

M*A*S*H

WET LETTER DAY

By

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ACT ONE

FADE IN

INT. MESS TENT - MORNING

HAWKEYE and B.J. are in the chow line. IGOR is serving.

HAWKEYE

Igor, why is it that every lunch time you choose to serve food out of the back of a garbage truck?

IGOR

The key is not smelling it, sir.

HAWKEYE

Igor... as perplexing as it may sound, we're human beings on this side of the table. We need real food. The cook, if that's even his real name, needs to stop confusing subsistence with sustenance. What he calls food, I call turgid muck... on a good day.

(pointing)

Look at this... what is this yellow stuff, damp squib?

IGOR

Green beans, Captain.

HAWKEYE

(to B.J.)

Did you just hear him?

B.J.

I think the army's reinvented the color-wheel.

HAWKEYE

Igor... the vegetables are indefensible. The meat's so old it's playing bingo and the dessert looks like something out of a Bombay public toilet.

(determined)

There's no way I'm eating this.

IGOR

But--

HAWKEYE

I'm not leaving here until there's something fresh on my plate... if that's even possible.

Igor feels beneath the counter and grabs a can of spam, which he puts on Hawkeye's tray.

IGOR

(sheepish)

Fresh for another five years.

HAWKEYE

You're an insult to your profession, you know that?

IGOR

Back home, I was a plumber.

HAWKEYE

Well that explains the seasoning.

B.J. steps up.

B.J.

(to Igor)

Forgive him, he has expectations. Now if you would mind, I'd like some of your finest slosh and disgorge... but perhaps hold off on the dessert. I don't want to spoil my appetite.

Igor slops the food onto B.J.'s tray.

IGOR

More?

B.J.

I'm hungry, not suicidal.

B.J. and Hawkeye join CHARLES at a mess table. Charles is SCOWLING as he reads his Boston Globe.

HAWKEYE

Charles.

B.J.

Morning Chuck.

Charles ignores them as he GRUNTS at the newspaper.

HAWKEYE
 (to B.J.)
 Around the Globe in eighty grunts.

Hawkeye opens his spam, smells it and pushes it away...
 disgusted.

B.J.
 Not good, huh?

HAWKEYE
 Somewhere between a toddler's nappy
 and a wet dog wearing a toddler's
 nappy.

Charles GRUNTS again.

HAWKEYE
 Okay Charles, you have our
 attention, what's bothering you?

CHARLES
 Leave me alone.

HAWKEYE
 How can I, with you 'Billy Goat
 Gruffing' every five seconds?

Charles looks up.

CHARLES
 Not that it's the business of
 either of you two boobs... but I
 have just now discovered that due
 to the poor speculation on the part
 of my imbecilic, dimwitted and
 soon-to-be ex-financial adviser...
 I have missed out on what amounts
 to a colossal fortune.

B.J.
 Forgot to evade your tax, did he?

CHARLES
 Hardly. The man strongly advised
 against purchasing stocks in
 Bethlehem Steel, despite it being
 the obvious choice to every child
 and their dog in Boston.

Charles folds his newspaper, and with great restraint,
 places it gently on the table.

HAWKEYE

Is it just Boston Blue bloodhounds who can sniff a good thing, or are Mississippi poodles also stock savvy?

CHARLES

Boston, Massachusetts is the birthplace of stock speculation. William C. Durant wrote the book on trading.

B.J.

The car guy?

CHARLES

G.M., Chevrolet and the jeeps we use in this East Asian cataclysm.

HAWKEYE

Yes Charles, but didn't Durant also file for bankruptcy after the stock market crash?

CHARLES

(seething)

He probably listened to my adviser.

Suddenly, a CRASH outside.

B.J.

Speaking of crashes.

Everyone hurries OUT.

EXT. COMPOUND/WATER TOWER - CONTINUOUS

POTTER runs over to join Hawkeye, B.J. and Charles at the crash site. A jeep has plowed into the water tower, causing a major water spillage.

POTTER

(shouting)

What in blue blazes is going on?

The injured DRIVER slowly gets out.

DRIVER

The brakes failed and I had to swerve to miss the Korean merchant.

Potter waves a CORPSMAN over to help the driver.

POTTER
Get this man into X-Ray, pronto.

B.J.
(to Charles)
Between the stock market and his
jeeps, Durant is oh-and-two
Charles.

