

CARPE SKIP DAY

by Bradley Walton

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A Comedic Monologue

by **Bradley Walton**

SYNOPSIS: Kai has looked forward to his Senior Skip Day for years. Unfortunately, now that it's arrived, his mom is forcing him to go to school. But when Kai's first period class takes an unexpected turn, it begins to look like the day isn't lost after all. Can Kai sneak around school until the final bell without getting caught? Can he seize his Senior Skip Day?

TIME: Present day.

SETTING: With Mom on the way to school and at school.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either)

KAI/KAYLA (m/f) A high school senior who's been looking forward to Senior Skip Day for a long time.

SET: Bare stage.

COSTUME: School clothes.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Carpe Skip Day contains lots of short paragraphs. When reading something aloud, it is customary to pause at the conclusion of a paragraph. Don't do that here—it'll kill the pace. Instead, transitions to new thoughts and emotions, conveyed in print by transitions to new paragraphs, should be communicated to the audience through changes in the performer's vocal pitch or inflection. This will help to keep the monologue moving briskly along.

Minor word changes in monologue are approved as necessary if character is not male.

AT START: *KAI/KAYLA, dressed for school, on a bare stage.*

KAI / KAYLA: Today is the day. Thirteen years of public education have been leading to this... the pinnacle atop the mountain of high school... the moment of glory known as Senior Skip Day... and my mom is driving me to school.

Nathan Hartman and I had bragged to each other about how we were gonna spend the day. I don't particularly like Nathan—the text alert on his phone is music from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which screams “arrogant film nerd”—but he's friends with enough of my friends that I can't avoid him, plus we have Spanish together. Nathan told me he was gonna sleep in and do nothing, so I one-upped that by saying I wasn't even going to get out of bed.

Unfortunately, I had to put my mom in the loop because she works from home, and also, she drives me to school.

She said I might as well ask permission to rob a convenience store and then use the money to buy cigarettes for kittens.

I pointed out that convenience stores sell cigarettes, and it would be more efficient to just steal those rather than stealing money to buy cigarettes somewhere else.

Mom said she knew, and the example was intended to demonstrate stupidity as well as immorality. Ouch.

Needless to say, that pretty much shut down any further discussion or negotiation about staying home.

So, here we are. The big day. And me on my way to school, the same as always... not that I'm gonna tell Nathan.

Usually, Mom's really chatty, but today she's grimly silent. I know that anything I say will turn into a warning about not making poor choices that I'll regret, so I keep my mouth shut and we ride in a silence that couldn't be more awkward if there was a dead stock broker tied to a cotton candy machine in the back seat.

Mom drops me off at the front of the school. She smiles and tells me, "Have a good day." Only, she says it like a warning, so it comes out, "Have a. GOOD. Day." With kind of a growl at the back of her throat. The smile is also definitely a warning smile. The kind of smile that says, "I know what you're thinking, whether you know you're thinking it or not."

"Love you," I say.

"I love you, too," she says, drawing out the "too" so it has just a hint of menace. As if to say, "I love you because I'm your mother... which also means I know where you live, I have keys to your house, and oh, by the way, I live there, too. Don't forget that. And don't ever forget that you exist because I gave you life. Don't make me regret that. My love is unconditional, except for today."

Her car pulls away and I walk into the school feeling super self-conscious. I don't make eye contact with anyone for fear that they're looking at me and wondering, "What's Kai doing here? Doesn't he know it's Senior Skip Day? Did his MOM make him come?"

I should turn around, walk out the door, and go somewhere. But the school isn't close to anywhere worth going. I could text somebody who is skipping and ask them to pick me up, but that would mean admitting mom made me come to school. And that's just embarrassing. Plus, they might tell Nathan.

So I guess I'll awkwardly be the only student in the room for my senior classes, and pretend I'm not a senior in my other classes. I can say I flunked a year if anyone asks.

Sure enough, when I arrive at English 12 for first period, no one is there. I go stand in the back corner where no one can see me from the hall. A few minutes later, the bell rings, and still, nobody else has shown up... not even the teacher. Then, outside the door, I hear his voice... "I don't see anybody in the room. Looks like they all skipped. I'm gonna run out for coffee. You want anything?"

Another teacher says something back, and their conversation fades away down the hall.

Holy cow. I have the classroom to myself.

I close the door and lock it for good measure. The whiteboard is practically calling to me. I pick up a dry erase marker and stare at the huge blank canvas. I can draw anything. I can write anything. My imagination is the limit. And so I draw... a duck. Because it's pretty much the only thing I know how to draw. And it's not a whole duck... just the head. It's not particularly good, but it looks passably like a duck. Enough that most people could tell what it's supposed to be. I hope.

Okay... it's not a very good duck. I can do better. So I draw another duck. It looks like the first one. I pull out my phone and do an image search for ducks to use as reference. With fresh enthusiasm, I begin to draw again, looking back and forth from my phone to the white board. I take my time, working slowly, trying to get the details perfect. When I'm finished, I step back to examine my work. Hmm. It's a duck, all right. Definitely the most realistic duck ever committed to white board. On Senior Skip Day. In this classroom. This morning. Except for maybe the first one I drew.

Maybe I should try drawing a cow instead?

And then the bell rings. Already? Did I take that long on the second duck? I guess so. That was a complete waste of time.

Awesome! My Senior Skip Day isn't a total bust after all!

I erase the board, open the door, and step out into the already crowded hall, doing my best to blend in and not look like a senior. I hunch my shoulders a little and try to look timid, channeling my inner freshman. Yes, that's right. I am a freshman. I am totally a freshman. Nothing to see here, folks. Wait—is that a senior over there? Hah! Made you look!

I don't actually say any of that because I don't want to draw attention to myself, but I think it as loud as I can.

My second period Spanish 2 teacher has a super strict “no phone” policy, so I stop to turn mine off before going in the room. But as I'm about to power it down, I get a text from Nathan. It says, “How's Skip Day?” I text back, “Perfect. I should skip class more often.” As I press “send,” I make a decision. I can't give up on Senior Skip Day now. I'm gonna skip the rest of my classes. I will seize the day! Carpe diem! No—*Carpe Skip Day!* And if Mom finds out, she'll get over it. Eventually. I'm going away to college in the fall, so she can only ground me for so long.

I take off down the hall. The crowd thins, the bell rings, and suddenly it's just me and a few stragglers. What I need now is a plan. A plan and a hall pass. As long as I have one of those little yellow slips of paper in my hand, any teachers who see me will probably leave me alone without asking to see it. So where do I get one?

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