

SO MUCH SNOW

A HOLIDAY PLAY IN ONE ACT

By **Emmett Loverde**

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SYNOPSIS: An intriguing group of magical characters gathers in a wintry expanse to solve the mystery of where they came from . . . and what's coming for them. They turn out to be toys that are about to be given as gifts to a family of poor children. A wonderful holiday fantasy featuring a wide range of roles for all ages.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4 MEN, 4 WOMEN, 2 EITHER)

CAP'N PRICE (m)..... A soldier. *(37 lines)*
WOMAN (f)..... Made of snow. *(49 lines)*
BEAR (m)..... A stuffed toy. *(58 lines)*
SNOW GIRL #1 (f)..... Made of snow. *(33 lines)*
SNOW GIRL #2 (f)..... Made of snow. *(19 lines)*
SNOW BOY (m)..... Made of snow. *(33 lines)*
KANGAROO (f)..... A stuffed toy *(41 lines)*
TIGER (m/f)*..... A hand puppet. *(14 lines)*
ELEPHANT (m/f)**..... A hand puppet. *(Non-speaking)*
JACK (m)..... A jack-in-the-box. *(11 lines)*

SETTING

A snow-covered expanse.

TIME: Any time.

* The character of the SNOW BOY will eventually put on and become the TIGER hand puppet character but when the TIGER first appears it needs to be played by a separate actor.

** SNOW GIRL #1 will eventually put on and become the ELEPHANT hand puppet but when the ELEPHANT first appears it needs to be played by a separate actor.

SCENE: *A snow-covered expanse. The base of a gigantic tree is upstage, off to one side, and a particularly large snowdrift (or something) is upstage opposite the tree. It is morning. (The “snow” may consist of Styrofoam peanuts, fabric, or some sort of soft, white substance.) Multicolored LIGHTS shine down from the sky.*

AT RISE: *A sprightly tune, played by a flute or piccolo, is heard off stage. A SOLDIER in uniform enters playing said instrument and looking battered, perhaps from battle. This is CAP’N PRICE.*

CAP’N PRICE limps slightly as he pulls a little wooden wagon laden with plain cardboard boxes, but his manner is upbeat. On his chest is tacked a yellow letter-sized sheet of paper containing the handwritten message “OLDEST BOY.”

Whistling still, CAP’N PRICE stumbles over something buried in the snow. He stares down at it, astonished. A woman’s face! He bends down and “uncovers” the woman by gathering and rearranging the snow and shaping it into the figure of a reclining WOMAN. As soon as he finishes his work, a beautiful WOMAN OF SNOW - - all in white, of course - - opens her eyes.

He reaches out his hand and she hesitantly takes it in hers. He guides her to her feet, then bows to her. The MUSIC he had been playing now resumes as if by magic and they begin to dance beautifully together.

At first they are far apart, touching only with the tips of their fingers. As their dance continues, they move closer together, until their arms almost completely encircle each other. Suddenly, she leaps away from him, frightened.

WOMAN: You will melt me!

CAP’N PRICE: It’s not intentional.

WOMAN: Stay there. *(She backs away a few feet, then stops, squinting at his chest.)* Why are you wearing that sign? Are you the oldest boy?

CAP'N PRICE: I think I'm the only boy.

WOMAN: (*Smiles.*) Around here, at least.

CAP'N PRICE: Help me make more.

WOMAN: More boys?

CAP'N PRICE: And girls.

WOMAN: How?

CAP'N PRICE: The same way I made you.

Together they begin pushing and gathering snow to make a new person.

WOMAN: What's your name?

CAP'N PRICE: Everyone calls me Cap'n Price.

WOMAN: Captain of what?

CAP'N PRICE: Everyone.

WOMAN: Where is everyone?

Before he can answer, a furry pink animal pops its head out from under the snow. It shakes itself, flinging snow in every direction. It is a BEAR. As the BEAR bows grandly to the WOMAN, the audience can see the yellow hand-lettered sign on its back: "GIRL." The BEAR turns to CAP'N PRICE and bows.

