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A one-act dramatic play

Oinkink

by Idries Shah



KashfisChildren.org

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CAST

(Narrators 1-3 can be read by more than three students so that many will get a chance to perform.)

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

The Man

The Voice from the Bottle

Tricksters

Townspeople

Grey Geese (some of the townspeople can transform to geese by putting on masks, makeup & costumes)

The Script

(The man is sitting in a chair reading a large book on animals, with some coins in his pocket.)

Narrator 1: Once there was a man who wanted nothing more than to transform himself into a different animal.

Narrator 2: Day after day ... year after year ... and decade after decade passed.

Narrator 3: And during this time, he never stopped wondering how he might achieve his aim.

Narrator 1: He wanted to see what other creatures could see.

Narrator 2: He wanted to know what other creatures knew.

Narrator 3: He wanted to understand what other creatures understood.

(Enter several Tricksters with charms and talismans.)

Narrator 1: Sometimes tricksters sold him charms and talismans, claiming that they would help him make such a transformation.

Narrator 2: Sometimes, they took his money and made him perform all sorts of peculiar rituals.

(The Tricksters take the man's coins. Have the actor to think of ways to show silly rituals, such as hopping up and down, wearing socks on his head, etc. Let the actor use his/her own ideas.)

(Enter a few townspeople, who start to laugh silently pointing at the man.)

Narrator 3: Sometimes, people laughed at him, calling him a madman or a fool.

Narrator 1: But mostly, people sent him on his way, saying his mission was impossible.

Narrator 2: But he refused to give up his dreams. He read every book he could find in case it held the secret.

(The man looks through several books.)

Narrator 3: He searched for teachers far and wide. *(The man darts from one townspeople to another.)*

Narrator 1: He even resorted to magic. Nothing worked. He remained a normal man.

(The man waves a magic wand, while the Tricksters and Townspeople leave laughing silently.)

Narrator 2: Then one day, deep in thought, he was walking along a narrow street when he came across a bottle lying on the ground. Something made him pick it up and put it in his pocket.

Narrator 3: When he got home he saw that there was a label on the bottle, which said:

The Voice from the Bottle: Open this bottle, place three drops on your tongue and make your wish. Your dreams will come true.

Narrator 1: Here was his chance at last! With trembling fingers, the man opened the bottle, measured three drops on to a spoon and put the liquid on to his tongue.

Narrator 2: Now, it so happened that the bottle was indeed full of magic potion, and what is more, the potion could speak. The potion's voice boomed out:

The Voice from the Bottle: What is your wish?

Narrator 3: And without another thought he answered,

The Man: I wish to become another kind of creature.

Narrator 1: Looking up into the sky he saw some geese flying south on their winter migration.

(Several geese start to circle around.)

Narrator 1 (continues): And he added:

The Man: I want to become a giant grey goose.

Narrator 2: The voice immediately answered:

The Voice from the Bottle: Repeat the word: OINK and you will become the finest goose that ever lived. When you want to change back again, or become something else, say the word INK.

(The man says "OINK"! And he puts on the grey goose mask, if available.)

Narrator 3: No sooner had the man said the word OINK than he found that he had indeed been transformed into a very large and very beautiful grey goose.

Narrator 1: What was more, he felt wonderful. He knew everything that a goose would know.

Narrator 2: And yet wonder of wonders, he could also still think like a man. He thought:

The Man: This is quite amazing. Now I have tried being a goose, I can change back to human form and become something completely different. What shall I become next? Perhaps I'll change into a wise man.

Narrator 3: With a shiver of excitement, he remembered he needed to say INK to change himself back to human form. But try as he might, every INK he attempted to utter came out as...

The Man: OINK!

Narrator 1: Because OINK is the sound that grey geese make. And there is no goose, grey or otherwise, that can make the sound INK.

Narrator 2: And so the man who became a grey goose had to remain a grey goose...

Narrator 3: trying to say INK but never managing to say more than OINK. And needless to say,

All the Narrators: ... he never got the chance to become a wise man.

The End

TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THEATER

Teachers may want to use this script as an excellent way to allow students to learn the story, while promoting reading fluency. Students learn to read with expression and to practice such attributes of fluency as pausing, inflection and intonation. Reading the scripts aloud to students promote listening skills as they follow along silently and listen for spoken cues. Having students take on character roles helps them understand literary elements, such as motivation and characterization. The scripts provide a great opportunity for student cooperation, and they are an enjoyable way to teach reading fluency.

