

# **Disrupting the Box**

v. 13

A drama in two acts

by David Datz

*First 10 pages only*

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### Synopsis

At a large non-profit organization, employees face moral decisions about how to react to the unethical diktats of a new CEO.

### Production History

*Disrupting the Box* has not been produced. It has had several Zoom readings and one staged reading.

### Author Biography

David Datz is a writer and actor in Los Angeles. He has written three full-length stage plays and several shorter plays. He has also written three novels, and has self-published a sci-fi novel, *Scalies*, which can be found by searching for “David Datz” at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Smashwords, and the Apple book store.

### Cast

Actors can be of any race or ethnicity.

Dana: Male, upper-middle-age, middle manager.

Kaden: Female, upper-middle-age, middle manager.

Lee: Male, on the cusp of old age, the oldest person in the cast.

Marty: Male, late twenties to early thirties.

Gerry: Female, early twenties.

Woodrow: Male, middle-age.

Skylar: Female, middle twenties.

### Time

The present.

### Settings

Offices, loading docks, bar.

**Note:** More details about settings, costumes, props, and sounds can be found after the script.

Start of PlayAct IScene 1

*Lights up on KADEN's office, stage left. KADEN seated behind it. LEE in the guest chair. They are in the middle of a very hot argument.*

LEE

*(Angrily, urgently, almost shouting.)* I'm telling you this is only the start. This guy will—

KADEN

*(Matching his anger.)* Lee, calm down.

LEE

—if we don't take steps now—

KADEN

All I'm asking is—

LEE

For me to sell out, along with you.

KADEN

Lee, stop.

LEE

Stop what? Kaden, you—

KADEN

Stop talking before you get in serious trouble.

*LEE sits quietly.*

KADEN (CONTINUED)

*(Trying to cool things down.)* Lee, we've known each other how long?

LEE

Since right after Noah's dog died.

KADEN

*(Picking up the joke.)* His dog died? Wait, I thought there were two, and if one died—

LEE

There was a pair, but this was an extra one. The family pet. They had to put him down after he tried to eat one of the sheep.

KADEN

*(Chuckles, reluctantly.)* Lee.

LEE

This is why you put up with me.

KADEN

*(Fondly.)* Besides that you know the data better than anyone.

LEE

And I know what to do with it.

KADEN

*(Angry again)* Which doesn't make it okay for you to come in here and accuse me of—

LEE

*(Joining the fight)* You cave, Kaden, every time.

KADEN

Goddamn it, Lee.

LEE

Swearing at your staff, not a good idea.

KADEN

When management makes a demand of me, even if I think it's questionable, if I don't see any other option, I do what they want. If you call that caving—

LEE

Exactly what it is.

KADEN

You know, Lee, despite all these millennia, there are still things you don't know.

LEE

I'm sure. Such as?

KADEN

Such as the times I've shielded you.

LEE

In the future, don't bother.

KADEN

You're welcome.

LEE

I'm not afraid of them.

KADEN

*(Looks at him for a moment with boundless exasperation.)* Okay. Anything else you want to say?

LEE

*(Exasperated to the point of pleading.)* I want to know how you'll respond when this new CEO starts making off-the-wall demands which—

KADEN

Lee, please—

LEE

—which could wreck Glo-Zar's reputation as a global charity, or worse, make our lives miserable.

KADEN

You seem to know things about him that I don't.

LEE

I've done a fair amount of reading.

KADEN

You have time for that?

LEE

My own time. At home.

KADEN

My god. I can't fault your dedication but maybe you'd be happier if you didn't do things like that at home.

LEE

You have to be ready, Kaden.

KADEN

I'll be ready to do what's right for the organization.

LEE

Oh, sure you will. But you'll always be able to flex the definition of *right*.

KADEN

*(Dismissive.)* Okay, Lee. You wanted to warn me. Consider me warned. Thank you.

LEE

*(Urgently.)* You have to understand what he's capable of, Kaden, I—

KADEN

*(Finally done.)* Okay, Lee. I get it. I get the message. It's loud and clear.

LEE

I don't think you—

*KADEN rises from her chair.*

KADEN

I believe you have work to do.

LEE

*(Giving up, but just for now.)* Okay. Whatever.

*LEE starts to leave.*

KADEN

And shut the door behind you, please.

*LEE exits.*

*KADEN sits back down and looks out into space.*

*Blackout.*

## Scene 2

*Lights up on DANA's office. He is seated behind his desk. GERRY and MARTY are in guest chairs. They are in the midst of an amicable discussion.*

DANA

I like it.

GERRY

Marty helped.

MARTY

Not really. I just mentored, whatever that means.

GERRY

*(To DANA to tease MARTY. They clearly like each other a lot.)* He did it nicely. He's not so bad, really, once you get to know him.

DANA

But you need to think inside the box.

MARTY

*(Laughs.)*

GERRY

*(Mystified.)* I need to . . .

DANA

Everybody says think outside the box. But sometimes you need to think inside the box.

GERRY

Haven't I?

MARTY

She has a point, boss.

GERRY

*(Pleading a little.)* If you thought it was a really bad idea you would say so, right?

MARTY

He'd get out his bright red bullshit stamp. The digital one, of course.

DANA

The one I used on that exercise in ass-kissing you handed me right after you started. But it wasn't just the ass-kissing that earned the bullshit stamp.

MARTY

I know.

DANA

*(Smiling.)* The real problem was, it was very poor quality ass-kissing.

