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KAPLAN’S CRISIS

A 10-Minute Play by
Susan Surman

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Kaplan’s Crisis
by Susan Surman

CHARACTERS

1W / 1M

DR. SIDNEY KAPLAN: Successful psychotherapist; works in mysterious ways to cure his patient. But today, he has other things on his mind.

ROSE BERMAN: Overweight, overwrought, overanxious. Her therapy sessions are the only way she legitimately gets away from her domineering mother.

SETTING

Dr. Sidney Kaplan’s office; two comfortable chairs, a table/desk with a chair suffice)

TIME

The present; late morning.
Kaplan’s Crisis
by Susan Surman

AT RISE:  

DR. SIDNEY KAPLAN is sitting at his desk lost in his own reverie talking out loud to no one before HE is interrupted by the next patient.

SIDNEY  

Fifteen years and she just says she doesn’t want to be married anymore. Just like that. I don’t want to be married anymore. We’ve been together since our first year in college for Chrissakes. What wife does that?

ROSE  

(Shouting off)

Doctor Sidney Kaplan, I’m gonna kill you!

SIDNEY  

(Calmly)

Ah, my eleven o’clock is here.

ROSE BERMAN rushes in holding a dangerous looking glass vase. In a threatening gesture, SHE puts the vase to HIS skull.

SIDNEY, Continued

You – Princess Rose Berman – would kill me with that cheap piece of glass? At least use Steuben.

ROSE is disarmed, giving SIDNEY time to move out of harm’s way. HE removes the vase from HER hands, guides HER to the chair, and sits in the chair facing HER. Slipping the vase under the chair, HE begins the session.

SIDNEY, Continued

Anything new, Rose?

ROSE

SIDNEY
Nothing?

ROSE
Berman needs no sermon. A rose is a rose is a rose. Anything else is just cheap prose. John Kennedy rose and Rose froze. I made you a chocolate cake, but I left it in the taxi. I’m very depressed.

SIDNEY
You seem very up today. You just tried to kill me. If you were depressed, you would have killed yourself. Any dreams?

ROSE
You wanna hear my dream?

SIDNEY
Sure.

ROSE
Well, I’m not gonna tell ya.

SIDNEY waits.

Okay, I’ll tell ya.

SIDNEY
It’s your nickel.

ROSE
You always say that. It’s funny. She won’t let me make any decisions. She tells me what to do, what to eat, what to wear.

SIDNEY
Is that the dream? Who’s the she?

ROSE
Her. Rose.

SIDNEY
Rose, Rose?

ROSE
I mean Edith.

SIDNEY
Your mother. Go on.
ROSE
I hate you, Kaplan.

SIDNEY
I know. Tell me about the dream.

ROSE

SIDNEY
How did you feel when you woke up?

ROSE
Hungry for meatballs in tomato sauce.

SIDNEY
Is that what you ate when you woke up?

ROSE
Spaghetti and meatballs. The thin kind. It’s the same, always the same, what’s in a name.

SIDNEY
And when you ate the spaghetti and meatballs, how did you feel?

ROSE
After or during?

SIDNEY
Both.

ROSE
Nauseous.

SIDNEY
You felt sick?

ROSE
Are you deaf?

SIDNEY
We are here to discuss you, Rose.

ROSE
Then I ate a Hershey Bar. No...a Twix. No... wait...Three Musketeers. No...
You’ve been watching Adam’s Rib again.

I love that movie.

A film, Rose, a sheet of material covered with a chemical substance changed by light and all the actors are dead. Can you remember when you felt like that another time?

Hungry?

Hungry.

(Thinks)
My twenty-first birthday. I was twenty-one.

What happened?

I went to a Bruce Springsteen concert. I sat there for two hours before I realized I was in the wrong teatro. It wasn’t Springsteen.

Then what?

I left that’s what.

So you got up and walked out.

Are you telling it or am I? I bought one of those giant Hershey Bars with almonds and a small Hershey Bar without almonds. And a tootsie roll.

Then what?

