

A DRAMATIC DECISION

by Tanner Dean

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A Comedic Monologue

by Tanner Dean

SYNOPSIS: A first year speech student begrudgingly decides to enter competition but is hit with a classic dilemma. What event does he/she actually aspire to compete in? Will it be a foray into the eccentricities of drama? Will they enter the “ring” with the ferocious debate team? Or could tragedy strike, and they be forced to mime for the entire season!?

TIME: Present day

SETTING: High school speech competition

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either)

NARRATOR (m/f) A high school speech student

SET: Bare stage

PROPS

- Fedora
- Binder
- Humorous, easy to see picture or cartoon

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: This piece was written as a monologue but can be modified as a duet, with the other person doing some of the other events, being the other partner, etc.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to my friend and former co-director Rikki for influencing me to finally start to share my ideas, and to my dad for convincing me that a few of them are actually good!

NARRATOR: So here we are. My first year in speech and drama. The only reason I'm here is because my parents and teachers thought it would be (*Sarcastically.*) "Beneficial to my future." So far, instead of building life skills, I've been treated to an early morning with sarcastic, over-caFFEinated coaches and hundreds of high-schoolers screaming the lyrics of every Disney song imaginable at the top of their lungs all morning.

I mean, how do I even get started? Just pick an event they say. As if I even know where to start!

Okay so... maybe we'll put the speech back in speech and drama. Let's see, there's O-O, M-P-A, L-D, H-O-I, D-O-I? ... Ugh, this is like alphabet soup. I'm gonna need a T-O (*Makes a timeout sign.*) and go through this mess of events a bit slower.

Let's start with "Original Oratory."

(*As oratory speaker, slightly annoying.*) School lunches have undergone a massive overhaul in the past when previous administrations began programs to modernize healthy meals in public schools.

(*Normal.*) Original Oratory! Also known as OO! OO. Oh, oh, this is so boring! Seriously, they want me to write a ten minute speech on salad and recite it back to a room of strangers several times a week? No thank you!

Then there's Memorized Public Address. Well, it has the word "memorized" in the title, as if that's appealing. Although, it would be a bit better than Original Oratory. Essentially, all I would have to do is repeat what someone else said!

(*As Martin Luther King.*) I have a dream that one day my four children will live in a world where...

(Normal.) Actually, this is okay, but we've already heard these things before, and trust me... in today's society, I'm not about to get burned for plagiarism.

I want to do something fresh and exciting! Let's see... Informative!
(As informative.) I would get to write a speech on what I am passionate about, and I get to make fun visual aids?

Well, that might be the one for... *(Pause, looks offstage.)* What? People will do presentations on things like goats or earwax? And I have to watch them, like all day? Maybe we should re-route.

I hear debate is popular these days. Especially Lincoln-Douglas. What's not to like? Dressing up in my finest just to argue for a half hour at a time. After all, I've been practicing for years with my parents every night at the dinner table.

(Overly Pretentious.) Now Mother, my value criterion is my quality of life and my contention is that you should purchase me the newest iPhone immediately.

(Back to normal.) Mmmm... Maybe not. After all, I'm not even sure what some of those words mean. Maybe having a partner to help me would be good. Policy debate might be the answer!

(As experienced debater, very intense.) As you can see, our solvency regarding embargos on Venezuela has completely dispelled the negative's counter plan, thus also proving the extensive significance of our case's solvency.

(As a new debater, confused.) Yeah, um.... South America's pretty sweet!

(Normal.) Okay, I just don't think I have what it takes to be in debate, including this new Public Forum thing. Or as every coach in a suit would say, the Confederate Kids of Debate.

You know I just don't think debate is for me. Wayyy too much preparation. But what if we went the opposite direction: Impromptu! Why, the name of the event screams, "I don't care enough to prepare!"

Okay, all I have to do is speak on this (*Pull out a picture of something awkward or uncomfortable.*)... for three minutes. Next!

Extemporaneous, or Extemp, since I'm on a time limit, literally means without preparation. And yet it's the only event where I'm given 30 minutes of time to prep whatever nonsense I found on Google and parrot it back at the judge.

I want something a little less rigid, something fun! That's it! SPO!! Ah, Spontaneous Oral Interpretation. What a breath of fresh air! No memorization and a different piece every performance, it seems a little too perfect... (*Super overdramatic, with empty binder.*) My name is Sam. Sam I am and I do not like green eggs and ham. Scene.

(*Normal.*) Well this would be fun if I didn't have to watch other people spontaneously prep pieces like this 8 MORE TIMES!! I know I nailed it, but some others might need more than 5 minutes to prep. Those poor Spontaneous judges...

But, we do have other OI's. The sister speech events that are Humorous Oral Interpretation or HOI, and Dramatic Oral Interpretation or DOI. Might I tackle DOI?

(*Depressed, open empty binder, slowly.*) It was then that all of my family died at the exact same time. I began a lonely drive home where I found my beloved house was engulfed in flames reaching toward the cold dark sky. Soon after I...

(*Normal.*) Whoa, this is dark.

How about we just put this one away since we still have things to do today. Come on, Humorous Oral Interpretation...

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