

**Young Adult
Sequoyah
Reader's Theater Scripts
2008**

Assassin
By Anna Myers

Narrator
X

Wilkes
X

Arabella
X

Narrator: We are presenting the historical fiction novel, *Assassin* by Anna Myers.

Arabella is a young girl of fourteen who befriends a charming actor, John Wilkes Booth, with whom she is infatuated. Arabella is read by _____ and Wilkes is read by _____. The narrator is _____.

It is April 1865 in Washington D.C. Arabella is aware of his plot to assassinate President Lincoln and plans to stop Wilkes. The events that unfold will change the course of history forever. Before finding him, she says a prayer asking for forgiveness.

Arabella: (Praying) God forgive me. If you will only forgive me, I will show you that I am stronger now. I will go to Wilkes Booth and say I am glad his plan did not work. I will face him and tell him I am glad Richmond has fallen, that I am not a Southerner at all. I will tell him I do not need his false friendship, and I will write to Steven and beg his forgiveness.

Narrator: Arabella finds Wilkes at the Ford Theatre. She interrupts him as he is making final preparations to assassinate President Lincoln.

Wilkes: I don't want to hurt you, Arabella. Take the rope. Now put your hands together with the rope between them.

Arabella: (shaking) Please, Wilkes, you're hurting me.

Wilkes: So many people have been hurt, sweet Arabella. Pain doesn't matter much now, not yours, not mine. We are going down into the basement. You will walk in front of me, and if you make any unexpected moves, I will have to shoot you. Move. Be careful Arabella, these steps are steep and made of stone. I am afraid if you slipped, the fall would kill you.

Arabella: What are you going to do with me?

Wilkes: Hush, I'm thinking. There it is. I thought there was one down here. See that chifforobe over there? Move. Get in. Oh, good. You're a perfect fit.

Arabella: Don't make me get in, please.

Wilkes: Oh, Arabella, don't beg. It will only make me feel bad. You don't want me to feel bad, do you?

Arabella: Wilkes, please.

Wilkes: Well, there is one other choice.

Arabella: What?

Wilkes: I could shoot you. Probably that would be kinder. (Shrugs) This thing seems pretty tight. I wonder how long you can live in there with such little air?

Arabella: Don't kill me. I am your friend - remember how I tried to help you?

Wilkes: Oh, I remember, but you wouldn't want to help me kill the president, would you?

(Laughing) Don't fret so, little Arabella. It was only a rhetorical question. I expected no answer. Even if you were willing, there is no part for you to play, not in this drama. You would be nothing to me but a liability. Now I must close this door. Open up. No one is in the building now to hear the shot, but someone might hear you call later. (Whispering) I am sorry Arabella. In fact, when I am finished

drilling a hole in the door of the presidential box, I will come back down if there is time and drill a few holes for you. I have no wish to know you have suffocated. The air will buy you time. Someone may find you before you die from thirst. [Pause] I'll try to make these holes above your head, Arabella. Perhaps you had best scrunch down as much as possible. I'm going now, Arabella. I don't think you will hear the shot, but probably the commotion afterward. I would imagine there will be a great deal of commotion. When those sounds reach you, you will know Abraham Lincoln is dead.

Narrator: President Lincoln was pronounced dead at 7:22 A.M. the following morning after being shot by John Wilkes Booth. That day in Fords Theatre, was the first time an American president had been assassinated. If you would like a different perspective of history, or insight into a killer's mind, you must read *Assassin*, by Anna Myers.

Code Talker
By Joseph Bruchac

X X
Sam Bill

X
Narrator

Narrator: During World II, Navajo Indians were recruited to use their native language as a secret unbreakable code to send messages back and forth on the front lines. They had to remain secret, even for twenty years after the war. In the historical fiction novel, *Code Talker*, by Joseph Bruchac, Ned Begay tells his story of fighting as a Marine in the Pacific Islands and how he sent secret messages to other Navajo code talkers. We begin our story as Ned is preparing to go to war. Two Navajo code talkers who have seen combat, have joined him and are eager to tell their experiences. The Navajos were given “white man” names by their teachers when they went to the white man school as children. Bill is read by _____ and Sam is read by _____. The narrator is _____.

Sam: None of the officers on our landing craft knew what to do with us Indians. They’d been told we had our own special orders. So we just sort of strolled off the LC onto the beach like two shepherders looking for a lost lamb.

Bill: We were supposed to report directly to the commanding officer, General Vandegrift. Nobody else. But the landing zone was chaos. We were so green that we didn’t wait till we knew things were clear. We just wandered off.

Sam: Happy-go-lucky. Anybody seen a general around here?

Bill: *Wehee*, that was us. Dumb as sheep dung. Next thing we knew, we were up near the front line perimeter. We heard this whining sound coming out of the sky like the world's biggest mosquito. Looked up and it was a Japanese Zero.

Sam: Diving in low over those coconut palms on a strafing run. Well, we hit the ground holding on to our helmets while bullets splattered all around us.

Bill: With all the sand we ate, I figure each of us was about ten pounds heavier by the time we got up again.

Narrator: Bill and Sam finally found the general who ordered them to try to send one of their secret messages to each other. It was received, but not just by Sam.

Bill: Every American radio operator on Guadalcanal heard our message. *Wehee*, did they! They started phoning in to report to headquarters that the Japanese were broadcasting on our frequency. They'd never heard Navajo before and assumed it had to be the enemy. So, they called off the test for the night. From then on, every time a message was sent out in Navajo code we had to start it off by saying "ARIZONA" or "NEW MEXICO" in a loud voice to alert the other radio operators that we weren't the enemy.

Sam: You guys will have to do the same.

Narrator: If you would like to read about the Navajo experiences training for combat, and find out how the Navajo Marines helped American win World War II, read *Code Talker* by Joseph Bruchac.

