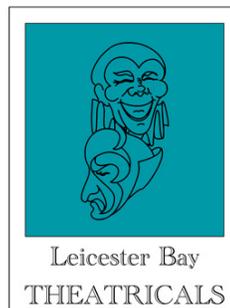


PERUSAL SCRIPT

**THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR
AND THE BED TIME BUDDY**

a ten-minute play by
Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR AND THE BEDTIME BUDDY

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THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR AND THE BEDTIME BUDDY by Eric Samuelsen received its world premiere May 22, 2004 as part of the first annual SLAM at Plan-B Theatre. The following cast was directed by Kirt Bateman: Tony Larimer, Stephanie Howell and Kay Shean. Designed by Cheryl Cluff, Megan Crivello, Wilton Koernig, Randy Rasmussen and Cory Thorell. Stage managed by Jennifer Freed. Produced by Jerry Rapier.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BEN -- the father/husband

CLAIRE -- a daughter

ANNA -- the mistress

NOTE: No stage directions, indications of props or costumes, or sound effects are included. All is left to the discretion of the director.

DIALOG NOTE: Dialogue in *italics* indicate thoughts not in the direct conversation with other characters, but maybe to the audience — or just thoughts. Conversational lines with the other characters are in regular text

THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR, and the BEDTIME BUDDY a 10-minute play by Eric Samuelsen. 2f 1m. Simple projection backdrop, chairs. Contemporary costumes. A meat-packing magnate, his daughter, and his second wife play the games and vie for the immense fortune at his fingertips. He knows nothing but the business of making money and has been very successful. His daughter is the go-between in the family as no other family members really want to talk to him, even when they want something from him but she has a problem: the smell of her girlhood home turns her stomach. His mistress is young, well provided for, but still jealous of anything his first wife asks for, even though she holds the checkbook. And there is that smell. Premiered at the first Plan-B Theatre Company SLAM, 2004. (Later adapted into the full-length play, MIASMA.) **ORDER #3264**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine The Sugarbeet. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at Mormoniconoclast.com. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR, AND THE BED TIME BUDDY

CLAIRE: *Go on. Take a whiff.*

BEN: *Deep, full breath. Fill your lungs!*

CLAIRE: *Interstate 80 goes through Ogallala, there's an exit. The next closest town is twenty eight miles to the north, thirty one to the south. But off the exit, you'll find no gas stations, no convenience stores, not even a McDonalds, if you can appreciate that irony. No one ever stops.*

ANNA: *They can't take the stink.*

BEN: *It's vital, it's alive! Sinew and bone and red, raw meat!*

CLAIRE: *It's bullshit. Actually, literally bull shit, bovine excrement; that's one predominant odor.*

BEN: *If you can smell it, you can taste it.*

CLAIRE: *Cattle know. They hear the whirling knives, the bellowing terror. Sometimes they panic, which is bad, slows up the line. They shit themselves in fear. And when they die, their bowels loosen, just like humans.*

ANNA: *Ben wouldn't live anywhere else. And I live with Ben. You adjust to what you have to. You cope. In time, you thrive.*

BEN: Claire.

CLAIRE: Daddy

BEN: I'll get my checkbook.

CLAIRE: Anna.

ANNA: Claire. Who is it this time? Peter again? Terry?

CLAIRE: It's Peter. *You were right the first time. You know us so well.*

ANNA: Don't tell me. He's starting a business.

BEN: I can't find my checkbook anywhere.

ANNA: It's in my purse. I left it at the office.

CLAIRE: I can come back tomorrow.

BEN: Where are you staying, honey? We can put you up here.

ANNA: She won't stay here. She can't stand the smell.

BEN: Nonsense. We'll make up a bed in the guest room.

CLAIRE: I have a hotel room in Kearney.

BEN: Kearney? All the way in Kearney?

ANNA: *She can't stand the smell.*

CLAIRE: It's okay. Closer to the airport.

