

THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

THE ANNIVERSARY

by
Madeleine Huxtable
And
Steve Lockley

April 2010
Copyright Madeleine Huxtable/Steve Lockley
huxtable1@adam.com.au
dslock@adam.com.au

1 EXT. BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 1

A modest, brick house with an immaculate garden. GERTRUDE, a timid woman, 60+, long grey hair tied back into a bun, takes the junk mail out of the letter box and picks up the morning paper off the lawn as she goes inside the house.

2 INT. FRONT DOOR BROWN RESIDENCE 2

Ticking clocks can be heard as Gertrude, the daily newspaper under her arm, shuts the front door and heads for the kitchen. As she walks, she glances through the junk mail. Suddenly, she stops dead. She looks at a flyer for a jewellery store advertising a diamond sale. She folds it up and puts it in her apron pocket.

3 INT. KITCHEN BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 3

A large clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 7.00 am. A calendar shows that it is Monday. There is a large red circle around Wednesday with "Our Anniversary" written next to it. GERTRUDE stands on a chair and moves the minute hand back by 1 minute.

There is a loaf of bread, an opened tin of tuna and a bowl of lettuce on the table. She makes two sandwiches, wraps them in film-wrap and places them inside a lunch box. She adds a small cake and a banana and closes the lid. She places the lunch box inside a leather brief case on the sideboard.

The clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 7.15 am. She places two eggs into a saucepan and sets the timer for 5 minutes, places two pieces of bread in the toaster and turns on the electric kettle. She takes the flyer from her apron pocket and looks longingly at it again. She looks at the ringed date on the calendar and again at the flyer. She looks excited, and quickly inserts it into the folded newspaper.

The clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 7.20 am. The timer bell rings. She places the daily newspaper and a breakfast of two boiled eggs, strips of toast, and a cup of strong tea on the table. KENNETH, her husband (a tall, thin man 60+, greying comb-over, glasses) enters. He sits down in front of the food and picks up the spoon next to the plate. It hovers for a second and then drops to crack the top of the egg. He nods in approval and begins eating. He opens the newspaper, sees the flyer and pushes it to one side. It flutters to the floor. Gertrude picks it up and puts it in her apron pocket.

The clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 7.30 am Gertrude stands by the sideboard holding the brief case.

Kenneth checks the kitchen clock against his fob watch and reaches up to adjust it. He smiles at Gertrude with self satisfaction. He reaches for his briefcase, kisses Gertrude on the cheek and leaves the room.

4 INT/EXT. LOUNGE BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 4

Gertrude watches Kenneth walk across the front lawn and down the road.

5 EXT. BUS STOP- DAY 5

Kenneth stands at the bus stop with the usual people. He checks his watch as the bus arrives.

6 INT. OFFICE- MORNING 6

Kenneth gets out of a lift into an office area.

7 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION- MORNING 7

Kenneth places his brief case on his desk and sits at his work station. A photo of Gertrude sits next to his computer. Files sit in neat trays near a phone. He turns the calendar page over to show today's page.

8 INT. OFFICE LUNCHROOM - DAY 8

Kenneth enters the lunch room where a large clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 12.00 Noon. Kenneth checks the wall clock with his fob watch. Happy that they agree, he sits at the table and opens his lunch box. A MAN, mid 30s wearing a suit finishes his lunch and checks his watch. The Man gets up and walks toward the door. Kenneth and the Man slightly acknowledge each other as the Man leaves the room.

9 INT KITCHEN BROWN RESIDENCE NIGHT 9

The clock on the wall ticks loudly. Gertrude and Kenneth sit quietly at the kitchen table eating dinner. On the flyer, Gertrude has put a pencilled circle around a picture of a diamond ring and it sits next to Kenneth's plate but he ignores it all through dinner. Gertrude scowls and puts it back in her apron pocket.

10 INT. LOUNGE ROOM BROWN RESIDENCE - EVENING 10

The walls are decorated with various ticking clocks and there are several framed photographs of the two of them, all in front of or next to clocks. In each photo Kenneth looks happy and Gertrude looks miserable.

Gertrude sits in a lounge chair reading a magazine. The page is open showing a series of diamond rings and other jewellery. Kenneth is repairing a clock. It begins to tick. Kenneth listens and smiles with satisfaction. He gestures to Gertrude who smiles, acknowledging the victory.

