

Night Duty

a play in
one act

David Stroud & Barbara Towell

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Lights up

Centre stage is a table with a chair either side of it. On the table is a phone, patients' notes in a folder and pen holder with pens and pencils. MERYL sits at the table. She picks up the notes and reads them. Enter SLATER.

SLATER: I thought they'd've knocked this place down by now. So out of date. Bryn Coch Mausoleum rather than Bryn Coch Hospital, I'd say.

[SLATER takes off jacket, hangs it on a hook on the wall and wanders around]

So out of date. [sits on chair at table opposite MERYL]

MERYL: It seems okay to me. [puts down patient notes]

[pause] Strange, you being here, Mr Slater.

SLATER: Oh! Why's that then? You were told I was coming.

MERYL: Yes, yes. Sister left a note.

SLATER: So why strange?

MERYL: No reason really – except, you see, it's usually Jeff, Jeff Davies who's on night duty with me. Used to him being here – that's all.

SLATER: Got a bit of a thing for him, have we ... [SLATER stares at MERYL's badge] Meryl?

MERYL: No, no! It's – it's just that we have a bit of a laugh – a bit of a joke from time to time – that's how it is. [pause] As you know, he's off sick tonight. I said, when he phoned in: "Oh yeah! Sick of work, is it?" He laughed because we're used to each other. That's all. [SLATER sits with arms folded staring at her]

MERYL: It can be very silent here at night when the patients are asleep – so we chat. Chat about this and that.

SLATER: Really. [he smiles] Well, you can talk to me.

[MERYL appearing uncomfortable, gets up]