



Oklahoma Library Association
Sequoyah Book Awards

Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award

Readers' Theatres for

2006 Masterlist

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HAWKSONG
By Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

Staging: The narrator stands at the lectern, and the other readers sit on stools.

Narrator			The Disa
X			X
	X	X	
	Zane Cobriana	Danica Shardae	
	X		X
	Charis Cobriana		Nacola Shardae

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from Amelia Atwater-Rhodes’s novel, *Hawksong*, a science-fiction story set in an alternate universe. The war between the Avians and the Serpientes has been raging for so long that no one on either side even remembers why it began. Zane Cobriana, read by_____ is the newest leader of the Serpiente people. Zane like many others has grown tired of the constant killings and decided to approach Danica Shardae, read by_____ the new ruler of the Avian people about a solution for peace. Neither side trusts the other and so must travel to neutral grounds called the Mistari lands. The Disa, read by_____ is the ruler of the Mistari lands and will council both sides in an effort to restore peace to their lands. Zane’s mother Charis Cobriana, read by_____ and Danica Shardae’s mother Nacola Shardae, read by_____ will be attending the meeting as well. As our scene opens this meeting is just beginning.

The Disa: I already know that this is not going to be easy. But, as long as both of you are willing to make the effort, there is always a chance for peace.

The Disa: Charis, you are Naga, the Queen, are you not?

Charis Cobriana: I am, but my husband is dead. Zane hasn’t taken the throne yet, but

you should address him as our leader.

The Disa: Zane, have you not taken a mate?

Zane Cobriana: Taking a mate in the middle of this war would be giving a death sentence to a woman in return for her love. I've learned from experience that even a woman with child is not safe from the killing, not when she's carrying a cobra's blood.

The Disa: And among your people, Nacola, whom should I address as your leader?

Nacola Shardae: My daughter, Danica Shardae. She will soon be queen.

The Disa: How soon?

Nacola Shardae: My daughter has no husband. The one she was raised with was killed in this war, and since Danica is now old enough, I want her to choose her own. When I said soon, I simply meant... I am tired of this war, tired of being queen. My daughter still has faith, and if anyone is strong enough to lead us to peace, it is her. She will be appointed Queen on her next birthday.

The Disa: Danica, Zane, both of you have come here, asking for peace. Both of your families are willing to follow you. Why do you need our help?

Zane Cobriana: Even if every one of us wants peace, our people would rather fight than be taken by surprise. Among my own guards there is strong doubt as to how far we can trust the Avians, and among many of my people there is even speculation as to why I would want to make peace.

Danica Shardae: We were barely able to control our soldiers these last two weeks. They don't believe the Serpiente can be trusted, and unless we either give them permission to fight again, or we find some way to convince them that the

Cobriana family and their people really want peace, my mother and I won't have the power to keep them from going against us.

The Disa: You are both saying that your people doubt your sincerity, and the other side's sincerity. You two are their leaders, and if you can set the example and show them how much you are willing to give for this peace, they will follow. The question then is how much are you willing to give?

Danica Shardae: Anything

Zane Cobriana: Everything

The Disa: When you have hatred, you need to start with the heart to mend it. Similarly, when you have a rift between people as great as you have, the only way to bridge the gap is to start at the center.

The Disa: You came for advice. All I can send you away with is this: You can only sew shut a rip by making the two sides one again. Danica Shardae, Zane Cobriana, you said you would give up anything, everything, to stop the war. Never ask your people to do something that you do not have the courage, or the determination, to do. If you want peace, start between the two of you.

Narrator: Can the wars between the two groups find a peaceful solution? The Disa has a plan for peace. The plan could result in getting both leaders killed. If you want to know the dangers involved and whether the plan can work, read *Hawksong* by Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

FOR FREEDOM: THE STORY OF A FRENCH SPY

By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Staging: The narrator is standing off to the side. Maman and Suzanne stand together and Dr. Leclerc is off to the side.

Characters:

X			X
Narrator			Dr. Leclerc
	X	X	
	Maman	Suzanne	

Narrator: This is taken from the historical fiction novel *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy* written by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. Suzanne is read by _____, Maman is read by _____ and Dr. Leclerc is read by _____. Suzanne has just agreed to help Dr. Leclerc with the Resistance during Hitler's rein in France. She will work as a spy delivering messages to other spies. As we begin, Suzanne is thinking to herself.

Suzanne: I didn't tell Madame Marcelle anything on the trip to Saint-Lo. I couldn't think how to begin. *I am doing something for Dr. Leclerc that may be illegal, and the Germans could hang me for it- in fact, they probably would if they caught me-but I don't know what it is. Perhaps I am a spy-what do you think?* Perhaps I was letting my imagination run wild. Perhaps I wasn't a spy; perhaps it was nothing. Perhaps Dr. Leclerc wanted me to baby-sit or to help with paper-work in his office. *You can't tell anyone. Not your mother, not your brothers, not your best friend. And if you agree to help me, you can never back out. You must help me until the very end.* It wasn't nothing. It was spy work. *Dear God, make me strong.*

Suzanne: Dr. Leclerc needs to see me this morning.

Maman: Everything's healing?

Suzanne: Oh yes. Only he wanted to check the stitches again.

Dr. Leclerc: Suzanne. Sit. Shut the door. First of all, I'm never going to tell you more than the least you need to know. Try not to ask questions, ask them only of me. Trust no one else. No one. I receive messages, and I send them. I need you to carry them. You'll pick them up from me and give them to someone else. I'll tell you when and where.

Suzanne: What kind of messages?

Dr. Leclerc: It doesn't matter.

Suzanne: Where do you get them?

Dr. Leclerc: It doesn't matter.

Suzanne: Whom do you give them to?

Dr. Leclerc: These are unnecessary questions, Suzanne. Are you frightened?

Suzanne (nods slowly)

Dr. Leclerc: You should be. You could be caught. I would say it is very likely that you will be caught. Perhaps your youth will shield you from suspicion. I hope so. If the Nazis catch you, they won't let you go. If you aren't brave enough, it is better that you say so now. If you lose heart later, you will endanger others besides yourself. You will endanger me, my family, and many people you don't know. Do you think you have enough courage?

Suzanne: These messages, will they help France win the war?

Dr. Leclerc: They will increase our chances.

Suzanne: I have enough courage.

Dr. Leclerc: You are certain?

Suzanne: I am.

Dr. Leclerc: Alright then. I receive messages from the Allies for many different people.

You will pass them on. When I need you, I'll send for you. You'll come to me as a patient. Perhaps this incision of yours won't heal quickly. I suggest that you may continue to have pain when you move your arm. When you come, I'll give you the message on a small piece of paper. You'll hide that paper on your person. Don't bother trying to read the message; it'll be written in code. You will go where I tell you and give the message to the person you meet there. You'll do it so no one sees. You will do everything as naturally as possible. Do you understand?

