

TIMOTHY MANN SYNDROME

By Jules Tasca

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CAST:

TIMOTHY MANN – *an old gentleman*

DR. DELORA – *a young psychiatrist, either male or female*

SETTING: *Dr. Delora's office*

AT RISE: *DR. DELORA sits at desk. The intercom buzzes. DR. DELORA picks up the telephone.*

DOCTOR: Yes...Josey...Yes, send Mr. Mann in...no...there's no time for anyone else today...no...I've got the clinic this afternoon and a psychiatric association meeting this evening... no... They'll have to schedule another time...no...no, there's no time... Mr. Mann will be the last... **(DR. DELORA hangs up. After a beat, SHE looks at her watch and sighs. TIMOTHY MANN enters.)**
Mr. Mann...

TIM: Tim.

DOCTOR: Doctor Delora...pleased to meet you.

TIM: I told them at the hospital, I'm not crazy. I told the orderly who brought me here I'm not crazy. And I'm telling you...the shrinks at the hospital can't do anything. You think you can?

DOCTOR: I'm just going to chat with you.

TIM: Are you some kind of specialist?

DOCTOR: I'm a psychiatrist, and a colleague of mine at the hospital told me about you and I asked if I could see you.

TIM: Because this is such an unusual case? Yeah, and they can't do anything at the hospital. They just think I'm ill.

DOCTOR: And you're not?

TIM: Do I look sick to you?

DOCTOR: Then why don't you sign yourself out?

TIM: Because, Doctor, because I'm...I'm afraid to be with nobody. You have my records right there. Read them.

DOCTOR: I did. But, I'd like to hear it from you. How long have you been in the hospital?

TIM: How long? Who can say about time? I mean to be definite. I feel as if I've been there forever, but that's just an expression – forever – It's an abstraction...forever...endless time.

DOCTOR: The records say you've been in for...

TIM: I thought you wanted to hear from me...I've been in the hospital for a few weeks.

DOCTOR: The records say two years.

TIM: They don't have my wristwatch, Doctor.

DOCTOR: All right, Tim, tell me. What's troubling you?

TIM: How many times must I tell it? I told them all, and what do they do? They give me little pink pills. Pink pills that get into your blood and swim through you. They breast stroke by my eyes and brush a haze over them. The pink pills are angels sent to slow me down...slow me...down...

DOCTOR: It's a mild tranquilizer to calm you.

TIM: How could I calm down?

DOCTOR: What is it? Tell me. What troubles do you have? And when did they all start?

TIM: When? When? It was the stupid watch.

DOCTOR: The watch?

TIM: Yes, the cursed wristwatch! I...I...I was at work one day.

DOCTOR: When was this?

TIM: When? When? Doctor, don't ask when. Life is a jumble jar of months and years.

DOCTOR: When?

TIM: Okay...It...was...It was one day...yes; it was one day...in...in winter...Some winter. At work...I looked at my watch. It read five o'clock. I put my papers in my brief case. I...yes...I rushed out the door to make my 5:15 appointment...my boss, Mr. Marvel, stopped me. "Tim", he said, "where are you going at 4:00?" I said, "It's five o'clock." He said, "It's not even four yet." I looked at his watch and it was five minutes to four. Doctor, I had a good watch. A *Rolex*. I returned to my office and examined the watch, and I noticed that the second hand kept speeding up.

DOCTOR: The second hand?

TIM: Speeded up...yes...I ran over to my 5:15 appointment, finalizing a deal on a building under construction. Then I sped home. I told my wife, Jan, that the watch, the *Rolex*, she'd given me for our fifth wedding anniversary ran fast. I bolted a little supper and then I rushed the wristwatch down to the jeweler Jan bought it from. He checked it out and said that he could find nothing wrong with it. I said, "It's fast." He said, "It's fast?" He said,

“There’s nothing wrong with it.” He reset it and polished it. It shone in the shop like the sun. Outside, I stared into the face of the ridiculous timepiece. I could still see that second hand...

DOCTOR: Yes...

TIM: Doctor, it seemed to be going even faster. I was tired. I didn’t want to go back inside and argue with the gentleman. I went home. The next day I got up and I took the speed lane to work, because I had – I always had- so many things to...details...I had to pick up plane tickets and documents from my secretary.

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