

Two Hander

[A nurse walks in. There are two chairs a small table and a telephone and a bag hanging over one of the chairs. She walks in and starts to tidy everything away. She picks up her bag and looks inside it for a moment. The other actor walks through the audience. He stops at an imaginary door. He stands still thinking, and then takes a breath and goes to knock. He stops. Then he knocks hard on the door. The nurse looks towards the imaginary door.]

Nurse: Not now! **[She sighs and goes to open the door.]** Hello...

David: Umm..

Nurse: Can I help you?

David: I... Can I come inside?

Nurse: You want to see me now?

David: Yes.

Nurse: Okay.. come and sit down. **[They sit on the chairs.]** What can I do for you? **[He stares down at his feet.]** Hmmm! Look if you don't tell me what's wrong, I can't help you!

David: Sorry.... It's hard...

Nurse: It's getting late too. I was just going home... **[He still says nothing.]** Look...ummm..

David: David.

Nurse: If you don't want to talk about it now, maybe you could come back tomorrow? There won't be many people in the morning..

David: No! I don't want to come back tomorrow.

Nurse: Oh... all right! I'll phone home and tell my husband I'll be late... **[She preses the number and turns away from David.]** Hello Tina darling! Yes.. I'm fine! You had a good day at school? Good! Eight out of ten! What a good girl! Is your Daddy there? No... okay.. okay.. I'll be a little while yet. When he comes in tell him to start the supper. Yes... and Johnny's with Aunty? Okay darling, see you soon. **[She puts the phone down.]**

David: Sorry... You've got kids at home?

Nurse: Yes! So how can I help you?

David: Ohh.. I don't know how to say this... **[He laughs.]** I wanted to creep in here when no one was around.. Oh god...

Nurse: You've picked something up?

David: Yes.. I've picked something up. Help me.

Nurse: What exactly are your symptoms?

David: Symptoms?

Nurse: What's wrong with you? Where does it hurt?

David: Where do you think it hurts?!

Nurse: I don't have to put up with this! I should be at home now.. but I'm taking the time to see you! If you can't talk nicely to me.... You can go!

David: Sorry!

Nurse: So am I! I should have gone home and made my kids supper!

David: It hurts here.. it burns when I piss. And there's green stuff coming out the end of... Ohh god!

Nurse: Sounds like gonorrhoea.

David: Yeah.

Nurse: You know all about gonorrhoea and you still go out and get it?

David: Look..

Nurse: All you need to do is wear a condom!

David: People make mistakes!

Nurse: Yes.. they make mistakes all the time! And we have to deal with them. I'll have to take a swab.

David: What?

Nurse: I'll have to take a swab.. go behind the screen.

David: Take a swab where?

Nurse: Inside your penis.

David: No.. no forget it!

Nurse: I have to do this all the time. It takes a few seconds, then it's finished.

David: You have to do it?

Nurse: Otherwise we don't know which STI you have. Come on now... [**She stands showing the way. David looks around as if searching for a way out and then walks quickly past her. He walks back in doing up the belt of his trousers. She follows.**] You've taken the first two tablets. Now we have to wait thirty minutes before I can give you the two injections...

David: Two?

Nurse: In your bottom. One each side. If you don't like that you can take 12 tablets again in thirty minutes. You decide.

David: I'll have the injections.

Nurse: Then you have to take these tablets twice a day everyday till they're all finished. You must use a condom until you're better. And after that too if you've got any sense!

David: You'd like to cut it off wouldn't you?

Nurse: What?

David: You'd like to cut it off!

Nurse: If you want to know the truth, I get fed up with you men coming in like this. You shouldn't get gonorrhoea.. You can protect yourself! But you all want to have sex all the time, with any one! With prostitutes! And if a girl does want you to use a condom, you slap her around till she decides it isn't worth it!

David: That's men is it? [**The nurse walks away and picks up a card, sits at the table and writes on it.**]

Nurse: You have to contact all your partners and let them know..

David: All my partners?

Nurse: I don't know how many people you've been sleeping with!

David: Hundreds!

Nurse: They all have to come here. They can pass the sickness on to other people.

David: Ohh come on! No one would sleep with someone else when they've got this thing!

