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Dramatic Publishing

SATURDAY, THE 14TH

A Full-Length Play
by
WILLIAM GLEASON



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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WILLIAM GLEASON

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(SATURDAY, THE 14TH)

ISBN 0-87129-350-1

SATURDAY, THE 14TH

A Full-Length Play
For Ten Men and Nine Women*

CHARACTERS

DR. STERNWAFFLE psychiatrist
PATSY FINK the girl and the woman
CHIEF FOSTER chief of police
MASON/CHESTER the maniac/the actor who portrays him
MARGIE Mason's wife
MIKEY Mason's son
MAXINE owner of Camp Slippery Floors
NURSE WILSON psychiatric nurse

BENNIE
SUSAN
MIKE camp counselors, 1957
SHIRLEY
BOB

VIRGIL
OTIS
TED camp counselors, the present
VALERIE
THELMA
JENNY

*Camp Counselors of 1957 can double as counselors of the present

TIME: Late 1950's and the Present

ACT ONE

NOTE: *The staff taking tickets, and ushers, should wear black baggy garments and hockey masks or something similar. DR. STERNWAFFLE, an incredibly serious psychiatrist, enters with the audience and is seated near the front of the house with easy access to the stage. Stage curtains are closed as the audience enters. After house is seated, lights flicker and fade to black. In the darkness a girl's voice sings softly.*

GIRL (off). Happy birthday to you...
Happy birthday to you...
Happy birthday, dear Mason...
Happy birthday to... (She screams a long scream.)

SCENE: *Outside somewhere, 1958. Rock and roll begins to play in the distance. Lights come up, downstage. PATSY FINK enters DR in front of curtain, dressed in the style of the 1950's - poodle skirt, bobby socks, etc. She is crying. She stops DC, sniffs and wipes her eyes. She looks right and left, pulls a large wad of Kleenex from her bra and blows her nose.*

BENNIE (off, calls). Patsy? Patsy, where are you? (PATSY blows her nose again and stuffs the Kleenex back in her blouse. Pulls herself together.) Patsy?

(BENNIE enters dressed like 1950's nerd - horn-rimmed glasses, slacks too short, white socks, penny loafers and plaid shirt with sleeves rolled up. He pauses DR and looks at PATSY. She turns her back to him, wipes eyes again. He steps toward her tentatively, stops.)

BENNIE. I couldn't find you. I was worried.

PATSY (*back turned to him*). Nothing to worry about.

BENNIE. Was it something I said?

PATSY. No, Bennie. It's not that. It's not you. (*Sighs.*) Everybody laughing and dancing... music playing... It just didn't seem... appropriate. It just isn't right.

BENNIE. There's always a party the night before camp closes.

PATSY. I know. I know. (*Sighs.*) It's a tradition.

BENNIE. Well it is. Gives the camp counselors a chance to say good bye after all the kids have gone home to Mommy.

PATSY. Only not all the kids went home to Mommy this summer, Bennie. Did they?

BENNIE (*sighs, steps away*). It was an accident, Patsy.

PATSY. That's what we keep telling ourselves. Maybe if we keep telling ourselves that we'll even start believing it.

BENNIE. It wasn't anybody's fault.

PATSY. It was everybody's fault, Bennie. If we had done the bed check instead of playing Spin the Bottle we would have found out he was missing.

BENNIE. It wouldn't have made any difference.

PATSY. We could have gotten to the kitchen sooner. We could have stopped him before... (*Lowers face.*) before...

BENNIE. It's not like we hadn't taken precautions, Patsy. We hid all the can openers as soon as we realized he had a problem. How were we supposed to know he brought one from home?

PATSY. I can't get it out of my mind. It's like a red-eyed rat running around in my head, gnawing and clawing, chewing up my sanity in little pieces.

BENNIE (*grabs her shoulders*). Stop it. Stop thinking about it.

PATSY (*crying*). You weren't the one who found him. I was! All those pork and beans cans scattered on the floor!

BENNIE. I said stop.

PATSY. And he still had that silly little birthday party hat on (*Sobs, collapses in BENNIE's arms.*)

BENNIE (*holds her, says softly*). It's over. It's history, Patsy. We can't do anything about it now.

PATSY. I don't think it'll ever be over. Mason will always be with us. Nothing can change that.

BENNIE. It's getting dark out here. Let's go back to the party.

PATSY. You go.

BENNIE. I'm not leaving you out here.

PATSY. I'll be along in a minute. I just need a little time to pull myself together. Please?

BENNIE. Okay. But don't take too long. You owe me at least five dances. *(Smiles, crosses R.)*

PATSY. I'm a lousy dancer.

BENNIE. That makes us even. *(He exits. She stands C. The rock and roll music in the distance fades and the lights dim slightly. Ominous music fades in over the rock and roll. PATSY looks around and crosses her arms as if to ward off a sudden chill. We hear crunching noises as if footsteps are falling in the underbrush. She looks nervously right and left.)*

PATSY. Bennie? Bennie, is that you? *(More crunching. It stops.)* Who is it? Who's out there? *(She looks around again and crosses quickly toward R, then stops. An empty can rolls from off R and clatters to a stop at her feet. She slowly reaches down and picks it up. Her eyes go wide with fright as she reads the label out loud.)* Pork and beans.

(PATSY gasps and throws the can off R, then crosses quickly toward L looking back over her shoulder. As she reaches L exit there is a loud, ominous music tag as MASON steps out to greet her. He is very short and very rotund. He wears plaid shorts, army boots and a sweatshirt with "Camp Slippery Floors" on it. He also wears a hockey mask and a stupid birthday party cap. He wears horn-rimmed glasses over his hockey mask. PATSY comes to a halt and faces him. She gasps.)

PATSY. Mason! No. It can't be. You're... you're... *(MASON slowly raises a plumber's helper - plunger - in his upstage hand. More ominous music. He steps toward her. PATSY steps back.)* No. No. *(Voice rising.)* It wasn't my fault! *(Lights out. She screams and the scream is cut off. We hear squishing noises followed by several loud suction "thwop" noises. Late 1950's rock and roll music comes up.)*

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *Camp Slippery Floors main lodge/recreation room, seconds later. Upstage wall has log cabin look. There is a door UC and a window on either side through which we can see the forest in the moonlight. Over the door is an old emblem that reads "Camp Slippery Floors - Founded 1924." Picnic table R with one bench. On table are paper cups, punch bowl and a record player which supplies the music. Other picnic bench is DC. There are also exits DR and DL. Several chairs line the L wall and a dartboard is on the wall over the chairs.*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *BENNIE is seated on the bench with his chin resting in his hands. MIKE is bopping with SHIRLEY, C, upstage of the bench. MIKE has the 1950's tough-guy look, white T-shirt, hair slicked back, Levi's, etc. SHIRLEY is dressed sloppily in shorts and a baggy short-sleeved shirt. SUSAN, a pretty girl with a semi-formal dress on and her hair in a pony tail is dancing around by herself. BENNIE, facing audience, looks at his watch, sighs and returns his chin to his hands. We hear distant offstage scream.*

BENNIE (*jumps to his feet*). What was that? (*MIKE and SHIRLEY keep dancing - oblivious.*)

SUSAN (*stops dancing*). What was what? (*BENNIE crosses to record player quickly, stops music.*)

BENNIE. I heard something.

MIKE (*has stopped dancing*). What happened to the music?

BENNIE. I heard something. At least I thought I heard something.

MIKE. You've been hearing things all summer. (*To SHIRLEY.*)
The guy wakes me up at least once every night 'cause he thought he heard something.

BENNIE. It sounded like a scream.

SHIRLEY. Really? A scream?

SUSAN. I didn't hear anything.

BENNIE. I heard a scream.

MIKE. It was probably an owl.

BENNIE. How would you know? You grew up in Detroit. You wouldn't know what an owl was if it built a nest in your hair.

MIKE. Funny guy. (*Approaches BENNIE.*) Lest you forget, four eyes, I spent a whole summer out here just like you did. And I know what an owl sounds like when I hear it. (*Pokes him in chest with finger.*) You dig?

BENNIE (*rubs chest*). That hurt. (*Offstage scream - louder. SHIRLEY jumps.*)

MIKE. That... was *not* an owl.

BENNIE. Patsy's out there! Come on!

(BENNIE rushes toward the upstage door and others follow. He grabs door and throws it open. BOB stands in the door wearing colored lotion on face, a houserobe, slippers and baseball cap. BOB screams. BENNIE stops and screams as do SHIRLEY and SUSAN. They all stand staring at each other.)

BOB (*smiles*). What's the deal?

BENNIE. Bob, you idiot!

BOB (*stepping in*). Well, a pleasant evening to you, too.

SUSAN. We thought...

BOB. Thought what?

