Take Your Medicine

By Felicia Metcalfe

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4 MEN, 8 WOMEN; EXTRAS: 1 ESSENTIAL EXTRA, MAN OR WOMAN)

HENRY K. DOBSON
A large, heavy-set man of about fifty-five or sixty. He is president and main stockholder of a large bank. His hair is sprinkled with gray, and he has heavy, bushy, black eyebrows. He is high-tempered and domineering. He wears a handsome, dark dressing gown over a hospital night gown, and bedroom slippers.

ANGELA WARREN
Mr. Dobson’s twenty year-old attractive niece. She wears stylish traveling clothes suitable either to summer or winter.

DR. WILLIAM JACKSON (BILL)
Angela’s handsome, well-educated fiancé. Well-dressed and very likeable college professor.

MISS HOLT
The head nurse of the hospital. About forty-five, she is tall, austere, disagreeable, and dictatorial. She wears a head nurse’s uniform, white shoes, and white hose.

PATRICIA PRYOR (PAT)
An attractive nurse of about thirty. She has a gracious personality that helps her get along with even the most unruly patients. She wears a white uniform, and cap, white shoes, and white hose.

DOROTHY CARLETON (DOTTIE)
A cute, pert little nurse, about twenty-one. She is attractive and full of life and fun. She wears a white uniform, cap, white shoes, and stockings.

CHARLOTTE NELSON (LOTTIE)
About Dottie’s age, she is likewise pretty and attractive. She wears a uniform identical to Dottie’s in every respect.

JACK BENSON
He is a happy-go-lucky, good-natured orderly, about twenty. Always joking, popular with patients and nurses alike, he wears a white duck orderly’s uniform or white overalls and white shirt.
JONATHAN PUCKETT
A patient. About fifty-five or sixty, he is small in stature, but large in good humor. He is the pet of the hospital. Never short tempered, he is more apt to joke than complain. He wears a dark robe over a white hospital gown, and bedroom slippers. (Use white or bald headed wig.)

MISS CORDELIA PUCKETT
Jonathan’s sixty-five year-old disagreeable, autocratic sister. Her plain, unbecoming suit is as masculine as her actions. She wears a mannish hat and coat, or a dark one-piece dress. She wears no jewelry, and walks heavily in flat-heeled shoes.

MISS DOVIE FINKLEDINK (TURTLE DOVE)
A foxy fifty year-old maid. Coy and giggly, she has frizzy hair, wears too much rouge, smeared lipstick, far too many bracelets, and a juvenile ribbon in her hair. She has on a fancy robe over a colorful nightgown, and bright bedroom slippers trimmed in maribou fur or floppy ostrich feathers. She walks with mincing steps and speaks with many giggles and high inflections.

DODIE BLAKE
An undergraduate nurse, about eighteen. Loose-jointed, awkward, odd-looking, she wears no makeup and her hair in a most unbecoming style. As she slouches along, she slides her feet in a peculiar gait. Her uniform is that of an undergraduate nurse, blue cotton and no cap. Her shoes and hose are white. When she stands, her shoulders slump and her feet point in.

EXTRAS [ONE ESSENTIAL EXTRA]
- Only one essential extra—the demented patient. A wild-looking, demented patient, either male or female, wearing a white hospital gown, a colored robe, and bedroom slippers.
- Two odd-looking old maids in street clothes
- A forty year-old man in a business suit.
- A middle-aged woman in a street dress and avant-garde hat
- Her meddlesome little daughter in pig-tails, hair ribbons, and short, childish dress
- Other visitors to the hospital

Important: If desired, all extras may be omitted except the demented patient.

Note: Nightgowns should be extremely long and worn with or without a robe. They may be worn over regular clothes if desired.

Note: All persons and places in this play are imaginary. Any resemblance to actual persons, dead or alive, is purely coincidental.
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STAGE PROPERTIES

➢ Two white iron single beds, regular hospital beds if available, or cots, one down left and one down right. (If necessary, colored iron beds may be painted. Otherwise, white paper or cloth may be used to cover the head and foot.)

➢ Two small bed-side tables holding medicine bottles, glasses, spoons, boxes of cotton, one at the head of each bed.

➢ Straight chair, up left.

➢ Table with white cover and empty flower vase, up left.

➢ Hall tree, up right.

➢ Straight chair, up right.

➢ Wheelchair, if available, but not necessary to the plot.

➢ Stretcher, if available, but not necessary to the plot.

HAND PROPERTIES

ACT ONE

Magazine, Mr. Puckett.
Two boxes of candy wrapped in red paper and white cord, Jack.
Bouquet wrapped in green paper, Jack.
Wheelchair, if available, Jack (NOT REQUIRED).
Wristwatch, Miss Holt.
Pitcher of ice water, Jack.
Bottle of medicine and spoon, Pat.
Tray of old dishes to drop, Lottie.
Small thermometers made of short drinking straws, Dodie.
Wristwatch, Dodie.
Food list, Pat.
Black or brown leather bag like doctor’s case, Bill.
Table knife, fork, pie knife, sugar tongs, carving knife, Bill.
Small bottle and nose dropper, Dodie.
Tea wagon or large tray, Jack.
Three small trays containing supper, Jack.
Two large white napkins, Jack.
Three cards to go on trays, Jack.
Letter written on colored stationery, Jack.
Clean pillow slip, Pat.
Flat basket and white towel, Dodie.
Bowl of sugar on tray, Jack.
Biscuits or bread, Jack.
Lady’s handkerchief, Miss Finkledink.
Man’s handkerchief, Bill.

**ACT TWO**
Improvised oxygen tent. (This is made of an empty orange crate covered with
white cheesecloth and a metal gas-storage container borrowed from a filling
station), Pat and Jack.
Letter on white stationery, Miss Findledink.
Atomizer, Dodie.
Bottle of medicine and huge spoon, Dottie and Lottie.
Two bills in envelopes, Miss Puckett.
Improvised stomach pump. Made of a yard-long piece of rubber tubing and
An empty quart jar. For Pat.
Bottle of very large pills made of dough, Pat.
Nut pick or sharp-looking instruments, Pat.
White operating apron, rubber gloves, white mask, Dottie and Lottie.

**ACT THREE**
Basin of water, wash cloth, soap, towel, Dodie.
List written on paper, and pencil, Dodie.
Handkerchiefs, Dottie and Lottie.
Pitcher of ice water from Act I, Pat.
White powder, Bill.
Handkerchief, Miss Finkledink.
Handkerchief, Miss Puckett.
Box of baking soda, Pat.
Carving knife, pie knife, knife, fork, Mr. Puckett.
Stretcher, if available, Jack (NOT REQUIRED).
Glass of orange juice, Pat.
Check book and fountain pen, Angela.

