ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST
Dale Wasserman

Comedy Drama / 13m. / 4f / Interior with buffet

Kirk Douglas played on Broadway as a charming rogue who contrives to serve a short sentence in an asylum mental institution rather than in prison. This, he learns, was a mistake. He clashes with the head nurse, a fierce matron. Quickly, he takes over the ward and accomplishes what the medical profession has been unable to do for twelve years: he makes a presumed deaf and dumb Indian talk. He leads others out of interments, stages a revolt so that they can see the world series on television, and arranges a rollicking midnight party with liquor and chippies. For one offense, the head nurse has him submit to shock treatment. The party is too horrid for her and she forces him to submit to a final correction: a frontal lobotomy. Winner of the 1976 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Revival.

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ONE FLEW OVER
The Cuckoo's Nest
A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

by Dale Wasserman

From the Novel by
Ken Kesey

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978-0-573-61343-2

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One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest
A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

by Dale Wasserman

From the Novel by Ken Kesey

A Samuel French Acting Edition

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New York Hollywood London 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%)
CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE PATIENTS
Chief Bromden
Dale Harding
Billy Bibbit
Scantion
Cheswick
Martini
Ruckle
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.

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 of 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 lairine. 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, toggle switches, knobs through which the NURSES, with godlike power, can monitor lights, sound, TV, etc. At the foot of the Station there is a grey 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, brashish 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 stands six and a half feet but wane people are about carries himself like a small man. Head cocked, he is listening. Vogue and milky light-patterns wreath and intertwine across the stage.
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

(There comes the soft, majestic 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 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. Of deef an' dumb.
WILLIAMS. Had his breakfast an' rarin' to go.
WARREN. (Coming close to CHIEF BROMDEN.) Don't you know better? Don't you know how to keep to your room till bell ring? (CHIEF BROMDEN slides away.) Haw, look at 'im shag! 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. Of Chief Broom. Thassit, baby, thassa good loony.
WILLIAMS. (Thrusts the broom into CHIEF BROMDEN'S hands.) Start sweepin', baby.
WARREN. Of Broom Bromden.
WILLIAMS. Of 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 AIDES, 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 of 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 tosses 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.
(Cocks 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 tranquility 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 pincushion 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. Wha-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 is for the luva God — !

NURSE RATCHED. (Laying a hand on his arm.) It’s all right, Charlie.

CHESWICK. Whataya 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-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-
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 plods 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... that'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. (Pensively.) 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. Whata 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 card! (Snatches them and starts to deal himself.)

CHESWICK. (Chortling suddenly.) Ha!

CHESWICK. 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 didn't.

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 psychopath. As President of the Patients' Council I, Dale Harding, do hereby decree ten seconds of blessed — therapeutic — silence. (Claps 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's 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 extraverted 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 openness.) 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 McMurray, buddies, R. P.
McMurphy, and I am a gamblin' fool. (Squinting at the hand.)
What's this here you're playin' Pinocchio? Jesus, ain'tcha got a straight
dock 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 M'lVn go bog-eyed at what hey 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. McMurray takes back his cards.) Y'see, bud-
dies, 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' boe
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. (Crimly.) All right, fella, you askin' for it, you
yonna 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. (Slicking out his paw, which BILLY avoids.) Well,
SCANLON. (Stammering 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'n' you go get dried up?

HARDING. Pull the nails out.

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

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

MCMURPHY. (Stops short at CHIEF BROMDEN 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 deaf-and dumb.

MCMURPHY. Well, what have they got 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 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 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?
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST

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 Black Jack to HARDING, CHEWSICK, 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, whaddya 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 ass-hole in that nurses’ hothouse would turn down that mother-lovin’ music! (Rises, going toward the Station.) Hooecee, 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. McMurry, 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.) Step 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?

CHEWSICK. Okay.

SCANLON. Run ‘em!

McMURPHY. Here we go!

NURSE RATCHED. (Over the speaker.) Don’t forget, Mr. McMurry, 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, Professor, there you sit with a deck 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?

CHEWSICK. 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. McMurray, 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 sits 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-darin'. 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 sub-see me like I am! I say to her, "Mama, I'm muh-not right in the head. I can't even sub-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 sub-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 sits 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 popposa! 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) McMurray, 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 willing.

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-realistic in my sexual relations. Doc, is that really serious? I mean, you every been troubled by it?

DR. SPIVEY. (A little winfully.) No, Mr. McMurry, I’ll admit I haven’t.

McMURPHY. That bit about fightin’ I can understand, but whoever heard of a man getting ‘ too much poolle?

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. McMurry? What about that?

McMURPHY. (Turns his cap sideways; with a maniacal grin.) Do I look like a sane man? (Laughs uproariously at this joke.)
DR. SPIVEY. (A pause.) Your father had an iron bolt through his jawbone?

McMURPHY. A reglar Frankensteen!

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

NURSE RATCLIFFE. (A rescue operation.) If I may suggest, Doctor, Mr. McMurchy 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 RATCLIFFE. 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 RATCLIFFE. Do you mean sexually inadequate?

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

BILLY. (With malice.) I’11 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 RATCLIFFE. 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. (Wistfully.) I ‘11 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.
McMURPHY. Say, buddy, is this the way these llectic 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 nothing 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.
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 'ncha 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. McMurry... my friend... I'm not a chicken, I'm a rabbit. All of us here, rabbits. Billy, hop around for Mr. McMurry 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! Punis...
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 but 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!
CHEDWICK. (Joyfully.) Oh, boy!
McMURPHY. Who's got ten bucks they want to lose? Come on, buddies, you hit or you sit!
HARDING. Mr. McMurray — this deserves odds. Twenty dollars to your ten that you can't do it.
McMURPHY. (As the ACUTES swirl into line, singing 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. F. McMurray 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 RUCKUS off the wall

and leads him to the dormitory.) Mr. McMurray? 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 EAST; but for a single shaft on the CHIEF, Monitor light in the Nurses' Station shift their pattern to accompaniment of electronic toonal 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 you 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. (Diggs 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'ar, 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 hide 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. MCWURPHY examines the CHIEF speculatively.) Ya know, Chief ... when I hollered, you sure did jump. I thought somebody told me you was deaf. (MCWURPHY 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 bug.
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.)

MCWURPHY. (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-ee,
So fare thee well, darlin’, I’m gone on my way ..." (He comes trotting back out of the latrine and whips 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. (Starting at the hand on his shoulder.) We don’t open the cabinet till six forty-five.
MCWURPHY. That where it is? Locked in the cabinet?
WARREN. Tha’s right.
MCWURPHY. 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.
MCWURPHY. 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?
MCWURPHY. (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?
MCWURPHY. Yeah, I think I do now. You’re sayin’ people’d be brushin’ their teeth whenever the spirit moved ‘em.
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-uhw that gamblin’ man!”

NURSE RATCHED. (To the grinning WILLIAMSS) Haven’t you anything better to do than stand around and gape? I want this room spotless. (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 McMurry?

CHESWICK. Hey, where is McMurry?

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? Whataya 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. (Becoming.) 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!
MCNulty. 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 spinnin the wheel!

DR. SPIVEY. Oh, fine!

MCNulty. 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 reach. 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. Murphy'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. Murphy showed me his request in my office when I figured ... I mean since he’s been here a week already ... I signed it.

(Murphy and Billy share Murphy'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 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 ..." (Murphy 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 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-whoel guh-girl that —

Murphy. Say, I got somethin to take up.

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

Murphy. You mean you don't know me?

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

Murphy. 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. Murphy?

DR. SPIVEY. In what respect?

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

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

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

Murphy. In a pig's gizzard.

DR. SPIVEY. (Unexpectedly,) I must say, Nurse, I agree with Patient Murphy. 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-
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 . . . listen, 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. Aright, 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 to 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. McMurry.

Mr. McMurry.

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

NURSE RATCHED. Would you step out here 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 plamin' to piss in 'em, not eat lunch out of 'em.
NURSE RATCHED. I think we'd better give you another job.
(Enters Station.)
McMURPHY. (Stopping 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 Spearmint 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 everything? (To SCALON.) Hey, Pop, what they got you in for?
SCALON. 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? Oh! 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
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.) Fast 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. (Clenching 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 gah-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?
ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST

TV time to afternoon!

NURSE RATCHED. I see.

McMURPHY. Okay, boys — !

NURSE RATCHED. One moment! Do any of you feel, perhaps, that Mr. McMurry 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 wan’t 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. McMurry.

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 OTHERS 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 —
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, Nurse — wouldja mind bringin’ me a red-hot and a can ‘o 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 shrill- ing 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 accompa- niment of joyful yapping.

McMURPHY. Snap the ball. Use your elbows, willya? Drive, you puny mothers, drive. (blows the whistle, stopping action.) Rucky, 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 re- sume play. MARTINI tosses the ball to an imaginary teammate.)

MARTINI. Hey, George! (McMURPHY blows the whistle, re- 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 wanna —

RUCKLY. 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? What’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 joined.) 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 grip, 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-get out this afternoon if ... (Willy.) You think I wuh-want to stay here? Sure, I’d like a convertible and a gash-girl friend. But did you ever have people I-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 sees 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 figured 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 — I (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 Toe 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 Toe Ah Millatoona. But is 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 everybody got 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 cheeks, 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 agains.)

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

CHIEF BROMDEN. (Gazing skyward, chanting softly.) Wire.

briar, limber lock ...

