

DID I EVER TELL YOU

Written by

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INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - DAY

This is not the retirement home of your dreams. The walls, the furniture, even the people are sterile and musty at the same time. The only decorations are faded prints of uninspired water colors. Chosen, at some point, because they were considered soothing.

Residents sit in small groups. Knitting. Playing cards. Watching the news. Staring out the window. Anything to pass the time.

SAMSON BELL, 60s, lingers in the doorway to the rec room, eyeing the inhabitants. He is a feisty fellow, but a little desperate for friendship, to the point that he wears out his welcome quickly.

Samson focuses in on the card players. He approaches their table, pulling a chair up with him.

SAMSON

Can you deal me in, Marty? Say, did I ever tell you about the time in Vegas when...

MARTY doesn't even look up.

MARTY

Sorry, Samson. We're all full.

SAMSON

Oh, OK. Another time.

Samson drags his chair over to the folks at the window. He takes a seat in the back as a bird flits by outside.

SAMSON

Hey, did I ever tell you about the time I helped locate a rare...

A BIRD WATCHER cranes her neck like an owl while keeping one eye on the window.

BIRD WATCHER

Shhhhhhh!

SAMSON

Right. Quiet.

Samson twists in his chair. Two orderlies in the doorway catch his eye.

ORVILLE the chief orderly is giving the new recruit, JOSHUA, a tour.

ORVILLE

This is the rec room. They all can hang out and do whatever. We gotta check on 'em every so often, but they don't do that much.

Orville heads down the hallway while Joshua lingers. He studies the faces of the residents.

Joshua's gaze lands on Samson. He grins at Samson before hurrying to catch up with Orville down the hall.

Samson watches him go and smiles to himself. Someone who hasn't heard his stories.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - LATER

Orville is continuing the tour.

Samson is lurking around a corner. Waiting for a moment to approach Joshua.

ORVILLE

This is the nurse's station. Here is the to-do list. If you get paged, come here for instructions. At the end of your shift you...

A woman's voice comes over the intercom on the desk.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Orville, please report to room 237. Mrs. Schwinder needs help out of bed.

Orville rolls his eyes.

ORVILLE

Wait here.

He trots down the hall.

Samson sees his chance at Joshua and pounces. As best he can at his age.

SAMSON

New orderly?

Joshua turns and puts on a bright smile.

JOSHUA

Yes, sir. First day. My name is Joshua.

Joshua holds his hand out to Samson.

Samson shakes his hand with relish. Like he hasn't touched another person in months.

SAMSON

Samson.

Samson soaks in the handshake a moment longer then gets back to business. With a forced calm he leans against the nurses station.

SAMSON

Do you like movies?

JOSHUA

Sure.

Samson beams.

SAMSON

I was in a movie once with Lauren Bacall.

Joshua lights up.

JOSHUA

Really? That's amazing. Which one?

SAMSON

I was in...

Orville comes around the corner.

ORVILLE

You telling stories again, Mr. Bell?

Samson blushes.

JOSHUA

Samson was just telling me...

ORVILLE

Yeah. He'll tell you a lot of things. Talk your ear off if he gets half a chance. Go on back to the rec room, Mr. Bell.

Samson looks to Joshua sheepishly.

Joshua smiles and Samson takes heart. Joshua might believe him.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SAMSON TELLING STORIES

- Used to restore Renaissance paintings
- Sailed on a ship attacked by a giant squid
- So close to a tornado could have reached out to touch it
- Flew a hot air balloon across the country
- Lived through a flood and saw a carnival float by

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Joshua is mopping. Nobody is around except for Samson.

Samson is having a ball sliding on the wet floor.

SAMSON

Did I ever tell you about the time
I was on a championship curling
team in Canada? First American to
do it.

JOSHUA

That's the thing with the brooms on
ice, right?

Samson slides by. He taps his nose as he goes. Right.

JOSHUA

You better be careful.

Samson slides the other way.

SAMSON

You're too young to worry so much.
You'll worry your life away before
you know it. I'll be f....

Samson slips up on his slide and takes a tumble, twisting his
ankle as he goes.

JOSHUA

Samson! Are you OK?

SAMSON

Yeah. I'm fine. Just help me up,
will you? I used to box kangaroos,
worse things have happened to me.

Joshua gives him a hand and stands him up.

Samson seems steady enough. Joshua lets go to pick up his mop.

Samson sighs and braces himself. He tries to take a step and immediately collapses again.

SAMSON

Though, this isn't the best thing
that has happened to me.

INT. SAMSON'S ROOM - EVENING

Joshua pushes Samson in a wheel chair. Samson's ankle is in a brace.

JOSHUA

Alright. Here we a...

Joshua is distracted by all the trinkets, photos, and keepsakes in Samson's room.

Renaissance painting puzzles, a fish tank with a sunken ship and octopus figures, a toy that replicates tornadoes, a model hot air balloon with a globe printed on it, framed news articles about natural disasters. The items are endless.

Samson clambers from the wheel chair into his bed while Joshua looks around. He eyes Joshua uneasily.

JOSHUA

So, this is where your stories come
from? You make them up.

Joshua is a little embarrassed that he believed all the tales.

Samson is desperate to hold onto Joshua. He doesn't have anyone else.

SAMSON

I didn't make them up! Everything
here is a memory! An event!

Joshua picks up the balloon globe.

JOSHUA

Is this what you flew across the
country in?

Samson is close to tears.

SAMSON

I rode an elephant across India and drank tea with the most elegant geisha. I climbed a redwood just to see the view. Why else would anyone talk to me?

Joshua glances around the room. He sees an elephant figure with a rider, a delicate tea pot with geisha painted on the side, and a framed photo of a redwood.

SAMSON

I did do those things. I did do those things!

Joshua looks at Samson. He doesn't believe him any more.

SAMSON

Get out! Go! Leave me alone!

Samson turns away from Joshua and sobs.

SAMSON

(muffled)

I really did know Lauren.

Joshua is taken aback. He didn't mean any harm.

He turns to leave when something on a shelf catches his eye.

Half hidden behind other trinkets is an old 8x10 glossy photo of Lauren Bacall.

Joshua pushes the other keepsakes aside and picks up the photo. In the back ground is a much younger Samson.

Joshua looks at the photo in wonder. He told the truth.

Joshua takes the photo and quietly leaves the room.

Samson keeps sobbing. Alone.

INT. SAMSON'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Samson lies in bed. He is wearing the same clothes from yesterday. He makes no move to get out of bed.

Orville comes in. He sizes up Samson and shakes his head. Nothing he hasn't dealt with before.

Orville gets Samson out of bed and cleans him up like you would a small child.

When Samson is ready for the day Orville sits him in a wheel chair and pushes him out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Samson is listless in his chair.

ORVILLE

Buck up, Mr. Bell. It's a beautiful day. I bet you have a story about a day like today.

SAMSON

No.

Orville doesn't know what to say. Samson always has a story.

INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Orville rolls Samson into the rec room. There is an unusual buzz in the room. Everyone is talking.

Samson slowly lifts his head to see what the commotion is about. He is stunned.

All over the room are copies of his photo with Lauren Bacall. The residents are all gabbing to each other with pictures in hand.

After a moment Marty notices Samson and Orville in the door.

MARTY

There he is!

Everyone hurries over to Samson. They all talk over each other, asking about the photo.

Samson sees Joshua on the far side of the room smiling at him.

The light comes back into Samson's eyes. Everyone wants to hear his story.

Samson takes a deep breath.

SAMSON

Did I ever tell you about the time...

CUT TO BLACK.