BEAR: How d'y'do?

WOMAN: You don't sound like a lady!

BEAR: Madam, neither do you. (*To CAP'N PRICE.*) What's her problem?

CAP'N PRICE: Your sign.

BEAR: I can't see it.

WOMAN: It says "Girl." If you're a girl, I'm an elephant!

BEAR: Thank you both for uncovering me. I could barely move.

CAP'N PRICE: What should we call you?

WOMAN: In spite of your sign, I refuse to address you as "Girl" just on principle!

BEAR: I'd prefer that you address me as little as possible. (*To CAP'N PRICE.*) I look a little like a bear. Why not just call me "Bear"?

Everyone nods. A good solution.

WOMAN: Now that you're here, you can help us make children.

CAP'N PRICE: *(Quickly.)* Out of snow.

The three begin shaping three children out of snow: two girls and a boy. CAP'N PRICE is finished first and BEAR stops his own work to help CAP'N PRICE stand the wobbly SNOW GIRL #1 on her feet. The WOMAN joins them, beaming at SNOW GIRL #1 as though she were her own creation.

As soon as she stands up straight, SNOW GIRL #1 opens her eyes to focus on what is in front of her: a gigantic pink wad with arms.

SNOW GIRL #1: Candy!

To the WOMAN'S dismay, SNOW GIRL #1 dashes directly into BEAR'S cuddly arms - - ignoring the WOMAN'S own, which are wide open. Laughing, BEAR hugs the child back. Furious, the WOMAN plunges back into her work of shaping a child.

BEAR, CAP'N PRICE, and SNOW GIRL #1 quickly complete a second child of snow: SNOW BOY. As he struggles to stand up, the WOMAN dashes over and stands at the ready, arms outstretched. SNOW BOY opens his eyes and focuses them on the bright uniform of CAP'N PRICE.

SNOW BOY: Soda pop!

He dashes into CAP'N PRICE'S arms, surprising him. Defeated, the WOMAN trudges back to finish her work. The others try to help her, but she swats their hands away.

Finally her creation comes to life: a second snow girl. SNOW GIRL #2 staggers to her feet and opens her eyes, looking directly at CAP'N PRICE . . . and does nothing, much to the WOMAN'S delight.

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Next, SNOW GIRL #2 turns to BEAR. Again no reaction. The WOMAN can scarcely contain her glee as SNOW GIRL #2 turns to face her . . . and does nothing.

WOMAN: Don't you know me? I brought you to life.

SNOW GIRL #2: I'm hungry!

SNOW GIRL #1: So am I!

SNOW BOY hungrily bites off some of BEAR's fur, then spits it out.

SNOW BOY: You're not candy!

BEAR rubs the tender spot where SNOW BOY bit him. Suddenly a long, furry ear pokes up out of the snow.

CAP'N PRICE: (To BEAR.) Is that one of yours? (BEAR feels for his own two ears, then shakes his head.) Then whose is it?

BEAR: Maybe it belongs to a cat.

CAP'N PRICE: The ear's too skinny.

SNOW GIRL #1: A bird?

WOMAN: A bird? Where are its feathers?

SNOW GIRL #1: What do I know? (Points at BEAR.) I thought he was candy.

SNOW BOY: Maybe it's a weed!

SNOW GIRL #1: A furry weed?

SNOW BOY: (Shrugs, pointing at CAP'N PRICE.) I thought he was soda pop.

A second long ear appears next to the first.

WOMAN: A bunny rabbit!

A cute head to which the ears are attached pops up a moment later . . . but the creature has no long teeth.

CAP'N PRICE: Hmm . . . no long teeth.

The bunny-like creature begins to bounce. It bounces higher and higher each time. With each successive leap, more and more of a handwritten yellow sign on its chest is revealed. The sign reads "DOG."

BEAR: *(Reading sign.)* Do dogs do that?

WOMAN: Certainly not! If that's a dog, then I'm an - -

BEAR: Right, you're an elephant. We got it. *(On its next bounce, a pouch on the creature's belly peeks into view.)* It's a kangaroo!

Nods of agreement all around. The KANGAROO'S final bounce carries it all the way out of its hole in the snow . . . and into the arms of the surprised WOMAN. They both tumble to the ground, of course.

KANGAROO: Mommy!

The WOMAN struggles out from under the KANGAROO and backs away.

WOMAN: I'm not good with animals. Besides, you're the mommy - - a mommy kangaroo.

KANGAROO: I'm neither a mommy nor a kangaroo!

SNOW BOY: Then what's with the pouch?

KANGAROO: That's a . . . a satchel!

SNOW GIRL #2: And the big feet?

KANGAROO: I am specially-abled, so please mind your comments.

BEAR: You can call it a "satchel" if you want, but it's still in your tummy and still meant for carrying baby kangaroos.

KANGAROO: I'm not a - -

WOMAN: And the only animal that's "specially-able" to jump like that is a kangaroo!

KANGAROO: *(Starts to cry.)* Please call me something else.

CAP'N PRICE: Your sign says "Dog." How about that?

KANGAROO: I prefer "Slim" or "Toothpick."

WOMAN: But you're anything but!

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The KANGAROO cries harder.

BEAR: There, there. She didn't mean it.

WOMAN: Of course I did. If that creature is "skinny" then I'm - -

BEAR: About to be eaten alive!

WOMAN: *(To KANGAROO.)* Accept who you are. I'm made of snow. That means I'm going to melt soon.

Alarmed, the SNOW CHILDREN crowd around her.

SNOW GIRL #1: But we're made of snow, too!

SNOW BOY: Does that mean we're not going to live forever?

WOMAN: *(Nods sadly.)* I'm sorry I brought you into a world you would have to leave so soon.

BEAR: *You brought??*

SNOW BOY: *(Shrugs.)* It's okay. So far I've had a great time!

SNOW GIRL #1: Yeah. It's not like we're seeing famine and greed and everything.

SNOW GIRL #2: And we've learned about dogs and cats and bunny rabbits and kangaroos and bears and all sorts of ridiculous creatures and we have this wonderful sky full of brightly-colored stars.

BEAR: Ridiculous creatures?

Laughing, SNOW GIRL #2 dashes out of BEAR'S clutches, leading him on a merry chase. The other two SNOW CHILDREN join in, and soon everyone but the WOMAN is running, leaping, and laughing.

SNOW GIRL #2 nearly trips over a wide flat something buried in the snow downstage center. She uncovers it enough to glimpse a hand-lettered yellow sign that reads "YOUNGEST BOY."

SNOW GIRL #2: Look! It says "Youngest Boy."

Everyone gathers around the box as BEAR and CAP'N PRICE lift off the cover and pull out its contents one by one: several large, flat cloth sacks with a different person or animal painted on each - - a tiger, a sea lion, and an elephant. Except for their size, they resemble simple hand puppets for children that could be made out of paper bags, pillowcases, or even socks. Without hesitation, BEAR hands the elephant tapestry to the WOMAN.

BEAR: An elephant! Now you're all set.

The WOMAN shoves the tapestry back at him, insulted. CAP'N PRICE pulls out a handbill and holds it up.

CAP'N PRICE: *(Reads.)* "Directions for Enjoying Your New Circus Hand Puppets."

BEAR: Whose hands are that big?

SNOW GIRL #1: Yours, almost.

BEAR smiles at her, complimented. The KANGAROO and the SNOW CHILDREN drape the gigantic hand puppets over snowdrifts in order to admire them better. BEAR surveys the elephant puppet critically.

BEAR: It's too thin.

KANGAROO: It's too flat.

BEAR: You're right.

BEAR picks up the elephant hand puppet and begins blowing air into it.