Nurse: Woman don't always know they've got it. They don't have any signs. That's why men think it's a woman's disease.

David: Well I got it from a woman.

Nurse: Men can't tell when they get Chlamydia ..

David: What's that?

Nurse: It's another sickness you get through sex. But men don't realise they have it and they go spreading it round all over the place.

David: We are bad aren't we?

Nurse: If you don't want to get this sickness again, you have to use condoms! **[She slaps some down on the table.]** You can have these. They are free. Supplied by the health department! Now please umm...

David: David.

Nurse: Make sure you tell your partners ..

David: I have one.

Nurse: Okay.. tell your *partner* to come and see me. Or you'll get it again when you sleep with her.

David: My god!

Nurse: Do you have to swear like that?

David: You think you know everything!

Nurse: I see lots of young men like you and I'm sick of it! You have girlfriends all over the place and you don't take responsibility for anything. Have you thought about AIDS?

David: AIDS is it now?

Nurse: Yes AIDS! People are getting it all over the Pacific! It's a sexually transmitted disease as well David! People die of it! They die horrible deaths!

David: **[He pretends to be terrified.]** AHHHHHH!

Nurse: You're crazy!

David: You're a bitch.

Nurse: Ohh my god!

David: Don't swear!

Nurse: Well really... I... I've never been called a bitch before.. in here!

David: It's true. You are a bitch. You a nurse? You're acting like I'm a criminal. I'm sick! That's all. I've caught a disease.

Nurse: I'm trying to give you some good advice, so you won't catch a disease again.

David: Yeah yeah okay! I've got to go and find all those women I slept with and let them all know they've all got it.

Nurse: Can't you take anything seriously?

David: Yeah! I'm seriously feeling terrible. Have you thought about that? I'm seriously infected with this gonorrhoea and I don't like it. I feel like shit. And then you tell me I could have AIDS. Okay! **[He stands up to leave.]**

Nurse: No you don't! You can't go yet! You have to have that injection! **[She turns to the phone again and presses the numbers, turning away from him.]** Tina? Yes.. I won't be long now. Is Daddy back yet? Okay.. You put on the rice and go get Johnny. If he comes in tell him to ring. Okay darling.. thank you. **[She puts the phone down and turns back to face him.]** I .. I want to apologies.

David: You what?

Nurse: I'm sorry. I want you to understand how dangerous your behaviour is.

David: Why do you think it's my behaviour?

Nurse: Well.. you have to be sleeping around with lots of people to get things like that and you're obviously not using a condom.

David: Look I don't have lots of women.

Nurse: You expect me to believe that?

David: Yes, it's true.

Nurse: You said you got it off a woman.

David: I did.

Nurse: [**She looks at her watch.**] I better give you that injection... [**She gets up and walks over to an imaginary cupboard.**] Take down your trousers and lie on the bed.

David: Take down my trousers?

Nurse: I can't give you the injection through your clothes can I?

David: Jesus..

Nurse: Don't swear! Go behind the screen and lie on the bed. [**Now she stands waiting for him to walk past again.**]

David: You couldn't get one of those dirty sicknesses, eh Nurse? Your life's perfect! [**She looks angrily at him and he walks out past her. She takes a step after him and freezes. She goes and picks up her bag and then walks out. She walks round and comes back into the acting area and puts her bag on the ground. She is home now.**]

Nurse: Tina! Tina.... Johnny's asleep? Good .. and Daddy? Ohh... He'll be back soon. He must have met some friends. You go and do your homework.... [**She takes off her uniform.**] I've got to cook now Tina. Can't you do it on your own? Just try and do what you can, while I get the food ready. ... [**She starts to prepare food.**] No I don't know when Daddy is coming back! [**She is chopping and wiping her eyes as if she is chopping onions.**]... You can't do the maths? Okay, show me the book. [**She goes over and looks at the imaginary book.**] I used to have trouble with this stuff too. Maybe you should ask your teacher tomorrow. She just gets cross when you ask? Pheww.... I think you're too tired to do this now Tina. I'm tired too. Why don't we go to bed? I'm not hungry are you? I'll cook a big breakfast in the morning. Come on.. lets go and lie down. We'll feel a lot better after a good night's sleep...
[**She leads out the imaginary child and carries out her uniform with her.**]

[**David walks back onto into the acting area.**]

David: [**He turns and bangs on the door. This time he is drunk.**] Nurse! Hey nurse! [**The nurse comes round the backdrop again and opens the imaginary door.**] Hello again!

