

BOXED IN

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Ben Kingsland

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BOXED IN

A Ten Minute Comedy

By Ben Kingsland

SYNOPSIS: It's a tough economy and Delaney is sure her boss is planning to give her a pink slip. But her boss can't fire her if she can't find her! When Delaney decides to hide in a cardboard box in the break room until the crisis passes, it's up to her long-suffering co-worker, Jill, to pretend nothing is going on, which would be a lot easier if the box would stay quiet.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 female, 1 male)

NATHAN (m).....Office worker. (10 lines)

JILL (f).....Office worker. Workgroup
partners with Delaney.
(56 lines)

DELANEY (f).....Office worker. Workgroup
partners with Jill. (26 lines)

PENDERGAST (f).....Older. The boss. (22 lines)

SETTING: An office break room.

TIME: The present

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Laurel Mill Playhouse One-Act Festival 2009 - Directed by Mark Allen.

AT RISE: *The break room at an office. A table and several chairs. There's a refrigerator-sized cardboard box by the wall. A mostly-empty tray of cookies is on the table. JILL is sitting at the table, reading. NATHAN enters, urgently.*

NATHAN: Hey. Are there still cookies?

JILL: Go for it.

NATHAN: *(Grabbing a cookie.)* Hello lunch! If it wasn't for catered meetings I'd have starved to death by now. *(Pause.)* Do we have anything else left?

JILL: All the lettuce that was under the luncheon meats; we stashed that in the fridge.

NATHAN: That's good eating.

JILL: *(Agreeing.)* Mmm-hmm! I love when the meat juice pools up in the lettuce leaves.

NATHAN: I call that a 'violent vinaigrette.' Ha! Any cheese cubes?

JILL: I didn't see any. I also haven't seen Delaney all day.

NATHAN: Huh! Maybe she's sick.

JILL: She better be dying. Our project's almost due, and I can only pick up so much slack . . .

NATHAN: *(Shrugs.)* Give her a call.

He takes a handful of cookies and sighs.

NATHAN: Someday, I'll be able to afford groceries again.

JILL: At least we're working, right?

They both knock wood. NATHAN exits. JILL pulls out her phone.

JILL: *(As she dials.)* "Hey, Delaney, it's Jill. I was just wondering; since you seem to think I'm supposed to do both our jobs, how would you feel if I got both our salaries? Doesn't that seem - "

A muffled phone starts to ring from inside the cardboard BOX. JILL stops. The BOX begins to shift around.

BOX: *(Fearful whisper.)* No! Shhh! No! No! No! Stop, please!
The phone ringing stops.

BOX: Phew . . . !

The BOX stops moving. JILL is still.

JILL: Hello?

The BOX jumps, then is still. JILL slowly walks over to the BOX. She lifts up a corner. DELANEY is crouched inside. DELANEY shrieks and pulls the box back down.

JILL: Delaney?

DELANEY: *(Inside the box.)* Shhhshhhshhhh!

JILL: What are you doing in there?

The box scoots towards JILL. JILL does a little dodging.

DELANEY: Quiet, quiet! You never saw me!

The box scoots back to its original place.

JILL: You're a little hard to miss.

The box turns to face her.

DELANEY: Well, of course, if you're talking to me. When nobody's talking to me, I do just fine.

JILL: But I *need* to talk to you. Our deadline is -

DELANEY: Please, Jill, not now! Not today.

JILL: Look, what are you doing?

DELANEY scoots right up to JILL, bumping her.

DELANEY: *(Oblivious.)* Jill, if you value our friendship, please, I need you to do this for me.

JILL: Delaney, I feel like something's come between us. Do you mind taking this off?

DELANEY: No, I can't.

JILL: Okay, then. Can I come in? I'll take off my shoes . . .

DELANEY: I'm sorry, I can't let you in. There's only food for one.

JILL: What do you mean, 'food for one'? How long are you gonna be in there?

Beat. DELANEY begins to sob, softly. JILL listens.

JILL: Are you cry - ?

DELANEY gives a loud wail. JILL winces at the volume.

JILL: Yeah, I thought so.

JILL takes a deep breath. She begins patting the box reassuringly.

JILL: There, there.

DELANEY: *(Through tears.)* I can't come out.

JILL: Ooookay. If you're stuck, I'll call the janitor.

DELANEY: No, I'm not *stuck*. But if I come out, I'm gonna lose my job. *(Pause.)* There's more layoffs due this month. I overheard Pendergast talking about a "list" yesterday with Human Resources, and she said my name. If she finds me, I'm getting a pink slip for sure!

JILL: So you're hiding.

Beat.

DELANEY: Oh! I just nodded. Sorry.

JILL: You know, if you didn't want to be seen, why didn't you just call in sick?

DELANEY: *(Self-righteous.)* You mean *lie*? Wow, Jill. I guess you and I approach problems a little differently.

JILL: I guess we do. How long are you going to keep this up?

DELANEY: Well, I've got my Blackberry. And I've got my Vitamin Water. And I took some cheese cubes from the fridge earlier -

JILL: *(Accusing.)* You took all the cheese cubes?

DELANEY: Hey! I have needs, okay? I'm going through a tough time!

JILL: Times are tough, Delaney! You think you're the only person on Pendergast's list? I don't see anyone else playing hide-and-go-seek.

DELANEY: I didn't know what else to do.

DELANEY starts crying again.

JILL: Okay. Look, there's got to be a better solution. We've just gotta think outside the box. Why don't we -

PENDERGAST enters. She carries a clipboard.

PENDERGAST: Hello, Jill.

JILL: (*Whirling around.*) Morning, Mrs. Pendergast.

DELANEY gasps and the box jumps. JILL pretends to gasp and steady herself against the box, giving it another shake.

PENDERGAST: Are you all right?

JILL: I'm fine. Whew! Just got a little - whew! - short of breath.

PENDERGAST: I understand. I remember what I was like in your condition. You are expecting, aren't you?

JILL smoothes out her clothes a bit.

JILL: No, ma'am.

PENDERGAST: Oh. My mistake.

PENDERGAST examines the cookie tray.

PENDERGAST: Wouldn't you know it? The jackals already ate all the chocolate chip cookies. Do you know what I think about some of these people, Jill?

JILL: We should get raises?

PENDERGAST: Ha, ha! No. I think some people just aren't very considerate. That has an effect on a workplace, you know. They may think it goes unnoticed, but trust me, I don't miss anything.

The box begins to inch back towards the wall.

PENDERGAST: If you saw who took these cookies, Jill, you bring it to my attention.

JILL grabs the box and holds it still.

JILL: Yes sir, ma'am!

PENDERGAST: Is that the box for the new refrigerator?

JILL: What - oh, this box? I didn't even notice it here.

PENDERGAST: Who would have left it in the middle of the room like this? Push it back to the wall, will you?

JILL: Okay -

The box scurries back to the wall. JILL hurriedly follows it, pretending to push.

JILL: (To PENDERGAST.) Done!

PENDERGAST: I'll call a custodian to come break it down.

JILL: Oh, no need. They already know.

PENDERGAST: Why haven't they taken it away yet? It's an eyesore.

JILL: They're waiting for a charity group to come pick it up.

PENDERGAST: What charity?

JILL: Boxes for Love.

PENDERGAST: Boxes for Love.

DELANEY's cell phone rings.

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