1. Using the Script

- a. Use the script as you would any reading material and make sure students are familiar with any new words. Your students should be familiar with the story and the vocabulary before they engage in this activity.
- b. Tell students that different combinations of readers will take turns reading the “play.”
- c. Assign the first set of readers and give them time to practice their roles and feel confident. Encourage them to read with expression.
- d. When the first readers are ready, you may want to have them stand where all students can see them. They may also read from their seats. Coach the readers to look up occasionally from their scripts and to make eye contact with the audience and other characters/readers as they read their lines.
- e. Have other sets of readers take turns at reading the script.
- f. If you have the resources, make a copy of the two-page script for each of the characters in the cast and mark the parts for that character. If this is not possible, have the student actors read their lines from the books, without marking, of course.

RETELL OPTION: Children might also use this script as a guide to retell the story in their own words or act out the story in their own way.

2. Staging the Play

- a. When students have become familiar with the script from several readings, you may want to create a full stage performance with costumes, props, and an audience of students, parents, and teachers. It is always a good idea to allow more rehearsal time when applying extra touches such as costumes or movement.
- b. In planning a performance, encourage students to think about the expressions and movements characters might make. For example, have students think about how people look and move when they are mad, happy, angry, or nervous.
- c. Have students practice facial expressions. If the character is the man, have students practice looking impatient because he doesn't want to wait for better ideas. You might have a mirror around for the students to practice making their “faces.”
- d. Encourage them to create a “voice” for their character.
- e. Encourage students to act creatively (even to “ham it up”) with the script to increase the entertainment value of the performance, keeping in mind that the most important purpose of this script is to give students a chance to build their reading fluency.
- f. Establish a “stage” area in the classroom, moving and using tables, desks, and chairs and using the floor as needed and as safety allows.
- g. Use these simple tips to keep the performance smooth and entertaining:
 - ❖ Make sure readers are positioned within view of all members of the audience. It is important that the audience can hear lines and see movements and expressions. If you choose to place all the readers in

front of the audience at once, it is helpful to have them stand in a semicircle so that each reader can be seen by all the other readers and by the audience.

- ❖ Suggest where readers should stand so that they do not block the audience's view of other readers.
- ❖ Remind students that they should be looking at, talking to, and reacting to the other readers/characters. However, the narrator may face and speak to the audience.
- ❖ As an alternative to having all the readers stand together in the performance area, you may want to direct the performance by having readers enter and exit off to the side before and after delivering their lines. Having readers move in and out of the performance area will require more rehearsal time.

3. Ideas for Props

(Props are optional and can all be constructed out of cardboard, construction paper, feathers, ribbons, buttons, and other common items.)

1. **Magic Bottle.** Have the students decorate a large plastic bottle with magic signs and symbols. Place a large label on the bottle that reads: "Open this bottle, place three drops on your tongue and make your wish. Your dreams will come true.")
2. **A large book about animals & birds,** plus several other books in a stack.
3. **Coins,** use buttons to represent coins, or have the students draw and cut out coins.
4. **Several Talismans.** Have the students discuss what is meant by "talisman" and have them design several to use in the play. For instance, pictures of insects, birds, snakes, plants and flowers can have special magical meaning in some ancient lore.
5. **Magic Wand,** for The to pretend to use.
6. **A spoon** (or a cutout of a spoon).
7. **Mask & Costumes** (for The man and other characters and for the geese). Students can construct the masks using paper plates, construction paper, paper drinking cups for goose bills, and use theatrical makeup to paint their faces to be geese. They can also draw, cut out and tape paper "feathers" onto clothing to make wings and tails. (See more ideas below in EXTRAS: Costumes & Props.)

Extras: Costumes and Props

The face and head command the most attention, so a hat, mask, or makeup can work as an entire costume. Make sure that students obtain permission before borrowing items from other people. It's best not to let them cut, paint, or modify any clothing items unless you bring in articles of clothing specifically for that purpose.

Students will have their scripts in hand while performing. So, when choosing props, keep in mind that objects which require two hands may not be practical. Encourage students to use their imagination as they transform everyday objects into props.

For Masks: Have students draw a mask large enough to cover their faces, yet has eyeholes for viewing. Geese, for instance, may only need a beak for a mask. The beak can be made by rolling a sheet of construction paper into a cone shape and taping, stapling or gluing the cone shape together. Secure strings on each side of the "beak" so the students can tie them onto their face. Or the students can construct a goose mask using a paper plate and a paper cup (for the beak). They can draw and cut out "feathers" from construction paper and tape them onto clothing to represent wings. Again, encourage students to use their imagination for the masks and other costumes.



