

The Timekeeper

Liam Tibbitts is an aging clockmaker in a small city in upstate New York. He has recently lost his wife and his sight. Zachary Tibbitts, his son, a professor of English at the University of Virginia will be visiting. Zach discovers during his visit that his father is beginning to show signs of Alzheimer's disease. Zach is torn between teaching and leaving his position at UVA to take care of his father. This, coupled with a newly discovered love in his life, Marie Claire, places a great deal of stress upon him.

Zach opens a new/used and rare bookstore in his father's old clock shop and continues to care for his father until it becomes too much for him to handle: failing bookstore due to unexpected competition from a big box book store, the pressure of caring for his father, a postponed wedding and a failing relationship. He begins to drink again and smoke. At first he hides his problems by sipping on the sly and lacing his coffee with Irish whiskey, but openness becomes the norm. Two years later, Liam passes.

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Great Stage Publishing

The Timekeeper

by
Thomas M. Kelly

Great Stage Publishing

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The Timekeeper

A play in two acts by Thomas M. Kelly

Time will tell your fortune, heal your wounds and divulge all things... good and evil.

(Anonymous)

Out of the future which does not yet exist into the present that exists but a moment

and then it disappears into the past which has ceased to exist.

(Saint Augustine)

Synopsis:

Liam Tibbitts is an aging clockmaker in a small city in upstate New York. He has recently lost his wife and his sight. Zachary Tibbitts, his son, a professor of English at the University of Virginia will be visiting. Zach discovers during his visit that his father is beginning to show signs of Alzheimer's disease. Zach is torn between teaching and leaving his position at UVA to take care of his father. He decides on the latter. This, coupled with a newly discovered love in his life, Marie Claire, places a great deal of stress upon him. When Liam is lucid he speaks eloquently and with no Irish brogue. However when he is not, in remembering, he speaks with a slight brogue. Zach opens a new/used and rare bookstore in his father's old clock shop and continues to care for his father until it becomes too much for him to handle: failing bookstore due to unexpected competition from a big box book store, the pressure of caring for his father, a postponed wedding and a failing relationship. He begins to drink again and smoke. At first he hides his problems by sipping on the sly and lacing his coffee with Irish whiskey, but openness becomes the norm. Two years later, Liam passes.

Setting: A present day wee clock shop in the small city in New York state.
Stage left: a door entering from the street. Center stage: a customer counter.
Stage right: a grandfather clock. A near empty line of shelves containing

only two or three mantel clocks of any description. The most common are the hump-back mantel clocks. They are waiting to be picked up by their owners. A lone cuckoo clock hanging on the wall.

Broom and dust pan, shelving, Liam's tall stool. Center stage is a workbench containing small hand tools of a clockmaker and an old clock in the stages of being repaired.

Characters:

LIAM Tibbitts 78: The blind owner of a clock repair shop.

ZACH Tibbitts, 46 - 56: Liam's son, writer and English Professor.

MARIE CLAIRE O'Doule, 42 - 48: Customer, high school English teacher, single, and a woman of simple needs but of great requirements of others.

BILLY Donahough, 17 - 18: Apprentice to Liam Tibbitts, a high school student in one of Marie Claire's literature classes.

Props:

Liam: cane, watch.

Zachary: bottle, cigarettes,

Billy: student's backpack, notebook, school books.

Marie Claire: handbag, clock, picnic basket

David Sedaris', "Me Talk Pretty One Day", tape player,

Biba Caggiano's "Modern Italian Cooking", Ahmad Jamal's "Ahmad's Blues", "Do not go gentle into that good night." (*From Dylan Thomas: Selected Poems. 'In Country Sleep', 1952. Edited by Walford Davies.*

JM Dent Sons Ltd, London, 1974.) Dylan Thomas'

"Fern Hill", Old broken cuckoo clock, tea cups, coffee cups, bowl of soup (water), soup spoon, danish/sweet bun on a plate, two hidden bottles of Irish whiskey, breathalyzer, envelope with Liam's final tape. (Insertions of sample dialogue for descriptions of common antique clocks are included

below. In this writing I will use a 19th century French Napoleon III Era clock, Boulle Style with a natural shell veneer case with ormolu, or faux gold trim, but you may use any available antique clock and provide your own short description.)

ACT I, Scene One:

(On October 1, 2001, at 4:00 pm, LIAM Tibbitts sits behind his workbench intent on the repair of an old clock. He is alerted at the snap of the door latch and the tinkling of his doorbell. Enter MARIE CLAIRE O'Doule carrying a very ornate mantle clock.)

LIAM: Good afternoon, ma'am.

(MARIE CLAIRE O'Doule places the clock on the counter and watches as LIAM approaches the counter in flawless motion.)

MARIE CLAIRE: How did you know....?

LIAM: *(Interrupting.)*

How did I know a woman entered? The gentle breeze, as you opened the door, brought with it the fragrance of rose... no... to be more precise.... my Pristine roses... It is an elegant rose.... I remember the petals had the look of antique silk. *(Flirting.)* What is the name of your perfume?

MARIE CLAIRE: Soft Shoulders. Why... Is it important?

LIAM: Of course it's important. How am I to recognize you when you come back?

MARIE CLAIRE: I'm impressed. But the woman entering may not be me.

LIAM: Every woman has a different fragrance no matter what perfume she uses to lure.

MARIE CLAIRE: Lure? ... Oh, never mind. I just moved into 2122 down the street. I was talking to my neighbor, Jennifer...

LIAM: *(Interrupting.)*

....Ah, Jennifer Paulson. 'Accenti'. A fruity tangerine, with peach, raspberry and a little vanilla bean fragrance.

A walking fruit smoothie. She is a beautiful woman. A sweetheart. Sorry, I interrupted you. Forgive my ill manners. My name is Liam. *(He extends his hand.)* Liam Tibbitts. And you are...

MARIE CLAIRE: I am Marie Claire O'Doule. I was told....

LIAM: *(Interrupting.)* ...You were told that I am blind. And you were also told that, even though blind, I am able to fix your clock. Yes, I am blind and yes, I can fix your clock.

LIAM: What have you brought me today, Marie Claire O'Doule? *(He raises a hand to stop her response...)* Wait Let me tell you.

(LIAM gently places his hands on the clock as if caressing a woman. He studies every curve.) Ah, it is a late 19th century Hamilton.

MARIE CLAIRE: Yes.

LIAM: Now what is the problem with your clock?

