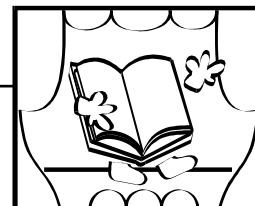


Readers' Theater



Daniel Half Human : and The Good Nazi

by David Chotjewitz

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1 Daniel	Narrator 2 Rheinhard	Narrator 3 Sophie	Narrator 4
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Daniel: Vati?

Rheinhard: Yes?

Daniel: Can you...can you sign this?

Narrator 1: Rheinhard went to the table and bent over the slip of paper. It was a form.

Rheinhard: What's this for?

Daniel: You have to sign it.

Narrator 2: Rheinhard looked it over. There was an X at the bottom where the parent was to sign. It was an application to the Hitler Jugend.

Narrator 3: Daniel looked his father in the face.

Daniel: Everyone is joining. All my friends. Armin, too.

Narrator 4: Rheinhard drew his eyebrows together. He turned around and called:

Rheinhard: Sophie? Kindly come here.

Sophie: In a moment.

Narrator 1: She called from the library.

Sophie: What's going on?

Rheinhard: I want to show you something.

Narrator 2: She came into the room.

Rheinhard: Have a look at this.

Narrator 3: Rheinhard handed her the form. She read it through calmly. Then she turned to Daniel.

Narrator 4: Daniel stood very straight and looked his parents in the eyes.

Daniel: Everyone is joining. Really.

Sophie: Yes?

Rheinhard: There is no law that says you always must do what everyone else is doing.

Daniel: I don't always.

Sophie: You haven't found the right friends. If you want to join a youth group, then let's think about it. There are many you would like, the Pathfinders, for instance.

Daniel: *(to himself)* I knew she'd start in with something like that.

Daniel: I don't want to join the Pathfinders. I want—

Narrator 1: Rheinhard cut him off.

Rheinhard: You're being rude.

Narrator 2: Daniel swallowed and tried a new approach.

Daniel: Listen to me, please. The Hitler Jugend isn't like the SA. It's basically not so different from the Pathfinders. They go on hikes, they sing folk songs—

Rheinhard: You needn't tell us what the Hitler Jugend is.

Sophie: We have nothing against hiking or folk songs. You know that.

Daniel: Vati...

Narrator 3: Daniel clenched his jaw, trying to hold back the tears that were gathering in his eyes.

Rheinhard: Oh, dear, will our young hero now start crying? The same boy who is so eager to join the new Germany's elite, hard-as-steel-and-iron Hitler Jugend?

Sophie: No, Rheinhard. Not like that. We have to talk about it. Together.

Rheinhard: What is there to talk about?

Sophie: Maybe we should tell him.

Rheinhard: Tell him what? There's nothing to tell.

Sophie: Others, unfortunately, don't agree with you, Rheinhard.

Rheinhard: If you tell him, you'll be doing just what those fanatics want you to.

Narrator 4: Daniel was baffled. What was all this about?

Narrator 1: Rheinhard had turned away. Sophie looked at her son. Her mouth was closed tight, as though she wanted never to speak another word. But then she did:

Sophie: Daniel... we haven't talked about it with you until now because we thought it wouldn't matter.

Daniel *(to himself)* Could I have been adopted? But that wouldn't have anything to do with the application form. So what was it?

Sophie: But there are people for whom it matters a great deal. And unfortunately, what they say is what counts in Germany today.

Daniel: What are you talking about?

Sophie: Well, you see... It's not so easy to explain: My parents, your grandparents, whom you hardly knew, were—no, they really weren't Jewish, they'd resigned from the Jewish Community, withdrawn their names from its registry when they were young. They wanted to be Germans, first and foremost. Not Jewish in the old ways, keeping kosher and all that—

Daniel: Jewish?

Narrator 2: Daniel was stunned; he couldn't believe it.

Sophie: They were Germans, of course. But they both came from Jewish families. They withdrew from the Jewish Community because they were nonobservant. I was brought up like every other German girl. We celebrated Christmas, we had a tree, and we sang Christmas songs. For a long time I didn't even know that I was of Jewish descent...But by the Nazi definition, I am a Jewess now. I would never describe myself as such. That makes no difference to them. And by their definition, you are half Jewish, non-Aryan.

