

DEATH OF A SNOWMAN

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Daniel Guyton

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SYNOPSIS: A young girl and her snowman discuss the afterlife in this existential winter drama.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(1 MAN, 1 WOMAN)

CHARLOTTE (f)..... 11 year old girl.

SNOWMAN (m).....Snowman.

AUTHOR NOTES

Death of a Snowman premiered at the Phoenix Theatre (Melanie Price, President) as part of their *A Very Phoenix Xmas 4: Our Stockings are Stuffed! Festival* in November, 2009. The cast was as follows:

CHARLOTTE..... Amanda Lynn Meyer
SNOWMAN Michael Shelton*

Director Bryan Fonseca
Costumes..... Karen Witting
Stage MangerBranden Galvin
Set Design Bryan Fonseca, Christopher Hansen and Lori Raffel

* Mr. Shelton appeared courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

AT RISE:

Lights up on SNOWMAN, center stage, asleep. CHARLOTTE enters. She is 11 years old.

CHARLOTTE: Hello? Mr. Snowman?

SNOWMAN: *(Waking up.)* Hmm, yes? Oh hello, child.

CHARLOTTE: Oh good, I thought you'd gone away.

SNOWMAN: *(Dry, but polite.)* No, I have no legs, so I'm hardly mobile now, am I?

CHARLOTTE: Well, I... My daddy said you're going away soon...

SNOWMAN: *(Slightly annoyed by the suggestion.)* Hmm, yes. Your daddy's quite the prophet then, isn't he?

CHARLOTTE: Excuse me?

SNOWMAN: The prophet, it's...nevermind. What can I do for you, my dear girl?

CHARLOTTE: *(Shyly, sitting down.)* Nothin'...I just wanna talk.

SNOWMAN: Oh. Well, it's...difficult to talk with this corn-cob pipe in my mouth. Hold on... *(With difficulty, he moves his arm and removes the pipe.)* There you go. Now, what shall we talk about?

CHARLOTTE: The afterlife? *(Pause.)*

SNOWMAN: The... Yes, well... A heady subject, that. Where should we begin?

CHARLOTTE: I dunno. I just have questions.

SNOWMAN: Such as?

CHARLOTTE: Such as you, for instance. Where will you go when you die?

SNOWMAN: *(After some thought.)* Well, I'll...become a pool of water, I suppose. And eventually nourishment for grass and weeds. *(Small pause.)* My eyes...shall be cast into the furnace to keep your family warm. And my nose...a fodder for the horses.

CHARLOTTE: Do you think you'll go to heaven?

SNOWMAN: I hope so. I wouldn't stand a chance in hell.

CHARLOTTE: And me? Where will I go when I die? Will I become a pool of water, also?

SNOWMAN: No, your death will be a far more complex thing.

CHARLOTTE: Why so?

SNOWMAN: Well, your nose is not made of carrot, for one. (*She smiles sadly and sits down next to him.*)

CHARLOTTE: Will you miss me when I die?

SNOWMAN: If I should live so long.

CHARLOTTE: I missed my mommy terribly when she died. (*Pause.*)

SNOWMAN: Yes, I imagine you would.

CHARLOTTE: Do you think you'll die before me?

SNOWMAN: Yes, I imagine I will. What time of year is it?

CHARLOTTE: It's winter.

SNOWMAN: It's... Yes, I know that, you silly girl. I mean, what month?

CHARLOTTE: It's almost Christmas.

SNOWMAN: Ah. Then I shall live another month or two. Perhaps. (*Small pause.*) Depending on the weather.

CHARLOTTE: (*Standing.*) Why do people die?

SNOWMAN: (*Shrugging.*) Why do people live? Why does snow fall on the ground? Why do dogs always pee on my chest whenever they walk by? Life is full of questions, child. Most of which will never have an answer.

CHARLOTTE: Do you believe in heaven?

SNOWMAN: I believe we all have our places in the universe. Our *raison d'être*, our reasons for being. And when our earthly bodies pass on into the ether, we...pass on our purposes to others. For instance, you created a snowman last year, didn't you? What was his name?

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Snowman.

SNOWMAN: Mr... Yes, you're very inventive, aren't you? Well, when you created Mr. Snowman Senior, you...

CHARLOTTE: No, no, he was Mr. Snowman Junior. Mr. Snowman Senior was the year before. You're Mr...

SNOWMAN: Snowman the Third. Yes, thank you. I come from a long line of Mr. Snowmen. (*Sarcastically.*) Quite the noble lineage. Well, as I was saying, when you created my progenitor, Mr. Snowman the Second, you created him with purpose; to bring joy to yourself and to other children everywhere. And as he was my father and my namesake, I can only assume he was successful. But then he died, and he melted into the soiled, solid earth below. And from his death came new life and new purpose. His liquid soul assuaged the thirst of many a thankful shrubbery. And eventually...his essence was born again. (*He points to himself.*) And as you created me from the icy memories of my father, so too was I born with a similar purpose; to bring delight to you and to other children everywhere.

CHARLOTTE: And what is my purpose?

SNOWMAN: To tell me I'm delightful. To be delighted. To find joy in my existence, child, along with the existence of all Mr. Snowmen, great and small. Do I believe in heaven? Well... Not for snowmen, possibly. Heaven has enough delights without the need of frigid old popsicles like myself. But do I believe my purpose and my essence will continue on throughout the ages? For centuries to come? Most undoubtedly, I do. For, so long as little girls like you continue to create me, along with countless other Mr. Snowmen after me, I know my essence will go on. Thus, the circle of life continues.

CHARLOTTE: But what about global warming? (*Pause.*)

SNOWMAN: Global... What now?

CHARLOTTE: Warming. My daddy said the earth is getting hotter.

SNOWMAN: Your... Did he now?

CHARLOTTE: Yes. And he said that you'll be gone in days, never to return again.

SNOWMAN: He said that?

CHARLOTTE: He said we'll be lucky if you're alive by New Year's.

SNOWMAN: By New...! Well, tell your daddy he can kiss my snowballs.

CHARLOTTE: Really?

SNOWMAN: Yes, you... No, no. Little girls should not repeat such things...

CHARLOTTE: I shouldn't?

SNOWMAN: No, you... By New Year's, eh? Tell him...ask him where he gets his facts.

CHARLOTTE: The Weather Channel.

SNOWMAN: The Weather...? Yes, well. Does this Weather Channel say that the earth will continue warming? Or only now because of the impending summer?

CHARLOTTE: It will continue, I think.

SNOWMAN: Oh. Good Lord. This bodes not well for my descendants.

CHARLOTTE: Are you worried?

SNOWMAN: Worried? I...I always thought I'd be a father. And perhaps someday a grandfather.

CHARLOTTE: My daddy says he'll be a grandfather too, one day. And then he'll sit back and laugh at me when my children misbehave the way I sometimes do.

SNOWMAN: He said that, did he?

CHARLOTTE: Yes. And my momma always wanted to be a grandma too, one day. We used to talk about me being a mommy, and her taking care of my little ones. I'd bring my dollies to her in bed. Their names were Jan and Misty. She'd lay in bed and hug me and say she wanted to be a grandmother so bad. But she didn't make it. (*CHARLOTTE starts to cry.*) She didn't make it. (*SNOWMAN pats her on the head. She hugs him.*)

SNOWMAN: Come, come now, child. Don't despair. For you're young. And vibrant. And your mother would have wanted you to play.

CHARLOTTE: She would?

SNOWMAN: Yes. And besides, you're...making me melt. (*CHARLOTTE lets go of him. He pats himself dry.*)

CHARLOTTE: Oh. I'm sorry.

SNOWMAN: No, that's all right, dear. That's...I think I'm having hot flashes.

CHARLOTTE: (*Jumping up.*) Would you like some iced tea?

SNOWMAN: Oh, no. Just some...ice would be plenty. (*CHARLOTTE runs into the house.*) Global warming, indeed. Perhaps I am designed for hell, after all... (*CHARLOTTE runs outside with a cup of ice.*) Thank you, child. (*He holds a piece of ice to his forehead, and then pours the rest on the ground around his waist.*) Ahhhh...

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Snowman?

SNOWMAN: Yes?

CHARLOTTE: Would you...like to go in my freezer?

SNOWMAN: Your freezer? Would I fit?

CHARLOTTE: Well, not in one piece...

SNOWMAN: Oh! Good Heavens, child! (*He touches his neck.*) I think I'll take my chances on the ground. Thank you very much.

CHARLOTTE: But you're gonna die, Mr. Snowman! I don't want you to die!

SNOWMAN: Well, nor do I, child! But such things, they...they are inevitable, I'm afraid.

CHARLOTTE: Maybe daddy can buy you a giant cooler.

SNOWMAN: Maybe.

CHARLOTTE: Or maybe I can bring you ice every day.

SNOWMAN: Perhaps. Yes. Perhaps. That would be an idea.

CHARLOTTE: Will there be enough ice in July? Oh no! How can there be enough ice in July?

SNOWMAN: Will there be enough ice in February, if this...global warming thing is true?

CHARLOTTE: I don't know. I don't know. What can I do?

SNOWMAN: Just be happy... And enjoy the time you have with me. Much as you enjoyed the time you had with your mother. Would you like to bring out Jan and Misty and we can play dollies together?

CHARLOTTE: No. I... We buried them in momma's coffin. So she wouldn't get lonely in the dark. I feel so helpless.

SNOWMAN: You shouldn't. You have legs, child, which is more than me. You have life. You should revel in the mysteries of the universe. Explore the world. Don't focus so much on the sadness, instead focus on the wonders. Allow your curiosity to be your strength, your thirst for knowledge to guide you through the troubled times. I...I imagine even global warming will have some benefits. There'll be plenty of rivers and lakes for you to play in. No more shoveling your sidewalk. And...and instead of building Mr. Snowmen in the future, you'll...you'll build Mr. Mudmen. And the mudmen will not melt as easily as I. They will last. For years to come, if you so desire. So take heart, my precious little girl, for though the future may seem bleak, your essence will continue on, as will mine, and as will all the living creatures on this earth.

CHARLOTTE: Did my momma have an essence?

SNOWMAN: Oh yes.

CHARLOTTE: And has it...continued on?

SNOWMAN: You're here, aren't you? *(Pause. She nods.)*

CHARLOTTE: Mr. Snowman, if you go to Heaven before me, will you tell my momma I said hi?

SNOWMAN: *(SNOWMAN smiles.)* Of course. What does she look like?

CHARLOTTE: She's beautiful.

SNOWMAN: *(SNOWMAN smiles.)* I imagine everyone in Heaven is beautiful. *(Pause.)*

CHARLOTTE: Do you mind if I go play?

SNOWMAN: *(SNOWMAN smiles.)* No. No, I don't mind a bit.
(CHARLOTTE kisses him on the cheek, and then runs off to play. SNOWMAN smiles and closes his eyes for a nap.)

BLACKOUT.

THE END