

=====

RESTORATION

=====

by Michael Cheikin

Copyright by Michael Cheikin

=====

RESTORATION

=====

Copyrighted material

Production Information

- Synopsis:** RESTORATION is a dramatic one-act about the intense personal effects of breast cancer, not only on women, but on their families, their doctors and our culture.
- Actors:** Three actors:
One man, mid 40's (may also be played by a woman)
Two women, ages 38 and 28
- Set:** A doctor's exam room. There must be a door. Also an exam table, a desk, a few chairs, possibly a file cabinet.
- Running Time:** Approximately 20 minutes.
- Props:** Small boom box, which fits in a file or desk drawer.
A folding curtain, behind which patients may change.
- Bandages, tape, chart(s), prescription pad, gown(s), glove(s), pen(s), [suture removal kit = tweezers and scissors], garbage can.

Restoration

Time

Present.

Place

The office of Dr. David Long. Exam table, desk, chairs.
There must be a door. On the wall are diplomas, a
blood pressure cuff and a few educational charts.

Dramatis Personae (in order of appearance)

Dr. David Long	a prominent breast surgeon. Mid 40's. Average in height and weight, glasses, bald, perhaps a beard, a gentle face, a touch of sadness in his manner and voice, but also encouraging with a sense of humor. (If played by a woman, change her name to Katherine, give her very short hair, trim the bald jokes and change lines about wife and kids to husband and kids.)
Debbie	a 38 year old breast cancer patient. Has three kids. Light brown hair, shoulder length or shorter. Overweight.
Suzie	28 years old. A stripper. Very attractive. Long dark hair. Shapely dancer's body.

Author's Note

I write to seek the Truth in emotion, thought and action; revealing this image of human need required that I subordinate my fears to my commitment to this Truth.

[Lines in square brackets are optional.]

(TO THE ACTORS: These characters have known each other for a long while, and have been through a lot together. They are very up front with each other. Both women trust Dr. Long completely. He is comfortable enough with Debbie to yell when necessary, and she is not hurt by his yelling. With Suzie, he shows another, and equally emotional side. There is lots of subtext--eye contact, touch, even sexual tension despite it's

inappropriateness, coming from raw emotion. Take your time to feel it.

(As background, Dr. Long performed a lumpectomy on Debbie nine months ago. She then developed a second lump in the same breast and insisted on a mastectomy. The treatment and prognosis is the same whether or not the breast was removed.)

1 (AS LIGHTS COME UP, DR. LONG AND DEBBIE ARE COMPLETING
2 THE EXAM OF HER MASTECTOMY
3 SCAR. HER BACK OR SIDE IS TO
4 THE AUDIENCE, WHILE SHE HOLDS
5 OPEN HER GOWN (OPENING TO THE
6 FRONT.))
7

8 (THERE IS WHITE TAPE AND A BANDAGE OVER HER LEFT BREAST
9 AREA (AND ALSO SERVES TO
10 COMPRESS THE ACTOR'S BREAST)).
11

12 (THE GOWN IS OFF HER LEFT SHOULDER.)
13

14 DR. LONG:

15 There. Stitches are all out. Leave this bandage on
16 till tomorrow.
17

18 (SHE TRIES TO GET GOWN ON BUT HER ARM HURTS.)
19

20 DEBBIE:

21 Ow.
22

23 DR. LONG:

24 Here.
25

26 (HE HELPS HER GET HER GOWN OVER HER SHOULDER AND MAY TIE
27 IT AS THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES:)
28