Suzanne: How will I know whom to meet? Will I recognize them? Will I know their names?

Dr. Leclerc: Names are dangerous. You'll never know anyone's name except mine, which you already knew. You'll know the others by their numbers.

Suzanne: Their numbers? What numbers?

Dr. Leclerc: Everyone has a number. You're number twenty-two. The twenty-second spy in Cherbourg. Welcome, Suzanne.

Narrator: This book is based on the stories told by the French spy, Suzanne David. If you would like to learn more about Suzanne and her work, read *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley.

Our Time on the River
By Don Brown

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern; other readers sit on tall stools.

X
David

X
Steve

X
Narrator

Narrator: This reader's theater is based on a scene from *Our Time on the River* by Don Brown. Steve's older brother, David, has quit college and joined the Army during the Vietnam War. Before David leaves for Vietnam, he and Steve go on a canoe trip for two weeks. In this presentation, David is read by _____ and Steve is read by _____. Although the brothers do not have a close relationship, David begins to open up and share some of his feelings with Steve. In this scene, the brothers are enjoying the cool night and warm glow from the fire.

David: Man, this is a million times better than the army. In the field we gotta eat crappy canned stuff, stuff that shouldn't even be in a can, like eggs or turkey, and you can't even enjoy that, because you gotta race off for some kind of duty. Somebody's always screaming at you to hurry up. And you better, too! Once, a guy in the platoon –Bobby Culpepper – didn't finish his chow in time. Sergeant Gibson came over and spilled Culpepper's food on the ground and made him sit in it!

Steve: Is Culpepper a buddy?

David: No. Just a redneck I met at basic training. From somewhere in Maryland. Said he was in the Klan back home. Ku Klux Klan. I thought the Klan was way down in Alabama or Mississippi, but he said no, that is was up north, even in Maryland

by the Delaware border. That's not very far from us! Anyway, he joined up with his cousin, another Maryland redneck. They were gonna be lifers and do thirty years in the service, but Culpepper found out he hated the army. Taking orders and all. And he couldn't stand living with colored guys. Man, what was he thinking when he joined up? I bet half the army is colored! Then his cousin got zapped by lightning with those two other guys I told you about.

Steve: Were you friends with any of them?

David: Naw. The three of them and Culpepper hung out together. I'm surprised Culpepper didn't get blasted with them. God, what a mess. There are better ways of dying.

Steve: Is Culpepper going to Nam with you?

David: He's there now. I don't know why, but he got yanked from our platoon and went about a month ago. Man, I thought he was gonna cry when he got his orders. He ended up in a supply company stationed in Vung Tao. That's on the coast. It's supposed to be beautiful. I heard he's a bartender at an officer's club.

Steve: That sounds better than getting shot at.

David: Yeah, until Charlie plants a bomb and blows the place up.

Steve: It's still gotta be safer than running around in the jungle. Maybe you'll be a bartender. Or an office worker.

David: I'm gonna end up a grunt in the boonies with an M16. Uncle Sam needs grunts.

Steve: That isn't what you told Mom.

David: I didn't want to scare her.

Steve: (Pause) Are you? Scared, I mean.

David: Nah. Well, maybe. A little. You'd be nuts otherwise. But Sergeant Gibson says everything will be OK if you stay "heads up and butt down".

Narrator: Steve was not as confident as David. Steve didn't think Sergeant Gibson was right, but he didn't say so. The boys enjoyed each other's company on the river and had many experiences that they would always remember. The bond they shared made it even harder for Steve to think of David leaving. Would David come back from his tour of Vietnam or would it be like their mother feared. To find out what happens to David and Steve read *Our Time on the River* by Don Brown.

UNDER THE SAME SKY

By Cynthia DeFelice

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern. The other readers sit on tall stools.

			X	X	X
			Jorge	Gilberto	David
	X	X			
	Joe	Luisa			
X					
Narrator					

Narrator: I am _____, the narrator for this readers theatre presentation based on Cynthia Defelice's novel, *Under the Same Sky*. The main character, Joe, desperately wants a motorbike for his birthday, but his parents are unwilling to pay \$1,000. Joe's parents decide to give Joe \$50 for his birthday and allow him to earn the rest of the money by working on the family farm. As a result, Joe is now a part of the work crew made up of Mexican immigrants. In this presentation, Joe is read by _____; Lucia is read by _____; Jorge is read by _____; Gilberto is read by _____; David is read by _____; and Carlos is read by _____. In this scene, the crew has spent the morning picking strawberries and are now preparing for their lunch break.

Luisa: Manuel is driving the berries someplace. He knew he wouldn't be back, so we brought our food. You share with us? (pausing) You probably want to ride your bike back home.

Joe: No! I don't. It's just that I don't have anything to contribute.

Luisa: (smiling) Don't worry. There's plenty.

Narrator: Joe joins the rest of the crew sitting on a blanket. The crew eats their lunch, but the conversation is slow due to the language barrier.

Joe: Sorry, *no hablo espanol*.

Jorge: No, no. Good for us. Good . . . *como se dice?* . . . practice!

Gilberto: For when the lady comes for English lessons.

Joe: (confused) English lessons? What lady?

David: Ginny. She comes on the Monday, Tuesday, Thursday. Teach English for us.

Joe: (surprised) You guys are all taking lessons?

Frank: It's good to know the English. Get to be better job. Bigger, more important, more money.

Carlos: Frank going be Big Boss someday.

Luisa: (seriously) Most of these men never go to school, have to work. Me, I have to leave school, go to work. But I don't want to work like this all my life. In one school I go to in Texas, I learn about computers. I like that. In Yo Pueda I had drama class. We learn how to say how we feel about things. I like it very much also.

Joe: What's Yo Puedo?

Luisa: Yo Puedo. It means "I Can." It's a club we had at the school in Texas. For migrant kids. So we learn we can do many things, not just pick the fruit and plant the cabbage. We like to work for your father, Joe. He is good boss, not like some others. But is better, I think, to learn about other jobs.

Joe: (curiously) What are the other bosses like? The bad ones?

Luisa: Your father, he is a good man. He treats us fair, pays us fair, pays what he says he will pay. The houses here are nice. Clean, with inside bathrooms, not like some that have dirt and bugs, no furniture. Your father acts to us with respect. Your mother, too. LuAnn, she brings *el café, los pastels*. Meg, she comes, practices English with us. Is nice. Many people not like this. They look at us like, What are you doing here? You are nothing. But they don't know we save our money to help our family.

Narrator: The crew begins to put away their lunch stuff. They continue their conversation in Spanish, while Joe tries to keep up. He suddenly recognizes one of the words.

Joe: *Periodico*. Isn't that the word for newspaper?

Luisa: The last days, the *periodico* brings nothing but bad news.

Joe: What bad news?