MARIE CLAIRE: I know it is quite old. I don't think it chimed all night. When I awoke at precisely six o'clock this morning I didn't hear it chimeor at seven o'clock, ...I leave the house at precisely seven o'clock... I thought perhaps I had stayed up too late grading papers and my timing was off. I checked the time and realized it had stopped at 6:48 last night.

LIAM: *(As he continues to examine.)* Exquisite! Do you try *not* to wind it tightly?

MARIE CLAIRE: Oh, yes. Mother gave me explicit instructions. That was my task every evening. Great grandfather gave it to great grandmother on their first wedding anniversary. See, it's engraved. Oh, ... I'm sorry. *(Remembering his blindness...she reads.)* "Time will tell your fortune. My fortune is you. Love always, Albert."

LIAM: Do you know the rest of the quote?

MARIE CLAIRE: Is there more? Whom did he quote?

LIAM: Yes. "Time will tell your fortune, heal your wounds and divulge all things... good and evil." Anonymous.

MARIE CLAIRE: I hope you can fix it.

LIAM: I'm sure I can. Perhaps just a good thorough cleaning. If you would be so kind.... *(As he searches for pencil and form in his pocket.)*...your telephone number. I already know your address.

(Enter BILLY Donahough, apprentice, with back pack.)

BILLY: *(Unknowingly interrupting.)* Sorry, I'm late Mr. Tibbitts.
(Surprise at seeing MARIE CLAIRE.) Oh, Miss O'Doule.

MARIE CLAIRE: Billy. Did you finish your assignment?

BILLY: Not yet, Miss O'Doule.

MARIE CLAIRE: Can I expect it in the morning?

BILLY: Yes, Miss O'Doule.

MARIE CLAIRE: Is the computer room locked?

BILLY: Yes, Miss O'Doule.

MARIE CLAIRE: *(To LIAM as she finishes filling out the form.)* When should I come by for my clock, Mr. Tibbitts?

LIAM: Come by Thursday afternoon, Marie Claire. 'Tis a beautiful name, Miss O'Doule.

MARIE CLAIRE: Thank you, Mr. Tibbitts. I'll be here. Have a good day.

LIAM: Have a good day, Marie Claire O'Doule. Thank you.

MARIE CLAIRE: Billy. Tomorrow morning at 8:00?

BILLY: Yes, Miss O'Doule.

(MARIE CLAIRE exits.)

LIAM: Your reason for being late, Billy?

BILLY: Miss O'Doule kept me after school to do some extra research in the library.

LIAM: And what kind of research would that be?

BILLY: I goofed up my Contemporary Lit. paper.

LIAM: How so?

BILLY: We had to write a paper on any one of the important Southern writers. My paper was on William Faulkner.

LIAM: William Faulkner's writing is very difficult to read let alone follow. Stream-of-consciousness, you know. Mr.

Faulkner sought to portray his character's point of view by giving the written equivalent of the character's thought processes.

BILLY: Yes. Whatever. She said I wasn't thorough. She gave me a 'D'.

LIAM: A 'D'?

BILLY: I guess I didn't try hard enough.

LIAM: Ha, even renowned university professors find Mr. Faulkner very difficult to understand. My son, Zachary is one of them. Stream-of-consciousness writing is strongly associated with the modernist movement.

BILLY: Your son is a professor?

LIAM: Yes. He is a professor of English at the University of Virginia. He is coming to town this weekend. He'll be here Thursday. Staying for a couple of weeks before school starts.

BILLY: Do you think...

LIAM: *(Interrupting.)* ...I'm sure he will. In the meantime. Sweep up, put my tools away and then you can read your paper to me.

BILLY: Yes, sir, but sir, I a 'D'.

LIAM: Read it to me and I'll tell you where you are deee-ficient in your writing.

BILLY: University of Virginia. He was Writer in Residence.

LIAM: No. He's just a professor of English.

BILLY: No. William Faulkner. He was a writer in residence at UV before he died.

LIAM: Yes. He was. Get busy. I want to go home.

(Lights down.)

End of Scene One.

Act I, Scene Two:

(Thursday afternoon, October 4, 2001. The time, 2:00pm. LIAM and ZACH enter the shop. LIAM deftly reaches behind the glass door to remove the “Closed for Lunch” and replaces it with the “Open” sign. ZACH wanders the shop examining the old clocks as he talks. LIAM hangs his hat and coat, dons his apron and finds his way to his stool and work bench. His bench is his centering device. From here he can go anywhere without hesitation.)

ZACH: Hannah still prepares a fine lunch.

LIAM: Yes, she does. But she’s getting on in years. Can’t keep up with the fast food joints coming into town.

ZACH: *(As if not paying any attention.)* With their mechanical wizardry, their steady tick-tock, tick-tock and beautiful chimes, these seemingly timeless timepieces amazed and tempted me as a boy to follow in your footsteps. You don’t have many on the shelf...

LIAM: *(Interrupting.)* Ah, but instead of your work, you read Joyce, Hemingway, Shakespeare, Nietzsche. Didn’t you?

ZACH: Yes. I’m afraid you didn’t get much work out of me. How’s the new boy? Billy, is it? How’s he working out?

LIAM: Yes. When he works, he works.

ZACH: What’s that supposed to mean. “When he works, he works.”

LIAM: Yesterday he was late. Preoccupied. He rushed through his chores. Didn’t dust my workbench. Today. I don’t know. We’ll see. *(Pause.)* You’re not going to be here very long, are you, Zachary?

ZACH: At least two weeks. Just enough time for you to be relieved when I go.

LIAM: Good enough. Just enough time to engage in a few of our poetry skirmishes.

ZACH: I’m a willing warrior. Now, about Billy...

LIAM: Oh, Billy's fine. He's a teenager. What more can a person expect? He will be asking your advice on his paper about William Faulkner. Seems as though his teacher said he was not thorough enough. She gave him a 'D'.

ZACH: She? Do I know her?

LIAM: No. You wouldn't know her. She's new.

ZACH: Why would a high school student choose to write about one of the most multifaceted, most difficult writers to understand? Commendable.

LIAM: "I decline to accept the end of man..."

ZACH: Man will not only endure,..."

LIAM: ...but.... Uhm..., forgot the last word.

ZACH: ...prevail...

LIAM: Yes. ...prevail. He read his paper to me. And she is right. He was not thorough.

