

REMEMBER WHEN

By Samara Siskind

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CHARACTERS

TOMMY	WASHINGTON/PETEY
BILLY	THOMAS JEFFERSON/BIFF
SUB ZERO/CHARLIE	ABRAHAM LINCOLN/THE
CHAPLIN	BRAWNZ
JADE	ALBERT EINSTEIN/RICHARD
MOM	NIXON
DAD	ZELDA
GRANDPA MARTY/ELVIS	LOUISE
GRANDMA EDIE	LITTLE ORPHAN MANDY
PILGRIM	SHIRLEY TEMPLE
JOHN/NEWSBOY/RILEY	SALLY
PILGRIM MARY	BARB
GEORGE	MARILYN MONROE

*Special note on casting:

Many of the roles call for doubling. The play may be done with as many as twenty-nine actors, and as few as fifteen. Many of the roles are gender flexible. The breakdown above yields a flexible cast of twenty-one with roughly ten male and eleven female actors.

SETTING

Bare stage. Chairs and props are moved on and off when needed.

PROPS

2 game controllers	Fake money
Piano bench	2 oversized lollipops
Cigar	Cane
2 Gift wrapped History books	Towel
Musket	Water Bottle
Plastic turkey	Comb
Recipe	Handkerchief
Newspapers	<i>Next Sunday Night Sign</i>
Potato sack	

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AT RISE: Lights up on TOMMY and BILLY with game controls in their hands.

TOMMY: Ready to play?

BILLY: You bet!

TOMMY: Okay, I'll be Sub Zero--

BILLY: You're always Sub Zero!

TOMMY: So, it's my Xbox.

BILLY: Last time you promised I could pick first!

TOMMY: No I didn't--

BILLY: Yes you did!

TOMMY: Well, when you get an Xbox for your birthday, you can be Sub Zero.

BILLY: That's not fair!

TOMMY: It's totally fair.

BILLY: Tommy!

TOMMY: ***(mocking him)*** Billy!

BILLY: ***(pouting)*** Fine, then I don't want to play.

TOMMY: Don't be such a baby. Here, I picked your character for you.

BILLY: ***(whining)*** But I wanna be Sub Zero.

TOMMY: Tough, now you're Jade.

BILLY: Hey!! I don't wanna be a girl!!

TOMMY: Stop whining, she has better moves anyway--

BILLY: No she doesn't.

TOMMY: Seriously. She can do the whole headlock on the ground thing and then flip you over her head.

BILLY: ***(excited)*** Oh yeahhhh. I forgot.

TOMMY: So... we ready?

BILLY: Fine, but get ready, 'cause you're going back to the freezer!

TOMMY: That's what you think sissy boy.

BILLY: Oh yeah? I'm gonna show you what girl power's all about!

TOMMY: After I turn you into a frozen fish stick!

(Lights rise on Xbox characters in mid fight. SUB ZERO and JADE execute the moves TOMMY and BILLY are controlling. They do flips and various stage combat moves.)

BILLY: Hey watch it!! You messed up my hair.

TOMMY: What's the matter, can't take the heat?!

Remember When - Page 4

BILLY: I can't take your icicle breath!

TOMMY: Owww, c'mon!!

BILLY: How d'ya like that?! Frosty's getting his butt kicked by a girl!

TOMMY: You're dead!!

BILLY: Good thing I have two more lives.

TOMMY: Not for long.

BILLY: Hey!!

TOMMY: Ha!!

BILLY: Where'd you learn that move?

TOMMY: I picked it up.

BILLY: Yeah, right. From looking up game cheats on the internet.

TOMMY: Don't be a sore loser.

BILLY: Watch it!!

(Enter MOM and DAD.)

DAD: Boys, you are way too loud!

MOM: You need to keep it down in here.

TOMMY and BILLY: Sorry.

DAD: Don't you have any homework to do?

TOMMY: In a minute Dad, I'm almost through with this dork--

BILLY: That's what you think, Ice Man--

(MOM and DAD watch the screen in disgust, MOM shielding her eyes from the violence.)

MOM: Oh my word.

DAD: What game is this?

TOMMY: Sudden Mutant Death.

BILLY: In Antarctica.

MOM: It's so brutal.

BILLY: ***(smiling)*** We know.

TOMMY: Isn't it cool?

MOM: What's the object?

TOMMY: To kill your opponent, then zap all the mutants you can--

BILLY: And make 'em bleed green blood!

MOM: ***(to DAD)*** Did you buy this for him?

DAD: ***(apologetic)*** It was on his Christmas list.

(MOM and DAD watch for a few more beats. They grimace and shake their heads.)

MOM: I can't take any more of this.

DAD: Me either.

(DAD pulls an imaginary plug. The fight sequence powers out as SUB ZERO and JADE fall to the ground. Lights fade on them.)

TOMMY and BILLY: HEY!!!

DAD: Sorry guys, these games are way too violent.

MOM: Whatever happened to checkers, or backgammon, or . . .
yahtzee?

TOMMY: Didn't the dinosaurs use to play those?

DAD: Don't get smart young man.

MOM: Why, when I was your age--

TOMMY: ***(covering his face)*** Oh no, not with the old folks stories again.

BILLY: Yeah, those are pretty lame, Mom.

MOM: You boys have no respect for the way things were.

TOMMY: Sure we do. . . we just like things better now.

MOM: Well, we didn't need remote controls to entertain us when I was a
kid. I remember it like it was yesterday. . . We'd visit Grandma and
Grandpa's house for sing-a-long night every Sunday. . .

TOMMY and BILLY: ***(looking at each other)*** Sing-a-long night?

(Lights up on GRANDMA and GRANDPA sitting on a piano bench. GRANDPA has a cigar in his mouth and GRANDMA plays an imaginary piano as they sing "Those were the Days".)

GRANDPA MARTY: Boy the way Glen Miller played. . .

GRANDMA EDIE: Songs that made the hit parade. . .

GRANDPA MARTY: Guys like us we had it made. . .

BOTH: Those were the days.

GRANDMA EDIE: And you knew who you were then!

GRANDPA MARTY: Girls were girls and men were men. . .

BOTH: Mister we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again.

GRANDPA MARTY: Didn't need no welfare states. . .

GRANDMA EDIE: Everybody pulled his weight. . .

BOTH: Gee, our old Lasalle ran great. Those were the days!!!

GRANDMA EDIE: Oh Marty. . .

GRANDPA MARTY: Edie, that was beau-ti-ful.

BILLY: That was prehistoric.

GRANDPA MARTY: Watch it, you meathead.

MOM: Hey Grandma and Grandpa, I was trying to show the boys here
how much fun we used to have in the old days.

GRANDMA EDIE: Boy, oh boy, did we ever.

TOMMY: But didn't you get bored without DVD's or Playstations?

GRANDMA EDIE: A what-station?

MOM: We would amuse ourselves.

BILLY: With what? Making fire with sticks?

Remember When - Page 6

GRANDPA MARTY: (**shaking a fist at BILLY**) Why I oughta--

GRANDMA EDIE: (**holding him down**) Calm down, Marty. Remember what the doctor said, you have to keep your blood pressure below 120 over 80 (**to boys**) It's usually much higher.

GRANDPA MARTY: (**to BILLY**) Next time you won't be so lucky you little--

GRANDMA EDIE: They're just a different generation. It's hard for them to understand how things used to be.

GRANDPA MARTY: Well, we could show them a thing or two about entertainment.

BILLY: What are ya gonna show us Grandpa? Bingo?

GRANDPA MARTY: I'm gonna show you my fist in a second, you little--

GRANDMA EDIE: Oh, stop it, Marty. Remember, these are our only grandchildren.

