

PLAY #16 CARRY A BIG STICK

by

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CHARACTERS

BUD	A thief. He's all the brawn.
MANNY	Another thief. Hot-tempered in a boyish way.
CHON	A magician, who also happens to be a thief. He's all the brains. He wears a very large top hat.

CARRY A BIG STICK

SCENE 1

(At Rise: BUD, MANNY, and CHON sitting around a fire. CHON wears a large top hat.)

BUD

And that's how we came to accept things as they are.
What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

MANNY

That's bullshit.

(BUD pulls a stick from the fire and
raises it at MANNY.)

BUD

You dare to question my authority?!
(Pause.)

CHON

Bud! What is authority?

MANNY

I just think that's bullshit, Chon.

BUD

Shut up! You imbecile!
(He puts the stick down.)

MANNY

I'm not a imbecile.

BUD

If you question everything I've gone through to get us
here...

MANNY

And where have you gotten us?

BUD

This is as much your fault as mine.

CHON

Bullshit is Manny's perception.

BUD

Fuck his perception.

MANNY

Maybe if you considered my perception. Bud! We would have taken the right turn. And then we wouldn't be in the state we are currently in. Which is lost! Which is in the dark!

CHON

At least we have the fire.

(Silence. They all stare at the fire.)

I want to propose something. We cannot deny that the burning stick in the fire is hot.

MANNY

I need something to eat.

CHON

Or that Manny is hungry.

BUD

I won't be blamed for our current state of affairs. People get lost.

CHON

Even the state of being lost is a perception.

BUD

We're lost, Chon!

CHON

Consider for a moment the possibility that we are on a journey together.

MANNY

That should have ended three hours ago.

CHON

Should have is a perception.

MANNY

I refuse to be tested to the edge of death for the purpose of strengthening my soul! Or anyone's soul! Least of all Bud's.

BUD

Fuck you.

MANNY

If you want to turn this into a process of growth for your soul, that's fine. But don't drag me into it!

BUD

We're already in this together.

CHON

That's a fact. But we're no where near death.

MANNY

It's getting colder by the minute. We have no food. We're all out of water.

(CHON pulls a water bottle out his bag.)

CHON

I've got water.

BUD

YOU! Miles back you said you were out like we were.

CHON

I brought an extra one.

BUD

Give it over.

CHON

Wait just a minute. That's not the way to go about this.

MANNY

That's right. We're in this together, Bud. Can I have a sip?

CHON

Getting back to my proposition.

(BUD grabs the stick again and threatens CHON.)

BUD

Give me some goddam water! I'm dying here.

MANNY

We're all dying.

BUD

Or I'll knock that ridiculous hat off your head and then pound on what's beneath it.

CHON

Bud... Old boy. Listen to me. Both of you. We have lots of wood. A fire. We've got water. What if I were to bring food into this picture?

BUD

And how are you going to do that?

CHON

Watch very carefully.

(CHON removes his hat and slowly pulls a dead rabbit out of it.)

BUD

What the hell?

MANNY

Where did you get that?

CHON

While we were walking.

MANNY

You killed a rabbit? How did you do that?

CHON

While the two of you were fighting.

MANNY

With what?

CHON

A stick. You see? No blood. Just a little nick on the head.

BUD

You knew we'd be out here! You knew!

MANNY

He's right! Back when we were choosing which way to go, you knew we were going the wrong way!

BUD

Now that I remember, he disappeared for a little

while.

MANNY

He probably knows where the money is, too!

CHON

Now, boys! Perceptions are tricky things. Why don't we cook this rabbit and we can take care of first things first?

BUD

Do you know where the money is?

MANNY

We followed the map... Until we didn't know where we were on the map. But you knew where we were.

BUD

Do you know where we are now? 'Cus if you do, you better damn well get us out of here.

MANNY

Not until he takes us to the money!

CHON

Now that you have food and water and fire, you want money, too. Isn't that typical?!

BUD

You've been playing us all along, haven't you?

CHON

Playing is rather an unfortunate choice of words.

BUD

What else do you have in that hat?

(BUD raises the stick over CHON's head.)

MANNY

Don't kill him, Bud!

CHON

I might be helpful in getting us all out of here. Bud?

(BUD lowers his stick, and gets up in CHON's face and speaks slowly.)

BUD

Do you know... How to skin... A rabbit? Because I do.

CHON

Be my guest.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWO

(At Rise: CHON, BUD, and MANNY are all laughing and eating rabbit.)

MANNY

It's delicious. I never would have thought... Poor little bunny! You know... I had bunnies as a kid.

BUD

How did you learn to hunt rabbit?

CHON

I was apprenticed to a magician who made me catch rabbits for him. I never knew it might some day come in handy.

MANNY

But how do you kill them?

CHON

You creep up on them. And you fool them. You trick them into thinking you're one of them. And then...

MANNY

Then?

CHON

Down comes the club!

MANNY

Ooh! What's a magician want with a dead rabbit anyway?

CHON

I've given away too many of my tricks already.

BUD

Is that where you perfected your skills in thievery, too? From a magician?

CHON

We all seem to be pretty well-versed in that kind of magic.

BUD

If only certain people could remember where they hid the money, they might be able to make it magically reappear.

MANNY

I used to be good at drawing maps.

BUD

Well, the map you drew this time sucked!

MANNY

It would have been perfectly fine if you hadn't directed us off the map!

CHON

Now let's all stick together, shall we?

BUD

What else did you learn? From this magician?

CHON

Well... Let's see... He taught me how to throw my voice.

MANNY

What, you mean like a ventriloquist or somethin'?

CHON

Sort of.

BUD

Get out! Do it, then.

CHON

Throw my voice?

BUD

Yeah.

(Pause. An owl hoots.)

CHON

See?

MANNY

That was an owl!

BUD

Do it again.

(The owl hoots.)

CHON

See?

MANNY

He's doing it, Bud.

BUD

Show us something different.

CHON

What? Like a bear?

(A bear growls.)

BUD

Again!

(Bear growls.)

MANNY

Oh my god. He's doing it.

BUD

Shut up, Manny.

CHON

It's pretty simple.

BUD

I'm not so sure.

(The sound of men's voices.)

What's that?

MANNY

Bud! He's doing it!

(Pause. Men's voices again.)

Aren't you?

CHON

I didn't do that.

BUD

Are you sure?

(CHON grabs a stick.)

CHON

Wait here...

(CHON sneaks off into the woods.
Silence. They wait.)

MANNY

Where did he go?

BUD

Quiet!

MANNY

Chon? Are you okay? Chon!

(BUD grabs a bigger stick.)

What are you doing?

BUD

I'm going after him. I think this is a trick.

MANNY

Don't leave me here!

BUD

I'm on to him, Manny.

MANNY

Bud?

(BUD exits into the woods.)

Bud!

(Pause. The sound of leaves rustling
and tree limbs snapping.)

BUD!!

(Silence. Sound of tree frogs. MANNY
starts shaking and whimpering and
running around the campsite.)

Oh my god... Oh my god! Bud! Bud, please!

(He trips over CHON's hat, which spills
out a considerable load of money.)

Oh my god... It's been here the whole time. The money!

(Sound of rustling leaves.)

Bud? The money's been here the whole time. Right under
our noses. Chon?

(CHON steps out of the woods with his
stick.)

CHON

I'm sorry, Manny.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY