

A Piece of Clockwork

Six One Act Vignettes

by James M. Kemp

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Scene 1 - Pigpen

Setting –

The action takes place in the room of a “memory” care facility’s patient. A hospital-type, saloon-style/half door and frame sit upstage with the half door closed. There is a nondescript single bed center stage left. There is the shell of an HVAC unit stage right. The fan motor on the HVAC unit can be heard with a slight squealing sound coming from it. An empty male portable urinal sits on top of the HVAC unit. The stage walls and/or flats can be seen from all angles with the door and frame being the only item separating the inside of the room from the outside hallway.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Schultzie – a patient in a “memory” nursing facility.

Male Visitor

Female Visitor

Arnie – an orderly working in the nursing facility.

Louie – a maintenance man for the nursing facility.

(On lights up, Schultzie, a patient is standing behind a hospital café/half door, is peering over the top into the hallway “outside” of the set where we see him from behind. He is wearing boxer shorts, white crew socks and a hospital gown which is open and untied. He rocks side to side slightly like a person who may need to use a toilet.)

Schultzie – *(yells toward rear wall of the stage)* Clean my pig pen! Hey Joe! Clean my pigpen.

(A couple of visitors enter stage right and stop to the right of the Dutch door. They peer in several directions as if looking for signage.)

Male Visitor – They said she was in 24B.

Female Visitor – I heard 24D.

Male Visitor – Yes, but your hearing is not the best.

Female – Well then, let’s find 24B.

(The couple proceed toward the café/half door, unaware that Schultzie stands on the other side.)

Schultzie – *(yells over the top of the Dutch door as the Visitors pass the door)* Hey! Hey, Joe!

(The Visitors react with shocked expressions.)

Female Visitor – (screams).

Male Visitor – (to Schultzie) Excuse me, Sir. Are you talking to us?

Schultzie – Clean my pigpen!

Female Visitor – (to Schultzie) Would you like me to call a nurse for you?

Schultzie – (yells) Hey, Joe!

I-1-2

(The Male Visitor grabs the female's arm and pulls her past the door and offstage left.)

Schultzie – Hey! Somebody clean my pigpen!

(Arnie, an orderly, enters stage left staring at visitors running from the stage, and walks toward the Schultzie's door. Arnie speaks to Schultzie whose head extends over the top of the Dutch door.)

Arnie – Schultzie, old buddy. Old pal. How's it hangin' today, Buddy?

(Arnie enters the room through the cafe/half door as Schultzie backs away from the door. Schultzie grabs the empty urinal that has been sitting on the HVAC unit.)

Schultzie – (holding out the urinal) Clean my pigpen!

Arnie – (sniffing) Buddy! Buddy, what is that smell?

Schultzie – Smells! Buddy smells. Buddy smells bad!

Arnie – More than your pigpen, Buddy. It's coming from your heat register. It was cold last night. I suspect they heat kicked in.

(Arnie takes the empty urinal from Schultzie and walks to the HVAC unit. He bends over toward it and sniffs.)

Arnie (continues) – It stinks!

Schultzie – Pigpen need! Pigpen need!

Arnie – Buddy, do you need help in the bathroom?

Schultzie – (absent-mindedly) Buddy need help in bathroom?

Arnie – Schultzie, have you been peeing in the heater again?

Schultzie – Pee in heater? Pee in heater. Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – You have. Haven't you?

Schultzie (yells) – Pee! Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – You still need to pee?

Schultzie (yells) – Still need pee! Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – OK. Take my arm. The bathroom is next door.

(Arnie offers his arm. Schultzie takes it. Arnie places the urinal back on the HVAC unit. They head toward the door to leave for the bathroom. The café/half door swings open, causing them to step back as Louie enters carrying a toolbox. When Schultzie sees Louie, Schultzie lets go off Arnie's arm and cowers slightly behind Arnie.)

Arnie – Hey, Louie! You must had got the word before I did.

Louie – Graveyard reported it.

Arnie – Well they were not lying. Smells as bad as I ever smelled.

Louie – Wheee! How come they didn't call housekeeping?

Arnie – Housekeeping don't deal with human waste. You know that.

Louie – Housekeeping is human waste if you want my opinion.

(Louie walks toward HVAC unit as Schultzie continues to cower. Louie opens his toolbox and takes out a tool and begins to dismantle the unit.)

Arnie – OK, Schultzie. Let's go clean that pigpen.

Schultzie – *(smiling sheepishly)* Clean pigpen! Clean pigpen. Clean! *(Squeals)* Clean pigpen!

(Schultzie pulls loose from Arnie's arm and bolts for the café/half door just as the visiting couple enters from stage left. They speak to each other as Schultzie starts toward them when Schultzie's boxer shorts fall down. Schultzie steps out of the boxers and continues toward the alarmed visitors.)

Female Visitor – Harold, what do we do?

I-1-4

Male Visitor – Turn your eyes away, Hazel!

Schultzie – *(bolting by the visitors and making an exit stage left)* Clean pigpen. Clean pigpen. Death would be sweeter.

(Arnie bolts out the café/half door, nearly colliding with the visitors.)

Arnie – *(to the visitors)* Sorry folks, he needs to use the bathroom real bad!

(Arnie exits stage left.)

Female Visitor – From the smell of it, I suspect he already has used the bathroom.

Male Visitor – Come on, Hazel. The smell is really getting to me.

(The two visitors exit stage right. Louie continues to work on the HVAC unit. He begins to whistle “Whistle While You Work” as he continues his task. From offstage left, we hear the flush of a toilet and Arnie talking to Schultzie.)

Arnie – Good job, man! You cleaned that old pigpen right up, now. Wait. Anything left in the pen? Shake it, Schultzie. Shake it.

Schultzie – Shake it, Schultzie. Shake it. Shake it Schultzie. Shake it. Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – OK, Buddy. That’s enough. Wait a minute. Where’d your boxer shorts go?

(Arnie and Schultzie enter from stage right.)

Schultzie - Where’d your boxer shorts go?

Arnie – Well, where are they?

Schultzie – Where are they? Death would be sweeter.

(Schultize points at his boxer shorts on the floor near the café/half door.)

I-1-5

Arnie – I ran right by them.