29 DEBBIE:

30 Well? How does it look?
31

32 DR. LONG:

33 Looks great. All closed up.
34

35 DEBBIE:

36 Can I start the chemo now?
37

38 DR. LONG:

39 Whenever you're ready.
40

41 DEBBIE:

42 Monday.
43

44 DR. LONG:

45 Debbie.
46

47 DEBBIE:

48 What?
49

50 DR. LONG:

51 We've talked about this.
52

53 DEBBIE:

54 I gotta get on top of this thing.
55

56 DR. LONG:
57 There's no rush. This is slow growing.
58
59 DEBBIE:
60 Yeah, and it takes two years till it's large enough to
61 detect. You sure my other breast is OK?
62
63 DR. LONG:
64 Yes. It's been tested more times than the HMO
65 director's wife.
66
67 DEBBIE:
68 You can take it too. I really don't care.
69
70 DR. LONG:
71 You didn't even need the mastectomy.
72
73 DEBBIE:
74 Yes I did. I have to get rid of every cell.
75
76 DR. LONG:
77 This is only step one.
78
79 DEBBIE:
80 I know, I know.
81
82 DR. LONG:
83 You still have chemo, radiation and hormonal therapy.
84
85 DEBBIE:
86 They call it slash, burn and poison.
87
88 DR. LONG:
89 Debbie, you're very lucky the cells have estrogen
90 receptors.
91
92 DEBBIE:
93 Yeah. Menopause at 38.
94
95 DR. LONG:
96 (ENCOURAGING) Your chances are 20 percent higher!
97 [RESEARCH THE PERCENTAGE]
98
99 DEBBIE:
100 (CAN'T SHAKE HER NEGATIVITY) Chances! I'm the one in
101 nine to get this! That's lucky? I should be glad I
102 already had my kids, right?
103 (PAUSE, THEY BOTH SIGH.)
104
105 DEBBIE:
106 You have any kids, doc?
107

108 DR. LONG:
109 Two. In their teens. They're ashamed of their Dad
110 [me]. (MAKES A JOKE AND SILLY GESTURE TO AMUSE HER, NOT
111 WHINE ABOUT HIS KIDS:) Tatoos are boring. They go to
112 South Street to get nails through their foreheads.
113
114 (THEY LAUGH.)
115
116 DEBBIE:
117 You think my Jimmy will remember me?
118
119 DR. LONG:
120 (ANGRY) Stop talking that way! Do you hear me. You
121 have no right to talk that way. Your job is to get
122 better.
123
124 DEBBIE:
125 (SOME TEARS) Sorry. I keep it up, most of the time.
126 For my kids, my husband. Even my best friend. But now
127 and then, I need to... (TRAILS OFF)
128
129 (PAUSE, HE DOESN'T PROCESS THIS UNTIL A BEAT OR TWO
130 LATER.)
131
132 DR. LONG:
133 ...vent... [go ahead...] I understand...
134
135 DEBBIE:
136 ...I know you do. You're a good doctor.
137
138 DR. LONG:
139 I try.
140
141 DEBBIE:
142 You care. About me. About what happens to me.
143
144 DR. LONG:
145 (SIGHS)
146
147 DEBBIE:
148 What about you, doc.
149
150 DR. LONG:
151 What about me?
152
153 DEBBIE:
154 How do you vent? How do you... restore... yourself?
155 One woman after the next?
156
157 DR. LONG:
158 I manage.
159
160 DEBBIE:
161 You're here six days a week. What does your wife think?
162

163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

DR. LONG:

She understands.

DEBBIE:

Do you have a... normal... relationship?

DR. LONG:

I think you're overstepping your bounds.

DEBBIE:

I mean, please, Dr. Long, for me, enjoy your wife.
(PAUSE) You know.

DR. LONG:

I know.

DEBBIE:

You do?

DR. LONG:

Debbie, how are you and your husband doing?

DEBBIE:

He's great. He's there when I need him. But I know
he's terrified. Of my scar. Taking care of the kids
for a lifetime.

DR. LONG:

STOP IT! (SHE LOOKS DOWN, SOME TEARS. HE HOLDS HIS HEAD
AND SIGHS. PAUSE.) OK. You are going to die. (TAKES
HER CHIN) But you're bad. And only good people die
young. (SHE SMILES.) (GENTLY:) So, unless you have an
appointment, I suggest you focus on living. Get back in
the ring, Debbie.

DEBBIE:

I promise I'll fight. But I have to be realistic.

DR. LONG:

(SOFTLY) You have to do whatever it takes. Pray.
Deny. Take vitamins. But don't [you dare] be
fatalistic! Take control. Believe in the mysterious.
Do whatever it takes... to heal.

DEBBIE:

Is that what you do?

(PAUSE.)

DR. LONG:

(GUILTY, LOOKS DOWN) I do what I have to [do]. (LOOKS
AT HER, LIGHTLY, AGAIN TRYING TO AMUSE/DISTRACT HER)
And you have to do what I'm telling you.

