THE MILDRED B. FANKHAUSER AWARD
BY
WENDY YONDORF
SCENE THREE

The Volunteer Office. There is a huge plaque hanging on the wall upstage with 33 names engraved on it. Lambie, age 78, is sitting at Gwyn’s desk, looking through the drawers. Lambie wears a volunteer jacket over her pink Chanel suit. There are 24 gold plated pins hanging from her jacket. Gwyn, age 39, the new Director of Volunteer Services enters the Volunteer Office carrying a huge three ring notebook. She wears a tight fitting dark suit.

GWYN
(fairly irate)
Uhm. What are you doing?!

LAMBIE
I’m very upset.

GWYN
Could you please move away, or let me have my...?

LAMBIE
I’m missing a pin.

GWYN
That may be, but it’s not OK for you to sit at my desk. You are in violation of HR 3B, HIPAA and corporate compliance.

Lambie rises from Gwyn’s chair.

LAMBIE
Could you look under the desk?

GWYN
Why would it be there?

LAMBIE
Because I sit there all the time. You’re never there. I don’t know where you go or what you do.

Gwyn gets on her hands and knees.

GWYN
I have meetings.

LAMBIE
For what?!

GWYN
For my job.
See anything?

GWYN

Not yet.

LAMBIE

Someone must have taken it. I tell you, this hospital used to be so beautiful. Filled with well mannered people. The girls in the library all wore gloves. Everybody smelled normal and there were very few Puerto Ricans.

GWYN

(standing up)

I beg your pardon.

LAMBIE

You know what I mean. Half the therapists here can’t speak English. So, no luck?

GWYN

Did you look in your pockets?

LAMBIE

A million times.

GWYN

Well, we’ll just order you a new one and you’ll be ship shape. I’m sure it won’t break the budget.

LAMBIE

That pin is special ordered for me every year. They only make them up to 10,000 hours. I have—

GWYN               LAMBIE

18,006 hours.       18,006 hours.

GWYN

Which is why I asked you to come in.

LAMBIE

Good. You know and I know, I deserve the Mildred B. Fankhauser Award.

GWYN

Well, there are other considerations—

LAMBIE

Oh, come on, Greta, who else is even close?

GWYN

...It’s Gwyn.

LAMBIE

Gwyn?

GWYN

That’s my name.
It is?!

Yes, Gwyn, not Greta.

But, it’s so unattractive.

(summoning her courage)

...You know, that’s-- that’s very unkind.

What?! Unkind?! Who the hell do you think you are? I’ve been here for 25 years, and you’ve been here for half a minute. And I’m supposed to hear I’m unkind? I’m the volunteer for Chrissake. I could walk across the street anytime I want-- Lenox Hill, New York/Cornell, Memorial-- and take my you know what with me. You know what I’m talking about. They’re all waiting for me to croak. Am I right? Every week they send those letters asking me to come to some dull as dirt lecture on Lupus. And at the end of the lecture-- well they may as well pass a collection plate. Now look, Maude Godwin gave 5 million bucks to Premier Orthopedics. She’s the only volunteer who gave more than me and she worked for 33 years--

Wait a minute. She’s not an active volunteer, is she?

No, she died. You know that ferry boat accident in Lake George?

Oh, my God.

Her husband was the captain and he survived. Well, she was so ashamed, she just gave up the will to live. Anyway, Maude got the Mildred B. Fankhauser Award last year and then, Tony was set to give it to me and now that he’s dead, I’m hearing a lot of lousy rumors about you wanting to give it to that oriental boy.

Now, just a minute.

I know all about it.

First of all-- it is a violation of BSBM to discuss any internal awards matter-- and, secondly, Tony was not going to give the award to you. He was going to give it to Lola. And thirdly, even if I were thinking of giving it to Jimmy Pu--
But you can’t give it to him! He’s a man! And he’s retarded!

GWYN
He is--? Well, it doesn’t matter. I’ve had it up to here with the Mildred B. Fankhauser Award. It’s a stupid award. It doesn’t celebrate the individual on their own merits. It’s become this idiotic holy grail that everyone competes for and I think it’s souring the whole volunteer department. So, I’m going to retire the award.

Silence.

LAMBIE
...You know, that’s a very good idea.

GWYN
You think? Really?! You’re not pulling my leg?

LAMBIE
Absolutely, wipe the slate clean.

GWYN
Oh, I’m so glad we’re of like minds! And I’m thinking of creating a student award. Perhaps set up a scholarship for inner city youth--

LAMBIE
We’ll retire the Mildred B. Fankhauser award and ceremony. Dr. Fankhauser will probably be relieved. It’s named after his mother you know. She was a real bitch. No one liked her. I think he was terrified of her, too.

GWYN
Well, the award brings out the worst in everybody.

LAMBIE
And the first 22 years, the members of the Women’s Auxiliary just nominated themselves for the award.

GWYN
But, then why didn’t you get it?

LAMBIE
Because, I was Jewish.

GWYN
No!

LAMBIE
I kid you not. Look at the plaque. It’s all Wentworth, Reynolds, a French woman, Maude, but no Jews.

Gwyn inspects the plaque.

GWYN
You’re right. Well, that’s just awful. Why didn’t you say something?

LAMBIE
I didn’t have to. I converted to Catholicism. I never liked being a Jew anyway. All that bowing and those sad holidays. Who needs it?... Greta, could you do something for me?
GWYN

Sure.

LAMBIE

Set up a meeting for me with Dr. Fankhauser. We’ll give the Mildred B. Fankhauser award to me and then we’ll retire it.

Wendy Yondorf’s newest play **ADMIT ONE** will have a reading with Michael Emerson and his wife, Carrie Preston, this March; Lisa Rothe will direct. **I’m Peggy Guggenheim & You’re Not** had a staged reading at the Mint Theatre in New York City with Ana Gasteyer, Brian Murray and Frank Wood. **EDFCZP**, a ten-minute play, was published in *The 10 Minute Play* (Heinemann Press, 2001, under the title *The Last Twin*); the play premiered at Circle Repertory directed by William Esper starring Joel Rooks, and again at Manhattan Theatre Source. **13 RITES** (Heinemann Press, 1998) was produced by LaMama’s Theatre Festival of New Plays starring Patricia Randall and Sam Guncler. **Murder in the Book Club** was read at Abingdon Theatre Company. **The Space Between the Trees** garnered a Berilla Kerr Foundation Award; the play was nominated by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival as a regional finalist and was produced by Niagara University. Previously, **The Space Between the Trees** was read at the Jewish Repertory Theatre with actors Frances Sternhagen, Frank Wood and Laura Esterman. Wendy Yondorf graduated from Brown University where her play, **Lupus Quadrille**, premiered.