JACK-IN-THE-BOX

A Play in One-Act

By Sara L. Reily

Dedicated to Jennifer

The Playwright, Sara L. Reily

STORY OF THE PLAY

JACK-IN-THE-BOX is a unique drama that explores the depths of the human spirit. Jarod, a young med student, takes a journey into his own mind after an accident causes him to become comatose. As Jarod struggles to make sense of his surroundings he comes across a man who will change his life forever...his subconscious. The limited set allows the stage to become a universal playing ground where Jarod's subconscious introduces him to various places and people that enlighten and encourage him to take on life's obstacles and survival. Jarod becomes a recognizable character who discovers more about himself than he ever knew existed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(3 M, 2 W)

MAN: Jarod's subconscious.
JAROD: Medical student in a coma.
LIZ: Jarod's wife.
AARON: Jarod's dead brother.
WOMAN: Jarod's mother.

PROPS
MAN: Stack of notebooks, pen, paper, newspaper, orange.
JAROD: Letter opener.
AARON: Baseball and mitt.
WOMAN: Baby doll wrapped in a blanket.

SETTING
The stage is cluttered with junk. There is a filing cabinet, a chair, pens and paper strewn over the floor. The stage is dimly lit.

SOUND EFFECTS
The beep of a pulse monitor. Pace of monitor varies at times.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: THE MAN walks on stage carrying a stack of notebooks. He drops them, exasperated, sits down, picks up a pen and some paper and begins to write. JAROD, a young man in his 20s, enters looking frazzled.)

MAN: Yeees?
JAROD: What're you trying to do, give me a heart attack?
MAN: Hardly.
JAROD: *(Walks farther onto the stage)* I need help.
MAN: *(Grunts)* What a surprise.
JAROD: Directions or something...I don't know. Where am I?
MAN: Hmmm?
JAROD: Can you tell me where I am?
MAN: Should I?
JAROD: What? Yes...I...I...
MAN: I don't think I will.
JAROD: Are you crazy?
MAN: That's personal, don't you think?
JAROD: Forget it. Just...I don't need this.
MAN: Good-bye.
JAROD: I'll ask someone else.
MAN: Good luck. *(JAROD exits SR. MAN begins to write. Jarod enters again.)* Yeees?
JAROD: Jesus!
MAN: You really should be more aware of your surroundings.
JAROD: What?
MAN: You know, take in the scenery...watch where you're going.
JAROD: I don't understand.
MAN: No, of course you wouldn't know.
JAROD: *(Crossing towards MAN)* Do I...know you?
MAN: I don't think so.
JAROD: You seem familiar.
MAN: Yes, well...I'm not...bye.
JAROD: No...really...Who are you?

MAN: *(Drops notepad)* Look, you need to go now.
JAROD: I tried.
MAN: Try harder.
JAROD: Am I dead?
MAN: Do you feel dead?
JAROD: *(Thinks for a moment)* I guess not.
MAN: OK, bye.
JAROD: Will you at least show me the way out?
MAN: OK...*(Begins to exit SR. Stops)* Hmmm. No, I don't
  think so.
JAROD: You want to get rid of me so bad.
MAN: Yes! Yes I do. God, I wish you would leave.
JAROD: Have you ever heard of hospitality?
MAN: Yes.
JAROD: Well...?
MAN: I don't believe in it.
JAROD: You're insane.
MAN: I've often thought so.
JAROD: Just show me the way out.
MAN: *(Begins to write)* Go the way you came.
JAROD: I...I don't remember how I got here.
MAN: I can't show you the way back.
JAROD: Do you mind telling me why?
MAN: I can't...leave.
JAROD: What? How am I supposed to get out of here?
MAN: Look...I'm stuck here.
JAROD: *(Exits and returns)* What do you mean stuck here?
MAN: Just go. I have a lot of work to do.
JAROD: Tell me what you mean.
MAN: Go.
JAROD: I can't. *(MAN ignores JAROD and continues to
  write. JAROD plops down to think.)* I'm dead.
MAN: You're not dead.
JAROD: I'm dead and I'm in hell.
MAN: You're not dead.
JAROD: I knew I should have gone to confession. I took the
  Lord's name in vain eight times last week —
MAN: Twelve.

JAROD: I drank someone else's wine at a par...What did you say?

MAN: *(Looking up)* I said dwell. Don't dwell on it.

JAROD: So, I am dead.

MAN: Please sir, if you'd kindly shut your trap...I have to think.

JAROD: Rude.

MAN: Shhh.

JAROD: *(Searching the room)* There's gotta be a way out.

MAN: There is.

JAROD: How?

MAN: I don't know, but you got here, right?

JAROD: You know something.

MAN: Really?

JAROD: Why won't you tell me?

MAN: Tell you...?

JAROD: *(Crosses to MAN and grabs him)* You're holding out on me. I want you to tell me how to get out of here.

MAN: And by assaulting me you think I'll tell you.

JAROD: *(Lets go of MAN)* Oh, God. What am I doing?

MAN: You're losing your mind.

JAROD: I'm losing my...I'm crazy.

MAN: More like claustrophobic.

JAROD: Yes. Yes. That's it. Claustrophobic. How did you know that?

MAN: You're displaying classic symptoms.

JAROD: Oh.

MAN: It helps to loosen your tie.

JAROD: *(Takes HIS tie off)* Thanks.

MAN: Now, if you'll excuse me.

JAROD: Who are you?

MAN: You're not going to let this go are you?

JAROD: No.

MAN: Figures.

JAROD: You're not going to say?

MAN: No.

(JAROD stares at MAN while Man writes ignoring him.)

End of Freeview

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