34 DEBBIE:
35 (FINALLY FEELING BETTER, MAKING A JOKE) Well, is it
36 true, one day, I'm gonna have the breasts of an eighteen
37 year old? Right?

38
39 DR. LONG:
40 That's what I promised. Get over the next few
41 months...of hell...and I'll reconstruct you with your
42 own muscle, no implants, and then I'll even tuck your
43 other side.

44
45 DEBBIE:
46 What about my thighs?

47
48 DR. LONG:
49 No extra charge!

50
51 DEBBIE:
52 Just imagine---at 38, for the first time in my life,
53 I'll be "perky". Even at 16 I needed steel. Bra and
54 panties.

55
56 DR. LONG:
57 Get dressed.

58
59 (SHE GOES BEHIND THE CURTAIN AND DRESSES. HE WRITES A
60 NOTE AND A PRESCRIPTION.)

61
62 DR. LONG:
63 I'm writing you this clearance. To begin chemo on
64 Monday.

65
66 DEBBIE:
67 Great!

68
69 DR. LONG:
70 Did you get a wig.

71
72 DEBBIE:
73 No. Not yet.

74
75 DR. LONG:
76 I think that's [it's] important.
77 (SHE HAS FINISHED DRESSING AND EMERGES.)

78
79 DEBBIE:
80 I tried. I looked at a few. But I couldn't do it. Not
81 yet.

82
83
84 DR. LONG:
85 Make it fun. Be a blonde. Or give yourself a perm.

86
87
88

89 DEBBIE:
90 I know I know. (SMALL PAUSE) You know, in some ways,
91 losing your hair is worse than losing your life.
92
93 DR. LONG:
94 (INSULTED) Hey!
95
96 DEBBIE:
97 (LAUGHING) Sorry.
98
99 DR. LONG:
100 I still haven't recovered!
101
102 DEBBIE:
103 So where's your wig?
104
105 DR. LONG:
106 (A JOKE) One day, I'll tell you about my car racing
107 accident. (GESTURE OF HAIR FLYING OFF.)
108
109 (SHE LAUGHS AGAIN)
110
111 DR. LONG:
112 (MAKING MORE JOKES) Get this--my barber just raised his
113 rate. 20 dollars! He says it's harder with less! That
114 comes to five dollars a hair.
115
116 (SHE LAUGHS AGAIN)
117
118 DR. LONG:
119 Hey, I forgot to look at your hand.
120
121 (SHE GIVES HIM HER LEFT HAND)
122
123 DEBBIE:
124 Here.
125
126 (THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES AS HE LOOKS FOR SWELLING BY 1)
127 PRESSING THE SKIN, 2) MOVING
128 THE FINGERS, AND 3) GENTLY
129 PINCHING THE SKIN ON THE BACK
130 OF HER HAND)
131
132 DR. LONG
133 You remember what I told you.
134
135 DEBBIE:
136 Yes. No injections, no trauma. Call you if it gets red
137 or swollen.
138
139 DR. LONG:
140 24 hours a day. Don't hesitate.
141

142 DEBBIE:
143 I know.
144
145 (SHE PLACES HER RIGHT HAND ON TOP OF HIS, SANDWICHING
146 HIS HAND BETWEEN HER TWO.)
147
148 DEBBIE:
149 Doc, how can I thank you.
150
151 DR. LONG:
152 You don't need to.
153
154 DEBBIE:
155 Yes I do. I mean it.
156
157 DEBBIE
158 (TOUCHES HIM, ALMOST INAPPROPRIATELY) Isn't there
159 something I can do? For you?
160
161 (PAUSE. HE REMOVES HER HAND.)
162
163 DEBBIE:
164 Type?...
165
166 DR. LONG:
167 Yes. Fight.
168
169 DEBBIE:
170 I'm sorry to lean on you. I can imagine that you have
171 hundreds...
172
173 DR. LONG:
174 --That's not important right now. You are. That's my
175 oath. When you're in my office, you get all of me.
176
177 DEBBIE:
178 (LIGHTLY, IN A GOOD MOOD, SHE'S BEEN RESTORED BY HIS
179 MANNER, SETTING HIM UP FOR A JOKE:) Well, you could do
180 me a favor.
181
182 DR. LONG:
183 (NOT REALIZING HE'S BEING SET UP) What? Anything.
184
185 DEBBIE:
186 Don't race any cars until you've gotten me over this
187 thing.
188
189 (SHE GESTURES. THEY LAUGH.)
190
191 DR. LONG:
192 I won't. Good luck with the chemo. I'll see you in two
193 weeks.
194
195 (HANDS HER HER CHART AND PRESCRIPTION.)
196

