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The Snake Pit

By Frank Partos

Do you know
where you are, Mrs. Cunningham?
Where is he?
As if he were crouching behind me.
- Why am I afraid to look at him?
- You know, don't you, Mrs. Cunningham?
In New York, of course.
I used to live in Evanston, Illinois.
That's where I was born.
It's right near Chicago.
Did you sleep well
last night, Mrs. Cunningham?
- How are you today?
- Very well, thank you.
Who is he and why all those questions?
As if he were testing me.
- Do you hear voices?
- Think I'm deaf? I hear yours.
It's hard to keep on being civil
when they ask you such naive questions.
But who's that?
And what's happened to him?
You suspect him of anything.
He's clever,
but he can't fool me with his magic.
It's an old trick,
changing into a girl.
Oh, no. She can't be he.
She doesn't ask questions.
Pardon me, but you look pale.
Have you been job hunting?
- Virginia, don't be silly.
- You know my name?
You must have seen it on my bag.
I don't know where it is.
I was going to get some groceries
and go back to the apartment.
Oh, could you tell me how to get to...
What are you talking about?
How to get to where?
Where? What's the name of the street?
It's the sun.
It's too warm.
I'm worried about you, Virginia. I wasn't

gonna tell you this, but I'm going to one.
Maybe I'll be leaving from there.
Before long, I'll be on my own...
wondering where the next meal's
coming from.

- Look, how would you like to...
- All right, ladies.
- Let's go.
- What's the matter?
- Please. You don't wanna make trouble.
- What is it? A fire? A riot?
- Shh.
- All right, ladies. Fall in. Fall in.
- You heard me. I said fall in.
- Fall in? Fall in what?
- No talking, ladies.
- You see?
- Why do we have to stand with all of them?
- Come on, ladies.

Let's go.

Oh, I see. It's a zoo, a tour.

I don't like a zoo, do you?

I don't like the smell, and I'm sorry
for the animals, locked up in cages.

Don't talk now.

You know it's against the rules.

- Enjoy the sun, Virginia?
- Yes, thank you.

People are friendly

in New York, or maybe just fresh.

I've never seen her before, and she calls me
Virginia. What am I supposed to say? Hi, kiddo?
Come on. Step along.

- Ruth, Minna, where are you going?
- Okay, Jean. They're all in.

Ward 3-A, step out.

No talking, ladies.

Mary, get up.

You know better than that. Come on.

Ward 3-A,

we haven't got all day.

- Where are we going?
- Keep in line, ladies.
- Why do we have to keep in line?

I don't like regimentation.

- Please, Virginia.

- Doing all right, Lucille?

- Yes, thank you.

I may have to

make a speech against it.

- Against what?

- Regimentation, of course.

But I... I can't make a speech

without writing it first.

Now, now. Don't run, ladies.

- And no pushing.

- Quit pushing.! Somebody's pushing.!

- Come on.! Open the door.!

- Quiet. No talking.

- The way they treat us,

you'd think we were criminals.

- That's right.

- Criminals?

- Come on. Take over here,

will you? Let's go.

- Criminals?

- Come on, Virginia.

A prison?

That's it.

A prison. I should've known it.

- How did I get here?

- What's wrong, honey?

- Let me go. Let me go!

- Virginia, Miss Hart will hear you.

I won't stay here. I won't stay in this place

another minute. I wanna get out!

- What's the trouble?

- Nothing, Miss Hart. It's that

Virginia feels a little faint.

She got a little too much sun, I think.

She'll be all right.

Hello, Mrs. Cunningham. Miss Hart, we'd like

to speak to Mrs. Cunningham for a minute.

- Yes, Doctor. Go ahead, Grace.

- I'm sorry.

Would you like

to sit down?

Don't be afraid, Mrs. Cunningham.

We're your friends.

We just want to talk to you.

- How do you feel today?

- Very well, thank you.

- Is there any reason
why I shouldn't feel well?

- No. Of course not.

Maybe you'll think it's strange
to ask you this, but somehow
people never remember my face.

- Do you know who I am, Mrs. Cunningham?

- Of course.

You do? Tell me.

- Don't you know?

- If you don't mind, would
you tell me just the same?

- The warden.

- The warden of what?

- Of this prison.

- Is there any reason why
you should be in prison?

Why, yes, of course.

I'm writing a novel about prisons...

and I've come here

to study conditions and take notes...

about one day's worth,

thank you, and I'm going to leave now.

Where will you go when...

when you leave here?

- To your husband?

- I have no husband.

- You haven't?

I thought you were married.

- I am married.

If you're married, doesn't that
mean that you have a husband?

Pardon me. It slipped my mind.

What's your name again?

Stuart. Virginia Stuart.

- Miss Stuart?

- No. Mrs. Stuart.

- Mrs. Stuart?

- Virginia, darling, look at me.

Don't you know who I am?

I'm Robert. Virginia.
All right, Mrs. Cunningham.
The nurse'll take you back now.
Come on, Virginia.
You know, I'll be really sorry
to leave those poor girls.
I asked you to come here because
I've been going over information
you gave about your work.
We've seldom had a case history
that told so little.
I wish I could tell you more
about it, Dr... I'm sorry, but
I can't quite pronounce your name.
"Kik's" all right.
That's what everybody calls me here.
Well, you see, Dr. Kik, my wife never
talked very much about herself or her family.
I always thought it was strange,
but when you love somebody,
you're not looking for symptoms.
Looking back now, I see things
I never thought were important.
- Would you like to tell me about them?
- First time I met her, Doctor...
was... was in Chicago.
I was a clerk in a publishing house
putting out some second-string magazines.
It was my first job
after getting out of the army.
It wasn't much.
I was taking my time getting settled...
but I kept my eyes open
for something better.
- That's where I saw her first.
- Miss Stuart.
- Yes?
- I'm sorry. Miss Gilmore's tied up right now.
She asked me to return your manuscript,
tell you she liked the story very much, but...
The idea is too depressing. The characters
aren't quite the way she'd like to see them.
And the end doesn't quite come off. Or is it
the beginning? I'm awfully glad she liked it.

- No, she did, but you see...
- She isn't going to publish it.
- Well, she said she hoped
you would understand.
- I hoped she would.
- Here. You may keep them.
- Thank you.

There was a place downstairs.

Every day, I made up my mind to eat
somewhere else, but I usually ended up there.

Thank you.

Keeps going up, huh?

I noticed her right away.

Sitting there, she looked like a kid who'd
been told to eat something she didn't want.

- Hello. Mind if I sit here?
- No.

Thank you.

- Your first one?
- First one I thought was good... until today.
- Look, may I tell you something
about our Miss Gilmore?
- No.
- You mean, you'd rather I wouldn't talk?
- No. I didn't mean that.

Well, Miss Gilmore

or no Miss Gilmore...

if I wrote a story I thought was good,
I wouldn't care what anybody said about it...
or how many editors
turned it down.

I'd stop smoking
and start eating.

- Why don't you fire Miss Gilmore
and read my story?
- I might at that.

After that, she used
to drop by the cafeteria every so often.

- Hello, Virginia.
- Hello.

She always had some kind of excuse
for coming. I didn't care.

I was just glad she did. It didn't take long
to find out we liked the same kind of things.

We liked music,
the same kind of music.
We liked walking together.
I knew a place where you got the best soda
in town. She loved it.
She didn't tell me much
about herself.
I knew she lived out of town,
but I didn't know where.
Somehow I thought she was grateful
that I didn't ask too many questions.
Sure, it was strange,
but maybe that's why I liked her.
She seemed to like me.
I don't know how many times we met...
but somehow I felt that she needed me,
like a child looking for protection.
- Then it was early in May, I think.
- Hello.
- Hello, darling.
- This was going to be our big day.
The Boston Philharmonic
was in Chicago playing Brahms First.
We planned to spend the whole afternoon
together and go to the concert.
I forgot to tell you.
You know the guy from overseas...
who said he'd get me
into the Alden Hotels in New York?
I got a letter from him the other day,
and it's all set if I want it.
Pay isn't much to start with, but
it's more than I'm getting here, so I...
Robert, I can't go to the concert.
Something's come up, something important.
- I'm sorry. I was trying to
tell you all afternoon.
- Virginia, what is it?
- What's it all about?
- It's no use, Robert. I'm sorry.
- I've got to leave right away.
I can't explain it.
- Virginia, wait a minute.
Let me go.

Let me go. Please!

- Let me go!

- That was the last
time I saw her in Chicago.
She didn't come back,
and I couldn't find her.
I came to New York
and took my new job.
For six months,
I hadn't heard a word from her.
Then the Boston Philharmonic
was in New York.
Somehow, it had become a habit with me,
looking for her everywhere.
Maybe I was just hoping.

- Virginia.

- Hello.

I knew I'd see you again.
It wasn't a coincidence,
Doctor.
I'm sure it was something
we both wanted.
You mean to tell me
you've been in New York six months?
Where have you been?
What have you been hiding for?
Oh, I thought, I guess, that it'd
be all right if we just happened to meet...
on the street, on the subway,
in a restaurant.

- Tonight it wasn't an accident.

- Why didn't you call?

I told you where I was gonna work.
Why'd you run away from me in Chicago?
Why didn't you come back? Oh, I know.
You've got a deep, dark secret.
You killed somebody,
and the police are after you.
I don't care. I found you,
and I'm not gonna lose you again.
Tell me. What have
you been doing all these months?
Working 18 hours a day
and being lonely 24.

