

Cromwell looks at him viciously.

CROMWELL, *goes apart; formally*: Sir Thomas More, is there anything you wish to say to me concerning the King's marriage with Queen Anne?

MORE, *very still*: I understood I was not to be asked that again.

CROMWELL: Evidently you understood wrongly. These charges—

MORE, *with a sudden, contemptuous sweep of his arm*: They are terrors for children, Master Secretary—an empty cupboard To frighten children in the dark, not me.

CROMWELL, *it is some time now since anybody treated him like this, and it costs him some effort to control his anger, but he does and even manages a little smile as one who sportingly admits defeat*: True . . . true. Sir Thomas, very apt. *Then coldly* To frighten a man, there must be something in the cupboard, must there not?

MORE, *made wary again by the tone*: Yes, and there is nothing in it.

CROMWELL: For the moment there is this: *(Picks up a paper and reads:)* "I charge you with great ingratitude. I remind you of many benefits graciously given and ill received. I tell you that no King of England ever had nor could have so villainous a servant nor so traitorous a subject as yourself." *During this, More's face goes ashen and his hand creeps up to his throat in an unconscious gesture of fear and protection. Cromwell puts down the paper and says:* The words are not mine, Sir Thomas, but the King's. Believe that.

MORE: I do. *He lowers his hands, looks up again, and with just a spark of his old impudence:* I recognize the style. So I am brought here at last.

CROMWELL: Brought? You brought yourself to where you stand now.

MORE: Yes—Still, in another sense—I was brought.

CROMWELL: Oh, yes. You may go home now. *After a fractional hesitation, More goes, his face fearful and his step thoughtful, and he pauses uncertainly as Cromwell calls after him: For the present. More carries on, and exits:* I don't like him so well as I did. There's a man who raises the gale and won't come out of the harbor.

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (from the novel by Ken Kesey)

by Dale Wasserman

ACT II

McMurphy contrives to serve a short prison sentence in what he believes will be the pleasanter setting of a mental institution. In short order, his roguish but honest nature and his enthusiasm for life generate feelings of optimism and confidence in the inmates. But McMurphy breaks the rules of the institution and he encourages the inmates, for the sake of their sanity, to do the same. His adversary, Headnurse Ratched, warns him about his misbehavior; then, in a desperate attempt to regain control of the ward, she submits him to electro-shock therapy. When this fails to surpress his spirit, she finally has him lobotomized. Believing he would rather be dead than live as a vegetable, one of the inmates, Chief Bromden, smothers McMurphy with a pillow.

Prior to the following excerpt, McMurphy became aware that his release from the institution was totally dependent on Nurse Ratched and that, unlike a prison sentence, there is no specified release date for mental patients. At that point, to the disappointment of the inmates—who have come to regard him as a Moses leading them out of slavery—McMurphy decides to abide fully by the institution's rules.

The following scene between McMurphy and Chief Bromden takes place some hours later. It is night. The dayroom is empty and lit only by moonlight. Chief Bromden enters. He is an American Indian, a giant of a man, who is presumed to be deaf and dumb. The "panel" referred to in the dialogue houses all the electrical circuits that feed into the control board (controlling and monitoring sound, light, TV, etc.) in the Nurses' Station.

Chief Bromden enters from the dormitory. He looks about in a puzzled way as though someone had called to him. He is drawn to the windows, magnetized by moonlight. Raises his head looking up at the sky . . . and in the hush is heard the high laughing gabble of wild geese passing overhead. He raises his arms wide, as though to embrace the whole lost world beyond the windows, then folds them about his body. He is standing like that, head thrown back, eyes closed, when McMurphy enters.

MCMURPHY, *whispering*: Chief, you all right? *No acknowledgment.* Saw you get up and figgered maybe you come out here to scrape off some a that thousand-year gum. *Offering a stick of gum; apologetically*: They took away my canteen privileges so this is all I got.

CHIEF BROMDEN, *taking it—then he speaks in a hoarse voice*: Thank you.

MCMURPHY: That's okay. *Starts off, comes to a startled halt.* Hey—! *Coming back*: Try it again—you're a little rusty.

CHIEF BROMDEN, *clears his throat; more clearly*: Thank you. *McMurphy starts to laugh, trying to keep the sound down. Chief Bromden goes toward the dormitory, his feelings hurt.*

MCMURPHY, *stopping him*: 'Scuse me, Chief. What I was laughin' at, I just caught wise to what you been doin' all these years—bidin' your time till you could tell 'em off!

CHIEF BROMDEN: No . . . no, I'd be afraid.

MCMURPHY: How's that?

CHIEF BROMDEN: I'm not big enough.

MCMURPHY: Hoo boy, you *arè* crazy, aren't you. I been on a few reservations in my life, but you are the *biggest* damn Injun I have ever seen!

CHIEF BROMDEN: My papa was bigger.

MCMURPHY: Yeah?

CHIEF BROMDEN: He was a full chief and his name was Tee Ah Millatoona. That means The Pine That Stands Tallest on the Mountain. But my mother got twice his size.

MCMURPHY: You must of had a real moose of an old lady!

CHIEF BROMDEN: Oh, she wasn't big *that* way. She wasn't Indian, neither. She was a town woman. Her name was Bromden.

MCMURPHY: Yeah, I think I see what you're gettin' at . . .

when a town woman marries an Indian that's marryin' beneath her, ain't it? And your papa had to take her name?

