

RETURN OF THE HORSEMAN

A drama for the stage in two acts

by

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Running time: 115 minutes.

CAST

3F/2M play 12 roles (number of lines in parenthesis)

F mid-70s	MRS. GALLIPO (570)	Slight build. Scattered
F mid-40s	NURSE (239)	Efficient.
	ABIGAIL (54)	MRS. GALLIPO at 45. Caring.
	CYNTHIA (22)	Probing.
M mid-40s	DOCTOR (107)	Officious
	PATRICK (89)	MRS. GALLIPO's husband at 45. Dedicated.
M 20-25	MICHAEL (52)	M 20 MRS. GALLIPO's son at 20. Spontaneous.
	CLARK (14)	M 25 HMO rep. Efficient.
	JANITOR (22)	M 22 Happy.
	PAT (41)	M 24 MRS. GALLIPO's husband at 24. Ambitious.
F 20-24	ABI (39)	F 20 MRS. GALLIPO at 20. Supportive.
	JUNIOR NURSE (18)	F 22 Willing.

Three different voices are prerecorded or delivered O.S.:

PLAY-BY-PLAY (31)	M. Baseball radio play-by-play
CONTINUITY (9)	F. Radio continuity
RESIDENCE (13)	F. Residence announcer

The number in parenthesis after the character name is the character's number of lines.

A room in the Lakeview Residence for patients with age-related mental disorders.

ACT I

Scene 1: Lakeview Residence  
Scene 2: Diagnosis  
Scene 3: The Family Home  
Scene 4: Admittance  
Scene 5: Discovery

ACT II

Scene 1: The Test  
Scene 2: Departure

#### STAGE

For minimal production: a bed, a table, chairs.

Otherwise: a table with chairs, prominent. A working table lamp, an unconnected telephone and an unconnected radio sit on the table. Under the table is a garbage can. The table and chairs are the only pieces common to the three locations and times in the life of the main character, Mrs. Gallipo:

- A: The bedroom she now occupies in Lakeview Residence.
- B: The interview room at Lakeview Residence.
- C: The center of her home as it was.

The bedroom contains a bed and a bedside table, on which sits a nurse-call buzzer control. Against a wall is a chest of drawers. Prominent is an intercom-sized loudspeaker with a clearly visible signal lamp. The loudspeaker delivers all three O.S. voices. The home as it was contains typical living-room furniture and objects.

O.S. Voices: RESIDENCE voice is clear. CONTINUITY and RESIDENCE voices come to us from the past. The signal lamp is on only while RESIDENCE is speaking. RESIDENCE voice is overlaid on preppy background musak. PLAY-BY-PLAY is overlaid on crowd sounds from a high-school baseball game. CONTINUITY interrupts PLAY-PY-PLAY and is overlaid on silence.

#### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Óisín: Oh-sheen.  
Niamh: Nee-uv.  
Tír na nÓg: tseer nu noog ("noog" rhymes with "know").  
Fíanna: Fee-un-na.

#### PAUSES AND SILENCES

The play unfolds to us in the mind of MRS. GALLIPO. Pauses and silences are hers. She PAUSES to reconnect quickly. During a SILENCE, her mind slips to another frame of reference and may or may not return to the previous frame.

Ellipses (...) in MRS. GALLIPO's lines denotes a loss of concentration or inability to find the word or memory.

Double dashes (--) denote interruption.

ACT I

SCENE ONE: LAKEVIEW RESIDENCE

MRS. GALLIPO (66), RESIDENCE (2), DOCTOR (3), NURSE (53),  
PLAY-BY-PLAY (4), ABIGAIL (2)

LIGHTS UP on MRS. GALLIPO in the  
bedroom. She is wearing an  
inexpensive overcoat and a small  
beret and holding a bunch of  
flowers. Silence as she looks  
around this strange room

MRS. GALLIPO

It's nice, I suppose. I wouldn't like it here myself. Too  
quiet.