Nurse: You?

David: It's ten days!

Nurse: You're drunk!

David: Yes! But I'm good when I drink.. I don't want to fight. I've come to see you. You said to come in ten days.. well here I am!

Nurse: How can you come here drunk?

David: Ohh come on! Come on!

Nurse: You have to respect this clinic! It's.. it's government property!
David: Yeah.. it's falling to bits.
Nurse: David! This is it! You get out of this clinic now!
David: Why? What have I done?
Nurse: You're drunk!
David: People get drunk every weekend out there in the big world nurse. They drink anything.. any old thing. And then... you know what they do?
Nurse: Yes! I do know what they do! They go and sleep with prostitutes and they catch gonorrhoea and maybe AIDS!
David: Why aren't you out there then?
Nurse: What?
David: They need condoms out there! When they're drunk and doing things.. not here in this clinic where you make people afraid.. Where they will never come because you are such a bad bitch.
Nurse: **[She grabs the phone and starts to press the numbers.]** I'm calling the police!
David: You're wasting your time.. they never come. Anyway I'm not going to do anything to you. I want to talk...
Nurse: Helo! Helo! Yes.. I need your help now! I'm calling from the Health Centre. Yes.. there's a drunk man here.. right here now! No! But he's drunk! He could do anything! Come and get him right away!.... How long will it take you to get here? You have to wait for transport? All right. Hurry up! **[She puts the phone down.]** You better go! They're coming!
David: I want to know a couple of things first.
Nurse: Ohhhhh!
David: I got to thinking about what you said...
Nurse: It's encouraging you think, I suppose.
David: You said I could have AIDS. You can't get AIDS and an STI at the same time!
Nurse: Yes you can.
David: But that's not fair!
Nurse: You are so stupid...
David: It's not fair to get two things at once!
Nurse: I've had young girls in here, with two different STI's at once.
David: God..
Nurse: What about women who get raped and get given AIDS at the same time? Is that fair?
David: No.. no it's not.
Nurse: And husbands who give AIDS to their wives!
David: Wives never give it to their husbands?
Nurse: Maybe sometimes.. but it's usually the other way round. You know it is!
David: AIDS! Is that all you can talk about?
Nurse: *You asked me* if it was possible to get AIDS and an STI at the same time. I'm just giving you the answer!
David: So what does AIDS do?
Nurse: You don't know?!
David: I know a bit.... No! I'm not sure. Not really!

Nurse: After all the health education we do, you still don't understand what AIDS is and how to protect yourself!?

David: I know you get it through sex and you have to use condoms!

Nurse: But you don't use condoms! That's why you came here in the first place!

David: So tell me what happens if you get it... how do you know?

Nurse: You don't know!

David: Okay I'm an idiot! Take pity on this poor idiot **[He falls onto his knees.]** ..tell him what happens when you get AIDS.

Nurse: Nothing happens for years. It lives in your blood and you can pass it to people when you have sex with them. Slowly AIDS kills the white blood cells that protect your body from disease.. One day you get sick.. You get diarrhoea or a bad cough and it won't get better.. then you get fevers and other strange sicknesses as well. You get sicker and sicker and then maybe you get well for a little while, then you get sick again and this time you don't get better. You die.

David: One less bastard to worry about eh Nurse?

Nurse: **[She picks up the phone and presses the numbers again.]** Police?! I just rang! There's a drunk here in my clinic! I want him out! I know you're waiting for transport! When is it coming?

David: I told you

Nurse: **[She walks away carrying the phone with her to be out of ear shot.]** He's drunk! He could .. destroy the clinic.. steal the drugs! Yes.. I know about the transport! But what if he hit me? Or raped me?! No he hasn't done anything .. yet! But your job is to stop that happening! You have to get here now!... It not your fault. There are no police cars. Have you ever thought of taking a bus??! **[She slams the receiver down and puts phone down on the table.]**

David: How are you women meant to protect yourselves? **[He laughs.]**

Nurse: Girls get raped and the police do nothing! Drunk men rape and terrorise their wives and there's nothing they can do! That's how AIDS spreads! But no one wants to talk about it!

