

On Tuesday
a play with an end which considers possibilities
by Jennie Webb

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On Tuesday

Characters: THE WOMAN AT HOME
THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR
A CONCERNED FRIEND

Setting: The doorway of a dwelling, and just a bit beyond it

Time: Sometime Friday evening

Casting:

The woman at home and woman at the door are relatively the same age, probably in their late 20s or 30s. A concerned friend can be played by a man or a woman of any age. Multi-racial casting is encouraged.

Dialogue Notes:

— Indicates a character's dialogue is interrupted, by another character speaking, an event or a character abruptly shifting gears within a line of dialogue.

... Indicates a character is searching for words, does not complete a thought or leaves a line of dialogue open.

Synopsis:

A play with an end which considers possibilities, *On Tuesday* takes a dark and slanted look at our innate desire to have some control over the events and people around us, to make a connection and have an impact. How powerful is our need to make sense of the inconceivable, in any way we can?

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On Tuesday

We see a woman, alone at home although her surroundings are, at present, somewhat veiled; perhaps she is isolated in a spotlight.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

So am I flying? Or falling. No. Is there a difference? Yes. Because my arms are...

She slowly starts to spread her arms.

Out. Like wings. That makes sense. And I can feel the air, as it rushes past me.

(spreading her fingers) Rushes with this amazing intensity. It's thrilling. And...

Frightening. Terrifying. *(moving her arms in front of her)* Because there's nothing to protect me if... No. There's no if. It's inevitable. I'm not looking for protection. So is it fear, or freedom? Surrender. Release. *(letting out a long breath of air)* Okay...

She closes her eyes. Then opens them.

Eyes open or closed? *(closing them)* Open. And it's like I'm suspended, supported by air that's thick and lovely. It's not rushing past, but lingering, cushioning. I'm deep inside this comforting pillow of air. *(her arms are now holding her body)* Which is completely... Suffocating.

She opens her eyes.

And I'm heavy. Jesus, I never thought about that. But yeah. Against the air, I'm like a goddamn rock. Plunging through it, carving a path through space. Pushing space. But space pushes back, hard. Until... I disappear. So I'm light. Incredibly light. I suddenly weigh nothing and it feels like forever, this moment. This forever moment where everything makes sense. It fits inside an instant, this sudden glimmer of something sure. Something definite. Something definitive.

Her arms are fully extended to each side, like she's flying.

And in that single, spread-out second of clarity everything is totally, completely, one hundred percent—

She is interrupted by the sound of a doorbell ringing. The lights quickly shift to reveal a doorway and the suggestions of a home. It's evening. The woman at home is standing on a piece of furniture. We then hear knocking on the door.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(offstage) Hello? Hello? Anyone home?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Hi! Yeah! Just a minute...

She opens the door and a woman moves into the room, along with a friend who appears to be very concerned.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Can I tell you how glad I was to get your call? After all this time? The one bright spot to end my whole terrible day. And how crazy was it I was almost down the street having coffee, huh?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Um, yeah...

She closes the door, eyes on the other woman's concerned friend who is rather boldly inspecting her home and its contents.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Do you ever get coffee at that place? It's good coffee. Pricy. But aren't they all? And is it that good? I don't know. I'm actually supposed to stop drinking coffee anyway. *(to her concerned friend)* Right?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Right.

Perhaps this friend feels entitled enough to open a door or drawer and peer inside.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right. Did I tell you I've been doing this positive imagery, creative visualizations? Caffeine's a blocker or something. Imagery helps with the physical problems. From the injury. After the accident. And also dealing with the goddamned lawyers. Visualizing things. Like images of lawyers with their... Well, that's maybe not so creative. Or maybe creative, but not all that positive. Can you believe this has been going on for six years now? How insane is that?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I don't—

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(interrupting) Well, it is, let me tell you. A bordering-on-schizophrenic six years which is almost impossible for me to get my head around. And not because of the brain thing, either.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Almost seven.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right. What?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Almost seven years.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Seven— My lord! Seven years. *(to the woman at home)* Insane.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Sounds like it. So. I'm really glad that I found you—

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(interrupting) I can't believe you still had my number! I've lost everyone's. Did you used to have an address book? Well, that was one thing. But with a phone the number goes in and *then* something happens and, well, it's lost. I mean, not just *lost*—like lost because you can't find the book—but *gone*. And what you can do about it? Nothing. So I'm glad you called.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

You were listed.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

What?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I didn't have your number. You were listed.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Okay, now that is funny—like strange funny—because I never thought of myself as listed. *(to her concerned friend)* Are people still listed?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

I'm listed.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

You're listed. You *know* that?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

I've asked for myself.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Really!

The women observe the concerned friend who seems rather inappropriately at home in this home.