**SOUND EFFECTS**
Crying of a small baby.

**HINTS ON MAKE-UP**

HENRY K. DODSON:
Dust hair with cornstarch. Make bushy black eyebrows of crepe hair. Add eye-
lines and wrinkles. Ruddy cheeks, red nose.
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MR. PUCKETT:
He wears a white or a bald-headed wig with a fringe of silver gray hair. He is pale, with no robustness at all. Wears old-fashioned steel-rimmed glasses when he reads. Use eye-lines, wrinkles at forehead, eyes, and mouth. No rouge or lipstick.

ANGELA WARREN:
Usual make-up for young lady. Heavy street make-up plus eye-lines and highlights for additional glamour.

DR. BILL JACKSON:
He is a healthy, robust young man, so use eye-lines for accent on the eyes, a little rouge, slightly darkened brows, and light dusting of powder. No rouge.

MISS HOLT:
Dust hair a bit with cornstarch. Eyelines and a few wrinkles in forehead and between eyes. A small amount of rouge, applied low on the cheeks, and a little lipstick.

PAT PRYOR:
Make up similar to Angela’s—heavy street make-up plus eye-lines and highlights.

DOTTIE:
Make-up similar to Pat’s.

LOTTIE:
Make-up like other young ladies.

JACK BENSON:
The same as Bill’s. A little rouge for good health, eye-lines, slightly darkened brows, no lipstick.

CORDELIA PUCKETT:
Dust hair with cornstarch. No rouge. Use eye-lines, wrinkles in forehead and around mouth to show pinched condition of her bearing. Little or no lipstick.

DOVIE FINKLEDINK:
Lots of rouge set on a white-powder base to give startling effect. Too much lipstick not too carefully applied. Use shadow below eyes to give slightly sagging effect. Eye-wrinkles, and a few faint ones in the forehead. Use eye-lines for accent.

DODIE BLAKE:
She is colorless. So use only a bit of rouge, eye-lines, and practically no lipstick. Her hair should be stringy and shapeless.
DEMENTED PATIENT:
Use gray eye shadow for deep-set eyes and hollow effect. Very little rouge, lots of light powder for a bloodless effect, wrinkles in forehead and eyes.

VISITORS:
Use make-up according to the age represented as illustrated in the above descriptions.
ACT ONE

Setting:
A bright, cheery room in a private hospital in the 1950’s. It is five o’clock in the afternoon. Down left is an iron, white bed, a regular hospital bed if available, or a cot. Upper left is a door leading into a side hall. At back, left, is a table with an empty vase. At center, back, is a doorway through which can be seen nurses and visitors passing back and forth. This door stands open throughout the play. At back, right, is a hall tree. Upper right is a door leading to the bathroom. At lower left is another white iron bed or hospital cot. Near the head of each bed is a small table upon which rest medicine bottles, boxes of cotton, a glass and spoon. Two straight chairs complete the furnishings. The beds are covered with white spreads and two pillows each. On each table is a tap bell or buzzer. Attached to the foot of each bed is a chart to which is tied a pencil on a string.

At Rise:
Jonathan Puckett is discovered in bed, propped up against some pillows, looking at a magazine. The nurses’ pet, he is a jolly old thing, and he is enjoying his magazine at the moment. His dressing gown is hanging on the hall tree, and his bedroom slippers are under his bed.

Jack Benson, an orderly, enters at back, smiling. He walks with a sort of fast lope, carrying a package which contains two boxes of candy, wrapped in bright red paper and tied with a string. Mr. Puckett sees him entering.

MR. PUCKETT: (Laying down the magazine.) Hello, there, Jack-be-nimble! What you got there?

JACK: (Going to the bed.) The package you ordered from the drug store.

MR. PUCKETT: (Reaching to take it.) That’s right. Thanks, Jack. (He unties the string and opens the package, revealing the two boxes of candy. He holds them up for Jack to see.) Look-a-there!

JACK: Say! Somebody’s sweet-tooth’s gonna get a treat! (He winks at Mr. Puckett broadly.)

MR. PUCKETT: (Brightly.) Yep, you’re right. How about seeing if you can find Miss Dottie and Miss Lottie?

JACK: (Going up center.) Okay. Saw ‘em in the office just a minute ago.

He exits at back and goes to the right. Mr. Puckett folds the red paper into the shape of a cap and puts it on his head. He then unrolls some cotton from the box on the table by his bed, tears it to look like a white beard, and ties it under his nose and around his head with the string from the box. He then hides the candy under his pillow as Dottie and Lottie enter the door, back, coming from the right.

LOTTIE: (Coming down, center.) Well! Look at Santa Claus!

DOTTIE: Jingle bells! Jingle bells! Did you send for us?
BY FELICIA METCALFE

MR. PUCKETT: (Happily.) Sure did! Guess what I’ve got for the two sweetest little nurses in the hospital? I’ll give you three chances. No more—no less.
LOTTIE: (Pouting.) Don’t keep us waiting, Santa Claus!
DOTTIE: Please tell us. We can’t wait!

Mr. Puckett uncovers the two boxes.

MR. PUCKETT: (Holding them out.) Here’s one for you, Dottie; and one for you, Lottie.

They take the boxes, squealing with joy. One sits down on one side of his bed near him. The other comes around and sits on the foot of the bed facing the audience. They open the boxes and begin eating, feeding Mr. Puckett pieces alternately, poking them into his mouth.

LOTTIE: (Happily.) Oh, so good!
DOTTIE: (Smiling at Mr. Puckett.) You’re the best old Santa Claus in the world!

Jack enters at back, from the right, carrying a bouquet of flowers wrapped in green tissue.

LOTTIE: Whew! Look at that!
DOTTIE: Aren’t they pretty!
MR. PUCKETT: (As Jack shows them to him.) Where’d you get ‘em, Jack-be-nimble?
JACK: The florist just delivered them.
MR. Pucket: Who’re they from?
JACK: (Reading the card.) “To Santa Claus from the third floor nurses.”
MR. PUCKETT: (Pleased.) Now, what d’ya know about that! Those sweet little girlies. (Sniffing toward Jack.) Lemme smell ‘em. (Jack holds them down as Mr. Puckett sniffs.) Say, they smell good!
JACK: What you want me to do with ‘em?
MR. PUCKETT: (Pointing.) Put ‘em in that vase over there, will ya?
JACK: (Crossing toward the table.) Yes, sir. (Picking up the vase, leaving the flowers on the table.) I’ll get some water. (He exits, right, to return shortly and put the flowers in the vase.)
LOTTIE: (As Jack works.) Have some candy, Santa Claus?
DOTTIE: (Holding out her box.) And mine, too, please!
JACK: (Worried.) Hey, save some for me! (He rushes down, takes a piece from each box, then goes to the door at back, eating. He looks down the hall then speaks to those in the room in a loud whisper.) Hey! Old Battleaxe is coming! (He slips out the door and down the hall to the right.)

