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*Dramatic Publishing*

**PAPER**  
**OR**  
**PLASTIC:**  
**THE ICE STORM**



**COMEDY BY**  
**WERNER TRIESCHMANN**

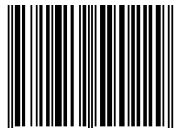
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# PAPER OR PLASTIC: THE ICE STORM

**Comedy. By Werner Trieschmann. Cast:** 2m., 2 to 5w., 9 to 14 either gender. The last time we saw Sarah, she was the young hero of *Paper or Plastic?*. There, Sarah was trying her best as a new employee at Puritan Foods, a grocery store with more than a cart full of crazy customers and fellow employees. In *Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm*, Sarah is back, but this time she is hastily given—maybe tricked into?—the job of assistant manager. Sarah is happy about the new promotion until she realizes that with great power comes even more grocery store insanity. Did we mention there's an ice storm coming?! When the assistant manager suddenly leaves ahead of the bad weather, Sarah is left to deal with stubborn customers who just want to stand at a register and read a magazine. Then there are unruly kids running around the store throwing cereal and climbing on top of shelves. That's nothing compared to the strike organized by the baggers and a mysterious figure known as "El Diablo." Sarah tries to stay awake throughout the ordeal—Puritan Foods is open 24/7 of course—while also trying to smooth over the toughest obstacle of all, the cane-wielding head of Skybell Ice Cream. Will the striking baggers get a raise or just a bunch of bananas? Will there be anything left on the shelves? Will Sarah survive? The answers and laughs are in the forecast of *Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm*. *Simple set. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: PL9.*

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# **Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm**

By

WERNER TRIESCHMANN



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# Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm

## CHARACTERS

*(Up to 2m., 2 to 5w., 9 to 14 either gender.)*

SARAH (w): the girl who wants to be a good assistant manager

CARL (m or either): the assistant manager

IN-STORE ANNOUNCER (either)

REGINA (w or either): the smart-aleck

STRESSED-OUT MOTHER (w)

KENNY (m or either)

MILK SHOPPER (either)

BREAD SHOPPER (either)

LITTLE SAM (either)

CONNIE (w or either)

FELICIA (w or either)

SHOPPER #1 (either)

SHOPPER #2 (either)

SHOPPER #3 (either)

SHOPPER #4 (either)

SHOPPER #5 (either)

MRS. BELL (w or either)

PLACE: The Puritan Foods grocery store.

TIME: A deceptively mild winter day.

SETTING: Two grocery store checkout counters and other locations in and around Puritan Foods.

## Paper or Plastic: The Ice Storm

*(Lights up on CARL, the assistant manager, standing in an area defined by light. He is looking at his phone and occasionally looks around to see if anyone is nearby.)*

*After a few seconds, SARAH, wearing a standard red Puritan Foods smock, walks in slowly, trying to sneak up on CARL. CARL quickly turns and looks in the direction of SARAH, who ducks down or ducks out of the way. Satisfied that no one is coming, CARL goes back to his phone.)*

SARAH. Hey, Carl.

CARL *(still staring at his phone)*. How did you find me?

SARAH. It wasn't easy. That "Hazardous Materials Keep Out" sign on the door down here was a little intimidating. But I found the ladder when I opened the trap door and climbed down. Is this the sewer?

CARL. No, the sewer is that way. This is the assistant manager's lounge. You are a clerk and you aren't allowed in here.

SARAH. But I need to see you.

CARL. Yeah ... no you don't.

SARAH. It's my six-month performance review. I've been at Puritan Foods for a little more than six months, which is the longest I've held a job, by the way. That's because it's my first job.

CARL. Yeah great. Set up an appointment on my calendar and we'll get that done.

SARAH. I set up an appointment two months ago. It took me that long to find you.



CARL (*sighing*). All right.

SARAH. Should I start? OK. I feel I've really grown as a person here in my time at Puritan Foods. At first I thought a job at a grocery store would be really, well, lame. It was tough at first dealing with the customers when they complain, especially since I couldn't send the tough ones to you.

CARL. That's right.

SARAH. However, you haven't yelled at me about anything for the last three months and you haven't made me mop out the freezer in two months.

CARL (*still looking at his phone*). Yeah that's great, Betty.

SARAH. Sarah.

CARL. Yeah you passed your six-month review. We're quite proud of your progress at Puritan Foods blah blah blah yeah yeah.

SARAH. I passed? Really? Really? That's so awesome. I've been working very hard. Wait till I tell my mother.

CARL. Yeah very exciting ...

SARAH. So what does this mean? Oh. Will I get a raise?

CARL (*stops staring at his phone and now looks at SARAH*). I forgot. For passing your six-month review, Puritan Foods awards you one free banana.

(*CARL hands SARAH a banana.*)

SARAH. That's it?

CARL (*back to staring at his phone*). Congratulations.

SARAH. What about a promotion? I believe I could be a great manager.

CARL. Manager? Listen, Veronica—

SARAH. Sarah.

CARL. If anybody is going to be manager, it's me. I'm the one doing all the hard work.

*(Pause.)*

SARAH. You mean like staring at your phone down here in the sewer?

CARL. This is the assistant manager's—

*(An alarm goes off.)*

CARL *(looking at his phone and shaking his head)*. Oh no. Oh no. Oh NO.

SARAH. What's the matter?

CARL. All right Katniss, you want to be an assistant manager?

SARAH. Yes I do and it's Sarah and I think I am qualified for—

CARL. Yeah OK great, you got it for two weeks starting right now.

SARAH. Right now?

CARL. I'm taking a two week vacation.

SARAH. Oh thank you, Carl. Thank you. I promise I am going to do the best job.

CARL. Yeah great. You have the weekend shift and you will have to work nights.

SARAH. I'm still in high school you know ... but I can do that. Whatever I need to do. Of course.

*(CARL hands SARAH a clipboard.)*

CARL. Here is the schedule for the clerks and the baggers and everybody else. You must not lose this. Do you understand? Take it with you in the bathroom.

SARAH. Assistant manager. I have goosebumps.

CARL. Some of the baggers have complained about the schedule and say they are going to strike. The bagger they call El Diablo—

SARAH. El Diablo? Who is that?

CARL. I don't know. El Diablo says if we don't meet their demands that they're going to do something drastic. You have to figure that out.

SARAH. How do I do—

CARL. Very important. You need to set up the display for the Fourth of July.

SARAH. It's early March.

CARL. I know, I should have done it in February. What else?

*(CARL looks at his phone.)*

CARL *(cont'd)*. Oh no.

SARAH. What?

CARL. The Skybell Ice Cream sample giveaway is this weekend. Listen very carefully, Sonya, you must take care of Skybell Ice Cream. If you do nothing else, do not upset the representative from Skybell Ice Cream. Tell me that's clear.

SARAH. Skybell Ice Cream. Got it. And my name is Sarah, the assistant manager.

CARL. Yeah God help you.

*(CARL walks toward some light or perhaps to the end of the stage.)*

SARAH. Wait! Carl, are you jumping out of the sewer?

CARL. It's the fastest way out. By the way, there's one more thing I forgot to mention.

SARAH. What?

CARL. The alarm is tied to a weather app on my phone.  
There's an ice storm coming. Bye, Annie!

*(CARL jumps.)*

SARAH. It's Sarah. Sarah! Ice storm?

*(Lights change.)*

IN-STORE ANNOUNCER. Attention Puritan Food shoppers, attention. The National Weather Service forecast for our area calls for a 20 percent chance of frozen precipitation. Let me repeat. A 20 percent chance. There's no reason to panic. If you are experiencing anxiety about the weather conditions, please be aware that the Puritan Foods offers many fine over-the-counter sedatives in our pharmacy. That's just one way your friends at Puritan Foods are keeping our customers from completely going crackers. By the way, there's a great sale going on in the cracker aisle! Check it out and thank you for shopping at Puritan Foods.

*(Lights come up on two Puritan Food counters. One counter has a line of customers: SHOPPER #1, SHOPPER #2, SHOPPER #3 and more if desired. They are being checked out by REGINA. Over at the other register, the STRESSED-OUT MOTHER is reading a magazine and is completely content.)*

*SARAH walks in and looks around.)*

SARAH. Hey Regina, guess what?