SHIRLEY. We thought someone was hurt.

BOB. Someone *was* hurt. Me. (*To SUSAN.*) Would you help me to a chair, please? (*Offers arm.*)

SUSAN (*takes his arm, escorts him*). What's that smell?

BOB. Don't be alarmed. It's just me.

MIKE. What's that stuff on your face?

BOB. Calamine lotion. And it's not just on my face. It covers my entire body. (*To SUSAN.*) Wanna see?

SUSAN. No thanks. I just ate.

BOB. It seems that the bed of clover I took a nap in yesterday wasn't clover at all. It was...

ALL. Poison ivy?

BOB. You guessed it. Consequently it feels like two million army ants are having a convention on my body. I think I'll sit down now. (*He sits, screams, then smiles.*) Gosh that hurt.

BENNIE (*closes door*). Two months at camp and you don't know what poison ivy looks like? Serves you right.

BOB. I spent eight weeks chasing wild-eyed sixth graders over hill and dale, dodging arrows, stopping food fights and pulling the camp cat out of the outhouse. I didn't have time to study the flora and fauna. (*To SUSAN.*) Would you scratch my back, please?

SUSAN. You're not supposed to scratch it.

BOB. Well, could you at least beat me with something before I itch to death?

SHIRLEY. Kids. Yech. I hope I never see another twelve year old.

MIKE (*crossing to record player*). Punks. All of 'em. Talk too loud, eat too much and don't listen to a word you say.

SUSAN. Aw, they're just kids. We were twelve once, too, y'know.

BENNIE. The problem is we just had too many of 'em. You get 'em in a group like that and they go weird on you. Kinda like piranha fish. You got one in a fish bowl and it's kinda cute. Ugly, but cute. You put two hundred of 'em together in a pond and they rip you to shreds.

MIKE. I don't wanna talk about kids. We did our job. Now it's over, so let's get on with the party.

BOB. Yeah, we did okay. (*Not so certain.*) Didn't we?

SHIRLEY. I guess. I guess we did. (*Looks around.*)

BENNIE. We had a lot of kids to watch. (*Looks down.*)

SUSAN. Maybe a few too many.

SHIRLEY. Don't you mean *one* too many? (*They look at her.*)

MIKE. Put a lid on it.

SUSAN. One too many. (*They look at her.*)

BENNIE. Mason. (*Ominous music. They look at BENNIE. They all fall silent, staring into space. Through the upstage windows we see the toilet bowl plunger moving by R window to L window. It stops in window for beat then moves off L. Music fades.*)

BOB (*to MIKE*). You gonna put on some music or what?

SUSAN. Suddenly I'm not much in the mood for music.

MIKE. Yeah? Well tough. I'm gonna put some on anyway.

SHIRLEY (*to MIKE*). What's with you?

MIKE. How many times have we been over it? A hundred? Two hundred? Well, we can talk about it ten thousand times and nothin's gonna change. What happened, happened and

- all the talking in the world's not gonna make one bit of difference. You wanna talk about Mason again, go ahead. Me? I'm havin' a party.
- SUSAN. I don't see why you're getting so angry.
- MIKE. Who's gettin' angry?
- BENNIE. He's right. Let's just forget about it.
- SHIRLEY. Easier said than done.
- SUSAN. He was just a kid.
- MIKE (*approaching her*). Oh! Now, he was "just a kid." Sure. And the hunchback of Notre Dame was just a bell ringer.
- SUSAN. Meaning what?
- MIKE. I'm just as sorry as anybody in here about what happened but don't you think it's time for us to stop beating ourselves with the big guilt stick? Mason was a pain in the...
- SHIRLEY. Mike!
- BOB. Well, he was.
- SUSAN. Okay, so he wasn't very likable.
- BENNIE. I've got spiders in my garage that are more likable. Black widow spiders.
- MIKE (*falsetto voice*). Gimmie cookies. Gimmie meat. Gimmie ice cream. Gimmie, gimmie, gimmie. Eat, eat, eat. He was a vacuum cleaner.
- SHIRLEY. It's not nice to talk that way about someone who's...
- BOB. And mean, too. The kid was mean.
- BENNIE. A psychopathic vacuum cleaner.
- SUSAN. That's not the point.
- MIKE (*to SUSAN*). Admit it. You wanted to strangle the twerp at least once a day. All of us did.
- BOB. I spent my whole summer trying to keep him 'out of trouble or out of the kitchen.
- BENNIE. We all did.
- SUSAN. Well, we didn't do a very good job as far as the kitchen is concerned, did we?
- MIKE. So what were we supposed to do? Tie him to his bed? Lock him in a closet? He knew the rules.
- SUSAN. He had a problem.
- BENNIE. He was the problem.
- SUSAN. Still, if we'd done our job that night...

