

The beginning of

THE AMAZIING COLOSSAL THING (from **PLAYING DOCTOR**)

a comedy in one act

by Rich Orloff

Place: A hospital room

Time: The present

Characters: MARVIN QUIFFLE, the patient, about thirty or so

FIRST NURSE, the nurse of one's nightmares*

SECOND NURSE, the nurse of one's dreams*

DAD, Marvin's father

MOM, Marvin's mother

GREG THOMPSON, M.D., same age as Marvin

CATHY, Marvin's ex-girlfriend, same age as Marvin*

(*These roles can be played by the same actress.)

As the play begins, we hear a few chords of organ music, the type of adventure riff one used to hear at the top of old-time radio serials. We hear a voice like the narrator of old-time radio serials:

VOICE

The *Amaziiiiiiiiiiiiing* Colossal Thing!

The organ music crescendos. Lights up to reveal a typical hospital room. Sitting up in the hospital bed is MARVIN QUIFFLE. About thirty or so, there's nothing extraordinary about Marvin, with the possible exception of a three-foot extension rising from his pelvic area, hidden from our view by the bed sheets. Marvin reads an innocuous magazine such as GOOD HOUSEKEEPING.

The FIRST NURSE enters. Rumor has it that this nurse once smiled, but there were no witnesses. The nurse and Marvin look at each other.

MARVIN

Does the hospital gift shop have any *other* magazines?

FIRST NURSE

Look, I've got a job to do, I'm going to do it, and then I'm going to leave.

MARVIN

So, what's your name?

FIRST NURSE

Does this look like a cocktail lounge?

MARVIN

I'm sorry. I –

FIRST NURSE

I have to take your pulse.

In a strict business-like manner, she takes the pulse of Marvin's extension.

MARVIN

So how's my –

FIRST NURSE

Open.

Marvin opens his mouth. She sticks a thermometer in it.

FIRST NURSE (cont'd)

Close.

She looks at Marvin's extension, makes a note, and puts it in a pocket.

MARVIN

What did you –

FIRST NURSE

Ya wanna chat, I'll find someplace else to stick it.

She takes out the thermometer.

MARVIN

What was that note you made?

FIRST NURSE

I need a new umbrella.

MARVIN

Have my test results have come back yet?

FIRST NURSE

Why is it that every time I answer one question, you just ask another one?

MARVIN

I'm just trying to be friendly.

FIRST NURSE
(dubious)

Really?

MARVIN
Yeah. I was raised that it was polite
to, you know, extend yourself.

FIRST NURSE
You've succeeded.

The nurse exits. In the hallway, we hear Marvin's parents:

DAD (o.s.)
Excuse me. Is this the room for Marvin Quiffle?

FIRST NURSE (o.s.)
Yeah.

MOM (o.s.)
Can he see visitors?

FIRST NURSE (o.s.)
As long as you don't stand where
he has an obstructed view.

Marvin's parents enter. MOM and DAD are middle-American folks
with middle-American tastes. Mom carries a shopping bag.
They see Marvin at the same time but react differently:

MOM
(horrified)
Oh my God!

DAD
(beaming)
Hya, son!

MARVIN
Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad.

DAD
So how's the chip off the ol' block?

MARVIN
(not really)
I'm okay.

MOM
As soon as we got the message,
we took the next flight in.

MARVIN

But you only live thirty miles from here.

MOM

(not listening)

We had to drive three hours to the airport.

DAD

The weather was awful.

MOM

No planes were taking off.

DAD

We had to spend all night sleeping
in the waiting room.

MARVIN

Why didn't you just drive here?

DAD

Because to parents, no sacrifice is
too great, even when unnecessary.

Mom takes a baked chicken out of her bag.

MOM

Would you like a chicken?

MARVIN

Mom, they do serve food here—

DAD

You could at least thank your mother
for the chicken.

MARVIN

I don't want the chicken.

DAD

Your mother slaved four years
making that chicken.

MOM

I raised it from an egg.

MARVIN

But I'm –

DAD

You don't know how many times I said, "I'm sick of having a chicken in our guest room."