(turning back to the women at home) Anyway, have I told you what a terrible day I've had? With my brain injury I forget, so forgive me. And I swear—dealing with this lawsuit has made me even more bonkers. How are you?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I'm... I'm okay. Listen. The reason I called you, the reason I found you—

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(interrupting) I'm still blown away by how perfect this is.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

(to the woman at home) She's told me so much about you.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Wait. You don't know each other? *(to the woman at home)* This is the friend who has basically nursed me back to health over the past six—

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

(interrupting) Seven.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Seven years. So I could have sworn you two knew each other. But that may be my brain. Or a dream. I've been working on harnessing my dreams. Using them in my life. And I sometimes get things mixed up.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Or straightened out.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right! Dreams have incredible power.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Dreams of flying, for instance.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

What?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Dreams of flying. Flight is a fairly common dream, but can be very significant. Symbolizing freedom, or a desire for freedom. An ability to control your own circumstances, to rise above the situation at hand.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

I dream of flying. A lot.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Of course if you're flying and lose control—start to fall, for instance—it may be a sign that you have a lack of power, are perhaps afraid of overcoming obstacles. Or you could be struggling with the very idea of liberation, of release.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

I run into telephone poles. In my dreams, I mean.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Obstacles.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Which isn't to say that I haven't in real life, since the accident. Not sure if that's the right way to incorporate a dream, huh?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

If you're a lucid dreamer, dreams like this can become a real opportunity. Of course only *you* know whether you're a lucid dreamer. And lucidity is highly subjective.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(to the woman at home) How long has it been, anyway?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

How long has what been?

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Since we've seen each other. Or talked to each other, even. At least ten years.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Eleven.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right! At the reunion. So did you even know about my brain injury? The lawsuit?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I did. I heard about it. I think Joe told me.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right! Anyway, the saga continues. As you might expect. What did Joe tell you?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

He— I can't remember, it's been awhile. But that's why I called you. I'm sorry. I called you because... Joe is dead.

Short pause.

He... took his own life.

Pause.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Why didn't he call me?

Short pause.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Before or after he killed himself?

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

But we talked, like, all the time! We were so close! He should have said something!

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I—

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(interrupting) When did he call you?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

He didn't. His sister told me what happened last night.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

How do you know his sister?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I don't. But somehow she found me and then I tried to think of his other friends...

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

I was listed.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

And so I called.

Pause.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

"Took his own life."

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Yeah.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

That's good.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

It's good?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

As a statement. "Took his own life." If you break it down, it's an act of affirmation. Like reclaiming. Which is the only thing that makes any sense: you can't really *take* something that was already yours. You take it back.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

That *is* good.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

(to the concerned friend) Who are you?

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Are you sure you never met?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

You can *lose* your life, however. A lost life implies there are other forces at work. If your life was taken—by an event, an illness, or at another's hand—it's also a statement, but not necessarily your own.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

(to the woman at home) You knew Joe had been very depressed, right? I mean, of course he was excited about the OCD diagnosis, but in the last month or so he'd been depressed. And they switched his medication.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Oh. No. I didn't.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

It's crazy.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Yeah.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Unbelievable.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

But understandable.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

What?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

I mean, I can always understand that choice.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Did you even know Joe?

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

I didn't have to.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

You should have! Joe was a great guy. He was smart and giving and funny and generous...

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

How long since you'd spoken to him?

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

He'd been depressed. They switched his medication.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

People get depressed. People get new medication. People don't just...

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Except they do.

Short pause.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Apparently so.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

How did he do it? Did his sister find the body?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

No. No, they... I didn't want to ask her about the details so I didn't know at first and I kept... I guess I was trying to imagine how and... who *would've*, maybe? Found him? I think he may have considered that. Maybe.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

He was a great guy.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

What one of his friends said is that he was at work.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Joe hated his job.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

And I guess he went up on the roof of the building...

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

And he jumped.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Yeah. He jumped.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

He jumped? I never would've...

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Me neither.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

But of course that's what he did. He hated his job, he hated his life. He did his 9-5 work week, he clocked out, he went up to the roof. He knew the building was high enough. He knew people would see it, they'd have to, so someone he cared about wouldn't have to find him at some undetermined time later. He knew his family would be informed because he was at work and they had all his information. He'd obviously planned it out, thought about it. Then he jumped. It's very proactive, really. A positive step. Even if it is off a building.

Short pause.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Please leave.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

Right. Okay. Because I'm actually expecting a call from my lawyer. The insurance company may want to settle!

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I so don't give a shit.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

What?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Look, I'm sorry. I'm sure your brain is of grave concern to you but it's actually not to me. Nor is your very concerned friend with all the answers who seems far too comfortable here and I want you both out of my house. I'm sorry. I'm dealing with a lot. My friend Joe is dead.

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR:

He—!

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

(interrupting) Yes! He's your dead friend too! He seemed to have had a lot of friends, and no, I hadn't talked to him in years so for all I know he was your best goddamned friend, and I haven't got the vaguest idea why he didn't call you to let you in on his grand plans to *be* dead!

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

But isn't that what you want to know, as well?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

What?!

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

You want to know why he didn't call you. Why he didn't tell you he was out of hope, out of breaks, out of energy to keep pushing uphill, everyday. Why he only shared his lovely great guy self and why he didn't call you when he was depressed or feeling alone, when you could have done something. Told him that you valued him, considered him a friend, loved him. And perhaps that would have made a difference. You might have said just the right thing to save his life. Or at the very least, you might have understood. His why. How. What.

Pause.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I think I hate you.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

We'll go.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Good.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

(moving toward the door) There's really no need to feel guilty, though.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

I don't feel guilty.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

You couldn't have done anything, anyway.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Probably not.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

When a person makes a strong choice about his or her own life there's really very little influence another person can truly have.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Fine.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Of course it's always up in the air about how much control we have over outside influences. Getting struck by lightning or hit by a bus.

Short pause.

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Or both.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

What?

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

Maybe simultaneously.

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

I—

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

(interrupting) For me it's a positive image. That kind of control. I think I'll dream about it

A CONCERNED FRIEND:

Okay...

THE WOMAN AT HOME:

And of course there's always the risk of being crushed by, say, falling bodies.