CROOKED RIVER
By Shelley Pearsall

X	X	X
Narrator	Rebecca	Laura

Narrator: In this Reader’s Theatre we are presenting a scene from Shelley Pearsall’s *Crooked River*, an historical fiction story told in the first person narrative by a thirteen year old girl who is coping with the rough times and the injustice of the frontier in 1812. Rebecca Carver is standing in the dooryard with her oldest sister Laura, after a tremendous storm has wrecked havoc over the countryside. Laura just returned from the hanging of Indian John. Rebecca is tormenting herself over whether or not to ask Laura what happened to Indian John. Rebecca Carver is read by _____, Laura is read by _____, and the narrator is _____.

Rebecca: (hesitantly) I want to know (taking a deep breath) I want to know what happened to Indian John.

Laura: Reb, I don’t...

Rebecca: (stubbornly) I want to know.

Laura: (sighing) I’ll tell you what I saw. May God forgive me, but I’ll tell you what I saw. Indian John was taken to the gallows. Some of the men gave speeches and the reverend offered a short sermon and two prayers. All the while Indian John stood on the gallows with a rope around his neck. I had to look away, my stomach was so sick, Reb. (Raising her voice) How could they do that to a poor man? How could they? (Pause) His body crumpled to the ground, Reb. (Closing her eyes) The hanging rope broke above him...

Rebecca: (incredulously) The rope broke?

Laura: (quietly) I turned and saw his body on the ground as the storm fell upon our heads. May God save the poor man's soul. That's what I prayed as we ran for the shelter of Mr. Perry's store. The whole crowd ran. I thought we would all be swept away in the storm. I had hold of Lorenzo's hand in the scattering crowd and we ran toward the store, with the wind and thunder roaring around us as I have never heard before in all my life.

Rebecca: (softly) So, he is dead? They have buried his body, and he is dead?

Laura: (shakily) No. That is what has unsettled everyone, all of us who were there. I saw his body on the ground with my own eyes, Rebecca, truly I did. And Pa said when the storm hit, he lifted the body into the coffin with the help of the sheriff and four other men. And Dr. Weston said that all life had expired. But when the storm ended and the men returned to the gallows, the body was missing from that coffin, and no one knows where it has gone.

Narrator: Indian John spent his days awaiting trial in the loft of Rebecca and Laura's house. They came to know his gentle soul. The girls knew, just as his lawyer knew, that Indian John could not kill. If you would like to know more about the houseguest and the plot to kill him, read *Crooked River* by Shelley Pearsall.

Down the Rabbit Hole

By Peter Abrahams

X
Ingrid

X
Joey

X
Chief Strade

X
Narrator

Narrator: Ingrid Levin-Hill is having a chaotic year. First she gets lost on the way to soccer practice and ends up being the last person to see a murder victim. Then she's accused of cheating on a math test and gets placed in a lower math class resulting in parental anger and punishment. To top it all off, she has a crush on the police chief's son, Joey, and it appears he might feel the same about her. Although she likes his son, Ingrid worries that the police chief will discover her relationship to the murder investigation. In the following scene, Ingrid eats dinner with Joey and his father. After the routine conversation, the conversation turns to Chief Strade's investigation of the murder Ingrid almost witnessed. The plot thickens in Peter Abrahams's novel *Down the Rabbit Hole*.

Joey: Ingrid's into Sherlock Holmes.

Chief Strade: There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.

Ingrid: "The Boscombe Valley Mystery"

Chief Strade: I'm a big fan. Wonder what he'd think of the case?

Ingrid: The Cracked-Up Katie case?

Chief Strade: That's what people called her, but there was never any evidence of actual insanity and no criminal record whatsoever. She did have her share of problems.

Joey: Mental problems, right, Dad?

Chief Strade: Don't know if you'd call them mental problems. She got eccentric over the years, but at one time she must have been pretty normal. They say she was engaged to one of the most eligible bachelors in Echo Falls.

Ingrid: Who was that?

Chief Strade: Phillip Prescott.

Ingrid: Of Prescott Hall?

Chief Strade: Yup, the last of the Prescotts.

Ingrid: The one who took off for Alaska?

Chief Strade: How'd you know that?

Joey: Ingrid's Alice in the Wonderland play.

Ingrid: My dad told me.

Chief Strade: That's the story. Long before my time, of course. This must have been thirty years ago or so. I was a kid back then, younger than you two.

Ingrid: Here in Echo Falls?

Chief Strade: Oh, no. Thirty years ago I would have been in Germany. Army brat.

They say her problems started up after he disappeared.

Ingrid: He just took off for Alaska? Out of the blue?

Chief Strade: He wrote a farewell letter to *The Echo*. We found it among her effects, saved all these years.

Ingrid: What did it say?

Joey: Read it out loud.

Ingrid: "My friends, this may come as a surprise, but after our wonderful production of *Dial M for Murder*, I feel a sudden and very deep need to refresh myself. My

plans take me far away, to Alaska or even beyond. I want honest physical work, space, a chance to work things out in my head. Please don't think badly of me.

Sincerely, Phillip Prescott.”

Joey: That's so weird.

Chief Strade: What do you think, Ingrid?

Ingrid: Yeah, it's weird.

Joey: He never came back?

Chief Strade: Nope, never heard from again.

Joey: What happened to all his money?

Chief Strade: I wondered about that so I called old Mr. Samuels over at *The Echo*. If

there's an Echo Falls historian, it's Mr. Samuels. Seems there wasn't much

Prescott money left by then. They hadn't really worked for a generation or two.

What was left behind got used up in maintenance and taxes over the years. Wash up, Joe. I'll take Ingrid home.

Ingrid: What's *Dial M for Murder* about?

Chief Strade: No idea. Let me guess—you want to be an actress too.

Ingrid: I don't know what I want to be yet.

Chief Strade: Give a thought to criminology.

