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Help Desk

A short comedy by

Don Zolidis

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Help Desk by Don Zolidis
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One-act Comedy
4-20+ actors

When you call the help desk, you're looking for a solution – but your problems might just be beginning. Whether you're getting shamed about your inability to log in, giving your credit card information to a scammer, or having serious conversations with a clown, customer service calls spiral into absurdity for the customers and employees alike in this hilarious comedy. From playwright Don Zolidis comes a comedy perfect for anyone who's ever wondered what hilarious, outrageous, awful person might be on the other end of the line.

Cast of Characters

ANGEL
JERALYN

BORIS
TANNER

TALULA
CARTER

MARCUS
BAILEY
DANI

PRESTON
MONIQUE

TAMARA
BOFFO

MARA
BRENT

BRIN

CHARLIE

CHASE
YAMIRA

MILENA
STUART
TANNER
BOFFO

Bonus Scenes:
VINNY
WATKINS

TORI
MASHA

JESS
BRETT
VIC
MILEY
MABEL

How to Perform this play: This play may be performed live – with people in desks spread out on stage, talking into the fourth wall as if there were a computer screen. Or it may be performed virtually, with actors talking into a camera to other actors.

Number of Actors: Any number of actors can be used in this play. If you're not doing the bonus scene, as few as 4 actors could perform this play, frequently switching costumes. Feel free to cut any scenes as necessary, or add scenes from the bonus section.

Gender of Performers: I've selected the gender of the characters rather arbitrarily. Feel free to change the gender of any character and adjust pronouns accordingly.

1.

JERALYN is at the Help Desk, with headphones on. She is scrolling through her phone.

Lights up on ANGEL, calling in.
JERALYN lets it ring for a moment, calls out.

JERALYN

Anyone else gonna get that?

No response from anyone else. The phone keeps ringing.

Oh okay I guess I got it then. I guess I'll take this one. Whatever. It's cool.

The phone keeps ringing.

Y'all are disappointing.

She answers it.

Help Desk, this is Jeralyn. What seems to be the nature of your problem?

ANGEL

Hey – so I'm trying to log into the network and I can't seem to make it work.

JERALYN

Oh okay. Boy that's a challenge. Glad I picked up this call.

ANGEL

I'm sorry?

JERALYN

No go ahead. Walk me through how terribly difficult this is.

ANGEL

Um… so – I put in my ID and password –

JERALYN

Uh huh.

ANGEL

And then it says it can't log me in.

JERALYN

Right. Mystery. What could it possibly be?

ANGEL

Well, this is super weird, cause normally I don't have any trouble.

JERALYN

Oh you never have trouble. This is your first time encountering an insurmountable difficulty. So difficult, in fact, that it prompted you to call the help desk.

ANGEL

Yeah.

JERALYN

You feel like this problem is so hard that it demands assistance from a paid professional. You can't crack this nugget. Impossible to figure out.

ANGEL

Um… did I catch you on a bad day?

JERALYN

Why would you say that?

ANGEL

It just seems like you kinda have an attitude.

JERALYN

WHOAH. *I* have an attitude? I'm just sitting here, minding my own business, I'm not the person who can't figure out how to log in to the network. I'm in the network just fine. I got no problems.

ANGEL

Right, but you work at the Help Desk.

JERALYN

Oh, you know ALL ABOUT me, don't you? ALL ABOUT ME.

ANGEL

Can you just help me, please?

JERALYN

Oh now you need help. Just a minute ago you were saying I had an attitude, and now all of a sudden you're desperate for my assistance. I don't know, maybe you think it's cool to insult someone and then demand they help you. That's how it works where you live. You do you, I guess.

ANGEL

So… with my password? Please.

JERALYN sighs.

JERALYN

All right – have you tried turning off your computer and turning it back on again?

ANGEL

Does that work?

JERALYN

No I'm just saying stupid stuff to keep you occupied. I'm just making stuff up over here because that's what I like to do with my time. Turn off your computer, then turn it back on again. Do it. DO IT.

ANGEL

Okay, okay!

ANGEL turns off her computer.

Um… so now I turn it back on?

JERALYN

No we just leave it off.

ANGEL

Oh.

JERALYN

Of course you turn it back on! What part of "turn off your computer, then turn it back on again" didn't you understand?! Did your brain just cut out after the first part of my instructions?

ANGEL

Sorry I –

JERALYN

How are you gonna log into a network with a computer turned OFF? How are you gonna do that? Are you magic? Do you have magic? Are you a wizard? Am I talking to a wizard? Are you gonna get your wizard wand and abracadabra yourself into the network, is that what you're planning on doing?!

ANGEL

No! I don't know! Maybe!

JERALYN

Is your computer back on yet?

ANGEL

It's booting up.

JERALYN

Uh huh. All right – well I guess we wait for that then.

ANGEL

I'm doing what you asked me to do!

JERALYN

Not fast enough! I got other people to help, all right? I got people who got real problems calling in – and what are they gonna do if the line is busy?

ANGEL *(near tears)*

I don't know! I just can't log in to the network!

JERALYN

And it's my problem that you FAILED?! Take some responsibility for your actions!

ANGEL

I'm trying to! I'm having a hard day!

JERALYN

I bet you are! It's about to get harder!

ANGEL

No!

JERALYN

Did you remember your password correctly?!

ANGEL

Yes.

JERALYN

Did you?!

ANGEL

Yes!

JERALYN

Stop lying to me! I know you're lying! Did you enter your password correctly?!

ANGEL

I think so!

JERALYN

Before you were sure and now you just think so?! Which is it?

ANGEL

I don't know! I don't even know who I am anymore! I tried to do the captcha thing and it asked if I was a robot and I started thinking about it, and I was like, *am* I robot? If I was a robot would I even know? Maybe I'm a robot that's programmed to think it's a human being! And all of a sudden I didn't even know if I *deserved* to get into the network if I couldn't even prove that I was a human! I mean, maybe I'm just a brain in a vat and this is a computer simulation and –

Types something in to the computer.

Oh. Hold on. I think I got in.

She exhales.

Oh I made it in. Thank you. I think I learned something today.

JERALYN

I think you did, lady. I think you did.

ANGEL

You saved me.

JERALYN

Just doing my job. Next time… you're a human being. Remember that.

ANGEL

Thank you.

JERALYN

Cause a robot never woulda made that dumb mistake.

Lights change.

2.

Light up on BORIS, dressed like a hippie, at the help desk.
TANNER is calling in.
BORIS takes the call.

BORIS

Help Desk, this is Boris. How may I help you today?

TANNER

Hey man – it's Tanner.

BORIS

Hello Tanner.

TANNER

I need some help.

BORIS

Everyone does sometimes. You came to the right place, Tanner. Tell me what's going on with you.

TANNER

Um… so I'm trying to order something from Amazon and it's not taking my credit card information.

BORIS

Uh huh. That's a bummer, dude.

TANNER

Right. So what am I doing wrong?

BORIS chuckles.

BORIS

We're not there yet. Don't rush the process.

TANNER

Oh.

BORIS

You gotta *savor* the process, know what I'm saying? This is a journey that we are on together, and you don't want to rush to the end of the journey without fighting all the monsters along the way. Right? How else are you going to learn and change and grow?

TANNER

I'm not sure I want to learn and change and grow –

BORIS

Ohh. Don't say that, Tanner. Let's unpack that.

TANNER

I'm trying to order socks, actually. For my feet. I need some new socks.

BORIS

Mm-hm, that's what's going on on the surface. But that's not what's really happening.

TANNER

That's actually exactly what's happening.

BORIS

Little word of advice for you: I want you to remove the word "exactly" from your vocabulary. We are faulty creatures. Our perceptions of the world are not necessarily what is "reality." In fact, "reality" which I am putting in "air quotes", is not actually a thing. So you need to release yourself from the pathological need to "know" "what" is "going on."

Skipping Forward

TANNER *(longingly)*

Five!

(Desperately pleading)

Five!

(He reaches out a hand for five)

FIVE!

BORIS

Five hears you!

TANNER

I love you, Five!

BORIS

Call the others! Call them!

TANNER

Seven! Nine! One! One again! One another time! Zero! Zero please hear my call! And FIVE!!!!!

BORIS

And your expiration date?!

TANNER

Why do you –

BORIS

SPEAK YOUR EXPIRATION DATE INTO THE UNIVERSE!

TANNER

JULY 2025!

BORIS

YESSSS!

Tanner takes a deep breath.

TANNER

Nothing seems to have happened? Boris? Boris are you there?

Short pause

Boris did you just steal my credit card information? Boris?

BORIS

Thanks for calling the Help Desk.

Lights down on BORIS.

3.

Lights up on CARTER and TALULA

TALULA

Hello?

CARTER

Is this the Help Desk?

TALULA

Yes it is.

CARTER

I got a bone to pick with you.

TALULA

I'm sorry to hear that, but I'm here to help. That's why I'm at the Help Desk. I love helping people.

CARTER

I need to report a faulty product. Possibly poisonous. Super dangerous. And there are no warning signs on it at all, NONE. What's your name?

