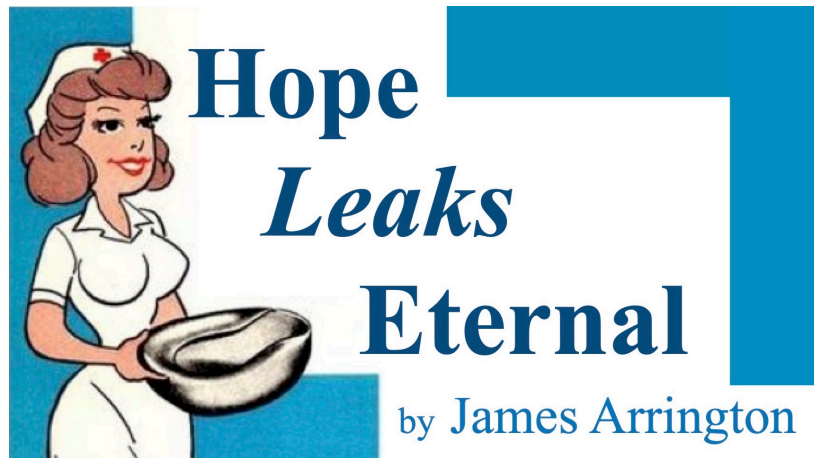


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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Hope Leaks Eternal

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ORDER #3352

CAST

TOM — a man in his 20s to early 30s

THE YOUNG WOMAN — a mysterious stranger of similar age

NURSE — well, a nurse

TIME: PRESENT

SETTING: A HOSPITAL ROOM

HOPE LEAKS ETERNAL by James Arrington 1f, 2m Simple setting. 10 minutes. A hospital room is meant for those suffering medical distress. However, there are more needs that require attention than simply the physical. In this comedy, a young man suffers alone and can't stand it. He makes his needs known. He is treated by a non-physician in a highly irregular and spectacularly human way. Come play a game of cat and mouse in a hospital room as hope leaks eternal. **ORDER #3352**

James Arrington — Retired former Associate Professor, Former Department Chair at Utah Valley University. James Arrington was schooled professionally at The American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and then earned a master's degree in Theatre from Brigham Young University. He has worked professionally for 30 years became a sensation on the Utah theatre scene when he returned to create and star in his one-man show *Here's Brother Brigham*. It toured the U.S., Canada, and the British isles. He went on to write and produce numerous theatre pieces including several one-man shows: *J. Golden*, *Tumuaki!* *Matthew Cowley of the Pacific*, and co-wrote *Wilford Woodruff: God's Fisherman*. He wrote and starred in a quirky TRIPLE *The Farley Family Reunion*, *Farley Two: The Next Gyraton*, and *Farley Family Xmas* and a charming musical *Christmas Without Christmas!?* He co-wrote the pioneer musical *The Trail of Dreams* and was granted a commission by the Sesquicentennial UtahWar Committee to co-write and tour *March of the Salt Soldiers: The Utah War*. He has written for stage, screen, outdoor pageant, radio drama, and puppet shows.

HOPE LEAKS ETERNAL

(The place people don't like to go and will do most anything to stay out of: a hospital. This is Room 1123. TOM is in bed. He is disheveled and in a backless hospital gown in an elevating bed. He is attached to a "feeding line" but is agitated, sitting up, and screaming.)

TOM: HEY!? DIDN'T ANYBODY HEAR THAT I NEED A BEDPAN?!

(He punches his call button savagely.)

And what good is a call button if it doesn't call anybody?!! I could die and I would be the ONLY ONE TO KNOW IT!!

(He screams in frustration and bangs on his bed with a box of kleenex from the table/cart.)

HEY! I NEED A BEDPAN AND PRETTY QUICK! DO YOU WANT ME TO GO IN THE BED? I MEAN, IT MAY BE SLIGHTLY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR ME, BUT THINK WHAT IT WILL BE FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE TO CLEAN IT UP!!!... HEY, I'M TALKING TO...

(Suddenly a YOUNG WOMAN appears at the door. She is clearly not the nurse. She is upset but trying to cope. They size each other up in this interrupted moment.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Okay, where is it?

TOM: What?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What?! What...you've been yelling about.

TOM: The bedpan?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: That's what you want, right? I'll get it for you and then you can be more quiet.

