

**Readers Theatre:  
Bringing Stories to Life Workshop  
Resource Packet**

**Dr. Susan Kosoff and Ms. Lavina Chong  
Wheelock College**

## Hug 'O War

By Shel Silverstein

I will not play at tug o' war.  
I'd rather play at hug o' war,  
Where everyone hugs  
Instead of tugs,  
Where everyone giggles  
And rolls on the rug.  
Where everyone kisses,  
And everyone grins,  
And everyone cuddles,  
And everyone wins.

## Sick

By Shel Silverstein

"I cannot go to school today."  
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.  
"I have the measles and the mumps,  
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.  
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,  
I'm going blind in my right eye.  
My tonsils are as big as rocks,  
I've counted sixteen chicken pox  
And there's one more---that's seventeen,  
And don't you think my face looks green?  
My leg is cut, my eyes are blue—  
It might be instamatic flu.  
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,  
I'm sure that my left leg is broke—  
My hip hurts when I move my chin,  
My belly button's caving in,  
My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,  
My 'pendix pains each time it rains.  
My nose is cold, my toes are numb,  
I have a sliver in my thumb.  
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,  
I hardly whisper when I speak.  
My tongue is filling up my mouth,  
I think my hair is falling out.  
My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,  
My temperature is one-o-eight.  
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,  
There is a hole inside my ear.  
I have a hangnail, and my heart is—what?  
What's that? What's that you say?  
You say today is...Saturday?  
G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

## Monkeys on the Bed

By Iona and Peter Opie

Three little monkeys  
Jumping on the bed;  
One fell off  
And knocked his head.  
Momma called the doctor,  
The doctor said:  
“No more monkeys  
Jumping on the bed.”

## The Lion and His Counselors

NARRATOR. The King of Beasts was in a very bad mood. That morning his wife had complained:

LIONESS. Your breath smells very bad!

NARRATOR. After roaring around a lot to let off steam, he decided to call his counselors.

LION. Counselor Sheep, do you think my breath is bad?

SHEEP. (*Smells breath.*) Do you want an honest answer?

LION. Of course I want an honest answer! Is my breath bad?

SHEEP. Your breath is very unpleasant. (*LION roars.*)

NARRATOR. The King of Beasts bit the sheep's head off. Then he summoned the wolf.

LION. Counselor Wolf, do you think my breath is unpleasant?

NARRATOR. The wolf, seeing the dead sheep, answered:

WOLF. No, my King, your breath is not unpleasant. In fact, it is as sweet as springtime flowers!

NARRATOR. This really made King Lion angry, being flattered in this way, and he ripped off the wolf's head. Then he called the fox to ask him the same question. The fox glanced around, saw what had happened to the two other counselors, the sheep and the wolf, and coughed before he said:

FOX. (*Coughing and clearing his throat a bit before he whispers:*) Your majesty, I have such a cold, my nose is so plugged, I can't smell anything.

NARRATOR: MORAL: WHEN THERE IS DANGER, WISE MEN SAY NOTHING.

## The House That Jack Built

Adapted for Readers Theatre by Fran Tanner

For 11 voices

- 1: This is the house that Jack built.
- 2: This is the malt, that lay in the house that Jack built.
- 3: This is the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.
- 4: This is the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.
- 5: This is the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.
- 6: This is the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.
- 7: This is the maiden all forlorn,  
6: That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.
- 8: This is the man all tattered and torn,  
7: That kissed the maiden all forlorn,  
6: That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,

2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.  
9: This is the priest all shaven and shorn,  
8: That married the man all tattered and torn,  
7: That kissed the maiden all forlorn,  
6: That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.

10: This is the cock that crowed in the morn,  
9: That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,  
8: That married the man all tattered and torn,  
7: That kissed the maiden all forlorn,  
6: That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.

