

We Will Take Good Care of You

by

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Cast of Characters

MRS. BIRCHWOOD:

40's

PETE HENNINGS:

50's

Place
Office

Time
Evening

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside Mrs. Birchwood's office. There is nothing in her office except a desk.

At Rise: The play opens up with Mrs. Birchwood standing powerfully at the center of her office facing the front door as Pete Hennings cautiously enters.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Come in Mr. Hennings. Take a seat. Not many people get to see my face.

PETE sits.

Don't be frightened. You're not in trouble. We know that you witnessed something this evening that may have been shocking. I want you to know that what you saw was an escapee.

PETE HENNINGS: Escapee?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: A person who had escaped from a confidential ongoing clinical trial.

PETE HENNINGS: He was screaming for his life.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: It is common for this trial. It's the condition we installed in him.

PETE HENNINGS: Installed?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: He's homegrown. How much of an understanding of this do you have? In what section of the premises do you currently work in?

PETE HENNINGS: Umm, I work— I work in the south wing. I don't know nothing more, other than this place is a science laboratory for curing diseases.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: We would like to keep it that way, but I am sure you have questions. I would like to give you a rare opportunity to ask me about anything you desire, anything at all based on the work we do here.

PETE HENNINGS: Why, the man who escaped...why did he have wounds all over his body?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: He is part of our current ongoing human experimentation, it is a very intensive trial. (holding up a folder) This is his documentation, he voluntarily signed up for it. Unfortunately, the treatments are vigorous with a very high risk of the body turning against itself, his body is reacting in ways which we feared.

PETE HENNINGS: But why was he treated so violently when they came for him?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Because he was *being* violent. And we were terribly afraid of anyone getting hurt.

PETE HENNINGS: I see...

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Can I trust you?

PETE HENNINGS: Trust me?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You obviously witnessed something, but we can't allow you to leave this building, unless you agree to silence. We would need you to sign for it.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD slides a sheet of paper across her desk.

PETE HENNINGS: Can I read it over first?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Of course...

PETE HENNINGS reads the sheet of paper.

PETE HENNINGS: I will be fired if I don't sign?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Correct.

PETE HENNINGS: I've been here for thirteen years. I've never come across anything like this.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Which is why you will sign Mr. Hennings.

PETE HENNINGS: I do believe there is a lack of loyalty on your part, if you don't mind me saying.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: No, you have every right to voice your opinion.

PETE HENNINGS: I feel as though I am being forced to sign this paper.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You are.

PETE HENNINGS: How is that a good thing?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: It's an agreement. We must protect what's established.

PETE: (*referring to the paper*) What is this here? It says in part two that I have to be examined and have my memory of the incident erased!

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: That's only a formality.

PETE HENNINGS: I will not agree to such a thing! And what is the point in even signing, if a part of my memory will be erased?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Peter, you must sign in order to permit us to examine you and specifically remove what you witnessed from your mind. It is the only way to move forward. If you don't agree to it, we will be forced to find your replacement immediately.

PETE HENNINGS: I've made it very clear that I don't want my brain being touched.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: No damage has ever or will ever occur.

PETE HENNINGS: I once heard that there was an incident, well, a series of incidents that have been kept quiet, where the memory loss procedure was damaging.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Nonsense.

PETE HENNINGS: I have a family to worry about. If anything were to happen to me, they would fall into ruins.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Which is why you will be greatly compensated for your troubles. If you sign, I'm sure you are aware that you will be given a large sum of money, as it states on the paper, but not until after your memory has been erased. And if something were to happen to you during the procedure, your family will be duly compensated for your loss by a one-hundred percent increase for what we plan to give. Look further down...it's in your contract.

PETE HENNINGS: ...That's a large sum of money...

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: It certainly is...you should consider yourself a lucky individual. If you weren't mopping those floors in that room at that particular time, you wouldn't have seen a thing and you wouldn't be presented with such an enormous opportunity. There are moments that we encounter in life Peter, once in a blue moon, that present us with that rare glimpse of luck...when given such a thing, one has to take it by the reins and ride it out to glory. If not, well, you can always live in regret, misery and hopelessness. It will eat at you for the remainder of your life, that missed opportunity, because you didn't take it. It takes courage, I admit. You have to see it clearly with both eyes and not overthink. Trust your gut. Your time is now. I know that from experience, I've missed a few of those chances in my life and I've learned to minimize my regret by taking action, action, action. I implore you, Peter, take the contract, if not for you, for your family, whom you love, I am sure of it.

PETE HENNINGS: I don't want to die.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD (shouting): Mr. Hennings! (softly) Excuse me...(more softly) Peter. Your wages are loathsome. Don't you ever wonder to yourself if you could be more?

PETE HENNINGS: I do.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: How far will your life really ever go?

PETE HENNINGS: It is a common tale.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: I know your life...it's dull...insignificant. Your brain power is limited. You are at least smart enough to realize that fact.

PETE HENNINGS: I am, Mrs. Birchwood. I just want to do what is right.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD (hard): Sign the fucking paper.

PETER takes a moment...he leans forward...
he signs the paper.

Good. Very, very good.

PETE HENNINGS: I don't feel well.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Tomorrow morning, be here at 6AM sharp. You must undergo your procedure at once.

PETE HENNINGS: Can I talk to my wife...about all this?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Of course not. Do you desire her to undergo the same?

PETE HENNINGS: No...not at all.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You've answered your own question.

PETE HENNINGS: Right.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You've done yourself, your family and this company a large service.

PETE HENNINGS: What will I say to my wife when I receive the additional sum of capital?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You won't even know what it's for...other than a bonus. You see? You will be given a workman's bonus for thirteen loyal years working for the company. Remember, you won't remember. It will be news to you.

PETE HENNINGS: Umm, I...forgive me for asking you this Mrs. Birchwood...but...hhh, how do I know that I will receive the money for sure?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Don't you trust me?

PETE HENNINGS: But where is my proof? I mean, once I have my memory taken away from what happened today, the man, this meeting with you...how will I know that this agreement of ours is going to produce money on my end?

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Not sure if I should be insulted or intrigued.

PETE HENNINGS: Sorry---

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: You will have to take my word for it.

PETE HENNINGS: Surely, there must be some form of proof. I am going to be undergoing the procedure.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Don't cross the line, Peter.

PETE HENNINGS: I-

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Do not fuck with me.

PETE HENNINGS: I didn't mean to--

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: I didn't get to where I am today lying my face off. I built this business up with integrity, honesty and discipline. My word is my life.

PETE HENNINGS: I'm so sorry.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: I am thankful that you signed our contract. You did the right thing. If I could give you some assurance, I would, but common sense says I cannot. Therefore, you must trust me on good faith. Period.

PETE HENNINGS: I will. Wish this didn't happen.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: As do I.

PETE stands up.

PETE HENNINGS: I think I'll go now.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: 6 in the morning, tomorrow.

PETE HENNINGS: Yes.

MRS. BIRCHWOOD: Thank you. We will take good care of you.

END OF PLAY