Then I ate them.
What about the concert?  
SIDNEY  
The concert?  
ROSE  
You were angry? Mad? Glad? What?  
SIDNEY  
I felt stupid.  
ROSE  
What else?  
SIDNEY  
Show me your spleen. Don’t be mean, jelly bean.  
ROSE  
Answer the question.  
SIDNEY  
I felt very small. Insignificant. New word.  
ROSE  
All individuals cope with feelings of inferiority by stressing compensatory processes.  
SIDNEY  
English, if you don’t mind. The almonds got stuck in my teeth. Everyone was laughing at me. I started to cry. I was hysterical.  
ROSE  
The cause of hysteria relates to the passive sexual experience before puberty. The traumatic seduction. Everyone knows Freud deliberately urinated in his parents’ bedroom when he was seven.  
SIDNEY  
I’m just allergic to chocolate. Don’t make such a big deal.  
ROSE  
I get paid to make a big deal.  
SIDNEY  
My mother said the food you eat a lot of is the food you’re allergic to. I’m allergic to nuts, too, el medico. Walnuts, peanuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans. You name it, if it has a nut in the title, I’m in trouble. Almond butter, peanut butter, all nut butters. And cats
ROSE, Continued
and maybe dogs and...and...I think that’s it. Not dogs. I love love love dogs.
My mother wants a cat. I hate cats. I want a dog. She won’t have one in the house.

SIDNEY
It is the biological factors that give the driving force to the personality through the id. This
source of psychic energy is manifested as the person’s wishes correspond to specific needs.
Pre-dispositions in human personalities refer to the biological history of man as an animal
species. It is necessary to analyze from the structure of the whole to the characteristics of
its constituent parts.

ROSE
I love it when you talk shop. I don’t get it, but I love it.

SIDNEY
You mentioned dogs. Let’s see, Rose, where do I begin?

ROSE
The beginning is always good.

SIDNEY has an idea but hesitates.

ROSE, Continued
Go on, Doctor Kaplan. I’m listening.

SIDNEY
Thank you, Rose. I…

ROSE
Remember, you’re not alone.

SIDNEY
Thank you, Rose.

ROSE
You’re welcome.

SIDNEY
You mentioned dogs.

ROSE
I did?

Somewhere during this exchange of
dialogue, THEY switch seats, so
SIDNEY is in the patient’s chair and
ROSE is in SIDNEY’S chair.
I have always had a particular affinity to animals. When I was younger, I wanted to be a veterinarian. When I watched Lassie on TV, I didn’t identify with the kid, I identified with the dog.

ROSE
You seem different today. Should I make notes?

SIDNEY
No, Rose, just listen. Dogs don’t have to worry about the mundane. Haircuts, lawyers, taxes, tailors, laundry, cooking.

ROSE
Unless they happen to be in show business in which case their agents take care of it.

SIDNEY
A dog accepts he’s a dog. It eats, performs natural functions, sleeps, and feels emotions.

ROSE
Have you noticed how many dogs are working now? Every ad on TV has a dog.

SIDNEY
Just listen, Rose.

ROSE
I’m listening.

SIDNEY
The first transformation took place in Scotland, 1881. A dog, not dead two hours and preserved in a special fluid, was brought to the surgery. Under deep anesthesia, Sir Lancelot Alexander’s pituitary gland was replaced. One hour later, the dog’s testicles replaced the human testes.

ROSE
(Elated) These are words that are positively taboo at home. My mother would have a fit.

SIDNEY
It took fifteen operations to complete the transformation. The technical term is canine trans-incision homeoectomy. Observe.

HE gets down on the floor on hands and knees.

SIDNEY, Continued
Today, they can do it in five ops.
ROSE
(Studying him)
You know, Sid, in that position, with that expression on your face, you look just like a dog.

SIDNEY
Thank you. I take that as a great compliment.

ROSE
That looks like a very comfortable position.

SIDNEY
I feel great. It is common knowledge that upright positions are unnatural. Backaches, feet malformations, and even toothaches are common symptoms. In this position, back pain is non-existent. I feel weightless, self-assured, and not in the least bit tired or hungry.

ROSE
My back always aches, I’m always hungry, and I’m always running to the dentist. Tell me, do they do many of these trans dog things?

SIDNEY
An excellent question. I shall respond with a question. Who do you think won First Prize at that famous dog show in London, England?

ROSE
(After a second, gets his meaning)
R-e-a-l-ly!!!!!!!

SIDNEY
Oh, yes. He wasn’t just any ordinary Scottish Deerhound. Over ten thousand entries and nearly half were trans-incisions. And they only lost one. I shouldn’t even mention it. It was a fluke. A miniature poodle was poisoned backstage.

ROSE
Oh, no. Did it suffer?

SIDNEY
It was quick.

ROSE
Would it be okay if I tried that position?

SIDNEY
Be my guest. It’s a free floor.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes