

# **Discharge Planning Blues**

**by Phillip W. Weiss**

**Phil's Literary Works LLC  
19 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
Penthouse  
New York, NY 10001  
Tel. 212-388-8690  
Email: [pwnycny@aol.com](mailto:pwnycny@aol.com)  
Website: [www.philsliteraryworks.com](http://www.philsliteraryworks.com)**

**Copyright © 2012 Phillip W. Weiss**

**Characters:**

**Helen Stankowski, M.D. – first year resident**

**Paul Alexander, MSW – social worker**

**Mabel Brewster, RN – head nurse**

**Irene Walters, M.D.**

**Sylvia Birnbaum, MSW – Paul’s supervisor**

**Harry Schwartz/Abba – patient**

**Craig Eisenbrot – Harry’s grandson**

**Waitress**

**Settings: A medical/surgical unit in a large public hospital and a coffee shop**

**Synopsis: Conflict erupts as a hospital treatment team struggles to discharge a high-risk patient.**

**This play is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to any persons living or deceased is completely coincidental and entirely unintentional.**

Scene 1

*Time: 10:00 A.M.*

*Place: An ante-room next to the nursing station of a medical/surgical unit in a large public hospital in New York City.*

*Three people are seated in the room: Dr. Helen Stankowski, a young, attractive woman, in her late 20s; the head nurse, Mabel Stewart, a woman in her mid-40s, and Paul Alexander, the unit medical social worker, tall, handsome, in his mid-30s. They are conducting daily rounds.*

**MABEL**

The next patient is Frank Montgomery.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

He'll be cleared for discharge tomorrow.

**MABEL**

He's gonna need some clothing.

**PAUL**

What happened to his clothing?

**MABEL**

His clothing was so filthy that they had to be discarded.

**PAUL**

What does he need?

**MABEL**

Shoes, slacks, shirt ... everything.

**PAUL**

Okay. I'll go talk with the patient and see what I can do.

**MABEL**

Well, I hope there's no screw ups like what happened with that other homeless guy who had to stay in the hospital an extra night because he needed a pair of socks.

**PAUL**

If you told me that earlier in the day instead of at five PM, then maybe I could have gotten him a pair.

**MABEL**

*(incensed)*

Don't blame that on ME! That's YOUR job to know who needs clothing, not mine!

**PAUL**

*(annoyed)*

Don't tell me my job, okay?

**MABEL**

I'm not telling you your job. I'm just letting you know that you got to be on top of these cases.

**DR. STANKOWSI**

Enough of this bickering. *(pause)* What's the plan for Mr. Montgomery?

**PAUL**

He's homeless, so the plan for him is placement in the shelter. You need to complete an M11Q form so I can make the referral.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Okay, give me the form.

*Paul takes a form from his clip board and gives it to Dr. Stankowski.*

**PAUL**

The form needs to be filled out as completely as possible otherwise the shelter may bounce it back to us.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Don't worry about that. I'll have the form completed and back to you by lunch time.

**PAUL**

Fine.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Okay. Now for our last patient: Harry Schwartz.

**MABEL**

Mr. Schwartz said she wants to go home.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I cleared him for discharge yesterday and he was supposed to go home today with home care, so why is he still in the hospital?

**PAUL**

The patient is ninety-four years old and lives alone in the fifth floor of a walk-up. He has no known relatives and when I spoke with him about home care he said he didn't want any strangers in her apartment and that he could take care of himself. I think if he was discharged to home he would be at risk. Maybe he should be placed in a nursing home for further rehab.

**MABEL**

Can't the rehab be provided at home?

**PAUL**

Possibly. The problem is whether he can negotiate the five flights of stairs.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

How come you didn't tell me before that he lived in a walk-up?

**PAUL**

I did tell you the day after he was admitted.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I don't remember that at all, and anyway, I don't see why he needs to go to a nursing home when he is medically cleared for discharge, wants to go home and can get home care services.

**PAUL**

I can understand the patient wanting to go home, but not if it's going to place him at risk.

**MABEL**

From a nursing point of view, he can perform all his activities of daily living. I mean, he's not bedbound.

**PAUL**

I know he's not bedbound, but can he handle the five flights of stairs and will he be trapped in her apartment? Those are my concerns.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

You know, Mr. Alexander, you make it sound like we don't care what happens to the patient and frankly I resent that.

**PAUL**

I'm not insinuating anything. I'm just reporting my assessment of the patient's situation and needs.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Who's the doctor? Me or you?

**PAUL**

You are.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Thank you. So I would appreciate it if when I order something for the patient, that you not fluff it off.

**PAUL**

I'm not fluffing off anything.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

**No? In the meantime the home care services I had requested for the patient are still not in place. Did you even make a referral?**

**PAUL**

**No, I did not.**

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

***(angry)***

**Your lack of cooperation is outrageous and unprofessional. I'm gonna have to discuss this matter with your supervisor.**

**PAUL**

**Go right ahead.**

***Pause.***

**MABEL**

**Is there anything else, doctor?**

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

**Please see to it that Mr. Montgomery gets his clothing. I don't want to have another delay in discharge like what happened with Mr. Ferkofsky.**

**MABEL**

***(recalling an unpleasant event)***

**Yes, the Ferkofsky case. We thought the patient would never leave.**

**PAUL**

**That was an unusual situation. Nobody knew that the patient would be locked out of his apartment.**

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

**In the meantime the patient wound up staying on the unit for an extra four days while you were spinning your wheels accomplishing nothing.**

PAUL

What do you want me to say? The only person who had an extra set of keys was the landlord and he was out of town. What could I do?

DR. STANKOWSKI

*(disgusted)*

“What could I do?” That’s the best you could do? Pathetic.

*Paul does not reply.*

*(pause)*

DR. STANKOWSKI

This meeting is adjourned.

End of scene 1

Scene 2

*Time: One hour later*

*Place: The ante-room. Paul is alone writing notes in a chart. Sylvia Birnbaum, a woman in her late 50s, enters the room. She is Paul's supervisor.*

SYLVIA

Hello, Paul.

*Paul stops writing and looks up at Sylvia.*

PAUL

Hello, Sylvia. What brings you here?

SYLVIA  
*(still standing)*

I need to talk to you.

PAUL

About what?

SYLVIA

You probably already know.

PAUL

No, I don't know.

*Mabel sits next to Paul and looks directly at him.*

SYLVIA

Dr. Stankowski called me about a patient Harry Schwartz and had some rather uncomplimentary things to say about you, Paul.

PAUL

That's too bad.

**SYLVIA**

**What's the problem with the case?**

**PAUL**

**The doctor wants to discharge the patient to his home with home care services but I think that plan will put the patient at risk.**

**SYLVIA**

**What does the patient want?**

**PAUL**

**He says he wants to go home.**

**SYLVIA**

**Well, there you go. What else do you need?**

**PAUL**

**Look, Sylvia, just because the patient says he wants to go home doesn't mean that's the best plan for him. What if he said he wanted to commit suicide? Would that be okay?**

**SYLVIA**

*(a little put off)*

**Now don't be facetious, Paul.**

**PAUL**

**I'm not being facetious; you asked me what the problem was and I told you.**

**SYLVIA**

**Paul, this is the fourth complaint I've received about you in the past two months. That's not good.**

**PAUL**

**Look, I'm doing my job. What else do you want from me?**

**SYLVIA**

**Maybe, to work more cooperatively with the rest of the treatment team.**

**PAUL**  
*(irritated)*

I DO work cooperatively with rest of the treatment team.

**SYLVIA**

Not according to what I'm being told.

**PAUL**

What are you being told?

**SYLVIA**

That sometimes you don't follow through with implementing treatment plans causing delays in discharge.

**PAUL**

Well, I don't feel obligated to follow through with plans that I believe will hurt patients. It just seems like all the hospital wants to do is to clear the beds as fast as possible, no matter who may get hurt.

**SYLVIA**

That's a pretty serious allegation, Paul.

**PAUL**

Maybe it is, but I'm just going by what I've seen.

**SYLVIA**

Look, the social work department has a responsibility to work cooperatively with the other members of the treatment team, and when that does not happen, it causes a lot of problems.

**PAUL**

Problems? For whom?

**SYLVIA**

For the department, for one thing. We're trying to justify our existence and get more staff, and if we're seen as not wanting to work with other members of the team, then that could affect staffing, including your job.

PAUL

What are you trying to tell me?

SYLVIA

That you are to work with the treatment team, not against it.

PAUL

Where does advocating for the patient fit into that?

SYLVIA

*(becoming irritated)*

Look, Paul, don't play games with me. I've told you what's expected of you.

PAUL

Yeah, for me to be rubber stamp.

SYLVIA

*(angry)*

Wrong! That's exactly the kind of attitude that's getting you in trouble. Nobody is telling you to be a rubber stamp, but you can share your recommendations in a way that doesn't put off other staff.

PAUL

Like how? Wear a big smile, kow-tow before the doctor? What am I supposed to do?

SYLVIA

For one thing, don't come off like your challenging the doctor's authority.

PAUL

That's a laugh. I'm in no position to challenge anybody's authority, much less the doctor's.

SYLVIA

But you do challenge the doctor's authority. I've seen it myself.

PAUL

Don't I have a right to express my professional opinion?

SYLVIA

You do, and you are expected to do so, but you are also expected to work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary treatment team.

PAUL

I know that and I do that; I can't help if what I say is not well received by others.

SYLVIA

Nobody has ever complained to me about your assessments. It is the way that you share them that's the problem.

PAUL

Oh, so now it's a matter of personality.

SYLVIA

*(frustrated)*

Look, I'm not going to argue anymore with you about this. *(pause)*  
Okay, so what's the discharge plan for Mr. Schwartz?

PAUL

As far as I'm concerned, it's whatever the doctor recommends.

SYLVIA

Okay, but what is YOUR recommendation?

PAUL

That the patient be placed in a nursing home for further rehab.

SYLVIA

Why?

**PAUL**

Because he lives on the fifth floor of a walk-up and will be trapped in his apartment because he can't negotiate five flights of stairs.

**SYLVIA**

How do you know that?

**PAUL**

By observing him.

**SYLVIA**

Did anyone on the treatment team tell you that the patient can't handle the stairs?

**PAUL**

No, but when I mentioned the possibility to the team, they just blew me off, like what I said meant nothing.

**SYLVIA**

Okay, so you have a hunch, based on an impression, that the patient may not be able to perform a certain activity. Right?

**PAUL**

Yeah, that's right.

**SYLVIA**

Did you suggest a rehab consult to assess the patient's level of functioning?

**PAUL**

I did but I was ignored.

**SYLVIA**

Well, mention it again, and if you have any flack, let me know. But under no circumstances are you to ignore the doctor's recommendations. Is that clear?

**PAUL**

Okay, if that's what you want, but let me make one thing clear: I have to do what I think is best for my clients, and not be influenced by politics. I have no interest in that kind of game playing.

**SYLVIA**

Paul, cut the attitude and do your job. You're treading on thin ice and I may not be able to cover for you much longer. I hope you understand that.

**PAUL**

Message received loud and clear, Sylvia. (*sarcastic*) As usual you've been very helpful and supportive.

**SYLVIA**

(*ignoring Paul's sarcasm*)

I do my best, Paul.

**PAUL**

Yes, I agree, you're doing your very best, and I have to do my very best too.

Sylvia exits. End of scene 2.

Scene 3

*Time: Later in the afternoon*

*Place: The nursing station.*

*There's lots of activity going as new patients are being admitted and others are awaiting discharge. Dr. Stankowski enters the unit accompanied by the attending physician Dr. Irene Walters. Dr. Walters is a friendly, elderly woman who immediately inspires confidence and projects the image of one who is compassionate and understanding. Dr. Stankowski and Dr. Walters are engaged in conversation.*

**DR. WALTERS**

Yes, I agree that patients need to be discharged in a timely manner. After all, time is money and money is time as the saying goes, and we don't want to waste valuable hospital resources and time.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I'm glad you agree with me, Dr. Walters.

**DR. WALTERS**

But, Helen, we also have to take into consideration the needs of the patients.

*Paul enters the scene. He is carrying a large bag full of clothing.*

**PAUL**

*(to both doctors)*

Hello.

*Paul places the bag on the floor.*

**DR. WALTERS**

*(pointing to the bag)*

Who's that for?

**PAUL**

Paul Montgomery.

**DR. WALTERS**

Good job, Paul. Looks like you're on top of things.

**PAUL**

Thank you, Dr. Walters, but if it weren't for the clothing department, I don't know what we'd do for these patients.

**DR. WALTERS**

Well said, Paul.. I'm glad that you're assigned to this unit.

**PAUL**

Thanks, Dr. Walters.

*Mabel enters the unit.*

**PAUL**

*(to Mabel)*

I got clothing for Mr. Montgomery. I hope you're happy.

**MABEL**

Paul, it's not about me, it's about the patient.

**PAUL**

Whatever you say, Mabel.

**MABEL**

*(annoyed)*

What's your problem?

**PAUL**

Nothing.

**MABEL**

*(annoyed)*

Okay, then why don't you can the attitude?