Schultzie – *(slightly agitated)* Ran by. Ran by. Shake it. Ran by.

Arnie – Come on. Let's grab them on our way back to your room.

Schultzie – *(slightly less agitated)* Back to your room. Back to your room. Shake it. Back to your room.

(Arnie leads Schultzie by the forearm. When they get to the shorts, they stop.)

Arnie – Schultzie, can you put on your own shorts?

Schultzie – Own Shorts! Own shorts. Put on own shorts! Shake it. Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – Go ahead put them on but try not to moon anyone.

(Schultzie complies and waits for Arnie. Arnie again takes Schultzie's forearm and leads him back into the room where Louie is still working and whistling. Arnie directs Schultzie to sit on the bed. Schultzie stares at Louie with his mouth gaping open.)

Arnie – How's it goin', Louie?

Louie – Oh fine! He's really done a good one this time. This all can't be recent. It's dried and caked.

Arnie – It's been fairly warm. Maybe the heat didn't kick in until last night.

Louie – Whatever.

Arnie – Hey, would you mind watching him a minute while I go take a leak myself?

Louie – I suppose not. Schultzie and I are old buddies.

Arnie – How so?

Louie – He was my foreman down at Highland Heating about ten or fifteen years ago. Yeah, old Schultzie here was a peach of a guy.

Arnie – *(leaning from side to side)* So you can watch him for a minute or two?

Louie – Sure. Him and me can talk about old times.

Arnie – Thanks, man. I mean I really gotta go!

I-1-6

(Arnie runs out the door and offstage left. Louie picks up a pipe wrench and approaches Schultzie. Schultzie cowers and covers his head with his hands and arms.)

Louie – So, Schultzie. Here we are again. Remember when you were the boss down at Highland?

(Schultzie looks away.)

Louie – *(continues)* Well, do you? Do YOU!

(Louie thrusts the pipe wrench closer at Schultzie until he actually touches Schultzie which causes Schultzie to recoil away from the tool.)

Schultzie – *(frightened)* Do you? Do you? Do you?

Louie – *(pushing the pipe wrench at Schultzie again)* Shut up, asshole! I put up with your shit for four long years. No pay for overtime 'cause you were always fucking things up making us put in more time than we were ever paid for. Now I have to put up with your piss.

(The sound of a toilet flushing is heard from stage left. Arnie appears on stage after the flush, still zipping up his pants, and heads back toward Schultzie's room.)

Louie – *(continues and grabs Schultzie's gown tightly around Schultzie's neck)* Listen up, asshole. If you ever piss in that heat unit again, I will come in the middle of the night and cut off your fucking dick. Got that?

(Arnie enters the room just as Louie releases Schultzie.)

Schultzie – *(speeding toward Arnie for protection)* Off your dick! Off your dick! Death would be sweeter!

Arnie – *(to Louie)* What the hell just happened in here?

(Lights fade to dark.)

I-2-1

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Scene 2 – Finding Dallas

Setting –

The action takes place in the room of a “memory” care facility’s patient. There is a stand-alone door frame at rear center stage. A single bed is center stage, situated sideways to the audience with the head of the bed located facing stage right. The bed is covered with a quilt containing images of action super heroes from popular comic book series. It is early evening. Lighting is subdued. The door to the room is closed.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Benjamin Harness – an elderly patient in a “memory” care facility.

Reverend Thomas (Tom) Sibley – pastor of a mainstream denomination church, a man in his 40s.

Reverend Abraham (Abe) Peet – pastor of a Fundamentalist Congregation, a man in his 40s.

Shadowy Figure – an elderly person dressed in loose-fitting pajamas.

I-2-2

(On lights up, Benjamin is seated cross-legged, in the center downstage position of the bed, facing the audience. "Benji" is dressed in pajamas that also contain images of popular comic book super heroes. Benji is busy trying to put clothes on an obviously old military "boys" doll. Just as he is about to be successful at putting the doll's pant legs over the doll's arms, a knock is heard at Benji's door.)

Benji – Hello. Hello. HELLO!

Reverend Thomas Sibley – *(opening the door slightly and sticking his head inside the room)* Hello, Benji. It's Reverend Tom here to pay you a visit.

Benji *(puts the doll down)* – Pay you a visit.

Reverend Tom – Are you ready for some company, Benji? Remember me?

Benji *(picks the doll up)* – Remember me?

Rev. Tom *(partially entering the room)* – I certainly do, Benji. I came to pay you a visit.

Benji *(smiles)* – Pay you a visit.

Rev. Tom *(walking fully into the room and closing the door behind him)* – That's right. Since you haven't been able to come to church for a long time, I'm bringing the church to you.

Benji *(looks at Tom and smiles even more broadly)* – Bringing the church to YOU!

Rev. Tom – That's right, Benji. Do you mind if I sit with you on your bed?

Benji (*patting the quilt on his side nearest the door*) – On your bed?

Rev. Tom (*sits where Benji has patted*) – Hey Benji, have they been treating you OK?

Benji – OK!

Rev. Tom – Are you getting enough to eat?

Benji - Enough to eat?

Rev. Tom (*nodding his head toward Benji's doll*) – How is Harold doing these days?

Benji – Harold doing?

Rev. Tom – Is Harold getting enough to eat?

Benji (*laughing*) – Harold eat? (*more seriously*) Where's Dallas?

Rev. Tom – Dallas is still there, down the road a piece.

Benji (*laughing*) – Down the road. Down the road!

*(Another knock is heard at the door as Reverend Abraham Peet sticks his head inside the door.
Rev. Abe carries a large Bible with colored flagging stickers hanging from it in large amounts).*

Reverend Peet (*walks into the room*) – Hey, Tom. Benjamin, do you mind if I sit down too?

I-2-4

Benji (*patting the remaining area of the quilt on the side opposite Rev. Tom*) – Sit too?

Rev. Tom – Hey, Abe.

Rev. Abe (*sits on Benji's opposite side*) – How's it going, Tom? Benji's ex-wife was a member of my flock.

Rev. Tom – It's going well, Abe. Benji here was one of my parishioners many years ago. After he and his wife divorced.

Benji (*focusing on dressing his doll*) – Wife divorced! Wife divorced Benji!

Rev. Abe – It had something to do with some Gay thing, didn't it?

Benji – Didn't it?

Rev. Tom – I don't know about that, Abe. As I recall, your board excommunicated Benji after the divorce.

Rev. Abe – There was more to it than that, Tom. It involved unrepentant sin.

Benji (*agitated*) – Sin! Sin! SIN!

Rev. Abe – But things have changed since then. Now we like to love the sinner and hate the sin.

Rev. Tom – Is that what some of your parishioners were doing last Saturday at the funeral service for Andy Weyman? Loving the sinner? Carrying signs that read "All Faggots Go to Hell"?

Rev. Abe – Well, Tom, as you know, my flock numbers in the hundreds. I can't run heard on them all, all of the time. And many of them have strong convictions based on scripture.

Rev. Tom – You mean based on 18 obscure passages that were meant to be a code of behavior for Hebrew priests?

Rev. Abe – All scripture is divine, Tom. All scripture is divine.

Benji (to Rev. Abe) – Where's Dallas?

Rev. Abe – Why Benji, Dallas is where it's always been – down the road a piece. Does this place ever take you people out of excursions?

Benji – No Dallas.

Rev. Abe – Well, Benji Dallas has grown a lot. More and more pilgrims moving in, seeking divine guidance in a pre-ordained political state.

Rev. Tom – And they all seem to be moving in your direction, Abe.

Rev. Abe – I am blessed, Tom. I am blessed.

Benji – I am blessed, Tom.

Rev. Tom – Yes, Benji. I agree. You are blessed. And we are all blessed to have you in our company.

Benji – In our company.

Rev. Tom – Rev. Abe here thinks that book he carries is something of a holy relic.

Rev. Abe – This book I carry, as you well know, is the word of God. As received. God’s will and totally without error.

Benji – Without error.

Rev. Tom – We need to tell Rev. Abe that in our 500-year old tradition, that book CONTAINS the word of God, written by men and women who were inspired by God. And we all need to look for that word prayerfully and decently in order.

Rev. Abe – Can you say the word “heresy”?

Bejamin – Heresy!

Rev. Tom – Actually, historically, in the early primitive church, people who believed as you do now, Abe, were convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.

Rev. Abe – All the more reason to reject the sinful teachings of the Episcopal Roman Church.

Benji – The Roman Church! Where’s Dallas? Where’s Dallas!

Rev. Tom (patting Benji on the back) – Don’t get upset, Benji. Rev. Abe here believes anyone who hasn’t undergone some wild, spiritual transformation, is doomed to hell.

Benji – Doomed to hell.

Rev. Abe – Benji, unless you accept Jesus Christ as your lord and savior, Jesus will not save you in that horrible, final day of judgement.

I-2-7

Benji – Final day of judgement! Where’s Dallas?

Rev. Tom – We need to tell Rev. Abe that the Nicene Council almost decided not to include the book of “Revelation” in the church’s canon of divinely inspired books.

Rev. Abe – But apparently, we should all be glad they did include it. Otherwise, Satan will be winning at Armageddon!

Benji – Satan will be winning. Where’s Dallas?

Rev. Tom – Only if you believe the mindless wanderings of a first century Christian who was probably high on LSD from eating the mold on the bread they served him while he was in prison on that island.

Rev. Abe – Really Tom. Sometimes I think you liberals don’t even worship the same God that we conservatives worship. Right, Benji?

Benji – Right! Right! Where’s Dallas?

(A voice from a speaker system is heard speaking “Attention Park Manor visitors, visiting hours are now over. Please make your way to the exit doors in our main lobby and have a wonderful tomorrow!”)

Rev. Tom – O.K., Benji. It sounds like Reverend Abe and I need to get going. Is there anything you need me to bring you the next time I visit?

Benji – Where’s Dallas?

Rev. Abe – Benji, we have a group of seniors in our flock that makes regular shopping trips into Dallas. Maybe, we can pick you up some day.

Benji – Pick you up some day. Where’s Dallas?

Rev. Abe – Benji, shall we pray before Tom and I leave?

Benji – Shall we pray?

Rev. Abe (bows head) – Lord, we just...

Benji – Lord Weejus! Lord Weejus! Lord Weejus!

Rev. Abe – O.K., Benji. It looks like you are all worn out. I will see you again on my next visit.

Rev. Tom – Me too, Benji. Me too.

Benji – Me too.

(Both ministers exit through the door as the lights gradually fade to darkness. After the door has closed, Benji climbs under his quilt and places his doll on his pillow next to his head. Slowly, the door opens again and a shadowy figure appears backlit in the doorway. The figure closes the door and walks toward Benji’s bed. The figure lifts the quilt and climbs into bed next to Benji).

Shadowy Figure – Hi, Ben.

Benji – Hi, Dallas. I love you Dallas.

Shadowy Figure – I love you too, Ben.

(Lights Out)**I-3-1****A Piece of Clockwork**

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Scene 3 – '57 Chevy**Setting –**

The action takes place in a patient's room of a "memory" care facility. There is a stand-alone door frame at rear center stage. A single bed is center stage, situated at an angle to the audience with the head of the bed facing upstage. The bed is covered with a quilt containing images classic vehicles. It is morning. Lighting is bright. The door to the room is closed. There is a photograph of a classic 1957 Chevrolet hardtop on a bedside table next to the CD player stage left. The CD player is playing "Dites-Moi" from the original cast recording of "South Pacific". Chad Sibley and Sarah Peet enter from upstage left and walk slowly toward the "outside" of the door. Sarah is looking at a small notebook as they walk and talk.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Michael de Leon – an elderly patient in a "memory" care facility.

Chad Sibley – Michael's grandson, a young man in his early 20s.

Sarah Peet – Chad's girlfriend, a young woman in her early 20s.

Arnie – an orderly working in the nursing facility.

I-3-2

(On lights up, Michael de Leon is seated on his bed behind a bedside tray. Michael is busy twisting a large toy bolt in a children's toy shop bench. Michael is humming along with the music from the CD player. Chad and Sarah stop outside Michael's door. They each wear clothing that is best described as being "Goth". Chad's hair has tints of green. Sarah's hair has tints of purple).