Narrator: Ingrid follows Chief Strade's advice and decides to look into the mystery of

Cracked-Up Katie's death. A blossoming romance, lead role in *Alice's*

Adventures in Wonderland, soccer, and grounding keep Ingrid busy, but she does

manage to find Katie's murderer, and almost her own. Follow Ingrid's

investigation by reading *Down the Rabbit Hole* by Peter Abrahams.

Flush
By Carl Hiaasen

X
Shelly

X
Abbey

X
Noah

X
Narrator

Narrator: Welcome to the Florida Keys. We are presenting a scene from *Flush* by Carl Hiaasen. Noah and Abbey's father, Paine, has been arrested before for partially sinking the *Coral Queen*, a casino boat he suspects is dumping waste into the ocean. The dumping is actually being done by the owner of the *Coral Queen*, Dusty Muleman. He has a secret spy at the Coast Guard station and has managed to keep from being caught. Shelly, a large, beer drinking, tattoo wearing, tangerine smelling, gal is Dusty's ex-fiancé. Shelly, Abbey, and Noah are devising a plan to catch Dusty red-handed. Shelly is read by _____. Abbey is read by _____ and Noah is read by _____. The narrator is _____.
Abbey and Noah knock on Shelly's trailer door.

Shelly: (hoarsely) Time izzit?

Noah: Seven-thirty

Shelly: A.M.? You gotta be kiddin' me.

Abbey: It's important. Please?

Shelly: Killer headache. Large party last night.

Noah: We need your help, now.

Shelly: To do what?

Noah: To stop Dusty Muleman. You promised, remember?

Shelly: (tired laugh) And *you* promised to keep your brother outta trouble.

Abbey: We won't get in any trouble, if you help us.

Shelly: I don't know what we can do to stop him. He's tight with all the big shots in town.

Noah: But he's poisoning Thunder Beach. You know how sick a kid could get from swimming in that bad water? Same goes for the fish and the dolphins and the baby turtles. It sucks what Dusty is doing. It's awful.

Shelly: Yeah, but –

Noah: And don't forget what happened to Lice. Remember how you told me you had a dog in this fight? Remember –

Shelly: Lice is exactly what I been thinkin' about. Say they really killed him, okay? You s'pose they'd hesitate to do the same to me or you, if somethin' goes wrong?

Abbey: Shelly, I know it's dangerous. Not to mention crazy.

Noah: Look, if you don't want to be a part of this, its okay. I understand.

Shelly: (worn out) Enough already, Noah. This poor blond head's about to explode. Guess I wasn't feelin' so brave when I got up this mornin', but hey, a promise is a promise. Count me in. So what's the plan? And how does your daddy fit in?

Abbey: He doesn't fit in. We're not telling him about it.

Shelly: That's probably a darn good idea.

Noah: But we'll still get blamed for everything – if we get caught. That's why we need you.

Shelly: (sighing) So let's hear it.

Abbey: Well?

Narrator Noah and Abbey fill Shelly in on their plan. Shelly decides the idea is so whacked, it just might work. All Shelly has to do is flush, and flush often. To find out if their outrageous plan works or just gets flushed down the toilet, read *Flush* by Carl Hiaasen.

The Lightning Thief
By Rick Riordan

X
Narrator

X
Percy

X
Annabeth

Narrator: Greetings from Camp Half-Blood! We are presenting a fantasy adventure novel, *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. Twelve year old Percy Jackson always thought he was just a trouble maker with dyslexia and ADHD. He soon finds out after returning home for the summer that there is a special reason for his troubles. His mother takes him to the beach where she met his father, a man he has never met. Events start to unravel as he finds out that his best friend is not what he thought he was, and a huge half man, half bull monster is after him. His mother must give him up to the only place Percy will be safe. Camp Half-Blood. Our story begins as Percy is being shown around Camp Half-Blood by Annabeth, the young girl who helped nurse him back to health after he arrivrd at the camp. Percy is read by _____. Annabeth is read by _____. The Narrator is read by _____.

Percy: That's it. I want to go home now.

Annabeth: Don't you get it, Percy? You are home. This is the only safe place on earth for kids like us.

Percy: You mean, mentally disturbed kids?

Annabeth: I mean not human. Not totally human, anyway. Half-human.

Percy: Half-human and half-what?

Annabeth: I think you know.

Percy: (suspiciously) God, Half-god.

Annabeth: (nodding) Your father isn't dead, Percy, He's one of the Olympians.

Percy: That's.....crazy.

Annabeth: Is it? What's the most common thing gods did in the old stories? They ran around falling in love with humans and having kids with them. Do you think they've changed their habits in the last few millennia?

Percy: But those are just (pause). But if all the kids here are half-gods.

Annabeth: Demigods, that's the official term. Or half-bloods.

Percy: Then who is your dad?

Annabeth: (annoyed) My dad is a professor at West Point, I haven't seen him since I was very small. He teaches American History.

Percy: (surprisingly) He's human.

Annabeth: (angrily) What? You assume it has to be a male god who finds a human female attractive? How sexist is that?

Percy: Who's your mom, then?

Annabeth: Cabin six.

Percy: Meaning?

Annabeth: Athena. Goddess of wisdom and battle.

Percy: And my dad?

Annabeth: Undetermined, like I told you before. Nobody knows.

Percy: Except my mother. She knew.

Annabeth: Maybe not Percy. Gods don't always reveal their identities.

Percy: My dad would have. He loved her.

Annabeth: (cautiously) Maybe you're right. Maybe he'll send a sign. That's the only way to know for sure: your father has to send you a sign claiming you as his son. Sometimes it happens.

Percy: You mean sometimes it doesn't?

Annabeth: The gods are busy. They have a lot of kids and they don't always... Well, sometimes they don't care about us, Percy. They ignore us.

Percy: (angrily) So I'm stuck here, that's it? For the rest of my life?

