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# The Phlebotomist

*A Red-blooded Comedy with Bite*

by

**Neal Donohue**

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# The Phlebotomist

by Neal Donohue

## CAST

BELA; *Count Dracula, the world renowned vampire of Transylvania.*

JOB APPLICANT; *Phlebotomy technician, hypnotized and sent home by Bela.*

NURSE FENDER; *Supervisor of the Sunshine Blood Bank.*

BORIS; *Bela's loyal assistant from Transylvania.*

NIGHTINGALE; *Young nurse assigned to help Bela at the clinic.*

DOCTOR PARSAN; *New Director of the Sunshine Blood Bank, enamored with Nurse Nightingale.*

DONORS; *Assorted blood donors, from bankers to winos.*

MR. KATZENZAKIS, *a local banker*

ALBERT, *a homeless "hobo"*

AN OBNOXIOUS DRUNK

MRS. SIMPSON, *an elderly woman*

FINAL DONOR

DETECTIVE; *Police officer investigating the sudden death of Mr. Katzenzakis.*

UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATOR: *On the case of the death of Mr. Katzenzakis*

## SETTING

*The Sunshine Blood Bank in Los Angeles; the present*

**The Phlebotomist**  
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**ACT I**  
**Scene One**

*(AT RISE: Two job applicants sit against a wall, awaiting an interview at the Sunshine Blood Bank of Los Angeles for Phlebotomy technician; a medic who draws blood. Above their heads a large clock declares it to be eight. One applicant is dressed casually and appears nervous, while the other is dressed in a formal tuxedo and cape, inspecting his finger nails. His flamboyant appearance draws the attention of the other.)*

JOB APPLICANT

Phlebotomist?

BELA

I beg your pardon, are you speaking to me?

JOB APPLICANT

Do you see anyone else in this room? I said, are you a phlebotomist?

BELA

I am from Transylvania.

JOB APPLICANT

What?

BELA

Transylvania! That is small village in Bulgaria. I know not where this phlebotomy is, nor do I care.

JOB APPLICANT

You don't get it, do you?

BELA

What must I get?

JOB APPLICANT

This is the Sunshine Blood Bank of Hollywood.

BELA

Of course it is! That is why I am here. Why are you here?

JOB APPLICANT

I'm a phlebotomist.

BELA

Who cares? I am Bulgarian.

JOB APPLICANT

Listen to me, carefully. (Slowly) I draw blood for a living.

BELA

(*Slower*) And so do I. Much longer than you, I can assure you.

(*BELA laughs.*)

JOB APPLICANT

I certainly believe that, grandpa. But that doesn't mean you'll get this job.

BELA

I am not your grandpa. What job are you applying for, a janitor?

JOB APPLICANT

No, wise guy. Phlebotomist! I just told you that. Are you deaf? I'm a phlebotomy technician.

BELA

Well, I only want job to draw blood.

JOB APPLICANT

Then you are a phlebotomist?

BELA

And you are idiot! How many times must I say, I am Transylvanian! What is wrong with you? You will never get job as janitor.

JOB APPLICANT

I'm not applying for a job as janitor!

BELA

I would not give you one if you were. You are obviously demented peasant.

JOB APPLICANT

A what? Say, I bet you don't know what a phlebotomist is?

BELA

Must I go through this again? Stop it! I don't care. Leave me alone! Go read comic book.

JOB APPLICANT

I draw blood for a living.

BELA

*(Exhilarated)* Ah! Why did you not say so? Are you of the living dead? Perhaps you can be my helper. You should apply for job to draw blood.

JOB APPLICANT

I am! Are you cracked in the head, you illegal moron? Don't you know why I'm here?

BELA

This is not my job. If you do not know why you are here, you should go away.

JOB APPLICANT

Are you making a joke?

BELA

I do not make joke. Perhaps your mother has made joke.

JOB APPLICANT

Suppose I punch you in the nose, you sissy?

BELA

Ha! That is most unlikely. I would have to kill you.

JOB APPLICANT

Kill me? You? You're nearly sixty years old.

BELA

Sixty? Ha! You must be imbecile. I am six hundred and thirty-two years old.

JOB APPLICANT

I knew it. You're nuts. Another Hollywood wacko. You don't make any sense. You don't understand a word of English. You're right off the boat.

BELA

I was never on boat. I flew to America from Transylvania, and Transylvania is in Bulgaria. Bulgaria is in Europe. Europe is one of five continents on planet called Earth. Earth is third planet from sun and sun is center of solar system. Your science class is over. Now, go away and play with yourself before your mother comes home. But leave me alone, you jackass!

JOB APPLICANT

You got some nerve. Are you calling me stupid?

BELA

I call you jackass. You are deaf, as well. Go away! Shoo! Shoo!

JOB APPLICANT

Listen to me, you old geezer. Don't talk to me anymore. That's a warning.

BELA

*(Laughs)* That is no warning. That is great relief. Thank you, Mr. Pumpkin head.

*(BELLA and JOB APPLICANT sit silent for a long period.)*

BELA

*(Glares back)* I have decided to forgive you. My name is Bela. *(Cheerfully)* You must be demented peasant, no? We have many like you in Transylvania. You must understand, in Transylvania gentlemen do not talk to peasants, unless we first make love to their wife. My name is Bela. Let us be friends.

JOB APPLICANT

My name is Jack. All I asked was if you draw blood for a living.

BELA

*(Laughs)* You may say I draw blood for a living, or you may say I live to draw blood.

JOB APPLICANT

Sure, it's a job, nothing else. I know. I've been waiting here more than an hour. My house cat must be ripping the couch to shreds by now. Nice cape you got. You must have another job here in Hollywood? Are you an actor?

BELA

Actor? No.

JOB APPLICANT

Why this cape? Are you gay?

BELA

*(Somber)* Sometimes, but not tonight.

APPLICANT

*(Baffled)* Not tonight?

BELA

No, tonight I am serious. I must get job. And this is how Transylvanian gentlemen dress. Are you gay tonight?

JOB APPLICANT

I'm married! See this ring?

BELA

Ah, gold? I have medallion with gold, also, but much more. You see? Come close to my neck and take a look.

JOB APPLICANT

No thanks. I don't do that kind of stuff. I know it's Hollywood, but I'm a phlebotomist, that's all. By the way, Bela, I'm fresh blood. I'll get this job, easy.

BELA

Fresh blood? Very good! You must look into my eyes.

JOB APPLICANT

Say, I told you I don't do that kind of stuff.

BELA

You must do as I say.

APPLICANT

The hell I do! I do what I want. What I want...what I...I....

BELA

*(Waving his hand)* You are under my spell. Do as I command you!

JOB APPLICANT

*(Hypnotized)* I am under your spell—hey, go to hell!

BELA

I probably will, but right now I am your master. Repeat after me, "Bela, you are my master."

JOB APPLICANT

Yes. Bela, you are my master...you are my master.

BELA

Repeat, "I must go home now to drown my cat."

JOB APPLICANT

I must go home now to drown my...What?

BELA

Just repeat after me, you pigeon-brained peasant, "I must go home now to drown my cat."

JOB APPLICANT

Yes, master...I must go home now to drown my cat.

BELA

Good. Now, go home, Jack, and drown your cat. I need job more than you do.

JOB APPLICANT

Yes, master. *(Rising)* Excuse me, but I have to go home now to drown my cat. Good luck with your new job, Bela.

BELA

Yes, thank you very much, Jack. Now, shoo!

*(In a trance JACK rises and shuffles out of the interview room. NURSE FENDER, the head nurse at the blood bank, strolls in and looks around alarmed.)*

NURSE FENDER

My word! Is there nobody else here, except you?

*(BELLA looks around and shrugs. NURSE FENDER sits at her desk, shuffles papers, then stares back at BELA before introducing herself.*

NURSE FENDER

Good Evening, sir. I'm nurse Edith Fender. I'm the personnel manager of the Sunshine Blood Bank of Hollywood. I'm in charge of hiring. Are you sure nobody else showed up, tonight?

BELA

None that I have seen. Perhaps it is early.

NURSE FENDER

That's strange, it's past eight o'clock. Well, it's actually getting late, so let's get started. Come and sit down over here, sir. Let me take a look at your resumé, Mister...Mister...?

*(BELA walks to her table and with a grand flourish of his cape; he sits.)*

BELA

Draculoski! My Bulgarian name is Bela Vladimir Ziebrinenski Draculoski. I am visitor from Transylvania.

NURSE FENDER

That's quite a name you got? Mind if I call you Bela?

BELA

For someone as lovely as you, you may call me whatever your heart desires.

NURSE FENDER

*(Flattered)* Oh, my! How charming! So, you're visiting Los Angeles? Well, don't worry. We're an equal opportunity employer. You may call me Edith.

BELA

Yes, and you may call me, 'sir'. My, what a commanding figure you are, Edith. I am overwhelmed by your beauty...your size, your face, your roundness. You are a mountain flower of beauty. What wondrous, strong, hands you have. Have you milked many cows?

NURSE FENDER

Well, no—what did you say? Have I milked many cows? Just what the hell does that mean? Please be civil, while I look at your resume.

BELA

Your wish is my command.

NURSE FENDER

It says you're originally from Transylvania. Never heard of it.

BELA

I would not think so.

NURSE FENDER

Your resume states you're certified to draw blood in Bulgaria. How many years have you been doing this type of work?

BELA

A very long time. Three, four, maybe five hundred years.

NURSE FENDER

I see. Well, that's nice. Then we can...what? Did you say five hundred years?

BELA

*(Forces laugh)* Days! I mean days. My English is not so good. About five hundred days, or about two human years.

NURSE FENDER

Human years? Well, two years does qualify you, and even if your English isn't good you won't be talking much with the public--I hope. You'll do fine. Since this is the last day of interviews

*(NURSE FENDER drops pen and cuts her finger while picking it up.)*

NURSE FENDER

Ouch, a paper cut! Wow, that stings.

*(She squeezes her bleeding finger. BELA's eyes light up, his nostrils expand, his breathing quickens as he feverishly leans over her desk to touch her.)*

NURSE FENDER

Don't you hate paper cuts? Look at all this blood.

BELA

No, not at all. I love blood. May I touch your finger?

NURSE FENDER

Huh? No! Did you say you love blood?

BELA

*(Fighting urge to suck the blood)* No, I love looking at you. *(Stands)* Anyway, you have resume. You know what I mean. If you hire me, I can be of great service to you, and your bloody bank. I work hard, never late, never miss work in hundred years, and I welcome response for this blood sucking job. Will that be all, Madame Edith?

NURSE FENDER

We prefer to call it phlebotomy technician. And again, just call me Edith. We'll be in touch, but confidentially I can see no problem with you, Bela. You can have the job if you want it... *(Whispers)* ...and anything else available. *(Giggles)* Oh yes, one other thing. This is minimum-wage and it's a graveyard shift, eight to four in the morning. Will that be a problem for you and your family?

BELA

*(Laughs)* You are most funny. That is reason I chose it. This is most marvelous.

NURSE FENDER

No, Bela. I'm not trying to be funny. I'm serious. Will these hours be a problem for your wife?

BELA

*(Affects a serious frown)* Oh? Yes, we are being serious. Do not worry, Nurse Fender. I tell my wives, tonight. Now, I shall leave. Will that be all?

NURSE FENDER

What do you mean, wives?

BELA

Wife! My English is not so....

NURSE FENDER

I know, we've been through this already. Well, you start Friday night.

BELA

Yes, I will arrive after sundown. I say once more to you, my lovely employer, good evening and farewell. Until we meet again, *adieu*.

NURSE FENDER

Good night. But not sundown, Bela—it's eight in the evening.

BELA

Yes, I understand. Now, I must go, I say! And once again I bid you *adieu*, my delightful princess. *(Rises, flaps cape, passes a hall mirror and thinks he sees his reflection)* Yikes!

NURSE FENDER

What's the matter?

BELA

*(Laughs)* Your mirror must be dirty; I thought I saw my reflection.

*(BELLA exits.)*

NURSE FENDER

Why do I always get all the screwballs?

*(BLACKOUT.)*

## ACT I

### *Scene Two*

*(AT RISE: The following evening. BELLA has arrived at the blood bank in full formal dress ready to begin his new job as Phlebotomist.)*

NURSE FENDER

Good evening, Mr. Fancy-pants. It's work time. Put away your exotic cape. Looks like you've been partying on the wrong side of town. This is just a blood bank on skid row, no need to get formal. Sit the client down, strap his bicep, draw a pint, thank him with a thirty dollar check, then push him out the back door. They only want money for a bottle of wine, anyway. Got that?

BELA

*(Indignant)* My name is not Fancy-pants. It is Bela. Where is rope?

NURSE FENDER

What rope? Why do you need a rope?

BELA

To tie victim down.

NURSE FENDER

Very funny! They may be winos, but we treat them with respect and dignity. We don't tie people down at this blood-bank, and we don't call them victims. We use the armrest, jab'em, draw a pint, stick a label on the bag, then kiss'em goodnight. Have you got that?

BELA

*(Looking at his pants)* I will not kiss them good night. That is not my job, and these are not my fancy pants. Do you wish me to wear my fancy pants? I do have beautiful Perestroika dance wear. It is only used for Halloween celebrations. My father gave me his last pair before wretched peasants bury him alive in graveyard. Would you like to hear story? It is very sad.

NURSE FENDER

No—God, no! I don't want to listen to this, anymore. I have a hangover and a lot of paperwork to do. Just keep it simple. (*Outside door opens*) I hear someone. (*Opens door*) I'll sign him in. Good luck, Bela.

BELA

(*Flourishes cape*) And good luck to you, my fellow blood-sucker!

NURSE FENDER

(*To herself as exits*) What can you expect for minimum-wage?

(*BELA arranges needles, test-tubes, and labels as a clean, well-dressed GENTLEMAN enters.*)

BANKER

How do you do? (*Laughing*) You must be the chief vampire?

BELA

(*Shocked*) What? Who tell you this? This is lie. I am not vampire.

BANKER

Hey, I was joking. Ease up pal, I was just pulling your leg.

BELA

You may not pull my leg—we have not been introduced. I am your blood-banker. Now, sit down, give me blood, and keep quiet!

BANKER

You don't sound American to me. You must be new. My name is Charles Kazantzakis. I donate blood every month. I'm the president of Harbinger Bank. I'm right there on that street corner. Is this the first time you've drawn blood?

BELA

Kazantzakis is Greek name, no?

BANKER

Why, yes it is. Are you Greek?

BELA

No, I am from Bulgaria. Bulgarians suffer many centuries from Greek barbarians who massacred, tortured, and raped our women.

BANKER

Well, yes, that's unfortunate—the old world, religious wars and stuff. It's all very tragic. But we're all Americans, now.

BELA

Not me.

BANKER

Immigrant? I'm sure you will be an American someday.

BELA

I do not wish to be American.

BANKER

Tell me friend, have you been doing this long? What's your name?

BELA

I am not your friend. My title is Count Bela Vladimir Ziebreński Draculoski. I have drawn blood before your Greek mother entertained villagers in her barn. Now, let me show you how I treat barbarians.

*(BELLA quickly straps BANKER's arms to chair with ropes.)*

BANKER

Hey, take it easy pal! I'm not going to run away.

BELA

*(Laughs)* I make sure you don't. Boris, come out! Tie up this Greek butcher.

*(A large stern MAN slowly shuffles from the closet.)*

BORIS

Yes, master.

BANKER

What's going on here? Who is that guy? What are you two morons doing? I can't move my arms!

BELA

You be silent.

BANKER

I will not be silent. Untie my arms, right now. I'm going home.

BELA

*(Laughs)* You may not go home. I am going to take your blood--all of it!

BANKER

What the hell are you talking about? Let me out of here, you illegal bastard. Help! Office manager, get in here! Somebody help me!

BELA

Shut up, you Greek scum! Office manager go home. Nobody is here besides me and my slave, Boris. You are now under my spell.

BANKER

The hell I am! Mother of mercy, what's gotten into you people?

BELA

Boris, this Greek pig needs anesthetic.

*(BORIS hits BANKER over the head with black-jack, knocking him out. BELA shuts front door, returns to client, and slowly lowers his head over the banker's neck while throwing cape over his victim. BLACKOUT.)*

## ACT I

### Scene Three

*(AT RISE: The next evening. The BANKER's body has been discovered in the alley outside the blood-bank and a POLICE DETECTIVE is in the process of interviewing NURSE FENDER and BELA.)*

DETECTIVE

*(Interviewing with pad and pen)* Okay, Edith, let's go over this one more time. What exactly happened? You say you went home at eight, before Mr. Kazantzakis left. He was found in the alley right outside your blood-bank. The autopsy says there was no blood found in his corpse. Yet, you claim you don't have any record of a blood donation?

NURSE FENDER

Bela, did you draw any blood from Mr. Kazantzakis?

