

USE OTHER DOOR

By Jerry Rabushka

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CHARACTERS

1 Male and 1 Female who play various characters of various ages, described at the beginning of each scene.

SCENE 1

(WOMAN is an older snippy “librarian” type who insists everyone follow the rules. MAN is a high school aged “rebel” type, around 16 years old, who doesn’t want to bow to her authority. Onstage is a door, real or imaginary, in a building lobby, with a sign that says “use other door.”)

WOMAN: Young man? *(HE doesn’t pay attention.)* Young man! Where do you think you’re going?

MAN: *(it’s obvious)* Out!

WOMAN: *(can’t believe it)* Out... the door?

MAN: *(duh)* Out... the door. Whoopee.

WOMAN: *(severe)* You can’t go out that door.

MAN: It’s just a door, lady!

WOMAN: No one goes out that door. *(HE doesn’t believe her and takes a step towards it. SHE becomes threatening.)* No one ever goes out that door.

MAN: *(still flouting her)* Ever?

WOMAN: Ever!

MAN: Ever... *(goes towards the door)*

WOMAN: *(pulls him away)* Uh uh!

MAN: What? Will Martians attack? *(takes a look at her)* Oh, I see they already have.

WOMAN: See that sign? “Use other door!”

MAN: I’m already here. Why can’t I just use this one?

WOMAN: Why can’t *you* use it? What if *everybody* used it? If you could use it, they wouldn’t need a sign. Or it would say “use *this* door.” Or they’d just prop the darned thing open. What is wrong with you?

MAN: Well why did they put a door here if you can’t ever use it? Why not put in a window? At least I could look out of it. Or would there be a sign saying “Look out other window?”

WOMAN: That's why they invented mini blinds. You young people always want instant gratification. You have to be denied access to appreciate the entrances and exits available to you.

MAN: Sort of like if I don't pay attention to my girlfriend she's going to leave me for another guy.

WOMAN: **(doesn't think HE gets it)** No, not at all! Unlike your girlfriend, this door will always be there. And no matter how nicely you talk to it, no matter how kissy-poo you get with this door, you still can't get anywhere with it.

MAN: You shouldn't ever say kissy-poo! Is the door locked?

WOMAN: **(mortified)** Of course not! That would defeat the purpose of the sign.

MAN: So this is really a test, more or less.

WOMAN: This isn't philosophy. This is "follow the instructions." They're very simple. "Use other door."

MAN: I can't find the other door.

WOMAN: I've spent thirty six years in this lobby and I still can't find it. But I'm not going to flout the authority that placed this sign.

MAN: Call me a rebel. I'm going in.

WOMAN: You'll pay... dearly. **(HE opens the door and screams, while SHE laughs uproariously.)**

SCENE 2

(MAN is the same guy, 25 years later. HE hasn't recovered from using the door. HE walks with difficulty and appears infirm. WOMAN is a young southerner, new to town. SHE approaches the door. HE hobbles over to her.)

MAN: Uh... ma'am?

WOMAN: **(sweet and charming)** Yes?

MAN: Uh... don't.

WOMAN: **(doesn't understand)** Don't what?

MAN: The door. Don't ever.

WOMAN: Ever?

MAN: Ever.

WOMAN: Why not? **(looks him over and says sweetly)** Oh you *have* had a hard life, haven't you?

MAN: Do you see the sign?

WOMAN: **(desperate, and naïve)** I've got to get out. I've been here for three days but I can't find a door I can use.

MAN: Ma'am, I don't know where you come from, but-

WOMAN: Mississippi.

Use Other Door – Page 4

MAN: Mississ-

WOMAN: Oxphalia, Mississippi to be exact.

MAN: I was going to say, you must be new to these parts. Because around here, (**very serious**) we don't use that door.

WOMAN: Well who put it here? It's like running smack into the face of temptation and denial!

MAN: I gave in to temptation, and I've been denied ever since.

WOMAN: You mean in all of recorded history no one's ever gone through that door?

MAN: Once.

WOMAN: What happened?

MAN: The screaming. The laughter. I just stay here as a reminder to make sure it never happens again.

WOMAN: Well if you won't tell me, I'm going through. (**HE goes over to her and whispers something.**) Oh! Oh, no! (**SHE faints and HE tries to revive her.**)

MAN: Twenty five years ago. To the day.

WOMAN: Well, why don't they just plaster over it? That sign's getting kind of tattered.

MAN: I used to walk upright. I used to have a clear mind. But I figure if they can't learn by reading, (**points to himself**) they learn by example.

WOMAN: Well you know what they say. When he closes a door...

MAN: When he closes a door, (**spooky!**) you don't open it!

WOMAN: That was twenty five years ago. Whatever was there then can't still be there now.

MAN: That sign was up for years before I got there. The French lost North America because they couldn't get through that door.

WOMAN: I doubt that door was here in 1763.

MAN: Exactly. How could you get through here without a door? And because of that, they lost the war. Now, find another way out, before it's too late!

WOMAN: Call me a rebel! I'm going in! (**SHE goes through and screams. HE laughs as best HE can.**)

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