# **SNAKES IN A HOSPITAL**

a short play by

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## **DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

CHRIS: Male, twenties to thirties, any race. A reporter from the

Philadelphia Inquirer. Specializes in cover-ups and scandals. A fast-talking, wisecracking reporter with an eye for Jess.

DR. JESSICA

COLEMAN: Female, twenties to thirties, any race. The head of neonatal

intensive care. Trying to become the Chief Medical Officer of the children's hospital. A scatterbrained flowerchild who's

in over her head...until the very last line.

DR. RICHARD STERN: Male, forties and up, any race. The head of surgery. Trying to

become the Chief Medical Officer of the children's hospital. An "old boy" who gave a bright young girl a chance, and

immediately regretted it.

## ACT 1, SCENE 1

SETTING: Jessica' Office, A Children's Hospital, Now. There's a Desk with Jess' laptop on it, along with an empty flowerpot, and a potted aloe plant. It's old, but with a little love and care it could be 100% healthy again. A trashcan sits on the right side of the desk.

AT RISE: JESS is inspecting her aloe plant and CHRIS is watching her.

### **CHRIS**

Jess, are you going to spend all day playing with that plant, or are we going to bust your boss?

### **JESS**

(Distracted)

Richard isn't my boss, Chris. He's just the Head of Surgery. And if this plan works, he'll never be my boss. And I'm not playing. I'm repotting.

## **CHRIS**

When you said you were "digging up dirt on your slimy boss," this wasn't what I had in mind.

## **JESS**

Chris, this is an aloe plant. It can treat rashes, burns, skin irritation in general. It has antiseptic properties. If I let it die, it'd be a disservice to my field. That's why I'm putting it in a bigger pot with more dirt.

(CHRIS stares at her in disbelief.)

### **JESS**

Do you know how many children I used to see every day with horrible, painful skin conditions?

### **CHRIS**

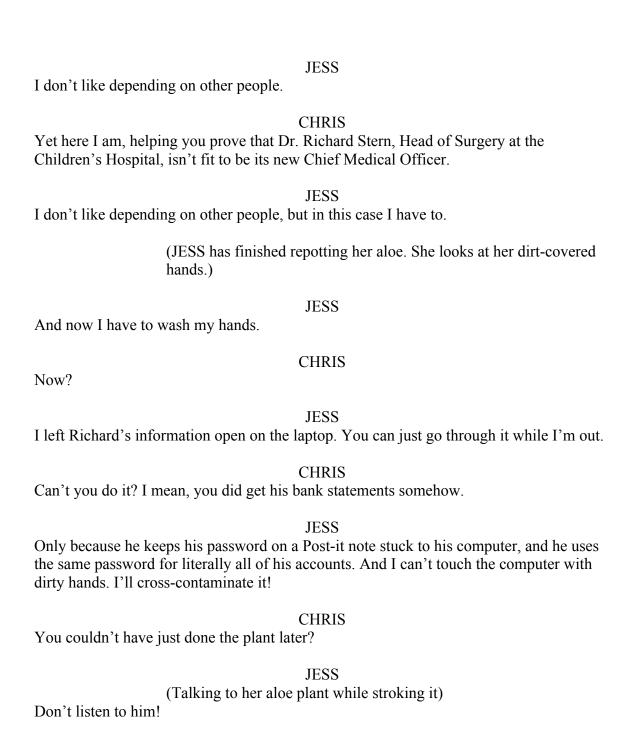
So a sick kid comes into your office and you rub them with a plant.

## **JESS**

Obviously not. I make my own lotion. Which I've "accidentally" slipped into the poor mothers' bags with a nod and a wink.

### **CHRIS**

Because the other ones are full of snake oil.



(JESS gives her plant one last friendly pat and walks out of the room. CHRIS sits at JESS' desk and starts typing.)

**CHRIS** 

Go into Richard Stern...Projects...Complaints...Grant Budgets. That looks promising.

(CHRIS double-clicks)

#### **CHRIS**

Huh, that's a lot of money to be getting back from a business that cleans surgical equipment. Sneaking a little money on the side, eh Ricky?

(RICH knocks at the door. He can't see that CHRIS is inside.)

**CHRIS** 

Who is it?

RICH

Who's this?

**CHRIS** 

You first.

(RICH opens the door and storms in.)

RICH

I'm Dr. Richard Stern, Head of Surgery. Where is Jessica?

**CHRIS** 

I know who you are, Ricky. Dr. Coleman isn't in right now.

**CHRIS** 

But maybe I can help.

(RICH steps into the office, and shakes CHRIS's hand.)

**RICH** 

I certainly hope you can. Did you find anything that would make her seem..."unfit for office?"

**CHRIS** 

I was working on that now.

**RICH** 

Then why are you in my folder? I'm paying you to investigate her!

