

POPCORN FALLS

Synopsis: The sleepy town of Popcorn Falls is forced into bankruptcy when a neighboring town threatens to turn them into a sewage treatment plant. Their only hope – open a theater! Two actors play over twenty roles in a world of farce, love, and desperation, proving once and for all that art can save the world.

Actor 1 -- plays multiple characters that are male, any ethnicity. Mid-30s to early 50s. Mostly plays Mr. Trundle, the new mayor of Popcorn Falls. Also plays Hans, a German foreign exchange student and Mr. Upmall, an octogenarian who has always dreamed of performing onstage.

Actor 2 -- plays multiple characters, any ethnicity. Mid-30s to early 50s. Mostly plays Joe, the town custodial engineer. Also plays many characters, including Austin, the not-very-bright-but-eager-to-please sheriff, Ms. Parker, the "very theatrical" town librarian, Mrs. Stepp, the oversexed, hardboiled middle school teacher who is always out on the prowl, Floyd, the owner of the local lumberyard who lost half his arm in a freak accident, and Becky, a very sweet lost soul, who was once in love with Joe.

ACTOR 1 MONOLOGUE

You're forgetting something very important, Mr. Doyle. The people of Popcorn Falls will soon be citizens of Cattaraugus and have the right to vote for all public offices. If you don't let them put on a play, you take away the one chance they have of saving themselves...they will hate you. On the other hand, if you give us time...allow *me* to be the failure, it's me they will hate. You can sue me, throw me in jail for misappropriation of funds. And you, Mr. Doyle, you will become their hero. Don't underestimate the people of Popcorn Falls, Mr. Doyle. They are fighters. Like George Washington. Now if you will please sign the contract, I have play practice!

ACTOR 2 MONOLOGUE: Playing Becky – a very sweet, lost soul. Just moved to Popcorn Falls. Was once in love with Joe.

There was this time...I must have been fourteen. We were on a field trip and they stuck us all in this auditorium to watch *Romiette and Julio*. A rock version of *Romeo and Juliet*. It was boring and annoying, and so loud we couldn't understand what anyone was saying. And to top it all off, this girl I despised, Karen Collier, was sitting behind me kicking my chair, trying to annoy me. Suddenly, in the middle of the show, the entire theater goes black. So they make everyone go outside and wait at the back of the school on these hills...I'm not sure why I feel I need to tell you every tiny detail. So after about fifteen minutes, one of the actors starts singing. Pretty soon all the actors are singing. They perform the entire show for us. No sets. No costumes. And by the end of it, I look over, and Karen Collier is smiling at me. And on the bus ride back, she sits next to me and we talk the whole ride home about the play. How cute the guy was playing Julio. How sad it was at the end when they died. A girl who hadn't spoken to me since kindergarten. And I remember thinking to myself...wouldn't I be the luckiest person in the world if I could be a part of something that brought people together like this? To share an experience that has never happened before and will never happen again?

ACTOR 2: Playing Joe – A nervous janitor whose wife is pregnant with their third set of twins.

ACTOR 2 MONOLOGUE

(on the phone) It's Trudy. What's the matter, honey, what happened, you and the boys okay? They have what? All four of them? That's disgusting! (covering the phone) You are so lucky you don't have kids. (Into phone) I fed 'em the leftover shrimp quesadilla from Chi Chi's like you told me. I have no idea. I ate the same thing and I don't have dia... (stomach growls) Oh. I didn't get dia... (stomach continues to growl) Oh! Oh my... Honey, I-I-I'll be home in a minute. (hangs up the phone) Sorry Mr. Trundle! I gotta go! Don't have kids, Mr. Trundle! And don't eat at Chi Chi's! Ahhh...!

ACTOR 2: Playing Mrs. Stepp – Hard-boiled, chain-smoking, no-nonsense middle school teacher who is on the prowl. Secretly still has a thing for Floyd. Always looks like she's holding a cigarette.

ACTOR 2 MONOLOGUE

Mrs. Stepp. My maiden name was Guided. Of the East Nantucket Guideds! I understand what you're saying. You want to save this town by opening a theater and you need me to build costumes, print the posters, design the wigs, the makeup... well, pass! I've moved on and so should you. Now, as I have a class that starts in five minutes, I would appreciate it if you'd make like a banana – and vamoose! The next time you have anything to ask me... you'll see I can be very agreeable when asked nicely. And by nicely, I mean with a glass of Chateauneuf-du-schlitz and a canister of Pringles. My only hope is that Floyd doesn't find out about our little manage a deux. He can be a very –jealous—man. Voulez-vous faire le Bing Bong avec moi, ce soir? I used to teach ninth grade French

SCENE

CHARACTERS

ACTOR 2 -- MR. DOYLE – Head of the Cattaraugus County Budget Planning Committee. Determined. A corrupt bully who will stop at nothing to conquer Popcorn Falls and turn it into a sewage plant.

ACTOR 1 -- MISS BROWN – Mr. Doyle's very unenthusiastic secretary. Would rather be doing anything else.

ACTOR 2 -- AUSTIN – The not very bright but eager to please sheriff of Popcorn Falls. Would like everyone to think he's smarter and more important than he actually is. Wants desperately to make his mother proud and become the next chief of police. Could speak with a bit of a southern accent.

SCENE #1

MISS BROWN -- 1

Beep. Mr. Doyle, your three o'clock is here.

MR. DOYLE -- 2

Beep. Thank you, Miss Brown. Send the boy in.

AUSTIN – 2

You called me, sir?

MR. DOYLE – 2

Let me get straight to the point. It's fallen on my shoulders to make a decision that could affect the future of Popcorn Falls forever...who will be the next chief of police?

AUSTIN – 2

That is amazing sir, that is exactly what I wanted to talk to you about.

MISS BROWN – 1

Beep! Mr. Doyle, don't forget your mani/pedi in thirty minutes.

MR. DOYLE 2

Beep! Goodie. (to Austin) I need to find someone who isn't afraid to take responsibility. Someone strong enough to be head of security while my plant is being build. Someone who knows this town like the back of their hand!

AUSTIN – 2

Me! Me! Pick me!

MISS BROWN 1

Beep! Mr. Doyle, your wife called. You need to pick up Mr. Doyle Jr. from Pee-Wee Karate.

MR. DOYLE – 2

Beep! Arigato gozaimasu. (to Austin) I have a plan and I need someone to ehlp me. We're going to give the people of Popcorn exactdly what they want – water. And then I'm going to give you what you want. One day, all of this will be yours...Police Chief Austin.

AUSTIN – 2

Hot Diggity Dog!

SCENE #2

ACTOR 1 – Hans – Originally from Germany, Hans came to Popcorn Falls as a foreign exchange student and stayed. He now runs the Popcorn Falls Funeral Home and is obsessed with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies. He speaks with a heavy German accent, wears a monocle, and is very excited to be part of the new acting troupe.

HANS

Becky! You're working in Mrs. Stepp's dress shop now!

BECKY

Beats slinging burgers and pulling beers. Plus it gives me nights off for my acting classes over in Peepaw.

HANS

Vow! Business is really booming, ja?! Do you make suits? I need to place an order for Mr. Upall.

BECKY

Oh, no, did he...the poor dear.

HANS

Poor, nussing! He's getting married at ninety-three. When Ms. Parker proposed, he keeled right over...

HANS AND BECKY

Just like one of those YouTube goats!

BECKY

Let's talk pattern How about something patriotic?

HANS

Ooh, goose steps!

BECKY

Goosebumps?

HANS

Zat's the vun.

BECKY

I'll get started on this right away.