

**ASBESTOS POSSIBLE**

A comedy in one act  
by  
Bradley Hayward

**PREVIEW ONLY!**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Twin siblings reunite to scavenge their late grandmother's attic for a vintage Super Nintendo. As they sift through asbestos covered mementos, they realize their clashing world views are just as hazardous as the insulation. Amidst the boxes of nostalgia, they discover that while neither has exactly saved the world, they've both been doing their best to survive it.

## **CHARACTERS**

(1m, 1f)

**LINDSAY:** (40s, f) A high energy kindergarten teacher who uses her Master's degree to advocate for social justice. She wears a cotton t-shirt and sensible joggers

**DENNIS:** (40s, m) Her twin brother. He's a construction worker with no thumbs who relies on personal grit to navigate a world he believes is over regulated and under built. He wears a flannel shirt and heavy work boots

## **SETTING**

A cluttered attic, overflowing with cardboard boxes. A thick layer of rotting insulation covers the support beams. Piles of insulated fluff has fallen off and collected on the floorboards. A stray light bulb dangles from the ceiling.

## **RUNNING TIME**

10 minutes.

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(The stage is dark for a moment. There's a loud crunch in the dark.)

**DENNIS:** Dammit!

(The lights rise. LINDSAY stands under a light bulb that dangles from the ceiling. It sways back and forth, as though she has just pulled the chain to turn it on. DENNIS stands in the middle of the floor, one foot inside a cardboard box. )

**LINDSAY:** Congratulations, Dennis. You've killed a box of Grandma's Precious Moments. Their porcelain blood is on your hands.

**DENNIS:** (Struggles to pull his foot out of the box) The eyes on these things are weird, Linds. They don't have pupils. I did the world a favour.

**LINDSAY:** That was our inheritance. Those creepy little orphans were going to fund my Lego workshop for at risk toddlers.

**DENNIS:** You're a kindergarten teacher. Every day of your life is an at risk toddler situation.

**LINDSAY:** Can we not start this today?

**DENNIS:** Fine. But I'm not leaving this heat trap until I find the Super Nintendo.

**LINDSAY:** (Scans the room) We need to be systematic. This attic represents your entire lifestyle. Disorganized and full of hazards.

**DENNIS:** It's just a room full of junk. Stop over complicating the dust.

**LINDSAY:** This "dust" is probably asbestos.

**DENNIS:** Good. Then you might keep from sighing every five seconds.

**LINDSAY:** I sigh because your opinions infuriate me. And you have no shortage of opinions!

**DENNIS:** You have no shortage of hot air yourself.

(LINDSAY sighs. Loudly.)

See! There it is!

**LINDSAY:** There what is?

**DENNIS:** You know what. You've been doing that since we were six and I couldn't tie my shoes fast enough. It's not just a sigh. It's this sound that says I'm broken and you're the only one who noticed. Every time I'm about to do something, whether it's build a deck, or start a business, or simply exist, I hear that whistle through your nose and I feel like that loser in the back of the class again. It makes me feel like crap, okay? Like I'm a project you can't wait to

finish.

**LINDSAY:** Dennis. I didn't –

**DENNIS:** Whatever.

**LINDSAY:** I thought it was just our thing, you know? Twins taking care of each other. I didn't realize it was a weapon.

**DENNIS:** Let's drop it.

**LINDSAY:** I promise, on Grandma's Precious Moments, I will never sigh at you like that again. From now on, if you're being an idiot, I'll just tell you to your face.

**DENNIS:** Forget it.

**LINDSAY:** But I promise.

**DENNIS:** Okay. You promise.

**LINDSAY:** Okay. So, where's the Nintendo? I know she kept it. Grandma never threw anything away. She still had index cards from Richard Simmons' Deal-A-Meal.

**DENNIS:** Not the Nintendo. The SUPER Nintendo.

**LINDSAY:** Pardon me. The SUPER Nintendo.

**DENNIS:** It's the only thing we ever used together without fighting.

**LINDSAY:** Because it was a cooperative experience.

**DENNIS:** It wasn't that cooperative. You used to steal my power ups. I'd do all the work, and jump over all the lava, and you'd just slide in and take the leaf.

**LINDSAY:** I wasn't stealing, I was using the flight capabilities. As the older twin, I have a natural responsibility to fly ahead.

**DENNIS:** You were born four minutes earlier because you kicked me out of the way. I've still got a dent in my head. And being born first doesn't make you the CEO of childhood.

