

## What's On Millie's Mind

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A 10 minute play

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## SCENE 1

In a bedroom in a government run long term care facility - the basics, nothing fancy. There are some hand colored drawings on the walls. There are two single beds. One bed is against one wall and has a single long stemmed flower on it. On the other bed is a Korean male (80's), who is sleeping. This bed is a few feet away from the wall.

Millie (Korean 40's, female) tries to move the bed that has the sleeping man so it's closer to the wall. She pushes it, but it won't move. She looks at the bottom.

MILLIE

(to herself and whispering)

Are there wheels? Is it locked? How do you move this thing?

She looks around the bed. A knock at the door from a personal care worker who enters with a blood pressure monitor.

PCW

Just here to check your father's vitals.

MILLIE

Yes, of course. Please.

The personal care worker stops and see the bed Millie is standing by.

PCW

Did they leave the bed this way? The ambulance workers?

MILLIE

I'm trying to move it back, but I don't know how.

The personal care worker takes a breath.

PCW

I can do it. Hold on.

She walks to the man on the bed.

PCW

Mr. Ahn, I just need to check your blood pressure, okay?

He doesn't move. She puts the monitor around his left upper arm.

MILLIE

I could see if they're still here and can ask them to come back.

PCW

They've already left.

MILLIE

I'm sorry.

PCW

It happens. They're always in a rush to get out of here.

She checks the blood pressure and takes off the monitor. She tucks the blankets in properly.

PCW

He sleeps better when he's all tucked in. He's a fighter.

MILLIE

He is.

He's been to the hospital a lot lately.

Five times in a month. More than once a week.

The personal care worker lowers the bed.

PCW

They didn't even lower it.

MILLIE

I lowered it a little.

PCW

Yeah - it needs to go all the way down. He could fall, otherwise.

MILLIE

He looked at me.

PCW

Your father?

MILLIE

One of the ambulance workers. In the beginning he was friendly but when he found out my father was going back to his long term care facility, he looked at me like I wasn't a good daughter.

PCW

I don't think ambulance drivers care that much.

MILLIE

He was Korean too. I could tell by how he recognized the Korean I spoke to my father. At first he liked that i can speak our mother tongue. Koreans are supposed to take care of their parents - at our home - not in a long term care facility.

PCW

Your father has advanced dementia.

MILLIE

He didn't when he came here.

PCW

Who knows how fast it advances. The average person in a long term care facility lives in one for 2-3 years. Your father has been here for longer.

MILLIE

You were here when he came?

PCW

This is my job. Be good to yourself. You can't take care of both parents. Your mother is in stage seven too.

MILLIE

And it's getting worse every day. I see it.

PCW

No one can say what's right for each person, each family.

MILLIE

But the guilt...

PCW  
You visit. You're here now.

MILLIE  
I can't move the bed back.

PCW  
It locks when it's up high.

The personal care worker pushes the bed. Millie goes to help. They move it against the wall.

MILLIE  
I thought about them living with me in California but they wouldn't be able to get health insurance and I wouldn't be able to pay for their care there. They're treated well here. You and everyone else here are so great.

PCW  
We try.

MILLIE  
Above and beyond because it isn't easy work and the pay could be better.

PCW  
That's very true. The Canadian health care has problems, but it's good to the elderly. For now. Who knows how sustainable it is as the population ages and with the low birth rate...

The personal care worker tries to push some buttons on the bed, but it won't start. She takes a breath.

MILLIE  
Did I do something wrong?

PCW  
Sometimes it - I can do it.

The personal care worker pushes the bed away from the wall again.

PCW  
Yeah - the bed got unplugged. It happens.

She plugs the bed back in and moves it again by the wall.

PCW

There.

Mr. Ahn, I'll wake you up when it's time for dinner.

MILLIE

He didn't eat much at the hospital. Or sleep well. He's very tired.

PCW

I'm glad he's back.

MILLIE

Thank you for the flower.

Millie points to the single long stemmed flower on the other bed.

PCW

It's Mother's Day. We do that for all of the mothers.

MILLIE

It's kind.

## SCENE TWO

A Korean woman (late 70's) sits in a wheelchair. Her eyes are closed. Several wheelchairs with people in their 70's, 80's and 90's are around her. Millie enters and sits by the Korean woman.

MILLIE

Hi Umma. It's me, Millie - your youngest daughter. I'm here again. I came by yesterday and the day before and last month too.

Happy Mother's Day!

I'm going to leave tomorrow. I need to go to look after Sadie. She's doing very well. The best daughter I could have wished for. Your grand daughter.

Umma smiles.

MILLIE

I like your smile. You're listening. Thank you.

Sadie wishes she could be here but she has school.

You remember how you used to take care of her when she was born? I didn't know what to do and you helped me a lot.

I'm sorry I have to go. I wish I could stay longer.

Lester is leaving to go back to work - he works in South Dakota right now, this year and the next too so it's me being with Sadie during the week days. He comes back on the weekends.

I need to go early tomorrow. Back on a plane. I'll come again soon. When I can.

I wish we had more time together - for another day where we could talk, eat lunch, be together. Just together.

I miss you. I really do. I didn't think I would. I miss you so much, Umma. Too much.

I just want you back. Another moment when we could talk and be together... Where you can be my mother again...

Happy mother's day.

Do you remember how I used to sing that song - Where's My Mother's Face?

Can we sing it together? Let's do it. Okay? Please.

Millie sings the Korean children's song, Where  
Is My Mother's Face?

MILLIE

깜빡깜빡 엄마 눈 어디 있을까 [Blink, blink, where are my mother's eyes?]

요기요기 눈눈 여깁다 [Here it is eye to eye.]

벌렁벌렁 엄마 코 어디 있을까 [Where is my mother's nose?]

요기요기 코코 여깁다 [Here, here is her nose.]

빠끔빠끔 엄마 입 어디 있을까 [Where is my mother's mouth?]

요기요기 입입 여겼다 [Here, here it is - in and out.]

까딱까딱 엄마 귀 어디 있을까 [Where is my mother's ears?]

요기요기 귀귀 여겼다 [Knock, knock it is here.]

사랑합니다, 어머니 [I love you, mother.]

I love you so much.

Millie holds her mother's hands.

Blackout.