MIKE. Enough already. Enough. I give up. You guys can talk your heads off. Me? I'm long gone. *(Heads for door.)*

SUSAN. Wait a minute.

SHIRLEY. Yeah. Don't be so hasty. We weren't trying to start a fight or anything.

MIKE. Does that mean we can have our little party now? Have a little fun on our last night together?

SUSAN. Yeah. *(Smiles, crosses, holding out hand.)* No hard feelings?

MIKE *(shakes her hand)*. Forget it. How about we dance and make up? *(She nods. He turns to put on music.)*

BENNIE. I'm gonna get Patsy. *(Heads for the door.)*

SHIRLEY. Time to dance, twinkle-toes. *(Pulls BOB to his feet. He screams.)* Sorry.

BENNIE *(at the door, jumps)*. I wish you'd stop doing that.

BOB. Me, too.

(Fast song plays. BENNIE exits upstage. We see him come to L window as others start to dance. BOB moves like Frankenstein. As BENNIE reaches L window, he stops. His eyes go wide with fright. He tries to turn and run but a hand reaches out and grabs him. He screams loudly and disappears. As they dance:)

MIKE. Shut up, Bob.

BOB *(in pain)*. What?

MIKE. I said knock off the screaming.

BOB. Whatever you say.

(As SHIRLEY and BOB bop, SHIRLEY twirls him and he spins out of control toward the door. SHIRLEY is doing her own thing and doesn't notice as the door is swung open by MASON who pulls BOB out. BOB screams and closes the door behind him. SHIRLEY finally looks around and sees that BOB is gone. She crosses to R window and looks out, leaning over outside. Hands grab her and pull her out, legs kicking wildly. MIKE and SUSAN are still dancing. The music stops.)

MIKE *(smiling at SUSAN)*. How about a slow dance?

SUSAN. Only if you conduct yourself like a gentleman.

MIKE (*looks around*). Where'd everybody go?

SUSAN (*looking*). Beats the heck outa' me. (*Motions to record player.*) Put on a slow one.

MIKE. You pick out one. I'll be right back. (*He crosses to door, calls back.*) Don't start without me. (*Exits.*)

SUSAN. Not if you hurry.

(She crosses to record player, looks through records. We see MIKE through R window. He stops, scratches his head and turns toward L. He moves out of window. SUSAN finds a record she likes - i.e. Johnny Mathis. She starts the record as MIKE appears in L window. SUSAN starts to sway to softly playing music, singing along but not in tune. Suddenly MIKE doubles up as if in pain. He tries to straighten up, a look of horror on his face. He tries to get in window, clawing at it, but MASON's hands pull him back. MIKE's fingers lose their grip and he screams as he falls out of sight.)

SUSAN (*facing audience, swaying, stops singing*). I told you that scratching only made it worse, Bob. (*She turns.*) Bob? (*Looks around.*) Mike? Shirley? Come on, you guys. (*An empty pork and beans can comes through the window and clatters to the floor by her feet. She picks it up, looks at it, reads out loud.*) Pork and beans. (*She gets a wary look on her face, shakes her head, knowingly.*) So, it's the old end-of-camp practical joke time. (*She throws can out window and calls.*) Okay, gang. Very funny. Ha, ha. Can we get on with the party now? (*She crosses down, looks around and sits on DS bench. Music is still playing softly. She looks around, calls out.*) It won't work, you guys. I'm not the spooky type. (*The lights flicker and go out. She gasps. Very soft light filters in through the two upstage windows. SUSAN sits quietly, silhouetted in the back light. She calls out again.*) Can we hurry up and get this over with? I want to dance.

(The UC door slowly creaks open. We see MASON silhouetted in the doorway. He crosses slowly up to SUSAN's back.)

SUSAN (*boredly, looking forward*). So, who is it? Jack the Ripper? Dracula?

MASON (*harsh whisper*). It's me. It's Mason.

SUSAN. Sure. Sure it is. (*Exaggerated.*) And I'm so scared.

MASON (*harsh whisper*). Dance?

SUSAN (*rising, facing audience*). Delighted, I'm sure. (*As she rises, she turns and MASON steps onto bench, making him taller. He takes her in his arms as music plays. He is facing the audience as they move back and forth along the length of the bench.*) You smell like pork and beans. (*Lights flicker twice and come back on. SUSAN realizes something is wrong. She takes a step back, sees MASON and gasps. MASON holds an electric hand mixer in his right hand, hooked up to an extension cord that trails out the UC door. He raises the mixer next to his face and turns it on. The blades spin as the mixer hums.*) No! (*SUSAN raises hands.*) No! (*Music tag - lights out. Curtain closes. In the darkness we hear agitated/urgent voices, off.*)

DIRECTOR. What are you doing? You can't go out there!

NURSE. This is an emergency.

DIRECTOR. I've got a show in progress, lady.

NURSE. I tell you it's an emergency!

(*DIRECTOR and NURSE WILSON enter in darkness DR.*)

DIRECTOR. Wait a minute!

NURSE (*calls out to audience*). Dr. Sternwaffle? Are you out there?

DIRECTOR (*calling off*). Okay, okay. Bring up the houselights. (*Houselights come up.*) I'm sorry for the interruption, ladies and gentlemen. It seems we have an emergency.

(*We hear loud snoring from front of audience. STERNWAF-FLE is slumped over with his head resting on shoulder of person seated next to him.*)

NURSE. Dr. Sternwaffle?

DIRECTOR (*to NURSE*). Maybe he's not here. (*To audience.*) This won't take a minute, folks.

NURSE. Of course he's here. He wouldn't miss this for the world. He loves shows filled with mindless, gratuitous violence where scantily clad teen-agers get hacked up by ominous, psychopathic weirdos. *(She hears snoring, looks, points.)* There he is! Dr. Sternwaffle? *(More snoring.)*

DIRECTOR *(to person sitting next to STERNWAFFLE)*. Would you wake the doctor up, please? *(More snoring. He won't wake up.)*

NURSE *(to person)*. Just say "malpractice."

STERNWAFFLE *(wakes up)*. Huh? *(Looks around.)* What's going on? What are you doing here, Nurse Wilson?

NURSE. It's an emergency, Dr. Sternwaffle. A matter of life and death.

STERNWAFFLE. Then call a real doctor. I'm just a psychiatrist. Besides, my kid has a starring role in this show. It'd break his little heart if I walked out early.

NURSE. Doctor, please. It's Patsy. Patsy Fink.

STERNWAFFLE. What about Patsy Fink?

NURSE. She spoke.

STERNWAFFLE. That's impossible. Patsy Fink hasn't spoken a word since that terrible night at Camp Slippery Floors thirty years ago when all those camp counselors were attacked by that lunatic.

NURSE. She spoke.

STERNWAFFLE. Patsy Fink has been in a state of profound catatonic withdrawal for over thirty years. Why would she start talking now?

NURSE. We had the radio on in the recreation room. Patsy was staring at the wall as usual. Suddenly the local station announced that Camp Slippery Floors was going to reopen this summer.

STERNWAFFLE. After thirty years?

NURSE. Yes. And when they said that, Patsy turned to me. She looked right at me and she spoke to me.

STERNWAFFLE. What did she say?

NURSE. She said... "They'll be sorry."

STERNWAFFLE. I must leave at once. *(Crosses quickly toward stage.)*

NURSE. I told you it was important.

STERNWAFFLE. This better not be some twisted, sick practical joke, Nurse Wilson.

DIRECTOR. Sorry for the interruption, ladies and gentlemen. *(Calls off.)* Places, everyone.

STERNWAFFLE *(onstage)*. Very well. Let's get to the sanitarium.

(He takes NURSE WILSON by the arm and they start to exit. MASON enters DL dressed the same way as before and carrying the mixer.)

MASON *(calls out)*. Hey, Dad? Where you going, Dad?

STERNWAFFLE *(stops, turns)*. Chester? Is that you? *(MASON nods.)*

DIRECTOR. We've really got to get this show on the road, Doctor.

STERNWAFFLE *(dirty look to DIRECTOR)*. I'm about to break my kid's heart, you insensitive slob. And you're worried about some Mickey Mouse production.

MASON. Where you going, Dad?

STERNWAFFLE *(to NURSE)*. Start the car. I'll be there in a minute. *(NURSE exits. STERNWAFFLE crosses stage to MASON. DIRECTOR sighs with exasperation and crosses arms, waiting. STERNWAFFLE smiles and nods.)* I must admit, you look pretty spooky in that outfit, Son.

