

I'M STUCK IN A ROUND OF SERIOUS DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION AND I REALLY HAVE TO PEE

By Bradley Walton

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I'M STUCK IN A ROUND OF SERIOUS DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION AND I REALLY HAVE TO PEE

A Ten Minute Comedy Monologue

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: What if you drank three large sodas while you were competing in a forensics tournament? What would it be like to sit through a heart-wrenching round of serious dramatic interpretation as your bladder got fuller by the minute? Worst of all...what if you were the last person in the room to perform? Could you funnel your anguish into your performance and win the round?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either; gender flexible)

NARRATOR (m/f) Who is competing in a forensics meet and just drank a lot of diet soda

AUTHOR NOTES

Prior to our first competition this year, some of the veteran members of my forensics team were giving advice to our newcomers. Among the bits of wisdom that they offered: Go to the bathroom before the start of each round. And just like that, I had a script.

AT RISE: *The NARRATOR, dressed for a forensics competition, on a bare stage.*

NARRATOR: A teenage girl dressed in a black suit stands at the front of the room. Her long red hair is pulled back in a conservative braid. She speaks eloquently about losing her little brother in a car accident, and never realizing how much she loved him until it was too late. I am sitting in a round of serious dramatic interpretation at the state forensics tournament. The girl speaking is the first contestant in the room. I will be the final contestant. As I listen to her, I become aware of two things: Although she is performing a work of fiction, I am genuinely moved. Also, there is a faint pressure in my bladder, and this concerns me because I will be stuck here for an hour; it is possible that the three 16-ounce diet sodas I drank at lunch may have been a mistake.

The speaker concludes her performance and takes her seat. I applaud politely, as do the other contestants.

There is a bottle of water on my desk. I decide that it is probably best if I think about liquid as little as possible, so I set it down on the floor beside me, out of sight.

An older teen in a white shirt and blue tie now moves to the front of the room. His piece opens with rainfall as a metaphor for the lost innocence of his character's childhood. I hope that this metaphor will not be repeated, because I do not want to think about rain. The mental image of falling water is something I should avoid if I am to make it through the hour. Unfortunately, I am a captive audience. The metaphor of rain pops up again in the performance. And again. I begin to count, hoping that the act of counting will take my mind off of the image itself. This backfires, as each rising number seems to psychologically increase the intensity of the sensation in the lower portion of my body, and the metaphor occurs a staggering twelve times. This is both surprising and impressive given that the script is less than ten minutes long and most of the action takes place in a desert.

In spite of the harrowing escalation that has occurred during the second speech, my bladder pressure remains at a manageable level. There are three performances left before I speak, and the likelihood of another infinitely repeated rain metaphor is low. I am confident I will persevere. I am also thirsty. In addition to three sodas, lunch also consisted of two slices of greasy pizza and a bag of salty potato chips. This probably had something to do with why I drank three bottles of soda in the first place. That, and my desire to support the school's community service club. They were selling concessions as a fundraiser to help build a playground for disabled children. I felt the cause was worth supporting. I see now that I was a fool. I should have dropped an extra dollar in their donation box rather than buy the third drink. I promise myself never to buy diet soda to support a playground for disabled children again. Emboldened with this resolve for the future, I pick up my bottle of water, unscrew the lid, and take a tiny sip. The liquid restores a glimmer of vitality to my mouth, and without thinking, I take a large gulp. Before I can swallow, the realization of what I am doing hits me like a rain metaphor. If I swallow the liquid, it will surely add to my misery as the round progresses. I must spit it out. Except there is nowhere to spit. The window is too far away. Also, it is closed. The contestant sitting in front of me is wearing a sweater that looks soft and absorbent, but releasing the contents of my mouth upon it would surely be frowned upon by the judges as unsportsmanlike conduct. Spitting on the floor or even back into the bottle would probably be considered gross. I could pretend to cough and spit the water onto my own clothes, but I don't want to look like I wet myself. I could also pretend to cough and spit the water someplace else, but even this strikes me as an unwise course of action. As I struggle with my quandary, I become aware that some of the other students in the room are looking at me strangely. It dawns on me that this may be because of the large quantity of water I am holding in my mouth; I have aqua-chipmunk cheeks. One of the judges looks at me. And so, having no other alternative...I swallow.

I will be regretting this in about fifteen minutes. I just know it.

A short, brown-haired boy is next. He speaks of the uncertainty of life and the capriciousness of nature. The mention of nature makes me uneasy. My fears prove well-founded when, two sentences later, the narrator shares that his grandfather's house, the refuge of his childhood, was washed away in a flood. Instinctively, I squeeze my knees together. I do not relax them until the performance is finished. When I finally do, I wish I hadn't. The soda, the water, and the thought of a flood have done their damage. I feel like I just sat through a 64-oz. movie while drinking a three hour soda.

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