

### Excerpt from “The Custodian”

Suddenly the swishing of the mop stopped. The custodian took off his checkered derby cap and placed it under his arm wiping off the sweat from his brow.

“She’s gone.” He announced to the silence.

The voice of Billie Holiday began to wail out “The Very Thought of You,” as Mr. Harris came to his door dressed in his pajamas and a robe. Mrs. O’Hara exited her room wearing bright red lipstick and a necklace made up of cubic zirconias. The jewelry caught the dim light in the hallway. Her long robe swayed around her delicate slippers like an evening gown. Mr. Harris walked out and bowed in front of her as the music played. He took her in his arms, and they began to waltz around the hallway spinning in circles as the custodian looked on.

The custodian then moved towards Mrs. Garcia’s room. He entered her room and carefully removed the IV from her arm. She got up and walked over to her wooden chest and took out a pair of worn pink ballet slippers. She gracefully leaned down and placed them carefully on her feet. She combed her long gray locks into a bun in the back of her head and moved out into the open corridor. She placed herself in the middle of the room and began to gracefully spin and leap as Mr. Harris and Mrs. O’Hara danced around her.

The group suddenly stopped as a roar of music came out of Mr. Gleason’s room. He exited his room playing his trumpet in a grand execution of “The Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B.” Mr. Harris and Mrs. O’Hara swayed to the music like a couple of teenagers.

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