Charles SNEERS. In the distance A KOREAN MERCHANT dusts himself off beside his wooden cart. KLINGER ARRIVES.

KLINGER
Hey, what happened to the water
tower?

POTTER
(calmly)
It sprung a leak.
(yelling)
What do you think?

KLINGER
I think I better save the mail from
drowning.

Klinger grabs a now drenched mailbag from the rear of the flooding jeep.

CHARLES
Idiots.
(Charles snatches the mailbag
and rummages through)
You'd better pray any letter of
mine is salvageable.

B.J.
(to Hawkeye)
How do you feel about buying
something from the up-ended
merchant, as a show of good faith
for the U.S army nearly running him
over?

HAWKEYE
The money's only going to end up in
Rosie's pockets anyway?

B.J.
Charles... feel like joining us in
a gesture of good faith? It was a
Boston jeep after all.

CHARLES
 (rummaging)
 Thank you, no. I refuse to deal in
 the trumpery of sidewalk swindlers.

B.J.
 You're all heart Charles.

B.J. and Hawkeye HEAD OVER to the Korean merchant.

B.J. (cont'd)
 (walking)
 Erin's birthday's coming up, I
 think she'll be wrapped with a new
 blanket.

HAWKEYE
 And you have just the Peg to keep
 it fastened.

B.J. and Hawkeye HEAD o.s.

POTTER
 Klinger.

KLINGER
 Yes Colonel.

POTTER
 I need you to organize a work
 detail for the tower.

KLINGER
 As you wish, but shouldn't I wring
 out the wet letters before the
 words run off?

POTTER
 (in earshot of Charles)
 When Charles has finished looking
 out for number one, get onto the
 letters and then onto the repairs.
 I'd better go and call H.Q. to see
 about getting a new water truck.

Potter LEAVES. Charles finds his letter and hands the
 mailbag back to Klinger.

CHARLES
 (smugly)
 Thank you.

KLINGER
 (sarcastically)
 No, thank you Charles. As long as
 you're taken care of.

CHARLES
 I am... but if you really wish for
 my happiness...
 (seething)
 Don't rebuild the tower with
 Bethlehem steel.

KLINGER
 Huh?

On Klinger's confused look.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Hawkeye and B.J. search through the items on the wooden
 cart. There's everything from ornate china to haberdashery.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 You like jewelry?

B.J.
 I'm strictly in the market for a
 cuddly blanket... for my daughter.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 No more pink blankets.

B.J.
 Good, because blue's her favorite.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 Blue I have.

The merchant opens a large box underneath.

KOREAN MERCHANT (cont'd)
 My wife makes blankets by hand.
 Incheon wool, very soft.

B.J.
 (sifting through box)
 She's very talented. Must know her
 Merinos from her medakas.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 (to Hawkeye)
 How about you? Maybe a picture
 frame for your sweetheart's photo?

HAWKEYE

No sweetheart.

KOREAN MERCHANT

Okay you keep picture that comes with frame, free of charge. Now people think you have sweetheart... and not just weirdo.

HAWKEYE

I think I'll pass.

B.J. finds a blanket.

B.J.

This will do nicely.

KOREAN MERCHANT

Great choice. One dollar.

B.J.

(handing over coins)

Here. Keep the change. Who needs whiskey when I have the gift of giving?

Hawkeye contributes his coins.

HAWKEYE

(to merchant)

Unlike him, my cockles only warm to hard liquor, but what's a day or two on the wagon?

INT. POTTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Potter is on the phone.

POTTER

(agitated)

I know we're not due a truck for another two weeks, but as I said, our water supply is currently seeping its way into the main road.

(pause)

Don't you think that if the river water was at all usable I'd be down there with a bucket myself? It's no good for drinking and it's no good for washing surgical linen...

(cranky)

...we pride ourselves on cleanliness around here, you know.

(pause)
 Son, let me be succinct. We need
 clean water and we need it NOW.

(pause)
 Hello...? DAMN.
 (Hangs up, yells o.s.)
 Klinger!

Klinger ENTERS.

KLINGER
 Your bellhop at your command.

POTTER
 H.Q. won't send another water truck
 for at least two weeks. Think you
 could procure a truckload of the
 good stuff?

KLINGER
 Clean water... around here? Not a
 chance. What about from Seoul?

POTTER
 Too expensive. They measure water
 by the carat down there.

KLINGER
 How much do we have in reserve?

POTTER
 After this dry summer, not even
 enough to clean my jockey shorts.

Klinger begins to panic.

KLINGER
 Wait, so you're saying we're all
 out of water? Not even enough to
 drink?

POTTER
 Son, we don't have enough for
 drinking, showering or anything
 else you choose to do in water.
 It's on the extinction list until
 we figure this out.

KLINGER
 But I come from a long line of very
 thirsty people. I won't survive.

POTTER

Boy... you're from the desert.
There's not a lot of drinking water
out there.

KLINGER

That's why my Uncle Ja'far went
into hip flasks. He couldn't take
the cottonmouth.

(woozy)

I can't feel my tongue.

POTTER

Please leave the tomfoolery for
'The Bickersons'... and get our
head nurse and chief surgeon in
here, pronto.

KLINGER

Father Mulcahy might have a Holy
Water supplier?

POTTER

Bring him too. Nothing wrong with a
hope and a prayer... and Klinger,
before you dehydrate, we'll have
milk rationed out with dinner.

KLINGER

(suddenly combative)

I'm lactose intolerant. What are
you trying to do, kill me.

Klinger STORMS OUT.

POTTER

That boy is one of a kind.

INT. "THE SWAMP" - DAY

Charles is listening to opera with his back to the door.

Hawkeye and B.J. ENTER... with B.J. carrying his new
blanket. Hawkeye spots Charles's letter pegged to the
clothes-line. He unhooks it and reads it with B.J. over his
shoulder.

HAWKEYE

(loudly)

"Dear Chip."

Charles turns immediately.

CHARLES

(angry)

Give that back you me, you swine.

HAWKEYE

Dear Chip, Charles? I always knew you had a chip on your shoulder... but I never knew you were the Chip on your shoulder.

CHARLES

I'll give you five seconds to return that letter to me or I'll drop your precious moonshine accouterment into the latrine.

B.J. blocks off the still.

B.J.

You wouldn't dare!

CHARLES

(inching forward)

Four... three...

B.J.

Actually Hawk, better return his letter, I think we've run out of bargaining with Chip?

Hawkeye hands it over.

HAWKEYE

(smiling)

Mail call... Charles.

CHARLES

(smugly victorious)

Thank you.

Charles returns to his seat.

HAWKEYE

What? That's it? No explanation?

B.J.

Come on Chuck, you can't leave us in the lurch. This is the most interesting thing we've ever learned about you.

CHARLES

Firstly Hunnicutt, you've learned nothing about me... and secondly, if you doltish macaques must know, the nickname was bestowed upon me by my resplendent nanny Christina. She modified Charles to Chip for more intimacy.

B.J.

Then we should use it too, Hawk.

CHARLES

Absolutely not. It is reserved for Christina and her daughter and only Christina and her daughter, Hazel... from whom this letter was sent.

HAWKEYE

So do we get to hear about the life of the Boston Brahmin?

B.J.

Yeah, come on Chip, read the letter... chop, chop.

CHARLES

Under one unconditional stipulation. Neither of you two ever utter that name again.

HAWKEYE

Mum's the word.

B.J.

You can count on us.

CHARLES

I doubt that.

Hawkeye and B.J sit on their bunks.

CHARLES (cont'd)

(reading letter)

"Dear..."

Charles looks up sharply. Hawkeye zips his mouth and B.J. puts a sock in his.

CHARLES (cont'd)

(back to letter)

"...Chip. I hope you are doing splendidly, as much as you can in

(MORE)

CHARLES (cont'd)
 an appalling war. Mother and I miss you dreadfully and we speak often and decorously about you to anyone who will listen... which is many. I'm writing because I have such wonderful news. Colin and I have been married."

HAWKEYE
 Hear, hear.

B.J.
 That's terrific news.

CHARLES
 (irritated)
 Terrific news? The man to which she is now betrothed is an Irish immigrant, and no doubt fostered for a life of crime with the Irish Mob in Somerville... to whom he has most likely already gambled away Hazel's life's savings.

HAWKEYE
 Any special reason you hold this guy in such high esteem?

CHARLES
 (facetiously)
 It's a long list, where do I start?

