

# ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

A Play in Two Acts by  
**DALE WASSERMAN**

From the Novel by  
**Ken Kesey**



**Samuel French, Inc.**

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**SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.**  
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TORONTO

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(Name of Producer)  
presents  
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST  
By Dale Wasserman (50%)  
Based on the novel by Ken Kesey (25%)

Broadway Premiere: November 13, 1963 at the Cort Theatre

## **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST**

**BY DALE WASSERMAN**

FROM THE NOVEL BY KEN KESEY

**Produced by David Merrick and Edward Lewis**

in association with

**Seven Arts and Eric Productions**

### **CAST**

*(In order of appearance)*

Chief Bromden	ED AMES
Aide Warren	LINCOLN KILPATRICK
Aide Williams	LEONARD PARKER
Nurse Ratched	JOAN TETZEL
Nurse Flinn	ASTRID WILSRUD
Dale Harding	WILLIAM DANIELS
Ellis	ARNOLD SOBOLOFF
Billy Bibbit	GENE WILDER
Scanlon	MALCOLM ATTERBURY
Cheswick	GERALD S. O'LOUGHLIN
Martini	AL NESOR
Ruckly	WILLIAM GLEASON
Fredericks	WESLEY GALE
Sefelt	CHARLES TYNER
Col. Matterson	PAUL HUBER
Randle P. McMurphy	KIRK DOUGLAS
Dr. Spivey	REX ROBBINS
Aide Turkle	MILTON J. WILLIAMS
Candy Starr	ARLENE GOLONKA
Nurse Nakamura	MICHI KOBI
Technician	CLIFFORD COTHREN
Sandra	K.C. TOWNSEND
Aide	PAUL GUMENY

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST,  
revised from three to two acts and rewritten for a smaller cast, opened  
Off-Broadway at the Mercer-Hansberry Theatre on March 23, 1971,  
and played for two and a half years (1,025 performances).

*"Like a cartoon world, where the figures are flat and outlined in black, jerking through some kind of goofy story that might be real funny if it weren't for the cartoon figures being real guys..." — One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

**SANKOWICH/GOLYN PRODUCTIONS**

presents

**DALE WASSERMAN'S  
ONE FLEW OVER  
THE  
CUCKOO'S NEST.  
FROM THE NOVEL BY KEN KESEY**

Production Designed by **NEIL PETER JAMPOLIS**

Produced by **RUDI GOLYN**

Directed by **LEE D. SANKOWICH**

**CAST** (In order of appearance)

Chief Bromden.....	WILLIAM BURNS
Aide Williams.....	WILLIAM PATERSON, JR.
Aide Washington.....	JOHN HENRY REDWOOD
Nurse Ratched .....	JANET WARD
Nurse Flinn.....	EVE PACKER
Dale Harding .....	JAMES J. SLOYAN
Billy Bibbitt .....	LAWRIE DRISCOLL
Charles Atkins Cheswick III .....	WILLIAM DUFF-GRIFFIN
Frank Scanlon.....	JON RICHARDS
Anthony Martini .....	DANNY DE VITO
Ruckly.....	JOSEPH NAPOLI
Randle PatrickMcMurphy .....	WILLIAM DEVANE
Dr. Spivey.....	JACK AARON
Aide Turkel .....	JEFFREY MILLER
Candy .....	LOUIE PIDAY
Technician .....	KELLY MONAGHAN
Sandy .....	SYDNEYANDREANI
Voices.....	JOHN GARBER, DOUG ARMAND, JOSEPH NAPOLI, DANNY RICH, MARC NELSEN, TEDDI KERN, JAMES BARNETT, JOHN BLAKELEY, LEE D. SANKOWICH

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### THE PATIENTS

Chief Bromden  
Dale Harding  
Billy Bibbit  
Scanlon  
Cheswick  
Martini  
Ruckley  
Randle P. McMurphy

### THE STAFF

Aide Warren  
Aide Williams  
Dr. Spivey  
Nurse Ratched  
Nurse Flinn  
Aide Turkle

### OTHERS

Candy Starr  
Sandra

## NOTE

There is profanity and strong language in the play. Particularly as concerns educational institutions and community theatres, you may feel at liberty to modify or delete language which may give offense in your community without, however, altering the basic text.

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## ACT I

*SCENE: The Day Room in a ward of a State Mental Hospital somewhere in the Pacific Northwest. A spacious, clean-lined expanse, impersonal and rather sterile. The furniture is plastic-covered. The trappings are at a minimum and disciplined in disposal. There are large, high windows opening on the ground level of a green world outdoors. Formidable locked steel grilles cover these windows, which are customarily left open. A door opens into the latrine. Next to this, a broom closet. There is a bulletin board, a magazine rack, a games cabinet and, on a pedestal, the patients' Log Book. A locked door leads to the hallway; another door, unlocked, to the dormitory. The Nurses' Station is a large booth, somewhat elevated. It has sliding glass panels through which the CHARGE NURSE may keep all the room under scrutiny. It is always kept locked. Through the glass may be seen drug cabinets set in the wall. NURSES sit at a desk facing the room; on this desk a telephone and a microphone, and to one side a tape recorder. These latter two feed into speakers set in the walls or ceilings of the Day Room. Mounted on the wall behind the desk there is an array of switches, dials, toggles and knobs through which the NURSES, with godlike power, can monitor lights, sound, TV, etc. At the foot of the Station there is a gray steel oblong, perhaps three feet long. This is the "panel" which houses the transformers, relays and electrical cables feeding into the Station. It has a squat, brutish look, disguised by cushions which allow it to be used as a bench. There is a TV set, kept out of the way when not in use. The arrangement of tables and chairs is flexible.*

*AT RISE: The stage is dark but for a single shaft of light on CHIEF BROMDEN. He is a huge, bull-muscled Indian who stand six and a half feet but when people are about carries himself like a small man. Head cocked, he is listening. Vague and milky light-patterns wreath and intertwine across the stage.*



*(There comes the soft, puissant thunder of machinery and, contrapuntally, the pinging rhythm of electronic music. Behind the glass of the darkened Nurses' Station colored lights pulse and dance accompaniment.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. You hear it Papa? The Black Machine. They got it goin', eighteen stories down below the ground. They're puttin' people in one end and out comes what they want. The way they do it, Papa, each night they tip the world on its side and everybody loose goes rattlin' to the bottom. Then they hook 'em by the heels, and they hang 'em up and cut 'em open. Only by that time they got no innards, just some beat-up gears and stuff, and all they bleed is rust. You think I'm ravin' 'cause it sounds too awful to be true, but, my God, there's such a lot of things that's true even if they never really happen!

*(A bell rings. The sounds and dancing light are gone, and the STAGE LIGHTS UP with the effect almost of an explosion. Whistling is heard from off as the AIDES approach. CHIEF BROMDEN freezes into the catatonic stance. A key hits the lock, and AIDES WARREN and WILLIAMS enter, their rubber-soled shoes making no sound. They wear starched and spotless white uniforms and they lope in tandem or abreast like a team of splendid, lithe panthers.)*

WARREN. Well, well, here's the Chief.

WILLIAMS. The soopah-Chief.

WARREN. Ol' deef an' dumb.

WILLIAMS. Had his breakfas' an' rarin' to go.

WARREN. *(Coming close to CHIEF BROMDEN.)* Don' you know better? Don' you know keep to your room till that bell ring? *(CHIEF BROMDEN slides away.)* Haw, look at 'im shag it! Big enough t'eat apples off my head and he scared like a baby.

WILLIAMS. What you want, baby? Yo' broom? *(Going to fetch it.)* Thassit. He want his broom.

WARREN. Ol' Chief Broom. Thassit, baby, thassa good loony.

WILLIAMS. *(Thrusts the broom into CHIEF BROMDEN'S*

hands.) Start sweepin', baby.

WARREN. Ol' Broom Bromden.

WILLIAMS. Ol' Chief Broom

*(They bray with laughter. Unseen by them NURSE RATCHED has entered. She is a handsome woman, her age hard to tell. There is an odd perfection about her: face smooth as flesh-colored enamel, skin a blend of white and cream. A brilliant warm smile which appears often. Her body is ripe and womanly, evident even under the starched white uniform. Now she moves up on the AIDIES, silently as though she were on wheels.)*

NURSE RATCHED. If you don't mind, boys? *(The AIDES are startled.)* I don't think it wise to group up and stand around like that. Mean ol' Monday morning, you know, *such* a lot to get done?

WARREN and WILLIAMS. Yeah, Miz Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. That's fine, boys. Warren, you might start by getting poor Mr. Bromden shaved, and Williams, you have dormitory duty, don't you?

WILLIAMS. Yeah, Miz Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. That's just fine.

*(WILLIAMS disappears into the dormitory and WARREN plucks the broom from CHIEF BROMDEN and tows him toward the latrine.)*

NURSE FLINN. *(Enters hurriedly. She is a vapid girl with apprehensive eyes, who wears a gold cross at her throat.)* Good morning, Miss Ratched. *(NURSE RATCHED looks at her watch.)* I'm sorry I'm late, but I went to Midnight Mass, and then I overslept, and —

NURSE RATCHED. *(Smilingly unlocks the Station.)* Never mind, we'd best get started, hadn't we? *(NURSE FLINN scurries into the Station and starts popping pills into paper cups. NURSE RATCHED throws a series of switches, then picks up the microphone. Her voice booms out over speakers in the Day Room and the dormitory.)* Medication. All patients to the Day Room. Medication.

*(Clicks off the microphone. Leaves the Station, ready to greet patients as they enter. To the FIRST PATIENT, cheerily:)* Good morning, Mr. Harding.

HARDING. *(Pausing briefly.)* Are you sure? *(He goes to NURSE FLINN. He is in his late thirties, handsome, effete. Rolling his eyes aloft.)* Dear Lord, for the tranquillity we are about to receive, we thank Thee. *(Pops pills and water into his mouth. Crosses to set up a card table and get a pinochle deck from the cabinet.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Warmly, to the next PATIENT.)* Billy, dear. *(Linking arms with him affectionately.)* I spoke to your mother last night. *(BILLY halts apprehensively. In age, almost thirty, but appears more like a boy.)* I had to tell her.

BILLY. Whu-what did you say?

NURSE RATCHED. *(Pulls back his sleeve, revealing bandages on the wrist.)* That you were very sorry and had promised not to try it again.

BILLY. Th-thank you, Miss Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. *(Handing him his water.)* Drink it all, dear. *(Calling to another PATIENT who has entered.)* Good morning, Mr. Scanlon. Mr. Cheswick.

*(SCANLON, a man nearly bald, in his fifties, stalks across to a table without answering. He sets down a box he is carrying, pulls up a chair and starts working with tools inside the box. CHARLES CHESWICK is short, chubby, crew-cut; his manner alternately truculent and cringing.)*

CHESWICK. *(Examining the pills NURSE FLINN hands him.)* Wait a shake, honey. What're these?

NURSE FLINN. Medication.

CHESWICK. Christ, I can see that. What kind?

NURSE FLINN. *(Trying a flirting technique.)* Just swallow them, Mr. Cheswick — just for me?

CHESWICK. Don't gimme that crap, all I want to know, for the luvva God — !

NURSE RATCHED. *(Laying a hand on his arm.)* It's all right, Charles.

CHESWICK. Whattaya mean, it's all right?!

NURSE RATCHED. You don't have to take them.

CHESWICK. That's what I mean, you just shove any old shit at a man ...! I don't? Well ... that's okay then.

*(He takes the pills and water and downs them without further fuss. MARTINI, a little Italian, bounds into the room, eager and bright-eyed, dashes into the latrine, immediately reappears.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Good morning, Mr. Martini.

MARTINI. *(Addressing absolutely no one.)* Mornin'!

*(He goes to NURSE FLINN and downs his pills. Then, as CHESWICK has done, he joins HARDING and BILLY at the card table. RUCKLY enters, herded by WILLIAMS, shambles across stage. A once-powerful body now undirected by intelligence, blank-faced and empty-eyed, with shaven skull.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Greeting him.)* Mr. Ruckly.

RUCKLY. *(Pausing, his lips working in a fury of inarticulation.)*  
F-f-f-fuck 'em all!

*(He backs into the wall as though yanked by a rubber rope, and freezes there, crucified.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Taking a note from her clipboard.)* Williams, we've a new admission today. I'd like you to meet him at Receiving.

WILLIAMS. *(Taking the slip of paper.)* Yeah, Miz Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. Miss Flinn, I'll be in the Staff Room. *(To the patients.)* Behave yourself, boys!

*(She exits.)*

CHESWICK. *(Mimicking.)* "Behave yourself, boys!" What choice we got?

*(The latrine door bursts open and CHIEF BROMDEN comes floun-*

*dering out in flight from WARREN who pursues, brandishing an electric shaver with its long cord dangling.)*

WARREN. Come back here, yuh damn redskin! Don' like this, huh? *(He raises and brandishes it at CHIEF BROMDEN, making a buzzing sound, and CHIEF BROMDEN recoils and plops into the rocking chair, huddling in fright.)* Hmm. Can't say I like that look in your eye. *(Takes a restraining strap from his back pocket, skillfully whips it around CHIEF BROMDEN'S chest, cinching it behind the chair.)* Yeah .. tha's some better.

*(NURSE FLINN has crossed with a medical tray to SCANLON and now sets it down on his table.)*

SCANLON. *(Indignantly, shoving the tray away from his box.)*  
Look out, there!

NURSE FLINN. No, no!

WARREN. *(Grinning.)* Sweet thing, you want some help?

NURSE FLINN. *(Primly.)* I don't need any, thank you.

*(WARREN exits, laughing. NURSE FLINN retrieves her tray, and retreats to the safety of the Nurses' Station.)*

HARDING. Your deal, Martini.

MARTINI. Huh? Oh, yeah, here we go! *(Deals enthusiastically, sailing an extra set of cards off to his left to a player who isn't there.)*

CHESWICK. Hey, cut it out!

MARTINI. Whatsa matter?

CHESWICK. There's nobody there.

MARTINI. *(Doubtfully.)* You sure?

CHESWICK. There's only four of us.

MARTINI. Okay! *(Picks up the cards and starts dealing again, this time sailing off an extra set to his right.)*

HARDING. Martini, will you for God's sake stop hallucinating? Oh, give me the cards! *(Snatches them and starts to deal himself.)*

CHESWICK. *(Chortling suddenly.)* Ha!

BILLY. What's f-f-funny?

CHESWICK. That mousey little nurse. Reminds me of the first time I ever saw a girl take off her clothes. I was eight, see, and I was sitting up in a tree looking through her bedroom window, and by the time she got down to her li'l panties, I got to shakin' till I fell outa the friggin' tree!

*(BILLY stands up and goes to the Log Book.)*

HARDING. *(Without turning his head.)* That's it, Billy, write it down.

BILLY. Well, we're sub-supposed to.

CHESWICK. Sure, get a gold star by your name.

BILLY. You write down everything I say.

CHESWICK. Yeah, and I'm going to write down some things you *did*!

HARDING. Shut up, you two.

RUCKLY. *(Roused.)* F-f-fuck 'em all!

HARDING. Oh, for heaven's sake, this place is a *madhouse*. *(Rising.)* Fellow psychopaths. As President of the Patients' Council I, Dale Harding, do hereby decree ten seconds of blessed — therapeutic — silence. *(Clasps his hands and bows his head. The silence is almost immediately shattered by a ringing, brassy, voice as the ward door is opened.)*

McMURPHY. *(Off.)* Buddy, you are *so* wrong, I *don't* have to do this, and I *don't* have to do that, and *get* the hell away from me or I will take and ... *(Has backed into view in a fighting crouch, pursued by WILLIAMS who looks hot and angry and frustrated. Now he becomes aware of the room and the PATIENTS staring at him.)* Good mornin', buddies! Mighty nice fall day! *(Let's have a look at McMURPHY. Shaggy, with long sideburns. A devilish grin and a face battered and scarred across nose and cheekbone. He wears a black motorcyclists' cap, an ancient brown leather jacket and jeans faded almost to whiteness. On his feet lumberman's boots with a ring of steel in the heels. A wide-open extroverted air which registers almost shockingly in this environment. Now he hooks his thumbs in his belt and starts to laugh. It rolls big and free, and its vibrations jolt*

the PATIENTS openmouthed.) Damn, what a sorry-lookin' bunch!

