



**An Untimely Death on Passchendaele Ward**

*Scene 8: The Commissioner*

**Comm**

I heard you got some trouble on this unit?

**Gus**

There's nothing we can't handle!

**Comm**

That's not what I heard. OK, I'll cut to the chase.

**Gus**

What?

**Comm**

I'll proceed without preamble to the pertinent issues. I've been looking at your policies.

**Gus**

Our policies?

**Comm**

Yes, you know. Operational policies as outlined in the National Service Framework, the government's blueprint for mental health, rolled out across the country in 1999! I'm pleased to see that there seem to be copies on every ward!

**Gus**

Yes, we use them all the time.

**Comm**

I'm sure you do. So you will understand why I'm so shocked by your policy on access!

**Gus**

On access! What's wrong with our policy on access?

**Comm**

What's wrong with it? Most of the hospital is upstairs and you don't have a single lift or a ramp! How do you account for that?

**Gus**

Well, we did look very carefully at this problem, and we decided to treat the disabled exactly the same as everyone else.

**Comm**

But people can't get up the stairs, man!

**Gus**

We refuse to discriminate against our disabled brothers and sisters. If we put a lift in, or a ramp, we would be treating them differently. We will not patronise them in that way. They have the same rights as everyone else. Anyway, we have an isolation room and an electric shock suite on the ground floor so that our disabled friends will not be deprived of the same high quality of treatment that everyone else gets. And we don't have any disabled people employed by the Trust anyway, so it's not a problem.

**Comm**

I wonder why? OK, take me to the Patients' Advocate.

**Gus**

What?

**Comm**

I want to talk to someone independent about what's been going on here. The advocate is usually someone who can give an intelligent balanced overall view.

**Gus**

I fear in this case you're going to be sadly disappointed.