

THE ARTISTS OF ICE AND SNOW

A short comedy for young audiences by
Kemuel DeMoville

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

WIND, any gender, the cold north wind.

RAIN, any gender, the freezing rain.

SUN, any gender, the sleepy winter sun.

OCEAN, any gender, someone with depth.

FLURRIES, a chorus of wind flurries.

DROPS, a chorus of rain drops.

RAYS, a chorus of sun rays.

CURRENTS, a chorus of ocean currents.

CASTING NOTES

There should also be a group or chorus helping each "artist" present their work. When each of the four artists presents their work to the others, the chorus members can hold up examples of art that they made. This gives an opportunity for performers to make and present art/props that they have created specifically for the production. The chorus can be as large or small as the production calls for.

Any gender denotations amongst the characters of the play can easily be changed to suit the cast of the production.

SETTING

If presented over videoconferencing, there should ideally be an arctic landscape of some kind behind each character. Ultimately it can be as simple as piles of white sheets or white towels behind the various performers—something to signify that the world of the play happens in a cold environment.

NOTES

While the Beluga Whale could definitely be a puppet, the use of puppets for various characters is also possible. I leave it up to the individual productions to decide which character(s) to make into a puppet(s).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The play was commissioned and first produced by the Kennedy Theatre at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2008. The costume design was by Sandra Finney, puppet design was by Melissa A. Elmore and set design was by Joseph D. Dodd.

WIND.....Jeremy J. Dowd
RAIN.....Alan Shepard
SUN.....Kat Pleviak
OCEAN.....Tony Young
CHORUS.....Miriam Joanne Jones, Kaitlin Steer,
Parrish Massey, Rebecca McGarvey, Clara Bowden-Kirby,
Shealin Johnson, Lauren Santos

DEDICATION

The play is dedicated to my nieces: Samantha Kenney, Olivia VanDerSluis and Maiya DeMoville. I hope you all have the confidence and tenacity of the ocean and are always able to show your talents and personalities to the world. All of you are strong, intelligent, creative and empathetic young women, and the planet is a better place with all of you striding across it with confidence and kindness, sharing your many talents and ideas. Love you!

(The videoconference windows appear. At first, the windows are empty. Suddenly, WIND appears, blowing loudly – and somewhat obnoxiously – on a recorder.)

WIND: I am the cold north wind! Can you hear me? Can you hear me as I whistle through the valleys? Can you see me as I shake upon the treetops? Can you feel my frozen fingers turn your cheeks and nose cherry red? I am the cold north wind!

(Wind runs around in and out of the frame, blowing the recorder, then waiting. Slowly, the blowing becomes less passionate.)

I am the cold north wind!

(Nothing. Not the reaction Wind expected.)

I am the cold north wind! Hello?

(Nothing.)

Rain! Rain, get out here!

(RAIN appears in their frame.)

RAIN: Is it my part already?

WIND: Yes! I've been running around here like a breeze in a blender blowing on this thing waiting for you.

RAIN: Sorry about that. I had to make water.

WIND: Never mind. Go back there. I'll do my part again.

(Rain leaves the frame.)

I am –

(Rain enters the frame.)

RAIN: Here is the freezing arctic rain, sweeping in –

WIND: Hey. Hey. Hey!

RAIN: What?

WIND: Too soon. Let me finish my part.

RAIN: But you take forever.

WIND: Just come out when I blow the whistle.

RAIN: Fine.

(Rain leaves the frame again.)

WIND: I am the cold north wind!

*(Again, Wind runs in and out of their frame, blowing the recorder.
Rain enters their frame banging on a hand drum.)*

RAIN: Here is the freezing arctic rain, sweeping in from the Bering Sea. Can you hear my thunder pounding? Pounding! Sounding like a roar!

(They both run around their frames. The chorus of FLURRIES and DROPS makes wind or storm sounds alongside Wind and Rain, who are blowing the recorder and pounding the drum. The Flurries and Drops throw snow confetti in the air or at their cameras.)