WILLIAMS. Now, see here, mister —

McMURPHY. Get away from me, boy, give me a minute to look my new home over, will ya? What the hell, I never been in a Institute of Psychology before! (As WILLIAMS goes into the Nurses' Station; advancing on the group.) My name is McMurphy, buddies, R. P. McMurphy, and I am a gamblin' fool. (Squinting at the hands.) What's this you're playin'? Pinochle? Jesus, ain'tcha got a straight deck around here? Well, say, here we go, I brought along my own just in case. (Distributing samples.) Every card a picture — and check those pictures, huh? (The MEN go bug-eyed at what they see on the cards.) Fifty-two positions, boys, every one different. Easy now, don't smudge 'em, we got lotsa time, lotsa games. (WILLIAMS is ex-postulating unheard with NURSE FLINN who picks up the telephone but will get no help. McMurphy takes back his cards.) Y'see, buddies, what happened was I got in a couple hassles down at the Work Farm and the Court ruled that I'm a psychopath. And do you think I'm gonna argue with the Court? (Winks broadly.) Shoo, you can bet your bottom dollar I don't. If it gets me outa those damn pea fields I'll be whatever their little heart desires, be it psychopath or mad dog or werewolf, because I don't care if I never see another weedin' hoe to my dying' day — (WILLIAMS had come up behind him to renew the assault. McMURPHY seizes a chair and fends him off, lion-tamer fashion.) — and will you get the fuck away from me?

WILLIAMS. Mister, we got rules. I gotta take your temperature, and I gotta get you showered.

McMURPHY. All you gotta do is let me get acquainted with my new buddies here, and if you do *one* thing more —!

WILLIAMS. (Grimly.) All right, fella, you askin' for it, you gonna get it. (Turns and marches out of the ward.)

McMURPHY. (Laughs his wall-shaking laugh.) That's a whole deal better, now we can get somethin' settled. Okay, which of you's the bull goose loony? (The MEN gape at him.) I'm askin', who is the bull goose loony?

BILLY. Well, it's not m-me, mister. I'm not the buh-buh-bull goose loony, although you could say I'm next in luh-line for the job.

McMURPHY. (Sticking out his paw, which BILLY avoids.) Well,

buddy, I'm truly glad you're next in luh-line for the job, but since I'm thinkin' a takin' over this whole shebang maybe you better take me to your leader.

BILLY. Mister Harding ... you're President of the Pay-Pay-Patients' Council ...

HARDING. (*Leans back, looks at the ceiling.*) Does this ... gentleman ... have an appointment?

BILLY. Do you have an appointment, Mister-Mc-Muh-Murphy? Mister Harding is a busy man.

McMURPHY. This busy man Harding, is he the bull goose loony?

BILLY. That's right.

McMURPHY. Well, you tell Bull Goose Loony Harding that R. P. McMurphy is waitin' to see him and this nut-house ain't big enough for the two of us. You tell him either he meets me man to man or he's a yaller skunk and better be outa town by sunset.

HARDING. Billy, you tell this young upstart McMurphy that I'll meet him in the main hall at high noon and we'll settle this affair once and for all, with libidos a'blazin'.

McMURPHY. Billy, you tell him that R. P. McMurphy is used to bein' top man in *every* situation, so if he's bound to be a loony he figures to be the stompdown dadgum biggest one of all! (*HARDING rises and attempts to go around McMURPHY, who quickly stops him by stepping in his path. McMURPHY holds out his hand and HARDING, conceding defeat, takes it.*) There, by God, and we ain't spilled a drop of blood! Now, who's the rest of these fellers?

HARDING. Well, on this side of the room we're the Acutes.

McMURPHY. What's acute about you?

HARDING. That means we are presumably curable. Over there, the Chronics. (*Pointing out the types.*) A Walker and a Vegetable.

McMURPHY. And they ain't curable? Well, what the hell! (*Attempting to shake hands with MARTINI.*) Hiya, buddy, R. P. McMurphy, howdye do? (*MARTINI refuses to acknowledge his presence. To CHESWICK.*) Randle P. McMurphy ...

CHESWICK. (*Ignoring his hand.*) Got any cigarettes ...?

McMURPHY. Nothin' butt. Get it? (*Hands him the pack. On to SCANLON, a slap on the shoulder.*) Buddy, how'rya?



SCANLON. (*Slamming the lid on the box.*) Careful!

McMURPHY. What's that you're makin'?

SCANLON. (*Darkly.*) A bomb — to blow up the whole stinkin' world.

McMURPHY. Oh man, you got *competition*. (*Trots on to RUCKLY, pulls up short to regard him reproachfully.*) Buddy, my name is R. P. McMurphy and I don't like to see a grown man sloshin' around in his own water. Now, why'nt you go get dried up?

HARDING. Pull the nails out.

McMURPHY. The — ? Oh, sure! (*Pulls the invisible "nails."*)

RUCKLY. F-f-fuck 'em all! (*He staggers off to the dorm.*)

McMURPHY. (*Stops short at CHIEF BROMDEN strapped in the chair.*) Hooeee! What have we got here?

CHESWICK. That's Chief Bromden.

McMURPHY. What's your story, Big Chief?

BILLY. He can't hear you. He's duh-deaf and dumb.

McMURPHY. Well, what they got him strapped down for? I don't like that, no, *sir*. (*As he unstraps the CHIEF.*) It just ain't dignified. (*CHIEF BROMDEN rises. McMURPHY whistles.*) Say, you get your full growth you're gonna be pretty good-sized. (*Circles CHIEF BROMDEN on a tour of inspection.*) What tribe is he?

BILLY. I don't know. He was here when I c-came.

HARDING. According to the doctor, He's a Columbia River Indian ... one of those who lived up on the waterfalls? But I believe the tribe is now defunct.

McMURPHY. That right, Chief? You defunct?

BILLY. He c-can't hear a word you say.

(*NURSE RATCHED has entered, followed by WILLIAMS. WARREN comes out of the Station and joins them.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Holding out her hand.*) Mr. McMurphy.

McMURPHY. (*Shaking hands with her.*) Howdy, Ma'am!

NURSE RATCHED. I'll take that ... (*She takes the strap from him, hands it to WARREN.*) Aide Williams tells me you are being difficult.

McMURPHY. (*Pained.*) Me?

NURSE RATCHED. I understand you refused to take your admission shower?

McMURPHY. Well, as to that, ma'am, they showered me at the courthouse and last night at the jail, and I swear they'd of washed my ears for me on the way over if they coulda found the facilities. *(Explodes into laughter — alone.)*

NURSE RATCHED. That's quite amusing, Mr. McMurphy. But you must realize that our policies are engineered for *your cure*. Which means cooperation.

McMURPHY. Ma'am, I'll cooperate from hell to Thursday, but you wouldn't want me to be unpolite? I mean, had to get acquainted with my new buddies?

NURSE RATCHED. *(Ever-smiling.)* Please understand, I *do* appreciate the way you've taken it upon yourself to ... orient with other patients? But everything in its own time. You *must* follow the rules.

McMURPHY. *(Face close to NURSE RATCHED'S, smiling brightly.)* Ya know, ma'am — that is the *exact* thing somebody *always* tells me about the rules — just when I'm thinkin' a breakin' every one of 'em.

*(LIGHTS DOWN FAST, but for a shaft on CHIEF BROMDEN. The stage does not go completely dark, but is covered by moving projections ... bizarre, intertwining patterns through which PEOPLE move, slowly, as in a dream, to the positions they'll occupy when the CHIEF has finished speaking. NURSE RATCHED and WILLIAMS go into the Station while WARREN exits. SCANLON pulls up a stool to the card table, and McMURPHY sits on the back of a chair.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. New admission, Papa, now they gotta fix him with controls.

They got wires runnin' to each man and units planted in our heads. There's magnets in the floor so we can't walk no way but what they want. We got stone brains, cast-iron guts, and copper where they took away our nerves.

We got cog-wheels in our bellies and a welded grin,  
And every time they thow a switch it turn us on or off.

They got a network clear across the land — factories, like this,  
For fixin' up mistakes they made outside.

The Combine, Papa. Big, big, *big*. (*Listens a moment.*)

Oh, yes, there is *too* such a thing! They got me way back ago, the  
way they got to you!

(*LIGHTS TO FULL on the Day Room. Music up simultaneously; it's miserable stuff, coming from the wall speakers. In the Station NURSE RATCHED has replaced NURSE FLINN and is penciling notes in files. At the card table McMURPHY is dealing Blackjack to HARDING, CHESWICK, BILLY, SCANLON and MARTINI. His cap is tilted forward until he has to lean back to see the cards. He holds a cigarette in his teeth and talks around it. His lingo sings like a pitchman's chant.*)

McMURPHY. Hey-ya, hey-ya, come on, suckers, you hit or you sit. Hit you say? Well, well, well, and with a king up the boy wants a hit, whaddaya know. So comin' at you, *too* bad, a little lady for the lad and he's over the wall and down the road, up the hill and dropped his load. Comin' at you, Mr. Scanlon, *and I wish some asshole in that nurses' hothouse would turn down that mother-lovin' music!* (*Rises, going toward the Station.*) Hooeee, I never heard such a drivin' racket in my life. (*Raps on the window.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Sliding back.*) Yes?

McMURPHY. Would you mind switchin' off that god-damn noise?

NURSE RATCHED. Yes, Mr. Murphy.

McMURPHY. Yes what?

NURSE RATCHED. Yes, I would mind. Music is considered therapeutic.

McMURPHY. What in the hell is therapeutic about Lawrence Welk?

NURSE RATCHED. Please don't lean on the glass, it makes finger marks.

McMURPHY. (*Turning away.*) Horse muh-noo-ur.

NURSE RATCHED. Oh, Mr. McMurphy, I should mention, we have a rule against gambling.

McMURPHY. We're just playin' for cigarettes.

NURSE RATCHED. *(Smiling.)* Are you sure those cigarettes don't represent something else?

McMURPHY. Yeah, a hell of a lot of smoke. *(Laughs, then stops, noticing the OTHERS are not laughing. Goes back to the table as NURSE RATCHED closes the panel. To the MEN:)* Y'know, you girls oughta laugh it up a little! *(Confidentially:)* Listen, that was a good thing she brought up. How about we sweeten the game?

BILLY. Where would we get muh-money?

McMURPHY. *(Shielding the action from the Station, rubs thumb and forefinger together.)* Stop kiddin', I found out a few things about this place before I got sent over. Damn near half you boys in here pull compensation, three, four hundred a month, and it don't draw nothing' but dust. So all you gotta do is sign some IOU's.

HARDING. All right with me.

McMURPHY. Let's say each cigarette's worth a quarter?

CHESWICK. Okay.

SCANLON. Run 'em!

McMURPHY. Here we go!

NURSE RATCHED. *(Over the speaker.)* Don't forget, Mr. McMurphy, no gambling for money.

McMURPHY. *(Staring up at the speakers.)* Say, is that a two-way system?

HARDING. No, but Miss Ratched is a human radio.

McMURPHY. Is, huh? Well, I just may have to pull her plug. *(Dealing.)* All right, Perfessor, there you sit with a deuce showin' and here's a pack o' Marbros says you back down. *(The bell rings.)* Now what?

NURSE RATCHED. *(On the loudspeaker.)* Group Meeting. Time for Group Meeting.

*(The MEN get up quickly. The table is snatched from under McMURPHY'S elbows and chairs are arranged in a semicircle.)*

McMURPHY. What's goin' on?

CHESWICK. Group Therapy. Every day this time.

*(McMURPHY wanders around, puzzled. The ACUTES take their places. NURSE RATCHED flips a couple of switches in the Station as though setting it on automatic pilot. Picks up her wicker basket and goes to take the Log Book from its stand, then seats herself L. of C., leaving the C. chair vacant.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy, would you like to join us? *(He takes an empty chair.)* Now, then, would anyone like to begin? *(Her eyes are on BILLY, who at length stirs uncomfortably.)*

BILLY. *(Touching the bandage on his wrist.)* I guh-guess I ought to talk about this. *(NURSE RATCHED waits.)* It was on account of my mother. Every time she comes to visit it leaves me feeling just awful.

NURSE RATCHED. Your mother loves you, Billy.

SCANLON. *(Mimicking.)* Billy-darlin'. Billy-baby.

BILLY. *(Disregarding SCANLON.)* I know. That's the trouble. I'm such a duh-disappointment to her, but she won't admit it. She won't suh-see me like I am! I say to her, "Mama, I'm nuh-not right in the head. I can't even tuh-talk straight." But she goes right on. And pretty soon I want to k-kill myself. So I try.

NURSE RATCHED. Is it possible that you may be trying to punish her?

BILLY. Sure, it's possible! *(Desperately.)* Muh-Miss Ratched, couldn't we tuh-talk about somebody else today?

NURSE RATCHED. You really ought to face it, Billy. *(BILLY turns away, and McMURPHY is watching in amazement. At length:)* Very well. *(She opens the Log Book.)* At the close of Friday's meeting we were discussing Mr. Harding's young wife ... the fact that she is extremely well-endowed in the bosom. Does anyone care to touch upon this further? *(Silence, then McMURPHY holds up a hand and snaps his fingers.)*

McMURPHY. Touch upon what?

NURSE RATCHED. The subject.

McMURPHY. Oh, I thought you meant touch upon her ...  
(*Makes a mammary gesture and unleashes his laugh. But the MEN are gazing at him blankly and the laugh dies of malnutrition.*)

NURSE RATCHED. To continue. According to notes entered by various patients in the Log Book — (*DR. SPIVEY enters, moving fast. He is a resident psychiatrist, a pipe-smoking, glasses-fumbling, harassed fellow of no great force. He seats himself.*) — Good afternoon, Doctor.

DR. SPIVEY. Sorry. (*Makes a vague gesture, meaning "please continue," and drops his eyes despondently to the floor.*)

NURSE RATCHED. Yes ... we were talking about Mr. Harding's relations with his wife ...

MARTINI. Whose wife? Oh. Yeah, I see her!

McMURPHY. (*Jumping up.*) Where?

MARTINI. Mama Mia ...! Una poppona! La figura d'una dea! Ma fa allungare!

McMURPHY. (*Peering vainly.*) God, what I wouldn't give for that man's eyes.

(*DR. SPIVEY has awakened from his stupor and is staring at McMURPHY. He puts on his glasses for a better look, takes them off and turns to NURSE RATCHED, who calmly extracts a folder from her basket and opens it.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Reading.*) McMurphy, Randle Patrick. Committed by the State for diagnosis and possible treatment. Thirty-five years old. Never married. A history of drunkenness, assault and battery, disturbing the peace, *repeated* gambling, one arrest for rape.

McMURPHY. Statutory!

NURSE RATCHED. With a child of fifteen.

McMURPHY. Said she was *seventeen*, and she was plenty willin'.

NURSE RATCHED. A court doctor's examination of the child —

McMURPHY. Doc, she was *so* willin' I took to padlockin' my pants.

NURSE RATCHED. Our new admission, Doctor.

*(McMURPHY obligingly takes the folder from her and passes it to DR. SPIVEY who puts on his glasses and starts reading. In the silence DR. SPIVEY clucks disapprovingly; chuckles at a spicy bit; whistles incredulously; and generally runs through a repertoire of reactions as McMURPHY beams on him. He looks up to find all eyes on him.)*

DR. SPIVEY. Oh ... ah ... it seems ... you've no previous history. Any time spent in other institutions?

McMURPHY. Well, sir, includin' state *and* county coolers —

DR. SPIVEY. *Mental* institutions.

McMURPHY. Ah. No. This is my first trip. But I *am* crazy, Doc, I swear it. Here — lemme show you — that other doctor at the Work Farm — *(Leans over DR. SPIVEY's shoulder, thumbing through the file.)* Yeah, here it is. "*Repeated outbreaks of passion that suggest the possible diagnosis of psychopath.*" Way he explained it, Doc, psychopath means that I fight and fuck — oh, 'scuse me, how did he put it? — I'm over-zealous in my sexual relations. Doc, is that real serious? I mean, you every been troubled by it?

DR. SPIVEY. *(A little wistfully.)* No, Mr. McMurphy, I'll admit I haven't.

McMURPHY. That bit about fightin' I can understand, but whoever heard of a man gettin' too much poozle?

DR. SPIVEY. *(Referring to file.)* I am interested in this statement: "Don't overlook the possibility that this man might be feigning psychosis to escape the drudgery of the work farm." Well, Mr. McMurphy? What about *that*?

McMURPHY. *(Turns his cap sideways; with a maniacal grin.)* Do I look like a sane man? *(Laughs uproariously at this joke.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Perhaps, Doctor, you should advise Mr. McMurphy on the protocol of these meetings.

DR. SPIVEY. Yes. One of the first rules is that the patients remain seated.

McMURPHY. (*Seating himself.*) Why, sure, Doc.

DR. SPIVEY. You see, we operate on the principle of the Therapeutic Community.

McMURPHY. The which?

DR. SPIVEY. Ther-a-peutic Com-munity. That means that this ward is society in miniature, and since society decides who is sane and who isn't, you must measure up. Our goal here is a completely democratic ward, governed by the patients — working to restore you to the Outside. The important thing is to let nothing fester inside you. Talk! Discuss! Confess! If you hear another patient say something of significance, write it down in the Log Book for all to see. Do you know what this procedure is called?

McMURPHY. Squealing?

DR. SPIVEY. Group Therapy. Help yourself and your friends probe the secrets of the subconscious. Bring those old guilts out into the open!

McMURPHY. (*Blankly.*) What guilts?

Dr. SPIVEY. You have them or you wouldn't be here.

