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Readers' Theatre

A Resource Handbook



Multi-Cultural Folktales



Folktales from
Asia
Africa
Mexico
Europe
Southeast Asia
America



Twenty three
summaries
of folktales
to be adapted to
Readers' Theatre
format
by teachers
and students
with a
how-to-do-it
guide.



Six ready-to-use
Readers' Theatre
plays

Stevens & Shea Publishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 794, Stockton, CA 95201

This resource guide is about two things: Readers' Theatre, and folktales from a variety of cultures. Readers' Theatre provides teachers with an important tool for involving students in writing and oral reading. Folktales offer a rich source of materials for multi-cultural understanding and the teaching of values.

The guide is divided into two sections. The first provides some practical ideas for writing Readers' Theatre and teaching it in the classroom. It includes two overhead projector masters.

The second section contains 23 summaries of folktales which can be used by teachers and students to write their own Readers' Theatre versions of the stories. Six of these are already converted into Readers' Theatre format as examples of how this can be done. These are ready to duplicate and use in the classroom. Included are folktales from Europe, America, Africa, Mexico, Asia and Southeast Asia.

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ISBN: 0-89550-194-5

Stevens & Shea Publishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 794, Stockton, CA 95201
(209) 465-1880

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About Readers' Theatre

Here is a teaching strategy that can be used in nearly all subjects and grade levels. Readers' Theatre is simply the reading of a play aloud without action or staging.

The essential idea of Readers' Theatre is that situations are written into conversational form. Narrators' parts are used to set the time & place and to form transitions between scenes.

To perform the Readers' Theatre play, students might read in small groups around the room with each student having a part, or one group might read at the front of the class.

Advantages to Readers' Theatre

- it involves students as active learners, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.
- it teaches specific content in an efficient and effective manner.
- it develops skills such as reading, listening, speaking, posture, poise, and self-confidence.
- it provides a method of learning that appeals to a wide variety of students with different levels of interest and reading ability.
- it is easily prepared and managed by the teacher.

Rev. 7/97

Readers' Theatre Example

Chow Khok and his son had a young donkey. He wanted to sell the donkey at the market. The donkey was big and would sell for a lot of money. However, the market was far away. If they walked the donkey to market, it would lose weight and they could not sell it for as much money. They agreed to carry the donkey to market by tying its legs together and hanging it on a long pole which they would carry on their shoulders.

Narrator: A long time ago in Cambodia there was a poor farmer named Chow Khok and his son. They had a fine young donkey.

Chow: If we take this donkey to market and sell it, we can make a lot of money.

Son: The market is a long way from here, Papa. The donkey will be skinny by the time we reach the market and we will not make much money.

Chow: I have a plan. We will tie the donkey to a pole and carry it to market. It will be just as fat

☞ Identify scenes

- Each scene is an important action or point of conflict.

☞ Identify characters

- Who is in the play and who is in each scene?
- Add characters for more parts in the play.

☞ Identify motivation of each character

- What is each character's purpose in each scene?
- What is it they want to do?

☞ Use narrator to introduce (and conclude) scenes

- The narrator tells the situation in which the scene takes place.
- This includes telling where the scene takes place.
- Use more than one narrator if the narrator has many lines to speak.

☞ Write dialog

- Write as people would ordinarily talk.
- Limit the number of words a person says at one time. Keep each speaking part short.

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Africa (Pages 1-6)

What the Spider Knows (Page 1)

Anansi, the spider, learns how to use magic and a big nose to hunt but is not patient enough to learn everything he needs to know. Moral: Don't think you know everything.

The Stone with Whiskers (Page 2)

The spider tricks animals into his trap until a smart rabbit tricks the spider to fall into his own trap. Moral: People who use tricks on others will eventually be tricked themselves. Also: Patience is a virtue.

The Greedy Man and the Stranger (Page 3)

A stingy man refuses to share food with a stranger. The stranger gets even by using magic. Moral: Be generous and share.

Play: *The Greedy Man and the Stranger* (Pages 4-6) This play has ten parts.

America (Pages 7-12)

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John, a superhero, dies trying to beat a machine.

Johnny Appleseed (Page 9)

Johnny gives away apple seeds and lives close to nature.

Play: *Johnny Appleseed* (Pages 10-12)

This play has ten parts.

Asia (Pages 13-18)

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Juan Usong and the King – Philippines (Page 14)

Juan, a clever liar, tricks a king because he is greedy. Moral: Greed can bring grief.

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The First Monkey – Philippines (Page 16)

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Jack takes a chance and trades his mother's cow for some beans.

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Moral: If you lie, people will no longer believe you. Similar to "The Boy Who Cried Wolf."

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Moral: Don't let yourself be tricked.

The Tbal Kdoong – Cambodia (Page 37)

A widow is tricked by a scoundrel pretending to be a Buddhist monk. A tbal kdoong is a rice grinder. Moral: Don't let yourself be tricked.

A Father, Son and A Donkey – Cambodia (Page 38)

A father and son take a donkey to market to sell. On the way they encounter numerous critics. Moral: Follow your own good judgement and don't be influenced by others.

Play: ***A Father, Son and A Donkey*** (Pages 39-41)

The play has twelve parts.

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Viking Press, 1949

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University of Indiana Press, 1968



There was a great famine in the land. Everyone was hungry. Anansi, the spider, decided to travel to find food. He traveled for many days. One day he sat down beside a river. He heard a voice ask why he had come to this land. Anansi said he came in search of food. The voice told him to cross the river and then heard a noise – “Huha!” Instantly he was blown across the river and landed before a very tiny man sitting on a rock. Anansi was scared. The man had a very long nose.

The man said he was lonely and that no one ever came to visit him. He said everyone was afraid of his long nose. Anansi said he was hungry. The man said not to worry because he could hunt with his nose, and he would let Anansi see how he did it if Anansi would help him carry his nose back to his hut. Anansi grabbed the end of the nose and they went back to the man’s hut. The man told Anansi that he would have to learn to hunt by watching. The man fed Anansi and they went to sleep.

At midnight the man woke Anansi. He said they would go hunting. They saw a bush pig and the man made a noise – “Huha!” – through his nose and the pig fell dead. Later they saw some deer and the man did the same thing and the deer fell dead. They collected the animals and went back to the hut to cook them.

They ate for a week and Anansi wanted to go home. The old man said Anansi had not learned the secret of hunting. Anansi said he had learned enough. He knew that he had to say “Huha” through a big nose and hunt at midnight. The old man gave him some meat and Anansi went home.

At home, Anansi asked his wife and son to get some clay and he made a big, long nose like the old man’s. At midnight, he woke his son and said they were going hunting. He told his son to carry the end of the nose. They saw a bush rat. Anansi told his son he would try out the nose on the rat. He made the noise, “Huha.” The rat fell dead. They saw an antelope and again tried the nose. The antelope fell dead. Anansi was very proud of how his clay nose worked. The son saw a tree full of monkeys. Anansi said he would use his nose on them.

He made the noise, “Huha.” Nothing happened. The monkeys stared at him. He made the noise again. The monkeys jumped from the trees and landed on top of Anansi. They squashed him flat and broke his nose.

Later the old man came along and found Anansi. He told the son, who was sitting by his crushed father and crying, that Anansi had not learned enough. He still needed to learn that the nose did not work on monkeys.

Long ago there was a great famine. All of the animals were dying of hunger. Bra Spider got up one morning and went to see if his trap had caught anything. On the way he saw a stone with a beard. He knew about this kind of stone. He knew that if you said, "This stone has a beard", it would fall down on you and crush you. Bra Spider thought this would be a good way to feed his family.

Bra Spider went to see Bra Deer and invited him to come and look at his trap. He said that if there were anything in the trap, he would share it with the deer. When they approached the stone with whiskers the spider let the deer go first. The deer saw the stone and said, "Bra Spider, look! A stone with a beard." The stone fell over and killed the deer. The spider took the deer home and his wife and children were happy because they had food to eat.

The next day the spider and his family were hungry again. He pulled the same trick on Bra Antelope. The spider's family was happy. He did this every day for many days and his family was well fed.

One day he went to Bra Rabbit and told him the same thing. When they got to the stone he told the rabbit to go ahead of him, and that he would tell him which way to go. When the rabbit got to the stone he said nothing. Bra Spider said, "Bra Rabbit, don't you see..." The Rabbit said, "See what?" The spider said, "Don't you see the stone with a..." The Rabbit told him no and asked, "What does it have?" No matter how the Spider tried to get him to say "stone with a beard" the Rabbit wouldn't say it. The spider told him to say, "stone with a bea." And the Rabbit would say, "stone with a bea." The Spider told him to say, "stone with a bear", and the Rabbit repeated it exactly. Finally the Spider lost his temper and told the rabbit to say, "stone with a beard!"

When he said this, the stone fell over and killed the Spider.

One day a stranger visited the house of Bafu. Bafu was very stingy and did not like to share with anyone. The stranger said he had traveled a long way and was very hungry. He asked for something to eat. Bafu said he had no food to eat. The stranger knew that Bafu was not telling the truth and decided to come back when Bafu was eating.