As the ELEPHANT fills with air, it comes to life. (This can be accomplished by having an actor enter it from a hidden place on the stage or through a trap door, if available.) The ELEPHANT starts swinging its trunk to and fro, much to BEAR'S annoyance, and then begins picking snow up in its trunk and spitting it at whomever is nearby.

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He picks up the fabric bag with the elephant's picture - - really, two pieces of painted cloth sown together at the edges - - and begins blowing air into it.

As the ELEPHANT fills with air, it comes to life. It starts swinging its trunk to and fro, much to BEAR'S annoyance, and then begins picking snow up in its trunk and spitting it at whoever is nearby. (This also can be accomplished by having an actor enter the puppet from under or behind scenery or through a trap door.)

BEAR: If you don't cut that out, no more air!

ELEPHANT: *(Laughing playfully.)* I'm an elephant! I'm taking a dust bath! With snow!

BEAR: You don't have to give me one!

He resumes blowing up the puppet. The KANGAROO and the SNOW CHILDREN inflate the TIGER puppet, which boxes teasingly with the SNOW BOY.

The ELEPHANT puppet, who is sagging because it has leaked a lot of air by this point, struggles valiantly to the top of the cottage-shaped mound.

ELEPHANT: I'm running out of air!

BEAR: Come down and we'll give you some more.

ELEPHANT: I must find my own! My own breath, my own voice, my own wind!

WOMAN: Don't worry, you have plenty of wind already.

By now the ELEPHANT sags like an old blanket. So does the TIGER. Soon they are mere pieces of cloth once more. (This can be accomplished by having the actors inside the puppets crawl out of them and hide as the puppets "deflate".)

SNOW GIRL #1: They're all dying!

KANGAROO: *(To CAP'N PRICE.)* Does your rifle have a bayonet?

CAP'N PRICE: Yes. Why?

WOMAN: Oh no, don't you kill yourself now!

KANGAROO: *(To CAP'N PRICE; ignoring the WOMAN.)* If you please. *(Hesitantly, he offers her his weapon. KANGAROO takes it and - - before anyone can stop her - - she thrusts it into one of her seams. Everyone screams - - everyone, that is, except KANGAROO.)* What's the matter?

SNOW BOY: Didn't that hurt?

KANGAROO: No. I'm stuffed with stuffing, after all.

BEAR: Like a turkey?

KANGAROO: No, like a pillow.

Puffy white stuffing pokes out of the opened seam. KANGAROO pulls a few gobs out, and the two SNOW GIRLS stuff it deep inside the TIGER, filling out his paws. Immediately, the paws leap up and began flapping wildly . . . but the motion knocks the stuffing back out of the animal and it drops, motionless again. (This again can be accomplished by having an actor reach inside and animate the puppet from a hidden place.)

BEAR: Maybe you should start with his head.

The SNOW GIRLS fill the TIGER'S head all full of stuffing. It leaps up happily. Encouraged, KANGAROO gives more and more of her stuffing to the three SNOW CHILDREN, who continue to fill the TIGER.

In moments, the TIGER is bounding all over the place. KANGAROO sags slightly but is overjoyed.

TIGER: I can do anything!

BEAR: Within reason.

The TIGER ignores him and races to the roof of the cottage mound, laughing all the way. He races toward the edge . . .

ALL BUT THE TIGER: Watch out!

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Before the TIGER can jump off the roof BEAR sits on him, pinning him down.

TIGER: You're squishing me!

BEAR: Do you promise not to do anything stupid?

TIGER: What do you expect? My head's full of stuffing.

WOMAN: Why not a knot?

BEAR: What do you mean?

The WOMAN ties a knot in the open end of the TIGER, trapping the stuffing inside.

CAP'N PRICE: Ingenious!

KANGAROO: Smart, too!

WOMAN: Thank you, thank you. *(Glares at the others.)* Well?

SNOW BOY: I thought it was pretty cool.

