

PANDORA'S

Boxer Briefs

A Play about a Play by

Tyler J. Rinne

Cast of Characters in order of appearance

Doris Maples

Steven Stevens

Teddy Rickenbacker

Stuffy Stevens

Roger Karll

Buddy Boyle

Sonia Stevens

Simon Stevens

Penelope Pear

Gussy Grimus

Vanessa Greene

Eye Tunes

Carmen Croxly

Bertie Beetbox

Toby Snubbles

Mz. Manager

Kara Karll

Rock McMahan

Marcus Gruul

Grossus

Elpis

Prune

Krumply

Vise

Emperor Emprus

Saur

Boer

Alph

Scene One

(Welcome to the small town of Bug-Eye, and the even smaller theatre that is the headquarters for the Bug-Eye Underground Theatre Troupe, or B.U.T.T. The stage is set for a play that takes place somewhere between Greece and Midwest America, and it's not even close to being done.)

(At Rise: Rehearsal. DORIS MAPLES, playing the part of Pandora, sits at center stage. Other than a corsage on her wrist, she is in street clothes. A clipboard lies at her side.)

DORIS/PANDORA: Oh, when will my date arrive? The semi-annual middle school prom dance and apple-bobbing tournament is scheduled to start any moment and, lo, here I sit, all alone.

STEVEN: *(From offstage.)* Knock-knock-knock!

DORIS/PANDORA: Epimetheus! Is that you, finally here to take me to the semi-annual middle school prom dance and apple-bobbing tournament that is scheduled to begin at any moment?

(STEVEN enters as Prometheus. DORIS grimly crosses out lines on her clipboard.)

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: It isn't Epi-morpheus, Pandora.

TEDDY: *(From offstage.)* Epimetheus.

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: It isn't Epidermis, Pandora. 'Tis me: Prometheus, your one true love, here to take you to the semi-annual middle school prom dance and apple-bobbing tournament featuring DJ Mister Mix-It and the Apple Core Four that is scheduled to begin any moment.

DORIS/PANDORA: What?

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: That's right. I know that you have already been asked by my brother, Episodic—

TEDDY: *(From offstage.)* Epimetheus.

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: But I am the one who loves you, so here I am.

DORIS/PANDORA: But Epimetheus has already given me this beautiful corsage and asked me to the semi-annual... *(Crossing out more lines.)* He asked me to the dance.

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: But my dear Pandora, I have something far greater than that cor-sage.

DORIS/PANDORA: Is it...your eternal love, Prometheus?

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: Yep. And this box.

(STEVEN pulls out an old shoebox and offers it to DORIS.)

DORIS: *(Breaking character.)* What is that?

STEVEN/PROMETHEUS: This, my dear Pandora, is—

DORIS: Hold it, hold it, *hold!* *(Off into the wings.)* Stuffy, what is this? Stuffy!

STUFFY: *(Entering from offstage, bespectacled and constantly sniffling.)* That's Pandora's Box, Doris.

DORIS: This is a shoe box. This is not Pandora's—can I get some light onstage please? *(Nothing happens.)* Lights, please?

STUFFY: I'm in charge of lighting, too. In addition to props.

ROGER/EPIMETHEUS: *(Stumbling on, flipping through his script.)* Hey, bro, that's my girl now! I gave her a corsage and she's coming to the semi-annual middle school—

DORIS: Hold! Roger, we're holding!

ROGER: Oh, sorry. Is this not the part where I come in?

DORIS: Roger, this isn't even the part you play. You're Tree #2, Party-Goer #7, Old Man at the Market #12, Little Boy #4, Mime #3, and Fish Ghost #2.5.

ROGER: Oh. Sorry.

DORIS: Teddy, when did we add "Fish Ghosts" to the script, and why are they numbered by halves?