ZACH: *(Pause.)* I miss those times we ... *(Looking around.)* You don't seem to have many clocks for repair, Dad. Business is slow?

LIAM: Yes. I'm being replaced. Besides who can trust a blind man to fix a clock? Electronic gadgets have replaced the outdated mechanical timepieces. Instead of fixing the new gadgets, they toss them and buy new. Now you can find the time on your cell phone, whatever. Time is easy now. It wasn't easy a few years ago. Then... you had to work for time. Now it is just... there. Everywhere. For the blind person it is still the tick-tick-tick of every second and the chimes on the quarter hour and hour or the touch of the Braille watch. It was and is beautiful craftsmanship.

ZACH: I remember the frantic spring forward and the fall back changing of daylight savings time. Now it's done for me; on my computer and my cell phone. No effort. *(Takes out his cellphone.)* I sometimes wonder if something has been lost with these 'gadgets' as you call them.

LIAM: Oh, sure. I remember when you were just a boy running around.... Uh... *(LIAM stammers attempting to find the bit of memory.)* Well, it will come to me.

ZACH: I'm sure it will. (*ZACH picks up one of LIAM's tools and studies it.*) I remember when you bought this tool (... *needle nose pliers, etc.*). It was on my ninth birthday. (*With the tinkle of the door bell, enter MARIE CLAIRE O'DOULE.*)

LIAM: Good afternoon, Ma'am. What can I do for you, today?

MARIE CLAIRE: (*Brusquely, with some flare.*) Ohhh. Liam Tibbitts. You lied to me!

LIAM: Lied. To you, Ma'am? You...

MARIE CLAIRE: You said you would know it was me when I came to your shop to pick up my clock. You said you would recognize my perfume. I am very disappointed, Mr. Tibbitts.

LIAM: (*Leaning forward.*) Ah, Miss O'Doule. I am so sorry. I recognize your voice. Not much of a breeze today. Forgive me.

MARIE CLAIRE: Is my clock ready?

LIAM: Oh, yes. And a fine piece it is. But before we do business, I would like you to meet my son, Zachary.

Zachary. This is Marie Claire O'Doule. Miss O'Doule is a teacher at your old high school.

ZACH: A pleasure, Marie Claire. What do you teach at Mountain High?

MARIE CLAIRE: Beginning French and Contemporary Literature.

ZACH: Is my old French teacher still there? John Combs.

MARIE CLAIRE: No. When he retired the administration asked me to take his place. That was two years ago.

LIAM: He died.

MARIE CLAIRE: Yes. Poor fellow.

ZACH: What a shame. Nice man. Did he ever marry?

MARIE CLAIRE: I don't think so. I didn't know Mr. Combs at all, but those who did, thought him a good man. A bit terse and bit short with the students at times, but a good man.

LIAM: No. He never married. Toward the end he brought in an old German cuckoo clock. It's right over there. (*Pointing accurately.*) It has no value. Said he overwound it years ago. Didn't want me to fix it. "Just take it," he said. Use it for parts. Time waits for no man."

ZACH: More precisely, Dad: "Time and tide wait for no man". ...

And/or.... "Man waits not for time nor tide."

MARIE CLAIRE: Ah, the words of Mark Twain. "There is no shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by." Annie Dillard.

ZACH: "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek"?

MARIE CLAIRE: No. I think it serves as an autobiography of her life.

LIAM: Well this day in *my* life is getting short. Where is that Billy?

MARIE CLAIRE: I'm afraid his tardiness is my fault, Mr. Tibbitts. His research was not what I expected of him. Perhaps one more attempt to find the *raison d'être* for Mr. Faulkner's naming his fictional county, Yoknapatawpha (*yak-na-pataw-pha*), will....

ZACH: (*Interrupting.*) ...It is considered to be one of the most monumental fictional creations in the history of literature. According to Faulkner himself, the name Yoknapatawpha, means water slowly flowing through flatland.

LIAM: Mr. Faulkner was a man of encryption. But he treated his characters with dignity. His early days were spent in the library. I want Billy to do the same.

MARIE CLAIRE: I want him to find the source of Mr. Faulkner's county. If Billy consults the Dictionary of the Choctaw Language, a copy of which we have in the library ... I checked, ... he will find the source.

ZACH: That's an awful lot to expect from high school sophomore. Some of my third year college students can't grasp the correct pronunciation, let alone the correct spelling.

MARIE CLAIRE: Billy is an exceptional student. He'll find it.

LIAM: Speak of the devil. I hear him running Here he is.

(*BILLY enters, gasping.*)

BILLY: Sorry, Mr. Tibbitts. *(Shocked at seeing her.)* Miss O'Doule!... *(Then excitedly.)* I found it! I found it! It was in the Dictionary of the Choctaw Language. Printed in 1915. *(Aside.)* A smelly old book. *(Return.)* I only hope it's accurate. It seems that the combination of several words, *(BILLY pulls his notebook from his backpack and reads.)* "ik pa-ta-fo, meaning unplowed and pa-ta-fa; plowed, tilled. Yak-ni, a noun., the soil; yak-ni pa-ta-fa, furrowed fallow land. I think the logical conclusion is that Mr. Faulkner, with a little imagination and perhaps some Southern drawl, discovered his fictional "Yoknapatawpha County" in that book. But I think there is something more I could find.

MARIE CLAIRE: Very good work, Billy. I'll expect at least 500 words on the subject Monday morning.

BILLY: But,....

ZACH: Yes, excellent work Billy. I'm Zach, Liam's son.

BILLY: Thank you, sir. We have to talk.

ZACH: Fine. Maybe tomorrow.

LIAM: Start cleaning Billy. I want to go home sometime today. Mind you dust my workbench. You forgot last night.

BILLY: Yes, sir. But I...

MARIE CLAIRE: *(Interrupting.)* My clock, Mr. Tibbitts.

ZACH: I'll get it dad. Which one is it?

LIAM: Billy, where did you put Miss O'Doule's clock.

BILLY: Nine o'clock, Mr. Tibbitts. Second shelf. But you haven't fixed it yet. There's no...

LIAM: Of course I did.

ZACH: I'll get it down for you, Dad. *(ZACH turns and retrieves the clock. He examines the paperwork. He gently places the clock in front of LIAM. LIAM places a hand on it.)* You didn't fix it. It hasn't been worked on yet. That's not like you, Dad. Not like you at all. Who's clock did you work on yesterday?