**PAUL**  
*(irritated)*

I don't have an attitude.

**MABEL**  
You certainly do, and I don't like it.

*Paul starts folding the clothing*

**DR. WALTERS**  
*(interceding)*  
Please, please, no bickering on the unit.

**MABEL**  
*(to Dr. Walters)*  
Excuse me, doctor. I'm in charge of this unit, not you.

**DR. WALTERS**  
*(placating)*  
Sorry, I didn't mean to tread on anybody's toes, but I just couldn't help but make a comment.

**MABEL**  
We're very busy here and I have no time for small talk.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
Nobody's making small talk.

**MABEL**  
Okay, then let's talk about Ms. Shapiro. When will she be leaving the hospital?

**DR. WALTERS**  
*(to Dr. Stankowski)*  
Is there a problem?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

The patient was cleared for discharge yesterday but home care services are still not in place.

**DR. WALTERS**

What's the hold up?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(to Paul)*

Yes, Paul, what is the hold up?

*Paul stops folding the clothing.*

**PAUL**

It's a bad discharge plan and in good conscience I cannot help to implement it.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

So, you're deliberately sabotaging the plan?

**PAUL**

No. I'm not sabotaging anything. I just don't want to do something that I believe may hurt the patient.

**MABEL**

*(to Paul)*

Lord, you are one arrogant ...

**DR. WALTERS**

*(interrupting)*

Stop! Let's not get personal, all right? *(to Mabel)* And this IS my bailiwick. *(pause)* Now, what exactly is going on here?

**PAUL**

The patient lives alone on the fifth floor of a walk up and if we send him home he'll be stuck in her apartment, which will put him at risk.

**DR. WALTERS**  
*(to Dr. Stankowski)*

Were you aware of this?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Yes, I was, but the patient said he wants to go home so I cleared him for discharge and ordered that he be provided home care services.

**DR. WALTERS**  
*(to Paul)*

What's wrong with that, Paul?

**PAUL**

Home care services will not do this patient any good if he's trapped in his apartment.

**DR. WALTERS**

Paul makes a good point. On the other hand, the patient says he wants to go home and we can't ignore that either.

**PAUL**

I'm not ignoring that. If the patient wants to go home, that's okay with me but I don't want to be part of something that I think will be hurtful to the patient.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

So, your solution is to withhold services from the patient?

**PAUL**

Nobody wants to withhold services. What I want is for the patient to receive the level of services she needs to ensure that he is able to function safely in the community.

**DR. WALTERS**

That sounds reasonable to me.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Dr. Walters, with all due respect, all of this had been discussed at rounds.

**DR. WALTERS**

I'm beginning to get the impression that somewhere there's been a breakdown in communication.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Then what do you want me to do?

**PAUL**

Maybe the patient needs to be seen by rehab to assess her ability to climb stairs.

**DR. WALTERS**

*(impressed)*

I think that that's an excellent suggestion.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Look, the patient is able to ambulate without assistance, so why does he need a rehab consult?

**DR. WALTERS**

Just to make sure that all bases have been covered. Let me know the results.

*Dr. Walters exits.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(to Paul)*

Thanks a lot. Now you made me look bad in front of my boss.

**PAUL**

All we did was talk about a case. I didn't mean to make anyone look bad.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I don't know if you're putting me on or what but what you're doing is further delaying the patient's discharge, which is not helping the patient at all.

**PAUL**

I'm just doing my job and if that doesn't suit you, then there's really nothing more to say.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(angry and bitter)*

All you social workers are the same, just a bunch of pompous know-it-alls who think you know better than anyone else what's best for the patients when in fact you're nothing more than glorified paper pushers who go out of their way to give everyone else a hard time under the guise of being clinicians and advocates, which is an outright sham. What are you doing working in a hospital anyway? A hospital is not a welfare center. You don't provide hands-on care and everything you do just makes it harder on the rest of us, the people who provide the actual care, to do our jobs and just produces more delays and more wasting of money, OUR money, MY money, the taxpayers' money, none of which seems to concern you in the least.

**PAUL**  
*(angry)*

I'm sorry you feel that way but if you doctors would do your paperwork promptly and correctly than maybe some of the delays could be avoided. What I don't understand is how people as educated as medical doctors can't fill out simple, straight-forward forms. Every time I ask one of you doctors to complete a form it's like pulling teeth. Good lord, sometimes I wonder how you doctors get through medical school. Like when a patient needs transportation, I give the doctor the form and guess what? I wind up having to fill out the form myself because the doctor either can't or won't do it, and then when there's a delay in discharge because the transportation is not yet in place, guess who gets the blame – ME! That's who. And the next thing I know, my supervisor's on my back because of your dereliction. *(pause)* And, by the way, I'm a taxpayer too, so don't tell me that I don't care about how the taxpayers' money is spent because some of the money that's being spent is mine.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(incensed)*

Oh, so now you're blaming the doctors for your incompetence in processing forms? Unlike you social workers, doctors are not paper pushers. We do actual WORK, which is more than I can say for you. I didn't go to medical school to fill out forms or to make sure that a patient has a pair of slacks. That's YOUR expertise, not mine, so get off my case and do your job! And if you really cared about how the taxpayers' money is being spent, you'd be doing a lot more to help prevent delays in discharge.

PAUL

*(contemptuous)*

You do work? That's news to me. The only work I see you doctors doing is looking at charts, writing orders that nobody can read and having tons of meetings, so if that's what work is to you, then you have no idea what real work is.

*Dr. Stankowski is about to offer a retort, but stops, waves her hands in a gesture of frustration and exits.*

MABEL

*(to Paul)*

By the way, Mr. Montgomery's gonna need some carfare to get to the shelter.

PAUL

Okay, Mabel, thanks for letting me know.

MABEL

I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with Dr. Stankowski and I thought you were right.

PAUL

Right? About what? I just don't want anybody getting on my case, and that includes you too.

MABEL

Hey Paul I was just trying to be supportive.

PAUL

*(skeptical)*

Just a few minutes ago you called me arrogant. Now you're being supportive? Give me a break.

MABEL

*(insulted)*

Okay, Paul, whatever you say.

*Pause*

**PAUL**

**Now, how much carfare will Mr. Montgomery need?**

**End of scene 3.**

Scene 4

*Time: Next day, 8:00 AM*

*Place: a coffee shop across the street from the hospital. Paul is seated at a table eating breakfast when Dr. Stankowski enters. Paul sees Dr. Stankowski and gestures to her to join him. Dr. Stankowski goes over to Paul and joins him at the table.*

PAUL

Good morning. You come here often?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Not too often. I wanted to get some coffee to take out.

