

Joe / Frank

men's must be dredged out of experience and a peasant-like common sense. A man among men.
DOCTOR BAYLISS is nearing forty. A very self-controlled man, an easy talker, but with a whisp of madness that clings even to his self-effacing humor.
AT CURTAIN, JIM is standing at L., staring at the broken tree. He taps a pipe on it, looks through the pipe, feels in his pockets for tobacco, then speaks.

JIM. Where's your tobacco?
KELLER. I think I left it on the table. (JIM goes slowly to table on the arbor at R., finds a pouch, and sits there on the bench, filling his pipe.)
JIM. (A woman rain tonight.)
KELLER. Yeah, right here.
JIM. Paper says so?
KELLER. Then it can't rain.

(FRANK LUBRX enters, from R., through a small space between the poplars. FRANK is thirty-two but balding. A pleasant, opinionated man, uncertain of himself, with a tendency toward peevishness when crossed, but always wanting it pleasant and neighborly. He rather saunters in, leisurely, nothing to do. He does not notice JIM in the arbor. On his greeting, JIM does not bother looking up.)

FRANK. Hello, Frank. What's doin' ?
KELLER. Nothin'. Walkin' off my breakfast. (Looks up at the sky.) That beautiful? Not a cloud.
KELLER. (Looks up.) Yeah, nice.
FRANK. Every Sunday ought to be like this.
KELLER. (Indicating the sections beside him.) Want the paper?
FRANK. What's the difference, it's all bad news. What's today's calamity?
KELLER. I don't know, I don't read the news part any more. It's more interesting in the want ads.
FRANK. Why, you trying to buy something?
KELLER. No, I'm just interested. To see what people want, y'know? For instance, here's a guy is lookin' for two Newfoundland dogs. Now what's he want with two Newfoundland dogs?
FRANK. That is funny.
KELLER. Here's another one. Wanted—Old Dictionaries. High prices paid. Now what's a man going to do with an old dictionary?

FRANK. Why not? Probably a book collector.

KELLER. You mean he'll make a living out of that?

FRANK. Sure, there's a lot of them.

KELLER. (Shakes his head.) All the kind of business goin' on. In my day, either you were a lawyer, or a doctor, or you worked in a shop. Now . . .

FRANK. Well, I was going to be a forester once.

KELLER. Well, that shows you; in my day, there was no such thing. (Scanning the page, sweeping it with his hand.) You look at a page like this you realize how ignorant you are. (Softly, with wonder, as he scans page.) Pss!

FRANK. (Noticing tree.) Hey, what happened to your tree?

KELLER. Ain't that awful? The wind must've got it last night. You heard the wind, didn't you?

FRANK. Yeah, I got a mess in my yard, too. (Goes to tree.) What a pity. (Turns to KELLER.) What'd Kate say?

KELLER. They're all asleep yet. I'm just waiting for her to see it.

FRANK. (Snuck.) You know?—It's funny.

KELLER. What?

FRANK. Larry was born in August. He'd been twenty-seven this month. And his tree blows down.

KELLER. (Touched.) I'm surprised you remember his birthday, Frank. That's nice.

FRANK. Well, I'm working on his horoscope.

KELLER. How can you make him a horoscope? That's for the future, ain't it?

FRANK. Well, what I'm doing is this, see. Larry was reported missing on November 25th, right?

KELLER. Yeah?

FRANK. Well, then, we assume that if he was killed it was on November 25th. Now, what Kate wants . . .

KELLER. Oh, Kate asked you to make a horoscope?

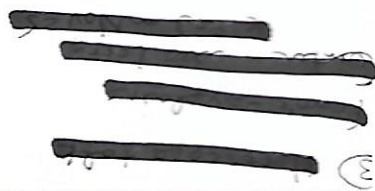
FRANK. Yeah, what she wants to find out is whether November 25th was a favorable day for Larry.

KELLER. What is that, favorable day?

FRANK. Well, a favorable day for a person is a fortunate day, according to his stars. In other words it would be practically impossible for him to have died on his favorable day.

KELLER. Well, was that his favorable day?—November 25th?

FRANK. That's what I'm working on to find out. It takes time! See.



the point is, if November 27th was his favorable day, then it's completely possible he's alive somewhere, because . . . I mean it's possible. *(He notices jim now. jim is looking at him as though at an idiot. To jim—with an uncertain laugh.)* I didn't even see you. KELLER. *(To jim.)* Is he talkin' sense? jim. Him? He's all right. He's just completely out of his mind, that's all. FRANK. *(Feesed.)* The trouble with you is, you don't believe in anything. jim. And your trouble is that you believe in anything! You didn't see my kid this morning, did you? FRANK. No. KELLER. Imagine? He walked off with his thermometer. Right out of his bag. jim. *(Gets up.)* What a problem. One look at a girl and he takes her temperature. *(Goes to driveway, looks upstage toward street.)* FRANK. That boy's going to be a real doctor; he's smart. jim. Over my dead body he'll be a doctor. A good beginning, too. FRANK. Why? It's an honorable profession. jim. *(Looks at him steadily.)* Frank, will you stop talking like a civics book? *(KELLER laughs.)* FRANK. Why, I saw a movie a couple of weeks ago, reminded me of you. There was a doctor in that picture . . . KELLER. Don Amecchi! FRANK. I think it was, yeah. And he worked in his basement discussing things. That's what you ought to do; you could help humanity, instead of . . . jim. I would love to help humanity on a Warner Brothers salary. KELLER. *(Points at him, laughing.)* That's very good, jim. jim. *(Looks toward house.)* Well, where's the beautiful girl was supposed to be here? FRANK. *(Excited.)* Annie came? KELLER. Sure, sleepin' upstairs. We picked her up on the one o'clock train last night. Wonderful thing. Girl leaves here, a scrawny kid. Couple of years go by, she's a regular woman. Hardly recognized her, and she was running in and out of this yard all her life. That was a very happy family used to live in your house, jim. jim. Like to meet her. The block can use a pretty girl. In the whole neighborhood there's not a damned thing to look at. *(Enter ANNE, jim's wife, from r. She is rounding forty, an overweight woman)*

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