McMURPHY. Oh yeah, yeah ... I think I'm beginnin' to ketch on ...

DR. SPIVEY. Excellent.

McMURPHY. Like this dream I had the other night, couldja maybe tell me what it means? Y'see, it was like me in the dream, but then again it wasn't ... me, I mean ... more like somebody that *looked* like me ... like ... like my *daddy*.

DR. SPIVEY. Interesting!

McMURPHY. Yeah, that's who it was! It was my daddy for sure, because when I saw me — him, I mean — he had this big iron bolt through his jawbone like Daddy used to have.



DR. SPIVEY. (*A pause.*) Your father had an iron *bolt* through his jawbone?

McMURPHY. A regular Frankenstein!

DR. SPIVEY. How fascinating. I don't believe I've ever heard of a similar —

NURSE RATCHED. (*A rescue operation.*) If I may suggest, Doctor, Mr. McMurphy might learn best by example? (*Re-opening the Log Book.*) According to notes entered by various patients in the Log Book, Mr. Harding has stated that he was uneasy when walking with his wife on the street because of the manner in which other men stared at her. He has further said, quote: —

HARDING. (*Flat-voiced.*) She damned well gives them reason to stare, unquote.

NURSE RATCHED. Yes. He has also been heard to say that he may give *her* reason to seek sexual attention elsewhere. What reason, Dale?

HARDING. Well ... I can't say that I have been notably ardent ...

NURSE RATCHED. Do you mean sexually inadequate?

CHESWICK. Maybe she's just plain too hot for him. That it, Harding?

BILLY. (*With malice.*) I'll b-bet he's afraid of her.

HARDING. Not afraid!

MARTINI. Okay, scared!

HARDING. It might be fair to say ... intimidated.

CHESWICK. Same thing.

NURSE RATCHED. I see Mr. Harding has also stated that his wife's ample bosom gives him a feeling of inferiority.

SCANLON. So why does he marry a broad with such big knockers to begin with?

CHESWICK. (*Wisely.*) I'll bet he's got a mother fixation.

SCANLON. I'll bet he was never *weaned*.

HARDING. (*Goaded ... and McMURPHY is taking it in with growing incredulity.*) That's not so! I wanted a *womanly* woman.

One who would not compete, but who might help me to ... (*His hands wave.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Referring to notes.*) She has commented, Dale, that she finds you less than masculine.

CHESWICK. Yeah, like the way you use your hands. (*HARDING captures his hands between his knees.*) How about it, Harding?

NURSE RATCHED. You chose a woman who was quite obviously your inferior. Don't you find significance in that?

HARDING. Yes, of course, but I theorized ... it seemed to me ... sexually, at least ...

BILLY. Yeah. You're always saying she's such a guh-good lay.

CHESWICK. Yeah, what happens in the sack?

HARDING. Complete .. complete psychic impotence — oh, damn, why do I always cry?

SCANLON. Say, Harding, wouldn't it be a lot easier if you was to just come and admit you're a faggot?

McMURPHY. (*Up out of his chair with a roar.*) Awright, knock it off!

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy.

McMURPHY. Leave the guy alone!

NURSE RATCHED. Sit down.

McMURPHY. (*To HARDING.*) Lissen, buddy, you don't hafta take this shit!

NURSE RATCHED. (*Closing the Log Book with a "Splat!"*) Doctor, I suggest we close the meeting.

DR. SPIVEY. Oh?

NURSE RATCHED. Close it until discipline has improved.

(*DR. SPIVEY obediently rises and makes his exit. NURSE RATCHED gathers up her paraphernalia, restores the Log Book to its podium and exits also. There is silence among the MEN, a subtle sense of shame at once again having betrayed one of their*

*number. HARDING remains seated. His cheeks are knotted and he hums a shapeless tune. McMURPHY straddles a chair facing him.)*

McMURPHY. Say, buddy, is this the way these leetle meetings usually go? Bunch of chickens at a peckin' party?

HARDING. Pecking party? I haven't the faintest notion what you're talking about.

McMURPHY. Why, I'll just explain it. The flock gets sight of a speck of blood on some chicken and they all go to peckin' at it, see? Till there's nothin' left but blood and bones and feathers. But usually a couple of the flock gets spotted in the fracas, then it's *their* turn.

HARDING. (*Lacing his hands together, forcing himself to be casual.*) A pecking party. That certainly is a pleasant analogy, my friend.

McMURPHY. That's right, my friend. And that's exactly what that meeting reminded me of.

HARDING. And that makes me the chicken with the spot of blood, eh, friend?

McMURPHY. That's right, friend. And you want to know who pecks the first peck? It's that ol' nurse, that's who.

HARDING. So it's as simple as that. As stupidly simple as that. You're on our ward six hours and have already simplified the work of Freud, Jung and Maxwell Jones and summed it up in one analogy: it's a peckin' party.

McMURPHY. I'm not talkin' 'bout Fred Yoong and whosis Jones, buddy, I'm talkin' 'bout that crummy meeting and what that nurse did to you.

HARDING. Did to me?

McMURPHY. In spades.

HARDING. Why, this is incredible! You completely disregard the fact that everything she did was for my benefit.

McMURPHY. Horse apples.

HARDING. I'm disappointed in you, my friend. I had judged you were more intelligent. But it's evident I made a mistake.

McMURPHY. The hell with you, buddy.

HARDING. Oh, yes, I also noticed your primitive brutality. Psychopath with definite sadistic tendencies, probably motivated by unreasoning egomania. And *those* talents certainly qualify you as a therapist, my friend. Oh, yes, they render you quite capable of criticizing Miss Ratched, although she's a highly regarded psychiatric nurse with twenty years' experience in the field. But you, no doubt, with your talent could work subconscious miracles, soothe the aching id and heal the wounded superego. *You* could probably cure the whole ward, Vegetables and all, in six months, ladies and gentlemen, or your money back!

McMURPHY. (*Regards him levelly.*) Are you tellin' me that this crap that went on today is doing some kinda good?

HARDING. Why else would we subject ourselves to it? Miss Ratched may be a very strict lady, but she is not some kind of monster chicken, pecking our eyes out.

McMURPHY. No, buddy. She ain't pecking at your *eyes*. She is aimin' right square at the family jewels!

HARDING. Miss Ratched! Why, she's like a mother, a tender mother —

McMURPHY. Don't give me that tender-mother crap. She's a ball-cutter from way back.

HARDING. (*His talk speeds up, his hands dance and flutter, a wild puppet doing a high-strung dance.*) Why, see here, my friend, my psychopathic sidekick, Miss Ratched is a veritable angel of mercy and — why, everybody knows it. She's unselfish as the wind, toiling thanklessly for the good of all, day after day, seven days a week. Why she has no life, no husband, nothing but her work, and everybody *knows* it. Do you think she *enjoys* being stern with us, asking those questions, probing our subconscious till it hurts? Oh, no, my egomaniac buddy, she is *dedicated*, she gives every bit of herself, she de-

sires nothing more on earth than to see us walk out of here adjusted and capable once more of coping with life. So you're wrong, I assure you. Our Miss Ratched is the kindest, sweetest, the most benevolent woman that I have ... that I have ... ever ... (*Stops. Begins to laugh. Then he is crying.*) Oh, the bitch. The bitch ...

(*The MEN are silent. HARDING fumbles for a cigarette. McMURPHY takes it from him and lights it.*)

BILLY. (*At length.*) You're right. About all of it.

McMURPHY. Okay, why'ntcha do something?

HARDING. Why? Because the world belongs to the strong, my friend. The rabbit recognizes the strength of the wolf, so he digs holes and hides when the wolf is about. He doesn't challenge the wolf to combat. (*Laughs.*) Mr. McMurphy ... my friend ... I'm not a chicken, I'm a rabbit. All of us here, rabbits. Billy, hop around for Mr. McMurphy here. Cheswick, show him how furry you are. Ah, they're bashful. Isn't that *sweet*?

McMURPHY. (*Violently.*) Shut your mouth!

HARDING. (*Quietly.*) All right, friend, what would you have us do?

McMURPHY. Raise jack. Tell 'er to go to hell!

CHESWICK. (*Jeering.*) Try it, buddy. They'll ship you right on up to Disturbed.

SCANLON. Or down to the Shock Shop.

McMURPHY. The which?

HARDING. Electro-Shock Therapy, my friend. A device which combines the best features of the sleeping pill, the electric chair and the torture rack.

McMURPHY. You kiddin' me?

SCANLON. (*Touching his temples.*) Hell, no.

HARDING. (*With malicious relish.*) They strap you to a table. You are touched on each side of the head with wires. Zap! Punish-

ment and therapy in one shocking package. Chief Broom, there. He's had two hundred treatments.

McMURPHY. What about that little fart of a doctor?

HARDING. Oh, she requires his approval. But that's a formality. He's got two hundred patients, a bleeding ulcer and *no* desire to make waves. (*With malice.*) What's the trouble, friend? Losing your revolutionary spirit?

McMURPHY. What about this Democratic Ward stuff? Why'ntcha take a vote?

Billy. What'll we v-vote?

HARDING. That the Big Nurse can't ask us any more questions?

CHESWICK. Can't look at us in a certain way?

SCANLON. Can't send us to the Shock Shop?

HARDING. (*Sweetly.*) Tell us, friend, what shall we vote?

McMURPHY. Hell, *anything*! Don't you see you got to do something to show you still got balls? You say the Chief is scared, but look at *you* guys. I never saw a scarer-looking bunch in my life!

CHESWICK. (*Standing up.*) I'm not!

(*McMURPHY turns to stare at him. CHESWICK sits down.*)

McMURPHY. (*After a pause; shrugs.*) Well, ... no skin off my ass.

HARDING. How true.

McMURPHY. And I sure wouldn't want some ol' fiend of a nurse after me with three thousand volts.

HARDING. Naturally.

McMURPHY. (*On his way out.*) So what the hell.

HARDING. Oh, Mr. McMurphy. (*As McMURPHY pauses; bowing.*) Welcome to the club.

McMURPHY. (*Turning, slowly coming back.*) You say she can't do nothin' less she gets your goat?

HARDING. That's right.

McMURPHY. Unless she makes you crack up some way ... like bustin' her in the nose or cussin' her out?

HARDING. You'd be safe as long as you kept your temper.

McMURPHY. (*Walks around a little, whistling and thinking as the MEN watch him tensely.*) Okay. All right. You birds think you got the champ there. Well, how'dja like to put some money on it?

HARDING. On what?

McMURPHY. That I can get the best of her.

HARDING. (*With joy.*) You propose to make a wager on *that*?

McMURPHY. I am wagering that I can put a burr up that nurse's butt within a week. That I can bug her so she comes apart at them neat little seams and shows you guys she ain't unbeatable. One week, boys — and if I ain't got her where she don't know whether to shit or go blind the money is yours!

CHESWICK. (*Joyfully.*) Oh, boy!

McMURPHY. Who's got ten bucks they want to lose? Come on, buddies, you hit or you sit!

HARDING. Mr. McMurphy — this deserves odds. Twenty dollars to your ten that you can't do it.

McMURPHY. (*As the ACUTES swarm into line, signing IOU's.*) Hey-a, hey-a, hey-a, step right up, it's a spin a the wheel, a turn a the card, it's the battle a the century, one week, seven days, no holds barred, R. P. McMurphy versus the Big Nurse to a knock-out, decision or draw. Two to one is the odds, boys, getcha money down, hey-a, hey-a ...!

MARTINI. I bet five dollars ...

McMURPHY. Five for the Road Runner!

(*NURSE RATCHED enters.*)

NURSE RATCHED. Gentlemen, it's time for occupational therapy. (*The ACUTES scurry off, WILLIAMS takes RUCKLY off the wall*)

*and leads him to the dormitory.)* Mr. McMurphy? What was that activity?

McMURPHY. *(Finishing writing down the bets.)* We're just playin' a little game.

NURSE RATCHED. You're sure it's not some form of gambling?

McMURPHY. *(Shocked.)* Good heavens, no, ma'am. *(NURSE RATCHED smiles and exits.)* Gamblin', hell — this is a sure thing!

*(He exits as the LIGHTS DIM DOWN FAST but for a single shaft on the CHIEF. Monitor lights in the Nurses' Station shift their pattern to accompaniment of electronic tonal buzzes.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. You see that, Papa? They got the place on automatic pilot for the night. It's in the night they do the things to us they want ... things too horrible for day. And if the night ain't long enough they slow it down. Oh, yes, Papa, that's a fact. They got fake time they can speed up or slow down. I seen three months go by once in a hour. I see three days go by like *this* —

*(A finger-snap. A cheerful whistling is heard from the dormitory. Swiftly the nightmare circuitry and sound fade out and LIGHTS bounce up to normal, night. As the CHIEF kneels by his rocking chair, McMURPHY comes trotting in, barefoot, wearing only his denim pants and cap. He looks about, spies his pornographic deck of cards, snatches it up.)*

McMURPHY. There y'are, babies, don't wanna lose you. *(Does a one-handed shuffle and cut, clacks the deck together and laughs in pleasure at his own dexterity. He spies CHIEF BROMDEN.)* Hey, Chief, sack time! *(CHIEF BROMDEN has upended the chair and is picking at its bottom with his fingernails. McMURPHY approaches, curiously.)* Whatcha doin'? *(Kneels by the CHIEF, whistles as he*



*examines the lumpy bottom of the chair.) Holy ke-rist, 'bout ten thousand pieces of gum! This where you stash it, Chief? Wait a minute, we can do better'n that. (Digs in his pocket, triumphantly comes up with a stick of gum.) Juicy Fruit, okay? (Unwraps the gum, sticks it in CHIEF BROMDEN'S mouth.) There y'are, Injun, put a nice fresh taste in your mouth. (There is a sound of a key in the Ward door.) Somebody comin'! (Hurries to the shelter of the angle of the wall. The CHIEF follows. They huddle there together as AIDE TURKLE, the aging night man, enters. Singing a little ditty, TURKLE puts a couple of pieces of furniture straight, checking around with his flashlight. He pulls a bottle of liquor from his back pocket and takes a belt. Then he exits, singing mournfully. McMURPHY and CHIEF BROMDEN come out of their refuge. McMURPHY examines the CHIEF speculatively.) Ya know, Chief ... when I hollered, you sure did jump. I thought somebody told me you was deaf. (McMURPHY digs a finger in the CHIEF'S ribs, chortles gleefully and trots into the dormitory, still laughing. The CHIEF follows, disturbed.)*

*(LIGHTS TO FULL on the Day Room, empty. It is morning. AIDES WARREN and WILLIAMS enter. They carry cleaning and polishing utensils and a bucket of powdered soap. They set down their materials and go to work on glass and baseboards.)*

WARREN. Finger marks an' smooches.

WILLIAMS. An' scuffs all over the place.

WARREN. Big Nurse see this, she raise sand fo' sure.

WILLIAMS. She beat us wi' that big brown bag.

WARREN. Haw! Why'n' we jus' beat her back?

WILLIAMS. Go man!

WARREN. First, we slug 'er with this can.

WILLIAMS. Git 'er down!

WARREN. Prize open 'er mouth!

WILLIAMS. Stuff this whole damn mess inside!

WARREN. Ram it to the bottom with a mop!

*(They stomp the imaginary Big Nurse to death.)*

McMURPHY. *(off, singing.)*

"Your horses are hungry, that's what she did say,  
Come sit down beside me and feed them some hay ..." *(He comes trotting from the dormitory en route to the latrine, toothbrush in hand, wearing nothing but his cap and a towel around his hips.)*  
Mornin', boys! *(The AIDES stare, less flabbergasted by his costume than by the sound of singing. Off, big and happy.)*

"My horses ain't hungry, they won't eat your hay-ay-eee,  
So fare thee well, darlin', I'm gone on my way ..." *(He comes trotting back out of the latrine and whops WARREN on the shoulder with a big friendly hand.)* Hey, there, ol' buddy, what's the chance of gettin' some toothpaste for my grinders?

WARREN. *(Staring at the hand on his shoulder.)* We don't open the cabinet till six forty-five.

McMURPHY. That where it is? Locked in the cabinet?

WARREN. Tha's right.

McMURPHY. Well, well, well, now why do you reckon they keep the toothpaste locked up? I mean, it ain't like it's dangerous?

WILLIAMS. *(Coming over, sniffing trouble.)* Ward policy, tha's the reason.

McMURPHY. Ward policy? Now, why?

WILLIAMS. Well, whaddya s'pose it'd be like if everybody was to brush their teeth whenever they took the notion?

McMURPHY. *(Reasonably.)* Uh huh, uh huh, I think I see what you're drivin' at: Ward policy is for them that can't brush after every meal.

WILLIAMS. My gaw, don't you see?

McMURPHY. Yeah, I think I do now. You're sayin' people'd be brushin' their teeth whenever the spirit moved 'em.

WILLIAMS. Tha's right, why —

McMURPHY. And, lordy, can you imagine? Teeth bein' brushed at six-thirty, six-twenty — maybe even six o'clock in the mornin'!