I'm selling toys at Braddock's on the sixth floor, and I've been working on a novel. It's almost done. Oh, you don't know how good it is to see you again.

From then on,
we were happy, like any two people in love.
When I talked about getting married,
she wouldn't be pinned down.
I didn't wanna press her.

Battleship sailors
pose for a picture with the royal family.
The king, queen and two princesses
returning from South Africa.

Thank you.

- R.C.?
- Robert Cunningham,
and don't ever ask me for a match again.

Thank you, darling.

- You know something?
- What?

I love you very much.

- What's the matter, honey? Are you sick?
- I don't know. Probably.

It was so hot in the movie.

I'll be all right.

- Robert, do you really love me?
- You still don't know?

I do, but...

but you don't wanna marry me, do you?

I don't know

how many times I'd asked her to marry me...

but there on the subway platform,
for the first time, she brought it up.

- I could hardly believe it.
- If I want to?
- I get three days off at the end
of the month. How'd that be?

- The end of the month?

You see? I was right. You're just trying to
put it off. You don't really want to marry me.

Virginia!

First thing next morning,
we got our license.

Three days later...it was the seventh

of May... we were married.

A couple of days after that, I worked late.

Virginia?

Virginia?

Virginia?

- Darling, what are you doing out here?

- I can't sleep, Robert.

I don't think I'll ever

be able to sleep.

Well, come on inside, darling.

You're gonna catch cold.

That was the first time

she really frightened me.

Even then, I didn't suspect anything.

But two days later...

You know, darling, I'm worried

about the way you haven't been sleeping.

Last night again, I saw you...

Virginia, darling, don't you think

you'd better see a doctor?

- It's such a beautiful day.

- Yes, but...

Almost too beautiful

for November.

- What do you mean, November?

Are you kidding?

- What do you think it is?

May. May 12.

- Where do you see that?

- Well, here. You can see for yourself.

It's an old newspaper.

Can't you see? It's torn.

- Virginia, what is it? That's

this morning's newspaper.

- It isn't. It can't be.

- Virginia, why don't you

get dressed? We'll see a doctor.

- Doctor?

Yes. My head hurts. Robert,

there's something the matter with my head!

- Come on, darling. Let me help you.

- Who are you?

- Why do you torture me? Why do you lie to me?

- Virginia, what's the matter?

- Don't you know me? I'm Robert...

your husband Robert!

- Let me go! Let me go!

- Virginia, what's the matter?

- Let me go. Don't touch me.

- Virginia, don't you know I love you?

- Love me?

No, you can't make me love you! You can't make me belong to you! You can't!

- Virginia.!

- I can't love you! I can't love anybody! I can't!

The rest you know, Doctor.

You've no idea what that day in May might mean to your wife?

- She never told you anything more of her family?

- Just that her father died...

when she was about six and then her mother married again... recently moved to Oregon. Tell me.

When did you last see her in Chicago?

- I'd say it was about the first week in May.

- Could it have been the 12th?

It might have been. Do you think there's a connection there?

Possibly.

Mr. Cunningham, I'd like to use shock treatment on your wife...

but you'll have

to sign this consent.

Shock treatment. Isn't it...

I mean, do you have to?

The only reason I want to use it is because in many cases, it helps establish contact faster.

When that happens, we'll be able

to start getting at the real

causes of your wife's illness.

- Isn't there any other way?

- Yes, if we had time, lots of time.

There are many things we're short of in state hospitals, but time most of all.

I guess it was the word "shock" that...

Where do I sign, Doctor?

I want some water.

I'm thirsty.

Who's next?

- All right, Evelyn.

- Virginia?

- You'd better come over here. You're next.

- Go ahead, honey. It's your turn.

I'm afraid. I'm terribly afraid.

- We're ready, Evelyn.

- Come on, Virginia.

You go in now.

Come on.

- What are you doing here, Grace?

- I just came along with Virginia.

- How many more left?

- Twenty-three, Doctor.

Virginia Cunningham from three.

First treatment.

- Is this the patient

you told me about this morning?

- Yes.

- I see.

- All right, Virginia. Get on this table.

- Come on. I said to lie down on this table.

- How are you, Mrs. Cunningham?

You're going to electrocute me.

Was my crime so great?

No, Mrs. Cunningham.

Nobody's being electrocuted.

Dr. Sommer and I are just trying

to make you well. We're your friends.

All right, Nurse Davis.

Pat, Mary, get on this side. Evelyn.

Would they dare

to kill me without a trial?

If I say I demand a lawyer, they'll have

to do something. It's in the Constitution.

- Now, just relax, honey.

- Three against one. It isn't fair.

Yes. I'd better

call a lawyer right away.

- I want...

- Nurse Davis,

I want her held loosely.

- Just guide her arms and legs.

- Yes, Doctor.

Don't be afraid, Mrs. Cunningham.

I've got a place to go,
and the doctor knows it.

Ain't got a temperature
or nothin'.

Ain't got a temperature or nothin',
and you can go home.

- Where are you going, Margaret?

- John was here today.

He wouldn't take me home.

I want to see my baby.

He can't take you home to that
crowded house with all his folks around.

You know that, Margaret.

- That's why you're almost well...
because you know it.

- Yes. I couldn't go back.

They all knew what to do for the baby,
and they said I didn't.

I think you knew
better than they did.

Sometimes I forget...

because I want
to see the baby so much.

You will...

soon, Margaret.

John's trying to find a place
just for you and him.

- And the baby?

- Of course.

Go back to bed now. You don't want to
have a cold when John comes to visit again.

Thank you, Doctor. Somehow you can
make me understand things.

- I always feel so much better
after you've talked to me.

- All right, Margaret. Come on.

Dr. Kik?

- May I please talk to you for a second?

- Yes, Mrs. Cunningham.

- How long have I been here?

- Here? What do you mean?

- The hospital. It is a hospital, isn't it?
- You came in May.
- What month is this?
- October.

June, July, August, September, October.

Five months, and I don't remember a moment of it.

- I don't remember a moment of it.
- You've been ill.

That's why you don't remember.

But you're much better now.

- Am I?
- Of course. Very much better.

Now you must sleep. I'll see you in my office tomorrow, and we'll have a long talk.

Yes, Doctor.

Why do they hate me when I love them so much? Leave me alone, I tell you.

Just leave me alone.

I'm better, but I'm one of them.

- Do you still have

Mrs. Cunningham's chart here?

- Yes, Doctor.
- May I have it?
- Yes, sir.
- Here it is.
- Thank you.

- I'm taking her off shock.

- But she didn't complete the full course, did she?

No, Miss Hart. I was only using it to establish contact with her.

Yes, Doctor.

Well, what are you waiting for?

You should know by now. On the table.

What's Mrs. Cunningham doing here?

Didn't you check her chart?

No, Doctor. Sorry, but it just so happened that I didn't have the time.

Besides, I forgot that this is one of your special cases.

You weren't supposed to come here this morning. I'm sorry. It was a mistake.

I know, Doctor, that in addition to all this,
I'm supposed to be supervisor here...
but I don't have to tell you how many patients
we have here and nurses to take care of them.

You can go back
to the ward now.

Tell Miss Hart I want to see the patient
in my office in half an hour.

- Very well, Doctor.

- There are two more of my patients.

- Do you mind if I take them next?

- Of course not. Go right ahead.

All right, Virginia. You heard
what Dr. Kik said. You can go now.

Come on, Virginia.

Why does she hate me?

I haven't done anything, have I?

Come now.

- Wait outside, miss.

- Yes, Doctor.

- Would you like to sit down?

- No, thank you.

- Did you have breakfast?

- If you can call it that.

- Would you like to smoke?

- No.

You do know who I am?

- You're the one who saved me out there.

- I didn't save you.

I didn't think you needed
any more shock treatments,
because last night in the dormitory...

- You remember talking
to me last night, don't you?

- Last night?

- Yes. I remember. You're Dr. Kik.

- That's right.

- Do you remember speaking
to me before last night?

- When?

Many times. In the ward.

In the courtyard. Here in this office.

I don't remember being here before,
but I remember your voice.

- I liked your voice.

- That's probably because

you liked talking to me.

- You told me I came here in May.

- Yes.

It was warm then.

Now the summer's over...

and I've lost all those months.

I know some of the problems you're facing,

and I know how you're struggling to solve them.

I want to help you, but I'll need

your cooperation. Do you understand that?

- I think so.

- Good.

Tell me, Mrs. Cunningham. What do you

remember of the time before you were ill...

before you came

to this hospital?

I don't remember anything.

I don't even remember coming here.

But before you came here,

when you were still outside, in New York.

New York. Yes.

I used to buy groceries,

and I was writing a novel.

- And I couldn't sleep.

- Yes, it's very bad, not being able to sleep.

You wake up early, and all kinds of

strange thoughts come into your mind.

- You're tired and frightened.

- Yes, yes.

I felt as if I'd done something,

and I just couldn't remember what...

- as if something was following me

all the time.

- I know.

You come to a point

where you just can't see any way out...

and you do things

which seem impossible to understand.

But you and I, we know there must be a reason,

like trying to push time out of your mind...

and saying it's November in May.

It's nothing to be ashamed of.

It could happen to anybody.
Why are you so nice to me?
Why are you so interested in me?
Because I want to help you.
I want you to feel that even if you think...
you did something you shouldn't have,
nobody'll punish you here.
Why do you want to make me love you? I can't
love anybody! I can't love anybody! I can't!
- You want to hurt me. Why?
- I don't...
Oh, I don't know why. I don't know.
- You want to hurt anybody
who tried to stop you...
from doing away with a day,
a very important day in your life.
Wouldn't it be better
to try to face it? May. May 12.
I don't know.
It means nothing, nothing.
- Unless...
- Unless?
I don't know.
I don't remember.
- Who was with you the morning you became ill?
- I was alone.
- You mean, your husband wasn't with you?
- I have no husband.
- You know that.
- You've told me many times you were married.
- How can you be married
without having a husband?
- Yes, that's strange, isn't it?
- What's your name?
- Virginia Stuart.
- Is that your full name?
- Isn't it?
No.
- Do you know?
- Of course.
- Tell me.
- Virginia Stuart Cunningham.
- Cunningham.
- Mrs. Robert Cunningham.

- Robert.
- Your husband.
- My husband.
- Isn't it better to know?
- Isn't it?
- Yes. Oh, yes.
Well, what
about a cigarette now?
Yes, thank you.
Tell me. Do you remember the time
before you were married, in Chicago?
- That's where you met Robert, isn't it?
- Yes, I think so.
He was going to take you
to a concert, but you said...
something had come up
and you couldn't go with him.
- Concert? I'm sorry, Doctor.
I can't follow you.
- You ran away from him.
Where did you go?
- I don't know what you're talking about.
- Thank you, Mrs. Cunningham.
You can go back to the ward now.
I'll talk to you again soon.
Have 1...
Have I seen him since I've been here?
Your husband came every visiting day,
even when he couldn't see you.
- He wants to see you very much.
- Should I see him?
- I think so.
- Yes, Doctor.
Good-bye, Mrs. Cunningham.
Nurse.
- Shall I have that?
- Thanks.
- You can take her back now.
- Come, Virginia.
Get me the New Alden Hotel in New York.
I want to speak to Mr. Cunningham.
- Come on. I'll hold it for you.
- Thanks.
I remember this suit. It's a little small,

but I bought it because it was reduced.

I always meant to have it altered.

Small?

I could be having a baby in this suit,
and nobody'd know the difference.

It's very nice, I think.

Sit down, Virginia.

- I wonder why Miss Hart made me dress up.

Maybe it's D.T.

- D.T.?

Occupational therapy.

Dressing therapy.

Look what's been in here

all this time.

It's like putting your hands

in someone else's pockets... a dead woman's.

Well, what do you know? Well, you look
like a million dollars in that suit, Virginia.

- I'd rather just look well in it.

- Ready?

- There. That's dandy.

- All right. Come with me, Virginia.

- See you later.

- Ready for what, Miss Hart?

You'll find out. Go along.

Go ahead, Virginia.

Fine. Thanks.

Right over there.

Robert.

It looks like him, but I must be careful.

Watch your step, honey.

Everything counts against you.

- Of course it's not him.

- Hello.

He even sounds like him.

They do a goodjob when they want to.

- Hello.

- You... You look wonderful, Virginia.

- Thank you.

This way,

Mr. Cunningham.

Dr. Kik said you can

take her into the yard...

and there's a place behind the hedge

where you can have your lunch.

- Thank you, Nurse.

- It's all right, Virginia. You can go.

- Do you have a key?

- This door isn't locked.

Isn't it?

That's funny. Usually

they're very careful about doors here.

You'd think they're

the most important things in the world.

- It's nice here, isn't it?

- Yes, very nice.

- What do you say

we make a picnic out of it, huh?

- That's fine.

Funny how the ground dried up.

It poured last night.

- It was the night before.

- Oh, then I must've lost another day.

I don't suppose I'll ever find it.

It's just a blank.

- What's in the box?

- All kinds of things.

Sometimes, before I came here,

I wished I could make my mind a blank.

Now I know

what a blank mind is.

I get up in the morning,

then suddenly it's time to go to bed.

And I can't remember

what happened in between.

Is it... Is it real?

Try it.

Oh, it is real!

I wish you could

have this every day.

They told me this was one

of the best hospitals in the country.

Are you really Robert?

I have to be sure, you know.

The sun... The sun

isn't warm anymore.

I don't want you to catch cold.

Here, darling. Put this around you.

I wouldn't mind having a cold or pneumonia or anything I could understand.

What's the matter with me?

Is it a brain tumor?

- You've had a nervous breakdown.

- Nervous breakdown.

- That doesn't sound so bad, does it?

- Just takes time. That's all.

What else does it

do to you besides take time?

It's like any sickness, darling.

Dr. Kik'll make you well again.

Yes. He wants to help me.

Oh, may I light it myself, please?

Could you possibly let me

have some matches? To keep, I mean.

It's funny. They don't let us

have matches... as if we were children.

- They don't cost much, do they?

- I haven't got matches, but...

R.C. Robert Cunningham.

You are Robert.

- Hello, Kik. I was looking for you.

Did you get my note?

- Yes.

- Well, what do you think?

- What do I think, Dr. Gifford?

I think it's one of the worst things that could happen to this patient.

Miss Seiffert, did you...

Thank you.

Miss Seiffert?

Oh, I beg your pardon.

Yes, Dr. Kik?

Miss Seiffert, did you tell Mr. Cunningham there's a way of getting his wife released?

Indeed I did, Doctor.

It all happened the other day.

He mentioned that his mother owned a farm in Illinois, and I told him I was sure...

there wouldn't be much trouble

getting his wife discharged

if he took her out of the state.

- Dr. Curtis agreed with me, and...

- Provided, of course, she
passes the staff examination.

Huh? Oh, of course!

Of course.

I don't get it.

What's wrong with that, Kik?

What's wrong is that
this patient isn't ready to go to staff...
to say nothing of being discharged from
the hospital, particularly to her husband.

- Why, is something the matter with him?

- No.

But the patient's main problem happens to
be a complete inability to accept his love...
or the love of any man
she could think of as a husband.

- Her rejection is something...

- Miss Primm, can't you see
the doctor hasn't finished yet?

All right.

You can take it.

What I'm trying to say, Dr. Gifford, is
that until the treatment Mrs. Cunningham...
is now getting brings out the causes of
her unconscious rejection and resolves them...
we can't send her to Illinois or any state
without the least chance of her getting well.

Now, now, Doctor. We're not trying to
minimize the importance of treatment.

Trouble is, for you, each case is the one,
and for us, it's one of thousands.

Yes, Curtis.

One of thousands, even millions...

but only by trying to make each case
the one can we really help the patient.

I happen to have here some
of the more recent statistics.

Oh, yes. Here they are. Sometimes
even we doctors must face reality.

Number of patients in reception building
six months ago... 537.

Originally,
it was designed for 312 patients.
Today, the number of patients

in the same building: 718.

This morning, we were asked
to admit 43 new cases. Care to
hear how many we could take?

- Sixteen.

- And those, only by putting more mattresses
in some of the day rooms.

Yes, Kik. We don't have enough bed space.

We don't have enough beds or sheets.

We haven't got enough

of anything but patients. Miss Seiffert?

- Uh, yes, Dr. Gifford?

- I want you to continue the investigation...
of this patient's release
and report directly to me.

- Curtis, will you come with me? Miss Primm?

- Yes?

- Send some coffee to my office.

- Yes, Doctor.

- Good day.

- Good day, Doctor.

Excuse me.

- Doesn't give you much time, does it?

- No, it doesn't.

You see, Terry, I'm convinced there's something
quite recent in this woman's history...

that we know nothing about,

which I'm almost sure would lead

to the origins of her illness.

- If only I could get it out of her before...

- Before it's too late.

Yes. Well,

there's one more shortcut I can try.

Ninety-six, 95...

94...

90, 90...

- Ninety-three.

- Ninety-three...

92, 92...

- Ninety-one.

- Ninety-one...

88...

85, 80, 80...

Thoughts are coming

to your mind now.
You're going back.
You're thinking about Chicago.
Chicago. Concert.
You're in Chicago.
You're going to a concert with Robert.
Suddenly you decide
you can't go.
Concert. Chicago.
Yes. I left the bar.
Robert tried to stop me,
but it was late. It was late.
- Robert,
I can't go to the concert.
- What?
- I'm sorry. I was trying
to tell you all afternoon.
- Virginia, wait a minute.
- What is this? What's it all about?
- It's no use. Robert, I'm sorry.
I've got to go right away.
Let me go. Please! Let me go. Let me go.
Please let me go.
I have to hurry. It's late!
- Go on. Where are you going now?
- I only have a few minutes.
There's a train at 5:00.
- I've got
to be ready. I have to be ready.
It's 6... 30.
Where are you going?
- He'll tie it for me.
- Who will tie it for you?
I'm coming!
I'm coming!
Hello. I'm ready, Gordon.
I hope... I hope I'm not too late.
- Gordon?
- Yes. He hates to be kept waiting.
- All right. Go on.
- I tried not to go with him, but I had to.
Last Sunday, I tried. I'm going to Chicago
next Sunday, Gordon. There's a concert.
Oh, but you know, Gordon.

He said it was the annual banquet May 12.
Gordon, please,
couldn't you go without me?
L... But he... Oh, he...
- He said you must be ready by 6:30, Virginia?
- Yes.