My rain pours through your wind's cold bluster.

WIND: My icy billows freeze your rain to ice and snow.

RAIN: Snow!

WIND: Snow!

RAIN & WIND: I have made winter.

WIND: What?!

RAIN: I have made winter.

WIND: No, I have made winter.

RAIN: I made the snow.

WIND: But I blew it all over the land.

SUN: *(Off screen:)* What's all this noise?

(SUN enters in their frame.)

I'm trying to get some sleep.

RAIN: Sun! You can help us. Who makes winter? Is it Wind's cold breezes or Rain's snow and ice?

SUN: That's easy.

WIND: It's me, right?

RAIN: No. It's me!

SUN: You're both wrong. I make winter.

(Pause. Rain and Wind laugh.)

What's so funny? This is the one time of year when I can take a little break up here. When I'm on vacation, it doesn't get hot. So, I make winter.

(Pause. Rain and Wind laugh again. OCEAN enters in a new frame.)

OCEAN: Hey guys. What's so funny?

RAIN: *(Quietly to Wind:)* Oh, man! Not Ocean.

WIND: I can't stand Ocean. All they ever want to do is sit around.

SUN: Hey, Ocean. We were just trying to figure out which one of us makes winter.

OCEAN: Oh. Well, that seems easy enough.

RAIN: Really? But all of us have a good reason to think we're the one who makes winter.

OCEAN: What you need is a contest.

WIND: Like a beauty contest? Because I would win that hands down.

OCEAN: No. You need to have a sculpting contest.

SUN: I'm more of a mixed media kind of guy.

OCEAN: All of you should try to make a sculpture out of ice and snow. Whoever is the best at using winter's elements to make the sculpture has to be the one with the talent to make winter happen.

RAIN: That makes sense.

WIND: Yeah.

SUN: Let's do it!

RAIN: I'll go first.

(Rain beats the drum, and the Drops display their winter artworks. The art is smooth and fluid.)

OCEAN: It's beautiful. The whole world is wrapped up in snow and ice.

RAIN: Yeah. It's a masterpiece. You can say it.

WIND: It's okay.

SUN: I suppose some people would be impressed.

RAIN: I don't know how you can do better than this. This is a jewel of form and simplicity.

WIND: It's hills! It's snowy hills. Every year, whenever we have this competition, it's always snowy hills. There's no form, no art – all you do is dump.

RAIN: I wrap.

WIND: Whatever. Sit back and watch the master work.

(Wind blows on the recorder, and the Flurries display their winter artworks. The space is harder now, more angular and cliff-like.)

You see that right there? That's talent.

RAIN: I don't like it.

WIND: What's not to like? It's beautiful. It's art.

RAIN: I know what I like. This isn't it.

OCEAN: You guys think maybe I could have a turn shaping the ice and snow?

(Sun, Rain and Wind laugh.)

RAIN: What are you going to do? Splash on it?

SUN: We appreciate you judging and all, but you're really not a part of this competition.

OCEAN: Why not?

WIND: Well...you're the ocean. You're just water.

OCEAN: So is rain.

WIND: I know. And that's why they're not gonna win. You need wind power to make a winter wonderland.

RAIN: First of all, I am gonna win. You can't have snow or ice without water.

WIND: Just because you make it doesn't mean you shape it.

RAIN: Second of all, you're...well...you're... You just can't, okay?

OCEAN: That's not a reason! Give me a reason why I can't sculpt something too!

WIND: *(Doesn't have a reason:)* We've... There are tons of reasons.

OCEAN: Name one.

WIND: I... There are too many. I wouldn't know where to start.

OCEAN: You guys are jerks.

SUN: The sea is a temperamental thing. Now it's my turn to sculpt!

WIND: Do you really think you can do better than this? You're just the sun. What are you going to do? Shine on it? Make it brighter? Lame.

SUN: Just sit back and watch what I can do.

(Sun shines brightly, and the chorus of RAYS responds. The art resembles chunks of melted ice and snow.)

There. What do you think?

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