

The setting is a long-term care facility.

PETTYJOHN

Clara, Could you spare a moment, please?

CLARA

Yes, Mrs. Pettyjohn?

PETTYJOHN

Have you woken Mr. Wakefield yet? Oh, that's funny, isn't it? Woken Mr. Wakefield. He shouldn't need any waking, should he?

CLARA

Well, I was going to do him next.

PETTYJOHN

Good. I had a talk with Dorothy, and we decided that he isn't really capable of bathing himself any longer. So would you put him on your bath board, please?

CLARA

Does he know?

PETTYJOHN

I spoke to him a couple of days ago.

CLARA

How did he react?

PETTYJOHN

Didn't say anything. Just kept staring off into space as he so often does.

(Looks at watch.)

There's still time this morning.

CLARA

You mean right now?

PETTYJOHN

Yes. This is his usual bath day, isn't it?

CLARA

I believe so. Okay then.

(She leaves the supervisor's station.)

Shit.

(Walks to MR. WAKEFIELD'S room, enters briskly, turns on the lights, vigorously pulls the curtains open.)

How are we today, Mr. Wakefield?

Time to get up! *(Pulls the covers off him.)*

Don't want to. WAKEFIELD
(Pulls covers back over himself.)

Mr. Wakefield, why don't you want to get up? Why? CLARA

I don't like anyone to tell me when to get up, that's why. And I don't like them to tell me, "do this, do that." WAKEFIELD

Come on , you'll enjoy it once you get up. It's going to be sunny. CLARA

Don't like the sun. WAKEFIELD

And the birds are singing. CLARA

Can hear them from here. WAKEFIELD

Come on, please. CLARA
(Again yanks bedclothes off him. Mr. WAKEFIELD tries to pull them back.)

Have a brother... used to pull me out of bed all the time when we were kids. Never liked him. WAKEFIELD

Now come on, Mr. Wakefield, let's have more cheerful thoughts. Come on. CLARA
(Pause.)

It's time for breakfast. *(Pause.)*

And if we want to have breakfast, we have to get out of bed. *(Pause.)*

And we do want breakfast, don't we? *(Silence.)*

Feeling a little depressed today, are we? *(Cranks up the bed.)*

We don't want people thinking we are lazy, now do we? *(She tries to gently pull him to sit up, but Mr. WAKEFIELD resists.)*

This will make two days in a row.

WAKEFIELD

If you'd let me have an afternoon nap I wouldn't be so sleepy.

CLARA

Mr. Wakefield, that isn't what we do here. Come on.

(With some difficulty she gets Mr. WAKEFIELD out of bed.)

There, that's better. Now here's your dressing gown.

WAKEFIELD

What?!

CLARA

Your dressing gown. Today is your bath day, and I'm going to give you a nice bath.

WAKEFIELD

Don't want a bath.

CLARA

It'll freshen you up.

WAKEFIELD

Had one last week.

CLARA

You want to smell nice for Mrs. Bellamy down the hall, don't you? Here, come on then.

(Mr. WAKEFIELD gets settled in a wheel chair. On the way to the bathroom they pass the supervisor.)

PETTYJOHN

Going to have a nice bath, are we, Mr. Wakefield?

CLARA and Mr. WAKEFIELD proceed.

CLARA

Here we are. Now off with the dressing gown. That's it. Now off with the top. Come on.

WAKEFIELD

I can do the rest now.

CLARA

No, let me help you. The supervisor... Mrs. Pettyjohn explained this to you, didn't she?

(Turns on taps and tests water.)

What is the matter?

WAKEFIELD

I didn't think I would ever have to be helped like this. I don't like it.

CLARA

You'll enjoy it once you get in the water.

WAKEFIELD

I don't need a bath. And I can bathe myself.

CLARA

No, no, it wouldn't be safe for you now. All kinds of accidents can happen in the tub. You could trip and fall—one foot in the tub and one out. Whew! You'd never be the same again. Now let's get you out of those natty-looking pajama pants. There, just step out of them. That's it.

(Helps Mr. WAKEFIELD into the bath.)

Sit forward now and I'll start with your back.

(Beat.)

And another thing, maybe you wouldn't be able to get up from the bath at all, and you'd have to sit there until somebody found you. Water getting colder and colder. A case of frozen assets, eh?

(Beat.)

Let's get those legs straightened out. The warm water will loosen them up. Those muscular legs must have been a great hit with the ladies at one time, eh? That scar on your stomach—surgery or a jealous husband?

(Beat.)

I'll tell you a secret, Mr. Wakefield. I don't really like bathing male residents. Oh, you're all right, but some of the others get quite excited, if you get my drift. Older men, surprisingly, can be quite frisky.

(Beat.)

Okay, I've washed up as far as possible and down as far as possible. Now you wash possible.

(Hands Mr. WAKEFIELD the flannel.)

And don't forget to shampoo.

(Beat.)

You know what they do in Finland when—you know—that happens in the bath? They throw a bucket of ice-water over you. Hey, just kidding, Mr. Wakefield.

WAKEFIELD

I wish you wouldn't talk like that. You say things that make me feel uncomfortable.

CLARA

I'm just trying to cheer you up. Come on, out you get.

(Beat.)

I bet you'll go and brag to all the other men about how nice Mrs. Johnson gave you a bath today.

(Beat.)

Here comes the best part of all—being wrapped up in this big soft towel. You look so snug.

WAKEFIELD

Please don't let them know.

CLARA

Let who know what?

WAKEFIELD

The others. Don't tell them that you gave me a bath. Please.

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