Daniel: Me?

Sophie: Yes. Maybe now you'll understand; that is why you can't join the Hitler Jugend.

Narrator 3: Daniel couldn't understand her at all. The words buzzed in his ears. He could almost not hear her. What was it she was saying?

Daniel: You're a Jewess?

Sophie: It's the crazy Nazis who want to make me into one. I am German.

Daniel: Why didn't you tell me?

Sophie: Because it didn't mean anything to us. I never thought about it.

Narrator 4: He stared at the floor. He couldn't think clearly anymore. Then he burst out:

Daniel: How could you keep something like that from me? I'm not...I'm not, I can't be, you know, what you just said.

Sophie: Half Jewish?

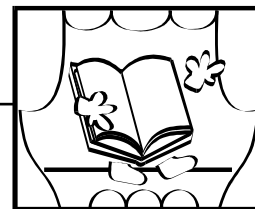
Daniel: I don't want anything to do with that! I'm a German, like everyone else.

Sophie: Naturally. I can see that. But-

Rheinhard: It's not a matter of what you want, Daniel. It's not we who invented this claptrap about races. The Nazis, whom you so admire, have given us that. You will have to come to terms with it and take the consequences.



Readers' Theater



Life as We Knew It

by Susan Pfeffer

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4	Narrator 5
	Narrator 6	Narrator 7	Miranda	Jonny	Mom

Narrator 1: All CNN talked about was the moon. Some asteroid is going to hit the moon. And it is going to be visible in the night sky. It is supposed to happen around 9:30 Wednesday night.

Narrator 2: The news reporters said asteroids hit the moon pretty often, which is how the moon gets its craters, but this one is going to be the biggest asteroid ever to hit it and on a clear night you should be able to see the impact when it happens, maybe even with the naked eye but certainly with binoculars.

Miranda: The news sure made it sound pretty dramatic, but I still don't think it's worth three homework assignments. One paper for Madame O'Brien, my French teacher. Written in French, of course. What does this have to do with French? Another paper for Mr. Clifford, my English teacher, on any topic that has to do with the moon. And the third paper for Ms. Hammish, the history teacher. All due Friday of course! I'll really be sick of the moon by then.

Narrator 3: The astronomers on TV looked like they loved what they were doing. You could see how excited they were that this asteroid was going to make a direct hit on the moon.

Narrator 4: These astronomers had charts and computer projections and graphics, but basically they looked like big kids at Christmas.

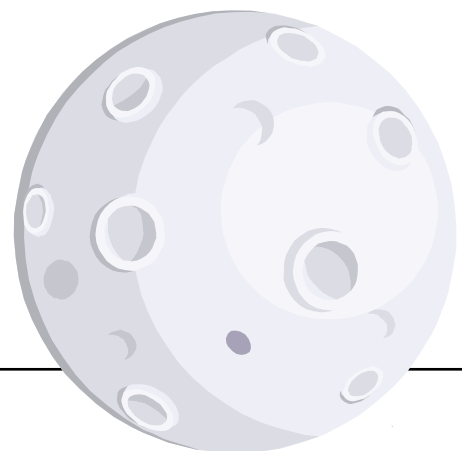
Miranda: Mom had gotten out my older brother Matt's telescope and she'd found the really good pair of binoculars that had somehow hidden themselves last summer. She'd even baked chocolate chip cookies for the event, so we carried a plate out and napkins. We decided to watch from the road, since we figured we'd have a better view from up front.

- Jonny: Mom and I brought out lawn chairs, but I decided to use the telescope. We didn't know exactly how long the hit was going to take or if there'd be something exciting to see afterward.
- Narrator 5: It seemed like everyone on the road was out tonight. It was like a big block party.
- Miranda: When it got closer to 9:30, things got really quiet. You could sense how we were all craning our necks, looking toward the sky. Jonny was at the telescope.
- Jonny: The asteroid is coming!
- Miranda: We could all see it in the night sky. It was the biggest shooting star you could imagine. It was a lot smaller than the moon, but bigger than anything else I'd ever seen in the sky. It looked like it was blazing and we all cheered when we saw it.
- Narrator 6: And then it hit. Even though we knew it was going to, we were still shocked when the asteroid actually made contact with the moon.
- Miranda: It made contact with our moon. At that second, I think we all realized that it was our moon and if it was attacked, then we were attacked.
- Jonny: I know all those astronomers I'd watched an hour earlier on CNN can explain just what happened and how and why and they'll be explaining on CNN tonight and tomorrow and I guess until the next big story happens. I know I can't explain because I don't really know what happened and I sure don't know why.
- Miranda: But the moon wasn't a half moon anymore. It was tilted and wrong and a three-quarter moon and it got larger, way larger, larger like a moon rising on the horizon, only it wasn't rising. It was smack in the middle of the sky, way too big, way too visible.
- Jonny: You could see details on the craters even without the binoculars that before I'd seen with Matt's telescope.

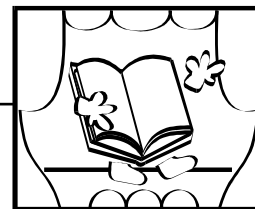
- Narrator 7: It wasn't like a big chunk of it flew off into space. It wasn't like we could hear the sound of the impact, or even that the asteroid hit the moon dead center. It was like if you're playing marbles and one marble hits another on its side and pushes it diagonally.
- Miranda: It was still our moon and it was still just a big dead rock in the sky, but it wasn't benign anymore. It was terrifying, and you could feel the panic swell all around us.
- Mom: Come on, kids. We'll see what CNN has to say about all this.
- Jonny: Mom, is the world coming to an end?
- Narrator 1: Jonny asked as he picked up the plate of cookies and ramming one into his mouth.
- Mom: No, it isn't. And yes you have to go to school tomorrow.
- Narrator 2: Jonny put the cookies away and turned the TV back on. Only there was no CNN. Most of the networks were off, but the local channel seemed to be carrying NBC out of Philly. Even that was weird, because we get New York City feeds.
- Narrator 3: At first the newscasters didn't seem to know much more than we did. The moon got hit, like we'd been told it would. Only something had been miscalculated.
- Narrator 4: But before some astronomer could come on and explain to the rest of us what had gone wrong, there was a bulletin.
- Narrator 5: The newsman cleared his throat, like taking an extra few seconds was going to change what he had to say. We are receiving reports of widespread tsunamis. The tides. As most of you know, the moon controls the tides. And the moon, well, whatever happened this evening at nine thirty-seven p.m., the tides were affected. The tides seem to have swelled far beyond their normal boundaries.
- Narrator 6: The newsman continued. Massive flooding has been reported all over the eastern seaboard. There are confirmed reports of tidal waves twenty feet or higher in New York City. The tides don't seem to be stopping. AP is reporting that the Statue of Liberty has been washed out to sea.

Narrator 7: The newsman was still talking. There's no way of knowing the number of deaths. Communication satellites are down. Telephone lines are down.

Miranda: I said good night to my family and went to my bedroom. I've kept the clock radio on, and I keep hearing reports. The tides seem to have pulled back from the East Coast, but now they're saying the Pacific is being affected also. San Francisco, they say, and they're afraid for LA and San Diego. I looked out my window just now. I tried to look at the moon, but it scares me.



Readers' Theater



Sold

by Patricia McCormick

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4	Narrator 5
	Narrator 6	Narrator 7	Narrator 8	Ama	Lakshmi
	Bajai Sita	Woman			

Narrator 1: Ama has to be coaxed from bed the next morning with a cup of hot tea. She says she is not ill, but she has the look of a great sickness about her.

Lakshmi: I put my baby brother in a basket on my back and go about my chores, all the while keeping my eyes on Ama, my mom. Her steps are slow and heavy, and she stops often in her work to shake her head and sigh.

