

CORTEX KIN

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A one-act play

by

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Cast of Characters

DANIEL:

A man in his early 30's. He is dressed in jeans and a button down shirt. He works in a corporation and is emotionally shut down as the play opens.

HANK:

A woman in her 70's. A housekeeper. She tends to be sarcastic but is very focused on her task at hand.

FEMALE VOICEOVER:

Young-sounding, hospital worker.

Scene 1SETTING:

The inside of a brain. A rather gray room. More like a gray cave. Shelves with many boxes or storage items covered in cobwebs.

AT RISE:

HANK, a woman in her 70's, enters, carrying a large box of empty beer bottles. She puts it on a shelf, exits and returns with a feather duster. She angrily starts cleaning. Enter DANIEL, a young thirty something in jeans and a button down shirt. He looks confused.

DANIEL

Um, can I help you?

HANK

Well, good. This is the only feather duster I have but you can grab a broom from the cart in the hall and start working on the floors.

DANIEL

No, that's not what I meant. I meant...what are you doing here?

HANK

Oh. I see. That's how it is. You think I don't need to be here? Have you looked around? I need to be here, let me tell you.

DANIEL

Why? Who are you? Hey, don't touch that!

(DANIEL jumps across the room  
and takes a large book from  
HANK's grasp)

That's not for you to look at.

HANK

Oh, please. Do you think I don't know what's in that?

DANIEL

It's not yours to know about! It's private! What? Have you been snooping through my things?

(HE sneezes)

HANK

Snooping? Ha! You think I have time to snoop? After I'm finished in here, I have to go down the hall and clean in there! You're not the neatest crayon in the box, you know.

DANIEL

(sneezes again)

The neatest crayon...?

HANK

You know why you're sneezing? Dust! All this dust that builds up.

DANIEL

Come on, it hasn't been that long.

HANK

Oh, really? When was the last time you were up here?

(DANIEL thinks)

Having a hard time remembering, are you?

DANIEL

Well, I don't know. I mean, it must have been...well, okay, so maybe it was before Thanksgiving.

HANK

Oh, Thanksgiving. With your take-out from that greasy place on the corner.

DANIEL

How do you even know about that?

HANK

Your mother was really upset that you didn't come home.

DANIEL

I had to work! I'm not discussing this with you! You shouldn't even know about that!

HANK

Not since the summer.

DANIEL

(sneezes)

What? No, that can't be.

HANK

Why would I bother to make it up? You think that makes my job easier? I don't think so. Here, this was the last time you came up here.

(SHE claps her hands. "In Your Eyes" by Peter Gabriel is heard)

DANIEL

(startled)

What the--?

(HE listens)

Oh, right. When I ran into Audrey Schuler at the supermarket.

(HE sneezes. HANK claps her hands again. The song stops.)

HANK

That's the last time you were up here.

DANIEL

That was so long ago. There must have been another time since...

(HE sneezes)

Since then. Oh! My allergies are really bad up here today.

HANK

It's the dust. If you came up here more, it wouldn't be so bad. There are tissues in the cart in the hall.

(exit DANIEL to hall. HE re-enters with a tissue box)

DANIEL

So, how often do you come up here? It seems like your cart is kind of full.

HANK

I don't fall down on the job, if that's what you're implying!

DANIEL

I'm not implying anything. I don't even understand what your job is. Who do you work for?

HANK

I work for you.

DANIEL

You certainly do not! I don't have any employees.

HANK

Sure you do.

DANIEL

If you think you're my employee, than you need to have your head examined.

HANK

(suddenly laughing loudly)

That was pretty good! You're very funny!

(SHE continues laughing)

DANIEL

Stop it. That wasn't supposed to be funny. Stop laughing! I don't even know what's so funny!

HANK

I'm sure you don't. It's not in your nature to have said it, if you did.

DANIEL

My nature? You don't know me at all. How could you know my nature?

HANK

Listen, I have known you since you were a little bitty nothing. Since before you came into this world.

DANIEL

(beat)

Mom?

HANK

Oh, please. Do I look like your mother? How could I be your mother?

DANIEL

Well, I don't know! Who else would know me since before I was born? I thought maybe you could be wearing a costume and playing some elaborate prank.

HANK

A costume.

DANIEL

I don't know! You're saying that you've known me since before I was born and you're telling me I should clean up more, you're giving me tissues...

HANK

That's my job. This isn't a prank and I'm not your mother.

DANIEL

That's good because she's a little mad at me right now.

HANK

Well, she should be! It wouldn't have killed you to drive her home from Passover, now would it?

DANIEL

I was running late to my friends'...

HANK

You were not.

DANIEL

Yes, I was!

HANK

That's what you told your mother and so now she thinks your friends come before the family...

DANIEL

I know she does. You know, my father is the one that should have been there to drive her home! Then I wouldn't be in this mess at all!

HANK

Why don't you just tell her it's not actually because you wanted to go to your friends' house but because you wanted to pack for your trip? You don't think she would understand?