The two girls jump up quickly, Mr. Puckett takes the candy and hides it. The nurses then pretend to be straightening the covers on his bed as Miss Holt, the
MISS HOLT: *(Sternly.)* What is going on in here?
LOTTIE: *(Lightly.)* We were just straightening up Mr. Puckett’s bed.
DOTTIE: The spread was all wrinkled.
MISS HOLT: *(Her arms folded.)* I heard a lot of talking and giggling as I came down the hall!
LOTTIE: Mr. Puckett made us laugh!
MISS HOLT: *(Stiffly.)* Frivolity cannot be tolerated here. A nurse’s time is valuable. So don’t waste it!
LOTTIE AND DOTTIE: *(Nodding automatically.)* Yes, Miss Holt.
MISS HOLT: Mr. Puckett, it’s time for your exercise.
MR. PUCKETT: *(Frowning.)* But I just had some! Three times up and down the hall!
MISS HOLT: *(Unbending.)* Every half hour, Mr. Puckett! Doctor’s orders!
MR. PUCKETT: *(Unhappily.)* But I get tired. I want to rest! That’s what I’m here for—to rest, not to train for a track race!
MISS HOLT: *(To the girls.)* Get him up! Dr. Morgan says he needs exercise, and he gets it!
MR. PUCKETT: *(Pouting.)* I don’t like to walk. My feet hurt!
MISS HOLT: *(To the girls.)* Hurry up! Take him to the sunroom and back three times.

They get Mr. Puckett’s robe from the hall tree, and put it on him. They then lead him between them out back and down the hall to the left. Miss Holt nods, pleased, and stalks out back and to the right. In a moment Jack appears at the hall door, back, pushing Mr. Henry K. Dodson in a wheelchair, if one is available, or helping him by the arm. Miss Holt is with them. Mr. Dodson is his usual grouchy self, his heavy eyebrows beetling with bad temper. He wears dark red satin robe over regulations hospital nightgown, and bedroom slippers.

MISS HOLT: *(In a matter-of-fact tone.)* This is your room, Mr. Dodson.
MR. DODSON: *(Looking around and scowling.)* I don’t like it!
MISS HOLT: *(Indignantly.)* Don’t like it? What’s the matter with it?
MR. DODSON: *(Viciously.)* I don’t like a thing about it! It’s too small…The ceiling’s too low…Not enough windows…I sniffs…Too stuffy…Not light enough! *(Shouting.)* Get me another room! *(Jack straightens the bed.)*
MISS HOLT: *(Haughtily.)* This is the only vacancy in the hospital. You’ll have to stay here, or leave!
MR. DODSON: *(Roaring.)* I’ll have to stay here? Who said so?
MISS HOLT: *(Glaring at him.)* I did!
MR. DODSON: *(Roaring at her.)* And who are you to dictate to me? I’ll have you know I’m Henry K. Dodson, president and principal stockholder of the First National Bank!
MISS HOLT: (Her jaw jutting.) And I happen to be Miss Holt, the head nurse of this hospital! What I say around here goes!

MR. DODSON: (Shaking his finger at her.) Madam, I won’t stay in this stuffy little chicken coop, and you can’t make me!

MISS HOLT: You will if you stay in the hospital, sir!

MR. DODSON: (Angrily.) Madam, I’ll buy this place lock, stock, and barrel just to have the pleasure of firing you!

MISS HOLT: (Haughtily.) This hospital is not for sale, sir! (To Jack.) Is the bed ready?

JACK: Yes, Miss Holt.

MISS HOLT: Then let’s get him in.

MR. DODSON: (Firmly.) I won’t get in that bed! It looks like a cooling board, and I’m not dead yet.

MISS HOLT: (Taking one of his arms. To Jack.) Take his other arm, Jack. I’m too busy to waste my time on him.

MR. DODSON: (As Jack takes his other arm.) Let go of me, you little shrimp! (He jerks away, but Miss Holt and Jack half-carry, half-force him into bed against his struggles.)

MISS HOLT: (Triumphantly.) If you want anything, just ring. (She flounces out back, and off to the left.)

MR. DODSON: (Snorting.) Humph! Who does she think she is! Telling me what to do! Why, her nose stuck up like the spout of a coffee pot! (He sputters like a horse and beetles his shaggy eyebrows, peering at Jack.) Who are you?

JACK: (Meekly.) I’m an orderly, sir.

MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) Don’t you have a name?

JACK: (Frightened.) Yes, sir—I—uh—

MR. DODSON: (Exploding.) Well, what is it?

JACK: (Gulping.) Jack, sir. Jack Benson.

MR. DODSON: (Pointing at the other bed.) What’s that doing in here?

JACK: (Scratching his head.) I guess the shoe’s on the other foot, sir. They put you in his room!

MR. DODSON: (Exploding.) Santa Claus? Where am I, at the North Pole?

JACK: (Startled.) No—no, sir. He’s Mr. Puckett. We just call him “Santa Claus” because he’s always giving us presents.

MR. DODSON: (Sourly.) Well, what’s he doing in my room?

JACK: (Scratching his head.) I guess the shoe’s on the other foot, sir. They put you in his room!

MR. DODSON: (Shaking his fist.) I won’t have it! Me, Henry K. Dodson staying in a ward! It’s—it’s ridiculous!

JACK: (Surprised.) This ain’t no ward, Mr. Dodson. It’s the highest-priced room we’ve got!

MR. DODSON: Then why’re there two beds in here?

JACK: (Explaining.) It’s so crowded, they had to.

MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) Take me out of here!

JACK: (Shaking his head.) Can’t do it, sir. I’ve got my orders.

MR. DODSON: (Angrily.) I’m giving you new ones!
JACK: (Stubbornly.) I get my orders from Miss Holt.

MR. DODSON: (Roaring.) You mean to say you’d pay more attention to that hawk-nosed, beetle-eyed, rawboned warhorse…!

MISS HOLT: (Entering at back.) Jack! Don’t stand around wasting time. Mr. Ogletree wants to be rolled to the sunroom. (If there is a wheel chair, Jack pushes it out the back door and off to the left, speaking as he goes.)

JACK: (Leaving.) Yes, Miss Holt. Right away. (He hurry's off.)

MISS HOLT: (To Mr. Dodson.) I hope you are happier with things now.

MR. DODSON: (Grimly.) I am not! But I guess I’ll have to stay. But I want you to take that other bed out of here! I want to be alone.

MISS HOLT: (Firmly.) I’m sorry, but it stays! Mr. Puckett has been here much longer than you.

MR. DODSON: (Exploding.) I don’t care if he’s been here since you laid the foundation! Get him out of here!

MISS HOLT: (Firmly.) I will not!

MR. DODSON: (Waving his arms.) I’ve had enough of your high-handed ways, madam! Tell Dr. Morgan I want to talk to him!

MISS HOLT: (Shaking her head.) You can’t see him.

MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) Why not? I’m paying him enough to buy him! Tell him to come here at once.

MISS HOLT: (Firmly.) He isn’t in the building.