B.J.
 Are you gonna do this every time a Boston broad gets hitched?

HAWKEYE
 Yeah Charles, didn't you show a similar distaste when your sister got engaged to an Italian? And were you not long after appropriately appalled by your behavior?

CHARLES
 I regretted my behavior then, but at least he wasn't after money. May I?
 (reads further down)
 "Colin has expressed his profound disappointment that you were unable to attend the nuptials and he wanted to ask you a question personally..."

(glancing up)
 Oh goody...
 (back to letter)
 "Charles, Col here. As you know
 Hazel is pregnant... and the little
 'babby' is due soon, so I'd like to
 ask you for--"
 (folding the letter)
 And mercifully that's where the
 water washed away his grubby
 imploring for money. The words are
 now nothing but an ink spot.

B.J.
 That's a lot of speculating,
 Charles. Even for a Bostonian.

HAWKEYE
 (suspicious)
 I don't buy it Charles. Your
 reaction far exceeds what's in that
 letter. Did you two have a bust up
 or something?

CHARLES
 I hardly spoke to the man.

HAWKEYE
 (matter of fact)
 Then there's only one reason you're
 acting like a spoiled brat. You're
 jealous of him marrying her.

CHARLES
 Jealous... of him? How dare you?
 I've known this sweet girl for most
 of my life... and we're good
 friends, nothing more.

B.J.
 (to Charles)
 That's just his point.

CHARLES
 Nothing this man has ever done, or
 will ever do, can possibly raise
 even the tiniest jealousy in me.
 Preposterous accusation.

HAWKEYE
 Thou doth protest too much,
 Charles.

B.J.
 (to Charles)
 Listen, if you don't want to send them money, why not at least buy a gift for the baby? We have our very own mobile haberdashery outside.

B.J. holds his blanket up.

CHARLES
 That's not an entirely terrible idea Beej, even for you.

B.J.
 Anytime Charles.

Klinger KNOCKS and ENTERS.

KLINGER
 I have been sent to collect a one, Capt. B.F. Pierce, to attend the party of a one, Sherman T. Potter, to be held in his office immediately. Attire is smart, casual.

B.J.
 Something in green okay?

KLINGER
 He'll be the envy of his friends.

CHARLES
 As long as I'm not required, I'll be leaving.

KLINGER
 How did you letter turn out?

CHARLES
 It was lucid and semi-intelligible, unlike you.

KLINGER
 Good!
 (double guessing)
 I think.

Charles EXITS.

HAWKEYE
 What's this about, Klinger?

KLINGER

I'll leave your 'hostess with the mostess' to explain everything.

HAWKEYE

Potter only requested me, not Beej or Chip?

KLINGER

Chip? Who is this Chip?

HAWKEYE

If I tell you, Charles will kill me.

KLINGER

Charles is Chip? And Chip is Charles?

Hawkeye stands.

HAWKEYE

Yes, but keep it under your hat.
He's all crumby about being a Chip.
(pointing towards the door)
You coming?

KLINGER

Yes, but I'm still tracking down a certain man of the cloth... lead on.

B.J.

(to both)

Toodles.

Hawkeye and Klinger LEAVE.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Charles stands at the unmanned wooden cart.

CHARLES

Hello?

(looking around)

Hello... hi, anybody there?

The merchant rises from behind the cart.

CHARLES (cont'd)

(sarcastic)

(MORE)

CHARLES (cont'd)
Oh, there you are. For a second I
thought you might have absconded,
leaving all this behind.

KOREAN
Looking for something in
particular?

CHARLES
Yes. You sold a blanket to a
colleague of mine and I was hoping
you had one for me.

KOREAN MERCHANT
All gone.

CHARLES
What do you mean all gone?

KOREAN MERCHANT
Lady come and buy the lot.

CHARLES
Which lady?

KOREAN MERCHANT
Tall, blond and bossy. She's like
my wife, if my wife was tall and
blond.

CHARLES
Can you get any more?

KOREAN MERCHANT
More in two weeks.

CHARLES
Two weeks? No, I need one to send
immediately.

KOREAN MERCHANT
Tell you what. I'll get you one I
saved for my brother, but it's
gonna cost.

CHARLES
Fine. How much?

KOREAN MERCHANT
Five dollars.

CHARLES
 (forking out cash)
 Here's ten. I'll expect it
 tomorrow, and make sure it's in my
name.

