Just Another Snow Day

by Bryan Starchman

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Snow day! In this collection of hilarious scenes we see how an unexpected day off from school can be an answer to a prayer…or not! Sweethearts Mark and Jessica aren't feeling very sweet when, after a whole night of decorating the gym, the winter homecoming dance is canceled. Meanwhile, Paul is thrilled to get an invitation from Mary to go sledding, if only his overprotective mother will chill. Then there's poor Julie – will she ever figure out how to get her tongue unstuck from the frozen flagpole? Woven throughout the many scenes, Trenton, a student, and Mr. Ruffino, his drama teacher, battle the weather and each other to get their copies of the latest game "Zombie Apocalyptico 7" before the post office closes. By evening, the school theater becomes the place to be when the power goes out and the generator kicks on. Using minimal sets and a very flexible cast, this sparkling comedy might just have your audience wishing for their own snow day!

Enjoy this show any time of the year. Snow days can be magical and bring out the kid in all of us (even teachers) because if you live in an area where it snows, that 5 a.m. phone call sings out, "Here's a gift. Cherish it! Make the most of this extra time, it's the stuff that life is made of."

-Bryan Starchman

DEDICATION

For my wife who I share all my snow days with.
Who says a kiddie pool can't be used as a sled?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 6 w, 18 flexible or with doubling 3 m, 3 w)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (flex): Live actor or recorded.
MARK (m): Senior who just finished setting up homecoming.
JESSICA (f): Junior who just finished setting up homecoming.
TRENTON (m): A hyperactive high school student.
TRENTON'S MOM (f): Middle-aged and not happy about the snow day.
MR. / MRS. RUFFINO (flex): Actor playing <u>your</u> drama teacher.
RUFFINO'S SPOUSE (flex): Actor playing <u>your</u> drama teacher's spouse.
PHONE (flex): Live actor or recorded.
MARNI (f): Very punctual and studious student, needs to relax.
SUPERINTENDENT (flex): Superintendent of schools.
NATALIE (f): Over protective middle-aged mother of Paul.
PAUL (m): High school student and son of Natalie's.
MARY (f): High school student going sledding with Paul.
POSTAL WORKER (flex): Mill City Post Office worker.
NURSE (flex): Live actor or recorded.
JIMMY (m): 19-year-old college student, plays basketball.
LINDA (f): Over protective mother whose child got hit by a snowball.
ELDER 1 (flex): Senior citizen who isn't letting the snow get to him.
ELDER 2 (flex): Another.
JULIE / JUDE (flex): Student who licked a flagpole.
JULIE / JUDE'S VOICE (flex): Student offstage of same gender or pre-recorded.
DALE / DANA (flex): Julie or Jude's crush.
MANDY / MATT (flex): Dating Dale or Dana, mean and not too bright.
NEWSPERSON (flex): Reporting on the snow, named Sunny Rains or Sonny Rains.
CAMERAPERSON (flex): Filming the newsperson.
WRITER (m): Wrote a modern version of *Our Town* and tonight is the premiere.
DIRECTOR (flex): Student director of Writer's original show, sits in audience until this scene, flexible.
TECHIE / SAMMY (flex): Voice from the back of the auditorium in the sound booth.
TIMOTHY / TAMMI (flex): Linda's child, face completely bandaged so we can't really see him.

NOTE ON CASTING

Option 1: Uses a cast of 29 plus extras. Maximum students involved: 5 m, 6 w, 18 flexible.
Option 2: Uses a cast of 6. Minimum students involved with doubling, using recorded voiceover actors and quick changes: 3 m, 3 w.
Option 3: Any variation you like.

Mr. Ruffino is a pretty meaty part, so it is best played by a student either parodying your own drama teacher or by a student playing the fictional role of Mr. Ruffino. Feel free to change the name to that of your actual drama teacher. I do recommend that your drama teacher have a cameo in this show, as it is fun for the audience and for the cast to see an adult on stage; roles that might be appropriate are Radio Announcer, Phone, Postal Worker, Nurse, Newsperson, or Cameraperson.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Weather Report
  Video Game Interlude, Part 1: Zombie Apocalyptico 7
  Car Interlude, Part 1: Save the Last Dance for Me
Scene 2: Perfect Attendance or BUST!
Scene 3: Hey, Let's Go Sledding!
  Video Game Interlude, Part 2: Neither Rain, Nor Sleet, Nor Snow
  Car Interlude, Part 2: Stuck in the Middle with You
Scene 4: Parental Guidance
Scene 5: Back in My Day…
  Video Game Interlude, Part 3: The Student Becomes the Teacher
  Car Interlude, Part 3: Scenes from a Car
Scene 6: I Saw It in the Movies
Scene 7: The Show Must Go On
  Video Game Interlude, Part 4: Going Postal
  Car Interlude, Part 4: The Great Escape
Scene 8: All the World's a Stage!
Final scene: Hello…Is There Anybody Out There?

PRODUCTION NOTES

The town in this play is called Mill City, but feel free to substitute your own town's name and points of interest as you see fit. If you live in a place where school is never cancelled due to a “snow day,” stick to calling the town in this play “Mill City.”

There are multiple ways to make it look like it is snowing, from projectors to plastic snow fluffs that will drive your custodians insane, to foam machines that stain the carpet. After 15 years of directing shows, my favorite staged snow trick is this: four straight-faced actors hold little white paper bags filled with white confetti (from your three-hole punch) and as they stare out at the audience, they take a handful of "snow" and throw it in the air. The audience loves it, four more kids are in the play, and you don't have to worry about it looking fake because everyone is in on the joke! For scenes where snow is blowing, a simple fan with white confetti being dropped in front of it will add to the humor.

The same goes for sound effects. A professionally recorded “phone ringing” is fine but I have gotten huge laughs when the SFX come from live students offstage. For instance an enthusiastic “Ring a ling ding dong ding! A ring a ling a ling ding dong!” in place of a pre-recorded “phone ringing” is quite amusing, especially if the actor making the sound effect stops right when the phone is picked up. As with most things in the theater: it’s all about the timing. There are opportunities throughout this play for voiceovers. Voiceovers can be pre-recorded, but can also be played by a student with a headset on, staring out at the audience with a “dead behind the eyes” glare and a pasted on smile.

Keep sets basic. Nearly everything can be pantomimed on a bare stage with a free-standing door or if you don’t have a door, even that can be mimed by the actors.

Scene 1: Weather Report

(AT RISE: The stage is dark and the sound of a radio tuning through stations can be heard. A signal becomes stronger and we hear a RADIO ANNOUNCER. The Radio Announcer can also be played by a student staring out at the audience in a loud Hawaiian shirt, holding a pair of large headphones up to his/her ear.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER: Good morning from K-R-A-B. the Crab, your station for all the golden oldies. The time is 5:35 a.m. This is a weather alert for Mill City and the surrounding areas. A winter storm warning is in effect through 6 p.m. tonight. Heavy snow started falling in the early morning hours and is expected to continue throughout most of today. All area schools are closed for today. Keep your radios tuned to K-R-A-B the Crab, your station for all the golden oldies, for the most up-to-date weather forecasts. Coming up next, take a trip back in time to...

(SFX: Radio fades to static and then fades out completely. SPOTLIGHTS find MARK and JESSICA standing on opposite sides of the stage. They address the audience.)

MARK: It's like a birthday present that you forgot to open.
JESSICA: Slipped under your bed, waiting to be found.
MARK: And as you're searching for a matching sock, there it is.
JESSICA: Suddenly something as boring and mundane as getting dressed for school becomes exciting.
MARK: You never know when it might happen.
JESSICA: And if you wish too hard for it, inevitably the "storm of the century" turns into a pathetic little drizzle of rain.
MARK: But then, some random Friday morning you wake up and realize…

(LIGHTS UP on the entire CAST.)

End of Freeview

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