MR. DODSON: He was here all day, torturing me in that clinic while he tried to find something wrong with me. Where is he now?

MISS HOLT: If you must know, he took the five o’clock train to Chicago.

MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) Do you mean to say he went off and left a hospital full of patients with no one to look after them?

MISS HOLT: (Haughtily.) He left me in charge!

MR. DODSON: (Exploding.) What’s the difference?

MISS HOLT: (Tossing her head and going to center.) Your special nurse will come on duty in a few minutes.!

MR. DODSON: (Growling.) What’s his name?

MISS HOLT: It’s not a he. It’s a she!

MR. DODSON: (Loudly.) What? I won’t have a woman nursing me!

MISS HOLT: (Haughtily.) And why not?

MR. DODSON: (Glaring.) I don’t like women, that’s why!

MISS HOLT: (Glaring at him.) Wasn’t your mother a woman?

MR. DODSON: (Snapping at her.) I barely remember her. She died when I was a child.

MISS HOLT: Didn’t you have any sisters?

MR. DODSON: (With a shrug.) Yes, one, but she was a fool—ran away with a two-by-four professor when she could have married my partner in the bank. So that was the last of her as far as I was concerned!

MISS HOLT: You must think money is everything!

MR. DODSON: (Firmly.) Money talks! It gets you what you want!

MISS HOLT: (Looking at her wristwatch.) It’s time to take care of a patient. Excuse me, please. (She hurry's out back.)
BY FELICIA METCALFE

MR. DODSON: (Shouting after her.) Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

She does not pay any attention, so Mr. Dodson flops around in his bed like a whale in shallow water. He pulls on the spread, and it pulls up from the foot, leaving his feet bare. He tries to put it back and finally in disgust throws it on the floor. Pat Pryor enters, back. Pretty and wise, she soon shows she knows how to handle the difficult Mr. Dodson.

PAT: (Pleasantly.) How do you do. (She picks up the spread from the floor.)
MR. DODSON: (Eyeing her askance.) Who are you?
PAT: I’m your special nurse.
MR. DODSON: I asked the same question of that stupid boy, and he said “an orderly.” Don’t people have names in this hospital?
PAT: (Smiling, as she puts the spread on the bed.) Oh, yes, my name is Pryor—Pat. Patricia Pryor—or if you want a shorter form, Pat.
MR. DODSON: (Scowling.) I don’t like women nurses.
PAT: Too bad! But I guess you’ll have to put up with me.
MR. DODSON: Who told you to come in here?
PAT: Dr. Morgan. (She tucks at the bed.)
MR. DODSON: What’d he say was the matter with me?
PAT: Oh, nothing very serious.
MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) I said, “What’s the matter with me?”
PAT: (Still casual.) They haven’t finished the examination yet, but they suspect you may have splenomegalia.
MR. DODSON: (Wild eyed.) What’s that?
PAT: A disease of the spleen.
MR. DODSON: (Horrified.) Do you mean the tortures have to continue?
PAT: (Shrugging.) Oh, perhaps just the stomach pump and a few things like that.
MR. DODSON: (Sitting up and sticking one foot out.) I’m going home! Get me my clothes!
PAT: I can’t. Your clothes are locked up.

Visitors pass by the door, from time to time.

MR. DODSON: (Angrily.) Of all the high-handed places! I wish I’d never come here.
PAT: I’m sorry.
MR. DODSON: (Leaning back against pillows.) What’s the matter with my spleen?
PAT: (Looking at bed chart.) They’re not sure yet.
MR. DODSON: (Seriously.) Am—uh—I—going to pass out?
PAT: Oh, no! You’ll soon be all right again.
MR. DODSON: (Complaining.) What good’s a spleen anyway? If mine ever did me any good, I don’t know it. How long will I have to stay here?
PAT: That depends on the kind of patient you prove to be.
MR. DODSON: *(Loudly.)* I haven’t time for all this foolishness! I’ve got work to do. My business needs me.

PAT: *(Going above the bed.)* Let me fix your pillows.

MR. DODSON: *(Shouting at her.)* Leave ’em alone! I like ’em like they are!

PAT: Oh, no. They’re all twisted into knots. *(She pats them.)* Now! Isn’t that better?

MR. DODSON: No!

PAT: Now—is there anything you’d like me to do?

MR. DODSON: *(Waving at them.)* Yes! Lock those doors.

PAT: We are not allowed to do that. Why do you want them locked?

MR. DODSON: To keep that man from coming in here.

PAT: *(Laughing.)* Who? Santa Claus?

MR. DODSON: Yes. I’ll bet he’s an old fool.

PAT: He’s a grand fellow!

MR. DODSON: *(Pointing to the flowers.)* Whose weeds are those?

PAT: Those lovely flowers? I think they belong to Mr. Puckett.

MR. DODSON: Phew! He must be a sissy. Who ever heard of a man having flowers in his room?

*Jack enters with a pitcher of ice water and a bottle of medicine.*

JACK: Here’s some ice water, and Mr. Dodson’s medicine.

PAT: Thanks. *(She shakes the bottle and pours out a spoonful of dark brown medicine.)* Here you are, Mr. Dodson.

MR. DODSON: *(Scowling.)* What’s that?

PAT: Come take your medicine.

MR. DODSON: *(Closing his lips tight.)* I won’t do it.

PAT: *(Grimly.)* Sorry, but you’ll have to. *(She puts her arm around his neck and puts the medicine into his mouth. He sputters.)*

MR. DODSON: Phew! Enough to kill anybody. *(He rubs his mouth.)*

PAT: I’m sorry.

JACK: Mr. Dodson, do you know the difference between a pitcher of ice water and a pretty nurse?

MR. DODSON: No, and I’m not interested in—!

JACK: *(Continuing.)* One has plenty ice, and the other’s plenty nice! *(He laughs and slaps his leg. Mr. Dodson grabs a spoon from the table and throws it at him.)*

MR. DODSON: *(Wildly.)* Get out of here! *(Jack dodges and runs out back and to left.)* Why don’t they have men nurses?

PAT: *(Saucily.)* It takes a lot of sense to be a nurse.

MR. DODSON: Humph! A moron could pat pillows and dose out medicine.

PAT: Yes, but a moron couldn’t handle cranks. *(She goes up center.)* Ring, if you need anything. I’ll be out at the desk. *(She exits back and to right.)*

MR. DODSON: Humph! Silly little nitwit! I’ll tell ’em to give me another nurse tomorrow.
Sound off left of a man singing in a high falsetto voice. It is Mr. Puckett returning from the sun parlor with Dottie and Lottie. He makes up his tune as he sings “Old King Cole was merry old soul, a merry old soul was he.” They enter at back. Mr. Dodson sits up and glares, then flops down again and covers his head with a sheet. The nurses help Mr. Puckett to get into bed, laughing and chattering.