Art Materials: water (washable) paints, paint brushes, foam brushes, sponges, plastic cups, paint cups & trays, art paper roll, pencils, markers, glue, scissors, chalk, rulers, string or ribbon, stencils of various shapes or objects (flowers, etc.), finger paints, construction paper or other heavy paper

Students may wish to use their art and other drawings from previous lessons.

Making a Mural: Allow enough space in the room for several students to work at once on the large art roll (the mural can be as long as your “staging” area) that is taped to the wall (or laid out on the floor). Or, you may want to section off parts of the larger roll of art paper for several students or groups to work on at once. Or, cut sections of the paper roll for each student or group of students to work with at their desks or on the floor.

Depending on your staging space, you may want to do several murals: One for the beginning scenes, one for the middle scenes, and one for the ending scenes. Allowing time during the performances for changing scenes is another possibility, but this takes coordination and rehearsal, so make sure your rehearsals include this activity.

THIS WILL TAKE MORE THAN ONE DAY TO COMPLETE. YOU MAY WISH TO DECIDE WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO KEEP THE MURAL SO THAT IT REMAINS INTACT AND CAN DRY BETWEEN CLASSES.

Here are some suggestions on making a mural:

1. Discuss some possible ideas for the mural they will be creating. Here are some suggested ideas:

The illustrations in the book include many designs and illustrations of animals, people, streets, buildings and objects; perhaps the students want to emphasize these elements in the mural. They may want to use their own drawings for ideas for scenes of the story.

The elements of the story take place in several locations. Perhaps the students want to create a mural that replicates all of the places in which the story occurs.

2. You may want to organize students into three groups: one group for scenes or designs from the first part of the story; one for the middle part; and one for the ending of the story. Have the students or group of students brainstorm ideas for a mural.

3. Once they have decided on the idea for the mural, students or groups of students can lightly sketch their designs onto drawing paper at their desks. Using these sketches, ask student or group to show their designs to the class and have the class discuss the elements and where to add them to the mural. Let this be a cooperative effort. Make sure that all students have a part in the design of the mural, whether it’s sketching, painting, planning.

4. Allow 4-6 students at a time to take turns coming to the mural to sketch the design and later to paint. Older students may direct younger students.

5. Some painting can be done with sponges, others with paint brushes. Let the students make these choices. One idea using sponges is having students dip them into one or more colors of paint and press them onto the paper, creating a different texture than brushstrokes. Students may want to create “stencils” by drawing a design (such as a flower) on thick paper, cutting out the design, and use sponges to stencil the design onto the mural.

6. Ten minutes before class ends, have students help with the clean-up.

Clean-Up

1. Assign students to wash brushes and sponges.

2. Assign students to collect the newsprint or plastic sheeting (re-use if possible).

3. Assign students to cover paints, rinse out plastic cups or trays.

4. Store mural or individual pieces of it so that it will dry without disturbing other classroom activities.

Other Ideas for Activities

Some suggestions for making the set:

Architecture: Have the students look at the architecture depicted in the illustrations to get ideas for their murals.

Making Magic Bottles: Students may want to make up several “magic” bottles with various labels on what magic may be inside. Have them use the story to get ideas. Then have the students take turns on explaining their bottle to the classroom.

Bird (Geese) Research: Have the students do research on the habitat, migratory patterns and the life of grey geese. Have them guess what a goose may sound like. If possible, replay an actual goose “honk” downloaded from the internet. (This recording can also be used in the play as a background sound.)

Follow-Up

There will be opportunities to recall and use the story with your students. For example, whenever you notice a student being impatient or trying to “run before he/she can walk,” remind him/her about the man in *Oinkink* who didn’t take the time to think about the consequences of his actions. For instance, you may want to say:

“When I heard you just now, it reminded me of the story we read called *Oinkink*. Can you guess why I thought that?”

“Do you remember the story of the man who impatiently made a magic wish to be a goose without thinking about reasons it might not be such a good idea? Do you think that kind of impatience happened in this situation right now? Why do you think so?”

Go back to the story from time to time, weeks or months later, to see if your students can remember and retell the story in their own words or act out the story in their own way. You and your students may find more meanings, concepts and insights from it as time goes on. Remember, these stories can be enjoyed and be useful for people of all ages.