6:

I had to. I had to.
- You liked doing what Gordon told you?
- Oh, I don't know.
Yes, I thought I owed it to him. He took
such good care of his mother and sister.
Janey said
he was like a father to them.
Was Gordon the first one
you cared for after your father died?
Yes. I was writing all the time.
I wanted to become a writer.
And before that, in school,
did you go out with boys?
Oh, no. I had to study. Gordon was the only
one. He seemed to know what was best.
He always tied the bow
in my hair.
- Gordon?
- Oh, no. My father.
Tell me about your father.
- I was ready, just
as Gordon said, at 6:30 sharp.
- Go on.
- You remember it now.
- Yes. Yes, I do.
Hello. I'm ready, Gordon.
I hope... I hope I'm not too late.
Ready? Not quite.
- Oh, I am sorry.
- I'm afraid you'll never change.
There. You look rather pretty tonight,
Virginia.
Well, we'd better be going. It's
a long drive, and I don't like to be late.
Go on. What happened then?
- I don't remember.

- You're in Gordon's car.
Yes. Yes.
Gordon's car.
You know, for the first time since I've known you, you had me worried for a while.
Oh, I was sure you'd be there, but Janey was trying to call you all day.
I'm sorry, Gordon.
I was out.
She and George Bennett are going to be married in June.
Oh, I'm glad for Janey.
George is a nice boy.
You bet. So you see, honey.
Now I not only get Janey off my hands...
but George said he'd be glad to pitch in and help with Mother.
Well, I decided...
I mean, this is as good a time as any.
We'll make it
a double wedding, huh?
I haven't got an engagement ring yet like George, but we'll announce it at the dinner.
- You're shaking.
- It's nothing. I'll be all right.
- Virginia, are you sick?
- I don't know. I just feel...
- There's a drugstore about a mile up the road.
- I think I'd better go home.
- Virginia, what's the matter?
- Please, Gordon. Take me home.
You didn't want to marry him.
- Virginia, why?
- I was really sick. I couldn't help it.
Of course you couldn't. What happened then?
Gordon's taking you home.
I couldn't help it.
I couldn't. I couldn't.
Oh, he can't be dead! He can't be!
Oh, Gordon! If only I hadn't made him turn back, he wouldn't have died!
You didn't make him turn back.
You were sick, and he was taking you home.
That's what anybody would've done.

It's only natural you felt a certain blame.
He died, and you didn't.
You're going to sleep now,
Mrs. Cunningham.
When you wake up, you'll
remember everything you told me.
Everything.
Let her sleep for a while
and then take her back to the ward.
And in addition to the foregoing...
the narcosynthesis
revealed the existence...
of earlier factors
in the patient's life...
directly connected with the root causes
of her present condition.
In view of this,
I'm sure you will agree...
that the patient should not be allowed
to leave the hospital...
at this time.
With a sincere hope that
you will take this matter...
into serious consideration...
and the usual ending.
Thank you. Will you see that Dr. Gifford
gets this as soon as possible?
Two chocolate and vanilla mix
and two coffees, please.
- Cream and sugar?
- One cream and sugar.
Two chocolate and vanilla mix,
two coffees, one cream and sugar.
Hiya, honey.
I hope you feel as good as I do today.
I wish Robert wouldn't leave me alone.
All these people probably looking at me,
thinking I'm one of the sick ones.
I won't let them scare me.
I wonder which is which.
If I can't tell,
maybe they can't tell about me.
Look at that one over there. Didn't know
they allowed that kind in the store.

It isn't nice.
They shouldn't laugh at us.
Watch me. I'm sitting
over there with my boyfriend.
I wanted to be sure. I was worried
you'd think my husband was him.
Well, here I am again.
Funny. I thought that tall, handsome man who
came to see her last week was her boyfriend.
This one doesn't look
like the real one. Or maybe I...

Question:

Dear Dr. Kik, when am I real?
Sorry, darling.
They don't seem to be in a hurry here.
- Half vanilla, half chocolate.
- Thank you.
- Cream and sugar.
- Nobody'd ever
think Robert belonged here...
whereas I always look rather...
- It isn't fair.
- What are you thinking of?
It's hard to say
what I'm thinking of ever.
I don't remember so many things,
and I forget even what I remember.
- It's such good ice cream.
- I'm glad. I have good news for you.
I'm pretty sure you'll be going with me
to my mother's soon.
- Your mother?
- Yes. To her farm. Where I was born.
- You remember.
- Oh, yes. Of course.
Everybody says you're so much better now.
The fresh air and rest and lots of good food.
- That's what you need most.
- Yes.
Sometimes I think I'm not
as sick as the others, but they
say if you think you're well...
then you're really sick.

If I say I'm sick,
maybe that means I'm well.
- The trouble is, I can't be sure of anything.
- You can be sure of one thing.
Of me.
Well, sweetie, I told you.
Everything's gonna be wonderful.
My husband has just agreed to give me
a divorce. That's the only reason I'm here.
Well, better not
keep the man waiting.
Now I don't know
who's mixed up.
I should've introduced you,
but I don't know her last name.
- And anyway, things seem different here.
- Yes, they do.
Like the other night... last night...
yes, I heard a scream...
and I didn't know if it was me
who screamed or not... if it was I or not.
When you start worrying about
your grammar, I know you're getting well.
Am I? For a while, they thought
Don Jackson was going to get well.
I knew him in Evanston.
When he was in law school...
he... he lost his mind,
and they took him away.
- At first, they thought he'd
get over it, but he never did.
- You shouldn't worry about Don.
I remember his mother
saying, "My real boy is dead.
He's happy there, in a world of his own,
with his own kind."
All right. You can have it.
- I hate him, and I hate you!
- Tommy, darling, wait a minute!
Now, now, Jane.
This doesn't concern you, dear.
With my own kind.
- Robert?
- What is it, dear?

- You must divorce me.

- Divorce you?

Yes. You must. It's not fair for you to be tied to me. You should have your freedom.

My freedom? The few hours I can spend here with you... that's my freedom.

- You're talking too fast. I can't follow you.

- Virginia, darling, I love you.

Yes. Did... Did Dr. Kik say anything to you about Gordon?

- Gordon?

- Yes.

No, he didn't, but it's all right.

Ohh.

- Sure you don't want it?

- Sure.

Virginia, I was going to tell you.

Dr. Gifford says you're going to staff.

Staff? Yes. I heard about it.

Where is that?

It's a group of doctors. They talk to you a little before you go home.

- It's nothing to be afraid of.

- Does Dr. Kik know about it?

Dr. Gifford thinks you're well enough to go to staff.

Only a little while ago,

Dr. Kik said it'd take time.

- He's my doctor, Robert.

- Sometimes I wonder if Dr...

I'm sure, dear, whatever they decide about you will be with Dr. Kik's consent.

The important thing is that you wanna go home with me.

- You do, Virginia, don't you?

- Yes, Robert. Yes.

Everybody wants to go home from here.

- Virginia Cunningham!

- I passed. I'm going home.

- I'm going to see my baby.

- How do you know? They didn't tell me nothin'.

No. All they do is write things.

Every time you open your mouth,
they write something down.
I knew from the way Dr. Kik looked at me,
and then I heard Dr. Gifford say "recovered."
Virginia Cunningham?

Oh, here you are.

- Where are you going?

- Oh, I'm sorry.

Funny the way they keep
changing the doors here.

- Good luck. I'm sure
you'll be all right, dear.

- Thank you.

I'd better smile. Careful.

This way.

Sit here.

- Who's next?

- Virginia Cunningham, Doctor.

- May I have her file?

- Yes, Doctor. Here it is.

Let's see. Curtis, is this the case
we discussed the other day?

Yes, Doctor.

- Give it to Dr. Kik.

- Yes, Doctor.

To Dr. Kik.

- Dr. Kik?

There's nothing to be afraid of.

- Go ahead, Dr. Kik.

Mrs. Cunningham, your husband
has applied for your discharge...
with the understanding that you're
to be released to his mother in Illinois.

- You know that, don't you?

- I don't get it.

Whatever they decide about you,
it'll be with Dr. Kik's consent.

I'm going to ask you a few questions.
Please try to answer the best you can.

- You understand?

- No, I don't.

The members of the hospital staff want
to find out if you're well enough to leave.

- Now, Mrs. Cunningham...

- Do you think I'm well enough?
- That's what we're trying to find out.
- You want to get rid of me?
- We're not trying to get rid
of you, Mrs. Cunningham.

But you won't catch me saying,
"I'm not sick." I know what that means.

Nobody's trying to catch you
at anything, Mrs. Cunningham.

If you don't mind, Dr. Kik, I think it would
be better if Dr. Curtis examined the patient.
May I have her file?

- Now, Virginia... That's your name, isn't it?
- If you know it, why ask me?
- I understand you wanna leave us.
- Yes. Oh, yes, I do.

The sooner the better. Now. Right away.
I'll do anything to get out of here.

That's good. Now, then, Virginia,
just relax and tell me.

- Where were you living when you became ill?
- New York.
- Where in New York?
- New York City.
- I mean, where in New York City?
- Manhattan.
- Yes?
- Yes?

- I mean, go on.
- Go on about what?

I'm trying to find out
your address in New York.

Oh, I knew all the time
that's what you meant, but I don't know.
Please, God.

Please help me.

I'm sure you know your own address.
Just think a moment.

I've forgotten it.

I never could remember figures.

- What street did you live on?
- Waverly. No.

Bleeker.

No. That was Helene Carter.

Or was it Jennifer?

Hudson, maybe.

No, it wasn't Hudson.

I can't remember.

- Your husband's been here to see you?

- Yes.

- How often does he come here?

- As often as the rule allows.

- How often is that?

- Why? Don't you know?

I know. I know all about it.

I'm simply trying

to find out if you know.

I can't see what difference it makes.

