

DANGEROUS MNEMONICS

By

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## Cast of Characters

<u>MAX:</u>	Male, 29. American accent.
<u>ALISTAIR:</u>	Male, 25. British R.P. accent. Same actor as Commentator.
<u>MOTHER:</u>	Female, 49. American accent. Should be played by an actress around the same age as the actor playing Max.
<u>GRANDMA:</u>	Female, 67. American accent. Should be played by an actress around the same age as the actor playing Max.
<u>COMMENTATOR:</u>	Male, 45. American accent. Same actor as Alistair.

## Scene

The play takes place at various times and in various locations leading up to The Memory Olympics. The locations should be subtly suggested with minimal props and furniture. The changes in time and location should be smooth and not interrupt the flow of the story.

## Time

The present.

DANGEROUS MNEMONICS

*MAX is sitting alone. The others surround him.*

ALISTAIR

A photographic memory is an obnoxious fantasy. They don't exist. Average memories, like you and I have, are strikingly powerful. If used properly.

*A bell sounds.*

MAX

Britney Spears sitting in a tub full of cottage cheese.

ALISTAIR

Three of diamonds.

MAX

Donald Trump masturbating on the sofa.

MOTHER

Six of clubs.

MAX

Danny DeVito rubbing baby oil all over his and David Cameron's naked bodies.

GRANDMA

Ten of spades. And seven of hearts.

MAX

Almost there, boy. Almost there. It's almost over. Just one more card. One more. Oh no. Oh no. No no no no no NOOOO!!!

*Alarm goes off.*

*One year earlier at the Memory Olympics.*

MAX

So what does it feel like to win the Memory Olympics?

ALISTAIR

I think that is the most boring question I've ever heard. Do you have anything more original?

MAX

These are the questions pal, I'm sorry.

ALISTAIR

It's a miracle I'm even awake.

MAX

Hey, if you don't want to be interviewed, fine.

ALISTAIR

You're in a foul mood. I see our great feats of memory weren't enough to impress you.

MAX

Yeah, it was great. It's just-

ALISTAIR

Say it.

MAX

It's-

ALISTAIR

Come on, let's get it out.

MAX

No, it's-

ALISTAIR

What do you really think of us?

MAX

Well.

ALISTAIR

What?

MAX

You memory athletes, you all seem so... ordinary.

ALISTAIR

Exactly! You seem disappointed.

MAX

I wanted to find some kind of superhuman intelligence.

ALISTAIR

My dear boy.

MAX

Boy?

ALISTAIR

Yes. My dear boy. You know nothing about memory. I can recite Joyce's Ulysses in its entirety by heart. I have committed to memory hundreds of random digits at a time. (Shuffles first deck) I can memorise the order of an entire deck of playing cards (shuffles second deck) and then place a second deck in the exact same order. How do you think I'm able to do that?

MAX

You- you have like a photographic memory.

ALISTAIR

Rubbish. Photographic memories are an obnoxious fantasy. They don't exist. Average memories are strikingly powerful. If used properly.

MAX

How can you do all that with just an average memory?

ALISTAIR

All memory athletes have average memories. My memory is quite average indeed. The difference is we use special techniques.

MAX

What are they?

ALISTAIR

They are centuries old. Quite ingenious actually.

MAX

You're fucking kidding me. There might be a story here after all.

ALISTAIR

If you really want to write an incredible story I can help you. I'm actually looking for a research subject.

MAX

You want me to be your research subject?

ALISTAIR

I'm writing my thesis about how the memory works and how it can be improved exponentially. I could train you to be a world-class memory athlete.

MAX

I lost my keys yesterday for the second time this week, man, and you want to turn me into a memory athlete?

ALISTAIR

I can make you famous. I can make us both famous.

MAX

Famous? But my memory sucks ass.

ALISTAIR

My dear boy, you would be ideal.

*At MAX's home.*

MOTHER

Sweetie, please. At least call your brother.

MAX

No, Ma'.

MOTHER

He said he could get you a job.

MAX

No.

MOTHER

A real job.

MAX

Blogging is a real job.

MOTHER

Why don't you get paid?

MAX

I'm just starting- No. Forget it. I'm going to be busy. Training. I'm an athlete now.

MOTHER

An athlete?

MAX

I'm going to train for the Memory Olympics.

MOTHER

The what?

MAX

There's this guy, Ma'. A neuroscientist. I'm going to train with him. He's going to turn me into a memory athlete.

MOTHER

Sweetie, that sounds wonderful. But... well, you lost your keys yesterday.

MAX

I know.

MOTHER

For the second time this week.

MAX

I know, Ma'!

MOTHER

It happens to all of us.

MAX

He says that doesn't matter. He says all memory athletes actually have average memories.

MOTHER

Sweetie, things are getting a little tight around here.

MAX

Jesus Ma', could you give me a break?

MOTHER

I'm sorry sweetie, but- I could barely pay for the groceries today. I had to leave grandma's diapers.

MAX

Ma'...

MOTHER

And my hours are getting cut again next month-

MAX

Ma'! I'm trying to do something important. Please don't make me quit before I even try! Please!

MOTHER

But sweetie-

MAX

Please Ma'!

MOTHER

No, that's fine dear. That's fine. You go ahead.

MAX

Jesus.

MOTHER

Go ahead, dear. We'll manage. We always do.

GRANDMA

(Enters) Tonya, Tonya is that you?

MOTHER

No mother. It's Molly. Your daughter.

GRANDMA

Yeah, sure Tonya. Listen, I just peed in the living room.

MOTHER

Oh no mother.

GRANDMA

It just came out. I thought I saw one of those Russians.

MOTHER

Oh mother, please don't tell me it was on the couch again.

*GRANDMA shrugs.*  
Oh gosh darn it!

GRANDMA  
Why does she keep calling me mother? And who are you anyway?

MAX  
Jesus.

*At ALISTAIR'S office.*

ALISTAIR  
You see, in Antiquity, people didn't have gadgets to help them remember things. Even writing things on paper was a luxury. Memory was their only resource. Anything that wasn't committed to memory would be lost forever.

MAX  
So how'd they do it, Doc?

ALISTAIR  
Simple. They used mnemonics.

MAX  
Huh?

ALISTAIR  
They developed a series of techniques, mnemonics, that helped them to think in more memorable ways.

MAX  
And that's what you're gonna to do with me?

ALISTAIR  
Yes.

MAX  
Help me think in more memorable ways?

ALISTAIR  
Exactly.

MAX  
How?

ALISTAIR  
For becoming a memory athlete, it helps to have a dirty mind.

MAX  
Are you kidding me?

ALISTAIR  
You see, our minds evolved to be extremely visual. They are at their best remembering visual images.



MAX

Images. OK...

ALISTAIR

And they remember erotic and exciting images best. If you have something you need to remember, for example a shopping list, it helps if you code it into visual images. And it helps even more if those images are-

MAX

Dirty?

ALISTAIR

Precisely. The filthier, the better. I've found picturing famous people doing lewd and outrageous things works best.

MAX

Holy shit.

ALISTAIR

For example, if you need to remember to buy clotted cream, picture a tub of clotted cream on your front porch and try to imagine Britney Spears bathing in it.

MAX

Wow.

ALISTAIR

Exactly. That's certainly much harder to forget.

MAX

I think I'm gonna like this.

ALISTAIR

We'll see.

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END OF SAMPLE

*If you'd like to read the full short play (21 pages) please contact German Munoz at [g@germanmunoz.com](mailto:g@germanmunoz.com)*

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<http://germanmunoz.com/>*