

Seller Door

By Larry Mitchell

A play of consequences

6th draft for Boar's Head Players

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(BHP6)

Larry Mitchell

778 S. Erika
Fayetteville, AR 72701

(620) 340-7322

mygrandadsname@gmail.com
Lmmitche@uark.edu

Cast of Characters

BARKER M/F, not too young, nor too old, clean and ready.

HAROLD M, nice enough guy, 19

JACK M, ailing from a blow to the head.

JILL F, Jack's wife, a yes-woman.

ALLISON F, College-educated

BILLY M/F, a blonde ...19

FREDDIE M/F, An able bodied civil servant, mid thirties.

JEAN M/F, a prisoner.
(Pronounced "John" or "Gene," depending on the gender.)

SETTING

Time: None like the present

I. A door, podium beside it

II. A room, bowl of pretzels on a table. Nothing else. No doors. No windows. Perhaps, three walls and an invisible fourth.

NOTE: Feel free to make the choice whether to reveal the room before the blackout or to use that black as a shift.

Feel free to change pronouns to fit the gender breakdown of your individual cast.

Water:

There are several ways of achieving the "water" effect that fills the room:

a long silk sheet, (*The "Ballad of Uncle Tom," from "The King and I"*)

lights, sound, (*"The Diviners,"*)

or, some combination of Plexiglas and water, (least desirable),

and probably a great deal more ideas that designers would be more qualified than I to name off.

SELLER DOOR

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ACT 1: THIS DOOR IS OUR DOOR

*AT RISE, a DOOR. By the door, a
PODIUM. By the Podium, a RUG.
Perhaps the rug is the path...*

*There are several PRETZELS scattered
about. Perhaps they are in a trail that
leads to the door...*

*ENTER the BARKER, clean cut, not too
young, not too old. Male, female, whatever.
Bow-tie and a smile.*

*BARKER sets up a poster on the front of
the podium, which reads, "Use the Door
That's what it's For!"*

*He stands by the podium, taking the place
in, never noticing the pretzels strewn
about, until he steps on one...*

BARKER

Where do they come from? Always so many pretzels. Every morning like this. Pretzels.

*He bends down, picks one up, looks to the
door, then back to the pretzel, then he
stands, eyeing the pretzel, inspecting it,
turning, sniffing, finally taking a bite.*

*After the bite, he waits to see if anything
happens...*

Nothing does...

BARKER (cont'd)

Well, got time to lean, got time to clean. Every spider needs a web.

He pulls out a BROOM, begins sweeping the floor, gathering the pretzels into a pile.

Now what?

BARKER (cont'd)

Red leather, yellow leather. Red leather, yellow leather, red leather, yellow leather. Diction is at the top of the teeth. The top of the teeth and the tip of the tongue. Puh. Puh. Puh ta cuh ta. Puh ta cuh ta, Buddagudda. Buddagudda. Buddagudda, buddagudda, buddagudda, puh ta cuh ta.

He sweeps the pile under the rug, leaving a rather conspicuous lump.

Now what?

BARKER (cont'd)

Blue bugs have black blood and black bugs have blue blood. She sells sea shells by the sea shore. Who? *She* sells sea shells by the sea shore. What? She *sells* sea shells by the sea shore. What kind? She sells *sea* shells by the sea shore... and I get people through the door! Ste-ep right up!

BARKER notices the audience.

BARKER (cont'd)

Oh. It's you, again. No, no. Please. Stay. That was just warm-ups. Not speaking in tongues, just getting mine a bit loose. This job is all about talking. Exciting? Yes. Boring? Sometimes. Though, the pressure of a quota keeps you on your toes. Gotta stay on mine, if you know what I mean. Toes. And, you'll do well to stay on yours. Gotta get five in every day. Five. No less. Bonuses for more. *If* you're good enough. Advice? OK. When in doubt, just keep talking. Eventually, something will make sense to somebody. Doesn't matter if it's true or not. Just keep talking. And, try to keep a good rhythm. Observe.

BARKER does a walk, takes a look around, like a gladiator before the fight, then moves with purpose to the podium, grasping it like the reigns of a chariot horse, begins.

BARKER (cont'd)

Steeeeeep riiiiiiight up! Be the first to go through the door. Step right up! Don't miss out on the adventure of your lives. Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, to the door. That's right. I said it. You heard it. The door! Everything will be explained on the other side. All will be clear. Step right uuuuuuuuuup! Walk through the door! It's just that easy, folks...

(To the Audience.)

...Yeah. Sounds good, right? I know.

BARKER does some stretches. Checks bow-tie. To the audience...

BARKER (cont'd)

A brief lecture:

Preamble: I am not a salesman. I am a savior. I am here to help the people. Whether they know it, need it, or not. My weapons:

One: Jones effect. Gotta keep up with the Jones's. If they've got it, then you need it. Right?

Two: Save your bullets. If you shoot six bullets into a can. You just get a can flopping around on the ground with holes in it. Like a dying fish. Now, save that second bullet till that can is in the air. Then fire a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, waiting for the apex, and you could get that can to hop over a fence if you wanted to.

Three: Always be opening. Always. Be. Opening.. A: always, B: be, O: opening. ABO. Always be opening... the door.

