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Dramatic Publishing

**a
full-length
comedy**

M*A*S*H

by TIM KELLY

**dramatized from the book
by RICHARD HOOKER**



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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"M*A*S*H"

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(M*A*S*H)

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M*A*S*H
A Comedy in Two Acts
For Fifteen Men and Fifteen Women
(much smaller with doubling)

CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

GENERAL HAMILTON HARTINGTON HAMMOND

PVT. BOONE

LT. COLONEL HENRY BRAYMORE BLAKE

CAPTAIN BRIDGET McCARTHY

LT. JANICE FURY

SERGEANT DEVINE

LT. LOUISE KIMBLE

CAPTAIN FRANK BURNS

FATHER JOHN PATRICK MULCAHY

CAPTAIN WALTER WALDOWSKI (WALT)

CAPTAIN JOHN McINTYRE (TRAPPER JOHN)

CAPTAIN JOHN BLACK (UGLY)

CORPORAL "RADAR" REILLY

CAPTAIN BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PIERCE (HAWKEYE)

CAPTAIN AUGUSTUS BEDFORD FORREST (DUKE)

HO-JON

PVT. LOPEZ

KOREAN WOMAN #1

KOREAN WOMAN #2

LT. NANCY PHILLIPS

MAJOR MARGARET HOULIHAN

CONGRESSWOMAN GOLDFARB

DEAN MERCY LODGE

MISS RANDAZZLE

MITZI, FRITZI and AGNES

LT. CONNIE LIEBOWITZ

CAPTAIN OLIVER WENDELL JONES
(SPEARCHUCKER)

MAJOR RUTH HASKELL

G.I.'s, Koreans, Medical Personnel

PLACE: Compound of the 4077th Mobile
Army Surgical Hospital, Korea.

TIME: A period of many months during
the Korean Conflict.

ACT ONE

Scene One

In the darkened theatre we hear the menacing sound of artillery fire. It goes on for a few seconds, until --

LIGHTS COME UP on the office of General Hamilton Hartington Hammond, south of the city of Seoul. The office is nothing more than a small table or desk placed in front of the curtain, DR, on which are telephone, papers, etc.

The office of Lt. -Colonel Henry Braymore Blake, commanding officer of MASH, is DL, also with a desk telephone, papers, etc.

GENERAL HAMMOND, in full uniform, sits behind his desk holding the telephone receiver impatiently. PVT. BOONE, Colonel Blake's clerk, holds the other receiver nervously, looking off L.)

GENERAL HAMMOND. . . . still there? . . . hello . . . ? (Shakes receiver.) What a lousy connection. (Barks into mouthpiece.) Anybody out there!

BOONE (frightened). Yes, yes, General Hammond, sir. I'm here.

GENERAL HAMMOND. I don't want to talk to a private! I want to talk to a colonel. Colonel Blake! (BOONE almost drops the receiver.)

BOONE. Yes, sir, General Hammond, sir. He'll be here in a moment, sir.

GENERAL HAMMOND. He'd better be!

(COLONEL BLAKE, disheveled, ENTERS from DL. He's been interrupted while taking a shower. He wears long johns with his colonel's wings pinned on the shoulders. His feet are stuck into heavy, unlaced combat boots. He wears a cap with earflaps and dark sunglasses. There's a towel around his neck.)

COLONEL BLAKE. I wait all week for this call and it has to come when I'm in the shower.

BOONE. General's on a tear, Colonel Blake.

COLONEL BLAKE. Boone, you get out of here and get me some coffee. (BOONE dashes off, DL.) Strong coffee! Last cup you got me wouldn't even stain my shirt.

GENERAL HAMMOND (confused by the sounds coming through the receiver). Stain your shirt? (Shakes receiver again.) What is this? (Barks.) Henry, that you? Henry!

COLONEL BLAKE (on the mouthpiece). Now, listen, General. I gotta have two more men.

GENERAL HAMMOND. What do you think you're running up there? Walter Reed Army Hospital?

COLONEL BLAKE. Listen to me----

GENERAL HAMMOND. Take it easy, Henry.

COLONEL BLAKE. Don't Henry me. And I won't take it easy. If I don't get two new surgeons on my MASH team pronto----

GENERAL HAMMOND (cutting in again). All right! All right! So I'll send you the two best men I have. Satisfied?

COLONIAL BLAKE. They'd better be good, or I'll----

GENERAL HAMMOND. I said they'll be the two

best men I've got!

COLONEL BLAKE. Good! And get 'em here quick.
(COLONEL BLAKE slams down his receiver,
EXITS DL. GENERAL HAMMOND hangs up the
telephone.)

GENERAL HAMMOND. I'll get 'em there quick,
Henry. And, brother, are you in for a surprise!
(He stands, EXITS DR as the LIGHTS FADE.)

ACT ONE

Scene Two

THE CURTAIN OPENS on the MASH compound. [For detailed description and stage chart, see Production Notes, pages 111-113.]

NOTE: All transitions from one scene to another are done so the effect is of one picture blending into another. There is always something happening onstage. [See Production Notes page 114.]

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The MASH compound is alive.

In the nurses' tent, CAPTAIN BRIDGET McCARTHY, an efficient and capable personality, is seated on her foot locker, arranging her hair into a tight bun. LT. JANICE FURY, young and attractive, is exercising -- kneebends, twists, et al.

In the mess tent, the cook, SERGEANT DEVINE,

is pouring coffee into some cups set out on the counter. A nurse, LT. KIMBLE, and CAPTAIN FRANK BURNS, a boorish stickler for procedure and the rule book, are seated at the down-stage table. A chaplain, FATHER JOHN PATRICK MULCAHY, sits at the second table reading a newspaper.

NURSES, DOCTORS, MILITARY PERSONNEL and KOREAN WORKERS are seen in Avenues "A," "B," and "C," coming and going.

NOTE: From time to time during the compound scenes, the director may want to have cast members make stage crosses to suggest the pulse of MASH life. Unless there is a specific reason for a particular character to make an appearance in some "Avenue" area, it is not indicated in the script, but it is a good idea to keep in mind the importance of optional stage activity. [See Production Notes, page 114 .]

The main focus is on "The Swamp." A foot locker has been pulled out and it serves as a card table. Three doctors are grouped around it playing poker. They are: CAPTAIN WALTER "WALT" WALDOWSKI, CAPTAIN JOHN McINTYRE, who goes by the name of "TRAPPER JOHN," and CAPTAIN "UGLY" JOHN BLACK, who, in typical MASH insanity, is called "UGLY" because he's actually quite good-looking. A fourth man, CORPORAL "RADAR" REILLY, is down on his hands and knees, his ear pressed to the floor of the tent.)

WALT. Anything yet?

RADAR. I can't hear anything if you're going to

keep asking me if I hear anything. (Afterthought.)
Sir.

TRAPPER. Radar, it's a good thing you've got special gifts. Otherwise, I'd boot you out of this tent. You don't show proper respect for the officer class.

RADAR. Wait, wait. I hear something now.

UGLY. What?

RADAR. Quiet.

TRAPPER and WALT (to UGLY). Quiet!

(In the mess tent, SERGEANT DEVINE brings coffee to the downstage table. /See Production Notes for suggestion on handling such shifts of action./)

DEVINE. Here we go.

LOUISE. Thanks, Sergeant.

BURNS (taking cup). You're wearing dirty fatigues, Sergeant Devine. Merely because we're close to the front lines is no reason to assume a slovenly attitude.

DEVINE. Uh-huh.

BURNS. Uh-huh? Uh-huh what?

DEVINE. Uh-huh to what you said. (Then:) Sir.

BURNS. Don't get discourteous with me, Sergeant Devine. I'll have you up before Colonel Blake.

DEVINE (taking out some travel folder). I was wondering, sir, if you'd care to purchase the band-aid concession at Yankee Stadium?

BURNS. Nonsense.

DEVINE. I could let you have it cheap.

BURNS. You must take me for a fool. (Smugly.) Besides, I happen to know you sold that concession to Major Hobson only last month. (On this, FATHER MULCAHY looks up wide-eyed. DEVINE shrugs, returns to his duties.)

(In the nurses' tent, JANICE has quit exercising.)

JANICE (exhausted). You'd think working in a mobile Army unit would keep you in trim.

BRIDGET. I don't worry about it. I let it spread.

JANICE. If the kids I went to school with could see me now. They didn't think I was good for much except looking helpless.

BRIDGET. You do fine.

JANICE. When the artillery starts, I go weak in the knees.