TALULA

Um… Talula.

CARTER

All right, Talula – listen to me. I got one of your so-called bottles of water, and you know what I did? I drank it.

TALULA

Oh.

CARTER

And then I looked at the ingredients. What do you think the ingredients were? In a bottle of WATER. What are the ingredients in a bottle of water?

TALULA

Water?

CARTER

Oh sure water, there's supposedly water in this thing. But you know what else? Magnesium Sulfate. Magnesium. Sulfate. Chemicals.

TALULA

I'm not sure those are chemicals.

CARTER

They are SCIENCE words and I do not like them! I didn't ask to put SCIENCE into my body! And now I've got Magnesium throwing a party in my lungs or wherever and sulfate is just RIPPING up my stomach! It's madness!

TALULA

Do you actually feel sick?

CARTER

Do you think these chemicals would be so obvious as to cause OBVIOUS problems?! No. They're smarter than that.

TALULA

I'm not sure that they're smart at all.

CARTER

That's what they want you to believe. Wake up, Talula. Open. Your. Eyes. I've got Magnesium and I've got Sulfate INSIDE MY BODY right now. What can I do? How do I stop them? I'm freaking out!

TALULA

Okay – first – calm down.

CARTER

I AM VERY CALM.

TALULA

I'm pretty sure speaking loudly activates the Magnesium.

CARTER

What?!

TALULA

Shhh! You need to keep it down and act rationally or the Sulfate will awaken.

CARTER

It awakens?!

TALULA

Don't you know anything about Sulfates?

CARTER

There's more than one?!

TALULA

Yes, sir, yes, there are many sulfates.

CARTER gasps.

And they lurk around you, unseen, ready to strike at a moment's notice.

CARTER

My goodness.

TALULA

So the first thing you need to do – you need to me very carefully and do everything I say or you will be facing an awakened Sulfate and an activated Magnesium. Do you want that?

CARTER

No. No I don't want that.

TALULA

No you don't.

CARTER

Are the sulfates in the chemtrails?

TALULA

You better believe it.

CARTER

They're everywhere. They're in our water. They're inside us.

TALULA

Yes, but there is one way to get them out.

CARTER

I have a knife here.

TALULA

Don't – you don't need a knife.

CARTER

Are you sure I don't need a knife?

TALULA

No. That only angers the magnesium.

CARTER

I don't want to anger it.

TALULA

In fact, speaking its name aloud peeves it.

CARTER

Oh.

TALULA

But there is one way to get it out. I need you to find a lavatory.

CARTER

A lavatory?

TALULA

Do you have one in your house?

CARTER

I think so.

TALULA

Okay. I need you to go it, and I need you to urinate. Carter? Carter, are you there?

CARTER

I'm scared.

TALULA

Be brave, Carter. It's the only way to get it out.

CARTER

If you say so.

TALULA

And listen, never buy one of our products again, okay? I don't think you can handle it.

CARTER

Thank you. You saved my life today.

TALULA

Just doing my job. Now go. Pee. Pee like the wind.

CARTER

Thank you. I'll name my first-born after you.

TALULA

Please don't. Also don't have children. They've got lots of magnesium in them.

CARTER

Good to know.

Carter exits.

TALULA takes a moment, then opens a bottle of water.

TALULA

I love helping people.

She checks the label on her bottle.

Sodium bicarbonate?

Lights down on them.

4.

Lights up on BAILEY and MARCUS.

BAILEY

Help Desk, this is Bailey.

MARCUS

Bailey!

BAILEY

What's up?

MARCUS

Bailey, this is Marcus!

BAILEY

What's up, Marcus?

MARCUS

I am having a bad day, Bailey.

BAILEY

I'm sorry to hear that.

MARCUS

A real bad day. You know why I'm having a bad day?

BAILEY

Uh… Climate change?

MARCUS

No –

BAILEY

Natural disasters in your vicinity? Flesh-eating virus? Unsocial rats? Murder Hornets?

MARCUS

No, Bailey, I am having a problem with socks.

BAILEY

Oh.

MARCUS

My socks are malfunctioning, Bailey.

BAILEY

I'm not sure socks can malfunction, sir.

MARCUS

Oh can't they? I DISAGREE. I have worn these socks for six months straight and do you know what happened?

BAILEY

I can't imagine.

MARCUS

They got a HOLE in them. Now how did that happen?

BAILEY

Maybe your feet wore a hole in them.

MARCUS

My feet are PRISTINE. Do you understand how beautiful my feet are? My feet wouldn't hurt anyone! And you're insinuating that my lovely feet have attacked some socks? Didn't happen. Did not happen.