The stranger returned just as Bafu and his wife sat down to dinner. Bafu told his wife to tell the stranger he had died. The stranger said that he was sorry and would help bury Bafu. Bafu pretended he was dead. The stranger dug a grave and put Bafu in it and left. Bafu called to his wife to dig him up before he suffocated.

Bafu told his wife he was really hungry and wanted dinner. The stranger returned. Bafu told his wife to hide the food by putting it in a bag he carried around his waist. He told the stranger that he had no food. The stranger knew he was not telling the truth because he could see the gravy dripping from the bag. Bafu told the stranger he would give food to no one, not even a genie.

The stranger went to a forest where genies lived. He told a genie that Bafu had insulted them by saying that he would never give food to a genie.

The genies decided to get even with Bafu. That night one of the genies snuck into Bafu's hut and stole his food. The next morning Bafu looked for his food and found it was gone. A genie in human form stopped by Bafu's hut. He told Bafu that he should go to the village chief and insist that he find the person who stole the food, or Bafu would throw himself down in front of the chief's hut and die.

Bafu asked the chief to find the person who stole the food. The chief told Bafu that he was stingy and the chief would not bother to look for the thief. Bafu threw himself down in front of the chief's hut and pretended to be dead. He pretended so well that people thought he was dead and told the chief. The chief ordered that he be buried.

Everyone in the village helped dig the grave. They buried him so deep that he could not dig his way out.

The Greedy Man and the Stranger (African) Play

First Narrator: One day a stranger came up to the house of Bafu.

Second Narrator: Bafu was a stingy man and did not like to share with anyone.

Wife: Bafu, would you like your dinner served now?

Stranger: I see you are about to have dinner. May I come in?

Bafu: There is no need to. The dinner is not ready, is it, Wife?

Wife: Oh no, Bafu, it is not ready.

Stranger: I am very hungry, Sir. I have traveled a long way without any food. I have had nothing to eat for three days.

Bafu: I am sorry to hear that, but this has been a bad year for me. I have had terrible losses. The weather was bad and I lost all of my crops. In fact, I have no grain. I'm just eating herbs and leaves myself.

Stranger: I'll eat anything you have to offer.

Bafu: I'm afraid I have nothing to offer.

First Narrator: The stranger left. He knew that Bafu had something extra to eat, and he decided he would come back later and surprise Bafu while he was eating.

Wife: Oh, Bafu, here comes the stranger again.

Bafu: Oh, no. He doesn't give up easily, does he?

Wife: What should we do? Dinner is ready.

Bafu: I'll hide. When he comes in, tell him that I have died.

Second Narrator: And that is what the wife did.

Wife: Oh, Sir, my husband Bafu has just died.

Stranger: That is too bad. I am sorry. I must help you bury him. I'll dig his grave, if you get me a shovel.

First Narrator: The wife got a shovel and the stranger buried Bafu.

Second Narrator: Then the stranger left.

Bafu: Quick, Wife, dig me out of here before I suffocate.

First Narrator: The wife dug Bafu out of his grave.

Bafu: Oooh! I nearly suffocated in there. Now I'm really hungry. Enough of these tricks. Will you serve me dinner now?

Wife: What if the stranger comes again?

Bafu: I don't care if he tries a hundred tricks. He's not going to get any of my dinner. Bring the food now.

The Greedy Man and the Stranger (African) Play

Second Narrator: So Bafu's wife served him, but just as she did, the stranger appeared at the door again.

Wife: Bafu, the stranger is here again.

Bafu: Quick, hide the dinner.

Wife: But where?

Bafu: Here, put it in this bag I carry around my waist.

First Narrator: The wife put the dinner into the bag.

Bafu: Ouch! It's so hot that it's burning my stomach.

Stranger: I see, Bafu, that you are not dead. Now you are pretending not to have any dinner, but I see it dripping out of the bag around your waist.

Bafu: I'll tell you the truth: no stranger ever eats at my house, not even a genie.

Stranger: I see. Now I understand why I was not welcome.

Second Narrator: The stranger left.

First Narrator: Then the stranger went straight to the forest of the genies. The genies did not like human beings at all.

First Genie: What do you want here, human person?

Stranger: Take no offense. I'm not here to bother you. But I know someone who has insulted you.

Second Genie: Who?

Stranger: Bafu, who lives down the road there.

Third Genie: What did he say?

Stranger: He said that no stranger will ever eat his food, not even a genie.

First Genie: He did! That cheapskate!

Second Genie: Imagine that! Not feeding a genie.

Third Genie: Oh, that makes me mad. We'll take care of him.

Stranger: So long.

Second Narrator: The next night one of the genies went to Bafu's house and stole all of his food.

First Narrator: When Bafu woke up he began to look for his food. He was getting angry. He met one of the genies who had changed into the shape of a human.

First Genie: You look upset, Sir. Can I help you?

Bafu: Last night someone stole all my food.

The Greedy Man and the Stranger (African) Play

First Genie: That's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that.

Bafu: There is no sign of who took it, or which way they went. I bet it was that stranger who was here the other day.

First Genie: I'll tell you what you should do.

Bafu: What should I do?

First Genie: Go see the chief. Tell him to find the person who stole your food, or you will throw yourself down in front of his house and die.

Bafu: That's a good idea.

Second Narrator: Bafu went to the chief's house.

Chief: Hello, Bafu.

Bafu: Chief, someone has stolen my food, and I want you to find out who it is.

Chief: Don't be as stupid as you are cheap, Bafu. I can't find out who stole your food.

Bafu: If you don't, I'll throw myself down and die.

First Narrator: So Bafu threw himself down in front of the chief's house and pretended he was dead.

Second Narrator: He pretended so well that everyone thought he was really dead.

First Genie: Hey, Chief, I think this man is dead out here.

Chief: I'll be darned! He threatened that he would die, but I never believed him. You know how Bafu was always lying about how he had no food to give anyone. He was a very stingy person.

Friend: What will we do with him?

Chief: I would like to feed him to the hyenas, but everyone deserves a decent burial. We will bury him.

First Narrator: All of the people in the village joined together to dig his grave. They buried him so deep that he could never dig his way out.

First Genie: Imagine that, saying that he wouldn't serve anyone, not even a genie.

Second Genie: I bet everyone is willing to share now.

Third Genie: I guess there are always some people who are not willing to share with others, even those who are needy.

Second Genie: They'd better watch it if we find out.

Third Genie: Yes. Heh, Heh, Heh.

The End

The Deceived Blind Men (Native American) Summary

Two blind men lived in a village on the edge of a lake. It was decided that the two men should live on the other side of the lake. The villagers thought that if the village were attacked the two men might easily be captured or killed.

The villagers took the men to the other side of the lake. They built a wigwam for the men. Inside the wigwam they placed a kettle and baskets of food. A rope was stretched from the wigwam to the lake so that the men could easily get water. The villagers promised to return to provide them with food.

The men divided the chores. On one day one would go to the lake and get water. The other would cook. The food that was cooked was divided equally between the two men. The men lived happily for two years.

One day two raccoons were walking along the edge of the lake when they found the rope. They followed the rope to the wigwam and looked in. The men were sleeping.

The men got up and said they were hungry. One of them started to get the water. The raccoons raced ahead and moved the rope from the edge of the lake. The blind man could not find the lake. He returned and said that the lake had dried up. He had found the rope tied to a bush.

The other man said that it could not be. A bush could not grow overnight. He followed the rope to the lake. The raccoons raced ahead of the man and moved the rope back to the lake. The man found the water and filled his bucket. He returned to the wigwam.

He told his friend the lake still had water. His friend wondered what had happened. The raccoons waited for the men to cook their food. The men cooked eight pieces of meat. Each took a piece.

The raccoons entered the wigwam and quietly took four pieces. One of the men reached for another piece of meat and found only two pieces remaining. He said to his friend that he must be very hungry because he had eaten more than his share. The other man said that he had only one piece and accused the other of eating more than his share.

The raccoons thought this was very funny. Each of the raccoons tapped the men on the face with their paws. Each of the men believed that the other and struck him. They began to fight.

The raccoons took the remaining pieces of meat. They began to laugh. The blind men heard the raccoons laughing and knew they had been tricked. The raccoons told them they should not find fault with each other so easily.

John Henry (American)

Summary

When John Henry was born his parents knew he was an exceptional child. He weighed 33 pounds and could talk. He was always hungry and ate huge amounts of food. He grew very fast.

When he was very young he used his father's five pound hammer as a toy to break rocks. His father worked on the railroad. He used sledgehammers to drive steel spikes to hold the rails down. Hammers were also used to drill holes in rock so that dynamite could be placed in them to blast tunnels through rock mountains. John Henry sang as he broke rocks. He sang:

If I die (WHAM!)
A railroad man, (WHAM!)
Go bury me (WHAM!)
Under the sand, (WHAM!)
With a pick and shovel (WHAM!)
At my head and feet (WHAM!)
And a twenty-pound hammer (WHAM!)
In my hand, (WHAM!)

John Henry told his father that he loved swinging the hammer and making the steel ring like a bell. He wanted to be a railroad man like his father. John Henry went to work for the railroad. He was the strongest and fastest man with a hammer anyone had ever seen. Actually he used two hammers, one in each hand. They weighed 20 pounds each.