PAUL

I don't want to keep you.

DR. STANKOWSKI

That's okay. I have some time. My rotation doesn't start until nine. How about you? Do you come here often?

PAUL

Every day.

DR. STANKOWSKI

How's the food?

PAUL

I'm still alive, aren't I?

*They both laugh.*

DR. STANKOWSKI

About yesterday, I'm sorry that I blew up at you like that. It was not professional of me.

PAUL

Nobody's perfect and besides I think I said a few things too that maybe I shouldn't have said.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

So, do you want to call truce?

**PAUL**

I didn't know that we were in a war. All we did was exchange some frank and candid comments about issues affecting both of us.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

You have a good way with words, I have to hand you that.

**PAUL**

You're not so bad yourself in the rhetoric department. By the way, I did some thinking about some of the stuff that you said, and I thought you did make some valid points. Some social workers do sometime pontificate which is something I personally detest. I have no use for know-it-alls. I have a cousin who drives me nuts every time we get together. Name the topic and this guy has an opinion. The problem is that he thinks his opinions are fact when actually he doesn't know what he's talking about, which makes it rather hard to converse with him. Not that he's not a nice guy, he is. But still, he can be a real pain in the butte if you know what I mean.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I know what you mean. I have an aunt who's the same way. Once she starts talking there's no stopping her until she runs out of steam, and she usually has a lot steam to blow off. Luckily we don't get together too often.

*Pause*

**PAUL**

Where are you from originally, if you don't mind my asking.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Poland. I came to the states when I was five years old. My father owned a construction business and decided to relocate to the United States, so here I am now.

**PAUL**

Is your father still in business?

DR. STANKOWSKI

No, he died five years ago from a heart attack.

PAUL

That's too bad. Where's your mother?

DR. STANKOWSKI

In Greenpoint. She now runs the business. I live with her.

PAUL

So, are you a first year resident?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Yes, this is my first year. I did my internship at New York College and then transferred to City Hospital.

PAUL

What are you planning to specialize in?

*A waitress interrupts their discussion.*

WAITRESS

*(to Dr. Stankowski)*

What would you like to order?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Your breakfast special.

WAITRESS

How do you want the eggs?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Sunnyside up.

WAITRESS

Juice?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Apple juice, and also coffee black with sugar.

WAITRESS

Okay. (to Paul) Are you okay?

PAUL

I'm okay, thanks.

*Waitress exits*

PAUL

As you were saying?

DR. STANKOWSKI

I lost my train of thought.

PAUL

I asked you what field you're going to specialize in.

DR. STANKOWSKI

*(suddenly remembers)*

Oh, yes. I want to go into family practice.

PAUL

That sounds like a good field.

DR. STANKOWSKI

It is.

PAUL

I have a friend of mine who is a retired ob-gyn doctor who I met when I was in the army.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(surprised)*

You were in the army?

**PAUL**

Yes. You sound surprised.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
It's just that I can't imagine social workers serving in the military.

**PAUL**

When I was in the army I wasn't a social worker. As a matter of fact my military job had absolutely nothing even remotely to do with social work.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
So what did you do in the army?

**PAUL**

I was a mechanic. I repaired heavy ordnance like tanks and artillery.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
That sounds pretty impressive.

**PAUL**

Well, it wasn't; it was a job, period.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
How long were you in the army?

**PAUL**

Eight years, two four-year hitches.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
Were you stationed overseas?

**PAUL**

Yeah, twice. Once for two years in Germany and once for a year in Iraq. Germany was okay; Iraq, well that's a different story.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

What happened in Iraq?

**PAUL**

Some nasty stuff that I'd rather not discuss.

*Pause.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

So how'd you wind up becoming a social worker?

**PAUL**

After eight years I had had enough of the military and fixing machines; I decided that I wanted to fix people instead, so I left the military, went back home to Oswego, New York, where I'm originally from, then went to school at the state university, got a BA degree and then a two years later got my MSW, all paid for by Uncle Sam. Then I started looking for a job and after sending out about five hundred resumes, finally got a job with the city, and here I am now. That's my story in a nutshell.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I thought about joining the military too. I even talked with a recruiter about the military's program for paying for medical school, but to tell you the truth I just couldn't see myself being sent to Iraq or Afghanistan or some other place we have no business being in.

**PAUL**

I think you made the right decision. I wouldn't recommend anybody joining the military, at least not before giving the matter a lot of careful thought, but as the saying goes: to each his own. And besides, I don't like giving advice because once you give advice you become responsible for the outcome, and sometimes outcomes aren't good. What I do know is that being in the army helped to ruin my marriage.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(again surprised)*

My, you're full of surprises. You were married too?

**PAUL**

Yeah, for four years, like a hitch in the army, but it didn't work out. I was always away and after a while she didn't like being a soldier's wife, and in a way, with me not being around, who could blame her? Then again, she knew what she was getting into when we got married, so it wasn't like she went into it not knowing.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Where is she now?

*As Paul is about to reply the waitress again appears. Both Paul and Dr. Stankowski are visibly annoyed by the interruption.*

*Awkward pause.*

**WAITRESS**  
*(to Dr. Stankowski)*

Here's your order.

*The waitress places the food on the table.*

**WAITRESS**

Will there be anything else?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

No, thank you.

*The waitress, sensing tension, stands there for a moment, then leaves.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Don't you hate being interrupted?

**PAUL**

What are you going to do? She's a waitress. I guess sensitivity is not part of her job description.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Still, she could have at least said excuse me before barging in.

**PAUL**

That's true, but there's also another saying: the world is not a perfect place.

*Paul and Dr. Stankowski chuckle.*

**PAUL**

Anyway, as I was about to say, my ex-wife now lives in Redding, California with our son, Mikey, who's ten.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(impressed)*

You have a son too! My, you ARE full of surprises.

**PAUL**

In fact, I'm planning to go to California next month to visit him.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

It must be tough being separated from your son.

**PAUL**

It has its challenges, but we stay in contact by phone and email, so it's not all that bad. What about you? Are you married?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

No. I haven't met mister right yet.

**PAUL**

Are you looking?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

To tell you the truth, I've been so busy these past few years that I haven't had much time for socializing.

**PAUL**

I don't get it: a pretty lady like you not socializing? That's too bad. You should have no problem meeting any guy you want.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(a little self-conscious)*

Well, maybe, but it's a little more complicated than that.

**PAUL**

In what way?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

A lot of guys get turned off when I tell them I'm a doctor and most of the good male doctors are already married.

**PAUL**

Why limit yourself to doctors?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I don't. It's just that I'm not around too many men who aren't doctors.