WARREN. *(Uneasily.)* C'mon, Williams. We gotta get to work ...

McMURPHY. Hey, wait, what do we have here?

WARREN. Where?

McMURPHY. What's the stuff in this old can?

WARREN. Tha's soap powder.

McMURPHY. Well, I generally use paste ... *(Digs his toothbrush in the can, taps it on the side.)* We'll look into that ward policy shit later. *(Goes trotting back into the latrine, singing; it becomes muffled as he brushes his teeth. The AIDES gape foolishly. Then WARREN notices CHIEF BROMDEN, grabs up a broom and strides over to him angrily.)*

WARREN. *(Shoving the broom in his hand.)* There, damn you, get workin', don't be gawkin' 'round like some big useless cow! Move! Move!

*(The CHIEF is propelled into his automatic motion. NURSE RATCHED enters, starts to unlock the Station, freezes as she hears an alien sound.)*

McMURPHY. *(Off, singing in a lusty bellow.)*

"Oh, your parents don't like me, they say I'm too po-o-oor,  
They say I'm not worthy to enter your door.

Hard livin's my pleasure, my money's my o-o-own ...

An' them that don't like me, they can leave me alo-o-one!" *(He has come swinging out in time to sing the last line directly to NURSE RATCHED, who is now staring in horror at his near-nudity.)* Good mornin', Miss Rat-shit! How's things on the outside?

NURSE RATCHED. You can't run around here ... in a towel.

McMURPHY. Towels against ward policy, too? Okay, I'll just — *(Reaches for the towel.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Stop! Don't you *dare!* (*Ominously.*) You get back in there and put your clothes on this *instant*.

(*The MEN have entered and are watching. McMURPHY hangs his head like he's about to cry.*)

McMURPHY. I can't do that, ma'am. I'm afraid some thief in the night boosted my clothes.

NURSE RATCHED. Boosted ...? That outfit was supposed to be picked up — to be laundered. Williams?

WILLIAMS. (*Swiftly.*) Mr. Warren got laundry duty.

NURSE RATCHED. Warren. *Come here.* (*WARREN obeys fearfully.*) Couldn't you see this man had nothing on but a towel?

McMURPHY. (*Whispering.*) And my cap ...

NURSE RATCHED. Well ...?

WARREN. He ... he got up too early.

NURSE RATCHED. Got *up* too early. You'll get his clothing this instant, Mr. Warren, or spend the next two weeks on Geriatrics cleaning bedpans! (*WARREN exits, smoldering. McMURPHY escorts him off with a whistled few bars and a bit of soft shoe to "Sweet Georgia Brown."*) And you — get rid of that towel at once.

McMURPHY. Certainly! (*Whips it off. Underneath he is wearing black satin shorts with an imprint of big white whales with red eyes. McMURPHY grins happily.*) Ain't they some shit? (*To EVERYONE, displaying them.*) They was a present from a co-ed at Oregon State. She said I was some kind of symbol.

(*NURSE FLINN enters and McMURPHY pounces on her. NURSE FLINN screams and runs for the Station.*)

NURSE RATCHED. Very well, Mr. McMurphy, if you've finished showing off your manly physique, I think you had better go get dressed.

McMURPHY. (*Picking up towel.*) Dee-lighted. (*Whacks his bare belly and sings as he goes.*)

"She took me to her parlor, and coo-ooled me with her fan,  
And whispered low in her mama's ear, I luh-uhv that gamblin' man!"

NURSE RATCHED. (*To the grinning WILLIAMS:*) Haven't you anything better to do than stand around and gape? I want this room spot-less. (*To the PATIENTS, sweetly:*) Gentlemen, hadn't you better get dressed? (*They scurry back into the dormitory. She goes to join NURSE FLINN at the medication center.*)

(*LIGHTS DOWN FAST but for a single shaft on the CHIEF as he stands holding his broom.*)

CHIEF BROMDEN. I remember one Christmas, Papa ... here at the hospital. It was right at midnight and there's a big wind and the door blows open whoosh! and here comes a fat man all dressed in red with a big white beard and moustache. "Ho, ho, ho," he says, "like to stay but I must be hurryin' along, very tight schedule, you know." Well, the Aides jumped him and pinned him down with their flashlights and gave him a tranquilizer and sent him right on up to Disturbed. They kept him six years, Papa, and when they let him go he was clean-shaved and skinny as a pole.

(*Lose the CHIEF. LIGHTS UP on the Day Room. WARREN is entering the Station as NURSE RATCHED comes out. Group Meeting formation; all present except McMURPHY and DR. SPIVEY.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Closing the Log Book.*) Now, boys, before we open the meeting I thought we might have a little discussion. Informal, you know? On the subject of Patient McMurphy?

CHESWICK. Hey, where is McMurphy?

NURSE RATCHED. I suggested this would be a good time for his interview with Dr. Spivey. We're not going to make any *decisions*, you

understand, I just don't think he should be allowed to go on upsetting the other patients.

SCANLON. I ain't upset.

CHESWICK. Neither am I!

NURSE RATCHED. You may not *realize* you are. However —

*(From off, a happy chortling and sounds of male good-fellowship, as the Ward door opens and DR. SPIVEY and McMURPHY enter. McMURPHY has an arm about the DOCTOR'S shoulder and they are very chummy; in fact, McMURPHY takes the DOCTOR'S key to lock the door behind.)*

McMURPHY. Right, Doc? Whattaya think?

DR. SPIVEY. Oh, it's a *charming* notion.

McMURPHY. A real blast! *(Digs his fingers in the DOCTOR'S ribs, and they laugh, poking each other.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Doctor. Doctor, we have a meeting in progress.

DR. SPIVEY. Eh? Oh, sorry. Go right ahead!

NURSE RATCHED. *(Smiling.)* Yes. We were just considering the matter of morale?

DR. SPIVEY. Why, that's exactly what *we* were talking about! And I made the suggestion ... *(To McMURPHY, puzzled.)* ... or was it you?

McMURPHY. Hell, no, it was your idea.

DR. SPIVEY. I suggested — well, what would you think if we were to have a carnival?

NURSE RATCHED. A ... carnival?

DR. SPIVEY. *(Beaming.)* Right here on the Ward! Wouldn't it be fun? There could be games, booths, decorations ... what do you think, men?

CHESWICK. *(Galvanized by McMURPHY'S big thumb.)* Oo! I think it's a *good* idea!

DR. SPIVEY. And *not* without therapeutic value.

SCANLON. Hell, yes, lots of therapeutics in a carnival.

CHESWICK. Scanlon could do his human bomb act. And I could make a ring toss in Occupational Therapy!

McMURPHY. Myself, I'd be glad to run a Skillo wheel. (*Chanting under the lines following.*) Heya, heya, step right up ladies and gentlemen, and try your luck, a bonanza for a dime, a prize on every spinna the wheel!

DR. SPIVEY. Oh, fine!

MARTINI. I could sell things!

HARDING. I'm rather good at palm readings.

DR. SPIVEY. Fine, fine! What do you think, Miss Ratched? (*She looks at him, frozen-smiled.*) A ... carnival? Here on the ... ward?

NURSE RATCHED. (*At length — letting the idea die before burying it.*) I agree it might have therapeutic possibilities. But of course it must be discussed in Staff before a decision can be reached. Wasn't that your intention, Doctor?

DR. SPIVEY. Yes, of course ... I just thought ... feeling out some of the patients ... but a Staff meeting ... oh, certainly.

NURSE RATCHED. (*Referring to a memo.*) Also, Doctor, I recommend that Mr. McMurphy's request for a visitor ... as he puts it, "A twitch named Candy Starr?" ... be denied until he becomes more familiar with the rules in this Ward.

DR. SPIVEY. I ... well ... Mr. McMurphy showed me his request in my office and I figured ... I mean since he's been here a week already ... I signed it.

(*McMURPHY and BILLY share McMURPHY'S triumph. The CHIEF has put the broom back in the closet.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Opens the Log Book.*) I see. Very well, Billy Bibbit and his speech problem. Can you recall, Billy, when you first had speech difficulties? When did you begin to stutter?

BILLY. The v-very first word I said, I stuttered. Muh-muh-mama. And when I proposed to a guh-guh-girl, I flubbed it. I said, "Huh-huh-honey, will you muh-muh-muh ..." (*McMURPHY laughs companionably, and BILLY giggles, too.*) ... till she broke out laughing.

NURSE RATCHED. Your mother has spoken to me about this girl, Billy. Apparently she was quite a bit beneath you. Was it that which frightened you?

BILLY. No!

NURSE RATCHED. Then what was the matter?

BILLY. I was in luh-love with her.

NURSE RATCHED. Let me quote from your mother, Billy — "She was a designing little slut who only wanted to marry my Billy because —"

BILLY. (*Anguished.*) No! She was a luh-lovely guh-girl that —

McMURPHY. Say, I got somethin' to take up.

NURSE RATCHED. If you wish to speak you must first be recognized.

McMURPHY. You mean you don't know me?

NURSE RATCHED. I *know* you but I don't *recognize* you.

McMURPHY. Say, you got a hell of a problem! (*Sympathetically.*) Wouldja like to discuss it?

NURSE RATCHED. Doctor, I wonder if we shouldn't discuss Mr. McMurphy?

DR. SPIVEY. In what respect?

NURSE RATCHED. I have observed a definite deterioration of discipline since he arrived. Perhaps ... another form of therapy ...

McMURPHY. What you got in mind? Hookin' me up to your little battery charger?

NURSE RATCHED. (*Smiling.*) For your own good, Randle.

McMURPHY. In a pig's gizzard!

DR. SPIVEY. (*Unexpectedly.*) I must say, Nurse, I agree with Patient McMurphy. I find him quite lucid, quite in touch, and despite



his past record he has exhibited no tendencies toward violence. So I must conclude that electro-shock therapy is *not* indicated.

NURSE RATCHED. Very well, if there's nothing further —

McMURPHY. Doc, I got a little matter —

NURSE RATCHED. Doctor, I think you should point out that the purpose of these meetings is *therapy*, and that these petty grievances —

McMURPHY. Petty? You call the World Series petty?

DR. SPIVEY. The World Series ... ?

McMURPHY. Sure, Doc, it starts Friday. The big games! And you got this rule about lookin' at TV only at night. Okay, let's change it to afternoon.

NURSE RATCHED. (*Sweetly.*) For therapeutic reasons?

McMURPHY. Therapeutic as all hell!

NURSE RATCHED. Or were you hoping, perhaps, to make bets on the games?

McMURPHY. How about it, guys? Don't you want to watch the Series? Cheswick?

CHESWICK. Why not?

McMURPHY. Scanlon?

SCANLON. (*Uneasily.*) I don't know, Mac ...

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. Scanlon, as I recall, you refused to eat for three days until we allowed you to turn on the set at six instead of six-thirty.

SCANLON. A man needs to see the news, don't he? God, they coulda bombed us clear to hell and it'd be a week before we knew.

McMURPHY. You sayin' there's anything therapeutic about the news?

SCANLON. Well ... maybe they won't bomb us this week.

McMURPHY. Attaboy! Let's take a vote. All those in favor raise your hands! (*CHESWICK'S hand comes up. And SCANLON'S. The OTHER MEN look at the floor.*) Hey, what is this crap? I thought you guys could vote on stuff like this. Ain't that right, Doc? (*The DOC-*

TOR *nods.*) Okay then. who wants to watch those games. (CHESWICK'S hand goes higher but there is no other response.) What's the matter with you guys?

NURSE RATCHED. Three, Mr. McMurphy. Just three. Not sufficient to change ward policy. Now, if that's settled may we terminate the meeting?

McMURPHY. Yeah ... let's terminate the lousy meeting.

(DR. SPIVEY rises and exits. NURSE RATCHED replaces the Log Book and exits. The PATIENTS put the chairs back, then scatter about the room. WARREN helps, then returns to the Station.)

BILLY. (Finally.) Listen, Randle. Some of us have b-been here a long time. And some of us will b-be here a long time after you're gone. A long time after the World Series is over. And don't you see ... d-don't you realize ...

McMURPHY. (Shaking his head.) I don't understand it. I — don't — understand — it. (BILLY turns away in despair.) Harding, what's the matter with you? (HARDING shrugs, turns away.) What are you guys afraid of? Why, you bunch of gutless wonders. I oughta just leave you to her. Yeah, that's what I oughta do — bust on outa here and nail the door shut behind.

BILLY. Yeah? All right, you're talking so big, just how would you break out?

McMURPHY. Forty ways!

HARDING. Name one.

McMURPHY. You think I'm kiddin, huh. (Looks about, and his eyes light on the chest-like panel at the foot of the Station.) There. The thing Billy's sittin' on. I could throw it through that mesh window.

HARDING. I don't recall anything about psychopaths being able to move mountains.

McMURPHY. Hell, are you tellin' me I can't lift that dinky thing?

HARDING. That dinky thing weighs a quarter ton. *And it contains all the electrical equipment for the Station.*

SCANLON. Hell, yes, try it Mac. You'll short-circuit the controls and blow this whole damn hospital into orbit!

McMURPHY. Who's willin' to lay five bucks?

HARDING. This is more foolhardy than your bet against the Big Nurse.

McMURPHY. Five bucks, you peckerheads! 'Cause nobody's gonna convince me I can't do anything till I try. Here — all your IOU's from Blackjack. *(Slamming them on the table.)* I'll put up the whole shebang, double or nothin'!

HARDING. You're on!

OTHER MEN. Covered. I'll take it! *(Etc.)*

McMURPHY. Stand back boys. Scanlon, get the women and children someplace safe! *(McMURPHY tries, but the box doesn't budge.)*

SCANLON. Ah, Mac, you giving up ... ?

McMURPHY. Hell, no. Just warmin' up. Here goes the real effort!

*(This time he throws all his strength into it. He closes his eyes and his lips strain away from his teeth. His head is thrown back, his whole body shaking with the strain. CHIEF BROMDEN finds himself moving toward McMURPHY in a sort of muscular empathy. The air explodes out of McMURPHY'S lungs. He collapses over the panel. For a few moments there is no sound but his scraping breath. Then he pulls himself to his feet, crosses and picks up the IOU's with clawed and shaking hands. Proffers them but no one makes a move, so he strews them on the floor. Turns and makes his way unsteadily toward the dormitory.)*

HARDING. Mac. *(McMURPHY pauses.)* No man could lift that thing.

McMURPHY. *(Turning, tears of rage and frustration in his eyes.)* But I tried. Godammit, I tried. *(He exits into the dormitory. CHIEF BROMDEN follows a step or two, arms reaching out.)*

*(LIGHTS DOWN FAST, but for a single shaft on CHIEF BROMDEN; and there are SOUNDS and VISUAL EFFECTS.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. There! The waterfall! How come I hear it, Papa? I hear it and it sounds like in the Spring. I see a salmon jump! I smell the snow where the wind is blowin' off the peaks. And the tribe out there above the falls ... lissen, the way they yell each time they spear a fish! How come, Papa? What's makin' it come back?

*(The effects vanish as LIGHTS BACK FULL. AIDE WILLIAMS is crossing to hand CHIEF BROMDEN his broom.)*

WILLIAMS. Awright, work time, get goin'.

*(The PATIENTS engage in jobs of floor polishing, dusting, etc. WILLIAMS closes the CHIEF'S hands around the broom handle, starts him moving like an automaton. NURSE RATCHED enters the Station. We hear a snatch of singing — McMURPHY'S voice — from within the latrine. WILLIAMS goes to peer through the latrine's window in suspicion. Suspicion verified; he marches across to the Station and taps on the glass. NURSE RATCHED slides back the panel, frowns as WILLIAMS mumbles in her ear. She comes out of the Station and crosses to the latrine.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Rapping on the door.)* Mr. McMurphy. Mr. McMurphy.

McMURPHY. *(Sticking his head out.)* Ma'am?

NURSE RATCHED. Would you step out her please?

McMURPHY. *(Emerges, a toilet mop in hand. NURSE*

*RATCHED brushes by him and enters the latrine.*) Boy, she musta had to go in a hurry!

NURSE RATCHED. *(Emerging, very angry.)* Mr. McMurphy, that is an outrage.

McMURPHY. *(Firmly.)* No ma'am, that is a latrine.

NURSE RATCHED. You are supposed to get those fixtures clean.

McMURPHY. Well, ma'am, they might not be clean enough for some people, but me, I'm plannin' to piss in 'em, not eat lunch out of 'em.

NURSE RATCHED. I think we'd better give you another job. *(Enters Station.)*

McMURPHY. *(Slapping the wet brush onto WILLIAMS' chest.)* Take over, buddy! *(As WILLIAMS, in fury, takes mop to the broom closet, then enters Station; to the MEN:)* You guys ready to pay off them IOU's?

HARDING. You haven't won yet, friend.

