

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest  
Part 3

After that, McMurphy had things his way...

1. List some ways McMurphy succeeds in disrupting the dull routine of Nurse Ratched's ward.

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2. State a theme for this story based on the following observations from the Chief:  
"But I remembered one thing: it wasn't me that started acting deaf; it was people that first started acting like I was too dumb to hear or see or say anything at all." "People will force you one way or the other, into doing what they think you should do."

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3. One of the overall themes of this novel is the power of women to destroy men. Find an example of this power in the Chief's childhood story about when he first felt deaf and dumb.

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4. What are the first words the Chief uses?

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5. Explain how bigness or size plays an important part in this section.

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6. Why do you think McMurphy wants the Chief to lift the control panel? Is McMurphy motivated only by selfish interests? Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

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Two whores on their way down...

1. Why does McMurphy have trouble getting enough patients willing to go on his fishing trip? How does Nurse Ratched try to discredit McMurphy in front of the other patients?

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2. How does Billy react to Candy Starr?

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3. Find another allusion to Christ before the men get to the boat.

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4. Give two examples of changes in the outside world that the Chief describes as the Combine at work.

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5. State a theme for this story based on the following passage.

“While McMurphy laughs...Because he knows you have to laugh at the things that hurt you just to keep yourself in balance, just to keep the world from running you plumb crazy. He knows there’s a painful side; he knows my thumb smarts and his girl friend has a bruised breast and doctor is losing his glasses, but he won’t let the pain blot out the humor no more’n he’ll let the humor blot out the pain.”

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6. What does Bromden see the men do?

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7. In this Chapter, find a quotation which indicates that the men are different.

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8. What do you think is making McMurphy feel “tired” and “frantic” as the Chief describes him in the above quotation?

“...a set of tail-lights going past lit up McMurphy’s face, and the windshield reflected an expression that was allowed only because he figured it’d be too dark for anybody in the car to see, dreadfully tired and strained and frantic, like there wasn’t enough time left for something he had to do...”

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9. Why do you think Kesey includes a description of McMurphy’s first sexual experience in this section?

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