TEDDY: *(Entering, he carries a huge binder absolutely stuffed with papers.)* Fish Ghosts are now an integral part of Scene Four. They are numbered by halves because, obviously, some of them are just fish heads and some of them are—

BUDDY/EPIMETHEUS: (*Entering with head held high, the consummate over-actor.*) Hey! Brother! *That is my girl!* I have presented her with yon corsage and *she* is accompanying me to the semi-annual middle school—

DORIS: Buddy! Hold! We are holding! Teddy, is it really necessary that we describe the dance in full every single time—

BUDDY: Oh, good. While we've stopped, I have a few questions. I'm having a hard time finding my motivation for when the Fish Ghosts show up. It makes no logical sense that—

DORIS: Later, Buddy. Okay? Stuffy, could I *please* get some lights?

STUFFY: Actually, I wanted to show you this new device that I jiggered together. It's a combination TV remote, laser pointer and popcorn popper. It also controls the stage lights.

DORIS: Then start controlling. (*DORIS opens the shoe box as STUFFY tries to get the remote to work.*) Stuffy, why is Pandora's Box filled with gumdrops?

STUFFY: Oh, sorry, that's just my gumdrop collection. I didn't have time to clean it out.

DORIS: Gumdrop...collection?

(The box opening was obviously a cue, as the entire rest of the company come trudging out of the darkness, closing in on DORIS. ROGER joins them as maybe that was one of his parts? Others in the group are SONIA STEVENS, SIMON STEVENS, PENELOPE PEAR, VANESSA GREENE, EYE TUNES, BERTIE BEETBOX, GUSSY GRIMUS, and TOBY SNUBBLES.)

GROUP: Oogie-boogie, oogie-boogie, boogie-boogie-boogie-blam!

DORIS: (*Collapsing on the couch.*) HOLD!

(Everyone freezes except for ROGER, who keeps going.)

ROGER: Oogle-boog, oogle-boog, doogie-doogie-dooble-bloob! (*Realizing.*) Oh. Is that not my part?

DORIS: (*Standing up, a rallying cry.*) Ladies and gentlemen. Cast and crew. Members of the Bug-Eye Underground Theatre Troupe. My fellow B.U.T.T.s. Today, we find ourselves on the verge of history. ...And on the verge of opening a show that is unfinished, unprepared-for and

(Looking at TEDDY, who shakes his head.) unwritten. But are we dejected?

STEVEN: A little.

DORIS: No! We are not dejected!

STEVEN: Oh.

DORIS: Are we downhearted?

BUDDY: I'm certainly not up-hearted.

DORIS: No! We are not downhearted! And are we anywhere close to being finished? (Everyone looks at one another.) No! We're not! So why are you all standing around when we have *work* to do?! (An off-stage door slams and MZ. MANAGER enters. She is a crabby old lady in gray, striding toward DORIS.) Everybody take five.

MZ. MANAGER: Ms. Maples? A moment of your time?

DORIS: What can I do for you, Mz. Manager? Crunch time, you know.

MZ. MANAGER: That, my dear, is putting it *lightly*. Must I remind you that, unless this summer's production is a success, your B.U.T.T. is out of here?

DORIS: Yeah, yeah...

MZ. MANAGER: Do not "yeah, yeah," me, Ms. Maples—you are not the backup vocalist for my 1950s do-wop group, are you, Ms. Maples?

DORIS: Not that I'm aware of, no.

MZ. MANAGER: Exactly. *And don't you forget it.* Ms. Maples, I am here to check up on you and your B.U.T.T. As you know, the Bug-Eye Town Commission, of which I am the chair, has their eye on you. You and your little student-run drama company here are teetering on the brink of forcible extinction.

DORIS: Come on, we don't—

MZ. MANAGER: Ms. Maples, we of the Town Commission have allowed you to exist for two—that's right, two—whole summers, operating under your *extremely* lax set of budgetary, disciplinary and, may I say, *quality* standards and, if this year's production is not up to snuff both onstage and off, *we will shut you down.* Is that clear?

DORIS: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

MZ. MANGER: *(Stares daggers at DORIS, then exits. She pauses just before leaving.)* Break a leg, Ms. Maples.

(The door slams. Everyone stands in stunned silence for a moment, then they move in on DORIS.)

SONIA: What did she want?

SIMON: What's she doing at rehearsal?

PENELOPE: Yeah, she's not a B.U.T.T.

SIMON: Some of us would disagree, Penelope.

DORIS: *(Getting back her gusto.)* Mz. Manager stopped by to wish us luck on our forthcoming production of "Pandora at the Prom," our gutsy, modern retelling of the Pandora's Box myth. She also wanted to remind us that we have no money, no talent, and no hope of surviving the summer.

ROGER: Hey! We have—! *(Trying to think of something they have.)* Oh, I guess she's right.

DORIS: She also wanted to remind us that if *this* summer's show turns out anything like *last* summer's show—*(Everyone starts screaming and running around. Panic!)* I know! I know! No one wants a repeat of "Macaroni Days, Macaroni Nights." *(Everyone gasps at hearing the title.)* Oh, come on—saying the show's name isn't going to hurt you, it's not Voldemort.

STEVEN: *(Tentatively.)* "Macaroni Days, Macaroni—"

(STUFFY whacks his remote against his leg and it finally works. The lights go on, but it also causes a short circuit from off stage. Sparks fly! Everyone screams.)

STUFFY: Hey! I got my remote to work!

DORIS: Everyone's superstitions thank you, Stuffy. Take a seat. *(Looking at her watch.)* Okay, gang, we officially open in three days. Translation: AHHHHH! Production crews? Let's have some updates. Stuffy, I assume we're looking for a better version of Pandora's Box?

STUFFY: Sure, if you want one.

DORIS: This is me saying I want one. How are lights?

STUFFY: Sometimes they turn on and most of the time they turn off.

DORIS: Great. If we could get them to turn *on* most of the time and turn *off* sometimes, I'd be looking at a scenario that I like a lot better. (*STUFFY nods.*) Teddy? How's the script coming?

TEDDY: I can say with confidence that what I *have* is phenomenal. What *has been written* is great. The first seven pages? Watch out.

DORIS: What about the rest of it?

TEDDY: Watch out for that too, because it could show up at any moment.

DORIS: Keep chugging away, Teddy. Gussy. Where's Gussy?

GUSSY: (*Pushing her way between actors. She lugs around fabric, scissors, and measuring tape.*) Move it or lose it, suckers. Ask my scissors if I'm serious.

DORIS: Where are we on costumes, Gussy?

GUSSY: Where are we? Where *are* we? I'm working my *actual buns off* over here trying to make these box-office-bombs-in-waiting look half-way presentable so that their own mothers don't *faint* at the very ever-lovin' *sight* of 'em, and you ask me "where *are* we?"

DORIS: ...Yes?

GUSSY: (*Chipper.*) Just fine! They'll look great! Anything else I can do for you, Dor?

DORIS: Actually, there's a rather large box of what looks to be underwear just sitting over there...

(*ROGER picks up a pair of heart-studded boxers out of a box.*)

GUSSY: Property of the costume department! Get it *out* of your hand before you *lose* your hand!

DORIS: Okay. Vanessa. How's music coming?

VANESSA: (*Nudging her way forward with EYE TUNES, she carries a little music maker.*) Um, yeah, Doris? We've still only got this little keyboard that only makes cat noises so—

DORIS: Carmen? How're ticket sales?

CARMEN: (*Rifling through a stack of envelopes, she taps on a calculator.*) Actually, we've sold two tickets.

(*Everyone cheers!*)

DORIS: Wait a minute, wait a *minute*—let's not get carried away, people. Have they *paid* for them yet?

CARMEN: (*Consulting her notes.*) Yes, they have.

(*Everyone cheers again!*)

BERTIE: (*A small voice from the crowd pushes forward. For some reason, he is dressed as a moose.*) My parents cannot wait to see the show.

(*The crowd quiets, puzzled. DORIS beckons to STUFFY.*)

DORIS: Who is that?

STUFFY: Um, that's Bertie Brickwell? They call him Bertie—*sniff*—Beetbox?

DORIS: Beatbox? Vanessa could use some help in the music department. Get him—

STUFFY: Beet-box. Beets—as in the vegetable. He's the heir to the Brickwell Beet fortune.