11: This is the farmer who sowed the corn,  
10: That fed the cock that crowed in the morn,  
9: That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,  
8: That married the man all tattered and torn,  
7: That kissed the maiden all forlorn,  
6: That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,  
5: That tossed the dog,  
4: That worried the cat,  
3: That killed the rat,  
2: That ate the malt,  
1: That lay in the house that Jack built.

## The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf

Adapted for Readers Theatre by Fran Tanner

For 6 voices

1: A Shepherd Boy, who tended his flock not far from a village, used to  
amuse himself at times in crying out,  
BOY: *(crying loudly)* The Wolf! The Wolf!  
1: Twice  
2: or thrice  
1: his trick  
BOY: *(triumphantly)* succeeded!  
2, 3, 4: *(quickly and excitedly)* The whole village came running out to his  
assistance.  
1: when all they got was to be  
BOY: *(laughing)* laughed at  
1: for their pains. At last one day  
WOLF: *(strong and sinister)* the Wolf came indeed.  
1: The boy cried out in earnest  
BOY: *(alarmed)* The Wolf! The Wolf!  
2, 3, 4: But his neighbors  
3: supposing him to be at his old sport  
2, 3, 4: *(unconcerned)* paid no heed to his cries  
WOLF: *(wickedly)* and the wolf devoured the Sheep.  
1: So the boy learned  
BOY: *(unhappily)* too late  
1, 2, 3, 4: *(with strength)* THAT LIARS ARE NOT BELIEVED  
1: even when they tell the truth!



## Words

NARRATOR. Come with us to the wonderful world of words which is found in the land  
of books! Words are beautiful --

READER 1. vermilion,

READER 2. mellow,

READER 3. fairy,

READER 4. shallow,

READER 5. wonder,

READER 6. cellar door.

NARRATOR. Words are magic --

READER 2. abra-ka-dabra,

READER 4. Rumpelstiltskin,

READER 6. fee-fi-fo-fum,

READER 3. double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

NARRATOR. Words are fun --

READER 5. sachet,

READER 1. moisty,

READER 6. dingle,

READER 4. pebble,

READER 2. serendipity,

READER 3. pumpernickel,

READER 5. swashbuckling.

NARRATOR. Words make up the wonderful world of books which are peopled with all  
sorts of characters --

READER 4. kittens,

READER 1. frogs,

READER 3. geese,

READER 6. lions,

READER 2. elephants,

READER 5. and even hippopotamuses.

NARRATOR. And books take you everywhere --

READER 3. Petunia's farm,

READER 4. brier patches,

READER 1. Lake Okeefenokee,

READER 6. circuses,

READER 2. and faraway jungles.

ALL SING. World of books, world of words,

Bestest books you've ever heard,

With a nick, nack, paddy-wack, fetch another book,

Come with us to our story nook.

## Why the Squirrel Lives in Trees

From *How and Why Stories for Readers Theatre* by Judy Wolfman

**Narrator 1:** Many years ago, the wolf and the dog were best friends. Wolf lived in the woods, and Dog lived on a farm. Every day they would play together.

**Narrator 2:** One day, while they were playing the wolf showed his teeth to the dog.

**Wolf:** Look, Dog. My teeth are better than yours. They're longer.

**Dog:** Your teeth may be longer, but *my* teeth are stronger. I think my teeth are better than yours.

**Narrator 1:** They argued about which had the best teeth.

**Narrator 2:** After a long time, Dog had an idea.

**Dog:** Wolf, go get your friends from the woods, and I'll get my friends from the farm. Come back with your friends when the sun is over the treetops.

**Wolf:** And then what will we do?

**Dog:** We'll fight to see who has the strongest teeth.

**Narrator 1:** Wolf went to the woods and got his friends Bear, Fox, Rabbit, and Squirrel.

**Narrator 2:** Dog went to the farm and got his friends Cow, Pig, Sheep, and Cat. Before they left the farm, Dog told Cat what he wanted her to do.

**Dog:** I need your help, Cat. Bear will be there. He's the biggest and strongest animal, so I want you to jump at him and catch his throat. Then he won't be able to hurt anyone.

