

SUGAR HORROR

A short comedy by
Rex McGregor

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

RETTA, preteen girl, cautious.

ANSEL, Retta's younger brother, adventurous.

DONNA ROCKWELL

SETTING

A street in your neighborhood. The near future.

(RETTA, a preteen girl, comes in, wearing a skeleton costume. She carries a bag full of treats.)

RETTA: Come on, Ansel. My bag's full. Let's go home.

(ANSEL, Retta's younger brother, comes in, wearing a business suit many sizes too big for him. He has an optical head-mounted display pushed up on his forehead. He is scoffing candy from a bag.)

ANSEL: Still room in mine. How come you got more treats than me?

RETTA: I didn't. I'm just saving them for later.

ANSEL: I want some for later too. Can we do one more house? Please, Retta!

RETTA: We've already done the whole street.

ANSEL: We missed this place.

RETTA: That's out of bounds.

ANSEL: Whata you mean?

RETTA: The lady who lives here's a witch.

ANSEL: Bull! No such thing as witches.

RETTA: That's what grown-ups want us to think. But I overheard Mom talking to Dad. She said, "That woman who moved in on the corner, you stay away from her. I know her type. She'll bewitch every man in the neighborhood."

ANSEL: Cool! If she's got magic powers, she can download candy.

(Ansel approaches a door.)

RETTA: Ansel! Stop! It's too risky.

ANSEL: So? Why can't I take a risk for once in my life?

RETTA: We have to play safe.

ANSEL: That's all we ever do. Virtual reality lessons at school. Virtual reality games at home. Boring! I want real reality. A real life adventure! Don't you, Retta?

RETTA: Well... As long as you're ready to run at the first sign of danger —

ANSEL: Thanks, sis.

(Ansel knocks on the door.)

RETTA: Don't you dare step inside.

ANSEL: I'm not crazy. Most accidents happen in the home. Slippery floors. Loose mats. I'm after adventure. Not a broken neck.

RETTA: The biggest hazard you have to watch out for is grown-ups.

ANSEL: Yeah. If one of them trips over and lands on you, you could be squashed to death.

(The door opens. DONNA appears, looking like a cheerful 1950s housewife.)

DONNA: Hello, children.

ANSEL: Trick or treat!

DONNA: My, what gorgeous costumes. *(To Retta:)* I can see you're a stick-thin supermodel. *(To Ansel:)* But what are you? A lawyer?

ANSEL: Scarier.

DONNA: Politician?

ANSEL: Scarier.

DONNA: I give up.

ANSEL: Bank manager.

DONNA: Ooh!

ANSEL: Give us a treat or I'll fiveclose you.

DONNA: Pardon?

RETTA: He means "foreclose."

ANSEL: Only worse.

DONNA: Well, I'd better fetch something extra special. Don't go away.

(Donna goes back inside.)

ANSEL: See? Nice lady.

RETTA: I don't trust her. I took her photo. Let's run a background check.

(Retta starts poking the air in front of her. Ansel lowers his optical head-mounted display over his eyes.)

ANSEL: I hate wearing these googles.

RETTA: You'll get eye implants when your retinas are fully developed.

ANSEL: Yeah, yeah. And in the meantime I have to go around looking like a baby.

RETTA: This facial recognition app is awesome... Here we are. Donna Rockwell. Human resources manager, Advanced Food Technology Project, NASA.

ANSEL: NASA? That's where they do rocketship stuff. Cool.

RETTA: Shh! She's coming.

(Donna reappears, carrying a basket.)

DONNA: Now, which one of you deserves first taste?

ANSEL: Me! Me!

(Donna reveals a cabbage.)

DONNA: Enjoy.

ANSEL: Yuck!

DONNA: Have a nibble. I guarantee you'll love it.

ANSEL: I don't eat greens.

RETTA: OMG! It's pure sugar!

ANSEL: What?

RETTA: Look at your nutrition analysis app.

ANSEL: Jeepers!

(Ansel can't resist taking a piece of leaf.)

RETTA: Ansel!

DONNA: It's perfectly safe. Check the health certification on your screen.

(Ansel tentatively tries a lick.)

ANSEL: Yum!

DONNA: It may look like a cabbage. But it's actually an edible 3D printout.

ANSEL: Sweet!

(Ansel grabs the cabbage and scoffs it.)

RETTA: If that's supposed to get kids to eat their veggies, it's an epic fail. They'll just rot their teeth!

DONNA: Teeth are disposable. We can regrow them.

ANSEL: I'm already on my second set.

RETTA: But you won't get any more.

DONNA: Yes you will. As many as you need.

ANSEL: Like sharks?

RETTA: That laser technology costs the earth.

DONNA: Not any more. We use high-speed printers for dentistry now.

ANSEL: I've got a gap up here. Can you fill it?

DONNA: Of course.

(Donna reaches into her basket and takes out a portable printer.)

ANSEL: I want my chewing power back to full strength.

DONNA: "Upper right second molar. Scan for personalized fit"... Done.

(Donna produces a tooth and inserts it into Ansel's gum.)

RETTA: OMG! The tooth's made of pure sugar too!

DONNA: Highly compacted. Can last for weeks if you suck at it slowly.

ANSEL: Wow!

(Ansel starts sucking his fingers.)

RETTA: That's enough, Ansel. Let's go home.

DONNA: You can make all sorts of interesting things out of sugar.

ANSEL: Yeah?

DONNA: Would you like one of these printers?

ANSEL: Sure!

DONNA: "Replicate."

(Donna produces another printer. She offers it to Ansel, who sticks the cabbage between his legs and takes the printer.)

ANSEL: Gee, thanks.

RETTA: Don't eat it!

ANSEL: I'm not stupid. This is an investment... But so tempting. You hold it for me, sis. You've got willpower.

(Retta reluctantly accepts the printer.)

RETTA: I guess it could come in handy. If used sensibly.

(Ansel can't help chewing his fingers.)

DONNA: Absolutely. For example, if you ever need a prosthetic limb...

RETTA: I don't have a lot of call for that.

DONNA: You never know.

ANSEL: Hey! Where are my fingertips?

(Terrified, Ansel holds up his knuckles.)

RETTA: OMG! You've chewed them off!

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