*(McMURPHY goes to CHIEF BROMDEN, takes a stick of gum from his pocket.)*

McMURPHY. *(Singing.)*

"Oh, does the Spearment loose its flavor on the bedpost overnight,  
When you chew it in the mornin' will it be too hard to bite?" *(Laughs, and sneaks the piece of gum into the CHIEF'S hand.)*

WARREN. *(Entering.)* Visitor, Mr. McMurphy.

*(CANDY STARR enters. She's a dish.)*

CANDY. McMurphy.

McMURPHY. Candy baby!

CANDY. Oh, you damned McMurphy! *(Runs to him, leaps into his arms. They kiss — sensationally — and heads swivel toward*

*them. NURSE RATCHED clicks on the microphone.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Please identify your visitor.

McMURPHY. *(Bellowing.)* She's my goddamn mother! *(To the MEN:)* Buddies, this is Candy Starr.

CANDY. *(Turns to them, smiling.)* Hiya, boys, how's every little thing? *(To Scanlon:)* Hey, Pop, what they got you in for?

SCANLON. Rape.

McMURPHY. *(Laughs.)* Honey, this is Billy Bibbit. Wouldja believe it? He's a virgin.

CANDY. *(With instant sympathy, taking BILLY'S hand.)* Aw, they lock you up for *that*?

McMURPHY. Come over here and talk to me. *(Sits with her on a couch, and BILLY, fascinated, hangs close.)* How's Sandra?

CANDY. Tied up, man, I mean like *really*. She got married.

McMURPHY. Got which?

CANDY. *(Giggling.)* Can you picture that? Ol' Sandy married.

McMURPHY. Wow! Who to?

CANDY. You remember Artie, from Beaverton? Always used to show up at the parties with some weird thing, a gopher snake or a white rat or some weird thing like that? Jesus, a real maniac! *(She clamps her hand over her mouth and looks at the MEN, round-eyed.)*

McMURPHY. That's okay, honey, they're a lot crazier outside.

CANDY. You damned McMurphy ... *(She throws her arms around his neck. The LOUDSPEAKER clacks on.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(On microphone.)* Mr. McMurphy —

McMURPHY. *(Raising both hands.)* Okay!

CANDY. You all right, baby? I mean, they treating you all right?

McMURPHY. Oh, hell, yes. The grub — sensational. And the bed they give a man ... hey, why'n't I show you?

CANDY. *(Hoping to her feet.)* Why not?

*(McMURPHY takes her by the hand and is leading her toward the*

*dormitory when the LOUDSPEAKER clacks on again.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy —

McMURPHY. *(Reversing course.)* Okay, okay. *(Comes back into Day Room, makes X to indicate exact spot, yells to NURSE RATCHED.)* Here ...? Here ...? *(To CANDY:)* I think she wants to watch. *(Grabs CANDY in an embrace. Then low:)* Listen, honey, I got an idea. You talking about the old parties and all ... I bet I could fix it so we could throw one right here.

CANDY. *(And some of the MEN inch closer, listening.)* You kiddin'?

McMURPHY. And maybe you could bring Sandra.

CANDY. I told you, ol' Sandy got married.

McMURPHY. Well, she still digs parties?

CANDY. Oh, sure! But ... how'd we get in? *(McMURPHY looks about, beckons her closer, whispers rapidly in her ear as the MEN draw toward them. CANDY giggles delightedly.)* Far out! *(She jumps into his arms.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(On microphone.)* Mr. McMurphy — I'm afraid you'll have to ask your visitor to leave.

CANDY. *(In protest)* Hey, I just got here!

McMURPHY. *(With a big wink.)* Later, baby. Say so long to the fellows.

CANDY. *(Clinching with him.)* You damned McMurphy! *(To the MEN:)* Later, boys. *(She exits.)*

McMURPHY. Nice kid. Comes from a good family

BILLY. *(Bursting out.)* You're not really guh-going to do it?

McMURPHY. Why not?

SCANLON. A party *here*?

McMURPHY. That's the scam.

BILLY. With C-Candy?

McMURPHY. Cute trick, huh? How'd you like to bump bellies with *that*?

BILLY. (*Overcome.*) Oh, b-b-boy!

HARDING. My friend, for pure audacity that proposition wins the analysts' Oscar.

McMURPHY. I plan to fling the greatest brawl that ever got flung in a loony-bin.

MARTINI. (*Clapping his hands joyfully.*) Oh, man, we're gonna have a party!

McMURPHY. (*Springing the trap.*) We? Who the hell said we?

HARDING. We're not invited?

McMURPHY. Nope.

BILLY. (*Dismayed.*) But why?

McMURPHY. 'Cause I'm fed up with you jerks, that's why! Know what's goin' on this very minute? The World Series! And *you* dickheads kept me from seein' it!

CHESWICK. But, Mac, we tried.

McMURPHY. Sure, you and Scanlon. All the rest too damn scared to raise their hands!

HARDING. I'm sorry, Mac. If the matter weren't already closed ...

McMURPHY. Anything in the rules say you can't vote again?

HARDING. N-no, I don't recall that there is.

McMURPHY. Well, then?

NURSE RATCHED. (*Has come out of the Station and approached the GROUP. WILLIAMS follows.*) Haven't you gentlemen work to do?

McMURPHY. (*Boldly.*) Sure, but right now we got a special meeting of the Patients' Council

NURSE RATCHED. Called by whom?

McMURPHY. Mister Dale Harding, President!

HARDING. (*A pause, then unsteadily, as NURSE RATCHED turns her eyes on him.*) That's right, Miss Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. For what purpose?

HARDING. For ... for ...

McMURPHY. For the purpose of takin' a re-vote on changing



TV time to afternoon!

NURSE RATCHED. I see.

McMURPHY. Okay, boys — !

NURSE RATCHED. One moment! Do any of you feel, perhaps, that Mr. McMurphy is imposing his personal desires on you? I've been thinking you might be happier if he were moved to another ward.

SCANLON. You can't send him to Disturbed just for bringin' up a vote!

CHESWICK. *(Defiantly.)* That's right.

NURSE RATCHED. *(To McMURPHY:)* You're certain one more vote will satisfy you?

McMURPHY. I just wanta see once and for all which of these birds has any guts and which hasn't.

NURSE RATCHED. Very well, everyone in favor of changing television time to afternoon, raise your hands.

*(The hands come up ... BILLY'S a little slower than the others. Finally all are raised but the CHIEF'S.)*

McMURPHY. *(Racing toward the TV set.)* Batter up!

NURSE RATCHED. One moment, please! The rules call for a unanimous vote.

McMURPHY. Unanimous ... ? *(Catches on, points to BROMDEN in disbelief.)* You mean you want the Chief to vote?

*(BROMDEN moves to the closet to deposit his broom; enters the closet, pulling the door shut behind him.)*

HARDING. *(Miserably.)* All the patients present on the ward.

McMURPHY. So *that's* how you work this democratic bull. Of all the crappy things I ever heard — !

NURSE RATCHED. *(Calmly.)* You seem upset, Mr. McMurphy.

I'll have to make a note of that.

McMURPHY. Hold on — !

NURSE RATCHED. The meeting is closed.

McMURPHY. (*Frantically.*) Hold on one lousy minute. (*Looks for the CHIEF, goes to the closet, opens door.*) Chief, Chief ... (*Pulls CHIEF out by the back of his shirt.*) Chief, come on out here. Chief, it's now or never. We're men or we're monkeys, we make or we break. Get your hand up *now*.

NURSE RATCHED. Don't be ridiculous, the poor man can't even hear you.

McMURPHY. Come on, Chief, get that hand up and vote.

(*All eyes on the CHIEF. McMURPHY gives up. In frustration, he slams his cap to the floor, sits in the rocking chair as the OTH-ERS return to their work. NURSE RATCHED goes back to the Station. The CHIEF begins to raise his hand.*)

CHESWICK. (*Noticing.*) Mac ...!

WILLIAMS. (*Also noticing.*) Nurse Ratched ...

McMURPHY. (*Jumping up, pointing to the CHIEF exuberantly.*) Unanimous! (*The MEN explode into action, setting chairs and wheeling the TV into position, etc. NURSE RATCHED is staring at CHIEF BROMDEN. Taking the CHIEF by the hand.*) Sit down, you gorgeous monster, best damn seat in the house!

SCANLON. Okay, let 'er rip!

(*NURSE RATCHED turns abruptly and goes into the Nurses' Station.*)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE. (*As CHESWICK adjusts the TV.*) ... and he swings! At a bad pitch, oh my, and the count is three and two with the tying run on second base. It's the bottom of the sixth ... a hit and run situation ... here comes the windup. It's a —

*(In the Station NURSE RATCHED has opened a panel on the wall behind the desk and thrown a switch. The TV cuts off abruptly. McMurphy comes to his feet.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(On the microphone.)* The meeting was closed.

*(McMURPHY starts toward her.)*

HARDING. *(A warning.)* Mac.

NURSE RATCHED. You men will now go back to your duties. *(No one moves.)* Did you hear me? *(The MEN shift, uneasily.)*

McMURPHY. Don't move Billy — sit down. *(They go back to their chairs.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *Did you hear me?*

*(The MEN break and start back to their duties. McMURPHY holds his position.)*

McMURPHY. *(Finally, turning to TV set.)* Hoo, boy, lookit that. It's a hit. Right down the middle!

HARDING. *(Catching on, looks at NURSE RATCHED, wavers. Finally sits back down.)* Run, you mother-loving turkey, run!

MARTINI. *(Resumes his place.)* Two bases, two. Look out, there comes the throw.

SCANLON. He missed it! Overthrew second!

McMURPHY. Keep goin', for the luvva God, keep goin'!

NURSE RATCHED. *(Coming out of the Station.)* Stop it. Stop it.

CHESWICK. Take another! Take another base!

NURSE RATCHED. *(Standing between them and TV.)* Stop it, I tell you! Go back to your duties. Go back to your duties *this instant ...!*

HARDING. He dropped the ball!

BILLY. There it g-g-goes — !

HARDING. Into the outfield!

McMURPHY. All the way home, you jerk! Run, run, *run!*

NURSE RATCHED. You men stop it! Mr. Harding! Mr. Cheswick! *(Her voice is drowned out by the shouting.)*

McMURPHY. *(Quelling the noise.)* Oh, Nursie — wouldja mind bringin' me a red-hot and a can a beer?

CHESWICK. HOME RUN!!!

*(The MEN burst into cheers of triumph. NURSE RATCHED is shouting at them, quite out of control.)*

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I



## ACT II

*SCENE: The Day Room is empty but for RUCKLY, who stands atop the panel, arms extended with fingers touching, hoop fashion. The shrilling of a referee's whistle, and McMURPHY comes charging out, followed by HARDING, CHESWICK, SCANLON and MARTINI. They wear underwear in simulation of gym shorts, and are dribbling and passing a basketball. CHIEF BROMDEN follows, hovering on the outskirts of the action as though he would like to join in. Two or three baskets are shot through RUCKLY'S "hoop" to the accompaniment of joyful yapping.*

McMURPHY. Snap the ball. Use your elbows, willya? Drive, you puny mothers, *drive.* *(Blows the whistle, stopping action.)* Ruckly, how many times I gotta tell you, stand still. It ain't right for the basket to be chasin' the ball. *(He blows his whistle and they resume play. MARTINI tosses the ball to an imaginary teammate.)*

MARTINI. Hey, George! *(McMURPHY blows the whistle, retrieves the ball.)*

McMURPHY. Martini. There's only five men on a team. One ... two ... three ... four ... five. So don't go hallucinatin' any more!

*(Action as before; the ball being passed to much yipping and yapping. AIDE WILLIAMS enters, stops short in consternation.)*

WILLIAMS. Hey! You can't play basketball in here.

McMURPHY. Why not? Ah-ah, don't tell me ... against ward policy?

WILLIAMS. You got it, buddy.

McMURPHY. Aw, shucks, just when we got an alumni game

comin' up. (*NURSE FLINN has entered and is observing, in shock. McMURPHY goes to her.*) Hiya, honey! (*Reaching for the crucifix she wears around her throat.*) Mind if I take a look at that thing?

NURSE FLINN. (*Backing away.*) Oh, stay back!

McMURPHY. I swear I ain't gonna hurt you, I just wanta —

RUCKLY. F-f-fuck 'em all!

(*The Ward door opens; WARREN enters, followed closely by NURSE RATCHED. All are frozen by her presence as she takes in the scene. WILLIAMS looks, foolishly, from her to the basketball in his hands.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*To WILLIAMS:*) Good game? (*To Warren:*) Please take Mr. Ruckly down. (*WARREN lifts RUCKLY down and stands him in his accustomed place against the wall. NURSE RATCHED takes the basketball from WILLIAMS. Moving on to McMURPHY; good-naturedly.*) We do have our little difficulties, don't we? But they'll be worked out. After all, we have weeks. Months. If necessary, years. (*She exits, followed by WARREN and WILLIAMS, as FLINN hurries into the Station. The MEN break into a hubbub, crowding around McMURPHY.*)

CHESWICK. You've got her on the ropes!

SCANLON. She's groggy, Mac!

McMURPHY. Yeah ...

HARDING. All you need is the knockout punch!

BILLY. I wouldn't have believed it — !

McMURPHY. Shut up, will ya? Wha'd she mean by that?

CHESWICK. What, Mac?

McMURPHY. That "years" bit. (*Silence.*) Come on, why does she act like she's holdin' aces?

HARDING. Well ... I guess maybe it's because you're committed.

McMURPHY. Sure I'm committed, but my sentence only got

five months to run, so ... (*Looks at the faces. They are uneasy, some showing a kind of guilt.*) Come on, gimme the bit.

HARDING. Mac, it's not like a jail sentence. *In jail you've got a date ahead when you know you'll be set free. But here ... if you're committed ...*

McMURPHY. You mean I'm stuck here till she wants to turn me loose? (*HARDING is silent. McMURPHY is badly jolted.*) Hey ... then I got as much to lose buggin' that ol' buzzard as *you* do.

HARDING. More. I'm voluntary.

McMURPHY. You're which?

HARDING. I'm not committed. As a matter of fact, there aren't many on the ward who are.

McMURPHY. Are you shittin' me? (*HARDING shakes his head.*) Billy — *you* must be committed? (*BILLY shakes his head.*) Then why? Why? You're just a young kid. Why ain't you out runnin' around in a convertible, cruisin' for babes? (*BILLY looks at the floor.*) All you guys, why the hell do you *stay*? You gripe, you bitch how you can't stand this place, can't stand the Big Nurse, and here all the time you ain't *committed*! What's the *matter* with you? Ain't you got any guts?

BILLY. Sure! Sure, that's it, we haven't got the guts! I could g-g-get out this afternoon if ... (*Wildly.*) You think I wuh-want to stay here? Sure, I'd like a convertible and a guh-girl friend. But did you ever have people l-l-laughing at you? No, because you're so tough. Well, I'm not tough. Neither is Harding. Neither is Cheswick. Oh — oh, you — you t-talk like we stayed in here because ... oh ... what's the use ...

McMURPHY. (*Hard.*) Okay, why didn't you tell me?

HARDING. What?

McMURPHY. That she could keep me here till my dyin' day.

HARDING. I guess ... it didn't occur to us.

McMURPHY. That's a lotta crap! Oh, now I get it. Now I see why you guys keep comin' at me like I'm Jesus Q. Christ. It's 'cause



I got everything to lose, and you ... hooee, how d'you like that? You bastards conned me. Conned by a bunch of wackos!

HARDING. Mac, believe me —

McMURPHY. To hell with that. To hell with *you*. I got plenty of worries of my own without getting hooked on yours. So quit buggin' me. (*A yell.*) Alla you! Quit buggin' me!

*(A stunned silence. He makes a decision, goes to the broom closet, opens it and takes out the toilet brush. NURSE RATCHED, entering with the AIDES, pauses as she see McMURPHY emerge from the closet and start toward the latrine.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy. (*He stops as she comes to him.*) What are you planning to do with that?

McMURPHY. Plannin' to use it, ma'am. Plannin' to scrub them urinals so clean we're gonna have to wear dark glasses every time we take a pee. (*Goes into the latrine.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Examining the MEN thoughtfully.*) Mr. Harding.

HARDING. (*Low.*) Yes, Miss Ratched?

NURSE RATCHED. Have you gentlemen been reasoning with Mr. McMurphy?

HARDING. Yes, Miss Ratched.

NURSE RATCHED. Just what did you say?

HARDING. We ... explained the Therapeutic Community.

NURSE RATCHED. I see. (*She smiles.*) That's fine, boys.

*(CROSS-FADE as people clear. LIGHTS go to night lighting on the empty Day Room. The Nurses' Station is faintly illuminated from within. Elsewhere there are only the blue nightlights; and moonlight pours through the windows. For a few moments the stage is deserted. Then CHIEF BROMDEN enters from the dormitory. He looks about in a puzzled way as though someone had called*

*to him. He is drawn to the windows, magnetized by moonlight. Raises his head looking up at the sky ... and in the hush is heard the high laughing gabble of wild geese passing overhead. He raises his arms wide, as though to embrace the whole lost world beyond the windows, then folds them about his body. He is standing like that, head thrown back, eyes closed, when McMURPHY enters.)*

McMURPHY. *(Whispering.)* Chief, you all right? *(No acknowledgment.)* Saw you get up and figgered maybe you come out here to scrape off some a that thousand-year gum. *(Offering a stick of gum; apologetically.)* They took away my canteen privileges so this is all I got.

