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# **One Stoplight Town**

By

TRACY WELLS

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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*One Stoplight Town* was originally performed virtually by The Twenty-Fifth Street Players in Shelby Township, Mich. The show premiered in November 2020.

CAST:

TOM.....	Richard Haines
BOB .....	Elijah Dibler
SALLY .....	Maddie Balog
JIM .....	Evan Shirey
CLARA .....	Marina Terenzi
MELVIN .....	Jack Sanitate
CASEY.....	Hailey Nichols
1ST KID/TEEN.....	Mikey Kieliszewski
2ND KID/TEEN .....	Daniel Perkovic
3RD KID/TEEN.....	Olivia Steele
4TH KID/TEEN.....	Sydney Townsend
GIRL/TEEN GIRL.....	Cassandra Bremer
EMMA .....	Mackenzie Ludwig
RUNAWAY .....	Jamie Greenwood
PRODIGAL SON .....	Zachary Hannish
POLICE OFFICER .....	Evan Blanchard
POLLY .....	Carly Irwin
FLASH.....	Sophia Considine
GREEN BEAN QUEEN.....	Dona Jazrawy
DRUM MAJOR.....	Maggie Howell
1ST PROTESTOR .....	Ellie St. John
2ND PROTESTOR .....	Julia Petterle
3RD PROTESTOR .....	Isabella Cole
4TH PROTESTOR .....	Emma Daleo

## PRODUCTION:

Director .....	Eric Wells
Stage Manager .....	Millie Flinders
Lighting .....	Marissa Biddle, Davio Mazzella, Matthew Schultheis
Sound .....	Brooke Belisle, Christian Hill
Video Editing .....	Julia Petterle
Promotions .....	Isabella Cole, Lily Meyers, Emma Muszynski
Wardrobe .....	Zachary Hannish, Ellie St. John
Hair/Makeup .....	Hafsa Khan, Eva Slew, Ellie St. John

Additional performances of *One Spotlight Town* appeared in various cities across the United States in the fall of 2020. These premieres included the following schools:

Pequea Valley High School in Kinzers, Pa., on Nov. 5, 2020, under the direction of Alicia Trescavage.

Estrella Foothills High School in Buckeye, Ariz., on Nov. 12, 2020, under the direction of Tricia Schultz.

Lakewood High School in Lakewood, Ohio, on Nov. 19, 2020, under the direction of Martha Fickle.

Syossett High School in Long Island, N.Y., on Nov. 20, 2020, under the direction of Gene Connor.

The Wardlaw + Hartridge School in Edison, N.J., on Nov. 20, 2020, under the direction of Becky Randazzo.

Wayland Union High School in Wayland, Mich., on Nov. 20, 2020, under the direction of Rebecca Black.



# One Stoplight Town

## CHARACTERS

**TOM/TRISH:** Town handyman/woman; an everyman/woman and often the voice of wisdom; adult.

**BOB/BARB:** Grocer; cantankerous and afraid of change; adult.

**SALLY:** Girl/Woman in love; she has a sarcastic sense of humor and a teasing relationship with Jim.

**JIM:** Boy/Man in love; knows how to dish it out and take it in his teasing relationship with Sally.

**CLARENCE/CLARA and MELVIN/MAUDE:** Older members of the community who have seen and heard it all. They provide humorous observations of town life, not unlike a certain pair of puppets often found in theatre balconies.

**CASEY\*\*:** Young adult who is fearful of crossing the street for reasons unknown; eventually is able to confront her fears and succeeds.

**KIDS (4+)\*\*:** Kids approximately 8-12 years old who have an affinity for drag racing—on bicycles, that is. They idolize the older kids in town, and it shows as they try and act more grown-up.

**GIRL\*\*:** Flag girl who starts the race.

**TEENS (4+)\*\*:** Drag-racing kids but older, ages 16-17. Now more grown-up, the teens reenact the drag race for a film class project.