LIAM: I thought I was working on ... no. I... when did I promise it for you, Miss O'Doule?

MARIE CLAIRE: Today. But, that's alright. You can take your time, Mr. Tibbitts.

LIAM: I ... I'm sorry Miss O'Doule. I'm sorry.

ZACH: This is a beautiful clock Miss O'Doule. May I call you.... Marie?

MARIE CLAIRE: Actually, Mr. Tibbitts. I don't dispense my telephone number to mere acquaintances.

ZACH: No. I meant may I ... or should I...call you by your first name, Marie? Or your first and I guess your second names. Marie Claire?

MARIE CLAIRE: Forgive me. I am very literal minded. Marie Claire, of course.

ZACH: Now that we are on first name basis, maybe, before I go back to Virginia, we could meet for lunch?

MARIE CLAIRE: Well, ... I don't know... *(Happy that he asked, but...)* What do you think, Liam Tibbitts?

LIAM: Marie Claire. It's a free lunch.

MARIE CLAIRE: Good thought, Mr. Tibbitts. Yes, Zachary. I'll have lunch with you.

ZACH: How about Saturday say ... at 12:30? Hannah's?

LIAM: I thought for sure I worked on your clock. Maybe... Well, ...

MARIE CLAIRE: It's alright Liam. Thursday. Next week. Just take your time. *(She turns to leave.)* Tomorrow Zach?

ZACH: Yes, Marie Claire. Tomorrow at 12:00. Where did we decide to meet...?

MARIE CLAIRE: Forgetfulness must run in the family. *Saturday, 12:30.* Hannah's.

ZACH: Oh, yes. Sorry. 12:30 it is. ... Hannah's. Saturday.

MARIE CLAIRE: *(Looking at BILLY.)* First thing Monday morning. You have the whole weekend to work on it.

BILLY: Yes, Miss O'Doule.

(MARIE CLAIRE exits.)

LIAM: Billy. Are you sure I didn't work on Miss O'Doule's clock.

BILLY: No. I mean yes, sir, I'm sure you didn't. You told me to put it on the shelf. Then I dusted your...

LIAM: I was so sure I was working on her clock.

ZACH: It's not a problem, Dad. You can have it ready for her next week. What is the problem with it anyway? Let's see. *(He reads the work order.)* "stopped chiming". Can I take a look at it, Dad?

LIAM: Well, I don't know, Zachary. When was the last time you worked on a movement this complex?

ZACH: Never. You wouldn't have let me touch this beauty. I can tell it is probably late 1800's. It's a Hamilton. You gave me the clue with the complex movement.

LIAM: Very good. Let me take the back off for you. *(LIAM deftly reaches for a small screw driver type tool.)*

ZACH: You still don't trust me, huh?

LIAM: Of course I trust you. You got to be very good with the inexpensive clocks. Go ahead.

(ZACH takes the tool from LIAM. He gently opens the back.)

ZACH: I think this is a virgin, Dad. I don't think it has ever been opened. Look at that beautiful movement. Oops, sorry, Dad.

LIAM: Oh, I can see it, Zachary. I can see every gear, bushing, pivot.... It's beautiful. Isn't it?

ZACH: Yes, it is.

LIAM: It's obviously not moving. Let me feel if it has been wound. Perhaps too tightly, if at all.

ZACH: Oh, yes. I can see that is wound too tightly. Maybe... *(He fiddles in the mechanism.)*... there it goes. Ha, I'm a genius. Can you hear the movement, Dad? Come listen to this Billy.

(BILLY moves closer to listen, then watches the movement.)

LIAM: Can you imagine what would happen if there was just slightest miscalculation of the gearing in the cycloidal curve or the involute curve? *(LIAM exits to the back room.)*

BILLY: *(To ZACH.)* The what... curve?

ZACH: Stick around, Billy. You'll learn, just by being near him and his clocks. It just kind'a rubs off on you.

BILLY: I'm not so sure.

ZACH: I am. Henry David Thoreau wrote that the finest workers in stone are not copper or steel tools, but the gentle touches of air and water working at their leisure, with a liberal allowance of time.... And,... men like my father must be patient and precise in all that they do. They live in well defined and accurate environments. All the time being gentle *and* strict with those surrounding them.

BILLY: I can understand that.... working with clocks.

ZACH: "And he that will not apply new remedies, must expect new evils;..."

LIAM: *(As he enters.)* "...for time is the greatest innovator." Francis Bacon. "Look not mournfully into the past. It comes not back again."

ZACH: "Wisely improve the present. It is thine."

LIAM: "Go forth to meet the shadow future,...."

ZACH: and **LIAM:** "...without fear." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. *(They laugh together.)*

ZACH: I miss the days of our mini poetry competitions.

LIAM: It whiled away the ticking of the clocks.

ZACH: You knew when the clock was working perfectly and when it needed a slight adjustment by the poetic cadence.

LIAM: It did that.

BILLY: I guess I'll have to brush up on my poetry.

LIAM: It's almost closing time, Billy. Sweep up. And today, dust my workbench. Something you forgot to do last night.

BILLY: *(Looking at LIAM, then at ZACH.)* But sir,....

(ZACH lifts his forefinger to his lips to 'shh' BILLY.)

BILLY: *(Continues.)* Y-yes, sir. Sorry 'bout that.

ZACH: Dad, tomorrow I'm going to visit an old friend I haven't seen in years.

LIAM: Sure... "Man has his will, ---but woman has her way.

ZACH: How did youknow? Do you remember... I'm just visiting her. I should be back about eleven in time to meet Marie Claire for lunch. For dinner I'll bar-b-que some steaks. OK? *(Lights down.)*

End of Scene Two

Act I, Scene Three

(Early Friday morning, October 5, 2001. The shop is dark except for reflecting light of dawn. LIAM, alone, sits staring out at the quiet street.)

LIAM: Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

Life is but an empty dream! For the soul is dead that slumbers, and things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art; to dust returnest,

Was not spoken of the soul. *(Pause.)*

Life that shall send a challenge to its end, and when it comes, say,... welcome,... friend.

(What the heart of the young man said to the psalmist.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. A Psalm Of Life.)

(Pause.) What was that, Zachary? *(Leaning in to listen.)*

Life is but a *fleeting* dream? How so? *(Pause.)* Well... You must make of life what you can. *Life is real! Life is earnest!*

(Beat.)

Life is divided into moments of time. If, for one of those moments, you want to write. *Write! (Pause.) Speak louder boy! (Pause as he listens with his hand cupped to his ear.)* What do you write about?

