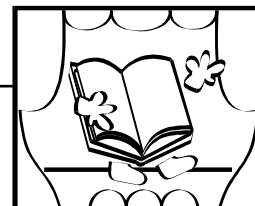


Readers' Theater



Violet Raines Almost Got Struck by Lightning

by Danette Haworth

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

Characters: Narrator 1 Narrator 2 Narrator 3 Violet Lottie 9-1-1 Lady

Narrator 1: So things are right back to normal today. Lottie and I are in her kitchen making crusts for apple pies. I'm pressing out a perfect pastry circle. This is a chore I like, pushing the rolling pin like a steamroller across the dough. I stretch the dough 'til it's almost breaking. Then I poke two holes in the top half for eyes and a bunch of holes, snowman-style, for a smile.

Violet: Look.

Narrator 2: Lottie stops rolling for a second, looks up, and laughs. Setting aside her rolling pin, she pokes some holes in her dough.

Lottie: Look at mine!

Narrator 2: Her face is even better—she made Xs for the eyes and a line for the lips, so her dough face is either asleep or drunk. We giggle and ball up our dough to roll it out again.

Narrator 3: When I look up, I notice Lottie's got her bathing suit on under her shirt. Yesterday, too. Well, it is hot in here. They don't have air-conditioning either, and the fans are just blowing the hot air around.

Violet: We going swimming later?

Lottie: What?

Violet: We going swimming?

Narrator 1: I point to her neck where her bikini top is tied.

Violet: You got your suit on.

Narrator 1: Lottie licks her lips.

Lottie: Oh, that. Um ...

Narrator 1: She looks down, rolls a little dough, looks back up.

Lottie: I don't know if there'll be time.

Violet: What do you mean? I'll just run and get my suit after we get these pies in. No big deal.

Lottie: Well, I mean, like—

Narrator 1: She sets her rolling pin down and looks at me straight on.

Lottie: Okay, don't be mad, but Melissa invited me over to watch *Paris Heights* with her.

Narrator 2: My eyes narrow into slits so thin I can barely see out of them. My cheeks turn into stone.

Lottie: Violet!

Violet: What?

Lottie: She's nice. I don't know why you don't like her.

Violet: I never said that!

Lottie: It kind of shows.

Narrator 2: I look away from her so she can't see that I know what she's talking about.

Violet: She tries to be so glamorous all the time.

Lottie: She thinks you have pretty eyes.

Narrator 2: Okay, I do like hearing that. But still, I'm not giving up my best friend for "pretty eyes." I shrug so's Lottie can see I don't care about that.

Narrator 1: Lottie heaves a big sigh.

Lottie: I'm allowed to have other friends, you know. You do.

Narrator 2: I lay my perfect pie circle in a pan. I grit my teeth as I roll out the next ball.

Violet: No, I don't.

Lottie: What do you call Eddie? Half the time you're out doing something with him.

Narrator 2: I roll faster, harder.

Violet: Eddie doesn't count. He's a boy. Besides, you don't like doing some of the stuff we do.

Narrator 3: We got the crusts in the pans and the tops rolled out. The windows darken as we work.

Lottie: Maybe there's stuff I like to do that you don't like to do.

Narrator 3: She pinches around the crust so the top and bottom'll stay together.

Lottie: I'm just saying that you have other friends and I don't get mad about it.

Narrator 3: It's true. She don't ever get mad when I'm out with Eddie. But like I said, Eddie's a boy. Melissa's trying to get my spot. I try to get the madness out of my face. It's still in my heart, but I don't want Lottie to know that. I just want everything to be like it always is. I grab the apples and a knife and start cutting.

Violet: I don't see what's so interesting about *Paris Heights*.

Narrator 1: Lottie laughs and grabs an apple.

Lottie: You've never even seen it.

Narrator 2: I am beginning to simmer. She knows Momma don't allow me to watch programs like that. I use my knife like an ax. *Chop. Chop. Chop.* I'm done cutting apples. As we mix the apples with sugar and spices, a long train of thunder rumbles by.

Lottie: I wonder if we'll have time to bake these pies.

