

Group Meeting 2

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

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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.)

START

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

CHESWICK. Hey, where *is* McMurphy?

NURSE RATCHED. I suggested this would be a good time for his interview with Dr. Spivey. We're not going to make any *decisions*, you understand, I just don't think he should be allowed to go on upsetting the other patients.

SCANLON. I ain't upset.

CHESWICK. Neither am I!

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

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

MCMURPHY. Right, Doc? Whattaya think?

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

MCMURPHY. A real blast!

(He digs his fingers in the DOCTOR's ribs, and they laugh, poking each other.)

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

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

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

DR. SPIVEY. Why, that's exactly what *we* were talking about! And I made the suggestion...

(To MCMURPHY, puzzled.) ...Or was it you?

MCMURPHY. Hell, no, it was your idea.

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

NURSE RATCHED. A...carnival?

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

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

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

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

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

MCMURPHY. Myself, I'd be glad to run a Skillo wheel.

(Chanting under the lines following.) Heya, heya, step right up ladies and gentlemen, and try your luck, a bonanza for a dime, a prize on every spinna the wheel!

DR. SPIVEY. Oh, fine!

MARTINI. I could sell things!

HARDING. I'm rather good at palm readings.

DR. SPIVEY. Fine, fine! What do you think, Miss Ratched?

(NURSE RATCHED looks at him, frozen-smiled.)

A...carnival? Here on the...ward?

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

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

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

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

(MCMURPHY and BILLY share MCMURPHY's triumph. The CHIEF has put the broom back in the closet.)

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

BILLY. The v-very first word I said, I stuttered. Muh-muh-mama. And when I proposed to a guh-guh-girl, I flubbed it. I said, "Huh-huh-honey, will you muh-muh-muh..."

(MCMURPHY laughs companionably, and BILLY giggles, too.)

...Till she broke out l-laughing.

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

BILLY. No!

NURSE RATCHED. Then what was the matter?

BILLY. I was in luh-love with her.

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

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

MCMURPHY. Say, I got somethin’ to take up.

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

MCMURPHY. You mean you don’t know me?

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

MCMURPHY. Say, you got a hell of a problem!

(*Sympathetically.*) Wouldja like to discuss it?

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

DR. SPIVEY. In what respect?

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

MCMURPHY. What you got in mind? Hookin’ me up to your little battery charger?

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

MCMURPHY. In a pig’s gizzard!

DR. SPIVEY. (*Unexpectedly.*) I must say, Nurse, I agree with Patient McMurphy. I find him quite lucid, quite in touch, and despite his past record he has exhibited no tendencies toward violence. So I must conclude that electroshock 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 DOCTOR nods.*)

Okay then, who wants to watch those games.

(*CHESWICK's hand goes higher, but there is no other response.*)

What's the *matter* with you guys?

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

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

(*DR. SPIVEY rises and exits. NURSE RATCHED replaces the Log Book and exits. The PATIENTS*

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