

Escape to Cancel

A comedy in one act

By Tim Mogford

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Anyone who has tried to cancel their service with any tech company will sympathize immediately with Meghan. On her way to work one morning she decides to quickly drop off the cancellation form she filled out from the company's website, but of course it turns out to be much more complicated than that. She is drawn into a process involving an increasingly bizarre set of characters who hamper, confuse, intimidate and even threaten her in their efforts to keep her as a customer. When Meghan's best friend is brought to the office in tears with instructions to illustrate the horror of "a life without CompCorp in it," Meghan realizes enough is enough! This fast-paced, hilarious ensemble play offers a rich opportunity for actors to hone their comedic skills. About 30 minutes.

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

First presented as a workshop production at the Schuylkill Valley Short Play showcase, and subsequently at the Bucks County Playhouse Schools' Drama Festival on April 19th, 2016, where it won awards for ensemble acting, direction and new writing. The original production featured the following cast: Daisy Grace, Sophie Goad, Daniel Tetreault, Kevin Cook, Michael Rinehart, Ben Moody, Kyle Dimovitz and Kylie Brown.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 flexible)

JESSI: Young, sweet, anxious woman. It is her first day on the job, and she is eager to please.

MEGHAN: Young, yet already tough and world-weary.

IAN: A nervous, stressed young man.

DAVID: A charismatic, slightly menacing figure. He seems older than he is.

STEPHEN: He would like to be the absent-minded professor type, but he is too normal to carry it off properly.

ROB: An imposing physical presence. It is usually difficult to see the softness.

PAUL: Rob's associate, with vulnerabilities which are a little more clear.

KATIE: Meghan's best friend and co-worker. Not quite as strong as Meghan, especially not today.

Note on casting: Though Meghan and Katie work best as female roles, and David, Rob and Paul were originally cast as male actors, none of the eight roles are actually gender-specific. With minor changes, a director can certainly adapt this script to fit his/her own needs.

PLACE

The dull, bare front office of CompCorp Media and Computer Services.

TIME

The present.

SETTING

A plain, nondescript office. A desk and chair, angled out, are SR. There is a computer on the desk, and perhaps some other standard supplies. There is a pen but no paper. A bundle of papers is in a drawer. Nothing personal of any kind. A small table is USC. There is a plain vase on it, with obviously plastic flowers.

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(AT RISE: JESSI is seated at the desk, idly tapping the keyboard with one finger. She looks bored. MEGHAN enters L. She has a signed paper form.)

MEGHAN: Hello?

JESSI: *(Surprised.)* Hello? Wow. Hey! Hello!

MEGHAN: Am I in the right place?

JESSI: I don't know. I hope so!

MEGHAN: I've been driving around for an hour. I'm looking for CompCorp. Are you...CompCorp?

JESSI: Yes! Yes, that's me. Us.

MEGHAN: It says "Electrical Appliances" on the sign. Do you...sell electrical appliances?

JESSI: I don't know. I don't think so. It's my first day.

MEGHAN: Okay. Just...it might be easier if the sign said "CompCorp," don't you think?

JESSI: They brought me in the back door.

MEGHAN: Okay.

JESSI: *(Confidentially.)* It's been a strange morning.

MEGHAN: Okay.

JESSI: But you're here now. My first customer. So...how may I help you?

MEGHAN: *(Approaches the desk.)* Oh...right. Okay, well, I printed out the form from the website, and filled it all out. That's what you're supposed to do, right?

JESSI: *(No idea.)* Absolutely.

MEGHAN: It said to bring it down here in person. *(With a laugh.)* You people don't make it very easy, do you?

JESSI: *(Still no idea.)* Ha! No. No, we don't. Sorry about that.

MEGHAN: It took me a long time to find those original serial numbers. You might want to tell people not to just throw those away.

JESSI: *(Earnestly.)* Right. Good idea. I'll make a note of that. *(Starts to search the desk. Finds a pen. No paper.)*

MEGHAN: You have no idea what I'm talking about, do you?

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JESSI: I'm really sorry. Is it that obvious? I can't find any paper.

MEGHAN: I want to cancel my service.

JESSI: Oh...well, okay. That should be easy enough. *(Turns HER attention to the computer.)*

(IAN enters SL. He looks worried. THEY do not see him. He goes to the small table and pretends to play with the plastic flowers.)

JESSI: *(Cont'd.)* Just give me a minute. If I can just... *(Playing desperately with the computer.)* Honestly, it's a little weird. I haven't been able to work out this thing all morning. So far all I can get it to do is solitaire. I'm sure I must be missing something.

MEGHAN: Look, I'm in kind of a hurry. I have to get to work.

JESSI: I'm sure. I'm really sorry. Let me see—

MEGHAN: I didn't realize it was going to be so difficult. I have my form. Can't you just keep it and call me later to confirm my service is cancelled?

JESSI: Well, I'm sure I could—

IAN: *(In a panic. Has the flowers in his hand.)* No! *(THEY turn to face HIM, astonished.)* Hi.

JESSI: Hi. I didn't see you come in.

IAN: No, I...the flowers. They seemed a little...dry. I was just...

MEGHAN: They're made of plastic.

IAN: Yes. Well. That would explain it. Thank you. *(Replaces the flowers.)* What seems to be the trouble...uh...?

JESSI: Jessi.

IAN: Can I help you, Jessi?

JESSI: I don't think we've met...?

IAN: No. *(Pause.)* What seems to be the trouble?

JESSI: Well, she would like to cancel her service, and I can't—

IAN: *(To MEGHAN.)* Why?

MEGHAN: I just do, and I filled out the form, and brought it down here like it said on the website—

IAN: *(Trying to recover.)* Thank you for doing that. I mean it. Would you like some coffee?

MEGHAN: Not really, thank you. I need to get going soon.

End of Freeview

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