BAILEY

I'm not sure this is a huge deal.

MARCUS

How can you say that? I had big plans for these socks! Ruined! I was gonna make cute little puppets with them!

BAILEY

You can still make puppets.

MARCUS

How'm I gonna make a little puppet? My little puppet has a hole IN ITS HEAD. Was it shot?! Was my puppet the victim of a murder? HOW AM I GONNA EXPLAIN MY MURDERED PUPPET TO PRE-SCHOOLERS?!

Puts a sock on his hand.

`Hey kids it's me, Jimbo, pay no attention to the GIANT HOLE IN MY FOREHEAD WHERE I WAS SHOT BY A RIVAL PUPPET GANG.' Kids are gonna be screaming, calling for their mommies! `Don't worry kids! I was raised from the dead by a Voodoo Priest and now I'm a zombie! But I'm only a little bit contagious! Who wants to give me their brains to eat?'

BAILEY

But you don't have to say that -

MARCUS

I'm going wherever my art takes me. Right now, because of my holey socks, it's taking me to some pretty dark places, Bailey! Real dark. `Hey Kids has anyone seen my brains!?'

He sticks a finger through the hole in the sock.

`Oh no my brains are oozing out I hope you can sleep well tonight! Here come my brains! Blarhrrhrhrghgh!'

His sock puppet dies horribly.

`I was… MURDERED!'

BAILEY

I'm sorry sir but our policy is not refund socks that have been worn. Every day. For 6 months.

MARCUS

Where's your manager?

BAILEY

She's pretty busy.

MARCUS

I want to speak to your manager! Put your manager on!

BAILEY

All right.

Bailey waves to someone in the dark.

Lights up on DANI, joining the call.

DANI

This is Dani. Manager and chief problem solver. I got your back, noble citizen.

MARCUS

Skipping Forward

Next time I have a jerk you get to the be the manager, okay?

BAILEY

Sure thing.

Lights down on them.

5.

Lights up on PRESTON, with complicated instructions from IKEA, and MONIQUE.

MONIQUE

Help Desk, this is Monique.

PRESTON

Hey there I got a problem.

MONIQUE

Sure you do. That's why you're calling the help desk. Before we start I have to let you know that this helpline costs ninety-nine cents a minute. Do you accept the charges?

PRESTON

Why do I have to pay to get help?

MONIQUE

You want people to help you for free? Out of the goodness of their hearts?

PRESTON

Well –

MONIQUE

Do you accept the charges? And I want you to know that whining about the charges costs five dollars a minute.

PRESTON

Ok, I accept the changes.

MONIQUE

All right, so what seems to be the problem?

PRESTON

Right. So I bought a Bjorgborn-ingen Fallfe –

MONIQUE

Oh the Bjorborn-ingen Fallfe, one of our top sellers.

PRESTON

Right, and I'm trying to put it together…

MONIQUE

Even a child could put that together.

PRESTON

Well, I'm actually on step forty-seven –

MONIQUE

That's a good step. One of the best.

PRESTON

Great, but I've put the little tuby things into the little holes, and they kinda get stuck, and I can't get them back out again.

MONIQUE

Are you looking at the pictograms?

PRESTON

Yeah I've got them right here.

MONIQUE

The pictograms are designed for people who don't even have the ability to read.

PRESTON

Uh-huh.

MONIQUE

So what you're saying is – these designs were built so a toddler could put this together, but it has you stumped.

PRESTON

Well, the tuby things don't fit in the –

MONIQUE

So you're confused? You don't know what's going on. I'm surprised you were capable of finding the phone number on there.

PRESTON

Well they actually make it hard to find the help line –

MONIQUE

Oh a lot of things are hard I guess, aren't they, little fwend?

PRESTON

My name is actually Preston.

MONIQUE

Aww Pweston is having twouble with his pictogwam. Poor Pweston.

PRESTON

I'm actually paying for you to help me.

MONIQUE

You are incapable of doing this yourself, so you need to pay money to a stranger to help you. That's where you are in your life.

PRESTON

Yes, that's why I called! Help me!

MONIQUE

All right I'll help you. Are there any other competent humans in the house with you? Anyone who can read or handle a tool of any kind?

PRESTON

This seems insulting.

MONIQUE

Do you want me to help you or not? Is there anyone else there? A six-year old, maybe?

PRESTON

No it's just me.

MONIQUE

Yeah that makes sense.

PRESTON

Why did you say that?

