

Old Folks Rock: Opus 88

Allan Bates





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OPUS 88—THEME AND VARIATIONS
or
SHUFFLEBOARD ANYONE?
(Still Champions)

A One-Act Play

by

Allan Bates

CAST

LUCY: A tough old dame.

FRANK: A tough old dude.

JERRY: An attendant in the rehab home. Not the best on the staff.

Place

A nearby rehab center, represented by two rocking chairs...and by the audience.

Time

Various moments in the ongoing now.

Running time: About 20 minutes.

Each scene has a title. Before each scene Jerry will place placards in sight and move the rocking chairs into position.

Old Folks Rock is a series of three plays, *Thief!*, *Favorite Cousins*, and *Opus 88*. They can be done together or each play can also stand alone.

If you are continuing from *Thief!* and *Favorite Cousins*, Henry in *Thief!* addresses the audience.

HENRY: We don't have any furniture to take off or bring on...except for a couple of rocking chairs. So this isn't really an intermission. It's just a very short break. But if you need go out because you didn't go when I told you it was a good idea, you can scoot out now and come back **real** fast.

Intermission

HENRY: Now we're all in a rehab center. It's not one of those really fancy places where they have a nice library room with lots of good books and a well-heated swimming pool and a beautician. Here there's no lovely young lady playing the piano while everyone dines on delicious meals that the chef prepares according to their choice. But this place has plenty of television sets. The food is pretty good. And a couple of times a week a bus comes to take you out to the nearby park in good weather, or to Walmart, or out for an ice cream sundae. And every now and then three or four little girls who are Miss Scott's piano students come to play "Moonlight Sonata" or "Claire de Lune" or "Happy Birthday" when it's someone's birthday. Here we meet Lucy and Frank. They're our oldest old folks. Sometimes, young folk, like those who are only in their fifties or sixties, are a nuisance. So now we just have Lucy and Frank. Let's look on while they rock. Oh yeah, don't take Lucy and Frank too seriously when they fuss about something. Don't you fuss sometimes too?

He blows the audience a kiss and exits.

OPUS 88—THE THEME

LUCY and FRANK are in the rocking chairs removed from each other about as far as the playing area permits. Both are facing Down Stage. Each has a section of the newspaper. She is silently fussing at a crossword puzzle. He is reading sports news but having trouble staying awake. This goes on for quite a while. Then the point of her pencil breaks.

She rises stiffly and goes to the audience, borrows a pencil, returns, and resumes her crossword puzzle. Finally, she calls over to FRANK.

LUCY: Hey! You!

(No response)

LUCY: Hey!

FRANK: Huh?

LUCY: What's a six-letter word beginning with C H?

FRANK: What?

LUCY: A six-letter word beginning with C H!

FRANK: Who cares? Why should anyone care?

LUCY: I care. I need a six-letter word beginning with C H for my crossword puzzle.

FRANK: Chocolate.

(LUCY counts on her fingers. Then disgusted)

LUCY: Chocolate! God Almighty needs to come down here like a bolt of lightning to make you wake up and teach you how to count!

FRANK: I can count. 17-14. The U lost 17-14.

LUCY: What?

FRANK: Last Saturday. Here's the whole story.

LUCY: *(shouting)* Harry! Come get this old fool out of here. This is my special place.

(They exit)

OPUS 88—HUMPH!

Once again the two are sitting far away from each other facing DS. Long silence. Occasionally, FRANK sneaks a glance over toward LUCY. She glances back toward him only enough to know that he is glancing at her. During this, each takes time to clear glasses before glancing. Finally:

LUCY: Humph.

FRANK: Humph what?

LUCY: Humph nothing. What makes you think I was humphing to you?

FRANK: There's no one else here to humph to.

LUCY: There is too. There's all those people right over there. Them. Playing cards, watching TV, talking about whether tonight's chicken will be as good as last night's pork chops. Them! So I can humph whoever I want to humph.

FRANK: They're there. You're here. And I'm here. You were humphing me.

LUCY: You're trying to strike up a conversation, aren't you?

FRANK: You spoke first. You said humph.

Long pause, during which LUCY emphatically folds her arms.

LUCY: This is the fourth day you had Harry bring you here to my spot.

FRANK: Jerry.

LUCY: Jerry who?

FRANK: Not Harry. Jerry. Jerry brings me here.

LUCY: Harry. Jerry. Who cares?

FRANK: Jerry probably cares. Anyway, this is the third day.

LUCY: Fourth. He put you over there the first day.

FRANK: So you noticed! Ha!

LUCY: Ha yourself! One. Two. Three. Four. One day over there and three days over here to near me. Practically next to me. You think I think that's an accident? No sir. That doesn't look like an accident to me.

FRANK: It isn't an accident.

LUCY: Then why does he do it?

FRANK: Chocolates.

LUCY: Chocolates?

FRANK: Chocolates. Jerry brings me out here every day because I bribe him with a chocolate. A chocolate every day.

LUCY: He takes bribes? God will show him what the world is like if he takes bribes.

FRANK: He takes bribes.

LUCY: He could be fired for that. Taking bribes like that.

FRANK: Good help is hard to find.

LUCY: Harry isn't good help.

FRANK: Jerry.

LUCY: Who cares?

FRANK: Jerry probably cares.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!