Would you change the rules?

- Please, folks. Virginia,

will you please answer?

- It'll make it easier for all of us.

- I'm trying.

- What's your husband's occupation?

- He works for some publishers.

No. That was way back.

He's a farmer, isn't he?

- I thought he was an auditor.

- Oh, yes, yes. For the Alden Hotels.

- Alden Hotels?

- Yes.

- Isn't he working for the Kraft Hotels?

- No. He works for Alden Hotels.

I'm sure you'll recognize

your husband's handwriting. Go ahead.

- What do you see?

- I see that my husband has written...

that he's employed

by the Kraft Hotels, Incorporated.

- What do you say to that?

- If he says Kraft, it's Kraft.

I was mistaken. I'm sorry.

- L... I'm terribly sorry.

- There, there. Don't get

upset. You're doing all right.

I wonder how much more it'll take

to make them see how wrong they are.

- Now, let's see.

You ever worked yourself?

- Beg pardon?

- Have you... Have you ever worked yourself?

- Better. Thank you. I have.

- Yes?

- Yes.

I'm sorry. I know what you mean.

You want further information.

564-12-1113.

- What's that?

- My Social Security number.

You mean to say you remember a long number like that, and you can't recall your address?

- Please don't do that.

- Now, look here, Virginia. I'm trying to help you, understand?

If you'll just pay attention to what I say and answer my questions.

That's what I'm trying to do. You see, you don't expect to forget your home address.

So you memorized

your Social Security number instead, eh?

Once, I lost my card, and I couldn't get a job until I got a new card.

And all because I didn't know the number.

It's important, you know.

- And your address isn't?

- Well, I don't suppose I'll have to find my way back there alone.

All right. I'll give you an easy question.

I'm sure you can answer this one.

- How old are you? Come on.

- I feel sick.

- How old are you?

- Please don't shake your finger at me.

- Dr. Gifford, this must be stopped before it's too late.

- Stop what?

- Come, now. Come. This is easy.

Take your finger away.

Please take it away.

Don't tell me you don't know your own age.

It's really a simple question.

Don't do that. Don't do that!

Come on. Stop it.
Get in there before 1...
Please! Please!
Come on. Cut it out.
Nobody's gonna hurt ya.
Now, cut it out, I said.
You're waking everybody up.
- Hi, Dot. Everything okay?
- Oh, just dandy.
Well, how's it going today, society lady?
Here. I brought you a lovely supper.
Tomato juice cocktail.
- Make you feel like a million.
- Thank you. I don't care for any supper.
You'd better be careful. We had
a little "ouble-tray" with her this morning.
She "icks-kay"
and "ites-bay." Get it?
- Yeah. One minute,
completely "uts-nay," and the next...
- It isn't nice...
to call a person "uts-nay"
in this place.
- See what I mean?
- Well, how about it, society lady?
- My name's Cunningham, Mrs. Cunningham.
- I know. "Mrs. Cunningham."
- What's yours?
- Jones.
- Miss?
- Don't rub it in. Come on, now,
or you'll get it through a tube.
- I don't want any.
- All right, Nurse.
- May I have it?
- Yes, Doctor.
I do wish you'd drink a little of this.
It'd make you feel much better.
I know your kind. Your voice is sweet,
but it drips with poison and lies.
- I know you and I hate you.
- I don't blame you for being angry...
but I want you to know that if
you need me and want to talk to me...

I'll be here.
Get away from there
before I report you.
- This is my place.
- Excuse me. I didn't know it was reserved.
Well, how many times do I have
to tell you? Or don't you remember?
Miss Green,
Virginia's on the rug!
You get off the rug,
Virginia Cunningham!
Come on! Come on!
Get off of there!
I've told you a dozen times,
we do not walk on our rug.
- Why not?
- Because we don't! Understand?
We're the only ward
that has a rug.
It's clean, and we mean
to keep it that way.
Why don't you
hang it on the wall?
Your wisecracks might have been appreciated
in other wards, but in 12 they don't go over.
- Is this 12?
- Well, what did you think it was? One?
- How long have I been here?
- Too long.
Now, just remember to keep your big feet
off that rug, and don't let me catch you again.
My big feet?
All right, ladies,
don't crowd.
- ##No gal maid has got a shade ##
- Emma!
- # Sweet Georgia Brown #
- Emma, you get off that rug!
#Two left feet, but, oh, so neat
is Sweet Georgia Brown #
- You get off this minute!
- Oh, do let her finish, please! She's good!
#You wanna know why
You know I don't lie #

Not much, it's been said
she knocks 'em dead #
- Emma! Emma! Emma. Come on, Emma.
- #When she lands in town #
#When she came
It's a perfect shame when she mows 'em down ##
Miss Johnson, Virginia's
on the wrong side again.
Oh, I beg your pardon.
I didn't see the seating chart.
- Huh. Alibi Al.
- Over there, Virginia.
- Hello, hello, hello. Hello, Virginia.
- Hello.
Hello. Hell's low
and heaven's high.
That's what you think. If you know what I know,
you'd laugh on the other side of your face.
Not being two-faced like some people
I could mention, I say hello again.
- No talking, ladies.
- You see?
Now, now, Countess,
enough is enough.
- Save some for Virginia.
- Thank you. That's very kind.
Save some for Virginia.
Save some for Virginia.
Save some for Virginia.
Hey, nursesey, nursesey,
how about another cup of coffee?
Here you are.
- Food's awful here, anyway.
- Ah, you said it.
Doesn't matter.
I'm not too hungry.
Oh, that's a good girl. Dr. Kik will be
pleased that you're eating again.
I should have told you the Kraft people
bought out the Alden chain.
Besides, I never thought they'd
be asking you questions like that.
Oh, Robert, that man, he's dangerous.
He can't be left loose.

- Hello, Doctor.
- Good afternoon.
Why don't the nurses
do something?
That's the doctor I was talking to you
about the other day.
What did you say, dear? I was thinking
about that terrible little man.
- You mean Dr. Curtis?
- Curtis? Who's Dr. Curtis?
Thanks. The guy that
just went through the room.
He's head
of women's reception.
It must be me again.
I thought he was a patient.
But, Robert, I'm sure there's
something wrong with him.
Yesterday he came into our ward
and asked me why I bit his finger.
He must be crazy or something,
saying I bit him.
I never saw him before
in my life.
I think they better put him in one of those
tubs they're always threatening me with.
Robert, I didn't
bite him, did I?
Did I?
I guess you did.
Anyhow, that's his story.
- I don't understand. When?
- At the staff meeting.
- But, Robert, it isn't like me
to go around biting people.
- Forget it.
Anyhow, next time you want to bite
somebody, don't make it such a big shot.
I'm sorry. I know it isn't funny,
but I can't help laughing.
Is he such a big shot?
- He's over Kik, and Kik's
pretty important here.
- Did you say Kik?

Yes. As a matter of fact, I've been wanting to talk to you about him.

- I wish you wouldn't.

- Virginia, it wasn't Kik who sent you to staff. It was all my fault.

I was too anxious to get you out of here. Kik told me I was.

As a matter of fact, he's the only one who said you weren't ready...

the only one who tried to stop it, but he was overruled.

- Good night, ladies.

- Good night, Miss Jenkins.

Good night,

Miss Jenkins.

What's the matter, honey?

Miss Jenkins!

Miss Jenkins, Virginia's sick!

Miss Jenkins,

Virginia's sick!

All right. I heard you the first time.

Is it a sharp pain?

- Where?

- Here.

A little indigestion,

I guess. It'll pass.

Funny how it hurts

just in this one spot.

- Sorry. It's a little tender.

- Call Dr. Kik.

Tell him I think

it's appendicitis.

- Do you think you can walk?

- Yes, I guess so.

Come with me.

You know... You know, I begged the nurse to let me put on a dress.

- Still in great pain?

- No, I feel much better now.

I promise not to tell

Miss Jenkins...

that your appendix was taken out years ago on one condition...

that if you decide to grow another one,
you'll do it during the day.

I tried to see you this afternoon,
but I was afraid to tell the nurse why.

- And what is the reason?

- I know now that you didn't
really want to get rid of me.

Sit down,

Mrs. Cunningham.

Maybe I just imagine it now, but I think
somehow I knew I shouldn't leave the hospital.

I wanted to leave, and yet I didn't.

Does that make sense, Doctor?

Yes, it does. And the fact that
you realize it shows you're getting better.

- You really think I am?

- How would you like to be moved up to one?

One? But that's the best ward,
and they say the food's so good there.

I'd like to see you
gain weight.

Besides, they aren't so crowded, and we'd
have a better chance to have long talks.

Yes, Doctor.

Tell Miss Davis the patient
from five is here. Dr. Kik's patient.

This is your room.

You'll wait here
until Miss Davis comes.

May I sit on the bed?

I don't think I would.

Miss Davis wants everything just so.

I know how you feel, kid,
but don't be scared.

Just do everything Miss Davis says,
and you'll be all right.

- Don't think about it. Just do it.

- Is she the head nurse?

Yeah. She took over
when Miss Somerville...

Well, she's it now.

For the time being, anyway.

I think I heard Miss Davis's name before,
but maybe I just imagined it.