MONIQUE

I think it's pretty obvious that if you can't put together a Bjorgborn-ingen Fallfe no one will ever love you.

PRESTON

What?!

MONIQUE

Are you going to let me help you or you just going to whine?

PRESTON

You're not helping me!

MONIQUE

Whining costs five dollars a minute, Preston. Is that what you want?

PRESTON

Okay, what do I do? I'm on step forty-seven.

MONIQUE

Okay, I want you to take a deep breath first.

PRESTON

Fine.

MONIQUE

You didn't take a deep breath.

PRESTON

I did take a deep breath.

MONIQUE

I didn't hear a deep breath.

PRESTON

Fine.

PRESTON sighs sarcastically.

MONIQUE

That was a sarcastic breath.

PRESTON

YOU'RE CHARGING ME BY THE MINUTE!

MONIQUE

SO MAYBE YOU BETTER DO WHAT I SAY! BREATHE!

PRESTON

I'VE BEEN BREATHING!

MONIQUE

NOT DEEPLY! NOT SINCERELY!

PRESTON

THIS IS THE MOST SINCERE, MOST DEEP BREATH I CAN DO!

Preston breathes as deeply, as sincerely, as possible.
He hurts himself. Badly.
He stumbles around, maybe falls over.

MONIQUE

Sir? Sir are you all right?

PRESTON

I… hurt myself.

MONIQUE

Do you need help?

PRESTON

Call… an ambulance.

MONIQUE

Of course.

PRESTON

Thank you.

MONIQUE

It's only twenty-one dollars a minute for me to call an ambulance.
Lights down on them.

6.

Lights up on TAMARA, on hold. She paces nervously.

TAMARA

Is anyone there?
No response.
You can do this, Tam.
She takes a deep breath.
Lights up on BOFFO, dressed in a full clown outfit, with wig, makeup, suit, shoes, funny nose, etc…

BOFFO

This is the help desk, can I help you?

TAMARA

Um… what are you supposed to be?

BOFFO

I'm at the Help Desk. I'm here to help you. Anything you need.

TAMARA

You're dressed like a clown.

BOFFO

You're very observant. Yes I am. I find it puts people at ease.

TAMARA

Does it?

BOFFO

Definitely. You'd be amazed at how people open up to you when you're a clown. How can I help you?

TAMARA

This is a very serious call.

BOFFO

Of course.

Boffo honks his nose.

Does that help?

TAMARA

No.

BOFFO

What if I did it twice?

Honks his nose twice.

TAMARA

I'm just – I'm a little freaked out by clowns.

BOFFO

Understandable.

TAMARA

Kinda scared by them.

BOFFO

Yeah a *lot* of people dress up like clowns and commit crimes. Happens all the time. You never know which clowns are the good ones, so I get it.

TAMARA

Are you a good one?

BOFFO

I'm the best one. I'm a listening clown. Go ahead. Tell me your problems.

Boffo produces fake flowers from his sleeve.

TAMARA

Uh… okay… so I took a home DNA test because there are some medical issues in my family.

BOFFO

Sure.

TAMARA

And I wanted to make sure I wasn't susceptible to genetic diseases –

BOFFO

Right. Mm-hmm.

Boffo produces a puppet version of himself and sets it in front of him.

TAMARA

Why did you bring out the puppet?

BOFFO

This is Lil' Boffo. Whenever I sense things are about to get emotional, I need Lil' Boffo. Say Hi Lil' Boffo.

He waves Lil' Boffo's arms.

`Hi Lil' Boffo!'

He's a card.

TAMARA

Can you put the puppet away please?

BOFFO *(as Lil' Boffo)*

`Tell me about your medical conditions.'

TAMARA

I don't want to tell the puppet about my medical conditions.

BOFFO *(as Lil' Boffo)*

`Lil' Boffo is sad now.'

You hurt his feelings.

TAMARA

I don't care! Put him away!

BOFFO *(as Lil' Boffo)*

`No! Don't put me in the box! I'll be good I promise!'
You go in the box now!
`Never!'
In the box!
Lil' Boffo struggles.
`Don't listen to the clown! He's an evil clown!'
Shhhhh!
He forces Lil' Boffo off the table and into a box.
`Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaah.'
Boffo slams the box shut. Turns back to Tamara.
Sorry about that. He gets inappropriate sometimes.

TAMARA

You were the one controlling him!

BOFFO

Whoah! That is a serious accusation!

TAMARA

Your hand was up his butt!

BOFFO

That's ridiculous! He doesn't even have a butt! Who would put a butt on a puppet?!

TAMARA

Up his – whatever. Opening.

