

THIRD MOUSE FROM THE LEFT

by Ken Bradbury



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Margo stands Stage Right. Dawn stands Stage Left with her back to the audience.

MARGO: *(entering)* Dawn? Dawn, where are you? *(looks at the closed door between them)* Dawn? Dawn, are you in there?

DAWN: *(turning to face audience)* No. Go away.

MARGO: *(tries the door, then)* The door's locked. Dawn, open the door.

DAWN: This isn't me speaking. Go look someplace else.

MARGO: This is ridiculous, Dawn. Why did you lock yourself in the bathroom?

DAWN: It's the only room in the house with a lock.

MARGO: But I mean, why are you doing this? How long are you going to stay in there?

DAWN: For the rest of my life. This is my new home.

MARGO: Dawn!

DAWN: Just leave me alone, okay?

MARGO: I will not leave you alone! This is your birthday party! We've got like twenty kids downstairs and Mom's been working all day on the food and decorations. You can't hide in the bathroom on your own birthday!

DAWN: Yes, I can. The door is locked and I can stay in here as long as I want.

MARGO: Okay, what happened?

DAWN: Nothing.

MARGO: Dawn, what happened?

DAWN: I told you, nothing. Just go away.

MARGO: Were the auditions today?

DAWN: What auditions?

MARGO: For the school play. You were trying out, weren't you?

DAWN: I forgot.

MARGO: You forgot whether you tried out for ... what was it ... Cinderella?

DAWN: Something like that.

MARGO: You tried out for Cinderella. That's what all this is about, isn't it?

DAWN: I have no idea what you're talking about.

MARGO: What part did you get, Dawn?

DAWN: A mouse.

MARGO: A what?

DAWN: I got one of those stupid mice that drive the pumpkin that turns into a beautiful coach. One line, "Giddy-up!" (*a pause, then*) Are you laughing?

MARGO: No.

DAWN: Yes, you are. Everybody will. "Oh look, there's Dawn, the third mouse from the left."

MARGO: Look, what am I supposed to tell the kids downstairs? They're all waiting to celebrate your birthday.

DAWN: I'm not having any more birthdays. I'm staying the same age in the same bathroom for the rest of my life. No one will notice. I'm just a mouse.

MARGO: Twenty-seven ice cream pops. Do you have any idea how long twenty-seven ice cream pops are going to last in this weather?

DAWN: Twenty-five. I brought two of them with me. I was hungry.

MARGO: Dawn, this is ridiculous! Look, you'll get over it, okay? Really! Just forget about the play and come on down and celebrate your birthday. I told Mom you were taking so long deciding what to wear.

DAWN: Tell her I'm looking for my mouse costume.

MARGO: Dawn!

DAWN: Just go away, Margo. Tell the kids I'm sick. The Black Plague. My left leg just fell off. Anything. I don't want a party.

MARGO: Dawn, you cannot spend the rest of your life in the bathroom. People will get suspicious.

DAWN: They won't even know I'm gone. Nobody misses a mouse.

MARGO: How are you going to eat?

DAWN: I brought two packs of Doritos.

MARGO: And when that's gone?

DAWN: You can slip food to me under the door.

MARGO: Under the door?

DAWN: Yeah. Long, skinny food. Spaghetti. String cheese. Carrot sticks.

MARGO: I don't believe you, Dawn. I just don't believe this whole thing. Mom works her tail off to give you a great birthday party, the whole room is decorated, all of your friends come over to celebrate, and you sit locked in the bathroom.

DAWN: I'm not sitting. That would be disgusting.

MARGO: You're going to stand up for the rest of your life?

DAWN: Mice have a very short life span.

MARGO: (*sitting*) Dawn, I'm sitting down. I'm going to sit right outside this door until you come out.

DAWN: Won't people talk? I mean when they walk by and see you sitting and talking to a bathroom door?

MARGO: You think they won't talk if the door is closed for six years?

DAWN: (*sitting*) Margo?

MARGO: Yeah?

DAWN: How come this never happens to you?

MARGO: Camping out in toilets?

DAWN: No. Getting disappointed. You're always so up ... so cheerful. Anything you try for, you get it. People expect you to. I'm not jealous ... really. I'm happy for you. But how come it never happens to me? I try out for the same stuff you do but it always turns out different. What am I doing wrong? (*a long pause, then*) Margo? (*nothing*) You still there, Margo?

MARGO: Yeah. Yeah, I'm here.

DAWN: Say something.

MARGO: I'm trying to figure out how to get spaghetti under this door.

DAWN: Margo, I'm serious.

MARGO: Maybe soup. We could squirt soup under the door, but it couldn't be like chunky beef and chicken ... maybe broth. Yeah, broth would work.

DAWN: Margo ...



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