

MOVING DAY

a short play

Sandra Perlman

CHARACTERS

DUKE	male orderly
BINKY	female orderly
CHARLIE	..	male patient
LEO	older male patient
DR. Lee	..	physician
GLENNA	female patient

SYNOPSIS

It's moving day at a mental hospital and some of the patients must be sent to different institutions. DOCTOR LEE and her two orderlies, BINKY and DUKE, are looking for a way to allow CHARLIE and GLENNA to remain together. CHARLIE speaks in rhyme and GLENNA communicates her love of CHARLIE in dance. Though not legally married, they have been all the other has for years. The Doctor and staff recognizes that CHARLIE and GLENNA are family to one another in a world where family may be all they have left.

SETTING

There should be no attempt at realism. A bench and a coffee pot may be all that is needed.

TIME

Present --

Casting: The playwright supports open casting and encourages the use of diversity in casting including actors with disabilities if appropriate.

ACT ONE

AT RISE:

BINKY comes in leading CHARLIE who wears ill-fitting street clothes. CHARLIE does not move or respond as he sits on the bench. DUKE, a male orderly who peppers his speech with "man" and "baby" regardless of sex or age, stops for a coffee.

DUKE

Last cup of coffee tastes as bad as the first. This place is a dump. Good thing they're closing it down!

BINKY

Now Charlie, you gotta sit down right here and hold tight to your ID bracelet and they'll put you on the right bus just as soon as it gets here.

DUKE

Binky baby, this dude does not hear you.

BINKY

Lay off. He's having a bad enough day without you.

DUKE

He's having a bad day, I'm having a bad day. The whole world's having a bad day and I don't just mean hair, thank-you.

BINKY

This has been Charlie's home since he was a kid.

DUKE

Home is out to lunch baby. Closing down this dump is doing us all a big favor. Blow this tomb up, build another shopping center cause if there's one thing this world needs its another place to shop! Hey, here's my man Leo! Good to see you this moving day, Leo. What's happening?

LEO

(LEO shuffles in speaking his rhymes)

Moving day. Oh boy, Moving Day, oh boy. Budget cuts, dislocation, reallocation, not recreation, moving day, oh boy, amen.

DUKE

Amen, brother. What's happening to Leo?

BINKY

Leo's going up north with me and Charlie to Glenside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUKE

All right Leo! Charlie my man, you got a friend. Glenside's not too bad, but it's a little too cold and a little too high up in those mountains, thank you. Both of you'll like it just fine -- especially with Binky there.

BINKY

Lots of evergreens up there, Charlie.

DUKE

Christmas trees everywhere, my man. Christmas everyday.

LEO

Needle trees, sure to please, Christmas trees, thank you, moving day, Oh boy, amen.

DUKE

Needles, trees, sure to please -- you sure are on top of it Mr. Leo -- maybe we should run him for Governor, or President! Yeah, President of all these United States.

BINKY

Don't make fun of him, Duke.

DUKE

I'm not making fun of him, baby, cause Leo makes a lot more sense than most people I know.

BINKY

Just treat him with some respect. Charlie and Glenna too. They've all have a long ride on that bus today.

DUKE

Shhhhhh!

(DUKE pulls her away from CHARLIE and LEO)

BINKY

What are you doing?

DUKE

You can't be telling this dude no lies.

BINKY

I just said --

DUKE

You just said something that is a lie!

BINKY

You mean Glenna's not going with Charlie ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUKE

The doc tried, let me tell you that woman is one hip goddess, but she can't change life once it has gotten into those computers. My man Charlie is still going to Glenside., but his lady is heading south with me and Doctor Lee to Fairview.

BINKY

You're kidding me.

DUKE

I don't kid about love, baby.

BINKY

How could they split them up, they're practically married.

DUKE

"Practically" is good enough for you and me and Doctor Lee -- but practically is not good enough for some who are real particular about the particulars when it doesn't follow the rules. Practically speaking, the rules suck.

BINKY

What are we going to do

DUKE

Ain't no "we" about it, honey. The doing is over.