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Taking it — then he speaks in a hoarse voice.)* Thank you.

McMURPHY. That's okay. *(Starts off, comes to a startled halt.)* Hey — ! *(Coming back.)* Try it again — you're a little rusty.

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Clears his throat; more clearly.)* Thank you.

*(McMURPHY starts to laugh, trying to keep the sound down. CHIEF BROMDEN goes toward the dormitory, his feelings hurt.)*

McMURPHY. *(Stopping him.)* 'Scuse me, Chief. What I was laughin' at, I just caught wise to what you been doin' all these years. Bidin' your time till you could tell 'em off?

CHIEF BROMDEN. No ... no, I'd be afraid.

McMURPHY. How's that?

CHIEF BROMDEN. I'm not big enough.

McMURPHY. Hoo boy, you *are* crazy, aren't you. I been on a few reservations in my life, but you are the *biggest* damn Injun I have ever seen!

CHIEF BROMDEN. My papa was bigger.

McMURPHY. Yeah?

CHIEF BROMDEN. He was a full chief and his name was Tee Ah Millatoona. That means The Pine That Stands Tallest on the Mountain. But my mother got twice his size.

McMURPHY. You must have had a real moose of an old lady!

CHIEF BROMDEN. Oh, she wasn't big *that* way. She wasn't Indian, neither. She was a town woman. Her name was Bromden.

McMURPHY. Yeah, I think I see what you're getting at ... when a town woman marries an Indian that's marryin' beneath her, ain't it? And your papa had to take her name?

CHIEF BROMDEN. She said she wouldn't be married to no man with a name like Tee Ah Millatoona. But it wasn't only her that made him little. Everybody worked on him. The way they're workin' on you.

McMURPHY. They who?

CHIEF BROMDEN. The Combine. It wanted us to go live some place else. It wanted to take away our waterfall. In town they beat up Papa in the alleys and cut off his hair. Oh, the Combine's big ... big. He fought it a long time till my mother made him too little to fight any more. Then he signed the papers.

McMURPHY. What papers, Chief?

CHIEF BROMDEN. The ones that gave everything to the government. The village. The falls ...

McMURPHY. I remember ... but I heard the tribe got paid some huge amount.

CHIEF BROMDEN. That's what the government guy said, here's a whole big pot of money. And Papa said, what can you pay for the way a man lives? What can you pay for his right to be an Indian? He didn't understand. Neither did the tribe. They stood in front of our door, holdin' those checks, askin' what should we do now? And Papa couldn't tell them 'cause he was too little ... and too drunk.

McMURPHY. What happened to him?

CHIEF BROMDEN. He kept drinkin' till he died. They found

him in a alley and threw dirt in his eyes. (*Fiercely.*) The Combine whipped him. It beats *everybody*.

McMURPHY. Now, wait a minute —

CHIEF BROMDEN. Yes, yes, it does! Oh, they don't bust you outright. They work on you, ways you can't even see. They get hold of you and they *install* things!

McMURPHY. Take 'er easy, buddy.

CHIEF BROMDEN. And if you *fight* they lock you up some place and make you stop, and — !

McMURPHY. (*Closing the CHIEF'S mouth with his hand.*) Woops, cool it. (*Takes him in his arms, gently, soothingly.*)

CHIEF BROMDEN. (*In a moment, ashamed.*) I been talkin' crazy.

McMURPHY. Well ... yeah.

CHIEF BROMDEN. It don't make sense.

McMURPHY. Well, as to *that* —

CHIEF BROMDEN. Sh-h! (*Raises his head, moves toward the windows, listening.*) Hear 'em? (*McMURPHY listens. From the sky the wild, gobbling cry again.*)

McMURPHY. Canada honkers flyin' south. Gonna be an early winter, chief. Look, there they go. Right across the moon!

CHIEF BROMDEN. (*Gazing skyward, chanting softly.*) Wire. brier, limber lock ...

McMURPHY. Huh?

CHIEF BROMDEN. It's a old children's rhyme. My grand-momma taught it to me ...

McMURPHY. Oh, lord, yes, I remember! You play it with your fingers. Hold out your hand, Chief. *Ticking off fingers, chanting.*) Wire, brier, limber lock —

CHIEF BROMDEN. Three geese in a flock.

McMURPHY. One flew east —

CHIEF BROMDEN. One flew west —

McMURPHY. An' one flew over the cuckoo's nest!

CHIEF BROMDEN. O-U-T spells out —

McMURPHY. Goose swoops down and plucks *you* out! *(They embrace, laugh happily; then the CHIEF sobers.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. McMurphy? You gonna crawfish? *(McMURPHY doesn't answer.)* I mean, you gonna back down?

McMURPHY. *(Turning away.)* Aw, what's the difference.

CHIEF BROMDEN. Are you?

McMURPHY. *(His eyes light on the panel. Brightly.)* Hey, remember when I tried to lift that thing? I bet *you* could do it.

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Shrinking back.)* I'm too little.

McMURPHY. Whyn't you give it a try?

CHIEF BROMDEN. I'm not *big* enough!

McMURPHY. How do ya know? That'd be one sure way to find out. *(Giving up, cheerfully.)* Well, when you're ready, lemme make book on it. Hoo boy, would *that* be a killin'!

CHIEF BROMDEN. McMurphy. *(McMURPHY pauses.)* Make me big again.

McMURPHY. Why, hell, Chief, looks to me like you grewed half a foot already!

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Shaking his head.)* How can I be big if you ain't? How can anybody? *(He exits into the dorm. McMURPHY is motionless a moment, then follows.)*

*(CROSS-FADE to daylight. NURSE FLINN is in the Station.)*

NURSE FLINN. *(Picking up microphone.)* Council meeting. Patient's Council meeting. *(MARTINI rushes from the dormitory in the midst of a frantic hallucination.)*

MARTINI. Air to ground, air to ground! ... Enemy sighted at three o'clock. Enemy planes at three o'clock! *(He wildly fires his imaginary machine gun into the sky.)*

CHESWICK. *(Coming out of latrine.)* Knock it off, Martini. There's no one there.

MARTINI. (*Excitedly.*) Don't you see them? Don't you see them?

CHESWICK. There's no one there, I tell you. Now stop it. There's no one there ... (*He takes MARTINI in his arms and quiets him.*)

MARTINI. (*Sadly.*) I thought I seen them.

(*The OTHERS enter. Their attitude is subdued, brooding. The CHIEF sits in the rocking chair. McMURPHY enters, head down, and seats himself, too. WARREN and WILLIAMS enter with almost military precision, preceding NURSE RATCHED.*)

NURSE RATCHED. Boys, I've given a great deal of thought to what I am about to say. I've talked in over with the Staff and we all came to the same conclusion — that there should be some form of punishment for the unspeakable behavior of yesterday. (*A pause. No comment.*) Most of you are here because you could not adjust to the outside world. You broke the rules of society. At some time ... in your childhood, perhaps ... you were allowed to get away with that. But when you broke a rule you knew it. You wanted to be punished — *needed* it — but the punishment did not come. That leniency on the part of your parents may have been the germ of your present illness. I remind you of this, hoping you will understand that it is *entirely for your own good* that we enforce discipline. (*Looking straight at McMURPHY.*) Is there any comment? (*Silence. McMURPHY riffles the cards in his hands — splat! — then waves an apology.*) Then I assume you understand me and agree. You also understand that it is *difficult* to enforce discipline in these surroundings. After all, what can we do to you? You can't be arrested. You can't be sent to an institution, you're already there. All we *can* do is take away privileges. And so, after carefully considering the circumstances, we have decided to take away certain privileges which allowed — no, *encouraged* the rebellion to happen. (*Referring to her memorandum.*) First, for thirty days there will be no viewing of televi-

sion. (*A groan from SCANLON.*) Second, the privilege of playing cards during recreation hours is hereby rescinded. (*The cards in McMURPHY'S hands go "splat" again. The MEN'S eyes go to him, hopefully.*)

McMURPHY. (*Putting the cards away.*) 'Scuse me.

HARDING. (*Sounding sick.*) Is that all?

NURSE RATCHED. Not quite. There is one more matter ... the behavior of a patient who has been here almost as long as I. Longer, I believe, than any of you. (*Smiling.*) You know, of course, to whom I refer? (*The MEN are puzzled at first, then turn eyes to CHIEF BROMDEN ... so long a fixture, never a subject in these meetings.*) Mr. Bromden long ago was diagnosed as catatonic. And for that reason — because it was assumed we could not communicate — we gave him up. We forgot poor Mr. Bromden. (*Smiles warmly at the CHIEF but there is apprehension gathering in his eyes and his hands grip the sides of his chair.*) That was wrong of us. But Mr. Bromden acted wrongly, too. Please don't misunderstand. We are happy to know that Mr. Bromden can be reached — but disappointed to learn he would *conceal* it from us, thereby refusing to cooperate in his own cure. And if Mr. Bromden can hear, isn't it logical to assume that he can also speak? I think Mr. Bromden should speak to us, don't you? His first contribution to Group Therapy. And how appropriate if those first works were an apology.

CHIEF BROMDEN. (*A whimpered plea.*) Mac ...

NURSE RATCHED. An apology for the behavior that made yesterday's rebellion —

CHIEF BROMDEN. (*In terror.*) McMurphy ...!

(*NURSE RATCHED snaps her fingers and WARREN comes across toward the trembling, retreating CHIEF BROMDEN. McMURPHY'S foot comes out — operating independently of his will — and WARREN trips over it and crashes to the floor.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*A warning.*) Mr. McMurphy — !



WARREN. *(Comes to his feet, catlike.)* Man, you beggin' for it!

McMURPHY. *(Rising to block WARREN'S way.)* Let 'im alone.

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy, I am warning you.

WARREN. *(Starts toward CHIEF BROMDEN once more and McMURPHY swings, a powerful but clumsy roundhouse right. NURSE RATCHED calmly signals to the Station. NURSE FLINN throws a switch that starts an alarm bell ringing. WARREN ducks lithely and sinks a fist in McMURPHY'S belly that doubles him over. Joyfully, dancing about.)* Come on, you bastard, I been waitin' for this. Come on, stan' up an' — Ugh! *(He is gripped from behind and lifted high off the floor in CHIEF BROMDEN'S hands. WARREN yells in terror.)*

*(BLACKOUT. The ALARM BELL sounds. The alarm bell continues, fading as: a tight pool of light reveals the electroshock table being readied by a TECHNICIAN who hums as he works. [This may be DR. SPIVEY if preferred.] McMURPHY, then BROMDEN, are pushed roughly into the area by the AIDES. Both are in straitjackets. McMURPHY begins to chuckle. CHIEF BROMDEN looks at him uncertainly.)*

McMURPHY. *(Laughing.)* Jesus, that look on Warren's face. That look when you threw the ol' bear hug on 'im. Aw, c'mon, Chief, why don't you laugh right out loud? You got to laugh — 'specially when things ain't funny. *(Laughs again, throws a shoulder block at the CHIEF, stands back and gets him to retaliate.)* That's the ticket! That's the way ya keep yourself in balance. Hey, y'know something? You're gettin' bigger. Look at that foot. The size of a flatcar! You keep growin' that way and pretty soon they'll have ta spring ya. And there'll be Big Chief Bromden, cuttin' down the boulevard, men, women and kids rockin' back on their heels to peer up at 'im! "Well, well, well, what giant's this here, takin' ten feet at a step and duckin' for telephone wires? Comes stompin' through town, stops just long enough for virgins, the rest o' you twitches



don't even bother linin' up!" *(His laugh rolls free, and the CHIEF joins him, this time more easily. NURSE RATCHED enters escorted by the AIDES.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Friendly.)* What's so amusing?

McMURPHY. I ain't sure you'd get the point.

NURSE RATCHED. Don't you boys feel sorry for what you did?

McMURPHY. I don't guess so, ma'am. So whatever you're goin' to do, get on with it.

NURSE RATCHED. We had a meeting, Randle. The Staff agreed it might be beneficial if you were to receive shock therapy. But we won't — provided you are prepared to admit your mistakes.

McMURPHY. You got a paper I can sign?

NURSE RATCHED. A paper?

McMURPHY. Yeah, then you could add some other things. Like how I'm part of a plot to overthrow the government, and how I think life on your ward is the sweetest fuckin' thing this side of Hawaii.

NURSE RATCHED. Randle, we are trying to help you.

McMURPHY. Do I get my pants slit? You gonna shave my head? *(NURSE RATCHED turns from him, nods her head abruptly to the TECHNICIAN, and exits.)* Don't be scared, Chief. I'll go first. If they can't hurt me, they can't hurt you. *(CHIEF BROMDEN whimpers as the AIDES grab McMURPHY and strap him to the table. The TECHNICIAN smears a compound on his temples.)* What's that?

TECHNICIAN. Conductant.

McMURPHY. Anointest my head with conductant! Do I get a crown of thorns?

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Whimpering.)* Papa. Papa.

McMURPHY. Don't holler, Chief. Or if you got to holler, make it "Guts ball."

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Trembling.)* Guts ball.

McMURPHY. Atta Injun! *(The TECHNICIAN sets the voltage and timer on his machine; clamps a pair of "ice tongs" on McMUR-*

*PHY'S head.) Hoo boy, I do get a crown.*

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(Trembling.) Guts ball. Guts ball.*

McMURPHY. *(Singing.)*

"Wire, brier, limberlock.

Three geese inna flock ... *(The TECHNICIAN jams a rubber mouthpiece between his teeth. Through the mouthpiece:)*

One flew Eatht, one flew Wetht ..."

TECHNICIAN. Clear! *(The AIDES back off.)*

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(As the TECHNICIAN throws the switch.)*

GUTS BALL-L-L!

*(A blaze of white light. McMURPHY'S body snaps into a rigid arc.*

*SOUND: An electronic scream with voices within it shouting,*

*"Air raid, air raid ...! The LIGHTS DIM OUT. The sounds fade, cross-blending into:)*

CHILDREN'S VOICES. *(On tape, singsonging.)*

Intra, mintra, cute-ra corn,

Apple seed and apple thorn,

Wire, brier, limber lock,

Three geese in a flock.

One flew east,

One flew west

And one flew over the cuckoo's nest ... ! *(Their laughter rises; then fades.)*

*(LIGHTS TO FULL on the Day Room. HARDING, MARTINI, BILLY, CHESWICK and SCANLON are there, and RUCKLY in his usual position. The MEN are mumbling intensely among themselves. They break off as NURSE RATCHED and DR. SPIVEY enter, moving briskly.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Without preamble.)* May I, Doctor? *(The*

*DOCTOR waves consent.*) Gentlemen, we have just come from the Treasurer's office, and we have here a memorandum of extreme interest. It concerns Patient Randle McMurphy.

SCANLON. *(Truculently.)* Yeah, where you got 'im? Up in Disturbed?

NURSE RATCHED. No, Mr. Scanlon, he is in the Recovery Room and will be back very shortly. *(Silence, and she smiles around the room, holding up the memorandum.)* This, gentlemen, is a record of Mr. McMurphy's gains in the short time he has been croupier of his little Monte Carlo here on the ward. How much did you lose, Billy? Mr. Harding? I think you all have some idea of what your personal losses were, but do you know what Mr. McMurphy's winnings come to? According to deposits he has made, over three hundred dollars. *(BILLY whistles.)* I just thought it would be better if there were no delusions about his motives.

HARDING. *(Stirring.)* Miss Ratched ... he never made any pretense about his motives.

CHESWICK. That's right!

SCANLON. *Said* he was out to take us and by God he done it!

CHESWICK. *(Who can see the Ward entrance.)* Mac!

*(McMURPHY and BROMDEN are pushed into the room by the AIDES. Both stand slackbodied as though they'd been wiped out by the EST. Then McMURPHY snaps out of the shamming.)*

McMURPHY. Stand back, you peckerheads, here comes the champ! Oi' McMurphy, the ten-thousand-watt psychopath! Howdy, buddies! Howdy, Doc! *(With a bow.)* Miss Rat-shit. *(Takes BROMDEN and makes him stand on the rocking chair; jumps to the panel.)* And here, ladeez and gennelmun, right here in front of your eyes, the Wild Man who dotes on high voltage and eats three aides for breakfast each and every morning! *(He roars at the CHIEF who weakly echoes the roar. Not satisfied, McMURPHY roars back until the*

*CHIEF responds with a full-bodied roar.)*

NURSE RATCHED. Mr. McMurphy. We are in the middle of a meeting.

McMURPHY. Oh, *do* continue. (*Rubbing his hands, eagerly.*) Who we tearin' up today?

NURSE RATCHED. Since you found it so enjoyable, perhaps a few more treatments ... ?

