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# The Men

By Carl Foreman

That was a bad shot,  
or else he was impatient.  
He must've aimed for my head,  
but he got me in the back.  
I was scared. I couldn't feel  
anything from my waist down.  
I thought I was dying.  
It's funny.  
It's very, very funny.  
I was afraid I was gonna die.  
Now I'm afraid I'm gonna live.  
"Oh, you'll be walking again  
in a couple of months,  
Lieutenant Wilczek."  
How many months?  
I've lost count.  
But let's keep it gay.  
Soldier, repeat after me:  
"The war's over now, and I'm  
glad I'm still half alive.  
I'm a lucky-"  
- A fine way to treat a Silver Star.  
- Turn the light out.  
Good night.  
You know how it is.  
You read a lot of things.  
You hear a lot of things.  
You get a lot of misinformation  
from people who oughta know better.  
Okay, let's summarize  
what we've learned.  
Paraplegia is the result  
of an injury to the spinal cord.  
That break in the cord causes  
immediate and lasting paralysis...  
of motion and feeling  
in the lower body.  
In general, most paraplegic  
patients will, at various times,  
suffer all  
of the following symptoms:  
pain, muscular spasms,  
bed sores,  
paralysis of the bladder

and bowels.

However, all of these  
may and can be controlled...  
by medical therapy, surgery,  
proper nutrition,  
physical rehabilitation  
and self-care.

Lastly, the question of walking.

In almost every case, the word  
"walk" must be forgotten.

It no longer exists.

In short, most paraplegics...  
must content themselves  
with life in a wheelchair.

Make yourselves accept that.

It'll make it

a lot easier for them.

Well, I've talked a long time.

Perhaps there are some  
questions you'd like to ask.

Doctor, my boy -  
he's only 19.

I know.

But with proper care,  
he may live to be 90.

Doctor-Brock, is it?

Well, this condition-  
there must be some cure.

Paraplegia isn't  
a death sentence any longer.

I'm happy to say  
that in this hospital...  
the mortality rate has been  
less than three percent.

I didn't mean that.

I meant the spine injury.

Surely there must be  
some way of healing it.

There must be  
specialists somewhere.

Madam, there is no method  
known to medical science...  
for the regeneration  
of spinal cord tissue.

None.

Doctor,  
my husband and I,  
we have a little girl.  
We've always wanted  
to have a large family,  
but now if we could just have  
at least one more for the child's sake.  
Will it be possible?

Well, that's difficult to say.  
In some cases, it is possible.  
However, I can't discuss  
your husband here.

I'll be happy to meet  
with you whenever you say.

Dr. Brock, what about  
the bladder and bowels?  
How badly are they affected?  
Most men find that they're capable  
of retraining themselves...  
and in time achieving  
regularity in these functions.  
Any more questions?

Dr. Brock.

We've been married nine years.  
I thought my husband and I knew  
each other as well as anyone could,  
and I want to keep  
our marriage going.

But... he's so changed.

He's different.

He isn't different.

He's the same man  
with a spinal cord injury.

- But when I try...

- Oh, I know right now he's unhappy.

He's depressed.

He feels himself totally  
dependent on others.

He says to himself,

"Im not a man any longer.

I can't make a woman happy."

Is it any wonder he finds it difficult  
to adjust to the situation?

But... how long will it take?  
Face it  
It's going to take time.  
It's going to take patience.  
For you and for him.  
But... will we have  
anything in common now?  
No more, no less  
than you had before.  
Dr. Brock,  
if you were a woman,  
would you marry a paraplegic?  
Might as well just ask me  
if I want to get married, period.  
And the answer to that is no.  
However, this young lady here  
is marrying one of our patients.  
You might check with her.  
Any other questions?  
If not, suppose  
we adjourn the meeting?  
And please feel free  
to consult with me whenever  
you have any problems.  
Because you will.  
Good night.  
Good night.  
Good night.  
Doctor?  
- More questions?  
- I'm afraid so.  
You have a patient here  
named Bud Wilczek.  
Kenneth Wilczek.  
We were engaged  
before he went overseas.  
Well, after he was hurt,  
he wrote and said it was all off.  
He's never even let me  
come to see him.  
Why don't you leave him alone?  
Because he doesn't  
really want it that way.  
I know he doesn't.

I know why he's acting  
like this. I'm no fool.  
Besides, you made it  
very clear just now.  
Why don't you write to him?  
I have, naturally.  
He doesn't answer.  
I was so sure you'd help me.  
Don't you understand?  
This is the third hospital  
I've followed him to.  
Yes, I understand.  
What do you want to do?  
- I want to marry him.  
- Why?  
Why? For the usual reasons.  
Do you have parents?  
- Yes.  
- Do they feel as you do?  
Why shouldn't they?  
Anyway, they're not engaged  
to him; I am.  
Well, what do you want me to do?  
You're his doctor.  
You could talk to him.  
I can't interfere  
in his personal life.  
Don't you think he needs me?  
Don't you think I can help him?  
I don't know.  
It takes a pretty special kind  
of woman in a lot of ways.  
Maybe I'm special.  
Maybe.  
Give me a ring in a day or two.  
Oh, thank you, Doctor.  
I will.  
Get up! Get up!  
Here they come!  
Good morning, gentlemen.  
Good morning, Doctor.  
- Hi, Doc.  
- Good morning, Doc.  
- Good morning, Mr. Thompson.

- Good morning, Doctor.
- How are you feeling?
- Okay, Doc.
- What's his residual?
- Nine out, one and a half left.
- Good! How did that happen?
- We just stood around him and prayed.

Well, that's nice, but  
let's keep working on it.

The patient's balance  
of bladder function is now good.

He may proceed with all  
routine activity, including gym.

- How's the family?
- Fine.
- The little one's starting to talk.
- Time sure flies.

You said it.

How are you today,  
Mr. Mullin?

- I'm still here.
- Oh, I see.

Well, let's take  
a look at that closure.

This looks good.

I'm proud of you.

- Did you hear that?
- I heard it.

What are you reading there?

"Nature Girl Meets the Monster."

Oh, please!

Is that all you can find to do?

Read those junky comic books?

Do I tell you what to read?

Closure of the sacral decubitus  
ulcer has been successful.

Patient may proceed  
with routine mild activity.

Hopkins, what are you  
doing here?

