

Still Stuck at Home

*A One-Act Play
by Bryan Starchman*

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Thank you for producing my play. During these times of social distancing and sheltering in place it has become necessary to think outside the box and so this play is intended to be presented using an online meeting platform like Zoom. With the way technology is always changing, I use Zoom in this script the way we call facial tissue Kleenex or hook and loop fasteners Velcro. Feel free to use whatever technology is available to you. Feel free to put this play on even when we are no longer sheltering in place since this is a shared experience that we will not soon forget. I also wrote this play so that it could easily be performed on stage once we are finally able to return to the theater! (Personally, I can't wait to return to Broadway to enjoy a live show or two...or three...or four.)

You may have four actors play the stock characters (Dad, Mom, Son, and Daughter) or expand the cast to eight, twelve, or sixteen by choosing four actors for Dad, four for Mom, and so on. Costumes are simple street clothes and so I would recommend just labeling the actors' shirts with DAD, MOM, SON, and DAUGHTER using those "Hello, My Name Is..." stickers but only if you use more than four actors. Use simple cat ears, dog ears, eyeliner whiskers for the pets. If you can figure out digital filters for the pets, even better.

The last scene is very important to me, so please don't skip it. While there is humor in tragedy, I also struggled with writing this piece because, like most people out there, this pandemic has personally affected me, my community, and the ones I love and care about. I had to find the humor in it for my own peace of mind, and I hope the spirit of my intentions come through and that we will all continue to support one another, not only during Covid-19, but in years to come.

Break a Leg!
~Bryan Starchman
May 1, 2020
San Francisco, CA

SYNOPSIS

Join this hilarious family as they struggle to endure being stuck at home – together! How many family game nights can teens endure? How are the pets holding up? Can mom convince the kids to do their schoolwork or will they be doomed to a fifth year of high school? How do first dates and book clubs work while social distancing? And really, who is strong enough to endure more than one Dad joke?

This show is perfect providing both laugh-out-loud humor as well as flexibility in staging. It can be traditionally staged or performed and viewed online.

Still Stuck at Home

- 4 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Minimum 4 m, 2 w, 2 flexible, 1 offscreen voice

Maximum 9 m, 7 w, 2 flexible, 1 offscreen voice)

DAD: *(Sometimes called Frank)* Enjoys bowling.

MOM: *(Sometimes called Karen)* Enjoys a clean house and reading.

SON: *(Sometimes called Spencer)* Son is a bit of a computer geek.

DAUGHTER: *(Sometimes called Jenny)* Fancies herself a fashion influencer.

PAUL: Son's creepy friend who stayed the night and never went home.

MUFFINS: The family's very happy dog.

PIDDLES: The family's very UNhappy cat.

TED: Daughter's Zoom date, a senior in high school.

NEWS REPORTER: Offscreen voice.

PROPS

Fake microphone - Dad

Trimmers – Dad

Couch cushion – Son

White board or chalk board – Mom

Yardstick – Dad

Essay and lesson plans – Mom

Empty plate and glass – Dad

Headphones – Dad

AirPods - Daughter

Compact – Daughter

Duffle bag with the following inside: a clipboard, a stethoscope, what looks to be a homemade lie detector test, some disposable cups, ink blots, and other random odds and ends. The funnier the better– Dad

Mug - Mom

Can of soup – Mom

Can of soup – Dad

Note – Dad

TV remote – Mom

Scene 1

(AT RISE: DAD, MOM, SON, and DAUGHTER are sitting on a couch in their family room. They are trying to pick what to watch for the evening. The "fourth wall" is the TV and we see the family staring forward at the audience as they watch.)

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* And in other news the governor has made it official: schools will remain closed for the rest of the academic year.

DAUGHTER: Yes!

MOM: No!

DAD: NOOOOOOO!

SON: Oh God! No! No! No!!!!!!

(PARENTS look surprised.)

MOM: Last year you were begging to be homeschooled!

SON: That was before. Now I yearn for the days when Biff Baxter would give me wedgies and Principal Paine screamed at me for ditching class so I could play Nintendo Switch in the bathroom stalls.

DAD: *(Picks something out of his ear, smells it, is about to taste it.)* What changed?

(The entire FAMILY stares at him in disgust.)

DAD: *(Cont'd.)* What!?!

SON: For one, my new tutors aren't exactly challenging me.

MOM: I thought the history of vacuums was incredibly informative.

SON: And I say, it sucked!

DAUGHTER: Zing!

DAD: You told me my math lessons were really "special."

SON: *(Mocking.)* "Why are math books so depressed?"
(Beat.) "They have a lot of problems."

DAD: *(Cracking up.)* You can't tell me you get that sort of quality joke at school.

Still Stuck at Home

- 6 -

SON: *(Still mocking.)* "Never trust a teacher holding graphing paper." *(Beat.)* "They're probably plotting something."

DAUGHTER: Stop. Please, stop.

SON: I wish I could. This went on for over an hour.

MOM: You poor thing.

DAD: Hey! You married me.

MOM: I know, honey. Believe me. I know.

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* So get ready to stay inside a bit longer, America. But remember, there's no time like the present to get to know your family a bit better.

DAUGHTER: Gag me.

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* You can spend this extra time doing fun activities like searching for that missing sock.

MOM: *(Genuinely excited.)* Oooooooooohhhh!

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* Or work together to create the next viral TikTok!

DAD: I'm ready to spit some mad beats, yo.

DAUGHTER: No! Just, no!

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* Or learn a new skill by giving each other haircuts!

DAD: *(Holding up his trimmers.)* Who wants to help me with that patch I can't reach on my back?

SON: So much fuel for my therapist.

NEWS REPORTER: *(Offscreen voice.)* Hang in there, America. Together we can continue to flatten the curve.

(SON and DAUGHTER start to get up.)

MOM: Where are you two going?

SON: I'm going to my room to sit in the dark. I'll probably rock back and forth. Mumble to myself.

(No one wants to touch that.)

DAUGHTER: Well, *I'm* going to my room to post another makeup tutorial.

End of Freeview

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