

The Middle Finger

A Hospital Drama

By Peter Mangiaracina

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Interior of a doctor's office. A doctor is sitting at his desk writing at the computer.

(voice offstage)

NURSE

Mr. Juan Smithers?

(a few seconds pass)

Mr. Juan Smithers? Mr. Smithers?

SMITHERS

That's me!

NURSE

The doctor will see you now. Will you come with me, please?

(A few more seconds pass and the door to the doctor's office opens. Speaks to doctor.)

Your 2 o'clock, Mr. Smithers, is here.

(A man walks into the room. He is short, bald, and is carrying a small plastic bag filled with chipped ice. The NURSE leaves, closing the door behind her.)

SMITHERS

Are you Dr. Slash?

DR. STAB

I'm Dr. Stab, a third-year plastic surgery resident at the hospital.

SMITHERS

A resident? Are you sure you know what you're doing?

DR. STAB

No. That's why I'm still a resident. But if it's something I can't handle, we'll refer you back to Dr. Slash, okay?

SMITHERS

Well, I guess that's all right.

DR. STAB

Have a seat please, Mr. Smithers.

(Smithers sits down)

Now...What Is the problem?

SMITHERS

(He lifts his right hand, which is missing the middle finger)

I lost my finger.

DR. STAB

Ah, yes. It seems you have. How did it happen?

SMITHERS

It got sliced off in a tragic pillow fight.

DR. STAB

(incredulous)

In a pillow fight!?

SMITHERS

Yes, it was very violent.

DR. STAB

(examining the scar)

Well, there's not much we can do. The wound seems to have healed quite a while ago.

SMITHERS

I want you to re-attach the finger.

DR. STAB

Re-attach the finger? But how? This wound is several years old.

SMITHERS

Yes. It happened 10 years ago on my wedding night.

DR. STAB

Mr. Smithers...In order to re-attach a finger, the accident would have had to have happened very recently, and...and then, well, first of all we would need the detached finger.

SMITHERS

I've got it right here.

DR. STAB

You have the finger?

SMITHERS

Yes, right here in this bag.

(He holds up the plastic baggie)

DR. STAB

That's impossible. The finger would be completely desiccated by now.

SMITHERS

It's quite fresh, really.

DR. STAB

(takes the bag from Smithers, opens it, extracts a finger. He examines it for several seconds)

This is not your finger, Mr. Smithers.

SMITHERS

Yes it is.

DR. STAB

Um, no. It's not. It's slender and delicately tapered. This is a woman's finger, Mr. Smithers.

SMITHERS

No it's not. It's mine.

DR. STAB

It has a long, red fingernail.

SMITHERS

No, it doesn't.

DR. STAB

I'm looking right at it, Mr. Smithers. This finger has had a French manicure very recently.

SMITHERS

I admit it. I gave the finger a French manicure.

DR. STAB

Ten years ago?

SMITHERS

No. Last week.

DR. STAB

You want me to believe that you took a decade-old, perfectly preserved severed finger to a nail salon and gave it a manicure?

SMITHERS

I was exploring my feminine self.

DR. STAB

Mr. Smithers. This is not your finger. It doesn't even fit on your hand.

(he grabs Smithers hand and places the finger over the wound)

You've got a big, fat hand, Mr. Smithers and this finger is too small.

OFFSTAGE FEMALE VOICE

(screaming)

Bastard! Where is he?

(A woman bursts into the room. She's carrying a large shopping bag in her left hand. Her right hand is heavily bandaged.)

MRS. SMITHERS

There you are, you son of a bitch.

SMITHERS

(meekly)

Oh. Hello, dear.

MRS. SMITHERS

Don't "hello, dear" me! Where is it?

SMITHERS

Um...Where is what?

MRS. SMITHERS

My middle finger, you swine! You stole it.

SMITHERS

No I didn't.

MRS. SMITHERS

Oh, yeah? What's that, then?

(she goes to the desk and snatches the finger from the doctor's hand, holding it in front of Smithers' face)

DR. STAB

What's going on here?

MRS. SMITHERS

He took my finger while I was sleeping. Cut it right off like a hunk of sausage.

SMITHERS

Did not!

MRS. SMITHERS

Then who did?

SMITHERS

(thinking quickly)

It must have been the wild monkeys.

MRS. SMITHERS

There were no wild monkeys in our house last night.

SMITHERS

Yes there were! I heard them gibbering in the hallway. I tried to stop them, but they broke into our bedroom and gnawed off your finger!

MRS. SMITHERS

Liar!

(She throws the finger at Smithers)

DR. STAB

All right! Let's calm down everyone.

MRS. SMITHERS

Calm down? Don't tell ME to calm down. I spent 150 dollars for a manicure yesterday and now one tenth of it is lying over there on the floor.

DR. STAB

Mr. Smithers...Did you cut off your wife's finger and try to pass it off as your own?

SMITHERS

What?

DR. STAB

Does that finger belong to your wife, Mr. Smithers?

SMITHERS

I don't remember.

MRS. SMITHERS

Wait. I'll give you something to jog your memory.

(She removes a big pillow from her shopping bag and begins to throttle Smithers with it)

This will teach you to run off with my body parts you ghoul!

SMITHERS

Please! No, my love. Don't you remember what happened the last time?