TOM: Oh.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So where is it?

TOM: Well, that's just it.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What is "it?"

TOM: Well see, I don't have a bedpan.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: *(under her breath)* As if I didn't know that...

TOM: What?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What?

TOM: What?!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Look, I'll just get your bedpan, okay?

TOM: No you won't.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: And just why not?

TOM: Because I don't HAVE a bedpan. That's what I've been yelling about.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You don't have one?

TOM: (*emphatically*) Why else would I yell?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Well, how the hell do I know?! You're the one who's in the hospital!

TOM: Just what is that supposed to mean?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: (*determined*) I'm looking in your bathroom.

(She moves purposely toward the bathroom door.)

TOM: Don't you think I already tried that?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Tried?

TOM: Looking in the bathroom?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Did you look everywhere in there?

TOM: You sound like my mother.

3352N: Please, don't bring your mother into this! Look. I don't know you from Adam and I have no clue as to whether you can walk or not. All I know is you are making the whole floor uncomfortable because YOU are YELLING YOUR HEAD OFF!

TOM: So are you, obviously.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What's that supposed to mean?

TOM: It's not supposed to mean anything. It means exactly what I mean it to. Ever since you came in here you've been yelling at me.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I have not!

TOM: Have too.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I CERTAINLY HAVE NOT!

TOM: See there you go again.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: What?

TOM: Yelling.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I AM NOT YELLING... I...am...just...making my point.

TOM: Right, at 90 decibels.

(Pause as they eye each other.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Wait a minute! If you could just get up and go into the bathroom to look for a bedpan... why didn't you just go in the bathroom while you were there?

TOM: Because...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Because why?

TOM: Because that's, uhm, not what I need the bedpan for.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: But that's what you were yelling about.

TOM: So, how else was I going to get somebody to bring me bedpan?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You mean to tell me that you've been screaming in here as if you were going to let loose in the bed just so someone would bring you a bedpan, but not for that purpose?

TOM: Uh, yeah, pretty much.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Well, if you could go into the bathroom to look why didn't you just go out and find one?

TOM: Okay, okay... have you seen the back of this hospital gown?

(He begins to show her.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Oh please!

TOM: You wanna go walking around in public place with your backside hanging out?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Right.

TOM: Second I am being charged about...hmmm... let me guess, about \$2000 a day for this empty room, this uncomfortable bed, this sterile bathroom, this TV that doesn't work, by the way - and then most

expensive, I presume, is the help - which I can't get any of. I resent it.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: So? Doesn't your insurance...

TOM: That's not the point. Who pays for it is not the point, okay?

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Look, I came in here to help you out and it now looks like...

TOM: Oh no, not that easy. Maybe you came in here to help me, but I still don't have a bedpan.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: But you said you don't need a bedpan!

TOM: Did not.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: You most certainly did! You said...

TOM: All I said was I looked in the bathroom and you, then, decided I didn't need a bedpan.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Right.

(pause)

This is ridiculous.

(She starts to leave.)

TOM: It really is, y'know? I mean, you came in here to help me and all you have done is argue with me.

(Turning on him.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: I HAVE NOT! I HAVE NOT!! I ONLY CAME TO...

TOM: *(with a huge grin)* Right on!

THE YOUNG WOMAN: *(struggling with some hesitation, then quietly.)* Look... one thing I did not come in here for was to be insulted. And I did not come in here to argue. I actually came in here to get you to stop yelling so everybody on the floor wasn't so upset.

TOM: And it looks like you are the only one who was upset enough to do anything.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Your point being...

TOM: No, I'm just saying...

(He shrugs and grins. There is an uncomfortable pause.)

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Yes?

TOM: That, uhm...

THE YOUNG WOMAN: Look, this is really starting to get to me. Some guy in a hospital bed is yelling about a bedpan when he doesn't need one and starts playing mind-games. For all I know you might be here for psychological reasons, a criminal...

(She turns again and starts for the door.)

TOM: Oh, come on, if I was a criminal I'd be handcuffed to the bed, right? If I was a fruitcake they'd strap me down. I'm nothing like that.

THE YOUNG WOMAN: And the bedpan?

TOM: Right, uhm, that's a little more complicated...

4 MORE PAGES TO THE END