BELA

Absolutely not. Obviously, this hobo drop dead. Must be sick before he got here. This is desperate neighborhood. We deal with desperate people, desperately looking for desperate money. They only give blood for bottle of wine. Is that not so, Nurse Fender?

NURSE FENDER

*(Forces laugh)* Of course not. Who told you that? Bela has such a hard time with English.

BELA

But you tell me this, yourself.

NURSE FENDER

No, no, no, no! That is absolutely ridiculous. But, yes, some donors are desperate to begin with, and shock sometimes can kill them. This is not uncommon. There's nothing we can do.

DETECTIVE

Mr. Kazantzakis was a banker and a stock broker. He had a family, a house in suburbia, and ran a business. He was on the Chamber of Commerce. Are you saying he needed thirty bucks for a bottle of wine?

BELA

Maybe he gamble, who knows? He look like gambler to me.

DETECTIVE

How can someone look like a gambler? You sound suspicious to me.

BELA

*(Affecting sobs)* Me? How dare you! Do you know who I am? Okay, I confess. I confess. I am most grieved by this tragedy. It is all my fault. I kill him! I kill him!

DETECTIVE

Ah, ha! Now we're getting somewhere. So, tell me, Mr. Draculoski, what exactly did you do?

BELA

*(Sobbing)* Nothing! I did absolutely nothing, and it kill him! I should have listened to desperate pleas. He want to sell blood, but smell of alcohol was too repulsive. I threw him into street. Oh, forgive me! I should have given him some bread to eat.

DETECTIVE

Alcohol? The autopsy didn't show a drop of alcohol in his system.

BELA

It could have been mouth-wash.

DETECTIVE

This sounds crazy. I don't have time for this. Something is fishy. All I can say Edith, you'd better run a squeaky clean operation from here on in, or I'll close this blood-bank down faster than you can say, "Count Dracula".

BELA

How dare you! You may not say such name! Who give permission to use my...my... *(Smiles)* I mean, who told you such silly name?

DETECTIVE

Who told me what silly name?

NURSE FENDER

Don't pay attention to Bela. He's an immigrant from Bulgaria and has difficulty with English.

DETECTIVE

*(Disgusted)* I'm out of here. But just remember, Edith, you've been warned. *(Exits)*

NURSE FENDER

Well, that was close. The chief of police could have shut us down, Bela.

BELA

*(Shrugs)* Ha! He is nothing but small potato. We have ways to fix police in Transylvania.

NURSE FENDER

This is not Transylvania! Bela, you do as I say, or you're fired. Do you understand me? I'm giving you an assistant to help you from now on, a nurse who arrived today by the name of Nightingale.

BELA

I need no such bird.

NURSE FENDER

You need to shut up, before we end up in jail.

BELA

*(Examining his fingernails)* If you insist.

NURSE FENDER

I don't insist, damn it! I'm giving you an order, you jerk—and stop coming to work in that crazy cape of yours. I don't care what you do in your private life. If I see you with that flaming outfit again, I'll fire you.

BELA

When will this Nightingale be here?

NURSE FENDER

She's here already. Listen to her and we'll get through this mess.

BELA

You Americans are such children.

NURSE FENDER

Not another word out of you!

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

**ACT I**  
***Scene Four***

*(AT RISE: The next evening.)*

NIGHTINGALE

*(Scurrying around the clinic)* Oh my, how disorderly! Why is this place such a mess? It's no wonder they hired me on the spot. Bela, you really must sanitize your instruments, and please put them in order. We can't put our syringe in the pencil holder. It's unsanitary. And it wouldn't hurt to put some flowers in here with paintings on the wall. It makes the customers feel at ease, and a couple of mirrors. I'll bring them in.

BELA

No! We must have no mirrors.

NIGHTINGALE

Don't be silly, Bela. We need to spruce up our office. This place is so depressing, it looks like a morgue.

BELA

Ah, so what is wrong with morgue? I say, no mirrors!

NIGHTINGALE

Why not?

BELA

It is bad luck in Transylvania.

NIGHTINGALE

This is America.

BELA

That is bad luck, too. *(Softly)* Ah, my delicate little Nightingale. My little song bird. What an apt description for such a beautiful woman. You must understand, if I should see your lovely image in a mirror as I work, I could not concentrate. I would be captivated by the delicate charm of your soft flowing blonde hair, your sparkling blue eyes, your enchanting smile. It would cast a hypnotic spell over me. I would be as one wounded by the arrows of love, as helpless as a wounded bat.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, how sweet!—wait...a wounded bat? Yuck! Did you say, '...a wounded bat'?

BELA

No—I say a 'cat.'

NIGHTINGALE

You said bat!

BELA

I say cat. My English is...

NIGHTINGALE

I know, I know. Your English is not so good. They told me all about your excuse.

BELA

But this is no excuse. Now, now, my precious little turtledove, why should we squabble when we may begin to work as one?

NIGHTINGALE

Perhaps we really don't need mirrors—but we must have flowers!

BELA

Yes, of course, my delicate rose petal. I so adore flowers, but what flower could ever match your divine beauty.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Giggles)* Let's not forget our work, Bela. Our clients are waiting for us in the hallway, and we really should get started. Don't you think?

*(NIGHTINGALE opens hall closet and sees BORIS standing there, arms folded, sternly staring down at her. She slams door, speechless, then fearfully whispers to BELA.)*

NIGHTINGALE

There's a terribly large man standing inside our closet.

BELA

You mean Boris?

NIGHTINGALE

Boris? You know him? Why is Boris standing inside a dark closet?

BELA

He's my assistant.

NIGHTINGALE

But I'm your assistant.

BELA

Of course, but he will assist you when you assist me. *(Aside)* Boris, you come out. We must work, now.

BORIS

*(Rattles closet)* Yes, Master.

NIGHTINGALE

Did he just call you, master?

BELA

Yes. It is Bulgarian tradition. We talk with respect in old country. Boris, come out, I say!

BORIS

*(Shouts)* May I open door, master?

BELA

Yes, you may, Boris.

BORIS

*(Steps out)* Thank you, Master.

NIGHTINGALE

I've never heard anybody talk like that. He gives me the creeps

BELA

Well, Boris is creep. In Transylvania we have many creeps.

NIGHTINGALE

Transylvania? Where the heck is that? Oh my, this is so exciting! Do I look nervous? My hands are trembling. Let's me see who's outside in the waiting room. *(Peeks out through the door but shuts it quickly)* Oh, we have a client. My first one! I'll go and bring him in.

BELA

Yes, do that my butterfly. *(NIGHTINGALE exits; BELA turns sternly to BORIS.)* Boris, you must be careful, tonight. Do not frighten our little song bird. Do everything Miss Nightingale tells you to do. Do you understand?

BORIS

Yes, Master.

BELA

And do not call me master, any longer.

BORIS

Yes, Master.

*(ALBERT, a "hobo" enters in soiled clothes, escorted by NIGHTINGALE.)*

NIGHTINGALE

Come right in, Albert. Sit down and make yourself comfortable. Bela will set you up, and have you ready to go in a jiffy.

ALBERT

*(Belches)* Okay, but where's da' check youse' promise me, so'z I'ze can gets some food and stuff?

NIGHTINGALE

Just talk to our phlebotomy technician, Mr. Bela. I'll finish your paperwork and be right outside. Bye! *(Exits)*

BELA

Food n' stuff? Ha! You filthy little tramp, you mean another bottle of wine, don't you? You get money when we get blood. Now sit down, shut up, and give me both arms.

*(BELA and BORIS strap ALBERT down; he grows alarmed.)*

ALBERT

What's youse' two doin' ta' me? Why's ya' strappen' my head to this chair?

BELA

You keep quiet. If you want free money you do as I command...this is America! Boris strap him tight! We need all his blood.

ALBERT

Ya'z needs' awlz my blood! Are ya' shure? I'ze never heard no one taken' awlz my's blood, before. I don't think I likes' this. Maybe I'ze change my mind. Yoose' just unstraps me, right now.

BELA

Change your mind? Ha! *What* mind, you drunken' little peasant! Boris, strap down his legs!

*(BORIS straps his legs.)*

ALBERT

*(Wrestles hopelessly against ropes)* Whoa! Whys' ya' strappin' down my's legs?

BORIS

He is ready, Master.

BELA

Go see what our Miss Nightingale is doing?

BORIS

*(Opens door to the front office)* Miss Nightingale is busy talking to client in waiting room.

BELA

Good! Lock door!

BORIS

*(Shuts door)* I lock door.