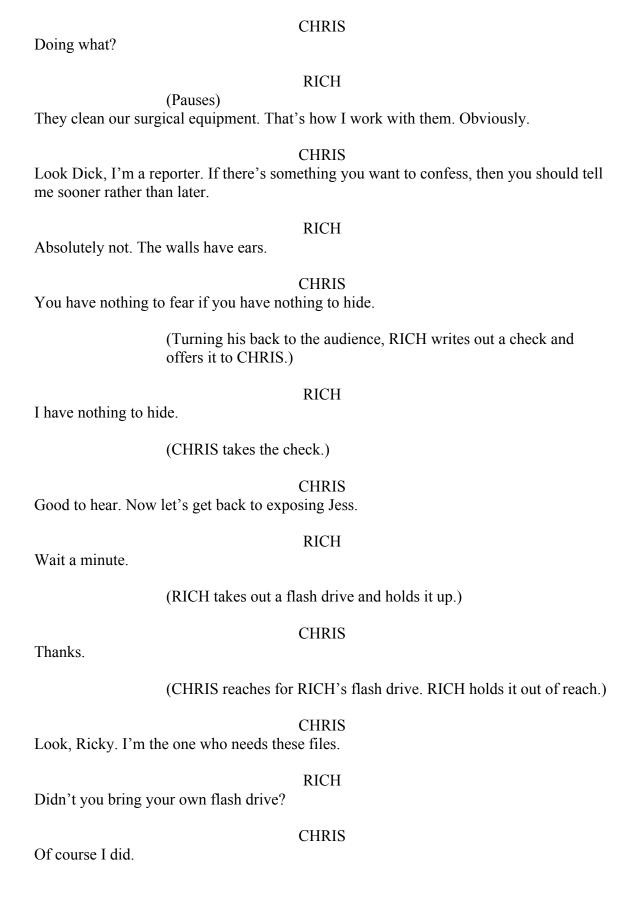
**CHRIS** 

It was already there when I got on. I'm a reporter, not your private eye, Ricky. The story's my biggest concern. Let me just exit out of here...get into here...

**RICH** 

She would do that, wouldn't she? Embezzle money and then throw the blame on me. And after everything I've done for her...

Voila!	CHRIS
So that's her folder.	RICH
Yep.	CHRIS
Click on the one that says Grant Budget.	RICH
Which one is that?	CHRIS
It's right in front of you. Any closer and	RICH it would've bitten you.
Okay, okay! I'm clicking it.	CHRIS
(CHRIS clicks twice)	
Oh, that's sweet. She's trying to update t	CHRIS he NICU.
Not that. Look at her accounts.	RICH
CHRIS Looks like she's been getting refunds from a "Surgical Sterilization Solutions."	
RICH Refund, shmefund! That's a kickback if I ever saw one.	
And how would you know?	CHRIS
Because I work with them too.	RICH
"Surgical Sterilization Solutions?"	CHRIS
Yes.	RICH



# (CHRIS takes out a Spiderman flash drive.)

(CTIKIS takes out a Spiderman flash diffee.)
RICH Spiderman? Really?
CHRIS Peter Parker's a journalist.
RICH So is William Randolph Hearst.
CHRIS But does he have his own flash drive?
RICH Let's just make the copies before Jessica gets back.
CHRIS Okay. Together.
(CHRIS and RICH triumphantly stick their flash drives into the computer. CHRIS types a bit more, then stops.)
CHRIS And there they go. Why do you need copies of Dr. J's bank statements anyway?
RICH What if your files get corrupted? Ever think about that?
CHRIS No, because I know how to use a flash drive. Done!
(RICH and CHRIS remove their flash drives.)
RICH I can't wait to see the look on Jessica's face when she sees this in the paper! She won't know what hit her!
CHRIS Pleasure doing business with you, Richie-Rich.
RICH I'd better get out of here before Jessica comes back. I'm needed in the OR, now.
CHRIS You'd better wash up, then. Who knows what you've caught in here?

(RICH leaves. CHRIS reinserts the flash drive and starts typing. JESS comes back in.)

**JESS** 

Did you get it all?

**CHRIS** 

Just about to. Richeroo came in, and he knows.

**JESS** 

That we're onto him?

**CHRIS** 

No. He knows about your history with "Surgical Sterilization Solutions."

(JESS pauses, and CHRIS turns to face her.)

**CHRIS** 

What are the odds of both of you laundering money from the same place?

**JESS** 

Well, at least one embezzler will be out of this hospital. So really, it's a good. We're draining the swamp, driving out the snakes.

**CHRIS** 

Good. Maybe we can celebrate over a nice dinner at The Olde Bar? My treat.

**JESS** 

Are you asking me out? Again? That is highly inappropriate, Chris.

**CHRIS** 

So, is that a no?

**JESS** 

Yes, that's a no. Look, you just focus on the files. I just remembered I left my phone in the bathroom. I'll be right back.

(JESS leaves. CHRIS plays with the Spiderman flash drive.)

**CHRIS** 

Too bad. A pretty little woman like you shouldn't have to go to prison. But that's exactly what's going to happen as soon as your finances make next week's paper.

(CHRIS walks out of the office whistling the Spiderman Theme, and JESS walks back in and types on her computer JESS turns to the repotted aloe plant.)

# **JESS**

(Gradually becoming more of a stone cold bitch)
Well, you did your job. You got Chris and Rich onto my computer. And now instead of my finances, they have viruses.

(JESS chucks the aloe plant in the trash.)

(BLACKOUT)