

THE PROCESS OF ADAPTING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE  
INTO SHORT PLAYS FOR USE IN THE EARLY  
JUNIOR HIGH YEARS

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A THESIS  
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We hereby recommend that the **thesis** prepared under  
our supervision by — Alice Margaret Donoho Holt —  
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## PREFACE

It is hoped that the material found in this thesis will serve as a springboard to junior high school teachers of speech who are looking for good material to dramatize in their classes. The purpose is to show that all teachers can readily adapt their own material from available sources. Interest in this project came about as a result of much looking for good short plays or scenes to be used especially in the writer's own seventh grade speech classes.

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## CHAPTER I

### FINDING SUITABLE MATERIAL FOR DRAMATIZATION

#### The Need for Dramatic Material

Almost everyone teaching in the field of drama in a junior high school will realize a common problem--that of finding suitable dramatic material for use in the classroom. Although boys and girls in the seventh grade need and still enjoy creative dramatics, they begin to want a script in their hands.

Nora MacAlvay and Virginia Lee Comer say in their book First Performance:

When the junior high school age is reached, the spontaneous creative expression of early childhood is waning, and there is a growing desire to emulate adult techniques. . . . But these plays must have qualities which keep the imagination alive and active, and which encourage a creative approach to direction, playing, and production.<sup>1</sup>

The short plays presented on the following pages are not meant to take the place of creative dramatics, but to bridge the gap between the ages when students enjoy working with stories creatively and when they want to work with full length plays. The idea has been to keep the scenes or playlets short, so that they may be adequately

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<sup>1</sup>(New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), p. vii.

rehearsed during class time, polished, and presented before the students tire of them. When students at the beginning of their junior high school years begin working on the ordinary one act plays, too often they find that the memorization of many lines is a big task for them. In fact, learning lines is such a task, that usually the students become discouraged and do little besides that. When the lines are learned, they feel that the play is ready for production. Most of the time, there is little done with characterization; as a result, much of the value of dramatization is lost.

Almost all one act plays are too long to be rehearsed during a class period; therefore, students rarely get the real feel of the play. The plays in this thesis have been kept short in order that they can be rehearsed more than once during a class period. They are designed primarily to be used as class laboratory experiences, with perhaps another class as an invited audience. Two or three such plays could make up an effective assembly program or a P. P. T. A. program. The staging, however, may be kept very simple, the play itself being of primary importance. Teachers may use plays such as these in a speech classroom, where there may be a raised platform, or in an ordinary classroom with one end cleared to serve as a stage.

It is the purpose of this thesis to show that from

the wealth of material in story form, teachers may easily adapt stories for use as short plays. Teachers of speech in junior high schools need not feel stymied by lack of good dramatic material or lack of funds to order good plays and pay royalty, if the plays can be found. With a little time and effort, they can use materials easily available to all teachers and write their own plays.

Three types of children's literature have been chosen as examples of worthwhile stories that may be easily adapted to the dramatic form. First there is the folk tale. These are the traditional stories that have been handed down through the years. They have a universal appeal. Their merit has been proved; otherwise, they would have been lost through the ages.

The second type to be considered is what we think of as the children's classic. These adaptations will usually be short scenes from novels or longer stories that the junior high school student enjoys. If he has read them, they are old friends, and he enjoys seeing them come to life. Surprisingly, not all children today have read all of these books. Often as a result of acting out scenes, their interest in the book is stimulated, and they will then want to read the entire book.

The third type of story that has been chosen is the modern short story, one with characters that the student might

meet any day. This is a type of story found in all basic readers adopted as textbooks to be used in the language arts program. Any teacher will have at her fingertips much material such as has been described, or she will know where it is readily accessible.

Prospective writers should not feel limited by these three types. There are many other types, such as myths, fairy tales for the younger child, biographies, hero tales, mysteries, scenes from history, etc., that may be easily adapted. In addition to these, one will find many seasonal stories that may be adapted to be used near special days or holidays.

#### Characteristics of Suitable Stories

The first problem facing the teacher who wants to try her hand at playmaking is that of finding stories suitable for dramatizing. Many stories from children's literature are excellent for reading and even for telling, but they are completely unusable for dramatization. Winifred Ward says that many stories are unsuitable for dramatizing because

- a. They do not present good conflict situations.
- b. They have not enough action.
- c. Their characters are not individualized enough to play well.
- d. They depend too much for their effectiveness on beauty of description or cleverness of dialogue.
- e. They have not a strong appeal to the interests of the particular group with whom they are to be used.



What, then, are the essential qualities of stories which are good to use?

1. The idea should be of some worth, and the writing carefully done.
2. The central situation should involve conflict of some sort.
3. There should be essential action in the development of the plot, and it should be action which can be carried out satisfactorily.
4. The characters should seem real.
5. The situation should call for interesting dialogue.
6. Poetic, or ideal, justice should almost invariably characterize the outcome of stories for little children. No story should be used if it is likely to lower moral standards.
7. The story chosen for dramatization should suit the interests and tastes of the children who are to use it.<sup>1</sup>

Isabel Burger sums up the qualities of a good story to dramatize in the following characteristics. She says it must possess:

1. a strong appeal to the emotions;
2. action that moves and interests;
3. a direct unbroken plot line, rising steadily to a climax;
4. a resolution that leads without delay to a satisfactory ending;
5. characters that are true-to-life, understandable, and interesting;
6. incidents that can be conveniently grouped into a few closely knit scenes; and
7. a worthwhile theme or central idea.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, authorities seem to agree that there are certain definite qualities that one must look for in stories to be dramatized. Let us examine some of these qualities more closely.

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<sup>1</sup>Stories to Dramatize (Anchorage, Kentucky: The Children's Theatre Press, 1952), pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup>Creative Play Acting (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1950), p. 66.

Perhaps the most important quality is that the story used should fit the age of the child for whom it is written. Here a knowledge of children's literature by age classification is invaluable. Junior high school youngsters have reached a sensitive age. They are beginning to grow up. They are beginning to think deeply and to formulate some of the philosophies which will follow them through life. They shy away from a story where romantic love is an element; yet they are certainly beyond the fairy tale age. Many times the students themselves can be a help in choosing suitable stories. It is necessary for the teacher to understand the age or degree of maturation of the students with whom she is working. A perfectly good story may be ruined for them because they feel it is too childish, in which case they will be most unenthusiastic from the first. On the other hand, if the ideas contained in the story are too mature, they will fail to grasp the characters and will not be convincing in their roles.

When a story has been found to fit the age group, it must be examined for the worthwhileness of its theme or central idea. Many students of this age have not been exposed to much in the way of dramatic material beyond that used in the typical assembly skit. This does not mean that good dramatic material must necessarily be serious. A play written for pure fun and enjoyment has a definite place in the child's life. It should not always teach a lesson, but it should have

some literary merit. It should not always have a highly exalted or inspirational theme, but it should not at this age present ideas that could be morally degrading.

For a play to be successful, for this age group, it must contain physical action. The students are too young for the psychological play. There must be plenty of opportunity for free movement about the stage; yet the action must be restrained and must be of the type that can be carried out satisfactorily. It must move swiftly and smoothly from the beginning to the end, so that there will be no lag for the actors or their audience. It should end in a manner that is pleasing and satisfactory to all. At this age students are not yet ready for the tragic ending. They have surely begun to see life's tragedies around them, and many of them may have experienced tragedies, but they are not yet ready to portray them on the stage.

The characters in these stories must seem real and true to life to the students in order that they can portray them. This does not mean that they must be like people that the children encounter in everyday life, but they must be uncomplicated characters that the students can understand. Many times students do a better job of acting a role when it is not anything like themselves.

Another characteristic that one must look for when trying to find stories to adapt is to look for stories where

the essential ideas can be portrayed in one scene. This rules out many stories. Stories do not lend themselves to adaptation for the stage when they roam from one scene to another. Of course it is almost impossible to find stories where the action all occurs in one spot; therefore, the prospective writer must use her imagination. She must decide what parts can be left out, what parts may be incorporated with others, what parts may be explained through dialogue, and where the most important part of the story takes place. This will be the one to use for the cutting.

