

Two of a kind. by Brian E Turner © 2003

CAST: ALICE about 25,
BEATRICE about 50

The set is minimal.

ALICE: You've come in again.

BEATRICE: Yes.

ALICE: You didn't knock.

BEATRICE: Do ghosts ever knock?

ALICE: I just wish you'd keep away.

BEATRICE: Why?

ALICE: I don't like you at all.

BEATRICE: That's not a nice thing to say to your only friend.

(Alice walks away downstage.)

ALICE: They took me... they took me to a place in the country. I had my own room. I was permitted to walk on the lawn. There was a statue of Adonis. He stalked through the Wonderglades and plucked me a bucket of tulips. He was my first friend. Then he went away to the land of witches and I was alone. I got well in time and then came back here. *(Pause)* She doesn't know about me. She only thinks she does.

(Beatrice comes up behind.)

BEATRICE: Have you been talking about me?

ALICE: No.

BEATRICE: I think you have.

ALICE: It's none of your business.

BEATRICE: What about that young man you were in love with once? What about him?

ALICE: I don't remember anything about that. Why do you tell me lies?

BEATRICE: I don't. I'm older than you. You should listen to what I say. Let me be your mother.

ALICE: My mother is dead.

BEATRICE: *(Walking aside.)* I clatter inside her head. It's my home. It's the only home I have. When I'm not in it I don't exist. Non sequitur. I'm very much like her, but I'm different. Older and wiser. I know she had a boyfriend. She's forgotten all about him. He used to bring her flowers and sweet summer wine. She let the flowers wither and die.

ALICE: Why don't you go?

BEATRICE: You can't make me.

ALICE: Sometimes, with great effort, I can.

BEATRICE: Sometimes.

ALICE: With effort.

BEATRICE: You are cruel. You don't care about me at all. I come to keep you company on frigid winter nights and all you do is ask me to leave.

ALICE: (*Walking aside.*) The west wind comes up cold from the sea. It howls through the corridors of my brain. Grey clouds surround me. Grey clouds embrace me. I wish she'd go. (*Pause*) Did I let the flower wither? Was he like a god looking down from Olympus? Remembrance is painful. Forgetfulness is sweet and soft and seductive.

BEATRICE: (*Coming up to her.*) It's better if you think of me as a friend.

ALICE: Are you trustworthy?

BEATRICE: Have I ever hurt you?

ALICE: No. The pain... the pain comes from elsewhere.

BEATRICE: You see, I am a salve.

ALICE: An opiate.

BEATRICE: Better than the drugs they prescribe you.

ALICE: But I hate you.

BEATRICE: (*Walking aside.*) What is hate but another form of love? A ducat has two sides but it is still of the one coinage. And we two are one, forged of the same metal. She wants to be alone and lonely. I bring her pain. I bring the vision of reality that she so much disregards. For her brief time now I will leave her alone.

(*Alice comes up.*)

ALICE: I think you are going.

BEATRICE: It is time.

ALICE: I don't want you to leave.

BEATRICE: It is time.

ALICE: If you go, don't shut the door.

BEATRICE: You know the door is always open.

(*They do not move. Curtain.*)