**TEEN GIRL\*\*:** Flag girl who starts the race.

**YOUNG EMMETT/EMMA:** Jim and Sally's child; approximately 10 (no lines).

**EMMETT/EMMA\*\*:** Jim and Sally's child on his/her way to college.



**RUNAWAY\*\***: A teen feeling misunderstood by her small town, contemplating leaving it all behind for the big city.

**PRODIGAL SON/DAUGHTER\*\***: An adult child of the town, returning home after living in the big city for many years.

**POLICE OFFICER\*\***: Keeper of the peace.

**POLLY/PAULIE\*\***: Beloved diner owner and chef of the best burgers and malts in town.

**FLASH\*\***: New flashy restaurant owner who believes that both sprouts and fried eggs have their place on a burger—and in this town.

**GREEN BEAN QUEEN\*\***: Local beauty queen who is ready to die of embarrassment when she shows up for the parade on the wrong day.

**DRUM MAJOR\*\***: Drum major in the school band who also shows up on the wrong day, but who is ready to make a new friend.

**PROTESTORS (2-4)\*\***: Townspeople protesting to keep the spotlight where it is, much to the dismay of the grocer.

**TOWNSPEOPLE**: Extras as desired to walk the streets, eat at the restaurants, watch the drag races, protest, etc.

**\*\*Options for doubling**: Many roles can be doubled or even tripled. The starred roles above are the easiest to combine, but any combination is acceptable.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Information regarding setting, properties, socially distanced blocking and virtual instructions, among other production notes, can be found in the back of the book.

# One Stoplight Town

## ACT I

### Scene 1: Only Time Will Tell

AT RISE: *A stoplight is C, hanging from above or on a pole. A ladder is next to the stoplight, and a toolbox is on the ground next to the ladder. Spotlight on TOM, wearing a toolbelt and standing on a ladder. He is whistling and making the final adjustments to the installation of the stoplight. BOB stands nearby or at the bottom of the ladder, holding it. After tinkering with the light for a moment, TOM pushes a switch and the lights turn on, cycling through the colors in time as TOM says his line.*

TOM (*looking at the stoplight*). Yellow ... red ... green.  
(*Pauses.*) Slow down ... stop ... go!

(*Lights full up on scene as TOM looks down at BOB and smiles.*)

TOM (*cont'd*). Looks like everything works up here.

BOB (*sarcastically*). Great.

TOM (*chuckling*). Don't tell me you're still upset that the town council approved putting up this stoplight.

BOB (*grumbling*). Stupid town council.

TOM (*smirking as he descends ladder*). Aren't you on the town council, Bob?

BOB (*scuffing his foot on the ground*). Yeah. So what? I got outvoted.

TOM. What do you have against this stoplight? It's just here to make sure everyone stays safe at the busiest intersection in our town.

BOB. Since when is the corner of Main and Third considered busy?

TOM. Ever since they opened the interstate a few miles north we've had a lot more traffic come through town.

BOB. That's just it—they drive right *through* our town! (*Points behind him to his grocery store.*) They don't come into my store and buy groceries. (*Points across the "street."*) They don't grab a burger at Polly's diner. (*Crosses his arms.*) So why are we bothering to put up a stoplight? They're not going to stop. Just let them pass us by!

TOM (*as he puts away his tools*). Like time is passing us by?

BOB. What is that supposed to mean?

TOM. Maybe the stoplight's a good thing. Maybe it means this sleepy old town is finally moving up in the world.

BOB. You know, Tom, I never figured you for one of those big city types.

TOM (*lifting up his toolbelt and looking down at his flannel and overalls*). Neither did I.

BOB. I thought you were one of us.

TOM. Who's *us*?

BOB (*not sure how to phrase it*). You know—one of *us*! The us that have lived here for generations and run the shops and restaurants. The us that sit outside on hot days, drinking icy glasses of lemonade and playing endless games of checkers with our neighbors. The us that know the name of every kid in town and aren't afraid to call them out when they get too rowdy. The us that think things here in town are perfect just the way they are and don't see why things have to change.

TOM (*chuckles*). Oh, Bob, I am one of that us. (*Turns back to look at the stoplight. If it's on a pole, maybe he pats the pole.*) But I also happen to like this new stoplight.