One day a salesman came to see John's boss, Captain Tommy. The salesman said he had a steam drill that could drive steel faster than any human. Captain Tommy said that would be tough to do because John Henry was the best steel driving man in the world. The salesman suggested that they have a contest.

Captain Tommy asked John Henry if he was up to a nine-hour contest. The captain offered him a \$100 prize if John could out-drive the steam drill. John Henry said that he would not let any machine take his place.

The day of the contest a large crowd gathered to watch. John told his shaker, Li'l Billy, to pray because if John missed the steel rod with his two 20 pound hammers he would surely kill him. A shaker held the steel rod that the hammer drove into the rock. Captain Tommy began the contest when he dropped his hat.

John Henry quickly took the lead. The steam drill salesman was impressed. He said John Henry was mighty strong but he couldn't keep it up. John Henry did keep it up and kept singing his song.

The last hour of the contest, John quit singing and looked tired. Captain Tommy asked him how things were going. John said he would die before he would let that steam drill beat him. Finally, the contest was over and John collapsed to the ground. John beat the steam drill. The salesman was unhappy. John asked for some water. John's wife, Polly Ann, gave him some water. Captain Tommy was worried. John died in his wife's arms.

Johnny Appleseed was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He had an apple orchard. One day a traveler stopped by and asked to buy a sack of apples. He said that he hadn't seen apples like that for years. Johnny asked where he had been. He said out West and they didn't have apple trees. Johnny gave him a sack of apples. The man offered to pay for them but Johnny told him that he should save the seeds and plant them. Then he would have his own apple trees.

Johnny moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He started an apple orchard there. He wanted to save the seeds and plant them to grow more trees all over the country. He knew he could never save enough seeds by himself to do that. One day he found a man who was making apple cider. He asked him what he did with the seeds after crushing the apples for the juice. The man said he threw them away. Johnny asked him to save the seeds for him. The man asked what he was going to do with them. Johnny said he was going to give them away.

Johnny took a bag full of the small seeds and began walking. He gave a little bag of seeds to each person he met and asked them to plant the seeds. Johnny knew that apples were good food for people.

Johnny was very poor. His shirt was a big flour sack with holes cut in it for his arms. He wore a pot on top of his head. The pot kept the rain out and he used it to cook in. The people he met thought he was beggar – a crazy beggar by the way he was dressed. They always thought he wanted money for his seeds but he never took any.

Johnny did not have many friends. One day on his journey he found a wolf caught in a trap. The wolf growled and tried to bite Johnny. The wolf's leg was broken. Johnny released the wolf from the trap and put a splint on its leg. The leg healed and the wolf became Johnny's friend. It followed him wherever he went.

The wolf traveled with Johnny for many years. Then the old wolf began to grow blind. As long as the wolf was with Johnny, farmers wouldn't shoot it.

One day when Johnny was taking a nap the wolf got thirsty and went to a stream they had just crossed for some water. A farmer and his son saw the wolf. They shot it. The shot woke Johnny up and he rushed to the stream. He asked why they had shot the wolf. They said that wolves were wild animals and should be shot.

Johnny went on giving out seeds until one day he lay down to take a nap and didn't get up.

Johnny Appleseed (American)

Play

First Narrator: Many years ago in the city of Boston there lived a young man named Johnny.

Second Narrator: One day a traveller came by his house.

Traveller: I haven't seen apple trees like that for years.

Johnny: Where have you been?

Traveller: Out West. They don't have apple trees out there; just grass, wheat and cattle.

Johnny: That's too bad. Apples are really good food. They taste good, and they are good for you. The trees are beautiful, too.

Traveller: How about selling me a sack of them apples? Maybe they'll keep until I can take them back to my kids. They would really like them.

Johnny: Go ahead and help yourself.

Traveller: Thanks. What do I owe you?

Johnny: Nothing, but I'll tell you what you can do. When you eat the apples, save the seeds and plant them.

Traveller: That's a good idea. Then we will have our own apple trees.

First Narrator: Johnny knew that many people were moving to the West, and he thought they should have apple seeds to

take with them. Johnny decided to move to Pittsburgh.

Second Narrator: Johnny worked hard and bought some land. He planted an apple orchard, but he knew that he could never grow enough apples to provide all the seeds he would need.

Johnny: Hello there. I see that you are making some apple cider.

Farmer: Yep. Would you like some?

Johnny: Sure. Thanks. I was wondering what you did with the seeds after you made the cider.

Farmer: The seeds? We throw them out. They're not good for anything.

Johnny: It sure is good apple cider.

Farmer: Thanks. What do you want to know about the seeds for?

Johnny: I would like to have them.

Farmer: That sounds kinda crazy to me. The seeds aren't no good. You can't eat them.

Johnny: But you can plant them and grow more trees.

Farmer: So that's it. You're going to sell them.

Johnny: Nope. Going to give them away.

Farmer: Well, you can do what you want. The seeds ain't doing me any good. You can go ahead and take them if you want. Sounds crazy to me.

First Narrator: Johnny carefully dried the apple seeds and put them into bags. Then he started out walking.

Second Narrator: Johnny gave a little bag of seeds to each traveler he met. Since he never asked for any money, he was very poor.

Child: Look, Pa, a beggar is coming down the road.

Pa: He probably wants a handout. I'll have to chase him off. We have to be careful of these beggars. They'll steal you blind if you let them hang around.

Child: Look, Pa. He sure is dressed funny. He's wearing a flour sack for a shirt. He cut holes out for his head and arms.

Pa: I'll be danged. He sure is. What's that he's got on top of his head?

Child: It looks like a pot.

Pa: That's it all right. It's a pot. Looks kinda crazy.

Child: Why do you have a pot on your head?

Johnny: You see, I travel light. This pot keeps the rain off my head, and when I stop, it's something I can cook in.

Child: That's a good idea.

Johnny: I've got some seeds here for you – apple seeds. Wouldn't you like some apples, sonny?

Child: Sure!

Johnny: You plant these seeds here, and someday you'll have an apple tree.

Pa: We don't have any money to give you.

Johnny: Wouldn't take it if you did. I gotta be going now. Be sure to plant the seeds.

Child: Thanks!

Pa: That's the strangest thing I ever saw; giving away seeds.

First Narrator: Johnny kept walking and walking, so he didn't have too many human friends, but he had many friends among the animals in the woods. He learned to live with the animals.

Johnny: Well, I'll be darned. Here is a nice grey wolf.

Wolf: Grrrrrr.

Second Narrator: The wolf showed his teeth and growled.

Johnny: Now take it easy there, Wolf. Don't get all upset. Old Johnny means you no harm.

Johnny Appleseed (American)

Play

First Narrator: The wolf growled again and snapped at Johnny.

Johnny: Oh, I see. You're caught in a trap.

Second Narrator: Johnny pried open the trap. The wolf pulled its leg out and fell to the ground.

Johnny: It looks like you ain't going no place with that leg banged up the way it is. I'll have to make a splint for you.

First Narrator: Johnny bandaged the leg and the wolf stayed with him while its leg healed.

Second Narrator: The wolf followed Johnny wherever he went. They became good friends.

Johnny: Well, Wolf, it would be a mighty lonely world if I didn't have you along on my trips.

First Narrator: The two spent many years together. As the wolf grew old, its eyes became dim. The only way it could find its way was by following Johnny along the trail.

Johnny: It's a good thing that these farmers know you are my friend. Otherwise they would probably shoot you. I think I'll stop here and lay down for a nap. You stay close to me, now.

Second Narrator: While Johnny slept, the wolf became thirsty. Remembering a stream they had just crossed, the wolf returned for a drink.

Boy: Look, Pa, there's a wolf!

Father: I see it. Get my gun from the wagon.

Boy: Hurry, Pa, before it gets away.

Father: I got it in my sights.

First Narrator: The shot hurled the wolf into the air and it fell down in a heap.

Second Narrator: The shot woke Johnny up. Instantly he knew what had happened. He ran to the stream where he found the dead wolf.

Johnny: Why did you shoot my friend?

Father: Because it was a wolf.

Johnny: He didn't do no harm to you, did he?

Boy: Everybody knows wolves are dangerous.

Father: You must be crazy, old man. All wolves should be shot.

First Narrator: Old Johnny Appleseed went on giving out apple seeds until one day he lay down for a nap and didn't get up.

The End

Once upon a time there was a poor family of four – a man, his wife, their son and the man's old father. The old man was a burden to the family. He had to eat whatever food was left over and whatever old clothes came his way. The old man was often cold and hungry.

Sometimes the boy would feel sorry for his grandfather and share his own food with him. If his parents caught him, he was scolded and told that he must not waste good food.

The old man was unhappy about the way he was treated. He complained more and more. The man and his wife ignored his complaints. They just said to themselves that an old ox stumbles and an old man complains. The man and wife could not stand the old man any longer. They planned to get rid of him.

They planned to take him far away and leave him by a roadside. They hoped that someone would feel sorry for him and take care of him. The boy overheard his parents' plans. They told him that the old man would get better care. That night they brought in a large basket, called a doko, to carry him away in.