Violet: Plenty of time. That thunder is far away.

Narrator 3: Then it booms again.

Lottie: I don't know. Sounds like it's getting louder to me.

Narrator 2: Thunder drums in the clouds again. Irritation crosses over me. I know what she's getting at.

Violet: You just want to hurry up and go to Melissa's.

Lottie: No, I don't. I just don't know if there's time for these pies to bake before the storm starts.

Violet: You can't tell when a storm's going to hit? Well, I can tell you. It ain't hitting now, so these pies are going in.

Narrator 2: I grab the pies, open the oven, and slide them in. I slam the oven shut. *Paris Heights* will have to wait

Narrator 3: A soft light flashes inside the clouds. *One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three*—crack!

Lottie: I think we should turn everything off.

Violet: No! That storm is three miles away.

Narrator 3: A bright strike flashes through the back windows and I forget to count.

Lottie: That's it. I'm turning everything off.

Narrator 1: Lottie frowns at me and stomps over to the box fan. She twists the knob, crosses her arms, and looks at me.

Narrator 2: Static rushes across my scalp and down my arms. All my hairs stand up. I look at Lottie in slow motion and my mouth starts to form her name. then light races down the kitchen wall and flares out the oven and at the same time—BOOM!—a bomb explodes. My ears are deafened. My heart hammers against my chest. I start crying.

Narrator 3: A fire is burning inside the oven. The smoke detectors shriek and Lottie's screaming and I'm screaming too 'cause I don't know what to do—Lord, help me—and then I'm getting up, I'm grabbing Lottie, and we stumble out of there and cross the yard, slipping and falling through the rain till we climb my steps and fall into my house. We hug each other and cry.

Narrator 1: Then I remember learning 9-1-1 in school. I let go of her and run to the phone.

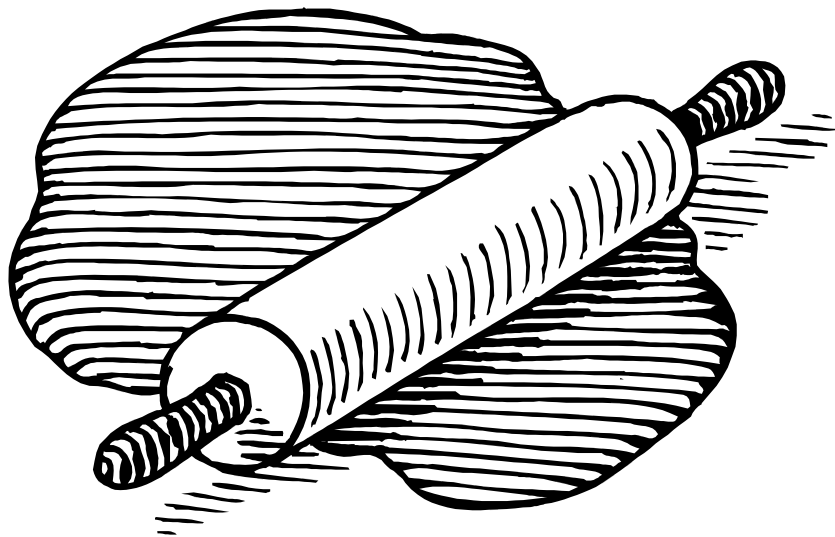
9-1-1 Lady: What's your emergency?

Narrator 1: I sob into the phone.

9-1-1 Lady: Take a breath and speak clearly. What's your emergency?

Narrator 1: I take one big breath.

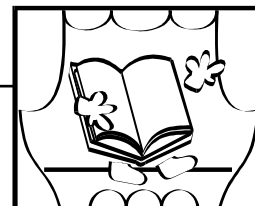
Violet: My best friend's house just got struck by lightning.



Readers' Theater

Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things

by Lenore Look



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

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Characters: Narrator 1 Narrator 2 Narrator 3 Narrator 4 Alvin Calvin

Narrator 1: It was the last day of summer vacation and Calvin and I were in our room getting ready for the first day of school. He was going into the fourth grade and I was heading into second. Calvin was on the computer and I was sitting on my bed going over my PDK—Personal Disaster Kit.