DOTTIE AND LOTTIE: (Going up center.) “Bye! See you later!
MR. PUCKETT: (He wiggles his fingers at them and lies down, they exit, up center.) ‘Bye!

Mr. Dodson uncovers his head and rises slowly to get a look at Mr. Puckett. Mr. Puckett happens to do the same thing at the same time. When they catch each other’s eye, they lie down again quickly. They wait a minute and do it again, and finally a third time. Mr. Dodson pulls the sheet over his head again.

MR. PUCKETT: (Singing.) “Old King Cole was a merry old soul. And a merry old soul was he!”
MR. DODSON: (Sitting up and glaring at him.) I came here for rest and quiet!
MR. PUCKETT: Well, brother, you came to the wrong place.

He goes on singing: “Old King Cole, etc.” A nurse goes by the door with a tray, and drops it. A cup and saucer break with a crash. Two other nurses out of sight burst out laughing.

MR. PUCKETT: Told you so, didn’t I? A hospital’s the noisiest place you can find.
MR. DODSON: (Scowling.) I’ll have it stopped! I won’t put up with it!
MR. PUCKETT: I’d like to see you do it! (He sings again, “Old King Cole, etc.”)
MR. DODSON: Hasn’t that song got an end to it?
MR. PUCKETT: Don’t know. Never have come to it yet.
MR. DODSON: Don’t you get tired of making that noise?
MR. PUCKETT: I don’t get to sing at home, so I’m enjoying myself here.
MR. DODSON: Why can’t you sing at home?
MR. PUCKETT: It’s this way—I live with my old maid sister and she doesn’t happen to have an ear for music.
MR. DODSON: (Sarcastically.) Did you say music? Humph!
MR. PUCKETT: (Grinning.) It’s what I call it?
MR. DODSON: What sort of ailment have you got?
MR. PUCKETT: (Sitting up and looking around cautiously.) Can you keep a secret?
MR. DODSON: Yes, I suppose so.
MR. PUCKETT: (Confidentially.) There ain’t a tarnation thing wrong with me.
MR. DODSON: (Surprised.) Then why in the world do you stay here?
MR. PUCKETT: I like it! Never had such a good time in my life. All these pretty nurses ‘n everything. Nobody to nag me. You see, my sister Cordelia sorta rules me—and the house, too.
MR. DODSON: Why don’t you defy her?
MR. PUCKETT: That’s easier said than done. Every now and then, I say to myself, “Buck up, Jonathan Puckett! Be a man!” But she finally wears me down again. Why, she’s so stingy she won’t even let me have a nickel to spend!
MR. DODSON: You’re just a worm, aren’t you?
MR. PUCKETT: Yes, I guess I am.
MR. DODSON: Why do they let you stay here when there’s nothing the matter with you?
MR. PUCKETT: (Giggling.) I play a trick on them. They think I’m running a fever!
MR. DODSON: How do you fool ‘em?
MR. PUCKETT: You seen those charts hitched to the foot of the bed?
MR. DODSON: Yes.
MR. PUCKETT: Well, there’s a little flibbertigibett of an undergraduate that comes in and takes our temperature and writes it on that chart. When she goes out, I erase it and add a degree or two. Pretty smart, eh? (A voice is heard off right, saying in a high tone, “Temperchure! Temperchure?”) There she comes now! (He lies down flat on his back.)

Dodie Blake, a trainee, enters back. She wears a blue uniform and no cap. She has a funny, loose-jointed gait, throwing her feet out. She is about eighteen. Her hair is combed unbecomingly, her expression is not too intelligent. She first goes to Mr. Puckett, shakes down a thermometer—a cellophane straw about four inches long, twisted at the end. She puts it into his mouth. Then, she crosses to Mr. Dodson and puts another into his mouth. She takes her stand in the center, looking at her wristwatch. She stands awkwardly, feet pigeon-toed, stomach out, shoulders humped. She looks at Mr. Puckett’s thermometer, says “Ninety-eight” and writes it on his chart. Then, she crosses to Mr. Dodson and says “Ninety-eight” and writes it on his chart. Then, she exits, back left. She can be heard saying “temperchure” in the next room.

MR. PUCKETT: See? (He crawls down to the foot of his bed, erases the number, changes it, and lies down again.) Got old Battle-axe fooled!

Pat comes from right and enters back.

PAT: (Brightly.) Well, how’s everything going?
MR. PUCKETT: I’m still living, thank goodness.
PAT: Fine!
MR. DODSON: (Scowling.) I won’t be, if I stay here long.
PAT: (Taking out a pad and pencil from her pocket.) I’ve come to get your orders for supper. Mr. Puckett, what do you want?
MR. PUCKETT: Well—let me see— (He rubs his chin.) I believe I’ll take some country sausages, two hardboiled eggs, a helping of boiled cabbage, some hot biscuits, and a pot of coffee.
PAT: *(Laughing.)* Come, come now. Get down to earth. You know you can’t have that.

MR. PUCKETT: Well, I leave it to you, but don’t bring me any more rice. I can’t even look at it anymore.

PAT: I’ll do the best I can for you. Mr. Dodson, what will you have? *(She takes a list from her pocket and hands it to him.)*

MR. DODSON: *(Turning away.)* I don’t want anything!

PAT: Dr. Morgan said for you to be sure to eat a good supper.

MR. DODSON: *(Angrily.)* Who does he think he is? I’m not hungry and I’m not going to eat!

PAT: I have to bring you a tray anyway. Orders are orders. *(She smiles mischievously.)*

MR. DODSON: *(Roaring.)* Orders! Orders! That’s all I hear around here.

You’d think this was a jail!

PAT: *(Going left.)* Be back in a few minutes. *(She exits, left.)*

_Miss Holt enters, back._

MISS HOLT: I hope you gentlemen are getting along all right. *(Noise off right of baby crying very loudly.)*

MR. DODSON: I’m not.

MISS HOLT: What’s the matter?

MR. DODSON: Too much noise! I’d just as soon take a rest cure in a boiler factory!

MISS HOLT: Has Miss Blake taken your temperature?

MR. DODSON: Yes.

MISS HOLT: *(Looking at his chart.)* Normal. *(She crosses to Mr. Puckett, looks at his chart, and frowns.)* I don’t understand this prolonged fever. I’m very much afraid we’ll have to run you through the clinic again. *(She exits, left.)*

MR. PUCKETT: *(Worried.)* Did you hear that? Said she was going to run me through the clinic again! I got to think up some way to get out of that!

PAT: *(Smiling.)* Mr. Dodson, I have a wonderful surprise for you.

MR. DODSON: *(Sourly.)* I don’t like surprises.

PAT: But this is an extra special one!

MR. DODSON: Humph! What is it?

PAT: Somebody has come to see you.

MR. DODSON: *(Waving.)* Tell him I don’t want to see him.

PAT: It’s not a he; it’s a she and she came from a long way off.

MR. DODSON: Who is it?