GRANDPA MARTY: Kids. I don't know what's wrong with these kids today.

GRANDMA EDIE: By the way, don't one of you boys have a birthday coming up?

BILLY: I do, I do!

GRANDMA EDIE: (**holding up a big gift wrapped package**) Well, that explains it! I knew there was a reason I had this present just sitting around here!

BILLY: (**grabbing gift**) Oh, boy!

DAD: Not so fast ,Billy, your birthday isn't until next week.

BILLY: Awwwww. Can't I open it now? (**whining**) Please? Pretty please? Pretty, pretty, pretty please??!!

GRANDPA MARTY: Would someone mind turning that kid off?

DAD: (**looking at MOM**) What do you think?

MOM: I think we can make one special exception.

DAD: You heard Mom, go for it Sport.

BILLY: (**tearing off wrapping**) All right!! Woo hoo! It's heavy! Let me see. . . What is it?! What is it?

GRANDPA MARTY: It's a knuckle sandwich. I picked it out myself.

GRANDMA EDIE: Oh put a lid on it Marty.

BILLY: New model Xbox here I come!!

(BILLY finishes unwrapping. It's a book.)

BILLY: (**reading title**) "A Complete History of America, Volume One". It's a. . . book.

MOM: Oh how sweet! What a thoughtful gift Grandma!

GRANDMA EDIE: It's never too late to start learning about the past. Now you can spend all your spare time studying history!

BILLY: Yippee.

Remember When - Page 7

TOMMY: At least it's not socks.

BILLY: What does unabridged mean?

TOMMY: It means it's not the Cliffs Notes version.

DAD: What do you say, Billy?

BILLY: Thanks, Grandma and Grandpa.

GRANDMA EDIE: Now, you enjoy that book, Billy. If you're a good boy, maybe Santa will bring you Volume Two for Christmas!

BILLY: **(deadpan)** I can hardly wait.

MOM: Thanks again, Grandma and Grandpa. We'll see you next Thanksgiving.

GRANDPA MARTY: Edie, remember that sweet potato casserole you used to make?

GRANDMA EDIE: Oh yeah. That was my Great Aunt Bertha's famous recipe.

GRANDPA MARTY: What you could do with yams back then. . .

BOTH: **(singing)** Those were the days!

(Lights fade on them.)

TOMMY: ***(plugging imaginary plug back in)*** Now, that we're done with the walk down Old Fogie Lane, where were we?

BILLY: I was kicking your Creamsickle butt!

(BILLY drops the book and picks up a game controller. SUB ZERO and JADE come back to life. The boys start to play again while SUB ZERO and JADE resume fighting.)

TOMMY: Good thing I saved our game!

BILLY: Yeah, I got you right where I want you!

MOM: ***(picking up book and dusting it off)*** Now why would you want to go back to playing that violent game when you have this fabulous book to dig into?

BILLY: Uh, because we're not geeks.

TOMMY: And we're not eighty.

(MOM and DAD watch for a few beats. They share a look and then DAD pulls the plug again.)

TOMMY and BILLY: HEY!!!

SUB ZERO and JADE: HEY!!

DAD: ***(to SUB and JADE)*** Sorry, guys. Oops. I mean, and lady. But you're through for the night.

JADE: And I was just getting warmed up.

(SUB ZERO and JADE start to exit.)

Remember When - Page 8

SUB ZERO: Can you believe this?

JADE: I bet the guys at Playstation don't have to deal with this.

SUB ZERO: No respect, I tell ya.

JADE: We really should join a Union.

(They take out their time cards and punch them out in an imaginary time clock, complete with sound effect.)

JADE: Good night, Al.

SUB ZERO: Good night, Jean.

(They exit.)

DAD: New rule-- no more Xbox until you read the book Grandma gave you.

TOMMY and BILLY: NO!!!!

TOMMY: Are you kidding?!

BILLY: That'll take forever!

TOMMY: We'll be Grandpa's grandfather's age before we're done!

BILLY: It's longer than the Bible.

DAD: Okay then, how about a few chapters?

TOMMY: Why do I have to get stuck reading his dumb birthday present?

DAD: Because you got a C in History.

MOM: ***(handing book to BILLY)*** Just give it a try, you may like it.

BILLY and TOMMY: Okay. Fine.

MOM: Have fun boys.

(MOM and DAD exit.)

TOMMY: Thanks a lot, Poophead.

BILLY: It's not my fault.

TOMMY: Yeah it is. You're the one who had to open it now.

BILLY: Oh yeah. Sorry.

TOMMY: ***(skimming pages)*** All right, let's just get this over with.
Chapter One . . . Mayflower, Plymouth Rock. . .

(Two pilgrims enter proudly. PILGRIM JOHN holds a musket, PILGRIM MARY a turkey. They strike a pose and smile.)

PILGRIM JOHN: Good day, youngsters. Today is a day we give thanks.

PILGRIM MARY: Would you boys like some food?

PILGRIM JOHN: We have turkey, and stuffing--

PILGRIM MARY: And cranberries and maize--

BILLY: And let me guess, sweet potato casserole?

Remember When - Page 9

PILGRIM MARY: (**panicking**) Oh, no! I knew I forgot to make something! The sweet potato casserole!

PILGRIM JOHN: It's not a big deal, dear.

PILGRIM MARY: That's easy for you to say! I'm stuck slaving away all day for you, your family, and a bunch of Indians! And for what? I don't even get a thank you. I'm so unappreciated, and now I went and forgot the sweet potato casserole. What am I going to do?

(SHE starts to cry.)

BILLY: My Grandma has a great recipe if you want it.

PILGRIM MARY: (**through tears**) She does?

BILLY: (**calling off**) Hey Grandma! You still here?

(GRANDMA EDIE enters holding a recipe. SHE hands it to MARY.)

GRANDMA EDIE: Here you are, dear. It was my Great Aunt Bertha's recipe!

PILGRIM MARY: Thank you so much. You are a lifesaver!

GRANDMA EDIE: Why, aren't you sweet. Don't forget, 1/3 cup packed brown sugar!

PILGRIM MARY: I won't! Thank you!

(GRANDMA EDIE exits.)

PILGRIM JOHN: Honey, don't you think we have enough food as it is?

PILGRIM MARY: (**flashing JOHN a dirty look**) Don't just stand there! Marshmallows! I need marshmallows!

(JOHN shrugs his shoulders as HE follows MARY off.)

TOMMY: (**calling after them**) And don't forget the pumpkin pie!

PILGRIM MARY: Pumpkin pie?!! OH NO! I FORGOT THE PIE!

(SHE runs offstage in a frenzy.)

PILGRIM JOHN: (**to TOMMY**) Thanks a lot.

TOMMY: Sorry dude.

(HE exits.)

BILLY: (**flipping through book**) Moving on. . . Forefathers, Declaration of Independence, Constitution. . .

(Forefathers enter-- GEORGE WASHINGTON, THOMAS JEFFERSON and ABRAHAM LINCOLN.)

GEORGE WASHINGTON: I cannot tell a lie--

THOMAS JEFFERSON: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: Four score and seven years ago--

TOMMY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. . . Just skip to the 1900's. Nothing cool happened before the 20th century anyway.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: **(offended)** What about the bomb's bursting in air?

THOMAS JEFFERSON: The birth of a new Republic?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: The abolishment of slavery?

(BILLY and TOMMY yawn.)

GEORGE WASHINGTON: Well, I never.

THOMAS JEFFERSON: What do you say we engage in some lunch gentlemen?

GEORGE WASHINGTON: Do you have change for a dollar, Abe?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: I only have a five.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: Show off.

(The Forefathers exit. BILLY flips ahead.)

BILLY: Here we are, the 1900's. . . The 1900's brought along many significant advancements in science and technology. . .

TOMMY: **(reading over BILLY's shoulder)** Albert Einstein proposes Special Theory of Relativity.

(ALBERT EINSTEIN enters.)

ALBERT EINSTEIN: $E=mc^2$.

TOMMY: That's cool dude, but we're kind of busy here.

BILLY: Yeah, TTYL.

ALBERT EINSTEIN: And what does that stand for young man?

BILLY: Talk to you later.

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Interesting. TTYL. A theory of postponement. And what is this LOL I keep hearing about?

TOMMY: Laugh out loud?

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Laugh out loud! A theory of gratification! Genius! Good heavens, I must document this immediately!

BILLY: KIT!

ALBERT EINSTEIN: I beg your pardon?

TOMMY: Keep in touch.

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Brilliant! Surely, I will!

(ALBERT EINSTEIN exits. TOMMY grabs the book away from BILLY. HE flips ahead.)

TOMMY: Let's see. . . Here we go! The Roaring Twenties. Now we're getting somewhere!

BILLY: Why's it called the Roaring Twenties?

TOMMY: ***(reading)*** It was a decade of American prosperity and optimism. . .

(ZELDA and LOUISE enter in FLAPPER gear, dancing the Charleston together.)

ZELDA: And all that jazz!

BILLY: ***(reading over TOMMY's shoulder)*** The decade of bathtub gin, the model T--

LOUISE: And all that jazz!

TOMMY: The first transatlantic flight, the movie--

ZELDA: And all that jazz!

BILLY: Radio, Prohibiton--

LOUISE: And all--

TOMMY: Flappers!

ZELDA: That--

BILLY: Gangsters!

LOUISE: Jazz!!!!

TOMMY: Look Billy, it says here it was also the Jazz Age!

(ZELDA and LOUISE look at each other.)

ZELDA: We give up.

(They start dancing again.)

TOMMY: Sure looks like they were having fun.

LOUISE: Good times, good times.

TOMMY: Uh oh.

BILLY: What?

(A NEWSBOY runs on stage holding up a newspaper.)

NEWSBOY: Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Stock Market Crash hits hard! Roaring Twenties, say buh bye!

(NEWSBOY exits. ZELDA and LOUISE stop doing the Charleston. They are thrown potato sacks from off stage. They put them on.)

BILLY: That bites.

ZELDA and LOUISE: You're telling us.

TOMMY: October 29th 1929, otherwise known as Black Tuesday, paved the way for a devastating chapter of American history. . . The Great Depression.

ZELDA: There goes rouging my knees.

LOUISE: And my shimmy shake.

ZELDA: Later, fellas.

(ZELDA and LOUISE exit in a depressed slump.)

BILLY: What was the Great Depression?

TOMMY: A period of widespread hunger, poverty and unemployment.

(Little Orphan MANDY enters with a great big smile on her face which never leaves.)

MANDY: ***(calling out)*** Sandy! Oh Sandy!! ***(to BILLY)*** Hi. Have you seen Sandy?

BILLY: Who's Sandy?

MANDY: My dog. Have you seen him?

BILLY: Nope. Maybe he's with your Mom and Dad.

MANDY: I don't have a Mom and Dad. I'm an orphan. Little Orphan Mandy.

TOMMY: Little Orphan Mandy? Don't you mean--

MANDY: ***(cutting him off)*** Don't say it.

TOMMY: Why not?

MANDY: If you think the Depression was bad, try being sued for copyright infringement.

TOMMY: Oh yeah, good call. Thanks, Mandy.

MANDY: Think nothing of it.

BILLY: ***(putting a sympathetic hand on MANDY's shoulder)*** Times are tough. I feel really sorry for you, Mandy.

MANDY: ***(huge smile)*** Why?

BILLY: Well, because you're an orphan. . . and poor.

MANDY: It's a hard knock life, but I can handle it just fine!

BILLY: For an orphan, you sure are happy.

TOMMY: It says here that Little Orphan. . . ***(winking at audience)*** Mandy, was one of the most memorable radio classics during the Great Depression.

MANDY: Well, Leapin' Lizards!

BILLY: Doesn't it depress you?

MANDY: What?

BILLY: That you're an orphan living during the Depression.

MANDY: The fun'll come out tomorrow.

BILLY: Really? It's been pretty boring so far.

MANDY: Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow. . . There'll be fun.

BILLY: **(taking money out of his pocket)** Let's make it ten!

MANDY: Just thinkin' about, tomorrow. . . clears away the boredom and the sorrow. . . 'til they're gone.

BILLY: When I think about tomorrow, I think of homework due.

MANDY: When I'm stuck with a day that's not okay, and depressing.

BILLY: Hey Tommy, some help here.

TOMMY: I just hold up my hands, strike the band, and say!

BILLY: Whoa.

MANDY: Oh!

MANDY and TOMMY: The fun'll come out tomorrow! So you gotta hang on 'til tomorrow, one more day!

BILLY: And I used to look up to you.

MANDY: Tomorrow!

TOMMY: Tomorrow!

MANDY: **(to BILLY)** I love ya!

BILLY: We just met.

MANDY: Tomorrow!

MANDY and TOMMY: **(big finale)** You're only a day-a-way!!!

(TOMMY and MANDY hug. A dog bark is heard offstage.)

MANDY: There he is!! I'm coming Sandy!! I have to go boys, or Miss Flannagan is gonna kill me.

TOMMY: Thanks Mandy!

BILLY: Yeah, don't be a stranger.

MANDY: Sure thing! And don't forget, drink your Ovaltine!

(MANDY exits while BILLY stares at TOMMY.)

TOMMY: What? I love that song.

BILLY: You learn something new every day.

TOMMY: **(back to book)** Let's see. . . Where was I?

BILLY: Please, no more Depression. The melancholy is starting to get to me.

(TOMMY gives BILLY a questioning look.)

BILLY: It's my vocab word of the week.

Remember When - Page 14

TOMMY: One industry that flourished during the Depression was the film industry.

BILLY: Now, that sounds interesting. Read some more.

TOMMY: Hollywood turned out movie after movie to entertain a nation down on its luck, and the 30's are often referred to as Hollywood's "Golden Age".

BILLY: Hooray for Hollywood!

(SHIRLEY TEMPLE enters singing.)

SHIRLEY: On the good ship lollipop, it's a sweet trip to a candy shop where bon-bons play, on the sunny beach of Peppermint Bay.

BILLY: I wanna go where bon-bons play.

TOMMY: Shirley Temple's films were leading attractions, perhaps because her characters' unwavering hopefulness in the face of trying circumstances spoke to American audiences.

SHIRLEY: And I have a drink named after me, too!

TOMMY: Wow. It says here you starred in over 40 movies! That's more than Tom Cruise!

SHIRLEY: Yep, I was a real workaholic. Lollipop?

BILLY: That sounds swell!

(SHE hands them both lollipops.)

TOMMY: Wow. Thanks, Shirley.

SHIRLEY: ***(with a wink and a smile)*** Don't think nothing of it boys!

(SHE exits tap dancing, doing consecutive buffalo steps.)

TOMMY: Movie genres that thrived during the 30's were lavish musicals, Westerns, gangster films, and screwball comedies.

(CHARLIE CHAPLIN wanders on stage with his signature walk and cane.)

TOMMY: Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights", released in 1931, was a huge financial and critical success, and many consider it one his finest films, if not his best.

(CHARLIE approaches BILLY and begins to pantomime.)

BILLY: Oh, hey Charlie. Huh? What are you trying to say?

(CHARLIE holds out four fingers.)

Remember When - Page 15

BILLY: Charades? Oh no, please no charades.

TOMMY: You suck at charades.

BILLY: No duh.

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