McMURPHY. Oh, *please*, ma'am. Look at the good a few measly volts have done! (*Advancing, "dialing" her breasts.*) I bet if we doubled the charge, I could pick up Channel Eight!

NURSE RATCHED. Doctor.

DR. SPIVEY. (*Who is chortling.*) Miss Ratched?

NURSE RATCHED. I'd like to withdraw that suggestion as to further shock.

McMURPHY. (*Reproachfully.*) Oh-h!

NURSE RATCHED. Yes ... I think it might be appropriate to consider ... surgical procedure?

McMURPHY. Ma'am?

NURSE RATCHED. An operation. Quite simple, really. We've had an excellent record in aggressive cases.

McMURPHY. Aggressive? Why, ma'am, I'm friendly as a pup. There's no cause to do any cuttin'.

NURSE RATCHED. (*Smiling, friendly.*) Randle, there's no *cutting* involved. We simply —

McMURPHY. Besides, it wouldn't do no good to lop 'em off. I got another pair at home. Big as baseballs!

DR. SPIVEY. Haw! (*And the MEN laugh, too. DR. SPIVEY rises, to leave.*)

NURSE RATCHED. One moment, Doctor. I should like to return to the subject.

DR. SPIVEY. What subject?

NURSE RATCHED. The question of surgical procedure for Patient McMurphy.

DR. SPIVEY. Not warranted except in cases of uncontrollable violence.

NURSE RATCHED. He has exhibited violence.

DR. SPIVEY. Shall we say there was a certain ... provocation? (*With unexpected firmness.*) No, Miss Ratched. Since you have brought up the matter in Group rather than Staff, I shall state my opinion. I do not approve surgical procedure in the absence of recurrent violence.

NURSE RATCHED. (*Tightly.*) And if it should recur?

DR. SPIVEY. Then ... we may reconsider. Mr. McMurphy — I would bear that in mind. (*Exits.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*Smiling brightly.*) Behave yourself, boys. (*Exits, followed by the AIDES.*)

McMURPHY. (*Shouting after her.*) Do change your mind about those treatments, ma'am, I just adore your little battery charger! (*His face changes when she is gone. To HARDING:*) What was that stuff about "surgical procedure?"

HARDING. I guess she means lobotomy.

McMURPHY. What's that?

HARDING. Well, you might call it kind of ... castration of the brain.

McMURPHY. Okay, okay, what's it do to you?

HARDING. (*Gestures to McMURPHY to follow him, and crosses to stand before RUCKLY.*) They say he used to be a real rough character.

McMURPHY. (*Gazing at RUCKLY ... the slack body, empty eyes. Softly.*) Jee-zuss ...

HARDING. (*Impulsively.*) Mac, we've been talking it over, the boys and I. We think you ought to get out of here.

McMURPHY. (*His eyes still on RUCKLY.*) Get out of here?

CHESWICK. (*Eagerly.*) That's right, we figured out a way. Soon's it gets dark tonight, I set fire to my mattress. Then we make a holler and when the firemen come they're going to leave the door

open, aren't they? Then we rush you out!

McMURPHY. (*Turns to them, grinning.*) Boys, it's as good as a TV show, and I thank you. But if I went I'd miss the party.

CHESWICK. Party?

McMURPHY. You forgotten?

SCANLON. Holy cow!

McMURPHY. You wouldn't want me to miss Billy cashin' in his virginity?

HARDING. But, Mac —

McMURPHY. Don't worry, boys, tonight them windows will be open. So I can sashay right on out. We make it a goin'-away party, huh? (*Sees WARREN entering.*) Woops, cool it.

WARREN. Supper time, gentlemen, move yo' feet. (*He goes to pull the "nails" from RUCKLY'S hands and the ACUTES follow him out.*)

McMURPHY. (*Catching BILLY'S attention.*) Pst. (*BILLY comes to him. Confidentially:*) You take your vitamins, Billy? 'Cause I'm warnin' you, that Candy girl ... !

BILLY. Aw, Mac ...

McMURPHY. Now, don't go bashful on me, I'm bettin' you burn that woman down!

BILLY. That's right ... that's what I'm gonna do ... (*Squirming pleasurably.*) I'm goin' to ... b-burn her down!

McMURPHY. Hey, you got any bread?

BILLY. How much?

McMURPHY. "Bout fifty bucks?

BILLY. Fifty — ! (*Resentfully.*) What for?

McMURPHY. Candy's layin' out for liquor. And there's old Turkle to take care of, and ... why the hell you lookin' down your nose like that?

BILLY. Something Miss R-Ratched said.

McMURPHY. What'd she say?

BILLY. How you were always coming out ahead. Always w-winning things. (*Turns from McMURPHY and exits.*)

McMURPHY. Winning. *(His eyes close, his body sags and his hands come up to where the electrodes were ... his face abruptly haggard and defenseless.)* Hoo boy. Winning. *(He exits, feet dragging.)*

*(LIGHTS DIM to Night Lighting. AIDE TURKLE enters the deserted room from the outer corridor. After making sure that he's alone he sits, lights up a marijuana joint and takes a deep drag. CHESWICK comes creeping out of the dorm.)*

CHESWICK. Ssssssssssst!

TURKLE. *(Startled, turns his flashlight on CHESWICK'S face.)*  
Lord he'p me, I thought you as a snake!

CHESWICK. *(An excited whisper.)* She showed up yet?

TURKLE. She who?

CHESWICK. Candy!

TURKLE. *(Blandly.)* I don't know nothin' 'bout no candy.

CHESWICK. *(Dismayed.)* Mac said he made a deal with you.

TURKLE. I ain't got the slightest inclination what you talkin' 'bout.

CHESWICK. Don't go away! *(Disappears back into the dormitory.)*

TURKLE. *(Exhaling smoke.)* I ain't goin' nowhere.

*(McMURPHY emerges with CHESWICK at his shoulder.)*

McMURPHY. Turkey, ol' boy! What's the beef?

TURKLE. Ain't no beef.

McMURPHY. So?

TURKLE. Ain't no money changed hands, neither.

McMURPHY. *(Digs in his pocket for a wad of bills.)* There y'are. Begged, borrowed and stole.

TURKLE. *(Taking it, mournfully.)* You know they fin' out 'bout this they fire my ass.

McMURPHY. She's bringin' liquor, Turkey.

TURKLE. (*Brightening.*) Yeah?

McMURPHY. Bottle of Scotch and one of vodka. Which d'you want?

TURKLE. (*Deliberating.*) Sorta like 'em both.

McMURPHY. Hey, what're we supposed to drink?

TURKLE. (*Morally.*) You ain't supposed to drink at *all*.

McMURPHY. (*To CHESWICK, who is at the window:*) Any sign?

CHESWICK. Nary sign.

McMURPHY. (*Slaps his forehead.*) Hoo boy, am I stupid! How they gonna find the right window in the dark? (*To TURKLE:*) Turn on the lights.

TURKLE. Hey, now, tha's *dangerous*. Miz Ratched, she see the ward lit up —

McMURPHY. Come on, Turkey, she's asleep,

TURKLE. (*Grumbling as he finds the key.*) That ol' shitpoke never sleep.

(*The LIGHTS GO ON and HARDING and the OTHER ACUTES come piling out of the dormitory.*)

MARTINI. (*Racing in.*) Hey, where's the party?

McMURPHY. (*Indicating the latrine.*) In there.

MARTINI. (*Joyously.*) Oh, boy! (*He races into the latrine.*)

McMURPHY. (*To TURKLE:*) Gimme the window key.

TURKLE. I ain't s'pose to let these keys off'n —

McMURPHY. Gimme.

TURKLE. (*Muttering as he moves it from the ring.*) Tha' better be good liquor.

McMURPHY. (*Tossing the key to HARDING.*) Open the window, huh?

HARDING. (*At the window.*) Sssssssss! She walks in beauty!



McMURPHY. Well, let 'er in! Let this mad stud at her!

BILLY. (*As HARDING unlocks the screen.*) Look, McM-M-Murphy, wait —

McMURPHY. Don't you mama-murphy me, Billy Boy, it's too late to back out now.

(*Candy is climbing through the widow, helped by HARDING and SCANLON, impeded by the bottles she carries in each hand. She's quite tipsy.*)

CANDY. (*Charging at McMURPHY.*) You damned McMurphy! (*See flings her arms around him to kiss him, and TURKLE adroitly snatches the bottle of Scotch.*) Hey, what the hell —!

McMURPHY. That's okay, baby. (*Inspecting the half-empty bottle of vodka.*) What happened to this one?

CANDY. (*Giggling, patting her stomach.*) We got the rest of it right here.

McMURPHY. We?

CANDY. Oh, lordy, I forgot, Sandra's out there!

SANDRA. (*Is struggling through the window with HARDING'S help, showing a lot of leg.*) Hiya, Mac.

McMURPHY. Sandy, baby! (*Kisses her. SANDRA is a big, earthy wench. Like CANDY, she is drunk.*) What'd you do with your husband?

SANDRA. (*As HARDING closes the screen and pockets the key.*) That creep!

CANDY. (*Giggling.*) She up and left him. Ain't that a hoot?

SANDRA. Lissen, you can take just so many funsies like ants in your panties and frogs down your bra. Cheesus, what a creep!

CANDY. (*With warmth.*) Hello, Billy!

BILLY. (*Bashfully.*) Hello, C-C-C-C —

CANDY. Never mind. (*She kisses him, then pulls him to a chair and sits on his lap.*)

SANDRA. *(Suddenly.)* Ouch!

McMURPHY. Ya okay, baby?

SANDRA. *(Darkly, eyeing SCANLON.)* Somebody pinched my ass.

McMURPHY. I gotta find somethin' for us to drink! Cheswick, get me somethin' to mix it in. *(Takes the keys and opens the Nurses' Station. MARTINI and SCANLON follow. SANDRA goes circling, looking over the MEN.)*

SANDRA. Whooee, Candy girl, is this for real? I mean, are we in an asylum? *(To HARDING:)* Tell the truth, are you really nuts?

HARDING. Absolutely, madam. We are psychoceramics, the cracked pots of humanity. Would you like me to decipher a Rorschach?

*(CHESWICK rolls in a stand with an enema bag with tube attached.)*

CHESWICK. Cocktail shaker!

McMURPHY. *(On microphone.)* Medication! *(Comes out of Station with jugs and bottles of medicine.)*

HARDING. *(Reading the label on a bottle of colored liquid.)* Artificial coloring, citric acid. Sixty percent inert materials.

McMURPHY. *(Pointing out a line.)* Twenty-two percent alcohol. *(Is pouring liquids into the bag.)*

HARDING. *(Reading the next label.)* Ten percent codeine. Warning: May Be Habit Forming.

McMURPHY. *(Seizing it.)* Nothin' like a good bad habit.

HARDING. *(Next bottle.)* Tincture of nux vomica.

McMURPHY. *(Emptying it in.)* That'll give it body.

CHESWICK. *(Returning from the Station.)* Here's some cups.

McMURPHY. *(Shakes up the cocktail with professional dexterity. Tastes it. Clicks his teeth together loudly.)* If we cut it a leetle bit ... *(Pours the remaining vodka into the "shaker" and squeezes it.)*

SANDRA. *(Giggling)* Jeez, what a blast. Is this really happening?

HARDING. No ma'am. The whole thing is collaboration between Franz Kafka and Mark Twain.

McMURPHY. (*Pouring.*) Bar's open.

HARDING. (*Tasting.*) Interesting ...

CANDY. (*Taking a sip.*) Tastes like cough medicine.

SANDRA. (*Getting to her feet.*) 'Scuse me, I gotta tinkle. (*She goes, weaving.*)

HARDING. You know this stuff gives one the feeling of — of —

McMURPHY. (*Grinning.*) No more rabbits?

HARDING. Old friend, you have taught me that mental illness can have the aspect of power. Perhaps the more insane a man is, the more powerful he can become.

SCANLON. Sure — Hitler!

(*There is a scream and SANDRA comes running from the dormitory with RUCKLY in pursuit.*)

RUCKLY. F-f-fuck 'em all!

SANDRA. This damn place is dangerous!

CHESWICK. (*Leads her to the latrine.*) Wrong way, lady.

(*MARTINI is in the Station, fiddling with the tape machine. Now it comes on: MUSIC.*)

CANDY. C'mon, Billy! (*Pulls him to his feet and they dance, cheek to cheek. The MEN fall back for them as they hold each other closely, moving slowly.*)

McMURPHY. (*Dangling TURKLE'S keys.*) How about the Seclusion Room?

CHESWICK. (*Happily.*) Sure, the place is one big mattress!

HARDING. One moment! Shall we send them off without benefit of ceremony. Come, children — here, before me. (*Mounts a chair as BILLY and CANDY link hands before him and the GROUP forms*

*up in rough semblance of a wedding.)* Mac, would you bring Ruckly? We need a centerpiece. *(McMURPHY brings RUCKLY, arranges him in a crucifixion pose.)* Dearly beloved. We are gathered in the sight of Freud to celebrate the end of innocence and to cheer on its demise. Who stands sponsor for the benedict?

McMURPHY. *(Moving to BILLY'S side.)* R. P. McMurphy.

HARDING. And for the bride?

SANDRA. *(Coming to CANDY'S side.)* Me!

HARDING. Very well, then. Do you, Candy Starr, take this man to love and cherish for such brief time as rules and regulations may allow?

CANDY. I do.

HARDING. Do you, Billy Bibbit, take this woman to have and hold until the night shift changes and our revels end?

BILLY. I duh-duh-duh - I duh —

McMURPHY. He does.

HARDING. Most merciful God, we ask that You accept these two into your kingdom with Your well-known compassion. And keep the door ajar for all the rest of us ... for this may be our final fling and we are doomed, henceforth, to the terrible burden of sanity. As comes the dawn we shall most assuredly be lined up against the wall and fired upon with bullets of Paxil! Prozac! Thorazine! Go, my children — sin while ye may, for tomorrow we shall be tranquilized.

*(CANDY and BILLY kiss. They exit to singing of the Wedding march, under an arch formed by CHESWICK and SCANLON'S arms.)*

McMURPHY. *(Putting down RUCKLY'S arms.)* Mr. Ruckly, you did a fine job. *(SANDRA sits on the floor, sniffing.)* Sandra, baby!

SANDRA. Well, it was so damn beautiful. *(McMURPHY hugs her.)*

HARDING. *(With a sigh.)* Mac, we're sure going to miss you.

McMURPHY. So why don't you all come along?

HARDING. Oh, I'll be going soon. But I've got to do it my own way. Sign the papers. Call my wife and say, "Pick me up at a certain time." You understand?

McMURPHY. Sure, but ... what is it with you guys?

HARDING. You mean what drove us here in the first place? Oh, I don't know ... a lot of theories ... but I do know what drives people like you — strong people — crazy.

McMURPHY. Okay, what?

HARDING. People like us.

McMURPHY. (*Uncertainly.*) Bull.

HARDING. Oh, yes, my friend.

McMURPHY. Hey, what's happening to the party? Drink up, you mother-lovin' loonies, this is Big Mac tendin' bar, and when he pours let no man — ! (*CHIEF BROMDEN, having taken several belts from the bottle, lets out a wild whoop, startling EVERYONE.*) Chief, was that you?

CHIEF BROMDEN. (*Equally startled.*) I guess so.

McMURPHY. What ya doin', declarin' war?

CHIEF BROMDEN. My tribe never made war on nobody.

TURKLE. That was a sorry damn tribe. (*TURKLE flinches as CHIEF BROMDEN looms over him.*)

CHIEF BROMDEN. Maybe that was our mistake. We should of! (*He whoops again, pleased with the sound, then goes into a shuffling war dance, accompanying himself with chanted Indian gutturals. The OTHERS fall delightedly into the line and it becomes a snake-dance, weaving its noisy way around the room.*)

(*NURSE RATCHED enters from the corridor and stands frozen in incredulity. She is there some moments before anyone becomes aware.*)

McMURPHY. Hiya, kid. We got room for one more.

(*NURSE RATCHED flees. HARDING drops out of the dance.*)

HARDING. *(Yelling.)* Stop! Quiet! Shut up, everybody. *(With delayed horror.)* Was that ... did I see ... ?

McMURPHY. *(Aggrieved.)* I assed her to stay.

HARDING. Oh, God, she went to get help. *(Hurrying to the window.)* Mac, you've got to get out of here.

McMURPHY. *(Cheerfully tipsy.)* Okay, soon's I say g-bye to my buddies.

HARDING. *(Swinging open the grille.)* In a hurry.

TURKLE. I don't know 'bout him — but I am goin' to drag ass! *(Climbs onto the sill, tumbles out of sight.)*

HARDING. Sandy!

SANDY. You coming, Mac?

McMURPHY. *(Shaking hands with the MEN.)* Best damned buddies I every had!

HARDING. *(As SANDRA climbs through the window.)* Don't hang around ... !