I am not a salesman. I am a savior. I am not a salesman. I am here to help the people. That's the motto, around here. Words to live by.

HAROLD, a young man, strapping, the prime of his youth, healthy, and a nice guy, too, enters, putting a ball onto the stage.

BARKER (cont'd)

(To the audience)

Ahh. The first catch of the day. Musn't be too eager, now. Gotta let them come to you.

Barker goes back to the sweeping, trying to redistribute, the pretzels under the rug to seem less obtuse.

HAROLD notices the BARKER, stops, watches, which the BARKER notices, but ignores, and continues sweeping, as HAROLD continues watching.

HAROLD

Mind if I play through?

BARKER

Oh! Hello there, son! Didn't see you there. Step right up!

HAROLD

To what?

BARKER

Why, the door, of course. What else is there?

HAROLD

Oh, I guess I wouldn't know. I just thought there might be more to it. I guess.

HAROLD goes back to putting, briefly, before the BARKER starts back in.

BARKER

More to what?

HAROLD

The door.

BARKER

So, you've heard of it, then?

HAROLD

Maybe. A little. I have a friend from high school, Billy. Can't stop talking about it. Says it's everything.

BARKER

Sounds like a smart man.

HAROLD

Just looks like a plain old door to me.

BARKER

What more could you need?

HAROLD

A hole.

BARKER

What?

HAROLD

(indicates golf club)

A hole.

BARKER

Sorry, no holes in there. Everything is patched up quite nicely. Nothing in there but opportunity.

HAROLD

Opportunity, like, how?

BARKER

What is it you're after?

HAROLD

Oh, I don't know that I was after anything at all. I was just putting, and you were just sweeping. Right?

BARKER

What if I was only sweeping because I was waiting for you, and you were only putting because you were supposed to run into me?

HAROLD

I'm afraid I don't follow you.

BARKER

Maybe, I am your hole. Maybe this door, itself, is your hole. Is it?

HAROLD

Is it?

BARKER

I don't know. I'm askin' you. Could be.

HAROLD

Well...

Pause

BARKER

Well?

HAROLD

What?

BARKER

You goin' in?

HAROLD

Why would I?

BARKER

Why wouldn't you?

HAROLD

I hadn't planned on it.

BARKER

Life's too short to make plans, son. This is an opportunity.

HAROLD

You keep saying that.

BARKER

I said it twice. Don't look a gift horse in the eye. Just walk through the door. On the other side lies the love of your life.

HAROLD

Love of my life?

BARKER

Maybe.

HAROLD

How do you know that?

BARKER

I don't. But the opportunity is there. I do know that.

HAROLD

Sounds important.

BARKER

Sounds like destiny. You goin' in?

HAROLD

I don't know.

BARKER

This isn't a time for, "I don't know." You gotta' strike while the iron's in the fire.

HAROLD

How so?

BARKER

Can't putt around forever. Eventually, you gotta find the flag. Am I right, or am I right, or am I right?

HAROLD

I suppose.

BARKER

Of course I'm right. I've been doing this a long time, and I see people like you every day. Young gentlemen, with everything to give, everything to gain. Everything but purpose. Allow me, allow this door, to provide you with that purpose.

HAROLD

Purpose?

BARKER

Nine out of ten ladies prefer purpose to putting.

HAROLD

I think I might have read that somewhere.

BARKER

Of course you did.

HAROLD

How much is it?

BARKER

The door? It won't cost you a thing.

HAROLD

Really?

BARKER

Really.

HAROLD

Well, alright.

BARKER

You sure? It's not for everyone, you know.

HAROLD

I'm sure. I mean, why not? Right?

BARKER

Oh! Wait!

BARKER pulls out a PAPER CUP, hands it to HAROLD.

BARKER (cont'd)

Here. Take this. You'll need it.

HAROLD

What's this?

BARKER

It's a cup.

HAROLD

Right. But why do I--

BARKER

It's just a paper cup, son. Don't over - think it.

Pause...

BARKER (cont'd)

Well, go on then. I'll see you in a while. Leave the putter, though.

HAROLD

Oh, of course. Can't putt forever, right?

HAROLD hands BARKER the putter and the ball.

BARKER

I'll see you soon.

HAROLD goes through the door.

BARKER takes a few swings with the putter as he addresses the audience.

BARKER (cont'd)

You see? It's gotta be about them. I am not a salesman. I am a savior. I am not a salesman. I am here to help the people. And, it's a joy, especially when you can help a fellow like that one there, the putter. He needed purpose, and I was more than happy to help him find it. That's my job. That's my purpose.

A phone rings.

BARKER (cont'd)

Pardon me.

BARKER finds and answers the PHONE.

BARKER (cont'd)

Just a moment. Duty calls. Literally.

(Into phone)

Barker, here... Yes, one so far... I'll get the five... I always do... Well, yes, only one, but it is still early, and I... yes, I'm sorry... You're absolutely right. Excuses are like hot dogs... Yes, lips and ass-holes, and everybody eats them...

(Laughs)

Really?.. That's not how I remember it... Perhaps something was lost in translation... I'm sorry. I won't try to be funny again. I assure you... Again, sorry... Yes, of course. I'll definitely step things up here... Yes, five for the day. No worries there, I assure you... And a good day to you.

Hangs up.