The last characteristic to look for is a story in which the situation calls for good dialogue. This will eliminate many stories, stories that rely heavily on description for instance. Writers will find it a great help to use stories that contain a great deal of conversation. It is surprising how much of this can be taken verbatim from the story, and if the story is well written, there is usually not much point in trying to improve on the author's choice of words. Also, if there is a conversational pattern to follow, it is certainly helpful to the one who is adapting the story, in assuring her that she is getting across the type of character in her dialogue that the author had in mind. However, if one finds a good story containing all the other elements which have been mentioned except conversation, she will not find the writing of dialogue too difficult.

A suggested list of stories and scenes from children's literature that are suitable for dramatization will be found at the end of this thesis. Teachers will be able to add many stories of their own to this list and should not, therefore, feel limited by the list. It is placed there as an aid to the beginner.

Now that certain characteristics, necessary to stories to be adapted to the dramatic form, have been considered, let us examine some techniques to be used.

## CHAPTER II

### TECHNIQUES TO BE USED FOR THE ADAPTATION OF STORIES FOR DRAMATIZATION

Since we are now ready to explain how short stories or scenes may be adapted for use as dramatizations, one of the first responsibilities of this chapter is to explain the differences between short stories and plays. What are these differences? Marguerite Fellows Melcher states them this way:

A story is told and listened to; a play is shown and looked at. A story can describe as many and as beautiful and strange places and objects and persons as it pleases. If it is a good story, it can make the reader or listener see them all. It can also take as long a time as it chooses to do this. But a play cannot be shown lasting as long as a story. It cannot be shown taking place in as many different spots as a story. It cannot tell about all the different things that a story may describe without losing the interest of the audience. A play has to be fitted to a chosen place and a chosen time; it has to pick a place and a time and a plot and keep to just these.<sup>1</sup>

Plays depend mainly on three elements for success. These three elements are plot, characters, and dialogue. In dramatizing scenes from stories, one must keep these three elements in mind. In some instances the plot may be more important. In others, development of character will be the

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<sup>1</sup>Offstage (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), pp. 4-5.

chief consideration. Always one must give careful attention to dialogue because it is through dialogue that the plot is revealed and that the characters unfold.

Before beginning any sort of adaptation, the teacher should read and reread the story until it is very familiar to her. Then she must consider the plot very carefully. What parts of the story must be seen on the stage, and what parts may be omitted in order for the audience to understand what is going on? Where should the scenes be laid? Most stories move from place to place. Since short plays cannot change scenes often, she must decide on a single scene where all the action can be centered. After the scene has been decided upon, the writer is ready to think about ways of getting the story across.

In the dramatization, the story should get underway with the opening speeches. There should be something of immediate interest, with no lag, while long explanations of what has gone before take place. The characters should be introduced swiftly. Whereas a short story writer may take space at the first of a story for description and explanation of preceding incidents, the dramatist must find other ways to get across such information. One such device may be the use of simple scenery and costumes.

Another device that she may employ for explanation of the plot is dialogue. Bit by bit, things may be brought

out in dialogue that will help the audience to understand the situation. This part will not be easy for the beginner because it must be subtle. For instance, a character must not ask another character a question when the audience realizes that the first character already knows the answer. It is much better to work in such explanations a little at a time as the story moves forward, than for the audience to realize what the dramatist is doing. Some writers have a character talking to himself in order to reveal the situation, but it is considered much better to bring in another character, sometimes a stranger, in order to get needed information across. Much can be told by the treatment of one character for another and the response they show toward each other.

### Plot

Now the dramatist is ready to concentrate on the segment of the plot from the story that she is going to dramatize. Fortunately, since the story has been written, the actual plot has been made for her. She should feel that she owes the author enough that she will not want to make major changes in the story itself. She probably will not change the outcome. She may add a character, or she may leave one out, but she will not completely change the character's nature. Her concern with the plot will be primarily to keep the number of episodes in the story to a minimum. In the



case of the novel or a longer story, she will possibly take one episode or chapter and build her plot around that. Yet when she cuts something, she must make sure that the thread of the plot is kept alive. She must keep up suspense, and she must keep the story moving quickly to a climax. Since children like action, she will be wise to show as much of the plot as she can, rather than to tell it through dialogue. As soon as the highest peak of action has been reached, the play should end quickly.

Another thing that the beginning writer must be cautioned about is that there must always be a "cover scene," suggesting the passage of time, for something that is supposed to be happening offstage. For example, a character cannot be sent a mile away for a loaf of bread and return immediately.

In summing up the plot, Miss Ward says

In general, a plot should be believable and interesting throughout. The development should seem natural, inevitable. It should have strong emotional appeal. If it is carefully worked out there will be no loose ends to leave one wondering. Details will be convincing. If a person is sent for he will not appear immediately--unless he has been looking through the keyhole! A cover scene will be provided which will have a real function in the plot besides consuming the time it will take for the person to be summoned. Nor will meals be eaten in split seconds, though time will have to be telescoped to a certain extent in the short space of time allowed for a play.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Playmaking With Children (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 183.

### Characters

The second element that a play depends upon is characterization. "Plot is what characters do; characterization shows why they do it."<sup>1</sup>

The characters in the play must seem like real people. For children they must be uncomplicated characters. They need not be like individuals whom the children have known, but they must be understandable to them. They must be direct, not subtle. Here, the writer who is adapting material from stories is fortunate. Most of her characters will be well defined for her by the original story writer. However, she must take care that they retain their real life qualities and that they do not become mere puppets in her hands. She must also be sure that they remain consistent throughout the play. Their dispositions, personalities, or character traits should not change radically.

The writer in adapting the story for the stage may have to leave out some characters not necessary to the story in order to keep the story simple, or for lack of room on the stage. She may have to add a character in order to forward the plot. Whether she is adding characters or taking them out, she should be sure that they all remain individuals. They should keep the traits that give them their distinct

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<sup>1</sup>H. D. Albright, William P. Halstead, Lee Mitchell, Principles of the Theatre Art (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), p. 15.

personalities. The dramatist may help suggest personalities through various means. One of these may be through the use of names that she gives the characters. One would expect a different type of personality in a character called Margaret and one called Peg. The name John would suggest more dignity than Johnny. Another way to suggest the personalities of the characters is through the speech that they use. One would expect, for instance, different types of speech patterns from a person of royalty and a mischievous boy. One would also anticipate differences in the looks of such widely different characters. Here again, in the appearance of her characters, the dramatist will find a means of making each character distinct and definite. Closely allied with the way a character looks is the way that character moves about on the stage. Age suggests one type of bodily movements; youth, another. Therefore, through suggestions concerning the ways in which the characters use their bodies, the dramatist will find still another way to keep her characters individuals.

### Dialogue

The third element of concern in adapting a story for dramatization is the dialogue. For the beginner this will probably seem the hardest task of all. And the dialogue is very important. It has three duties to perform. It must

explain what has happened before the scene takes place; it must carry forward the plot; it must reveal character.

As was stated earlier, it will be easier if the amateur writer keeps dialogue in mind when she chooses stories to dramatize. The story will be much easier to adapt if it already contains a great deal of conversation. In this case, she will certainly want to keep as much of the conversation as possible for dialogue in her play. This is not only the easiest thing to do, but also the best. If the story is well written, it is doubtful that the beginning writer can improve on what the more experienced writer has said. It also will help to keep the story writer's point of view of the character. Here again, as in the case of plot and characters, the dramatist will have to condense material and leave out bits of conversation that are not necessary to the play. She may have to expand the dialogue in order to make clear certain things for the people viewing the play. Any time she adds lines, she must try to make them as nearly like the ones the author used as she possibly can. She may find it helpful to look at another episode in the story or book to find characteristic dialogue.

If the beginning writer finds that she has to write her own dialogue, there are several points that she should bear in mind. Perhaps the most important of these is that the individual speeches should be kept brief. As has been

stated before, children like action. They tire quickly of long, detailed speeches, and such speeches quickly kill their interest. Short conversational lines that sound natural will help to keep the play moving quickly.

The dialogue must also fit the character who is saying it, and it should sound like something that he would say. This is essential because if the dialogue is not true, the children will not believe the character, and the play will not be convincing.

Dialogue must also be kept in language that the child is capable of understanding. If the language of the story is too formal, the dialogue may sound stilted. In this case, it may be better to simplify the language in writing the dialogue. If this cannot be done without weakening the story, perhaps the choice of story to be dramatized was not a good one.

### Conclusions

It is hoped that the hints on structure given in this chapter will be helpful to any teacher wanting to adapt her own dramatic material for use in the junior high school speech classroom. In addition to these suggestions, there are a few others concerning production that may help in making these cuttings seem more real to the students. It has been suggested earlier that scenery, costumes, etc., be kept to a minimum. This does not mean that they must be eliminated

entirely. Boys and girls of the twelve to fourteen years age group, who are getting their first feel of a real play, may want to carry these playlets a step further, using some scenery, costumes, and make-up. Scenery, if used, need not be elaborate. It may simply suggest an interior or an exterior. A set need not be used. Screens, if available, can be used in various ways to suggest scenes. Costumes will help the audience to understand the characters more quickly and will also help the student actors to assume the characters of the roles that they are playing. Costumes need not, indeed should not, be elaborate. Sometimes a hat, a shawl, or a sash will suggest the type of character the student is portraying. Make-up should also be kept simple. For many roles no make-up is necessary. To suggest age, however, or a nature unlike that of the child, a little stage make-up will make the child not only feel more important, but it will also help him and the audience to fall into the spirit of the play.

Keeping in mind that the purpose of these short scenes is to provide good dramatic material for classroom use, the writer of this thesis feels that simplicity of production is important. The use of scenery, costumes, and make-up can be justified only as a means of making the scene come to life for the student actor and the audience and to make them feel that the whole project is important. This feeling

will encourage the students to do their best.

On the following pages six short scenes will appear. These have been adapted from literature by the writer as examples of what can be easily done with material at hand, to fill a need in the lives of seventh and eighth graders.

## CHAPTER III

### STORIES DRAMATIZED

#### Folk Stories

##### "The Stone in the Road"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: Along a highway leading to the village, early in the morning.

##### Characters:

The Duke

Arnold, his servant

Bartholomew, a farmer

Reuben, the farmer's son

Agatha }  
Emilia } two country women

Bertram, a scholar

Charles, a young boy

As the scene opens, the Duke, followed by his servant, enters R., walking along the highway. The Duke is apparently looking for something. He spies a large stone.

Duke: Ah, here is the very thing I have been looking for, a stone to lay on the highway.

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<sup>1</sup>From Stories to Dramatize, by Winifred Ward (Anchorage, Kentucky: The Children's Theatre Press, 1952).



Arnold: But, good sir, why do you want to put a stone on the highway when your men work all the time to keep the roads clear?

Duke (sitting on the stone): It's a part of a little scheme of mine. I have been very discouraged lately. My people, I am afraid, are becoming selfish. They are thinking too much of themselves and too little of helping their fellow man.

Arnold: It's true. You have been so kind to them that they depend more and more on you instead of doing things for themselves. What is your plan?

Duke (standing): First we will move this stone into the middle of the road.

Arnold (going toward the stone): I'll move it for you, sir.

Duke: It is very heavy. We had better move it together.

(The two of them move the stone onto the highway.)

Arnold: Now what, sir?

Duke: Now I'm going to put this bag of gold here. (He puts it by the stone.) Now, let's move the stone so that it covers the bag of gold. (They do so.) Next, I plan to hide and wait to see if anyone will be thoughtful enough to move the stone out of the way and so find the gold.

Arnold: That's a good idea. (Listening.) I hear someone coming now.

Duke: Quick! We'll hide behind those bushes.

(As they hide, a farmer comes on R., with his son, Reuben. The farmer, Bartholomew, is pushing a wheelbarrow full of produce that he is taking to market. The farmer stops as he sees the stand.)

Bartholomew: I can't believe my eyes! That looks like a huge stone in the road ahead of us.

Reuben: Oh, maybe it's just something that has fallen out of a cart.

Bartholomew: Run on ahead, son, and see what it is.

Reuben (after he has explored it): It is a stone, Father! I wonder how it got here on the road.

Bartholomew (picking up his wheelbarrow): Well, one thing is sure. We won't try to move it. Let the Duke's servants get it out of the way. That's their job!

Reuben (as his father approaches): Wouldn't it be easier to move the stone than to take the wheelbarrow around it?

Bartholomew: We won't do any work for the Duke's servants. We have enough to do ourselves.

(They struggle with the wheelbarrow, grumbling. They leave L. As they go off, Agatha and Emilia enter R., carrying baskets of eggs to the village to sell.)

Emilia: I hope we get more money for our eggs than we did last week.

Agatha: So do I. I need some cloth for a new dress. I'm hoping to buy it today.

Emilia: Well, you won't be able to buy cloth unless we get more this week than we did last week.

Agatha (sitting on the stone): Wait a minute. My foot keeps slipping in my shoe. I need to tie the lace tighter. (As she adjusts the shoe) My, it feels good to sit awhile.

Emilia (also sitting on the stone): Yes, it does. We have already come a long way.

Agatha: Would you look at this big stone we are sitting on! I never noticed it in the road before.

Emilia: Why, a carriage could never get around this thing. I wonder why the Duke leaves it here.

Agatha (dreamily): Ah, the Duke! If I were rich like the Duke's wife, I wouldn't be selling eggs to buy cloth. I'd have the most beautiful clothes in the land.

Emilia (getting up): Quit your dreaming, Agatha. If we don't get on our way, we won't be able to sell these eggs at all.

Agatha (as they leave): The Duke had better see that this stone is moved away before dark. Someone could be badly hurt.

(They go off L. As they leave a scholar strolls on R. He is so absorbed in the book he is reading that

he fails to see the stone, and he falls over it.)

Scholar (as he gets up): It's a pity that the Duke can't see to his people well enough to keep the road clear. I might have broken my leg, falling over this old stone. He should really be more thoughtful.

(As the scholar goes off L., the Duke and his servant reappear.)

Duke: It is just as I feared. Not a single person has cared enough for others to remove the stone.

Arnold: I am afraid so. Shall I remove-----

(A gay whistle is heard R. They quickly hide again. A young boy, Charles, appears. He has a heavy sack of meal slung over his shoulder. He stops whistling as he sees the stone.)

Charles: A stone in the middle of the road! That's an odd place for a stone as big as that. Someone will fall over it! (He lays down his sack and shoves the stone from the road. As he goes back to pick up his sack, he spies the bag of gold.) Somebody must have lost this. (He picks it up.) I'd better see if I can find the owner.

(Quickly the Duke and Arnold step from their hiding place. The Duke walks to the boy.)

Duke: Read what is written on the bag, my boy.

Charles (reading): For him who moves the stone. (Astonished)  
Then?

Duke: Yes, it is for you. (He puts his arm around the boy's shoulder.) I am glad to find that there is one person in our village who thinks of other people sometimes.

Charles: Oh, thank you, sir! Thank you! It was just a little thing for me to do. You are very kind. I must go tell my mother! (He goes off R. The Duke and Arnold smile as the curtain falls.)

"The Old Woman and the Tramp"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: The small cottage of the old woman. It is simply furnished, with a cheerful fire burning on the hearth.

Characters:

The old Woman

The Tramp

As the scene opens, the old woman is alone. She is stirring the coals in the fireplace. Immediately there is a knock on the door R. She opens the door to admit a tramp.

Old Woman: Good evening. And where do you come from?

Tramp (He enters): South of the sun, and east of the moon, and now I am on the way home again, for I have been all over the world with the exception of this parish.

Old Woman: You must be a great traveler, then. What is your business here?

Tramp (looking the room over): Oh, I want a shelter for the night.

Old Woman (as she goes toward the door to let him out): I thought as much, but you may as well get away from here at once, for my husband is not at home, and my place is not an inn.

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<sup>1</sup>From Bag O' Tales, ed. by Effie Power (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1934). The writer is aware that there is a one act play, "The Pot of Broth," by W. B. Yeats, based on the same story. No effort has been made to consult the play.

Tramp: My good woman, you must not be so cross and hard-hearted, for we are both human beings, and should help one another, it is written.

Old Woman (crossly): Help one another? Help? Did you ever hear of such a thing? Who'll help me, do you think? No, you'll have to look for quarters elsewhere.

Tramp: Might you at least have a bite to eat for a hungry soul?

Old Woman: Where would I get it from? I haven't tasted a morsel myself the whole day.

Tramp (walking toward her and saying sympathetically): Poor old granny, you must be starving. Well, well, I suppose I shall have to ask you to have something with me, then.

Old Woman: Have something with you indeed! What have you got to offer one, I should like to know?

Tramp: He who far and wide does roam sees many things not known at home. Better dead than lose one's head! Lend me a pot, grannie!

(Led by her curiosity, she goes to a cupboard L. and gets the pot for him. He fills it with water, puts it on the fire, blows the fire fiercely, takes a nail from his pocket, turns it three times in his hand, and then drops it into the pot.)

Old Woman (staring): What's this going to be?

Tramp (stirring the water): Nail broth.

Old Woman: Nail broth?

Tramp: Yes, nail broth.

Old Woman: Well, I never heard the like before. That's something for poor people to know, and I should like to learn how to make it.

Tramp: That which is not worth having, will always go a-begging, but you have only to watch me to learn. (She comes closer to watch.) This generally makes good broth, but this time it will likely be very thin, for I have been making broth the whole week with the same nail. If I only had a handful of sifted oatmeal to put in, that would make it all right. (He pauses.) But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about. (He resumes stirring.)

Old Woman (hesitatingly): Well----I think I have a scrap of flour somewhere. (She goes to the cabinet, gets the flour, and gives it to the tramp.)

Tramp (as he stirs the flour into the water): This broth would be good enough for company if I had only a bit of salted beef and a few potatoes to put in. (He shrugs.) But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking about.

Old Woman (pretending to think hard): Now, I might just have some potatoes, and perhaps a bit of beef as well.



(She goes back to the cabinet and gets them.)

Tramp (adding the potatoes and the beef): This will be grand enough for the best in the land.

Old Woman: Well, I never! And just fancy--all with a nail!

Tramp: If only I had a little barley and a drop of milk, we could ask the king himself to have some of it, for this is what he has every blessed evening--that I know, for I have been in service under the King's cook.

Old Woman (delighted): Dear me! Ask the king to have some! Well, I never!

Tramp: But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about.

Old Woman: Why, I do believe I have just a little barley. (Once more she goes to the cupboard.) Now, I'm not just sure about the milk. Why, yes, here it is, too. (She takes them both to the tramp, who stirs them into the broth, then removes the nail.)

Tramp: Now, it's ready, and we'll have a real good feast. But to this kind of soup the king and the queen always have something to drink and one sandwich at least. And then they always have a cloth on the table when they eat. (He shrugs again.) But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about.

Old Woman (really enthusiastic by this time): Well, if that is all it takes to have a meal like the king and the queen, that's just what we will do.

(She quickly goes to the cupboard and gets glasses, bowls, bread, etc., while the tramp fills the bowls with broth.)

Old Woman (as they sit down at the table and begin eating): I don't know how I can thank you enough for what you have taught me.

Tramp: And a nicer woman I never came across. Ah, well! Happy are they who meet with such good people.

Old Woman (happily): Now I shall live in comfort, since I have learnt how to make broth with a nail.

Tramp: Well, it isn't very difficult, if one only has something good to add to it.

Old Woman (as the curtain closes, beaming): Such people don't grow on every bush.

## Children's Classics

"The Glorious Whitewasher"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: The walk in front of Aunt Polly's house. There is a fence immediately U. of the walk. The fence extends across the entire stage, from R. to L.

## Characters:

Tom Sawyer

Jim

Aunt Polly

Billy Fisher

Johnny Miller

Ben Rogers

As the scene opens, Tom appears L. on the walk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveys the fence, crosses the stage, sighs, puts down his bucket, dips his brush into it, and passes it along the top of the fence. He repeats the operation, looks at the part that he has done, looks at the remaining fence to be whitewashed, and sits down on a box. Jim comes on L. with a water bucket. Tom (jumping up): Say, Jim, I'll fetch the water if you'll whitewash some.

Jim (shaking his head): Can't, Marse Tom. Ole missis, she tole me I got to go an' git dis water an' not stop foolin' roun' wid anybody. She say she spec' Marse Tom gwine to ax me to whitewash, an' so she tole me

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<sup>1</sup>From The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, Inc., 1946).

go 'long an' 'tend to my own business--she 'lowed  
she'd 'tend to de whitewashin'.

Tom: Oh, never you mind what she said, Jim. That's the way  
she always talks. Gimme the bucket--I won't be gone  
only a minute. She won't ever know.

Jim: Oh, I dasn't, Marse Tom. Ole missis she'd take an' tar  
de head off'n me. 'Deed she would.

Tom: She! She never licks anybody--whacks 'em over the head  
with her thimble---and who cares for that, I'd like  
to know. She talks awful, but talk don't hurt--  
anyway it don't if she don't cry. Jim, I'll give you  
a marble. I'll give you a white alley!

Jim (wavering): White alley, Marse Tom? (Tom shows it to  
him.) My! Dat's a mighty gay one, I tell you! But  
Marse Tom, I's powerful 'fraid ole missis---

Tom: And besides, if you will, I'll show you my sore toe.  
(Tom starts to unwind the bandage from his toe. Jim  
gives in, puts his pail down, and begins watching the  
process. At this moment, Aunt Polly arrives L. with  
her broom in her hand. She strikes Jim a blow across  
the rear with the broom.)

Aunt Polly: I thought I told you, Jim, not to stop and fool  
around on the way. (Jim almost flies off, R.) And  
now, Tom, none of your mischief. You get on with your  
work. (She leaves, as Tom picks up his brush and

begins to whitewash with vigor. Soon, however, he slows down. Ben appears R., eating an apple and at the same time, pretending to be a steamboat. He works his way toward Tom, who is apparently paying no attention.)

Ben: Stop her, sir! Ting-aling-ling! Ship up to back! (his arms straightening and stiffening down his sides) Ting-a-ling-ling. Set her back on the stabboard! (His right arm is describing circles.) Chow! Chow! Ch-chow-wow! (The left hand describes circles.) Let her go back on the labboard! Stand by that stage, now--let her go! (To Tom) Hi-yi! You're a stump, ain't you! (Tom continues whitewashing.) Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?

Tom: Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing.

Ben: Say--I'm going in a-swimming, I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther work---wouldn't you? Course you would!

Tom: What do you call work?

Ben: Why, ain't that work?

Tom: (resuming his whitewashing): Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know, it suits Tom Sawyer.

Ben: Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you like it?

Tom: Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it.

Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?

Ben (as he stops nibbling his apple to watch): Say, Tom,  
let me whitewash a little.

Tom (considering): No--no--I reckon it wouldn't hardly do,  
Ben. You see, Aunt Polly's awful particular about  
this fence--right here on the street, you know--but  
if it was the back fence I wouldn't mind and she  
wouldn't. Yes, she's awful particular about this  
fence; it's got to be done very careful; I reckon  
there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand,  
that can do it the way it's got to be done.

Ben: No--is that so? Oh come, now--lemme just try. Only  
just a little--I'd let you, if you was me, Tom.

Tom: Ben, I'd like to, honest Injun; but Aunt Polly--well,  
Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn't let him. If  
you was to tackle this fence and anything was to  
happen to it--

Ben: Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try.  
I'll give you the core of my apple.