You aren't due back  
for two weeks.

- I know.
- Well, what's wrong? What happened?

Nothing. I went home  
and I came back.  
But you didn't use up your month.  
Come on. What's the score?  
Oh, my mother. She means well.  
They all do.  
But they keep telling me I'll walk  
again if I want to bad enough.  
Didn't you explain it to them?  
Sure. So they sit around  
looking at me...  
like I'm a freak on wheels.  
At night I can hear  
my old lady crying.  
Gee, I gotta live too.  
Look, it took you three years  
to get where you are.  
Can't you give them three weeks?  
Will you try it again  
in a month or two?  
If you say so, Doc.  
Yep.  
Good morning, Mr. Fine.  
You look just fine today.  
All right.  
So it's not funny.  
I'm no Jack Benny.  
I'm just a plumber.  
- How's your bladder?  
- Oh, about 10 and one.  
Swell.  
Still got that pain  
in the mid-thoracic region.  
- Where?  
- In the mid-thoracic region.  
He should be a doctor.  
The patient's bladder is now  
automatic and well-balanced.  
A Taylor brace will correct  
his back difficulties,  
but it's suggested  
that he go to the gym..  
More frequently and regularly.  
Have you decided what you're

gonna do when you leave?

Sure.

Sell shoelaces.

Fine, Mr. Fine.

Another Leo Doogan.

That's all we need.

I heard that, Dr. Brock!

Hey, Norm, remember

"Blood and Guts" Patton?

- "Bladder and Bowels" Brock.

- Yeah, the Bashful Butcher.

- You're going back to school.

- Why?

I got a picture of myself addressing  
a jury from my kiddie car.

Why not? Don't be a fool.

You might win a lot of cases.

Education department.

Let's get on the ball here.

- Yes, sir.

- "Yes, sir. Yes, sir."

Good day, Dr. Fine.

You look terrible.

Same to you.

Mr. Baker, I see,

is out to lunch.

He was out late last night  
celebrating his birthday.

- Where's Hamilton?

- Took off just before rounds.

Really?

Well, I want him in my office  
this afternoon.

Yes, sir.

Peek-a-boo, Mr. Baker!

Well, I'm beginning to think  
a survey of the discipline...  
in this ward might be of value.

Don't tell me Newman had  
a pressing engagement elsewhere too?

He's at school, Doctor.

You wanted him to get  
his diploma, remember?

He can't be in two places at once.

All right, Miss Robbins.  
Don't look so superior.  
You're not so smart, either.  
Hey, look!  
Anderson's got his crutches!  
You see that?  
You wait long enough,  
everything happens.  
You're gonna have to  
work hard, George,  
but you got a low-level injury  
and you can do it.  
Has Bricker shown you  
the ways you can ambulate?  
Yeah. Looks pretty hard.  
What do you mean?  
The swing-through gait  
should be pretty easy for you.  
Watch.  
It's slow,  
but it gets you there.  
You see that?  
Why, you can get onto  
it in no time at all.  
- It still looks hard.  
- What? With your build?  
It's a cinch.  
That's good news to me.  
Arise, Mr. Gunderson.  
"Hark, hark, the lark  
at heaven's gate sings,  
and Phoebus 'gins to-"  
Sherman, Weaver, Robbins,  
you know anything about this?  
No, Doctor. I had no idea.  
Did go down to the movies  
the other night against orders.  
I didn't know about it  
till afterward.  
Mr. Gunderson, look at me.  
- Listen, Doc, I couldn't help-  
- You listen to me!  
You know what you've done?  
Does it matter to you that this was

a perfectly good bedsore closure?

Now it's completely broken down.

It's a mess.

- It's not my fault.

- Oh, I'm sure it's not!

It's Dr. Weaver's fault

or Miss Robbins's!

They should've tied you down to  
your bed so you couldn't disobey orders!

What gives you the right to ruin  
good surgery by sheer carelessness?

This patient  
is grounded for a month.

All wheelchair privileges  
are withdrawn,  
and all therapeutic measures  
will be done in bed.

- I'm sorry, Doc.

- I have nothing more to say to you!

- How are you today, Walter?

- All right.

- How's the hand?

- I don't know. Better, I guess.

All right, let's see.

Now, let's see you try  
to bend the fingers.

Good. Good!

Sherman, Weaver,  
come here. Look at this.

Good, Walter.

That's very, very good.

Now let's bear down on  
those resistive exercises.

Let's keep 'em going.

That a boy.

That's right, Max.

Twenty across the board.

And you're in big trouble.

Business as usual,

I see, Mr. Doolin.

I don't believe

I've had the pleasure.

What was your name, sir?

When are you gonna stop taking

advantage of the government?

What do you want me to do? Walk?

I had enough of that in the infantry.

- How is he?

- As usual.

He won't go to the gym

unless we drag him.

All right, drag him down there.

Here's my man.

- How's Tarzan today?

- Oh, fine, Doctor.

I saw your mother

at the auxiliary meeting.

I didn't see Dolores, though.

Ah, that's a cute kid.

Who asked for your opinion?

You big wolf.

Did you see the

man from the bank?

Those guys won't even talk to me

until I get discharged.

Well, you'll have your house.

Ricky tells me you're working

a little too hard in the gym.

- Oh, I don't get tired, Doc.

- Take it easy.

You waited this long.

You can wait a little longer.

Yeah, I guess you're right.

Mr. Howard's been discharged.

Oh, yes. That brings us

to Mr. Fox In The Bush.

Any complaints today,

Mr. Butler?

Just a slight case of paralysis

in both legs.

Nothing serious, you understand.

Everybody's a comedian.

- Let's do a blood chemistry on him.

- What for?

It's my hobby.

Don't you want to be rehabilitated?

No, I don't want to be rehabilitated,  
readjusted, reconditioned or anything.

If you don't mind, I don't want  
to take my proper place in society.  
Does that make my position clear?  
Nevertheless, we'll do  
a blood chemistry on him.  
Thank you, Dr. Kildare.  
Hey, Doc, come here  
a minute, will you?  
It's important.  
Look through the little hole  
and tell me what you see.  
Some doll, eh?  
You moron!  
You're no good!  
You're making more money now  
than you ever made in your life,  
and all you wanna do  
is lie on your back,  
smoke cigars and  
look at naked women!  
You're impossible!  
Wonderful guy.  
You haven't been much help,  
but you're in pretty good shape.  
Much better  
than you deserve to be.  
Thanks.  
Your bedsores have  
practically healed,  
and your kidney condition  
will improve if you exercise.  
You're a well man.  
When do I leave?  
You could do it in a year,  
maybe only six months.  
It'll depend on you.  
You mean in six months  
I could work into a wheelchair.  
That's what you mean, isn't it?  
Well, that'd be wonderful.  
You've been a paraplegic  
for more than a year now.  
Don't you think it's time  
you accepted it?

I accept it. I'm just  
a bad patient, that's all.  
I'm sorry I'm spoilin'  
your record.  
What record?  
You mean all this  
is personal interest?  
Well, Doctor, I'm really touched.  
I'll get well real fast now.  
What is it you want,  
Mr. Wilczek?  
You want to die?  
It'd save the taxpayers  
a lot of money.  
That's very nice of you.  
Oh, uh, I met someone  
who knows you the other day.  
A girl. She says her name  
is Ellen something or other.  
She says you're engaged.  
Look, you keep her out of here.  
You keep her away from me.  
Why? Don't you  
like her anymore?  
Are you through with me?  
All through.  
You keep her out of here!  
You keep her away from me!  
I don't want to see her!  
You hear me?  
I hear you.  
I think it's time we began to get  
a little tough with Wilczek.  
- Let's begin by taking him off drugs.  
- He's got a lot of pain.  
I know, but we've  
got to start sometime.  
Also, he's strong enough  
to be moved into a ward.  
Let's put him in with Lopez  
and those other boys.  
Yes, sir.  
Lopez oughta be good for him,  
and those bench jockeys will

ride him till he's saddle sore.  
Let's do that.  
Where's Brock?  
- I want to see Brock.  
- He'll be around one of these days.  
I wanna see him right now!  
Who's going in?  
Can you tell?  
Oh, no! It can't be!  
We're getting laughing boy.  
King Bubbles  
of the happy islands.  
Good day, gentlemen.  
I'm bringing you a playmate.  
You're too good to us, Robbie.  
If you wasn't so sexy,  
you'd remind me of my mother.  
There you are, handsome.  
If there's anything  
you want, just buzz.  
You know how to buzz,  
don't you?  
If I do buzz,  
will you send somebody else?  
Be nice to Lt. Wilczek, boys.  
He's not a well man.  
Is that all you were, Mac?  
Just a lieutenant?  
How come the put him in here  
with us generals?  
Oh, lay off, Leo.  
Hello, Wilczek. I'm Norm Butler.  
Welcome to the country club.  
I'm supposed to talk  
to all new men about the P.V.A.,  
Paralyzed Veterans of America.  
We've got seven chapters now,  
you know-  
Sorry, I'm not a joiner.  
Hey, don't talk to Norm that way.  
He's a big wheel on the board.  
You might need him someday.  
- I'm not trying to sell you anything.  
- Look, I told you!

I don't want to join any clubs!  
Leave me alone, will ya?  
Norm, can't you hear?  
Leave the lieutenant alone.  
Sure...  
I'll leave him alone.  
Certainly.  
If a man wants to be left alone,  
he's got a right to be left alone.  
Hey, Angel, I'd like to introduce  
you to the lieutenant,  
but he wants  
to be A-L-O-N-E.  
Ah, Leo. Don't mind him.  
He's a clown.  
Yeah, I'm a clown.  
Hey, Norm.  
Did you ever see that picture,  
The Smiling Lieutenant?  
In person.  
Hey, Lieutenant, sir!  
Whose side were you on?  
Don't, Leo.  
He wants to be left alone.  
Who's not leaving him alone?  
The guy's a hero, ain't he?  
"The hero is not fed on sweets.  
Daily his own  
heart he eats."  
Oh, that's beautiful.  
Who wrote that?  
- Emerson.  
- Fine man.  
You know what, Norm?  
I bet you the lieutenant  
won the Silver Star.  
With oak leaf clusters.  
- And a good conduct medal.  
- With oak leaf clusters.  
Honest? You know,  
he should be left alone.  
The best his country can do  
for him is none too good.  
Yes, but you see,

he doesn't want to be a paraplegic.  
He doesn't? That's funny.  
I wouldn't have missed being  
a paraplegic for anything.  
Besides, sooner or later,  
everybody walks.  
I read it in the papers.  
Why don't you give the guy a break?  
He's got pain.  
No foolin'?  
Gee, that's tough.  
You know, I never had any pain.  
Did you, Norm?  
Never.  
Did you, Angel?  
Why don't you  
throw rocks at him?  
You're too dumb to have pain.  
Only smart people have pain.  
Would you mind turning  
your radio down?  
Eh?  
All right, you're a funny guy.  
Now turn it down!  
Eh?  
The lieutenant would like you  
to turn your radio down.  
What's that? Turn it upside-down?  
That's crazy, man!  
Is that an order, Lieutenant, sir?  
Your Highness, sir?  
I don't think so.  
He just thinks it's too loud.  
I can't hear it. Besides,  
I got big money riding on the fourth.  
Turn it down!  
What's the matter, Lieutenant?  
You paralyzed or something?  
Come on over here  
and turn it down yourself!  
I was a captain, Lieutenant,  
and I'm ordering you to cool off.  
Hello, Doctor.  
- Soda?

- No, thanks.

How's Ken?

All right.

When I got your message,  
I came right over.

- I was hoping-

- Yes, I know.

Tell me, how long did you know Ken  
before he went into the army?

It wasn't a wartime romance,  
if that's what you're driving at.

- We met in our first year at college.

- What was he like in those days?

- Naturally, I'm prejudiced.

- Naturally.

He was quite an athlete,  
a very good football player.

I had a lot of competition.

Would you say he was self-centered?

A strong ego?

No. He was an orphan.

He'd been on his own a long time.

And the kids did  
make a fuss over him.

With me, he'd always want  
to be boss.

I let him think he was.

But he's very,  
very nice, honestly.

Have you told him about me?

Yes. He doesn't  
want to see you.

But you're going  
to help me, aren't you?

I'm going to arrange  
for you to see him.

But I'm not doing it  
to help you.

I hope it'll help him.

That's fair enough.

You know, I have a feeling  
you don't like me very much.

Why?

That isn't so.

