

the Lesson
a play by daniel takacs

Dramatis Personae:

PIERCE, a successful artist.

MASTER, one who knows.

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(A room. An open door. PIERCE is pacing. MASTER is meditating. PIERCE has been waiting a long time. He waits even longer. The room is filled with air. Finally, PIERCE speaks.)

PIERCE

So is this what it's all about? Waiting?

(Pause.)

Well I can wait.

(PIERCE waits. A long time.)

See? I'm waiting. No big deal.

(Pause.)

Some test.

(Pause. PIERCE begins to meditate. Pause.)

I'm meditating.

(Pause.)

How do you do that leg thing?

(PIERCE tries to sit in lotus position.)

Ow!

(Pause.)

Will you help me please?

(Pause.)

I really hurt my leg.

(PIERCE gets up and walks it off.)

Some test.

(Pause. PIERCE stops and looks at MASTER.)

I can wait.

(Pause.)

I can wait.

(Pause. PIERCE wanders about the room.)

I live for waiting.

(Pause.)

I guess you don't care for decorating. See, I think that's a mistake. Decor really changes the way people perceive you. Or are you above all that?

(Pause.)

Yeah, I suppose so.

(Pause.)

You know I don't really wait for anyone. I'm really giving you the benefit of the doubt here.

(Pause.)

And that's saying something.

(Pause.)

I've fired guys over less.

(Pause.)

Consider yourself lucky.

(A long pause.)

When's lunch?

(Pause.)

Or do you not eat, either?

(Pause.)

Come on, you eat.

(Pause.)

Do you know who I am? You must.

(Pause.)

No, you don't. Or you'd treat me with some fucking respect.

(Pause.)

What, nobody's talked to you like that before?

(Pause.)

Well, let's cut the crap, then. Let's get to the teaching.

(Pause.)

Coward.

(Pause.)

I'm leaving.

(Pause. PIERCE goes to leave. He stops at the door.)

And you can expect my donation will be rescinded.

(Pause.)

Oh! I suppose you don't care about money either.

(Pause.)

Of course not. Of course not.

(Pause. PIERCE approaches MASTER.)

Helloooo! Buddy, I'm talking to you.

(Pause.)

Idiot.

(Pause.)

Some Great Master.

(PIERCE makes to leave. He stops at the door.)

If I leave, I fail the test?

(Pause.)

Well. Look at me, I'm failing the test.

(Pause.)

You are impossible! I work with people like you. Care only about yourself. You are inconsiderate. I mean it. You are.

(Pause.)

And you know what else. You're an asshole. Wasting peoples' time, making them wait on you. Betraying their trust. You should be ashamed of yourself.

(Pause.)

Forget this. And forget you. I'm done.

(Pause. PIERCE gets an idea. He sneaks up behind MASTER.)

HA!

(MASTER is unmoved.)

Scared you, didn't I?

(Pause.)

Yeah. You were scared.

(Pause. PIERCE gets close to MASTER's face.)

Fuck. You.

(Pause.)

You heard me. Fuck you.

(Pause.)

Go fuck yourself you fucking retard.

(Pause.)

Fucking fucker bitch twat cum-face bitch.

(Pause.)

Fuckhead.

(Pause.)

Yeah, you, fuckhead. Go fuck yourself.

(Pause.)

You know, meditation, it's a fad. Waste of time. Like... (*Searching*)... well you wouldn't know would you?

(Pause.)

What a waste.

(Pause.)

Listen. I'll give you one more shot.

(Pause.)

Talk to me.

(Pause.)

I mean it. This is your only shot.

(Pause.)

Don't be shy...

(Pause.)

Aaaaaaaand... anything you want to say?

(Pause.)

Or do?

(Pause.)

Bending a spoon would be fair game?

(Pause.)

Fine.

(Pause.)

Your loss, bub.

(Pause.)

I'm really leaving. This is it.

(Pause. PIERCE heads for the door. Stops.)

