

MISSING OUT

by SCOTT CRAIN

GENRE: Dramatic monologue

SYNOPSIS: In an age of digital distractions, an elderly woman worries that we may be trading the real world for a two-dimensional one.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Keep Claire's tone as personable and approachable as possible; she's not meaning to lecture or be preachy, and shouldn't be portrayed as such.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1F

TOPIC: Christian Living

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Psalm 46:10

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Sermon illustration

CHARACTERS:

CLAIRE – an elderly woman

PROPS: A chair

COSTUMES: Nothing specific

SOUND: Wireless mics if desired

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Unspecified

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MISSING OUT *by Scott Crain*

Lights up on CLAIRE.

CLAIRE: I'm eighty-two years old and I've had a lifelong love affair with trains. Riding a train is like riding a dinosaur—a relic from another time—and the older I get, the more I appreciate it.

She smiles ruefully.

Maybe because, with each passing year, I'm becoming a bit more of a dinosaur myself.

She sits with a sigh.

For my granddaughter's sixteenth birthday, I took her on a train trip through France. It was something my mother had done with me, the kind of trip I'd never forgotten. The history there. Churches and cathedrals that were built long before I was born, and that will still be standing long after I'm gone.

But my granddaughter brought along one of those electronic tablets, and spent half the trip gazing into it. Our train took us past the Eiffel Tower, and I remember, I squeezed her arm and pointed out the window. But do you know what Britney was doing?

Looking at a picture of the Eiffel Tower on her iPad.

Looking at a flat picture while the real thing went right past her.

It's hard to be angry, though. Sometimes I think I'm just as guilty. I spend more time watching fake people on television these days than I do talking to real ones. We have text conversations with absent people instead of having real conversations with present ones.

I'm not sure we really ever *are* present these days, for that matter. We've always got one foot in the room, and the other stuck in the World Wide Web.

And what a sticky web it is.

I'm a dinosaur, like I said. And that way of thinking is bound to be headed for extinction. Britney just laughs at me, and says people today are always looking at their news feeds because they have something called "FOMO."

The fear of missing out.

But we *are* missing out.

I can't help but feel like our lives are a train, trundling down a one-way track, and while we've got our heads buried in two-dimensional digital distractions, the best things in life may be ... passing us by.