

## **Frankentits**

a dramatic comedy feature film by Ellen T. Meiser

*Uninterested in silver-linings or corny tropes, a 31-year-old woman documents her breast cancer treatment journey by focusing on the moments that matter to her— the shitty, the funny, and the lonely bits.*

### **Synopsis**

During a night of bingeing a zombie show, SARAH HAMMOND-CHANG, a vibrant 31-year-old in suburban Loma Linda, California, finds a lump in her breast. What follows is a non-linear story about her journey through treatment and the experiences *she* finds important.

The story begins near the *maybe(?)*-end of Sarah's active cancer treatment: daily radiation therapy, antibody infusions, and regular checkups with her oncologist. Sarah's calmness at these appointments lies in stark contrast to her shock when she is first diagnosed and the rage she feels towards her disobedient body. It's through emotions that we get a peek into chemotherapy, which she shows us is analogous to the ancient Chinese torture method, "Death by 1,000 Cuts."

It's tough. Any cancer story is. But Sarah's is softened by the people around her: TY, her husband, her MOM, and LULU, a fellow patient who becomes her, "Boob Guru." Also helping her regain a bit of lightness are solo dance sessions in the bathroom to Mexican big band music and dirty rap, and a recognition of the lessons she's learned: how to swallow a gag-inducing amount of pills; the joy of nose picking; how steroids feel like meth; and how much she's loved.

With the help of a plastic surgeon, Sarah chooses her future breasts, tipping off a rumination over her relationship with her body and femininity. The irony of a "lady cancer" draining the "lady-ness" of its victims— turning them bald, boobless, infertile, dry, and unattractive—is not lost on Sarah. Lulu helps Sarah navigate this irony, and they grow closer over frank discussions about superstition in the face of mortality.

But cracks begin to appear in the relationships that hold her afloat: Ty's work obligations pull him away from being the support Sarah needs and Lulu suddenly goes MIA. The film culminates with Sarah confronting them both, and the discovery that Lulu's cancer has returned. With this realization, the friends' relationship shifts, Sarah becoming Lulu's Boob Guru.

The film winds down with a clinical view of Sarah's double mastectomy. When she wakes up, she has a hard time recognizing herself through the surgical aftermath. A call to Lulu, though, eases her mind about her new "Frankentits."

With the whirr of machines at Sarah's last radiation and a prayer to God, Jah, Allah, the Buddhas, aliens, and all higher spirits above, the movie closes. Does Sarah survive or are her ashes sprinkled somewhere? We don't know. And most importantly, she doesn't want us to know. That's not the point of this story. After all, as she explains, "this is a tale about the trek of cancer. It's not 'The Fellowship' or 'The Return of the King' from *Lord of the Rings*. Nope. This is 'The Two Towers.'" As the screen fades to black, the trek continues.

**Contact Information:** [ellentmeiser@gmail.com](mailto:ellentmeiser@gmail.com)