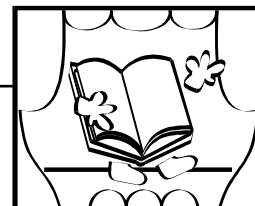


Readers' Theater



Igraine the Brave

by Cornelia Funke

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

Characters:	Narrator	Bertram	Mother	Father
	Igraine	Albert	Sisyphus	

Narrator: Pimpernel Castle had belonged to Igraine's family for more than three hundred years. Two stone lions guarded the castle. When Igraine scraped the moss off of their manes they purred like cats, but if a stranger came near they bared their stony teeth and roared. If you haven't guessed by now, Pimpernel Castle was a magical place and Igraine's parents and brother were magicians. Igraine and her cat, Sisyphus, have just awakened and are looking out of the window.

Igraine: Mmm, just smell that. Why are they working magic so early in the morning? I don't suppose they've even had breakfast yet. So you think they're worried my birthday present won't be ready in time?

Narrator: Igraine brushed a few moths off her woolly trousers, climbed into them, and put her great grandfather's chain-mail shirt over her head. Igraine had worn it ever since she found it in the armory, although it came down to her knees and she had to admit that it wasn't very comfortable. Her big brother, Albert, wanted to be a magician like their parents, but Igraine thought magic was dreadfully boring. She wanted to be like her great-grandfather, Pelleas of Pimpernel. He was a knight who fought in tournaments. Albert laughed at her ambition.

Igraine: Laugh all you like! You wait and see. I bet you ten of your tame mice I'll win one of the king's tournaments some day.

Narrator: Naturally Albert accepted the bet even though he loved his mice. Igraine's parents, Sir Lamorak and the Fair Melisande exchanged worried glances every morning when Igraine came down to breakfast. Her family definitely didn't think much of her plans for the future.

Igraine: *(buckling up her belt)* Come on, Sisyphus.

Narrator: Igraine and Sisyphus started to go toward the workshop. As they were waiting outside the door, a few startled bats fluttered to meet them. The heavy oak door of the workshop was painted with magical signs, and the door handle was a small brass serpent that liked to bite strangers' hands. Igraine put her ear to the door and listened as the Books of Magic sang in their high voices. Sisyphus was getting impatient and rubbed against her legs. He was hungry. As Igraine pushed him away, the door opened.

Albert: *(laughing)* I might have known.

Igraine: I was passing here entirely by chance. I just wanted to ask when we're finally going to have breakfast.

Albert: *(smiling)* You won't find out what you really want to know! Your birthday present has always been a surprise, and it's going to be a surprise this time too. Go and feed the snakes.

Narrator: Igraine tried to peek into the room.

Albert: Go away and play knights in armor, little sister! I'll ring the bell for breakfast when we're ready.

Mother: Good morning, honey!

Father: Good morning!

Narrator: Igraine went off to feed the animals. She was grumbling as she poured some milk and water for Sisyphus. She apologized to the water snakes as she fed them dry biscuits and blue eggs. She sighed and sat down on the bridge and pet the cat.

Igraine: Feeding the snakes every morning, dusting the Books of Magic on Wednesdays and Saturdays, scraping moss off the stone lions' manes once a week, and once a year a tournament at Darkrock Castle! Nothing exciting ever happens here, Sisyphus. Never ever! I'm going to be twelve tomorrow. Twelve! And I haven't had a single real adventure. How will I ever get to be a famous knight? Saving rabbits from the fox, rescuing squirrels from pine martens?

Narrator: Igraine looked up at the stone gargoyles. Some of them were yawning, and the rest were squinting crossly at the fat flies that liked to bask on their noses.

Igraine: I mean, look at that. Even the gargoyles are bored. I bet they'd like to crunch a few arrows or swallow a cannonball for a change. I know it's silly to wish for that kind of thing. I'm going to die of boredom, you wait and see! Maybe not overnight, but definitely before my next birthday!

Sisyphus: (*growling*) Learn to work some magic.

Igraine: I'm not interested in magic, you know that very well. Magic! Learning the ingredients for potions off by heart, magic spells, magic symbols, no thanks, not for me.

Sisyphus: Pull the drawbridge up!

Narrator: Igraine knew her parents didn't like her to use the real swords, but very likely they'd be shut up in their workshop for some time yet, so Igraine chose a blade that looked very like the play-sword her father had made her by magic. She took the magical leather dummy off his stand. Albert and her parents had conjured him up for her eighth birthday. Igraine blew three times into the dummy's face. He stood upright and marched out of the armory.