David: No.. they don't.

Nurse: **[She bangs the table.]** I'm wasting my time!

David: Ahh?

Nurse: I'm wasting my time being a nurse! We can't stop people getting these terrible sicknesses like AIDS! They'll be an epidemic here!

David: **[He stands up and pulls out a bottle from his jacket.]** We're a Christian country! Guided by religion and tradition! **[He takes a long drink.]**

Nurse: Put that bottle down!

David: Ahh! **[He drinks again.]**

Nurse: I'll...

David: Call the police?

Nurse: I'll call my husband! **[She walks to the phone and picks it up again. David continues drinking. She presses the numbers.]** Hello... Hello .. Tina? Is Daddy there? I need to speak to him now. Oh.. okay. If he comes back tell him to .. come here right away! Yes.. here! I need to see him! **[She puts the phone down slowly.]**

David: He's not at home much.

Nurse: You don't know that!
David: When you phone he's never there.
Nurse: He has a life too! He can't stay home all the time!
David: Where does he go then?
Nurse: It's none of your business!
David: I only asked. I didn't mean to upset you.
Nurse: You have no right to ask about my personal life!
David: You're not a person?
Nurse: I am a nurse! I am here to help my patients!
David: You don't need any help then?
Nurse: Yes! I need someone to come and take you away! I want to go home!
David: It's all right. You go home...
Nurse: I can't go and leave you here! You could ..
David: I won't do anything. I'll go.. I want to know if I'm okay now. That's all. [**He turns towards her.**] Do you have to examine me or what?
Nurse: I'm not going to touch you when you're drunk!
David: Please...do what you have to do then I'll go. And I won't come back. Ever again.
Nurse: Go behind the screen and take off your clothes.
David: Again?
Nurse: How else am I going to examine you?
David: I thought getting drunk would help.
Nurse: What?
David: I didn't want to come here and have you look at me again!
Nurse: David! I'm a nurse!
David: You all go home and talk about it to your friends.. [**He mimics her voice.**] He wasn't up to much.. His wife has no fun!
Nurse: I'd never do that!
David: I'm so ashamed.
Nurse: There's nothing to be ashamed of. [**She sits down. David looks at her.**]
David: Hah! [**He lays his head on the table.**]
Nurse: I mean it.
David: Ohh yeah....
Nurse: Go behind the screen David. You all look the same to me.
David: Okay.... [**She stands there and he walks past her. She walks out and then walks round the backdrop to her house again.**] 40439

Nurse: Tina! Tina! [**She takes off her uniform and hangs it up.**] Where is she? [**she walks a few steps.**] Tina! You've been sitting there all the time! [**She walks towards her and bends down to talk to her.**] Hey..... what's the matter? You're crying... What happened? Auntie says we never give her anything for looking after the baby. Daddy spends it all on drink...No Tina! It's not true! I give her money when I can.. but I have to pay for the rent and for food. No! I don't know where Daddy is! And don't you talk to him about this! It will only make him angry! I'll go and get the baby now. I'll talk to Auntie Tina... [**She stands up and starts leave.**] What? Why do I stay with him? Tina! He's your father! That's not true! [**She walks back and goes to hit the imaginary child.**] It's not true

Tina! You shut up now! **[She stops horrified.]** Tina.. Tina I'm sorry! Come back!
Come back Tina! **[She runs out after her.]**

[The nurse walks into the acting area as if she is very tired. She puts on her uniform and goes and sits down in a chair. She puts her head on the desk. David walks in. He stands looking at her.]

David: Hello..

Nurse: Ahh? You? What are you doing here? You promised you'd never come back!

David: I did.... Don't get cross. I want to say sorry..

Nurse: Go away!

David: I need to ask you something... Please.

Nurse: Ohh! Sit down! Tell me what you want!

David: Look.. I know I was a bit.. I shouldn't have been drinking when I came in here.

Nurse: No you shouldn't!