You see,
I keep forgetting things.
Well, you'll be all right,
or they wouldn't have put you in one.
Practically everybody
goes home from one.
Just keep in mind
what I told you.
In one, we don't sit on the floor.
You'd better get used to it right now.
I was afraid
I'd mess up the bed.
You'll find the rules here
different from the other wards.
Patients take care of their own rooms
and make up their own beds.
- Oh, I could never make a bed look like that.
- You'll learn.
You can go
to the day room now.
Our ladies don't eat between meals.
I'll put the candy with your things.
- Personal belongings are quite safe in one.
- This is my pocketbook.
The candy's quite gone.
I keep things in it I need.
You'll find this ward is quite pleasant...
for those who are willing to cooperate.
You know,
I remember you now.
It's nice here.
Quite a difference from the other wards.
- You know, I'm a pianist.
- I'm a writer.
- I said I was a pianist!
- Pardon me.
My name is Virginia.
What are you doing?
Dolls. Cute?
- Oh, very cute.
- I make them all the time.
May I have one of them
for a minute?
- It'll be a cigarette.

- Sure.
You can have it for keeps
for five of'em.
All right.
Thanks.
Now, now, ladies, there's no hurry.
You'll all get them lit.
Now, Dorothy,
wait a minute. There.
That's better.
Say, I thought it over.
I want 10 more. It's really worth it.
Here, take the whole pack.
Well, thank you.
Good afternoon, my dear.
I don't think I've had the pleasure
of seeing you here before.
I'm Virginia Cunningham.
I came from five.
Nobody comes to one
from five.
Even I had to spend a few days in two
before coming here.
- And I, my dear, have money.
- That must be convenient.
My husband, Mr. Greer,
is very wealthy.
I have more jewels
than I can possibly wear.
You, of course,
are a charity patient?
Oh, no.
It so happens that my husband,
Mr. Cunningham, is very wealthy.
My diamonds
simply weigh me down.
I have the Hope diamond.
I have the Hopeless emerald.
It carries the Cunningham curse.
You've probably read about it.
- Mr. Greer...
- Your husband?
Mr. Greer, my husband,
considered buying it, but it has a flaw.

You see, you can't
put an imperfect stone...
on the most beautiful
hands in the world.
That's why, my dear, I don't
do menial work like the rest of them here.
You mean occupational therapy?
It's supposed to be good for you.
You're quite wrong, my dear.
It isn't good for me.
I didn't mean you. I meant the "you"
one substitutes for "one."
- The general "you."
- General who?
Oh, Pershing.
Oh.
Cousin of mine.
One of the minor branches
of the family.
Virginia.! Virginia,
where did you get that doll?
Valerie gave it to me.
Why?
Give it back to her this minute.
The ladies here don't steal.
I didn't steal it! It's mine now.
I gave her cigarettes for it.
Virginia, will you do as I say!
Will you give it to me?
No. I won't give it.
Why should I?
All right. Miss Bixby,
bring her to my office.
Come, Valerie.
Thanks, Miss Davis.
Are you a good mother?
But I'm not a mother.
I never had a baby.
- Did you want to have one?
- Every woman wants to have one, I guess.
Oh, yes, I remember once
when I was little...
You do believe me, Dr. Kik, don't you?
I didn't steal it. Really, I didn't.

I know you didn't. But why get so upset
about a little rag doll?
Oh, I'm not upset. I tried so hard to
keep my promise, not make any trouble here.
I ate all I could today
to gain weight, and...
I know you want me to stay in this ward,
but it wasn't my fault.
- Really, it wasn't.
- Then why didn't you just give the doll back?
All right, go on! Take her part, just
like Father, and then getting angry with me!
Oh, Miss Bixby, Mrs. Cunningham
can keep the doll. It's hers.
- Will you please tell Miss Davis?
- Yes, Doctor.
- See you tomorrow morning at the usual time?
- Yes, Dr. Kik. 10:30.
You told me yesterday that
once when you were a child...
your father was angry
at you, quite unjustly.
Oh, that. It was nothing.
It all happened
because of a little doll.
It belonged to Jane.
Yes, they called her Janey then.
She was my friend next door.
It was her doll.
Mother was very upset.
She told...
Oh, I know! I exchanged it for a big doll
that Mother had given me for Christmas.
I wish I could remember why.
Oh, yes.
Virginia. Virginia,
didn't I tell you an hour ago...
to take that doll home to
Janey's and bring back yours?
But, Mommy, this is
little like a real baby...
like the one
you're going to have.
I wish I knew why you always

take such pleasure in annoying your mother.
Will you please
do as I tell you?
Oh, all right. I suppose there's nothing
to do but let your father handle it.
Father? Oh, no!
Don't tell Father!
Mommy, please don't!
Please!
I don't care! Go ahead! Tell him!
Daddy'll let me keep you.
He won't make me
take you back.
He loves me.
Your father loved you
very much, didn't he?
Oh, yes. I remember
when I was even smaller...
Up and down you go.
Hi, hi, hi, hi.
Try and win a big, beautiful prize.
Ten shots for a nickel.!
Win a big, beautiful prize!
Ten shots for a nickel!
Not a quarter, not a dime...
Hey, the man gets a perfect score.
- One hundred percent.
Do you wanna go another round?
- No, thanks.
- What do we get for all these?
- You can have your choice...
of anything here
on the top shelf.
- Which one do you want?
- That one. The little soldier.
- That's the one I want.
- This one?
- Yes.
- Here you are, little girl.
- They start going for a uniform
early, don't they?
- Certainly do.
Oh, Daddy, it looks like
you in the picture.

Here, darling,
let me fix your hair.
You love me, don't you, Daddy?
You love me more than Mommy does.
Don't be silly.
We love you both the same.
You loved your father, didn't you?
Oh, yes, very much.
Except when...
when he took Mother's part.
Like when he wanted me
to give the baby back to Janey.
Virginia, how many times did I tell you
to be nice to your mother, now?
You're going to have
a little sister pretty soon.
That's why Mother's sick
and nervous these days.
She's just sick so you'll
be nicer to her, that's all.
You wanted
to have a baby of your own...
so your father would be as nice
to you as he was to your mother?
He was nice to me always,
until Mother told him about her baby.
You take that doll back to Janey
and bring Queenie home.
Sometimes it's hard
for children to love their father, isn't it?
Yes, but he couldn't
make me love Queenie.
I really don't know
what to do with that child.
- Virginia, will you please eat your dinner?
- I'm not hungry.
It scares me how she's getting to be more
and more like my sister Annie...
always thinking
everything turns around her.
And Father let her get away with it, just
because she was the baby of the family.
Oh, don't worry.
I know what I'm doing.

It's high time she realized she isn't
going to be the only child in the family.
- Virginia, please, will you eat your dinner?
- No.
Then go on up to your room, and you're
going to stay there until you do eat it.
Go on.
I don't know why, but she just
makes me so nervous lately. L...
Virginia, you know
that that's no place to leave your doll.
Virginia, take your doll
as your mother told you.
I will just sit here, and she
can't never make me do anything.
And I will not eat,
and I'll get thin like nothing.
And then I'll run away, and they can't
find me because I won't be there.
And he'll be sorry,
and he'll cry.
And I won't let him
love me anymore...
because I don't care.
Yeah, I don't care
if he hates me.
I don't care because
I just don't care about him anymore.
I hope you'll break to pieces
and they bury you...
so I'll never
have to see you ever...
ever again!
Then what happened?
I don't know. Nothing. Nothing.!
Why are you crying?
The doctor came.
Who was sick?
It was Father. Ohh...
Wishes sometimes seem
to come true, don't they?
But I didn't want him to die.!
I didn't.! I loved him so.!
But you're not going away,

Mommy, are you?
You'll love me, please,
won't you?
But my mother got married
soon afterwards...
and somehow I always felt she didn't
like me because I reminded her of Father.
I'm sorry.
It's silly, isn't it? Crying about something
that happened such a long time ago...
something
I can hardly remember.
I don't think it is at all.
A little crying sometimes helps a lot.
I suppose so.
May I go, Doctor?
Yes. I'll see you tomorrow.
Mrs. Cunningham...
did your mother ever tell you
what your father died of?
I think she said...
Is it called uremia?
A very serious illness, which
usually takes many years to develop.
Oh.
Well, tomorrow then,
Mrs. Cunningham.
Yes, Dr. Kik.
Why, it's only a piece of rag.
Just a simple piece of rag.
- The doctor says you may
write for an hour each day.
- Why?
I understand you're a writer.
Isn't that what they do?
You will use the machine
only during rest hour.
I suppose you'll
make a great racket.
I don't want to bother anybody.
I don't have to write.
Dr. Kik says you're to write.
There'll be no argument, please.
Well, go ahead.

Might as well start right now.

What shall I write about?

How should I know?

You're supposed to be the writer.

What's the matter?

Go ahead.

I'm sorry. I can't write when people are watching me. I never could.

Look, Virginia... and I say this only for your own good...

being a writer is nothing to be so excited about.

It doesn't set you above the other ladies, you know.

- If you really were a writer...

- Do I tell you how to be a nurse?

All right, lady, I've tried to be patient with you...

but you just haven't any spirit of cooperation.

All you have is an exalted idea of your own importance.

If it weren't for Dr. Kik, you'd never be here.

I know now

why you hate me so.

It's because you're in love with Dr. Kik, that's why.

Miss Davis! Wait a minute!

Please, Miss Davis.

I'm sorry. I didn't mean what I said. Really, I didn't.

Please forgive me! Please!

Don't tell Dr. Kik about it!

Get back to your room!

Miss Davis, please, please!

Well, well, well.

We'll miss you, my dear.

- What do you mean?

- What do I mean?

You'll be out of here, I'd say, in about 10 minutes, maybe less.

