

## People, Places, Things by Duncan MacMillian

Emma is an actress with a drug and alcohol problem, she has checked herself into a rehab facility but is struggling to connect with the group and get to the root of her addictions. In this scene she is talking to a fellow patient about her job and life.

EMMA:

With a play you get instructions. Stage directions. Dialogue. Someone clothes you. Tells you where to be and when. You get to live the most intense moments of a life over and over again, with all the boring bits left out. And you get to practise. For weeks. And you're applauded. Then you get changed. Leave through the stage door. Bus home. Back to real life. All the boring stuff left in. Waiting. Temping. Answering phones and serving canapés. Nothing permanent. Can't plan. Can't get a mortgage or pay for a car. Audition comes in. Try to look right. Sit in a room surrounded by people who look just like you, all after the same part. Never hear back. Or if you get the part it'll be sitting around in rehearsal and backstage making less than you did temping. Make these friendships with people, a little family, fall in love onstage and off and then it's over and you don't see them again. You try not to take it personally when people who aren't as good as you get the parts.

But you keep going because sometimes, if you're really lucky, you get to be onstage and say things that are absolutely true, even if they're made up. You get to do things that feel more real to you, more authentic, more meaningful than anything in your own life. You get to speak poetry, words which you would never think to say but which become yours as you speak them.

It feels like Lydia wants me to acknowledge some buried trauma but there isn't any. I played Antigone and every night my heart broke about her dead brother. Then my own brother died and I didn't feel anything. I missed the funeral because I had a matinee. I'm not avoiding talking to the Group because I've got something to hide. It's the opposite. If I'm not in character I'm not sure I'm really there. I'm already dead. I'm nothing.

Acting gives me the same thing I get from drugs and alcohol. Good parts are just harder to come by.