BRIDGET. Happens to all of us.

JANICE. Sometimes when I'm at the operating table and those cases keep coming on day and night, I get the feeling I'm going to faint.

BRIDGET. I wouldn't advise it. Most of the doctors here are nice, but they're all a little crazy. If a nurse faints in surgery they either use her for a blood donor, or take bets on how long she'll stay under. MASH is no place for a lady, Lieutenant Fury. Remember that and you'll survive. Come on, we've got the next shift. (BRIDGET and JANICE EXIT their tent, going UR.)

(In "The Swamp," RADAR is convinced he's on to something.)

RADAR. Yup. That's what it sounds like to me. Helicopters. (The others tense.)

UGLY. How many?

RADAR (pressing ear to floor). More than six . . . no, more than eight . . . nine. More, even!

(CAPTAINS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PIERCE, "HAWKEYE," and AUGUSTUS BEDFORD FORREST, "DUKE," two young surgeons, have

ENTERED "Avenue C" from UL behind the mess tent. They carry duffel bags and are dressed sloppily. They look around, casing the compound. DUKE points to "The Swamp." They cross to it. (Dialogue plays through.)

TRAPPER. Must have been that assault on Moonflower Hill.

UGLY. I knew it would be a mean one.

WALT. Takes care of our poker game for the next seventy-two hours. (HAWKEYE and DUKE are standing at the stage left entrance to "The Swamp.")

HAWKEYE. This the tent they call "The Swamp"? (All look up to see the new arrivals. RADAR goes back to his peculiar listening.)

(During the following scene, FATHER MULCAHY will EXIT the mess tent and, in due time, so will LOUISE. Later, SERGEANT DEVINE will leave via exit flap in the rear of his "dining" emporium, leaving only CAPTAIN BURNS.)

UGLY. Tent number six of the double natural: 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.

TRAPPER. Astride the 38th Parallel.

WALT (like a travel agent). In lovely, romantic South Korea.

RADAR (flat). Otherwise known as "The Swamp."

UGLY. And who might you gents be? (The two new arrivals move into the tent.)

HAWKEYE. I'm Captain Benjamin Franklin Pierce.

WALT. That's a real name?

HAWKEYE. My friends call me Hawkeye. (Turns to his buddy.) And this is Captain Augustus Bedford Forrest, alias "Duke."

DUKE (with a feeble salute). Hiya.

ALL. Hiya.

TRAPPER. Did I hear right? Hawkeye?

HAWKEYE. Only book my old man ever read was
"The Last of The Mohicans."

TRAPPER (excited). Your old man used to sell
lobsters?

HAWKEYE. Still does. Nothing under a pound and
a half, though.

TRAPPER. From Crabapple Cove, Maine?

HAWKEYE. Bull's-eye!

TRAPPER (flinging off his fatigue hat). Hawkeye,
don't you remember me? Pride of Dartmouth
College? McIntyre. John McIntyre. "Trapper
John" McIntyre. (The name "Trapper John"
rings the bell.)

HAWKEYE (throwing his arms wide). Trapper John!
I'll be a speckled seagull! (TRAPPER JOHN and
HAWKEYE embrace like long-lost brothers,
dance around the tent like lunatic grizzly bears.)

TRAPPER. I knew there couldn't be two Hawkeyes
in this cockeyed world!

HAWKEYE. Trapper John, you ole trapper, you!

TRAPPER. Lobster man!

UGLY (shaking hands with DUKE). I'm John Black.
Everyone calls me Ugly. They call me Ugly
because I'm good-looking. Understand?

DUKE. If you say so, Captain.

UGLY (introductions). This is Walt Waldowski. If
you want to know where the real action is, it's
in his tent.

WALT (shaking hands). The Painless Polish Poker
Parlor and Dental Clinic. You guys get any
trouble with your tusks, I'm the man to see.
On Wednesdays and Fridays I run bingo games.
Helps relieve the tension.

RADAR. Quiet!

WALT, TRAPPER and UGLY. Quiet! (HAWKEYE

and DUKE react, startled. A deadly hush falls over the tent. Only now do the newcomers notice RADAR with his ear to the floor. They exchange a bewildered look.)

HAWKEYE. We don't mean to horn in, but----

ALL. Ssssshhhh. (HAWKEYE and DUKE can't figure this one out and don't try.)

