

Carla Luna-Flores

C Band

College English

#### Prompt 4

The boys sit around in the meeting circle, our meeting should be finishing up in a few minutes and I've saved some important information for the end. I fold up my papers and place them neatly in my basket, then set my basket down beside me on the floor. I quickly look at McMurphy to check and make sure he isn't asleep. I want to make sure he's listening to what I'm about to say, because this punishment is the consequence of his actions.

I put on a disappointed face as I take a deep breath, shake my head, and place my hands in my lap. Then I say, "Boys, I've given a great deal of thought to what I am about to say. And I feel horrible for having to do this but I've talked it over with the doctor and with the rest of the staff. And we all came to the same conclusion - there should be some manner of punishment for the unspeakable behavior concerning the house duties three weeks ago." I raise my hand to make sure no one interrupts me, I then look around to see if the men have any expression on their faces yet.

I continued my announcement, "We waited this long to say anything, hoping that you boys would take it upon yourselves to apologize for the rebellious way you acted. But not one of you has shown the slightest sign of remorse. Which is incredibly upsetting and only proves to me that the luxuries you all have here are taken for granted". As I continue to talk without telling the boys exactly what their consequence is they grow more curious and anxious, so I take my time. "Please understand: We do not impose certain rules and restrictions on you without a great deal of thought about their therapeutic value. A good many of you are in here because you could not adjust to the rules of society in the Outside World. It is now our job to expose you to the rules of society so you can learn to adjust during your time here. When you were a part of society in the outside world many of you avoided the rules of society and no one reprimanded you. That foolish lenience on the part of your parents and others may have been the germ that grew into your present illness. But now that you're adults, and under our care we believe you benefit from the discipline and order we enforce."

I look regretful as I look around the room, but in reality I'm proud of the punishment I've come up with. It was very strategic because I knew it would bug McMurphy the most. The men in the ward were getting too comfortable and no longer respected my authority. It's all because of that goddamn McMurphy, who likes to try and get under my skin and he's

encouraged the other men to do the same. I know he thinks this is all fun and games but I won't let him win. "It's difficult to enforce discipline in these surroundings, for we can not arrest you. And because we believe in humane treatment we can't be put on bread and water as punishment. Therefore what can we do?" I see Ruckley has an idea but I have no interest in hearing it so I don't pay him any mind.

"We must take away a privilege. After careful consideration of the circumstances of this rebellion, we've decided that there would be a certain justice in taking away the privilege of the tub room that you men have been using for your card games during the day. Does this seem unfair?" I don't move my head to look at McMurphy but I watch as all the boys turn their heads to face him. All the boys in the ward know McMurphy loves to play cards, which is why I chose to take away the tub room, I knew this would upset him the most.

I'm not going to sit around and wait for a reaction from McMurphy, so I wrap up the meeting. "If there is no discussion on this ruling, I believe our meeting is over ...". I look over to McMurphy not because I want to see his reaction but because I want him to know this punishment was targeted at him. All McMurphy could do was shrug his shoulders and sigh. After a few minutes he stands up and starts walking. I'm not sure what he wants but as he advances towards me I can see the gears turning in his mind. I wonder what his next move is...

Throughout this piece I made some very deliberate stylistic choices. Since this is told from the perspective of the Big Nurse I made her refer to the men of the ward only as "boys", by calling them boys instead of men belittles them, because the Big Nurse says it to make the men of the ward feel small. Additionally when describing the rivalry between the Big Nurse and McMurphy I used language such as, "advances", "next move", "strategic", to convey to the reader that this was a mind game the nurse was playing with McMurphy. This language would also show the reader the Big Nurse's "move" in this game, taking away the tub room where McMurphy played cards.