Tom: Well, here (starting to hand over the brush). No, Ben,  
now don't. I'm afeared----

Ben: I'll give you all the apple!

Tom (seemingly reluctant): Well, all right, Ben, but be  
mighty careful.

(Tom sits down, munches on the apple while Ben starts  
working enthusiastically.)

Ben: Say, Tom, this is fun. (He surveys his work.) I believe mine looks better than yours.

(Just at this time, Billy and Johnny enter. Billy is carrying a kite of sorts.)

Billy: Tom, why don't you and Ben come on out on the hill with us? We've got the kite all fixed up, and we're gonna fly it.

Ben: Aw, go on, can't you see we're doing something else more important?

Johnny: You mean you have to stay here and work on a Saturday morning?

Tom: Who said anything about work?

Ben: That's right. Why, Miss Polly won't let just anybody whitewash this fence, right here on the front where it shows. No, sir, she's mighty particular 'bout how this fence is done.

Johnny: Shucks, I bet I could beat Ben all to pieces. How about it, Tom?

Tom: No, I don't guess that would be fair to Ben. After all, he paid me an apple to get to whitewash a while.

Billy: Aw, come on, Tom? Tell you what. I'll let you fly my kite.

Tom (thinking): No, I guess I'd better not.

Johnny: Hey, Tom. I got a fine dead rat in my pocket. I've even got a string tied on him to swing him by. I'll give him to you if you'll let me paint a while.

Tom: Well--All right, but first let me have the rat.

(Johnny hands it over and takes the brush from Ben.)

Ben: Whew, my arm was gettin' a little tired.

Johnny: Say, this is all right. (He works enthusiastically.)

Billy: Tom----Tom----say, I'll even give ya the kite if  
you'll let me paint a little before it's all done.

Tom (trying to seem reluctant): Oh, all right, but see that  
you do a good job.

Ben: Yeah, remember Miss Polly is mighty particular.

(Billy whitewashes industriously while the others  
watch. The job is almost completed.)

Johnny: Say, I reckon ole Joe'll be mighty mad he missed out  
on all this fun.

Tom: Yeah, that's right. He was goin' out early to swim.

Ben: Tell ya what. Let's go on out and tell him what he  
missed.

Billy: Yeah, let's do that. I guess we're all through here,  
aren't we, Tom?

Tom: That about finishes it up, I guess. Y'all go on, and  
I'll put away the whitewash.

Boys: All right, Tom. We'll see ya in a little. Thanks,  
Tom. (They go off R.)

Tom (as he gathers up his loot and the whitewash bucket and  
brush): Aunt Polly (calling)! Aunt Polly! Can't I  
go play now?

Aunt Polly (offstage): What, a'ready? How much have you done?



Tom: It's all done, aunt. Come see.

Aunt Polly (coming on stage): Tom, don't lie to me--I can't bear it.

Tom: I ain't, Aunt; it is all done.

Aunt Polly (examining the fence): Well, I never! There's no getting round it, you can work when you're a mind to, Tom. But it's powerful seldom you're a mind to, I'm bound to say. Well, go 'long and play; but mind you get back sometime in a week, or I'll tan you.  
(Tom hustles off R., apparently afraid she'll change her mind. Aunt Polly watches him, smiling and shaking her head.)

The curtain closes.

"Playing Pilgrims"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: The living room of the March home. It is a comfortable old room, though the furniture is plain, and the entire room shows signs of wear. There is a fire burning in the fireplace. It is the time of the Civil War.

Characters:

The March Sisters

Meg

Jo

Beth

Amy

Mrs. March

When the scene opens, the four sisters are sitting around in the living room, Jo is sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace.

Jo (grumbling): Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents.

Meg (sighing): It's so dreadful to be poor!

Amy: I don't think it's fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all.

Beth (contentedly): We've got Father and Mother and each other.

Jo (sadly): We haven't got Father, and shall not have him for a long time.

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<sup>1</sup>From Little Women by Louisa May Alcott (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, Inc., 1947).

Meg (thoughtfully): You know the reason Mother proposed not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone; and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army. We can't do much, but we can make our little sacrifices, and ought to do it gladly. (Shaking her head) But I'm afraid I don't.

Jo: But I don't think the little we should spend would do any good. We've each got a dollar, and the army wouldn't be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from Mother or you, but there's a book I want to buy for myself. I've wanted it for so long.

Beth: I've planned to spend mine on new music,

Amy (decidedly): I shall get a nice box of Faber's drawing pencils; I really need them.

Jo (examining her shoes): Mother didn't say anything about our money, and she won't wish us to give up everything. Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun; I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it!

Meg (complaining): I'm sure I do--teaching those tiresome children all day, when I'm longing to enjoy myself at home.

Jo: You don't have half such a hard time as I do. How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous,

fussy old lady, who is never satisfied?

Beth (looking at her hands): It's naughty to fret; but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. My hands get so stiff, I can't practice well at all.

Amy (heatedly): I don't believe any of you suffer as I do, for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls who laugh at your dresses, and label your father if he isn't rich.

Jo (laughing): If you mean libel, I'd say so, and not talk about labels as if papa was a pickle bottle.

Amy: I know what I mean!

Meg: Don't peck at one another, children.

(Jo begins to whistle.)

Amy: Don't, Jo; it's so boyish!

Jo: That's why I do it.

Amy: I detest rude, unladylike girls!

Jo: I hate affected, niminy-mininy chits!

Beth (with a funny face): Birds in their little nests agree.

Meg (beginning to lecture): Really, girls, you are both to be blamed. You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, Josephine. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl; but now you are so tall, you should remember that you are a young lady.

Jo: I'm not! I hate to think I've got to grow up and look as prim as a China aster! It's worse now than ever,

for I'm dying to go and fight with Papa, and I can only stay at home and knit, like a poky old woman!

Beth (stroking Jo's hair): Poor Jo! You must try to be contented with making your name boyish, and playing brother to us girls.

Meg (continuing her lecture): As for you, Amy, you are altogether too particular and prim. Your airs are funny now; but you'll grow up an affected little goose, if you don't take care.

Beth (ready to share the lecture): If Jo is a tomboy and Amy a goose, what am I, please?

Meg (warmly): You're a dear, and nothing else.

(The clock strikes six. Quickly, Beth gets out a pair of slippers to warm; Meg stops her lecturing; Amy gets out of the easy chair; and Jo holds up the slippers in front of the fire to warm more quickly. Mother is coming, and they are making things ready.)

Jo: These slippers are quite worn out; Marmee must have a new pair.

Beth: I'll get her some with my dollar.

Amy: No, I shall!

Meg: I'm the oldest-----

Jo (cutting in): I'm the man of the family now Papa is away, and I shall provide the slippers, for he told me to take special care of Mother while he was gone.

Beth: I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's each get her something for Christmas, and not get anything for ourselves.

Jo (exclaiming): That's like you, dear! What will we get?

Meg (thinking): I shall give her a nice pair of gloves.

Jo: Slippers, the best to be had!

Beth: I'll hem her some handkerchiefs.

Amy: I'll get her a little bottle of cologne; she likes it, and it won't cost much, so I'll have some left to buy my pencils.

Mother (coming in): Glad to find you so merry, my girls.

(She is not elegantly dressed, but she is a noble-looking woman. She greets them as she takes off her coat, puts on her warm slippers, and sits in the easy chair.)

Well, dearies, how have you got on today? There was so much to do, getting the boxes ready to go tomorrow, that I didn't come home to dinner. Has anyone called, Beth? How is your cold, Meg? Jo, you look tired to death. Come and kiss me, baby. (They gather around her.) I've a treat for you girls.

Jo (crying): A letter! A letter! Three cheers for father!

Mother: Yes, a nice long letter. He is well, and thinks he shall get through the cold season better than we feared. He sends all sorts of loving wishes for Christmas, and an especial message to you girls. Here

it is. (She takes the letter from her pocket. She reads.)

"Give them all my dear love and a kiss. Tell them I think of them by day, pray for them by night, and find my best comfort in their affection at all times. A year seems very long to wait before I see them, but remind them that while we wait we may all work, so that these hard days need not be wasted. I know they will remember all I said to them, that they will be loving children to you, will do their duty faithfully, fight their bosom enemies bravely, and conquer themselves so beautifully that when I come back to them I may be fonder and prouder than ever of my little women."

Amy: Oh, I am a selfish girl! But I'll truly try to be better, so he mayn't be disappointed in me by and by.

Meg: We all will! I think too much of my looks, and hate to work, but won't any more if I can help it.

Jo: I'll try and be what he loves to call me, a "little woman," and not be rough and wild, but do my duty here.

Mother: Do you remember how you used to play Pilgrim's Progress when you were little things? Nothing delighted you more than to have me tie my piece bags on your backs for burdens, give you hats and sticks and rolls of paper, and let you travel through the house from the cellar, which was the City of Destruction, up,

up, to the housetop, where you had all the lovely things you could collect to make a Celestial City.

Jo: What fun it was!

Meg: I liked the place where the bundles fell off and tumbled downstairs.

Beth (smiling): My favorite part was when we came out on the flat roof where our flowers and arbors and pretty things were, and all stood and sang for joy.

Amy: If I wasn't too old for such things, I'd rather like to play it over again.

Mother: We never are too old for this, my dear, because it is a play we are playing all the time in one way or another. Our burdens are here, our road is before us, and the longing for goodness and happiness is the guide that leads us through many troubles and mistakes to the peace which is a true Celestial City. Now, my little pilgrims, suppose you begin again, not in play, but in earnest, and see how far on you can get before Father comes home.

Amy: Really, Mother? Where are our bundles?

Mother: Each of you told what your burden was just now, except Beth; I rather think she hasn't got any.

Beth: Yes, I have; mine is dishes and dusters, and envying girls with nice pianos, and being afraid of people.

Meg (thoughtfully): Let us do it. It is only another name for trying to be good, and the story may help us; for



though we want to be good, it's hard work.

Jo: We ought to have our roll of directions, though, like  
Christian. What shall we do about that?

Mother: Look under your pillows, Christmas morning, and you  
will find your guidebooks. Now let's see if we can  
help Hannah with supper.

Curtain

## Adaptations from Modern Stories

"The Doughnuts"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: The scene is laid in the small lunchroom of Uncle Ulysses and Aunt Agnes in the little town of Centerburg. The door leading outside is stage R. Across the back of the stage is a long counter, behind which there is work space. Immediately offstage L. is a small kitchen where all cooking equipment is placed.

## Characters:

Uncle Ulysses

Homer Price, his nephew

Mr. Gabby, an advertising man

The sheriff

Mrs. Morgan, a customer

Charles, her chauffeur

Customers

As the scene opens, Uncle Ulysses is alone on the stage. He is wiping the counter. Almost immediately, Homer enters the lunchroom from the outside door.

Homer (coming in): Howdy, Uncle Ulysses!

Uncle Ulysses: Oh, hello, Homer. You're just in time. I want to go next door to the barbershop for a spell, 'cause there's somethin' I've got to talk to the sheriff

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<sup>1</sup>From the story, "The Doughnuts," by Robert McCloskey, in Worlds of Adventure, ed. by Matilda Bailey and Ullin W. Leavell (New York: The American Book Company, 1951).

about. Would you take over here? There won't be much business until the double feature is over, and I'll be back before then.

Homer: Sure thing, Uncle Ulysses.

Uncle Ulysses (as he leaves): Uh, Homer, would you mind mixing up a batch of doughnut batter and put it in that new doughnut machine of mine? The recipe's right under the counter there. You could turn the switch and make a few doughnuts to have on hand for the crowd after the movie-----if you don't mind.

Homer: O. K. I'll take care of everything. (He takes the recipe from under the counter. As he begins to study it, a man, Mr. Gabby, comes in.)

Mr. Gabby: Good evening, Bud.

Homer: Good evening, Sir, what can I do for you?

Mr. Gabby (sitting down at the counter): Well, young feller, I'd like a cup o' coffee and some doughnuts.

Homer: I'm sorry, Mister, but we won't have any doughnuts for about half an hour, until I can mix some dough and start this machine. I could give you some very fine sugar rolls instead.

Mr. Gabby: Well, Bud, I'm in no real hurry, so I'll just have a cup o' coffee and wait around a bit for the doughnuts. Fresh doughnuts are always worth waiting for.

Homer (pouring a cup of coffee): O. K.

Mr. Gabby: Nice place you've got here.

Homer: Oh, yes, this is a very up-and-coming lunchroom with all the latest improvements.

Mr. Gabby: Yes, must be a good business. I'm in business, too. A traveling man in outdoor advertising. I'm a sandwich man. Mr. Gabby's my name.

Homer: My name's Homer. It must be a fine profession, traveling and advertising sandwiches.

Mr. Gabby: Oh, no, I don't advertise sandwiches, I just wear any kind of an ad, one sign in front and one sign on behind, this way (demonstrating). Like a sandwich, Ya know what I mean?

Homer (getting out the flour and the baking powder): Oh, I see. That must be fun; and you travel, too?

Mr. Gabby: Yeah, I ride the rods between jobs, on freight trains, ya know what I mean?

Homer: Yes, but isn't that dangerous?

Mr. Gabby: Of course there's a certain amount of risk; but you take any method of travel these days, it's all dangerous. Now take airplanes, for instance----  
(Mrs. Morgan, a well dressed woman, and her chauffeur, Charles, enter R.)

Mrs. Morgan: We've stopped for a light snack. Some doughnuts and coffee would be simply marvelous!

Homer: I'm sorry, Ma'am, but the doughnuts won't be ready until I make this batter and start Uncle Ulysses'

doughnut machine. (He points off stage L.)

Mrs. Morgan: Well, now, aren't you a clever young man to know how to make doughnuts!

Homer: Well----I've never really done it before, but I've got a recipe to follow.

Mrs. Morgan (as she begins to take off her coat, jewelry, etc.): Now, young man, you simply must allow me to help. You know, I haven't made doughnuts for years; but I know the best recipe for them!

Homer: But Ma'm-----

Mrs. Morgan: Now just wait until you taste these doughnuts. Do you have an apron? (By this time she is behind the counter. Homer gets her an apron.) Young man, we'll need some eggs, some nutmeg, and milk. (Homer goes to get them.) Now, Charles, hand me that baking powder. (He does so, as Homer returns. She is mixing the ingredients quickly.) Now, Charles, break those eggs in a bowl for me, please.

Mr. Gabby: Say, I bet these will be worth waiting for.

Mrs. Morgan: There! All ready. Now, Charles, pour this batter in the machine for the young man, and turn it on. (He leaves with the batter.)

Homer (doubtfully); It looks like an awful lot of batter.

Mrs. Morgan (enthusiastically): But wait till you taste them!

Homer: It's about ten times as much as Uncle Ulysses makes.

Mrs. Morgan: He won't have any trouble getting rid of these.

Homer: I hope not----Some of them ought to be about ready now.

Charles (coming on with a plate of doughnuts): That's a simply fabulous machine.

Mrs. Morgan: Young man, you must have the first one. (He takes one.) Now isn't that just too delicious? Isn't it marvelous?

Homer: Yes, Ma'm, it's very good.

Mrs. Morgan: I'm so glad you enjoy my doughnuts, but now, Charles, we really must be going. If you will just take this apron, Homer, and put two dozen doughnuts in a bag to take along, we'll be on our way. (He does so.) Charles, don't forget to pay the young man. (He pays Homer while she gathers up her coat, jewelry, etc.) Good night, young man, I haven't had so much fun in years. (They leave.)

Homer: Goodnight. (He starts L.) I guess we have about enough doughnuts to sell to the after theater customers. I'd better turn the machine off for a while. (He goes off.)

Mr. Gabby: These are sure good doughnuts.

Homer (coming back quickly): The machine won't stop! The doughnuts keep rolling right down the little shoot!

Mr. Gabby: Are you sure you pushed the right button?

(Mr. Gabby goes to check.)

Homer: Yes, I'm sure! I guess I better telephone Uncle Ulysses at the barbershop. (He picks up the telephone behind the counter and dials.) Oh, hello, sheriff. This is Homer. Could I please speak to Uncle Ulysses?-----Uncle Ulysses, I pushed the Stop button on the doughnut machine, and nothing happened. They're still rolling down the chute! (Mr. Gabby brings on a tray of doughnuts.) That's good, Uncle Ulysses, g'by.

Mr. Gabby: There sure are lots of doughnuts back there.

Homer: Uncle Ulysses will be right here.

Mr. Gabby: That's good. Yep, I lost count at twelve hundred and two.

(The sheriff and Uncle Ulysses come in.)

Homer: We're having a little trouble here.

Uncle Ulysses (crossing to check the situation): Well, I'll be dunked!

Sheriff (helping himself to a doughnut): Mighty fine doughnuts, though. What'll you do with 'em all, Ulysses?

Uncle Ulysses (groaning): What'll Aggie say? We'll never sell 'em all.

Mr. Gabby (an idea just dawning): What you need is an advertising man. Ya know what I mean? You got the doughnuts, ya gotta create a market---understand?

Homer: Yep! He's right. He's an advertising sandwich man; so if we hire him, he can walk up and down in front

of the theater when the show's over and get the customers.

Uncle Ulysses: You're hired, Mr. Gabby! Homer, run get those signs I have advertising fresh doughnuts. (He runs off L.) We'll rig 'em up somehow. I hope this advertising works. Aggy'll throw a fit if it don't.

Sheriff: Looks like you'll have to hire a truck to haul 'em away, if this don't work. (Homer brings back the signs, and they start to fasten them to Mr. Gabby. The sheriff goes off and brings back another tray of doughnuts. The door opens R., and Mrs. Morgan and Charles enter. She is very excited.)

Mrs. Morgan: I've lost my diamond bracelet, and I know I left it here on the counter.

Homer: Yes, Ma'm, I guess you forgot it when you helped make the batter.

(They all look, but they cannot find it.)

Mrs. Morgan: I'll offer a reward of one hundred dollars for that bracelet! It really must be found!

Sheriff: Now don't you worry, lady. I'll get your bracelet back.

Homer (suddenly): Say, I know where the bracelet is! It was lying here on the counter and got mixed up in the



batter by mistake! I bet it's cooked inside one of those doughnuts.

Uncle Ulysses: Ohh-hh! Now we have to break up all those doughnuts to find it.

Homer: Nope. I've got a plan. Let's add a \$100.00 prize for anybody finding the bracelet to Mr. Gabby's sign. Then he can walk down by the show. It's about time for it to end.

Uncle Ulysses: Let's try it. Here's a pen and ink, Homer.  
Mr. Gabby (as Homer adds to the sign): Say, that's a neat trick.

Mrs. Morgan: We just have to find the bracelet!

Homer: O. K., Mr. Gabby, get going!

(Almost immediately, people begin coming and going, clamoring for doughnuts, by the dozen, two dozen, etc. Within a few moments, a boy, one of the first customers, returns, shouting)

Boy: I got it! I got it!

Mrs. Morgan: My bracelet has really been found! Here, young man is your reward. (She gives the boy a \$100.00 bill.)  
Now, come Charles, we must be going. (They leave.)  
(The boy also leaves, Homer starts off L.)

Homer: I'll check the machine.

Uncle Ulysses: Well, that took care of most of the doughnuts.

Homer (reappearing, smiling): And the machine has finally run out of batter!

Curtain

"A Saturday in the City"<sup>1</sup>

Scene: The scene takes place in the Bookbinder Kitchen. It is not a large room. There is a table in the center, and there are cabinets on the sides. There is a door Up Center, leading to the rest of the house. There is a door leading outside R.

Characters:

Herbie

Felicia

Mrs. Bookbinder

Cliff

As the scene opens, Herbie and Felicia are eating breakfast at the table. Their mother, Mrs. Bookbinder, is busy at a cabinet L.

Herbie: Ma, can I go to the museum with Cliff today?

Mrs. Bookbinder (peeling potatoes): I suppose so. What's at the museum?

Herbie: Aw, you know, it's just a museum. Mrs. Gorkin said we should all go.

Felicia: Is that why you're so dressed up?

Herbie (quickly): Aw, I'm not so dressed up.

Mother (looking him over): Herbert, there's something funny about the way you look.

Felicia: What is it, Ma?

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<sup>1</sup>From The City Boy, by Herman Wouk (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948).

Mother: He looks older somehow.

Felicia (giggling): Ma, I see what it is. He's parted his hair on the wrong side. Isn't that silly?

Herbie: All right for you, smartie.

Mother: Well, it looks better the other way.

Herbie: Ma, Can I go to the museum?

Mother: Where is it?

Herbie: Down in Central Park.

Mother: How much is it?

Herbie: It's free, Mom.

Mother: You can go.

Felicia: How come that you're not going to the movies today?

Herbie (haughtily): A museum is more important than an old movie.

Felicia: More important than chapter fourteen of The Green Archer?

Herbie: Aw, the heck with that old movie! What's the sense of paying money 'n' sittin' through a rotten movie every week, just to see a chapter of The Green Archer?

Mother (dropping a potato in her surprise and coming over to give Herbie a pat on the head): You're growing up, Herbie. Bless you.

Felicia (suspiciously): Which museum are you going to?

Herbie (evading): Which one do you think?

Felicia: There are two, you know.

Herbie: Well, whaddya know! Two museums! Imagine that!  
Guess you hafta be in 8B to know that. (Gulping down  
the remainder of his milk.) Mom, how about carfare  
for the museum?

Mother: Can you wait until I finish this, or is the museum  
going to run away?

Herbie: Sorry, Mom.

Felicia: Say, how about me going with you? I haven't been  
to the museum in a long time.

Herbie (shocked, but trying to remain cheerful): Why--Why,  
sure, Fleece, come on. If you want to spend the day  
walkin' around with me and Cliff, that's fine.

Mother: That's nice, Felice. I'm glad you want to be with  
your own brother one day instead of that rotten Emily  
with her lipstick and rouge. You can take carfare  
for both----

Felicia: No, no, Mom, wait----

Herbie (exultantly): Aw come on, Fleece, Mrs. Gorkin says  
the museum is real educational.

Felicia (baffled): You really are going to the museum, aren't  
you?

Mother (positively): Yes, and you will go with him. What's  
playing at the movies that's better than the museum,  
I'd like to know?

Felicia: Mom, please, I promised Emily I'd go with her last

week. Besides, I need to pick up a pair of hose to wear to the Glass' party tomorrow.

Mother (firmly): Now Felicia, we've been over that before.

No hose for you.

Felicia (pleading): Why, why, can't I wear hose?

Mother: Because you're not old enough, that's why.

Felicia (insulted): If I can't wear hose, I won't go to the old party with you. Every girl in my room has at least five pairs of hose. Even kids a year below me wear them.

Mother: Felicia, for the last time, no. We're not going to argue any more. Besides, I can't buy you any today.

Felicia: Then I'll borrow a pair from Emily!

Mother: They won't fit.

Felicia: Oh, won't they? I borrowed them yesterday, just in case. I've already tried them on and they do fit. But, honest, Mom, I wasn't going to wear them without your permission.

Mother (knowing she is trapped): All right. Wear them just this once, but you are to return them just as soon as you're through with them. Papa won't like it.

Herbie (enjoying himself): Good! Now that that's settled, you can go to the museum with Cliff and me.

Felicia: Mom, do I have to? I did promise Emily, and I can go to those stuffy museums any old time.

Herbie: Aw, be a sport, come with me, Fleece. Is a girl friend more important than a brother? Please, Mom, make her go with me.

Felicia (jumping up from the table): I won't go with him, Mom! I'd rather die than be seen with a slovenly thing like him. He never even washes below his chin. (She dashes out.)

Mother (diverted, so that she doesn't notice Felicia's exit): Come here, Herbie. Let's have a look at that neck.

Herbie (going to her, proudly): I guess I'll show that girl who's slovenly. I've already washed my neck.

Mother (looking him over carefully): Why, Herbie, bless your heart. You really are growing up.

Herbie: Now, Mom, how about that quarter for carfare? Cliff will be here right away.

Mother (taking the money from her pocket and handing it to him): Here you are son. And I'm proud of you. Now where did that Felicia go? (She leaves C to try to find Felicia. Herbie stands grinning. He takes a comb from his pocket and starts to comb his already slick hair. Cliff calls from R.)

Cliff: Hey, Herbie.

Herbie: Come on in, Cliff. I'm about ready to go.

Cliff (whistling as he sees Herbie): Wow, do you look slick!

Herbie: We gotta get outta here before Mom gets back. I still might have to take Fleece.

Cliff: Oh, no! (Still looking Herbie over and shaking his head). There ain't any girl I could like that much.

Herbie: Sh, they'll hear you. (Grinning). But just wait till you see her! (They tiptoe out.)

Curtain

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

It has been the feeling of the writer for some time that the supply of suitable dramatic material for use in a junior high school is very limited. The purpose of this thesis has been, therefore, to explain the process by which a teacher may adapt her own material from children's literature already in existence. This process seems to fall into three divisions. First, suitable material must be found. Second, a certain amount of study must be made concerning techniques to be used. Third, the actual transformation from story to play must be made.

In looking for material to dramatize, the prospective writer must keep certain characteristics in mind. These may be summarized in the following statement. The story must fit the age group; it must have a worthwhile theme; it must contain action; the characters must seem real; the main idea of the story must be contained in one scene; and it must be a story that can be told in dialogue.

Once a teacher has selected literature to dramatize, she must turn her attention to techniques to be used. The



writer has tried to show that a play, to be successful, is dependent on three elements. These elements are plot, character, and dialogue. Here, she will find herself indebted to the original author for the greater part of all three elements. Hers is a problem of adapting, not originating.

Concerning the plot, the teacher's main duty will be that of condensing it or cutting down the number of episodes. In doing this, she must be careful to keep the thread of the story alive and running smoothly. The story must begin with the first speeches, and it must build rapidly. Then it should conclude before either the actors or the audience tire of it.

When she studies the characters, the teacher should keep in mind the author's original purpose in portraying them. She should do her best to see that they remain true to life. She must see that all the characters, whether they are the author's or her own, are simple, direct characters that the children will understand.

In writing dialogue the teacher will do well to retain as much of the conversation of the original author as possible. When she has to supply her own dialogue, she should remember to keep the speeches short, to use language that the child is capable of understanding, and to fit the dialogue to the character.

### Conclusions

Perhaps certain conclusions have already been reached concerning the adaptations used as illustrations in this thesis. The writer would like to add specific ones pertaining to the writing of these dramatications.

First of all, the material chosen covers a wide variety of types of literature. This was done in order to show that stories representative of various types of children's literature, from the early folk tale to the modern story, can be adapted to use in the dramatic form. Also, these types will be readily accessible to all teachers.

Beginning with the folk tales, the adaptations illustrate certain points which the writer has tried to make clear. "The Stone in the Road" had to be changed to one setting. The story itself was followed closely, but some characters had to be added to forward the plot. This called for additional dialogue, although when possible, the conversation of the story was used.

In "The Old Woman and the Tramp" much of the conversation has been used for dialogue. Although the main part of the story took place in the old woman's cottage, the story did not begin there; therefore, part of the setting had to be changed. Parts of the plot were omitted, and the story was condensed in order that it might take place in one evening. Although there are only two characters in the

story, it can be a valuable exercise in characterization. Often in the classroom there will be a need for one play which has only a few characters.

In selecting the stories from children's classics, the writer feels that the reasons for her choice are probably obvious. Both The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Little Women are widely known and loved. Both stories hold much interest for children entering junior high school. Both incidents chosen take place early in the books and serve to introduce the characters easily. The scene from Tom Sawyer is primarily an exercise for boys; the scene from Little Women, for girls. This fact is often advantageous when dealing with children of early junior high years. The scene from Tom Sawyer remains the same as the book except for the end, where it originally changed to the house. Much of the dialogue has been taken from the book, but it needed additions. All the lines of Billy and Johnny were added, as well as part of Ben's and Tom's.

The scene from Little Women, entitled "Playing Pilgrims," sticks more closely to the book than any of the others. The main problem here was to cut anything that was not essential and still leave enough of the episode to establish the character of each of the March girls.

Modern stories to dramatize are harder to find than other types, but it is worthwhile to find them. Children

enjoy dramatizing present-day stories for at least part of their work. "The Doughnuts" is a clever story taken originally from an entire book, Homer Price, by Robert McCloskey. The writer discovered both "The Doughnuts" and "A Saturday in the City" in books designed to use as seventh grade readers.

Much of "The Doughnuts" had to be cut in order to make it short enough for use here. Some of the characters were omitted. Part of the setting was changed. The doughnut machine had to be moved from the lunchroom proper for practical staging. Although much of the dialogue was taken from the story, it was often rearranged.

The scene, "A Saturday in the City," is really just an introduction to that story, taken originally from the book The City Boy by Herman Wouk. Most of the part chosen to dramatize actually took place in the Bookbinder kitchen. However, the episode itself was so short that it had to be filled in with sketches from other parts of the book. Some dialogue had to be added, and the ending was changed from the street to the house.

It is hoped that the suggestions and illustrations contained in this thesis will be of help to other teachers facing the same problems as the writer--that of finding suitable dramatic material for use in the junior high school classroom.

## SUGGESTED STORIES FOR DRAMATIZATION

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The. Mark Twain.

Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The. Mark Twain.

"Bad Joke That Ended Well, The," by Roger Duvoisin, in  
Stories to Dramatize. Ed. by Winifred Ward.  
Anchorage, Kentucky. The Children's Theatre Press,  
1952.

"Christmas Apple, The," by Ruth Sawyer in Stories to Dramatize.  
Ed. by Winifred Ward. Anchorage, Kentucky: The  
Children's Theatre Press, 1952.

"Christmas Carol, A." Charles Dickens.

City Boy, The. by Herman Wouk. New York: Simon and Schuster,  
1948.

"Enchanted Shirt, The," by John Hay, in Stories to Dramatize.  
Ed. by Winifred Ward. Anchorage, Kentucky: the  
Children's Theatre Press, 1952.

"Father Gets His Exercise," by Hiram Percy Maxim in More  
Chucklebait. Ed. by Margaret C. Scoggin. New York:  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

"How Arthur Proved His Kingship," by Sidney Lanier in Bag O'  
Tales. Ed. by Effie Power. New York: E. P. Dutton  
and Co., Inc., 1937.

"How Beautiful With Mud," by Hildegard Dolson in More Chuckle-bait. Ed. by Margaret C. Scoggin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

"How Will Scarlet Joined Robin Hood's Merry Men." Stories of Great Adventure. Ed. by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. Springfield, Massachusetts: Milton Bradley Company, 1919.

"Hundred Dresses, The," by Eleanor Estes. The Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature. Ed. by May Hill Arbuthnot. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1953.

Little Women, Louisa M. Alcott.

"Moor's Legacy, The," Washington Irving.

Prince and the Pauper, The. Mark Twain.

"Queen of the Sea," Twelve Bright Trumpets by Margaret Leighton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942.

"Ransom of Red Chief," by O. Henry.

"Rip Van Winkle," by Washington Irving.

"Robin Hood's Merry Adventure with the Miller," by Howard Pyle in Stories to Dramatize. Ed. by Winifred Ward. Anchorage, Kentucky: The Children's Theatre Press, 1952.

Story of a Bad Boy, The, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

"Wicked John and the Devil," Grandfather Tales by Richard Chase. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.

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