No, she can't send me away!

I must stay here! I promised Dr. Kik!

Miss Davis here?

- Miss Bixby.

- Yes, Miss Davis?

Bring Virginia here.

- Anybody seen Virginia?

- Yes, of course.

- Where is she?

- Find her yourself.

Virginia.!

Miss Davis,

Virginia isn't anywhere in the ward.

Of course she is.

She must be hiding somewhere.

- Virginia.!

- Virginia.! Virginia.!

I can't find her anywhere, Miss Davis.

I can't imagine where she could be.

Ridiculous.

She couldn't get out of the ward.

I'll find her myself.

I know all their tricks.

Virginia, we know you're in there.

Unlock that door and come out at once.!

Call an attendant.

Virginia, you know you can't get away

with this. We'll break down the door.

I won't come out! I won't come out

until you send for Dr. Kik!

Dr. Kik is away,

but your husband is here.

- Robert?

- Yes.

I don't believe it.

It isn't visiting day.

We sent for him.

He's waiting in the hall.

Perhaps they notified him

as soon as I was missing.

He could've

gotten here by now.

Are you coming out

or not?

Where... Where is he?

No! Robert!

Where is he? Robert!
Where are you!
Robert, where are you!
Where are you! Wait!
No! No! No, no!
No! Oh, they were lying to me!
You're liars!
Liars! Liars!
You're all liars! Liars!
Good afternoon, Dr. Kik.
May I help you?
Thank you.
Is Dr. Terry upstairs?
He was a few minutes ago.
Oh, here he is.
- Oh, hello, Terry.
- Hello, Kik.
I'm glad you're back.
- How is she?
- She's not very good.
I tried my best to make them keep her in
reception, at least until you returned, but...
- I know. May I see her?
- Yes, of course.
Thank you.
She refused to talk
to anybody but you.
Later she started calling
for her husband again.
- I suppose you know what happened in one.
- I do.
- You say she was calling for her husband.
- Yes. I sent for him.
He talked to her
for a few minutes yesterday.
- Go ahead.
- Thanks.
Look, Kik, if there's anything I can do
to help get her back into reception...
- just let me know.
- Thanks, Terry.
I'm patient 95312.
I've committed no crime.
I have no delusions

or hallucinations.
I demand to know why I'm being
kept here against my will.
I'm not guilty! I'm not guilty! They
tried to harm me and do away with me...
all because of \$17 million!
Hello, Mrs. Cunningham.
Hello, Dr. Kik.
This is Dr. Terry,
Mrs. Cunningham. He's a friend.
Sorry, Doctor.
I guess I wasn't up to one.
- I tried, I really did,
but I just couldn't make it.
- It wasn't your fault.
Dr. Terry, do you mind
if we take this off?
- Miss Vance.
- But, Doctor, the instructions we got...
It's all right.
Oh, Doctor, why do I do those things?
I hate myself for it.
I don't want to do them,
but I can't help it. I just can't help it.
But you're still my doctor,
aren't you, Dr. Kik?
No, Mrs. Cunningham.
Dr. Terry's in charge of this ward.
But I'm sure he'll let me come
and see you whenever you need me.
Of course. Anytime.
We still have many things
to talk over.
He's not my doctor anymore?
What's going to happen to me?
Now, like I said, 17 females surrounded me.
"Don't shoot," I told them.
"No shooting around here."
But they wouldn't listen to me. I've
been chopped up. I've been ground up.
1-9-7-0.
What am I talking about?
Come, come, Gertrude.
Come along, Gertrude.

- Well, this is it.
- What'd you say?
- Nothing. I was just talking to myself.
- A very bad habit.

You must be very sick.

Where'd you come from?

- One.

- One? Well, they bring you here
if you don't go home in a year.

- I hadn't been there a year.

- Sometimes they know sooner.

- Your name, please?

- Virginia Stuart Cunningham.

I'm Miss Somerville.

I keep the record.

I'm sure I haven't taken
your temperature today yet.

Normal. Thank you.

Miss Somerville?

Wasn't she the head nurse
in one before I was there?

Whatever she was,
she ain't anymore.

Very sick, you know.

Hester, let me go!

I won't do it again, I promise!

Let me go! Let me go!

Oh, Miss Vance!

Serves you right. I warned you
to leave Hester alone.

You gotta be careful with her.

Very sick, you know.

She don't talk, and she don't like nobody
she don't know, and she don't know nobody.

She fights 'em.

Hey, where you goin'?

Hello. I know how

you feel, Hester.

I used to feel like that too.

I'd like to be your friend.

Won't you let me

be your friend?

I'm the first lady of the land.

I have a right to cover my face.

I'm the first lady of the land. Nobody
can stop me from covering my face.
I'm the first lady of the land.
Do you know why Hester
didn't want to talk to me?
She thinks I'm just a dame like
all the rest of them. I'll bet you do too.
You all think you're more decent
than I am. I come from a good family!
You can't prove that I'm one of them!
You can't! You can't!
You can't prove that I'm one of them.!
You can't.! You can't.! You can't.!!
- # Blong, blong, blong, blong
Blong, blong, blong #
I'm talking to you as
a representative of authority.
Because if they could get Molly out of here,
August 20, 1943, she would give them \$10,000.
But they must investigate the case
to the nth degree and make a report on it.
I believe I can prove to them that I was
never insane. I had no bad habits of any kind.
And I'm willing to cooperate. They
can ask me any questions they wish...
and broadcast my answers
all over the world.!!
It was strange.
Here I was among all those people...
and at the same time I felt as if I were
looking at them from someplace far away.
The whole place seemed to me
like a deep hole...
and the people down in it
like strange animals...
like...like snakes...
and I'd been thrown into it.
Yes. As though... As though
I were in a snake pit.
A snake pit?
Later... weeks later...
I understood.
I remembered once reading
in a book that long ago...

they used to put insane people
into pits full of snakes.
I think they figured that something which
might drive a normal person insane...
might shock an insane person
back into sanity.
- Did you ever hear of that?
- Yes.
Well, it was just as though
they'd thrown me into a snake pit...
and I was shocked into thinking
that maybe I wasn't as sick as the others...
that I really might get well.
You are getting well.
I hope so. But why, Doctor?
Why am I getting well?
Is it because I'm supposed
to know why I got sick?
- Do you?
- Well, I know what you think.
It's because of what happened to me years
ago... like that doll when I was a little girl.
Well, not quite.
You didn't get sick
only because of the doll.
Was it because my father and mother
were so angry with me?
In a way, yes.
Look, it all starts
long before you can even talk.
It may have started
when you were a few weeks old.
You may have been hungry...
and too often your mother wasn't
there to feed you on time.
Then later, still long before
the doll incident...
you wanted very much
for her to love you.
It wasn't your fault,
but you didn't get that love.
Virginia, darling, I've already
kissed you good night. Now, go to sleep.
That made you turn

to your father.
And when he took your
mother's side against you...
you felt betrayed and unloved.
When children feel that way,
they get very angry.
Often, they want to eliminate the person
they feel doesn't love them.
You mean I wanted my father to die?
No, but unconsciously
you did want to get rid of him.
In a sense,
that doll was your father.
Then when he got sick and died, you
couldn't cope with this sense of guilt.
And so you began to bury the memory of
what had happened in your unconscious.
You pushed it down
deeper and deeper.
The years added layers
to cover it up...
but it was still there
and made you hurt yourself.
What did I do?
For example, you didn't
go out with boys.
The reason you gave was that you
were working, trying to become a writer.
Actually, you avoided them because you
were devoted to the memory of your father.
But I did go out
with Gordon.
That was rather like trying
to bring your father back, wasn't it?
Gordon was very like
your father in some ways.
He was head of a family,
wasn't he?
All right, Mother.
Virginia, you sit here.
Janey, stop fidgeting!
He was firm,
commanding, and you liked it.
Hurry, Virginia! You should know

by now I don't like being late.
Your father was punctual
and meticulous. So was Gordon.
- Don't forget... 6:30 sharp.
- Yes, Gordon. I won't forget.
Sometimes
I felt like a child with Gordon...
but I thought
I really loved him then.
When he asked you to marry him,
something deep in you rebelled.
Well, I... I just got sick.
It wasn't that I didn't
want to marry him. I did.
Consciously. But your getting ill...
was the physical expression of your
unconscious feeling that you didn't.
Even before you saw that truck,
you wanted to get rid of Gordon.
And you blamed yourself
for Gordon's death...
just as you blamed
yourself for your father's.
It's horrible, isn't it?
Again you needed love
and protection...
so you went to New York,
to Robert.
Robert? You said Gordon
was like Father. But Robert?
Wasn't he
like the other side of your father?
Yes, he was kind and
thoughtful. He sort of took care of me.
The way your father did?
Yes. But why,
after I was married to Robert...
why did I want
to run away from him?
I remember wanting to,
just before I got sick.
Because you were
going back to your original pattern.
You couldn't face

being married to Robert...
just as you had been unable
to face marriage with Gordon.
Yes, I...
I felt it was wrong somehow.
I felt like a child again.
Mrs. Cunningham, sometimes
children are afraid to grow up...
because they can't let go
of the love they felt for their fathers.
But they can't remain
with their fathers.
They do grow up, and...
and they do marry...
because they learn that husbands
and fathers can't be the same thing.
What did you say?
I said that husbands and fathers
can't be the same thing.
- Can they?
- No, they can't.
- It's funny.
- What is it?
Everything you've said
seems to make sense.
I feel as though
I know it... here.
But you don't quite
understand it all here?
It doesn't matter. You may never know
why everything happened...
but now you do know how and where
it started, and that does matter.
Look. It's as though
you were in a dark room...
like this one.
Now, and you wanted
to turn on the light...
but you couldn't because
you didn't know where the switch was.
Now you do.
You may never know why turning
that switch makes the light go on.
But you don't have to.