Narrator 2: At noon Lakshmi warms the remains of yesterday's soup, feeds it to the baby, then tightens her waistcloth so her own hungry stomach will think it is full. Then she goes in search of Ama so that Ama can wipe the bowl clean with the last heel of bread. When Ama doesn't answer Lakshmi's calls, Lakshmi goes outside and finds Ama hiding behind Tali, the goat's shed, weeping.

Lakshmi: What is it, Ama?

Narrator 3: Ama wipes her cheek with the hem of her shawl.

Ama: Your stepfather has said you must go to the city and earn your keep as a maid.

Narrator 4: This news is like a tiny earthquake, shaking the very ground beneath Lakshmi's feet. And yet, for Ama, she stands firm.

Lakshmi: This is good news, Ama. There will be one less mouth to feed here and I will send my wages home.

Narrator 5: Ama nods weakly.

- Lakshmi: If I go, you will have money enough for rice and curds, milk and sugar. Enough money for a coat for the baby and a sweater for you.
- Narrator 6: Ama smiles wanly and strokes Lakshmi's cheek with her work-worn hand.
- Lakshmi: Enough for a tin roof.
- Ama: In the city, the people clean the floors with one rag and the dishes with another. Take care not to mix them up, or you will risk a beating.
- Narrator 7: You will have to get up early in the morning before anyone else in the house and be the last one to bed at night. Never sit down in the presence of your mistress or her husband or even in front of the children. And never eat your meal until they have gone to bed. This will prove what a hard worker you are.
- Ama: Do not eat any food that comes in a paper wrapper. You do not know who has cooked it.
- Narrator 8: Put a pinch of cardamom in the rice. This will make it more filling.
- Ama: Stay two steps behind your mistress if you are helping her with the marketing, and keep your head bowed when you are in public so that the city men cannot see your face.
- Narrator 1: Say your prayers every day and wash your skirt and blouse once a month.
- Ama: You will make us proud, as the first member of our family to leave the mountain. And perhaps at festival time next year, your mistress will let you come back to visit. Then you can tell us all about the world beyond this one.
- Narrator 2: The next morning Lakshmi's stepfather brings her to Bajai Sita's store. He is carrying Ama's empty firewood basket and yet he is wearing his vest, his watch, and his best trousers.
- Stepfather: Lakshmi wants to go to work in the city.
- Narrator 3: Lakshmi feels herself grow taller with his words.
- Bajai Sita: Is she a hard worker?

Stepfather: She needs a thrashing on occasion, but she is not as lazy as some.

Narrator 4: Her cheeks flame with indignation, but she says nothing.

Bajai Sita: Are you willing to do whatever is asked of you?

Narrator 5: She nods.

Lakshmi: Yes, I will do as I am told.

Narrator 6: Bajai Sita goes behind a curtain and returns with the stranger in the yellow dress.

Narrator 7: The woman looks Lakshmi over head to toe, then addresses the stepfather.

Woman: How much do you want for her?

Narrator 8: The stepfather squints. He takes in the costly fabric of the woman's dress, the baubles on her ears, the silver bangles on her wrist.

Stepfather: One thousand rupees.

Narrator 1: There are not that many rupees in the world! Lakshmi cringes at his backwardness and prays this refined and lovely city woman does not laugh him out of the store.

Narrator 2: Instead, the woman motions for him to step inside the back room with her.

Woman: She has no hips, and she's plain as porridge. I'll give you five hundred.

Lakshmi: *(to herself)* I do not understand. I can carry a load of firewood so heavy it would put a man to shame, and my legs are sturdy enough to climb the mountain a dozen times in one day. What does it matter that I have no hips yet?

Narrator 3: The stepfather says he knows the going rate for a young girl like her.

Stepfather: No less than eight hundred.

Woman: I will give you half now and the rest when she has proved her worth.

Narrator 4: The stepfather grunts, and he and the woman return.

Narrator 5: Bajai Sita unfurls a roll of rupee notes from her waistcloth.

Narrator 6: The stepfather counts the money, then counts it again.

Bajai Sita: Your family will get nothing, not one rupee, if you do not obey your new auntie. Do you understand?

Narrator 7: The stepfather counts the money one more time.

Lakshmi: Tell Ama I will make her proud. Tell her I'll be back for the next festival season.