MOM

And I said, "One day our boy will be sick, and he'll need that chicken."

DAD

That's how much your mother loves you.

MOM

As soon as I heard you were sick, I slaughtered it.

DAD

I had to do all the packing. I don't know how to pack women's clothes.

MOM

You didn't have to make such a fuss about it.

DAD

Well, I've never packed a b-r-a before.

MOM

Albert, not in front of the b-o-y.

MARVIN

I can spell!

DAD

If you're so smart, when are you going to get a real job?

MARVIN

I don't want to go into the file cabinet business, Dad!

DAD

You like being a janitor?

MARVIN

No, but –

DAD

If it weren't for file cabinets, there'd be billions of folders strewn willy-nilly throughout the world.

MARVIN

It's not what I want.

DAD

How many times have I told you? Maturity is recognizing that what you want is the reward you get for doing what you *don't* want for so long you lose the desire to do what you want.

MARVIN

Then maybe I'm not mat-

DAD

Well, I'm glad you admit -

MOM

Please! Let's not have an ugly fight until we get home. So do you feel okay, are they treating you well here, and are you ever going to marry what's-her-name or am I going to die without grandchildren?

MARVIN

Her name's Cathy.

MOM

And why isn't she here by your side?

MARVIN

She's been really busy with rehearsals for the Lake Flaccid Chamber of Commerce's annual Salute to Dairy Products.

DAD

She should be with you.

MARVIN

Well, she, I...

MOM

What?

MARVIN

Cathy left me three weeks ago.

MOM

What's-her-name left you?

MARVIN

Her name is Cathy.

MOM

If she left you, why do I have to remember her name?

MARVIN

We lived together almost half-a-year.

DAD

Why would any sane girl leave *my* son?

MOM

Maybe she's psychotic.

DAD

(to Marvin:)

Why'd you get involved with a psychotic?

MARVIN

She's not psychotic! She, she just wasn't happy.

MOM

I don't know what girls want today. I've never wanted anything, and I've been happy with your father for thirty years.

DAD

Hey, remember when Marvin was two, and he used to grab his little thingy all the time?

MOM

Oh, yes. We had to keep going:

DAD

Shame!

MOM

Not nice!

DAD

Shame!

MOM

Not nice!

DAD

Shame!

MOM

Not nice!

MOM and DAD

Memories, memories.

MARVIN

Do either of you care what happened to me?!

MOM

I didn't want to embarrass you by mentioning it.

DAD

My boy's not embarrassed about these things.

MARVIN

Well, it is kind of –

DAD

That's why I contacted the *Lake Flaccid Semi-Weekly News-Tribune-Journal-Herald-Golf Digest*.

MARVIN

You what?

DAD

You made front page. Here, read.

Dad hands Marvin a newspaper. Marvin reads it.

MARVIN

"Due to an accident at the nuclear power plant where he works, Marvin Quiffle, son of prominent local file cabinet manufacturer Albert Quiffle, now has a three-foot rock-hard penis."

DAD

Do you like the artist's rendering? On the website, it's in 3-D. You put on the glasses and whoa!

MARVIN

I really wish you hadn't –

MOM

It's the company's fault, isn't it?
We'll sue them for all they've got.

MARVIN

It's not the company's fault.

MOM

It's not?

MARVIN

It was just one of those fluke things. I was mopping up some nuclear waste, and I put on my lead-coated jumpsuit, like I've done a thousand times, and I, I just forgot to zip up my fly.

MOM

If I had been there, I would've zipped you so tight...

MARVIN

(changing the subject)

Guess who my doctor is?

DAD

Who?

MARVIN

Greg Thompson.

DAD

Your old friend from high school?

MARVIN

We weren't what I'd call friends.

DAD

You were on the football team together.

MARVIN

He was the star quarterback; I handed out towels.

MOM

He was such a sweet boy.

MARVIN

He treated me like dirt.

MOM

Well, he was always being tackled to the ground. All he knew was dirt.

Doctor GREG THOMPSON enters. He's a good-looking man who radiates All-American positive energy. He also has the sensitivity of a turnip.

GREG

(looking at a chart:)

So how're you doing, Towel Boy –

(looking up)

Mr. and Mrs. Quiffle, how are you!

DAD

As I live and breathe.

GREG

And if you ever stop, just give me a call.

MOM

Why, you're even better-looking
than you were in high school.

GREG

Thanks. And so are you.

MOM

You didn't know me in high school.

GREG

I just can't imagine you looking better than you do now.

MOM

Oh, oh, you're making me blush.

GREG

So how are you doing, Towel Boy?

MARVIN

I think I've stopped growing.

GREG

And when did *you* get a medical degree?

MARVIN

I'm sorry, I –

GREG

(to Marvin's parents:)

If you'll both avert your eyes.

Marvin's parents turn away. Greg touches Marvin's extension.

GREG (cont'd)

Hmm. Cough.

Marvin coughs.

GREG (cont'd)

All done.

Marvin's parents turn back.

MARVIN

Did that tell you anything?

GREG

Yes. It's possible to have an erection and cough at the same time. I wonder if anyone's written a paper on that.

DAD

You've written papers?

GREG

Are you kidding? I'm the editor of *Lake Flaccid Journal of Medicine, Dentistry, Chiropractory and Home Repair*.

MOM

Your parents must be so proud.

DAD

Of course, they're proud. When I think back to that homecoming game...

GREG

The score was tied.

DAD

Twenty seconds left on the clock.

GREG

Fourth down, and on our own eight-inch line.

DAD

You got the ball, smashed through their line, and ran ninety-nine yards, two feet –

GREG

And nine inches.

DAD

You know, at that moment, I bet every father in the stadium wished you were his son.

GREG

And I wished every father was my dad.

DAD

That's a beautiful thought, son.

GREG

Thanks, Dad. And you know what I remember best about that day?

DAD

Was it that rare and special knowledge that after the game, every girl in the state wanted to give you head?

GREG

No, what was best was that singular moment when, after my shower, I was tossed a towel the second I needed one. That's what I think America's all about.

MARVIN

Good grief.

GREG

So this is all quite something, huh?

DAD

You bet.

GREG

Who ever thought Towel Boy would end up with the world's longest fishing pole?

DAD

Not me.

MOM

Not me.

GREG

And not a single person from our high school graduating class.

MARVIN

You didn't tell anyb—

GREG

I have 848 Facebook friends. Cathy was shocked.

MARVIN

You told Cathy?!

GREG

It brought me back to the good ol' days,
when I was star quarterback and she was
head cheerleader and I'd regale her with stories
of how the team snapped their towels at you.

MARVIN

Greg, have my test results come in yet?

GREG

Not yet.

MARVIN

Then why did you stop in here?

GREG

I just came in to give a warm hello so
I could bill your insurance company
another four hundred bucks.

DAD

Now that's the thinking of a man who'll never
have to clean up somebody else's nuclear waste.

GREG

Well, I gotta run. I think you two are
about the best parents a boy could have.

MOM and DAD

Awww.

GREG

When my parents die, I want *you* to adopt me.

Greg exits.

DAD

What a nice young man.

MOM

I think I'll mail him a chicken.

DAD

Well, we better get ourselves checked in.

MARVIN

Checked in?

MOM

We're staying at a motel across the street.

MARVIN

But you live less than an hour away.

DAD

We're your parents. We can't leave you at this moment of crisis.

MARVIN

Yes, you can.

MOM

But who will take care of you?

MARVIN

I'm old enough to take care of myself, Mom.

Mom starts to cry.

DAD

Now look what you've done.

MOM

I never thought I'd see the day when my son acted like he had free will.

MARVIN

I'm sorry, I – I just need some time alone. I'm going through a lot of stress.

MOM

I know how you're feeling.

MARVIN

I don't think you do.

MOM

A mother always knows.

MARVIN

Then tell me. How would you feel if you woke up one morning with a three-foot penis?

MOM

(instantly stops crying, then:)
Call if anything's the matter.