Chad – Did you fold the Bill of Sale right this time?

Sarah – Yes, I did. I won't make that mistake again.

Chad – Are we ready for our entrance?

Sarah – Ready.

(Michael de Leon, Chad's grandfather, hears Chad's knock at his door.)

Michael – Hello! Who the hell is it?

Chad *(from outside the door)* - It's me, Pops.

Michael – Tommy! Come on in. I need your help on this thing I'm doing.

Chad *(opens the door and enters with Sarah following him into the room)* – Hi, Pops. I brought Sarah with me again. Is that O.K.?

I-3-3

Michael – Sure. Sure. C’mon in. Is she your latest squeeze?

Sarah – Hi. *(beat)* Uh, Pops. I’m the same old *(beat)* squeeze.

Michael *(still turning the bolt with his toy wrench)* – Well, Tommy here hasn’t even introduced us. Where’s your manners, Thomas Eugene de Leon?

Chad – Sorry, Pops. I’d like you meet Sarah. My...uh...latest squeeze.

Michael – Sarah. Pleased to make your acquaintance. Tommy needs to get with it. Hey, Tom, can you hold that flashlight for me? I seem to have broken off a spark plug in the engine block.

(Chad reaches for an imaginary flashlight and directs it toward the area where Michael has been turning the bolt).

Chad – How’s that, Pops?

Michael – A little to the left, Tommy. If you please.

Chad – Sure, Pops. How’s this?

Michael – Better. A little more to the left. *(Chad moves the imaginary flashlight)* Perfect, son.

Sarah – So, uh *(beat)* Mr. De Leon...

Michael – This one has class, Tommy. She calls me mister.

Chad – She sure does, Pops.

I-3-4

Sarah – So, Mr. de Leon, Chad...I mean Tommy tells me you were an actor.

Michael – Yes, I was, Sarah. When I was younger. That’s how I paid for this ’57 Chevy. Ain’t she beautiful? Mom and Dad made me save up my royalties from “South Pacific”. Finally, when this baby came up for sale, I cashed in what I had made from acting (beat) from singing actually. I paid out cash on the barrel for her. A whopping \$1500. She has been a good ride for me. But these days, she’s more of a hobby. Do you have any hobbies, Sarah?

Chad – Sarah loves old cars, Pops.

Michael – Now, Tommy. Let Sarah speak for herself.

Sarah – Chad...Tommy is right, sir. I do love old cars. In fact, if I owned a ’57 Chevy like yours, I would be the happiest woman in town.

Michael – Well, Sarah, I hope you get one someday. Of course, you can’t have this one. It’s not up to par yet. Tommy, damn it, hold that flashlight still. I’m almost done here.

Chad – Sure thing, Pops. How’s this?

Michael – Better. Tommy, can you find my track on that record that’s playing over here? I think it’s maybe track 2.

Chad – Pops, is this the thing where I lift the needle...

Michael – Very carefully, Tommy. Put down the flashlight first. I can wait. The track title is “Dites Moi”.

Chad – Found it, Pops. (*Chad pretends to set a needle down on a phonograph*).

I-3-5

Michael – Nice work, Tommy. That’s me singing. I was 9 years old. We opened April 7, 1949 in New Haven. Me and my twin brother, Noel, Tommy’s uncle, shared the spotlight. In alternate shows, we each had to go on in these Polynesian swim suits with our little nipples bare as a cow’s tit. Pardon the expression, Sarah.

Chad – What kind of car did Uncle Noel buy with his money from the show?

Michael – I think it was a Plymouth but I can’t recall. My mind’s going. You know, Sarah, old age. That’s why this young guy named Arnie comes by the house every day to help with my chores. He ain’t much at tuning cars. He can hold a flashlight though. OK, Tommy, let’s give it a rest.

Chad – Sure thing, Pops. So Pops, Sarah here also collects autographs.

Michael – Does she? Does she want mine? I mean I didn’t really do anything after “South Pacific”. I became an insurance agent and Noel...well, Noel didn’t do too well in life, I’m afraid. Married this big, corn-fed gal and has about 6 to 7 kids. Your cousins, right Tommy?

Chad – Sure thing, Pops. Uncle Noel was a character!

Michael – So Sarah, you do want my Pops’ autograph don’t you?

Sarah – Sure, Tommy. Here’s my album.

Michael – Really, Sarah. You really want my autograph?

Sarah – Sure thing, Mr. De Leon. Here, can you sign right here under the name Bill? That’s Bill Anderson, the country singer. I got his autograph in Nashville once.

I-3-6

Michael (*takes the autograph book and examines it closely*) – Bill Anderson huh? I remember him. He did “I Wonder If God Likes Country Music?” You know, we told Tommy here we’d support him if he decided to become a Country singer?

Sarah – Tommy, you never told me you could sing.

Chad – Well, I guess that’s why I didn’t become a Country singer. I can’t sing.

Michael – Nope. Tommy here can’t carry a tune in a dry paper bag. Got a pen, Sarah?

Sarah (*hands Michael a pen*) – Sure thing, Mr. De Leon. Can you see Bill Anderson’s autograph?

Michael – I sure as hell can. (*Michael holds the autograph book close to his face as he signs it and hands it back to Sarah with the book closed*). There you go, young lady. You just made an old man happy.

Sarah – What a nice thing to say, Mr. De Leon. So, uh...Tommy, it’s getting late. Think we ought to get a move on?

Chad – Sure thing, Sarah. We do have that prayer group meeting to attend.

Michael – Well, there you go, Sarah. Reverend Thomas here has a flock to feed. Now we told him we would not support his decision to become a pastor. But he went and did it anyway.

(As Chad and Sarah nod politely toward Michael, about to turn and exit, there is a knock at the door).

Michael – That’s probably Arnie. He’s the helper that they send over to help with my bath and all. Come on in, Arnie.

I-3-7

(Arnie is an orderly at the memory care center where Michael is a patient. Arnie enters and gives a skeptical look at Chad and Sarah).

Arnie – Hey, Mike. I see you got company. It’s time for your shower, but I can come back later.

Michael – No, no Arnie. Tommy and Sarah here were just about to leave. They have a prayer meeting to go to.