**PAUL**

That's too bad because I think you have a lot to offer. You're attractive, you're employed and you're intelligent. That's a pretty good combination. Maybe you should expand your social horizons.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(guarded)*

Look, I'm really not all that desperate to meet a man.

**PAUL**

*(put off)*

Okay, whatever you say.

DR. STANKOWSKI

I'm really not.

PAUL  
(*annoyed*)

Fine. You don't have to convince me, okay?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Are you angry at me?

PAUL

No, I'm not. I felt that way yesterday, this is today. Don't worry about it. Everything is cool.

DR. STANKOWSKI

Well I hope it is because I want to share something else with you.

PAUL

What is it?

DR. STANKOWSKI

I was meaning to tell you at rounds but I might as well tell you now. After our discussion with Dr. Walters, I requested a rehab consult for Mr. Schwartz and the consultant found that he can only ambulate without assistance for short distance and would not be able to manage five flights of stairs, so I guess you were right after all.

PAUL

I was just doing my job and I never meant for this to be a contest between us, but thanks for sharing this with me now. So what's the plan now?

DR. STANKOWSKI

After breakfast, let's meet with the patient before rounds to discuss his options.

PAUL

That sounds like a good plan to me.

*Dr. Stankowski and Paul continue to eat in silence.*

End of scene 4.

## Scene 5

*Time: 9:30 AM*

*Place: A private room on the unit. In the room, the patient Harry Schwartz, a frail elderly male, is lying in bed, sleeping. Dr. Stankowski and Paul enter the room.*

DR. STANKOWSKI

He's still sleeping. I'll wake him up. *(to Harry)* Mr. Schwartz, wake up. *(Dr. Stankowski repeats this several times. Finally, Harry awakes).*

ESTHER

Oh, hello, doctor ... I can't remember your name ... good morning.

DR. STANKOWSKI

Good morning, Mr. Schwartz. I'm Doctor Stankowski and I'm here with Mr. Alexander, the social worker. You know him, right?

ESTHER

*(agitated)*

Yes. I told him that I wanted to go home but he's done nothing to help me leave. Now I'm stuck in this hospital like I'm a prisoner, all because of him. He won't get me the home care that I need. He's been no help to me at all.

DR. STANKOWSKI

I'm sorry you feel that way, but I can assure you nobody wants to keep you in the hospital against your will, which is why we're here now. We want to talk about your discharge plan.

HARRY

*(elated)*

I'll be going home! Oh, wonderful! When?

DR. STANKOWSKI

Well, remember the therapist from rehab that saw you yesterday?

ESTHER

Yes, I do. She was a very lovely young lady.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Well, in her report she found that it would be hard for you to go up and down stairs, and I believe that you live in a walk up, don't you?

**ESTHER**

Oh, don't believe that report. I've been climbing those stairs for over sixty years. All I need is for someone to help me with shopping and cooking. I can still take care of myself.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

That's good to hear and we want you to be as independent as possible, but at this time, discharging you directly back to your apartment might not be the best plan.

**ESTHER**

*(suddenly upset)*

What are you talking about? I can't go home? *(pause)* Did he *(points to Paul)* have anything to do with this? From the first moment I saw him I knew he didn't like me.

**PAUL**

That's not true, Mr. Schwartz.

**ESTHER**

*(angry, screaming)*

It is true! You hate me, and I don't know why! What did I ever do to you?

*Esther starts crying.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(aside to Paul)*

He's hysterical. Maybe he needs a psych consult.

**PAUL**

I don't think so. He's just upset. *(to Esther)* Mr. Schwartz, please stop crying.

*Paul offers Harry a tissue which Harry takes.*

**PAUL**  
*(to Harry)*

Now try to calm down otherwise it will be hard for us to talk with you.

*Harry wipes his face with the tissue and gives it back to Paul. Gradually he begins to calm down and soon stops crying.*

**PAUL**  
*(to Harry)*

Are you okay?

**HARRY**  
*(somber)*

I'm okay.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Good. Now, we are here to help you and we know that you want to go home, and that's our long term goal for you. But we think you need to go to another facility first to help you walk better so you can go up and down the stairs.

**HARRY**  
*(alarmed)*

Another facility? What kind of facility?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

A rehab facility.

**HARRY**

What rehab facility?

**PAUL**

There are several facilities in the city. We can start making referrals today.

**HARRY**  
*(whining)*

I don't want to go to a rehab facility. I want to go home. Please let me go home.

PAUL

If you go home you'll be stuck in your apartment, and then what would you do if you have to leave?

HARRY

*(desperate)*

I'd get my neighbor to help me. She's my friend.

PAUL

I know you would, but that may not be enough to ensure your safety.

HARRY

*(frustrated)*

Oh, you have an answer for everything, don't you?

DR. STANKOWSKI

*(firmly)*

We're not here to argue with you. We're here to discuss your options, okay? But if you keep fussing, we can't do that, and then nothing gets accomplished.

HARRY

*(subdued)*

Okay, I listen to what you have to say.

DR. STANKOWSKI

Here are your options. One, you can go home, but against medical advice, or two, we can transfer you to a rehab facility and from there you go home. The choice is yours.

HARRY

*(sad)*

That's not much of a choice.

DR. STANKOWSKI

But those are your choices. So which is it?

HARRY

*(panicking)*

Who's gonna look after my apartment while I'm away?

PAUL

What about your neighbor? If you want, give me her number and I'll call her for you.

HARRY  
(*evasive*)

I don't remember her number.

PAUL

Then what's her name?

HARRY

Mildred or Naomi ... I forget.

DR. STANKOWSKI

Okay, Mr. Schwartz, we really have to decide what to do with you because you no longer need to be in the hospital.

HARRY  
(*angry*)

THEN SEND ME HOME!

PAUL

We already explained why that won't be a good plan.

HARRY  
(*imploring*)

I don't care! I want to go home!

DR. STANKOWSKI  
(*to Harry*)

I know you do, Mr. Schwartz. I'll be getting back to you.

HARRY  
(*alarmed*)

What does that mean?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

It means that I have to discuss your case with the attending.

**HARRY**

*(bitter)*

You were so nice to me yesterday, but now you've changed and I don't like you anymore!

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

We'll be talking later, okay? Bye now.

*Harry is whimpering.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(aside to Paul)*

Maybe I should have discharged him to home when I had the chance.

**PAUL**

Yes, you could have done that, but it would have been the wrong thing to do.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Maybe you're right but I hope that later I don't have to tell you "I told you so."

**PAUL**

You won't have to because it won't be necessary.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

In the meantime, I'll request a psych consult to assess Mr. Schwartz's competency to make to make decisions regarding his discharge plan.

