

Everything in Its Place

By

J. Goodman-Clarke

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FADE IN ON:

INT. COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY

The sign on the door reads "Amherst College - R&D". A DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM chart covers one wall, photos on either side.

BURGIS BEMIS (45) putters around a machine. He's a tiny man with a huge mustache. A lab coat flaps on his limbs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Witness Mr. Burgis Bemis, a charter member in the fraternity of inventors. A little man whose consuming passion is knowledge and order -

Books and papers fill the office, labeled with post-it notes. Burgis stacks them in neat piles.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

- haunted by the scars of time.

Burgis fusses with a Hummel on a bookcase, and turns it to face the pictures.

INSERT:

- A yellowed photo of a bearded man. "Melvil Dewey, Reformer" written underneath.

- The other shot is more modern: a matron with chubby cheeks.

Burgis kisses the woman's photograph, and shuffles stiffly towards the machine.

He sets a timer to 30 minutes, and steps on a metal plate. The tower HUMS: loud and deep.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In just a moment, Mr. Bemis will enter a world lost long ago. Just waiting for him to arrive.

Burgis shrugs off the coat. He's stark naked underneath.

Vacuum tubes WHINE. The machine reaches critical mass.

Burgis pushes a button. A beam lances out, bathing him head to toe.

Burgis vaporizes instantly.

INT. LIBRARY - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

SUPER: Amherst College - 1875

Old-style furniture everywhere: A carved desk. A leather couch. Bookcases on each wall.

The room's empty. The glass door closed.

POOF. Burgis reappears; as naked as when he was born.

The shadow of a BUSTY FEMALE walks by outside.

Burgis ducks down - covers "naughty bits" with his hands. He looks at a clock nearby. The time reads 1:30 pm.

The door handle shakes.

MELVIL DEWEY (20) storms inside, a wool coat draped across his frame. He seems far younger than his picture - an energetic man with intense eyes.

DEWEY

Annie, where is my pencil?!?

Burgis ducks behind an office chair.

Melvil hangs the coat on a hook, and rummages through papers on his desk.

Burgis peeks over the side. Melvil reaches for a drawer -  
- inches from the small man's face.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Mister Dewey, it's over here...

Melvil wheels around, and heads outside. Burgis SIGHS.  
Relieved.

He steals a glance at a calendar. The date reads September 15th... 1875.

BURGIS

Yes!!!

He skips merrily across the room. Grabs the coat and tries it on for size.

MOMENTS LATER

The coat dominates Burgis' frame. His scrawny legs protrude from underneath like pale hairy toothpicks.

Burgis scratches like a madman as the wool starts to itch.  
The door SLAMS open again.

DEWEY

What in blazes are you doing  
here?!?

Burgis swings around. Melvil gawks at him, a two sided pencil  
in his hand.

BURGIS

I, um. Mr. Dewey! I'm Burgis Bemis.  
Ph.d...!

He marches across the room. Dewey backs away.

DEWEY

(cold)  
That's my coat.

BURGIS

Oh. Yes. I'm sorry!

He starts to remove it. Dewey grabs his lapel.

DEWEY

That's quite all right. Leave it  
be.  
(yells over his shoulder)  
Annie - please summon Mr. Levits.  
Immediately!

Dewey retreats to his desk. Burgis plops down on the couch, a  
huge grin on his face.

He fiddles with statues on a table.

The men regard each other warily.

BURGIS

(giggles)  
I can't describe what a pleasure it  
is to meet you. Me and Melvil  
Dewey. In the flesh!  
(pause)  
I'm guessing Mr. Levits is  
security?

Dewey nods.

BURGIS

(cheerful)  
No matter. I only came to see you.  
I'll return to the future shortly.

Dewey blinks.

DEWEY

Pardon me. Did you say "the future"?

Burgis bounces up and down with glee. His buttocks SQUEAK against the couches' leather.

Annoyance grows on Dewey's face. He TAPS the two sided pencil against the desk.

Burgis points at it enthusiastically.

BURGIS

Yes. I'm an inventor. Like you!

DEWEY

(beat)

One that travels through time?

Dewey reaches into a desk drawer. He withdraws a revolver, and lays it across his lap silently.

Burgis fumbles with index cards on a table, stacking them into neat piles.

DEWEY

Don't touch that!!

Burgis jumps. Papers fly everywhere.

He drops to the floor to sweep them up.

The coat hikes around his waist, presenting Dewey with a heinous view. Dewey claps a hand over his eyes.

Burgis stands up quickly.

DEWEY

You came from the future. To meet me?

BURGIS

Oh yes! You are a hero of mine. A reformer who revolutionized the information industry! In a way, you helped me build my time machine... Without your cataloging system, science would still be in the dark age!

Dewey stares at index cards on the floor.

DEWEY

You seem obsessed with organizing.  
Sir.

Burgis looks embarrassed.

BURGIS

Yes. Well. I have what they call  
OCD. But surely, you understand. An  
intelligent man *needs* to keep  
things organized! Otherwise, things  
go astray.

His voice trails off.

Burgis combs his mustache with a trembling finger. His eyes  
drift from Dewey. Towards a place far away.

BURGIS

I wasn't always this way. It all  
started with my wife. Meredith.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

INT. BURGIS AND MEREDITH'S KITCHEN

SUPER: 2016

MEREDITH BEMIS (40s) stirs dough in a mixing bowl. The merry  
matron from the photograph.

Burgis sits at a cluttered table nearby.

It looks like a paper mill exploded. Cooking ingredients  
piled on papers. Books scattered everywhere.

Meredith places the bowl on the table, turns away.

MEREDITH

Would you prefer chocolate or  
vanilla chips?