(Pause)

I'd like to go now, Michael. I've finished the numbers for  
today.

RESIDENCE

Attention. Mrs. Butt's flowers are missing again. If you see  
them, buzz your nurse. Now here is your afternoon music.  
Relax and enjoy.

Rhythmic musak starts from the PA.  
DOCTOR ENTERS carrying a small  
nondescript suitcase which he  
places on the table

DOCTOR

You know not to bother the security guard.

MRS. GALLIPO

Stay away from me, Patrick. I'm leaving.

DOCTOR

The others must not be disturbed.

MRS. GALLIPO

Fuck the others. Is Michael with you?

DOCTOR

We can't have you wandering off like that, Mrs. Gallipo.  
Nurse will have to keep a closer eye on you.

(EXITS)

MRS. GALLIPO

(Seeing the suitcase)

Is someone leaving? I wouldn't stay in a place like this either. We should visit my mother. She's not well, you know.

NURSE

(ENTERS)

It's rest period and I'll take those (flowers).

MRS. GALLIPO

(Resisting)

They're for Michael. He's playing tonight.

NURSE

Michael doesn't need flowers. Now lie down and relax to the music.

MRS. GALLIPO

I'll go with you. To the game. We'll take the flowers.

NURSE

I'm on all night and you're going nowhere.

MRS. GALLIPO

Nothing happens here.

NURSE

Nothing supposed to happen, Abigail Gallipo. And I'm here to make sure nothing ever does. Now get undressed and I'll unpack your suitcase.

(Pause)

It's nap time.

MRS. GALLIPO

I'm not tired.

NURSE

You never are.

(She straightens the bed clothes)

Now I want you in the bed and no talking. I'll get something to help you relax. In the meantime, Mrs. Butt will be glad to have these (flowers) back.

(EXITS with the flowers and MRS. GALLIPO's coat and beret)

MRS. GALLIPO

THOSE ARE MY FLOWERS.

(Pause)

This is not my bed. What's it doing here anyway? I can't sleep now. Michael knows I'm here. I have to be ready. They said he would not be long. Why he leaves me here, I don't know.

(Pause)

(MORE)

MRS. GALLIPO (cont'd)

This is not my bed. It's facing North and I'm not sick.

(Pause. Presses the buzzer)

I HAVE TO PEE.

(Pause)

I'LL DO IT ON THE FLOOR. Watch me. YOU'LL BE SORRY. I goddam guarantee it and turn off that damned noise.

(Squats)

RESIDENCE

(Replaces musak)

Attention. Bob Crawford as asked us to announce that he will be returning to his brother-in-law's in Weaver Township as soon as transportation is available.

PLAY-BY-PLAY

Jim Sweeney at River Stadium with the play-by-play on KOEH your home for high school baseball.

MRS. GALLIPO

Wait! I said I'll be there. I'm in the bathroom! I wait fifteen minutes for this stall and now you start the game.

PLAY-BY-PLAY

Tonight our very own Rockets from Booneville High take on the visiting Panthers from Pine City for the last spot in the North Central Regional playoffs.

MRS. GALLIPO

Rockets, four; Panthers, three.

PLAY-BY-PLAY

Many in the crowd here tonight to see pitcher Michael Gallipo, son of my good friends Doctor Gallipo and his lovely wife, Abigail, up at Lakeview Clinic. Gallipo has a one point nine E-R-A.

MRS. GALLIPO

One point four, Jim.

PLAY-BY-PLAY

We'll be back for the first pitch right after this.

NURSE ENTERS with MRS. BUTT's flowers and a vase of water. She begins to arrange the flowers in the vase

MRS. GALLIPO

Did Michael come home?

NURSE

We have chairs.

MRS. GALLIPO  
I want to talk to Abigail.

NURSE  
Why ask my permission to talk to yourself?

MRS. GALLIPO  
I don't need your permission.

NURSE  
Do we need to visit the bathroom?