I don't even know you.

You seem to be a very nice girl,  
but you could turn out  
to be very bad for him.

How?

Well, if you're going into  
this because you're sorry for him-  
Don't you think I'm the best judge  
of my own emotions?

Possibly.

Hi, Doc.

You see, men like him...

with drive, ambition,  
high hopes...

usually find it hard  
to make an adjustment,  
and he's no exception.

But I don't think you realize that  
you've got an adjustment to make too.  
Maybe I already have.

Have you?

I've got a hunch about you.

I've got a feeling that down deep  
you're hoping for a miracle-  
some piece of magic that'll restore  
this man to you as he was.

Is it wrong to hope?

There's a motto on the wall  
of my office.

It goes like this:

"Please, God, give us the strength  
to do the impossible,  
"but give us the courage to recognize  
what is really impossible.  
And, above all, give us the wisdom  
to distinguish between them."

May I see him now?

No. Come to my office  
tomorrow night about 8:00.

There's a wedding, and  
he'll be alone in the ward.

Thank you.

Bud?

How did you get in here?

Dr. Brock arranged it.  
Don't look at me!  
What do you want?  
What did you come here for?  
I told you I didn't want  
anything to do with you!  
Can't you understand  
English, you stupid idiot?  
Bud, darling, please.  
"Bud, darling, please."  
Start walking!  
- No.  
- I'll get you out of here.  
Will you get out!  
No.  
All right, I'll give you  
what you want.  
You wanna see what it's  
like? All right, look.  
I said look at me!  
Get a good look, Ellie.  
Does it make you feel healthy?  
Is that what you want?  
Okay, you can go home now.  
I'm not going home, Bud.  
I'm staying with you.  
Who asked you to pity me?  
Why did you have to come?  
Why didn't you listen?  
I listened to you once.  
I should've made you marry  
me before you went away.  
Ellie, go away, please.  
What is it with you?  
Don't you see it's all over?  
How about some light in here?  
Let's turn on those lights.  
Come on, open it up!  
Come on, hurry up!  
Hey, that's not fair!  
Everybody over to ward  
Ward  
Ward  
- Bud-

- No, Ellie, no.  
Why not?  
Why not us?  
I told you.  
I told you why not.  
Oh, we could make it.  
We still love each other.  
That hasn't changed.  
Ellen, you don't know pity from love,  
and you don't owe me anything.  
Well, you owe me something.  
I've waited four years.  
I've followed you  
from one hospital to another.  
Oh, Bud,  
we could really make it.  
I worked all through the war.  
I'm working now.  
I mean, what would I be doing?  
I'd go back to school  
on an athletic scholarship.  
I'd get a job weaving baskets.  
What do you wanna do,  
wait on me hand and foot all your life?  
I'm like a baby.  
You could build yourself up.  
Others do.  
You could try. You might even  
walk again if you tried.  
There's no hope.  
The wires are cut.  
All right.  
But you could get better.  
You could do lots of things.  
Oh, please, please try!  
Don't you see?  
I need you.  
There'll never be anyone else.  
Oh, darling!  
Don't you want us to be happy?  
Sure, I want us to be happy,  
honey, but I don't know.  
I don't know.  
A very nice wedding.

Well, I'll tell you.  
With her being a nurse and all,  
I think they got a chance.  
It ain't as if  
she didn't know the score.  
She's doing all right.  
Instead of taking care of a whole  
ward for 280 bucks a month,  
she's got one patient for 360.  
The government gives him  
a transportation allowance,  
so she's got a car.  
The government pays for half a house,  
so she's got a home.  
That's not bad.  
She's a nice girl. She didn't  
marry him for his compensation.  
- It's doomed.  
- What do you mean, doomed?  
Leo, my boy it's not in the nature  
of the normal woman to love one of us.  
This is sad but true,  
and we should face it.  
That's what I mean by doomed.  
Don't you think it  
depends on the people?  
It's not in the cards.  
Normal is normal  
and crippled is crippled,  
and never the twain shall meet.  
Who said that?  
- I did.  
The fact of the matter is we make  
other people uncomfortable.  
You know why?  
Because we remind them that  
their own bodies can be broken...  
just like that.  
And they don't like it.  
You were married once,  
weren't you, Norm?  
Yes.  
Well, she's a nice girl  
and pretty smart.

I think they've got a chance.  
What are you arguin'  
with him for?  
What do you know, dumbhead?  
Go to sleep.  
Come on, slow motion.  
Hit the linoleum!  
Not me.  
I dreamed I was running  
after streetcars all night.  
I gotta stay in bed and rest up.  
Don't disturb him today.  
He's readjusting.  
He's been readjusting  
for three years.  
Hey!  
Where'd you think  
you were going?  
Down to the cigar store.  
You better start  
with cigarettes.  
Hey, Sergeant, one cigar.  
Now I know why  
they call you Tarzan.  
What do you work so hard for?  
I got to. I gotta get outta here.  
I want to get a home.  
- Why? You gettin' married?  
- No. I'll never get married.  
See, I got six little  
brothers and sisters.  
My mother's getting pretty old.  
That makes me the papa now.  
You don't need a house.  
You need a hotel.  
Yeah. See, where we live  
now, it's not so good.  
My kid sister, she's 16.  
A girl like that, she's  
got to have her own room.  
A nice place where she can have  
company, not be on the street.  
- You know.  
- Yeah, sure.

Well, let's go, Papa.  
It's gotta mean only one thing:  
He's got a girl.  
No. It's just that summer's coming.  
I used to do the same thing to my dog.  
I'm telling you,  
he's got a girl!  
All right, gentlemen-  
and I use the term loosely-  
I'll satisfy this  
vulgar craving for gossip.  
Yes, I expect a visitor, a lady.  
The subject is now closed.  
I was the one who said it,  
but I don't believe it.  
Look, Donald Duck, I got  
just one thing to say to you.  
When she gets here, I don't  
want any whistling, sighing,  
ogling or anything else  
that you consider wit and humor.  
In other words, behave!  
Because if you don't-  
Norm, old boy,  
this sounds serious.  
Maybe it is.  
But what about-  
You said-  
I said what?  
Skip it.  
Hiya!  
- Hiya.  
- Hi, partner.  
Where were you headed for?  
Well, I wanted to catch you  
before you came in.  
Why?  
- Come here and sit down.  
- I'm not sure I will.  
I don't think I like your tone.  
If you're not gonna sit down,  
I'm not gonna tell you.  
Tell me what?  
Come on, sit.

