

THE EVERLASTING GOD STOPPER

by:
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THE EVERLASTING GOD STOPPER

Players:

ARTHUR: by all appearances, an ordinary 40-year-old man

MINNIE: an elderly schoolteacher wearing a gaudy, multicolored jacket and a rainbow of pens and colored pencils in her hair

DR. FALWELL: a wise, old physician with a comically large potbelly and posterior

NURSE MALKIN: a busty, gum-chewing nurse wearing a pink wig and cat-eye glasses

The play takes place in a private hospital room at St. Ronald's Hospital, a thoroughly modern, clean and hypoallergenic facility located on the outskirts of the seaside city of New Knoxville, Tennessee, formerly known as the underwear capital of the world.

The year is 2043.

AT RISE: A hospital room with a bed, chair and a complicated looking machine. The machine has a large red button and a nameplate reading E.L.G.S.

ARTHUR is atop the bed. He appears to be in a profound state of unconsciousness, or what doctors call a coma. He is fettered to the E.L.G.S. machine by a long blue cord.

MINNIE is seated nearby. She is grading a stack of papers in her lap.

MINNIE

O, George, George... We have never been at war with Eurasia. And, what's this? We have always been at war with Oceania? [*Tisk-tisk*] Ungood.

ARTHUR groans loudly, startling MINNIE.

MINNIE screams and leaps to her feet.

Aaaah!

ARTHUR

Aaaah!

MINNIE

[*Tossing her papers in the air*] Doctor! Doctor!

MINNIE rushes to ARTHUR's bedside and begins planting a series of lovesick kisses on ARTHUR's face.

ARTHUR

Aaaaah! Stop that! Stop!

MINNIE

You're awake!

DR. FALWELL rushes onstage.

NURSE MALKIN casually strolls in behind him.

NURSE MALKIN

[*Flat*] Alert the media. He's awake.

ARTHUR

Stop! Would somebody mind telling me! Stop! Where I am? Who is this woman? STOP!

MINNIE backs off.

DR. FALWELL

[*With a chuckle*] There-there, my boy. Don't get so excited. You're in St. Ronald's Hospital. The best hospital in all of New Knoxville.

MINNIE attempts to resume her shower of kisses, but is repelled by ARTHUR.

ARTHUR

And who the hell is she?

MINNIE

O, Artie. Don't toy with me.

DR. FALWELL

Now, Minnie, Arthur's been unconscious for nearly forty years.

ARTHUR

Forty years!

NURSE MALKIN

Give or take a week.

NURSE MALKIN sticks a thermometer in ARTHUR's mouth.

DR. FALWELL

Arthur, I know this must seem odd. You're probably having trouble remembering—

MINNIE

O, he remembers. Love never forgets.

DR. FALWELL

But, we've restored your body and brain to tip-top condition. Any minute now, you'll remember everything.

MINNIE, DR. FALWELL and NURSE MALKIN eye ARTHUR expectantly.

Sometimes it takes a while.

MINNIE, DR. FALWELL and NURSE MALKIN continue to eye ARTHUR expectantly.

NURSE MALKIN rolls her eyes and takes the thermometer.

DR. FALWELL

It's the severity of the brain damage.

ARTHUR

Brain damage?

DR. FALWELL

A slow re-boot. That's what I call cases like this.

ARTHUR

But, I feel fine. Just fine.

NURSE MALKIN

You don't look too shabby either.

NURSE MALKIN runs her fingers through ARTHUR's hair.

MINNIE

Back off, girlie. He's *my* husband, not yours.

ARTHUR

Husband? You're old enough to be my grandmother!

MINNIE

[*Puh!*] We're one year, three weeks and two days apart.

ARTHUR

Baloney.

MINNIE

And *you're* the older one.

ARTHUR looks to DR. FALWELL.

ARTHUR

How's that possible?

NURSE MALKIN

[Gesturing to the machine with the big red button] The Everlasting God Stopper!

ARTHUR

The everlasting what?

MINNIE

The machine. She means the machine.

DR. FALWELL

It's a highly-advanced, finely-tuned marvel of man's ingenuity. *Not* an Everlasting God Stopper. To call it that diminishes the genius of mankind. It's a childlike moniker coined by people who know nothing about science.

[Eyeing NURSE MALKIN] Absolutely nothing.

NURSE MALKIN blows and pops a bubble.

ARTHUR

But what is it?

DR. FALWELL

It's the latest technology from New Panasonic, a wonder of science and capitalism. It's an Evo-particle Latibular Genome Serumoscillator.

ARTHUR

A what?

MINNIE

[Gaily] An Evo-particle Latibular Genome Serumoscillator.

DR. FALWELL

It's complicated, especially if you've just come out of a coma, so we'll just call it the E.L.G.S.

NURSE MALKIN

[Phibbight!] The Everlasting God Stopper!

ARTHUR

I don't care what you call it. I just want to know what it does.

DR. FALWELL

Tell me, Arthur. Do you remember a thing called nuclear energy?

ARTHUR
Yes. Of course.

DR. FALWELL
Good. Do you know what stem cells are?

ARTHUR
[Angrily] Embryonic stem cells?

MILLIE
O, my goodness, no. No, no, no.

DR. FALWELL
No. Pluripotent stem cells.

ARTHUR
[Reassured] O. Okay, then... Adult stem cells?

DR. FALWELL
You see, we discovered, years ago, that embryonic cells were only good for curing disease, not for sustaining life. [With cheer] Thanks to adult stem cells, we still have plenty of incurable, but treatable, diseases.

ARTHUR
That's a good thing?

DR. FALWELL
If I want to buy a five-bedroom condo in New Aspen, yes.

ARTHUR
Did you say years ago? What year is it?

MINNIE
It's 2043 A.D., *anno Domini*. Or three A.O., *après* Obama, in the new calendar system.

ARTHUR
And *that's* my wife?

DR. FALWELL and NURSE MALKIN
Yes.

MINNIE
C'est moi!

ARTHUR
This is a nightmare.

MINNIE
Well, Artie. It's not my fault. You told me not to pull the plug. You said, "Minnie, if I'm ever hooked up to a machine, make damn sure I'm dead before pulling the plug."

MINNIE [continued]

Which, if you think about it, makes no sense. I mean, why hook a dead person up to machine? It took me a while to figure that out.

ARTHUR

Forty years?

MINNIE

O, you don't know what I went through.

DR. FALWELL

None of this is important, now. The fact is you're here and in perfect health. Thanks to the E.L.G.S.

NURSE MALKIN

The Everlasting God Stopper!

DR. FALWELL

[*Annoyed*] Nurse Malkin...

ARTHUR

Look. I don't understand. Look at my hands. My arms. My face. I'm a young man.

DR. FALWELL

That's the beauty of the everlasting—err, the E.L.G.S. As long as you remain hooked up, it rejuvenates the body to its most optimal condition, completely and continually. Bottom line, thanks to neutrons and pluripotent stem cells, you will never grow old and you will never die.

MINNIE

Isn't that wonderful, Artie?

ARTHUR

Hmm...

DR. FALWELL

Of course, now that you're awake, we have some restorative hygiene to discuss.

ARTHUR

Restorative hygiene?

DR. FALWELL

The E.L.G.S. is still experimental and there are a few common sense, pro-life maintenance steps you'll need to take while connected to the machine.

NURSE MALKIN

And some wicked side effects.

DR. FALWELL
Mild side effects.

ARTHUR
Like?

DR. FALWELL
Flatulence, for one.

ARTHUR
I guess I can live with that.

NURSE MALKIN
Frequent and painful flatulence.

DR. FALWELL
A natural byproduct of continual cell renewal.

ARTHUR
That's horrible...

NURSE MALKIN
It gets worse. Scaly rashes, constipation, suicidal thoughts, restless leg syndrome, disruptive snoring and night terrors.

ARTHUR
You're kidding.

MINNIE
Sleepwalking, uncontrolled drooling and muscle tremors.

ARTHUR
My God.

NURSE MALKIN
And occasional loss of bladder control.

MINNIE
Just think, I have to sleep with him!

ARTHUR
What? Why would you do that?

NURSE MALKIN
Because she's your wife.

MINNIE
That's right!

ARTHUR

But, I'm too young to be hooked up to a machine and sleeping with a withered, wrinkled, dried-up, old—

MINNIE

Hey!

DR. FALWELL

In any event, to make sure that you're not endangering your longevity with banned substances like alcohol and chocolate, we'll send you home with a Bedbug 3000. It will draw your blood and urine every night while you sleep.

ARTHUR

That's too much.

MINNIE

O, it's not so bad.

ARTHUR

What if I don't want to be hooked up to a God Stopper? What if I don't want nightly blood and urine tests, and night terrors, and flatulence?

MINNIE and NURSE MALKIN eye the big red button on the machine.

DR. FALWELL

Well... As a classically trained physician, I am required to tell you about all your options.

NURSE MALKIN hovers near the big red button.

You may terminate your life at any time by disconnecting the E.L.G.S.—

NURSE MALKIN

[*Excited*] Or by pushing this big red button!

ARTHUR

Hey! Let's not be hasty!

MINNIE

No!

NURSE MALKIN

[*Humph!*] Killjoy...

ARTHUR

Bitch.

[*Gesturing*] Come here, Minnie.

MINNIE steps closer to ARTHUR.

MINNIE
Yes, Artie?

ARTHUR
You know, you *are* starting to look familiar.

DR. FALWELL
I told you. I call it a slow reboot.

ARTHUR
Didn't we have a walkup apartment in Little Italy?

MINNIE
Yes, yes we did, Artie.

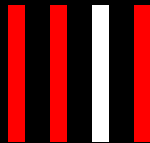
ARTHUR
And didn't you make an apple pie every Sunday?

MINNIE
With the flakiest crust and sweetest apples you ever did taste.

ARTHUR
[Smiling] And we were in love.

MINNIE
Yes! O, Artie! You're back!

MINNIE throws herself on top of ARTHUR.



**FIND OUT HOW
THIS PLAY ENDS.**

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