Luisa: Many people from my country died coming here. These people, they came by the desert. The river crossing is dangerous, and other people have died coming over the mountains. So they thought the desert would be safe. But it was not safe.

Joe: What happened to them?

Luisa: The coyote –the man who promise to show them the way—he left them. They had no food, no water, very hot. He said he would come back, but he never did. Some lived, but many died. It is a terrible way to die.

Joe: Did you know them?

Luisa: No. But I know others who died coming here. What Gilberto was saying before is that now Hector and his friends are afraid to come.

Joe: Who's Hector?

Luisa: Manuel promised your father to have more workers for the apples. Hector is one of them. He will bring others. But now I hope they do not even try to come.

Joe: How did *you* come?

Luisa: (reluctantly looking away) Manuel, Gilberto, Carlos, Jorge, Antonio, and David, they came in the car. At the border crossing.

Joe: But what about you and Rafael and Frank?

Luisa: (in a low voice) We have papers.

Joe: You mean working papers?

Luisa: (nods)

Joe: Well, yeah, you can't work without 'em, right?

Luisa: (nods again)

Joe: (being very persistent) But what I was asking was how did you guys get here? Plane?

Luisa: (with disbelief) I think it is time to go back to work.

Narrator: The crew goes back to work, but Luisa avoids Joe for the rest of the day. Joe suddenly understands just how different Luisa's life is from his own, but he also begins to realize that things on the farm are not quite as they seem. As the summer passes, Joe realizes the value of hard work and learns that there is more to life than money and having things. Join Joe in the hardest and most satisfying summer of his life by reading Cynthia DeFelice's *Under the Same Sky*.

KEESHA'S HOUSE

By Helen Frost

Staging: The narrator is off to the side. The other characters sit in chairs.

X	X	X	X	X
Joe	Keesha	Stephie	Katie	Harris

X
Narrator

Narrator: We are introducing you to some of the troubled teens found in Helen Frost's novel *Keesha's House*. Aunt Annie provided a home for Joe when he really needed someone to take him in as a young boy. When Annie died, the house became Joes. In gratitude, he continues to make the house a safe place where troubled teens can feel acceptance. Keesha, read by _____ is one of those teens. Joe is read by _____. Stephie is read by _____. Harris is read by _____.

Keesha: The night I ran off, holding on to my picture of Mama, like her face could talk to me or something, I still believed someone would come after me. I still thought the cops or somebody would look for me all night, and Dad would say he didn't mean it. His face when I left, so tight and dark. I'm scared when his eyes flash like that—*Don't come back*. Holding his bottle like a gun. What would a real home be like? An everybody-sit-down-at-the-table home? I remember when Mama was still alive, sitting on that brown couch holding Tobias. He had an earache, he cried all night, and she stayed up and tried to quiet him. She was scared of Dad. I remember his face, so angry when one of us cried. And her face, softer when he wasn't home.

Joe: It used to be when kids showed up they'd say, "I'm looking for Joe's house. Somebody sent me here and said to ask you for a place to stay tonight." They'd stay a week, a month, a year.... It's still like that, 'cept now they look at me like, "Where'd you come from? Ain't this Keesha's house?" I go get Keesha, and I watch while she checks out the situation, thinks what couch or bed we got. Time and again, she makes the right decision. She helps so many kids. The way she holds her head up, my heart breaks-ain't nobody thinkin' 'bout what Keesha

needs. I love this girl whatever way I can, too young to be her father, too old to be her man.

Stephie: At school there's this girl I know named Keesha who told me there's a place kids go and stay awhile, where people don't ask questions. I go, "Yeah, sure, okay." Kind of tossed my head, like I was just some girl who wouldn't care. But now I wish I'd asked her the exact address. (Nothing wrong with asking.) To lots of girls, it's no big deal to have a baby. They treat it like a big attention getter-when the baby's born, they go around showing it off to all their friends. But nothing like this ever happens in my family. Mom and Dad won't toss me out, or even yell at me, if I go home right now. But how can I keep acting like the girl they think I am-a carefree teenage girl with nothing big to worry me.

Katie: I sleep in my sleeping bag in a room with a lock in the basement of the place on Jackson Street. And I feel safe. If Keesha wants to talk to me, she knocks first, and if I want to let her in, I do. If I don't, I don't. It's my choice. There's not too much I really have a choice about. Mom would say I choose to leave my room at home, but that's not something anyone would do without a real good reason. There's no place for me there since she got married. Like, one time, I knocked her husband's trophy off his gun safe, and he twisted my arm-hard. I never feel safe with he's around. I finally asked my mom to make a choice: him or me. She went, "Oh Katie, he'll be fine." Then she knocked on our wood table. I blew up. I stormed out of the room and started thinking hard. In the first place, I know he won't be fine. I didn't tell her what he tries to do to me when she works late. In a way, I want to, but even if I do, she won't believe me. She thinks we're safe in the so-called nice neighborhood.

Harris: By the time Katie figured out I was living in my car, I'd saved some money. Enough so when they asked me if I wanted to move in, I could buy a bed that folds into a couch during the day. I found this little room with a window, up in the attic, and Joe said I could sleep up here. Now if I want to be alone, I can come up here and it's not lonely, because I hear sounds of people living downstairs in the house. I didn't have to buy too much. I've learned what I can live without. I might buy a small rug or something, but first I'll look around up

here. Joe's aunt Annie left lots of trunks and boxes full of stuff. One day I dusted off an old chess set and brought it down to the living room. Katie knows how to play, and Joe plays well enough to give us both a challenge.

Narrator: Teens come to the house left by Aunt Annie. They support each other until ready to get on with their lives. Read *Keesha's House* by Helen Frost to get better acquainted with a group of teens who have faced their difficulties and managed to rise above them.

THE STONE GODDESS

By Minfong Ho

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern at the side. Nakri and Teeda are sitting together.

The lighting is very dim, to give the feel of night.

X X

Teeda Nakri

X
Narrator

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from Minfong Ho's, *The Stone Goddess*. The book is historical fiction, written in first person, about a young girl and her family in the midst of the Cambodian revolution in the late 1970's. Nakri, read by _____, is telling the story. Her sister, Teeda, is read by _____. When the Khmer Rouge take over Cambodia, Nakri and her family are forced from their home. Their father is taken away, presumably killed. Nakri, Teeda, and their older brother Boran, are taken from their mother and made to work in a labor camp. In the following passage, Nakri has stepped on something sharp with her bare foot while working in the fields and cut it severely. It was not cleaned properly, and Nakri gets very sick with the infection. Teeda does her best to nurse her back to health by cleaning and bandaging her foot, and feeding her extra food Boran finds. In an effort to keep up her sagging spirits, Teeda tells her the age-old story of the Apsara's: the traditional dance of the gods and goddesses of Cambodia.