As long as you know where it is...
you don't ever have to be afraid
of being in the dark again.
And that, I'm sure,
you'll be able to do very soon.
Come along, ladies!
Keep going. Keep going.
Take a seat
right down there.
Hold it a second, will you?
For the benefit of those
of you who are new here...
and for those who might
have forgotten the rules...
I'm warning you that nobody
is allowed to dance...
with the same person
more than three times.
Jitterbugging is out.
No cheek-to-cheek stuff. Understand?
That's what you say.
No cheek-to-cheek stuff.
See? Over there. She's the one
I was talking to you about.
Watch me.
- Oh.
May I have some, per fervore.
Is he the one?
He certainly goes for your kind.
Don't you say "my kind."
You just remember where I came from.
Quiet, ladies, please.
Quiet!
Got a cigarette?
Here.
Hey, I thought you said one! Two's
all I have left for the whole evening.
My, you've
certainly changed.
They could let a girl light
her own cigarette, at least at a dance.
We ain't gonna
burn the place down.
It's just to prove to us

that we're still sick.
You know, I'd like to see you when
you really are you. I mean, your kind.
- My kind?
- Yes. I'm sorry.
Don't be sorry, because I'm
not what you think I am.
I'm sorry.
Hey, kid,
just take it easy.
Forgive me. Sometimes I just like to nestle
on somebody's shoulder to get myself balanced.
Well, I hope this is
the last time I'll see you here!
Who's she?
Hello, hello, hello. Hello, Cecilia.
Look, I may be nutty,
but I'm not that nutty.
Oh, pardon me. I hope
I don't have to see you again next time.
Hey, girlie,
how about a dance?
No, thank you.
I don't dance.
Oh, come on.
Don't be shy.
Go ahead, Virginia.
Dance with the gentleman.
I won't be long, Hester.
Do you mind if we dance
on that side?
- There's a friend I'd like to watch.
- Okay.
You're a gorgeous dancer,
even if I say it myself.
- Thank you.
- Oh, you're welcome.
That was very nice.
Thank you.
Are you all right, Hester?
I didn't really want to dance.
- May I have the next one, ma'am?
- Sure, kid. Sure.
That one

must be really sick.

Likes to nestle

on my shoulder.

- Good evening, Doctor.

- Good evening, Miss Sherman.

Doctor, could I

have a parole?

Go on and enjoy the dance.

We'll talk about it tomorrow.

- Hello, hello, hello. Hello, Doctor.

- How are you, Miss Newman?

- Enjoying yourself?

- Yes, thank you.

May I, madame?

Come on.

You know the rules. I've already

danced with you, three times.

What are you talking about? The dance

has just started. We danced only two times.

- Three times.

- Are you sure?

Absolutely.

Maybe I am crazy.

What about you?

Come on. Let's dance.

You're all right, Hester. Nobody's

going to hurt you. I won't let them.

Don't you remember?

What do you want to say, Hester?

Don't be afraid. Say it.

When I first came to the hospital,

I was just like you.

I guess I'd still be the same way

if it hadn't been for...

someone who kept talking to me

and made me feel I wasn't alone.

- Anything wrong?

- No, Miss Vance. Everything's all right.

- Hello, Mrs. Cunningham.

- Hello, Doctor.

- Having a good time?

- Oh, yes, Doctor.

- I got it all figured out.

- Sorry, but I...

I promised this dance
to somebody else.
To him? Hmm.
You'll be sorry.
Well, go ahead.
I'll take the next one.
Well, what are you
waitin' for? Go ahead.
I hate to be a nuisance,
but could we stay close to Hester?
They tell me you're the first one
Hester's ever let come near her.
- Becoming quite a doctor, aren't you?
- Oh, no.
It's just that
sometimes a sick animal...
knows better how another
sick animal should be treated.
You know, Doctor,
it really isn't fair.
You know everything about me,
practically from the time I was born...
and I don't even know
your first name.
Miss Vance wasn't going to let
Hester come to the dance.
I promised
to keep an eye on her.
I'd like to know it now.
- What?
- Your first name.
- Mark.
- Mark. Are you married?
Oh, no. Can you imagine me sitting in front
of a fireplace with a lot of kids around?
- Any family? Brothers? Sisters?
- No.
Look, you may be getting well, but
not well enough to question your doctor.
I suppose
I am getting better.
Time doesn't pass as fast as it used to,
and then you get selfish again.
I mean, if you have three cigarettes,

you don't give away two.
Yeah. Some selfishness
is a good sign of sanity.
- And there's another thing.
- What is it?
I'd rather tell you
some other time.
Well, as long as you think you're
getting selfish, I've good news for you.
You're going to staff.
- Staff?
- Yes.

##All the friends I knew ##
Goin' home, goin' home #
I'm a-goin' home #
Quiet like some still day #
I'm just goin' home #
It's not far, just close by #
#Through an open door #
#Work all done, care laid by #
Goin' to fear no more #
Mother's there expectin' me #
Father's waitin' too #
Lots of folk #
Gathered there #
#All the friends I knew #
#All the friends I knew #
Goin' home, goin' home #
I'm a-goin' home #
Quiet like some still day #
I'm a-goin' home #
It's not far #
#Just close by #
#Through an open door #
#Work all done #
Care laid by #
Goin' to fear no more #
Mother's there #
Expectin' me #
Father's waitin' too #
Lots of folk #
Gathered there #
#All the friends I knew #
##All the friends I knew ##

Home #
Home #
I'm goin' home ##
Am I? Am I going home?
Well, well, well. Quite a change
from the last time I saw you here...
when you knew your
Social Security number so well...
and took such a strong dislike
to Dr. Curtis's finger.
My Social Security number. 342... No.
156... No.
47... No, no. What is
my Social Security number?
So your husband applied for your release
again, eh? What are you thinking about?
I was thinking about
my Social Security number.
Oh, that. Don't worry. We all
know how well you remember it.
It's just that if you want to ask me
any other question, I'm sure I can answer it.
That's all right. I guess we have
enough information to take your word for it...
unless there are
any objections.
- Dr. Terry?
- No, Dr. Gifford. Unless Dr. Kik...
- No.
- Anybody else?
Yes, I would like to ask
a question, if I may.
- Go ahead, Doctor.
- According to this,
Virginia is one of the patients...
with whom Dr. Kik seems
to have achieved remarkable results...
by applying psychotherapy
almost exclusively.
Just to satisfy my own curiosity,
I'd like to ask her...
if she's aware now of
the origin of her illness.
Would you like

to answer that, Mrs. Cunningham?
Well, I'd have to be a doctor
to put it into the right words...
but I'm sure it wasn't
because of any one thing.
It was a lot of things,
and it started when...
when I was a child.
I don't know yet everything
that caused it, but I do know...
that I'll be able to see life and myself
differently than before I came here.
Virginia!
Oh, here you are.
Dr. Terry wants you...
Where you goin'? You're leavin' us.
- Who's leaving?
- Are you being transferred?
Oh, Mrs. Cunningham,
I've been looking for you all over.
I haven't got
your record for today.
- The patient's checking out.
She's leaving, Celia.
- That'll make room for another.
But they'll send us
more than one. They always do.
And we're so crowded already.
I just don't know where it's all gonna end!
I'll tell you where it's
gonna end, Miss Somerville.
When there are more sick ones than well ones,
the sick ones will lock the well ones up.
I'm not sure they'll like it. My key!
Where's my key? How can I let her out!
- Just draw a line through her name.
- I tried that. It doesn't work.
I know!
I'll erase it.
- There. There. That'll do it.
- Thank you very much.
All right, ladies.
Virginia must leave now.
I'll miss you. You sure

you ain't sick anymore?

- Ruth, take care of Hester, will you?

- Sure.

Miss Vance, may I say
good-bye to Hester?

Why, certainly. Now, now,
ladies, go about your business.

I wonder what kind
of business it is.

Good-bye, Hester. I'm leaving now,
but I'll come back to see you.

No, Hester. You know
you don't do that anymore.

Your doctor will talk to you. Don't
be afraid to talk, and you'll get well too.

Good-bye, Virginia.

Oh, Hester, you've talked!

I knew you would.

You're going to get well now.

I know you will.

Good-bye, Hester.

Good-bye, Dr. Terry.

Thanks for everything.

Your husband is waiting at the administration
building. Miss Vance will take you there.

- Good-bye, Mrs. Cunningham.

- This way, Virginia.

- Good-bye, Mrs. Cunningham.

- Dr. Kik.

Will you come to see us sometime...

Robert and me?

- Why, yes, of course.

- You never will.

But if ever you feel you want to talk
to me, you know where you can find me.

Good-bye and good luck.

Remember at the dance I was going to tell you
another reason for knowing I was getting well?

- Yes.

- It's that I'm not in love with you anymore.

You never really were,
Virginia.

Robert, what happened
to my wedding ring?

- I kept it for you.
- May I have it?
Sure. Here, darling.
Would you put it on
again, please?
It was a long time.
Okay. Say, folks,
the bus is leaving. Or don't you care?
Don't we care?
Come on, darling. We're going home.
Okay, Jerry,
take it away.