**LINDSAY:** You're just jealous that I had the whole world to myself for four minutes.

**DENNIS:** Four minutes to plan your socialist agenda.

**LINDSAY:** Oh, yeah? Well, you were an uninvited guest!

**DENNIS:** Oh, yeah? Well, that kick cost me my thumbs, too!

(He holds up his hands. He doesn't have any thumbs.)

That's a hell of a tax for coming in second place! Do you know how hard it is to play Super Mario 3 with no thumbs? I had to use my index finger to jump and my palm to run. I looked like a crab trying to use a calculator.

**LINDSAY:** Wait. Is that why you always played as Toad in Mario Kart? Because his head was bigger and you thought it gave you better balance?

**DENNIS:** No, I played Toad because he didn't wear shoes and I respected his lifestyle. Also, his steering wheel was smaller. Easier to palm.

(LINDSAY pulls a dusty envelope out of a box.)

**LINDSAY:** Hey, look at this. It's my certificate of participation from the regional science fair. "The Effect of Dolly Parton on Kidney Beans."

**DENNIS:** I remember that. You played "Islands in the Stream" to a bean for three weeks and it died.

**LINDSAY:** It didn't die! It reached its natural conclusion. I wanted to prove that empathy could grow things. I ended up with a pot full of mold and a C minus.

**DENNIS:** You're insane.

**LINDSAY:** Maybe. I thought I was going to change the world's agricultural systems. Now I spend my days trying to make sure kids named Jaden and Kaden and Braden don't eat all the crayons.

(DENNIS pulls a large wooden block out of a different box.)

**DENNIS:** Hey, look at this. I made this in seventh grade shop class. It was supposed to be a bird house.

**LINDSAY:** It doesn't have a hole.

**DENNIS:** Yeah, well, the drill press and I had a disagreement. So it's basically just a paperweight. I wanted to be an architect. I wanted to build skyscrapers that touched the clouds. Instead, I spend ten hours a day making sure some guy's guest bathroom is exactly forty five degrees. It's definitely not a skyscraper. It's just a very straight crapper.

**LINDSAY:** (Softly) We really thought we'd be more, didn't we?

**DENNIS:** (Shrugs) I look at this block, and I think about how I had to hold the chisel with my wrists because I couldn't grip the handle. It's a miracle I didn't lose a hand, let alone a thumb. Meh. I did what I could with the tools I had.

(LINDSAY holds up the certificate of participation and laughs.)

**LINDSAY:** Is participation really worth celebrating?

**DENNIS:** It takes up space on the fridge. That has to mean something.

**LINDSAY:** I guess. I'm not curing world hunger, but I haven't let Jaden eat a blue crayon yet.

**DENNIS:** That's a win in my book. Blue is the most toxic flavor.

**LINDSAY:** So we're just... mediocre?

**DENNIS:** Nah. We're just grown ups. We did as best as possible with the four minute head start you had and the ten percent of fingers I was missing.

**LINDSAY:** Speaking of asbestos, if we stay up here any longer, we're going to need medical intervention.

**DENNIS:** (Points at a beam) Look at that beam wrapping. That's low grade insulation. It's the "Oops, all Mesothelioma" crap.

**LINDSAY:** (Covers her mouth with her shirt) Don't point at it! You're agitating the particles!

**DENNIS:** It's not a beehive, Linds. It's insulation. It's been hanging there for decades, minding its own business.

**LINDSAY:** You sure?

(She reaches into a cardboard box and pulls out a stuffed bear. It's matted and covered in fuzz.)

Teddy Ruxpin looks like he died of lung cancer forty years ago.

(DENNIS picks up an old golf club, also covered in fuzz.)

**DENNIS:** And since when do nine irons grow fur? I think the asbestos actually ate through the chrome. One swing with this and you'd wipe out an entire country club.

**LINDSAY:** Everything up here is a bio hazard.

(She pulls a toaster out of a box.)

Look at this toaster! Why is there a toaster in the attic?!

**DENNIS:** Grandma thought throwing things away was a sin against the Great Depression. Look at the cord. It's not even rubber, it's braided fabric. If you plug that in, you don't get toast, you get a portal to 1922.

**LINDSAY:** And probably a house fire. That's it, we're abandoning the mission. I can feel my lungs closing up in protest.

**DENNIS:** Relax. I figured you'd have a panic attack by the third box. Here.

(He reaches into his back pocket and pulls out two pristine N95 masks. He tosses one at LINDSAY. She catches it.)

**LINDSAY:** An N95? With the cooling valve? Dennis, this is professional grade. This is the "I actually value my longevity" model.

**DENNIS:** I keep them in the truck for when I'm ripping out old drywall. I'm not an idiot, you know. I just don't like being told what to do by people who don't know how a load bearing wall works.

(He snaps the mask over his mouth.)

**LINDSAY:** Wait a second. You're putting one on, too? Without a court order, or a sign on a coffee shop door?

**DENNIS:** It's a dusty attic. I can actually see the particles, and they're the size of Corn Pops.

(LINDSAY follows suit and puts the mask on, her voice going nasal.)

**LINDSAY:** Wow. I guess I'm just confused by the consistency of your logic. I asked you to wear a mask to Thanksgiving because Aunt Anita was 104 and basically held together by hope,

but you told me breathing was a constitutional right that didn't require a filter.

**DENNIS:** That was different.

**LINDSAY:** It was the same air, Dennis! The air is the air!

**DENNIS:** No, see, that was about principles. This is about fibers. If a guy tells me I have to wear a hat to enter his building, I'm gonna fight him on it. But if a giant rock is falling toward my head, I'm putting on a hard hat. I'm a practical man. I respond to physics, not suggestions.

**LINDSAY:** So, if the suggestion comes from your sister who has a Master's degree, it's tyranny. But if the suggestion comes from a grey puff of insulation, it's common sense?

**DENNIS:** The insulation isn't trying to smuggle a social agenda into my respiratory system. It's just being insulation.

**LINDSAY:** It's being asbestos!

**DENNIS:** It's being predictable! I know exactly what it's gonna do. It's gonna sit there and be toxic. I can respect that. I can't respect a rule that changes every time a new study comes out of a university that charges fifty grand a year for tuition.

**LINDSAY:** The studies change because we learn things! That's how science works! It's a process of becoming less wrong!

**DENNIS:** It's a process of you making me feel like a jerk for wanting to see your face while you tell me I'm wrong.

(He turns away and grabs a new box. A pause.)

**LINDSAY:** I'm sorry.

**DENNIS:** Whatever.

**LINDSAY:** No. I'm actually sorry.

**DENNIS:** Are we gonna argue, or are we gonna find the game? My face is getting sweaty.

(LINDSAY adjusts her mask, then sighs loudly. DENNIS spins around sharply glares at her.)

**LINDSAY:** I'm sorry! I'm sorry! It came out by accident.

**DENNIS:** Let's just do this thing.

**LINDSAY:** Okay, okay. But you look very responsible right now and it's deeply confusing.

**DENNIS:** Don't get used to it. As soon as we hit the driveway, I'm going back to breathing raw, unfiltered freedom –

**DENNIS:/LINDSAY:** (Together) And the smell of diesel.

**LINDSAY:** I know, I know.

(DENNIS finds a box labelled "Christmas." His mood suddenly lightens.)

**DENNIS:** Hey, look! This one's taped shut with the heavy duty stuff.

**LINDSAY:** Wait. That's Grandma's handwriting. "Christmas. No Peeking."

**DENNIS:** Maybe this is it!

(He starts peeling the tape from the top of the box.)

**LINDSAY:** Be careful! If there's a fruitcake from the 80s in there, it's gotta be radioactive by now.

**DENNIS:** My hands are trembling!

**LINDSAY:** That could be asbestos anxiety. It's a real thing. I read a paper on it. It's the sensation of your DNA being rewritten.

**DENNIS:** You've read a paper on everything. As long as you don't start snorting lines off the rafters, we're fine.

**LINDSAY:** Just for the record, I would like to sigh. But I'm not going to.

**DENNIS:** Dealing with a classroom full of kids, that's a bio hazard. This is just vintage air.

**LINDSAY:** It's corporate negligence!

(She pulls a mug out of a cardboard box, covered in fluff.)

Look at this "World's Best Grandma" mug. It has a beard!

**DENNIS:** (Laughs) It provides a better grip. If I had a beard like that on my hands, I wouldn't need thumbs.

**LINDSAY:** That's the most disgusting thing you've ever said.

(DENNIS opens the lid of the box. His eyes widen.)

**DENNIS:** Linds?

**LINDAY:** Yeah?

**DENNIS:** (Excitement growing) You ready?

**LINDSAY:** Is it...?

**DENNIS:** The princess is not in another castle.

(He reaches inside and pulls out a Super Nintendo. Two tangled controllers dangle from the console.)

She's right here!

## **END OF PREVIEW**

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