Arnie – OK, Michael. I’ll let you say goodbye to Chad and Sarah here.

Michael – You mean Tommy, Arnie.

Arnie – Right, Mike. Tommy. I’ll be back in a minute or two.

(Arnie walks out into the hall and waits).

Chad – OK. Well then, Pops. We need to be going.

Sarah – Thanks again for the autograph, Mr. De Leon.

Michael *(stares blankly at the toy tool bench in front of him)*. – You’re very welcome, young lady.

Chad – See you later, Pops. Enjoy your shower.

Michael *(absently)* – You’re welcome, Chad. Come back again some time.

Chad – We will. Bye.

I-3-8

Sarah – Bye.

(Chad and Sarah exit into the hall where Arnie is waiting for them).

Arnie – You two never give up, do you? You’re gonna get that Chevy one way or another.

Chad – Hey, buddy, he promised that car to my Dad when my Dad was in high school. Now, it’s sitting over in storage gaining rental fees each and every day.

Arnie – Well, I looked one up on Google. That thing was listed for 75 thousand dollars.

Sarah – Was that one a two-door convertible?

Arnie – It sure as hell was. It looked just like the one your grandfather has on his bedside table. Why doesn’t your Dad get it out of storage and sell it?

Chad – My Dad and my Grandfather have not spoken to each other since the day my Dad was ordained.

Sarah – Besides, we got him to sign a Bill of Sale. So there!

Arnie – Does the word “fraud” mean anything to either one of you?

Sarah – That old fart is nuts. You can’t defraud somebody who ain’t there mentally. I looked it up online.

Arnie – And you don’t see anything wrong with what you’re doing? Morally, I mean.

I-3-9

Chad – Look, that old guy won't be around much longer. He did not make out a will. That damn car will be mine someday anyway. It might as well be mine right now.

Arnie – So you don't see anything wrong with getting an old guy with Alzheimer's to sign something that he doesn't even recognize or understand?

Chad – Well, so far, that old guy hasn't given us a valid signature. Last time, he signed it Enzo Pinza. What's it say today, Sarah?

(Sarah looks at the Bill of Sale stuffed into her autograph book).

Sarah – Fuck! It says "Joshua Logan". Who the fuck is Joshua Logan?

Arnie – Silly girl. He directed "South Pacific". But that isn't the entire story. Chad, your grandfather could never even have been in that musical.

Chad – And just why not?

Arnie – Do the math and check it out online. "South Pacific" opened in 1949. Your grandfather in there was born in 1949.

Sarah – Shit!

Chad – OK, Sarah. We need to alter our plans. First, let's go to the DMV. Then, we gotta figure out how to his real name on a Bill of Sale. Let's get out of here.

(Chad and Sarah exit stage left. Arnie looks on in dismay. Michael continues to stare at the toy tool bench on his bedside tray. The song "There Is Nothing Like A Dame" is playing on the CD).

Lights Out.

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Scene 4 – Sweetness**Setting –**

The action takes place in a “sensory” room of a “memory” care facility. There is a stand-alone door frame at rear center stage. A single bed is stage right, situated at an angle to the audience with the head of the bed facing upstage. The bed contains a human form (Freddie) which is covered up except for the back of the head which can be seen by the audience. A glass IV bottle is suspended from an IV pole behind the bed. It is late afternoon. Lighting is low.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Maggie Peet – an elderly patient in a “memory” care facility in her early 70s.

Freddie Peet – Maggie’s ex-husband, a well-dressed man in his early 70s.

Staff Nurse – A woman between 30 and 50 years old.

Arnie – An orderly working in the nursing facility.

I-4-2

(On Lights Up, Maggie Peet is seated in a chair in front of a bedside table that is open with the vanity mirror facing Maggie. Maggie is dressed in a mixed array of clothing that she has put on, with incorrect pieces of clothing having been “fitted” to her incorrect body parts. Maggie is busy applying makeup to her face. The results are not good.)

Maggie (sings) – Wherever we go. Whatever we do. We’re gonna go through it...

(Maggie pauses while she applies an excessive amount of blush to her forehead).

Maggie – *(addresses the body in the bed)* Right Freddie? Together? Right? TOGETHER!

Freddie – Remember Rome, Maggie? That first night in late summer? Dinner at the rooftop restaurant in the Forum Hotel. At sunset. The ancient forum spread out before us as we ate?

Maggie – Salt in Boca. Crème Brule. And that wine! But you left me at the hotel. YOU LEFT ME! For over two hours. Where were you, Freddie? Where did you run off to?

((Maggie stops her activities abruptly and stares straight ahead. Her facial expression changes from one of happiness to one of anger. She stands up and clenches her fists at her side. Maggie walks to the area behind Freddie’s bed).

Maggie *(continues to Freddie)* – Did you find a boy that night?

Freddie *(in a slightly different voice)* - Did we make love that night? I think we did!

Maggie – Did you walk all the way over to Popolo to get in line with the other fags? Was he pretty? Did he have a big one?

Freddie *(in the same slightly different voice)* - I could use a kiss.

Maggie – My ass, you could.

Freddie (*in the same slightly different voice as before*) – Give us a kiss, my sweetness.

Maggie – Sweetness my ass. I can't kiss you today. I don't know how many cocks you've sucked today. Narcissist! You, narcissist! You can take your fucking kisses and go to hell.

(Maggie removes the IV bottle from the pole, holds it over Freddie's head and drops it on his head. She then picks up the IV bottle and drops it again. Freddie does not move. Maggie pulls a remote-control unit from beneath the pillow under Freddie's head and looks at it quizzically).

Maggie (*pushing buttons on the unit*) - What's this? A camera? Here, let's take a photo. You can put it on the computer with all of your boy friends' photos.

Freddie (*in a new, slightly different voice*) - Christmas was wonderful!

Maggie (*pushing more remote buttons wildly*) - My ass it was. You ruined it again.

Freddie (*in the new, slightly different voice*) - Our anniversary was special.

Maggie (*pushing more remote buttons*) - It was special alright. I got drunk. You smoked pot and watched porn. Gay porn!

Freddie (*in another different voice*) - Death would be sweeter!