Teeda: Eat. You'll feel better soon. (not very convincingly) The harvest will be good, and we'll get more to eat. And maybe we'll get to visit Mother and Yann and Grandma soon, and Pa would be waiting there. Everything will be better.

Nakri: (quietly, weakly) Leave me alone.

Teeda: (Talking softly, slowly, gently) Once, when I was your age or even younger, I reached up and touched an apsara. (pause) We were visiting Granny – this was before you were even born – when Ma took me to see Angkor Wat, the ancient and sacred temple built of solid stone almost a thousand years ago. It was nearing sunset, and the shadows were very long. The Angkor Wat Temple was almost deserted as we walked along the corridors and courtyards. The apsara's were everywhere. They were beautiful – dancing with their arms raised, fingers bent back to a full arc, and always smiling. I had started my dance lessons not long before that, and it was as if they were showing me how to dance. Our mother knew the temple well from previous visits, and led me through the maze of corridors to a special spot, even more sacred than the others. It was where the apsaras first appeared, during the mighty Churning of the Oceans. There was a tumultuous struggle between the gods and the demons. At one end, holding the writhing head of a gigantic snake, was a row of demons, their arms straining in unison to pull it. At the other end of the snake, at its tail, was a row of gods, tugging equally hard.

Nakri: (murmuring) Like a tug-of-war game.

Teeda: (smiling) Except that this was in the ocean, and the rope was wound around Mount Mera, which was resting on top of a gigantic turtle. In the pulling of the

snake back and forth, the mountain was twirled around and around, churning the waves up into thick, white foam.

Nakri: Wasn't it terrifying?

Teeda: (nodding) Yes, it was – but no more than now. It's the way the world is now.

Everything churned up, the good and the bad, in a big tug-of-war. But Nakri, that's where these goddesses first appeared. Out of this terrible struggle they danced their way through the churning waves and flew up to the heavens! And they were smiling. These apsaras were radiant with grace and joy, and their dancing brought a shining beauty to the storm-darkened world. (whispering) That's what we must be like, little sister. Like the apsara goddesses, we must dance our way up through the storm. Even when – especially when – everything around us is dark, and everybody is fighting each other, we've got to keep our spirit up. We've got to keep dancing. That's what the apsaras told me, little sister. And that's what I'm telling you now: that if we can only keep the dance alive in our hearts, someday, somehow, we will reach the sunlight and the open sky again.

Nakri: In a way, grandmother weaving at the loom, humming to herself as she sends the shuttle through the taut threads, is keeping the dance alive. As was father, when he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me to watch the crescent moon. And you and Boran, gathering bits of extra food and herbs for me, are keeping the spirit of hope alive. (sounding intrigued, hushed) And....and you touched one, an apsara?

Teeda: On the ankle. So smooth and cool she was; she felt alive even though she was made of stone. If you saw her and touched her, too, this stone goddess, she would

tell you the same thing: that you must keep the dance alive, even through the worst storm. Do you hear me, Nakri?

Nakri: I hear you.

Narrator: Will the image of the stone goddess be enough to make Nakri strong enough to return to her family? Read *The Stone Goddess* by Minfong Ho to see if the family is reunited.

The First Part Last
By Angela Johnson

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern; Bobby, K-Boy and J.L. sit on chairs.

X	X	X	X
Narrator	Bobby	K-Boy	J.L.

Narrator: This is an excerpt from the novel, *The First Part Last*, by Angela Johnson.

In this novel, two teens, Bobby and Nia, face tough decisions about how to deal with an unexpected teenage pregnancy. Bobby, the father-to-be, uses flashbacks to tell the story in first-person. In this scene, Bobby is thinking about how he can tell his best friends, K-Boy and J.L. about Nia’s pregnancy.

Bobby: I keep waiting. I keep waiting for them to say something about what I just told them. For the first time I don’t know what they’ll say. I know it’s stupid, but I’m more afraid of what they’ll say about Nia being pregnant than I was about my parents.

J.L.: Yo, Bobby. I need some money for a phone call. You got change on you?

Bobby: (thinking to himself) I just told him my girl is having a baby and all he wants to do is make a phone call.

K-Boy: (laughing)

Bobby: (yelling) What the heck is so funny?

J.L.: Hey, Bro, I was just going to make a call for you to 1-800-I-STUPID.

Bobby: (to himself) K-Boy looks sorry for me. I don’t know what I expected. I would have probably said the same thing. We talked about this. We said only stupid people would let it get to this. ‘Cause there is birth control. Lots of it.

K-Boy: (shrugging) What can I say?

J.L.: What do you want us to say?

Bobby: Nothing.

K-Boy: Shoot.

Bobby: Yeah. That's pretty much where I'm at.

K-Boy: Nia okay? 'Cause I know she is seriously into the books...

Bobby: She's out of it. Last time I talked to her all she could do was get out a few words.

Mostly she just cries.

K-Boy: I feel you, man. I mean I wouldn't want to be ya, but I feel you. (pausing) So –
she keeping it or what?

Bobby: I don't know. She doesn't want to talk about it. She doesn't say yes. She doesn't
say no.

K-Boy: Bobby, what do you want her to do?

Narrator: Bobby's stomach is hurting by the time that question is out of K-Boy's mouth
and into the air. Bobby doesn't say; it's not up to me. He can't say what he wants.
His dad told him now was the time to shut up his mouth. What Nia wants is what
it's all about. No pressure. In order to find out what happens to Bobby and the
baby, read *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson.

SHAKESPEARE BATS CLEANUP

By Ron Koertge

Staging: The narrator is off to the side, Dad, Kevin and Mira stand together.

X	X	X
Dad	Kevin	Mira

X
Narrator

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from Ron Koertge's *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*, a contemporary fiction novel written in free verse. Fourteen-year old Kevin is a typical teenage who thinks about sports, friends, family and love. He lives for baseball, until mono forces him to stay home. Kevin's dad, a writer, hands him a blank journal suggesting he write down his thoughts. Kevin's dad is read by _____, his girlfriend, Mira, is read by _____. Kevin, read by _____ begins to describe himself.

Kevin: I'm kind of like a baseball diamond with the grass mowed and the chalk lines laid down, but there's no game. Wait. That's not a very good simile. Actually I'm more like a house that was nice once and then had a fire or something. Now it's being fixed up from the inside out. Yeah, that's better: my blood is getting more nuclei, my spleen is shrinking, my throat is like it used to be. But I am not really involved. It's being done by independent contractors.

Narrator: Writing poetry helps Kevin fill the days at home when he cannot not play baseball. Once he is better and confinement is over, Kevin finds himself on the bench instead of playing baseball. He misses writing, so he decides to write instead of paying attention to a game that he can't play. After the game, Mira sees him writing, and questions him about what he was doing. He is embarrassed

and tells her “nothing.” Later, Kevin feels badly about telling a lie, so he goes to her house.