David: I've been frightened about AIDS ever since you talked about it. I forget for a while and then .. it's there again. Did I pick up AIDS too when I got the STI? I want a test.

Nurse: An HIV test?

David: Yes.

Nurse: You have to think very carefully about this David. I have to explain everything to you before you can have the test.

David: I really want to know! Now!

Nurse: It's not as easy as that. You have the test today, but you won't know for a week or even longer.

David: Okay...

Nurse: If they tell you you're negative..

David: Pheww..

Nurse: It doesn't mean much.

David: Why?

Nurse: You have to come back and do the test again in three months.

David: Why?

Nurse: It takes three months for the virus to multiply to numbers we can see in the blood. So if you've slept with anyone in the past three months, we can't be sure you are really negative.

David: I need two tests three months apart then?

Nurse: That's right. And if you sleep with anyone in those three months and don't use a condom you still won't know.

David: Hmm...

Nurse: What if the test comes back positive?

David: I want to know. I told you.

Nurse: How will you feel if you find out you are positive David? You have to think about it.

David: I'll die won't I?

Nurse: No not now. You might not get sick for a long time.. but it changes your whole life. You have to look after your health. Give up drinking and smoking. Make sure you eat well and get enough rest. You must take responsibility and use a

condom every time you have sex. If you can do all of those things, you can lead a normal life for many years. Knowing you are positive could mean you have a much longer healthier life. Do you still want the test David?

David: I think so.

Nurse: Okay... I'll have to take some blood... **[She stands up.]**

David: What will you think of me, if I'm positive?

Nurse: Me? Nothing.

David: You think I deserve it. Someone like me .. sleeping with dirty women...getting gonorrhoea.

Nurse: You're wrong!

David: All you respectable people think that way!
[She stands up to get plastic gloves and a needle. She puts on the gloves as she speaks.]

Nurse: Roll up your shirt.. I've got to put the needle in your arm.

David: Hey! That's a big needle...

Nurse: You're not frightened of the needle? You had two big injections last time..

David: I didn't see the needle then!

Nurse: Sit down! It won't hurt! Ohh... you are so stupid!

David: I hate needles...they make me feel sick.

Nurse: Sit down and close your eyes. You won't feel anything. Come on! **[David sits down gingerly in the chair. The nurse rolls up his sleeve. He keeps his eyes tight shut. The nurse puts the needle to his arm and pretends to push it in. David winces. He keeps his eyes shut. She pretends to collect blood and pull out the needle. David remains rigged with closed eyes. The nurse looks at him exasperated.]** It's finished!
[David jumps, opens his eyes and looks down at his arm. The nurse wipes it with a cotton.]

Nurse: Keep that pressed to your arm. To stop the blood.

David: You'll hate me.

Nurse: I won't!

David: I wish I had your life. Happily married.. a house.. children. My life's a mess.

Nurse: You didn't say that before.

David: I don't like talking about it. I don't know why I married her. I was too young.. and stupid. Even more stupid than I am now. She goes her way and I go mine. But we're still stuck together. The family won't let me divorce her. It's not 'Christian'.

Nurse: **[She takes the gloves off and washes her hands.]** It happens all the time David. Don't feel bad. But .. look after yourself. Use condoms if you can.

David: Thank you nurse.

Nurse: My name's Rebecca.

David: Rebecca.

Nurse: Thank you David... **[She shakes hands with him.]**

David: What for?

Nurse: For taking responsibility. Most men don't.

David: I just came for a test.

Nurse: You will come back.. for the answer.

David: Yes I will.

Nurse: Next week then...

David: Good bye... [**He exits. She shuts the door goes back inside and picks up the phone and presses the numbers.**]

Nurse: Tina? Tina are you all right? Daddy's not there is he? No... I am so sorry I hit you last night. You were right. He's seeing another woman. I didn't want to tell you. I thought I could protect you... But I just made it worse. I have to start telling the truth. I can't live like this anymore. I hate it and.. it's dangerous. I want you to pack a bag. Just a few clothes.. yours, mine and the baby's. Come here .. then we'll go and get James from Auntie. I did love him Tina.. that's why.... Hurry up darling. I'll wait here. [**She puts the phone down.**] I'm not going back there again.