The man put his own father into the doko. The old man complained. The son reassured the old man that he would be taken to a place where he would receive good care. The old man was not fooled by this. He knew they were going to abandon him by a roadside. He reminded his son that he had taken care of him when he was growing up. The man paid no attention and lifted the doko onto his back.

The young boy watched silently. Then he told his father to take good care of the doko. His father asked why. The son said, "So we can use it when we have to throw you away. "

Juan was a famous liar. One day he was passing the king's palace and the king told him to tell a lie. Juan said that he was too busy to tell a lie; that he was on his way to the beach to fish. There were many fish to catch today and if the king sent his cook to the beach he would give him a fine fish. The king believed him and sent the cook to the beach. Juan was not there and there were no fish to catch. The king was very mad. The next time he saw Juan he told him never to set foot on the palace grounds again.

A few days later Juan made a sled to be drawn by a water buffalo. He put sand from the beach on the sled and drove it by the palace. The king saw him and reminded Juan of his warning. Juan said he wasn't on the palace grounds but was standing on the beach and the king couldn't do anything about it. The king ordered the palace guard to grab him, put him in a cage and take him to the beach and tomorrow, drown him in the ocean.

Juan was in the cage at the beach when a student wandered by. Juan said he would never marry a princess. The student asked what he was talking about. Juan told him the king wanted him to marry his only daughter and he refused. The king ordered him to say yes or be drowned and that he decided to be drowned. The student called Juan a fool and asked to take his place.

The next day the king's soldiers came to throw the cage into the ocean. The student shouted I will marry the king's daughter. The soldiers laughed and threw the cage into the ocean.

A few days later Juan went to the king's palace carrying a gold piece and a big fish. The king asked what had happened with him since he had been thrown into the ocean and drowned. Juan said that the cage had landed in the courtyard of the king's great grandfather and he was let out of the cage. His great grandfather gave him the gold piece and the fish to bring back to you. He said he wants to see you to give you his great treasure. The king asked how he could get the great treasure. Juan told him that all he had to do was to get into a cage and be dropped into the same spot in the ocean.

The king ordered his soldiers to put the king himself into a cage and drop him into the same spot in the ocean where they had dropped Juan. The soldiers thought this was very strange, but they always did what the king told them.

Of course, the king drowned.

Urashima Taro was a young fisherman. He fished every day to support his aged parents. One stormy day he went fishing. He fished all day and caught only three small fish. At night he drew his boat up on the beach and started home. He met three children on the way home who were poking at something on the beach with sticks. It was a small turtle with a shiny shell of five different colors.

Taro told the children to leave the turtle alone. The children beat the turtle even harder with their sticks. Taro offered the children the three small fish if they would let the turtle alone. The children took the fish and left.

Taro picked up the turtle and put it by the water. He told it to swim out into the ocean before the bad children came back. Taro went home.

The next day Taro went fishing again and caught nothing, but he decided to throw his line into the water one more time before he went ashore. This time he caught something heavy.

It was a beautiful girl. The girl spoke to him. She said that she was the turtle that he had saved from the beach the day before but in reality she was the daughter of the King of the Sea. She invited him to visit her father's palace underneath the ocean. With her was a huge turtle. She told Taro to hang on to the turtle.

They went to the palace. The king invited Taro to stay at the palace and marry his daughter. Taro forgot about his parents and decided to stay and marry the princess. He lived there for three years. One day the princess took him to a room in the palace.

The room had four windows, one on each side. One window showed spring, another summer, and another autumn. The fourth window showed winter and it showed the house his parents lived in. He became homesick. He told the princess he wanted to go home. She gave him a box to take with him. She said that if he kept the box they might be able to see each other again. She warned him to never open the box. The turtle took him back to his old village.

When Taro arrived in the village his house was gone. He did not recognize anyone. He asked someone what happened to the house of Urashima Taro. The person said that Urashima drowned at sea three hundred years ago.

Taro wandered back to the beach. He opened the box. Three columns of smoke came out of the box and he turned into a very, very old man.

Once there was a lazy boy named Juan. One day Juan's mother was beating cotton to remove the seeds. She told Juan to go to the garden and plant the seeds. She said they would make Juan a fine suit of clothes. Juan did not want to do anything that involved work. He asked his mother if he planted the seeds, would he get a suit of clothes. She said not right away. The seeds would have to grow into plants. He asked if he would get his suit after they had grown into plants. He thought if he asked enough questions his mother would get tired and plant the seeds herself.

Each time she told him what the next step was he would ask if he would get his suit afterwards. She would say no and describe the next step. It went like this:

The plants have to bloom first.

The plants must have pods.

We must take the cotton from the pods.

We must remove the seeds from the cotton.

I must spin the cotton into thread.

I must weave the thread into cloth on the loom.

I must cut the cloth.

I must sew the cloth.

I must wash the cloth.

I must starch the cloth.

I must iron the cloth.

Each time he asked if he were to get the suit. His mother kept reminding him to plant the seeds or he would never get his suit. Juan said it would take too long to get his suit and he would go out and play.

His mother became angry and threw the cotton she was cleaning at him. She said that she didn't want a lazy boy. She also threw the stick she was using to clean the cotton. The cotton and the stick hit Juan. The cotton spread all over his body and turned brown. The stick became a tail. Juan became the first monkey.

The First Monkey (Philippines)

Play

Narrator: Juan's mother was cleaning cotton and Juan was playing on the floor.

Mother: Juan, here are some cotton seeds. Go out and plant them in the garden.

Juan: Why? I am playing.

Mother: They will make you a nice suit of clothes.

Juan: Will I get my clothes after I plant the seeds?

Mother: No. They have to grow into plants.

Juan: Then will I get my clothes?

Mother: No. The plants have to produce flowers and if you don't get out and plant the seeds, you will never get a new suit of clothes.

Juan: After the flowers come, will I get my clothes?

Mother: No. The flowers have to turn into pods.

Juan: After that happens, do I get my clothes?

Mother: No. We have to pick the cotton and then clean it.

Juan: It seems like this will take a long time. After we clean the cotton will I get my clothes?

Mother: No. We have to spin the cotton into thread. It will take a long time if you don't get started and plant the seeds.

Juan: Will I get my new suit after it is turned into thread?

Mother: I told you we must wait for the plants to grow and have flowers, and the flowers to turn into pods. Then we must pick and clean the cotton and spin the cotton into thread. If you want a new suit of clothes, you must go out and plant the seeds.

Juan: Is that when I get my new suit?

Mother: No. We must weave the thread into cloth on the loom.

Juan: After that, do I get my new clothes?

Mother: I am losing my patience. Get out and plant the seeds. After we have the cloth we must cut it for the new suit.

Juan: Then will I get my new clothes?

Mother: No. We will have to sew it first.

Juan: That's when I will get the suit.

Mother: No. We must wash it and then starch it.

Juan: I know, but after that is done, I will get the clothes.

Mother: No. The suit must be ironed. And then you will have a new suit of clothes. Now go out and plant the seeds.

Juan: That sounds like too much work for a suit.

Mother: You're nothing but a lazy boy. Go plant the seeds.

Narrator: The mother threw some of the cotton she had been cleaning at the boy.

Juan: I'm going out to play.

Narrator: The mother threw the stick she had been using to clean the cotton at the boy.

Mother: I'm not going to have a lazy boy in this house.

Narrator: The cotton turned brown and began to spread over the boy's body.

Juan: Mama! Mama! What's happening?

Narrator: The stick turned into a tail.

Juan: Mama! Mama! I'll plant the seeds.

Narrator: It was too late. The boy turned into the first monkey.

The End

There was a tinsmith who was out of work. His wife and son were going to starve. He decided to leave home to seek work elsewhere. He told his wife that he was leaving to find work.

The man went off and after a few days he came on a great city. He found a job. He worked there for fifteen years. Then he told his boss he wanted to go home again. His boss paid him 200 gold pieces.

The man started down the road and the boss called him back. He said he would give him a word of advice if he paid him ten gold pieces. The man gave his boss ten gold pieces and the boss told him, "Never mix yourself in other people's affairs: you have seen nothing and you know nothing." The man started down the road again and the boss called him back for another word of advice. The price was ten gold pieces. The man paid. The boss told him, "Never leave the main road." Again the man started down the road and the same thing happened. The man thought the boss was just trying to get back his 200 gold pieces. The boss promised this was the last word of advice. "Think first and act afterwards."

The man started his trip home. He stopped at an inn and stayed in the stable with another traveller. While there they overheard a group of robbers planning a robbery. The other man said, "Let's go tell the innkeeper." The tinsmith used the first piece of advice, never mix in other people's affairs. The young man paid no attention and went to tell the innkeeper. The innkeeper was one of the robbers and he killed the young man.

The tinsmith continued down the main road. He met a group of camel drivers. After awhile they were hungry. The camel drivers decided to leave the main road for a nearby inn. The tinsmith stayed on the main road. The camel drivers left their camels with him. A short time later he heard an explosion. The inn stored gunpowder and blew up shortly after the camel drivers arrived. The camel drivers were killed. The tinsmith continued down the road with the camels. Eventually he came to his home.