Kevin: It was a poem. But I’m not sensitive. I’m a ballplayer. I was just fooling around with poetry when I was sick with mono.

Mira: So you lied.

Kevin: Just a little.

Mira: Thomas Jefferson said, “He who permits himself to tell a lie finds it much easier to do it a second and third time.”

Kevin: How did you know that?

Mira: I had to write a book report. But I just remember things. Don’t you?

Kevin: Most home runs by a first baseman, maybe. Not things Thomas Jefferson said.

Mira: Are you any good?

Kevin: At baseball?

Mira: At poetry.

Kevin: No. I don’t know.

Mira: You should show me something.

Narrator: Kevin does not want to share his own work with Mira, but does agree to share poetry with her.

Dad: There’s this poet I like a lot, and he’s reading in Venice Wednesday night. Do you want to go? I won’t tell your friends. We’ll wear disguises if you want.

Kevin: Can I bring somebody?

Dad: I thought you were through with girls.

Kevin: This one’s pretty interesting.

Dad: If you say so.

Narrator: Being encouraged to write gives Kevin insight into life after the death of his mother, a dad who cares for him, and a new girlfriend who likes poetry. Kevin's dedication to baseball is still there but his newly discovered appreciation for poetry may have changed his love life.

BUDDHA BOY

By Kathe Koja

Staging:

X	X	X	X
	Justin	Megan	McManus
Narrator			

Narrator: This reader's theater scene is taken from the novel, *Buddha Boy* by Kathe Koja. At Edward Rucher High School there are the cool kids like McManus, read by _____ who have everything and get away with everything. Then there's the ones in the middle like Justin, read by _____ and Megan read by _____ that aren't cool, but aren't outcasts either. Then there are the freaks and geeks, the weirdos like the new kid Jinsen, read by _____. No one understands Jinsen, but Justin is the only who bothers even trying. For being a "freak" Jinsen sure gets a lot of attention. You should hear some of the things the students have said about him.

Megan: (talking to Justin) What is *that*? Look at that bald-headed kid wearing the size million t-shirt. Is he an exchange student? From Mars?

McManus: Hey Buddha boy!

Justin: (to Megan) Maybe he's a monk?

Megan: He is not a monk. He is a feeb. A bald feeb.

Justin: (to audience) I can not believe I have to have him as a partner for our Econ assignment. Maybe if we work on the assignment at his house no one will see us together.

Megan: I pity you.

Justin: He let me look at his sketch book and the stuff he drew was amazing! I'd never seen anything like it, not outside an art book anyway. I will have to get him in our art class.

Megan: (annoyed) He's not going to *sit* with us, is he?

McManus: Hey Buddha boy! What's that book you have there? Let me see it. Oops!

(laughing) It's a watercolor now, right Justin?

Justin: (talking to the audience) I wanted to do something, say something-you evil creep-but I didn't when McManus dropped the sketch book into a puddle of water. There was Jinsen, looking right at me, the ruined book limp and bleeding water through his muddy hands. I felt guilty for not doing anything, so when this art project came up and Jinsen asked if I would help him, I said yes right away.

Megan: (to Justin) You're not becoming friends with him *are you*?

McManus: Hey Justin, seen your Butt Boy lately?

Justin: (to audience) Jinsen wouldn't tell me what they did to him, but his mouth was swollen, his jaw was red and his t-shirt was all torn.

McManus: Hey Justin! Come here.

Justin: No, you want to talk, let's talk right here.

McManus: (angrily) Ok, let's talk about your friend Buddha Boy. Cause he's really your friend. I know.

Justin: Yeah, he's my friend, so what?

McManus: So why?

Justin: What?

McManus: (furious) I said *why*. Why do you hang out with him? Why do you stick up for him? The kid's a freak, he doesn't even belong here. He wears freak clothes, he acts like a freak, and he sure talks like a freak....

Justin: (interrupting) Well, ignore him. Just pretend he's not....

McManus: (interrupting) Ignore him! How can you ignore him? You know what he said to me yesterday? When he was getting, when we were..... He said "If it makes you happy," that's what he said. "Go on, if it makes you happy." (yelling) What is that supposed to mean? You tell him, tell him to stay away from me. Just tell him that.

Justin: (to audience) What I don't understand is why Jinsen keeps taking it, he never gets mad.

Megan: Well, Jinsen is a good artist.

Justin: He's a great artist.

McManus: He's not as good as me.

Megan: Yeah, right.

Narrator: Do you know the concept of karma? It's kind of like a circle, or cause-and-effect, like a slow tolling bell you rang maybe a year ago, five years ago, maybe in another lifetime if you believe in that. Karma means that what you do today, and why you do it, makes you who you are forever: as if you were clay, and every thought and action left a mark in that clay, bent it, shaped it, even ruined it. With karma there are no excuses, no explanations, no I-didn't-really-mean-it-so-can-I-have-some-more-clay. Karma takes everything you do very, very seriously. That year at Ruchers, Justin learned a lot about Karma. If you would like to know more about Justin and his unique friendship with Jinsen, read *Buddha Boy* by Kathe Koja.

BIRDLAND
By Tracy Mack

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern; the other characters sit on chairs.

X	X			X
Aunt Jane	Leo			Homeless girl
		X	X	
		Mom	Joseph	
X				
Narrator				

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from Tracy Mack’s *Birdland*, a contemporary fiction story about a young man named Joseph and his family trying to come to terms with the death of Joseph’s older brother Zeke. Aunt Jane is read by _____. Leo, Joseph’s baby brother, is read by _____. The homeless girl is read by _____. Joseph’s mom is read by _____, and Joseph is read by _____. It is Christmas day and Joseph is meeting up with his family at the Jade Mountain, a Chinese restaurant where his family traditionally has dinner every year. Joseph is feeling down about the loss of his brother and the fact that no one in the family has learned to deal with Zeke’s death. Joseph’s feelings have been stirred up even more after meeting a homeless girl who may have known his brother.

Aunt Jane: (happy) Hey it’s the J-man. How are you, honey? Do you want to order for the table?

Mom: (cheerily) You should have seen the windows at Saks, Joseph—

Joseph: Where’s Dad?

Mom: He’s still at the hospital.

Joseph: (feeling down) You said...he was coming.

Mom: (sighing) Honey, he can’t predict what’s going to happen during delivery.

Joseph: (getting angry) Why isn't he here? He's *never* here!

Mom: There were some complica—

Joseph: Are you splitting up?

Mom: (embarrassed) Joseph! Where would you get an idea like that?

Joseph: (stubborn) I'm not hungry.

Mom: Joseph, please sit down.

Joseph: Why? So we can pretend we're a normal family?

Mom: This isn't the place – you're being rude.

Leo: (putting his two cents in) S'cuse you, Yoseph!

Aunt Jane: (concerned) Do you want to get some air, Joey?