Well,... you write what you know, what you feel in your heart is your dream. If your dream is to write about your dream, you must make every effort to accomplish that dream. What? *(Pause.)* Yes, it's self-gratification. Look around you. This is,... rather was,...*(Pause.)*... my dream. My self-gratification. My dream was to fix time.

Fix it in a way that I did not lose it. But I did lose time. I lost your mother during that time. With her, I learned friendship. I learned to give love and how to accept love. Hmmm? *(Pause. Leaning in to listen.)* Yes, oh, yes.

We loved each other very much. *(Pause.)* Time is a gift. A gift to be cherished. Treasured. *Take it! Hold it close to you!* Squander time and you lose your life. *(Pause.)* You must speak up Zachary. *(Leaning in to listen.)*

You're going where?

(Beat.)

Virginia? Why Virginia?

There are plenty of good schools here in New York. Why Virginia? *(Long reflective pause.)* Take care of yourself, son. *(Pause.)* Write often. *(Pause.)* Good by, Zachary.

(LIAM waves.) (Pause. LIAM stirs.)

Let us, then, be up and doing,

With a heart for any fate;

Still achieving, still pursuing,

Learn to labor and to wait.

(Lights down.)

End of Scene Three.

ACT I, Scene Four

(Friday, October 6, 2001, late afternoon. BILLY is sitting at the workbench doing his homework. ZACH enters.)

ZACH: Billy, is Liam in the back.

BILLY: No, sir. The Door was open when I got here. The shop was empty.

ZACH: *(Before waiting for an answer.)* Unlocked? Open?

BILLY: Yes, sir. I've been waiting for about half an hour.

Nothing has been moved since last night. The sweeper is here where I always leave it. Nothing's been touched.

ZACH: *(Retrieving his keys, opening the door.)* Well, I'll make some calls. I guess you can start your clean-up.

BILLY: *(Looking around as ZACH picks up the telephone.)*

ZACH: Hello. This is Zachary Tibbitts. My father, Liam owns the clock....yes. Well, I don't know. My father is missing. Do you...?
(Pause.) . No. I haven't. I'll call the hospital now. Could you give me the number? *(Pause as he writes.)* Thank you. *(Pause as he dials the hospital.)* Yes. Hello. My name is Zachary Tibbitts. My father, Liam....
 Yes. Oh, Hello, Mrs. Ingram. Have you ... I'm fine. Yes. Just visiting. My father... have you seen him? No. Well, I can't find him. The police? Yes, I called ... yes, they said I should check with you... the hospital. Would you notify me at his shop if you hear anything. Yes, thank you. Good-by, Mrs. Ingram. Yes. I will. Thank....

BILLY: Zach. He's walking down the street! He's coming!

ZACH: *(As LIAM walks into the shop.)* Dad! Where have you been? You scared the hell out of us!

LIAM: *(When LIAM has an 'incident' he speaks with a slight Irish brogue.)* I walked down to the old house. On Delhancey. What a big beautiful house that was. They tore it down you know, ya' know. Made room for those compact boxes they call "Homes of the Future". No life at all in those cardboard boxes.

ZACH: Dad!

LIAM: *(With a bit of Irish brogue.)* Life was squeezed out of them.. Give me back my Queen Ann with the big rooms and the long porch. No porch to be seen. Not a good place to raise a family.

ZACH: Liam!

LIAM: *(Dismayed.)* Zachary. You have never raised your voice to me.

ZACH: Sorry, Dad, but you had us worried!

BILLY: Mr. Tibbitts, is it okay if I go home now. I have a paper to write.

LIAM: *(Confused.)* Sure. Ah... young man, you can go home.

(BILLY exits. LIAM continues.) Who was that young man, Zachary? Why was he here?

ZACH: That was Billy. Dad. *(In dismay.)* He's ...he's just a friend. He, ... he was worried.

LIAM: Well.... I just took a walk. Funny *(Looking after BILLY.)* ... I don't

ZACH: You never liked that house, Dad. One repair after another! If it wasn't the furnace, it was the plumbing! If it wasn't the plumbing it was the electricity! You hated that house! Used to call it a "Damned old drafty barn"!

LIAM: *(With a bit of Irish brogue.)* You know who I met down there? Joe. You remember ole' Joe. Uhm... Joe... Can't seem to remember his last... He used to have the milk route, ya' know.

ZACH: *(With a hand on LIAM's shoulder. Calmly.)* Dad, Joe Demarest died ... what...30 years ago. Slipped and fell on the ice carrying two crates of empty milk bottles. Hit his head on the curb.

LIAM: No. I talked to 'im. His daughter is getting married.

Tom O'Guinn's son, Sean.

ZACH: Sean was killed in Vietnam before they could get married.

LIAM: Viet...?

ZACH: *(Not comprehending what is happening, but sensing something very wrong.)* Are you alright, Dad?

LIAM: *(With a bit of Irish brogue.)* You know who I met down by the old house? Joe Demarest. You remember ole' Joe. Still delivering milk. Same old dilapidated truck, ya' know. Ya' know...

ZACH: *(Shaken and now sure that something is wrong.)* Dad.... Maybe we should call it a day. Go home, have dinner, listen to some music or poetry. I brought some new cds. Maybe watch... well listen to some poetry. What do ya' say?

LIAM: *(With a bit of Irish brogue.)* That sounds like a good idea, ya' know. Maybe your mother will have some bangers and mash a'warmin'.

ZACH: Sure... Dad... Let's lock up.

(Lights down.)

End of Scene Four

ACT I, Scene Five

(Saturday afternoon, October 8, 2001, in the clock shop. LIAM and BILLY are together at the workbench.)

LIAM: That's it. Now line up and insert the two longer shafts into their holes as you lower the back plate over the gears.

BILLY: Like that?

LIAM: Yes. Now, into the holes of the back plate, that's this side, insert the lower posts. Then screw on the nuts. But only half way. That's it.

BILLY: What's this?

LIAM: This is a pivot locator. It's a tool we are going to use to insert the gear pivots from the bottom up. From the second wheel to the governors

and escape wheel that I showed you earlier. Now pretend you are holding that mechanism like a sandwich in one hand.

BILLY: Like so?

(LIAM feels BILLY's hand as he grasps the mechanism.)

