

MASTER COPY

## THE WHIZ

### CHARACTERS

Donna, 21, mousy,  
Hettie, early 20s, disheveled, quick-witted, more than a  
little odd

### SETTING

Waiting room of a therapist's office

### TIME

The present

### SYNOPSIS

*After much anguish, Donna, a shy and unhappy young woman, goes to see a psychologist. However, when she enters the waiting room, she is accosted by Hettie, a flakey patient, who pretends to be Dr. Gold and wants to help Donna get started immediately on her therapy. Despite Hettie's odd behavior, she actually manages to help Donna through one of her phobias, before her trick is revealed.*

*(Alone in a waiting room shared by several psychotherapists, Hettie, a young patient, thumbs through a thick, glossy magazine. As usual, she has arrived early for her session, and as usual, she is fidgety and bored. A figure arrives at the front door. She knocks timidly. Hettie looks up, puzzled. Another tiny knock.)*

HETTIE: Yeah? Is someone there?

DONNA: *(Pause. Very quietly.)* Dr. Gold?

HETTIE: *(Loudly.)* Huh? What did you say?

DONNA: *(Weakly.)* Is this Dr. Gold's office?

HETTIE: *(Loudly, leaning forward.)* I can hardly hear you! Did you say "Dr. Gold"?

DONNA: *(Weaker.)* Yes.

HETTIE: *(Yelling.)* Can't you read the plaque? Dr's. Gold, Beck, and Arp. *(She makes a barking sound.)* Arp, arp! Three shrinks, no waiting.

DONNA: *(Trembling.)* What did you say?

HETTIE: *(Loudly.)* I said this is Dr. Gold's office!! Why don't you come in?!

DONNA: *(Long pause.)* May I, really?

HETTIE: *(Looks disgusted. Throws down her magazine and stands up.)* Well, why the hell *can't* you come in? I don't figure you're physically unable to open a door, are you? *(She storms to the door and throws it open.)* Maybe you don't think you're *good enough* to come in? Maybe you don't have the self-confidence to open the door? Is that it?

DONNA: *(Stands there nervously, carrying a pocketbook like a small picnic basket over her arm.)* I'm sorry. I should never have come here. Please forgive me.

HETTIE: Get a grip, for God's sake! You've come this far. You might as well come in.

DONNA: You're right, of course. I have come a long way. They told me to follow Yellowtown Road all the way to the intersection of Green Street. My God, I passed some strange neighborhoods.

HETTIE: So then you have an appointment?

DONNA: Of course. With Dr. Gold. That name, Dr. Gold, gave me a good feeling.

HETTIE: Well, thank you. It's certainly better than Arp. Arp sounds like a barking seal. "Arp, arp, arp!" Don't you think?

DONNA: *(Trying to be agreeable.)* It does a little.

HETTIE: So come in please, Ms.—

DONNA: Gayle. Donna Gayle.

HETTIE: Of course, Donna. Welcome. *(She checks her watch.)*

You're early. I didn't expect you for another thirty minutes.

DONNA: *(Uncertain.)* I'm sorry. I wasn't sure of the way and

I didn't want to be late, so of course, I'm early. I should probably come back.

HETTIE: Now, now Donna. You're here. I'm here. What do we care about the clock?

DONNA: So you are Dr. Gold?

HETTIE: Well, what did you think, that I'm some kind of psycho waiting to see her own shrink?

DONNA: I guess you sounded older on the phone.

HETTIE: (*Putting on a huskier voice.*) Like this? "I have a three o'clock appointment available on Tuesday." (*Donna nods shyly. Hettie returns to her normal voice.*) People say I have a very deep phone voice. You probably thought I'd have a turban and a crystal ball too.

DONNA: If I were going to a fortune-teller, I might. I kinda had different expectations for a psychotherapist.

HETTIE: Of course, and you'll have to tell me all about them. So have a seat. (*Sits, swinging her legs over the arm of the chair.*) So?