He looked inside the window and saw his wife with another man, a young man. He became angry and thought about using his gun to kill the man, but remembering his boss' advice, he waited. He heard the young man say, "Tomorrow, mother, I will go to the field to get wood for the fire." The mother said there was no food to cook and that his father had been gone so long he had probably forgotten about them. The tinsmith realized he could have killed his own son.

Jack and his mother had no money. They lived on the milk their cow gave. One day their cow gave no milk. They didn't know what to do. Jack said that he could get a job. The mother said there were no jobs that anyone would hire Jack for. Jack said that he would take the cow to market and sell it. On his way to market he met a man. The man offered him five beans for the cow. Jack laughed. Five beans was not a very good price for a cow. The man said these were magic beans that would grow up to the sky. The man promised Jack that if it wasn't true he could have the cow back. Jack made the deal and took the five beans home.

Jack's mother was very unhappy. She beat Jack and sent him to bed. She threw the beans out the window.

The next morning a giant beanstalk had grown outside the house. It stretched up to the sky. Jack could open his window and climb on the beanstalk. This he did. He climbed all the way up to the sky. When he reached the sky he found a long road. He walked down the road and found a house with a large woman standing in front of it.

Jack asked the woman for something to eat. The woman told him to go away. She said her husband was an ogre and ate little boys like Jack. Finally the woman said she would give Jack something to eat. While Jack was eating her husband came. Jack hid in the oven. Her husband said:

Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive, or be he dead
I'll have his bones to grind my bread.

The wife tried to explain that he smelled the scraps of the boy she boiled for him the day before. The ogre went to sleep. Jack crept out of the oven and before he left, took one of the bags of gold that the ogre had on his belt. Jack ran and climbed down the beanstalk.

His mother was very happy. They lived on the gold for awhile. Then Jack decided to go back up the beanstalk.

Again he went up to the ogre's wife and asked for something to eat. She asked about the missing gold. Jack said he would tell her about it if she gave him some food. Again, the ogre returned and said he smelled an Englishman. Jack hid in the oven. The ogre had his breakfast of three boiled cows. Then he asked his wife to bring his golden hen. The wife brought in a chicken. The ogre told it to lay and the chicken laid a golden egg. The ogre fell asleep. Jack crept out of the oven and grabbed the golden hen. The hen cackled and the ogre woke up. He saw Jack running down the road with the golden hen and chased him.

Jack reached the beanstalk with the ogre a few steps behind him. He scrambled down the beanstalk with the hen in his arms. The ogre also climbed down the beanstalk shouting at Jack. When Jack got to the bottom he asked his mother for an axe and chopped the beanstalk down. The ogre was killed and Jack and his mother lived happily ever after with the golden hen.

A poor farmer and his wife wanted children. Finally, she gave birth to a boy. He was very small, no bigger than a thumb. They loved the child and fed him well, but he did not grow. They called him Tom Thumb.

One day the father was cutting wood and needed a horse and a cart to haul the wood. Tom volunteered to get the horse. The father told him he was too small. Tom said that he would sit in the horse's ear and tell him where to go.

Two strangers saw the horse and cart going down the road without a driver. They couldn't see Tom telling the horse which way to go. They followed the horse and cart into the woods. There they saw Tom climb out of the horse's ear. They thought Tom would make them a fortune by putting him on exhibit in a freak show with a circus. They asked the father to sell Tom to them. He refused. Tom whispered in his father's ear that he should sell him and he would escape and come back. The father then agreed to sell Tom to the men. One of the men put Tom on his hat brim and they started off down the road.

After awhile Tom said that he had to go to the bathroom and the man should put him on the ground. The man didn't want to but Tom insisted. Tom quickly ran off and hid in a mouse hole. The men tried to get him out with sticks, but Tom hid until they left.

After they left, Tom crawled out of the hole and started home. He heard two men coming down the road. They were discussing how to rob the parson's house. Tom shouted that he could help them. They looked down and found Tom. Tom told them they could hand him through the bars on the windows in the parson's house and he would hand them whatever they wanted.

They took Tom to the house and put him through the window. Tom shouted as loud as he could, "What do you want me to steal?" They told him to lower his voice but Tom continued to shout. His shouting woke up the maid. The thieves ran away and Tom hid out in the barn.

Tom was tired and went to sleep in the hay. He did not realize the cow was eating the hay until he was in the cow's mouth. In an instant the cow swallowed him. In the morning, the maid came to milk the cow. Tom began to shout. The maid was frightened and ran to get the parson. The parson thought the cow was possessed by the devil and had it killed. Just as the cow was cut open and Tom thought he was going to escape from the cow's stomach a wolf came along and swallowed the cow's stomach with Tom inside.

Tom decided to reason with the wolf. He told the wolf of a house where he could sneak in through a drain and eat all he wanted. The wolf liked the idea. Tom described his own house.

The wolf went to Tom's house and squeezed through the drain. It ate so much that it could not get back through the drain. Tom began to shout. His father and mother woke up and killed the wolf. Tom shouted that he was inside the wolf, and they cut the wolf open and rescued Tom.

A Judge of Horses, Diamonds and Men (Jewish)

There was a king who wanted to buy some diamonds. He heard about an old Jewish man who was a good judge of diamonds, horses and men. He called the old man to his palace to ask his advice about the diamonds.

The old man came to the king's palace. He looked at the diamonds and asked the price. The king told him the merchant wanted one million dollars. The old man said that the diamonds were worthless. They were just cut glass. The king thanked him and gave him a dollar for his good advice.

Later the king asked the old man to return to the palace. This time the king wanted to buy a horse. The old man looked at the horse and told the king not to buy it. He said the horse was a killer. This time the king did not believe the old man. One of the king's advisors suggested that a servant ride the horse first. The king told his servant to ride the horse. The horse bucked the servant off and kicked him in the head and killed him. The king gave the old man two dollars for this advice.

Later the king asked the old man to return to the palace. This time he wanted the old man to tell him what kind of king he was. The old man did not want to tell him. The king insisted. Finally, the old man told him that he was not a real king, but was a peasant. The king was very unhappy and put the old man in jail. The king's advisor told the king that he shouldn't do that and that the king should check with his mother.

The king told his mother that the old man had said he was not of royal blood, but was a peasant, and he had him put in jail for it. The mother told her son, the king, that he really was a peasant. Her real son had died just a few days after birth. Instead of telling the people that her son had died, she bought a baby boy from a peasant family and she raised him to be the king. The mother told the king that the old man had told the truth, and to let him out of jail.

The king wanted to know how the old man knew that he was a peasant. He asked the old man when he let him out of the dungeon. The old man said he knew he was a peasant when he gave him only one dollar for saving the king a million dollars and only two dollars for saving the king's life. He said a real king would have given him more of a reward.

A Judge of Horses, Diamonds and Men (Jewish) Play

First Narrator: Once upon a time here was an old Jewish man who was known as a good judge of horses and diamonds and men.

Second Narrator: A king who lived in a nearby town wanted to buy some very nice diamonds, but he was not sure that they were real. The king decided to call the old man who was an expert on diamonds to tell him whether or not the diamonds were worth anything.

Old Man: Good morning, my King. How may I be of service to you?

King: I would like to buy some diamonds, my good man. I understand that you are able to tell me if they are real.

Old Man: Are these the diamonds?

King: Yes. What do you think?

Old Man: How much does the seller want for them?

King: One million dollars.

Old Man: Ha! It would be a waste of your money. These are worthless. They are just cut glass.

King: Thank you. I almost bought them. I would have, if you hadn't told me otherwise. Here is a dollar for helping me.

First Narrator: The old Jewish man returned to his village. After awhile the king again asked him to come to the palace.

Old Man: Hello, Your Highness. Are you looking to buy diamonds again?

King: No, not this time. I hear you are also an excellent judge of horses. I am going to buy a very fine stallion. I would like you to tell me how much I should pay for him.

Old Man: Is that the horse over there?

King: Yes. He's a handsome horse, isn't he?

Old Man: Yes, he is, but I don't think you should buy him.

King: Why do you say that?

Old Man: That horse is a killer.

King: No, that couldn't be. See how quietly he stands there?

Old Man: Well, you asked for my advice and I gave it to you.

King: I don't think I'll take your advice this time, my good man. I believe that you must be mistaken.

Advisor: One thing you could do, King, is have one of your servants get on the horse to see if it is tame.

King: That's a good idea. But you'll see that the horse is gentle. Hey there, servant, get on that horse for me.

Servant: Yes, Your Highness.

A Judge of Horses, Diamonds and Men (Jewish) Play

First Narrator: The servant climbed on the horse.

Second Narrator: The horse suddenly went wild and bucked the servant off.

King: Is he all right?

Advisor: I'm afraid not, King. The horse kicked him in the head. Your servant is dead.

King: Well, old man, you were right. I didn't believe you, but you were right. You saved my life. Here's two dollars for your good advice.

First Narrator: A few weeks later, the king was wondering how great a king he was.

Second Narrator: He decided once again to ask the old Jewish man to his palace.

King: Hello. I have asked you here today to tell me what kind of king I am. My advisors tell me that I am a great king. Others tell me I'm just an ordinary king. Can you tell me?

Old Man: You want me to tell you what kind of a king you are?

King: Yes. That's what I want you to do.