McMURPHY. *(To BROMDEN.)* You gonna be all right? 'Cause if you ain't I'll hear about it, and I'll come bustin' back into this place ... !

HARDING. *(Crossing to him.)* Come on, Mac.

McMURPHY. Okay, all right.

*(WARREN and WILLIAMS, not quite fully dressed, come in fast. NURSE RATCHED is close behind.)*

NURSE RATCHED. *(Snapping it.)* Stand still, everyone. Just remain right where you are. *(Switches on full lights. The MEN blink confusedly.)* Warren. Room check. *(WARREN races off.)* Williams — get this place in order. *(Strolling about, easily.)* So, we've had a party. Thrown, no doubt, by Mr. McMurphy? *(To McMURPHY.)* I wonder ... was there some sort of profit in it?

McMURPHY. *(Scornfully.)* Oh, very smart. Tryin' to bug me till I blow. Well, shove it, lady, 'cause I'm hip ...

(WARREN pushes BILLY and CANDY onstage. They are disheveled and confused, covering their eyes against the light. McMURPHY stops dead at the window.)

NURSE RATCHED. Where were they?

WARREN. (*Grinning.*) Seclusion Room. On the floor.

NURSE RATCHED. William — Bibbit. Oh, Billy, I'm so ashamed!

BILLY. (*Considers.*) I'm not.

McMURPHY. Thassit, Billy — !

(The OTHERS erupt into cheers.)

NURSE RATCHED. You be silent! Oh, Billy ... a woman like this.

BILLY. Like what?

NURSE RATCHED. A cheap — low — painted —

BILLY. She is not! She's good, and sweet, and — !

ALL. Attaboy, Billy!

NURSE RATCHED. (*Dragging CANDY forward.*) Look at her.

CANDY. (*Fleeing to McMURPHY.*) Mac — !

BILLY. (*Simultaneously.*) You leave her alone!

NURSE RATCHED. Billy, have you thought how your poor mother is going to take this? She's always been so proud of your decency. You know what this is going to do to her. You know, don't you?

BILLY. No. No. You don't nuh-need —

NURSE RATCHED. Don't need to tell her? How could I not?

BILLY. (*Beginning to crumble.*) Duh-duh-don't tell her, Miss Ratched. Duh— duh —

NURSE RATCHED. Billy, dear, I have to. I have to tell her that you were found on the floor of the Seclusion Room ... with this ... prostitute. That you and she —

BILLY. No! I d-d-didn't! I mean, she m-made me do it!

NURSE RATCHED. I can't believe she pulled you in there forcibly.

BILLY. (*Wildly.*) It was the others. They m-made fun of me. Thuh-they —

NURSE RATCHED. Who, Billy?

BILLY. Thuh-thuh — they teased me. They c-c-called me names.

NURSE RATCHED. Who, Billy?

BILLY. (*Clutching her knees; sobbing.*) McMuh-Murphy. It was McMurphy.

McMURPHY. (*In dismay.*) Billy ...

NURSE RATCHED. All right, Billy. No one will hurt you. I want you to go to Dr. Spivey's office. Wait for him there, you'll be needing attention.

BILLY. Miss Ratched, you're not going to tell my mother?

NURSE RATCHED. It's all right, Billy, it's going to be all right.

BILLY. (*Catching McMURPHY'S eye.*) McMurphy ... ! (*Breaks and runs out of the ward. WARREN follows.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*To CANDY; hard.*) And you, miss, if you're not out of here within ten seconds I will have you jailed as a common prostitute.

CANDY. You coming, Mac? (*She flees through the window.*)

NURSE RATCHED. (*To McMURPHY.*) Aren't you? There's no reason to stay, you've already plundered these poor, sick people of everything they had. So run, Mr. McMurphy. Get out while the getting's good. Save your own skin, Mr. McMurphy, there's no more profit to be made out of these helpless, mentally ill —

WARREN. (*Off, yelling frantically.*) Nurse Ratched! Oh, my God, Nurse Ratched ... ! (*NURSE RATCHED hurries out, followed by WILLIAMS.*)

HARDING. (*After a silence.*) Nobody's blaming you, Mac.



SCANLON. (*Unconvincingly.*) That's right. Nobody's blamin' you.

(McMURPHY looks at them one by one, and their eyes won't meet his. He sits, slowly, waiting for what is to come. NURSE RATCHED enters, the AIDES following. She crosses directly to McMURPHY.)

NURSE RATCHED. He cut his throat. (*McMURPHY does not look up.*) He went into the Doctor's desk and he found an instrument and he cut his throat. That poor boy has killed himself. He is in there now, in the Doctor's chair, with his throat cut. (*McMURPHY doesn't move or answer.*) I hope you're satisfied. Playing with human lives. Gambling with human lives as though you were God. Are you God, Mr. McMurphy? Somehow I don't think you are God.

(McMURPHY sighs deeply and heaves himself to his feet.)

HARDING. (*Blocking him.*) No, Mac, it's what she wants.

McMURPHY. *Don'tcha think I know it!*

NURSE RATCHED. (*Signaling the AIDES not to interfere; smiling as McMURPHY walks toward her.*) Come on, Mr. McMurphy. Mr. Big ... Strong ... Masculine ...

(*He reaches out and rips her uniform open down the front. Her knee comes up viciously, and McMURPHY barely eludes it. NURSE RATCHED screams, the scream cut off as his hands lock about her throat. The cry is caught up and continued in CHIEF BROMDEN'S throat as he spins away. A single light stabs down at him as all other lights BLACK OUT. There is a hissing sound, then the thudding of the Black Machine with electronic counterpoint.*)

CHIEF BROMDEN. Papa, they got to me again. They got the

wires on me and they're givin' orders. Go right. Go left. Do this. Do that. Sign the papers twenty times and don't step on the grass. Where can I run? How can I get away? Papa, there's no place to hide no more. No place to hide!

*(LIGHTS COME UP on the Day Room. It is post-supper. CHIEF BROMDEN is hunched in catatonic stance. HARDING is at the card table dealing blackjack to CHESWICK, SCANLON and MARTINI.)*

HARDING. *(Imitating McMURPHY'S style.)* Hey-a, hey-a, come on, suckers, the game is twenty-one, you hit or you sit. What do you do, Scanlon?

SCANLON. I wasn't payin' any mind.

HARDING. Well, pay some mind.

SCANLON. *(Getting up restlessly.)* Gosh, if we only knew. Where they got him. What they're doin'. Damn near a whole week now.

CHESWICK. Hey, you know what a guy down at the dining room told me? He says McMurphy knocked out two aides and took their keys away and escaped!

SCANLON. *(Hopefully.)* That sounds like Mac.

HARDING. What ward was your informant from?

CHESWICK. Disturbed.

MARTINI. Somebody told me they'd caught him and sent him back to the Work Farm.

HARDING. Who?

MARTINI. *(Looking around.)* Somebody ... !

HARDING. *(Wearily.)* And a loony down in Occupational Therapy told me that McMurphy had sprouted wings and was last seen soaring in circles overhead, defecating on the hospital.

MARTINI. *(Open-mouthed.)* Honest? *(HARDING throws up his hands in disgust.)*

(WARREN enters, harbinger for NURSE RATCHED, who is close behind. NURSE RATCHED wears a cervical collar. Her manner has changed; warier, and her eyes are nervous. WILLIAMS appears in the doorway, waiting.)

NURSE RATCHED. (Her voice husky.) Isn't it past your bedtime?

CHESWICK. (Advancing.) Miss Ratched — (NURSE RATCHED takes a step backward.) — what we want to know —

HARDING. Is McMurphy coming back? I think we have a right ...

NURSE RATCHED. I agree, Mr. Harding. He will be back. (There is hostile skepticism.) Don't you believe me?

HARDING. (Deliberately.) Lady, we think you are full of bull.

NURSE RATCHED. (A pause; calmly.) I assure you, McMurphy will be back. Now I think it's time you were in bed? (She faces them steadily; and the MEN file silently into the dormitory. Only CHIEF BROMDEN, unnoticed and unmoving, remains. To WARREN:) Bring him in. (WARREN and WILLIAMS wheel in a gurney bed upon which McMURPHY lies covered by a blanket. He is immobile but for minor twitching. There are great purplish bruises about his eyes, and a thin line of spittle runs from his mouth. Following NURSE RATCHED'S signals, the AIDES position the bed.) That's fine, boys. (The AIDES exit silently on their rubber shoes. NURSE RATCHED feels McMURPHY'S pulse, straightens the blanket. Softly, looking down at him:) That's just fine. (She exits.)

(CHIEF BROMDEN emerges from the shadows and studies the figure. From the dormitory CHESWICK enters, then SCANLON and MARTINI. CHESWICK, at the foot of the gurney, lifts the chart that hangs there and holds it to the light.)

SCANLON. What's it say?

CHESWICK. McMurphy, Randle Patrick. Post operative. Pre-

frontal lobotomy.

SCANLON. So they done it.

CHESWICK. That ain't McMurphy.

SCANLON. (*Surprised.*) No?

CHESWICK. Some dummy they rigged up.

SCANLON. Think so?

CHESWICK. Factory made.

MARTINI. I bet he's right.

SCANLON. (*Dubiously.*) They done a pretty fair job, though.  
See? Even the busted nose.

CHESWICK. They can do noses.

MARTINI. Look, its eyes is open!

CHESWICK. All smoked up.

SCANLON. Nobody inside.

CHESWICK. How stupid does that ol' bitch think we are?

MARTINI. (*Wistfully, as the MEN turn away.*) Gee, I wish McMurphy would come back.

CHESWICK. (*Brightly.*) Hey, remember the time he pinched Miss Ratched on the ass and said he was just trying to stay in touch?

SCANLON. An' them things he'd write in the Log Book.  
"Madam, d'you wear a B cup or a C cup or any ol' cup at all?"

CHESWICK. D'you remember the time that little nurse —

SCANLON. The one that wears a cross!

CHESWICK. — she dropped a pill down the front of her uniform and McMurphy tries to help her get it out, and she hollers —

SCANLON. (*Falsetto.*) "Don't touch me, I'm a Catholic!" (*Whooping with laughter, they exit into the dormitory.*)

(*CHIEF BROMDEN moves at last, approaching the gurney. He gazes down at McMURPHY a long time. Then he slides the pillow from under McMURPHY'S head and presses it down on his face. McMURPHY'S body jerks and thrashes, fighting with indomitable vitality. BROMDEN is crying now. The tears roll*

*down his cheeks, but he keeps the pressure on the pillow until the body subsides ... at last gives up resistance. Now it is quiet, unalive. HARDING, in pajamas and robe, enters from the dormitory. He has been awakened and is angry.)*

HARDING. *What in hell is going on? They come in cackling like a pack of geese ... how is a man ever going to get any sleep if ... (He becomes aware of what is happening.) Chief. (Horrificed.) Chief! (He flings himself on BROMDEN.) Chief, let go. Let go. (Pulls with all his strength. CHIEF BROMDEN stumbles back. HARDING flings aside the pillow. Feels for pulse in McMURPHY's neck. In soft horror.) Oh, Christ Jesus ... (The CHIEF begins to sob, his body shaking. HARDING turns from him and races to the window.) I've still got the key! (He unlocks the grille, swings it open.) All right, Chief, get going. (No response.) Chief, do you hear me? (BROMDEN doesn't respond. With increasing desperation.) If you're gone they can't prove anything. Anybody can die, post-operative. Happens all the time. (Still no response.) We won't tell. But the Big Nurse ... she'll look at you. She'll ask questions. And you'll talk.*

CHIEF BROMDEN. *(It penetrates.)* What should I do?

HARDING. Beat it!

CHIEF BROMDEN. Out there?

HARDING. Flag a ride on the highway. Head north, Canada. We'll say he was alive *after* you busted out.

CHIEF BROMDEN. I'm afraid.

HARDING. *(Despairing.)* Chief ... !

CHIEF BROMDEN. I can't do it, I'm not big enough

HARDING. You're as big as you're going to get.

CHIEF BROMDEN. No. No. McMurphy said ... he says ... *(His eyes go to the panel at the foot of the station and he moves towards it.)*

HARDING. *(A wail.)* Chief, what are you doing?

CHIEF BROMDEN. McMurphy said ... *(He knocks HARDING*

*aside. Heaves on the panel. Nothing. He takes a deep breath, tries again. There comes a cracking sound, a ripping and screeching as the panel breaks loose. High-voltage cables snap: there are brilliant blue-white bursts of light and the snarling sound of short-circuits. The nightlights and the lights in the Station go out. The harsh Emergency lights come on. In the distance an alarm bell sets up a clamor.)*

HARDING. Oh, Christ, they'll come down with an army!

CHIEF BROMDEN. I done it. *(Exulting.)* I done it, Harding!

HARDING. Okay, Chief, go. *(He grips the CHIEF'S hand.)*  
You're going to make it out there.

CHIEF BROMDEN. Yeah ... *(He smiles at the world outside.)* I been away a long time. *(He slides lightly through the window, and is gone. HARDING closes the grille, drops the key outside. He comes down. Picks up the pillow and restores it to cushion McMURPHY'S head. He straightens the disarranged sheet and blanket. Satisfied, he throws a little salute to McMURPHY'S body, and exits into the dormitory.)*

*(The LIGHTS DIM. Last of all the single shaft on McMURPHY'S body DIMS OUT, and the bell stops its clamor as ...)*

THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

THE END

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## **Flight**

### **ARTHUR GIRON**

"A witty, touching flashback... There is poignancy between the laughs." —*The New York Times*

The author doesn't claim it happened exactly this way. He has taken real-life characters and biographical information and supposed what it was like for Orville and Wilbur growing up in the dysfunctional Wright family. They are portrayed as boys whose mischief is just a sign of frustrated brilliance. Not a documentary, the play explores the dynamics of the Wright family in theatrical terms. 4 m., 1 f. (#8179)

## **Pride's Crossing**

### **TINA HOWE**

*Best American Play of 1998*  
*New York Drama Critics Circle*

"A play you will remember and forever cherish.... It is rich in both texture and imagination." — *New York Post*

"A lovely achievement... Mabel becomes a woman who ... both typified her time and her class and transcended it." — *Variety*

At ninety, Mabel Tidings Bigelow insists on celebrating her daughter and granddaughter's annual visit with a croquet party. As the party unfolds, she relives vignettes from the past that reveal the precise moment of opportunity lost and love rejected that define her life. The vibrant portrait of Mabel that takes shape culminates in her one shining achievement when she became the first woman to swim the English Channel. 4 m., 3 f. (#18230)

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## **The Judas Kiss**

**DAVID HARE**

"What Hare has achieved masterfully are two companion vignettes pinpointing the fall of Wilde."—*New York Post*

"Shifts the heroic focus, emphasizing Wilde less as a martyr of sexual persuasion than a martyr of love."—*The New York Times*

"A moving evocation of the human spirit."—*New York Post*

Liam Neeson starred on Broadway in this compelling depiction of Oscar Wilde just before and after his imprisonment. Act I captures him in 1895 on the eve of his arrest; Act II portrays him in Naples two years later during a reunion with his unworthy lover. 6 m., 1 f. (#12645)

## **Never the Sinner**

**JOHN LOGAN**

"Remarkable."—*The New York Times*

"Great theatre. One of the year's best! An excellent and compelling play!"—*The New York Post*

"Riveting."—*New York Daily News*

Why would stylish, wealthy and intelligent young men murder an innocent boy? What demons lurked behind Robert Leob's flashing good looks? Behind Nathan Leopold's saturnine intellect? This exquisite Off Broadway hit explores the complex, provocative relationship between these infamous killers in a love story set to themes of crime and punishment, the press, the times, humanism, Nietzsche's philosophy and the end of the jazz age. 7 m. (#16591)

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## **The Blue Room**

**Adapted by DAVID HARE**  
**From *La Ronde* by Arthur Schnitzler**

"The hottest show in town."—*New York Post*

"Generates enough erotic energy to raise the dead.... A funny, intelligent and razor-sharp satire."—*New York Daily News*

"A range-stretching exercise for actors."—*The New York Times*

A sensation in New York and London, *The Blue Room* depicts a daisy chain of ten encounters between five women and five men; all portrayed by a single actor and actress. Each couple is seen before and after having sex; then one moves on to another partner. 1 m., 1 f. (#4275)

## **Amy's View**

**DAVID HARE**

"Funny, moving, difficult, fascinating. A major dramatist has written a strong, rich play."—*The London Times*

"Above all else, *Amy's View* offers the sheer exhilaration of watching a major dramatist writing for the theatre he loves at the very height of his powers."—*London Daily Express*

After sold-out performances at the National Theatre prompted a transfer to the West End, Judi Dench came to Broadway to star in this heady and original drama of love and death. Esme Allen is a well-known British actress caught in a changing theatrical climate. A visit from her daughter with her new boyfriend sets in motion events which gel sixteen years later. 3 m., 3 f. (#3709)

**David Hare was honored with a special citation from the New York Drama Critics for contributions, including *The Blue Room* and *Amy's View*, to the New York season.**

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