SNOW GIRL #1: Yes, very cool.

SNOW GIRL #2: *(Nodding.)* Cool. Yes.

WOMAN: Thank you. I'm touched.

TIGER: *(To KANGAROO.)* Thank you.

KANGAROO: Thank me? For what?

TIGER: The woman gave me a way to stay alive but you gave me life.

KANGAROO turns away, unable to look at the TIGER.

BEAR: Why won't you look at him?

KANGAROO: I don't want to be a mother.

SNOW GIRL #1: Babies are wonderful! Not that I remember that directly, never having been one, but I hear they're wonderful!

SNOW BOY: Me, too.

KANGAROO: Human babies, maybe. But baby kangaroos are heavy, noisy, hungry little monsters who will probably spit up all over me and ruin my nice velvety fur. Look at this pouch - - uh, satchel! Do you think this could hold anything bigger than a hamster?

TIGER: If you hate babies, why did you give me life?

KANGAROO: I didn't. I gave you stuffing.

SNOW GIRL #1: Hey Toothpick, do you have any more stuffing we could use to fill this one?

She holds up the CLOWN puppet.

KANGAROO: I suppose.

She begins pulling more of her stuffing out. BEAR stops her.

BEAR: I'm not sure you can spare any more of that.

KANGAROO: I could always fill myself with snow. (*Motions toward the SNOW PEOPLE.*) It works for them.

SNOW GIRL #1: No, Slim!

SNOW BOY: If you're full of snow, you'll melt!

SNOW GIRL #2: Like we will!

WOMAN: (*To all but KANGAROO.*) Why are you bothering? Let her do what she wants. (*To KANGAROO.*) Go ahead, give away all your stuffing. Then you'll leave everyone you gave life to without a mother.

KANGAROO: They'd have you.

WOMAN: I'm melting, too. I probably won't be around long enough to mother a snowflake.

SNOW GIRL #2: We need somebody!

KANGAROO points at CAP'N PRICE.

KANGAROO: What about him?

SNOW BOY: A dad in the service? I don't want to be a military brat!

BEAR: You're halfway there already.

KANGAROO: (*To SNOW CHILDREN, pointing at BEAR.*) How about him? He gives great hugs.

SNOW GIRL #1: I don't know about the inter-species thing. (*To BEAR.*) No offense.

CAP'N PRICE: (*To KANGAROO.*) You say you don't want to be a mother . . .

KANGAROO: That's right.

CAP'N PRICE: (*Points at TIGER.*) . . . but you gave him life.

KANGAROO: Sort of, but not really.

BEAR: He wasn't alive, and now he is, and you're the reason. Don't be difficult.

CAP'N PRICE: I say we all chip in. Everyone takes care of everyone.

WOMAN: (*Re: TIGER.*) Even the hand puppet?

BEAR: He's a little random, but he means mean well.

SNOW GIRL #1: (*To SNOW BOY.*) I guess I could help take care of you . . . a little bit.

SNOW BOY: (*To TIGER.*) I could help take care of you as long as . . . (*Pulls SNOW GIRL #2 over.*) . . . she helps!

SNOW GIRL #2: Hey!

TIGER: I can't take care of anyone. I'm too "random." Besides . . . my companions are dead.

BEAR: Not "dead," exactly. They're simply without life.

TIGER: (*Shrugs.*) Sounds like "dead" to me.

SNOW GIRL #2: This might work okay, at least until we melt. (*To WOMAN.*) When are we going to melt?

WOMAN: (*Shrugs.*) Soon, I suppose.

SNOW GIRL #1: (*Politely.*) Will it take long?

WOMAN: I don't know. I've never melted before.

SNOW GIRL #1: (*Tugging BEAR'S arm.*) Mr. Bear, could you roll over me and squish me out flat so I melt faster please?

BEAR: Don't be in such a hurry. You haven't melted yet.

SNOW GIRL #1: Okay.

SNOW GIRL #2: Wait a minute!

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