McMURPHY. Huh?

CHIEF BROMDEN. It’s a old children’s rhyme. My grandmomma taught it to me ...

McMURPHY. Oh, lord, yes, I remember! You play it with your fingers. Hold out your hand, Chief. Pickin’ off fingers, chanting.)

Wire, briar, 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!
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 sober.)

CHIEF BROMDEN. McMurry? 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. Why don’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. McMurry. (McMURPHY pauses.) Make me big again.

McMURPHY. Why, hell, Chief, looks to me like you growed 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 quiet 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 it 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 ruffles 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 McMur-
PHY'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 consent it from us, thereby refusing to cooperate in his own
care. 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 yester-
day's rebellion —
CHIEF BROMDEN. (In terror.) McMurphy ...!
(NURSE RATCHED snaps her fingers and WARREN comes across
through the trembling, retreating CHIEF BROMDEN. McMur-
PHY'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 — !
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 in part of a plot to overthrow the government, and how I think
life on your ward is the swearest 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 whis-
pers 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. (Whispering.) Papa. Papa.
McMURPHY. Don’t holler, Chief. Or if you got to holler, make
it “Guts ball.”
CHIEF BROMDEN. (Trembling.) Guts ball.
McMURPHY. Atta bigun! (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, briar, timberlock.
Three geese inna flock ... (The TECHNICIAN jams a rubber mouth-
piece between his teeth. Through the mouthpiece:)
One flew East, one flew Westh ..."
TECHNICIAN. Clear! (The AIDES back off)
CHIEF BROMDEN. (As the TECHNICIAN throws the switch.)
GUTS BALL-L-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-ru corn,
Apple seed and apple thorn,
Wire, briar, timber 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 them-

selves. They break off as NURSE RATCHED and DR. SPIVEY
enter, moving briskly.)

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

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ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST

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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 McMurphy.

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

NURSE RATCHE. 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 winning 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 be done it!

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

(McMURPHY and BROMDEN are pushed into the room by the AIDES. Both stand slack-jawed as though they’d been whipped on by the EST. Then McMURPHY snaps out of the shamming.)

McMURPHY. Stand back, you peckerheads, here comes the champ! Of Mr. 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, fadzez and gonniman, right here in front of your eyes, the Wild Man who dates on high voltage and eats three ailes 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 RATCHE. Mr. McMurphy. We are in the middle of a meeting.

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

NURSE RATCHE. 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, "dishing" her breasts.) I bet if we doubled the charge, I could pick up Channel Eight!

NURSE RATCHE. Doctor.

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

NURSE RATCHE. I’d like to withdraw that suggestion as to further shock.

McMURPHY. (Reproachfully.) Oh-h! NURSE RATCHE. Yes ... I think it might be appropriate to consider ... surgical procedure?

McMURPHY. Ma’am?

NURSE RATCHE. 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 RATCHE. (Smiling, friendly.) Randle, there’s no cuttin’ 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. Hah! (And the MEN laugh, too. DR. SPIVEY rises, to leave.)

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

DR. SPIVEY. What subject?

NURSE RATCHE. 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 hear 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. (Gesture 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. Suflly) 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. Sooner it gets dark tonight, I set fire to my mattress. Then we make a hotter 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.) Pat. (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 ... burn her down!

McMurphy. Hey, you got any bread?

Billy. How much?

McMurphy. About fifty bucks?

Billy. Fifty — I (Resentfully.) What for?

McMurphy. Candy's lay'n' 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-Ratchied said.

McMurphy. What'd she say?

Billy. How you were always comin' out ahead. Always winnin' things. (Turns from McMurphy and exits.)
McMURPHY. Winning. (His eyes close, his body saggs 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. Ssssssssssss!
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. (Dumfounded.) Huh, 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 stolen.
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. (Moral.) You ain’t supposed to drink at all.
McMURPHY. (To CHESWICK, who is at the window.) Any sign?
CHESWICK. Nary sign.
McMURPHY. (Stops 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’ shitpocke 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.) Sssssss! She walks in beauty!
McMURPHY. Well, let 'er in! Let this mad stud at her!
BILLY. (As HARDING unlocks the screen.) Look, McM-M-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 window, helped by HARDING and
SCANLON. Impeded by the bottles she carries in each hand.
She's quite tipsy.)

CANDY. (Charging at McMURPHY.) You damned McMurry!
(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 bot-
tle 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,
every witch. 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 boot?
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. (Dully, 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.)

SANDRA. (Suddenly.) Why?
McMURPHY. (On microphone.) Medication! (Comes out of Sta-
tion with jars 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.) Nuthin' like a good bad habit.
HARDING. (Next bottle.) Tincture of jux veronica.
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 dexter-
ity. Tastes it.) Chicks his teeth together loudly.) If we cut it a little bit ...
(Pours the remaining vodka into the "shaker" and squeezes it.)
SANDRA. (Giggling.) Jeez, what a blast. Is this really happen-
ing?
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, weeping.)