Igraine: En Garde, Leather Knight! You sawed off my unicorn's horn, and you'll pay dearly for it!

Narrator: The leather man drew his sword and planted himself in front of Igraine. As usual, he parried her sword-strokes with the utmost elegance, and soon Igraine was so hot in her chain mail that she ran down to the well in the courtyard. She was just pouring a bucket of water over her head when the stone lions above the gate began to roar. Startled, Igraine ran up the steps to the battlements. She saw Bertram, Master of Horse at Darkrock Castle. She ran back down to greet him. She fetched a bucket of water for Bertram and used a handful of straw to rub the sweat off of the horse.

Bertram: What weather! I'd sooner have torrents of rain. Where's your father, Igraine?

Igraine: Casting spells to make my birthday present. And you'd better not disturb him. Is the Baroness going to hold some horse races?

Bertram: No. I'm afraid the news I bring is nothing like that. Call your parents, Igraine, even if it does mean that your birthday present has to wait.

Mother: What is it, Bertram?

Bertram: Distressing news, Your Loveliness.

Father: (*coming into the room*) Oh, no! Don't say the old Baroness has. . .

Bertram: No, no. No, she's all right, but a few days ago she had an unwelcome visit from her nephew Osmund, the one who turned out so badly. Osmund the Greedy, everyone calls him. And he came with his castellan, who never opens his visor except to eat.

Igraine: Oh, a knight? What sort of armor does he wear?

Bertram: It has spikes all over it, from his helmet to the greaves on his legs. A nasty piece of work, just like the man inside it. Yesterday morning, just as I was getting the horses fed, Osmund suddenly announces at the crack of dawn that the Baroness has gone on pilgrimage and won't be back for a year at the earliest. And guess what: he claims she's left him in charge of Darkrock and all her lands while she's away.

Father: The Baroness on pilgrimage? But she never leaves her room except to see that her horses are all right.

Igraine: Or to drink honey beer.

Bertram: Exactly! No one saw her leave, and she didn't go to the stables either. Do you think she'd have gone away without saying goodbye to her favorite horse Lancelot? Ask your daughter! She's visited the Baroness often enough.

Igraine: Impossible. The Baroness never even went to bed without visiting Lancelot first.

Mother: That certainly does sound peculiar, Bertram. What do you suggest we should do? Shall we go back to Darkrock with you? Shall we ask this Osmund to tell us exactly where his aunt went?

Bertram: No, no, Your Loveliness. I haven't come to ask you for help. I'm here to warn you. I think Osmund is a threat to your castle and your family.

Albert: A threat to us? How?

Bertram: It's my belief. . . It's my belief this man Osmund came to Darkrock only to mount an attack on Pimpernel.

Father: Indeed? Well, well, I expect you have some reason for that suspicion?

Bertram: He wants your Books of Magic, sire! His servants talk of nothing else. He's planning to use your books to make himself the greatest magician in the world. And I assure you, when Osmund wants something he takes it. Not for nothing is he known as Osmund the Greedy.

Father: Yes, I think I've heard a few stories about him and his castellan with the spiky armor. Not very nice stories.

Bertram: Osmund is stirring up feeling against you, sir. He's spreading word that you don't deserve to own such powerful books if all you do with them is make trees blossom in winter and conjure up magical presents for your children!

Father: Ah. I see.

Bertram: Osmund's castellan is offering the villagers bags full of gold to tell him about the defenses of your castle. And that spiky brute puts his sword to the throats of those who don't take his gold and keep their mouths shut.

Mother: Those poor people. Bertram, next time you're in the village, would you be good enough to tell everyone they're welcome to pass on all they know to that castellan? What can he discover that's so important, anyway? And if this man Osmund really does attack us, then Lamorak and I will think up a few nice little magic surprises for him, won't we, my love?

Father: Definitely.

Bertram: He will attack! More soldiers are coming to Darkrock every day; heaven knows where Osmund finds them all. As you know, the Baroness stored nothing but her barrels of beer in the prison tower, but Osmund is having the place fitted out as a dungeon again, and I'm afraid you're meant to be his next guests in it. Yes, I fear he's going to be come calling at Pimpernel Castle very soon, and it won't be a friendly visit.

Father: Ah, well. Pimpernel has had unwelcome visitors many times before, and all of them wanted the Books of Magic. But the books are still here. No, I'm not worried. But thank you very much for telling us all this, Bertram. Will you stay to dinner? Good heavens, I believe we haven't even had breakfast yet!

Bertram: Thank you very much, sir, but I must get back before anyone notices. Do be careful and please take my warning seriously!

Igraine: Wait a minute, Bertram!

Bertram: Pull the drawbridge up the moment I've left, Igraine. Bar the fates, and keep well away from Darkrock while Osmund is there! No fencing practice with servants, no secret ride on Lancelot! And I'm afraid you and I won't be able to meet for some time.

Igraine: *(in a sneaky voice)* Don't you think it might be useful for someone to spy on that Osmund? I mean, he wouldn't know who I am!

Bertram: Don't you dare! I will personally throw you into the moat if I catch you at Darkrock. And I'll never take you to a tournament like I promised! So enjoy your birthday and pray for Osmund to die of indigestion before he can stretch his greedy fingers out to Pimpernel. Oh, yes, and this is for your pony. A little present from me and the grooms so that you'll remember us when you're a famous knight.

Narrator: Igraine stroked the soft leather of a beautiful bridle.

Igraine: Oh, thank you, Bertram!

Bertram: See you some time!

Narrator: Igraine wondered what Osmund and his castellan looked like with the iron spikes. She fell asleep. Around midnight, she was woken by someone hammering on her door. It was Albert.

Igraine: What's up?

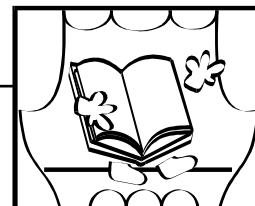
Albert: Er, well, it's like this, we've had a little magic mistake. . .



Readers' Theater

Greetings from Planet Earth

by Barbara Kerley



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

Characters: Narrator Mr. Meyer Theo Mother Janet
 JeeBee Kenny Rhonda Cynthia

Narrator: Mr. Meyer, the science teacher loved to talk about space exploration. One day, during class, he gave the class this assignment.

Mr. Meyer: The Voyager probes will have a special feature, something that's never been on a spacecraft before. Each spacecraft is going to carry a golden record: a message, in pictures and sounds, from Earth to any aliens out in space. And that's where the assignment comes in. You are going to create your own message from Earth. Think about what Earth is, what earthlings are like.

Theo: *(talking to himself)* Science is my favorite class in school, partly because Mr. Meyer listens to me. He doesn't lie either. I haven't told him the truth about "you." Mom wouldn't want me to. She likes to keep things private, and she sees him at school. But when he asks me if something's wrong, I don't want to say no.

Narrator: It's Theo's birthday and he is celebrating with his family. He sees the red package on the table, but reaches for something else.

Mother: *(nervously)* Happy birthday, honey.

Theo: *(opening the card)* Happy Birthday, Theo! Love, Mom.

Narrator: Theo looked at the bundle of dollar bills. He knew there were twelve of them. His mom always gave him a dollar for every year. Theo opened the package to find a Washington Redskins jersey.

Mother: I noticed your old one is getting a little tight across the shoulders.

Theo: It's great, Mom. Thanks.

Narrator: The smallest package was from Theo's sister, Janet. She is two years older and very concerned about her looks. The package was wrapped in toilet paper with a big pink bow stuck on top.

Theo: *(reading the card)* Make sure you recycle the wrapper, baby brother.

Janet: *(as she sees Theo looking at the pimple cream)* You are twelve now, Theodore. You are bound to get a pimple soon.

JeeBee: Honestly, Janet. Never mind about pimples, Theo. Happy Birthday!

Narrator: JeeBee's presents were the best. She wasn't like some grandmas, giving slippers or pajamas. Her present was wrapped in shiny gold. Once again, Theo avoided the red package.

Theo: *(reading the card)* A handy map for your arrival. Love, JeeBee

Narrator: It was an atlas of the moon. As Theo was leafing through the book, he came upon page after page of close-ups. Thousands of craters, whole mountain ranges, etc.

Janet: Wow, talk about pimples.

Theo: I love it.

JeeBee: Of course, it's just the map. You'll have to chart you own course one day when you get there. One more present.

Narrator: Theo looked at his mother. Her head was bowed so low that Theo couldn't even see her face, just her puffy brown hair.

Mother: Oh, just open it. It's okay, Theo.

Theo: It's a model for a Saturn 5 rocket and launchpad. Wow!

JeeBee: You missed the card.

Theo: Happy birthday, from your dad. *(silently)* It was JeeBee's handwriting, but still...

(Just then Kenny arrives in time for cake)

Janet: Good Evening, Kenneth. Enjoying your snack? How about some nice cold milk to go with that cake?

Theo: Hey, I want some milk too.

Janet: Theodore, how can Kenneth enjoy his snack if he doesn't have a napkin?

(Kenny runs out of the room with frosting on his chin. He runs to Theo's room).

Theo: *(Spreading out the Saturn 5 instructions).* I built the first model with my dad, although I don't really remember doing it. After dad left, JeeBee helped me with the next three. And you have helped me with the last three.

Kenny: I don't get it. How does he give you a present if he's not here?

Theo: Shh! JeeBee buys them. Every year we know it's supposed to be from my dad, but no one says it's from him—we never talk about it. It's like JeeBee wants me to remember him—but my mom doesn't.

Kenny: Why would your mom want you to forget him?

Theo: She always has. From the start.

Kenny: From the start of what?

Theo: From when he was supposed to come home. For weeks that summer before second grade, I asked her when he would get here. She always said she didn't know. Then one day she yelled at me to quit asking her. So, I asked my grandma.

Kenny: What did she say?

Theo: You dad wants to come home, but he can't.

(The next day at school).

Mr. Meyer: So, did anyone finish their Voyager assignment overnight? No answer. Don't worry. It's not due for two weeks. I thought I'd get a discussion rolling with a simple question. Who are we?

Kenny: We are the Tigers—the mighty, mighty, Tigers!

Mr. Meyer: Thanks for the school spirit, Kenny. So class, is that how you see yourselves, first and foremost: as members of this school?

Rhonda: *(reminded Theo of Janet)* No way, this school is bogus.

Theo: Besides, we're graduating in a few weeks.

Mr. Meyer: Good point, Theo. Our allegiances change all the time. Next year you'll be at the junior high. So who are you? Virginians? Americans?

Cynthia: Aren't those the same thing?

Mr. Meyer: Are they? How about the bigger picture? Are you the same as a kid in, say, China? How about a kid in Ethiopia?

Theo: We're all kids.

Mr. Meyer: And are people the same, all over the world? Who are we?

(Later, after school).

Kenny: *(in a robotic voice)* We are earthlings. We play football.

Theo: Shouldn't you sound like a human?

Kenny: *(interrupting)* What is that strange brown thing, make from the skin of a pig?

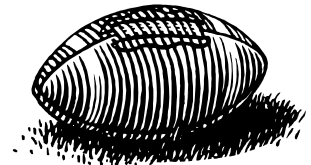
Theo: Is that what you're going to do for your tape? Talk about football like a weird alien?

Kenny: What's weird about this voice? I must vaporize you now.

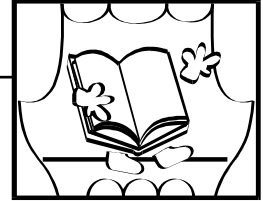
Theo: Seriously, football? The most important thing on Earth?

Kenny: Well, yeah. A picture of the Redskins. And a play-by-play for the tape. Hey, can I use your tape recorder?

Theo: I have to go. Mom gets upset when I am late. *(to himself)* What am I going to do for this assignment? I'll look in the garage for ideas. Builders. Are we builders?



Readers' Theater



Zorgamazoo by Robert Paul Weston

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

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3
	Katrina Katrell	Mrs. Krabone	

Narrator 1: Here is a story that's stranger than strange.
Before you want to begin you may want to arrange:
A blanket,
A cushion,
A comfortable seat,
And maybe some cocoa and something to eat.

Narrator 2: I'll warn you, of course, before we commence,
My story is eerie and full of suspense,
Brimming with danger and narrow escapes,
And creatures of many remarkable shapes.

Narrator 3: Dragons and ogres and gorgons and more,
And creatures you've not even heard of before.
And faraway places? There's plenty of those!
(And menacing villains to tingle your toes.)

Narrator 1: So ready your mettle and steady your heart.
It's time for my story's mysterious start. . .

Narrator 2: We begin in a subway, under the ground,
Where people in trains go rolling around,
In hurrying haste and in scurrying mobs,
Wandering off to their ponderous jobs.

Narrator 3: Much of the time they would linger in vain.
They would stand in the station awaiting a train.
They would push in between the ticket machines,
Like fish huddled into a tin of sardines.

Narrator 1: They clutched at their purses and cases they brought,
Anxious and angry and overly wrought,
Hoping a train would come barreling past,
Pick them up quick, and dash away fast.

There was one little girl who waited as well:
A girl by the name of Katrina Katrell

Narrator 2: While everyone else was busy or bored,
This one little girl should not be ignored.
For unlike the crowd, she was never inert.
Her senses were sharp and awake and alert.