BEN: Damn checkbook. We could wire transfer it, how much do you need?

CLAIRE: Sixty thousand dollars. If that's okay.

BEN: Fine, fine. Happy to do it.

CLAIRE: Wire transfer. I didn't know you were that adept with computers, Daddy.

BEN: Not me. It's Anna. She's a whiz.

CLAIRE: I'm sure she is.

ANNA: You can trust me. If he says to send I'll send it.

BEN: So, Peter. Starting a business?

ANNA: *Again.*

CLAIRE: A floral shop. He's already got a location, and a contract with FTD.

BEN: Fine, fine. Good for him.

ANNA: Does he have a business plan?

CLAIRE: I expect he does.

ANNA: Can he fax it to me tomorrow?

CLAIRE: He just asked me to come.

ANNA: And beg. On his behalf.

BEN: He has to know he's welcome here. We'd love to see him again, any of you, Terry, Beth.

ANNA: They can't take the smell.

CLAIRE: Not at all. *It's the company they don't care for.*

BEN: Good for Peter. Finally making something of himself, a new business.

ANNA: *They won't any of them come. They send Claire. Every time.*

CLAIRE: *I come because I can. Poor dreaming Peter, dull, pedantic Terry, Beth on her third divorce. They're not up to it, of course. Robert, my husband, my gentle botanist husband, says it's okay. I do what I must.*

BEN: *I just have one rule. Someone has to ask me in person. They can send Claire, that's okay. But not by phone, not a letter, email. I need to stand haunch to haunch with 'em. My flesh and blood.*

ANNA: *I'm from Gnaw Bone Indiana. That's a real place, gnawed to the bone. I was born Anita Philpott, my Dad ran a bait and tackle shop. You'uns wouldn't know me then, thick Hoosier accent, bad teeth and skin. I was not the girl you see now. I vowed age of seven, I would never gnaw another bone. And I haven't, not without dollar signs at the tip and root.*

CLAIRE: *I don't know that any of us have quite forgiven what she did to my mother*

BEN: *I met her in Chicago, she was selling commodities futures. Beef futures.*

ANNA: *He wooed me with meat on the hoof, ten thousand head at a time.*

CLAIRE: *They kill cattle with hammers, a blow to the head, and then they slash its throat.*

BEN: *We went to a steakhouse, afterwards, we went for drinks. We'd known each other six hours and she had me pawing at the ground.*

ANNA: *Between his ranches and the slaughterhouses, I knew what he was worth.*

BEN: *I can still rut like a bull.*

ANNA: *Thanks be to Viagra, that's actually true.*

CLAIRE: *They've never married. That's some consolation. We know she's in his will, but we don't believe she's cut us out completely.*

BEN: Claire.

CLAIRE: Daddy.

BEN: I've got my checkbook somewhere.

ANNA: Who is it this time?

CLAIRE: Terry. An opportunity, a post doctoral fellowship in Leeds.

BEN: Leeds? Where the hell's Leeds?

CLAIRE: England, Daddy. He thinks twenty thousand dollars....

BEN: Better make A twenty-five. Leeds? They don't study bugs here, in the good old US of A?

CLAIRE: Microbes, Daddy. It's a wonderful opportunity for him.

BEN: England. They have mad cows in England. Not here!

ANNA: Don't worry about the checkbook, Ben. I'll send the money.

BEN: That's fine, then, fine. You tell Terry to come out here some time. We have a hell of a problem with bugs out at the plant.

ANNA: Federal inspectors, Department of Agriculture. They keep changing the guidelines on us, it's difficult to track.

CLAIRE: I'll mention it to him.

BEN: They say our meat's unsafe! Ridiculous!

CLAIRE: *I visited the slaughterhouse for the first time when I was nine. I needed to know where the smell was coming from. I should say that I've been a vegetarian ever since. Peter is. But in fact, I do still eat meat.*

3 more pages to the end of the script:

BEN: *Fill your lungs!*

THE END