Well?

Well, don't get excited or anything.

Who's excited?

Okay. I think I'm getting return.

I'm starting to feel things.

I think my legs are coming back.

- Are you sure?

- I'm pretty sure.

That's why I came out here.

I didn't want to tell you

in front of the others.

- Have you told anyone?

- Weaver. He's gonna tell Brock.

Oh, Bud, that's wonderful!

I knew it! I always knew it.

Well, if I'm right, there won't be  
any more of these darned spasms.

I've gotta be right.

# Dolores, Dolores #

Aren't you gonna talk

to me today, Dolores?

- Hey, Angel.

- Yeah?

Ask your mother

if I can marry Dolores.

She said men who love horses  
don't make good husbands.

I don't love 'em. I just take  
a scientific interest in 'em.

She says you're a good boy, but  
then she doesn't know you like I do.

Well, tell her you're the laziest  
joker in the whole ward.

- He is not! You are!

- Ah!

What do you know, chicken?

- Hiya, Pop.

- Hello, Leo. How're ya feelin'?

Okay. How's Ma?

Not so good again.

That's why she couldn't come.

- How are they treating you, boy?

- Can't complain.

Oh.

Here you are, Pop.  
Thanks, boy.  
I'll get a little present  
for your mother.  
Yeah, do that.  
You're getting along all right,  
aren't you?  
Look, Pop, you don't  
have to hang around.  
Well, I got a couple  
of things to do.  
- I gotta see a fellow about a deal.  
- Yeah.  
Lay off the long shots, Pop.  
You haven't got the knack.  
Take care of yourself, boy.  
Thanks. So long, Pop.  
Did Normie tell you  
about last night?  
Did he tell you how he  
clean fell out of his chair?  
Oh, was he a scream!  
And did I have a head this morning!  
Please!  
Anyway, that's when I got him  
to promise to get rid of the muff.  
What's a beard?  
If I could grow dollars  
as fast as I grow hair,  
- I'd be an international banker.  
- Oh, Normie, you kill me!  
You know, some of the kids  
at the drive-in thought...  
I was goofy at first.  
But I said, "What's the difference?  
He's cute.  
"He's real educated.  
And what a sense of humor!  
And that car of his  
is really something.  
" Yeah, it's nice.  
My, this sure is  
a big hospital, isn't it?  
You know, Normie took me

on the 20-cent tour.  
Honestly, I've got corns  
on my feet from walking.  
- You're not tired, are you, hon?  
- No, I'm fine.  
You gotta take care  
of yourself, hon.  
Yeah, I know.  
She watches over me  
like a probationary nurse.  
Say, what time is it anyway?  
Oh, my! I've got to get back  
to the drive-in.  
- I'd better go now, Normie.  
- I'll take you to the gate.  
Okeydokey. Gee, I'm glad  
we got to know each other.  
We got a lot in common.  
Yes, we have.  
Well, good-bye, you all.  
Nice to have met you.  
Laverne-  
It's a pretty name.  
Well-  
Hey, what's the matter?  
Hey, jughead,  
what's the matter?  
I'm sick.  
Sick to my stomach.  
See that neck?  
See how rigid?  
- His temperature's 103 now.  
- All the classic signs.  
Get him into a private room  
right away.  
Get ready for a spinal tap.  
Call neurosurgery.  
Well?  
You can see for yourself.  
Shall we try another transfusion?  
Try-  
Out of nowhere.  
Out of a clear sky.  
Are you sure?

Yes.

I liked that boy.

You oughta get some rest.

You have grand rounds  
in exactly three hours.

Yes, I know.

He had a shell fragment  
in soft tissue near his spine.

It never bothered him. There  
was no point in messing with it.

It started to abscess, and  
it breached his spinal canal.

Meningitis.

It's nobody's fault.

It just happened.

We did everything.

- Anything new?

- No, sir.

Good morning.

Dr. Weaver tells me you think  
you're getting return.

Let it go, Doc.

Some other time.

No. Pin, please.

Now, tell me what you feel-  
the point or the round end.

Say sharp or dull.

Sharp.

Dull.

Sharp.

Sharp.

Sharp.

Look here, Ken.

I just jabbed that pin  
into your calf.

You didn't feel it, did you?

Look, Ken, the legs are gone.

Now the head has to take over.

I know what it means to you.

Forget it.

Before you can change the world,  
you have to accept it as it really is.

Without illusions.

You understand that, don't you?

You've been doing fine.  
Good reports from the gym.  
Keep it UP-  
And go out more often.  
Be with people.  
You remember we discussed trying  
another pudendal block on Mr. Butler.  
- Seems like a good idea.  
- Why bother?  
- There's no need for insolence.  
- Oh, come now, Doctor.  
Precisely.  
I am the doctor here,  
and I'm sick and tired  
of this attitude of doing me...  
a favor by allowing  
me to keep you alive!  
What do you men think this is,  
a country club?  
It's a hospital!  
We're not magicians here!  
We're only doctors!  
We do the best we can!  
And you can either develop  
a sense of responsibility...  
or you can get out,  
all of you!  
# Is not just for today, dear #  
# Love like ours #  
# Is forevermore #  
I have a table for you.  
This way, please.  
- We'll wait our turn, thank you.  
- But I have a table, sir.  
Just follow me.  
# Like you always will be #  
# Whenever your hand #  
# Touches mine #  
Just take it away.  
Thank you.  
# Men like you #  
# Make my love worthwhile #  
What did we  
have to come here for?

Why didn't we go to the Pump  
Room where people know us?  
We can't always go  
where people know us.  
Look at them.  
Look at them staring at us.  
- Come on. Let's skip out of here.  
- All right.  
You better take me  
back to the hospital.  
I'm not very good  
company tonight.  
No, you're not,  
but it's all right.  
I know you've got  
Angel on your mind.  
I got him on my mind,  
all right.  
He was a wonderful boy,  
but brooding won't help.  
No, nothing helps.  
He was the best patient in the ward.  
He worked harder than anybody.  
He wanted a house so bad.  
It wasn't anyone's fault, Bud.  
That's right. But if he was normal,  
he'd have had a chance.  
You try and you try, and you're  
still behind the eight ball.  
Take Norm-  
He's a brilliant guy.  
He graduated with every  
honor they had around,  
and he kids himself  
into thinking that cheap-  
Oh, Well.  
You've talked about  
everybody but us.  
I know it. I've been trying  
to work up to it.  
I've been kidding myself  
about getting return.  
Brock set me straight  
this morning.

All right.  
I counted on it too.  
But it doesn't change anything.  
Doesn't it?  
I think it does for you.  
If you can live with it,  
it's not that important to me.  
- Ellie-  
- No, Bud, I won't listen.  
You don't have  
to play it this way, Ellie.  
You've done enough for me.  
Then how about doing  
something for me?  
You've taken up  
six years of my life.  
When are you gonna make  
an honest woman of me?  
Very funny.  
Yes, isn't it?  
You worry about  
not being fair to me.  
I wish you'd quit worrying  
and start being fair.  
All right, we've  
had a disappointment.  
I say we go ahead  
and set a date...  
and get married on that date  
the way other people do.  
We're not the same  
as other people.  
Only in your mind.  
I'm not marrying a wheelchair.  
I'm marrying a man.  
Are you going to marry me  
or aren't you?  
Because if you are, I've got  
an awful lot of things to do.  
Clothes to buy. We'll have  
to get you a car you can drive.  
We'll need a house,  
furniture, dishes.  
I've got to get home and tell my folks

and be with them a while.  
You make it sound real-  
Oh, Bud, you haven't told me you  
love me in an awful long time.  
I miss it. It doesn't  
embarrass me to say it.  
I love you.  
Where have you been  
all this time?  
I had a date with Laverne.  
The corporal's getting married.  
Getting married.  
Well, that's nice.  
Did you know I've been planning  
on getting married too?  
Did I tell you I had a date  
with Laverne tonight?  
I did.  
Only she didn't show up.  
Maybe you got  
your wires crossed.  
Yeah, I got 'em  
crossed, all right.  
Of all people, me-  
the wise guy,  
the spectator  
on the scene of life.  
How stupid can you be  
and still be alive?  
Don't you think you're going  
off half-cocked 'cause...  
she didn't show up once?  
Oh, a very good question!  
Very good indeed.  
I like your style, young man.  
What's more,  
I'll give you the answer.  
You know why Vernie  
didn't show up tonight?  
Because she's in Canada.  
Do you know how much  
she took me for?  
Nine hundred bucks!  
Well, don't you

think that's kind of funny?

- Go to sleep, Norm.

- "Go to sleep, Norm."

To sleep.

"To sleep...

"and by a sleep to say we end...

"the heartache...

"and a thousand

natural shocks...

"that flesh is heir to,

"'tis a consummation...

"devoutly to be wished.

"To die, to sleep;

"to sleep, perchance to dream.

Ay, there's the rub."

That's by William Shakespeare.

A very nice man.

Well, Ellie, I wish you luck.

- We both do, of course.

- Oh, yes, dear.

You don't sound very happy

about it, either of you.

You don't like the idea, do you?

- We haven't said so.

- No. But it's pretty obvious.

Even if that's true,

it's not important.

It's your life, El.

You're not a baby anymore.

No, I'm not a baby.

It's My Life.

But I'm disappointed in you,

both of you.

You're taking it like just anyone  
would, as if you didn't understand.

You think I'm a silly young girl...

who doesn't know the difference  
between pity and love.

You could at least  
be honest about it.

If honesty is what you want,

I think you're making a big mistake.

Is that what you think too?

What you mean is, that I ought to be

very cold and practical about this.  
That even though Bud  
and I love each other,  
I ought to break it off  
and find a-  
That's one way of putting it,  
not necessarily the fair way.  
Look, Ellie.  
I like Bud.  
I like him a lot.  
I always have.  
I'd be proud to have him for a son.  
I mean that.  
But the point is,  
things are different now.  
Yes, I know,  
through no fault of his.  
But he's different too.  
He's not the same man.  
To me, he is!  
I love him!  
You love him.  
Love can be very fragile, El.  
Even healthy people can't always hold  
on to it or take it for granted.  
I'm telling you this for his good  
as well as yours.  
How long do you think  
that love is going to last...  
after you realize  
you've signed a contract...  
to be his nurse  
the rest of your life?  
It won't work.  
You're a young, healthy girl.  
It doesn't have to be that way.  
There's hope.  
So, you're going  
to live on hope.  
Oh, I'm not blaming you.  
I know you love him.  
I'd probably be ashamed of you  
if you felt any other way.  
But actually I blame Bud.

Yes, I do!  
He knows the score  
better than any of us.  
He ought to let you go.  
If he loved you  
as much as you love him,  
he'd make you go.  
You're being so clever,  
so logical.  
I never knew you could  
handle words so well.  
That's not an answer, El.  
You weren't quite so logical  
a few years ago,  
when we needed some boys to  
go out and get killed...  
or paralyzed!  
- That's enough, Ellie.  
I can't let you talk  
to your father like that.  
It's not fair, because  
he's not cold or selfish.  
He's done more  
for army boys in trouble-  
Harriet, please.  
- Well, you have!  
- That's not the point.  
I don't care. I can't allow Ellie  
to talk to you like that.  
Ellie, I haven't said anything  
because it's so hard.  
But you're all we have.  
Baby, is it so wrong for us  
to want a grandchild?  
I'm going to marry Bud.  
I'm sorry. I don't know.  
I just don't know.  
Well, why don't you know?  
You're his doctor.  
Who else is there?  
We're still learning.  
I've told you that before.  
Would you like to see  
our research in fertility?

I'd save your time.  
Some paraplegics are capable  
of having children, others aren't.  
We don't always know why.  
In Ken's case-  
In his case?  
It isn't very probable, but it is  
within the realm of possibility.  
I don't think-  
I'd rather say,  
"I don't know."  
It's pretty late in the day  
for this sort of thing.  
No it isn't.  
Because it really doesn't matter.  
Thank you, Doctor.  
Good-bye.  
What are you tryin' to do,  
walk outta here?  
Yeah.  
And I'm going to be  
married standing up.  
"Do you take this woman  
to be your wedded wife,  
"to have and to hold  
from this day forward,  
"for better, for worse,  
for richer, for poorer-"  
You sure you want  
to go through with this?  
Come on!  
Dearly Beloved, we are gathered  
here in the sight of God...  
and in the presence  
of this company...  
to join together this man and  
this woman in holy matrimony,  
an honorable estate,  
and therefore...  
not to be entered into  
unadvisedly or lightly.  
Into this holy estate come now  
these two persons present...  
to be joined together.

