

SPRING IS FOR THE BIRDS

by Alan David Perkins

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CHARACTERS

5 Workers
Cameraman
Sandy Beech
Tyrone Shoelaces
Winter
Summer
Woody Branch
Rabbit
Bear
Squirrel
Snake
Sonny Skies
4 Seeds
Barbara Blacksheep
Larry Bird
Lady Bird
Harold Bird
Sally Bird
Candy Wrapper
Groundhog
Autumn's Secretary
Autumn
Bob White
5 Students
Spring
Mother Nature

(The 5 WORKERS walk in a circle
in the center of the stage.
Each carries a sign saying
"Strike".)

5 WORKERS

Strike! We're on strike! Unfair! (etc.)

(SANDY BEECH, a news reporter,
runs on and adjusts her
clothing.)

SANDY

How do I look?

CAMERAMAN

Fix your collar.

SANDY

Are you ready now?

CAMERMAN

Three, two, one ...

SANDY

Are we on?

CAMERAMAN

And we're rolling!

SANDY

(to the audience) Hello, I'm Sandy Beech, and if you've just joined us, it is official, Spring has gone on strike — there will be no spring coming this year. I'm here with the members of Seasons Local Union number 407. Excuse me ...

(WORKER 1 comes to SANDY.)

WORKER 1

Yes?

SANDY

Is it true that Spring is on strike?

WORKER 1

That's absolutely correct. Spring is on strike.

SANDY

Now, that's a tall order — an entire season going on strike.

WORKER 1

I know we're up against some pretty stiff odds, but the boss says Strike, and we strike.

SANDY

Now, the boss you refer to is Spring himself?

WORKER 1

That's right. One of the hardest workers I've ever seen. We're his crew, and we back him up no matter what.

SANDY

How long do you expect this will continue?

WORKER 1

Only Spring knows that.

(WORKER 1 goes back to the circle.)

SANDY

(To the audience) Well, there you have it. The boss says Strike. Why would a season do such a thing? We take you now to Tyrone Shoelaces. Tyrone ...

(From another part of the stage, TYRONE enters with WINTER.)

TYRONE

Thank you, Sandy. Tyrone Shoelaces reporting live from Season Central. We're all concerned about the decision to cancel spring this year, so I'm here at Season Central to see if we can get a better understanding of the situation at hand. I'm here with Winter. Hello, Winter.

WINTER

(Yawns) Hello. Will this take long? I'm sleepy.

TYRONE

I'm sure it won't. Tell me, Winter, why is Spring on strike?

WINTER

I don't know what his problem is. Seasons have it easy. Take me, for instance. During winter everything slows down. The animals go into hibernation, the plants die, the waters freeze over ... I basically just sit still. It's a cushy job.

TYRONE

So you do basically nothing.

WINTER

That's not true. I nap.

TYRONE

That's all?

WINTER

Well, there IS the occasional snack.

TYRONE

(to the audience) And there you have it.

WINTER

Can I go back to bed now?

TYRONE

Oh, if you have to.

(to the audience)

This is Tyrone Shoelaces, reporting from Season Central.

Back to you, Sandy.

SANDY

Thank you, Tyrone. I have another one of the workers with me who can shed a little more light on this whole thing.

WORKER 2

Nope. That's the whole point. No light will be shed.

SANDY

But you just said ...

WORKER 2

I'll tell you what's going on ... we're not shedding any light. We're not bringing spring. You see, every year it's the same thing. Since Winter does basically nothing, it's all up to us to get things going. We have to wake up the animals, get the plants growing, bring out the sun, warm up the air ... it's a lot of work. And then Summer comes and basically lets everything run wild.

SANDY

Fascinating. And what about Autumn?

WORKER 2

Autumn? All talk, no action. But you gotta watch him — he likes to look good.

SANDY

So you're saying that Winter, Summer and Autumn do little to nothing.

WORKER 2

That's exactly what I'm saying. They put in a few hours and sit back, but we bust our ...

WORKERS

(Interrupting) STRIKE! WE'RE ON STRIKE!

SANDY

(to the audience) If you've just joined us, Spring is on strike. If I understand this correctly, Spring feels that he shoulders so much of the workload, that the entire season is on strike.