197 DEBBIE:
198 Thanks, doc.
199
200 (SHE HUGS HIM. HE RESPONDS, AWKWARDLY. SHE MOVES
201 TOWARD DOOR.)
202
203 DEBBIE:
204 Should I close the door?
205
206 DR. LONG:
207 Yes, please.
208
209 (SHE EXITS, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HER.)
210
211 (A PRIVATE MOMENT. WE SEE HIM PLOP INTO THE CLOSEST
212 CHAIR, UTTERLY EXHAUSTED.)
213
214 (HE SOBS.)
215
216 (A FEW BEATS LATER, KNOCK ON THE DOOR.)
217
218 (PAUSE. A SECOND KNOCK.)
219
220 DR. LONG:
221 Come in.
222
223 (SUZIE ENTERS. MID 20'S, LONG FLOWING DARK HAIR,
224 SHAPELY DANCER'S BODY, MINI
225 SKIRT. SHE CARRIES A CHART.)
226
227 SUZIE:
228 Hi!
229
230 DR. LONG:
231 (LOOKS UP, STILL IN A CLOUD, A BIT SURPRISED) Suzie!
232
233 (PAUSE. SHE LOOKS AT HIM CRITICALLY.)
234
235 SUZIE:
236 I'm glad your secretary could fit me in.
237
238 DR. LONG:
239 Is it two weeks?
240
241 SUZIE:
242 To the day!
243
244 DR. LONG:
245 (PAUSE) How are you?
246
247 SUZIE:
248 Not too good. My friend got beat up.
249

250 DR. LONG:
251 Is there anything I can do?
252
253 SUZIE:
254 No.
255
256 DR. LONG:
257 I can see you some other time.
258
259 SUZIE:
260 No. I know you wanted to see me. [I needed to see you,
261 too.]
262
263 (SHE HANDS HIM THE CHART. HE PUTS IT DOWN WITHOUT
264 OPENING IT.)
265
266
267 SUZIE:
268 Should I put on a gown?
269
270 DR. LONG:
271 Please.
272
273 [SHE GOES BEHIND THE CURTAIN TO GET INTO A GOWN.]
274
275 DR. LONG:
276 Did you notice, how many more appointments I have after
277 you.
278
279 SUZIE:
280 You're secretary said I'm the last one. It's past 7.
281
282 DR. LONG:
283 Is it? I can't believe it's been two weeks.
284
285 SUZIE:
286 Is that good or bad?
287
288 DR. LONG:
289 Good, that you stay in my mind. Bad, that my life is
290 running by.
291
292 SUZIE:
293 Still can't take some time off?
294
295 DR. LONG:
296 (HE TRIES THIS IN HIS MIND) Nooo. I'm too... needed...
297 Debbie...
298
299 SUZIE:
300 Who?
301
302 DR. LONG:
303 My last patient. A hero. Another life I've...
304 mutilated.

305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359

[SHE EMERGES WITH A GOWN ON, OPENING TO FRONT.]

SUZIE:

It's not you, it's the cancer.

DR. LONG:

I am the cancer. [(PAUSE) That's all I am.]

SUZIE:

Don't you talk that way! (TOUCHING HIM) I saw the way you helped my sister. You give each of them all you have, so much hope, and you have nothing left.

DR. LONG:

I swear, if I have to tell one more woman... [that I have to cut her,] if I lose her... All I see is death.

SUZIE:

I'm alive. And so are you. Now write a note [so we can get started].

DR. LONG:

Oh. Yes.

(HE PICKS UP THE CHART, BEGINS TO WRITE IN IT.)

(SHE GOES TO HIS DESK, LOOKS IN A DRAWER.)

SUZIE:

Where is it?

DR. LONG:

Oh. I moved it. There.

(SHE OPENS A DIFFERENT DRAWER, TAKES OUT A SMALL BOOM BOX.)

