IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

by Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

There's more action in the emergency room of County Community General Hospital than any nurse-turned-writer could ever imagine. Unfortunately Nurse Betty doesn't live to see it. She's bumped off because somebody at County Community doesn't want the world to read her novel "ER Confidential."

But whose secret has she uncovered? Surely not the two candy stripers who are trying to earn enough money to buy a beautiful prom dress by smuggling in fast food to the patients. Maybe it's the head of nursing, Nurse Rackett, who longs for the good old days when bedpans were...well, bedpans. Or could it be Dr. Nan Jeffries, longing to escape her mother's clutches and marry Orderly Dan. Could it be Orderly Dan, who once had a fling with Nurse Betty?

What about Will Bates, the multigazillionaire computer genius who's recovering upstairs and who mysteriously disappears. Could it be Dr. Kate Kildare, the forensic pathologist trying to baffle her colleagues with the perfect murder? And then there's Dr. Frank N. Stein, the head of psychiatry, who seems to need as much therapy as his patients. It could even be Dr. Stein's latest patient who thinks -- and acts and dresses -- like Marilyn Monroe.

Detective Sherman Holmes, on his first murder investigation, really walks into a hornet's nest when he steps into the ER, which is filled with just what the doctor ordered -- plenty of action and lots of laughs!

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 m, 15 w, 6 or more flexible, doubling possible)

NURSE BETTY: Author of a tell-all book about the ER.
DR. FRANK N. STEIN: Head of psychiatry.
FIONA: A partygoer.
SHANNON: Another.
FRED: Another.
DR. KATE KILDARE: Forensic pathologist.
DR. JESSIE WATSON: Dr. Kildare's assistant.
DR. NAN JEFFRIES: A plastic surgeon
MOTHER: Nan's mother.
DAN CARTER: An orderly.
NURSE RACKETT: Head of nurses.
DORIS AVERY: Chief administrator.
NITA CAPELLI: An editor.
SADIE: A candy striper.
ANNIE: Another.
MR. WILL BATES: Head of a computer empire.
MAMBU: A famous rapper.
MAMA: His mother.
AL: His agent.
DETECTIVE SHERMAN HOLMES: On his first murder case.
NADIA LOVEJOY: A psychic healer.
ELSIE DRUDGE: Patient who thinks she's Marilyn Monroe.
REPORTER ONE
REPORTER TWO
REPORTER THREE
POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER
OFFICER ONE
OFFICER TWO
VOICES: Of Announcer, of Patients 1, 2 3, and 4.

Note on doubling: *Nurse Betty and Nina Capelli can double in the roles of Nadia Lovejoy and Elsie Drudge. Fiona, Shannon and Fred can double as Reporters 1-3.*

SETTING

The play takes place in the emergency room at County Community General Hospital. Wing entrance down left leads to outside. Wing entrance down right leads to rest of hospital. Desk up right with visible computer monitor. Chair behind desk. Files, papers, etc. clutter the top. Behind the desk is doorway leading to offices. Up left is another doorway leading to examining rooms and other parts of the hospital. Down left is couch, chair, and table in a waiting room arrangement.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT I

Scene 1: In the emergency room at County Community General Hospital in a major city at the start of an all-night shift.
Scene 2: Three hours later.
Scene 3: The next morning.

ACT II

Scene 1: That evening.
Scene 2: Later that night.

PROPS

Computer; phone; file folders; papers; several orange computer disks; toilet seat with electrical cord; party hats; champagne glasses; peanut shells; clipboard; briefcase; contract; pen; surgical fatigues; mask with Groucho Marx nose, glasses and eyebrows; box of candy; bags from a fast food restaurant; cameras; gurney; aspirin; glass of water; wheelchair; pills; crime scene tape; envelope; notepad and pen; brushes for fingerprinting; folder of scattered papers; a list; photo; incense burner; paper bag; walkie-talkie; magazine; bedpan; notes; hypodermic syringe; stethoscope, starter gun; and handcuffs.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: In the Emergency Room reception area at County Community General Hospital at the beginning of an all-night shift. NURSE BETTY leans on the desk as DR. FRANK N. STEIN shows her his latest gadget, toilet seat with an electrical cord attached.)

BETTY: Gosh, Dr. Stein ... that's just amazing!
FRANK: Do you really think so?
ANNOUNCER:: Dr. Stein ... Dr. Frank N. Stein ... you're wanted in the psychiatric unit. Dr. Stein!
BETTY: I guess you gotta go.
FRANK: *(To the PA.)* Hold your horses, lady! *(To BETTY.)* It's a beauty, ha?
BETTY: Who wouldn't want a heated toilet seat? It sure would take the chill out of chilly mornings!
FRANK: It's got three temperature settings --
BETTY: I see that -- warm buns, baked buns, hot cross buns. Clever! I'd buy one in a second.
FRANK: You wanna buy this one?
BETTY: But, Doctor ... it's your only one ... the prototype. You need to save it for posterity. Some day they'll put it in a museum or something.
FRANK: You think so?
BETTY: It's what they do with all the world's great inventions.
FRANK: And then I'll be remembered for something important!
BETTY: But being a doctor is so noble, so ... unselfish and humanitarian.
FRANK: I'd rather be rich and famous like you know who in Room 48.
BETTY: Will Bates? The owner of Computers Galore? He's such a boring nerd!

(FIONA, SHANNON, and FRED enter left, dancing, wearing party hats, holding champagne bottles and glasses.)

(They slowly dance across the stage to exit right under next dialogue.)

BETTY: *(Continued.)* Excuse me, where are you going?
FIONA: To cheer up Mr. Bates!
SHANNON: He's in the hospital, you know!
BETTY: Excuse me, but we don't allow dancing in here ...
FRED: It's okay, if I put my back out, there are plenty of doctors around!
FIONA: Hey! Speaking of doctors, did you hear the one --

(As they exit, SHANNON and FRED roar as FIONA tells a joke.)

FRANK: Yeah ... he's a real boring guy.
BETTY: I'm sure you lead a very exciting life.
FRANK: Yeah ... I work all night here ... then go back to my basement apartment. I feed my parakeet Igor, work on my inventions ... heat up a Lean Cuisine meal for one ... go to sleep and show up here at six. I can hardly contain my excitement.
ANNOUNCER: Dr. Stein! To the psychiatric unit immediately!
FRANK: *(To PA.)* Just --
ANNOUNCER: And don't tell me to hold my horses! Move it!

(FRANK salutes PA and exits right. BETTY sits behind desk and begins to type on her computer.)

BETTY: Another unusual -- or shall I say sinister -- character at County Community General Hospital is Dr. Frank N. Stein, our head psychiatrist. By day, meek and mild-mannered. But by night, a mad scientist who experiments in his basement apartment with electricity ... chemicals ... and stolen body parts!

(KATE enters up right from office behind NURSE BETTY.)

End of Freeview

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