

Reader's Theater

Appleseed
John

Susan Brown

2nd Edition

Reader's Theater: Appleseed John by Susan Brown

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Warm Hearts Publishing

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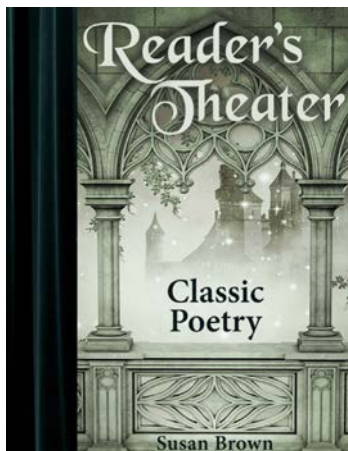
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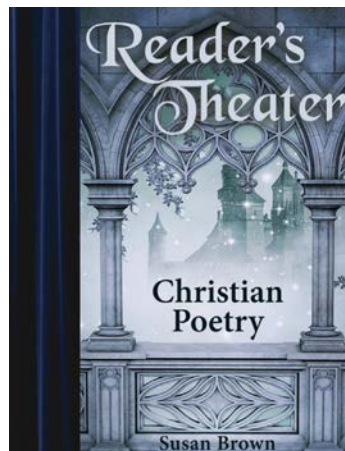
Portions of this book are based on text from the following works:

One Thousand Poems for Children: A Choice of the Best Verse Old and New. Edited by Roger Ingpen.

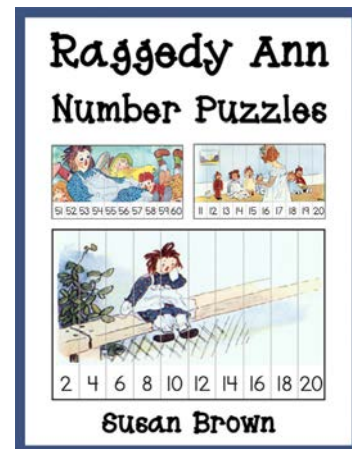
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Introduction

What is Reader's Theater?

Reader's Theater is the oral presentation of a written work that is performed with two or more readers. Memorization is not required because the focus of this form of drama is on *reading* the work with expression rather than reciting it. The readers help the audience to understand and visualize the text through their vocal performance.

Benefits of Using Reader's Theater

- It gives purpose to reading.
- It helps children develop reading fluency through repetition.
- It increases comprehension since the text must be interpreted for performance.
- It motivates children to read.
- It improves not only reading skills, but listening and speaking skills as well.
- It encourages children to work together.
- Performing Reader's Theater helps increase self-confidence.

Tips for Teaching Children How to Perform Reader's Theater

- Encourage the children to read with expression and to enunciate the words clearly.
- Teach the children how to project their voices so that they can be heard. Good posture helps with this.
- Pacing is important. Remind the children that they must be careful not to read too fast nor too slow, especially on unison parts.
- Show children how the script should be held. It's best if it is positioned below chin level so that the audience can see the faces of the performers. You may want to put the scripts in a three ring binder or attach them to construction paper or card stock for ease of use.
- Explain the importance of using facial expressions and gestures. This will make the presentation more interesting for the audience.
- Costumes and props may be used if desired, but are not a requirement.
- The positions of each reader on stage is up to you and the performers. Keep in mind that the scripts were written with the concept of having Reader 1 on the audience's left and the rest of the readers standing in number order to the right.
- Practice makes perfect, especially on unison parts. Encourage the children to rehearse their parts both individually and with their group.

What You'll Find in This Book

This book contains a script for 5 readers based on the poem “Appleseed John” by Lydia Marie Child. While this script was created with Reader’s Theater in mind, it could also potentially be memorized and used for another form of dramatic presentation.

Where to Find More Scripts

If you like this script, you can find more on our website at www.WarmHeartsPublishing.com.

Also, if you would like to share your success stories with me, offer suggestions, or ask questions, please visit the Contact page on the Warm Hearts Publishing website. I would love to hear from you.

Have a great year!

Appleseed John

Lydia Marie Child

..... **CHARACTERS**

NARRATOR 1

NARRATOR 4

NARRATOR 2

JOHNNY

NARRATOR 3

.....