Narrator 3: She kept to herself, but she wasn't alone.
She was joined by her guardian, Mrs. Krabone,
Who stood with Katrina, clutching her hand,
In the flickering light of the passenger stand.

Narrator 1: They were hunched near the tunnel of mortar and brick
Where the lighting was dim and shadows were thick,
Where Katrina was curious, squinting her eye. . .
She could swear that a creature was shuffling by.

Narrator 2: At first it was vague, just a shadowy form,
Like a ship in a mist or the fog of a storm.
She gaped with a steady, unfaltering stare,
To determine for certain: Was anything there?

Narrator 3: Yet try as she might, the tunnel was black,
Obscuring the path of the train and the track.

Narrator 1: She nearly was ready to give up her search,
When the subway arrived in a lumbering lurch.
It showered the station in glimmering light,
And that's when she saw something scurry from sight!

Katrina: Hey Krabby! (*she whispered*) There's something I see.
It's smaller than you, but it's bigger than me.
It's loping around in the tunnel, I swear!
It looked like a warthog, or maybe a bear!

- Mrs. Krabone: Don't call me Krabby
In a violent and rather vociferous tone.
You're a fool and a fibber!
Such ludicrous lying is never excused!
- Narrator 1: You see, my good reader, this had happened before,
Since Katrina Katrell—well, she loved to explore!
- Narrator 2: On her way home from school, whenever she could,
She would cut through a park or a forested wood;
And more often than not, in some part of a park
Where no one else went until after dark,
She would see something strange, something utterly odd,
Something hulking or hairy and possibly clawed.
She then would run home, with a story to tell -
Where Mrs. Krabone would do nothing but yell.
- Mrs. Krabone: Katrina! (she'd holler). You ignorant thing!
Your brain must be made out of paper and string!
All this rot about yetis and monsters in lochs!
They're nothing but lies! They're nothing but crocks!
- Narrator 3: Old Krabby, you see, was a bit of a witch.
In the pit of her heart was a serious glitch.
She didn't have time for the fanciful things,
Like pirates and gadgets and creatures and kings.
- Narrator 1: She believed that a girl should be perfectly prim,
And shouldn't be guided by whimsy and whim.
As such, she was certain Katrina was nuts:
Too lively, too feisty, and too full of guts.
Yet the two were related. Yes, that much was true,
But how they were linked—well, nobody knew.
- Narrator 2: Their relation was distant, hard to define,
Yet connected somehow by a family line,
Like forty-first cousins, ten times removed
(the bloodline, however, had never been proved).
- Narrator 3: And so, once again, they had come to collide,
With each of them taking their opposite side,
As they stood near the tracks, where under the ground,
Katrina thought beasties were creeping around.

Katrina: But Krabby! It really is true!
It looked like a thing that escaped from a zoo!
But I'm not a dullard! And I'm not a dunce!
So you gotta believe me, if only this once!

Narrator 3: Mrs. Krabone said nothing at first.
Her face went all flushed, as if ready to burst.
Then her lips twisted up into sort of a grin,
And she wrangled Katrina by ear and by chin.
Leaning in close, so Katrina could hear,
She whispered maliciously into her ear:

Mrs. Krabone: You listen to me. This lying must end.
When we get home, here is what I intend:
I will call up my friend, a Lobotomy Doc,
A talented man at the butchery block.
His scalpels are polished to shimmering shine.
He'll slice from your eye to the top of your spine.
He'll cut from your brow to the top of your head.
Your brain? He'll replace it with something instead,
Something quite nice, like a pastry or cake,
Or why not a succulent caribou steak?

Your original brain, he will lock in a box.
For that's what they do, those Lobotomy Docs.

You see now? You can't disagree!
You looked out the very same window as me.

Katrina: A creature! A thing! It was just like I said!
Perhaps there are more of them, farther ahead!

Narrator 2: But Mrs. Krabone was severely irate.
She spat when she spoke with fury and hate.

Mrs. Krabone: A creature? A mysterious beast?
You're crazy Katrina, and that's saying the least!
You listen to me, you insufferable brat.
What you saw—it was probably only a rat!

Katrina: But didn't you see it? His horns and his beard?
And he winked I believe, which was awfully weird.

Narrator 1: But the tirade issued from Mrs. Krabone,
Effectively silenced Katrina all the way home.
But her eyes remained actively darting around.
Even though she was silent and made not a sound.
Watching the weave of the wandering track,
Examining close every cranny and crack,
In search of the thing that had briefly appeared,
All hairy, with horns and a whiskery beard.

Narrator 2: A creature?
A beastie?
A troll or
A gnome?
Or a zorgle?