PAT: Your niece, Miss Angela Warren. *(She goes up center and speaks off right.)* Come in, Miss Warren. *(Angela Warren comes from right, and enters back. She is an attractive girl in a traveling costume. Pat exits.)*

ANGELA: *(Coming to his bed.)* Hello, Uncle Henry! *(She leans over and kisses him on his forehead.)*

MR. DODSON: *(Grimacing.)* Humph!

ANGELA: I came by here on my way home to tell you something important.
TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

MR. DODSON: Humph!
ANGELA: I went by your hotel and they told me you were out here—so here I am!
MR. DODSON: Humph!
ANGELA: (Hurt.) Don’t you want to hear my wonderful news?
MR. DODSON: (Scowling.) What is it?
ANGELA: I’m going to be married!
MR. DODSON: Humph!
ANGELA: I brought Bill with me to meet you. (She goes up center.) Come in, Bill!

A nice, attractive looking young man of about twenty-five enters, back. He is carrying a small leather bag similar to a doctor’s instrument case.

ANGELA: Uncle Henry, this is my future husband, Dr. William Jackson.
BILL: How do you do! (He stretches out his hand to shake hands, but Mr. Dodson just looks at him.)
MR. DODSON: (To Angela.) Did you say he was a doctor?
ANGELA: Yes, and I’m so proud of him. (She takes his arm.)
MR. DODSON: Well—I like doctors—I wanted to be a doctor myself, but I had to go to work to support my sister. If doctors have anything to them at all, they can make plenty of money. You made a wise choice, Angela.
BILL: I’d like to explain about my profession. It’s—
ANGELA: (Taking his hand and leading him away.) Come over here, Bill, and look at these flowers. Aren’t they lovely! (She nudges him and says under her breath “Hush!”) Whose flowers are they?
MR. PUCKETT: (Proudly.) They’re mine.
ANGELA: Oh, pardon me! I didn’t mean to be inquisitive. May I introduce myself? I’m Angela Warren and this is Dr. Jackson.
MR. PUCKETT: Pleased to meet you both. (He and Bill shake hands.) Sit down, won’t you. (Bill sits down in the chair near his bed.)
MR. DODSON: Angela, come here. (She crosses to him.)
ANGELA: Yes, Uncle Henry? (She stands looking down at him.)
MR. DODSON: I haven’t heard anything from you since the news of your mother’s death came. That’s a long time ago.
ANGELA: (Hesitating.) Well—you see—I guess I was a little bitter. I didn’t think you were quite fair to Mother.
MR. DODSON: She wouldn’t listen to me. She could have married a rich man, but took a professor instead. Ridiculous!
ANGELA: She was happy.
MR. DODSON: She probably starved to death!
ANGELA: No, we got along.
MR. DODSON: When I got sick the other day, I sent for my lawyer and had a will drawn up.
ANGELA: Oh?
MR. DODSON: I may as well tell you—I left my money to the widows and orphans of the state.

ANGELA: Why to them?

MR. DODSON: I got my start washing windows at the bank.

ANGELA: I’m your only relative, Uncle Henry.

MR. DODSON: Well, since I’ve seen you and you tell me you’re going to do the sensible thing and marry a doctor, I’m going to change my will.

ANGELA: (Happily.) Oh, Uncle Henry!

MR. DODSON: I tell you what I’ll do—The first man’s life he saves, I’ll make you out a check for fifty thousand dollars.

ANGELA: Uncle Henry—uh—why-uh—

_Dodie dashes through door, back._

DODIE: Nose drops! Nose drops!

_She has a small bottle and a nose dropper. She goes to Mr. Dodson, pushes his head back on the pillow. He tries to get up, but she pushes him down again._

MR. DODSON: (Sputtering.) Say—wait—I—

_She squirts something in his two nostrils, and crosses to Mr. Puckett saying “Nose drops”; he submits docilely while she squirts it in. She goes out, saying “Nose drops” as she goes down the hall._

_Pat and Jack enter with wheelchair, if there is one._

PAT: All right, Mr. Dodson, they want you in the clinic.

MR. DODSON: (Scooting down in the bed defensively.) What for?

PAT: To make a blood test before you eat your supper.

_They get him up and take him out, grumbling as usual. Dottie and Lottie enter while they are talking out Mr. Dodson._

LOTTIE: Come on, Santa Claus! We’ve come for you.

MR. PUCKETT: What for?

DOTTIE: To take another little sprint. (They go out back to left, with Mr. Puckett.)

ANGELA: Bill, everythings all right. Uncle Henry is going to leave us everything!

BILL: But, listen, Angela—he’s made a mistake. When you called me Dr. Jackson, he thought I was a medical doctor instead of a college professor.

ANGELA: Well, please don’t tell him any different!

BILL: (Frowning.) But I don’t like to deceive him.

ANGELA: For my sake, Bill, don’t tell him. He’d never get over it.

BILL: (Doubtfully.) It doesn’t seem right—

ANGELA: Yes, it is. I’m his only relative. He ought to leave me his money, instead of giving it to stranger.
BILL: Suppose he finds out!
ANGELA: He won’t. We’re only going to be here for a couple of hours.
BILL: (Worried.) This is not a good idea.
ANGELA: Stop worrying! We’ll be here such a short time.
BILL: (Frowning.) What if somebody wants my advice about something—
mathematics is about as far away from doctoring as anything could be!
ANGELA: (Laughing.) Listen, doctors depend on their “bedside manner” and a
few pills. Just smile and count the pills.
BILL: (Shrugging.) All right, but I’ll be glad when we get away from here!
ANGELA: Where’s the bag of silverware your mother gave us when we left this
morning?
BILL: It’s over there by the door.
ANGELA: (Relieved.) Good! Don’t let me forget it. I was afraid to leave it out in
the car.
BILL: I’ll keep an eye on it.

Mr. Puckett and the nurses return. They help him get into bed. At the same
time, Pat and Jack bring Mr. Dodson in and get him to bed.

PAT: (As she helps Mr. Dodson.) Jack, go get the supper trays. I think they’re
ready.
JACK: Okay. (If one is used, he takes the rolling chair out back to left.)
ANGELA: How are you feeling, Uncle Henry?
MR. DODSON: (Scowling.) I don’t know. There’s not enough left of me to tell.
BILL: (Going up, center.) Angela, I’m going to go call Cousin Annie Simpson
and tell her that we’ll be out there to spend the night.
ANGELA: I’ll go with you. (Bill stops.) Uncle Henry, we’re going to the office to
make a call. We’ll be right back. (They go out back, and to right, down hall.)
PAT: Are you comfortable? (She tucks the bed.)
MR. DODSON: (Shouting.) No!
PAT: Well, then—as comfortable as you can be in your frame of mind?
MR. DODSON: (Begrudgingly.) I suppose so.
PAT: (Going upstage.) I’m going to the clinic to ask about your blood test. I’ll be
back in a few minutes. (She exits, back, and goes right. Jack appears at
door pushing a tea wagon on which are four trays of food. If a tea wagon is
not available, let him use a very large tray holding four small trays.)
JACK: (Gaily.) Soup’s on! Here comes the grub man! (He pushes the cart just
inside the door, or puts the large tray on the table at back.) Well, by jing! I
forgot the napkins. I’ll be right back.