DONNA: In here?

HETTIE: Well, yeah.

DONNA: But isn't this the waiting room?

HETTIE: Actually, Dr. Arp has the office until 3:00. "Arp, arp!" So we might as well start right now. If someone comes in, we'll hide under the chairs.

DONNA: No, I don't think . . .

HETTIE: I mean, we'll stop talking. We'll pause and remain very still until they go away. That's what I do.

DONNA: I don't know. Maybe we should just wait until your office is available.

HETTIE: You have a hard time trusting, don't you? You're nervous about taking risks.

DONNA: Actually I am. You're right. OK. (*She sits. Donna smiles awkwardly. Hettie remains impassive.*) Well . . .

HETTIE: Yes, *well* indeed. (*Donna smiles inwardly.*) You're thinking something humorous.

DONNA: Yes, I am. How did you know?

HETTIE: Oh, I am the great and powerful Gold. It might even seem a little embarrassing, but that's OK.

DONNA: Yes, yes! (*Pause. Hettie nods, pleased with herself.*) So I can say anything? (*Hettie nods.*) Absolutely anything at all?

HETTIE: (*Smiles, nods, waits.*) It's about sex, isn't it? For me, it's always about sex.

DONNA: Oh God, no. It's about my boss Howard. He takes advantage of me.

HETTIE: Your boss takes *advantage* of you?

DONNA: Oh, no. Not like that. That's terrible.

HETTIE: Then how?

DONNA: Well, I do all the work, and he takes all the credit. I mean, sometimes he says "Thank you." But I'm living in a studio apartment near the train tracks, and him and his wife just bought a four-bedroom ranch in that new development near the golf course.

HETTIE: And how old are you, Donna?

DONNA: Twenty, well, twenty-one. It's my birthday.

HETTIE: Well, congratulations and many returns of the day. That's a very important birthday, twenty-one.

DONNA: Ah, not so much.

HETTIE: In this country, that is the age of full adulthood. You can vote and smoke and drink—

DONNA: Oh, no, I don't—

HETTIE: If you committed a capital crime, you would be tried as an adult.

DONNA: I would never—do anything like that!

HETTIE: You sound a little defensive, Donna.

DONNA: No, it's just that murder is terrible.

HETTIE: Now, I didn't say "murder," did I? So who would you like to kill, Donna?

DONNA: Kill? You're crazy! I would never kill anyone.

HETTIE: I know, I know. But surely you've thought about it. Everybody's thought it. I think about it all the time. There's

teachers I wanted to kill, and my mother sometimes, and the TV executives when they took *Star Trek* off the air.

DONNA: Wow! But I'm not like that.

HETTIE: So you don't have any angry thoughts or wishes about Howard?

DONNA: Now, I didn't say that. Angry thoughts, sure. I mean, we had this problem with the computers, but he couldn't fix it. So I got all these books and stuff, and I figured out how to fix our server and network. See, Howard wanted to save money so he didn't get a maintenance contract.

HETTIE: That boss of yours sounds like a moron.

DONNA: That's nothing. Then the big bosses came down from Chicago to check things out, and he had me lie and tell them that *he* fixed the problem. He said it would be better for me in the long run—because he would take care of things. But like I said, I'm living in a studio and he got a raise.

HETTIE: What's wrong with you? You let him take advantage and then you lie to cover up for him!? (*Gets out of her chair.*) How do you expect me to help you when you can't even help yourself!? That was downright stupid, Donna.

DONNA: Wow, you're pretty heated up. I thought therapists were supposed to be all calm and "How does that make you feel?"

HETTIE: You think this is angry? This is nothing. Sometimes *we* have to get heated up, when we have patients who act like milksops!

DONNA: (*Indignant.*) You think I'm a milksop!?

HETTIE: Yes!

DONNA: Well, that's terrible, and I don't even know what it is!

HETTIE: Are you angry at me?

DONNA: No. (*Brief pause. Shyly.*) What's a milksop?

