

DRIZZLE BOY

Spoiler Sheet

Below is the Scene Breakdown Spoiler Sheet for *Drizzle Boy*. Please note some changes to technical elements of the production may be changed during the previews of the show.

If you do not want the plot of the show to be spoiled do not read ahead.

The Short Story

Drizzle Boy by Ryan Enniss is the story of a male-identifying young Autistic person who is beginning his study at university. Over the course of his first semester, we follow him as he builds a rocket ship as part of his first major assignment. While he completes this task, Drizzle Boy falls in love with a female-identifying fellow student called Juliet and tries to make his parents understand that he needs to be given the space to grow-up and become his own adult person.

The Way The Story Is Told

The story is told from the perspective of the main character who is called Drizzle Boy. The play is set inside of his imaginative or psychological space. The story is non-linear – or out of order – and we are often given flashbacks into his early and adolescent life.

Drizzle Boy is onstage for the duration of the play and talks to us directly (although we are never required to answer back) about what he is going through. All of the other characters in the show are played by two other performers who enter and exit in different costumes.

Drizzle Boy begins the play by introducing a theatrical device that is used to communicate to the audience when there will be loud sounds/ music or a moment of visual intensity.

Content Warnings

Sensory access:

Audio and visual warnings have been built into this production to provide audiences with sensory sensitivities time to adjust and prepare before extreme lighting and sound cues are activated. If you have audio or visual sensitivities or are concerned about the content of the play we recommend looking through our spoiler sheet and visual story. Additionally, a breakout space will be available at the venue in our Diane Cilento Studio for those seeking a low sensory environment separate to the foyer and theatre.

Production Warnings:

This production contains: references and frank discussions about autism, high level coarse and ableist language including the word “retard”, aural depictions of bullying, depictions of medical mistreatment, references to suicide and occasional (and forewarned) loud noises and moments of visual intensity to reflect parts of the autistic experience.

Technical Warnings:

This production contains: smoke, haze, strobe, dead black outs, dynamic sound and the use of electronic cigarettes.

If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Headspace 03 9027 0100

Lifeline 13 11 14

Learn more about Autism from these great local organisations:

Code Blue for Autism codeblueforautism.com.au

Autism Queensland autismqld.com.au

The Long Story

This is an extensive description of what happens throughout Drizzle Boy’s story. Moments where there are loud noises are represented in **RED** while moments of visual intensity are in **BLUE**. In parts where they both happen together, they are represented in **PURPLE**.

Drizzle Boy begins the play by practicing some greetings or 'ice breakers' for his first day of university. Most of these are to do with outer space. He asks his plush toy Space Bear for some tips (but he remains silent). He gets dressed and readies himself for the trip to university. While he does this he tells us about the rules that he abides by – and, in turn, expects us to abide by. He communicates to us that whenever there is a loud sound that we will be warned. Same goes for any moments of visual intensity. He also tells us that if someone tries to touch him that he doesn't want to – there'll be an alarm. Just as he is about to leave – and cannot find his backpack – a six-foot figure with a goat-head enters and gives him his bag. Finally, he tells us that nobody must ever touch Space Bear. Ever.

Drizzle Boy makes his way to university. **There is a lot of stimulus – traffic, coffee machines, and the occasional loud student. This is uncomfortable for Drizzle Boy.** To make matters worse: he cannot find his way around the university campus. Just when he is about to have a sensory overload — **Juliet** enters and asks him if he's lost too. The pair make their way to their first class together: Physics.

In the classroom, a strange lecturer called **Hans** tells the student cohort that he is excited for them to begin their journey into the World of Physics. Before they can get started, they need to know who their peers are so he suggests a getting-to-know-you-activity where they tell each other a joke and some 'fun facts' about each other. Drizzle Boy and Juliet pair up. We learn that Juliet loves musicals and art. The pair bond over their mutual love of space.

When Drizzle Boy tells Juliet that he is Autistic she grows uncomfortable and leaves. Drizzle Boy tells us that this happens a lot. He explains that his life is a constellation of space-time coordinates and at each of these coordinates there is an example of an experience where people have either left him or tried to fix him.

We immediately flash back to a point in Drizzle Boy's life where his **Mother** tried to make him drink bleach. Drizzle Boy explains that his Mother thought this might 'cure him' so that he would be 'normal.' When he refuses to drink the bleach, his **Father** enters and tells him that lots of superheroes in films took special formulas to gain their powers. Eventually Drizzle Boy convinces his Mother and Father to drink 'the bleach' and when they do they both fall down and die. But Drizzle Boy explains that this didn't happen. He also tells us that his Mother did try to get him to drink bleach but at that point she was desperate.

