR: The rules —

MRS. JONES: Just let me talk to her. Alone.

DOCTOR: I will be just outside the door. But if it gets —

MRS. JONES: It won't. Just go.

(Doctor exits.)

Hey. Jenny? It's your mother.

JENNY: I know who you are. You just wear a stranger's face.

MRS. JONES: OK...

JENNY: Every time it's a new one. For me, too.

MRS. JONES: Is this about why you smashed those mirrors?

JENNY: Mirrors... Face, space, pace. All different. But the words? Always the same.

MRS. JONES: Let's get this conversation back on track, shall we? They tell me you've been refusing food. They'll force you, Jenny. A tube slammed down your throat should be real

enough to break this cycle if nothing else. You know the rules. Why don't you see what's happening here?

JENNY: Why don't you? The quiet ones at least pay attention.

MRS. JONES: Is that what this is about? Alright. Your whole life you've been saying I don't listen to you. Well, I'm listening now. You have my undivided attention. Tell me what's keeping you here so we can all move on.

JENNY: You'll never make it. You have to fill every silence with words or you'd hear the truth rustle and cough in the beat. Maybe that's how it all started. Maybe it's because you've only ever let me listen that I hear.

MRS. JONES: Fine. As usual everything is my fault. There. Happy?

JENNY: No. Please. I'm sorry. Mom, don't go!

MRS. JONES: I'm not going anywhere. Not without you. As if I'd leave you here without even trying. We'll do this as many times as it takes, you and I and then we'll walk out that door together.

JENNY: I'm just so afraid.

MRS. JONES: We all are in our own way. Go on. I want to know what it's like in there.

JENNY: It just gets so dark...

MRS. JONES: You mean at night.

JENNY: I don't!

MRS. JONES: I'm just... Go ahead. I'll be quiet.

JENNY: In the dark, it's just us echoes. Memories in light meant for ghosts and then the curtains blink and I'm alive for a moment until it's back into nothing. It's the arched eyes...they watch and they want but they don't...they won't...

MRS. JONES: Shh. It's alright. I'm here. Oh, Jenny. It's so much worse than the last time. What a step backwards. I wish you'd called me.

JENNY: No phone! It's too much work, having to pretend to listen.

MRS. JONES: I don't understand why you just can't, I don't know, ignore it. You know what's real and what isn't.

JENNY: I don't. I want to! But what if the rest of you are crazy and I'm the only one who knows what's really going on?

MRS. JONES: You haven't been taking your medicines, have you?

JENNY: They lie in bottles until they lie in my head and then it hurts worse when I see the truth staring back at me all squirming and hungry.

MRS. JONES: So, that's a no then.

JENNY: I don't want to be here anymore.

MRS. JONES: Oh, Jenny. That's all that any of us want. Come with me. Right now. Let's walk out that door and see what happens next. Once there's some improvement, there might be day trips, weekends home, anything's possible—

JENNY: I can't leave this room.

MRS. JONES: Why ever not?

JENNY: There's nothing out there for me.

MRS. JONES: Your life is out there, Jennifer! You've got your family, your old friends, graduation—

JENNY: None of it is real.

MRS. JONES: It is and I'll prove it. I brought you something. See? It's a picture of your room at home. I thought it would help keep you focused on your recovery. Where would you like me to hang it?

JENNY: Hang it on that wall.

(She indicates the audience without turning around. She laughs.)

MRS. JONES: Stop. Stop that. No wonder they want to lock you up and forget about you when you laugh like that. Come here. Let's clear off some of those tears. There. Now you listen to me. I know you and I have had our moments, but I'm your mother and I'm here. That has to count for something. Do you trust me?

JENNY: Yes.

MRS. JONES: Good. I need you to be brave because we're just going to do it. You're going to hold my hand and then we're both going to take a deep breath and walk right through that door.

JENNY: But it never ends well. It hasn't yet.

MRS. JONES: It will this time. You'll see in a minute that your brain has been lying to you. You'll never have to face that darkness or ghost light or whatever it was again. No more doctors. No more rules. We'll be free, Jenny.

JENNY: But what if you're wrong?

MRS. JONES: I'm not. Besides, we've already tried it your way. It brings us right back here every time.

JENNY: It's just...

MRS. JONES: What is it?

JENNY: My name. Jenny Jones.

MRS. JONES: What about it?

JENNY: It's just so stupid. Like someone made it up.

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