Old Man: That's very simple.

King: Well then, man, tell me.

Old Man: I'm not sure that you will want to hear it.

King: Get on with it!

Old Man: You are not a real king. You are a simple peasant.

King: You can't talk to a king like that. Everyone knows that a peasant is a lowly person and cannot be a king. One can only be born a king. I could put you in jail for insulting me.

Old Man: That won't change the truth, and what I say is the truth.

King: Put this man in jail until he changes his mind.

First Narrator: The old man is taken away to jail.

King: Can you imagine that? Calling me a peasant!

Advisor: You know, he was right before.

King: Now don't you start.

Advisor: I won't. I don't want to go to jail. But may I suggest that you talk to your mother about this.

Second Narrator: And that is what the king did.

King: Mother, you know the old Jewish man who advised me about the horse and diamonds? He just told me that I am a peasant.

A Judge of Horses, Diamonds and Men (Jewish) Play

Mother: You should not pay any attention to that.
King: Guard, let the old man out.

King: I didn't. I had him put in jail for insulting the king.

Mother: Oh! You shouldn't have done that. I know I should have told you about this.

King: What is it, Mother?

Mother: Well, many years ago I had a son who would have been king when he grew up. The people of our land were very happy. But my son died a few days after he was born. The people wanted a prince very much, so we never told them that the prince had died.

King: Well, who am I then, a peasant?

Mother: Yes. We bought you from a peasant family soon after my real son died.

King: You didn't!

Mother: Yes, we did. We raised you to take the place of our real son. We loved you as we would have our real son. We never told anyone.

King: Well, how did that old man find out?

Mother: You could ask him. You had better let him out of jail, though, because he only told you the truth.

First Narrator: The king went down to the dungeon right away to see the old Jewish man.

Old Man: Now what do you want to know?

King: Don't worry. I've come to set you free.

Old Man: Good.

King: Tell me one thing, though. What made you think that I was a peasant, and not a king?

Old Man: It is very simple. When I saved you a million dollars by telling you the real diamonds were just cut glass, you gave me one dollar. When I told you the horse was a killer and saved your life, you gave me two dollars. Now a REAL KING would have rewarded me more generously.

The End

The Hungry Woman

Once upon a time in the place where the spirits live there was a woman who was always hungry. There were mouths all over her body. She had mouths in her elbows and wrists and in her knees and ankles. The spirits thought she would eat all of their food. They threw her into the water.

When they saw that she floated, the spirits Quetzacoatl and Tezcatlipoca, changed into snakes and swam to the woman and tried to force her under water. By mistake they squeezed the woman so hard she broke in two. The spirits felt bad.

They took the bottom half back to the place where the spirits lived. They wondered what to do with her. The other spirits said we'll use it to make the sky.

The other half they used to make the earth. From her hair they made forests, from her eyes they made lakes, from her shoulders, mountains and from her nose, valleys.

But the mouths were still everywhere. When it rained she drank, when flowers and trees died, she ate. When people died in battle, she drank their blood.

The First Sun

When the earth and sky were made the spirits gathered to make a sun. The spirit Tezcatlipoca thought he should be the sun. When the spirits were finished gathering the light to make the sun, Tezcatlipoca snatched it and tied it to his waist. He jumped into the sky.

Then the spirits began to make people. They made them as giants. They were so large that if they fell, they could not get up. They could not stoop down to pick up food. They could only eat the acorns that grew on trees. When the sun reached the top of the sky it went dark. The sun did not have enough light. The people were too big and the sun too small.

After thirteen times fifty-two years Quetzalcoatl kicked Tezcatlipoca out of the sky. Quetzalcoatl became the second sun which was known as the Wind Sun.

How Animals Were Made

There were people under the Wind Sun, but they had only pine nuts to eat. Finally, Tezcatlipoca rose up as a jaguar and ran across the sky and kicked Wind Sun out. As the Wind Sun fell a big wind blew across the earth destroying the people, houses and trees. A few of the people remained hanging in the air. They became monkeys.

After the Second Sun the rain spirit became the sun. This was called the Rain Sun. There were people under this sun but they did not have anything to eat but river corn. Finally, Quetzalcoatl sent a shower of fire that burned up the earth. It was so hot that it burned up the sun. The people were changed into turkeys.

Quetzalcoatl invited the rain spirit's wife to be the fourth sun. It was called the Water Sun. The people still had nothing to eat but grass corn. It rained all the time. Finally, it rained so much that a great flood covered the earth, and all the people were changed to fish.

How People Were Made

After the flood had drained away the spirits wanted to make people. Quetzalcoatl went to the Land of the Dead beneath the earth. Quetzalcoatl took the bones of the dead. He took them to a place above the sky and gave them to a spirit called the Snake Woman. She ground the bones into a powder. Quetzalcoatl spilled his blood on the bones and other spirits did the same. The bones came to life. The spirits said that the people would be their servants who would bleed for them as the spirits bled to create the people.

How Corn Was Made

The spirits worried about what the people would eat. Quetzalcoatl saw a red ant carrying a kernel of true corn. Quetzalcoatl changed into an ant and followed the red ant to a mountain. Inside the mountain there were corn, beans, peppers and all the other foods that had been hidden since the beginning of the earth.

The spirits decided to break open the mountain and give the food to the people, but as soon as the mountain was split open the rain spirit rushed in and stole all of the food. The rain spirit still has the food and gives only part of it back each year in exchange for human blood.

The Fifth Sun

The world was still dark. The spirits built a fire. The fire was so hot that none of the spirits wanted to be the sun. The weakest and sickest spirit was chosen. He rose up into the air. Finally, he rose in the east to become the sun we have today.

The sun, however, did not rise very far. The spirits sent a falcon to ask the sun why it wasn't moving. The sun said it wouldn't move until the spirits sacrificed themselves by allowing their hearts to be removed. The spirits were upset.

The spirits asked the morning star to shoot an arrow at the sun to knock it from the sky. The sun ducked and shot flame at the morning star knocking it into the land of the dead. The spirits realized that the sun was too powerful so they sacrificed themselves.

One day a man found a snake in a trap. The snake asked the man to let him go. So he did.

The snake immediately wrapped itself around the man and prepared to eat him. The man told the snake it was wrong to repay good with evil. The snake said that that might be true, but that it was hungry. The man told the snake they should ask for a second opinion. The snake told the man that another person would agree with him, but he would allow someone else to decide whether or not the snake should eat the man.

The man saw a horse and called it over to judge the situation. The horse said that it was wrong to repay good with evil, but that was the custom. It happened all the time. They called an ox over. The ox heard both sides and also said it was the custom to repay good with evil. The man begged for a third opinion and a coyote was called over to judge.

The coyote said he was just a common person and could not judge wisely. He wanted to know if the snake was really trapped. He asked the snake to get back in the trap. He asked the snake if that was really how he was trapped. The snake said it was. He asked the man if that is how he found the snake. The man said it was.

The coyote then said that is how the snake should be left. The man protested that the snake will die in the trap. The coyote responded that it was the snake's problem. The coyote told the man that since he saved his life he deserved a reward. The man promised the coyote that if he came to his ranch every day after he tied up his dog, he would give him a chicken to eat. The coyote said that that is repaying good with good.

The coyote came every day for his hen. After a while it wanted a bottle of sotol (whiskey). Before long, the coyote wanted three chickens and three bottles of whiskey. The farmer told the coyote he wanted too much. The coyote replied that he had saved the farmer's life. The farmer agreed.

The next day the coyote came. It drank the first bottle of whiskey and asked for a chicken. The farmer let the chicken out of a bag and the coyote ate it. The coyote drank another bottle of whiskey and asked for the second chicken which he ate. He drank a third bottle of whiskey and asked for the third chicken. The farmer opened the bag and out jumped his dog which attacked the drunken coyote.

The coyote protested that it isn't right to repay good with evil. He should call off the dog. The man said that that may be true, but it is the custom.

The Legend of Agustín Lorenzo (Mexico) Summary

Agustín lived with his grandfather. His grandfather worked as a farm laborer on a big farm. Each day Agustín walked five miles one way to the fields to bring his grandfather lunch. One day he found his grandfather beaten and bloodied. He asked his grandfather what had happened and his grandfather said the mayordomo (boss) had beaten him. Agustín wanted to carry his grandfather home. Grandfather said it was better to stay and work. Agustín told his grandfather he was going to get even.

While Agustín walked home he found a small snake that had been cut in two. Agustín took a palm leaf and wove a tube which he put around the wounded parts of the snake. He caressed the snake and the snake came alive.

Days later he was passing the same spot. An old man on a donkey stopped him. He told the boy that he owed him something. He told him the snake was his son and he had saved his son's life. Agustín told the old man that he owed him nothing for that. The old man told Agustín that he could have anything he wanted. Agustín said he only wanted to revenge his grandfather's beating and he could do it with a horse.

A few days later the old man came to Agustín's house with a horse. He also gave him a magic pen. He told Agustín that the pen would write a letter to the mayordomo without ink or Agustín even knowing how to write. Agustín had never been to school.

