

## THE BIG RED CANDY-LIKE BUTTON

by John Cosper

**GENRE:** Comedy

**SYNOPSIS:** Two guards are given orders to protect a button that cannot be pressed, leading them to question that order and eventually break it.

**TIME:** Under 5 minutes

**CAST BREAKDOWN:** 3

**TOPIC:** Temptation

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:** James 1:13-15

**CHURCH YEAR SEASON:** Any

**SUGGESTED USE:** Sermon Starter, Illustration

**CHARACTERS:**

DUKE and SCARLETT—military guards  
SARGE—their commanding officer

**PROPS:** A console with one big, red button; military gear and weapons

**COSTUMES:** Military fatigues

**SOUND:** Two wireless microphones

**LIGHTING:** General stage

**SETTING:** A high-security facility

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### Director's Tips:

**SET:** The good news is that The Big Red Candy-Like Button only requires a single set piece, but as that set piece forms the centerpiece of the scene, you'll want to ensure that it's done well.

First of all, how big is "big"? Depends on your auditorium size, but be sure the folks in the back row can still see the button in all its glory.

Second, the positioning of the button on the console is important. If it's horizontal, the audience will only see the side of the button and have to rely on the dialogue to describe it. On the other hand, if the button is set into a vertical console, the audience will have trouble seeing it "pressed," as the motion will be entirely upstage. It may be best to meet in the middle: create a console angled toward upstage, thus getting the best of both worlds.

**CHARACTERIZATION:** This scene is more than a little cartoonish (even the character names are from G.I. Joe), so overdoing it is definitely in order. Encourage your actors to make big choices and have a good time. The stage directions give plenty of opportunity for over-the-top characterization, and some time should be spent in rehearsal making the scene as colorful and animated as possible.

**RAISING THE STAKES:** In order for the scene to have the necessary punch, the stakes have to be set high. The Sarge is very clear that the fate of the free world rests on the button not being pressed, so the reaction of Duke and Scarlett once the button is pressed needs to be huge. In a sense, the audience can only be expected to suspend their disbelief as far as the actors do, so make sure your actors are appropriately petrified.

**CAT AND MOUSE:** Duke and Scarlett engage in a dangerous round of cat and mouse around the notorious button, so take care to maximize the comedy with the blocking. As a general rule, blocking should be so clear that a person could watch the scene without sound and still follow the basic story. You may experiment with this in rehearsal: try watching just the blocking, sans lines, and see if the basic gag of the scene still plays.

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*A console is set up on stage with a giant red button on it. DUKE and SCARLETT march on from stage right, carrying weapons and in uniform. They are followed by SARGE.*

**SARGE:** Atten-HUT!

*DUKE and SCARLETT snap to attention.*

Right-FACE!