Narrator: Joseph angrily leaves the table and sits down on a bench outside the restaurant.

The wind bites into his cheeks and freezes his hands and feet, but he just sits there and lets himself grow numb. At last, Mom and Leo come out. They walk home in silence past the lights and wreaths of the brownstones.

Mom: (sighs) I know you're hurting, Joseph. I'm sorry. Your father and I, well, we're all trying to cope as best we can. Sometimes we fail, but it doesn't mean we give up on one another.

Mom: Janey thinks you don't tell us what's going on inside you because you don't want to hurt us or make waves. Is that true?

Joseph: (shrugs) I don't know.

Mom: I don't want to lose you, Joseph. But you're so quiet. Sometimes I think I've already lost you.

Joseph: (angrily) Dad's the one...who's AWOL.

Mom: (softly) We've lost so much. We're never going to be the same family we were, but we've got to find a way to hold on to what we have left.

Narrator: Joseph, Leo, and his Mom pause as they encounter a homeless girl waiting on their apartment building's front steps.

Mom: Are you okay?

Homeless Girl: (nodding) Just waitin' for a friend.

Mom: Well, I hope she doesn't keep you waiting long. It's frigid out here.

Homeless Girl: (staring at Joseph) He'll be right down.

Homeless Girl: I think I'll wait for him in the lobby. Warmer.

Mom: Good night.

Mom: Joseph?

Joseph: (cautious) Hope your friend shows.

Joseph: Good night.

Narrator: What will Joseph discover when he comes back downstairs later that night?

How will that change the lives of the homeless girl, Joseph, and his family?

Learn the secrets left behind by Zeke's passing by reading *Birdland* by Tracy

Mack.

THE BALLAD OF SIR DINADAN

By Gerald Morris

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern; other readers sit on tall stools.

X

	X	Sir Dinadan	X
X	Palomides		Sir Hermind

Narrator

Narrator: This reader's theater adaptation is based on a scene from *The Ballad of Sir*

Dinadan by Gerald Morris, a tale of a knight's adventures during the Middle Ages. Sir Dinadan and his friend, Sir Palomides encounter a large black funeral barge tied to the edge of a river. The barge is carrying the dead body of a white haired man. Another knight, Sir Hermind, is in full armor and kneeling on the shore before a rough wooden cross. Sir Dinadan is read by _____.

Sir Palomides is read by _____. Sir Hermind is read by _____.

_____ . I am _____, the narrator.

Sir Hermind: (grieving) At last, I am ready.

Sir Dinadan: (sarcastic) Ready for what?

Sir Hermind: (wailing) I will not resist you...I have been apart from my brother for too long, and I am ready to rejoin him.

Sir Dinadan: Right, then. Go see your brother. We wouldn't dream of stopping you.

Sir Hermind: (disgusted and angry) Must you sport with me, too? Did your masters Helius and Helake bid you mock me first?

Sir Palomides: Is that your brother in the boat, my lord?

Sir Hermind: (Sadly) Yes. That is King Hermance. I beg you delay no more, but do what you were sent to do.

Sir Palomides: (quietly) He expects us to kill him.

Sir Dinadan: (humorous and dramatic) Some people are so demanding, considering we've only just met, I mean.

Sir Hermind: (puzzled) Do you mean you aren't from Helius and Helake either?

Sir Dinadan: (sarcastically) No! Who are they?

Sir Hermind: (sighs) I get myself all ready, and then nothing comes of it.

Sir Palomides: But forgive me, my lord, why do you wish to die?

Sir Hermind: Oh, it's not that I wish it. It's just that I won't leave my brother again, and so my death is inevitable. Helius and Helake can't leave me alive, or their throne would be unsafe.

Sir Dinadan: It sounds like a story. We've nothing very pressing just now. Why don't you tell us what this is about? Who are Helius and Helake?

Sir Hermind: (nodding) My nephews. Or step-nephews, rather. Twin boys that my brother, the King of Withernsea, took in as his own after their parents were drowned in a flood.

Sir Dinadan: (respectfully) That was decent of him.

Sir Hermind: (speaks with great admiration) There was no man more kind and good than Hermance. It was what made him so fit to be king, and what made me so unfit to take his place. I never had his patience or goodness.

Sir Palomides: But why should you have taken his place anyway?

Sir Hermind: Hermance never had children, you see. And then, when his wife died and he swore that he'd never marry again, it didn't take a wizard to see who was up

next. Hermance began to groom me for the throne, and I wanted none of it. I wanted adventure. So I left. That was more than twenty years ago.

Sir Dinadan: Did you find adventure?

Sir Hermind: (gravely) No. Nor does anyone else. Adventure is something that happens to someone else. When it's happening to you, it's only trouble.

Sir Palomides: You found something better than adventure. You found wisdom. Perhaps you would not be such a bad king after all.

Sir Hermind: Hermance raised the two boys to be his heirs. Unfortunately, he gave them everything they wanted, and more.

Sir Dinadan: Probably not the best way to groom wise and generous kings, you mean.

Sir Hermind: (angry) They became evil, grasping men, taking what they wanted from the land and the people, abusing every right and privilege they had been given. They became so brazen that word of their deeds spread beyond Withernsea, and I heard of them. I came home. But too late. They killed him and threw the body into the river. Helius and Helake will be sending someone soon. I will be next.

Sir Dinadan: I suppose I ought to put on my blasted armor. Hope it still fits.

Narrator: Later that same day, seven mounted knight assassins came to kill Hermind.

The three knights fought the assassins. To find out what happened to the brave knights, read *The Ballad of Sir Dinadan* by Gerald Morris.

ERAGON
By Christopher Paolini

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern; other readers sit on tall stools. The reader for Solembun sits slightly behind the readers for Eragon and Angela.

X
Solembun
X X
Eragon Angela

X
Narrator

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from the book *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini.

Eragon is a sixteen year old boy who discovers that his future is going to be vastly different from the simple farm life he had envisioned. His mysterious rock has hatched into a dragon and he finds himself the first of a new generation of Dragon Riders. He sets off on a quest of revenge against those who have killed his uncle in their search for the dragon egg, not realizing that his journey will turn into much more. In this scene he is in a town searching for information about his uncle's death. He has just wandered into the shop of Angela, the Herbalist, and found that he can communicate telepathically with her werecat Solembun. Eragon is read by _____. Angela is read by _____, and the part of Solembun will be read by _____. I am _____, the narrator.

Angela: (startled, after looking at Solembun) He says you talked with him.

Eragon: (surprised) You can talk with him too?

Angela: Of course, but that doesn't mean he'll say anything back. He likes you. That's unusual. Most of the time Solembun doesn't show himself to customers. In fact, he says you show some promise, given a few years of work.

Eragon: Thanks.

Angela: It's a compliment, coming from him. You're only the third person to come in here who has been able to speak with him. But I don't run a shop just so I can prattle on. Is there anything you want? Or did you only come in to look?

