

4-1-46 to 11/11/48
C-11/48 C-11/48

Laura Swill

SEMINARIO MULTIDISCIPLINARIO
JOSE EMILIO GONZALEZ
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO
RECINTO DE RIO PIEDRA

DARK VICTORY
Dramatic Reading

George Brewer, Jr. and Bertram Bloch

Copyright (under the title "In Time's Course"), 1932, by George Emerson Brewer, Jr. Copyright, 1939, by George Emerson Brewer, Jr. (Revised). Reprinted by permission of the authors and the publisher of the play. This cutting of "Dark Victory" is not to be used by a cast for actual dramatization. It is published for the sole use of readers and may not be used in public if the reader receives remuneration, without written permission of the Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th Street, New York City.

Exclusive permission to copy this title for a reading granted the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa.

Dr. Frederick Steele, a noted young brain specialist, is closing his New York office and is going back to practice in his beloved Vermont hills. On the day he is to leave he is persuaded by Dr. Parsons to take one more patient, the beautiful Judith Traherne, who has been seriously injured by a fall from a horse.

Dr. Steele, after telling her that he can promise "a complete surgical recovery," performs a very delicate operation on her brain.

For three months Dr. Steele stays to attend Judith and in spite of the great difference in their lives and their ideals, they become very fond of each other.

In the second act of the play Dr. Steele comes to make his final visit at Judith's luxurious home.

JUDITH: So you're off tomorrow?--How can I ever thank you?

STEELE: Don't let's talk of thanks. Let me say that I care so much that I'll come to you half way across the earth, whenever you call me.-- Judith! I--I want--I must have your love, dear.

JUDITH: Oh,--I've wanted you to say that for so long--Dear God, thank you for letting me be--young--and alive!--Oh, Fred, I love this earth and all the good things on it.

STEELE: I'm going to help you find them, if I can.

JUDITH: That strange solemn note whenever you talk about my future.--What are you keeping from me?--All those carefully guarded phrases--"A complete surgical recovery"--and "I'll come to you half way across the earth--whenever you call me." Fred--You have no right to play God.--Fred, I'm asking for the truth--and I'm entitled to it.

STEELE: Judith, I'd hoped with all my soul this wouldn't happen, but it has;--so we'll face it.--As far as surgery can go you're cured. But there are some things surgery can't do.

JUDITH: Then that means another operati--? (She reads his face)--No?--You mean that--wouldn't do any good?--I see.--I'll have to face those headaches and that ghastly confusion all over again.--

STEELE: No, dear. You won't. I promise you that.

JUDITH: But--how will it happen?

STEELE: As quietly as going to sleep.

JUDITH: God's last small mercy!--I mustn't forget to thank Him for that when I see Him!--Will I have any warning?

STEELE: There will be a moment when you won't be able to--to--see as usual--that's all.

JUDITH: You mean I'll go blind?

STEELE: Just for a moment. Then you'll be perfectly all right again--but after a few hours,--you--well, you will go to sleep.

JUDITH: I see.--How long have I before the--the end?--Go on, tell me how long?--Five years?--One year?--Six months?--

16181 545-801

MDKSVCS C-1

STEELE: Possibly more. One can't be certain--six--ten months say. After all, time is only an illusion. We're on an adventure that can't be measured by time--because it 's eternal.--Your birth was part of it, Judith; your beauty is part of it; and your death will be part of it. What difference do a few hours make?--Our love--can't be destroyed.

JUDITH: You put it so eloquently--so clearly thought out.--So you knew this all along! And you're offering to marry me. (A dry little laugh, of despair and disillusion) That's very chivalrous of you, Fred, but I couldn't get used to this--this thing in six months--I'll stay here--where I can forget.

STEELE: You're coming with me to Felsboro as my wife.

JUDITH: Oh, I know why you did it, and, Fred, I want you to know I'm terribly, terribly grateful.

STEELE: Why?--I love you. Judith, you're not seeing things straight.

JUDITH: (Covering ears) I don't even hear what you're saying!--Go to Vermont and let me die my own way.--If you must think of me, then think of me as your patient. Ten years from now you can look the case up in your files:--"Traherne, Judith--aged twenty-seven--operation March fourteenth--patient made brilliant recovery--died six months later."

STEELE: Stop it, Judith!

JUDITH: This isn't going the way you expected! Beautiful Judith Traherne isn't acting up to your sentimental picture of her.--What do you think of me now?

STEELE: What I've always thought. I only want you to have the same faith in yourself that I have in you.

JUDITH: Oh, Fred, you're so easy for a woman to read. You despise everything I stand for--my set--my friends--my world. Well, thank God for that world now! My friends will help me forget.--Six months! Oh God, how long they seem.--But--I'll fill them--I'll show whoever runs this rotten world some merry hell before I've finished.--Well, why don't you go?--

Then followed months of fast and furious living. As one of the men in her set said, Judith had "been on more and bigger binges than anyone in six counties." One evening, after a particularly trying day, Judith stood before the window in her drawing room alone. Still looking out of the window, and very quietly she said, "Fred,--I'm coming."

