

Mr. Smith Goes to the Hospital

By

Alex Dunn

Copyright Alex Dunn, 2011

dunn.alex@gmail.com

ACT I

Scene 1

*Sally is lying in a hospital bed, covered in bandages. The other beds are empty. There is nothing on her night-stand.*

*Smith enters, holding a bunch of flowers.*

SMITH

How're you holding up, Sally?

*He pulls a chair over to her bed and sits.*

SALLY

(muffled)

That you, Smith?

SMITH

Yeah. Brought you flowers.

SALLY

Really? What kind?

SMITH

Not sure. Here, have a smell.

*He pushes the roses into the bandages covering her face.*

SALLY

(even more muffled)

You shouldn't have.

*Smith puts the flowers onto the night-stand.*

SMITH

Yeah, probably not. Can you even see them?

SALLY

No, but it's the thought that counts.

SMITH

Not really. How did your operation go?

*Sally lifts her stiff arms a few inches in an attempted shrug.*

SALLY

They won't know if it worked for another two weeks.

(CONTINUED)

SMITH

That's rough. Do you want me to bring you anything when I come tomorrow?

SALLY

Oh, Smith, you don't have to visit me every day.

*Smith waves it away.*

SMITH

Just doing my duty.

SALLY

But isn't it such an inconvenience? Aren't there other things you'd rather be doing than wasting your time with me?

SMITH

(looking around)

I certainly hope I'm not wasting my time. Is there a cancer ward in this hospital?

SALLY

I'm glad you're here, Smith.

SMITH

As soon as you're not, let me know.

SALLY

What do you mean?

SMITH

Well, I was walking over here and I overheard a young lady talking to her mother on the phone. This girl just had a baby, and the father ran out or something, so she's taking care of the thing all on her own. But she's supposed to give a job talk today, and she's heard the department head is biased against women with children, so she really doesn't want to have to bring the kid with her. I almost offered to babysit for her, but then I realized how much it must suck to be in all these bandages. Do you need me to scratch an itch, or something?

SALLY

Wait, do you know her?

SMITH

No. Why?

SALLY

I mean, why else would you take care of her baby after telling me you'd some visit?

SMITH

Think about how bad the job market is right now. This might be her only chance.

SALLY

So you only came to me because you decided my need was greater?

SMITH

Pretty much. She'll still be able to give her talk. Let's hope the chair will be reasonable.

SALLY

(indignant)

So what if there was someone in the next bed with even more broken bones? Would you give them the flowers instead?

SMITH

Depends on how much they like flowers.

SALLY

I thought you cared about me, Smith!

SMITH

I do care about your suffering! That's why I came!

SALLY

Not about my suffering, about me! Don't you care about me?

SMITH

I'm not sure if that's a valid distinction.

*Silence.*

SALLY

Maybe you should leave.

SMITH

Okie-doke.

(checks his watch)

Look at that, her talk doesn't start for another hour. I hope I can remember what university she's at.

(gets up)

Feel better, Sally.

*He leaves.*

SALLY

Thanks for nothing!

*The nurse enters. She stops several steps from Sally's bed.*

NURSE

Are you alright? Can I get you anything?

SALLY

No.

*The nurse nods, turns to leave.*

SALLY

Wait!

*The nurse stops.*

SALLY

Could you just . . . sit with me for a while?

NURSE

(comes to the bed)

Of course.

*The nurse sits in the chair that Smith left.  
Curtain.*