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Product Code: A0872-SP

# 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

Nothing. Something. Nothing.

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

Same as before. A boxing match. A brown canvas tent. Jay Leno in a metallic blue Chevrolet convertible. I'm lying on a cot. I look like Joan Crawford. Then I woke up. In real life, not the dream.

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...

SIDNEY

You've been watching Adam's Rib again.

ROSE

I love that movie.

SIDNEY

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?

ROSE

Hungry?

SIDNEY

Hungry.

ROSE

*(Thinks)*

My twenty-first birthday. I was twenty-one.

SIDNEY

What happened?

ROSE

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.

SIDNEY

Then what?

ROSE

I left that's what.

SIDNEY

So you got up and walked out.

ROSE

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.

SIDNEY

Then what?

ROSE

Then I ate them.

SIDNEY  
What about the concert?

ROSE  
The concert?

SIDNEY  
You were angry? Mad? Glad? What?

ROSE  
I felt stupid.

SIDNEY  
What else?

ROSE  
Show me your spleen. Don't be mean, jelly bean.

SIDNEY  
Answer the question.

ROSE  
I felt very small. Insignificant. New word.

SIDNEY  
All individuals cope with feelings of inferiority by stressing compensatory processes.

ROSE  
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.

SIDNEY  
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.

ROSE  
I'm just allergic to chocolate. Don't make such a big deal.

SIDNEY  
I get paid to make a big deal.

ROSE  
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.*

SIDNEY

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-l-y!!!!!!!

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.

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