Annabeth: It depends, some campers only stay the summer. If you're a child of Aphrodite or Demeter, you're probably not a real powerful force. The monsters might ignore you, so you can get by with a few months of summer training and live in the mortal world the rest of the year. But for some of us, it's too dangerous to leave. We're year-rounders. In the mortal world, we attract monsters. They sense us. They come to challenge us. Most of the time, they'll ignore us until we're old enough to cause trouble, about ten or eleven years old, but after that, most demigods either make their way here, or they get killed off. A few manage to survive in the outside world and become famous. Believe me, if I told you the names, you'd know them. Some don't even realize they're demigods. But very, very few are like that.

Percy: So monsters can't get in here?

Annabeth: (shaking her head) Not unless they're intentionally stocked in the woods or specially summoned by somebody on the inside.

Percy: Why would anybody want to summon a monster?

Annabeth: Practice fights. Practical jokes.

Percy: Practical jokes?

Annabeth: The point is, the borders are sealed to keep mortals and monsters out. From the outside, mortals look into the valley and see nothing unusual, just a strawberry farm.

Percy: So...you're a year-rounder?

Annabeth: (nodding) I've been here since I was seven. Every August, on the last day of summer session, you get a bead for surviving another year. I've been here longer than most of the counselors, and they're all in college.

Percy: Why did you come so young?

Annabeth: None of your business.

Percy: Oh, so I could just walk out of here right now if I wanted to?

Annabeth: It would be suicide, but you could, with Mr. D's or Chiron's permission. But they wouldn't give permission until the end of the summer session unless...

Percy: Unless?

Annabeth: You were granted a quest. But that hardly ever happens.

Narrator: Will Percy find out who his father is? Will he be granted a quest? Will he ever leave Camp Half-Blood? To find out the answers to these questions and to escape from your world, while talking an outrageous adventure with Percy and his friends you must read *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan.

Princess Academy
By Shannon Hale

		X		X-	X
		Doter		Mira	Britta
X	X		X	X	
Narrator	Laren	Os	Peder's Father		

Narrator- We are presenting a scene from the novel, *Princess Academy* by Shannon Hale.

The land is in need of a princess and the Holy men say the next princess will be from Mount Eskel. All the girls from Mount Eskel begin to attend the Academy in order to become a proper princess. There they begin to learn things such as the importance of the linder they work so hard to mine. Os realizes that certain things need to change.

Our scene takes place at the town meeting while the girls are home visiting their

families. Os is read by _____, Peder's Father is read by _____,

Doter is read by _____, Britta is read by _____, Laren is read by _____,

Miri is read by _____, and the narrator is _____.

Peder's Father- But no matter how much linder we cut, Os, it won't be enough. The absences of the girls meant fewer hands to help. My own boy has had to care more for the goats and the home, and that's one less stone session. Isn't that right, Laren?

Laren- I feel the pinch this year.

Miri- I have something to say... (clears throat)... At the academy, I found a book that explains how linder is sold in the lowlands. Apparently, our stone is so prized that the king himself will only use linder for his palaces, and the only place in all of Danland that produces linder is right here, so because demand for linder is high and supply is limited, its worth a great deal. In the rest of the kingdom, they trade for gold or silver coins

instead of food and supplies. In the capital, a block of linder is worth one gold coin, and in turn a gold coin can buy five bushels of wheat.

Laren (astonished) - Miri...

Miri- I know I'm asking you to believe a lowlander book, but believe it Pa. Why would a lowlander write anything good about Mount Eskel unless it was true?

Britta- Miri showed me a book, and I think it's true as well.

Os- It's easy to believe the traders will cheat us as much as they can but what can we do about it?

Miri- Refuse to trade for anything but gold or silver, and at decent prices. Then if they don't haul enough goods to trade for our cut linder, we can take their money down the mountain to buy even more.

Britta- There's a large market in a town three days from here. We stayed at an inn on my journey last summer. Gold and silver there would buy you much more than what the traders bring to your village.

Os- I can see the value in trading elsewhere, but if the traders won't take our linder for gold...

Doter- (forcefully) If they won't... we threaten to take the linder down the mountain! If we trade linder in that market ourselves, we'll earn even more!

Narrator- The studies were not just about the proper way to eat, dress, and waltz. No one expected that the girls at the academy would learn history and economics. If you would like to learn more about the academy, the girls who are competing to be the princess, and how the academy changes the lives of the villagers, read Shannon Hale's *Princess Academy*!

The Queen of Second Place

By Laura Peyton Roberts

Narrator: We are presenting a Reader's Theater from Laura Peyton Roberts' book *The Queen of Second Place*. Principal Ito is read by _____, Sterling is read by _____, Kevin is read by _____, Quentin is ready by _____, Ros is read by _____, Hayley is read by _____ and Cassie is read by _____. The narrator is _____. Cassie believes everyone is born with one special talent and all talents are not created equal. Sterling aka Fourteen Carat or FC has a special talent to be the dream of every high school boy. Cassie is the poster child for close-but-not close enough; the Queen of Second Place. When Kevin comes to her high school she is consumed with making him her next boyfriend. Out of desperation she tries to beat Fourteen Carat at her own game. She arrives at the all night party in the bowling alley dressed in a new miniskirt, a provocative blouse, heels, hair mussed with gel, smokey eye shadow and red lipstick. She plans to hit on Kevin.

Kevin: Wow, Cassie. You look.....different.

Cassie (flaunting herself): What? This?

Sterling: Where's your *date*?

Cassie: Does a girl need a date to hang out with her friends? You know what I was thinking? Why don't I rent some of those ridiculous shoes and we can all bowl together?

Sterling (disbelieving). You're going to bowl in a skirt?

Cassie: What's the matter? Afraid I'll beat you?

Sterling: In your dreams.