BINKY

Did anyone tell Charlie?

DUKE

Not me, baby. I don't like to receive bad news and I certainly won't give it.

BINKY

Do you think Glenna knows?

DUKE

Hard to tell. I think so. She's been hiding all morning and she knows how to hide in this old tomb better than anybody. I've been looking, but I can't find her anywhere.

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie. Relocation, celebration, up north, evergreens, Charlie, moving day, where's Glenna Charlie? Oh, boy, amen.

(At the sound of GLENNA's name, CHARLIE looks up and stands, then slumps back down again.)

DUKE

I'm gonna lose my job if I lose that girl and much as I hate this whole mess I hate that unemployment line more. I better check that day room again.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUKE (cont'd)

(DUKE runs off and LEO starts dancing around and chanting as CHARLIE grows more agitated.)

LEO

Glenn-ah, Glenn-ah, do surrend-ah...going up north to be togeth-uh! Glen-ah, Glenn-ah, do surrend-ah...going up north to be togeth-uh!

BINKY

You just relax, Charlie. That bus will be here soon and you and Leo will be in your own new rooms before bedtime.

(DUKE comes running in breathless)

What's up?

DUKE

(running in breathless)

She's not in the day room so I'm in deep trouble.

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie, moving day, Charlie, Amen.

DUKE

I checked every wing that's open in this place twice. What am I supposed to do now ?

BINKY

You'll find her, Duke. Just keep calm and think.

DUKE

When I worked for the meat packing plant I didn't ask where the beef was going?

BINKY

These are people, good people and you know it.

DUKE

Why should I start worrying about these "good" people now.

BINKY

No matter whatever you say -- you care about them.

DUKE

Caring is a whole lot of trouble and pain, Binky, baby, let me tell you. I know all about caring and I don't like it.

BINKY

You care about Glenna and Charlie too. We all do. We'll find her and -- Doctor Lee!

DOCTOR LEE

(running in very upset)

I was just down at reception and now they're saying they can't find Miss MacElroy.

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CONTINUED:

DUKE

This is not a good day, no way.

BINKY

She hasn't been feeling well all week. I think Miss MacElroy practically started this place and maybe she just doesn't want to leave it.

DOCTOR LEE

What about Glenna?

DUKE

I just told Binky, here, I know she's hiding, and she's hiding real good.

DOCTOR LEE

If anything could go wrong today it is. Duke, would you check the kitchen in "C" wing again.

DUKE

We cleared that wing yesterday, Doc it's empty.

DOCTOR LEE

Please Duke, Glenna might be hiding there.

DUKE

I looked everywhere, Doc. I swear I did.

DOCTOR LEE

I know you did but I just a feeling she knows what's happening.

DUKE

Say no more, I know the score, right Leo!

LEO

Moving day and the score's no more, moving day, oh, boy, amen.

DUKE

I'm on my way. (exits)

DOCTOR LEE

Here Charlie, you just make yourself comfortable and look out the window. I know that bus is late now but you'll be all settled in your new home by tonight.

BINKY

Isn't that just what I told you Charlie? Now you might not always believe me, but you know Doctor Lee doesn't lie.

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CONTINUED:

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie. Evergreens, up north, relocation, expectation, mad migration, holy, holy, amen.

BINKY

Glenna knows every inch of this place, you know.

DOCTOR LEE

You don't have to remind me. I hate all this moving people around like they're numbers in a book. They're flesh and blood. I hate being a part of it. It goes against every reason I went in to medicine. (pause) They've been together a long time haven't they?

BINKY

Longer than most people I know are together.

DOCTOR LEE

This place probably didn't know what to do with them then and to tell you the truth, I don't think we can do much more for them now. But at least they have each other. If they move them to two different places I hate to think what'll happen to them.

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie, relocation, expectation, mad migration, holy, holy, amen.

BINKY

They aren't married you know.

DOCTOR LEE

Oh, please, I come from a family where some people are engaged for twenty years and others elope on the third date. Those two people care about each other. They're married in my eyes -- I'll let God worry about the rest.