Back in the classroom, Juliet comes back to Drizzle Boy to apologise for how she treated him and the pair receive their first batch of assignments. Juliet leaves. Hans then reveals to Drizzle Boy that is Hans Asperger. Drizzle Boy exposes Hans as something of a 'bad guy' given his checkered past which 'people tend to forget about' when talking about the medical pioneer. Hans goes to touch Drizzle Boy, as he **does a massive alarm and warning lights go off**. Hans Asperger sets Drizzle Boy further tasks **which sends Drizzle Boy into a small panic ...**

Suddenly we are transported to a space and time that is very still and calm – Drizzle Boy is able to breathe here. Just as soon as we arrive there, however, we snap quickly to:

The university library. Inside Drizzle Boy is studying when Russian cosmonaut **Valentina Tereshkova** – the first woman in space – enters. She encourages Drizzle Boy to go above and beyond for the major assignment where he has to craft a demonstration of physics motion. Valentina suggests he build a rocket ship. He agrees to.

Drizzle Boy's Father asks him how his first week went with a short response from Drizzle Boy his Father goes for a hug and an **alarm goes off**. His father asks whether he's met any female prospects. Drizzle Boy is coy about this, the opposite of his Father.

Drizzle Boy is remembering being back at uni when Juliet enters with two wraps and offers one to Drizzle Boy, they're green. Juliet shares with Drizzle Boy her passion for flowers that she inherited from her father. Juliet tells her that one of her friends thinks Drizzle Boy is cute ... and asks what her "friend" would have to do to get a date with him. Drizzle Boy is a little nervous.

Drizzle Boy's Father tosses a football back to him which pulls him back from the memory. Drizzle Boy mentioned that he did meet a girl. His Father starts talking about girls and starts to have 'The Chat.' Drizzle Boy is embarrassed about being lectured in sexual intercourse by his Father while his Mother (who has been listening) is mortified that what was meant to be a moment of father-son bonding has devolved into an 'episode of *Love Island*.'

Drizzle Boy tells us that his parents haven't really coped with his burgeoning independence since he was diagnosed as Autistic. At this point, we flashback to a scene where Drizzle Boy – dressed as a doctor – recreates how he imagined the diagnosis went. We enter a flashback where his Mother is extremely worried while his Father is slowly making sense of the idea that his son will 'never be

normal.' Drizzle Boy – as the **Doctor** – refutes the idea of what 'normal' even means. He tells us that this scene never happened ... rather it's his imagining of what happened.

While still 'in role' as the Doctor – his Mother asks him more questions about what the diagnosis means for her son. She also asks whether she'd be a 'bad mother' if she left. Drizzle Boy tells her that she has to answer some of the questions for herself and that there is a lot of assistance available to her. Drizzle Boy warns Mother that under no circumstance should she consult Google.

Drizzle Boy's Mum immediately Googles and receives some rather disparaging, almost alarmist, and ableist results from Google. **Google** confirms that Drizzle Boy will experience great difficulty finding love.

Drizzle Boy speaks to us about how he is excited about the prospect of falling in love. He shares with us his previous relationship experience before telling us he's created a non-exhaustive list of attributes that might make him desirable to a potential partner. Juliet enters and ask him if he'd like to get married. The same strange goat-headed figure enters and is the negative voice regarding marriage and love. Juliet and Drizzle Boy continue to talk about marriage and living life together. Juliet then produces a bouquet of flowers and gives them to Drizzle Boy. He is nervous to learn that the "friend" Juliet was talking about is in fact her. She then asks him to go on a date with her, Drizzle Boy asks why. As she hands over her number – she glimpses Space Bear. Drizzle Boy downplays the significance of his plush toy. When Juliet leaves, Drizzle Boy is sent into a panic attack at the thought of going on a Date.

We are transported back in time to Drizzle Boy's Formal where – once again – he is visited by the goat-headed figure. We learn that this figure is Baphomet – a literal avatar of Drizzle Boy's anxiety. Baphomet tells Drizzle Boy that nobody inside wants him there and that he should leave the formal. Drizzle Boy does a deal with this 'devil' and agrees that he'll sell his soul in exchange for some hang-out time with the apathetic creature. When he returns home, his Mother asks him why he's home so early and whether it's because his date Grace didn't like her flowers or he got into another argument with his friend Jono. Drizzle Boy says that those two people aren't friends; Grace is someone who isn't routinely mean to him and Jono was someone who lent him a pencil in class once. His mother tries to touch him, **the alarm goes off**. Drizzle Boy blames his Mother. He never wanted to go to the Formal in the first place.

Drizzle Boy works himself up into a place of anxiety and suddenly we are again transported to a space and time that is very still and calm. Only this time we stay in this place for a little longer than before and hear Mother say: ‘What are you doing up there?’