Agustín rode to the hacienda where the boss lived. He told the guards that he wanted to see the boss. The boss said he would see him after lunch. Agustín told him to take the letter. The boss did and Agustín struck him with his whip just as the boss had struck his grandfather. The boss fell dead.

The guards began to shoot at Agustín but Agustín's horse jumped into the air and flew off. None of the bullets hit him. Agustín gathered together all the poor men of his village. He told them they would take the gold and silver from the rich people who paid them nothing for their work. This they did. They took the gold and silver and hid it in caves. Agustín said that the gold and silver was for the poor but it should only be used when there was a great need.

One day the soldiers surrounded a house where Agustín was staying. They set the house on fire. The soldiers said they killed Agustín, but others said they saw Agustín get on his horse and jump into the sky and escape.

There were two children. They had a stepmother who did not like them. She told her husband to get rid of the children.

The next day he took the children. He said he was going to chop wood on the mountain. When they got to the mountain he told the children to stay close together while he went up the mountain to get wood.

Night came and their father did not come back. The children were scared. The little boy said that they should return home. The girl said they would get lost in the dark. The boy said he had picked a guava and scattered the peelings along the way. They followed the peelings back to the house.

They decided to hide in the attic fearing their father would be mad at them for coming back. Later the father returned and sat down to dinner. He said that he was sad that the children were not there for dinner. The children shouted, "We are here!", from the attic. They came down to dinner. The father made an excuse that he became lost on the mountain. The children did not realize that the father tried to abandon them.

The stepmother was very mad. The stepmother told the father to choose between the children and her.

The next day the father took the children to the mountain again. Again he told them to stay close together. Again he did not return. The sister said, "Let's find a place where we can be safe for the night." They found shelter in a cave. The next morning they tried to find their way back home.

Soon they came to a house. They saw a woman making pancakes. She would bring them outside and put them in a basket. They were hungry. The boy snuck up to the house and took some of the pancakes out of the basket. He did this each time after the old woman brought them out. Finally the old woman caught him. His sister came up and explained what had happened to them. The old woman offered them more food and more food. The children became sleepy. The lady took them to a room to sleep.

In the night the Virgin appeared and gave each of them a rat's tail. She told them if the old lady told them to stick their fingers through the crack in the window to stick out the rat tails instead.

The next day the old lady told them to stick out their fingers. They stuck out the rat tails. They heard a man say the pigs were very skinny and that he would be back when they were fatter. They heard the old lady say that she didn't know why the pigs weren't fatter. She fed them a lot of food. She told the man she would feed the pigs more and to come back in a few days. The children tried to get out of the room but found that it was locked.

The next night the Virgin appeared again and unlocked the door. She gave them a donkey and told them to ride away as fast as they could.

First Narrator: There were two children who had a mean stepmother. The stepmother didn't want them.

Stepmother: You are going to do it, aren't you? I can't stand those little brats any longer. You must get rid of them.

Father: Yes. I'll do it. I must go to the mountain to collect wood tomorrow. I'll take them with me.

Stepmother: And don't bring them back.

Second Narrator: The next day the father took the children with him to collect wood.

Father: I have to climb the mountain to find wood. I want you to stay here. Stay together.

First Narrator: The children stayed together at the bottom of the mountain for the rest of the day. Night came and the children began to worry.

Sister: It is almost dark and it is getting cold. I wonder what happened to Papa.

Brother: I think we should start back to the house.

Sister: We're lost. How will we find our way back?

Brother: We can find our way back to the house. When we left I picked a guava and ate it on the way. All we have to do is follow the

trail of peelings, but we had better start before it gets dark.

Second Narrator: The children followed the trail back to the house.

Sister: What shall we tell our stepmother? She'll be very angry that we returned without father.

Brother: Nothing can be done until tomorrow. Maybe he'll return later tonight.

Sister: It is not like father to leave us like that.

Brother: I hope that he is OK.

Sister: Stepmother will beat us.

Brother: Let's hide in the attic tonight.

First Narrator: The children hid in the attic and soon the father returned home and sat down to dinner.

Stepmother: You took your time.

Father: I waited until dark to return. I feel bad leaving them out there. It is lonely not having them sit down to dinner with us.

Second Narrator: The children heard their father.

Brother: We are here, Papa! We found our way back.

Father: You must be hungry. Come down for some dinner.

The Little Guava (Mexico)

Play

First Narrator: After dinner the children went to bed.

Stepmother: That is the last time I'm feeding them. Either they go or I leave.

Father: I don't know how they found their way back.

Stepmother: But they did. I told you to get rid of them.

Father: I will go back to the mountain tomorrow.

Stepmother: Take them a different way and take them farther away so that they can't get back.

Second Narrator: The next day the father took the children to the mountain again.

Father: I did not find enough wood yesterday. I must go up higher on the mountain. I want you to wait here and stay together and be sure to wait until I come back.

First Narrator: The children waited and waited. Night came.

Sister: I'm scared. Papa hasn't come back.

Brother: He said to wait for him.

Sister: I'm getting cold.

Brother: Let's find some place where we can get out of the cold.

Second Narrator: The children found a small cave and crawled inside. They waited all night.

First Narrator: The next day they tried to find their way home.

Brother: I'm hungry.

Sister: We're lost. Which way should we go?

Brother: Look! There's a house.

Second Narrator: They walked toward the house. When they came closer they could see an old woman bringing pancakes out of the kitchen and putting them in a basket.

Sister: I have an idea. Why don't you sneak up to the house and take some of the pancakes out of the basket.

Brother: That's a good idea. We'll share them.

First Narrator: The boy crept up to the house and took some of the pancakes and brought them back to his sister.

Sister: These are good, but I'm still hungry.

Brother: So am I.

Sister: The old lady has brought out more pancakes. She didn't seem to notice that any were missing.

Brother: I'll go back and get more.

The Little Guava (Mexico)

Play

Second Narrator: This time the old lady saw the boy.

Old Lady: What are you doing here? Stealing my pancakes?

Brother: We are hungry.

Sister: We are lost and we're trying to find our way home.

Old Lady: Oh, I see. Come in and I'll make you all the pancakes you can eat.

First Narrator: After eating, the children became sleepy.

Old Lady: Why don't you children go to sleep. I have a room for you to sleep in.

Brother: Thank you. We didn't get much sleep last night.

Sister: We stayed in a cave and were very cold.

Old Lady: You can rest here. If you are hungry, I will give you plenty to eat.

Second Narrator: That night the Virgin of Guadalupe visited the children.

Sister: Who are you?

Virgin: I am here to help you. I am going to give each of you a rat tail. If the old lady tells you to stick your fingers through the crack in the window, you put these out.

Brother: Why?

Virgin: Do not ask. Just do as I tell you.

First Narrator: The next day the children heard the old lady outside the window.

Old Lady: I think they are fat enough now.

Man: Good.

Old Lady: Children, will you stick your fingers out the crack in the window?

Sister: What should we do?

Brother: Do what the Virgin told us to do.

Second Narrator: Both children stuck their rat tails out the window.

Man: The pigs look awfully skinny. I think I will wait until they're fatter.

Old Lady: I don't know why they're so skinny. They eat all the time. I'll be sure to fatten them up before you come again.

Man: I'll be back .

First Narrator: That night the Virgin visited the children again. She unlocked the door to the room and gave the children a donkey. She told them to ride away as fast as they could.

The End

One day a king was taking a long trip on his boat. It was a hot and sunny day. The boatman had to row many hours in the hot sun. The king and his advisors rested under the shade of canopies. The boatmen began to complain. They said it was unfair that they had to do all the hard work while the advisors rested in the shade. One of them asked, "Aren't we all human beings?" The king pretended to be asleep but he heard everything that the boatmen said.

At night the boat pulled ashore. They ate and the boatmen quickly fell asleep because they were tired. The king heard noises coming from a nearby temple. He awakened one of the boatmen who had been complaining and sent him to find out what the noises were.

The boatman went to the temple and returned. He told the king there were some puppies making noise. The king asked how many puppies there were. The boatman said he hadn't counted them. The king asked him to return to count the puppies. The boatman did so.

When the boatman came back he said there were five puppies. The king asked how many were male and how many female. The boatman went back to the temple to see.

When the boatman returned he said that two were female and three were male. The king asked what color they were. The boatman again went to the temple to find out.

The boatman returned to report that they were white, black and brown.

Then the king awakened one of his advisors and sent him to the temple to find out what the noise was. The advisor returned and said that it was some puppies making noise. The king asked how many and the advisor said five. The king asked how many were male and female and the advisor said three were male and two were female. The king asked what color they were and the advisor said they were white, black and brown and the mother was black and that they belonged to a priest of the temple.

The king turned to the boatman and told him that he had to send him to the temple four times to find out the same information that his advisor found out in one. He pointed out that that was why some people were advisors to the king and some were boatmen, even though we are all human beings.

There was a boy who lived with his aunt and uncle. He was called the Big Liar because he was always playing tricks on people. One day his uncle went to plow a field while his aunt stayed home to do housework. The Big Liar went to the field where his uncle was working. He shouted at his uncle that his aunt had fallen off a ladder and was bleeding badly. The uncle began to run home. Big Liar took a short cut and arrived home first.

