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A one-act dramatic play

The Spoiled Boy With the Terribly Dry Throat

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 Boy

The Doctor

Medical Students

The Cook

Servants

The Script

(The Boy is sitting up in his "bed" wearing a sleeping mask and holding his hand to his throat.)

Narrator 1: There was once an extremely spoiled boy who woke up one morning feeling that his throat was terribly dry. He didn't know why his throat was so parched.

Narrator 2: All he knew was that it felt as though he had swallowed all of the sand from all the deserts of the entire world.

The Boy: Help!

Narrator 3: ...he yelled, tearing off the silken sleeping mask that was shielding his delicate eyes from the sun's morning rays.

The Boy: Something awful has happened during the night! And now I have this chronic dryness in my mouth!

(Enter several Servants looking concerned about their master.)

Narrator 1: Servants scattered in panic, desperate to find something to alleviate their young master's suffering.

(Servants run around, searching, finding and rejecting all sorts of possible "remedies.")

Narrator 2: Back they came with oil.

(The Boy drinks it and makes a face to indicate it didn't taste good, etc.)

Narrator 2 (continues): And sure enough, when the boy drank it, his throat didn't feel dry any more. But he knew that something still wasn't right.

Narrator 3: The oil had produced a strange and unpleasant sensation in his mouth. He lisped:

The Boy: My tongue feels slippery. Something tastes dreadful.

Narrator 1: In bustled the doctor, accompanied by a number of medical students who were keen to observe such an unusual and challenging case.

Narrator 2: Conscious of the gravity of the situation and the need to command center stage, the doctor drew himself up to his full height. With a flourish, he prescribed pickles and vinegar, which his unfortunate young patient obediently forced down.

Narrator 3: Soon the boy's mysterious symptoms included watering eyes and a crippling stomachache.

(The Boy rubs his eyes and holds his stomach with a painful expression.)

Narrator 1: The medic, and the medical students, marveled at the fascinating ability the boy's ailment had to evolve in such a short space of time.

The Boy: I think I must be thirsty,

Narrator 2: ...rasped the boy, whose suffering had encouraged him to think. Barked the doctor:

The Doctor: Nonsense! Since when did thirst cause the throat to become slippery, the eyes to water or the stomach to burn?

Narrator 3: And he sent the servants to fetch rosewater, sugar syrups and cologne to sooth the child.

Narrator 1: The boy drank it all but felt no better, and all these complicated liquids did terrible things to his digestion.

(The Cook enters carrying sugar syrup.)

Narrator 2: Seeing him doubled over on the floor, the cook, who happened to be delivering additional sugar syrup, summoned up enough courage to comment, and said:

The Cook: I've raised several children of my own, and it seems to me that the child simply needs a glass of water.

Narrator 3: Scornfully, the servants and the doctor shooed her from the room, muttering that her children might need a simple solution, but a boy of the young master's standing needed something far superior to common water.

Narrator 1: Wearing by his ordeal, the boy was equally dismissive of the cook. He snapped:

The Boy: I feel quite insulted that you would compare me to your children, Cook. Surely it is obvious that I am the owner of a far more complicated digestion than that of a normal child. In fact, I am quite affronted that Cook could think that a complex case such as mine might be solved by anything as unimaginative as mere water.

Narrator 2: And that is how the boy turned away the one person sensible enough to cure him of the terrible burning in his throat. And how the household labeled the cook as a fool.

Narrator 3: And how the doctor became famous. And how the unfortunate boy went through his entire life...

All the Narrators: suffering from an incurably dry throat.

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 Boy, have students practice looking concerned because of the strange feeling in his throat. 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, pieces of cloth, and other common items.)

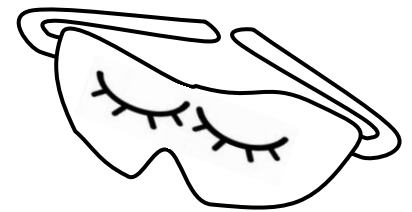
1. **“Bed”:** Have the students “construct” a bed using a chair arranged in front of a mural painted as a bedroom.
2. **Sleeping Mask:** Use a scarf or a piece of cloth large enough to cover the eyes, or construct a paper sleeping mask using construction paper. (See **Extras: Costumes & Props** below for more ideas.)
3. **Oil:** Have students decorate a plastic bottle to look like a bottle of oil, or draw and cut out a bottle from cardboard. (See **Extras: Costumes & Props** below for more ideas.)
4. **Spoons** (or cutouts of spoons)
5. **Jars/Bottles for Pickles, Vinegar, Rosewater, Sugar Syrups, Cologne:** Use the activities listed below on making these props.
6. **Glass (or Bottle) of Water:** Use plastic glass or bottles, or draw and cut out a glass of water from cardboard. (*Hint:* Do not use real water or liquids on stage because of spillage. Have the students use their imagination on representing these liquids.)

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 Sleeping Mask: Students can use a piece of cloth which can be tied around the eyes. Drawing a pair of sleeping eyes on the mask would be an idea. Or have a few students draw and cut out a mask using construction paper. They can cut 2 strips of construction paper for the band to go around the head, and staple, tape or glue these strips to fit.



For Bottles and Jars of Oil & Other Liquids: Have several size plastic bottles and jars, and at least one plastic cup. The students can draw and cut out “stickers” for the oil, rosewater, syrups, vinegar, cologne. Glue or tape these stickers onto the bottles. Or, have students draw several bottles and jars on cardboard and cut them out. The students then can decorate these cut-outs with stickers. They can color a plastic cup to represent a glass of water for the Cook’s scene. (*Hint.* Store the decorated plastic and cardboard bottles where the students can use the props at any time they wish to “retell” the story.)

Art Materials: water (washable) paints, paint brushes, foam brushes, sponges, plastic cups, plastic bottles and jars, paint cups & trays, art paper roll, pencils, markers, glue, scissors, chalk, rulers, 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 rooms, people, furniture, 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 mostly in the Boy’s bedroom, yet other areas, such as the Doctor’s office, can be depicted. 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 bottle) 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/Furniture: Have the students look at the architecture, furniture and other elements, such as windows, doors, columns, beds, medical equipment, which are depicted in the illustrations to get ideas for their murals.

Costumes: Students may want to make up several costumes using items of clothing that are specifically designated for this use. Have them discuss the dress as depicted in the story, by explaining much of the clothing is those worn by people from Afghanistan and other Central Asian areas. These include items such as hajibs and turbans (head coverings) and kaffiyehs (large scarves) and decorated tunics. Then have the students make up the costumes for their parts in the play. They can take turns explaining them to the classroom.

Follow-Up

There will be opportunities to recall and use the story with your students. For example, whenever you notice a student not heeding your advice, or trying to “run before he/she can walk,” remind him/her about the Boy and other characters in *The Spoiled Boy With the Terribly Dry Throat* who didn’t understand the basis for good advice. You may want to say:

“When I heard you just now, it reminded me of the story we read called *The Spoiled Boy With the Terribly Dry Throat*. Can you guess why I thought that?”

“Do you remember the story of the thirsty Boy and others in the story who refused to listen to a more experienced person’s advice? Do you think that kind of reluctance 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.