

# MANLY DUDE VS. PINK CEREAL

*A Comedic Monologue*

**By Bradley Walton**

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**MANLY DUDE VS. PINK CEREAL***A Comedic Monologue***By Bradley Walton**

**SYNOPSIS:** Caleb is seriously considering eating some of the strawberry-flavored cereal that's sitting in the kitchen cabinet, but he worries about what other people might think if they found out...because Caleb is a dude—a *manly* dude—and the cereal is pink. When Caleb succumbs to temptation and finishes off the box before he realizes what he's done, he goes to extreme measures to hide the truth from his mom. No one can know that Caleb ate pink cereal!

**TIME:** Present day.

**SETTING:** Caleb's home.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS***(1 male)*

CALEB (m)..... A sixteen-year-old who regards himself a really manly dude but way overthinks how others might perceive him.

**SET:** Bare stage.

**PROPERTIES:** None.

**COSTUMING:** Pajamas and white socks.

**AUTHOR'S NOTES:** Lots of folks place too much importance on what other people think of them... especially teenagers. This script is a satire about fragile masculinity, but it's also about the unnecessary pressures we can put on ourselves to conform with questionable perceptions of others' social expectations.

**CALEB:** It's gonna be a good day.

The weather forecast had been calling for three inches of snow last night, but it looks like we got closer to six. There's no way we're having school. I lie back down in bed, but then my mom comes in and tells me to get up. She says they haven't officially called off school yet. I know better than to argue, so I head to the kitchen for some breakfast. Hopefully they'll announce the cancellation while I'm eating, and then I can go back to bed. No sense in getting dressed and ready for school first.

I'd love a big breakfast of pancakes and eggs, but I don't feel like going to that much trouble, so I'm leaning towards cereal. I open the kitchen cabinets and look around. The only thing I can find is a strawberry-flavored Cheerios knockoff. That would be fine, except that the box and the cereal are both pink. Really pink. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with the color pink—it's just not my thing. Even if nobody saw me, I'd still know...I ate pink cereal. Artificial pink food coloring would be coursing through my body, and that would make me incredibly self-conscious around everyone else for the rest of the day. On the other hand, I'm not going to school, and Mom already sat down at her computer to work remotely from home. As long as I don't eat lunch when she does, I should be able to avoid her until supper time. So, I pour myself a tiny bit of the pink cereal. Wow! It's really good! I want more, but then Mom might figure out that I ate some, and if she mentions it, that could be awkward. I have one more single piece. Sooo yummy.

I eat another.

And another.

I look out the window at the snow, the cereal box still in my hand. It's beautiful outside. Well, maybe "beautiful" is too girly a word. Let's say, "awesome." It's awesome to look at.

Wait a minute! What's the matter with me? One of the neighbors might see me holding the pink box through the glass! I move back from the window, eating another piece of cereal and flogging myself

in my mind. I continue to flog myself and eat single pieces of cereal for thirty minutes or so, not stopping until my fingers touch the bottom of the bag inside the box. Only a few pieces are left! Oh, crud! What can I tell my mother so I won't have to admit what I've done? I could say I knocked it on the floor, spilling it, and had to throw it all away! Yeah, that's a good idea. But my mother can usually tell when I'm lying, so I have to knock it on the floor for real. I set the box on the counter and bump it with my elbow. It wobbles but doesn't fall over. I try again, and this time it goes off the edge. Without thinking, I reflexively reach out and catch it. It's a really good catch, and if my entire goal hadn't been to knock the box on the floor, I'd be proud of myself.

I set the box on the counter again, bump it with my elbow, and close my eyes to stop myself from catching it. I hear the box hit the floor, then open my eyes. No cereal has come out, so I pick up the box and dump what's left on the floor, figuring that as long as I can say I knocked the box off the counter and had to sweep everything up, Mom won't question me about what happened in between. I get the broom and dustpan. The large pieces are easy to clean up, but the crumbs are more challenging. Much more. And I have to get them all, because sooner or later... not today and maybe not tomorrow, but eventually... my friends will come over, and they can never be allowed to wonder what happened here. Even though I don't live alone, any hint of pink on the floor might lead them to assume the truth, and the ensuing damage to my masculinity could be irreparable. I lie down on the floor and shine a flashlight across it, searching for any odd flecks of pink that I might have missed. Part of me wonders if I should taste the floor, just to be sure. Would it be worth the peace of mind? Will I regret it if I do? Will I regret it if I don't? This is clearly a no-win situation, so I opt for the choice less likely to keep me awake at night for the rest of my friends' lives: I lick the floor. Instantly, I regret it. But the regret is temporary, vanishing as a new problem occurs to me: When I tell Mom I knocked the cereal box on the floor, I'll reflexively say I did it "by accident" because that's a lie everyone is automatically programmed to tell. But then, because I've lied, I'll have trouble maintaining eye contact. I'll start twitching or sweating or doing

something that'll tip my mother off. Since there's no conceivable reason for me to lie about knocking over the cereal box, she'll know I'm lying about the "accidental" part.

There's only one thing I can do: Knock the cereal box on the floor by accident for real. I still have to wash the bowl and spoon I used...if I clean them with the box right next to me, I might knock it on the floor. So, I wash the bowl. No luck. Then the spoon. Still no luck. I wash them again as thoroughly and recklessly as possible, but my elbow continues to miss the cereal box. I keep at it, working myself into a frenzy of determination to accidentally knock the cereal box on the floor, even if it kills me, and then, as I wash the spoon for the fourteenth time, it finally happens—success!

Still... something is nagging at me that I can't quite put my finger on. But before I can figure out what, I step on a piece of cereal I somehow missed! Now there are new crumbs on the floor, and worse... on the bottom of my sock. I hold my foot over the trash can and try to brush them off. But... what if some are embedded in the fabric and won't come out? What possessed me to go to bed in white socks? Why not black or brown or some ugly striped pattern... something, anything, that would go in with the colored laundry so I wouldn't have to worry about food coloring in my sock staining my white clothes pink in the washing machine?!

But the crumbs do come off. I don't see anything pink on the bottom of my foot. I think I'm safe. I put my foot back down...right onto the crushed piece of cereal I just stepped on. So, I brush my foot off. Again. And then I sweep up the new crumbs. Then I lick the floor, just to be sure. Having done it once, the second time doesn't seem like as much of a big deal, which is a disturbing relief. The floor tastes like floor, something I didn't have an opportunity to think about earlier. This makes me wonder how I know what floor tastes like. Hazy recollections from my early childhood begin to drift up from the depths of my memory. I push them back down. Some things are better off forgotten. I throw the cereal box in the trash. I've covered my tracks. And not a moment too soon, because my

mom walks into the kitchen. Why isn't she at her computer? How long hasn't she been at her computer?

"Hi, Mom," I say with a strained alertness in my voice that she'll notice if I don't distract her from it right away, so my mouth keeps running. "I accidentally knocked over the box of cereal and had to clean it up off the floor and throw it away."

Wait a minute, I wasn't going to say anything unless she asked me. Why did I just volunteer that? I mean, I know I'm an idiot in a state of panic, but besides that—why?!?

Mom looks puzzled. A question is coming. This is it—the moment of reckoning. Hopefully I've prepared myself well enough.

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