11 INT. BEDROOM BROWN RESIDENCE - NIGHT 11

The clock on the dresser ticks loudly. It reads 11:00 pm. Kenneth's fob watch on the dresser also reads 11:00pm. Kenneth lies alongside Gertrude who has ear plugs in both ears and is sound asleep.

12 INT. FRONT DOOR BROWN RESIDENCE - DAY 12

Gertrude, the daily newspaper under her arm, shuts the front door and heads for the kitchen. She glances through the junk mail and finds another flyer advertising the diamond ring. She now has two flyers.

13 INT. KITCHEN BROWN RESIDENCE 13

The clock on the wall ticks loudly. It reads 7.20 am. Kenneth enters. He drapes his suit coat on the back of his chair and sits down. Gertrude has placed a flyer inside the newspaper and nonchalantly places the other flyer in his coat pocket. Kenneth picks up the spoon next to the plate, it hovers for a second and then drops to crack the top of the egg. He nods in approval and begins eating. He opens the newspaper and sees the flyer. He looks at it this time; he's seen this somewhere before, but he moves it aside. Gertrude looks disappointed.

Gertrude stands by the sideboard holding the brief case. Kenneth checks the kitchen clock against his fob watch and reaches up to adjust it. While his back is turned, Gertrude puts the discarded flyer inside his brief case.

14 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION - MORNING 14

Kenneth places his brief case on his desk and sits at his work station. A photo of Gertrude sits next to his computer. Files sit in neat trays near a phone. He turns the calendar page over to show today's page.

He finds the flyer in his briefcase and puts it on his desk, slightly puzzled. He looks at it for a second. His face shows slight recall, but then he throws it toward the bin. The flyer misses the bin and lies on the floor.

15 INT. OFFICE LUNCHROOM - MORNING 15

Kenneth makes himself a cup of tea. The Man taps him on the shoulder and points to Kenneth's shoe. Kenneth looks down. The flyer is stuck to the sole of his shoe.

16 INT. OFFICE - MORNING 16

Kenneth is walking through the office looking at the flyer and drinking his tea.

17 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION - MORNING 17

Kenneth screws up the flyer and tosses it toward the wastepaper basket. It misses and lands on the floor. He tosses it again but it bounces back at his feet. He picks it up and smooths it out. He looks at Gertrude in the photograph and hurries to the lift.

18 EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING 18

Kenneth bends down to admire the rings in a jewellery shop window. He turns his head and the smile on his face shows he has seen something great. Kenneth enters a jewellery store.

19 INT. BEDROOM BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 19

Kenneth and Gertrude lie in bed. They exchange gifts. Kenneth smiles as he opens his gift of cuff-links in the shape of little clocks.

He hands her a gift bag with a jeweller's logo on it. Gertrude smiles knowingly. She draws out a velvet box and flips the lid. It's a wrist-watch.

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Gertrude picks up the clock and beats Kenneth over the head with it until it stops ticking and he stops breathing.

PRESENT:

Unaware of her feelings he leaves the room and the shower can be heard. Gertrude sees Kenneth's fob watch on the dresser and scowls.

- 20 INT. BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 20
- Gertrude walks quickly throughout the house systematically changing every clock back by 15 minutes, except the clock in the kitchen. This one she adjusts by 16 minutes.
- 21 INT. KITCHEN BROWN RESIDENCE - MORNING 21
- Gertrude stands by the sideboard holding the brief case, a dour look on her face. Kenneth checks the kitchen clock against his fob watch and reaches up to adjust it. He smiles at Gertrude with self satisfaction. He reaches for the brief case, kisses her on the cheek and leaves the room.
- 22 EXT. BUS STOP- MORNING 22
- Kenneth stands at the bus stop. He is alone. He checks his watch and looks up and down the street looking for the bus.
- 23 INT. OFFICE - MORNING 23
- The lift doors open and Kenneth enters at his floor. As he walks out the BOSS walks past pointing at his own watch. Kenneth scurries to his work station. He checks his diary. He has a meeting scheduled for 9.00 am. He checks his fob watch it reads 8.45. He smiles and sits down to relax. A fellow employee taps him on the shoulder and then taps his own watch. He smiles and acknowledges the employee. He gives a puzzled shrug to himself and checks his fob watch again.
- 24 INT. OFFICE LUNCHROOM- MORNING 24
- Kenneth makes himself a cup of tea.
- 25 INT. OFFICE- MORNING 25
- Kenneth slowly gathers folders from his desk and walks up the corridor to the meeting room.
- 26 INT. OFFICE BOARDROOM- DAY 26
- Kenneth opens the door and enters the room to see everybody already seated and the meeting in full swing. The boss at the head of the table frowns and points at his watch. The OTHERS stare at him.