Narrator 2: When you're afraid of everything, it's very important to carry a PDK. It's like a PFD, a Personal Flotation Device, only heavier and with more parts. A PDK begins with the right box. It must not be too big, like a shoe box, or too small, like a Band-Aid tin. A handle on it is good, but a lock is bad on account of it will keep you out when you need to get in. I use a waterproof fly box with compartments, which is just perfect.

Narrator 3: You can put anything in a PDK, but mostly it should be things that are useful in a disaster, such as:
A whistle. If I lose my voice, a whistle is very handy.
A three-leaf clover (because I couldn't find a four-leaf one).
Garlic. For fending off vampires and teachers.
Dental floss. Handy for trapping, wrapping, tying and hanging things (out of my sister's reach).
Band-Aids.
A magnifying glass. For general curiosity, but can also be used to start a fire.
A mirror. For sending signals, in case you can't start a fire.
A bandana. For preventing smoke inhalation, in case you start the above fire, but can also be used as a sling or a tourniquet.
A scary mask. For keeping girls away.
Escape routes.

Narrator 4: The problem with PDKs, as everyone knows, is that they need to be updated every year on account of you never know what you'll need in the next grade. Now that I could read and write without help, I was adding something I'd needed for a long time—emergency plans.

Narrator 1: I read them aloud to Calvin:

Alvin: How to Survive a Fire in the School Cafeteria.
1. Lie down. The freshest air is near the floor
2. Crawl away from the flames.
3. Run.

Narrator 1: And ...

Alvin: How to Meet Your New Teacher.
1. Put on a scary mask.
2. Rub on garlic.
3. Stay back 100 feet.

Narrator 1: And ...

Alvin: How to Survive Show and Tell.
1. Show something spectacular.
2. Hold it high.
3. Turn it around.
4. Listen to the oohs and ahhs.
5. Take a bow.

Narrator 1: When I finished reading, I was very impressed with my plans.

Narrator 2: But Calvin was not.

Calvin: That's stupid.

Narrator 2: Calvin is not supposed to use the s-word, it is bad.

Alvin: You can't say that.

Calvin: Okay, it's *dumb*. You're supposed to look your teacher in the eye, shake her hand and smile.

Alvin: But that's harder than putting on a scary mask.

Narrator 3: I am not too good at anything ever since I started school, but Calvin is good at everything.

Alvin: I need your help to finish my PDK.

Calvin: I've already helped you.

Alvin: I need more help. I need emergency plans for making friends. None of the boys at school will play with me.

Calvin: That's because you're weird.

Alvin: I'm not weird. I have so-so performance anxiety disorder.

Narrator 3: It is true. I see a therapist for it.

Calvin: That's weird.

Alvin: *You're* weird.

Calvin: Okay. The first step in making friends is, don't talk so much. You need to be quiet. That is the first rule of being a good friend.

Alvin: Oh. But I can't talk in school! That's the problem!

Narrator 4: Calvin glared at me.

Calvin: Maybe if you didn't use up all your words at home, you'd have some to use at school.

Narrator 2: I glared back.

Calvin: Okay. If I tell you, will you stop bothering me?

Alvin: Okay.

Calvin: Ready? You better write fast.

Narrator 1: So I did.

Narrator 2: I read it twice.

Narrator 3: Then I read it again.

Narrator 4: Calvin's Rules for Making Friends

1. Say hello.
2. Just say hello.
3. Trade baseball cards.
4. Trade more baseball cards.
5. Just trade baseball cards.

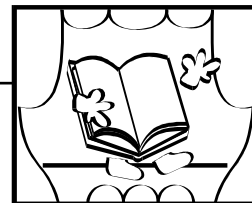
Narrator 1: It wasn't perfect, but I put it into my PDK and stopped bothering Calvin.



Readers' Theater

The Small Adventure of Dopeye and Elvis

by Barbara O'Connor



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

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Characters: Narrator 1 Narrator 2 Narrator 3 Narrator 4 Popeye Elvis

Narrator 1: Popeye and Elvis sat on the mossy bank beside the creek.