HETTIE: A milksop? A milksop!? A milksop is someone who always takes no for an answer. A milksop is someone who eats the leftover dried crumbs and then says "Thank you" and even does the dishes while everyone's eating dessert. A milksop is someone who doesn't even ask, "What's a milksop?"

when someone calls them one. They just accept that it means they are as wimpy and suck-upish as the word suggests.

DONNA: (*Pauses, quietly seething, then pops out with.*) But I did.

HETTIE: (*Annoyed.*) Did what?

DONNA: (*A little heated, at least for her.*) Did ask you what a milksop was when you called me one.

HETTIE: Oh, my God! You did.

DONNA: Yes, I did! And I really don't care for the tone you are using toward me.

HETTIE: You don't, huh?

DONNA: No, I do not!

HETTIE: So we're standing on our own hind legs, are we?

DONNA: I don't know about *we*, Dr. Gold, but I am. I, Donna Gayle of Kansas City, Missouri, am standing up on my two hind legs and roaring. (*She stands and paws the air.*) Woof, woof, Dr. Gold! I'm roaring!

HETTIE: (*Appreciative.*) You certainly are.

DONNA: Roar!

HETTIE: Roar, indeed. I think we've had a little breakthrough—right here in the waiting room.

DONNA: Watch out, world! Watch out, Harold Rothko! I'm not getting your laundry anymore.

HETTIE: Bravo, Donna, bravo!

DONNA: I am woman, hear me roar! From now on, if I solve the problems, I'm taking the credit. And I'm getting the pay for it too.

HETTIE: (*Looks at her watch.*) Well, I'd say we've—you've—done a good day's work already. Why don't I save you today's fee, and we'll pick up next week.

DONNA: Call it quits? I'm just getting started. I have things to talk about, sister. I've got a backlog of pain and sorrow and anger that I've been itching to get out. Roar! This thing with Howard is nothin'. I've got issues, Dr. Gold. Do you hear me—is-sues! My parents died when I was an infant, and I was raised by an aunt and uncle. And sure they meant

well, but they were busy running a large roadside farm stand and didn't have time for me. And then ever since that huge storm back in, I don't know, '92 when I was about twelve—nothing's ever been quite right. I mean, I have these dreams all the time—midgets, and witches, flying monkeys, for God's sake! And sometimes I feel so empty inside. That's why I think nobody loves me. I mean, sometimes I think, I think my head is full of stuffing, and you already saw how timid I am. I'm a coward. I know it. But could it be that something's really missing (*She bangs on her chest.*) in here? Am I heartless? Do I literally, lack a heart? Is that why no one loves me? You tell me, doctor. You have to help me! I can't go on like this!

HETTIE: This is very good, Donna. Very good. But I actually feel you are a little over-excited right now. I feel it would be better if we stopped so you can have a little time to process—

DONNA: Process, my butt! You're not stopping me now, Dr. Gold. I've been on this road so long, and I gotta find my way. I'm desperate, and I won't take no for an answer.

HETTIE: OK, Donna, but there's something I have to tell you. You're going to have to go down that road with somebody else.

DONNA: What do you mean, with somebody else? What the H do you mean?

HETTIE: Well, Donna, you see, I told a little bitty sort of white lie.

DONNA: What do you mean, Dr. Gold, a white lie?

HETTIE: Well, more of a fib, I guess you'd say.

DONNA: A fib?

HETTIE: OK, a big, fat, mendacious black hole of a lie!

DONNA: Lie? What are you saying?

HETTIE: I'm not Dr. Gold. I'm not even Dr. Beck or Arp. (*Weakly.*) Arp, arp.

DONNA: So who are you?

HETTIE: A patient, just like you. Well, not quite like you, be-

cause I've been at this for, like, eight years. And you've had more success in fifteen minutes out here in the waiting room with me than I have lying on the couch for, oh, 3,628 hours in there with Dr. Arp.

DONNA: You lied to me?!