CHIEF BROMDEN: She said she wouldn't be married to no man with a name like Tee Ah Millatoona. But it wasn't only her that made him little. Everybody worked on him. The way they're workin' on you.

MCMURPHY: They who?

CHIEF BROMDEN: The Combine. It wanted us to go live some place else. It wanted to take away our waterfall. In town they beat up Papa in the alleys and cut off his hair. Oh, the Combine's big . . . big. He fought it a long time till my mother made him too little to fight any more. Then he signed the papers.

MCMURPHY: What papers, Chief?

CHIEF BROMDEN: The ones that gave everything to the government. The village. The falls . . .

MCMURPHY: I remember . . . but I heard the tribe got paid some huge amount.

CHIEF BROMDEN: That's what the government guys said, here's a whole big pot of money. And Papa said, what can you pay for the way a man lives? What can you pay for his right to be an Indian? They didn't understand. Neither did the tribe. They stood in front of our door, holdin' those checks, askin' what should we do now? And Papa couldn't tell them 'cause he was too little . . . and too drunk.

MCMURPHY: What happened to him?

CHIEF BROMDEN: He kept drinkin' till he died. They found him in a alley and threw dirt in his eyes. *Fiercely*: The Combine whipped him. It beats *everybody*.

MCMURPHY: Now, wait a minute—

CHIEF BROMDEN: Yes, yes, it does! Oh, they don't bust you outright. They work on you, ways you can't even see. They get hold of you and they *install* things!

MCMURPHY: Take 'er easy, buddy.

CHIEF BROMDEN: And if you *fight* they lock you up some place and make you stop and—!

MCMURPHY, *closing the Chief's mouth with his hand*: Woops, cool it. *Takes him in his arms, gently, soothingly.*

CHIEF BROMDEN, *in a moment, ashamed*: I been talkin' crazy.

MCMURPHY: Well . . . yeah.

CHIEF BROMDEN: It don't make sense.

MCMURPHY: I didn't say it didn't make sense.

CHIEF BROMDEN: Sh-h! *Raises his head, moves toward the windows, listening: Hear 'em? McMurphy comes to him, listens. From the sky the wild, gabbling cry again.*

MCMURPHY: Canada honkers flyin' south. Gonna be an early winter, Chief. Look, there they go. Right across the moon!

CHIEF BROMDEN, *gazing skyward, chanting softly*: Wire, brier, limber lock . . .

MCMURPHY: Huh?

CHIEF BROMDEN: It's a old children's rhyme. My grand-momma taught it to me . . .

MCMURPHY: Oh, lord, yes, I remember! You play it with your fingers. Hold out your hand, Chief. *Ticking off fingers, chanting*: Wire, brier, limber lock—

CHIEF BROMDEN: Three geese in a flock.

MCMURPHY: One flew east—

CHIEF BROMDEN: One flew west—

MCMURPHY: An' one flew over the cuckoo's nest!

CHIEF BROMDEN: O-U-T spells out—

MCMURPHY: Goose swoops down and plucks you out! *They embrace, laugh happily; then the Chief sobers.*

CHIEF BROMDEN: McMurphy?

MCMURPHY: Yeah?

CHIEF BROMDEN: You gonna crawfish? *McMurphy doesn't answer.* I mean, you gonna back down?

MCMURPHY, *turning away*: Aw . . . what's the difference?

CHIEF BROMDEN: Are you?

MCMURPHY, *his eyes light on the panel. Brightly*: Hey, remember when I tried to lift that thing? I bet you could do it.

CHIEF BROMDEN, *shrinking back*: I'm too little.

MCMURPHY: Whyn't you give it a try?

CHIEF BROMDEN: I'm not big enough!

MCMURPHY: How do ya know? That'd be one sure way to find out. *Giving up, cheerfully*: Well, when you're ready, lemme make book on it. Hoo boy, would that be a killin'!

CHIEF BROMDEN: McMurphy. *McMurphy pauses.* Make me big again.

MCMURPHY: Why, hell, Chief . . . looks to me like you grewed half a foot already!

CHIEF BROMDEN, *shaking his head*: How can I be big if you ain't? How can anybody? *He exits into the dorm. McMurphy is motionless a moment, then follows.*

SHORT EYES

by Miguel Piñero

ACT II

The setting is the dayroom in the House of Detention. The characters are the inmates (mostly Puerto Rican and black) and guards of one section. The play depicts racial encounters, personal encounters, and the self-encounters of men facing their own yearnings, frustrations, rages, and fears. The tenuous stability of the section is disrupted with the arrival of Clark Davis. Clark is white and middle-class. He was arrested for raping a young girl, a crime that, even among these violent and hardened men, is looked on with particular revulsion. He is badly abused and threatened by both inmates and guards. Juan, a Puerto Rican inmate, is the one person who shows him any compassion, and Clark confides to Juan his own self-hatred and all the details of his sordid sexual proclivities.

In the following scene Clark has just returned from the lineup. He believes that he has a chance of being released and asks Juan not to divulge anything from their personal conversation. Juan is faced with the dilemma of breaking the confidence of this pathetic man or allowing him to go back outside "to scar up some more little girls' minds."

JUAN: What you want to see me about, Clark?

CLARK: Look, what I told you earlier . . . er . . . that between me and you . . . like, I don't know why I even said that, just . . . just that . . . man, like everything was just coming down on me . . . My wife . . . she was at the hospital . . . She . . . she didn't