Passing on

Theme Three

by

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10/11/11

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INT. HOSPITAL NIGHT

The NURSING COORDINATOR walks down a ward past Pop’s room. FRANCINE, not wishing to draw the attention of the NURSE COORDINATOR, sneaks quietly out of Pop’s room with her son MARLIN.

FRANCINE
Pop’s sleeping, but I still want you to keep an eye on him. Okay?

MARLIN nods

FRANCINE (CONT’D)
No drifting off, and no turning on the TV.

MARLIN
Where you going Mum?

FRANCINE
I’m gonna wait outside for Uncle Jacob. If Pop wakes up tell him we won’t be too long.

MARLIN
Bring me back some chips!

FRANCINE
Shhh!

FRANCINE opens the door quietly and MARLIN re enters Pop’s room. The NURSE COORDINATOR notices FRANCINE as she’s closing the door and approaches her.

NURSE COORDINATOR
Is everything alright?

FRANCINE
Gotta wait out front for Pop’s boomerangs.

NURSE COORDINATOR
Boomerangs?

FRANCINE
He’s wants to play, em. He’s missing his country.

NURSE COORDINATOR
It’s against ward policy to allow ...music this late at night.

FRANCINE
It’s important for him to sing about his country. Especially when he’s so far away from it.
NURSE COORDINATOR
Look, I understand where you are coming from but the other palliative care patients need their rest. Please respect the rules of the ward.

FRANCINE
We got our rules too. We can get in big trouble if we don’t do the right thing by our culture.

NURSE COORDINATOR
I realise that this is a very upsetting and emotional time for your family but it may be a while before your father um...passes on.

FRANCINE
He seen all the old people waiting for him.

NURSE COORDINATOR
I know this is a tough time for your family so it’s best you be rested and ready for the days ahead. Go home have a sleep and come back tomorrow. I’ll call you the second his condition changes.

FRANCINE
I’m sorry nurse but we can’t leave Pop here all alone. He has to have his family with him and we have to be with him. That’s our way. We’ll sleep on the floor if we have too.

JACOB enters the ward carrying boomerangs wrapped in a Kangaroo skin.

JACOB
Hey sis’... how’s Dad going?

FRANCINE moves away from the COORDINATOR and has a quiet word to JACOB

FRANCINE
He’s sleeping.

JACOB
I thought you was gonna meet me out the front.

FRANCINE
I was on my way but I got caught up with her.
FRANCINE points her lips to the NURSE COORDINATOR. The NURSE COORDINATOR is now talking on the phone and casts a concerned eye at FRANCINE and JACOB then checks the time on her watch.

JACOB
What’s up with her? She don’t look too happy.

FRANCINE
She wants us outta here.

JACOB
I’ll have a word with her.

JACOB and FRANCINE approach the NURSE COORDINATOR as she finishes her phone conversation.

FRANCINE
Nurse, this is my brother Jacob.

NURSE COORDINATOR
Jacob, I understand from Francine that you want to stay here tonight with your Father.

JACOB
That’s right. We can’t leave him now. Some other family are heading this way too. We gotta be here when they arrive.

NURSE COORDINATOR
I see. Do you know how many?

JACOB
A couple of cars. Maybe eight or nine people.

MARLIN opens the door and calls out in a loud whisper.

MARLIN
Mum, Pops waking up!

FRANCINE
You go Jacob. He might want those boomerangs.

JACOB
Don’t be too long.

JACOB stares at the standoff between the NURSE COORDINATOR and FRANCINE then goes to Pops room closing the door behind him.
FRANCINE is anxious waiting on the reaction from the NURSE COORDINATOR. Pregnant pause as the tension builds.

NURSE COORDINATOR
Francine, I’ve spoken to Doctor Salman and explained the situation to him.

FRANCINE
What did he have to say?

NURSE COORDINATOR
We’ll do what we can to help you through this difficult time.

FRANCINE
True?

FRANCINE becomes teary and reaches for a tissue in her pocket

FRANCINE (CONT’D)
I thought you was gonna kick us out.

NURSE COORDINATOR
I’m sorry if I seemed ...insensitive. I didn’t realise how important it was for you to be here. We’ll let you know when your family arrives and we’ll make sure they can see your Father as well, if that’s what you want.

From the room we hear the sound of boomerangs. Francine walks to the door opens it and turns back to the NURSE COORDINATOR who gives FRANCINE a comforting smile. FRANCINE enters the room.

THE END