SUZIE:

Where's the tape?

DR. LONG:

There.

(SHE OPENS HIS MIDDLE DRAWER, TAKES OUT AN AUDIO TAPE.)

SUZIE:

But this is classical.

DR. LONG:

I know.

SUZIE:

Oh. OK.

360 (SHE PUTS TAPE IN BOOM BOX AND BRINGS IT BESIDE HIM. HE
361 STILL HAS THE CHART IN HIS
362 HAND.)

363
364 SUZIE:
365 Are you done with your note?

366
367 DR. LONG:
368 Yes.

369
370 SUZIE:
371 What did you write?

372
373 DR. LONG:
374 That I found a small cyst that needs to be watched,
375 given your family history.

376
377 SUZIE:
378 That should cover a few visits.

379
380 DR. LONG:
381 Since I failed her.

382
383 SUZIE:
384 Stop that. You took great care of her. You gave Donna
385 [just] what she needed. To the last moment.

386
387 DR. LONG:
388 You know, we haven't settled our bill.

389
390 SUZIE:
391 What about it?

392
393 DR. LONG:
394 I still owe you.

395
396 SUZIE:
397 You treated Donna for free. You helped her. And now
398 we're helping each other. And that's all we're talking
399 money. OK?

400
401 DR. LONG:
402 OK.

403
404 SUZIE:
405 Now are you ready?

406
407 DR. LONG:
408 (SHYLY) I guess...

409
410 (SHE LOCKS THE DOOR.)

411
412 (SHE TURNS ON THE BOOM BOX. CLASSICAL MUSIC BEGINS.)
413

414 (SHE THEN TAKES THE CHART FROM HIS HAND, WHERE IT HAS
415 REMAINED SINCE HE HAS BECOME
416 DISTRACTED BY HER BEAUTY, AND
417 PLACES IT ON HIS DESK.)
418

419 SUZIE:
420 Are you here? [With me?]
421

422 DR. LONG:
423 Half. Part of me is still with Debbie.
424

425 (SHE HUGS HIM. HE TENSES UP A BIT.)
426

427 SUZIE:
428 When I'm here, I want all of you. OK?
429

430 (HE NODS.)
431

432 SUZIE:
433 (CLOSE TO HIS FACE) That's the price you pay for
434 caring. For holding up all these women. And now I'm
435 here to restore you. To fill you up.
436

437 (SHE BEGINS TO DANCE, BALLETICALLY.)
438

439 SUZIE:
440 You want me to treat you?
441

442 DR. LONG:
443 Yes. Please.
444

445 SUZIE:
446 You can touch me, if you want.
447

448 DR. LONG:
449 No--no touching. All I want, is, to see...
450

451 (SHE OPENS HIS LEGS, PUTS HER HANDS ON HIS SHOULDERS,
452 MOVES VERY CLOSE TO HIM, HER
453 HAIR FLOWING OVER HIS FACE AND
454 SHOULDERS.)
455

456 SUZIE:
457 Tell me. What you see.
458

459 DR. LONG:
460 You're so beautiful.
461

462 SUZIE:
463 (GIGGLES, A PROFESSIONAL HABIT) Thank you. (PAUSE.
464 SOFTLY:) You're gonna take care of me if anything
465 happens?
466
467
468

469 DR. LONG:
470 I'll take care of you... forever... (SOME TEARS IN HIS
471 EYES).
472
473 SUZIE:
474
475 Am I healthy?
476
477 DR. LONG:
478 You're so healthy. So very healthy.
479
480 (SHE VERY SLOWLY BEGINS TO STRIP. SHE MAY HAVE A RING
481 THROUGH HER NAVEL.)
482
483 (SHE DANCES FOR A FEW MEASURES.)
484
485 SUZIE:
486 You love my body?
487
488 DR. LONG:
489 Oh, yes...
490
491 SUZIE:
492 You want me to heal you?
493
494 DR. LONG:
495 Yes... help me... go on...
496
497 (AS SHE CONTINUES TO DANCE BALLETTICALLY, STRIPPING, WE
498 SEE DR. LONG'S EXPRESSION
499 SLOWLY CHANGE. THE LIGHTS AND
500 MUSIC SLOWLY FADE.)
501
502 (THE END.)
503