*(BELA spreads his cape over ALBERT and lowers himself onto his neck. BORIS watches and giggles. LIGHTS FLICKER. Finishing, BELA wipes bloodied mouth and sits calmly down at table, as ALBERT slumps over dead.)*

BELA

Boris, take Mr. Albert to alley.

BORIS

Do I put Mr. Albert into garbage can, Master?

BELA

No, Boris, just drop down sewer. We do not want trouble from meddling police chief, again.

BORIS

Yes, Master.

BELA

And stop calling me master. This is America.

BORIS

Yes, Master.

*(BORIS drags ALBERT out back door. NIGHTINGALE enters with check in hand.)*

NIGHTINGALE

Did we finish so quickly? Where's Albert?

BORIS

He ran out back.

NIGHTINGALE

But he forgot his check.

BELA

Oh, what a shame.

NURSE FENDER

*(Looking in)* I got another live one for you Mr. Fancy pants.

BELA

*(As NURSE FENDER exits)* Again, with my fancy pants? I tell you these are not my fancy pants.

BORIS

*(Returns)* Do you wish for me to stand in closet?

NIGHTINGALE

Closet? Why must Boris stand inside a closet?

BELA

*(Casually)* He like closet. Boris is shy.

*(Horried, NIGHTINGALE turns away, goes out, and brings in next DONOR.)*

DONOR

Whoa, baby! Lookey, lookey, lookey! I'ze just found me a sweet little cookie. Hey there, mama, come to papa. If you come with every pint of blood, you can have it all, baby.

*(Belches)*

BELA

We can have it all, whether you want to give it, or not. This is your turn, Nurse Nightingale. Why not take care of this gentleman.

NIGHTINGALE

Me? But he's frightfully drunk.

NEW DONOR

Com'on now, moma, take care of papa! You got my heart. Now, take my blood. I'm just a fool for love.

NIGHTINGALE

Your breath wreaks of alcohol.

NEW DONOR

Give me a kiss and I'll ferment your lips.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Exiting)* He's all yours.

BELA

Allow me, Mr. Lover-boy? *(Jabs DONOR)*

NEW DONOR

Ye-ow! Holy cow! I've been stabbed.

BELA

Do you have pain? Perhaps, you need sedative? Boris, Mr. Lover-boy needs sleep!

*(BORIS hits DONOR over the head with his blackjack.)*

NEW DONOR

Ye-ow! My hea---d! *(Faints)*

BELA

*(Calls out to lobby)* Miss Nightingale, we shall return after lunch. Mr. Lover-boy has calmed down and is ready for you. You may remove blood

NIGHTINGALE

*(Enters)* Why is he unconscious?

BORIS

He fall asleep.

*(BORIS and BELA exit out back door. After withdrawing his blood, Nurse NIGHTINGALE unties the DONOR who stumbles towards door.)*

NEW DONOR

You people are animals! Gives me my check. You should all be ashamed of yourselves. I'ze never coming back.

*(DONOR stumbles out. NIGHTINGALE sits in despair and calls her mother on phone.)*

NIGHTINGALE

Hello mother, it's Florence. I'm so depressed. I work with the strangest people I've ever known. My boss is from Bulgaria and he's driving me nuts. He mistreats all the donors and his assistant lives inside our closet. Tonight, I saw them strapping a client into a chair and beating him over the head with a blackjack. *(Pause)* Well, yes, he was drunk—but clobbering a defenseless hobo over the head was out of line, to say the least. *(Pause)* Huh? You did that to father when he was drunk? Oh, my! You never told me. Well, two more weeks is all I'm giving this place. *(Pause)* Yes, mom, I love you, too. Bye!

NURSE FENDER

*(Enters)* That last donor left in quite a huff. What's happening in here?

NIGHTINGALE

This job is awful.

NURSE FENDER

I know. Most sensible people want to keep their blood. But I meant with our Bulgarian meatball, Bela.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, Bela? Well, he's certainly a very polite man.

NURSE FENDER

Really? Don't let that fool you. He knows how to turn a woman on, believe me. *(Sighs)* But are you okay, hon? You don't look so well.

NIGHTINGALE

Why must you have three people doing such a simple job?

NURSE FENDER

I don't. Who's the third?

NIGHTINGALE

Boris, the man who sleeps inside the closet.

NURSE FENDER

What? There's no Boris on our payroll. Did you say he sleeps inside our closet? *(Peers into her eyes)* Have you been drinking?

NIGHTINGALE

No! Boris is Bela's assistant—or rather he's my assistant, when I'm assisting Bela. Right now, they're both out to lunch.

NURSE FENDER

You can say that again. I'm going to run across the street and grab a bite to eat. Listen for the door. And when I get back, I want to meet this Boris fellow.

NIGHTINGALE

Okay.

*(NIGHTINGALE pulls out a bag and pours out the contents. It is her "lunch." She begins to slowly eat until she hears someone knocking at the door.)*

NIGHTINGALE

Come in.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Hello? *(Entering)* Is this the Sunshine Blood Bank?

NIGHTINGALE

*(Not facing him)* Yes it is, but everybody's out to lunch...so to speak. Please remain in the waiting room until I come to get you.

DOCTOR PARSAN

But I don't want to give blood.

NIGHTINGALE

I can't blame you. Nobody does—not after we're through with them. But you have to wait outside just the same.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Who's in charge?

NIGHTINGALE

Who knows? Do you want to be in charge? *(Begins sobbing)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

Yes, actually. I don't think you understand, young lady. I'm the new director of the Sunshine Blood Bank. You seem to be a bit upset. Did you have a rough night?

NIGHTINGALE

Rough night? No, not if you compare it to World War II. This is the worst day of my life! I'm not working here any longer. There's no point talking to me about it. I'm not changing my mind.

DOCTOR PARSAN

That's a shame. I was hoping to work with someone as—someone like you.

NIGHTINGALE

Well, you're out of luck. We don't hire normal people here. *(Finally turns towards DOCTOR who is exceptionally good looking)* Oh, my! Work with me?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Why, yes. I'm the new director. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Doctor Parsan.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh! How do you do?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Fine and you're Miss...?

NIGHTINGALE

Nightingale! I'm Florence Nightingale. I'm just fine. You're such a handsome—I mean an interesting director. How delightful to meet you.

DOCTOR PARSAN

But I thought you said you weren't feeling well.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Forces laugh)* Don't be silly. I was only joking. I'm always joking. It keeps the donors upbeat. So, Doctor Parsan, what causes you to drop by our blood bank so late at night?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Well, I begin work in the morning but I wanted to meet my night staff. And there doesn't seem to be anyone in the front office. You're the first person I've met so far.

NIGHTINGALE

Really? You can count on me. I'll make sure the night staff will be prepared for you by tomorrow.

DOCTOR PARSAN

So, you're not quitting?

NIGHTINGALE

Quitting? Don't be silly. I thought I told you, I'm a joker!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Well, that's wonderful. I'm so glad you are staying. I'll look forward to working with you and getting to know you... your staff... Miss Nightingale.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, you can count on me. I'll have our crew ship-shape and at attention tomorrow. Good night!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Good night!

*(DOCTOR PARSON exits. BELA and BORIS enter through back door, filthy and bedraggled.)*

BELA

Miss Nightingale, my pretty flower, we need new gowns.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, my! What were you doing?

BORIS

We bury Albert in church graveyard.

NIGHTINGALE

You what?

BELA

*(Forces laugh)* That was most excellent joke, Boris! But be sensitive to our delicate nurse. She does not understand Bulgarian humor.

NIGHTINGALE

That was a joke? That's a joke! Listen, you two. We have a new director – Dr. Parson – and we don't have time for this nutty behavior. I'm taking charge of this clinic right now, until Dr. Parsan is satisfied. Do you fruitcakes understand me?

BELA

Well, I can make him think you are in charge. Boris, from now on Miss Nightingale must look like she's in charge. I command you to obey her.

BORIS

Yes, Master.

NIGHTINGALE

'Command'? 'Master'? What's wrong with you two?

BORIS

*(To Nightingale)* Are you new master?

NIGHTINGALE

*(Screams)* Yahhhhhh! No! Don't call me, or anybody else, master.

BELA

Obey, Boris!

BORIS

Yes....

BELA

Do not say!

BORIS

Yes....

BELA

Boris! Go into closet, and close door.

*(BORIS shuffles into closet and shuts door. BELA locks him in with key. NIGHTINGALE slumps on stool and starts to cry.)*

BELA

Now, now, my sweet butterfly! My delicate lily, why are you so sad?