Eragon: Just to look. Besides, I don't really need any herbs.

Angela: (mischievously) That's not all I do. The rich fool lords pay me for love potions and the like. I never claim that they work, but for some reason they keep coming back. But I don't think you need such chicaneries. Would you like your fortune told? I do that too, for all the rich fool ladies.

Eragon: (laughing) No. I'm afraid my fortune is pretty much unreadable and I don't have any money.

Angela: (hesitantly) I think. . . . That crystal ball is only for show. But I do have . . . Wait here; I'll be right back. (breathlessly) I haven't used these for so long, I almost forgot where they were. Now; sit across from me and I'll show you why I went to all the trouble.

Narrator: Eragon takes a seat while Solembum looks on from behind. Angela spreads a cloth on the counter and pours out a collection of smooth bones carved with runes and ancient symbols.

Angela: (seriously) These are the knucklebones of a dragon. Unlike tea leaves, crystal balls, or even divining cards, these have real power. They do not lie, though understanding what they say is complicated. If you wish I will cast and read them for you. But understand that to know one's fate can be a terrible thing. You must be sure of your decision.

Eragon: Why do you offer this?

Angela: Because of Solembum. The fact that he spoke to you makes you special. He is a werecat after all.

Eragon: (decisively) Cast the bones for me.

Angela: (sighing) This is the hardest reading I've ever done. You were right. Your future is nigh impossible to see. I've never known of anyone's fate being so tangled and clouded. I was, however able to wrest a few answers from it. (Pause) I will start here because it is the clearest to understand. Infinity and long life. This is the first time I have ever seen it come up in someone's future. Most of the time it's the aspen or the elm, both signs that a person will live a normal span of years. Whether this means that you will live forever or that you will only have an extraordinarily long life, I'm not sure. Whatever it foretells, you may be sure that many years lie ahead of you.

Eragon: What else do you see?

Angela: Now the bones grow harder to read, as the rest are in a confused pile. Here the wandering path, lightning bolt, and sailing ship all lie together – a pattern I've never seen, only heard of. The wandering path shows that there are many choices in your future. I see the mighty powers of this land struggling to control your will and destiny. Countless possible futures await you – all filled with blood and conflict – but only one will bring you happiness and peace. Beware of losing your way for you are one of the few who are truly free to choose their own fate. That freedom is a gift, but it is also a responsibility more binding than chains.

Eragon: (intently) What about the other symbols?

Angela: (sadly). The lightning bolt is a terrible omen. There is doom upon you, but of what sort I know not. Part of it lies in a death – one that rapidly approaches and

will cause you much grief. But the rest awaits in a great journey. The sailing ship is impossible to misunderstand. Your fate will be to leave this land forever, though where your final destination is I do not know.

Eragon: (hesitantly) Is there anything else?

Angela: (smiling) The next bone is a bit more pleasant. An epic romance is in your future. I cannot say if this passion will end happily, but your love is of noble birth and heritage. She is powerful, wise, and beautiful beyond compare. The final two bones indicate a betrayal. It will come from within your family.

Eragon: (outraged) My cousin Roran wouldn't do that!

Angela: I wouldn't know. But the bones have never lied and that is what they say.

Eragon: (joking nervously) After all that, death might be welcome.

Angela: It might be. But you shouldn't fret about what has yet to occur. The only way the future can harm us is by causing worry.

Eragon: (thoughtfully) Perhaps. When you cast the bones you spoke words of power from the ancient language.

Angela: (curiously) What I wouldn't give to see how the rest of your life plays out. You can talk to werecats, know of the ancient language, and have a most interesting future. Also few young men with empty pockets and rough traveling clothes can expect to be loved by a noblewoman. Who are you?

Eragon: I am Eragon.

Narrator: Eragon was the name of the first Dragon Rider long, long ago. Now Angela is all the more interested in seeing how Eragon's life will unfold. Eragon has a lot to ponder. Are Angela's predictions accurate? What choices will Eragon have to make about his future? Read Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* to find out.

THE RIVER BETWEEN US

By Richard Peck

X

Narrator

X

X

X

X

Delphine

Calinda

Tilly

Mama

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from *The River Between Us* by Richard Peck. This

historical fiction story is set during the early days of the Civil War after Tilly's twin brother Noah left to fight for the South. Mama is read by

_____, Tilly is read by _____,

Calinda is read by _____, and Delphine is read by

_____. Dr. Hutchings, a family friend, left for the war when

he learned they needed more army doctors. He sent back a report that half of the unit

was down with measles and the other half was drunk. One night after receiving the

doctor's news, Tilly had a dream about Noah. She went downstairs thinking he

might be home and she found Mama with the two French/Creole boarders,

Delphine and Calinda, in front of the hearth.

Tilly: Mama? [Pause] Mama, you'll catch your death.

Mama: I hope I do. I can't live like this. I want him back.

Tilly: Mama, we all want him back.

Mama: He's bad sick, you know. He is. I know things. Where do you think Cass gets it?

She gets it from me. I want him back. Go get him. [Long Pause]

(angry) Did you hear me? He's sick. My boy's sick. Go to him. Nurse him till he can travel. Then bring him back to me. [Pause] (cold voice) Are you deaf?

Tilly: (anxious) Mama, if I could find him, they wouldn't let me have him. He's a soldier. If he got well, Mama, they'd send him into battle.

Mama: Go get him. Wait till daylight. Then get out. Don't come back without him.

Tilly: (crying) Mama, I can't. I wouldn't know how. You and me'll go. We'll look for Noah together.

Calinda: (gently) Light a lamp Tilly. We'll send her up to her bed.

Tilly: I don't doubt but that Noah is sick, Calinda. We heard about the pneumonia the boys had brought with them from the wet ground they'd slept on at Jacksonville. I know about the measles, and there's been typhoid talk. Dr. Hutchings has said Cairo was a pesthole.

Calinda: (nodding) Yes, yes.

Tilly: (scared) But how can I go? I don't know where in the world it is, nor how to get there.

Calinda: (matter of fact) Before you ask, I stay at 'ome. I see to things here.

Tilly: (scared) But they's sickness down there, and you know the cures.

Calinda: (matter of fact) I send the cures with you, you and Delphine.

Tilly: (confused) Delphine? What earthly good would --

Calinda: (matter of fact) If you go among men, she come in handy. She is meant for men.

Tilly: Delphine, how old are you?

Delphine: Me? (shrugs) Fifteen

Delphine: Sixteen at Christmas.

Tilly: Never! Why, you're younger than me! Only by a few months, but I've been looking up to you all this time.

Delphine: (points to herself) For me, it is not young. Much should have been decided for me by now, my future made certain.

Tilly: (questioningly) You don't mean married?

Delphine: Married? (surprised) We don't marry. Not like you know it.

