

CONFERENCE WITH THE BULL

by

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CHARACTERS IN SAMPLE

TEDDY, late 20s - early 30s, male. A little lost.

MYNA, late 20s - early 30s, female. A master magician.
British.

ANNIE, late 20s - early 30s, female. TEDDY's wife.

CHARACTERS NOT IN SAMPLE

PENN, mid-30s, male. Colleague of TEDDY's.

SETTING & TIME

Several locations: the conference centers, airport bars and motel rooms of an American city.

A NOTE ON THE POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

These appear indented, in boldface, throughout the play.
They are projected on to a screen at the rear of the stage.

1 - IN SPITE OF THE ENTREATIES OF HIS FATHER, THE SHIP DEPARTED UNDER BLACK SAILS

(A meeting room at a convention center.

TEDDY, at a podium, with a laptop. A name tag looped around his neck. His hand is bandaged. He turns a piece of folded-up goldenrod paper in his hands.

He becomes aware of the audience, who are the attendees at his workshop. He starts a PowerPoint presentation on his laptop. It projects on a screen.)

**Trends in Personnel Capital Investment:
T. Burdock.**

TEDDY

Hi, my name is Ted Burdock. I'm from Hammerich Consulting. This is the "Trends in Personnel Capital Investment" workshop. Welcome to all of you. It's been great meeting all of you managers at the convention over these past five days. Thanks for coming to "Trends in Personnel Capital Investment." Anybody here who's lost? Heh.

okay You've heard the phrase: "People are your most important asset." At Hammerich Consulting, we say, "People are *more* than assets. They're real estate."

DEVELOP YOUR REAL-PEOPLE-ESTATE

- 1. Aspiration**
- 2. Arrangement**
- 3. Advancement**

TEDDY (cont'd)

Aspiration. Arrangement. Advancement. The three A's. By the time you leave this room, think about your real-people-estate and ask, how am I developing my three A's?

(MORE)

**In spite of the Entreaties of his
Father, the Ship departed under Black
Sails**

(TEDDY sees this.)

TEDDY (cont'd)

Oh. Heh. That's ah, somebody messed with my laptop. Somebody's played a joke on me. Heh. It's funny. It's very very...

Who did this? You know, 'cause it's not. Just 'cause maybe my personal life um, intruded, doesn't mean you can just. Let's keep my personal life out of it.

ASPIRATION: What Is It?

TEDDY (cont'd)

okay Before you develop your people, you must learn what they're made of, as with real estate, you have to see what kind of real estate is it? what is its altitude? is their water and rich soil?

ASPIRATION: What Could You Build On It?

And what can you build there? a strip mall or a grand hotel? so in the same way, what can your people be? how far can they develop?

ASPIRATION: How Do You Retain It?

And when you know this, when you've set on a course, then the hardest task isn't development, it's to retain your personal, sorry your person-NEL. Your personnel. Retain your personnel. It's like my old man told me at my wedding reception: "Hold on to that woman of yours tight. Don't be like me..."

And I said, "Dad, I should be so lucky to be like you."

but okay This relates to personal...sorry, person-NEL...

(He looks at the folded up piece of goldenrod paper.

He steps down from the podium.)

**In spite of the Entreaties of his
Father, the Ship departed under Black
Sails**

TEDDY (cont'd)

But I didn't listen to the old man. You won't listen to me. Yet I say. You. *Each* of you. There's a dark cave with a monster in it. There's a ship that takes you back to safety. Don't choose wrong.

2 - THE YOUTHS AND MAIDENS EXHIBITED

(A dining room at a convention center. Five days earlier. Conversation and laughter, clinking silverware.

At one side of the stage, MYNA. Name tag around her neck. She has a large paper bag next to her. She's in her own hard world.

She comes out of her hard world for a moment; long enough to pick up the bag, take a step forward, and put the bag down. In this way, she -- and, in a moment, TEDDY -- will make their way in a queue across the stage.

TEDDY enters, pardoning himself to unseen people in the line. He looks for the end, and spots it: MYNA. He walks across and queues up behind her. He gets too close to her. Static shock!)

MYNA

Ow!

TEDDY

Sorry.

MYNA

Ow.

TEDDY

Heh. Carpet and dry air.

MYNA

Wow that was the big one.

THE YOUTHS AND MAIDENS EXHIBITED

TEDDY

...okay Hi, my name is Teddy Burdock. I'm from Hammerich Consulting.

MYNA

My name is Myna Byrd.

TEDDY

Oh...

MYNA

Little joke by my parents.

TEDDY

Oh. Heh.

Man um. Starving. Nothing but pretzels on the plane.

MYNA

Today's complimentary lunch is Caesar Salad.

TEDDY

...okay So you're a workshop leader?

MYNA

So the name-tag tells us.

TEDDY

Me too. Friday. Trends in Personnel Capital Investment.

MYNA

Personal Capital.

TEDDY

No um, person-NEL. Nel.

MYNA

It makes a difference?

TEDDY

Um. Heh. No, probably not. Probably why they gave my workshop such a heh, such a lousy time-slot. End of the week. Everybody's gonna be tired of, um, heh...

um okay So you're British. Of course you're, I mean obviously. Bu you work in London?