Narrator 2: The birds chirped above them.

Narrator 3: The water gurgled below them.

Narrator 4: Boo snored beside them.

Narrator 1: And then ...

Narrator 2: a small adventure came floating down the creek.

Narrator 3: Elvis jumped up.

Elvis: What's that?

Narrator 4: Popeye leaned forward so he could get a better look at whatever it was floating toward them.

Narrator 1: A tiny boat!

Narrator 2: A yellow and brown and blue boat that dipped and bobbed as it made its way down the creek, bumping into rotten leaves that floated on the water and gliding smoothly over tiny waterfalls that flowed over the slippery rocks.

Narrator 3: Popeye felt a swirl of excitement as the boat got closer.

Narrator 4: A boat!

Narrator 1: Popeye had played in this creek about a bajillion times and had never, not once, seen a boat.

Narrator 2: Elvis didn't even take his sneakers off before stepping down into the water to scoop it up. Then he climbed back onto the sloping creek bank, holding the little boat out in the palm of his hand.

Narrator 3: Popeye peered at it with his good eye.

Popeye: A Yoo-hoo box!

Narrator 4: The boat was made out of a waxy cardboard Yoo-hoo chocolate drink box. Someone had made the box into a perfect boat, without a single piece of tape or staples to hold it together.

Popeye: I wonder where it came from.

Narrator 1: Elvis looked up the creek.

Elvis: Where does this creek start?

Popeye: I've been a pretty far ways up there, but I've never been to the end.

Elvis: How far'd you go?

Popeye: Not that far, I don't reckon.

Narrator 2: Popeye didn't want to tell Elvis that Velma wouldn't allow him to go farther than hollering distance from home.

Narrator 3: Elvis peered inside the boat.

Elvis: Hey! There's something in here!

Narrator 4: He pulled out a tiny square of folded paper.

Narrator 1: Popeye hopped from foot to foot while he watched Elvis unfold the paper.

Narrator 2: Once.

Narrator 3: Twice.

Narrator 4: Three times.

Narrator 1: Then he peered over Elvis's shoulder and both boys read out loud together:

Elvis and

Popeye: Yoo-hoo! Ha! Ha!

Narrator 2: Elvis looked at Popeye and Popeye looked at Elvis.

Elvis: What the heck kind of dang ignoramus talking is that?

Narrator 3: But Popeye's heart was thumping in his chest, and he felt an odd surge of love for the person who had written the note and sent it down the creek in that perfect little boat.

Narrator 4: Well, maybe not love.

Narrator 1: But *like*.

Narrator 2: Popeye *liked* the person who had sent the note down the creek in the Yoo-hoo box.

Narrator 3: He studied the note in Elvis's hand. The words were scrawled in big, sloppy letters with a blue colored pencil.

Popeye: Serendipity.

Narrator 4: Elvis's eyebrows squeezed together, and he frowned at Popeye.

Elvis: What are you talking about?

Popeye: Serendipity. It's like when something good happens all of a sudden when you're not expecting it.

Elvis: Yeah.

Narrator 1: They both leaned over and looked up the creek.

Narrator 2: Popeye tried to imagine who in the world had sent that little Yoo-hoo boat down the creek.

Narrator 3: Elvis brushed his hair out of his face and looked at Popeye with narrowed, serious eyes.

Elvis: We got to find out who sent this boat.

Narrator 4: Popeye nodded solemnly.

Elvis: Let's hide it.

Narrator 1: The boys raked up a pile of rotten leaves with their hands. Elvis placed the boat on the ground beneath a crooked oak tree and they pushed the leaves over it, covering it completely.

Elvis: We got to keep this a secret from Calvin and them.

Narrator 2: A little tingle of excitement ran through Popeye. He and Elvis had a *secret!*

Narrator 3: As they made their way back down the path through the woods toward the field, Popeye called out,

Popeye: Hey, Elvis, is this our small adventure?

Narrator 4: But Elvis just kept on walking in that way of his—head down, fists jammed in his pockets. Taciturn.

Narrator 1: So Popeye turned to Boo and whispered,

Popeye: Boo, I think this might be our small adventure.