DORIS: (*Beat.*) Why is he dressed like a moose? (*STUFFY shrugs.*) Teddy, is there—?

TEDDY: No moose in the script.

DORIS: Okay. Concessions team, I assume we're all stocked up on soda and popcorn and candy?

SONIA: Actually, no.

SIMON: We're trying something different this year.

DORIS: You tried something different *last* year.

SONIA: So we're trying something even more different than *that*.

SIMON: Penelope? Kick it.

PENELOPE: (*Starting music on a stereo.*) Are you tired of ice cream?

BUDDY: No, of course not. No one ever gets tired of ice cream.

PENELOPE: You *are*?

BUDDY: That's not what I said.

PENELOPE: Well, *we've* got the thing for *you*!

SONIA & SIMON: Frozen yogurt!

PENELOPE: Seize the opportunity!

SONIA & SIMON: Frozen yogurt!

PENELOPE: You only live once!

SONIA & SIMON: Frozen yogurt!

PENELOPE: YOLO!

SONIA & SIMON: FRO-YO!

(PENELOPE tries to turn off the stereo while the others strike poses. She finally gets it and poses too.)

VANESSA: Hey guys? Can we use that? All we've got is this cat keyboard and neither of us even know how to—

DORIS: Frozen Yogurt? That's not so weird. Sounds good, guys.

(PENELOPE turns the music back on.)

SONIA: New and interesting flavors!

SIMON: Things you would never eat otherwise!

DORIS: Aaaaaand *there* it is.

PENELOPE: We use ingredients that are—

SONIA & SIMON: Fro-yo loco!

SONIA: That means “crazy”!

SIMON: Spanish, *son*!

PENELOPE: Oysters yogurt!

SONIA & SIMON: Yum-yum!

PENELOPE: Noodles yogurt!

SONIA & SIMON: Oh yeah!

PENELOPE: Pork chop yogurt!

SONIA & SIMON: Still workin' on that!

PENELOPE: YOLO Fro-yo!

SONIA & SIMON: Brain freeeeeeeeze!

(PENELOPE struggles with the stereo, gets it turned off.)

VANESSA: Seriously, we would be willing to trade our cat keyboard for that sterro, if you—

(The stage door crashes open again. It is KARA KARLL, ROCK McMAHAN, and MARCUS GRUUL entering. They are members of the Bug-Eye Bullfrogs baseball team, and their uniforms show it.)

KARA: What up, nerds?

TEDDY: Um, we're actually in rehearsal right now, so—*(KARA throws her bat bag at TEDDY. He collapses around it.)* Just go on in.

KARA: Steve-o, time for batting practice. Let's go.

DORIS: We're in the middle of Steven's scene. I need him here. *(To her cast.)* From the top, please?

KARA: We have a big game tomorrow and *we* need him at *practice*.

DORIS: He'll be over later.

KARA: He'll be over *now*.

STEVEN: He'll make his own decision? *(DORIS and KARA stare at him.)* Tell you what, why don't you guys settle this?

DORIS: You Bullfrogs lost your last game 23-1. Isn't practice kind of an exercise in futility at this point?

ROCK: Actually, Kara's pitching tomorrow.

MARCUS: So we have a chance. That last game was my fault—I was pitching. You'd think the newspaper would be tired of using that same old "Bullfrogs Croak" headline.

ROCK: Marcus, don't blame yourself. That game was on me. *(He pulls a huge necklace filled with good luck charms out from under his jersey.)* I didn't spend my usual three and a half hours rubbing my orange rabbit's foot, and I'm pretty sure I didn't say any four-leaf clover haikus before the game.

KARA: You're one to talk about losses, Doris. I was here last year for "Macaroni Days, Macaroni Nights," remember?

(All of the balls fall out of KARA's bat bag that TEDDY was holding. Pandemonium from the cast.)

STEVEN: Sorry Doris, I gotta go. Are you still gonna be here later tonight? I can come back after practice?

DORIS: Don't bother.

(The team goes to leave.)

KARA: Toodle-oo, Doris! *(She slams the door, but pokes her head back in.)* “Macaroni Days, Macaroni Nights.”

(VANESSA’s cat keyboard starts playing with a mind of its own. Everyone begins to swarm DORIS. Everyone adlibs their problems, such as the ones below...)

VANESSA: It won’t shut off! I can’t get it to shut off!

BUDDY: I’d really like to go over some of these notes with you.

ROGER: Do you have a highlighter I can borrow?

DORIS: HOLLLLLLLLLLD!!!

(Blackout.)

Scene Two

(At Rise: Later that night. The sun has gone down and everyone but TEDDY and DORIS are gone. DORIS works on painting or assembling a bit of scenery and TEDDY scribbles away on loose leaf paper.)

TEDDY: What if we changed all of the characters into *fruit*?

DORIS: *(Sigh.)* What purpose would that serve, Teddy?

TEDDY: They'd all be...fruit.

DORIS: How about we focus on the script that we've got going?

TEDDY: Yeah, but it's so much more appealing to just start over. Or should I say apple-peeling!

DORIS: *(Considering.)* It would add a new layer to the apple-bobbing scene, wouldn't it?

STUFFY: *(Staggering onstage, surprising DORIS and TEDDY. He is covered in dust.)* AH-CHOO!!! I found it!

DORIS: Stuffy! I thought you went home six hours ago?

(TEDDY hands STUFFY a tissue, as he does every time STUFFY sneezes.)

STUFFY: Nope. I've been in the basement the whole time! But I *found* it!

TEDDY: You found *what*?

STUFFY: A number of things, actually. Plenty of them that I am AH-AH-ACHOO allergic to.

TEDDY: You're allergic to everything.

STUFFY: False. I am allergic to *many* things, but I am not *everything*. I am allergic to mold, pet dander, certain types of grass, all rodents except chinchillas, peanuts, walnuts, pine nuts, cashew nuts, Brazil nuts, sunflower seeds but not sunflowers, my own eyelids, and oats.

DORIS: Can't forget the oats. What'd you find, Stuff?

STUFFY: *(Pulling it from behind his back.)* The *perfect* Pandora's Box.

(The box is wooden, craggy and old, carved ornately and giving off a somewhat sinister sneer. In short: the perfect Pandora's Box. DORIS ogles it. She slaps STUFFY on the back and a plume of dust explodes from him. STUFFY sneezes.)

DORIS: Oh, Stuffy, it is perfect! Now if we could only get the rest of the show to measure up...

TEDDY: Hey!

DORIS: Not what I meant, Teddy. It's just that...guys, this is our third year of doing this and...we're not any better at it.

STUFFY: I wouldn't say that. We've hardly had *any* fires this summer. So far.

DORIS: I know, but...our hometown thinks we stink so bad that they are threatening to shut us down.

TEDDY: That's just Mz. Manager.

DORIS: And her whole Town Commission.

STUFFY: I'm pretty sure Mz. Manager *is* the whole Town Commission.

TEDDY: Come on—the show's going to be fine and Mz. Manager is not going to shut us down. We'll live to perform another summer and another summer and, okay, we might be dead after the fifth summer.

(They laugh.)

DORIS: Do you ever worry that you're just going to be good at something? *(TEDDY and STUFFY don't get it.)* Just good...and not *great*? I mean, lots of people are good at lots of stuff, but how many of them are great—*really great*—at something?

STUFFY: Are you looking for a round number here, or—?

DORIS: I mean I'm *good* at playing kickball. I'm *good* at brushing my teeth, but, man, what if I was great?

TEDDY: How do you become *great* at brushing your teeth?

STUFFY: If this is you telling us you're leaving the show to become a dentist—

DORIS: I don't want this summer's show to be *good*—I want it to be *great*.

TEDDY: Doris, I think I have a solution.

DORIS: Yeah?

TEDDY: Introducing my newest character: Froggo the Fierce, the roughest, toughest most best-at-math frog warrior the world has ever seen! Scene four—

STUFFY: The one with the ghost fish?

TEDDY: Fish *ghosts*, not ghost fish. *Big* difference. But yes—the one with the fish ghosts...*and* with Froggo the Fierce.

STUFFY: How does a warrior frog fit into the myth of Pandora's Box?

TEDDY: Well, let me tell you, my friend—

DORIS: Guys—you need some sleep. Stuffy, the new box is great. Teddy, maybe think in a direction not involving a Froggo. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

TEDDY: (*Going to exit with STUFFY.*) You're not staying, are you?

DORIS: I need to lock up. You guys go ahead.

TEDDY: Doris, we all know that that just means you're going to stay here all night.

DORIS: No it doesn't. Go, you guys. Go.

STUFFY: Get some sleep. Seriously.

DORIS: I will! I'm locking up and going home. Right behind you.

STUFFY: Alright, Doris. 'Night.

DORIS: Goodnight, boys.

TEDDY: (*Pausing at the door.*) We, uh, unrolled a sleeping bag in your usual spot.

DORIS: (*Beat. A smile.*) Thanks, guys. (*TEDDY and STUFFY leave. DORIS lingers and then goes to see that, yes, they did leave a sleeping bag out for her. She sits down on it and looks at the Box.*) If we could just be...great. (*Then, she opens it. The lights go out with a flash and a bang. DORIS yelps.*) Stuffy! I think I sat on your remote! Stuffy? Oh, where is that darned thing? (*The lights come back up a little, but now there are all kinds of weird people/creatures standing around DORIS on the stage. They are GROSSUS, ELPIS, PRUNE, KRUMPLY, and VISE.*) Gussy, those are some top-notch costumes, girl.

(Realizing she doesn't know these "people," DORIS gasps and hides in the sleeping bag. The creatures don't notice her. A maniacal laugh pierces the darkness. It builds...until the person laughing runs straight into the stage door. They try the handle, pushing, then run into the door again.)

EMPRUS: *(Off.)* What is wrong with this idiotic door?

SAUR: *(Off.)* I believe you have to push, Emperor Emprus, sir.

BOER: *(Off.)* Fire hazard otherwise, Emperor Emprus, sir.

(EMPRUS throws open the door and enters. He laughs maniacally. He is clad in black and red and has a big collared cape. SAUR and BOER follow.)

EMPRUS: Free! Free from that accursed box after all these eons...and yet, it feels like only yesterday, my friends, that we were wreaking havoc upon this poor, woeful planet, eh? Where is our little boxy prison, mm? Has anybody seen it? Come on, it has to be around here somewhere! *(Whining.)* Guys, I want that box.

SAUR: I'll find it for you, sir!

BOER: *I'll* find it for you, sir!

(SAUR and BOER rush around the stage trying to find the box, which DORIS has taken into the sleeping bag with her.)

KRUMPLY: *(A conniving, smiling trickster.)* What's the matter, Emperor, feeling homesick already?

EMPRUS: Of course not! I want to smash that wretched box into oblivion so we can *never* be sent back there again!

WISE: *(A hulking bruiser of a lady.)* I will smash.

EMPRUS: Of course you will, Wise.

WISE: I love to smash.

EMPRUS: Yes, we know, Wise. As soon as we find the box, you can—

WISE: Now I am excited to smash.

EMPRUS: Saur? Boer? If we could hurry it up—?

WISE: I must smash *something*. Or I will smash *someone*.

EMPRUS: Saur, Boer? Come over here and let Wise smash you, please.

KRUMPLY: *(Peeling back the sleeping bag and revealing DORIS.)*
Hellloooo, what's this?

DORIS: Um, I'm sorry, but auditions are over for the summer.

KRUMPLY: *(Standing DORIS up, leaving the box behind.)* And who might *you* be, my dear?

EMPRUS: Doesn't matter! Bring her over here for Vise to smash.

(KRUMPLY drags DORIS over, but ELPIS steps between them and VISE as she looks around. She is lithe and beautiful.)

ELPIS: Hey, what is this place?

GROSSUS: *(A slobby sweetheart that is always a bit sticky.)* Looks like some kind of gross, dirty, dingy dungeon. I like it!

PRUNE: *(A covetous, nervous money-miser. She picks up STUFFY'S remote control, looks it over.)* What's this? Looks valuable.

(PRUNE fiddles with the remote and the lights splash on to full. The creatures jump, and are then struck with awe.)

ALL: Oooooooooo!

ELPIS: Could it be true? Have we really sprung forth from our immortal prison into the most wondrous place in the whole wide world? *(Runs to DORIS.)* Tell me—are we in...the theatre?

DORIS: Yeah.

(A company-wide gasp of excitement. EMPRUS begins to laugh maniacally, which eventually turns into a coughing fit.)

EMPRUS: Get me some water!

SAUR & BOER: Yes, Emperor Emprus, sir!

(They run around looking for water, then come up to DORIS.)

DORIS: There should be some— *(She points offstage. SAUR and BOER run off. Everyone stands around awkwardly while EMPRUS wheezes.)*
So...you guys are new to town?

(SAUR runs on with a glass of water, hands it to EMPRUS. He drinks it and immediately spits it out.)

EMPRUS: With lemon! *(BOER runs on from the opposite side of the stage with a lemon. She squeezes it into his drink.)* Thank you, Boer. *(He takes another drink, spits that one out too.)* Now it's lukewarm!

Forget it! Just forget it! I'm not even thirsty anymore! The time is past and I'm over it and now I hate water, so just forget it! (*He advances on DORIS, menacing.*) Now, tell me, my dear—who are you, where are we, and when is the next open casting call?

DORIS: Um, actually...

EMPRUS: The correct answer is “right now.” Let's show her what we're made of, gang!

(All of them dash to their places. Some of them look rather elaborate. KRUMPLY runs to the front, takes a deep breath, and, just before he is about to launch into the most beautiful soliloquy known to man, ELPIS jumps in front of him.)

ELPIS: Wait! (*SAUR and BOER, who were holding an intricate archway pose, collapse to the ground.*) We cannot perform now, without an audience! (*General agreement. She goes to DORIS.*) You cannot expect me to flutter effortlessly from drama to tragedy to comedy and then back to drama again...without a full house? You cannot expect Saur and Boer to perform their madcap vaudevillian comedy...without a full house?

WISE: You cannot expect me to smash...

ELPIS: Without a full house? You cannot expect Krumply to soliloquize or Prune to croon, here, all by themselves? You cannot expect Grossus the Great to display his fantastic feats with only one spectator? My dear, I am surprised that you even got our beloved Emperor Emprus in the building...without a full house.

DORIS: Look...I appreciate the pitch. Sorry you had to come all this way. But...I have my own show—fully cast—that opens in (*Looks at watch.*) two days. I get it. You're good. But I'm not interested.

(DORIS turns to leave.)

ELPIS: Oh, my dear—we're not just good. We're great.

DORIS: (*Stopping, turning. Almost to herself.*) Great?

ELPIS: (*Smiling.*) See you at rehearsal, sweetie.

(EMPRUS leads the way to leave, but he tries to pull on the door this time. It doesn't work.)

SAUR: I think you have to push, sir.

EMPRUS: I can see that!

(He opens the door and they exit. DORIS stares after them as a smile slowly creeps onto her face. She starts to laugh.)

ALPH: (Off.) You shouldn't have done that.

DORIS: (Startled.) Ah! Steven, you scared me.

ALPH: (Entering from offstage. He is a little blue dude with a pair of underwear on his head.) I am Alph.

DORIS: Alf?

ALPH: I am *Alph*.

DORIS: Like the fuzzy alien guy from that TV show?

ALPH: Yes. I get that a lot. You should not have invited them into your show. They ruin everything.

DORIS: Hey, they seem alright to me.

ALPH: They were not imprisoned for eons for being "alright."

DORIS: Are you...one of them?

ALPH: Unfortunately, yes.

DORIS: Then you need to lighten up. If it's true what you're saying about being trapped in a box for, like, forever, you should be *happy* to be out. Come on...don't be so *blue*.

ALPH: (Beat.) Ah yes, a joke about my hue. How amusing.

DORIS: (Reaching for the underwear on ALPH's head.) What'd you do, get into Gussy's box o' undies? Let me get those off of you. (She does, revealing a pair of little horns.) Aaaaand let me just put those right back on.

ALPH: We were imprisoned in Pandora's Box for being the greatest evils known to man.

DORIS: Wait—*Pandora's Box*? The *real* Pandora's Box? Boy, Stuffy really went all out on props this year.

ALPH: We represent mankind's greatest sins: greed, gluttony, wrath—

DORIS: Hey, you could be in the show too!

ALPH: (A long beat.) What.

DORIS: Sure! Heck, I already accepted your pals—why not you too?

ALPH: They are not my "pals."

DORIS: Okay, so you're trapped in a little box with the same people for an eon or two, I can see how they would start to get on your nerves.

ALPH: I don't have any "pals."

DORIS: You can be *my* pal.

ALPH: (*Considering the offer.*) No thank you.

DORIS: (*A little hurt, she turns to go.*) Okay, have it your way.

ALPH: No! ...Wait. In...in the Box. No one ever...talked to me. They didn't like me. I...I was unlike them in many ways. For instance, I did not like fart jokes.

DORIS: Everybody likes fart jokes.

ALPH: Not I.

DORIS: Come here. Sit down. (*She beckons ALPH over to a platform on the stage. As ALPH sits down, she makes a farting noise with her mouth. She laughs, but fails to get anything out of ALPH.*) Sorry.

ALPH: You're not helping.

DORIS: I get that a lot.

ALPH: (*A small chuckle.*) So do I. I am Alph.

DORIS: Yeah, I got that.

ALPH: (*Extending his hand to her.*) I am Alph.

DORIS: Oh! I'm sorry! It's Doris. I'm Doris Maples.

ALPH: (*They shake.*) Bit of an old lady name, isn't it, Doris? (*DORIS gives him a look. ALPH cracks a wry grin.*) Only joking.

DORIS: Glad you know how.

ALPH: (*Looking around.*) So this is a theatre, then?

DORIS: What we pass off as one, yeah.

ALPH: And what do you do in your theatre, Doris Maples?

DORIS: (*Considering.*) We put on shows. We laugh, we have fun. We pretend to be other people.

ALPH: (*Brightening up at this.*) You pretend...?

DORIS: Sure! I've played all kinds of different parts since we started our theatre troupe. Princesses and warriors, cowboys and superheroes, and, well, now I'm playing Pandora in "Pandora at the Prom"!

ALPH: *(Smiling.)* That sounds nice. *(Catching himself.)* "Pandora at the Prom," eh? I don't suppose that has anything to do with...

DORIS: It's a gutsy modern retelling of the Pandora's Box myth!

ALPH: And that's what you've invited my...compatriots from the box to be a part of?

DORIS: Uh huh.

ALPH: Do you really think that's such a good idea?

DORIS: I get *that* a lot too.

ALPH: *(Smiling.)* Me too. *(Beat.)* I've done some thinking in the time that we have been sitting here together, and I have two things to say.

DORIS: Let's hear 'em.

ALPH: One: I think I too would like to be a part of your show. Playing a "character" sounds most intriguing.

DORIS: Done. From the second I saw you, I had you pegged for Old Man at the Market #8.

ALPH: Two: I would very much like to be your "pal," Doris Maples. If the offer still stands?

DORIS: Done and done! *(They shake on it. DORIS pats her tummy.)* Woof! I'm starving. You wanna' get McDonald's?

ALPH: Yes. I love the McRib. Is the McRib back?

DORIS: I don't think so. *(They start to exit.)* Hey, if you were trapped in a box for...

ALPH: Eons.

DORIS: ...For eons, how do you know about the McRib? And bad 80's TV?

ALPH: The box contained all of mankind's greatest evils. Naturally, we had fast food and TV. And the 80's. *(They exit. Blackout.)*

Wait! It's not over! [Contact the author](#) to read the rest! It's fun and it's free!