Maggie (*placing the remote back on the bed*) - But there ain't no whores in heaven, Freddie. No whores up there. But I don't suppose that's where you're going anyway, faggot. Pederast! Narcissistic pederast, that's what you are. A narcissistic pederast!

Freddie (*in most recent voice*) - Death would be sweeter!

I-4-4

Maggie (*begins to pound her fists on Freddie's torso*) - Here's some sweetness for you.

Freddie (*in most recent voice*) - Death would be sweeter!

Maggie (*continues pounding on Freddie's torso, but more wildly than before*) – I'll give you death, cock sucker!

(An alarm sounds from Freddie's bed. Arnie comes running into the room. He stands behind Maggie and reaches around her torso and grabs each of her arms and holds Maggie in a physical restraint).

Arnie – Breathe, Maggie. Take deep breaths now.

(Maggie's demeanor calms even as she attempts to resist the restraint).

Arnie – That's right, Maggie. Take some deep breaths. Breathe in. Now breathe out.

(The Staff Nurse runs into the room carrying a syringe. She takes advantage of the restraint Arnie has used on Maggie and plunges the needle of the syringe into Maggie's arm. Maggie's demeanor immediately becomes calmer).

Arnie – That's right, Maggie. Now just relax. Keep breathing but relax.

Staff Nurse – How long on the restraint, Arnie?

Arnie (*counts*) – One thousand ten. One thousand eleven. One thousand twelve.

Staff Nurse – OK. Release her.

I-4-5

(Arnie releases his restraint and Maggie collapses on Freddie's bed. The Staff Nurse lowers her head near Maggie's head and whispers).

Staff Nurse – Is it OK now? Are you calm now, Maggie?

Maggie – Yes. Calm. Calm now.

(Maggie stands up as the Staff Nurse comforts her).

Staff Nurse – There you go, Maggie. See how calm you can be!

Maggie – Calm now. Calm.

Staff Nurse – So, Maggie. Do you want to come with me to the nurse's station? I think we have some vanilla pudding there.

Maggie *(looks at Staff Nurse and slightly smiles)*- Vanilla?

Staff Nurse – Vanilla. Come on, let's go. Arnie will stay here and straighten things up. Arnie, I already called the S/O. He'll be here in a few. He only lives a few doors down the street. Let's try something new this time.

Arnie *(begins to straighten up Freddie's bed and rehang the IV bottle, then whispers to Staff Nurse)* – Do you want me to meet with the S/O and get the new recording myself?

Staff Nurse – Yes. Let him know about this escalation and ask him for an alternate message. But first, make sure there aren't any old messages on the recorder. If there are, erase them.

I-4-6

Arnie – Sure thing.

(The Staff Nurse exits while embracing Maggie and guiding her out the door and offstage left. Momentarily, a well-dressed older gentleman, Mr. Freddie Peet, Maggie's ex-husband, enters from stage right and walks into the room where Arnie is still straightening up).

Freddie – Hello. Arnie, isn't it?

Arnie – Right, Mr. Peet. Maggie just had another of her escalations. The nurse says I should get you to record a different message on the recorder.

Freddie – This one was Rome, right?

Arnie – Yes.

Freddie – We could try Paris.

Arnie – Sure. Let's do it. Here's the recorder. Push the record button.

(Arnie hands the recorder to Freddie. Freddie examines it and finds the record button which he pushes).

Freddie *(speaks into the recorder)* - Remember Paris, Maggie? That first night in late summer? Dinner at the little restaurant on Monte Martre. At sunset. We had the best Confit du Cannard of any place in Paris. Then we walked the Pigalle on that warm summer evening, accordion music playing from every doorway. *(Freddie stops and releases the record button)*. Will that do it, Arnie?

Arnie – Let's hope so. Tokyo was a bust. It looks like Rome is too.

Freddie *(hands the recorder back to Arnie who places it under the pillow in the now restored bed)* – OK. Well, here you go. I had best leave before Maggie gets back. She'd want to leave with me and we all know how long that one takes to defuse.

Arnie – Right, Mr. Peet. Thanks for stopping by.

Freddie – That’s alright. Any time. You people take good care of her. Let me know how I can help.

Arnie – Right, Mr. Peet. Thanks again.

Freddie – By the way, Arnie. You do so much for her. I feel like I owe you something. I don’t suppose you’d accept my invitation to have dinner with me some time.

Arnie – That’s very nice of you, sir. But I think that would be a violation of company rules.

Freddie – Well, if you find it’s not some kind of violation, give me a call. There’s a great French restaurant over on Commercial.

Arnie – Thanks again, sir.

Freddie (*holds out his hand*) – You’re quite welcome, my dear young man. You’re quite welcome.

Arnie (*takes Freddie’s hand a briefly shakes it, but needs to pull loose from the handshake*) – We’ll give you a call if this one doesn’t work.

Freddie – Please do.

(Freddie exits the room and exits stage right. A few seconds later, Maggie enters from stage left with Staff Nurse while eating vanilla pudding from a small container. The makeup has been removed from her face and clothing has been restored to correct places on her body. She and Staff Nurse enter the room and Maggie assumes the same position as at the opening scene).

Staff Nurse (*to Arnie*) – Did you get it?

Arnie – Yes. It’s all done and put away safely.

Staff Nurse *(to Maggie)* – So, Maggie. Are we good now?

Maggie – Yes. We’re good.

Staff Nurse – Great. Arnie and I are going to leave you alone now. We’ll check back in with you later. Use your call light if you need anything.

Maggie – OK.

(Staff Nurse and Arnie exit the room and exit stage left. Maggie continues her behavior as before, rearranging clothing inappropriately. Maggie begins to sing).

Maggie (sings) – Wherever we go. Whatever we do. We’re gonna go through it together.

(Maggie pauses while she applies an excessive amount of blush to her forehead).

Maggie – *(to the body in the bed)* Right Freddie? Together? TOGETHER!

Freddie (sound comes from the hidden recorder) - Remember Paris, Maggie? That first night in late summer? Dinner at the little restaurant on Monte Martre. At sunset. We had the best Confit du Cannard of any place in Paris. Then we walked the Pigalle on that warm summer evening, accordion music playing from every doorway.