He told his aunt that his uncle had been attacked by a buffalo in the field. He said that it looked as if the animal had stuck his horns in his belly and he might die. His aunt ran toward the fields. The Big Liar laughed and went to hide behind the house.

The aunt and uncle ran into each other. Both knew they had been tricked by the Big Liar. They went home and found the Big Liar hiding behind the house.

They put the boy in a bamboo cage and closed the lid. They told him that they were going to throw him into the river and drown him. The boy asked that they get him a book so he could read it when he went to Hell. The aunt and uncle could not refuse his last request so they went to look for the book.

A blind man came by while they were looking for the book. The Big Liar said to the blind man that he could make him see again if he would let him out of the cage. The blind man let him out and the Big Liar ran away. The aunt and uncle could not find the book and returned to find the empty cage and the blind man waiting to be cured of his blindness.

The Big Liar went to hide in bamboo by the river. While hiding he found a pot of gold. He took it home to his aunt and uncle. Now they were rich. The aunt and uncle thought the only way they could stop the boy from lying was by having him marry a good girl. They arranged a marriage to a good girl.

He continued to lie and cheat.

One day the Big Liar found some tiger cubs in the forest. Since he was a very bad person he broke the paws of the tiger cubs. The baby tigers cried with pain. The mother of the tiger cubs came to help her babies. The Big Liar hid in the bushes. She saw the mother take some leaves from a tree and rub the paws of the cubs. In a few minutes the cubs were healed.

When the tigers left the Big Liar dug up the tree and took it home. He planted it and called it a banyan. He told his wife that the tree was given to him by a god and that it could cure sickness. He told his wife never to throw garbage at the foot of the tree or it would fly away. His wife did not believe the Big Liar.

One day she became angry at her husband and threw garbage at the foot of the tree. The tree began to shake and pulled itself from the ground. The Big Liar rushed to the tree and grabbed one of its roots. The tree flew into the sky with the Big Liar holding onto the roots. The tree flew all the way to the moon where it has remained ever since. If you look carefully at the moon you can see the tree with the Big Liar seated at its foot.

The Old Woman and the Hare (Cambodia) Summary

Once there was a very smart hare (rabbit). He loved adventures. Sometimes he acted as a judge. He was so fair that other animals called him Judge Hare. Sometimes he was full of mischief. There was an old woman and her granddaughter. They went to the market to buy bananas which they brought back to their village to sell. Their path led through the forest where Judge Hare lived. Judge Hare saw the woman with a basket full of bananas which she carried on her head. He planned to trick the woman so that he could eat the bananas.

Judge Hare said to another rabbit that if he made a scary noise the woman might drop the basket and run. The other rabbit told him that rabbits could not make a big enough noise to scare anyone. Judge Hare thought that humans like rabbit stew but had a hard time catching live rabbits. If he pretended he was dead, maybe the woman would pick him up and put him in the basket.

The next day the rabbit lay on the path and pretended he was dead. Sure enough the woman came along and saw the rabbit lying still on the path. She said to her granddaughter that the dead rabbit would make a good meal. She picked up the rabbit and put it in her basket.

The woman went along talking with her granddaughter about what a wonderful meal the rabbit would make. Meanwhile the rabbit was busy eating all the bananas.

When the old woman got home she put the basket down and out jumped Judge Hare. The woman knew that the rabbit must have been Judge Hare because no other rabbit could be so clever.

Once there was a rich young widow living in the country. She lived with her brothers and sisters. The widow had a baby who was frail and sickly. A scoundrel living in a nearby village wanted to rob her. He watched the house.

The scoundrel told his friend that he would dress up as a Buddhist monk in a yellow robe to trick the widow. He would wait until she was alone when all of her brothers and sisters went to the fields to work.

One day he went up to the house. The widow was sitting in front with her sickly baby. She thought he was a Buddhist monk and asked him what he wanted. He said he came from a temple and was out collecting candles for the temple. He asked her why she was alone. She said she had to stay at home because her baby was so sickly.

He asked what sickness the baby had and why she hadn't taken him to the doctor. She said that doctors could not cure the baby. The robber said he knew all about this sickness and how to cure it.

The robber told her to prepare an altar with incense, candles and bananas. She prepared the altar and invited the scoundrel in the house. He said some prayers at the altar. He then asked her if she had a tbal kdoong. A tbal kdoong is a mill for grinding rice. She told him that there was one behind the house.

The robber told her to take her baby and put it in the large bowl under the grinder. The woman obeyed. The robber told the woman to jump on the lever that lifted the grinder above the bowl. The woman did as she was told. The robber told her to stay there while he went in the house to get some candles and incense for a prayer ceremony. Inside the house the robber stole the woman's gold and ran away.

The woman could not do anything. If she jumped off the lever, the grinder would fall into the bowl and crush her baby. She stayed there all day until her brothers and sisters came home.

A Father, Son and A Donkey (Cambodia) Summary

Chow Khok and his son had a young donkey. He wanted to sell the donkey at the market. The donkey was fat and would sell for a lot of money. However, the market was far away. If they walked the donkey to market, it would become thin and they would not make much money. They agreed to carry the donkey to market by tying its legs together and hanging it on a long pole which they could carry on their shoulders.

On their way to market they met a group of strangers. The strangers made fun of them for carrying the donkey. The father and son were embarrassed. They decided that the son would ride the donkey because he was smaller, and the father would walk behind.

They continued their trip and met another group of strangers. The son was riding the donkey and the father was walking behind. The group made fun of them because the father was walking. The group thought that it showed very little respect for the father. The man and his son decided that the father should ride the donkey and the son would walk.

On they went toward a village. A group of young girls made fun of them. They said that the father looked like a monkey riding the donkey, and the handsome young son should be riding it. The father and son discussed this and they decided that both would ride the donkey.

Later along in their trip they were stopped by a customs official who asked where they were taking the donkey. They told him they were taking the donkey to the market to sell. The customs official said the donkey was not big enough to carry both of them and they would break the donkey's back and would not be able to sell him. The father and son got off the donkey and began to carry him.

As they continued their journey they had to pass through a farmer's field carrying the donkey. The farmer said that his field was filled with sharp thorns and they would cut their feet. He told them that donkeys were for riding, not for carrying. The father and the son put the donkey down and wondered what they should do.

A Father, Son and A Donkey (Cambodia)

Play

First Narrator: Along time ago in Cambodia there was a poor farmer named Chow Khok and his son. They had a fat young donkey.

Chow: If we take this donkey to market and sell it, we can make a lot of money.

Son: The market is a long way from here, Papa. The donkey will be skinny by the time we reach the market and we will not make much money.

Chow: I have a plan. We will tie the donkey to a pole and we will carry it to market. It will be just as fat when we get there as it is now.

Second Narrator: They began their trip to the market with the donkey tied by the feet to a pole they carried on their shoulders.

First Narrator: They met a group of travellers on the road.

First traveller: What is this?

Second traveller: It looks like two fools carrying a donkey.

First traveller: They apparently don't know that donkeys are to be ridden, not carried.

First Narrator: The father and the son stopped to discuss the situation.

Chow: I don't like being made fun of.

Son: Maybe they were right.

Chow: I know what we can do.

Son: What?

Chow: You are smaller and lighter than me. You ride the donkey and I will walk.

Son: That is a good idea.

Second Narrator: That is what they did and they went on their way.

First Narrator: Soon they met a group of strangers.

First Stranger: I've never seen anything so disrespectful.

Second Stranger: Don't those fools know that the old should ride and the young should walk?

First Stranger: That boy has no respect for his father.

Second Narrator: When the strangers had passed, the father and son stopped and talked.

Son: They were right. It is disrespectful for me to ride while you walk.

Father: Let us change places, then. You walk and I'll ride.

First Narrator: They continued on their way. They entered a village and a group of young girls began to make fun of them.

A Father, Son and A Donkey (Cambodia)

Play

First Girl: Look at that old man riding the donkey. He looks like a monkey. its back and the donkey will be worth nothing.

Son: He is right, father. We should get off.

Second Girl: And the handsome young son has to walk.

Chow: Let's carry the donkey.

First Girl: The best looking should ride and the ugly should walk.

Son: That is a good idea.

Second Narrator: The father and son stopped again to discuss the situation.

Second Narrator: They continued on their way carrying the donkey. While passing through a farmer's field, the farmer stopped them.

Chow: It is most embarrassing that young girls make fun of us.

Farmer: Watch your step. This field is filled with sharp thorns. You will cut your feet.

Son: That is true. What should we do?

Chow: We will be careful.

Chow: I know. We will both ride the donkey.

Farmer: Haven't you heard that you ride donkeys? People don't carry them.

First Narrator: They both climbed on the donkey and continued on their way until they came to a customs station.

Chow: We have heard so many things.

Customs Officer: Stop. Where are you going?

Farmer: The donkey's thick skin and hair will protect it from the thorns. You two will cut your feet badly.

Chow: We are taking this donkey to market to sell it.

First Narrator: Chow and his son set the donkey down and wondered what to do next.

Customs Officer: You won't get much for that donkey if both of you ride it all the way to market.

The End

Chow: People we have met along the road say that donkeys are for riding.

Customs Officer: That donkey isn't big enough to carry both of you. You will break