BINKY

My brother's not married to the women he lives with and they don't even like each other half as much as those two. Whether they can say it or not, you can see how much they care.

DOCTOR LEE

There is no category to keep them together unless they are married. Those are the rules and those rules stink.

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie, Bureaucratic bullshit, Charlie, no ticket, no shirt Charlie, the check is in the mail and I'll be back with the cash in a flash, amen.

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CONTINUED:

BINKY

Nobody blames you, Doctor Lee. But somebody's got to tell Charlie.

DOCTOR LEE

Charlie, I want to ask your forgiveness. I tried to make them understand about you and Glenna. But it's hard to explain your kind of love to people who sit in front of computers all day long & live by rules and regulations. I don't know what happened inside your head that made you stop being a part of my world, but I know you're a part of Glenna's. I can see it in your eyes when she comes into the room and starts to dance for you. Because she is dancing for you Charlie. No one else. When she stops in front of your chair and kisses you gently on your forehead, she's kissing the only person that means anything to her in this world. You two have a great love -- more than most people will ever have in this life. You and Glenna are family no matter what anyone else says. And if I ran this crazy system, you and Glenna would never be apart.

BINKY

Glenna!

Suddenly the air is filled with music as GLENNA appears in her makeshift dancing outfit and tennis sneakers. CHARLIE'S face comes alive watching her and she kisses him on the forehead when she finishes.

DUKE

Good to see Glenna dancing again, huh?
(bus horn beeps)

DOCTOR LEE

Everything was okay?

DUKE

Sort of. Maybe this is something important.
(DUKE hands DOCTOR LEE some papers)

DOCTOR LEE

These are Miss MacElroy's transfer papers.

DUKE

Miss MacElroy passed away Doc. She was still in her favorite nightgown. Looked real peaceful, too. I covered her up and closed her eyes. This is her identification bracelet. She was supposed to go up north on that bus with Leo and Charlie. She could still go, if you get my drift.

DOCTOR LEE

Sooner or later they'll figure out the switch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUKE

Computers good for something. By the time they get those records straight, they'll be just as crazy about Glenna and Charlie as we are. (Pause) Wanna give it a try?

After a pause, DOCTOR LEE goes to GLENNA who is sitting next to CHARLIE and takes her wrist band off.

DOCTOR LEE

I don't know how much of this you will really understand, Glenna, or how much of it I do. But I don't think anyone will care Glenna Franks died in her sleep on the day she was to be transferred, or even surprised when Miss Flora MacElroy starts to dance after years of sitting in her room playing solitaire. But sometimes the rules need to be bent so that the right people get to where they should be going.

(DOCTOR LEE puts the new identification bracelet on GLENNA)

Congratulations Glenna and Charlie. This is the best wedding present we can give you.

BINKY

Hip, Hip, hooray!

DUKE

Aw right, Doc, you did fine.

(Bus horn blasts again)

Now we gotta get these people out of here before we all get our ass in a sling.

(Suddenly GLENNA stops and takes off her shoes.)

Now what'cha want to go and do that for, baby?

(GLENNA hands the shoes to DOCTOR LEE)

DOCTOR LEE

Thanks, Glenna. I'm sorry I can't go with you but I'll see you again, I promise. We'll both see you, won't we Duke?

DUKE

You betcha. Now let's move it!

LEO

Moving day, Charlie, dancing, prancing, Donner and Blitzen, holy, holy, amen.

BINKY

What do I say when they ask why she doesn't have any shoes?

DUKE

You'll think of something, baby, you always do.

(BINKY leads off GLENNA and DUKE takes CHARLIE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR LEE

Come on Leo, it's time to go.

(DOCTOR LEE puts the dancing shoe under her arm
and leads off LEO)

LEO

Moving Day, Charlie, Glenna, Duke, Doc and Binky. Moving day
and we're moving out. Moving day's coming and there's green
trees up north and Christmas everyday, today, tomorrow,
moving day, oh, boy, amen.

DOCTOR LEE

Amen, Leo. Amen.

END OF PLAY