WORKER 2

That is correct, Sandy.

SANDY

Furthermore, they're saying that the other seasons are basically lazy. Tyrone, what can you find out at Season Central.

(TYRONE enters again, this time with SUMMER.)

TYRONE

I'm here with Summer. Summer, it appears that Spring has made some pretty harsh accusations. What are your thoughts on the matter?

SUMMER

Dude! Spring, like, needs to chill out.

TYRONE

But is he right?

SUMMER

Spring is definitely a hard-working dude. There's no doubt about that. He needs to lay back, get mellow. Take it easy, man.

TYRONE

But isn't that the problem? He's decided to do just that?

SUMMER

Aw, bummer. You're right. Spring, dude, you gotta get your head together!

TYRONE

Mister Summer ... I can call you "Summer," can't I?

SUMMER

Righteous!

TYRONE

Summer — what exactly do you DO?

SUMMER

Aw, I got it great! I lay back, let my hair down, munch some chips, hit the waves, catch a gnarly curl — it's awesome! Being Summer rocks!

TYRONE

I think I understand.

SANDY

Tyrone?

TYRONE

Yes, Sandy?

SANDY

Tyrone — we've now heard from both Winter and Summer. They seem to be in total agreement with the workers. Spring carries most of the burden of the year's weather while the other seasons basically sit back and enjoy the fruits of Springs labors.

TYRONE

It appears to be true, Sandy.

SANDY

Is there any way you can get an interview with Autumn?

TYRONE

I've put in an appointment with this secretary. With luck we'll be hearing from him soon.

SANDY

We'll be waiting. We go now to Woody Branch, out in the field. Woody, what's happening in the field?

(WOODY enters with BEAR,
RABBIT, SQUIRREL and SNAKE, who
lies very still.)

WOODY

Actually, I'm not in the field, I'm in the forest. I'm here with what you might call the Woodland Animals.

BEAR

That's right — we're with the Woodland Animals Local Union number 43.

WOODY

Now, surely you've heard the news that Spring is on strike.

BEAR

You BET we have.

RABBIT

I think it stinks.

SQUIRREL

You can't imagine the implications of this catastrophe.

WOODY

I'm sure I can't. Can you give us an overview?

SPRING IS FOR THE BIRDS - 7

BEAR

For starters, we've finished hibernating! Like it or not, our clocks say it's time to get up. But now it's too cold, so we can't do anything but sit around the house.

SNAKE

Help ... can't move ...

SQUIRREL

And since we only put away enough food for the winter, we'll starve!

RABBIT

Not to mention that no fruits and leaves will be growing, so even if we DID go outside, there's nothing there to eat!

SNAKE

... help ...

WOODY

Is this true?

BEAR

Better believe it, hu-man.

SNAKE

Help!

WOODY

What's his problem?

BEAR

Oh, he's cold-blooded. Locks up stiff as a board until spring.

SNAKE

... cold ...

SQUIRREL

Nuts!

WOODY

I know it's nuts.

SQUIRREL

No, nuts. I'm looking for nuts.

BEAR

Yeah. Got any food?

SANDY

Woody?

WOODY

Yes, Sandy?

SANDY

You might want to ask them if this will effect next winter?

WOODY

Will this effect next winter?

RABBIT

If nothing grows, we can't put anything away. We'll be doomed!

SQUIRREL

I spend the better part of the year putting away nuts. If there are no nuts, then I don't eat during the winter. I'll starve.

BEAR

We'll all starve.

SNAKE

... freezing ...

WOODY

And there you have it. Woody Branch, out in the field ... uh ... woods.

SANDY

Thank you, Woody. Spring is on strike. I hear that we're trying to get an interview with the source of all this, Spring himself. We now have a report with Sonny Skies, who is REALLY in the field. Sonny?

(SONNY enters with 4 SEEDS, who do nothing but sit.)

SONNY

Thank you, Sandy. Hello, this is Sonny Skies reporting in the field ... literally. I'm here with five seeds.

SEEDS

Hi. How's it going. Yo. (etc.)

SONNY

Now, as you know, Spring is on strike. How do you see this effecting you?