MASON. Yeah. I'm the lunatic; a mindless, hulking, evil presence with an unquenchable thirst for incredible acts of violence.

STERNWAFFLE. I didn't know you were playing the part of a gym teacher.

MASON. You promised you would come to the show. It's my first starring role.

STERNWAFFLE. Something's come up, Chester. An emergency.

MASON. That's what you said on my last birthday, and when I made it to the finals of the All-City Dog Paddling Championship, and when the mayor presented me the key to the city for blowing away those airplane hijackers.

STERNWAFFLE. Chester, I feel bad enough as it is.

MASON. And where were you when I got the Nobel Prize, Dad? Were you in Stockholm with me and Mom and the rest of the entourage? No. Was that an emergency?

STERNWAFFLE (*looks down*). This is neither the time, nor the place to be discussing...

MASON. No! You were in Acapulco with Nurse Goo Goo Eyes making splashies in the hot tub.

STERNWAFFLE. Do you want to see me grovel, Chester? How much humiliation do you require? What would it take to get you off my case?

MASON. I just want you to put me first for once, Dad. Just one time I want you to say that I'm Number One on your list of priorities. That's what I want... But, if I can't have that, I'd settle for a 4-wheel drive pickup with a maxi-cab and mud grips.

STERNWAFFLE. You got it, Son.

MASON (*hugs him*). Thanks, Pop. (*Mixer is turned on, STERNWAFFLE yells and jumps back.*) Sorry, Pop. (*Cuts it off.*)

STERNWAFFLE. I'll be back as soon as I can, Son. Meanwhile, you give 'em heck. (*Thumbs up.*)

MASON (*gestures with mixer, turns it on, then off.*) And power windows and AM/FM cassette deck, too.

STERNWAFFLE (*crossing off*). You got it. (*Passing by DIRECTOR.*) What a kid. (*Exits.*)

MASON (*calling*). And air conditioning!

DIRECTOR. Will you shut up and get in place for the next scene?

MASON. Don't talk to me like that. (*Ominous music tag - houselights out, lights fade up, DS.*)

DIRECTOR (*taken aback*). What?

MASON (*harsh whisper*). You... heard... me.

DIRECTOR (*a little uneasy, crosses toward MASON*). Listen here, Chester Sternwaffle. Anymore back talk like that and I'll yank you down to (*Principal's name.*) office so fast your head will spin. (*Stops in front of MASON.*) Now take your place for the next scene. (*MASON slowly raises mixer. He turns it on and steps slowly toward DIRECTOR who stares uneasily, then steps back.*)

MASON. And don't call me Chester. The name is... Mason.

DIRECTOR (*voice rising*). No. Stay away from me. Don't come any closer. (*Covers face, screams. MASON takes another step, drawing up slack on mixer cord which pulls out of plug in extension cord. Mixer stops. DIRECTOR peeks through fingers, then turns and runs off R.*)

MASON (*harsh whisper*). They'll be sorry. They'll be very, very sorry. (*He "moonwalks" backwards off L.*)

SCENE THREE

SCENE: *Curtain opens to reveal PATSY FINK's room at sanitarium. Her bed sits under window R (use R window from main set.) Walls to left and right of window are covered with crude watercolor drawings of every sort of cutting device known to man - knives, swords, saws, scissors, etc. One chair sits beside the bed.*

AT RISE OF LIGHTS: *PATSY lies in the bed on her back, covered by a sheet. The toilet plunger is still stuck to her face, the handle pointing to the sky. STERNWAFFLE enters DR with NURSE WILSON. They stand staring at the bed.*

STERNWAFFLE. What is that on her face?

NURSE. A plumber's helper.

STERNWAFFLE. Oh. (*Nods.*) What's she doing with a plumber's helper stuck to her face?

NURSE. She can't sleep without it.

STERNWAFFLE. Oh. (*Nods.*) Why wasn't I told about this?

NURSE. You were.

STERNWAFFLE. Oh. (*Nods.*) I see. Makes one wonder why, after thirty years, it hasn't sucked her face inside out.

NURSE. Shall I wake her?

STERNWAFFLE. Yes. (*NURSE crosses.*) But be careful. She's tippy-toeing on a thin line between sanity and delusion.

NURSE (*nods, leans down next to PATSY, says softly*). Patsy? Patsy, honey? (*Suddenly yells.*) Watch out! It's Mason!