Cassie: So what's wrong with a little competition?

Sterling: I don't want to bowl. And even if I did, it wouldn't be with you. Go hit on someone else's date.

Cassie: Is that what I'm doing? That's pretty rich, coming from you.

Sterling: (warning) You'd better be very careful what you say next.

Quentin: (nervously) Hey, Cassie. Come on, we'll bowl with you.

Ros: (protesting) Quentin! You didn't bring me just to hang out with her!

Cassie: That's true, Quentin. You brought her to make Sterling jealous. By the way, how's that working for you?

Ros: (hysterically) Is that true?

Quentin: (mortified) No. Well...yes. But you have to realize.....it doesn't mean that I don't like you.

Ros: (furious) I *hate* you. Stay away from me!

Hayley: What is going on? Cassie, what are you doing here?

Sterling: (sneering) That's the million dollar question.

Narrator: A scuffle ensues when Cassie decides to get in Sterling's face and she pushes Sterling, falling into Principal Ito.

Principal Ito: Exactly what do you think you're doing, Ms...Howard, was it?

Cassie: (embarrassed) I just....it was

Kevin: It's nothing. A little misunderstanding.

Sterling: (resentful) A little!

Principal Ito: More like a disturbance. And you, Ms. Howard, appear to be the cause.

Cassie: (protesting) Me! But she.....

Principal Ito: I saw the whole thing. And here's what I observed: Number one, everything was quiet in this corner until you joined it. Number two, you walked right past the BOWLING SHOES ONLY sign with complete disregard for these maple floors. And number three, you pushed Ms. Carter here in flagrant violation of our school's nonaggression policy. You obviously can't follow the rules, so I'm going to ask you to leave.

Cassie: (in disbelief) You're kicking me out?

Principal Ito: I'm escorting you to the door. Lockdown is in five minutes, and I think it will be better for everyone if you're outside when it happens.

Narrator: Cassie made a fool of herself in front of the entire student body-at least those who she deemed important; her best friends Quentin and Haley, and the boyfriend she worked so hard to get. She is not sure she can show her face at school. This is just one of the big problems Cassie will face before the story ends. If you would like to see how Cassie handles plagiarism, getting caught driving without a license, being blackmailed by her eighth grade brother; to name a few, read *The Queen of Second Place* by Laura Peyton Roberts.

Runner
By Carl Deuker

×
Melissa Watts

×
Dad

×
Fat Man

×
Chance Taylor

×
Narrator

Narrator: The following scene is from Carl Deuker’s novel *Runner*, a contemporary realistic fiction novel set in Seattle, Washington. Chance, a senior at Lincoln High, lives on a small sailboat in Puget Sound with his drunk, veteran father. As graduation approaches, Chance isn’t worried about college applications like wealthy Melissa Watts. Chance has worries that most seniors don’t even know exist. Seattle is a wonderful city full of beautiful beaches and ships, but Seattle also has smugglers and crime. Chance has worries about money and the Fat Man can help. Chance is read by _____, Dad is read by _____, Melissa is read by _____, and the Fat Man is read by _____. The narrator is _____. The following scene takes place as Chance and Dad are leaving a food bank. Chance is late for his daily run when Melissa Watts drives up in her blue Jetta.

Melissa: You need a ride?

Dad: We sure do, young lady.

Melissa: You can put the groceries in the trunk. (Pause) I didn’t know there was a grocery store around here.

Chance: There isn’t.

Melissa: You going to your boat?

Chance: Yes.

Melissa: It's so beautiful here. I keep meaning to come down here and run along the water. (Pause) You still run, don't you?

Chance: Sometimes.

Dad: What are you talking about? You run everyday.

Chance: You can let us off here.

Melissa: Shouldn't I pull closer to the pier?

Chance: There's never any parking by the pier. This is great. Thanks for the ride.

Melissa: See you tomorrow.

Chance: Yeah. See you tomorrow.

Dad: Thanks.

Melissa: I'm Melissa Watts. You and my dad went to Ingraham High together. Trevor Watts. Do you remember him?

Dad: Sure! I remember Trevor.

Chance: (Annoyed) Come on, Dad. Let's get these boxes onto the boat.

Chance: I'm going to run now.

Dad: Take a day off, Chance. How about if you and me eat a normal meal for once? I could cook some soup. This bread is actually fresh.

Chance: I can't.

Dad: What do you mean you can't?

Chance: I just can't. Besides, I'm not hungry.

Narrator: The next morning Chance heads for school, and on his way he is encountered by the fat man who is furious.

Chance: (Worried) I ran yesterday. I swear I did. There was nothing there.

Fat Man: How come I didn't see you then?

Chance: I had to help my dad when I got home from school. Since I was late, I took a shortcut. It was almost dark, but I checked. I swear to God there was nothing there.

Fat Man: It was there, all right. It's still there. You missed it.

Chance: I'll go right now.

Fat Man: You'll go at the regular time!

Fat Man: You call this number if you are ever going to miss a pickup.

Chance: Who do I ask for?

Fat Man: You don't ask for anybody. It's an answering machine. At the beep, you leave a message – "Chance is out of the race today." You understand?

Chance: Yeah. I understand.

Fat Man: There's money in this for both of us. Don't blow it!

Narrator: Chance continues to run every day looking for packages. Chance is trying to help his worries go away, but the running ends up changing his life more than he or his father could ever imagine. To find out what happens to Chance, read *Runner* by Carl Deuker.

Shackleton's Stowaway
By Victoria McKernan

X
Shackleton

X
Perce

X
Narrator

Narrator: Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew set sail aboard the *Endurance* on October 26, 1914, with the goal of crossing the continent of Antarctica. It is Shackleton's second try. The story of this perilous adventure is the subject of the historical fiction novel, *Shackleton's Stowaway*. Perce Blackborow is an eighteen-year-old from Wales who stows away on the *Endurance* so he can be a part of the historical expedition. It is Christmas, and the *Endurance* is caught in pack ice off the coast of Antarctica. As the crew celebrates the holiday, Shackleton toasts the British soldiers who are fighting in the war that began a few days before they sailed from England. Perce is confused by his feelings about the war, and tries to express this to Shackleton. Perce is read by _____ and Shackleton is read by _____.
The narrator is _____.

