Making It

a play by Chris Douthit

(The gender of the characters is irrelevant, so there is not one assigned to any of the characters.

Well and Ill have a close relationship.

There are multiple places in the show where pauses should be drawn out to create a sense of discomfort. The silence between Well and Ill is important.

Lights come up on Ill, a thin person with closely cropped hair or wearing a bandana/scarf around his/her head. Ill wears pajamas or sweats and sits by a small table with some cards and flowers in a wheelchair, a beautiful blanket wrapped around their shoulders. Ill could be on oxygen and his/her breath is labored. Ill’s eyes and cheeks are sunken. Ill is in the late stages of a brutal disease. Ill seems to doze.

A hospice nurse is cleaning up some stuff, packing a backpack and preparing to leave. He or she is dressed in regular street clothes. He/she has a badge on the hem of his/her shirt.

The door opens. In rushes Well, a good looking and healthy person. Well is well dressed, as if coming from a white collar job. Well carries a container that could keep food either hot or cold.)

Well (to nurse): Hey.

Nurse: Hey.

Well: How was today?

Nurse: Okay, but it’ll probably be any day now. You might want to take some time off.

Well: Alright. Thanks. See you tomorrow.

Nurse: Yeah. Later. (Nurse exits).

(Well goes to Ill, gently shakes him/her awake).

Well: I made it!

Ill: You made it. (checks watch)
Well: No...I made it. *(referring to a foil covered dishes Well is lifting from the case. As the scene progresses, Well talks as he/she prepares the dish for dinner)*

Ill: Oh. *(distracted by a headache, still waking up)*

Well: You doubted me?

Ill: Hmmm… a little.

Well: What?

Ill: I didn’t think you’d make it. *(referring again to the time)*

Well: Why?

Ill: You’re so busy.

Well: I’m not too busy for you. *(Well stoops to kiss Ill on the forehead). How was your day?*

Ill: Okay…

Well: Just okay? Did you do anything?

Ill: I slept a lot. Watched some Parks and Rec. I don’t know. Slept some more, I guess.

Well: Did you take your meds? *(Well examines a pill box on the table)*

Ill: Yes. Of course.

Well: I’m just checking because you slept so much. I just want to make sure you’re getting everything you need. Speaking of which, have you eaten anything today?

Ill: I don’t remember. No...I don’t… yes. I had some banana.

Well: Is that all? You need to eat more, babe. If you’re going to get...um...you know you should eat. *(turns to focus on food preparation and to hide stick his/her foot in his/her mouth)*

Ill *(snorts at the thought of getting better):* Yeah. Well. I’m not really hungry.
Well: Do you think you can get some of this down?

Ill: What is it?

Well: What is it? What is it? (turning to Ill incredulously) I said that I made it. IT. It’s the last recipe in the book. (Well picks up the book on the table and thumbs to a specific page, turning it to Ill). Look

Ill: Oh. (reading) Osso Bucco, Saffron Risotto, and Braised Belgian endive.

Well: All that’s from the Bourdain cookbook. And Chocolate chiffon pie for dessert...I forget where we got that recipe, though. That Mark Bitman book you love so much?

Ill: You didn’t really make all that, did you? Where did you make it?

Well: Only the best for you…well, I hope it’s good, at least. I made it all in the kitchen at work. It was a little awkward, but I wanted it to be a surprise. And I hope you can try it.

Ill: At work? Wow. Okay. Of course I can try it. I just don’t know if I can eat that much.

Well (laughing): Maybe neither of us can eat that much. It might taste like shit.

Ill: If you followed the recipe, I’m sure it’ll be good.

Well: I think there’s more to it than that.

Ill: What did you save the hardest recipes for last?

Well: Is it that obvious?

Ill (laughing): I see. Save the hard ones for last so that if I kicked the bucket before we finished the book of recipes, you wouldn’t have to make it. Smart.

Well: Who said I wouldn’t make it?

(Awkward pause. Ill has a short coughing fit)

Ill: Wait a second. You were going to make it even after I died?
Well (hesitant): Yeah...to, like, honor you. As a tribute.

Ill: But the idea was to make all the recipes BEFORE I died so we could eat them together.

Well: I know, but…

Ill: But?

Well: What if we didn’t make it?

Ill (resentful): Well, we made it…See (point to the food)... (long pause)... You know there was always going to be an end.

Well: I know. I know. Look, I don’t know. What was I supposed to do?

Ill: You were supposed to do what we agreed on. We made a book of recipes to make and eat together before I died and if we didn’t get to the end of the book…

Well (interrupting): What, was I supposed to burn the book? Bury it with you? What?

Ill (taken aback): No. I...

Well: This is my experience...my experiment too. I wanted to see it through. What am I supposed to do when you’re gone? I’m not just going to stop existing, you know?

Ill: No…. I am.

Well: That’s not what I meant. You know what I mean. To hell with the cooking. How am I even going to go to the grocery store? Go to work? Take a shower? Get out of bed without you?

Ill: You don’t think I’ve thought about all that?

Well: No. I mean...I know you have.

Ill: It’s all I think about all day, every day while you’re at work. I don’t watch Parks and Rec. I worry about you. I know it’s going to be hard for you.

Well (flustered): Let’s just eat the damn food. It’s going to get too cold.
(Well has finished plating the food. Well sets napkins and silverware first then sets the gourmet meal in front of Ill with a flourish. Well pours a glass of wine. They start to eat.)

Ill: (tasting the food): Oh…

Well: What? Is it not good?

Ill: Sorry. No...I meant oooh. It IS good.

Well: Really? God. You scared me.

(They eat more in silence. We hear the clinking of silverware on plates. Well drinks all his/her wine and pours more. Ill coughs has another coughing fit)

Ill (recovering from the coughing): Look, hon. I am sorry.

Well: It’s okay. I’m sorry, too. I shouldn’t have said that I would have made this without you. I mean, I shouldn’t have even thought it.

Ill (eating): No. You were right. You are going to have to eat. (chuckles) Mmmm...this really is good.

Well: Why do you say it like that? You didn’t have faith in me?

Ill (mouth full): No. It’s not that. I am just surprised. This is a big, complicated recipe with everything else you are doing. And you made it yourself. When we started this, we were doing it together, but now I can’t help. The cooking was my thing.

Well: Yeah, the eating part was mine...but I wanted to do this for you.

Ill: You’re right. It was our thing (pause)...Thank you for doing this for me.

Well (puts fork down): You’re welcome…. Babe, I’m going to miss you.

Ill: I’m going to miss you too.

(Well gets up and kneels in front of Ill, hugging him/her around the waist. Well may be crying.)

Well (looking up at Ill): I just don’t know how I am going to make it….
**Ill:** Hon...you will make it.

(Lights down.)

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*Production Notes:*

*Alternatively, the action could take place with Ill in a hospital bed, but still at home, as in a living room. In the end, instead of Well hugging Ill in the wheelchair, he/she would get into bed with Ill.*

*Because the food may pose a problem for some productions, the dishes could also be changed, depending on what is available. However, the point is that the recipes are complicated and impressive sounding. Also, the food used on stage need not be what is mentioned in the script, though it would be better if the actors were actually eating something.*