**PAUL**

To me, he's just acting out, but I guess a psych consult wouldn't hurt, just to be on the safe side.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Let's see what psych has to say. *(to Harry)* Okay, Mr. Sxhwartz, we'll be leaving now. The nurse will come by soon with breakfast. Okay?

*Harry continues weeping.*

*Dr. Stankowski and Paul exit.*

End of scene 5.

Scene 6

*Time: The next day, 10 AM*

*Place: Nursing station, ante room. Present are Dr. Stankowski, Mabel and Paul. They are conducting daily rounds.*

**MABEL**

The next case is Frank Montgomery.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

He's medically cleared for discharge.

**PAUL**

I'm still waiting for the M11Q.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

I'll get it back to you after lunch. Did he get his clothing and carfare?

**PAUL**

I took care of that yesterday.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Excellent. I'm glad that you're on top of it, Paul.

**PAUL**

Thank you.

**MABEL**

The next and final case is Mr. Schwartz/

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Yesterday, Paul and I met with patient to discuss his discharge plan. Transfer to a rehab facility was discussed but the patient was resistant to the plan and became agitated. A psych consult was requested to assess the patient's competency to make decisions regarding his discharge plans. Psych saw him yesterday. According to the report ...

*Suddenly Harry's grandson, Craig Eisenbrot, appears at the nursing station. Craig is in his mid-30s, self-assured, and intelligent.*

CRAIG

Excuse me.

*Mabel leaves the ante room and approaches Craig.*

MABEL

May I help you?

CRAIG

Yes. My name is Craig Eisenbrot and I want to talk with the doctor about my grandfather who's a patient on this unit.

MABEL

What's the name of the patient?

CRAIG

Harry Schwartz.

MABEL

*(surprised)*

Mr. Schwartz has a grandson? He told us he had no relatives. *(pause)*  
Excuse me for a moment.

*Mabel turns and speaks to the others in the ante-room.*

MABEL

Excuse me, Dr. Stankowski. Mr. Schwartz's grandson is here to talk about her grandfather.

DR. STANKOWSKI

*(surprised)*

Mr. Schwartz has a grandson? I didn't know that! Paul, did you know about this?

PAUL

No, I did not.

DR. STANKOWSKI  
*(hesitates for a moment)*

Okay, let's meet with him. We can talk with him in here.

MABEL  
*(to Clarice)*

We were just getting ready to talk about your grandfather. Why don't you join us?

CRAIG

Thank you.

*Craig follows Mabel into the ante-room.*

DR. STANKOWSKI  
Hello, I'm Helen Stankowski, Mr. Schwartz's doctor.

PAUL  
I'm Paul Alexander, your grandfather's social worker.

And I'm Mabel Stewart, the unit head nurse.

*All three shake hands with Craig. Craig then takes a seat.*

DR. STANKOWSKI  
Wow! Is this a surprise!

CRAIG  
Let me get right to the point. I live with my wife and two kids in Fort Worth, Texas. Last night I received a phone call from my grandfather. He was hysterical. He told me that people were trying to put him away someplace and to come to New York to save him. His tone was so alarming that I decided to take the red eye to New York to see for myself what was going on. We didn't even know that he had been hospitalized. Why is he hospitalized anyway?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

He was admitted for severe dehydration. He was not retaining enough fluid. We stabilized his medical condition and were preparing to discharge him to her home when ...

*Suddenly Harry, wearing her hospital gown, appears at the nursing station.*

**HARRY**

*(screams)*

**I WANT TO GO HOME! I WANT TO GO HOME! I WANT TO GO HOME!**

*Mabel rushes to the counter. She is followed by Dr. Stankowski, Paul and Criag.*

**MABEL**

*(To Harry)*

**Go back to your room!**

*Harry is about to scream again when he sees Craig.*

**HARRY**

*(ecstatic)*

**Craig, it's you! Thank God you're here!**

**CRAIG**

**Abba, of course I'm here.**

*Craig walks around the counter and embraces Harry who returns the embrace and is now weeping with joy.*

**HARRY**

**This is my darling grandson, Craig. Isn't he handsome? I love him so much. (to Craig) You won't let them put me away, will you?**

**CRAIG**

**Of course not, Abba. We will never let that happen. (to Dr. Stankowski and the others) What's going on here? Why is my grandfather so upset?**

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

**Perhaps it would better if first we all sat down. We can all talk here (gestures in the direction of the ante-room).**

CRAIG

Fine.

*Craig takes Harry by the arm and everyone follows Dr. Stankowski into the ante-room. Everyone takes a seat.*

CRAIG

Okay. Now, what's the situation?

DR. STANKOWSKI

We were planning to discharge Mr. Schwartz back to his apartment with home care services when we found out that he lives on the fifth floor of a walk up and would not be able to negotiate the stairs.

HARRY

Untrue! I can walk up a dozen flights of stair!

CRAIG

Please, Abba, let the doctor speak.

HARRY

I will, but don't believe a word she says, and don't believe anything HE (*points to Paul*) says either. They're both liars.

CRAIG

(*to Harry*)

Okay, Abba. (*to Dr. Stankowski*) Please go on.

DR. STANKOWSKI

Since your grandfather would be at risk if we discharged him back to his apartment, it was decided to transfer him to a rehab facility to help him improve her ability to negotiate the stairs, but your grandfather adamantly disagreed with the plan. So we had him evaluated by psychiatry service to determine whether he was competent to make decisions regarding his discharge plans and psychiatry service found that he was not, and so at this point we were going to proceed with finding a rehab facility for him.

**CRAIG**

So because my grandfather disagreed with the discharge plan, he was labeled a mental case?

**HARRY**

There's nothing wrong with me upstairs!

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

That's not it at all. According to the psych consult's report, Mr. Schwartz has symptoms of early onset of dementia and recommended a thorough neurological work up to rule out Alzheimer's disease. But in any event, there was no way that we were going to discharge your grandfather back to a situation that would be unsafe for him.

**CRAIG**

I understand what you're saying but I still don't like how you've labeled my grandfather, and I can definitely understand why he is upset.

**HARRY**  
*(angry)*

You bet I'm upset and it's all because of that social worker *(points to Paul)* who told me I couldn't go home.

**PAUL**

I never said that.

**HARRY**

Yes, you did! And don't call me a liar!

**PAUL**

I'm not calling you a liar. We're trying to help you.

**HARRY**

You have a funny way of showing it.

**CRAIG**

Okay, Abba, enough. *(to the entire group)* This is what I am willing to do: My grandfather will come out to Texas and stay with me at my house. We have more than enough room for him and the kids will be overjoyed to see him. *(to Esther)* Abba, you understand? You're gonna stay with me in Texas.