BOFFO

Oh my gosh you're gross.

TAMARA

I am trying to tell you something serious!

BOFFO

I am a very serious person, all right! I am the most serious person who works here. Tell me what your problem is.

TAMARA

My problem is you!

BOFFO

Tell me your other problems then!

TAMARA

I am scared because it turns out I might have a genetic predisposition for –

Skipping Forward

MARA

I know I did.

BRENT

How can I help you?

MARA

I need to get rid of my boyfriend.

BRENT

Um… I'm not sure I'm the right person to call.

MARA

You help people, right? I need help – getting rid of my boyfriend. He's terrible.

BRENT

I'm sorry to hear that. Again, I don't know that I'm the right person –

MARA

He's worn the same pair of socks for six months.

BRENT

Oh.

MARA

Six. Months. Can you explain to me the mental state of a person who would do that?

BRENT

I can't, actually.

MARA

He breathes with his mouth OPEN. All the time. The boy cannot close his mouth. He's just walking around here, wearing the same socks every day, with a big open mouth like he's like one of those whales that's just sifting ocean water to eat krill. I can't take it anymore.

BRENT

Have you tried telling him how you feel?

MARA

What?

BRENT

Maybe you should just communicate with him.

MARA

`Hey Marcus close your mouth!' Never gonna work. He's dumb too. This boy is so dumb. He eats out of the garbage. He will literally open the garbage can and rummage around for food like a raccoon – mouth open the whole time. Flies are going in but they aren't even getting caught. They fly into his mouth, they're like `it's really dumb in here' and they escape. Every time I see his face I want to push him into a river.

BRENT

So why are you dating him?

MARA

He's so cute. But I hate him.

BRENT

Okay, um… maybe instead of complaining to me, maybe you could communicate with him.

MARA

Why are you trying to deflect responsibility?

BRENT

I'm not, I'm just saying that –

MARA

You're deflecting. You need to help me.

BRENT

I am helping you.

MARA

You're just talking. That's not helping. I need action. I want my boyfriend removed. Surgical action. Like I've got a 190 pound cyst that needs to be excavated from my life and transported to the nearest landfill.

BRENT

I'm not sure how I can do that.

MARA

Come up with a plan. Be creative. Think, Brent, think. Do you know people?

BRENT

People?

MARA

Yes, Brent. People. Do you know People?

BRENT

I know people.

MARA

Are these people good at getting rid of unwanted things? Permanently.

BRENT

I'm not sure what you're asking.

MARA

Oh I think you know what I'm asking.

BRENT

Are you really asking me to take care of your boyfriend?

MARA

Yes, Brent, I am.

BRENT

Okay. Hold on.

Brent takes out a black folder from beneath his desk.

I've got an opening next Tuesday at 2 a.m. Three person job. Your boyfriend will never be seen again.

Short pause

MARA

Are you saying you're gonna kill him?!

BRENT

Isn't that what you wanted?!

MARA

NO! My goodness what is wrong with you?!

BRENT

I thought that's what you were asking!

MARA

You are sick! You are demented! He's just annoying, he doesn't need to be whacked!

BRENT

You said "take care of"!

MARA

Yes, as in given job assistance and provided with affordable housing in a nice community!

BRENT

YOU SAID `REMOVED'!

MARA

Yes as in given a ride to a new furnished apartment near a farm upstate with a gym and a swimming pool! With lots of other stupid boys that he can play with in a healthy peer group! What is wrong with you?! You think you're some kind of mafia help desk?!

BRENT

You asked if I knew people!

MARA

Where is your supervisor? I want to talk to your manager!

BRENT

Oh come on!

MARA

Put your manager on the phone!

BRENT

Fine!

Lights up on DANI.

DANI

This is Dani.

Lights down on them.

8.

Lights up on BRIN and CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Help desk, this is Charlie.

BRIN

Hey there. I'm having a little bit of a problem.

CHARLIE

Aren't we all? But I'm the only one getting paid to help people, so fire away.

BRIN

So I downloaded your virus protection program on my computer.

Charlie laughs.

What?

CHARLIE

Nothing. I'm sorry I'm just amused. Go ahead.

BRIN

What are you amused about?

CHARLIE

Little joke we have here in the office. Not a problem. You don't need to worry about it. I just love my job, that's all. By the way, if you hear me laughing or high-fiving people, just ignore that.

BRIN

Why would you be high-fiving people?

CHARLIE

I just love my team, that's all. So you downloaded the virus protection.

BRIN

Yes, your "Virus Assassin 3."

CHARLIE

Oh you got 3?!

Charlie laughs again.