If any man  
can show just cause...  
why they may not  
be joined together,  
let him speak now or else,  
hereafter, forever hold his peace.

The bride and groom  
will join hands.

- Do you like it?

- Yeah, it's nice.

I'm not completely happy with the  
drapes, but the material's good.

Uh-huh.

- Do you like the lamps?

- Sure.

Yep.

I got the biggest  
ashtrays I could find.

I hate those little things  
that are always tipping ov-  
I gotta oil these darn  
wheels tomorrow.

Yes.

Well, what have we got,  
a family album already?  
They say no home's complete  
without one.

BOY-

Hey-Hey, Why'd you  
put these in here for?

Mm, those are all those pictures  
I've had for years, I thought-  
Im sorry. It was stupid.

I didn't think-

No, that's all right.

- I'll take them out tomorrow.

- It's all right!

I mean, forget it, honey.

It doesn't bother me.

I was just surprised, that's all.

Leo sent us a bottle of champagne.

Shall we open it now?

- Yeah, that's a good idea.

- I'll get it.

- Get the glasses.  
- Yes, I know.  
It's such a big bottle.  
We'll never finish it.  
Maybe we should call Leo.  
Yeah, he probably had that in mind.  
I don't know how they expect  
you to open these things.  
Darn wires go every which way.  
Let me have it.  
My Carpet!  
Oh. I hope it won't stain.  
I heard somewhere that  
cold water would.  
What's the matter?  
Nothing. I'll get some water.  
What are you lookin' at?  
You've seen this before.  
I'm sorry.  
I don't like the way  
you're lookin' at me, Ellie.  
I said I was sorry!  
Yeah, I know, but what  
are you sorry for?  
I don't know.  
Stop putting me on trial!  
You pick at me so I can't think!  
Wait a minute.  
What are you thinking?  
Are you thinkin' you made  
a mistake, is that it?  
You're sorry, aren't you?  
You're sorry, aren't ya?  
What do you want me to say?  
All right, I am!  
Why did ya have to wait  
till we were married?  
They come out slowly,  
both boys feeling the pace.  
It's been a very fast fight so far.  
Very even as far as I can see.  
Matt comes in fast now  
with a left to the head.  
Glances off.

Didn't do very much damage.  
Jenkins jabs with the left  
and brings over a right cross.  
And a fast left and right by Jenkins.  
I think Pyle was hurt.  
He's holding on now.  
Jenkins is trying to measure him.  
Pyle throws a left that  
goes wild of the mark,  
but he scores with a right  
under the heart.  
Well, what are you lookin' at?  
It kinda depends on what you  
like best-people, the horses.  
With me, it's horses.  
Someday I'm gonna have  
a whole stable full of 'em.  
You boys are vets,  
I take it.  
No, we're just up from Atlantic City,  
and we brought our chairs along.  
No, you're not! Hey!  
That's a great little sense  
of humor you got there.  
You know, that's a great characteristic  
of the American soldier-  
God bless 'em-  
is a sense of humor.  
I'm a vet myself.  
The other war, of course.  
What other war?  
- You know, the first one, 1918.  
- Oh, the big one.  
Well-  
You're quite a kidder, aren't ya?  
But seriously, boys,  
I wanna tell ya somethin'.  
I admire ya.  
I admire the both of you.  
Boys like you, after what  
you've been through,  
I say the best  
is none too good for you.  
- Is that what you say?

- Yes, sir.  
- That's what he says.  
- You say it all the time?  
Well, sure!  
God bless you, mister.  
Oh, I mean it. You boys  
have made a great sacrifice.  
Tell me somethin'.  
Uh, could I marry your daughter?  
I haven't got a daughter.  
Well, then, could I marry her?  
All right. Keep her.  
Who wants the old crow.  
Okay, boys.  
I can take a hint.  
These days, every punk that got run  
over in a blackout's a big hero.  
But that's okay.  
No hard feelin's. Here.  
Buy yourselves a drink.  
Hey, buddy.  
Buddy, come here a minute,  
will ya?  
Look, uh, I want  
to apologize to you.  
Hey, what's the matter, boys?  
Okay, we're leavin'.  
We're leavin'.  
Come on, slugger.  
Hey, champ, come in  
for a landing, will ya?  
- What's the matter, you worried?  
- Me?  
No, I just bruise easy,  
that's all.  
Hey! Look out!  
Congratulations.  
Very nice for the hospital,  
of course - wonderful publicity.  
I know. I don't like it  
any more than you do.  
Look, Gene. It isn't  
a matter of liking it.  
I'm the one who's gonna have

Washington breathing down his neck.

I know.

How am I going to explain it?

Here's a man that's been nothing but trouble since he's been back.

Consequently, he's restricted to the post.

He sneaks out, gets fighting drunk and-

**Question:**

a hospital am I running here?

It isn't very pleasant for you.

What is he doing here anyway?

He's married, isn't he?

He's got a home.

He isn't sick.

He's had maximum physical benefits.

Medically, yes. Psychologically, he could use some help.

Gene, let's be realistic.

How many normal people are there in the world?

I want you to discharge him.

I can't do that,

Dr. Kameran.

What do you mean, you can't do that?

He's going up before the P.V.A. disciplinary board.

- I don't intend to intervene.

- That's nonsense.

This has nothing to do with the Paralyzed Veterans Association.

- This is a hospital matter.

- I don't quite agree with you.

Oh, Gene, let's be sensible.

You've done wonderful work with those men.

But he's one of them. They'll be easy with him, you know that.

I can't agree with that either.

This is too important to let the men decide for themselves.

Doctor, you admit that  
they've done a good job,  
that they've been  
practically self-governing.  
And just because it is important,  
I can't very well take it  
out of their hands.

Just as I can't go over their  
heads whatever they decide.

You see that, don't you?

This thing gets out of hand,  
I may not be able to protect you.

I hope you're prepared  
to take the consequences.

I am.

So I said to her, "Hey, Robbie,  
when are you going  
to marry Brock?"

And she hits me.

Boy, did she give me a crack.

Gin.

Twenty-six.

He can't play the game.

He just talks ya out of it.

- That's game.

- Next player.

Hello.

Hi. I thought  
you went home.

No, I've been around.

L-I read about you in the paper.

I thought maybe you  
were hurt or something.

No, I'm all right.

- I'd like to talk to you, Bud.

- Okay.

No, stick around.

Ellie and I don't have any secrets.

What's on your mind, El?

- All right, Bud.

- We'd better be going, huh?

Stay!

These are my friends, Ellie.

They know all about us.

I came here to tell you  
I'm sorry.  
You see, at first,  
I was very sure of myself.  
Then I started getting  
confused and afraid and...  
that night the way everything-  
- Forget it!  
- It doesn't matter anymore.  
- But it does matter, Bud.  
I've had a chance to see things  
the way they really are.  
The important thing is to know  
what you're willing to settle for,  
to be really sure.  
I'm sure now.  
I want you.  
I want you to come home.  
I'm home. This is my home.  
This is where I belong.  
Oh, please!  
You go home!  
Go far away from me.  
Pretend it never happened,  
and we'll both be better off.  
Let's go to chow.  
And don't feel bad.  
You won't even have any scars.  
Well, we can restrict him  
to the hospital for 60 days,  
or we can vote for discharge.  
It's up to us.  
What I hear is, this guy's  
been trouble right along.  
- I say kick him out!  
- For what? For being AWOL?  
Sixty days' restriction is plenty.  
We're not responsible for  
what the guy does outside.  
- That's what I say!  
- Suppose he kills someone?  
- But he didn't.  
- Look. That's up to the cops.  
They didn't put him

in jail and we can't.  
We can only try him  
for breaking hospital rules.  
For being AWOL-that's all  
we know about officially.  
- "Officially," my eye!  
- We're not the police department.  
Listen. The cops brought him in here  
so the hospital could handle it.  
And that means us. Otherwise,  
he'd be in jail right now.  
- So, he's lucky!  
- All right, he's lucky!  
But we're supposed  
to be a disciplinary board!  
And I know if we go easy on him,  
we're not kidding anybody but ourselves!  
Listen. People always  
remember these wheelchairs.  
Don't ever forget that.  
Guys like him just make it  
tough on the rest of us.  
What's he doing here anyway?  
He's well, isn't he?  
He's married.  
He's got himself a home.  
Why isn't he living in it?  
- Maybe he's had trouble.  
- Let him patch it up.  
Anybody that's married  
is gonna have trouble.  
- You know, huh?  
- You can say that again.  
But if he's got things on his mind, are  
we gonna help him by kicking him out?  
You're not helping him  
by being easy on him.  
He'll make more trouble for  
himself and everybody else.  
I still think 60 days  
is tough enough.  
Well-  
Let's vote on it.  
All in favor of discharge,

raise your hands.

All against?

Norm?

Discharge.

You voted to kick me out?

Well, you're a nice bunch of fellas.

Who do you think you are?

What makes you think you can do it?

This is a veteran's hospital,  
and you're nobody, you're nothin'.

You see?

And we'll just see what  
Brock has to say about it.

Ken!

Before you go in there,  
I want you to know something.

I want you to know

I voted for discharge.

Thanks.

- I want you to know why.

- Don't bother, friend.

Thank you.

Thank you for calling.

- Well, they kicked me out.

- Yes, I know.

- Well-Well, that's crazy, isn't it?

- Do you think so?

What's the matter with everybody around  
here? What do you mean do I think so?

Listen. You're my doctor,  
and you're gonna keep me here.

I'm not going to overrule  
the board.

Oh, I get it. It's easier  
for you that way, isn't it?

Yes.

But it's better for you.

You're well, Ken.

Wh-What am I gonna do?

Where am I gonna go?

- Into the world.

- I can't go out there anymore.

- You still can't accept it, can you?

- No.

What did I do?  
Why'd it have to be me?  
Is there an answer?  
I haven't got it.  
Somebody always gets hurt  
in a war.  
Look, Ken. You're a married man.  
You've got a home.  
- That's where you ought to be.  
- I haven't got anything.  
What happened?  
Why did you run away?  
Nothin' happened.  
She couldn't take it,  
that's why.  
Sh-She looked at me  
like I was a bug.  
You want what everyone wants-  
peace of mind.  
It's pretty hard sometimes  
to accept the truth instead,  
even though that's where  
real peace of mind lies.  
And the truth is  
that you are what you are.  
The truth is that your wife is  
a human being with all the weakness...  
and all the strength  
that human beings have.  
- Yeah, it's easy for you to talk.  
- Oh, yes. I know.  
It's easy for me to talk.  
I know, I can walk outta here  
when the day is over,  
and I've got a good job.  
Only I can never see a patient  
walk outta here, never.  
I can keep a man alive, but,  
in his heart, he feels I've failed him.  
You feel that way, don't you?  
Took me a long time  
to get used to that.  
Peace of mind.  
Why didn't she leave me

alone in the beginning?  
Why'd she have to come around here  
and make me think we could make it?  
Suppose it were  
just the opposite.  
Suppose you were on your feet,  
and she were in the chair.  
Would you have come around?  
- Well, I don't know.  
- Shall I tell you something?  
I was married once.  
On our third anniversary,  
we-  
we were in an accident.  
Paraplegia was a new field then.  
At least, she didn't  
have to suffer too long.  
That was 18 years ago.  
And I'd give anything  
I've got to know...  
that when I go home that I'd  
find her there waiting for me...  
in a wheelchair.  
I'm due at a meeting.  
I think you ought to go back  
to your wife, Ken,  
if she'll take you.  
I can't guarantee that she won't  
ever look at you like that again.  
But, if she loves you,  
and if you behave,  
the chances are she won't.  
Anyway, you've got a lot  
of living ahead of you.  
And nobody can do it  
for you but you.  
Ellie.  
Hello, Ellie.  
- You've come a long way.  
- Yeah.  
- Had a flat tire. Fixed it myself.  
- Good for you.  
- Are you doin' anything tonight?  
- No.

Would you like to go to a movie  
or something or... talk?

Yes, I would.

Do you want me to help you  
off the steps?

Please.

# Love like ours is not just  
for today, dear #

# Love like ours is forevermore #