Charles LEAVES, passing Klinger who's ARRIVING.

KLINGER
 Hey, you selling drinking water?

KOREAN MERCHANT
 Have no water, but have seeds.

KLINGER
 (disappointed)
 I think the green thumbs you're
 looking for belong to our resident
 priest.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 Seeds not for planting. They are
 excellent for many other things.
 Medicine, health... they also clean
 dirty water.

KLINGER
 (skeptical)
 Sounds too good to be true.

KOREAN MERCHANT
 Believe me... we've used them for
 hundreds of years.

KLINGER
 They must be good, you don't look a
 day over forty. How much are these
 miracle seeds?

KOREAN MERCHANT
 Ten dollars.

KLINGER
 (shocked)
 Ten bucks?

KOREAN MERCHANT
 They not cheap... besides, one
 pouch will clean all the water in
 this camp.

Klinger hands over ten bucks and takes the pouch.

KLINGER

This stuff better work.

KOREAN MERCHANT

Before you leave... what's the name of the bald fancy pants who was just here? He forgot to leave his name.

KLINGER

I believe you mean Chip.

KOREAN MERCHANT

Chip? Yeesh, with a name like that, no wonder he in a bad mood.

INT. POTTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Potter and Hot Lips are waiting. Hawkeye ARRIVES, followed by MULCAHY.

HAWKEYE

I hear there's a party, but I don't see any animal balloons.

POTTER

Take a pew, both of you.

They sit.

POTTER (cont'd)

I've been on the phone requesting a new water truck but so far we've struck out.

HOT LIPS

What?

MULCAHY

That's ridiculous.

POTTER (cont'd)

I'm aware of the situation, which is why I've called this little tet-a-tet times two. We need ideas fast and I was hoping you all could shed some.

MULCAHY

I can't think of any places around here to collect water. Certainly not any drinkable water.

POTTER
Margaret?

HOT LIPS
I don't know either.

POTTER
Hawkeye?

HAWKEYE
Couldn't we get some from Incheon?

POTTER
I'm afraid importing water from
anywhere in Korea is too expensive.

Klinger knocks and ENTERS.

KLINGER
Pardon my interruption, but I think
I have something you gentlemen and
lady might be interested in.

POTTER
Not now Klinger.

KLINGER
It concerns our water shortage.

Klinger holds up the seed pouch.

KLINGER (cont'd)
Direct from our Korean merchant...
this bag of miracle seeds, and the
man guarantees the results.

HAWKEYE
We don't need a beanstalk.

KLINGER
Good, because these seeds filter
water.

POTTER
Son, were you born yesterday? The
man's sold you an egg.

MULCAHY
Actually Colonel. I've heard about
these seeds and they have excellent
results. The local orphanages swear
by them... without cursing of
course.

POTTER

Too risky Father. Our gizzards are a mite different to those of the local populous. It's a surefire way of inviting Montezuma's revenge amongst other things.

HAWKEYE

Father, you sure about their success?

MULCAHY

I can't guarantee their results Hawkeye, but I've heard only good things.

HAWKEYE

Colonel, we're in a real tight spot right now... how about we run these through the lab and see how they perform, before making our decision?

POTTER

I don't know. I don't want to risk these boys' lives by opening them up to a possible infection.

HOT LIPS

What other choice do we have?

POTTER

(reluctantly)

Well... if you're all in agreeance, then...

(to Klinger)

Son, mind if we borrow some of your seeds?

KLINGER

Take the lot. The merchant says there's enough to filter the entire water tower.

HAWKEYE

No time like the present to get started.

Hawkeye stands.

KLINGER

Before you go, your letters from home have been drip-dried and

(MORE)

KLINGER (cont'd)
 ironed, and are ready for
 collection.

Hawkeye ushering Klinger as they both LEAVE.

POTTER
 Now until we receive the results,
 we're gonna need to adapt hospital
 protocol.

HOT LIPS
 Rubbing alcohol should take care of
 any shortfall in pre-op, but the
 wounded will need drinking water
 following surgery.

POTTER
 Any ideas on the dirty linen?

HOT LIPS
 Actually, I bought all the blankets
 from the Korean merchant outside. I
 figured we could use them as
 temporary linen, and then store
 them for winter.

POTTER
 Smart thinking Margaret. Okay, let
 everyone know that all non-canned
 food is out of bounds for now. I'll
 make sure the kitchen rations out
 milk with dinner. Father, anything
 you can do?

MULCAHY
 I'll pray for rain. I'm sure a
 monsoon will come in handy about
 now.

POTTER
 Thank you Father.

INT. KLINGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Klinger passes Hawkeye his letter.

KLINGER
 Hopefully the only thing dripping
 in there will be irony.

The phone rings... Klinger answers.

KLINGER
(on phone)
Four-oh-double-seven... ah ha. Ah
hm. Ah hm. When...? Okay thanks.

Potter, Hot Lips and Mulcahy ENTER from Potter's office.

KLINGER
You better be quick with your lab
tests.

HAWKEYE
Why?

KLINGER
Fighting's flared up North. We can
expect plenty of casualties in the
next twenty four hours, or less.

HAWKEYE
(concerned)
I don't know if we'll have enough
time to run all the tests.

POTTER
I suggest we saddle up then...
because if we don't get usable
water in the next twenty four
hours, we're gonna have a big
problem on our hands.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

INT. LAB - DAY

Hawkeye is sitting, staring at a lab beaker. B.J. ENTERS.

B.J.
Hello stranger. Missed you at
dinner last night.

HAWKEYE
Not hungry. What do you know about
water-borne diseases and
filtration?

B.J.
Just that they were my favorite
band as a kid.

Hawkeye points at the lab beaker, where the solid particles
have separated.

B.J. (cont'd)
That's a good sign.

HAWKEYE
(unconvinced)
But it's what we can't see that we
need to keep an eye on.

Hawkeye drops a couple water drops into a Petri dish and
places it under the microscope.

HAWKEYE (cont'd)
What do you think?

B.J. has a look.

B.J.
A lot of nasty bacteria still
swimming around in there. I guess
there's nothing for it but to wait.

HAWKEYE
With the clock ticking, that's what
I'm afraid of.

B.J.
Listen, can I bring you anything? A
glass of milk... a mystery in a
can?

HAWKEYE
 (despondent)
 No thanks, I'm not hungry, and I'll
 drink when this water is ready to
 drink... and not before.

INT. "THE SWAMP" - DAY

Charles ENTERS, dressed in a robe. He spots a blanket on his bunk and unfolds it. To his horror, "CHIP" is boldly embroidered across the entire blanket.

CHARLES
 (angry with merchant)
 Idiot.
 (angry with bunk-mates who
 likely gave his nickname to
 the merchant)
 Idiots.

Charles begins to rip his blanket. Klinger knocks and ENTERS.

KLINGER
 Hello, Mr. Chip?

CHARLES
 (realizing it was Klinger)
 You! You did this.

Klinger backpedals as Charles encroaches.

CHARLES
 Do you know what you've done you
 Lebanese kaak? You and your big
 mouth have ruined a very important
 gift which is now in tatters. So
 expect the same treatment.

KLINGER
 Charles... may I call you Charles?
 How was I to know he was gonna
 do... whatever he did?

Charles shows the embroidered name.

CHARLES
 Look familiar?

KLINGER
 Uh oh. Look, I'll pay for another
 one.

CHARLES

There is no other one, you
immutable buffoon. But you will
pay... with your life.

B.J. ARRIVES in the nick of time to separate them.

B.J.

Easy does it you love birds. Come
on Charles, settle down.

CHARLES

Thanks to Klinger, I now have to
wire money back to the Irish
ingrate.

KLINGER

The merchant just asked for your
name. If you want to blame anyone,
blame him?

It dawns on Charles that B.J. and Hawkeye must have told
Klinger the nickname. He stalks B.J.

CHARLES

(to B.J.)

You must have to told Klinger.

B.J.

Charles... Charles... listen,
Margaret has an entire Post-Op full
of blankets. Ask her.

CHARLES

(calming)

This isn't over.

Charles STORMS OUT.

KLINGER

You saved my life, how can I repay
you?

B.J.

Just don't go around using his name
in vain. Next time he might have a
scalpel.

INT. POST-OP - DAY

HOT LIPS, KELLYE and another NURSE are making beds with bright orange blankets. Charles CHARGES IN.

CHARLES
Margaret, I need a favor.