27 INT. OFFICE- DAY

27

Kenneth sits at his work station, he is outwardly stressed and puzzled. He takes out his fob watch and stares at it. He shakes it, puts it to his ear, shakes it again. The Man walks past and Kenneth stops him and checks the time on his watch. Kenneth is really puzzled. He stands up and looks across the room at the office clock. He gives a puzzled frown. He looks at the photo of Gertrude on his desk. He picks up the phone and dials.

TALKING CLOCK [O.S]

At the third stroke the time is
11.25 am.

Kenneth sits bewildered and pushes his hands into his pockets in deep thought. He pulls out the flyer with a large black texta ring around the diamond ring. He looks at the photo of Gertrude on his desk. Gertrude's picture morphs into her giving him a very angry double finger. The penny drops.

28 INT. LOUNGE BROWN RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

28

The clock on the mantle ticks loudly as Gertrude dusts the shelves. She glares at the clock and growls, angry. Loud ticking consumes her mind. It gets louder and louder until she can stand it no longer. She heaves the clock over her head with two hands and smashes it onto the floor. It makes her feel good. She looks around the room - she can still hear ticking. She lifts the clock that Kenneth has been painstakingly repairing and chucks it against the wall. It breaks into pieces. She scoops all the photographs off the table onto the floor. Now there is the beginning of a pile in the middle of the carpet. She can still hear ticking.

She races from room to room collecting as many clocks as she can carry and tosses them on top of the pile. Gertrude has lost the plot. Her hair has become loose and hangs in strands over her face, giving her a ghoulish appearance.

29 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION - DAY

29

Kenneth opens his lunch box exposing his lunch. He suspiciously pokes his banana, then he smells it.

30 INT. GARDEN SHED- AFTERNOON

30

Gertrude rummages through the garden shed. She grabs an axe from the wall.

31 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION- DAY 31

Kenneth opens his sandwich slowly peering inside it as if it will explode. He lowers his brow, slightly puzzled, and then sighs with relief that it is normal. Kenneth takes a big bite of his sandwich.

32 INT. LOUNGE ROOM BROWN RESIDENCE- AFTERNOON 32

Gertrude is smashing the clocks that she has piled in the middle of the floor, with the axe. The frenzy slows until she is calm.

Solitary ticking can be heard. She turns her head dementedly, a murderous look in her eyes. She stalks the ticking like a hound would a scent.

33 INT. OFFICE WORK STATION- DAY 33

Kenneth whips out the Yellow Pages and runs his fingers down the page looking for a florist. He writes down the telephone number. He then turns to the page displaying jewellers. His finger stops and taps an advert.

34 INT. HALL/LOUNGE ROOM BROWN RESIDENCE - DAY 34

Gertrude finds where the ticking is coming from - the grandfather clock. She drags it down the hallway as if it were a corpse and pushes it on top of the pile. She looks around for the axe but can't find it. She punches out the glass at the front and pulls the arms off the clock face.

There is complete silence. Gertrude sits in among the destroyed clocks, looking totally demented.

Out of the corner of her eye she sees a flash of someone go past the front window. Was it Kenneth? She rips the pendulum out of the clock and stalks the front door. She flings it open and swings the pendulum until a dull thud can be heard followed by a blood spray across her face.

35 EXT. BROWN RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON 35

The dead body of the flower delivery man falls backward onto the ground, the pendulum buried deep into his face. A basket of flowers falls from his hands. Gertrude walks out and stands over him, shocked. She looks up to see Kenneth walking up the garden path holding a jeweller's gift bag. He assesses the situation and picks up the flowers.

KENNETH
Happy Anniversary.