NIGHTINGALE

*(Shouting)* Because you two are nuts!

BELA

This is not proper way to speak to boss. But I forgive you.

NIGHTINGALE

Listen Bela, Dr. Parsan will visit tomorrow and I told him I'm in charge, and that you and Boris are my helpers. Please cooperate!

BELA

You want I should pretend to be slave? Okay, this I will do.

NIGHTINGALE

Not slave, you will be my helper. Don't say slave or master, and don't lock Boris in the closet anymore. I want this blood-bank to appear normal.

BELA

This was normal before you come here. But I can do what you want for short time. Boris, did you hear what we shall do?

BORIS

*(From inside closet)* Yes, Master.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Sobbing)* Oh, I'm feeling sick! I'm calling mother!

BELA

You love your mother? That is good. So do I. Do you know my mother was queen of Transylvanian werewolves?

NIGHTINGALE

A queen of werewolves? Why, of course, how silly of me. I should have known.

*(NIGHTINGALE sobs uncontrollably as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## ACT I

### *Scene Five*

*(AT RISE: The following evening. DOCTOR PARSAN addresses NURSE FENDER, NIGHTINGALE and BELA.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

Good evening everybody—and a special hello to you Miss Nightingale. It's very nice to see you, again. You're looking especially lovely this evening.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Enchanted)* Good evening, Doctor Parsan. *(In "charge")* Now, listen up, we have the new director of our Sunshine Blood Bank here, Dr. Parsan.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Ah, yes, My name is Doctor David Parsan and I'm the new director of our clinic. It's so nice to get to know my night staff. I want to say I look forward to working with you for a long time to come, and tonight I am here to see how efficiently Miss Nightingale runs our clinic, so I can learn how you are doing and what your needs are. I'm here only to watch. I assure you, I will not interfere.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, Doctor Parsan, you may interfere if you want. I don't mind. I really don't. (*Giggles*)

BELA

(*Sarcastically*) Oh? So, you don't mind? How sweet of you, my dear.

NIGHTINGALE

(*Aside*) Stop it, Bela.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Ah, so you must be Bela, Miss Nightingale's helper, that Greek immigrant. What's your name, old boy?

BELA

I am not Greek! I am Bulgarian. And I am not your old boy!

DOCTOR PARSAN

That was simply an expression. I'm Doctor Parsan. How do you do?

BELA

How do I do, what? My assistant do everything I do not do.

DOCTOR PARSAN

What assistant?

NIGHTINGALE

(*Quickly*) Boris! I assigned our phlebotomist, Bela, a new assistant. His name is Boris. He helps us calm down all our donors.

BELA

And remove them after we take blood.

DOCTOR PARSAN

What?

NIGHTINGALE

Remove the blood donation is what he means. Bela is from Bulgaria, also. His...

BELA and NIGHTINGALE, *Together*

...English is not so good!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Well, that's just super! (*Looks into the front office waiting room*) Hey, looks as if we have a few donors outside. Bela, perhaps you'd like to do the honors of bringing one in for Miss Nightingale, so we can get started tonight.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, no! I'll bring one in.

BELA

(*Sarcastically*) Don't worry, this I can do. After all, I am just Bulgarian assistant.

NIGHTINGALE

No! I won't hear of it. You just stay put, Bela. I'll take care of it for you. (*Exits*)

NURSE FENDER

(*Looks at BELA then at DOCTOR PARSAN*) I'll help Nurse Nightingale with the registration and then take my leave. (*Exits*)

DOCTOR PARSAN

(*Strolls around and observes.*) Very clean facility, quite attractive. Though it could use a mirror or two. I'll have a few sent down tomorrow.

BELA.

You do no such thing. We never use mirror.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Nonsense. Brightens up a place. Besides, that will be Miss Nightingale's decision.

BELA.

She does not make such decision.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Now hear this, Bela, I only allow my facilitator to make final decisions, here—Miss Nightingale. Do we understand each other?

BELA

We understand each other, but we do not agree.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Good, so we're on the same page.

BELA.

I am not on any page.

DOCTOR PARSAN

What? Not again! That's simply an expression. It means we both agree.

BELA

Why don't Americans say what they mean? How does anyone understand you?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Well, I just told you, '*...we agree*'.

BELA.

And I just told you; we do not agree!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Now, listen here, this impertinence has gone just about far enough. I will not tolerate any more insubordination.

*(BORIS rattles the closet door.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

What's inside that closet?

BELA

What closet?

DOCTOR PARSAN

That closet, right there! There's only one closet, here.

BELA

Oh, that closet. It is my assistant locked inside.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Your assistant? Is there a person locked in there?

*(BORIS rattles the door all the more.)*

BELA.

No person. It is only Boris. He want to come out, but I lock his door.

BORIS

Master, let me out!

BELA.

Not now, Boris. I am busy talking.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Why is there a man locked in that closet?

BELA

Boris is not man, he is creep. But he lives in closet.

DOCTOR PARSAN

He lives in a closet? That's crazy. Get him out, immediately.

BELA

*(Unlocks door)* Come out Boris, and say hello to new director, Doctor Tarzan.

DOCTOR PARSAN

My name is Parsan, not Tarzan!

BORIS

Good evening, Director. Do you have a body?

DOCTOR PARSAN

A body? Why would I have a body? What does he mean, do I have a body? Why is he living in our closet? Who the hell hired this guy? Who the hell hired you? What the hell is going on in my clinic?

NIGHTINGALE

*(Enters with elderly lady; surprised to see BORIS)* Well, Boris, I wasn't expecting you to show yourself tonight. *(To DOCTOR PARSAN)* Boris helps at night sometimes and he loves to play hide-n-seek... don't you, Boris? *(To OLD WOMAN)* You just sit down, Mrs. Simpson and make yourself at home, this won't hurt a bit. It's quick, painless, and we're all one big family here.

OLD WOMAN

You know, I've never given blood before. I'm a bit afraid.

BORIS

I help you.

DOCTOR PARSAN

*(Pushes BORIS back)* The hell you will!

BORIS

It is my job. Stay away.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Who do you think you're talking to?

BORIS

I do not think.

BELA

No, he does not think. He is simply peasant. I tell him what to think.

NIGHTINGALE

Is there a problem, Bela?

BELA.

Is no problem. Doctor Tarzan is learning how to run a clinic.

DOCTOR PARSAN

That's Parsan, I already told you that. I don't need to learn a damn thing from the likes of you. Miss Nightingale, I want to know why this large fellow lives inside our closet?

NIGHTINGALE

Perhaps he likes it.

BELA.

Doctor, look into my eyes.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Look into your what?

BELA

I said, look into my eyes!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Are you nuts? Miss Nightingale, why did you hire these people? *(Turns back)* Look into your *what?*

BELA.

Look into my eyes and repeat after me, "I am the big chicken, here."

NIGHTINGALE

Bela, you're frightening Mrs. Simpson.

DOCTOR PARSAN

I will not. What did you say...chicken?

BELA

Say out loud, "I am the big chicken, here."

DOCTOR PARSAN

I will not—I am—I am...I am the big chicken, here.

BELA.

That's right. You are big chicken. Now, flap your arms like chicken, and cluck.

*(DOCTOR PARSAN places fists under his armpits and flaps his elbows while walking around the office, clucking.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

Cluck! Cluck! Cluck!

OLD WOMAN

Oh, my! What is this? (*Uncomfortable*) Is he really a doctor?

BELA

(*Laughing*) This is the Sunshine Blood Bank Clinic and this is the big chicken in charge. Allow me to introduce you to our director, Dr. Chicken.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh no, Mrs. Simpson, that's not true. You don't have to worry. He's not really a chicken. (*Aside to BELA*) Bela, what are you doing? How did you—

OLD WOMAN

For God's sake, I can see he's not a chicken! Who the hell is he? Why is he flapping his arms?

BELA

He is director of blood suckers. He runs clinic.

OLD WOMAN

Oh, my! I don't like this! Not one bit!

BELA

He is in charge of taking blood from hobos, the homeless, and the destitute. He really is biggest chicken in Los Angeles. You may watch him strut, as you donate your blood.

DOCTOR PARSAN

(*Strutting around office*) Cluck! Cluck! Cluck!

OLD WOMAN

Oh, dear me! (*Becoming increasingly afraid*) I have to leave. I'm afraid. Something is terribly wrong here. You people are strange. I must go...now.

NIGHTINGALE

Mrs. Simpson, please don't leave. I can explain.

