

A Lumberjack, a Eunuch, and a Pope

Each man lives many lives.

A comedy by James Hutchison

Also available from www.jameshutchison.ca

Under the Mistletoe *Not every romantic evening goes as planned.*

Two couples in their late fifties, one long time friends and the other having just met, try to navigate the tricky road of love, sex and desire while spending a romantic night in the Christmas Themed Suites at the Prairie Dog Inn.

Two Act Romantic Comedy 1M, 1W or 2M, 2W Single Set, 120 minutes

What the Dickens! *Even Scrooge got a second chance.*

When Marty Fisher gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha and the actor playing Scrooge shows up drunk Marty has to scramble to save the opening night production of a Christmas Carol and his engagement to his fiancée Tami.

Two Act Comedy, 6M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

A Christmas Carol – Two versions available -

When Scrooge's nephew Fred finds some letters Scrooge had written to his sister Fan a long time ago the past is unlocked, and Scrooge learns how his fear of poverty and pursuit of wealth have cost him a chance for love and genuine happiness.

CAST OF 10+ - Two Act Drama, 6M, 4W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

CAST OF 25+ - Two Act Drama, 15M, 10W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Heart of Stone: A Jessica Quinn Mystery *Trusting the wrong person can be deadly.*

When Jessica Quinn uncovers the truth about her father's killer and the truth behind a woman claiming to be the long-lost daughter of her client Mary McConnell more than one person ends up dead.

Two Act Mystery, 7M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Stories from Langford *Every town has its secrets.*

Six characters from Langford tell stories from their lives: stories about, jealousy, revenge, love and forgiveness.

Two Act Drama, 1M, 1W, Simple settings, 120 Minutes

Death and the Psychiatrist *Even Death Could Use a Friend*

Feeling depressed about having a job where no one likes him Death goes into therapy with Dr. Thompson in order to help him cope with his guilt.

One Act Comedy, 3M, or 2M, 1W, Single Set, 50 Minutes

Plus, other One Acts and 10 Minute Plays including The Blood of a Thousand Chickens, 500 bucks and a pack of smokes, and Elvis is Dead.

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A Lumberjack, a Eunuch, and a Pope premiered at the Short+Sweet South India Play Festival in Chennai India in 2016. It was produced at the RCP One Act Play Festival in Southfield, Michigan, USA and has been short listed for several other festivals including The Pint Sized Play Festival in Tenby Wales and the Short+Sweet Sydney Play Festival in Sydney Australia. The play was originally written in 2014 and was workshopped through The Alberta Playwrights Network. This version of the play was rewritten and published in September 2020.

The Playwright

James Hutchison writes comedies, dramas, and mysteries. He also interviews other playwrights, actors, and directors about the business and creative aspects of theatre, film, and television. You can read his interviews on his blog and download his plays at www.jameshutchison.ca.

A Lumberjack, a Eunuch, and a Pope: Each man lives many lives.

A Comedy in Ten Minutes

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CAST of CHARACTERS

Processing Clerk Division 86 - a no-nonsense bureaucrat

William Kensington the Third - a middle-aged man of wealth and entitlement

SETTING

A Busy and Depressing Waiting Room

TIME

2020

STORY OF THE PLAY

William Kensington the Third has died without learning the true meaning of life and must plead his case for another chance or be returned to earth as a slug.

For Niha

A Lumberjack, a Eunuch, and a Pope

SCENE: WAITING ROOM

Setting: *Waiting room*

At Rise: *A CLERK enters with a file folder and a clip board. KENSINGTON dressed in a hospital gown is pacing back and forth holding a ticket.*

CLERK: Now serving number 1 dash 314 dash 115 dash 71229 dash 3.

KENSINGTON: Well it's about bloody time. Do you know how long you've kept me waiting out here? It's outrageous!

CLERK: Well it is a busy day. Plenty of people to process. You folks just don't seem to take these pandemics very seriously, do you? Normally we would have processed you in an hour, but we're experiencing higher than expected volumes. Of course, this is nothing compared to the 1300s and the Black Death.

KENSINGTON: What the devil are you talking about? Do you have any idea who I am?

CLERK: Oh yes. You're 1 dash 314 dash 115 dash 71229 dash 3.

KENSINGTON: I am William Kensington the Third.

CLERK: I remember your father and your grandfather. Coal barons weren't they. Did you know over two hundred men, women, and children died in those mines and coal pits creating the wealth that your father passed on to you.

KENSINGTON: Nonsense. Those mines were safe and that's a lie. I demand to see your boss, or I'll see you fired and tossed out on your ass quicker than you can say peel me a grape. I paid for a private room, and I'm not going to wait around here any longer.