**Cat:** Don't worry, friend. You can count on me!

**Narrator 1:** When the sun was over the treetops, all of the animals met. Cat did what Dog asked and caught Bear's throat.

**Bear:** Owwww. That hurts! Help! Help!

**Narrator 2:** Bear was in pain. He wanted to fight but couldn't because Cat wouldn't let go.

**Bear:** Help! Help! Someone help me!

**Narrator 1:** But no one came to help Bear. Bear jumped around, waving his big paws in the air. Finally, he broke loose and ran away into the woods.

**Fox:** Look! Bear is running away!

**Rabbit:** Bear is afraid!

**Wolf:** Don't run away, Bear! I need you.

**Squirrel:** If Bear is afraid and running away, I'll run, too!

**Narrator 2:** Squirrel quickly ran to a tree. He ran up the trunk, all the way to the top.

**Narrator 1:** Squirrel thought that if the smallest animal on the farm could fight the biggest animal in the woods, he had better get into the tree.

**Squirrel:** I'm not safe on the ground, but I am safe in this tree. I think I'll stay here for a while.

**Narrator 2:** Squirrel stayed in the tree for a long time. He was afraid to come down. In fact, to this day, Squirrel still lives in a tree.

## Why Bear Sleeps All Winter Long

From *How and Why Stories for Readers Theatre* by Judy Wolfman

**Narrator 1:** Squirrel worked hard and was always busy. She was *really* busy in the fall.

**Squirrel:** Soon it will be winter. Now I must find lots of nuts and bury them. Then I'll have food when it snows and is cold.

**Narrator 2:** Fox was busy too. He looked after the chickens on a farm.

**Narrator 1:** Rabbit was also busy. She found food to store.

**Rabbit:** I'll pick cabbages and lettuce. I'll pull some turnips and carrots. Then, when winter comes, I'll have food to eat.

**Narrator 2:** Then there was Bear. In daytime, he found honey and went fishing. After that, he went to sleep in the warm sun. He didn't do too much work.

**Bear:** This was a good day. I found honey and I caught two fish. Now it's time to take my nap.

**Narrator 1:** When Bear was not napping, he liked to play tricks on the other animals. Mostly he played tricks on Rabbit. Like this one—

**Bear:** I see that Rabbit has filled her tree stump with food! But Rabbit isn't here, so I'll hide her food.

**Narrator 2:** Bear took the food from Rabbit's stump and hid all of it.

**Narrator 1:** Another time, Bear messed up her stump.

**Bear:** Rabbit has nice, warm, dry leaves in her stump. She did a good job laying them around. I'll just stomp on them and kick them. When Rabbit comes home, she won't know what happened! This will be a good trick.

**Narrator 2:** Each time Bear played a trick on Rabbit, Rabbit got madder and madder.

**Rabbit:** I can't take it anymore! Bear plays too many mean tricks on me. I don't know what to do! I can't keep Bear away by myself. I'll go ask my friends to help me.

**Narrator 1:** Rabbit hopped over to the pond to find Frog. Frog was sitting on a lily pad, soaking up the sun.

**Rabbit:** Frog, please help me. Bear is always tricking me, and it's not fair. Will you help me make him stop?

**Frog:** I don't know what I could do, but let's go see Squirrel. Maybe she can help.

**Narrator 2:** Frog and Rabbit went to see Squirrel. Squirrel was sitting in a tree, eating nuts.

**Frog:** Squirrel, Rabbit needs your help.

**Rabbit:** Yes, I do. Bear is always tricking me, and I want him to stop. Can you help me?

**Squirrel:** I don't think so, but I bet Mole could think of a way to help you. Let's go see him.

**Narrator 1:** So, Squirrel, Frog, and Rabbit went to see Mole. Mole was digging a new home for himself. The dirt was flying all over the place.

**Squirrel:** Mole, Rabbit needs your help.

**Rabbit:** Yes, I do. Bear is always tricking me and I don't like it. Can you make him stop?

**Mole:** Hmm, I don't know what I could do. Let's go find Fox. He's the smart one—he'll think of some way to stop Bear.

**Narrator 2:** Now, Mole, Squirrel, Frog, and Rabbit went to find Fox. They found him behind a tree, brushing his bushy tail.

**Mole:** Fox, Rabbit needs your help.

**Rabbit:** I hope you can help me, Fox. Bear plays lots of tricks on me and I want him to stop. Do you think you can help me?

**Fox:** Hmm. Maybe I can. Has anyone seen Bear today?

**Rabbit:** I haven't.

**Frog:** Not me.

**Squirrel:** Nope.

**Mole:** Not me.

**Fox:** Let's go find him.

**Narrator 1:** The animals followed Fox. They looked here. They looked there. They looked everywhere!

**Fox:** Here he is!

**Narrator 2:** Fox found Bear sleeping in a hollow log.

**Fox:** Shhh. Don't wake him up. Now, I know what to do. Frog, bring me some mud from your pond.

**Frog:** I'll hop to it right away!

**Fox:** Squirrel, bring me some leaves from your tree.

**Squirrel:** You got it! I'll be right back.

**Fox:** Mole, bring me some of your digging dirt.

**Mole:** I'll go as fast as I can.

**Narrator 1:** Soon the animals came back. Bear was still sleeping. Fox told the animals what to do.

**Fox:** Rabbit, fill Bear's log with mud from Frog's pond. Next, put in the leaves from Squirrel's tree. Then, put in the dirt from Mole's new hole.

**Narrator 2:** Rabbit did what Fox told her to. When the log was full, she used her hind legs to pack the mud, leaves, and dirt in tightly.

**Narrator 1:** The animals left and Bear was still sleeping. Each time he woke up, he saw that it was still dark.

**Bear:** What a long night this is. I'll go back to sleep until I see the sun.

**Narrator 2:** Bear slept all winter long. When he finally woke up, he felt great.

**Bear:** That was a good sleep! I feel *very* rested.

**Narrator 1:** He pushed the mud, leaves, and dirt out of the log. Then he walked out.

**Bear:** Birds are singing! Wildflowers are blooming! The sun is shining! My goodness, I slept all winter and now it's spring! I feel so great that I'm going to do this every year!

**Narrator 2:** Bear did what he said he would—every winter he slept until spring.

**Narrator 1:** Rabbit was happy, too. Bear never tricked her again, and she had time to play in the snow.

**Narrator 2:** And now you know why bears sleep all winter long.

## How Butterflies Came to Be

From *How and Why Stories for Readers Theatre* by Judy Wolfman

**Narrator 1:** Long ago, Earth-Maker shaped the world. He made many beautiful animals, trees, and flowers.

**Narrator 2:** He also made Elder Brother.

**Narrator 1:** One day, Elder Brother went for a walk.

**Narrator 2:** It was just after the time of year when the rains came. Everything he saw was wonderful and beautiful.

**Elder Brother:** The flowers have so many lovely colors, and the trees are green and bright. The children, too, are beautiful as they play and sing.

**Child 1:** Hi, Elder Brother. Will you play with us?

**Child 2:** We can do anything you want.

**Elder Brother:** Thank you, children. I would like to play with you, but not now. I have things I must do.

**Child 1:** When you're finished, come back and we'll play.

**Narrator 1:** The children smiled at Elder Brother and he smiled at them.

**Elder Brother:** What beautiful faces the children have. Their smiles light up their faces.

**Narrator 1:** Suddenly, Elder Brother stopped smiling, and he became sad.

**Elder Brother:** Someday, these beautiful young children will grow old and weak and die. And the beautiful red and yellow and white and blue flowers will fade. Soon, the leaves will fall from the trees. The days will grow short and the nights will be cold. But, I suppose that's the way it's meant to be. Even so it's sad, so sad.