MRS. GALLIPO  
I don't. I'll let you decide for yourself.  
(Pause)  
If I wanted to pee I'd say so.  
(Rising from her squat)

NURSE  
Suit yourself. I'm not changing your bedding again.

MRS. GALLIPO  
No one asked you to.

NURSE  
Mrs. Butt says the flowers are not hers.

MRS. GALLIPO  
She's right for once.

NURSE  
She wants to know if you touched them.

MRS. GALLIPO  
The old bat is touched herself. Is that my suitcase?

NURSE  
I'll put your things away.

MRS. GALLIPO  
I'm returning that suitcase. It's not me.

NURSE opens the suitcase to reveal a knot of blouses and scarves. She retrieves a jewelry box and a children's storybook from the suitcase

MRS. GALLIPO (cont'd)  
I want that jewelry box left on the table.

NURSE  
Then stop putting it in your suitcase.

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NURSE hands jewelry box to MRS.  
GALLIPO and packs the clothes away  
in a drawer. MRS. GALLIPO opens the  
jewelry box and it plays a melody.  
Nurse becomes ABIGAIL

ABIGAIL

(To 'MOTHER' in bed)

Are you awake, mother?

MRS. GALLIPO

Never mind her. Is Michael home?

ABIGAIL

(To 'MOTHER')

Michael is playing his last game tonight.

MRS. GALLIPO

(Closes jewelry box with a snap)

Not his last game.

Abigail becomes NURSE

NURSE

Still talking about Michael?

MRS. GALLIPO

He's here? At home? I want to go home. Take me home and I'll  
piss there and listen to the game in peace.

NURSE

Maybe next week.

MRS. GALLIPO

I always go home after finishing the books.

NURSE

This is your home.

MRS. GALLIPO

I've been doing the books for years, you know.

NURSE

You live here.

MRS. GALLIPO

My home has real furniture.

NURSE

All they can afford.

MRS. GALLIPO

Whoever lives here must be...

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NURSE  
Lonely?

MRS. GALLIPO  
Glad it's summer.

NURSE  
You love it here.

MRS. GALLIPO  
I do?  
(Beat)  
I DO NOT!  
(Beat)  
The people here are strange.  
(Confidentially)  
There was a man in the bathroom and he was... with an  
orange... coat. Is it summer?

NURSE  
Mr. Spigutz?

MRS. GALLIPO  
(Confidentially)  
Spiggy. We call him Spiggy on account of...

NURSE  
He looks like a long drink of water.

MRS. GALLIPO  
He was stuck in the window. Trying to jump. Kill himself.

NURSE  
This is a one story building.

MRS. GALLIPO  
Since when?

NURSE  
Since always.

MRS. GALLIPO  
Then who is living upstairs?

NURSE  
I don't know. Your friends, maybe.

MRS. GALLIPO  
I have no friends, no family. No visitors. Except Michael.

NURSE  
(Overlap)  
Except Michael. Now we need to undress.

During the following line, NURSE helps MRS. GALLIPO get undressed into her sleep attire. It is a slow process, interrupted by MRS. GALLIPO unintentionally reversing the work

NURSE (cont'd)

Mr. Spigutz was trying to escape again. He did his ACID test yesterday and... well, it could have been better.

MRS. GALLIPO

Are you a doctor? I am not sick, you know. I came to visit and they will not let me leave. I have things to do. Michael will be leaving for the game soon and I haven't started dinner yet. I'm doing a pot roast. His favorite. He's leaving for college tomorrow. Pre-med. Just like... His father want's him to start here at the clinic ASAP. Michael wants to go abroad of course. He gets his wanderlust from me. Doctor's without borders or some such. Those flowers are dieing.

NURSE

Because you haul them from room to room. Mr. Butt brings them in for the benefit of all.

MRS. GALLIPO

I brought the flowers; not Mr. Butt!

NURSE

And when was that?

MRS. GALLIPO

Recently.

