

PHARMACEUTICALS FOR DUMMIES

A One Act Stage Play

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>Angel Principle:</u>	Intern at Happy Pills Pharmaceuticals
<u>Maddog Conman:</u>	Advertising director
<u>Shady Fakester:</u>	Head of new drug development
<u>Alexis Siri:</u>	Drug-advising artificial intelligence
<u>Virtuous Pure:</u>	Focus group member
<u>Viceroy Bossman:</u>	Company CEO

Synopsis: An intern discovers pettifogging on steroids at a Pharmaceutical company.

Scene

Rainbow Ranch.

AT RISE: MADDOG CONMAN is standing center stage
as ANGEL PRINCIPLE enters.

ANGEL

Excuse me, sir. I'm the new intern. Name's Angel Principle.

MADDOG

Welcome to our executive offsite. As you *undoubtedly* know, I'm Maddog Conman, director of advertising for Happy Pills Pharmaceuticals.

ANGEL

It's an honor.

MADDOG

Of course it is. I'm meeting with our head of product development shortly. I assume you know how to make coffee.

ANGEL

You know I have a MBA, right? First in my class. University Valedictorian.

MADDOG

Sure, sure, sure. Did HR explain our core values? Our company motto?

ANGEL

No, sir. But I'm certain I'll find it inspiring.

MADDOG

Our core value is to get as many people as possible dependent on our drugs.

ANGEL

If you don't mind me saying, that's not very inspiring.

MADDOG

And our motto is, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time. And that is sufficient."

VICEROY BOSSMAN appears in the window, watches for a moment, then disappears when Maddog senses he's being watched and turns toward the window.

ANGEL

That's horrible.

MADDOG

You're right. Too long. How about "We can't fix stupid, but we can medicate it." It will tie in with our new ad campaign, "Pharmaceuticals for Dummies."

ANGEL

Do you think it's wise to insult the consumer?

MADDOG

(laughs)

A word of advise. Don't quibble over unimportant matters. If you play your cards right, you can go from a part-time unpaid intern to a full-time unpaid intern.

ANGEL

(sarcastic)

Lucky me.

SHADY FAKESTER and ALEXIS SIRI enter and stand between Angel and Maddog.

SHADY

(to Angel)

Hi. I'm Shady Fakester.

ANGEL

Angel Principle.

SHADY

And this is my latest creation. I call it Alexis Siri.

ANGEL

It?

SHADY

She's an AI. I bet you can't tell. Lifelike, right?

MADDOG

Shady, what do licensed drug dealers need with artificial intelligence?

ANGEL

(to herself)

So far, that's the only sign of any form of intelligence.

SHADY

When we open our chain of pharmacies, imagine having Alexis stationed to answer questions from the customers.

ANGEL

What kind of questions?

SHADY

You give her a symptom, and she tells you what drug to order. And, it will always be the most *expensive* drug we make. Go ahead, try it.

ANGEL

Um, okay. Alexis, my head hurts. What should I do?

ALEXIS

Take two aspirin and keep away from children. Just like it says on the bottle.

MADDOG

I don't get it.

ALEXIS

(turns to Maddog)

The aspirin would.

SHADY

(flustered)

Let's try another one. Alexis, what do you call convicts on Viagra?

ALEXIS

Hardened criminals.

SHADY

What's the difference between a bartender and a pharmacist?

ALEXIS

A bartender is a pharmacist with a limited inventory.

(turns to Maddog)

ALEXIS (CONT)

I'll be here all week.

MADDOG

I don't know. I don't think this will help us sell more drugs.

SHADY

We'll also have Alexis for your phone, so you can be told to buy our drugs from anywhere.

MADDOG

Better!

Viceroy appears in the window again, watches for a moment, then disappears when Maddog senses he's being watched and turns toward the window.

ANGEL

I don't get all these commercials selling prescription drugs. The people watching can't just go out and order those. The same will be true with an app. What's the point?

SHADY

(ignores her)

I almost forgot the best part. Alexis comes with a sidekick. People will trust her more with a black lab at her side.

Shady whistles toward the door.

SHADY (CONT)

Come on, boy.

When nothing happens Shady goes to the door.

SHADY (CONT)

He's a little nervous. Let me bring him in.

Shady exits and returns carrying a BLACK LAB. She sets the lab next to Alexis.

SHADY (CONT)

Say hi to Maddog, Bear.

Bear doesn't respond.

SHADY (CONT)

That's odd. He usually responds well to everybody.

ANGEL

Dogs are an excellent judge of character.

Maddog glares at Angel.

MADDOG

(to Shady)

What about new drugs?

Shady pulls out a giant pill and hands it to Maddog.

SHADY

This is our latest. It's a flamboyant little anti-depressant with undertones of oak and earth and some amusing side effects.

ANGEL

Why is it so big?

SHADY

Each capsule contains your medicine, plus a treatment for each of its side effects. It's an experimental drug.

ANGEL

Experimental?

SHADY

We're still experimenting to see how much customers will pay for it.

MADDOG

What are the side effects?

ALEXIS

After taking this you will have a burning desire to operate heavy machinery. Also, confusion, anger, and continued financial strain.

