

MOTHER NATURE'S **REVENGE**

By Robert Frankel

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DEDICATION

To Jon and Shelley, in pursuit of their dreams.

Robert Frankel

The Playwright

STORY OF THE PLAY

Mark Polluter is an environmental junkie and Mother Nature's overseer, a former school teacher, plans a little revenge. With a smile on her face she turns him into a tree, a bird, and then a fish. In each transformation Mark is visited by a few of the species, as St. Louee Cardinal, a baseball-playing bird, and Sally Starfish, an actress. As one of them, Mark learns firsthand the nasty effects of his human carelessness. Easy dialogue, fun costuming, and lots of comedy makes this topical play perfect for touring.

Educational Value

This production was designed to work well as an introduction to a class section on ecology. All ecological facts stated in this play are based on research done as of this play's copyright date. You might ask your students to jot down as many facts as they hear while they watch the play.

Run Time

The run time for this play is approximately forty minutes. Optionally, the Epilogue can be removed to reduce the run time by several minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(17 characters, extras if desired doubling possible)

OVERSEER: Mother Nature's ecologically sound, right-hand person; an ex-school teacher of Mark's.
FAXO: her wise-cracking android computer assistant.
MARK POLLUTER: a teenager who is an environmental "junkie."
SHERRY: a wisecracking friend of Mark's.
MISSY: another.
LISA: another.
GREG: laid back, low key friend of Mark's.
BELINDA: a congenial garbage bag.
JANA: a motherly jellyfish.
SALLY: a snobby starfish and actress.
ATLANTA HAWK: a cool, basketball-playing bird.
SEATTLE SEAHAWK: a cool, football-playing bird.
ST. LOUEE CARDINAL: a cool, baseball-playing bird.
EDDY: a seedy eel.
DOC: a smart dolphin, fish doctor.
WOODY: a jovial wood elf, Overseer's aid.
SPRITE: another.

Flexible Casting

Most characters, and especially those that are animals, can be cast as either male or female with simply a name change. In addition, characters from each setting can be doubled if desired - e.g. Belinda the Bag with Jana the Jellyfish, Lisa with St. Louee Cardinal. Extras may also be added as background birds and fish in their respective scenes, as well as in the beginning and ending lunch scenes as other students.

Costumes

Mother Nature wears green robes and a garland of flowers in her hair while Faxo wears an imaginative costume composed of a large, computer-looking box, with either real or painted buttons, knobs, levers, lights and a cordless phone (*for the last scene.*) Simple costumes for the animals can be created by using poncho-like garments with suggestive drawings or artwork on them. Each animal also has a distinctive personality so that, for the starfish, for example, sun glasses and glitter easily complete her costume. Likewise, each bird represents an actual sports franchise so any item (*hat, t-shirt, etc.*) can be added to suggest who they are. The production also has room for much more elaborate costuming if budgets allow.

Setting

Once again, the setting can be as simple or elaborate as the production budget allows. On the simple side, just a lunch table can suggest the lunch area. A tree stump can be used for Mark's stint as a tree; a table or low, long box as a perch for his stint as a bird; and the open stage with perhaps some seaweed at several places for his stint as a fish. More elaborate productions could include a large frame of clear strips of plastic to imply the fish pond, or an actual log on which the birds can perch.

Special Effects

Whenever the Overseer gets angry or says, "It's not nice to fool Mother Nature!", thunder sound is called for. This can be done with an recording, a pair of cymbals, or a stick against a garbage can lid. Whenever the Overseer changes Mark into some new animal. At these points, the same thunder sound should be heard. In addition, wind, flickering lights, and eerie music all enhance the effect. A xylophone or harp can create the appropriate music offstage in lieu of a recording.

(See **Props List** at end of script.)

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: It is lunch time on the playground of a school. There is a picnic table CS around which several students are preparing to eat. MARK is finishing telling a story. DR is the OVERSEER and a computer creature named FAXO. Overseer is taking notes throughout the following on a clipboard.)

MARK: ... so I end up cruising down Fifth with half of the marching band running after me!

(The OTHERS laugh.)

SHERRY: *(Opening lunch bag.)* And the answer is ... tuna on white! What a surprise! *(Looking up.)* Thank you, Mom. How did you know ... after forty-seven straight days of "tuna on white" that I'd want ... tuna on white?!

GREG: *(Peering into his lunch bag. HE is a man of few words and speaks in a virtual monotone.)* Bummer. Trade you.

SHERRY: Really? What do you have?

GREG: *(Still peering intently.)* Don't know.

SHERRY: No, seriously ...

LISA: *(Leaning over to look in GREG'S bag.)* Trust him. He doesn't know.

SHERRY: Still sounds better than tuna on white.

(SHERRY and GREG swap sandwiches.)

MARK: *(Unwrapping sandwich.)* Ta-da! The world's first bologna, egg salad, and mustard on rye! *(HE tosses wrapper on ground. OVERSEER frowns and makes a check on her clipboard.)*

MISSY: That's gross. My Mom would never make that.

MARK: *(Proudly.)* Neither would mine. I did it myself! *(HE spits chewing gum into hand and places it under table. OVERSEER is incensed by this and makes another note furiously. MARK waves sandwich around.)*

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MARK: *(Continued.)* Anyone want a bite?

OVERSEER: *(Snapping fingers in a huff. All ACTORS in the lunch scene immediately freeze.)* Mother Nature, that ticks me off! Throwing paper, putting gum under the ...

(FAXO carries a large, green book entitled, "Mother Nature's Rules of the Road," and speaks in a computer-like voice.)

FAXO: Please, Overseer. You must let him continue.

OVERSEER: *(Shaking head.)* The gall of that young man. Even when I had him in my first grade class, he refused to clean up his tinker toys. And now ...

FAXO: Please, Overseer. You cannot continue stopping the world. It is already forty-seven minutes and twenty-three seconds behind, due to your ...

OVERSEER: Yes, yes. I know, you computerized ninny. But that boy is down to his last strike! *(Snaps HER fingers. Lunch scene continues.)*

MISSY: Eeew! Keep that thing away from me! *(MARK laughs. MISSY shakes her head.)* You're a real trip. How'd your parents survive you, anyway?

MARK: *(Feigning godliness.)* I have no parents. I was a gift from above.

(In a fit of anger, OVERSEER raises arms and gestures. A clap of THUNDER is heard. The KIDS pause and look up startled. Then they laugh.)

SHERRY: See? Even they admit their mistake!

(THEY eat in silence for a moment. MARK finishes can of pop, wipes his face with his sleeve, and stands.)

MARK: I'm outta here, suckers.

LISA: Where you going?

MARK: No class this afternoon, right? The wolf woman cancelled science class so we all could go on an optional trip to "Use it Again City."

End of Freeview

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