

VITAL ORGANS

A one-act play

By Jonathan Dorf

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Cast of Characters

HARVEY RABBIT, 30s, recovering from a heart transplant
PIP, 10, though he may be played by an adult actor
DR. OLIVE, 30s, female, a doctor who seems to be taking liberties
JACKIE, female, high school student and candy striper
CHARLIE, 20s, male, a black market organ broker

It is possible for Pip, Dr. Olive and Charlie to be cast as actors of either gender--just change any pronouns accordingly.

Setting Notes

A patient's room, the ICU and various other suggested settings at a public hospital. It's probably a good idea to use area staging, so that the action can move quickly from one place to another.

Production Notes

It is not necessary that you use the specific objects Pip brings back on his missions for Harvey. In fact, feel free to come up with the most ridiculous things possible, and to substitute them for the baguette, bag of flour, gold ceramic cat and oranges. We simply used what props we had on hand, and your production should feel free to do the same.

In the original production, Pip's chicken was rubber.

Vital Organs premiered as part of Overnight Sensations at Mill Mountain Theatre in Roanoke, Virginia, directed by John Woodson.

A hospital room. HARVEY RABBIT, 30s, is on a gurney. Enter PIP, 10, carrying a chicken.

HARVEY

What've you got there?

(beat)

It's OK. You can tell me.

PIP

A chicken.

HARVEY

Isn't it unsanitary to have a chicken in a hospital?

DR. OLIVIA OLIVE, 30s, sweeps into the room.

DR. OLIVE

I see you've met Pip.

(beat)

Pip, honey, would you give Mr. Rabbit and I a moment?

Pip exits.

HARVEY

I didn't know you could bring a chicken into a hospital.

DR. OLIVE

Pet therapy.

HARVEY

I think it's dead.

DR. OLIVE

Less likely to get loose and contaminate the patients.

(beat)

I wanted Pip to meet you.

She examines him with a stethoscope.

DR. OLIVE (CONT'D)

Breathe.

HARVEY

Meet me?

DR. OLIVE

Your new heart is beating strong. Strong like a Russian powerlifter, strong like the Incredible Hulk, strong like King Kong on a double dose of steroids. You're ready to go home tomorrow.

HARVEY
 Tomorrow?! I just had my transplant.

DR. OLIVE
 Don't tell me after three days of hospital food you aren't
 clawing at the walls.

HARVEY
 Isn't there some law, some minimum recovery time--

DR. OLIVE
 You don't need us anymore.

HARVEY
 Says who?

DR. OLIVE
 Oh come on, Harvey. Going to the bathroom without a
 catheter, criticizing the thin array of TV choices, purring
 contentedly at that sponge bath yesterday--you're back!

HARVEY
 Maybe from the brink of death.

DR. OLIVE
 But though you may no longer need us--

HARVEY
 I'd hardly call that being back.

DR. OLIVE
 --Pip needs you. He needs a recovery model.

HARVEY
 My heart is getting worse as we speak.

DR. OLIVE
 The insurance company giveth, the insurance company taketh
 away.

HARVEY
 But I'm not ready! I have things I need to--

DR. OLIVE
 Given that it's 4:50 on a Friday of a holiday weekend, I
 don't think you're going to change that one. But you're
 ignoring an incredible opportunity to help a sick, possibly
 dying boy turn his frown upside down and maybe have a
 fighting chance to beat this thing.

HARVEY
 This thing being?

DR. OLIVE

That's confidential.

HARVEY

You want me to beat a thing, but you won't tell me what it is.

DR. OLIVE

Sometimes one has to fight a thing on faith.

HARVEY

But it's a big thing.

DR. OLIVE

Bigger than a fat man after an all-you-can-eat buffet, bigger than Godzilla, bigger than the national debt, bigger--

HARVEY

I get it. It's big.

DR. OLIVE

Pip!

HARVEY

But I don't know how to be a recovery model.

Pip returns. Instead of the chicken, he comes in with flowers.

DR. OLIVE

Pip, say hello to Mr. Rabbit.

HARVEY

You can call me Harvey.

