

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE LAMP

a 5-minute dramatic monologue

by Tara Meddaugh

EXERPT

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EXCERPT

Dedicated to my amazing mother, Roberta Meddaugh, and all those whose lives have been affected by, forever changed, or lost because of ALS.

With gratitude toward all those who have met this challenging disease head-on, including doctors, nurses, caregivers, contributors, researchers and supporters who strive to make life with ALS more manageable and find a cure.

For more information on this progressive neurodegenerative disease, visit the ALS Association at www.als.org: Compassion, Integrity, Urgency.

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Character Breakdown
(1 female)

JANINE A woman, daughter and mother in her 20s-40s.

Setting

Bedroom.

Time Period

Present.

EXCERPT

AT RISE: JANINE, a daughter and mother, in her 20s-40s, recounts the moment of arrival, upon her last visit with her mother before she passed away.

JANINE (out)

I walk in their house, my parents' house, but, you know, I still feel it's my house too, even if I'm only there as a visitor now. The strawberry shortcake lamp my mom painted for me when I was a kid is still up in my old bedroom. But the bed and the pink quilt are covered up now in those big blue, you know, storage bins. And they're all labeled things like, "Christmas ornaments" or "board games" or "Janine's drawings" or whatever.

(pause)

My mom saved everything.

(pause)

So when I walk in, I go straight to my parents' bedroom because my dad says she can't even sit up now. Last month when I was here, she was still in her wheelchair. But she hasn't eaten anything in 3 days and she only takes drops of water, from a straw.

(pause)

ALS is a cruel disease.

(pause)

It's all shutting down.

(pause)

Her lips are so dry, and I put Vaseline on them, just like the nurse does, with a cue tip, so no germs from our fingers get on her lips. But it doesn't matter if she gets sick now.

(pause)

I hug her as soon as I see her. She loves to hug, and I know it's got to hurt her that she can't hug back.

(pause)

There's a tv my dad set up in their bedroom so she can watch, I don't know, those legal or medical mystery shows she likes. And it's late, because, you know, we've been driving for 8 hours since we got the call to come Home. See? I still call it Home even though I haven't lived here for 10 years—because—because it's where my mom is. So.

(pause)

I wonder if I'll stop calling it Home when she dies...

(pause)

I'm sure she's tired and there's some law show on the tv and I say, "Do you want me to let you rest? Or did you want to finish the show?" She kind of shakes her head, as much as she can, with whatever muscles still work. And she whispers, "No."

(pause)

"Talk."

(pause)

And I don't know this yet, but tonight is the last time my mom is able to even whisper to me.

(pause)

I try really hard not to cry because we've gotten through this whole awful disease all trying to stay upbeat for each other. Of course she wants to talk. Does she care that much about this crime some actor lawyer is trying to solve on tv? Her only daughter is here on her bed now, and her baby grandkids are toddling along in the hallway, singing some version of Jingle Bell Rock. And, I mean, what difference does it make if she gets enough rest now? The remainder—

END OF EXCERPT

For the complete monologue, please visit:

<https://www.tameddaugh.com/strawberry-shortcake-lamp-a-5minute-monologue-play>

For more information about Tara Meddaugh or her work,
visit her website at www.tameddaugh.com.

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