**Narrator 2:** Just then, a wind came along. It brushed past Elder Brother and made some of the yellow leaves fall from a tree.

**Narrator 1:** As the leaves fell, they looked like they were dancing in the sunlight.

**Elder Brother:** Seeing the leaves dance gives me an idea! I'll make something that will make the hearts of the children dance. It will also make my heart glad again.

**Narrator 2:** Elder Brother took a bag and put many bright-colored flowers and fallen leaves into it.

**Narrator 1:** Then he added yellow pollen, white cornmeal, and green pine needles to the bag.

**Narrator 2:** He caught some of the shining gold of the sunlight and put that into the bag.

**Elder Brother:** I have many beautiful things in this bag, but I need one thing more. I must add the songs of the birds.

**Narrator 1:** He took some of the songs from the birds and placed them into the bag.

**Narrator 2:** Then he went to the children.

**Elder Brother:** Come children, look what I have for you.

**Narrator 1:** The children gathered around him.

**Child 1:** What?

**Child 2:** Looks like a bag to me.

**Child 3:** What's in the bag, Elder Brother?

**Narrator 2:** He handed them the bag.

**Elder Brother:** Here, open this. You will find something special in the bag.

**Narrator 1:** The children opened Elder Brother's bag and out flew the first butterflies.

**Narrator 2:** Their wings were bright as sunlight and had all of the colors of the flowers and leaves. They also held the colors of cornmeal, pollen, and green pine needles.

**Child 1:** Oh, look! These creatures have so many pretty colors.

**Child 2:** I see red and gold and black and yellow...

**Child 3:** ....and blue and green and white.

**Child 4:** They look like flowers dancing in the wind.

**Narrator 1:** The butterflies flew about the heads of the children and the children laughed.

**Narrator 2:** As those first butterflies flew, they sang beautiful songs, just like the birds.

**Narrator 1:** The children listened to the songs and danced to them.



**Narrator 2:** As the children listened to the singing butterflies, the songbirds came to Elder Brother.

**Songbird 1:** Elder Brother, why are those creatures singing our songs? They were given to us.

**Songbird 2:** We're happy to see the beautiful colors you have given these new creatures, but it is not right that you should also give them our songs.

**Elder Brother:** I never thought about that. You are right. The songs belong to you and not to the butterflies. I will take care of that right away.

**Narrator 1:** Elder Brother removed the songs from the butterflies and, to this day, butterflies fly and dance silently.

**Narrator 2:** When children see them dancing in the wind with their beautiful colors, their hearts are glad.

**Both Narrators:** And that is how Elder Brother meant it to be.

## **The Quack Frog**

From *Readers Theatre Anthology* by Mel White

**Narrator 1:** One day a frog came out from his home in a muddy swamp and announced to all the animal world:

**Frog:** I can cure every disease there is (*Jackass, Goat, Fox, Hare, and Sheep gather around him.*)

**Fox:** What did you say? You can cure every disease?!

**Frog:** (*Puffing up in pride from the attention*) Yes. Here, come and see! You're looking at the greatest physician in the world. Not even Jove's court doctor—

**Jackass:** (*Braying loudly, interrupting*) Hee-haw! Hee-haw! You, Frog, a physician? Hee-haw! Hee-Haw!

**Goat:** (*Baaa-ing in disdain*) Baaa-baaa! (*Several times, as if laughing*)

**Fox:** How dare you set yourself up to heal others? Why don't you first try to heal your own limping gait?

**Hare:** (*Excited*) Yes...and your wrinkled and blotchy skin?!

**Sheep:** (*In bleating voice*) And your bulgy and ugly eyes?!

**Narrator 2:** (*As the animals all laugh him to scorn*) At this, the quack frog drew in his head and hopped rapidly away back to the swamp from whence he had come while all the animals laughed him to scorn.

**Narrator 1:** Moral: Physician, heal thyself!

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