

All is quiet. A lone figure sits at a desk with a single light in the darkness. He writes, chews on his pen/pencil, violently scratches the words out and lowers his head to the desk in a motion of defeat, and begins mumbling.

Hunter: *(mumbling)* Preemptive, perfunctory, melon, bamboozle, reptilian, Argonaut, insatiable, tambourine...

Suddenly, the lights go on in the front left corner of the stage, revealing two people: A young man with brilliant green, spiky hair, worn, tattered jeans, no shoes and a white lab coat. He is carrying a purple clipboard and a pen. Next to him stands a little girl, maybe six or eight, with pigtails in gaudy, plastic hair rubber bands with a pink lab coat, a jumper and Mary Jane shoes.

Young man mutters to little girl: It's worse than I thought. (She nods in agreement)

Hunter: *(starts a little when he notices them)* Uh...Sorry, I didn't hear you come in. Are you here to look for mold?

Young man: No. A much graver problem is at hand than...mold. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Gerund, this is my associate, Dr. Participle *(motions toward the little girl)*, and you, I presume, are Hunter Phelps.

Hunter: Did my mom send you? *(Glances at the clock on the desk)* It this one of those deals where people from military school drag you out of bed in the dead of night? I'll go quietly, but I've always been a pretty good kid, I'd like you to know, always making my

bed at least once a month, brushing my teeth fairly regularly, using soap in the shower whenever I can find it and generally being a likeable...

Dr. Gerund: Enough! For a kid who has the worst case of word amnesia in the history of the planet earth, you sure have a lot to say. No, Dr. Participle and I are not here to teach you to shoot other human beings or march in line. We are here to probe your brain for the missing word, the one you've been searching for during the last (*scans the clip-board*) eight years, I believe?

Hunter: I didn't even know I was missing a word. Who are you guys, anyway? Are you escaped convicts or something? I swear I'll stab you with this pencil if you come any closer.

Dr. Gerund: Don't be ridiculous. We're not here for stabbings. We are here to help you find what you've lost, and hopefully open your mind to new linguistic possibilities. Don't you ever wonder why you stay up late into the nights, scribbling and searching through the dictionary?

Hunter: Well, yeah.

Dr. Gerund: Good, then. Dr. Participle, the probe.

Hunter: The *what*?

Dr. Participle pulls a small box attached with a wire to a long, thin metal rod from her lab coat, hands the box to Dr. Gerund, and walks toward Hunter with the metal stick.

Hunter: *(Leans back, motions with his hands)* Whoa, whoa, whoa. You are not sticking me with that *(Dr. Participle puts the end of the rod into Hunter's nostril)*...ting *(nasal response due to object in his nose. The machine beeps slowly, steadily)*.

Dr. Gerund: Excellent! You're not contagious. Congratulations. Had you been, we would have had to quarantine you for approximately *(looks at watch)* three-and-a-half centuries.

Hunter: Oh, goob. Now gid dis ting oudda my dose.

Dr. Participle removes the rod and returns to Dr. Gerund's side. They both move toward an EXIT sign that has appeared.

Hunter: Where are you going? I thought you said you were going to help me.

Dr. Gerund: We are. See you soon.

Hunter sits for a minute, looking around, shakes his head, and then goes back to scribbling and mumbling.

Dr. Gerund: *(offstage)* Hey! Do you read, Blue Eagle, do you read?

Hunter: *(Jumps out of his chair)* Where are you? And who's "Blue Eagle?"

Dr. Gerund: Clearly, we're inside you're brain, and you are Blue Eagle. I think I heard the name in a movie once, and it seemed fitting. This is a highly dangerous mission, you know. We need some official names and whatnot.

Hunter: *(Sitting back down)* Oh, okay. You're just inside my brain. No big deal. No worries here at all. *(Jumping back to his feet)* GET OUT OF MY BRAIN!

Dr. Gerund: I'm afraid we can't do that. Whoa Nelly! Lucky save, that one. Dr.

Participle nearly got swept away by a stream of consciousness. Careful with that, kid. Try to relax. This will only take a minute or two.

Audience hears some rummaging noises as Hunter paces around the stage. Occasional loud crashes occur, some sound like breaking glass.

Dr. Gerund: *(offstage)* AH-HA! *(Reappears with Dr. Participle onstage, grinning widely and skipping)* I do believe we've found it, and one of our finest reconnaissance missions ever, if I do say so myself, Dr. P *(shakes hands with her)*.

Hunter: So, what is it?

Dr. Gerund: Patience! *(Clears his throat as disembodied drum roll begins)* The long sought-after, forgotten and longed-for, long-awaited, much-anticipated, ever-important lost...

Hunter: *IS?!*

Dr. Gerund: Sheesh.

Hunter: *SHEESH?!*

Dr. Gerund: Lord, no. It's

SESQUIPEDALIAN.

Hunter: That's it?

Dr. Gerund: That's it? Aren't you thrilled? Aren't you just giddy? Aren't you ready to explode with joy and relief?

Hunter: I guess so...what does it mean, anyway?

Dr. Participle: (*Speaking very precociously*) It's a very long word that means "very long word."

Hunter: Well, thanks. It's been really...strange.

Dr. Gerund: Now write it down before you forget it! That's s-e-s-q-u-i-p-e-d-a-l-i-a-n.

Hunter: Whatever you say.

As Hunter writes, the light fades on him and shines only on the doctors. Dr. Gerund writes on his clipboard, and then turns to Dr. Participle.

Dr. Gerund: Well, Dr. P, another job well done, but we have more to do. It seems that the girl next door is being absolutely throttled by some rather complex sentence diagramming problems. It might get violent, so bring the tongs...