NARRATOR 1: Poor Johnny was bended well-nigh double
With years of toil, and care, and trouble;

NARRATOR 2: But his large old heart still felt the need
Of doing for others some kindly deed.

JOHNNY: “But what can I do? “

NARRATOR 3: old Johnny said;

JOHNNY: “I who work so hard for daily bread?
It takes heaps of money to do much good;
I am far too poor to do as I would.”

NARRATOR 4: The old man sat thinking deeply a while,
Then over his features gleamed a smile,

NARRATOR 3: Then he clapped his hands with a boyish glee,
And said to himself,

JOHNNY: “There’s a way for me!”

NARRATOR 2: He worked, and he worked with might and main,
But no one knew the plan in his brain.

NARRATOR 4: He took ripe apples in pay for chores,
And carefully cut from them all the cores.

NARRATOR 1: He filled a bag full, then wandered away,
And no man saw him for many a day.

NARRATOR 2: With knapsack over his shoulder slung,
He marched along, and whistled or sung.

NARRATOR 4: He seemed to roam with no object in view,
Like one who had nothing on earth to do;

NARRATOR 3: But, journeying thus o'er the prairies wide,
He paused now and then, and his bag untied.

NARRATOR 1: With pointed cane deep holes he would bore,
And in every hole he placed a core;

NARRATOR 4: Then covered them well, and left them there
In keeping of sunshine, rain and air.

NARRATOR 3: Sometimes for days he waded through grass,
And saw not a living creature pass,

NARRATOR 2: But often, when sinking to sleep in the dark,
He heard the owls hoot and the prairie dogs bark.

NARRATOR 1: Sometimes an Indian of sturdy limb
Came striding along and walked with him;

NARRATOR 3: And he who had food shared with the other,
As if he had met a hungry brother.

NARRATOR 4: When the Indian saw how the bag was filled,
And looked at the holes the white man drilled,

NARRATOR 1: He thought to himself 'twas a silly plan
To be planting seed for some future man.

NARRATOR 2: Sometimes a log cabin came in view,
Where Johnny was sure to find jobs to do,

NARRATOR 4: By which he gained stores of bread and meat,
And welcome rest for his weary feet.

NARRATOR 1: He had full many a story to tell,
And goodly hymns that he sung right well;

NARRATOR 3: He tossed up the babes, and joined the boys
In many a game full of fun and noise.

NARRATOR 2: And he seemed so hearty, in work or play,
Men, women, and boys all urged him to stay;

NARRATOR 1: But he always said,

JOHNNY: "I have something to do.
And I must go on to carry it through."

NARRATOR 3: The boys, who were sure to follow him round,
Soon found what it was he put in the ground;

NARRATOR 2: And so, as time passed and he traveled on,
Every one called him

ALL

NARRATORS: "Old Appleseed John."

NARRATOR 4: Whenever he'd used the whole of his store,
He went into cities and worked for more;

NARRATOR 3: Then he marched back to the wilds again,
And planted seed on hillside and plain.

NARRATOR 2: In cities, some said the old man was crazy;
While others said he was only lazy;

NARRATOR 4: But he took no notice of gibes and jeers,
He knew he was working for future years.

NARRATOR 1: He knew that trees would soon abound
Where once a tree could not have been found;

NARRATOR 2: That a flickering play of light and shade
Would dance and glimmer along the glade;

NARRATOR 3: That blossoming sprays would form fair bowers,
And sprinkle the grass with rosy showers;

NARRATOR 1: And the little seeds his hands had spread
Would become ripe apples when he was dead.

NARRATOR 4: So he kept on traveling far and wide,
Till his old limbs failed him, and he died.

NARRATOR 2: He said at the last,

JOHNNY: “’Tis a comfort to feel
I’ve done good in the world, though not a great deal.”

NARRATOR 4: Weary travelers, journeying west,
In the shade of his trees find pleasant rest;

NARRATOR 3: And they often start, with glad surprise,
At the rosy fruit that round them lies.

NARRATOR 2: And if they inquire whence came such trees,
Where not a bough once swayed in the breeze,

NARRATOR 1: The answer still comes, as they travel on,

ALL

NARRATORS: “These trees were planted by Appleseed John.”