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 benediction?

McMURPHY. (Moving to BILLY’S side.) R. P. McMurry.

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 dub-dub-dub — I dub —

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 Poxil! Prozak! Thorazine! Go, my children — sit 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 McMurry. So why don’ 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. (Uncertainty.) 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. (Grieved.) I assed her to stay.
HARDING. Oh, God, she went to get help. (Hurryin' 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 grill.) 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 ever 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 roces off.) Williams - got this place in order. (Strolling about, easily.) So, we've had a party. Thrown, no doubt, by Mr. McMurry? (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. Attabo, Billy!
NURSE RATCHED. (Dropping 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 nuthneed —

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-called me names.

NURSE RATCHED. Who, Billy?

BILLY. (Clutching her knees; sobbing) McMuh Murphy. It was McMuff Murphy.

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

WARREN. (Off, yelling fanatically.) 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. McMurry. 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 cataleptic 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 restlessiy.) 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 AIDSERS position the bed.) That’s fine, boys. (The AIDSERS 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-

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST

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. (Furioso) “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 dor-
mitory. 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. (Horrified.) 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 hor-
ror.) Oh, Christ Jesus ... (The CHIEF begins to sob, his body shak-
ing. 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 does
n'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. (I penetrate.) 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 wait.) 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 Emer-
gency 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 dor-
mitory.)

(The LIGHTS DIM. Last of all the single shaft on McMurphy's
body DIMS OUT, and the bell stops it clanger as ...)

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

THE END.
THE SCENE
Theresa Rebeck

Little Theatre / Drama / 2m, 2f / Interior Unit Set
A young social climber leads an actor into an extramarital affair, from which he then creates a full-on downward spiral into alcoholism and bummery. His wife runs off with his best friend, his girlfriend leaves, and he's left with...nothing.

"Ms. Rebeck's dark-hued morality tale contains enough fresh insights into the cultural landscape to freshen what is essentially a classic boy-meets-bad-girl story."
- New York Times

"Rebeck's wickedly scathing observations about the sort of self-obsessed New Yorkers who pursue their own interests at the cost of their morality and loyalty."
- New York Post

"The Scene is utterly delightful in its comedic performances, and its slowly unraveling plot is thought-provoking and gut-wrenching."
- Show Business Weekly

THREE MUSKETEERS
Ken Ludwig

All Groups / Adventure / 8m, If doubling / Unit sets
This adaptation is based on the timeless swashbuckler by Alexandre Dumas, a tale of heroism, treachery, close escapes and above all, honor. The story, set in 1625, begins with d'Artagnan who sets off for Paris in search of adventure. Along with d'Artagnan goes Sabine, his sister; the quintessential tomboy. Sent with d'Artagnan to attend a convent school in Paris, she poses as a young man – d'Artagnan's servant – and quickly becomes entangled in her brother's adventures. Soon after reaching Paris, d'Artagnan encounters the greatest heroes of the day, Athos, Porthos and Aramis, the famous musketeers; d'Artagnan joins forces with his heroes to defend the honor of the Queen of France. In so doing, he finds himself in opposition to the most dangerous man in Europe, Cardinal Richelieu. Even more deadly is the infamous Countess de Winter, known as Milady, who will stop at nothing to revenge herself on d'Artagnan – and Sabine – for their meddling behavior. Little does Milady know that the young girl she scorns, Sabine, will ultimately save the day.
THE OFFICE PLAYS
Two full length plays by Adam Bock

THE RECEPTIONIST
Comedy / 2m., 2f. Interior
At the start of a typical day in the Northeast Office, Beverly deals effortlessly with ringing phones and her colleague's romantic troubles. But the appearance of a charming rep from the Central Office disrupts the friendly routine. And as the true nature of the company's business becomes apparent, The Receptionist raises disquieting, provocative questions about the consequences of complicity with evil.

"...Mr. Bock's poisoned Post-it note of a play."
- New York Times

"Bock's intense initial focus on the routine goes to the heart of The Receptionist's pointed, painfully timely allegory... elliptical, provocative play..."
- Time Out New York

THE THUGS
Comedy / 2m., 6f/ Interior
The Obie Award winning dark comedy about work, thunder and the mysterious things that are happening on the 9th floor of a big law firm. When a group of temps try to discover the secrets that lurk in the hidden crevices of their workplace, they realize they would rather believe in gossip and rumors than face dangerous realities.

"Bock starts you off giggling, but leaves you with a chill."
- Time Out New York

"... a delightfully paranoid little nightmare that is both more chillingly realistic and pointedly absurd than anything John Grisham ever dreamed up."
- New York Times

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