Shackleton: You worked hard tonight, Perce. Thank you.

Perce: Glad to, Boss.

Shackleton: You all right, lad?

Perce: Yes, sir. Of course. It's a fine Christmas.

Shackleton: You missing your family?

Perce: Some. But I'm glad I'm here.

Shackleton: You look like you're a thousand miles from here. (laughing gently)

Perce: I was just thinking.

Shackleton: Ah. And what were you thinking?

Perce: About the war. How strange it seems out here. Having a war at all, I mean. I was wondering if – well, it's so grand out here. And there's so much to do – science and all that, but even just putting it all together. Figuring out how to get here and make it all work – exploring, I mean. I was thinking, sir. What if there were just more places to explore?

Shackleton: I'm not sure I follow.

Perce: I've only read about war in history, in school. Richard the Lionheart, Alfred the Great. It all sounds very exciting in a way. Men have a chance to be someone. To test themselves, I guess it is. But isn't that what exploring is for too? When you tried for the pole, sir – wasn't that like a battle?

Shackleton: Oh, yes.

Perce: But in a real battle, everything gets wrecked and people die. It doesn't make much sense really, having a war.

Shackleton: Most people don't think exploring makes much sense either.

Perce: Everyone loves exploring. It's a grand thing.

Shackleton: They like the idea of it. They like the stories in the newspaper and the lantern slide shows, but to most of them, it's just entertainment.

Perce: But if you do this, sir – I mean, when you do this, crossing all of Antarctica – people will know it's important.

Shackleton: Ah. (quietly) But it isn't, though. Not really.

Perce: Why do you do it, then, sir?

Shackleton: Why? (smiling) I don't suppose I'm good for much anything else.

Narrator: As the expedition continues and the surrounding pack ice forces the crew to abandon the ship, Perce learns that the expedition is very much like a battle – a battle for life. *Shackleton's Stowaway*, by Victoria McKernan, is an absorbing adventure story complete with real heroes, electrifying and sometimes horrifying action, and the moving struggle of man against the never-ending cold.

Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie
By David Lubar

X	X	X	X	X
Narrator	Kyle	Mr. Cravutto	Scott	Patrick

Narrator: We are presenting a scene from *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie* by David Lubar.

Scott Hudson is your typical 14 year old boy entering high school. He survives his first day of classes but has a surprise waiting for him when he gets home from school. Scott is going to become a big brother. He is not very happy with the idea of a new baby in the house. His way of dealing with the new addition to the family and all the things going on at his new school is to write them down. But guys don't keep diaries. Scott is read by _____, Kyle is read by _____, Mr. Cravutto is read by _____, Patrick is read by _____. The narrator is _____.

Scott: September 5

Listen you microscopic intruder. Guys don't keep diaries. No Way. At least, not any of the guys I hang out with. So this is NOT a diary. Okay? I hope we're clear on that. So why am I messing up a perfectly good blank notebook? To give you an idea of what high school is like. And maybe give you some tips. Right now, I can sort of cope, because you're not real. After you're born, I'll probably hate you. So it's good that I'm doing this now. Maybe it'll make up for all the rotten things I'll do to you later. Do babies float? Just kidding. Ha Ha. Of course you'll float. Everyone knows babies are about 90 % gas. Pfttt. That's a gas sound in case you didn't figure it out.

Narrator: Scott's problems are not just at home with the impending birth of the microscopic intruder. He also faces many challenges at school, like how to survive gym class on a few hours of sleep.

Kyle: Wake up!

Scott: Knock it off.

Kyle: Man, you look like you're wasted.

Scott: Sleep Deprivation.

Kyle: Sleep what?

Scott: Never mind.

Mr. Cravutto: Okay, ladies. Let's get moving. I want to see some jumping jacks. (pause)

Now squat thrusts. (pause) Now push ups. Come on girls, let's run some laps.

Scott: (gasping for breath) See Scott run. Run, Scott run. See Scott die, No such luck.

This sucks.

Kyle: That's 'cause you're out of shape.

Scott: (still out of breath) I am not. Nobody is in shape for this.

Mr. Cravutto: Okay, another lap, Jog Backward.

Scott: Sheesh. He'd probably make us run up the side of the school if he could figure out how.

Mr. Cruvutto: Kick up some dust, you sissies.

Narrator: Later in the day Scott sits down to lunch with his friends.

Scott: You had gym yet?

Patrick: I got out of it.

Scott: You won the lottery! How did you get out?

Patrick: Bad back.

Scott: Yeah right.

Patrick: Got a letter from my doctor.

Scott: Wish **MY** uncle had a medical degree.

Kyle: Wish I could get out of English.

Patrick: You got that right.

Scott: Are you kidding? English is great. I think it's my favorite class.

Kyle: No way. We spent the whole period memorizing prepositions.

Scott: You mean prepositions?

Kyle: Whatever you call it. We got them rammed down our throats.

Scott: Wow. Rammed down. You must be fed up. Ticked off. Bummed out. Screwed over.

Kyle: Very funny. Kiss off.

Scott: Really, we had a great time. We did these sentences the teacher called Tom Swifties. A long time ago Tom Swift used to write these sentences and it sorta turned into a word game. Like this. "I'd like a hot dog," Tom said frankly. Or, "Stop this horse," Tom said haltingly.

Patrick: That's pretty cool.

Scott: Let's do some Tom Swifties.

Kyle: Let's stick forks in our eyes. That would be even more fun.

Scott: "Let's stick forks in our eyes," Tom said blindly.

Patrick: "And knives," Tom said cuttingly.

Scott: Good one. Hey – how about, "Cafeteria food makes me gag," Tom said wretchedly.

Kyle: You guys are so hopeless.

Narrator: Scott finds himself involved in too many activities at school. He is also trying to capture the attention of Julia, the freshmen goddess he's known since kindergarten. Along the way he makes a lot of new friends but doesn't have much time to sleep! You will laugh your way through *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie* by David Lubar.

The King of Mulberry Street

by Donna Jo Napoli

X	X	X
Narrator	Tin Pan Alley	Dom

Narrator: In *The King of Mulberry Street* by Donna Jo Napoli, we see a story of a young immigrant boy lost and hungry on the streets of New York. Dom is fresh off the boat, alone and confused about why his mother stayed behind in Italy. Most boys like him either end up in an orphanage or with a padrone. A padrone is a man who pays for the passage to America then forces the young boys into slave like labor to pay off their fare with a large interest charge. After meeting a young boy named Tin Pan Alley who belongs to a padrone, our scene opens with the two boys working on a street corner playing music for money. Dom, a Jew, was told to hide his identity. Today is Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. By working today he has broken the holy day. Tin Pan Alley is read by _____ and Dom is read by _____. The narrator is _____.

Tin Pan Alley: Ninety-eighth cents already. You're good at this, and you don't even whistle. Usually it's slow on Saturdays.

Dom: I'm stopping.

Tin Pan Alley: You look sick. Here's your nine cents.

Tin Pan Alley: That's half of eighteen, which is what's left over after I pay my padrone. I'm not cheating you! You'd have had to get a whole dollar to earn ten cents.

Dom: I told you, I can count.

Tin Pan Alley: So you're trying to cheat me now, is that it? And I thought you were okay. Well you can't have ten cents. You can't cheat me.

Dom: I'd never cheat you. I keep a promise. Look, how bout you do me a four cent favor.

Tin Pan Alley: What's that mean?

Dom: Come with me to Mulberry Street to give a boy four cents.

Tin Pan Alley: Why don't you give him four cents yourself?

Dom: I can't.

Tin Pan Alley: Why not?

Dom: I don't want to tell you.

Dom: Come on Tin Pan Alley. If you do this, you get to keep my other five cents.

Tin Pan Alley: Let's hurry. If my padrone passes and finds I'm missing, he'll be mad.

Dom: How often does he come by?

Tin Pan Alley: Most days not at all. Other days he'll come a few times. But never early in the morning. Besides that, you can't predict. That way he keeps us honest.

Dom: Mullberry isn't that close, it'll take time.

Tin Pan Alley: I know where Mullberry is.

Dom: Look, let's not risk trouble with your padrone. Just keep the money.

Tin Pan Alley: What, are you feeling sorry for me? Don't waste your time. I'm going to earn back what my padrone paid for my passage over and then I'll find a regular job and I'll send to Italy for my aunt and my cousins on Vico Sedil Capuano. We'll have a good life. Come on, a deal's a deal. You think you're the only person in the world who can keep a promise?

Narrator: Will Dom survive the mean streets of New York? Will he be reunited with his mother, who is still in Italy? Will Tin Pan Alley ever escape his padrone? Using their ingenuity, *The King of Mulberry Street* by Donna Jo Napoli, will take you on their adventures through the streets of New York and their you will find the King of Mulberry Street.

Uglies
By Scott Westerfeld

X				
Narrator	X	X	X	X
	David	Tally	Maddy	Az

Narrator: Our takes place in the future, in a time where the way you look dictates your place in life. Ever since Tally Youngblood was a small child, she's dreamed of turning sixteen and having the operation. At sixteen, everyone in this futuristic world undergoes a surgery that transforms them from an "ugly" to a "pretty." The pretties live in their own exclusive towns and seem to live fulfilled, glamorous lives. This leaves Tally baffled at why some people would choose to run away before the surgery. Why would anyone choose to remain an ugly forever? Scott Westerfeld's novel, *Uglies*, examines the notion of true beauty and individuality, and as Tally Youngblood is about to find out there are serious consequences to being pretty. Our story begins when David, Tally's new friend, introduces her to his parents. Maddy and Az, David's mother and father, are the founders of the resistance movement. Tally is read by _____, David is read by _____, Maddy is read by _____, and Az is read by _____. The narrator is _____.

Maddy: David's told you a little about us, I suppose.

Tally: Well, he said you ran away a long time ago. Before he was born.

Az: Oh did he?

David: I didn't tell her everything, Dad. Just that I grew up in the wild. Tally came here to make sure her friend was okay. All the way here alone. But she might not want to stay.

Maddy: We don't force anyone to live here.

David: That's not what I mean. I think she should know before she decides to go back to the city.

Tally: I should know what?

Az: The big secret. The one that made us run away almost twenty years ago.

Maddy: One we usually keep to ourselves.

David: Tally deserves to know! She'll understand how important it is.

Maddy: She's a kid, a city kid. You've never been to the city, David. You have no idea how coddled they are. They spend their whole lives in a bubble.

David: She survived alone for nine days, Mom. Made it through a brush fire.

Az: Please, you two. *She* is sitting right here. Aren't you, Tally?

Tally: Yeah, I am. And I wish you'd tell me what you're talking about.

Maddy: I'm sorry, Tally. But this secret is very important. And very dangerous.

Tally: Everything out here is dangerous.

David: See. She understands. You can trust her. She deserves to know the truth.

Maddy: Everyone does. Eventually.

Az: Well, I suppose we'll have to tell you, Tally.

Tally: Tell me *what*?

David: The truth about being pretty.

Az: We were doctors.

Maddy: Cosmetic surgeons to be precise. We've both performed the operation hundreds of times. And when we met, I had just been named to the Committee for Morphological Standards.