ANGEL

That's terrible. Does it come with warnings?

ALEXIS

Yes. Don't take it if you drink water.

ANGEL

But everybody drinks water.

MADDOG

(stares at capsule)

Oh, yeah. The fine print is so small, no one will notice. Well done.

Viceroy appears in the window again, watches for a moment, then disappears when Maddog senses he's being watched and turns toward the window.

ANGEL

You can't give people that. It's way too big, and much too dangerous. People could choke.

Maddog shrugs and pops the pill.

MADDOG

That's not so hard.

Maddog shakes and looks loopy.

MADDOG (CONT)

Wow. Anybody have some heavy machinery I can operate? No? Okay. Angel, be a dear and go fetch me that focus group candidate.

Angel leaves and returns with VIRTUOUS PURE.

MADDOG (CONT)

(slurs)

Welcome. Who might you be?

VIRTUOUS

I'm Virtuous Pure. I was told I can make fifty bucks if I answer a few questions.

Virtuous sees Bear and hugs him.

VIRTUOUS (CONT)

You have a Lab! What a good boy. Sit. Stay. Good dog.

MADDOG

Virtuous, I need to know you're my kind of focus group member. Someone who'll tell us what we want to hear.

ANGEL

Isn't the point to get honest feedback?

Maddog and Shady look at each other and laugh. The drug is clearly affecting Maddog more by the second.

MADDOG

Angel, you're adorable.

VIRTUOUS

I don't have all day. What do I have to do to get paid?

SHADY

This is our prescription-recommending AI. We call her Alexis. Go ahead. Ask her a question.

VIRTUOUS

Cool. Hey, Alexis, my pops snores so loud my mama and I can't sleep. Got anything for that?

ALEXIS

(hands Virtuous two pills)

Yes. This is your sleep aid. Take two of these at bedtime and stuff them up your father's nose.

VIRTUOUS

Nice. Also, I've been having mood swings. What have you got for that?

ALEXIS

(hands Virtuous a pill)

Here is a mood-elevating medication. Want to know a secret? The less costly generic version is called chocolate.

VIRTUOUS

Do you dispense generic drugs? Aren't they like way cheaper?

ALEXIS

Yes. But for the real savings go for the placebo.

VIRTUOUS

How about ethical drugs?

MADDOG

In our business, that's a contradiction in terms. But we're all for leveraging the public's belief in that concept.

Shady pulls out a small box.

SHADY

Check this out. It's our new Over-The-Hill pack. You got your Tyrd-N-Old pain reliever, your W-D-Oldie for joints, and an ED medicine.

MADDOG

I like it. ED medicines are always a big seller.

SHADY

And get this. If you read the fine print you see ED stands for Erector Set Dysfunction.

ANGEL

That's false advertising!

Maddog and Shady high-five each other.

VIRTUOUS

So, where's my green?

SHADY

Not yet. Ask a few more.

VIRTUOUS

Okay. I feel rad, and want to stay that way. What advise can you offer?

ALEXIS

You've got a rare condition called good health. Frankly, we're not sure how to treat it.

SHADY

Sorry about that, boss. Still working out the kinks.

Maddog is barely able to stand now.

MADDOG

The Kinks? I love the Kinks. Can we sing "Lola?"

SHADY

Alexis, tell Virtuous your standard answer when we raise the price of her medication.

ALEXIS

The cost of your medication has gone up 1000%. Nothing personal. It's just business.

SHADY

So, Virtuous, how does that make you feel?

VIRTUOUS

That's bogus, man.

Viceroy appears in the window again, watches for a moment, then disappears when Maddog senses he's being watched and turns toward the window.

ANGEL

You two are the worst. You have lame drugs *and* you run an unethical business. My teacher had a name for people like you. You're pettifoggers.

MADDOG

Say what?

ALEXIS

Pettifoggers. It has three meanings. One is paying too much attention to small unimportant details in a way that shows a limited mind.

Alexis glares at Maddog.

ALEXIS (CONT)

With an emphasis on limited. Second, it means to carry on a petty, shifty, or unethical business.

Alexis glares at Shady.

ALEXIS (CONT)

With an emphasis on unethical. And third, to practice chicanery of any sort. Clearly, the Happy Pills trifecta.

VIRTUOUS

I get the whole Terminator vibe, but can I get my fifty buckaroos?

VICEROY BOSSMAN enters. Shady and Maddog cower. Viceroy shakes hands with Angel.

VICEROY

My name is Viceroy Bossman. I'm promoting you to director of marketing.

ANGEL

I accept. I'm certain I can stop all this pettifogging, put the well-being of our customers first, and right the ship.

VIRTUOUS

Groovy. So, do I get my moola, or what?

ANGEL

I'll give you a C-note if you can round up half a dozen friends to give me honest feedback.

VIRTUOUS

Seriously?

ANGEL

Seriously.

Virtuous bolts off the set.

MADDOG AND SHADY
(simultaneously)

But what about us?

VICEROY

The cost of keeping your jobs has gone up 1000%. You're both fired. Nothing personal. It's just business.

Alexis smiles.

(FADE TO BLACK)