Mr. Puckett gets up and tiptoes to the tea wagon and reads the names of the
cards on each tray.

MR. PUCKETT: “Mrs. Hawkins.” (He shakes his head.) I don’t want hers. A
bowl of hot water with one grain of rice floating around in it. “Miss Dovie
Finkledink.” Whew! Broiled steak, hot buttered rolls, coffee, raisin pie. I’ll change names with her. *(He changes the cards and goes back to bed.)*

Jack enters with two large white linen napkins. He ties one around Mr. Puckett’s neck, props the pillows behind him and brings him his tray.

JACK: Here you are, Mr. Santa Claus. Looks mighty good. Wouldn’t mind gettin’ my chewers in that steak myself. *(He crosses to Mr. Dodson.)* Here’s your tray, Mr. Dodson.

MR. DODSON: *(Waving it away.)* Take it away. I don’t want it.

JACK: *(Firmly.)* Can’t do that. Got to leave it in here. Orders, you know. I’ll just put it back here on the table and cover it with a napkin. Maybe you’ll want it later. *(He takes the other trays out back to right. Mr. Puckett is eating very fast. Pat enters.)*

PAT: *(Cheerfully.)* How’s everybody doing? Supper all right? *(She crosses to Mr. Dodson.)* Aren’t you going to eat anything?

MR. DODSON: No!

PAT: What’s the matter with our appetite?

MR. DODSON: *(Angrily.)* I don’t have to eat if I don’t want it, do I?

Pat crosses to Mr. Puckett. He tries to hide the tray from her with his left hand, packing the food into his mouth with the other.

PAT: What are you eating?

MR. PUCKETT: *(Between bites.)* Just what they sent me.

PAT: *(Alarmed.)* Something’s wrong! No wonder your fever stays up. You’ve got no business eating raisin pie. I’ll have to go see about this. *(She takes his tray away.)*

MR. PUCKETT: *(Holding on to it.)* Please—just one more bite won’t hurt me!

PAT: No! It might be the death of you! Somebody made a very stupid mistake. *(She exits back to left with the tray.)*

_Dodie is heard off right, saying “Tempercure.” She dashes in, puts a thermometer in each one’s mouth while she times it, standing pigeon-toed. She records them and exits back to left calling “Temperchure.”*_

MR. DODSON: *(Hopelessly.)* Does that go on day and night?

MR. PUCKETT: *(Chuckling.)* You said it, brother!

MR. DODSON: And they send people to this place to get well. *(Exploding.)* Bah!

Jack appears from right, and enters back.

JACK: *(To Mr. Dodson.)* Here’s a note for you.

MR. DODSON: *(Surprised.)* For me?

JACK: Yes, sir.
MR. DODSON: Who’s it from?
JACK: (Grinning.) From a lady in the room next door.
MR. DODSON: Humph! Put it into the wastepaper basket.
JACK: Don’t you want to read it?
MR. DODSON: No!
JACK: It’s mighty pretty pink paper—(He smells it.)—and it smells awful good, too. Just like perfumed soap.
MR. DODSON: (Angrily.) Throw it away!
JACK: It’s from Miss Turtle Dove Finkledink.
MR. DODSON: Never heard of her!
JACK: Don’t you want me to read it to you?
MR. DODSON: (Roaring.) Get out of here! (He throws a pillow at Jack, who dodges. Pat enters, down back.)
PAT: Jack, you’ve made an awful mistake. You gave Miss Finkledink’s tray to Mr. Puckett.
JACK: I did? No wonder she was mad. All she got was a cup of hot milk and some soda crackers.
PAT: Be more careful, hereafter.
JACK: I sure will. (He exits back to left.)
PAT: (Picking up the pillow.) What’s this pillow doing on the floor?
MR. DODSON: It’s mine. Give it to me.
PAT: No, the slip’s soiled. I’ll go get you a clean one. (She goes into the bathroom at the right. Miss Dovie Finkledink comes from right and knocks at the door.)
MISS FINKLEDINK: (Giggling.) Oh, I couldn’t think of coming in—without a chaperon present.
MR. PUCKETT: Aw, don’t be silly! We’re not going to hurt you. Come on in.
MISS FINKLEDINK: (Stepping inside.) Well, if you insist, I’ll just put one little foot over the doorsill. There won’t be anything improper about that, will there? (She spies Mr. Dodson.) Oh, you’re Mr. Dodson, aren’t you? You’re the president of the First National Bank, aren’t you? Someone told me you came today. I don’t suppose you know it, but that’s where I keep my little money. I just wanted to welcome you! We’re always so glad to have a new face in our midst.

Pat enters right, with pillow slip and changes the pillow as Miss Finkledink talks on.

MISS FINKLEDINK: (Brightly.) There’s Miss Pryor! I guess it’s all right if I just come in for a wee bit of a minute! (She walks in with little, mincing steps.)
May I sit down? I’m still not very strong after my operation. *(She sits down.)*
I know you two will be fine company for each other. Mr. Puckett—Santa Claus we call him—is such a scream—always thinking up nicknames for everyone. He’s the one who started calling me “Turtle Dove.” Isn’t that cute? *(To Mr. Dodson.)* You may call me that, too, Mr. Dodson, if you want to. *(To Mr. Puckett.)* You’ll have to think up a real cute name for Mr. Dodson, Santa Claus. *(Pat exits back to left. Miss Finkledink rises.)* There goes Miss Pryor, so I mustn’t stay. Mr. Dodson, I wrote you a little note of welcome. I hope you didn’t think it bold of me!

JACK: *(Entering at back.)* Miss Finkledink, I sure was sorry about getting your tray mixed. They’re fixing you another.

MISS FINKLEDINK: Oh, thank you so much! *(Shaking her finger at Mr. Dodson.)* Mr. Dodson, did ‘oo eat little Turtle Dove’s supper?

MR. PUCKETT: No, he didn’t. *(Flatly.)* I did.

MISS FINKLEDINK: *(Her face falling.)* Oh! Well—all right, Jack—I’ll be in my room. *(She and Jack go up center and exit.)*

MR. DODSON: *(Flopping around.)* There ought to be a law against women like that! Why can’t we lock our doors?

MR. PUCKETT: *(Laughing.)* Love at first sight! Did you see that yearnin’ look in her eyes?

MR. DODSON: *(Shouting.)* I’ve got to get away from here!

*Dodie calls off stage.*

DODIE: *(Off stage to the left.)* Teeth! Teeth!