Tally: The Pretty Committee?

Maddy: Yes. We were preparing for a Morphological Congress. That's when all the cities share data on the operation.

Az: At the same time, I was doing some independent research on anesthesia. Trying to make the operation safer.

Tally: Safer?

Az: A few people still die each year, as with any surgery. From being unconscious so long, more than anything else. I found that there were complications from the anesthetic used in the operation. Tiny lesions in the brain. Barely visible, even with the best machines.

Tally: What's a lesion?

Az: Basically it's a bunch of cells that don't look right, like a wound, or cancer, or something that doesn't belong there.

Maddy: When Az showed me his results, I started investigating. The local committee had millions of scans in its database. Not the stuff they put in medical textbooks, but raw data from pretties all over the world. The lesions turned up everywhere.

Tally: You mean, people were sick?

Maddy: They didn't seem to be. And the lesions weren't cancerous, because they didn't spread. Almost everyone had them, and they were always in exactly the same place. Most importantly, almost everyone all over the world had these lesions. If

they were a health hazard, ninety-nine percent of the population would show some kind of symptoms.

Tally: But they weren't natural?

Az: No. Only post-ops—pretties, I mean—had them. No uglies did. They were definitely a result of the operation.

Tally: Did you find out what caused them?

Maddy: In one sense, we did. Az and I looked very closely at all the negatives—that is, the few pretties who didn't have the lesions—and tried to figure out why they were different. What made them immune to the lesions? We ruled out blood type, gender, physical size, intelligence factors, genetic markers—nothing seemed to account for the negatives. They weren't different from everyone else.

Az: Until we discovered an odd coincidence.

Maddy: Their jobs.

Tally: Jobs?

Az: Every negative worked in the same sort of profession. Firefighters, wardens, doctors, politicians, and anyone who worked for Special Circumstances. Everyone with those jobs didn't have the lesions; all the other pretties did.

Narrator: So what exactly do the brain lesions mean, and will Tally decide to go through with the operation? If she does, the price of beauty may be her independence. Not to mention, Tally will have to betray her new friends. Of course, forgetting the surgery altogether means saying goodbye to her old friends and her old way of life forever. To find out what Tally will do, read *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld.

Voyage of Plunder

By Michele Torrey

X X
Josiah Daniel

X
Narrator

Narrator: Welcome aboard the pirate ship, the *Tempest Galley*. In 1696, Daniel Markham and his family were leaving Boston en route to Jamaica. His father's merchant ship was attacked, his father murdered, and Daniel and his stepmother taken aboard as hostages. Daniel's stepmother was later taken ashore because of illness, but Daniel is still in the custody of pirates. He is angry and vows vengeance toward the pirates, especially Captain Josiah Black, but is confused by the man's kindness and willingness to protect and help him. The part of Daniel is read by _____, the part of Josiah is read by _____, and the narrator is _____.

Josiah: Clearing his throat. Daniel...

Daniel: Aye. I'm listening.

Josiah: There's something you need to know. Something I should have told you long ago.

When I was a younger man, I was—I was in love. She—she was beautiful. Young like me. We were fools, she and I. Fools in love. We thought the world would part before us, like Moses parting the Red Sea. We thought nothing could stop two people so deeply in love. (He snorts.) But the world does not suffer fools gladly. I was a privateer at that time, living in Boston—

you do know what a privateer is, don't you? I was commissioned as a privateer by one of the colonial governors. Given the finest ship in the fleet. But, unknown to the governor, the woman whom I loved was his daughter—his only daughter.

Daniel: So what happened?

Josiah: I went away on a privateering voyage. A very successful one, I might add. In the interim, unknown to me, several things happened.

Daniel: What things?

Josiah: First, she discovered she was with child. My child. Second, her father learned of our clandestine relationship and forbade her ever to see me again, calling me a bloody scoundrel, a Judas, a philanderer, and things much worse than that.

Daniel: And?

Josiah: In outrage and in a desperate attempt to salvage his daughter's honor, he quickly arranged a marriage with one of the town's leading citizens. A merchant.

Daniel: (Swallowing hard, and saying in a whisper): Go on.

Josiah: So, within a month of my leaving on my privateering voyage, while I was still dreaming of the day we could be together forever as husband and wife, they were married. Her merchant husband was never the wiser, raising the child as his own, always believing the child was his. When I returned from my voyage, the governor declared me an outlaw. A pirate. Denied that he'd ever signed a letter of marque on my behalf. And for the life of me, I could

not find the letter. Likely he had one of his cronies steal it. He confiscated all the goods I had obtained and threw me into prison to await trial. But I escaped.

Daniel: What then?

Josiah: I was furious, of course. I commandeered my former privateering vessel, renamed her the *Tempest Galley*, and proclaimed myself a pirate. My first order of business was to plunder and burn every ship the governor owned. I ruined him, Daniel. Ruined him utterly. He died not long after. And there's been a price on my head ever since.

Daniel: (After a pause, unable to comprehend what he is hearing.) And what of— what of the child? (silence) Then at least tell me her name. (Again, silence.) Pray tell me. What was her name? The one that you loved?

Narrator: Instead of answering, Josiah pushes back his chair and crosses the room. He rifles through a drawer, withdrawing a folded letter. For a while he fingers the letter, as if deliberating whether or not to give it to Daniel. Finally he sits down and hands the letter to Daniel. It looks like it has been handled a hundred, a thousand times. Yet the green wax seal is still intact. Written on the outside of the letter is a single name: Daniel. The woman Josiah loved was Daniel's mother, Abigail Ball Markham.

Now that Daniel knows his father is a pirate, does he feel differently about his life on a pirate ship? To find out how Daniel fares at learning to use a sword, and finding buried treasure, read the historical fiction adventure *The Voyage of Plunder* by Michele Torrey.