CLERK: You have no choice in the matter Mr. Kensington. It all depends on your evaluation.

KENSINGTON: What evaluation?

CLERK: Didn't you watch the orientation video. It's very good. Orson Welles did the narration.

KENSINGTON: What on earth are you talking about? Orson Welles is dead.

CLERK: Of course, you were under anaesthesia?

KENSINGTON: I wouldn't want my appendix taken out any other way.

CLERK: (Laughs) You must have arrived unconscious and during the shift change.

KENSINGTON: What the hell are you talking about?

CLERK: You're dead Mr. Kensington. (Referring to file) You died of complications on the operating table at three minutes and thirty-eight seconds past seven this morning. Undiagnosed heart condition I'm afraid.

KENSINGTON: That's ridiculous. How could I be speaking to you if I was dead? Clearly this is nothing more than a dream and I'll wake up in my hospital bed and everything will be fine.

CLERK: This is no dream.

KENSINGTON: Of course, it is. What else could it be? I mean really, would the afterlife look so drab and dreary? You need to get an interior decorator in here and add some gold leaf. That will brighten things up.

CLERK: Gold leaf? I think not. Just what is the afterlife supposed to look like Mr. Kensington? The land of OZ? Should we have a yellow brick road leading you to your just reward with a chorus of winged munchkins flying about playing harps and singing silly songs?

KENSINGTON: Good Lord, no. I hate munchkins. But trust me – I owned a chain of casinos in Macau – and you need to add some sizzle.

CLERK: Would you rather go for something more whimsical like Willie Wonka's chocolate factory? Would that suit you? A river of chocolate and a chorus of oompa loompas to serenade you as you gobbled down an endless feast of chocolate cake and fudge.

KENSINGTON: That's sounds horrible. I'm not a fan of cute. Have you ever been to Disneyland? Horrible place. Grown people dressed as chipmunks. It's a nightmare.

CLERK: You don't like Disneyland?

KENSINGTON: Well one man's heaven is another man's hell.

CLERK: I'll keep that in mind.

KENSINGTON: This isn't hell, is it? You're not a demon, are you?

CLERK: Who said I was a demon?

KENSINGTON: You certainly don't act like an angel.

CLERK: There are no such things as angels and demons Mr. Kensington. I'm a Processing Clerk Division 86. We deal with the difficult cases.

KENSINGTON: And I'm a difficult case. That's ridiculous. I'm a captain of industry. One of the smartest men alive. A leader of the community. I've got wits – and smarts – and money. I'm Einstein, Lincoln, and Mark Twain all rolled into one.

CLERK: Einstein, Lincoln, and Twain might have a different opinion about that. And regardless of your claim to be smart it would appear that you have failed once again to have discovered the true meaning of life.

KENSINGTON: The true meaning of life – that's easy – to make every moment count. I read that on a Hallmark Card.

CLERK: As wise as the good folks are at Hallmark that's not the right answer. Would you like to try again?

KENSINGTON: Sure. Love thy neighbour.

CLERK: No.

KENSINGTON: Put on a happy face.

CLERK: Really?

KENSINGTON: Fine then. Truth. Money makes the world go round?

CLERK: Not even close and considering the fact that you've already had forty-nine lives to figure out the meaning of life I don't see much point in letting you try again.

KENSINGTON: Try again?

CLERK looking in file.

CLERK: I mean just look at this – your life as William Kensington the Third provided you with all the advantages in the world. Born into a rich family in a wealthy country. Well educated with access to the most prestigious schools and networking opportunities available. You had a devoted and loving wife. Three healthy children. And you drove a Lamborghini.

KENSINGTON: Yes, well you work hard and stay focused and success will come your way. Nobody did me any favours – I can tell you that.

CLERK: What about that enormous trust fund, your daddy left you? Didn't that help?

KENSINGTON: Having money and position had nothing to do with my success or accomplishments.

CLERK: It says your Casino's went bankrupt. How do you bankrupt a Casino? You had affairs, cheated your business partners, and used your money and position only to satisfy your own lust for power and pleasure and to punish others.

KENSINGTON: Those casinos had faulty plumbing which was the contractors' fault not mine and as far as the women go when you're rich and powerful women just make themselves available. Why shouldn't I take advantage of those situations.

CLERK: I think considering the disaster you made of your last life the only suitable thing to do is to send you back as one of the lower life forms this time. How would you like to be a sponge?

KENSINGTON: A sponge!

CLERK: Yes. What's wrong with a sponge? They are an essential part of the eco system.