SEED 1

Oh, it won't effect us at all ... except that WE WON'T GROW.

SEED 2

How'd you like to be stuck in a little shell in the ground?

SEED 3

We have such potential!! I could be a fifty foot pine tree!

SEED 2

Except for that you're a sunflower.

SEED 3

Ah, who asked you.

SEED 2

You know if spring doesn't come soon ... (whispers) we could die.

SEED 1

What was that?

SEED 3

We'll get through this.

SEED 4

I remember when I fell off the back of a bee. I had no idea where I'd land. But I've made a nice home here and now it's time to sprout. I think I can speak for the others by saying that it's time to grow!

ALL SEEDS

Yeah! Time to grow! Yeah! (etc.)

SONNY

A touching display. This is Sonny Skies reporting from the field. Literally.

SEED 1

Yeah. Literally. Funny.

SANDY

Thank you, Sonny. Next we go to Barbara Blacksheep, who has an interesting take on this whole thing. Barbara

(BARBARA enters with the BIRDS, who look like tourists. They wear Mickey Mouse ears.)

BARBARA

Hewwo, Sandy. This is Bawbwa Bwacksheep. I'm here in Orwando, Fworida — Disney Worwd to be exact — with the Bird family.

LARRY BIRD

Hi. I'm Larry Bird, and this is my lovely wife, Lady Bird
...

LADY BIRD

Hello. Hi Mom!

LARRY BIRD

And our children, Harold and Sally.

HAROLD

Dad, can we ride Space Mountain again?

BARBARA

Now, you're actually GLAD Spring is on strike?

LARRY BIRD

Yes. Spring is for the birds. Ha! I made a joke!

HAROLD

Good one, Dad. Not.

LADY BIRD

As you know birds fly South for the winter. Well, this year we wound up in Disney World and, by golly, we're having the BEST time!

SALLY

I wanna see "It's a Small World!"

LARRY BIRD

In a moment, sweetie.

BARBARA

But without Sprwng, you'll be stuck in Fworida.

LARRY BIRD

And what's your point?

LADY BIRD

Don't get us wrong — for years we've flown North for the spring, then South for the winter, then North for the spring again, then South for the winter again. We're just getting a little tired of it. So, we've decided to just stay in Florida where it's warmer.

BARBARA

But what about food?

LARRY BIRD

There's food down South.

BARBARA

What about the nests you've weft behind?

LADY BIRD

I understand Animal Kingdom has some nice condos for sale.

SALLY

Can we go to Epcot?

HAROLD

Mom, I'm hungry.

SALLY

Me too, me too!

LARRY BIRD

In a minute, kids. You know how kids are. They get so peckish this time of day.

BARBARA

Of course.

SANDY

Excuse me, Barbara.

BARBARA

Yes, Sandy?

SANDY

We've just gotten a hold of someone I think our viewers are going to want to hear from. We take you now to Candy Wrapper who has a special report. Candy ...

(CANDY enters with the
GROUNDHOG.)

CANDY

Thank you Sandy. I'm here with the one-and-only Groundhog.

GROUNDHOG

WHAT? IS THAT CAMERA ROLLING?!!

CANDY

You can relax, Mr. Groundhog.

GROUNDHOG

OH? IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY!

CANDY

Mr. Groundhog, I'm sure you know that Spring is on strike.

SPRING IS FOR THE BIRDS - 12

GROUNDHOG

HE'S RUINED MY LIFE!!

CANDY

I can see how this will effect you. I mean, you basically usher in the spring.

GROUNDHOG

OH MAN, I CAN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE!! IT'S ALL UP TO ME!
IT'S ALL ON MY SHOULDERS!

CANDY

I understand you've already made your history-making appearance months ago.

GROUNDHOG

OH, REMIND ME, WHY DON'T YOU! IT'S JUST THE BIGGEST EMBARRASSMENT OF MY LIFE.

CANDY

You mean Spring not following through?

GROUNDHOG

EVERY YEAR IT'S THE SAME THING: "IS SPRING COMING?" "IS IT SIX WEEKS OR JUST AROUND THE CORNER?" WHEN, WHEN, WHEN ... IT NEVER STOPS!! IT'S ALL UP TO ME! DO YOU HEAR ME?! EVERYBODY WAITS FOR ME TO CALL THE SHOTS!! NOW I'M NOTHING BUT A BIG, FAT LIAR!!

CANDY

Nobody thinks you're a liar.

GROUNDHOG

NO! I'M A BIG, FAT, UGLY, FURRY, SMELLY LIAR!!! IT'S ALL MY FAULT!!! I ALREADY TOLD EVERYONE SPRING WAS COMING!! NOW IT'S NOT COMING AT ALL!!! WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE TO YOU, SPRING!

CANDY

So, according to the Groundhog ...

GROUNDHOG

SPRING! BUDDY!! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT AGAINST ME? WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE TO YOU? WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN PARTNERS, YOU AND I! I MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT, AND YOU FOLLOW! YOU'RE THROWING EVERYTHING OFF!!! YOU GOTTA END THIS STRIKE! I CAN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE!! I CAN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE!!!

CANDY

This is Candy Wrapper, live with the Groundhog. Back to you, Sandy ... and FAST.

GROUNDHOG

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAUGH!!!!

SANDY

Thank you, Candy, for that ... loud report.

CAMERAMAN

Psst! We've got Tyrone.

SANDY

Oh! We've got Tyrone Shoelaces back at Season Central.
Have you got something for us, Tyrone?

(TYRONE returns with AUTUMN's
SECRETARY.)

TYRONE

Yes I do, Sandy. I have a rare exclusive with Autumn.
Now, Autumn ...

SECRETARY

Mr. Autumn will be with you shortly.

TYRONE

You're not Autumn?

SECRETARY

Oh, certainly not. I'm his secretary.

TYRONE

When will Autumn be able to speak with us?

SECRETARY

Autumn is a very busy season.

TYRONE

Oh, is he now?

SECRETARY

That's right. He's on a very tight schedule. This morning
he saw his stylist, and then he went to see his tailor.
Right now he's returning from the gym. He tends to put on
a few pounds during the winter, you see.

TYRONE

But as a Season ...

SECRETARY

Mr. Autumn is extremely busy, you know.

TYRONE

Doing what?

SECRETARY

Now, that's entirely up to Mr. Autumn now, isn't it?

TYRONE

Yes, I suppose it is.

SECRETARY

Here he comes now, right on schedule!

(AUTUMN enters with a grand gesture.)

AUTUMN

Thank you, thank you. Take a message, please. Dear Mr. Summer: I humbly accept your offer to spend this summer at your seaside resort. Please contact my secretary to make all the arrangements, blah blah blah, etcetera etcetera etcetera. Very truly yours, Autumn. Get that out right away, would you?

TYRONE

Uh, Mr. Autumn.

AUTUMN

Yes, that's me. And I tell you that I have the utmost confidence that we're doing all we can on this matter. Furthermore, you can trust me completely to do whatever it is that's necessary in order to continue the fine traditions that have been placed before us. Thank you, thank you.

TYRONE

Now, Mr. Autumn. About Spring being on strike ...

AUTUMN

Yes. It's a shame. But I assure you that I would never do such a thing, and you can count on my continuing service and support. Thank you, you're too kind.

TYRONE

So, what is it exactly you do, Mr. Autumn?

AUTUMN

Do? Why, all I can. All I can. Thank you.

TYRONE

And that would be ... ?

AUTUMN

Ah, you're a feisty one. Very well. Autumn is a very, very difficult season. One must have a keen eye for color and style. Winter is just around the corner, you know, so I must be sure that the plants wither and the leaves fall ...

TYRONE

Isn't that up to gravity?

AUTUMN

It's that Gravity again, stealing my spotlight. Take a letter: Dear Mr. Gravity: Once again it is apparent that YOU are taking credit for my toil and labor. I see no further recourse but to have my lawyers contact you. Very truly yours, Autumn. Get that out right away, would you?

SECRETARY

Yes sir, Mr. Autumn.

TYRONE

And about the plants withering. Isn't that because Summer let them all run wild?

AUTUMN

Take a letter. Dear Mr. Summer: Once again it is apparent that YOU are taking credit for my toil and labor. I see no further recourse but to have my lawyers contact you. Very truly yours, Autumn. Oh, P.S. I retract my offer to stay at your seaside resort. Get that out right away, would you?

TYRONE

So, what are you going to do now, being that Spring is on strike?

AUTUMN

I have an appointment to have my colors done. What do you think — golds? reds?

SECRETARY

Oh, that would be just lovely.

TYRONE

Sandy, do you have any questions for Mr. Autumn?

SANDY

As a matter of fact ...

AUTUMN

No time. But feel free to make an appointment with my secretary. Ta, ta! Thank you, thank you.

(AUTUMN exits.)

SANDY

So, there you have it ... an exclusive, rare and strangely uninformative interview with Autumn.

WORKER 3

So, you see that we weren't kidding.

SANDY

For those who just joined us, I'm standing here with a member of Seasons Local Union number 407. You've worked directly with Spring for many years, is that correct?

WORKER 3

Absolutely. Spring is one of the hardest working Seasons I've ever seen. He just doesn't order us around. He doesn't tell us to do anything that he doesn't happily do himself.

SANDY

Do you have a specific responsibility?

WORKER 3

Yes I do. I get the plants growing.

WORKER 1

Sun detail. I make the weather warmer.

WORKER 2

Livestock. I tend to the animals and insects.

WORKER 4

Snow removal.

WORKER 5

Social events. You know ... kite flying, baseball, barbecues, school graduations ...

SANDY

Speaking of which, we have a special report in now from Bob White. Come in, Bob.

(BOB enters with 5 STUDENTS.)

BOB

Thank you, Sandy. I'm here with students from [Name of this school] in [location of school]. As you already know, Spring is on strike.

STUDENT 1

I know! It's freezing out here!

BOB

How does this effect you?

STUDENT 1

Well, first of all, we can't play in the schoolyard.

STUDENT 2

If spring doesn't come, we'll be in the fifth grade forever!

STUDENT 3

I kinda like being in fifth grade! I got [teacher's name]!

STUDENT 4

Hey, I'm looking forward to summer vacation. My family is taking me to Disney World!

BOB

I hear they're having a bird problem down there.

STUDENT 2

I want to graduate!

STUDENT 5

I play in the band. If spring doesn't come, we'll be practicing that music for the spring concert until I'm old!

STUDENT 1

Maybe you'll finally hit all the notes.

STUDENT 5

That's not funny.

STUDENT 1

I want to go to High School and play on the baseball team. If spring doesn't come, we won't get to play in the schoolyard and I'll never get my pitching arm in shape.

STUDENT 3

Hey, we won't have to take the city-wide exams!

BOB

Do you have any messages for Spring?

STUDENT 1

Yeah. Look, Spring ... we know that sometimes you have to work hard, and sometimes it seems like it's not worth it. But nobody can do what you do, and we're all counting on you.

STUDENT 2

Yeah. Come back, Spring.

ALL STUDENTS

Yeah. Come back, spring.

BOB

And there you have it, Sandy. From [school], this is Bob White reporting.

(The WORKERS all see SPRING approaching, and they crowd around him.)

SANDY

We're back, and, yes, Spring is here! The cause of all of this turmoil has arrived. Spring, Spring ... over here! An interview, please!

SPRING

Yes?

SANDY

Sandy Beech, and we're live on the air. Do you have a statement to make?

SPRING

As a matter of fact, I do.

SANDY

Give him room, give him room.

SPRING

Ladies and gentlemen. I want to apologize for all of this, but you have to understand that I have no choice. I've been doing this for a long time, and the workload is simply unfair. Winter just sleeps all the time, Summer lets everything I've done go to waste and Autumn ... well, nobody's quite sure what Autumn does. But my job is never quite done. From bringing in the sun to making everything grow ... it's just not fair. I appreciate all of you who want me to end this strike, but it's just not possible. WE'RE ON STRIKE!!

SPRING IS FOR THE BIRDS - 19

SPRING and WORKERS

WE'RE ON STRIKE! WE'RE ON STRIKE! (etc.)

SANDY

Amazing. Spring, is there anything that will make you end this strike? Spring? Hello? Spring?