REGINA. I don't have time for your crazy games, Sarah.

SARAH. Carl just left on vacation and named me assistant manager.

REGINA. He did?

SARAH. Isn't that exciting?

REGINA. I guess I should throw a party for you and make a cake and piñata and oops looks like I am a little busy.

SARAH. Oh. Yeah, you do need some help.

REGINA. Ya think?

SARAH. That sounds like a job for the assistant manager. Where is everybody else?

REGINA. How should I know?

*(REGINA turns to SHOPPER #1. SARAH looks over the schedule.)*

REGINA. Paper or plastic?

SHOPPER #1. Don't matter t' me, little lady. Just make it fast 'cause there's an ice storm a comin'.

REGINA *(to SARAH)*. Hey, assistant manager, can you do something about this? Get me a bagger, a monkey with fast hands, somethin'?

SARAH. Sure, Regina. Where's Kenny? Little Sam?

REGINA. No idea. Why don't you get on that register over there? Help me out a little, Ms. Big Shot Assistant Manager.

SARAH. Sure, Regina, sure.

*(SARAH walks over to the register where STRESSED-OUT MOM is still happily reading her magazine. SHOPPER #2 sees what is going on and runs over to stand behind STRESSED-OUT MOM.)*

SARAH. Ma'am, are you ready to check out? Ma'am?

STRESSED-OUT MOM *(not looking up from magazine)*. I dunno. Ask your sister.

SARAH. I'll assume you found everything OK.

STRESSED-OUT MOM (*looks up from her magazine*). What are you doing?

SARAH. I'm sorry—are you ready to check out?

STRESSED-OUT MOM. No and you're going too fast.

SARAH. I know. But they've warned us about the ice storm.

STRESSED-OUT MOM (*staring at SARAH*). You. Need. To. Slow. Down.

*(STRESSED-OUT MOM goes back to reading her magazine.)*

SARAH. Ma'am?

*(STRESSED-OUT MOM doesn't answer.)*

SARAH (*cont'd*). Do you want paper or plastic?

STRESSED-OUT MOM (*looks up*). Why are you asking me so many questions?!

SARAH. I'm sorry. I just need to know—

STRESSED-OUT MOM. I don't care. What takes the most time?

SARAH. The most time?

STRESSED-OUT MOM. Just leave me alone.

SARAH. Leave you alone? Ma'am, excuse me, sorry, but I'm the assistant manager and I need to check you out. We're really quite busy today and there are—

STRESSED-OUT MOM. Busy?! Did you just say busy? To me?

SARAH. Uh, um, I—

STRESSED-OUT MOM. You have any kids? Hmm?

SARAH. I'm a junior in high school.

STRESSED-OUT MOM. Oh. Well, do you want kids when get older?

SARAH. Sure.

STRESSED-OUT MOM. No you don't. Just a friendly piece of advice from one breeder to another. You know what I did before I started reading this magazine? I was in the aisle with the bleach. You know why? Any idea?

SARAH. No.

STRESSED-OUT MOM. Because I was taking the top off different bottles of bleach and breathing them in. It was the only way to smell something clean. I have four children. Four.

SARAH. I love children.

STRESSED-OUT MOM. Really? Have you ever seen the monkey cage at the zoo? You know, the one with the screaming monkeys and the bars and the poop on the floor? That's heaven—heaven—compared to my house. There's the toddler who won't be potty trained no matter how hard you try and likes to find corners of the house to hide to do his business. Then there are third-grade twins who like to put cellphones in microwaves and jump off the side of the house and a fifth-grade know-it-all with an impossible science fair project and two dogs and a goldfish and another baby on the way. You know what happens when I brush my hair?

*(SARAH shakes her head.)*

STRESSED-OUT MOM *(cont'd)*. It falls out. My hair falls out. If you don't mind, I am going to stand right here and read this magazine and you are going to stop talking to me. Got it?

*(STRESSED-OUT MOM goes back to her magazine.)*

*KENNY, dressed in camo, runs in.)*