(*DOCTOR PARSAN starts pecking NIGHTINGALE's head.*)

NIGHTINGALE

Stop that, Dr. Parsan!

OLD WOMAN.

Aghhh! That man is pecking on your head! He does think he's a chicken. Oh, dear me! This is not a clinic—this is loony bin! (*Terrified*) And I'm leaving.

(*OLD WOMAN runs out of clinic.*)

DOCTOR PARSAN

Cluck! Cluck! Cluck!

NIGHTINGALE

Bela! What have you done?

BORIS

What now, Master?

NIGHTINGALE

Boris, just—oh! *(Sitting down)* I'm calling my mother. I don't want to work here, anymore.

BELA

Don't be silly, Nurse Nightingale, my delicate bird of youth. Boris, please put Doctor Chicken into closet before he lay egg. *(Consoling NIGHTINGALE)* Ah, now, now! Don't you worry, my dear. Your Doctor Parsan will be fine in a few hours.

*(BORIS leads DOCTOR PARSAN into closet, shuts and locks door. DOCTOR PARSAN continues clucking inside closet.)*

NIGHTINGALE

A few hours! You just locked him inside a closet, alone?

BELA

Boris, go inside and keep doctor company.

*(BORIS unlocks door, enters and shuts door behind him. BELA crosses to the closet and locks the door.)*

BELA, *Continues*

Now, let us look at our waiting list for donors. *(Picks up clip board)* Ah, we have four donors tonight. Very good. I go out and bring one in, and you, Miss Nightingale, can take charge of blood bank, again. How do you like that? You will be in charge. *(Laughs)*

*(BELA exits to front office as NIGHTINGALE slumps into chair and begins sobbing.)*

NIGHTINGALE

*(Wailing)* But I don't want to be in charge!

*(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)*

**ACT II**  
***Scene One***

*(AT RISE: Just before sunset. DOCTOR PARSAN sits with an ice bag on his head. NURSE NIGHTINGALE hovers nearby.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

Wow, what happened to me? One minute I was talking to that troublemaker, Bela, and the next minute I woke up inside that dark closet. Ow! I feel dizzy. Was I acting strange, Miss Nightingale?

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, no. You just lost your breath and fainted. I felt you needed some rest so I had Boris put you into the closet.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Rest? I felt fine when I walked in there, but I can't remember a thing after that.

NIGHTINGALE

Like I said, you fainted.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Really? I had a terrifying nightmare that I was an enormous.... *(Chuckles)* Oh, never mind! I must have been dreaming.

NIGHTINGALE

Exactly. You must have had food poisoning. I took your blood pressure and you're normal. I bet it was airline food. You can never be too careful when you fly.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You can say that again. Whew! You know, that oddball Boris was inside the closet when I woke up?

NIGHTINGALE

Are you sure? Maybe you were hallucinating?

DOCTOR PARSAN

No, I'm sure he was there. It was dark, but I recognized that heavy breathing of his. But who knows, maybe you're right. I was ready to fire those Bulgarian nuts, but now I see it was only my imagination.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Shocked)* You were going to fire them—and you changed your mind? Well, I'm glad I could help—I guess.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Say, what's a professional nurse like you doing working in a dump like this? You belong in a top notch hospital.

NIGHTINGALE

I was working in Houston when my mother fell sick. She was alone, so I returned to Los Angeles to take care of her. I decided to take some work to keep myself busy.

DOCTOR PARSAN

I'm sorry to hear about your mother. Is she okay?

NIGHTINGALE

She's getting better.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Oh, what's wrong with her?

NIGHTINGALE

Asthma. But she's finally recovering. I'm thinking of moving back to Houston.

DOCTOR PARSAN

*(Disappointed)* Oh? That would be a shame. I need a good nurse, Miss Nightingale. If there's anything I can do to make you change your mind just let me know.

NIGHTINGALE

You feel that way?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Oh, yes! I think you're highly competent, serious, professional, both dedicated and smart.

NIGHTINGALE

*(Disappointed)* Oh? Is that the only reason? I mean—I'm surprised you could see all that in just one day.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Of course, and if I'm not being too personal, I must say you are the loveliest nurse I've worked with since my fiancé left me.

NIGHTINGALE

I am? I mean, how could she leave you? Well, I mean, that's really too bad. You'll get over it and meet the right woman, I'm sure...in time.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You think so? You really are a beacon of light in this place...and very pretty, if you don't mind my saying.

NIGHTINGALE

Do you think so? I think you're pretty—I mean, nice too. I mean, nice to work for.

DOCTOR PARSAN

*(Awkwardly)* Of course, we're both nice to work for. I mean, it's nice to have you work here.

*(Leaving)* Remember, if there is anything I can do....

NIGHTINGALE

Like what?

DOCTOR PARSAN

You know, anything. Well, I'll be in my office.

NIGHTINGALE

Oh?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Here's my office telephone number. If you need anything, or want to talk or something you call that number.

NIGHTINGALE

Or something?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Yes, 'something'. Just call and I'll make sure it gets fixed.

NIGHTINGALE

You'll fix it?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Of course.

NIGHTINGALE

Well, you can call here, as well...to find out what I'm doing...I mean, what we're doing for the donors.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Yes, of course. Well, it was lovely...I mean nice speaking to you again, Nurse Nightingale.

NIGHTINGALE

Call me Florence.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Okay, Florence. Call me David.

NIGHTINGALE

Okay, David. Such a sweet name.

*(BORIS starts rattling the closet door.)*

BORIS

Let me out! Boris want to get out of closet.

DOCTOR PARSAN

My God! Is he still inside that closet?

BELA

*(Enters from back door; blood on his lips.)* Good evening, everyone! What a lovely evening in the city. There is a full moon out tonight. It makes my spine shiver, my toes tingle, my blood boil, and my heart dance to the serenade of dreams, those dark foreboding dreams where cryptic melodies of death sing dirges to the memories of human desire, desires all left desolate and on fire. Delight of delights, I search the night, howl to a silvery moon which gives me light, and offer praise to my never ending flight.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Did I hear him right? There must be something wrong with my hearing.

BORIS

*(Rattles the door)* Master! Master! Let me out. Boris want to work.

BELA

Keep silent, Boris.

DOCTOR PARSAN

I'm not feeling well. What exactly is this man, Florence?

NIGHTINGALE

*(Forcing laughter)* Oh, you silly goose! David, I have to confess to you our little secret. Guess what? This is Hollywood, and our phlebotomist, Bela, is an aspiring thespian.

BELA

*(Laughs)* I am no such thing. That is most impossible. I am not even woman!

NIGHTINGALE

*(Whispering)* Will you please shut up?

DOCTOR PARSAN

An actor? *(Laughs)* If he was playing a ghoul, I would believe it.

BELA

A ghoul? Ha! Don't be ridiculous. Boris is ghoul—not me. I am a...a....

NIGHTINGALE

...a heck of a joker! Well, I guess we're ready to start tonight's work, and Doctor Parsan I know you have lots of paperwork to do, so get along, now. I hope you remember our little conversation. I'll be here all night, so don't be shy.

DOCTOR PARSAN

And don't you be shy. Bye-bye!

(DOCTOR PARSAN exits through front office; BORIS rattles the closet door.)

BELA

Patience, Boris!

NIGHTINGALE

*(Dreamily)* Toodle-oo, David.

*(BELA unlocks closet door. BORIS enters from the closet.)*

NIGHTINGALE

*(Yells at BELA)* How could you do this to me? Stop acting so crazy! Why is Boris still living inside our closet? Didn't the doctor fire him? Get him out, before I start to cry.

BELA

Boris is my assistant and my servant. He helps me work. Why so angry, Miss Nightingale? It is beautiful night, a night for love and romance. Maybe you fall in love with Doctor Chicken?

NIGHTINGALE

Stop calling him that!

BELA

Why? Did you not see him strut around office clucking? He was like a great giant chicken. Boris, did you see him?

BORIS

Yes. Maybe we make chicken soup.

NIGHTINGALE

You lay a hand on David and I will kill you!

BELA

*David?* Ah, you use first name? How nice. Maybe you are in love.

NIGHTINGALE

Don't be ridiculous.

BELA

Yes, I think so. *(To BORIS)* Boris, our delicate bird, Miss Nightingale, is fluttering with passion for our Big Chicken.

BORIS

Good! Perhaps Doctor Chicken will lay some eggs for us to eat.

NIGHTINGALE

Stop calling him *Doctor Chicken!* I've had it with you Bulgarian baboons! Good night!

*(NIGHTINGALE storms out.)*

BELA

She called us baboons, but does not like when we say Doctor Chicken. What do you think, Boris? Americans are strange, are they not?

BORIS

Yes. They frighten me.

BELA

I understand. She is in love with him. He is in love with her. Why doesn't she demand copulation like normal Bulgarian woman, so she can get back to work?

BORIS

Because she is not Bulgarian.

BELA

Ah, of course. There is no hope for Americans.

BORIS

They are stupid people.

BELA

I am afraid so. Tonight I feast on big, round, teenage boy, very fat and very drunk. He must have been three hundred pounds.

BORIS

Really? Americans are so big, no?

BELA

Yes. He was lying outside the House of Billion Dollar Burgers, in alley with ketchup and super-size sauce all over his face.

BORIS

They do not drink wine in America, only super-size sauce.

BELA

So true! But he was feast for a king...or a vampire. (*Laughs*) He must have been drunk, since I feel so light headed. I even feel like dancing. (*Begins dancing; flaunting his cape*) Look at me! I am now the Billion Dollar Burger King! The Billion Dollar Burger King! Everybody have a chicken-wing, because I am Billion Dollar Burger King! Oh, I must laugh. I just want to dance and sing! Come on, Boris, let us do Perestroika and sing about the Billion Dollar Burger King.

BORIS

Yes, master!

*(BORIS and BELA dance wildly around the room as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## ACT II

### Scene Two

*(AT RISE: Several hours later. A sound is heard in the alley behind the clinic. BORIS opens the rear door then turns to BELA.)*

BORIS

Master, looks like we have a donor lurking outside. Should I bring him in?

BELA

Is it man or woman?

BORIS

Man! Very rough man. He must be killer.

BELA

Do not be silly. Americans do not kill, they hire lawyers. Bring him in.

BORIS

Master, do we take all his....

BELA

Shush! Yes, we do. Now catch him before he runs away!

*(BORIS exits quickly returns with a scowling, suspicious fellow.)*

INVESTIGATOR

So, you guys do the bloodletting around here?

BELA

I beg your pardon, were you addressing me? I am chief phlebotomy technician of Sunrise Blood Bank. I have no cards to introduce myself but my name is Count... *(Halts and laughs)* I am the Count! Yes...one, two, three! You see? Do you watch Sesame street? This is delightful program for lazy, spoiled, children. Here is my trusted assistant, Mr. Borinski Meniquovadis—but you may call him Boris, or just boring! *(Laughs)* You see, I tell little joke. So, relax. I will personally set you up and draw blood. It is quick, painless, and Boris will pay you thirty American dollars. Then you go your way, buy some wine, and vomit in alley. We don't care...this is America! *(Laughs)* Are you ready?

DETECTIVE

You don't sound American to me? How long have you two clowns been in Los Angeles?

BELA

Long enough. Now, sit down.

INVESTIGATOR

You have a license?

BELA

To drive car? Yes! Now, sit down, I say!

INVESTIGATOR

No, I mean do you have a medical license to draw people's blood? Let me see it.

BELA

*Let you see it?* Do you have license to be jack-ass? Boris, I need help.

INVESTIGATOR

Did you know some bodies were found outside your clinic? Were they donors, also?

BELA

Who knows? We don't have donors, we have winos. They come, they go, they sell blood, they buy wine, eat cheeseburgers out of dumpsters, and get hit by cars. Who cares? Sit down, don't worry, shut up, and we draw blood.

INVESTIGATOR

I have another question.

BELA

No more questions. You have too many questions. You give me headache. Boris, grab this wino's arms!

*(BORIS grabs INVESTIGATOR who immediately resists. Both of them wrestle, knocking over lamps and desk items, then tumble onto the floor as NURSE FENDER walks in.)*

NURSE FENDER

Oh, my word! What's going on here?

BELA

We prepare donor. He is afraid of needles.

*(BORIS and the INVESTIGATOR continue to wrestle on the floor.)*

NURSE FENDER

Where did that man come from? How did he get in here?

BORIS

Boris find him lurking in alley.

NURSE FENDER

I don't believe that gentleman wants to donate blood.

BELA

Ha! Well, too bad for him. It is too late to change mind. He must give blood.

NURSE FENDER.

No, he doesn't. You can't force people to give blood.

BELA

Why not? We do this in Transylvania all the time. He has no choice. We have Boris to help.

*(BORIS and INVESTIGATOR continue to wrestle on floor.)*

DETECTIVE

Let go of my ankle, you damn ape!

BORIS

You must give blood, before you get wine. Master, should I hit him with club?

BELA

Of course.

NURSE FENDER.

No, don't do that! Stop!

*(NURSE FENDER dives into the melee. All three get tied up, wrestling on the floor.)*

INVESTIGATOR

Hey, lady, let go of me!

NURSE FENDER.

I'm trying to help you...ahhhh!

*(INVESTIGATOR mistakenly strikes NURSE FENDER. She faints.)*

INVESTIGATOR

*(Rises holding his battered head)* You birds are all going to jail. *(Holds up recording device)* I got enough evidence on my recorder to put you all away for the rest of your life. I'm shutting down this hell-hole, you foreign scum!

BELA

Okay, you win! I see you are too cunning. I bow to your prowess, your investigative guile, your deceitful behavior. You are obviously some kind of American genius. We have been beaten, Boris. Let investigative guy go. *(Glares at INVESTIGATOR's small recorder)* You call that recorder? It is so tiny. Nothing but cheap toy. Ha! It is nothing but piece of cheap crap!

DETECTIVE

Crap? Hey, this cost me four hundred bucks! It's digital. This is the best model on the market.

BELA

The supermarket, perhaps? It is typical piece of American crap.

DETECTIVE

Do you see this red transmitter light? It's filming your every move right now. This is no piece of crap!

BELA

Look at toy, Boris. Investigator guy has nothing but cheap piece of crap.

BORIS

Does not surprise me. Americans only make crap.

DETECTIVE

Hey, watch what you say!

BELA

*(Laughs)* Why should he? Your cheap piece of American crap cannot record him. It cannot record anything.

DETECTIVE

You foreigners don't know quality when you see it! I bet you don't have flush toilets in that Bulgar city you come from.

*(BORIS pulls out billy-club and hits INVESTIGATOR over the head. He collapses into BELA's arms who slips him into the chair and straps him down. )*

BELA

We do not need flush toilets. We are not full of crap, like you Americans.

BORIS

He is ready, master.

BELA

Very good, Boris. Please, step back as I taste the liquor of the devil.

*(BELA howls like a wolf.)*

BORIS

Bon appetit, monsieur!

BELA

Merci beau coup, mon ami!

*(With a flourish of his cape, BELA covers the INVESTIGATOR and drains his blood. BLACKOUT.)*

## ACT II

### Scene Three

*(AT RISE: Several hours later; NURSE FENDER, holding her swollen jaw, attempts to talk to DOCTOR PARSAN.)*

NURSE FENDER

I'm sorry I had to page you, Doctor, but please! Please, Doctor Parsan, you don't have any choice. Fire those Bulgarians, now! They're nuts!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Now, just calm down and tell me what happened, Nurse Fender?

NURSE FENDER

I heard loud scuffling in the clinic from my office. I rushed down and found Bela and Boris, manhandling another donor. Boris was wrestling with the man. I tried to stop them but he socked me in the jaw and knocked me out.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Bela struck you?

NURSE FENDER

No, the donor. When I awoke I found myself lying all alone on the clinic floor.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You say the donor socked you? Well, obviously it was another wino. Sounds like someone should be minding their own business, Nurse Fender.

NURSE FENDER

This *is* my business! Boris held the man while Bela was strapped him to the table. The client was screaming at the top of his lungs to be released and then he threatened to shut down our clinic. You have to fire them now.

DOCTOR PARSAN

It seems you are jumping to conclusions. That wino was obviously dangerous. Isn't it a pity? You try to give these people a hand up, and they behave like animals. No gratitude. But Nurse Fender you should know, by now, these derelicts are unpredictable.

NURSE FENDER

He wasn't a derelict. He was an undercover investigator sent by the chief of police.

DOCTOR PARSAN

How would you know?

NURSE FENDER.

I called the police when I came to. They told me.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You called the police without telling me? That doesn't seem right. Who's running this blood bank, anyway? You asked for police without my permission?

NURSE FENDER

No, of course not. I only called the police. I didn't ask anyone to come. Why would I do that? I'm the one who hired Bela.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You think it's your right to hire and fire people? You better be careful, Nurse Fender, I'm in charge here. I suggest you ignore it.