LIAM: Yes, like that. Now press the plates together very lightly as you guide each pivot into place with the pivot locator. If you press too hard, you could damage the small pivots! No! No! Billy! Patience! Billy, patience! It's a good thing this mechanism is junk! You would have destroyed a valuable instrument! Now sweep up, clear my work bench and pack up your things! You're finished for the day!

(BILLY sweeps the floor and dusts the workbench. From under the counter he retrieves his backpack. LIAM is listening with ear plugs to a book on tape. As BILLY approaches the door....)

LIAM: Leaving early today are you Zachary? Did you finish cleaning? Tell your mom, I'll be home early for dinner. We have a neighborhood meeting to go to. I'll be damned if they are going to condemn my house!

BILLY: *(Confused.)* It's Billy, sir. Mr. Tibbitts, you said ... I was finished ... for the day. Ah, ... Yes, sir. I finished cleaning. Yes, sir. Ah... Good-bye sir.

(BILLY exits.)

LIAM: Good-bye...uh...Zachary. ... Kids today. Always in a hurry.

(ZACH enters.)

ZACH: Hi, Dad. I brought you a cup of tea and some of your favorite cookies. Oatmeal with raisins. *(LIAM, in fear of the unknown, stands and backs away from ZACH who has his back to LIAM.)* What was Billy's big hurry?

LIAM: *(LIAM stands with mouth wide open as if unable to find the words, but eventually does.)* Uhm... *(Pause.)* I don't know...

ZACH: What happened here? Looks like somebody really made a mess of everything. Did...

LIAM: I don't know what that is. Who are...?

ZACH: (*Concerned.*) Dad. What's... what's the problem?

(*LIAM looks at ZACH then at the workbench, the mechanism, then ZACH. He is again unable to find the words.*)

ZACH: (*Continues.*) Would you like me to call for some help? Should I call your doctor? (*With fear in his eyes, LIAM cannot answer.*) I'm calling your doctor. (*Looking for emergency numbers in LIAM's workbench drawer.*) Ah, here we are. Doctor Powers. (*ZACH uses his cell phone.*) Hello. This is Liam Tibbitt's son, Zachary, may I speak with Dr. Powers? (*Pause.*) His patient? Liam Tibbitts. No? Oh. He's a what? An OBGYN. What the hell? Thank you anyway. (*ZACH disconnects and pockets his phone.*) Dad, this Dr. Powers, he's a woman's doctor. You can't be one of his patients. Who is your doctor?

LIAM: Doctor? I ...uh...don't know. Uhm...

ZACH: I'll call Mrs. Ingram at the hospital... again. Maybe she knows who your doctor is? (*ZACH uses his cell phone.*) Hello. This is Liam Tibbitt's son, Zachary, may I speak with ... Oh, hello Mrs. Ingram. (*Pause.*) No. He's right here beside me. Would you happen to know who his doctor is? (*Pause.*) Dr. Guenther? Is he *still practicing*? (*Pause.*) Oh. His son, Arnie? Arnie! We went to grade school together. Is it possible to get in to see him now? Yes. I do appreciate ... Yes. We'll be right there. Thank you, Mrs. Oh, Mrs. Ingram, would you know a Dr. Powers? (*Pause.*) Oh, Mom's ... uh... okay. I'm sorry. We'll... Yes, thanks. (*ZACH disconnects and pockets his phone.*) OK, Dad. Your doctor is Arnie Guenther. Arnie Guenther. Who'd a' thought. (*He smiles.*) Dr. Arnold Guenther. Let's lock up. He's waiting.

(*Lights down.*)

End of Scene Five

ACT I, Scene Six

(*Monday, October 8, 2001. The remaining clocks are lined up on the counter. ZACH is on the telephone.*)

ZACH: Yes, dean. Yes. I've taken your advice ... I realize I need some help. (*ZACH is holding a glass or bottle.*) My first AA meeting is the week I return. (*Pause.*) Yes. I realize that. But I want to spend some time

with my father before I come back. *(Pause.)* No. I've thought about it. I don't think I need any longer than two weeks. My father and my career with UVa are the most important things in my life. *(Pause.)* I realize that. *(Pause.)* Yes, I.... *(Pause.)* Yes, I think this will work out better for all concerned. I'll see you in two weeks. And.... Thank you Dean Ramsey. *(Pause.)* No, you won't regret it. Good by.

(ZACH closes his cellphone, pauses, then opens the drawer of the workbench and removes a small bottle of Irish whiskey. Stares at it. Opens it slowly. Raises it to his lips and sips. Replaces the cap and places it in the drawer. He opens his cellphone, refers to the work tag on the workbench and punches in the number.) Mrs. Stein? This is Zachary Tibbitts. My father, Liam, has repaired your clock and it's ready for you to pick up. *(Pause.)* Deliver? Well, yes, I guess I could. Let's see. I have your address as 276 Cooper's Lane. Is that...? *(Pause.)* Yes. What's a good time to...? *(Pause.)* Tomorrow at three? *(Pause.)* I'll be there. Thank.... *(Pause.)* Yes... the bill... twenty-one-fifty. *(Pause.)* Why? Dad is closing his shop. *(Pause.)* Yes. Well, he's seventy-eight and... Yes. *(Pause.)* Yes. It is a beautiful old clock. Yes. *(Pause.)* Tomorrow at three. Thank you, Mrs. Stein. *(ZACH ends his conversation with Mrs. Stein and punches in another number.)* Mrs. Johnson? Annabelle? *(Pause.)* Mrs. Johnson, this is Zachary Tibbitts. Do you remem.... *(Pause.)* I'm fine. You have a clock in my father's shop for repair... *(Pause.)* Yes...

He is closing his shop... *(Pause.)* Well, he's seventy-eight and... Yes. *(Pause.)* Yes. Your clock is ready to pick up. *(Pause.)* Yes, I'll be here until about five.

(Pause.) Yes. *(Pause.)* Thank you. *(ZACH closes his cell phone. MARIE CLAIRE enters.)*

MARIE CLAIRE: Hi, Zachary.

ZACH: Hi, Marie Claire.

(As Zack turns to replace the work tags to the appropriate clocks he surreptitiously slips a mint lozenge in his mouth.)

MARIE CLAIRE: *(Approaches Zack.)* Thanks again for the lunch on Saturday, I had a wonderful time.

ZACH: Yes, lunch was great. *(Avoiding her approach.)* We should do that again.

MARIE CLAIRE: Maybe a picnic, before you go back to Virginia?