What *was* the right answer, by the way?

(Pause.)

Right.

(Pause.)

Bye then.

(A long pause.)

Come on.

(Pause.)

You beat me, come on. Out with it.

(Pause.)

I deserve to know. I did the waiting.

(Pause.)

I earned it.

(PIERCE approaches MASTER, grabs his clothes and begins to tug at him.)

Hey. Come on.

(Pause.)

Hey. Talk to me.

(Pause.)

What's your problem? Just say something.

(Pause.)

Anything! Come on.

(Pause.)

Say something!

(Pause.)

What do you want you old creep! Tell me! Tell me what I'm supposed to do! Am I supposed to grovel? Cause I won't! Am I supposed to wait here all day? Well how goddamn long is that gonna take? Am I supposed to just put aside my life and become a mountain-man? Huh? Huh?!

(Pause. PIERCE Shouts.)

Answer me!

(Pause.)

Answer me!

(PIERCE jumps around the room, making a ruckus.)

Answer me! Answer me! Answer me! What am I supposed to do? Tell me what I'm supposed to do. Kiss your hand?

(PIERCE kisses MASTER's hand.)

Well I'm kissing it. I'm kissing it. Is this enough for you? Huh? Am I humble enough now?

(PIERCE gets up, starts to bang on the walls.)

What do you want from me! What do you want! Huh? Do I bow?

(PIERCE bows.)

I'm bowing! Look at me, I'm bowing! I am low I am so low. I'm so low and humble I have to bow to the big strong man.

(Pause. Over the following section, PIERCE falls into a tantrum.)

Not enough old man? Am I just a big baby to you? A big stupid baby? Is that what I am?

(Pause.)

Look I'm a big stupid baby and I neeeded the big strong man! Waaaaaaa. Come on big strong man! Come on! Come on! Give baby his bottle. Give it to me! Waaaaaaaaaaaa!

(Pause.)

Answer me! Speak! Answer me!

(Pause.)

Tell me! All I want is a little peace. And you won't give it to me! Shit! Fuck! Give it to me! Give it to me! I want it! Give it to me. GIVE IT TO ME! GIVE IT TO ME!
I JUST WANT SOME PEACE! And nobody will help me. Nobody! Nobody.

(PIERCE is calming down now.)

Nobody... Nobody... Nobody.

(Pause.)

Not even you.

(Pause. PIERCE collects himself.)

That was unsightly of me.

(Pause.)

Well judge me all you want. I guess I just don't have your... whatever this is.

(Pause. A breath.)

I need help.

(Pause.)

I have this knot. In my heart. And it's squeezing me.

(Pause.)

I thought that if I could be successful, if I... it would go away.

(Pause.)

But it's worse. It's worse than ever. I would do anything.

(Pause.)

I'm pathetic.

(Pause.)

Big front. Nothing underneath.

(Pause.)

Guess you have the opposite problem.

(Pause.)

How do you do it?

(Pause.)

Practice, I bet.

(Pause.)

Yeah, something like that.

(A long pause.)

How many monks does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

(Pause. In answer:)

Oooooohhhhhmmm.

(Pause. MASTER is unmoved.)

Worth a shot...

(Pause. PIERCE stands. He starts to leave. Pause.)

I wish you had been able to help me.

(Pause. PIERCE approaches MASTER.)

Thanks for trying I guess.

(PIERCE pats MASTER on the head. Pause. PIERCE hugs MASTER. Pause. PIERCE goes for the door. Stops.)

(Pause. PIERCE tries to go, but he cannot. Silently, he curls up on the floor. Silently, he weeps. Silently, he gathers himself up.)

(Silently, he closes the door. He gathers his strength. He approaches MASTER, and sits cross-legged beside him. He begins to meditate. Silence.)

(MASTER stands silently and helps PIERCE into lotus position. PIERCE watches as MASTER returns to meditation. Pause. PIERCE closes his eyes. They sit in silence together for a long time. Lights slowly fade.)

END