HOT LIPS
Can't you see I'm making beds?

CHARLES
(exaggerated)
Please.

Hot Lips straightens up.

HOT LIPS
Okay Charles, what is it?

CHARLES
I need a blanket.

HOT LIPS
Impossible, we only have enough for O.R. and Post-Op and we still need more for triage.

CHARLES
Please Margaret. I'm only asking for one.

HOT LIPS
And I'm saying we don't have one to spare. Ask the merchant.

CHARLES
I did, but the Lebanese simpleton took it upon himself to embroider the last blanket, rendering it useless as a gift.

HOT LIPS
Well, if it's only embroidered, I'd be happy to swap it for one of mine.

CHARLES
(sheepish)
It's torn.

HOT LIPS
Then we don't have a deal.

CHARLES
Margaret I'm begging you. It's a matter of the utmost importance.

HOT LIPS
Is it for a patient?

CHARLES
No.

HOT LIPS
Is it for the Colonel?

CHARLES
No.

HOT LIPS
Then it's not that important.

Hot Lips rejoins Kellye. Charles STORMS OUT.

INT. OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

Charles is drinking a cognac at the bar. B.J. ENTERS and joins him.

B.J.
Charles, may I?

CHARLES
(sober, but solemn)
It's a free country.

B.J.
It's not actually, but I think I know what you mean.
(to Igor)
Bourbon, neat.
(to Charles)
I... just wanted to apologize for letting Klinger in on the joke... we promised we wouldn't, but we did anyway. So... sorry.

CHARLES
It was only a blankie.

B.J.

(bemused at Charles's change
of heart)

Is this the same Charles who wanted
to rearrange Klinger and I from the
inside out?

CHARLES

"Anger, resentment and jealousy
doesn't change the heart of
others... only yours." Shannon
Alder.

B.J.

Well, you should always listen to
your elders.

CHARLES

You know Beej... Hawkeye was right.
But don't tell him that.

B.J.

I'm sure he already thinks it.

CHARLES

I wasn't angry at the husband. The
only thing he did was to make Hazel
happy.

B.J.

And take her away from you...?

CHARLES

That too. You know, when I pursued
medicine at Harvard, I did so
partly out of filial duty... and
partly because I really wanted to
be a surgeon. I was passionate
about the profession... still am.
But what I never told another soul
was... a large part of my
motivation was to impress Hazel. I
loved her.

B.J.

Then why the reaction with the
blanket? She would have taken it as
a touching gift.

CHARLES

No... you see Chip was my childhood
nickname... a name shared between
two young friends. If I was going

(MORE)

CHARLES (cont'd)
 to woo her into sharing her love
 with me, I needed her to see me as
 a man, not the boy I was. I always
 hoped that after graduation, she
 would see me with fresh eyes. But
 as you can see... she turned to
 someone else for that house call.

B.J.
 I'll tell you what I do see. I see
 someone who cares deeply for
 someone else, who's special to them
 in a very important way, and
 whether that's as a friend or
 something else... that's what
 you'll need to come to terms with.
 You may have wanted her to stoke
 your fire, but it sounds like she's
 been, and will always be, your
 pilot light... and maybe that's
 just as important.

Charles looks up at B.J.

CHARLES
 Pilot light.

B.J.
 Do what you need to do Charles,
 just be happy with your choices.

Beat.

B.J. (cont'd)
 Another drink?

CHARLES
 Cognac. We should wet the baby's
 head... and toast the family.
 Cheers.

B.J.
 Cheers.

They finish their drinks.

B.J. (cont'd)
 Same again Igor.

INT. KLINGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Charles is on the phone, sending a telegram.

CHARLES

This is Major Charles Winchester...
Mash, four-oh-seven-seven. I wish
to send a telegram to a Mrs. Hazel
Murphy... seventy five Mill Brook
Ave, Walpole, Massachusetts...
Ready?

(pause)

Dear Hazel, my sincerest
congratulations to you on your
recent wedding. I wish I could have
attended, but circumstances as they
are, unfortunately prevented it. As
per your recent letter, I have
wired funds to my parents... who
will in turn, forward them to you.
I had intended to send a gift, but
Korea... as it is, made this
impossible... so let me simply pass
on my kindest regards and wishes to
you and Colin, and I wish you both
the best of luck in your new life.
Stop. Much love, Charles.