ZACH: Sounds good to me.

MARIE CLAIRE: Is Liam here? I've come for my clock.

ZACH: No. Not yet.

MARIE CLAIRE: I called Billy Donahough's mother this morning. Did you know they is your father's backyard neighbor? She said Liam has not moved from his chair. Seems to be carrying on a lively conversation with someone. Is he alright?

ZACH: When I woke this morning he was sitting in the back yard staring at the sundial in Mom's garden. Early in the morning, when she was alive, she'd be out there, *(With a bit of Irish brogue.)* "When the dew is fresh and the soil is forgivin'," she'd say. She still had a bit of a brogue. *(Pause.)* When I approached him he was talking to her, *(Imitating LIAM.)* "Are you going to take out the slender speedwell, Maggie? It's a weed!". She'd reply, "In Aireland..." With him interrupting... *(Imitating.)* "Yes I know... it was sewn into the clothes of the eismirceach *(pronounced: ehs-mir-kehk)*, ... the emigrants, our parents, for good luck..." She'd finish for him, "to speed them on their crossin': hence... 'speedwell'. Sure, it may be a weed but it has such attractive wee blue flowers." *(Returns to his voice.)* She hated to pull it. I can hear her now: "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. Genesis 1:31. The dear lord saw fit to let it grow, and so will I. I'll just keep it under control. Let it have just a wee bit of my garden". *(Imitating LIAM.)* "But it's roots, Maggie... they creep out into the lawn. It... it's such a nuisance and a menace." It's a reminder, Liam, from the aulde contry, ya' know." The two of them were having such a delightful conversation, I hated to interrupt. They continued to carry on their tête-à-tête. When I went home to make lunch for him, he was still in the garden where I left him at eight o'clock. Here it is 2:30 and he's not here yet.

MARIE CLAIRE: Then Mrs. Donahough was right. She said he seemed OK and ...

ZACH: *(Interrupting.)* ...Oh, he's fine... at least according to his doctor. Arnie Guenther. Doctor Arnold Guenther. *(He smiles.)* We went through grade school together. His folks sent him on to Georgetown Prep. Anyway, Arnie said Dad's suffering from the early stages of Alzheimer's.

MARIE CLAIRE: Oh. I'm so sorry Zachary. I don't know him at all, but I do know that he is a man I would like to have known all my life. What are you going to do?

ZACH: I decided today that it was time the shop was closed.

MARIE CLAIRE: I don't think Liam would survive without ...

ZACH: I'm going to have to close it for him. I've been calling the last remaining customers to inform them....Which reminds me... *(Reaching for her clock.)* Your clock is ready. Seems as though it *was* over wound.

MARIE CLAIRE: But.... I'm sure... . Oh, well. I must have miscounted.

ZACH: Well, it needed a good cleaning and I ...

MARIE CLAIRE: I don't think it was ever cleaned. Mother wouldn't let any... *(Opening her purse.)* How much do I owe you?

ZACH: *(Triumphantly.)* No charge, Ma'am. A courtesy of Liam Tibbitts Clock Repair. At your service since 1957. It should be good for another hundred years.

MARIE CLAIRE: Long after I'm gone. ... Thank you, Zachary.

ZACH: Can we please dispose of the formal names? Everyone, except my father, calls me Zach.

MARIE CLAIRE: Fine. Zach. Everyone calls me Marie Claire. *(They laugh. Laughter turns to silence. Pause.)*

ZACH: I need to simplify my life so that my time and energy are available for things that are really important at this time.

What do you think of turning dad's old shop into a book store?

MARIE CLAIRE: And leave U V A?

ZACH: I called Dean Ramsey. He was very understanding. The best he could do was to offer me a one year sabbatical. I couldn't agree to that, because it would mean that at the end of the year I would have to make the same decision again. And if I opted not to go back at that time, taking the one year salary they would have had to give me, would seem unethical.

MARIE CLAIRE: *(Smiling at what she is hearing: “an ethical man”.)*
New, used and rare?

ZACH: Yes. I could split the back room, it’s rather large, into a reading room and an office for me to continue my writing. Have dinner with me tonight?

MARIE CLAIRE: Yes. *(Pause.)* What will Liam do with his time?

ZACH: *(Surprised.)* Yes? *(Returning.)* Yes, well ... what any retired timekeeper does: Recite poetry and have mini-poetry skirmishes with his son. Or I could, as Arnie suggested, place him in a care facility.

MARIE CLAIRE: Yes. Did his doctor, Arnie, suggest a ...

ZACH: I’ll pick you up at Seven? Arnie didn’t suggest anything. But I’m going to start looking for one here in town, if dad agrees.

MARIE CLAIRE: Liam is such a vibrant man, Zach. Are you sure? I couldn’t see grandmother placed in a nursing home. I stayed with her in her home, to the end.

ZACH: Seven? ...I don’t think I have a choice.

MARIE CLAIRE: *(As if taking charge.)* I’m not sure about a care facility for Liam. He seems so full of vitality. Can we make it seven-thirty, I have...

ZACH: Seven-thirty it is. *(Beat.)* The alternative is, and I’m sure he would not agree, would be to take him to Virginia with me.

MARIE CLAIRE: *(Shock, disappointment.)* In either place, I... I’m sure he would languish.

ZACH: But, I think I’d rather stay here with him... and I have my writing. He could, as I say, come down here until... well... and... *(Looking at the door behind MARIE CLAIRE.)* Hey, look who’s here. *(MARIE CLAIRE turns as LIAM enters the shop.)*

MARIE CLAIRE: Hello, Liam.

LIAM: *Miss O’Doule!* How are you this fine afternoon?

MARIE CLAIRE: I’m fine. You look... well... *rested.*

LIAM: Yes. A little forgetful now and then according to his highness there,...

ZACH: Whoops!

LIAM: But on a happier note, I spent the morning in Maggie's garden, and remembered a few of our many wonderful moments together.

MARIE CLAIRE: I'm sure the two of you had great times. You will have to show me her garden, Liam.

LIAM: Soon, while there is some color left and certainly before the winter frost.

MARIE CLAIRE: Zachary tells me that my clock is repaired. I overwound it after all.

LIAM: So it seems.

MARIE CLAIRE: Now I must be on my way. Places to go, things to do and people to see.

LIAM: and **ZACH:** *(In concert.)* Good-by Marie Claire.

ZACH: Wait,... your clock. I'll carry it to your car.

MARIE CLAIRE: Oh, it is such a beautiful day, I decided to walk. I can carry it. Thank you. Good-by, Liam.

LIAM: Miss O'Doule.

ZACH: Tonight at seven, Marie Claire?

MARIE CLAIRE: Seven-thirty, Zach!

(LIAM, listening intently to their banter moves to his stool. MARIE CLAIRE and ZACH kiss as she exits with her clock.)

LIAM: *(Sternly aggressive.)* I talked to Eddy Johnson on the way. *(Growing anger.)* He congratulated me on my retirement. "Retirement!?", I says. He said you told his wife, Annabelle, that her clock was ready to be picked up and that I was closing my shop! *(Slow and exacting.)* What right... have you... to tell everyone... that I am closing my shop... and retiring?!

ZACH: Dad, you heard what Arnie said yesterday. It's time you quit. Your condition....

LIAM: *(In denial.)* My condition! What is my condition? I'm blind. I can still repair clocks!

ZACH: Didn't you hear him at all, Dad? You're beginning to show signs of Alzheimer's Disease. Besides ...your customers...

LIAM: That's not what he said. We talked about my eyes. He said my blindness was incurable. *I can live with that! I can still work!*

ZACH: Do you remember him asking you about your forgetfulness, your... Alzheimer's Disease? ... You don't....?

LIAM: No! He didn't mention anything about ... what is it?... Alzheimer's?!

ZACH: He asked you if you had trouble remembering recent events, activities, or the names of familiar people... like Billy. Instead of answering, you started reciting Wordsworth...

LIAM: Now *that* I remember....

(He tries to quote.) The unknown men I travelled among, No. I traveled among unknown lands... No. Ah, I have it.... I traveled among unknown men... In lands beyond the sea; Nor, England! did I know till then What love I bore to thee.

ZACH: Dad!

LIAM: 'Tis past, that melancholy dream! Nor will I quit thy shore

ZACH: Liam!

LIAM: *(Louder.)* A second time; for still I seem To love thee more....

ZACH: You are either avoiding the issue or you just don't remember!

(LIAM springs to his feet. He is inches away from his son's face.)

LIAM: I can look in the face of blindness, see nothing and live with it! I can trace the streets out there *(Pointing accurately with his cane.)* with my cane! *(Moving accurately to the clock on his workbench.)* By feeling with my fingers, I can sense the magnificent workmanship of the great, and not so

great, clockmakers. (*Back to ZACH.*) *I can confront death!* I faced it when Grandpapa, only fifteen months away from Bataan, died in a gas pipeline explosion in Buffalo. And Mama (*Pause.*) I faced death with my fellow Marines at the Yalu River. I can accept death! (*Pause.*) (*Lovingly.*) Holding your mother's hand, I felt the last bit of life flow from her! I can meet death's insult! Death can take stock of me anytime! I'm ready! (*LIAM searches with his hand, and faltering, he finds his stool.*) But... I can't ... I can't see the picture,... see the image,... (*He sits.*) the vision of my body sitting in a ... in a limbo,... not knowing what to remember... or how to remember *what* ... or the fact that I am *supposed* to remember. Remember ... who, why? Who am I alive for? ... Why am I living in this bag of old bones... I'm not useless! ... Why am I alive if I can't remember my accomplishments, (*Quickly.*)... my love,... my poetry,... my clocks? (*Return.*) Time. (*Pause, contemplatively.*) Why would I be concerned with the essence of time? Time is the essence of memory. When I *ask*,... "What time is it?" ... Who will answer? ... Will the reply be "What is time?" or "The time at the tone will be exactly nine-forty-two and thirty seconds... ." Will it *matter* to me? *No!* Time will mean *nothing* to me. I won't be able to measure the (*Quickly.*) lapse of time... to manage time... to plan time... or fix time. Time to me is measured by the tick, tick, tick of a precise mechanism. (*Slowly with his fingers on the mechanism.*) The number of teeth on the pinion gear determines the proportion of the epi-cy-cloidal (*epi-cy-cloid-al*) curve used to design the pinion leaf's structure, and the number of teeth on the pinion determines the proportion of the epicycloidal curve used to design the gear tooth's construction. (*Return.*) The knowledge of the exacting *why* of the constant

mechanical ticks... tick, tick, tick... won't even become a nuisance, or annoyance, ... it won't mean a thing to me sitting unmoving in a chair, lying dormant on a bed, walking to nowhere.... And not being able to do anything with time, because I can't remember the *purpose* of time. (*Pause.*)

ZACH: This morning, in Mom's garden ... her sundial... you stayed there with her most of the day. The silence of it ...

LIAM: ... irritated me. It doesn't tick... It doesn't even hum. At least the Accutron had an annoying hum. The sun's movement across the sky is a constant movement, effecting a blade's shadow on a flat surface marked in proper increments, from which time can be measured... it irritated me. No tick, tick, tick. Is time a non-spatial continuum in which actions occur in

apparently irreversible and unalterable succession from the past through the present and on and on into the future?

ZACH: That sounds like something out of Webster's...

LIAM: ...Oxford, ...I think. Long ago. Will it matter to me? At what instant and where will I be when time rushes on without me? By your actions today you have told me there is no longer a purpose for me... if my memories are gone... if time is gone... What is my world without time.

I'm better off dead!

ZACH: For any change to happen, no matter the proportion or extent, ... time is a necessity. Frankly, I wish it passed a little slower. But, fast or slow, our bodies change on the tick, tick, tick of time, or by the measurement of the movement of the sun. Your body has changed. The cruelty of time has taken your sight, some of your memories... and you must deal with it. *We... must face it and deal with it... together. (Lights down.)*

End of Scene Six

End of ACT I

ACT II, Scene One

(Three months later, Saturday afternoon, January 25, 2002. ZACH and MARIE CLAIRE are in the now empty of clock shop. They are sharing a brown bag lunch.)

MARIE CLAIRE: *(As she finishes her lunch.)* Well, that was good and I liked it.

ZACH: I'm glad you thought of lunch. I was getting hungry. I was going to work on through lunch if Dad didn't show. I called him, but he must be napping. As I leave I see him turn off the cellphone I bought for him.

MARIE CLAIRE: There is plenty left, if he suddenly appears.

ZACH: *(Standing and walking around the room.)* One good thing about converting this to a book shop is that I won't have to build many shelves. These should be sufficient for awhile, at least until business picks up.