Into this serene state arrives Tereshkova. She snaps Drizzle Boy out of his reverie by telling him that she has bought him parts for his rocket so that he can begin building his spacecraft. Drizzle Boy tells Tereshkova that he has a date – she is discouraging of him being ‘distracted by love’ but concedes the date may just prove to him the necessity of hard work to prove himself to his superiors and doubters alike. Dad enters and offers a hand to help (Tereshkova is not optimistic about his involvement) and Father and Son spend some time bonding over how they used to build Lego. Drizzle Boy’s father suggests that the rocket might just be his son’s ‘Rain Man thing.’

Drizzle Boy then pauses the scene and tells us that his Father often relates real-life problems to movies and the ‘Rain Man thing’ is to do with his Father’s insistence that Drizzle Boy has latent savant capabilities. Drizzle Boy explains that he used to like the film but suggests that it hasn’t aged well and that he has a lot of questions now about the film ... Drizzle Boy goes back in time to when he was 11 and his Father introduced him to Rain Man, and gave him strange ideas on what Drizzle Boy could do. Drizzle Boy’s name – or nickname – was given to him by his Dad as a riff on Rain Man: ‘maybe you’re not Rain Man, maybe you’re more of a Drizzle Boy.’ Drizzle Boy elaborates on why he hated the film. **Dustin Hoffman** appears like a demented 1980’s whack-a-mole and then Drizzle Boy slams shut the hole he came from.

Back in the present, Drizzle Boy’s Father suggests that they test Drizzle Boy’s savantism but he refuses. Drizzle Boy tells his father that he has a date. His father is surprised and asks Drizzle Boy to tell him how it goes.

Drizzle Boy prepares a list of things to talk about on a date in case things get awkward. Baphomet enters and provides a series of altogether unhelpful conversation topics. None of which alleviate Drizzle Boy’s nerves.

On the date, sitting outside in a park, both Drizzle Boy and Juliet are exceptionally nervous. But just as Drizzle Boy goes to wrap up the evening, Juliet comments that the ‘stars are coming out.’ Immediately feeling something in common with her, these friends grow closer talking about their different relationship to the stars. Juliet tells Drizzle Boy she bought her father a star. They then talk about ‘how cool it would be’ if there was such a thing as Space Bears.

Soon after Drizzle Boy shows Juliet his Space Bear ... and she asks where he got the toy from?

Drizzle Boy takes us into a Flashback at the Planetarium where he became fixated on space; so much so that his Father couldn't remove him from the venue... without the aid of a souvenir: a plush toy dressed in an astronaut's outfit.

Back on the date Drizzle Boy tells Juliet that – more than anything – he wants to go to outer space. He tells her that he is building a rocket ship. She doesn't ridicule or laugh at this but appears genuinely encouraging. Drizzle Boy tells her she could go to outer space with him ... that they might even see a space bear! But in response to his offer: she makes a strange expression. One that he cannot read.

Drizzle Boy's inability to perceive what Juliet is thinking – or feeling – throws him into a Flashback whereby he is interrogated by a **Doctor** and taken through a series of drills where he must identify what the Doctor is thinking based on the shape of his facial expression. Drizzle Boy gets many of these expressions “wrong.” The session ends with the Doctor telling Drizzle Boy he is weird.

Still at a loss as to how to talk or communicate with Juliet – Drizzle Boy pulls out his phone to text Juliet and builds his rocket.

Hans, meanwhile, tells Drizzle Boy that he has failed his first test. When Hans asks after the progress of his major assignment, Drizzle Boy tells him he is building a rocket. Hans is bemused by the prospect and suggests creating something far more simple. This sends Drizzle Boy into a mild panic.

The panic attack leads us back into a space and time that is very still and calm. Once again we hear his Mother say: ‘What are you doing up there?’

Juliet enters. Drizzle Boy explains that he is having a bad day – which, for Drizzle Boy, means that his Synaesthesia is overwhelming. Juliet suggests they sit down and listen to some quiet music. As they listen to an ‘old song’ – one of Juliet's favorites – she asks if Drizzle Boy can show her how his Synaesthesia feels. He does. **She is transported inside of his mind for a moment – almost magically – and, while there, they dance a little.** Afterwards Juliet divulges to Drizzle Boy that the song was a favorite of her Dad's ... who passed away last year from a stroke. Drizzle Boy apologizes for not contacting Juliet after their date. Juliet asks Drizzle Boy to dance with him. Juliet concedes that it's okay. Drizzle Boy asks Juliet why she likes him. And she intimates that she's creating a list about just

why. **The duo dance again but this time Drizzle Boy is in his element – dancing with all the moves that his father gave him in preparation for the formal but that he was never able to use.** The pair come face to face, and then kiss.

Later, Mum enters and tells Drizzle Boy that it's time to go to Aunty Kate's party. Drizzle Boy does not want to go. He feels as though he hasn't been invited. Mum pleads with Drizzle Boy to go... but he chooses not to. Drizzle Boy's Mother says that she is very disappointed in him.