BURGIS

(cranky)

I don't care. It's the same to me.

MEREDITH

You can't work *all* the time! Put  
down the books and eat, BB!

Burgis grabs a tin labelled "Peanuts", and shovels some into  
his mouth.

BURGIS

Do as you wish. But leave me be!

She grabs the tin from his hand, and sprinkles bits in the bowl.

MEREDITH

There! You've decided for me.

Meredith stirs without looking - takes a taste. Turns red, and starts to CHOKE.

Burgis stares at the container. Meredith's pudgy hand grasps her swollen throat.

BURGIS

Peanuts!?!

He jumps to his feet and scrabbles through a sea of papers.

BURGIS

Sweetheart - where's your allergy pen!?!

MEREDITH

Gawwwwkkkkkkk!

Meredith falls over backward. The bowl CLATTERS to the floor. Burgis stares helplessly.

BACK TO:

INT. LIBRARY - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

Burgis SNIFFLES, and wipes away a tear.

BURGIS

My wife. She had an allergy. My messy ways killed her. I swore then and there to dedicate myself to putting everything in order. And erasing my mistake.

A speechless Dewey stares at him.

DEWEY

Tragic. Yes, indeed.

He swivels his chair towards the entrance.

DEWEY

(yells)

Annie! Woman! Where's Levits?!?

No answer from outside. The clock TICKS loudly. 1:58 PM.

DEWEY

(to Burgis)

So. Have you gone back and saved your darling Meredith?

BURGIS

Well, no. This is my first test.

DEWEY

(shocked)

Surely, your wife's life takes precedence?

BURGIS

It's easier to travel back a great distance. Jumping to a date within one's lifetime: it's complicated, in strange ways. So I scheduled this stop first. As a dry run, as it were...

DEWEY

Your machine. Where is it?

BURGIS

Back in my lab, of course!

DEWEY

Then how can you return?

BURGIS

It's on a timer.

DEWEY

(chuckles)

A timer? How very droll!

Burgis stares at him.

BURGIS

Why?

DEWEY

A time machine - on a timer.

(chuckles)

That's funny. Don't you see?

Burgis scratches at his leg, exposing Bemis family jewels.

DEWEY

Good God, Man! Put that away!



BURGIS

What?

DEWEY

Your nudism. It's on display.

BURGIS

My...? Oh - that!

He jumps up and fastens the coat. Bits of him bounce freely.

DEWEY

(drily)

You have a reason for that, I pray?

BURGIS

Yes, of course! The device can only transport flesh. Like in the Terminator movies!

DEWEY

The what?!?

BURGIS

You know, with Schwarzenegger -  
Oh. Right. Never mind.

He scratches his balls, then reaches out to Dewey.

BURGIS

I only have moments left. And I'd  
dearly love to shake your hand...

Dewey jumps away.

Annie's silhouette flits past the door, a male companion at her side. Dewey's face lights up, relieved.

DEWEY

Please excuse me!

He grabs the gun, and darts outside.

MOMENTS LATER

Burgis stands in the room, alone. Shadows flit in the hallway. Voices raised in urgency.

DEWEY (O.S.)

The man is deranged!

Burgis' face falls. He wanders the room, and fusses with figurines. He looks down: the bookcase seems astray.

DEWEY (O.S.)  
 No, I don't think he has a weapon.  
 No, I *haven't* searched him. Please  
 don't ask me to explain!

Burgis pushes against the bookcase.

It wobbles, and settles against the wall. Burgis smiles.  
 Everything is right again.

He glances at the clock. 1:59 PM.

The door SLAMS open.

Dewey rushes into the room, revolver drawn. A thuggish man  
 (MR. LEVITS) thunders at his side.

MR. LEVITS  
 Back to your asylum, nutter boy!

BURGIS  
 Please - there's been a mistake!

Burgis backs away, horrified.

Levits SLAMS him into the wall. He frisks Burgis' coat  
 pockets, and slides a hand underneath.

MR. LEVITS  
 Let's see what ya got. What the  
 hell?!?  
 (to Dewey)  
 You dinna tell me he was naked!

Burgis throws a punch at Levits.

- and stumbles into the bookcase.

It wobbles off balance. Topples.

Squashes Dewey like a pancake underneath. Blood runs from the  
 librarian's ear. Burgis stares, horrified.

The clock reads 2 PM.

Annie SCREAMS. Burgis fades away...

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE OFFICE - EVENING

POOF! A naked Burgis reappears in present day. He grabs his  
 lab coat off the floor, and looks towards the machine.

It's not there.

A jumble of wooden beams are assembled in a corner. Steel planks are soldered to the sides.

A sign on front reads: "Tyme Machein. Someday."

BURGIS

My stars and garters - this can't  
be!

Burgis looks towards the wall. The Dewey Decimal Chart is gone. An illustrated horse and buggy in its place.

Burgis dashes to his papers, and grabs a diagram. The drawings look like a steam punk wetdream. A mass of pipes, hand driven cranks.

BURGIS

(mutters)

"Without you, science would still  
be in the dark age."

He runs to a bookshelf, panic in his eyes.

BURGIS

No matter, dear Meredith. I can  
build it again!

(pause)

Why can't I remember?

He flips through titles. His engineering books are gone. In their place: "Alchemy 101". "Foraging for Dummies".

Burgis falls to his knees.

BURGIS

No....!

Light fades at the window.

There is no electricity...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The best laid plans of mice and  
men. And Burgis Bemis - a small man  
who wanted nothing but to master  
time. Burgis Bemis, now just part  
of a stunted landscape - a fragment  
of what science *could* have been.  
Here, in the lost Time Zone.

FINAL FADE OUT: