

ONCE UPON A STORY

One Act Play

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Prologue

A desk and chair downstage. On top of the desk, piles of paper are laid out untidily and there is also a lamp. The remainder of the stage is the area in which the Writer's story is acted out.

Storyteller 1 People say that stories start,
Storyteller 2 With just one simple line:
Storyteller 3 With 'One fine day'
Storyteller 4 Or 'Long ago'
Storyteller 5 Or 'Once upon a time...'.
Storyteller 6 But 'Once upon a *story*' is how this tale begins,
Storyteller 7 With a certain Mr Writer who dreamt of wondrous things...

Writer enters.

Storyteller 1 He longed to tell an awesome tale
Storyteller 2 Of fun adventures,
Storyteller 3 Of ships setting sail,
Storyteller 4 Of magic and intrigue and things most bizarre;
Storyteller 5 Time machines
Storyteller 6 Or invisible cars.
Storyteller 7 But this poor writer was not very good,
Storyteller 6 Though he'd try and try as best he could.
Storyteller 5 His tales were always ever so boring.
All If only he'd write an interesting story!

Writer mimes the following actions as they are described.

Storyteller 4 And then one morning, this Writer arose,
Storyteller 3 Got himself washed and put on his clothes.
Storyteller 2 He sipped his tea,
Storyteller 1 placed his cup in the sink,
Storyteller 2 Then sat at his desk and started to think.
Storyteller 4 Taking deep breaths, he turned on the light,
Storyteller 5 Picked up his pen and started to write.

Story Begins...

The underlined speech shows when Writer is writing his story (rather than thinking or discussing it with other characters) and therefore his pen moves on the paper during underlined sections.

Writer One fine day...no, no, no (*scribbles out*). Long ago.....still not right (*scribbles out*).

Maybe...once upon a time. Yes, once upon a time...in a land not far from here...

where bizarre things happen and unusual sights are seen, there was a little boy.

Boy Thief runs on and freezes centrestage.

No, wait (*scribbles out*)....a little girl.

Boy Thief exits as Girl Thief runs onstage and freezes centrestage

Actually...no, (*scribbles out*) I won't have any characters in the story just yet.

Girl Thief exits.

But it does need to start in an interesting place...Let me think...I know, a funfair!

Short section (30-60 seconds) to be devised. Lots of energy and excitement to create the feel and look of a funfair - 'roll up roll up', different rides, families having fun, coconut shy, games, candy floss etc.

Hmmm, or not. (*Scribbles out*)

Funfair performers exit, disappointed.

Maybe under the sea!

Short section (30-60 seconds) to be devised. Lots of slow movements to create the feel and look of under the sea – different kinds of fish, sea weed, mermaids/mermen, crabs etc.

Urgh, this isn't working! (*Scribbles out*)

Under the sea performers exit, disgruntled.

Writer puts the pen down, screws up the paper and throws it on the floor.

Come on, you can do it...Just need to think of somewhere interesting. (*He pauses, thinking, then gasps.*) I've got it! (*Picks up the pen and starts to write enthusiastically*) Once upon a time, in a land not far from here, there was a

beautiful...forest. It was full of trees of all different shapes and sizes – some tall (tall trees enter) and some short (short trees enter). Some beautifully elegant (elegant trees enter) and others not so elegant (not-so-elegant trees enter). Children played there (children run in and out of the trees) - they thought it was a magical place - and there were animals at every turn (animals enter) – squirrels, rabbits, even the odd hedgehog. They would scurry and hurry and meander about. Right in the middle of the forest, there was a small area with no trees at all (trees, children and animals exit) ...no (scribbles out and rewrites)...with only one tree (Tree enters). No one ever visited the clearing – it was a quiet and lonely place...But one day, everything changed...

Writer continues to write eagerly as his story is acted out. Both Writer and Tree remain onstage for the rest of the play - Tree standing upstage and Writer sitting behind his desk.

Prince enters, running.

Prince I must find her quickly. I simply must.

Jones enters slowly, looking tired.

Jones Yes, sire, but maybe if we could walk a little slower.

Prince Slower? Why, Jones, we have no time to lose. The love of my life is lying in a deep sleep in that far off palace. I must reach her immediately.

Jones But sire, maybe if we could have just a short rest.

Prince Certainly not. We must press on. To think, by nightfall I will have broken the spell and I will live happily ever after with my love.

Jones Please sire, just a little rest. The lady has been asleep for a long time. An extra 5 minutes won't make much difference.

Prince But I must...

Jones And a rest now would give you time to make sure you look your best.

Prince Hmmm, excellent idea Jones. We'll have a 5 minute break, then back to it.

Jack enters and begins to cry. Prince and Jones exchange glances – Prince indicates for Jones to help.

Jones Hi there...Are you alright?

Jack continues to cry.

Excuse me...Is everything alright?