KENSINGTON: I don't want to be a sponge.

CLERK: Oh. How about a slug, then?

KENSINGTON: A slug.

CLERK: Yes, a slug. You failed to evolve on a spiritual level, and now it's time to give another soul a chance.

KENSINGTON: Will I still be able to drive a Lamborghini?

CLERK: Slugs don't drive Lamborghini's Mr. Kensington. I'm afraid you'll have to satisfy yourself with crawling around a garden somewhere munching on radishes and eating cabbages.

KENSINGTON: This is absolutely outrageous! I demand you give me another chance. Clearly you made things too easy for me. I mean don't you have to suffer in order to gain spiritual knowledge. Tell you what, why don't you send me back to some place that doesn't have all the opportunities and advantages of my last life and I'll try again. I could always drive a Ferrari instead of a Lamborghini.

CLERK: I'd hardly call that a disadvantage.

KENSINGTON: Then send me back as a farmer. I imagine a farmer has a challenging life.

CLERK: You've been a farmer. And not a terribly good or moral one either.

KENSINGTON: I don't remember that.

CLERK: That's because you have no knowledge of your previous lives. You begin each life with a clean slate and an empty mind. Some people's minds remain empty their entire lives.

KENSINGTON: Alright then how about a night watchman. That's a depressing job.

CLERK: Mr. Kensington you have been a farmer, a night watchman, a telephone solicitor, a stone mason, a short-order cook, a lobster fisherman, a financial loans officer, a chimney sweep, a lawyer, a reporter, a cab driver, a poet, a French chef, a male prostitute, an English professor, a writer, a massage therapist, a milkman, a cheese maker, a plumber, a cardiologist, an elementary school teacher, a coal miner, a lighthouse keeper, a theatre critic, a clown, a harmonica player, an insurance salesman, a hair dresser, a barista, a yoga instructor, a locksmith, a jockey, a politician, a mule skinner, a mime, an accountant, a dentist, a black smith, a pet groomer, a clock maker, an interior designer, a web developer, a pick pocket, a policeman, an actor, a lumberjack, a eunuch, and a Pope.

KENSINGTON: Right. So, what you're telling me is I haven't been a waiter.

CLERK: No! What I'm telling you is that if you haven't figured out the true meaning of life in any of these previous incarnations - why in the name of all that is holy would you think being a waiter would lead to a different result?

KENSINGTON: I'd say the odds are in my favour, wouldn't you? I mean, if you were a betting man wouldn't you think the chances of me figuring out the meaning of life – next time – would be pretty high.

CLERK: In all of those previous lives, whether rich or poor, man or woman, you have swindled or cheated or lied to get what you want without any consideration for the feelings of others.

KENSINGTON: That's because life's all about winning. Beating the other guy. Defeating the enemy. That's how you build fortunes and empires.

CLERK: That's a very ugly view of life Mr. Kensington.

KENSINGTON: You don't get to the top of the food chain by being nice. No, nature teaches us that only the strong survive.

CLERK: You are a compulsive liar and a cheater. You measure all things from one perspective. Your own. You are responsible for causing grief and misery to others. You care only about satisfying your needs and desires. You have shown no compassion, whatsoever. Why should we show you compassion now?

KENSINGTON: Ha ha ha.

CLERK: What's so funny?

KENSINGTON: That's it, isn't it?

CLERK: What's it?

KENSINGTON: The meaning of life: compassion.

CLERK: Oh, come now, would it really be that simple? I don't think so.

KENSINGTON: Of course, it is. There you go. Done. The meaning of life is compassion.

CLERK: Fiddlesticks.

KENSINGTON: So, I'm right.

CLERK: Unfortunately, yes.

KENSINGTON: You're not so compassionate yourself you know. You seem to get a real kick out of making us difficult cases squirm. So, what happens now?

CLERK: Now? Now, you get your just reward.

KENSINGTON: Does it include a Bugatti?

The CLERK looks through her file and then selects an envelope.

CLERK: No, you're going to – Disneyland. You'll have to settle for a ride on the monorail.

The CLERK hands KENSINGTON the envelope.

KENSINGTON: Disneyland?

CLERK: Yes. It's the happiest place on earth why wouldn't it be the happiest place after death?

KENSINGTON: I won't put up with this. I'd rather be a slug.

CLERK: Sorry.

KENSINGTON: Is the sponge option still available?

CLERK: Too late for that I'm afraid.

KENSINGTON: Come on – an eternity in Disneyland – this is going to be hell.

KENSINGTON exits.

CLERK: Well one man's heaven is another man's hell. Be sure and say hi to Mickey for me.

CURTAIN