This interaction begins a downward spiral for Drizzle Boy who is then punished by Hans for submitting an assignment late. Hans suggests that Drizzle Boy might not be ready for university or for space. Drizzle Boy panics, tries to rally but ultimately ends up in the beginnings of an overload before ...

Hans enters and hands him an assignment, saying his essay is late. Drizzle Boy said he had applied for an extension, but Hans says it was not through the proper channels. Hans then says that he might not be ready for university and adult life and going to space.

Juliet rushes up to him to present a gift. She makes him listen to a list of reasons why Drizzle Boy is likeable. Drizzle Boy misjudges her list as a declaration of love – and solemnly swears his own! Juliet is taken aback. She explains that she doesn't love Drizzle Boy and Drizzle Boy can't understand why not? The pair argue about how Drizzle Boy doesn't like himself and how the rules by which he abides can't be followed by everyone. Drizzle Boy explains to Juliet that he can't be the walking encyclopedia on Autism. Juliet asks to be let in and when Drizzle Boy says that he 'needs help' from her she says that she is not his carer. The pair part ways.

He is momentarily thrown back into a space that calms him. Although this time we hear more from this location. We hear Mum say 'What are you doing up there?' And Dad shout 'I'm going to get you down son!'

Tereshkova enters – upset that he has not followed the plans and explains that he needs to re-consider the launch date but Drizzle Boy explains his major assignment is due tomorrow and he must take-off. Tereshkova leaves, explaining that she would never commit herself 'to a mission that is doomed to fail.' Drizzle Boy's Father breaks something on the rocket ship causing him to lash out at his Dad – he insults his love of movies and calls him 'pathetic.' Dad leaves.

Drizzle Boy's Mother enters and he asks her where Space Bear is. His mother explains to him that she thought she would wash Space Bear as he was getting dirty. She then reveals a destroyed Space Bear. Drizzle Boy begins to wail and she tries to comfort him and the **no-touch alarm goes off.**

Drizzle Boy prepares for take-off but as he does he begins to Overload – there are now a multitude of voices coming from the two performers surrounding him who move between Doctor, Mum, Dad, Juliet, Baphomet, Tereshkova... the lines between all roles are now slippery as Drizzle Boy loses a firm grip on his reality as he heads into an Overload.

Drizzle Boy is at the bottom of a black hole. The speaker starts talking about what autism is and how it impacts upon your life, the Autism Talks ad. Drizzle Boy speaks about when he was 10 years old standing on the roof of their house looking at the stars. His parents are yelling for him to come down from the roof, and think he is going to jump. Although he does think about it alot, he comes back to space, and no one owns space and no one can tell you how or what to be, if he's on earth he's Autism, if he's up there he is a new star.

His father enters with some strawberry jam toast and offers to make him a cup of tea. The two have a discussion about when his Mum will come home from her work mate Kate's house. His father tells Drizzle Boy that they are not disappointed in him for failing classes at uni and that the uni failed him for not having a space that was built for neurodiverse people.

Drizzle boy apologises to his Dad for being a failure and that he is not going to space. Dad suggests that they watch a movie together, *Alien*. Dad says that Drizzle Boy can bring the stars to him and there are other things he can do and to do things in bits and pieces. Drizzle Boy says he could look for an astronomy program somewhere, but he also wants to move out of home. Dad suggests he get a part-time job in the meantime while they look for programs.

Baphomet appears and is trying to talk Drizzle Boy into giving up while he gets dressed into a space suit. Drizzle Boy agrees that he is tired, and it would be nice to just relax but he doesn't want to give up on his dreams. Drizzle Boy acknowledges that he will always have those shitty little thoughts in his head but he doesn't need Baphomet anymore, that it is a destructive friendship. Baphomet leaves.

Mother enters and hands Drizzle Boy a helmet for his suit and makes a fuss over him, they talk about him being ready and makes sure to calm his nerves. Drizzle Boy tells her he loves her.

Drizzle Boy reflects on this experience and realises that all of the joy and wonder are right here on earth.

Juliet enters, Drizzle Boy is in his space suit working at the planetarium. Drizzle Boy apologises to Juliet for putting so much pressure on her through their relationship. Drizzle Boy thought he was always going to go to the stars, but now he gets to see them every night, and Juliet's Dad is technically part of the exhibit, and points out the constellation.

Drizzle Boy acknowledges that this is a conversation that never got to happen and Juliet wasn't really there and he filled in the gaps. Imagining it was good enough. Juliet makes a joke and then she leaves.

Hans appears for a second and tries to talk to Drizzle Boy, but he dismisses him. Drizzle Boy speaks about what it would be like to be up in space and all he can see back down on earth. The life that he's lived, and the dreams he had. This is his last transmission. Drizzle Boy is reunited with a special friend in the form of Space Bear and he tells us his birth name.