MARTY

I know.

GERRY

*(To MARTY)* So you re-wrote it, whatever it was?

MARTY

I trashed it and started over.

DANA

It's now the third section of our official guidance.

GERRY

*(Sincerely.)* Wow. I'm impressed.

MARTIN

*(Modestly.)* It's not that big a deal.

GERRY

But Dana, are you saying my proposal is . . . ?

DANA

No, it's not bullshit. See, there's another element in play here.

GERRY

And that is?

DANA

*(To MARTY.)* Tell her.

MARTY

The secret of comedy.

GERRY

*(Takes a moment to get it.)* So you're saying the timing is off?

DANA

Yeah, but unlike in comedy, it's out of our control.

MARTY

You're talking about Bob.

DANA

Yeah. Him.

GERRY

But the memo said we should go on doing our business.

DANA

Yep. That's what it said.

MARTY

But it's not what it meant.

DANA

Nope.



GERRY  
What do you think will happen?

DANA  
He's admired as a disrupter.

MARTY  
But will the disruption be good?

DANA  
I always try to be positive.

MARTY  
That doesn't sound great.

DANA  
I always try to be positive.

GERRY  
So where does that leave my proposal?

DANA  
In a holding pattern. It's just not a good time to send it upstairs.

GERRY  
But it would help us a lot, right now.

MARTY  
She's right again, boss.

GERRY  
*(Liking him, teasing.)* Why, thank you, Marty. Such a good mentor.

DANA  
Nothing to say you couldn't start doing parts of it on your own.

GERRY  
You wouldn't object?

DANA  
How would I even know?

GERRY  
*(Concerned.)* Is that how it's going to be here?

DANA  
*(Smiles.)* You young people. You worry too much.

*Blackout.*

Scene 3

*Lights up on KADEN's office. SKYLAR is in the guest chair.*

SKYLAR

Bob gave me an assignment.

KADEN

Oh?

SKYLAR

Yes. He emailed me. And then he phoned.

KADEN

*(Somewhat surprised.)* He phoned?

SKYLAR

Yes. I forwarded you the email. It was the fourth item in it.

KADEN

The fourth. Right. He's fond of numbering his paragraphs, isn't he. I picture him writing a novel that way.

SKYLAR

Is he?

KADEN

Writing a novel? No. Not that I know of. That was a joke.

SKYLAR

You never know.

KADEN

So, what did he say on the phone?

SKYLAR

That it was really important. That he thought I'm the best person to lead the way on it, and that he would see that I get the resources I need.

KADEN

And did he say what resources he had in mind?

SKYLAR

Well, he mentioned Lee as an example.

KADEN

Well, shit. Did he mention me?

SKYLAR  
No.

KADEN  
Did you?

SKYLAR  
No, I . . .

KADEN  
Like for instance, to say that I'm your boss and you would have to talk to me about additional assignments?

SKYLAR  
No. I'm sorry. Maybe I should have.

KADEN  
No. *I'm* sorry. Of course you didn't. When the CEO calls, it's hard to keep your mind straight. What else?

SKYLAR  
He told me to write a project plan.

KADEN  
Right. For which he gave you the particulars.

SKYLAR  
He sketched them out, yes.

KADEN  
Wow. You should be thrilled.

SKYLAR  
It does seem important.

KADEN  
Did he give you a time frame?

SKYLAR  
He wants it in two weeks.

KADEN  
(*Surprised.*) Two weeks? Shit howdy. Did you tell him you already have a deadline in that same two weeks?

SKYLAR  
I tried to, but—

KADEN

But he said don't worry about that. He told you this assignment he's giving you is more important.

SKYLAR

That's what he said, yes.

KADEN

Of course that's what he said. Obviously he wanted you to bypass me, didn't he.

SKYLAR

He didn't say that, he just said something—

KADEN

Let me guess. He said, you should always remember that at Glo-Zar, each employee has to set his or her own priorities in line with the philosophy of a global charity. Right?

SKYLAR

How did you—

KADEN

Just guessing.

SKYLAR

I came to tell you I might be late finishing my next assignment.

KADEN

Right. We'll have to stretch that one. I don't want you to work sixteen-hour days trying to do both.

SKYLAR

But I feel guilty about it.

KADEN

I know. That's what makes a good worker. Guilt. A great motivator, right behind fear.

SKYLAR

Kaden, I—

KADEN

It's okay, Skylar. I'll reassign your immediate stuff.

SKYLAR

Thank you.

*Beat.*

KADEN

Skylar, when did this start? Was it at that last conference?

SKYLAR

Well . . .

KADEN

The one where Bob took you to lunch.

SKYLAR

I don't know.

KADEN

You talked.

SKYLAR

We did.

KADEN

*(Taking a moment.)* You'd better get to that assignment.

SKYLAR

Thank you.

*SKYLAR exits. KADEN picks up phone and pushes a button.*

#### Scene 4

*Lights up on DANA, in his office, stage right, and KADEN in hers, stage left. They are conversing on office phones without video. They talk like the old friends that they are.*

DANA

So, you've got Lee telling you that Bob is a jerk, and that selfsame jerk has reached over your head and grabbed one of your staff, and that makes you nervous.

KADEN

You might say that.

DANA

Okay, but to calm you, I would also say that Lee is an old crank. A sort of likeable old crank, but an old crank nonetheless.

KADEN

Believe me, I know.