

The Seller and the Giver

Seller: (*loudly*) Roll up, roll up. Yes, good people come and see what I have. Make way over there!

A crowd approaches, CROWD1, and they watch the selection of brightly wrapped boxes the SELLER lays before them.

Seller: Yes, folks, this is your lucky day.

Giver: I have something to offer too.

Seller: Ha-ha-ha. Did you hear that? He has something to offer. Don't listen folks. What's he got that I haven't?

Giver: What I have doesn't come in boxes. (*Giver goes to the side.*)

Seller: Doesn't come in boxes? What is it then, thin air? No folks, don't waste your time with that. Come closer now and look at these special introductory offers. This box here has 25% off. Yes, 25% off. There's a whopping 50% off this box. No, there's nothing wrong with your hearing, madam, I said 50%. And this box here - well, what can I say? Call me stupid, call me rash... but this box here is ABSOLUTELY FREE. Yes, a free gift to a lucky person.

CROWD1a How do we decide who gets the free gift?

Seller: Well, now, don't ask me. I'm only offering the gift - you decide.

People in CROWD1 begin to discuss, then to argue then to fight over who should get the free gift. After a few minutes there's an uproar. Meanwhile, a second crowd, CROWD2, wander up and they wonder what on earth is going on.

CROWD2a What's going on here?

Seller: Search me. Someone should call the police because this is getting out of hand. I'm trying to run a business here. I'll call them myself.

After a short time the POLICE arrive and break up the fight and haul the people of CROWD1 away.

Seller: Now, good people, I can see you're a lot more civilised than that last lot. And it's just your good fortune to be around to pick up a few bargains. Look at these beautiful boxes and all that expensive wrapping. Bet you're wondering at what wonderful things are inside? Well, you won't find out till we've sold them.

CROWD2a: How much are they all?

Seller: Well... I'll let you decide that. Let's have an auction. Take this box here... who'll give me five pounds?

Giver: I've got something to offer too.

Seller: Oh, here he is again. Really, haven't you had enough for one day?

Giver: What I have to offer costs no money.

Seller: Ha-ha-ha - what nonsense! Costs no money... what is this wonderful stuff that costs nothing? No, folks, you listen to me - you get nothing for nothing in this life. Now, where were we? Who'll give me five pounds for this box?

CROWD2b: I will.

Seller: Six pounds - any takers?

CROWD2c: Me.

And so the SELLER begins to auction away all the boxes. The SELLER does not allow anyone to look inside the boxes until the end of the auction. Meanwhile the people of CROWD1 return after being released by the police.

CROWD1a: Where's our free gift?
CROWD1b: We all had to pay a fine - these gifts better be worth it.
Seller: Ah, there you are my dear people. What ruffians those police are! Where did they come from anyway?
CROWD1c: Yeah, who called the police?
CROWD2a: Not me, was it you?
CROWD2b: Not me neither. Must have been you.
CROWD2C: I didn't.
CROWD1b: Well, who did then? That fine cost me a whole month's wages.
CROWD1: *(all)* SOMEBODY MUST HAVE CALLED THE POLICE.
Giver: I have something to say to you all.
CROWDS &
Seller together: YOU CALLED THE POLICE. *(They all point at the giver.)*

All at once, the crowds rush on the giver and beat him to the ground. The giver seems dead. The seller looks on whilst counting his money.

CROWD1a: Now, let's open the boxes.
Seller: Now, now, ladies and gentlemen. Mustn't be too hasty. Nobody takes those boxes until they're paid for. We don't want the police to call again, do we?
CROWD2: But we've paid for them.
Seller: Paid for them? Paid for them? Don't be ridiculous. Nobody's paid for anything. These boxes contain the finest gifts money can buy. They're worth more than a few quid. Look, call me stupid, but I'll even give you all a fair chance to own these wonderful gifts. We'll have another auction.

And so the SELLER auctions off the boxes all over again and people of CROWD1 and CROWD2 make desperate and frantic bids. At length, all the boxes are sold and the SELLER counts the money greedily and disappears off-stage.

CROWDS: *(all)* LET'S OPEN THE BOXES!

They jump over the GIVER, rush to the boxes and rip them open in a rush to see what's inside them. Every nook and cranny is searched for a gift. Soon they realise there's nothing inside the boxes.

CROWD1a: There's nothing here. We've been tricked.
CROWD2a &b: Nothing in these ones either. This is terrible. We've spent all our money.

The people sit miserably amongst the torn paper and empty boxes.

Giver: *(rising)* I have something to offer. *(Speaks loudly and all the people listen whilst being seated.)* I offer you all a new way to live. In this new life you will not quarrel and fight and scramble for useless, empty things. This new life costs no money but it demands that you give it your whole self, nothing less will do. There is no bargaining to be done. I offer myself as an example of love and sharing and compassion to one another. I want you all to follow this example. I want you all to follow me.

The giver walks away slowly, and one by one, the people rise and follow.

THE END