Communication

Theme One

by

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1. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

NATHAN is a middle aged Aboriginal patient sitting on his bed as the DOCTOR reads through his SOAP notes. A NURSE with a wheelchair looks on.

    DOCTOR
    Hmm...160 over 95.

NATHAN nods without understanding what the doctor is talking about.

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    LDL’s are normal.

NATHAN nods

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    Urinalysis didn’t show anything.

Doctor mutters to himself

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    White blood cell count is normal.

NATHAN nods and half smiles

The doctors pager sounds. He checks it.

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    The joys of Obstetrics. Nurse will take you for an Echo-Cardiogram and Mr....

DOCTOR check the patients name on the clipboard

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    Mr. Teagan I’ll see you tomorrow.

The doctor exits in a hurry leaving a bewildered NATHAN. The nurse shakes her head at the doctor’s lack of bedside manner.

    NURSE
    I’m sure you could do with a cup of tea after that.

    NATHAN
    Sure could...and some fresh air!
NURSE
How do you like your tea...Black?

Nathan looks sternly at the nurse

NATHAN
What? You think black people only
drink black tea?

NURSE is embarrassed by her faux pas

NURSE
Oh, I’m so sorry Mr. Teagan. I
didn’t mean to offend...

NATHAN
Hey! I’m only joking with ya.

NURSE
You have to be careful what you
say these days.

NATHAN
At least I understand what you’re
saying.

NURSE
Sometimes doctors forget they’re
talking to patients.

NATHAN
They should talk straight out
like my tea.

Nurse looks confused

NATHAN (CONT’D)
Plain and simple, nothing fancy.

Nurse hands NATHAN a cup of tea. He sips and grimaces.

NATHAN (CONT’D)
Pwah! Tastes like perfume!

NURSE
It’s Earl Grey.

NATHAN
Ya got any Bushells?

NURSE
Sorry.

NATHAN shakes his head.
2. EXT HOSPITAL GROUNDS

NATHAN and the NURSE are sitting on a bench. NATHAN is drinking from a water bottle as the NURSE sips her tea. There’s a wheelchair beside them. NATHAN is unwilling to engage in chit chat.

NURSE
How’s the water?

NATHAN screws the lid on the bottle and places it beside him ignoring the nurse’s question.

NURSE (CONT’D)
Do you have family in Perth?

NATHAN
Not much.

NURSE
Most of my family live over East. Do you have a big family?

NATHAN
I got the biggest mob in the Pilbara, and a big mob of grannies too.

NURSE
Grannies?

NATHAN
Yer, little ones. We call our grandchildren our grannies too.

NURSE
They must keep you busy. Big responsibility, kids. They’re with you for life.

NATHAN is silent. NURSE changes the subject.

NURSE (CONT’D)
Did you understand what the Doctor was saying.

NATHAN
Not really. Might be my blood making me sick.

NURSE
Your blood pressure is very high. 160 over 95.
NATHAN
What’s that mean?

NURSE
It’s like when a radiator gets blocked, the pressure builds up and then...

NATHAN
Boosh!! Water goes everywhere. I done that a few times.

NURSE
The Doctor thinks you might be showing signs of anxiety and stress, you know, worrying about things too much.

NATHAN goes quiet and takes a sip of his water.

NATHAN
Back home, I’m a big man in my community. Everyone comes to me with their problems expecting me to fix everything. Including their radiators.

NURSE
If you don’t look after yourself you can’t help others.

NATHAN
That’s true aye!

NURSE
Come on. We’d better you echo-cardiogram done.

NATHAN
I don’t know about all these tests. I think I’d rather be sick back home than here. At least I’d know what’s going on.

NURSE
The best place for you is back home, but feeling healthy not sick. Then you can enjoy spending time with your ...grannies children.

NATHAN
Stick to calling em kids. You fellas can’t pull off the grannies thing yet.

They laugh and have a moment of connection.
The NURSE helps NATHAN into his wheelchair

NATHAN reaches into his top pocket and pulls out a photo of his granddaughter. He looks at it for a moment then hands it to the NURSE.

NATHAN (CONT’D)
This is one of them ...Jaquita.
She’s a proper cheeky one.

NURSE
Very cute.

NATHAN
Maybe I gotta get myself better for her.

NURSE
That’s right! Listen to what the Doctor has to say.

NATHAN
I’ve been listening. I just don’t understand what he’s saying.

NURSE
Then stop pretending you understand and ask him to explain things properly.

NATHAN smiles and puts the photo back in his pocket

3. INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

The DOCTOR is looking through NATHAN’S notes. The NURSE is adjusting NATHAN’S pillow.

DOCTOR
The Echo-cardiogram hasn’t shown any abnormalities.

NATHAN
Hold on Doctor, this Echo Cardy thingy what’s that all about.

DOCTOR
We use sound-waves to take a picture of your heart.

NATHAN
And your telling me the pictures were okay?
DOCTOR
That’s right. There’s nothing wrong with your heart.

NATHAN
You ever been out bush Doctor?

DOCTOR
Out bush?

NATHAN
Not just around here I mean right out bush?

DOCTOR
No...not really.

NATHAN
If you ever in the Pilbara look me up and I’ll take you out bush. Show you some culture.

The DOCTOR puts down the clipboard and sits on the bed next to NATHAN.

DOCTOR
I always wanted to go on trip across Australia. Take my kids before they grow up and leave home.

NATHAN
If ya want a few extras I’ve got plenty- and they never leave home! They’d be with ya for life, aye Nurse! Biggest mob of grannies!

They all laugh

THE END