



Herb and Lois Walker's

SCRIPTS FOR SCHOOLS

**WHY THE EVERGREEN TREES
KEEP THEIR LEAVES**

**Re-told and Formatted for
Choral Reading/Speaking
by Lois Walker**

A Story Poem Based on a
Well-Known Folktale and an
Old English Nursery Rhyme

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HISTORY

The ALL CHORUS in this story poem was inspired by an old, well-known nursery rhyme. The nursery rhyme is usually referred to as either the "North Wind Doth Blow" or "The Robin". It is British in its origins and believed to have originated in the 16th century. In the original version, "The North Wind Doth Blow" uses the olde English word 'doth'.

The purpose of the rhyme was to ensure that a child associated security with home while empathizing with the plight of the robin. In this script, the rhyme is used to establish the plight of the injured bird and set the stage for his encounter with the trees of the forest.

THE ORIGINAL NURSERY RHYME

The North wind doth blow and we shall have snow,
And what will poor robin do then, poor thing?
He'll sit in a barn and keep himself warm
And hide his head under his wing, poor thing.

FORMATTING

This story-poem script is formatted for 6 SOLO READERS, ALL READERS, ALL GIRLS, and ALL BOYS.

ESTABLISHING THE RHYTHM

To find the proper rhythm for this story-poem piece, first read-aloud and clap through the sections as you go. Each underlined word or word part falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast! This is a rehearsal technique and readers will not clap throughout these sections during performance. Once the rhythm has been established, you'll want to work at smoothing the piece out and making it flow.

ALTERNATE "ALL CHORUS" TEXT:

North wind will blow, we will have snow,
And what does a little bird then, poor thing?
Find a kindly tree who might agree
To guarantee lodging, 'til spring!

ALL: It was cold, we're told, a long time ago,
Then "shivered" and "quivered" by winter's first snow,
The birds did their thing, as each took wing,
And flew away south to wait for spring.

ALL GIRL: One worried bird stayed, afraid, you know -
Couldn't fly in the sky, had to stay below.

ALL BOYS: An absurd little bird with a broken wing,
Afraid to think what winter might bring.

ALL CHORUS: **North wind will blow, we will have snow,
And what does a little bird then, poor thing?
Sit in a tree, all wrapped in leaves
And hide his head under his wing?**

ALL GIRLS: That's how it began, the plan, the design.
We agree that a tree could suit the bird fine,

ALL BOYS: But finding a tree to agree caused the trouble.
For this bird was broken - all stubble and rubble.

SOLO

READER 1: "No!" said birch tree, "Are you blind, can't you see?
I need to be free to take care of me!
So please go away, don't stay, I'm no shelf.
You can't perch on me, take care of yourself."

ALL CHORUS: **North wind will blow, we will have snow,
And what does a little bird then, poor thing?
Sit in a tree, all wrapped in leaves
And hide his head under his wing?**

ALL GIRLS: Next came the oak, solid bloke of thick trunk.
He seemed ready and steady, a large solid hunk.

ALL BOYS: But he swore and he roared, loud as orchestra horns

SOLO

READER 2: "You're not welcome here. No! You'll eat my acorns!"

ALL GIRLS: The bird fluttered and hopped, then stopped near a willow
Whose leaves on display, seemed to sway and then billow.

ALL BOYS: And being polite, he asked if he might
Sleep in those billowing leaves that night.

**ALL CHORUS: North wind will blow, we will have snow,
And what does a little bird then, poor thing?
Sit in a tree, all wrapped in leaves
And hide his head under his wing?**

SOLO

READER 3: "No, indeed," said the tree, "And please don't proceed!
A stranger means danger - I live by that creed.
Never seen you before and won't see you again.
So be on your way then, goodbye and amen!"

ALL: "What a mess, this is hopeless", the little bird cried,
"The trees won't protect me and I cannot fly."

ALL GIRLS: But a spruce tree nearby then heard his cry,
And called,