BOB (*looking up at the light*). I don't see what's so great about it.

TOM (*looking up at light*). The light turns yellow when we need to slow down and check out our surroundings. It turns red when things aren't safe and we need to take a few moments and stop. And when that light turns green, we know all is well and we are free to go on—to head off in a new direction, to whatever life has in store for us. (*Looks at BOB.*) I don't know about you, but sometimes I need a little reminder to slow down, stop and take in all the great things life has to offer in this town. But also that there is a great big world out there and it's OK to go explore it.

BOB. I don't need to go exploring. Everything I need is right here. (*Indicates his surroundings.*)

TOM (*pats BOB on the shoulder*). That's great, Bob.

BOB. You know people are going to hate that stoplight. They'll want it taken down.

TOM. Only time will tell, Bob. (*Picks up his toolbox and looks at his watch.*) Speaking of time, I'd better be on my way. Polly's oven is on the fritz, and she'll have my head if I don't get over there to fix it before the breakfast rush.

BOB. The whole town'll have your head if they don't get their breakfast!

TOM (*chuckling*). Ain't that the truth? (*Puts two fingers to his temple and salutes BOB.*) See you later, Bob.

BOB. See you, Tom. (*Watches as TOM exits and then turns back to the stoplight. Grumbling.*) Stupid stoplight.

(*BOB kicks the base of the stoplight or picks up a rock and throws it at the light. The stoplight immediately turns red.*)

BOB (*cont'd*). Didn't like that, huh? You're telling me to stop?  
Take that!

*(CLARENCE and MELVIN enter with their lawn chairs. They set them up nearby, outside of the grocery store as BOB kicks again or throws another rock. The light begins to flash red. BOB jumps back and looks at the light.)*

BOB (*cont'd*). I didn't mean it, I swear!

CLARENCE. Who are you talkin' to, Bob?

MELVIN. You ain't talkin' to that new stoplight, are you, Bob?

BOB (*turning to CLARENCE and MELVIN*). Did you guys see that? It's flashing red because I kicked it! (*Or threw a rock at it!*)

*(The stoplight resumes cycling through colors as normal as BOB looks at CLARENCE and MELVIN.)*

CLARENCE (*squinting up to look at the light*). Looks fine to me.

MELVIN (*squinting up to look at light*). Looks fine to me too.

BOB (*turns back to light*). It was flashing red at me just a minute ago—I swear!

CLARENCE. Sure thing, Bob.

MELVIN. Whatever you say, Bob.

BOB (*grumbling*). Stupid stoplight.

*(BOB exits, into the store if possible.)*

CLARENCE. You saw it flashing at him too, didn't you Melvin?

MELVIN. Sure did, Clarence. Sure did.

*(MELVIN and CLARENCE chuckle as lights fade to black. MELVIN and CLARENCE exit.)*

## Scene 2: The Big Dance

*(It's nighttime, just after the big dance at the local high school. JIM enters L, on his way home. He is wearing dress clothes and is walking backward, finishing his conversation with a group of friends who are offstage, unseen and unheard. JIM is in good spirits, having had a good time at the dance. During the scene, the color of the light is synced with SALLY's movements. JIM walks backward until he is C.)*

JIM *(laughing)*. That's a good one, Chuck. I bet he never saw that coming. *(Pauses, listening to the response.)* No way! You better hope Mr. Schmidt doesn't find out. *(Pauses, listening to the response.)* What about you, Bill? You and Lucy looked pretty cozy. *(Pauses, listening to the response, then laughs.)* Yeah, well, does she know that?

*(JIM pauses, listening to the response. SALLY enters R, wearing a dress. The light is green. After a few steps in, she sees JIM, shakes her head and stops, listening. The light turns red. JIM flicks the collar of his jacket, boastfully.)*

JIM *(cont'd)*. You know me. The ladies at Central High love them some Jim!

*(He pauses, listening to the response as SALLY shakes her head in disgust. She starts walking toward JIM. The light is green.)*

JIM *(cont'd)*. Yep, even her. *(Runs his hand through his hair, playing the cool guy.)* She might've played it cool at the dance, but you guys know Sally's desperately in love with me.

*(SALLY is now right behind JIM, with arms crossed, unseen by him up until she speaks.)*

SALLY. Is that so?

JIM *(turning abruptly, startled)*. Sally! *(Trying to compose himself, yet also still trying to look cool in front of his friends.)* I didn't see you there.

SALLY *(cool)*. I gathered that.

JIM. How long have you been standing there?

SALLY. Long enough.

JIM *(turning back to his friends, briefly)*. Um, guys, I'll talk to you later, OK?

*(SALLY starts to walk past JIM, with arms crossed.)*

JIM *(cont'd)*. Hey Sally, wait a minute, won'tcha?

SALLY *(sarcastically, swooning)*. How could I resist? After all, I'm desperately in love with you. *(Looking at JIM pointedly.)* Isn't that right, Jim Matthews?

JIM. I was just joking around with the guys, Sally. You know how it is.

SALLY. No I don't. But I'd love to hear more. *(Waving her hand for him to continue.)* Enlighten me.

JIM *(faltering)*. Um ... well, I ... you see ...

SALLY *(chuckling)*. That's what I thought.

*(She turns and starts to walk away. The light is green.)*

JIM. Won't you at least let me apologize?

SALLY. It's not necessary.

JIM *(embarrassed)*. Yes, it is. I don't want you to think that's the kind of guy I am.

SALLY (*chuckling*). You don't want to know what kind of guy I think you are.

JIM (*insulted*). What is that supposed to mean?

SALLY (*stops and turns back. Light is red*). You're the kind of guy who makes jokes about the bows I wear in my hair.

JIM (*incredulously*). Are you serious right now?

SALLY (*walking slowly toward him. Light is yellow*). You're the kind of guy who calls me a brainiac when I raise my hand and answer a question.

JIM. That happened one time. (*He thinks.*) Or maybe two.

(*SALLY looks at him pointedly. He smirks.*)

JIM (*cont'd*). Or maybe more than two.

SALLY. You're the kind of guy who teases me because my dioramas are too good.

JIM (*throwing his hands up*). You make the rest of us look bad! Did you really have to make a working oil rig complete with realistic pumps and moving trucks?

SALLY (*stops and crosses her arms, smirking. Light is red*). I can't help it if I'm detail oriented.

JIM. Detail *obsessed* is more like it! Why couldn't you just make a baking soda volcano like the rest of us?

SALLY (*flippantly*). Hey, if you're content with a measly A minus, who am I to stop you?

(*She starts to walk away as JIM shakes his head. Light is green.*)

SALLY (*cont'd*). So if you want to know what kind of guy I think you are ... now you know.



JIM. Yeah well, you aren't exactly Green Bean Queen material yourself.

SALLY (*turning back, suddenly. Light turns red*). What is *that* supposed to mean?

JIM. You're the kind of girl who laughs at me for spilling milk on myself at lunch.

SALLY (*chuckling*). You've always been a sloppy eater.

JIM. You're the kind of girl who makes jokes when my science experiment exploded in my face.

SALLY (*laughing*). That's right! You were missing an eyebrow for the entire third quarter.

JIM. You're the kind of girl who makes fun of a guy for not getting the lead in the school play!

SALLY (*trying not to laugh*). It wasn't that you didn't get the lead ... it was the part you *did* get.

JIM. I wasn't feeling well on the day of auditions.

SALLY (*snickering*). So you said.

JIM. I had a cold! I couldn't stop coughing and blowing my nose.

SALLY (*teasing and chuckling*). Sure ...

JIM. That's the only reason the director didn't give me any lines!

SALLY. You were a gate!

JIM. I'll have you know the gate was a pivotal role in our production of *Our Town*!

SALLY (*chuckling*). Pivotal is right! (*Stiffens up and pretends to be a gate swinging open.*)

JIM (*embarrassed, looking down*). That was a long time ago.

SALLY. It was last year!

JIM (*looking at SALLY pointedly*). Yeah, well you've been picking on me ever since freshman year.

SALLY (*starts to walk away. Light is yellow*). So what? We already established you pick on me too.

JIM. Sure I did—

(*SALLY smiles smugly. JIM calls after her.*)

JIM (*cont'd*). Back in second grade! You're the one that's holding a grudge and still picking on me.

SALLY (*stops, turns and draws in a sharp breath, aghast. Light is red*). How dare you!

JIM (*interrupting*). I teased you when we were both eight years old. We were children.

SALLY (*walks toward him. Slowly. Light is yellow*). You act like a child now!

JIM (*laughing*). You just can't help yourself, can you? (*Looks at stoplight.*) Here we are, all these years later, standing under this stoplight, and you're still calling me names.

SALLY. You started it!

(*She crosses her arms, turns and starts to stomp away. Light is green.*)

JIM (*calling after her*). I really liked your bows, you know.

SALLY (*slows down but doesn't turn back. Light is yellow. Quietly*). Yeah, well, I think it's kind of cute that you're a messy eater.

JIM (*taking a step toward her*). I also really like how smart you are.

SALLY (*stops but doesn't turn. Light is red*). I kind of liked when you had only one eyebrow. It made you look a little mysterious.

JIM (*stepping closer, very near her now*). And I really liked your diorama of the oil rig. I hoped you would ask me to come over after school so I could get a closer look at it.

SALLY (*looking over her shoulder at JIM*). I thought you made a wonderful gate.

JIM (*stepping closer, now right beside her*). Can we call a truce then?

SALLY (*turning to face him*). How do we do that?

JIM (*looking up at the stoplight*). How about a dance?

*(JIM looks at SALLY and holds out his hand. She takes it, and they start to dance. The light is yellow if slow dancing and green if more upbeat.)*

SALLY (*after a moment*). So does this mean we can't tease each other anymore?

JIM (*chuckling*). I didn't say that.

SALLY. Good, because seriously, Jim, you are a terrible dancer! Do you have two left feet or something?

JIM (*feigning annoyance*). Oh really! And I suppose a brainiac like you could show me a thing or two about dancing?

SALLY. You know it! Unless you're *trying* to break every one of my toes, I think you and I are going to need to get together a few times a week for some dance lessons.

JIM. You know what I think?

SALLY. What?

JIM (*smirking*). I think you're desperately in love with me.

SALLY. Of course you do!

*(SALLY swats him on the arm, and then the two of them laugh. JIM pulls SALLY in closer, and they continue to dance as lights fade to black. JIM and SALLY exit.)*

### Scene 3: The Drag Race

*(It's daytime. KIDS 2 and 3 are standing C, in conversation. KID 1 enters with GIRL on his arm. KID 4 follows.)*

KID 1. I love the thrill of race day.

KID 3. Hot metal.

KID 4. The smell of burning rubber.

KID 2. The wind in my hair.

KID 1. This one is mine. I can feel it!

*(All KIDS are C now. TOM enters, unseen by KIDS. He stands off to one side and observes.)*

KID 1. So what are the terms?

KID 2. We start over there—*(Points off R.)* race around the stoplight and finish over there. *(Points R.)* The first to finish wins.

KID 3. The first to swerve is chicken. *(Making “wings” out of his arms and clucking around, like a chicken.)* Bock ... bock ... bacawk!

KID 4 *(to KID 3)*. You look silly you know.

KID 3 *(getting in KID 4’s face)*. Yeah well, your friend looks like a chicken! *(Making wings again and getting closer to KID 4.)* Bacawk!

KID 4. Stop it!

GIRL. Are you guys sure this is a good idea?

KID 3. I think it’s a *great* idea!

KID 4. The best!

GIRL. This could be dangerous, you know?

KID 1. Danger doesn’t scare me.

KID 2. Danger is my middle name!

KID 3. Your middle name is Winston.

*(KID 3 laughs and elbows KID 1, who also laughs.)*

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**CASTING:** Feel free to assign gender or race as needed to any character. If you need to change other identifying characteristics, such as names, to better identify with your community, you may do so.

**SETTING:** A street corner in small-town America. This is a town that most people just pass through, populated by residents who have their quirks but who love its charm. The play takes place over time, starting on the day when a stoplight is installed at the intersection of Main Street and Third. It signifies change for this town, and through this play, we will see how this change affects its residents, who may seek the simple life, but whose lives are anything but simple.

**TIME:** Modern day but could also take place during any time starting in the 1990s to the early part of the 21st century. This play takes place over a period of about 25 years.

### SCENE LIST:

#### ACT I:

Scene 1: Only Time Will Tell

Scene 2: The Big Dance

Scene 3: The Drag Race

Scene 4: Sooner or Later

Scene 5: Soapbox

Scene 6: Coming and Going

#### ACT II:

Scene 1: The Green Bean Queen and the Drum Major

Scene 2: Stop and Go

Scene 3: A Taste of Things to Come

Scene 4: The Drag Race, Part Two

Scene 5: Time Flies

**SET:** The play could be done on a bare stage with only a spotlight present. The spotlight could be hung from above or could be on a pole. Its original wiring does not need to be functional. In fact, it would be best if any lighting effects from the spotlight could be controlled by stagehands, either through overhead lighting or through LED lights installed inside the spotlight and controlled remotely. If the stage is bare, designate areas for each shop. Or you could choose to have shopfronts as indicated in the script. For the restaurants, you might also have outdoor tables with umbrellas.

**COSTUMES:** Modern-day attire. You could choose to change the fashions to indicate the passage of time and to play off the theme of change if you like. TOM should wear a flannel shirt and overalls. BOB should wear a white apron over his clothes. SALLY should wear a dress and a wedding dress as indicated. JIM should wear a shirt and suit/tuxedo as indicated. GREEN BEAN QUEEN should wear an evening gown, sash and tiara. DRUM MAJOR should wear a band uniform. For drag-racing KIDS/TEENS, replicate their outfits from kid-style clothing to teen fashion, with similar colors/materials for each character in order to remind audiences that these are the same kids, just now grown. GIRL/TEEN GIRL should wear a scarf or be in possession of a scarf. POLICE OFFICER should wear a police uniform and have a whistle. FLASH should wear bright colors.

**PROPS:** Toolbox with tools, tool belt, ladder, 2 folding lawn chairs, scarf, 2 bicycles or tricycles, bouquet of flowers, protest signs (see Act I, Scene 4), megaphone (optional), large soapbox, suitcases, baby carriage, newspaper, baton, whistle, 3 chalkboard signs, 1-2 paper bags, plate (if using only 1 bag), 2 hamburgers (pre-divided into two pieces each), script, movie camera, ticket pad and pen.

**CUTTING:** When cutting for time, the following scenes must remain: Only Time Will Tell, The Big Dance and Time Flies. Additionally, the characters of Jim and Sally enter briefly into scenes to indicate the passage of time. They get married, have a baby and later send their child off to college. If you remove the scenes where these background actions take place, please add them into the background of additional scenes as relevant. They do not need to have lines if added. They could just be crossing the street wearing wedding attire, pushing a baby carriage, etc. Also note that there is a pre-cut, 45-minute version available.

**TECHNOLOGY REFERENCES:** Feel free to either play the piece during the time frame indicated or update the references to play it during modern day.

**SOCIALLY DISTANCED BLOCKING:** Most scenes can be easily blocked keeping social distancing in mind per the director's discretion. Some scenes will require some modest adjustments; for example, for the dancing scene with Jim and Sally, you could use up-tempo music and have them do silly or faster, upbeat dances.

**VIRTUAL PRODUCTION:** This play can easily be done entirely virtually. One way to do this would be to have a screen background with a stoplight in the center. Then have your video performers flanking or surrounding the stoplight. If you can't adjust the actual lights on your virtual stoplight to match the stage directions, you could change the overall color of the digital background to change colors as indicated by the lights. You could also choose a digital background of a small-town main street and have a video image of a stoplight present in the center at all times, which would allow you control of an actual light. The performers could also use a matching digital backdrop for continuity or could use all black or all white backgrounds for day/night as desired.