

## **A Piece of Clockwork**

by James M. Kemp

### 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.

*(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?

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.

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)**