IN THE CLOUDS

An interactive play for ages 2-6

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CHARACTERS

DR. PUFFY* (PhD), A Junior Cloud Scientist, Dr. Puffy is in training at the Cloud Lab. Dr. Puffy desperately wants to do a good job on her first day, but she gets distracted by the many possibilities of cloud science.

DR. WISPY* (PhD), A Senior Cloud Scientist and Cloud Lab supervisor, Dr. Wispy is efficient and detail-oriented. This leads Dr. Puffy to (wrongly) believe that she is no fun!

JUNIOR CLOUD SCIENTISTS, the audience, in training alongside Dr. Puffy.

*Dr. Puffy and Dr. Wispy can be played by actors of any gender and race. This script uses she/her pronouns, but pronouns can be changed to reflect performer identities. An effort should be made to cast performers who challenge societal expectations of what scientists look like.

SETTING

The Cloud Lab, where clouds are prepared and shelved in the sky.

Between performances, the Cloud Lab is an installation where young people play freely, shaping cloud fluff into different types of clouds. If desired, this installation can have a STEM connection. An installation copy of THE COMPLETE MANUAL OF CLOUD MIXOLOGY (3rd Edition) lays out the different types of clouds- cirrus, cumulus, stratus, etc.- and participants try to recreate them with their cloud fluff.

During performances, the Cloud Lab becomes a performance space, where audience members (Junior Cloud Scientists) play in specific ways when invited by the performers.

PRE-SHOW

As audience members arrive, DR. WISPY and DR. PUFFY offer them JUNIOR CLOUD SCIENTIST sticker name tags. Maybe audience members decorate these name tags as a pre-show activity.

DR. WISPY and DR. PUFFY

(*to audience members as they enter, ad-libbing*)

Welcome to the Cloud Lab! Welcome Junior Scientists! Good morning, doctors! It's the perfect day for a perfect cloud!

SCENE 1: HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT CLOUD

Senior Cloud Scientist DR. WISPY greets the newly recruited scientists-in-training. Among them is DR. PUFFY, an eager Junior Cloud Scientist.

DR.WISPY

Welcome to the Cloud Lab!

Dr. Puffy claps and whoops enthusiastically, then seems self-conscious of this display.

DR. WISPY

Today, you will learn to make the perfect cloud! This training may require you to leave your seat later on. Adult Scientists, please help your Junior Scientists navigate the lab and return to their seats.

Now- how to make the perfect cloud!

With a flourish, Dr. Wispy reveals the Cloud Machine from beneath a sheet.

Step one: a dash.

Everyone, show me "a dash" with your hands. Very good.

The audience gestures.

Step two: a sprinkle.

Let me see your sprinkle.

Gestures.

Step three: a stir
Like this-

The audience rolls their hands, imitating Dr. Wispy.

Keep stirring! Excellent!

POOF! A puffy cloud is created. Soft, fluffy, swirly – a textbook-perfect cloud, as we can see when Dr. Wispy compares it to an illustration in THE COMPLETE MANUAL OF CLOUD MIXOLOGY (3rd Edition). Dr. Wispy measures the cloud with a tape measure stored in the pocket of her lab coat.

DR. WISPY

Perfect.

She shelves the cloud carefully.

DR. WISPY

Doctor, would you like-

Trembling with excitement, Dr. Puffy can't wait to try. A dash, a sprinkle, a stir, poof! A tiny cloud puffs out of the machine. Dr. Wispy measures it and shakes her head -too small to meet the Cloud Mixology Standard.

DR.WISPY

Practice makes perfect!

Dr. Wispy leaves Dr. Puffy to practice some more.

SCENE 2: TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

Dr. Puffy is determined to make the perfect cloud. She repeats the sequence. Dash, sprinkle, stir… the cloud is still too small. Dr. Puffy has an idea. She encourages the audience to do the

gestures with her. A dash, a sprinkle, a stir, POOF! The cloud is almost identical to Dr. Wispy's. What if they try even harder? A big dash, a heavy sprinkling, a vigorous stir, BOOOM! Dr. Puffy is nearly buried in an avalanche of cloud.

DR. WISPY pops back in to see how things are going. Dr. Puffy frantically hides the mess, perhaps draping it with the sheet that was covering the Cloud Machine. Dr. Puffy lounges nonchalantly on the lumpy pile.

Dr. Wispy examines the previous, medium-sized cloud that Dr. Puffy created. She nods approvingly, comparing it to the illustration in the cloud manual.

DR. WISPY

Almost perfect!

She shelves it in the sky, and pats Dr. Puffy on the shoulder before exiting.

The moment Dr. Wispy leaves, Dr. Puffy jumps into action. She compares the mountain of cloud to the illustration in the manual. Egad! This is certainly not perfect! She starts cutting up the big cloud into smaller clouds, shelving them as she goes.

SCENE 3: TREASURES

While Dr. Puffy is cutting up the cloud pile, something falls out of the fluff in her hands with a PLUNK. It's a little airplane. Dr. Puffy is delighted! She pilots the airplane past the front row of the audience, then sets it carefully on a shelf. Are there more treasures?

Dr. Puffy picks up another cloud. She shakes it- we hear something rattle! Dr. Puffy tries to get the object out but can't. She approaches the audience and asks a Junior Cloud Scientist to reach into the cloud. They pull out a little bird! Dr. Puffy wants more! Another one, a little butterfly. Another one, a little kite! Dr. Puffy

lines up her treasures on the shelf. She is just about to get more when-

DR. WISPY returns. She is very pleased with all the new clouds on the shelves.

DR. WISPY

Almost perfect!

But what's this, a cloud on the ground? Dr. Wispy picks it up and goes to shelve it. As she approaches, she notices the little objects lined up neatly. She does a double take, perhaps pausing to wipe her glasses. Before she can get a closer look, Dr. Puffy scoops them up and hides them! "My eyes must be tired," thinks Dr. Wispy, as she leaves Dr. Puffy to continue her work.

SCENE 5: RAIN

Dr. Puffy resolves to stay on the straight and narrow. She continues her labor of excavating the clouds from the cloud mountain. She realizes all the shelves are full. What to do? She begins piling clouds on top of each other, squeezing them in tight.

Suddenly, the clouds start to flash. The Junior Scientists hear a low rumble. Dr. Puffy frantically tries to pull some of the squished-in clouds out of the shelves, but as she removes them, she realizes they are blue and grey! Oh no! More rumbles and flashes. It starts to rain.

It's a quiet and soothing rain. Puddles start spreading across the floor. What can we see in the puddles?

Dr. Puffy and all the other junior scientists play in the rain. But they remember that there is work to do! They help Dr. Puffy mop up the puddles with the fluffy clouds.

SCENE 6: WASHER/DRYER

There is a problem. Everything is soaking wet! Dr. Puffy removes her red socks and wrings them

out. She wrings out a sopping cloud. She compares it to the illustration in the COMPLETE MANUAL OF CLOUD MIXOLOGY. Definitely NOT perfect.

Dr. Puffy has an idea! She turns a previously hidden knob on the Cloud Machine to "SPEED WASH/DRY." and another one to "WHITES." She loads the wet clouds into the machine. At the last second, she decides to add her socks before shutting the door. Why not, she shrugs. We hear washer/dryer sounds.

Wait, wait, wait. Ding-Dong-Ding! It's done. But when Dr. Puffy opens the door, OH NO!! The clouds are dyed PINK!

SCENE 7: RAINBOW

Dr. Wispy comes in at the worst possible moment.

DR. WISPY

Did I hear- what's that?

Dr. Puffy quickly closes the door of the dryer and scrambles to hide the little pink cloud in her hand. Too late to hide it, she eats it! She tries to hustle Dr. Wispy out of the room, but it's all too late. Dr. Wispy opens the dryer door... BOOM! Many, many, MANY pink clouds spill into the Cloud Lab.

Oh, it's over. Go ahead and fire me, thinks Dr. Puffy. Maybe she even removes her lab coat and hands it in. Dr. Wispy realizes how she has made Dr. Puffy feel. Dr. Wispy flips to a PINK CLOUDS page of her instruction manual. There are so many more pages, so many more types of clouds, in all sorts of shapes and colors!

DR. WISPY

Perfect! Perfect, perfect, perfect!

DR. PUFFY

Perfect?

DR. WISPY

Perfect.

Dr. Puffy reveals the treasures she found in the clouds.

DR. PUFFY

Perfect?

DR. WISPY

Perfect!

Dr. Puffy holds a single red sock in Dr. Wispy's face.

DR. PUFFY

Perfect?

Dr. Wispy reveals that she is also wearing red socks!

DR. WISPY

Perfect! Watch this!

Dr. Wispy shows Dr. Puffy how to sculpt the clouds into different shapes

Perfect!

Dr. Puffy sculpts her own silly cloud.

DR. PUFFY

Perfect!

They smile.

DR. WISPY

(to the audience)

Today, you will make the perfect cloud! Come on up!

The scientists invite the audience to come onstage and sculpt their own pink clouds. As they play and decorate the sky, a rainbow appears.