NURSE

You have not been outside the front gate since you got here.

MRS. GALLIPO

I brought gardenias. Not those sad little things.

NURSE

And you can bring more next weekend. From your garden.

MRS. GALLIPO

We have no garden. We live over there.

NURSE

You live in the mall parking lot?

MRS. GALLIPO

Yes.

NURSE

So you could not have brought flowers from your garden.

MRS. GALLIPO

That's what I'm trying to tell you. You should listen. It's easy. You point your...

(Pause)

I brought them from the flower shop. Over there. You must be new here. I will talk to my husband about hiring people without my say so. Now please inform him that I am finished with the books for today and I will see him at home.

MRS. GALLIPO makes for the door but is guided back to the bed by NURSE

NURSE

Into bed now, Mrs. Gallipo, and I'll get your meds.

MRS. GALLIPO

My name is Abigail.

NURSE

And a lovely name it is.

MRS. GALLIPO

I'm not tired.

NURSE

I want you in that bed.

MRS. GALLIPO

If you want someone in the bed, get in yourself.

NURSE

I'll tell your husband you are good.

MRS. GALLIPO

He knows I'm good. We make fiki-fiki all the time and he says I'm really good.

NURSE

Do you want me to get the janitor and the gardener?

MRS. GALLIPO

I'm not taking visitors and I'm not getting in there. It's facing the wrong way. Bad luck.

NURSE

It's been like that since you got here and you never complained before.

(Pause, moves the bed)

Better?

MRS. GALLIPO  
 (Gets into bed)  
 See if Spiggy is free.

NURSE EXITS

MRS. GALLIPO (cont'd)  
 Don't think I don't know what you're trying to do. Shut me  
 away and hope I die. Save the cost of putting me down. Well  
 that's not going to happen.  
 (Gets from bed and moves it to the  
 correct alignment)  
 I haven't lost my marbles yet and you're not sending me to  
 the death house when I do. I'll get Spiggy. If he hasn't  
 jumped. He's ready. So am I. We'll do it. Together. We'll...  
 go to the game.

Door closes off

MRS. GALLIPO (cont'd)  
 Michael, is that you? I EXPECTED YOU EARLIER. I'll get my  
 bag. Not that suitcase. I can't be seen walking around with  
 that thing. The red and blue striped bag we take to the  
 beach.

(That bag is nowhere to be seen)  
 Things move around in this place like little leaguers under  
 an infield pop-up.

The phone rings

MRS. GALLIPO (cont'd)  
 (Making for the phone)  
 Michael!

NURSE  
 (ENTERING with a tray of medication and  
 a glass of water)  
 Out of bed?

MRS. GALLIPO  
 I have to answer that.

NURSE  
 (Guiding MRS. GALLIPO to the bed)  
 Answer what?

MRS. GALLIPO  
 That. That. You answer it. Quickly. It'll be Michael.

NURSE  
 I have no business taking your private calls, my lady, if and  
 when you get any.

The phone stops ringing

MRS. GALLIPO

You missed it.

NURSE

It didn't ring. It can't ring. It's not connected. Why you keep it is beyond me.

MRS. GALLIPO

But they called earlier about a... They want me to go down town to the.... Said they brought in... It's slipped my mind. Do you know?

NURSE

Dementia, dear. It comes and goes.

MRS. GALLIPO

It does?

NURSE

You're early-stage. Lots of time left and you'll do fine. After a good night's sleep you'll pass tomorrow's test with colors flying.

MRS. GALLIPO

Flying colors.

NURSE

And you'll pass the test after that, and the test after that.

MRS. GALLIPO

I don't think I'll do a test now, thank you.

NURSE

You really don't have a choice.

MRS. GALLIPO

I was never good at tests. Thank you for considering me though.

NURSE

You'll ace it.

NURSE hands a large red pill and a glass of water to MRS. GALLIPO

MRS. GALLIPO

Did the man in the orange robe...

NURSE

Mr. Spigutz.