MYNA

San Francisco.

TEDDY

San Francisco? Wow cool, I've always -

MYNA

Please, just give me your card? I'll take your card. You'll take mine. We'll be done.

(Beat.)

TEDDY

Um. Heh. I um was trying to -

MYNA

Network.

TEDDY

No I appreciate a good bridge.

Um What I mean is, I've always wanted to visit San Francisco. Golden Gate Bridge. 'Cause um a bridge talks to you, shows you how it gets from one place to another. A plane doesn't tell you anything about the trip. Just scoops you up and drops you off. But abridge tells you how it gets over the river.

MYNA

Are you a builder of bridges?

TEDDY

No, I'm um, I'm just a workshop leader. Friday.

MYNA

Friday. I'm on Tuesday.

TEDDY

Wow Tuesday.

MYNA

Yes. Tuesday.

TEDDY

Um. um I just wanna say, I didn't realize you were one of the Tuesday workshops. That wasn't why I um, said hi. I wasn't trying to you know, get in with the Tuesday people.

MYNA

I'm going to ask you something, and I want you to answer me, in spite of the fact that we don't know each other, with the utmost candor: are you really hungry for what's served at the end of this line?

TEDDY

Um yeah, maybe not. But I mean yeah, mostly I wanted to... I'm doing a ton of these conferences. Next few years. Figure I should do the "Getting To Know People" thing.

MYNA

Enjoy your Caesar Salad.

(Beat.)

TEDDY (between us:)

My problem is? We could be anywhere.

MYNA

We could, couldn't we?

TEDDY

Cleveland, Dallas, L.A....

MYNA

Any place, any time.

TEDDY

My theory is um: every Convention Center leads to every other Convention Center. Heh. Across the country, you know? Enter in Houston, exit in Minneapolis. Like um, a disconnected labyrinth.

MYNA

In you go, Theseus.

TEDDY

Heh. But this is how you get into the business, you know um, how it's done, be an adult, you know. I mean, to everybody, it probably at first seems a little um, disappointing? The firm handshakes and um bullet points. Like why does every point need that, *dot*? I mean, but you know, it's fine, but um. It can't all be um, like when we were kids on, on an adventure.

MYNA

Oh dear.

TEDDY

Something...?

MYNA

Here you are.

Why are you playing with your finger? Is that string?

TEDDY

Um, wedding ring.

MYNA

Your wedding ring?

TEDDY

That's my wedding ring.

MYNA

It's a bit of twine?

MYNA

Teddy Burdock.

TEDDY

Did I say Teddy? Ted. Ted Burdock.

(MYNA steps out of line. She takes out a business card and hands it to him.)

MYNA

Ted Burdock, Teacher of Personal Capital Investment: are you a vegetarian? I really can't stand the self-righteous twits that get their tails up their ass over a steak or a leather coat. I like steak. The bloodier, the better. There's a steak house up the street. It's supposed to be only half-bad. Which is certainly better than what's waiting for us at the end of this line. Shall we have a feast tonight, and write it off on our taxes?

TEDDY

Um. Heh. Oh, I have an appointment tonight.

MYNA

An appointment.

TEDDY

Yeah, sorry um, it's a client.

(He takes her card, offers her his.)

TEDDY (cont'd)

But um, another time, maybe?

(She takes the card.)

MYNA

If there is another.

(She exits.)

3 - EVERY DAY, TO BE DEVOURED

(In the darkness:)

TEDDY

What're you wearing?

ANNIE (V.O., over speakers)

Is that why you called me?

TEDDY

C'mon Annie, what're you wearing?

ANNIE (V.O.)

Negligeé.

TEDDY

The green one?

ANNIE (V.O.)

You think I hang out alone in our house, in my negligée?

TEDDY

So what, then?

ANNIE (V.O.)

Sweat pants, torn.

TEDDY

um You really wearing those things?

ANNIE (V.O.)

What's it matter?

TEDDY

I'm trying to imagine you, here in my room, here with me.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I *am* in your room. I *am* with you. In a way.

(MORE)

(Lights up. A hotel room.

*TEDDY lies on the bed, on the phone.
ANNIE, on cellphone, in sweat pants and
a special black t-shirt.*

*Even though this is a phone conversation
and ANNIE is not physically in the room,
she moves about it freely. Her voice is
amplified over the speakers.)*

ANNIE (cont'd)

Shouldn't you be getting ready for your presentation?

TEDDY

It's not 'til Friday.

ANNIE

You're not sitting in your room all night. Met anyone?

TEDDY

Not really.

ANNIE

Babe -

TEDDY

A couple people.

ANNIE

You should be networking.

TEDDY

Schmoozing.

ANNIE

Way of the world.

TEDDY

Doesn't mean I have to like it.

ANNIE

Are you gonna do this? Is this your, not just your job, but your career now?

TEDDY

Yeah.

ANNIE

Then.

TEDDY

Schmooze.

ANNIE

Schmooze.

TEDDY

Wait. You're wearing the shirt, right? *The shirt.*

ANNIE

What if I am?