

NOTES

In *I Dream of Lillian*, Elise Sharron introduces us to Evelyn, a woman who has been recently diagnosed with breast cancer. This monologue should be performed by a female and be entered in Dramatic Interpretation. As with any devastating illness, there are many highs and lows. Play each moment, always being conscious of the emotional transitions throughout the selection. The character, Evelyn, also has an infectuous sense of humor, so play those lighter moments, too. Breast cancer is a disease that affects countless women around the world; therefore, play the character with 100% honesty. This play is a tour-de-force for the mature actress who possesses the ability to take the audience and her character on a truly emotional journey.

(The scene begins with a woman looking into a mirror. She rubs her hand over her bald head. She smiles.)

Talk about getting stared at? You know, it's funny. Babies come out with no hair and everyone thinks they are the cutest things to ever grace the earth, but when I step out with my...smooth skin, just as smooth as before said baby, I get stared at much like I imagine lepers got stared at in Biblical times. *(Laughs)* But what I want to say to those who stare is "It's called chemo plus radiation, people...a toxic combination, a killer."

When people think 'killer,' they think about a door getting kicked in at 3a.m., blood everywhere and screams that can be heard through walls. But you see, when I think *killer*, I think about a very nice looking Dr. James Middleton. When I say *nice looking*, ladies, I mean, imagine your *dream man*. Now multiply that by ten, and that is Dr. J, as I called him. *(Beat, laughs)* I joke, but it was so hard to believe that such a *killer* looking man, no pun intended...well, a little, could deliver such information. "Evelyn, we detected a mass in your left breast. I'm so sorry, but it's breast cancer. *(Beat, laughs)* Of course, it's cancer, I think to myself. A beautiful man like that wouldn't be declaring his love for me, now would he? No. To some women that would be a dream, instead of the nightmare my life was becoming.

So what do you do next? You go home and sit your husband down and tell him the news. You both cry a little. You decide on what you're going to do

next. You cry a little more. You sit in on the porch at sunset with a glass of wine and accept that you don't know how many more beautiful sunsets you are going to see. My husband joins me, holds my hand and kisses my forehead; I know he will always be there for me.

Chemo. First let me say that when I speak of cocktails, I mean a large glass of red wine, but my new favorite flavor is chemo with a radiation twist. Now, I am a woman, and just like all women my first thought is—will I lose my hair? I mean, I'd already lost my breasts, and as a woman, I started to think of the things I had left that *made* me a woman...my hair. (*Beat*) Well, of course, I did lose it, but I wanted to change my outlook on the negative and try to make it positive, so it was... my chance to express my fashion sense to the world. (*Grabs scarf*) This scarf says, 'My grandmother was raised in the South and is darn proud of it.' This is my 'My husband plays too much damn golf and I don't care what I look like' scarf. And this one is my most beautiful creation. It's the one I would like to model for my daughter.

Her name was going to be Lillian. After the beautiful Dr. J gave me the life changing news, I began an aggressive round of chemo mixed with a shot of radiation. As predicted, I was sick most of the time. I went in for my weekly blood work and found out that, congratulations, we're pregnant. Pregnant! Why now? Why is it that the most beautiful things come to us in life at the wrong time? I'm up every morning at 4 a.m. to get to the hospital. They hook me up to the machine, and medicine runs through my veins. I go home, rest, vomit, and sleep. Then it starts over. More chemo, more tests, and in the midst of all of this, my husband comes in one night and tells me that he loves me and that I'm beautiful. (*Beat*) He actually tells me I'm beautiful. As I'm kneeling on the floor bent over the toilet, he rubs my back. When my hair started falling out, he went scarf shopping with me. As I look in the mirror at my naked, thinning body with minimal hair on my head, I see myself as the most unattractive woman in the world. But I come home from the grocery store one day, and he has candles lit. He massages my feet and runs a warm bath for me. For the first time in months, I feel...perfect. We made love that day.

The doctors told me I couldn't get pregnant, but I've learned that the doctors just don't know everything. They told me to abort the baby, to kill Lillian. And I told them that I would die before I would kill the one thing that is living within me. So I made a decision that no one expected and no one supported. I stopped going to chemo, and I stopped the radiation treatments. They told me that the odds were against us. They tried to talk me into an abortion by telling me that I would lose Lillian and would die. I told them no. I told my husband no. I wouldn't be able to live with myself,