(Maggie stops her activities abruptly and stares straight ahead. Her facial expression changes from one of happiness to one of anger. She stands up and clenches her fists at her side).

Curtain. Lights Out.

I-5-1

A Piece of Clockwork

by James M. Kemp

Scene 5 – Photograph Album

Setting –

The action takes place in a visitor's lounge of a "memory" care facility. There is a stand-alone door frame at rear center stage. Two lounge chairs are situated at angles to each other, center stage. It is late afternoon. Lighting is low. Two figures are seated in the chairs. One is an elderly male and the other is an elderly female. Both are dressed in common street clothes. The male holds a large photograph album.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Angela Baxter – a female in her early 70s.

Charles Morgan – a male in his early 70s.

Schultzie – an elderly male in his 80s.

Arnie – An orderly working in the nursing facility.

(Lights come up on Angela and Charles. Charles is looking intently at the photograph album. There is a moment of silence and then Charles turns to Angela and speaks.)

Charles – It's all here isn't it? A nice summary of lives being lived.

Angela – Yes. It is.

Charles – Even some of the objectionable things are in here.

Angela – Objectionable? I suppose.

Charles – I mean there was the time we took the kids camping at Lincoln City and got rained out.

Angela – It did rain.

Charles – Then there was the vacation at Six Flags when the kids all broke out with the Chicken Pox while we were standing in line for a ride.

Angela – They got some stares.

Charles – Do you recall the meal at the seafood place in Ghiardelli Square?

Angela – I always ordered cioppino.

Charles – And I got my scallops. We made the kids order from the kids' menu. Remember?

Angela – That kids' menu! And Jerry asked for mushrooms and grated cheese on his hamburger.

Charles (looking intently at the album) – Was that the toy hand grabber Jerry had to have from the souvenir store? He tried to drink his milk using that contraption and spilled it all over the place. That's what we got for taking the kids to fancy restaurants.

Angela – They were fancy.

Charles – That was the year of the little trailer.

Angela – I remember that trailer.

Charles – Jerry and I built it from scratch. When we pulled into the first California gas station on our way south, one of the attendants said our trailer looked like a magician's box.

Angela – It was unusual.

Charles – But who had the bright idea to camp out near Disneyland? Remember the little slab of concrete where they expected us to pitch our tent on?

Angela – That tent!

Charles – But the old Boy Scout camp in Newport Beach was so much better.

Angela – Yes. I think It was better.

Charles – We took the kids for another fine dining experience there. Remember, we had to choose between a Roy Rogers and The Aches? The one with the waiters in tuxedos at the door and the lot filled with Mercedes won out.

Angela – Those tuxedos!

I-5-4

(Their conversation is interrupted when a patient named Schultzie comes dancing into the room wearing only a pair of briefs.)

Angela – Oh dear. There he goes again.

Charles – Sir. Excuse me sir. Don't you think you should put on more clothes? There is a lady present in this room.

Schultzie – Death would be sweeter.

Charles – If you say so.

Angela – He always says that.

Charles – Is there a staff person we can call to take him back to his room?

(Schultzie's dance becomes more intense and demonstrative. Arnie, a ward attendant, enters the room.)

Arnie – Schultzie, old buddy, old pal. Let's leave these folks alone. They are trying to have a nice conversation. They don't need your performance.

Schultzie – Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – Schultzie, c'mon, buddy. Let's go back and put some clothes on.

Schultzie – Death would be sweeter.

Arnie – Let's go get some yogurt. I think we have vanilla.

I-5-5

Schultzie – Vanilla would be sweeter.

(Schultzie stops dancing and allows Arnie to take him by his forearm.)

Arnie – Let's go see what we can find in the frig.

Schultzie – Vanilla would be sweeter.

(Arnie leads Schultzie off stage left and then returns to the room.)

Charles – Thank you so much for doing that. He was getting a little annoying.

Arnie – He gets like that some times. He doesn't mean any harm. He just likes to dance. You should see him when he hears "Rhapsody in Blue".

Charles – Well, at any rate, thanks. Your name is?

Arnie – Arnie, Mr. Morgan. My name is Arnie.

Charles – Well, you seem to be a very capable employee, Arnie. Now, where were we with this album, my dear?

Angela – It is getting late.

Charles – Can I stay past visiting hours, Arnie?

Arnie – Well, actually you can stay as long as you want, Mr. Morgan. But the lady has to leave at 9 pm.

Angela – Yes, I really need to go home and water the plants. Let me have the album. I can come back tomorrow.

Charles – OK. Here. Take it. Arnie, would you be so kind as to show her out?

Arnie – With pleasure, Mr. Morgan. Ma’am.

(Angela takes the album from Charles and then takes Arnie’s forearm as he guides her toward the door and out into the hall stage left. Lights fade on the interior of the room as Charles sits quietly and alone.)

Arnie – So, how did he seem to you today?

Angela – Better, I suppose. He remembered things from my family’s photo album. Of course, they were things we might have talked about long ago; joked about as neighbors for over 30 years.

Arnie – But of course, they were not memories from his own life.

Angela – No. He and Emily didn’t have any children. They both seemed to enjoy our children very much. Always took an interest in what my children were up to. They were good neighbors, Emily and him.

Arnie – Well, he does seem to enjoy your visits. Nice of you to share your family’s joys with him.

Angela – What else do I have to do? My Jerry moved away years ago. My mister passed away ten years ago.

Arnie – Sorry to hear that, Ma’am. Well, you have a good evening. Will we see you tomorrow?

Angela – Yes. I baked a cake for him. I’ll bring him over a piece. I’ll even bring one for you too, Arnie.

LIGHTS OUT. CURTAIN.

Scene 6 – A New Room

Setting –

The action takes place in a patient's room of a "memory" care facility. There is a stand-alone door frame at rear center stage. Two nurses are preparing a hospital bed for a new occupant. The bed is situated downstage left. Upstage left is an HVAC unit. An arm chair is situated upstage right.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance) –

Jenny Von Runion, staff nurse – A woman between 30 and 50 years old.

Marilyn Huffman, housekeeping employee – A second woman between 30 and 50 years old.

Schultzie – an elderly male in his 80s.

Louie – a maintenance man for the nursing facility.

(Lights come up on Jenny and Marilyn. They have just begun the process of preparing a bed for a patient. Jenny takes a mattress cover from a stack of laundry stacked on the arm chair and brings it to the bed where she tosses it up to cover the bed. Marilyn is standing on the other side of the bed and catches her side of the mattress cover and spreads it over the mattress.)

Jenny – I think we could tell my kids. They're old enough to understand.

Marilyn – Well, mine aren't.

Jenny – I know. That is a problem.

Marilyn – I still think it's too early.

Jenny – It's not like it's anything unusual these days. Kids hear about it on TV, in school and even from the neighbors.

Marilyn – I suppose, but exactly what are they hearing?

(The two women have finished with the mattress pad. Jenny goes to the chair for a fitted bottom sheet. She starts to toss it up to spread it, but stops. Jenny looks around the room suspiciously, walks over to the door which has been closed, opens the door and sticks her head out into the hall and pulls it back inside the room. She walks to Marilyn's side of the bed, places the fitted sheet unfolded on the bed and holds her arms out beckoning to Marilyn. Marilyn responds by stepping into Jenny's embrace.)

Jenny – Maybe they would hear that two women who are in love with each other is not such an unusual thing.

Marilyn – Two women in love who have just recently been divorced from their kids' fathers.

Jenny – Maybe. In the best of all possible worlds. I’m just not sure we’re there yet.

(The two women stop embracing and take positions on opposite sides of the bed. Marilyn unfolds the sheet and hands one side to Jenny.)

Marilyn – Here. Make yourself useful.

Jenny – Oh, but I am useful.

Marilyn – Yes, that was a very nice casserole you made for us all last night.

Jenny – See, we really are living a (gestures parentheses in the air) “normal” life. But, let’s keep it at home. There are already enough rumors going around this place about us.

Marilyn – How do you know?

Jenny – I have my spies.

Marilyn – I suppose I have a few of my own. They never really come out and say anything or ask about us. But people know.

(The two women finish with the bottom sheet and unfold the top sheet.)

Jenny – They all suspect something. We do tend to slip into patient’s rooms together and close the doors.

Marilyn – Well, we are sharing tasks between two departments in this facility. Others should do the same.

Jenny – Now that would be the day, wouldn't it? Housekeeping and Nurse Department sharing tasks. Your people call me when they find vomit in a patient's room. Like I'm supposed to mop it up.

Marilyn – There is that inter-departmental agreement...

Jenny – I know. But it's such a simple thing to mop up puke. Besides, we only have one mop in our department...

(The two women put the final touches in making the bed. Marilyn approaches Jenny and puts her index finger in front of Jenny's mouth.)

Marilyn – Shhh. Shush now. That is just the way it is. That is just the way people are. Stuck in their ways. And that is just why I don't think we need to come out to anyone in this place any time soon.

(Jenny pretends to kiss Marilyn's finger.)

Jenny – Yes. That is the professional way to look at it. OK, this little task is done. Thank you very much.

Marilyn – Sure thing, Babe. I have a vomitless floor to scrub. See you this evening if not before.

Jenny – Yes. I need to move a patient in here.

(Both women exit through the door and offstage left. Jenny returns with Schultzie and carries a suitcase. They enter the room.)

Jenny – Ok, Mr. Schultz. This is your new room. Doesn't it smell nice?

Schultzie – Clean pigpen?

Jenny – Yes. It is a clean pigpen. A nice, clean pigpen.

(Jenny puts down the suitcase as Schultzie sits down on the newly made bed.)

Schultzie – *(absent-mindedly)* Death would be sweeter.

Jenny – Now, Mr. Schultz. You have a nice clean pig...room. It's a lovely day. Why don't you just lay down on the bed a take a nice long nap?

Schultzie *(complies)* – Death would be sweeter.

Jenny – If you say so, Mr. Schultz. But life can be sweet also.

Schultzie *(raising his head from the bed)* – Clean my pigpen?

Jenny – Yes. Your pigpen is clean. I saw to it myself. Housekeeping just finished cleaning your pigpen.

Schultzie *(concerned)* – Man? Man clean pigpen? Man?

Jenny – Man? Oh, you mean Arnie?

Schultzie *(affirmatively)* – Man! Clean pigpen!

Jenny – Well, Mr. Schultz, I know you miss him, but Arnie won't be cleaning any more pigpens at this facility.

Schultzie *(agitated)* – Man clean pigpen!

Jenny – Now, now. Calm down, Mr. Schultz. Arnie won't be back any more.

Schultzie (*agitated*) – Man clean pigpen!

Jenny (*comforting Schultzie*) – Now, we can't get angry. Arnie had an accident the other day. A very serious accident. Unfortunately, a city bus hit him in a crosswalk.

Schultzie (*sadly questioning*) – Man dead?

Jenny – Yes, man is dead.

Schultzie (*lying back down*) – Death would be sweeter.

Jenny – Let's hope it is, Mr. Schultz. Lets hope it is. Now just lie back and take a little nap.

Schultzie – Clean pigpen?

Jenny – Yes, it is a very clean pigpen, Mr. Schultz. I helped Housekeeping clean it myself.

Schultzie (*lying back on his pillow*) – Man dead. Clean pigpen.

Jenny – Yes. Yes. Arnie is dead and your pigpen is clean.

Schultzie – Death would be sweeter.

Jenny – And life, Mr. Schultz. Life would be sweeter too.

(Jenny leaves the room and closes the door.)

Schultzie *(to himself)* – Man clean pigpen!

(Schultzie sits up in bed and looks around his new room. He focuses on the HVAC unit. He gets up from his bed and walks to the HVAC unit. With his back to the audience, he pantomimes unzipping his fly. Suddenly the door bursts open and Louie from the maintenance department stomps into the room closing the door behind himself. Schultzie appears to be startled, pantomimes zipping up his fly and stands at the HVAC unit waiting.)

Louie – And just what the fuck do you think you are doing, old man? I just overhauled the heater in your last room.

(Louie walks toward Schultzie and invades Schultzie's personal space and grabs his arm. Schultzie tries to pull away.)

Louie – I told you if I ever caught you pissing in your heater ever again, I would...

LIGHTS. CURTAIN.