Act Three. Scene: The living room of Dr. Steele's house in Felsboro. It is evening of the next day. Dr. Steele has just finished putting a log on the fire. A knock is heard, and Judith enters.

JUDITH: Fred, I've come.

STEELE: Judith--Steady!

JUDITH: Oh, I'm all right.

STEELE: Thank God!

JUDITH: I must talk to you, Fred.--I've done what I said I would. Everything--to the last empty boast.--I couldn't die knowing your bitterness toward me--I couldn't have you go on feeling that way forever.

STEELE: Stop it, Judith. Do you think I have found happiness in this empty house? I love you, Judith.--I'm never going to let you go again.

JUDITH: Then I must never interfere with your work--promise me that.

STEELE: You're going to help me be the kind of doctor I've always wanted to be.

JUDITH: I want to help you--I must give you something of me that will live on in your work, after I've gone.

STEELE: You're the only person who can give me that.

She relaxes in his arms as the scene ends.

It is late-January, two months later. The room has softened in appearance since last we saw it. Bright curtains have been hung at the

windows, comfortable chairs have been added, and there are green things about. Through the windows intense winter sunlight pours in.

As the curtain rises, Judith is at the desk, busy with accounts.

Miss Jenny enters bringing a plate of cake for the tea table.

MISS JENNY: Happy, Mrs. Fred?

JUDITH: Terribly, Miss Jenny!--There's the telephone! (At phone)

Hello?---Yes,---Montreal calling?---No. You may reach him at Felsboro 93. (Hangs up) Miss Jenny, they wouldn't call him to Montreal?

MISS JENNY: Now don't worry, Mrs. Fred; he'd soon be back.

JUDITH: I know. I can't help grudging every minute he's away, every second--I wish it wouldn't cloud up like this.

MISS JENNY: What are you talking about? I never saw it brighter.

JUDITH: But it's getting--dimmer--each second--Look! (Holds hands to light, turning them slowly) Curious how I can still feel the heat of it. (Turns facing room) Why--how dark it's gotten! (Suddenly with hand to her throat) Agh! (Terror; hand over eyes) Miss Jenny!

MISS JENNY: What is it, dear?

JUDITH: N-nothing. (Laughs; tries to sound natural) Nothing! (Laughs again; more convincingly) Don't pay any attention to me. The phone again! I'll answer! (Feels way to desk, gropes for instrument) Miss Jenny! Give it to me! Hello?--Yes.--You couldn't get him?--This is Mrs. Steele speaking. Tell Dr. Platt that I'll get him somehow. (Vision has returned, though blurred.) Miss Jenny--don't worry about me--I'm all right. I think I hear Fred's car. I'll take those books to Mrs. Waring, now. I'll be right back. Tell Fred to call the Montreal operator. I'll go the back way. It's shorter. Miss Jenny, say nothing to him about--about anything--Promise? (Exits)

Steele is at the phone when Judith returns.

STEELE: (In phone) But really, Stephen, there must be someone in Montreal.

JUDITH: You must, dear.

STEELE: But, darling--someone else can do the operation.

JUDITH: (Smiling) The land is full of great brain specialists better than Frederick Steele, isn't it?

STEELE: Stephen, I'm coming--Tomorrow morning, then. Good-bye.

JUDITH: I was going over the books today, Fred.

STEELE: What did you find?

JUDITH: Certain debts owing my husband that will never be paid.

STEELE: Not one that you haven't repaid a thousand times.

JUDITH: Have I really been a good wife?

STEELE: You!--you idiot!

JUDITH: Oh, I've loved it so--every minute. How can I make you understand? Look out there. (Points to window) Somehow it's been like that--shining and quiet. And behold--all things had been fulfilled that were to be, and there was no emptiness under heaven.

STEELE: Judith, dear, I--er--left a memorandum there. You'll be able to reach me at any time. If anything--anything--Oh, my God! Judith, I'm not going.--I can't!!

JUDITH: (Very firm--very crisp) Fred, look at me.--I was never to fail you or keep you from your best.--We've had our love and we're complete, nothing can hurt us now. That's our victory--our victory over the dark. And it is a real victory because we're not afraid.

There is a long pause as they look into each other's eyes.

STEELE: (His tenseness relaxes and he smiles) Thank you, Judith.

He holds her closely for a moment and is gone. Judith takes up the memorandum from the desk. She walks slowly to the fireplace, and stands facing the flames; after a moment she tears the paper across and throws the fragments in the blaze as the curtain falls.

Readings, Plays, Entertainments
WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU
Sioux City, Iowa 51106