Hey everybody I got a customer here who got Virus Assassin 3!

Laughs and celebration from off-stage (or off-screen.)

I know, right!? Wooo!

BRIN

Yeah, so I downloaded Virus Assassin 3 because it said it would take care of my viruses permanently.

CHARLIE *(chuckling to himself)*

Yeah it says that. Classic.

BRIN

But as soon as I installed it I started getting all these pop-ups.

CHARLIE

Yup!

BRIN

And they just say things like, "your computer is in danger!" Or this one "There are viruses coming for your computer – they are stealing all of your information and writing emails to your

Mom blaming her for all the problems in your life." I mean that's really specific. My Mom doesn't even know she's responsible for all the problems in my life.

CHARLIE

Amazing.

BRIN

So it seems like all Virus Assassin 3 does is just put pop-ups on my computer scaring me.

CHARLIE

Sometimes fear is the best motivator.

BRIN

But that's basically what a virus does.

CHARLIE

Yup!

BRIN

So how is Virus Assassin 3 different than a virus?

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE

Hey she's asking how Virus Assassin 3 is different than a virus!

More laughs and celebration off-stage.

Yes you're right.

BRIN

What am I right about?

CHARLIE

Virus Assassin 3 is in fact a virus. Don't get upset – it's there to show you just how bad a virus can be.

BRIN

But I paid for it!

CHARLIE

I know! You made a terrible mistake! You were completely fooled! That just shows you how vulnerable you are to other viruses!

BRIN

It says it murders viruses!

CHARLIE

And it does! By becoming one of them! And now your computer is infected with Virus Assassin 3, which is totally about to beam all your credit card information to the Dark Web.

BRIN

The dark web?!

CHARLIE

Oh yeah! It's scary. That's why it's called the Dark Web. Pretty soon organized crime in Morocco is going to have access to all your contacts and will be calling your Grandma.

BRIN

This is crazy!

CHARLIE *(laughing)*

I know! You'd be amazed at how many people fall for this!

BRIN

But how do I get rid of it?

CHARLIE

That's where I can help you. We have a specially designed product that will take care of Virus Assassin 3. No problem. No questions asked.

He can barely keep a straight face while saying it.

Virus Assassin Extreme. I know you're worried that it's gonna be expensive, but it's only a monthly fee of 19.95.

BRIN

Why is it a monthly fee?

CHARLIE

It's a subscription service. Because Virus Assassin 3 is constantly mutating, so you need Virus Assassin Extreme to be constantly adapting to fight it. Don't you know anything about viruses?

BRIN

How do I know Virus Assassin Extreme isn't just another virus?

Charlie laughs again.

CHARLIE

I guess you'll just have to trust me.

BRIN

But you don't seem trustworthy at all!

CHARLIE

It's quite a dilemma, isn't it? You are really in a bind!

He calls out to the other people
I think she's gonna buy Virus Assassin Extreme!
More laughs and cheers from people off-stage.

BRIN

I'm not doing this.

CHARLIE

Aww. You sure?

BRIN

Yes! You guys are like criminals! I guess I need to buy a new computer then.

CHARLIE

I guess you do. But you're in luck because we sell those too.

BRIN

Ooh!
Lights down on them.

9. Bees!

Lights up on CHASE and YAMIRA.
Yamira is wearing as much of a beekeeper's outfit as she can manage. Heavy gloves, a hood or helmet if possible.

CHASE

Help Desk, this is –

YAMIRA

Bees! There are bees!
Yamira ducks.
They're everywhere! They're inside my house! BEES!

CHASE

This is Chase, how can I help you?

YAMIRA

I'm telling you there are bees!

CHASE

Oh so I'm talking to an amateur beekeeper, am I? Fantastic. Do you know the word apiary? I do.

YAMIRA

Help me!

CHASE

Absolutely! The key to beekeeping is to make sure that your queen is happy.

YAMIRA

She's sending her minions after me! They are inside the house! Aaaaah!

CHASE

Right. Don't keep bees inside the house.

YAMIRA

How do I kill them?!

CHASE

Bees are actually endangered.

YAMIRA

I want them MORE endangered!

CHASE

Bees and other pollinators are responsible for quite a lot of our food. Instead of fearing them, we should be thanking them. But don't shake hands with a bee, though.

Yamira gets stung.

YAMIRA

Ah!

CHASE

I said DON'T shake hands with them.

YAMIRA

They're shaking hands with me!

CHASE

They must like you.

He chuckles.

Just kidding, they see you as a threat that must be eliminated.

YAMIRA

How do I eliminate them?