PIP

Hi.

DR. OLIVE

I'll leave you two to get acquainted. The entire third floor's on life support and going fast. Thank God it's late enough that we can bill them for a full day.

Dr. Olive exits. Pip looks at Harvey expectantly.

HARVEY

So...you're sick, huh?

(beat)

What happened to your chicken?

PIP

It died.

HARVEY

Just now.

(beat)

I'm sorry to hear that.

(beat)

I like your flowers.

(beat)

I'm sorry--I have no idea what a recovery model does.

PIP

You're supposed to talk to me and tell me to have a positive attitude, and if I do, I'll feel better and get out of the hospital.

HARVEY

Been there, done that, eh?

PIP

You're my fifth recovery model.

HARVEY

Guess they weren't very good.

PIP

Number one wasn't so good, but two was OK, and three, four and five were great.

HARVEY

Then why me?

PIP

They died.

HARVEY

(beat)

Are those flowers for me?

PIP

Just found 'em.

HARVEY

(beat)

Did you just find the chicken too?

Pip nods.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Are you good at finding things, Pip?

Pip nods. Enter JACKIE, teenage girl and hospital volunteer, potentially dressed in a chef's hat and apron.

JACKIE

Hey you sexy hunka heart transplant patient. I hear you're getting out tomorrow.

HARVEY

Theme party?

JACKIE

People on the third floor are dropping dead like crazy.

(notices Pip)

Aren't you the cutest little thing.

(to Harvey)

With the holiday weekend, they need every body they can get.

(to Pip)

That's so sweet--you brought me flowers.

(beat--to Harvey)

Since you're getting out, would you like to come see me this weekend in my high school production of Sweeney Todd?

Harvey attempts to stand up from the gurney.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going, buster?

HARVEY

The doctor said I could--

JACKIE

(picking up an x-ray)

I don't see anything on your chart about getting--

HARVEY

That's an x-ray.

(grabbing the IV stand)

I can make it to the bathroom.

JACKIE

What you do when you're home--like coming to see me in Sweeney Todd or in our community theatre production of Titus Andronicus--is one thing. But what you do at a hospital when you're like a liability petri dish is another, ya big hubba hubba lug of a man, you.

(beat)

I'll get Dr. Olive. You stay put.

Jackie exits.

HARVEY

Pip, the thing about recovery is that it's not just about having a good attitude. It's about being proactive.

PIP

What's proactive?

HARVEY

Proactive means that sometimes you have to take a trip to the third floor to find things you need. You said you were good at finding things, right Pip?

Harvey leans in to whisper in Pip's ear, as the lights come up on the third floor, where Dr. Olive performs CPR using a CPR bag on CHARLIE, mid-20s or older and a black market organ broker, who is on the ground. He flails, while Pip exits Harvey's room.

CHARLIE

(through the mask)

Stop already!

DR. OLIVE

Sorry. That candy striper keeps popping up out of nowhere.

She stops and removes the CPR bag.

CHARLIE

(sitting up)

She scares me.

DR. OLIVE

What I wouldn't give for two of those beefy thugs from the morgue.

CHARLIE

That'd fix her.

DR. OLIVE

And a couple beefy thugs from maintenance to fix the A/C.

CHARLIE

I hate holiday weekends. We'd better get to it before everything goes bad.

DR. OLIVE

Three-fifteen's got a liver for sure, and maybe a kidney.

CHARLIE

You promised me a spleen.

DR. OLIVE

Relax. Three-eighteen's got a spleen.

CHARLIE

I'm not saying I don't want the liver or the kidney.

The kidney's a maybe. DR. OLIVE

If it's a go, I want it. CHARLIE

Duly noted. DR. OLIVE

A kidney's a keeper, my grandfather always said. CHARLIE

I'll keep that in mind. DR. OLIVE

We should get to it before that creepy candy striper-- CHARLIE

Dr. Olive slams the CPR bag back on him as Jackie enters, this time carrying a large knife and a cutting board and if possible whistling the melody behind "Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd.

Want to read the entire script? Order a free electronic perusal copy today!