(pause)

Got that? Thank you.

Charles hangs up. SFX choppers. Camp P.A. announces incoming wounded.

P.A. (V.O.)

All personal, incoming wounded...

Charles HURRIES OUT.

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

Hawkeye looks up at the clock.

HAWKEYE

(impatiently)

Come on, come on.

P.A. (V.O.)

Everyone report to triage on the
double, it's gonna be a heavy load
folks... and remember we're
scrubbing with alcohol, so leave
your candles and snifters at home.

HAWKEYE

Time's up, ready or not, here I am.

Hawkeye suctions a few drops of water onto a Petri dish. He places it under the microscope and checks it... adjusting focus as he goes.

HAWKEYE (cont'd)

Now's not the time for a game of hide and seek. If you're there, show yourself.... I think the seeds worked... which means Klinger actually came through... and I'm not sure which is more surprising.

(yelling o.s.)

Nurse! Nurse!

Hawkeye starts packing up as NURSE BAILEY ENTERS.

HAWKEYE (cont'd)

Bailey, give this pouch to Klinger and tell him to begin water treatment immediately... a few buckets at a time. Instructions are written on a piece of paper in the pouch.

NURSE BAILEY

Yes doctor.

Nurse Bailey EXITS. Hawkeye continues gathering his belongings.

HAWKEYE

(to Petri dish)

Now if you could only salvage the food around here, I'd buy you a picture frame and kiss you every night.

Hawkeye EXITS.

INT. O.R. - DAY (TWELVE HOURS LATER)

All surgeons are operating. Potter up top, B.J., Hawkeye and Charles at the end. Hot Lips, Kellye, Nurse Bailey and other NURSES are assisting. The casualty load is light and the mood in O.R. reflects this. Mulcahy is reading his water damaged letter from back home.

MULCAHY

"So our new habits arrived yesterday and with all the basketball I'm playing, mine fit like a glove. I didn't even need the ecclesiastical shoehorn. But later Father Thompson..."

(flips page)

"...squeezed my buns and he awarded me top prize." Oh dear.

Everyone laughs. Hawkeye loudest, perhaps in relief of solving the water issue.

MULCAHY (cont'd)

I think the water damage might have stuck these pages together.

POTTER

There's a dozen reasons why I'd agree Father.

Laughing continues... as Klinger ENTERS... fatigued from a lack of hydration.

KLINGER

(drowsy)

Urgent telegram for Major Winchester.

He hands the telegram to Mulcahy.

POTTER

(to Klinger)

Son, you'd better drink some water. You don't look well.

KLINGER

Not until the water truck arrives. Us Klingers are allergic to dirty water, sir.

POTTER

But the new supply doesn't arrive till next week.

KLINGER

Eight days.

Klinger AMBLES OUT.

MULCAHY
Major... would you like me to read
your telegram?

CHARLES
Please do Father.

MULCAHY
(reading)
"Dear Chip..."

Charles smiles.

MULCAHY
"Hope you are in good spirits. We
all miss you terribly. Hazel
received your telegram yesterday
and immediately went into labor. I
believe she was overjoyed. She was
curious to why you wired her and
Colin money though, seeing as they
are so flush following their
windfall from steel speculation."

Hawkeye and B.J. laugh.

MULCAHY (cont'd)
"We also waited for your response
regarding the question in the
previous letter. Hazel and Colin
wanted your permission to name
their son... Chip, after you."

Everyone is touched, not least Charles.

MULCAHY (cont'd)
"Chip Elijah Murphy says hello.
Hazel also wanted to remind you
that you're always in her thoughts,
each and every day. Anyway, hope
you're well, much love, Christina."
Well, I must say... that was a most
touching telegram.

Everyone ad lib "hear, hear".

B.J.
Pilot light burns brightly Charles.

Charles smiles.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

FADE IN

EXT. KLINGER'S OFFICE, WATER TOWER - DAY

Klinger, "dying" of thirst, RUNS out his office towards the water tower. A human chain of corpsmen are filling it bucket by bucket. Klinger grabs the nearest bucket and pours the water over his head... drinking what he can.

IGOR

(to Potter)

Shall I tell him that's the untreated water, sir?

POTTER

Too late. You know, I think that boy's gonna learn every lesson the hard way.

On Potter's look, FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT

THE END