RADAR (getting up). Gonna be a busy night. Yes, sir, a busy night. (He EXITS toward stage R, into "Avenue A" and off.)

HAWKEYE. Somebody digging under the tent?

TRAPPER. No. That was Radar Reilly.

WALT. He's got the gift.

DUKE. Uh--what gift?

UGLY. He can anticipate what you're gonna say before you say it. And he's got super-sensitive ears. Why, Radar can hear things no other mortal can. This tent is his best station for receiving.

TRAPPER. We knew two new guys were coming last week.

UGLY. Radar monitored the call from General Hammond. (HAWKEYE and DUKE are impressed.)

HAWKEYE. Sounds like a good man to know. Where do we bunk?

TRAPPER. In here with me. (Sour.) And Burns.

UGLY. I'll get Ho-Jon to unpack your duffels. (UGLY moves to stage right entrance of "The Swamp.")

TRAPPER. You guys get the middle cots. (HAWKEYE and DUKE toss their duffels on the middle cots.)

UGLY (yelling into "Avenue A"). Ho-Jon!

HAWKEYE (sitting on cot). Who's Burns?

WALT. Captain Frank Burns. And he'll never let you forget it.

TRAPPER. Regular army. Goes watery in the eyes when they play taps.

UGLY. Does surgery by the numbers. (Yells again.)

Ho-Jon!

DUKE (looking around). So "The Swamp" is home.
HAWKEYE. Better believe it.

(HO-JON, a small seventeen-year-old Korean, comes running into the compound from UR, behind the nurses' tent, and into "Avenue A.")

WALT (to HAWKEYE). Stay out of Burns' way. He can mean trouble. (HO-JON, energetic and anxious to please, is now standing outside "The Swamp." He wears fatigues, and like all Koreans he has the habit of putting an "S" sound on the end of some of his words.)

HO-JON. Here I am, sir, Captain.

UGLY. What took you so long? Two new butcher boys. Hop to it, Ho-Jon.

HO-JON. Yes, sir, Captain. Next time I'll run faster. (HO-JON enters tent. DUKE is unpacking his duffel.)

TRAPPER. Couple of live ones for you, Ho-Jon. (To HAWKEYE and DUKE) Best houseboy in the camp. Sews on buttons faster than the speed of lightning. If Ho-Jon can't find you what you want, it ain't available in the Republic of South Korea.

HO-JON (slight Oriental bow). I am very honored, gentlemen, sirs. (HAWKEYE and DUKE return the bow.)

DUKE. Same here.

HAWKEYE. Gotcha.

TRAPPER. Do you know who these esteemed doctors happen to be? (HO-JON is all smiles, thinking he's about to deliver a high compliment.) Oh, yes, sir. Two new butcher boys. (HAWKEYE and DUKE aren't exactly overwhelmed by the "flattery.")

DUKE. They learn fast.

HO-JON (referring to DUKE'S unpacking). Oh, no, sir. My job. (Always smiling, he crosses quickly to the cot and takes the duffel from DUKE, begins to unpack it.)

(During HO-JON'S introduction, BURNS gets up from the table in the mess tent, exits into "Avenue C" and moves to "The Swamp.")

WALT (the cards). You guys in?

DUKE. I'm game.

HAWKEYE. You're telling me.

DUKE. So I'll shower later. (DUKE, HAWKEYE, WALT, UGLY and TRAPPER JOHN group around the foot locker serving as table. BURNS enters "The Swamp" from L, frowns.)

BURNS. Captain Waldowski, why don't you play cards in your own tent?

WALT. Last night's rain washed out the floor.

TRAPPER. I asked him to play cards in this tent.

BURNS. It's also my tent and I wasn't consulted. In any case, I don't approve of frivolity in the compound. (Insufferably.) War is a very serious business. (All stare at BURNS. He really is a pompous ass. HAWKEYE belches. HO-JON suppresses a laugh.)

TRAPPER. Come off it, Burns.

BURNS. Captain, if you please.

TRAPPER. Well, I don't please. (Introductions.) This is Captain Forrest.

DUKE (a wave of the hand). Hi.

TRAPPER. Captain Pierce. (BURNS extends a hand. HAWKEYE prefers to belch a second time, which is his way of evaluating BURNS. This time HO-JON laughs out loud.)

BURNS (turning, angry). What are you laughing at?