CHASE

Maybe it would help if I understood how the bees got in your house.

YAMIRA

I wanted honey.

CHASE

Classic mistake.

YAMIRA

And I thought it would be fun to keep bees. Aaaah!

She dives to avoid one.

So I got a hive, and I got a queen, and I got a whole bunch of bees. And they were fine for a while – aaaahhh – but I thought it was going to rain, and I was worried about my hive, and they seemed super nice… so I brought them into the house.

CHASE

You brought the entire hive into the house?

YAMIRA

I was worried about them!

She dives again.

I shouldn't have been, because they're MEAN!

She gets stung again.

Ah!

CHASE

Where is the hive now?

YAMIRA

On the kitchen table. But I can't get near it because there are A LOT OF BEES.

CHASE

All right, listen to me, you need to calm down. Bees can smell fear.

YAMIRA

They can?

CHASE

Yes. The smell it and they love it. So stand up. And don't be frightened!

YAMIRA stands up.

She gets stung. Tries not to react.

YAMIRA

…ow.

She gets stung again. Tries not to react again.

…..oooow.

She lets out a high-pitched whimper as she get stung again.

Skipping Forward

YAMIRA

How do I do extrude an odor?

CHASE

Believe in yourself. And a high fiber diet. Once you've entranced the bees with your scent, you need to lead them outside, pied-piper style.

YAMIRA

Okay.

CHASE

Good luck. On the count of three – charge…

YAMIRA

I'm scared.

CHASE

You should be. One… Two… Three… CHARGE!

YAMIRA

AAAAAAAAAAAH!

YAMIRA charges off-screen (or off-stage)

Aaaah! Oh no! Ow! Ow! This was a terrible idea! Ow! Oww! Oh no! Oh! Ouuch! Ouch! Oh it hurts so much!

Chase picks up some reading material.

Oh no! AAAAAAAH! Aaaaah!

Yamira crawls back onto the screen.

I've got a new plan: This is the bee's house now. I'm gonna move.

CHASE

Good idea.

Lights down on them.

10.

Lights up on JESS and BRETT.

BRETT

Customer Service. This is Brett.

JESS

Hi I've been on hold for a long time – hold on a second I don't even remember why I'm calling…

BRETT

It's okay. I've got nothing to do.

JESS

Oh right. I'm trying to add more data to my plan.

BRETT

Oh. Oh shoot. You're gonna actually need someone in account modification then.

JESS

Oh.

BRETT

Simple mistake to make and I don't even hold it against you. I'm going to transfer you over to account modification.

JESS

Thanks.

Lights down on Brett and up on VIC.

VIC

Account Modification, this is Vic.

JESS

Hi, I'm trying to change my plan to add more data –

VIC

Whoah whoah whoah slow down – I don't handle data. You're going to need to go to Data Planning.

JESS

The last person told me I was supposed to go to Account Modification.

VIC laughs.

VIC

Oh man. That was rich. Was it Brett? It was Brett, right? Don't trust Brett. He just wants you off the phone. He had no idea what he was doing. Only Data Planning can help you. I'll send you there.

JESS

Well, okay.

Lights down on Brett up on MILEY.

MILEY

Data Planning, this is Miley.

JESS

Hi, I'm trying to add some data to my plan.

MILEY

Oh man, you need Customer Service.

JESS

I've already talked to customer service!

MILEY

I can only help you plan your data, I can't actually change anything. This isn't like the Wild West or something, we have rules at this company. I'll send you over to Customer Service.

JESS

Please just –

MILEY

Have a nice day!

Lights down on Miley and up on Brett.

BRETT

Customer Service, this is Brett.

JESS

Brett. I just talked to –

BRETT

Oh crap.

Lights down on Brett and up on Vic.

VIC

Account Modification, this is Vic.

JESS

Vic! This is Jess!

VIC

Doesn't ring a bell.

JESS

I just talked to you! You just sent me to Data Planning and they said they could only plan data, they couldn't actually change anything.

VIC

That is a lie. They are lying to you. Don't take that from them. You need to stand up for yourself.

JESS

They sent me back to Customer Service.

VIC

Customer Service is a living nightmare. Don't trust anyone in Customer Service. Data Planning is the only one that can help you.

JESS

Can't you help me?

VIC

I am helping you by telling you to stand up for yourself. If you're going to let them transfer you, they'll walk all over you your entire life. You need to believe in yourself, Jess.

JESS

I'm just trying to get more data.

VIC

Which is why you need to talk to Data Planning. I'll send you there. But remember: you are worth it. Don't believe their lies.

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, visit www.concordtheatricals.com