HETTIE: Yeah. I'm an old humbug.

DONNA: You called me a milksop, you humbug!

HETTIE: I know. I'm sorry.

DONNA: Sorry? This whole thing was a put-on, an act, a fraudulent abuse of my trust?

HETTIE: Kinda. Yeah.

DONNA: (*Standing.*) Who do you think you are, nut ball?! Do you know this was like the scariest thing I ever did, coming in here and facing up to my demons?

HETTIE: I know. And you did a really good job.

DONNA: And you played with me like a yo-yo on a string!

HETTIE: I'm sorry, Donna. I guess I'll have a lot to talk about with Dr. A.

DONNA: You sure will. What's your name? Your real name!

HETTIE: Hettie. Hettie Johnson. Donna, please don't tell Dr. Arp. He wants to put me in for even more intensive therapy. My parents have loads of dough, so they're happy to palm me off on him every day. And he has halitosis! And he's boring!

DONNA: Good. You deserve it! You deserve a heck of a lot worse than bad breath.

HETTIE: I didn't mean any harm. It even looks like I did you some good.

DONNA: That ain't good enough.

HETTIE: What do you mean?

DONNA: I mean, you owe me.

HETTIE: Owe you what? An apology? I apologize. I really do.

DONNA: Well, that's very nice and good, but hardly enough.

HETTIE: You want me to treat you to a coffee? (*Donna shakes her head.*) Lunch at Chili's? (*Donna shakes her head.*) Dinner?

The all-you-can-eat buffet at the Cozy Kitchen? Then what? What?

DONNA: I want you!

HETTIE: (*Beat.*) What does that mean?

DONNA: I want you to be my therapist!

HETTIE: Your therapist?

DONNA: Unlike you, money's an issue for me. A big issue. And the last thing I need is to pay ninety bucks a week for some big shot with diplomas on her wall to go, "That's very nice, Donna. And how did that make you feel?"

HETTIE: So what am I going to do to help you? I'm a crackpot. I'm a nut ball.

DONNA: You're also the best damn therapist I've ever had.

HETTIE: But you've never had a shrink.

DONNA: So all the better.

HETTIE: What if I do something wrong? What if I mess you up for life?

DONNA: Well, you'll just be very careful, won't you? And if you continue to do a good job, a very good job, I won't have to tell Dr. Arp about any of this. "Arp, arp!"

HETTIE: This is the craziest thing I ever got mixed up in.

DONNA: Well, perhaps you'll be a lot more careful in the future when you plan to impersonate. Now when Dr. Gold comes out, tell her you saw me, and I acted like a real witch. Say I cackled and practically flew out of here on a broomstick followed by a flock of monkeys. And then when you're done with your session, come meet me at the coffee shop on the corner. I'll be waiting for you. (*She laughs witchily and zooms out the door.*)

HETTIE: Jeez. (*Shaking her head.*) Dr. Arp will never believe this . . .

## MARTHA FALLS

### CHARACTERS

SHELLY, 25 years old

TINA, 22 years old, Shelly's little sister

### SETTING

Mount Rainier in Washington state

### TIME

The present

### SYNOPSIS

*Shelly and Tina's mom has finagled things to get both sisters on a hiking trip before they move away and start lives on their own. For years Tina has lived in Shelly's shadow in terms of dating and boys. On this trip, Tina has put her foot down and asked that this be a "no boys" sisters' week so that there are no hurt feelings. In this play the two sisters fumble around in search of Martha Falls. They also fumble around their funny relationship, past antics, and discover that both have betrayed their "no boys" pact.*

SHELLY: Where are we?

TINA: (*Gesturing out toward the landscape.*) Enjoying the gorgeous view of the most spectacular array of wildflowers that ever folded into the glacial fields of—

SHELLY: OK, spare me the *Grapes of Wrath* description. Where are we, Teen?

TINA: Well . . . I . . . um . . .

SHELLY: You don't know where we are?!