NURSE FENDER.

Ignore it? My jaw feels like it's broken.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Let me see it. (*Wiggles her jaw; she winces.*) Pretty swollen but it's nothing serious. Now if you don't mind, I have a bed I'd like to get back to.

NURSE FENDER

Is that it? Is that all you're going to do? This place has become a circus with those Bulgarian screwballs.

DOCTOR PARSAN

There will be no racial epithets in my clinic. Don't overreact, Nurse Fender. This is a blood bank on skid row. All of this comes with the territory. (*Laughs*) This is not Cedar Sinai Hospital, you know.

*(BELA and BORIS enter from rear door.)*

BELA

*(With a flourish of his cape)* Good evening, my fellow blood-suckers! What a splendid evening! We have eight fresh pints of blood. Show them Boris!

*(BORIS opens refrigerator door and reveals eight red containers.)*

BORIS

Only one donor!

NURSE FENDER.

One donor? That's impossible. You see, they can't even keep records.

BORIS

But is true!

BELA

Quiet, Boris.

NURSE FENDER

I've seen how you birds get blood. You nearly killed that donor tonight in a free for all. I was knocked out. That's not how we run a business, here. You can't tie people down, or knock them out and force them to give blood.

BORIS

We can't? Why not?

BELA

Boris, I say be quiet!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Let's not get hysterical, Nurse Fender. Bela has a good reason for his behavior, I'm sure. Don't you Bela?

BELA

Boris and I were frightened. We had to protect the clinic and Nurse Fender when this wino attacked Boris. Naturally, I felt especially concerned for Nurse Fender's honor.

DOCTOR PARSAN

There, you see? It was all a misunderstanding. Bela was trying to protect you, and you didn't even know it. You really should thank them.

BELA

There is no need. I only do my duty. This is who I am. And Nurse Fender, you do not need to thank me, even though I protect your honor.

NURSE FENDER

My honor? I tried to stop you from beating up a helpless man and got knocked out. Then you two left me on the floor, unconscious. Why in the world should I thank you? That poor fellow disappeared and I have a broken jaw. You did this. I was the victim!

BELA

Yes, everybody in America is victim. He came to rob blood bank and Boris was holding him for police when you interfered.

NURSE FENDER

Rob a blood bank? Why would anybody rob blood?

BELA

It happens all the time in Transylvania. But he escaped after you interfered.

NURSE FENDER

Interfered? The man was screaming for his life while Boris was hitting him over the head with his black-jack.

BELA

Screaming is common ploy of brigands and villains. Can you not see that, you ignorant cow!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Now, Bela. Let's be professional.

NURSE FENDER

He's no professional? He's running a three-ring circus down there!

BELA

Well, perhaps you would like to be our dancing elephant?

DOCTOR PARSAN

Whoa! That will be enough from the both of you. Nurse Fender, please, I can handle this. Bela from this day forth you will follow all guidelines I set down and obey our head nurse, Miss Nightingale.

BELA

She is not head nurse, she is only helper. She was not even working here, last week. Nurse Fender assigned her to me only as my assistant.

DOCTOR PARSAN

Is that true, Nurse Fender.

NURSE FENDER

Well, it's apparent that Bela's command of English is horrible. So, I asked Nurse Nightingale to help him.

DOCTOR PARSAN

But Florence told me she was in charge of the clinic. Isn't she in charge?

NURSE FENDER

Not exactly.

BELA

Apparently Miss Nightingale's command of English language is not so good, either.

*(BORIS and BELA begin laughing.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

Wake her up—I mean, call her in, immediately.

NURSE FENDER

I thought she left early.

DOCTOR PARSAN

She called me. She wasn't feeling well. She's resting in the lounge. Ask her to come in.

NURSE FENDER

Yes, doctor. *(Exits)*

BELA

This is most unfortunate. It must be hard running blood bank when slave lie to you. Very bad, indeed. In Transylvania, we fix lying scum very fast.

DOCTOR PARSAN

How dare you! You take that back. Florence is the most decent woman I have ever loved—I mean, known. She would never lie to me.

BELA

Loved? So, it is true. Our delicate song bird has laid some eggs on director. Did she sit on you?

DOCTOR PARSAN

I beg your pardon!

BELA

You may beg all you want. You are not pardoned. Miss Nightingale is in charge only because she sit on Director.

DOCTOR PARSAN

What the hell does that mean? That's absurd.

BELA

It is not absurd. We do this in Transylvania with our peasants. But we do not put them in charge. We put them in barn.

*(BORIS and BELA laugh.)*

DOCTOR PARSAN

You Bulgarians are an insult to decent behavior. I've had enough. One more word and you're fired.

BELA

Nobly said. Nurse Nightingale plays in your office polishing your trumpet while we wrestle with your human debris. In Transylvania we reserve majestic name for you. Vampire!

DOCTOR PARSAN

How dare you? There is no need for talk like that. That's a lie.

BELA

Is it? You invite the destitute, the disturbed, the wretched into your parlor like spider, stick needles into veins, suck out blood then sell to hospital. You pay with cheap bottle of wine to give hobo hope until he straggle back to be milked again, like cow. I say you are vampire. Do not be ashamed, Doctor Parsan. In Transylvania we build statue to vampire like you. You are to be respected. You are sly, powerful; you drink blood of vermin we call human. Stand with me! Be proud! *(Flourishes cape)* You have what all vampires desire; title, power, respect! You devour the homeless, the hopeless, the helpless. Don't you know you are great vampire, as I am? I shall call you Count Parsan, vampire of Hollywood Hell.

DOCTOR PARSAN

That does it, you and Boris are fired!

BELA

Ha! You cannot fire me. Look into my eyes, Dr. Parsan. Ask me for blood.

DOCTOR PARSAN

You're insane. Get out of here. Take that zombie with you—both of you get out, right now...get out, you two...you two...

*(BELA steps up to DOCTOR PARSAN and stares into his eyes.)*

BELA

Look into my eyes! You are no longer director. You are no longer doctor. You are pig.

DOCTOR PARSAN

I am not standing for this any longer—not any longer—I am not a... *(Grunts)*...pig. I'm the director of this blood bank and you're fired. I am not a pig! *(Grunts)* Oh, god! Stop this. *(Grunting; falls on his hands and knees)* I am a doctor, I tell you! Help me! I tell you I am a doctor!

*(DOCTOR PARSAN rushes about the floor on his knees, grunting.)*

NURSE FENDER

*(Enters)* My God! What is happening? Has the doctor lost his mind?

BELA

No, he has found it!

BORIS

*(Shrugs)* This is common in Transylvania.

BELA

*(Pointing to closet)* I command you! Go to closet, Doctor Parsan! Go inside and do not come out!

DOCTOR PARSAN

Yes, Master. *(Grunts)*

*(DOCTOR PARSAN crawls into the closet. BORIS shuts the door.)*

BELA

Let us go, Boris. We are no longer needed in America. We go home. Good day to you, Nurse Fender. I cannot work in your country. Nobody here knows who they really are. *Bon soir, mon ami! Apres moi, les deluge!*

*(NIGHTINGALE, her hair and clothing askew, enters quickly from the office door just in time to see BELA, with a flourish of his cape turn and exit, laughing. BORIS exits just behind him and slams the back door.)*

NIGHTINGALE

Oh, my! They certainly were in a rush! *(Turns, smoothing her hair with her hand)* Oh, Nurse Fender. Are you still here? Isn't your shift over?

NURSE FENDER

Yes it is. But we had an unexpected mishap, something you need to know about.

NIGHTINGALE

Really? Did you see Bela and Boris rushing out? I thought it was time for Bela to work.

NURSE FENDER

Not tonight. They're not coming back. They just got fired.

NIGHTINGALE

Fired? Oh, dear me! That's too bad...well, not really! David...Doctor Parsan did the right thing. I bet he's finally happy.

NURSE FENDER

Not exactly. He's sitting inside the closet, and won't come out.

NIGHTINGALE

Why is he inside the closet?

NURSE FENDER

Bela told him to.

NIGHTINGALE

Is it locked?

NURSE FENDER

No, Dr. Parsan simply can't come out.

NIGHTINGALE

What? (*Rushes over to the closet and swings it open, and sees DOCTOR PARSON on his knees looking up at her.*) David, why on earth are you sitting inside this closet? Did those brutes hurt you? (*Hugs him; he grunts*) Are you alright? Why don't you get off your knees?

(*DOCTOR PARSAN smiles up at her as he continues grunting.*)

**This is Not the End of the Play**  
**Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes**