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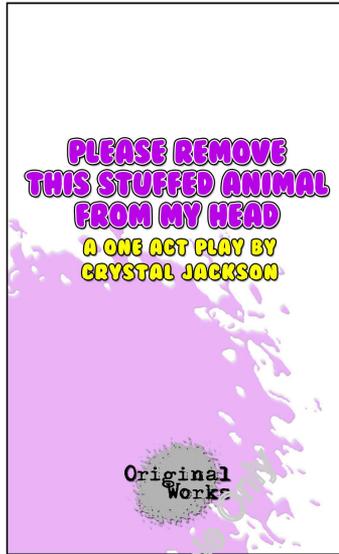
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With My Eyes Shut
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**Please Remove This Stuffed Animal
From My Head by Crystal Jackson**

Synopsis: A man has an appointment with the Bureau for Stuffed Animal Removal in hopes of getting a little stuffed lion removed from atop his head. The bureau subjects the man to a series of questions about his character and his motives, even forcing him into an interpretive dance to express his feelings, but he cannot be swayed. Ultimately, the bureau chief is called in for the final decision. The removal procedure is extremely dangerous, unavoidably life threatening, and comes with one severe long-term side effect.

Cast Size: 3 Males, 1 Female

With My Eyes Shut
by Kira Rockwell

Sample Only

WITH MY EYES SHUT received its World Premiere at WaterTower Theatre's Out of the Loop Fringe Festival in Addison, Texas on February 28, 2016. It was directed by Abigail Birkett, with sets, lights, and costumes by Ryan Schaap, sound by Ryan Swift Joyner, and props by Hillary Collazo Abbott who was also the production stage manager. The cast was as follows:

COLE	Michael McMillian
NAOMI	Zoe Kerr
ASM	Carissa Jade Olsen

The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the Last Frontier Theatre Conference and Baylor University for their role in the development of this play.

Sample Only

CHARACTERS

COLE male (mid-twenties) Identifies on the Autism Spectrum. A music virtuoso.

NAOMI female (mid-twenties) Identifies on the Autism Spectrum. A dancer.

ASM “Assistant Stage Manager” female (thirties). Neuro-typical. She’s just trying to do her job.

PLACE

A black box studio. Liminal.

TIME

The Present.

A NOTE ON SET

There should be an arrangement of mirrors onstage forcing the audience to come to grips with seeing their own reflection during the entire performance.

WITH MY EYES SHUT

PRESHOW: I WILL MAKE EYE CONTACT

(Cole writes, “I will make eye contact,” over and over and over. Once he has filled the entire writing space, he exits.)

SCENE 1: DOLPHIN TRAINING

(Enter the ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER, or ASM. She erases his writing.)

ALL: Dolphin Training!

(ASM exits. Cole enters sporting a red clown nose, playing the kazoo, and wheeling in a wooden Xylophone. He warms up the instrument while speaking to the empty black.)

COLE: This is a xylophone. It’s a wonderful percussion piece. The Greek words, “Xylon” and “Phone,” mean wood sound, quite simply. The basic models most likely originated in Southeast Asia and many early forms can be traced to Africa as well. The xylophone was first mentioned in Europe in 1511 and was referred to as, “wooden clatter.” Ha! Wooden clatter. Clatter meaning, a rattling sound of hard objects striking. Polish composer, Michael Josef Guzikov, was one of the most acclaimed Xylophone players in the 17th century. Percussion is my preference for it is the backbone—the

heartbeat of every ensemble. In percussion we are multi-faceted—we are rhythm, melody, and harmony within a song.

(Enter Naomi with a red clown nose in hand.)

NAOMI: How are you able to keep your nose on?

(Cole stops striking his mallets.)

COLE: Can you repeat the question?

NAOMI: Your clown nose, how do you keep it on?

COLE: With my nose.

NAOMI: Well, yes, but *how* are you able to keep it on when it smells so bad?

COLE: You'll grow accustomed to the latex smell.

NAOMI: Is that your thing?

COLE: My thing?

NAOMI: *(Pointing to the Xylophone)* Your instrument. Is it your focus, your lens of life? Everybody on the spectrum has one.

COLE: Do you have one?

NAOMI: Oh, no, I'm not on the, "spectrum."

COLE: This program is only for people on the spectrum.

NAOMI: What spectrum are you referring to? The emission? The absorption?

COLE: The Autistic.

NAOMI: I prefer to identify with the color spectrum rather than the human one.

COLE: Why? You aren't a color.

NAOMI: Says who?

COLE: Your DNA.

NAOMI: I feel more like a color. Besides, it has been scientifically proven that colors make humans feel something. Our emotions don't create the colors. Colors create our emotions. I myself create emotions therefore I am a color.

COLE: Is that your lens, color?

NAOMI: No. I dance. All styles. I'm a prodigy. My name's Naomi.

COLE: Hello. I'm Cole.

NAOMI: How long have you been in this class?

COLE: A year.

NAOMI: Do you like it?

COLE: I like that they let me play my instruments.

(Cole strikes a melody on his xylophone. The ASM enters. She takes Cole's mallets and exits.)

NAOMI: Is she on the spectrum?

COLE: No.

NAOMI: Why did she take your mallets?

COLE: Because she can. *(Beat.)* Welcome to clown school.

(Lights transition.)

SCENE 2: WORD ASSOCIATIONS

ALL: Word Associations!

(The stage is washed with amber and orange.)

A VOICE: Surprised.

(Cole and Naomi both widen their eyes, grab their face, and gasp.)

A VOICE: Correct interpretation.

(Sound of a piccolo.)

A VOICE: Sad.

(Cole frowns. Naomi looks down. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Sad.

(Cole crosses his arms. Naomi pouts. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Sad.

(Cole punches the air. Naomi crouches on the ground. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Sad.

(Cole and Naomi look at each other and shrug.)

A VOICE: Correct interpretation.

(Sound of a piccolo.)

A VOICE: Happy.

(Cole and Naomi smile. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Happy.

(Naomi holds up a peace sign. Cole gives two thumbs up.)

A VOICE: Correct interpretation.

(Sound of a piccolo.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(Naomi dramatically sighs. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(Cole cracks his knuckles. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(Cole give up. He covers his ears and sits on the ground. Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

NAOMI: Can you describe it in a color?

(Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(COLE retrieves his harmonica from his pocket. He plays his tune.)

NAOMI: Can you describe the texture?

(Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

NAOMI: I don't know what it looks like!

(Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

NAOMI: Pass.

(Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

NAOMI: I said, pass!

(Sound of a tuba.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(Naomi, in the beginning stages of a panic attack, rips off her clown nose. Sound of a tuba.)

NAOMI: Stop it.

A VOICE: Disappointed.

NAOMI: Leave me alone!

(Sound of a tuba. Cole stops playing the harmonica.)

A VOICE: Disappointed.

(Naomi reaches moderate stages of her panic attack.)

A VOICE: Correct interpretation.

(Sound of a piccolo.)

A VOICE: Word Associations complete. Congratulations.

(Naomi searches for her breath.)

NAOMI: Red is angry. Orange is anxious. Yellow is happy. Green is relieved. “I am green with envy.” “You yellow-belly coward!” “You look blue in the face.” “Are you feeling blue?” Blue is sad. No, blue is peaceful. Blue is peaceful. Blue is peaceful. I am blue. I am blue. I am blue.

(Cole plays his tune on the harmonica. The ASM enters. COLE hides his harmonica.)

COLE: Can I have my mallets back, please?

ASM: No.

NAOMI: They don't belong to you.

ASM: It's a prop. They belong to the show.

NAOMI: Give them back.

ASM: Look, I'm just doing what I'm told. Here,
this *prop* is for you.

(She gives Naomi a bowl of spinach.)

NAOMI: What's this?

ASM: What does it look like? A bowl of spinach.

END OF SAMPLE