**HARRY**  
*(guarded)*

But what about my apartment and all my things?

**CRAIG**  
*(reassuring)*

Don't worry about that. After we get to Texas, I'll go back to New York and check on your apartment and have your belongings shipped. How's that sound?

**HARRY**  
Oh, I wouldn't want to be a bother for you.

**CLARICE**  
No bother at all. In fact, we'd be overjoyed to have you stay with us. So, what do you say?

*Esther does not immediately reply. She is engrossed in thought. Then ...*

**CRAIG**  
Wonderful! I knew you would save me! *(to the rest)*: Isn't he marvelous? *(to Paul)* How come you couldn't be so nice?

*Paul does not reply.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
Okay, so the plan is for Mr. Schwartz to be discharged to his grandson's house in Fort Worth, Texas. Good. Now, who's going to arrange for transportation?

**CLARICE**  
No problem. I'll go on line and book two tickets on the next flight back to Fort Worth, Texas. *(to Harry)* So, Abba, get dressed because we'll be leaving soon.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Excellent! I'll write the discharge papers and prescriptions. *(to Craig)* And thank you for your help. It came just in the nick of time.

**PAUL**  
*(to Clarice):*

What's your address?

**CRAIG**

Twenty two seventy eight Clarkson Lane, Fort Worth, Texas. And my cell phone number is 846-821-9845.

**PAUL**

Thank you.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(to Harry)*

So, you'll be leaving soon. I hope this is what you want.

**HARRY**

Yes, thanks to my precious Craig. *(to Craig)* Thank you my boy for stopping these people from killing me. You've saved my life.

**CRAIG**

Nobody was trying to kill you. They were trying to help you. Now, let's go back to your room and get prepared to leave, okay?

*Craig helps Harry to stand up and both exit, with Craig's arm around Esther's shoulders.*

**DR. STANKOWSKI**  
*(upbeat)*

Well, Paul, as the saying goes, all's well that ends well.

**PAUL**  
*(skeptical)*

Yeah, maybe.

DR. STANKOWSKI  
(*not listening to Paul, elated*)

On to the next case.

PAUL  
Dr. Stankowski, listen to me. I don't have a good feeling about this discharge.

DR. STANKOWSKI  
(*heard Paul, annoyed*)  
Now what? The grandson shows up and is willing to take the patient home and the patient agrees. Case closed.

PAUL  
Still, I think it's strange how the grandson suddenly shows up and is trying to rush this discharge.

MABEL  
Oh, oh. Here we go again.

PAUL  
(*to Mabel*)  
What do mean by that?

MABEL  
Sometimes it's better to leave well enough alone.

PAUL  
Look, I don't feel comfortable about this discharge, okay? (*Pause*) Let me try something. *Paul takes out his cell phone.* I'm gonna try the number that Mr. Eisenstein gave me. *Paul tries the number on his cell phone, listen on the phone for a moment, then puts away the phone.* Just as I suspected: the number is no good; it's been disconnected.

MABEL  
Well, so what?

PAUL

If he fabricated a wrong number, then maybe he's fabricating everything else, and if that's the case, then I can't certify that this is a safe discharge.

*Harry and Craig enter the nursing station. Harry is dressed.*

CRAIG

Okay, I guess we'll be on our way. All I need now is my grandfather's discharge papers.

*Dr. Stankowski is sitting on a chair at the nursing station filling out the discharge papers.*

DR. STANKOWSKI

I'll be finished in a moment.

PAUL

*(to Dr. Stankowski)*

Just a moment, doctor.

*(to Harry)*

I tried calling the number you gave me and it was disconnected.

CRAIG

*(surprised)*

Oh, I'm sorry. I gave you my old number by mistake. But why do you need my telephone number anyway?

PAUL

It is the policy of the social work department to follow up with high-risk patients by phone to see how they are doing in the community and to determine if they require any additional services. So, now may I have your correct telephone number?

HARRY

Oh, don't bother with him! He's just trying to make trouble.

CRAIG

Well, actually, I don't have a new telephone number yet.

PAUL

You don't? Why not?

CRAIG

May I speak with you privately?

PAUL

Okay. Let's talk in here (*points to the ante-room*)

DR. STANKOWSKI

Would you mind if I join you?

PAUL

Please do.

*All three go into the ante-room and sit. Harry remains standing at the nursing station.*

PAUL

Okay, so what's the problem?

CRAIG

I'll be honest: I'm having some problems at home. Yesterday I had to change my telephone number after I received two calls from my wife threatening to kill me, and I don't want to give out my new number to anyone, including my grandfather, so I gave you my old number instead.

PAUL

Where's your wife now?

CRAIG

Right now she's out of the home; in fact, a couple of days ago I took out an order of protection against her.

PAUL

Where are your kids?

**CRAIG**

They're with her. She kidnapped them.

**PAUL**

It seems like your situation is unsettled.

**CRAIG**

*(defensive)*

Look, I'll be able to care for my grandfather, if that's what you're driving at.

**PAUL**

I'm not driving at anything. I'm just making an observation, but based on what you've told us, it seems that discharging your grandfather to your home at this time may not be a good plan. *(pause)* Where are your parents?

**CRAIG**

They're in Brooklyn.

**PAUL**

So why can't he stay with them?

**CRAIG**

No way. My father is a one hundred percent service connected Vietnam War veteran and my mother has her hands filled just trying to manage him.

**PAUL**

Then why are you involved?

**CRAIG**

Because besides me and my parents, my grandfather has no other relatives, so it's all on me. But that's okay because I've always been close to my grandmother. He wasn't always like the way she is now.

**HARRY**

*(Screams)*

Come on, Craig. Let's go!

**CRAIG**  
*(loudly)*

Okay, Abba. Just a moment!

*(to Paul and Dr. Stankowski)*

You may not know this, but my grandfather was a professional prize fighter. His last fight was in 1958. He fought twice for the welterweight championship of the world but lost both times, each time by a decision. Now, my grandfather was very generous with the money he made, and when I was a little boy he helped us a lot, with everything, especially after my father came back from Vietnam, so I feel I owe him something in return.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Look, I'm sure your grandfather's boxing record is impressive and your wanting to help him is commendable, but you may be doing your grandfather a disservice if you take him into your home before you've resolved your other issues.

**CRAIG**  
*(angry)*

Then what am I supposed to do? Just leave him here so he can be dumped in some facility? There's no one else available to care for him.

**PAUL**

Look, we understand how you must feel but we also have a responsibility to our patients which includes ensuring that they have a safe discharge plan.

**HARRY**  
*(screams)*

Come on already! Let's get out of here!

**CRAIG**

Don't you hear him?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Of course we hear him. He wants to leave, and he's angry.

**CRAIG**

That's right! So, if you have nothing more to say, please give me my grandfather's discharge papers so we can leave. We have a flight to catch.

PAUL

Dr. Stankowski, I don't think this is a safe discharge.

CRAIG

He's not your grandfather, he's mine!

DR. STANKOWSKI

I'm sorry, Mister Eisenbrot, but I have to agree with Mister Alexander.

CRAIG

*(annoyed)*

So my coming here from Texas was all for nothing?

PAUL

No, not at all. The fact that we now know that you're involved could be very helpful. Perhaps you could help your grandfather find another apartment in a building with an elevator.

CRAIG

I wish I could but I have to get back to Fort Worth.

PAUL

So, I suggest that we postpone Mr. Schwartz's discharge pending placement in a rehab facility.

CRAIG

Will I be notified where he's going?

PAUL

Yes, but I need your correct telephone number.

CRAIG

*(hesitates)*

Okay, here's my new number. *(Craig reads the number from her cell phone).*  
851-385-7243.

PAUL

*(while writing the number on a piece of paper)*

This is your correct number, right?

CRAIG

Yes, it is. *(pause)* Now, how are we going to break the news to my grandfather?

PAUL

By telling him, right now. Why don't you have your grandfather join us?

*Craig gets up, goes to Harry.*

HARRY

It's about time!

CRAIG

Abba, come with me into the room. The doctor and social worker want to talk with you.

HARRY

*(becoming hysterical)*

I don't want to talk with them! I just want to leave with you!

MABEL

*(to Harry)*

You go back into the room. I'll bring her in.

*(Harry returns to the room)*

MABEL

*(to Harry)*

Let's go, Harry. *(Mabel gently but firmly grabs Harry around the waist and guides him into the room)*

MABEL

Okay, Harry, now sit down.

*(Harry sits and Mabel remains standing)*

HARRY  
(*angry*)

Now, what's going on here?

DR. STANKOWSKI

There's been a change in plans.

HARRY  
(*angry, hysterical*)

Oh God, no! Not again!

DR. STANKOWSKI

We're not discharging you to your grandson's.

HARRY  
(*shocked*)

WHAT! (*to Craig*) Is this true?

CRAIG  
(*starts crying*)

I'm afraid so, Abba.

HARRY  
(*enraged*)

You dreadful people! Look what you've done to my precious grandson!  
You're nothing but bullies! Why, if I were younger ...

MABEL  
(*sharply to Harry*)

Stop it! I will not allow you to talk that way.

*Harry does not reply.*

DR. STANKOWSKI

Thank you, Ms. Stewart. (*to Harry*) We're trying to help you, and your  
grandson came here from Texas to see if he could help too, but right now he can't.

HARRY

*(becoming more agitated)*

Why, if I were younger I'd give the lot of you the old one-two just like I did to Barney Ross in '41. They say that Ross was the best boxer in the world, but I taught him everything he knew. Me! That's right, and I woulda been champ too if it hadn't been for that crooked ref Izzy Levine, the bum, I knew him when he was snot nosed kid on Delancey Street, who stopped the fight saying that I couldn't go on when I coulda gone another twenty rounds, easily! And he knew it! You shoulda seen me in my day! I was the best, nobody could knock me down, nobody, you hear, nobody! I fought fifteen times at Madison Square Garden and filled the arena every time. I was a bigger draw than Benny Leonard! Yeah, they said the Jews weren't tough but I showed them who was tough, I sure did, and now .... *(starts wailing)* Oh, God! Oh, God! Now you're going to kill me!

DR. STANKOWSKI

*(to Mabel)*

Take Mr. Schwartz back to his room. I'll be there shortly to give him a sedative.

MABEL

*(to Esther)*

Let's go, Harry.

*Harry continues to wail. Mabel escorts Harry from the room.*

HARRY

*(screams, offstage)*

Please don't leave me, Craig! PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!

CRAIG

*(distraught)*

What have I done?

PAUL

You've done nothing wrong, Mister Eisenbrot ... Craig.

CRAIG

*(angry)*

How can you say that? Didn't you hear him screaming?

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

Look, why don't you come into my office.

**CRAIG**

*(bitter)*

I don't want to go anywhere with you, okay? You've done enough damage already. I came here to help my grandfather and now I'm leaving with the sound of his screaming ringing in my ears, thanks to you. *(pause)* Shame on the both of you. I have a good mind to just take him out of here.

**PAUL**

That is certainly your prerogative, but if anything happens to your grandfather you'll be held fully liable. Are you willing to take that chance?

**CRAIG**

*(incensed)*

You people have an answer for everything. *(Dr. Stankowski and Paul do not reply.)* I'm out of here!

*Mabel returns to the nursing station as Craig storms off the stage.*

**CRAIG**

*(offstage, yells)*

You'll be hearing from my attorney!

**MABEL**

*(to Dr. Stankowski and Paul)*

What's with him?

**PAUL**

Mister Eisenbrot disagreed with the discharge plan.

**MABEL**

Well, didn't I tell you to leave well enough alone?

**PAUL**

Yes, you did, Mabel, but the problem was that the situation wasn't well enough to be left alone.

MABEL

There you go again, being a smart aleck.

PAUL

Yeah, that's what it may sound like to you but we're dealing with people and their emotions, and because of that sometimes people's feelings can get hurt. It comes with the territory.

MABEL

So, when do think you'll find a nursing home for Mr. Schwartz?

PAUL

Probably by tomorrow.

MABEL

Probably? That doesn't sound very reassuring.

PAUL

*(laughs)*

Hey, I do my best.

MABEL

Whatever you say, Paul. *(pause)* By the way, what's going on with Mr. Montgomery?

PAUL

Nothing. I'm still waiting for that M11Q.

MABEL

Still waiting for that M11Q? That doesn't sound very reassuring either.

PAUL

C'mon, Mabel, quit ragging me. *(sarcastic)* You know how much I depend on forms.

**MABEL**

*(with a mixture of affection and respect)*

You and your forms. *(pause)* Paul, you're a real card.

**PAUL**

*(still sarcastic)*

And you're a real card too. *(pause)* Now, just get me that M11Q and my life will be complete.

**DR. STANKOWSKI**

*(laughing)*

One M11Q form coming up.

*Dr. Stankowski starts filling out the M11Q.*

**PAUL**

*(sarcastic)*

Ah, the sound of those words is like music to my ears. It sure is great being a medical social worker.

*Mabel, Paul and Dr. Stankowski laugh.*

The end.