Narrator: Ever since they stepped off the steamboat from New Orleans, Tilly has been suspicious of the beautiful Delphine and her mysterious companion, Calinda. As Tilly and Delphine head out in search of Noah, they find their concern for Noah draws them closer to each other. If you want to find out the secret behind the mysterious young ladies from New Orleans, read *The River Between Us* by Richard Peck.

THE BOY WHO SAVED BASEBALL

By John H. Ritter

Staging: The narrator stands at a lectern. The other readers sit on tall stools.

		X		
	X	Tom	X	
	Mr. Gallagher		Mrs. Gallagher	
X			X	
Cruz de la Cruz			Frankie	X
				Wil
			X	X
X			Rachel	Maria
Narrator				

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from John Ritter's novel, *The Boy Who Saved*

Baseball, a contemporary realistic fiction story about a small town in California with a big controversy. In a town meeting, the residents of Dillontown recently learned an enormous real estate plan would bring new roads, new homes, new jobs, as well as a new ballpark. What happens depends on the local summer baseball camp team. If they win against their rivals from the next town, Dillontown stays like it is. If they lose, bring on the bulldozers. On the first day of baseball camp, those who were brave enough to stay on the Dillontown team begin to gather at the Gallagher's home, where the camp is held every summer. The small team already begins to feel defeated when they realize they only have nine players, needing ten. As this scene begins, Tom, the main character, read by _____, is standing outside with his teammates, Frankie, read by _____, Wil, read by _____, Rachel, read by _____, and Maria, read by _____. Tom's parents, the coaches, Mr. Gallagher, read by _____, and Mrs. Gallagher, read by _____, are also outside deciding what to do next. They all turn their heads to see a stranger appear on

horseback, Cruz de la Cruz, read by _____. I am _____, the narrator.

Cruz: *Buenos Dias*. Is this the world-famous Dillontown Wildcats Baseball Camp?

Mr. Gallagher: Yes, yes it is. This is Lucky Strike Park. Home of the Wildcats.

Welcome.

Cruz: Thank you. I'm Cruz de la Cruz, from Paloma. Here's my insurance waiver and two hundred dollars. I bat right, throw right, I'm mainly a shortstop, but I can pitch or play anywhere. Hope I can still sign up.

Maria: (surprisingly) You rode that horse all the way from Paloma? Over the mountains?

Cruz: (shrugging) Yeah. Beats walking.

Frankie: That's, like, fifty miles of rough country. How long'd it take?

Cruz: Not that long. Left yesterday morning. Stopped at my uncle's house in Campo at noon, then rode to *mi abuela's* in Pine Valley. That's where I came from this morning.

Frankie: Wow, even Pine Valley's a long ride!

Mrs. Gallagher: Certainly is. Cruz, you must be hungry. We live right next door. And I'll fix you a sandwich. How's peanut butter and jelly?

Cruz: Well, yeah, all right. Sounds good. Thank you. I'm just glad to finally be here.

Wil: (looking amusingly at the others) You're glad to be here? What for?

Cruz: (smiling) Seriously? Look at this place. The old stone wall, the gate, the famous Shrine of the Dillontown Nine. Getting to play here is like dying and going to Fenway.

Frankie: The ballpark in Boston.

Mr. Gallagher: Yes, well, it does have a certain – a certain –

Rachel: Spirit. I think there's a sort of spiritness out there.

Cruz: Yeah, yeah, that's right.

Frankie: Okay, but do you know what you're walking into?

Cruz: (eyebrows raised) Well, the website said it was a weeklong camp for anyone who loves to eat, drink, and sleep baseball. That's me!

Wil: (bleakly) That was before last night. Now it's eat, sleep, and delete baseball.

Mr. Gallagher: Not necessarily. We've had a little disagreement in our town over what direction it should go in. And this ball team here will have a say in that decision.

Frankie: (smiling). A BIG say.

Narrator: Mr. Gallagher explained the whole situation to Cruz.

Cruz: Whew. We're playing for the future of this ballpark? (making a fist) *Ay, Dios.*
Then we're on a mission from God.

Mr. Gallagher (suddenly inspired): Okay, then. We've got ourselves a team. Let's go set up camp!

Narrator: Who is this Cruz de la Cruz character and does he help the Dillontown Wildcats or hurt them? Is he *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*? Read this novel by John Ritter to find out if the Wildcats triumph and save their field or lose it all to their rivals.

FULL TILT
By Neal Shusterman

Staging:

				X	
	X	X	Sammy	X	
Narrator				Blake	Cassandra

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from Neal Shusterman's *Full Tilt*, a science fiction story about Blake, a responsible sixteen year old and his wild younger brother, Quinn. Blake and Quinn have been lured into a bizarre carnival experience by a beautiful young woman named Cassandra. Little do they know that the price of admission is their souls and the only way to save themselves is to survive seven carnival rides before dawn. In this scene Blake read by _____ has just survived his second tortuous ride and has ended up in some type of tavern with Sammy, the bartender, read by _____. Cassandra is read by _____.

Cassandra: Enjoying yourself?

Blake: It sure looks like you are.

Cassandra: (shrugging) I pass time well.

Blake: Is that what you call it----passing the time? Luring people onto rides and watching them die?

Cassandra: They don't die, not exactly.

Blake: Exactly what happens to them, then?

Cassandra: You're in no position to ask questions.

Blake: I'm asking anyway.

Cassandra: (thinking a minute) If you lose your life on a ride, the park just...absorbs you, simple as that.

Blake: (looking confused) Who are you?

Cassandra: (looking into his eyes) Who am I? The sum of your dreams; the thrills you refuse to grasp; the unknown fear.

Blake: Gee, thanks for the haiku, but a picture ID would have been enough.

Cassandra: (looking into his eyes again) If this amusement park were flesh, then you could say I'm its soul.

Blake: (grinning and nodding his head) The spirit of adventure.

Cassandra: (looking serious) Yes.....and I'm very, very bored. (hesitate) Is that fear you're feeling?

Blake: It's none of your business what I'm feeling.

Cassandra: (looking seductive) I shouldn't be keeping you; after all, you've got five more rides to get through.

Blake: Or else what?

Cassandra: (turning toward Sammy) Sammy can answer that one for you." (hesitate) Sammy?

Sammy: Yes, Miss Cassandra?

Cassandra: How long have you been with us? It's all right, you can answer.

Sammy: (trying to remember) Of course, I'd be guessing.....but I'd say about thirty years now. I was fifteen then. I was on my third ride when I got caught.

Blake: Caught?

Sammy: You know.....dawn.

Cassandra: The sun rises and we close our gates. If you're not out of the park by dawn
(hesitate) then you stay.

Narrator: If you would like to find out if Blake and Quinn survive the seven rides and are
able leave the park, read *Full Tilt* by Neal Shusterman.