MR. DODSON: *(Iratedly.)* What’s that she’s yelling?

MR. PUCKETT: *(Explaining.)* She’s coming to wash our teeth.

*Dodie enters back from left with a towel in a flat basket over her arm. She goes to Mr. Puckett.*

DODIE: *(Flatly.)* Teeth! *(She gives him a towel. He pretends to take his teeth out in the towel and hands them back to her. She then goes to Mr. Dodson.)* Teeth!

MR. DODSON: *(Exploding.)* Get away from here!

DODIE: *(Simply.)* Gotta have your teeth.

MR. DODSON: *(Angrily.)* I’ll have you know my teeth are hitched in my mouth!

DODIE: Oh ‘scuse me. *(She exits to bathroom, right.)*

*The sound of water, if possible, comes from right. Miss Holt and Jack enter back with a wheel chair. If none is available, they merely walk in.*

MISS HOLT: *(Coming to Mr. Dodson.)* Mr. Dodson, we’re ready for you again.

MR. DODSON: *(Unhappily.)* What for?

MISS HOLT: We have to examine your digestion throught the fluoroscope.

MR. DODSON: *(Scooting down in bed.)* I’m not going!
TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

MISS HOLT: (To Jack, firmly.) Take hold of him, Jack! My time is precious.

They take him out, still fussing. Dodie enters from right with Mr. Puckett’s teeth and the basket.

MR. PUCKETT: (Laughing.) They’re gonna think he ain’t got a stomach. Nuthin’ to show in it! (Dodie hands him his teeth. He pretends to put them back in and returns the towel to her. She starts out, center.) Wait a minute, Little Miss Muffet. Sit down and talk awhile. I ain’t a spider.

DODIE: (Stopping up center.) Can’t. Gotta go wash Miss Finkledink’s teeth. (She exits up center to the right. Pat enters back from the left, almost bumping into her.)

MR. PUCKETT: (Seeing her.) Howdy, Goldilocks! Why don’t you sit down and rest awhile. You’ll wear yourself out!

PAT: (Looking at the empty bed.) Where’s my patient?

MR. PUCKETT: Aw, Old Battle Axe came and got him.

PAT: (Going up center.) I’d better go see about him.

She exits back to right. People pass by the door, then Lottie and Dottie enter from the left, back.

LOTTIE: We’ve got a message for you, Santa Claus.

MR. PUCKETT: What is it?

DOTTIE: Some of your cronies want you to come and play dominoes with them in the sun parlor.

MR. PUCKETT: (Starting to get up.) All right. They licked the socks off me last night, but I’ll get them this time. Who is it, old Mule Face and Hoot Owl?

DOTTIE: That’s right.

MR. PUCKETT: (On edge of the bed.) Then let’s go. (They go out back to the left. In a moment Angela and Bill enter. She crosses to Mr. Dodson’s bed and feels of it.)

ANGELA: What a terrible bed! Poor Uncle Henry! Look how hard it is! (She stretches out on the bed.)

BILL: I’m so tired any bed would feel good. (Going to Mr. Puckett’s bed.) I wonder how hard this one is? (He stretches out on the bed. In a moment Dodie enters up stage.)

DODIE: Temperchur! (Before the two on stage realize it, she sticks thermometers in their mouths. Looking at them.) Ninety-eight! (She then writes on her chart, and breezes out again, unconcerned. Bill and Angela leap out of bed.)

ANGELA: That stupid thing! She couldn’t even tell we weren’t patients!

BILL: (Shaking his head.) What a fog she’s in!

Miss Holt and Pat bring Mr. Dodson in and put him back in bed as Jack comes rushing down the hall and dashes into the room.
JACK: (Worried.) Come quick, Miss Holt! Mr. Ogletre was eatin’ his supper and got a chicken bone caught in his throat. He’s chokin’ to death!

MISS HOLT: (Rushing up center.) Oh, heavens! If only Dr. Morgan were here! (She, Pat, and Jack rush out back.)

MR. DODSON: I feel awful bad, Dr. Jackson. I wish you’d give me something to ease the pain.

BILL: Oh—I—uh—You’re Dr. Morgan’s patient. I wouldn’t be ethical to interfere with his treatment.

MR. DODSON: I don’t give a hoot about that? I’ve got to get relief! (He lies down with his face to the audience and groans.)

Angela motions to Bill. She takes the napkin from the supper tray and puts two spoonfuls of sugar in a glass of water and hands it to Bill. Bill takes it to Mr. Dodson.

BILL: Take this, please. It’ll make you feel like a new man. (Mr. Dodson swallows it.)

Angela rolls some pills from a biscuit and hands them to Bill. Bill takes them to Mr. Dodson.

BILL: Take these pills, please.

MR. DODSON: They look mighty big.

BILL: They won’t be hard to swallow. Here! (He hands him a glass of water.) Now, let me feel your pulse. (He counts.) Pulse is a little fast, but you’ll soon be all right.

MR. DODSON: Thank you, Doctor. (He swallows pills.)

Miss Holt rushes in, followed by Jack who has a mop and dust pan.

MISS HOLT: He’s choking to death! Come, Dr. Jackson, we need you! You must get a bone out of Mr. Ogletree’s throat!

BILL: (Hanging back.) Why—un—I—he’s Dr. Morgan’s patient! It isn’t ethical—MISS HOLT: Don’t hold back on that account! Here! (She picks up the bag by the door.) Come quickly! (She pulls him out door at back.)

Jack begins mopping the floor.

JACK: Mr. Dodson—

MR. DODSON: (Lying on his side facing the audience and almost asleep.) What? (He yawns.)

JACK: Do you know the difference between a sheep and a mule?

MR. DODSON: (Impatiently.) No, what is it?

JACK: I’d hate to have you for my butcher. (He laughs and slaps his leg, then continues mopping and whistling a tune. He exits back.)
Mr. Dodson begins snoring in little puffs. Angela is reading Mr. Puckett’s movie magazine. Then Miss Finkledink appears at back.

MISS FINKLEDINK: Pardon me, but did I leave my little hanky out here awhile ago?
ANGELA: I don’t know. (She looks around.)
MISS FINKLEDINK: Oh, I see it—down by the chair. (She picks it up.) Dear Mr. Dodson is sleeping. He must have had a hard day. Now, don’t worry about him after you leave. We’re going to see that he doesn’t get lonesome.

She tiptoes out back. Bill enters staggering along carrying his bag. He drops into a chair.

ANGELA: (In a loud whisper.) Did you get the bone out?
BILL: (Grinning.) Yes. (He opens the bag and takes out some silver sugar tongs.) With these sugar tongs! That sure was a close call.
ANGELA: Who for? The man?
BILL: No! For me! We’ve got to get away before something else happens! (He takes his handkerchief out and mops his brow.)

QUICK CURTAIN - END OF ACT ONE

We hope that this sample script proved useful. If we may be of further service do not hesitate to contact us at:

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