

FOREST FIRE!

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Choral Speaking/Teacher/For Intermediate to Advanced Voice Choirs

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Written

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Formatted for Choral Speaking

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This choral speaking script, "Forest Fire!" includes a variety of speaker experiences. As in most choral speaking, ALL SPEAKERS speak in unison together. But, in an effort to bring needed variety of sound and a composer's touch to the choral expression of this script, you will find that:

1. ALL VOICES speak in unison together.
2. 4 SOLO SPEAKERS speak special lines. (4 speakers may be used, or solo parts may be divided up to fit your needs).
3. ALL MALE VOICES speak in unison together.
4. ALL FEMALE VOICES speak in unison together.
5. MALE and FEMALE QUARTETS speak separately as quartets and also together.
6. 4 CHARACTER SPEAKERS speak as the Camper Quartet and as Solo Campers 1,2,3,4.

To find the proper rhythm, first read-aloud and clap through the piece 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 the entire piece during performance.

PLACING OF SPEAKERS ON RISERS

Special attention to placing of speakers on risers is especially important for a visually interesting performance. Some suggestions:

1. Position MALES on one side of risers, FEMALES on the other. OR place MALES in top half section, FEMALES on bottom half. You might ask MALES to wear all of one color (or special costumes which fit the story), and ask FEMALES to wear another color (or special costumes).

2. SOLO SPEAKER lines are often effective coming as a surprise from all sections of the choir, so these speakers may be scattered throughout the choir groupings. However, solo speakers may also be positioned together in the front row or off to one side of the risers.

3. QUARTETS, however, should be positioned together in the front row, if possible. These people must speak as a small group in unison, so should be positioned together where they can work together and the audience can easily see and hear them. (In this piece, the Female and Male Quartets might do well in the front row. The Camper Quartet is made up of 4 character speakers and must be positioned together in a prominent place for both quartet and solo lines. A featured place off to the side probably works best for the Camper Quartet).

4. CHARACTER SPEAKERS (speaking the lines of characters in a story) may also be positioned together in the front row. They might also be positioned off to the side, placed standing on a low separate platform nearby, or seated on tall stools. Each might wear a small costume piece (or carry a prop) which suggests the character they are

PACING

There is a definite rhythm or beat (just like a musical piece) to this script. This doesn't mean a director shouldn't slow things down at certain key points and/or play with the rhythm. The more the piece is interpreted, felt, colored, and shaped, the better the performance. Because this piece builds as the fire grows more and more out of control, there is ample opportunity to interpret the build through a variance of rhythm and volume.

LINE NUMBERING AND SECTIONS

Important: use of LINE NUMBERS at left on each script page will help you quickly identify specific lines when rehearsing with your group. It's easier to say, "Let's start again from line 25", than spending precious time trying to identify group sections by description. This particular piece has also been broken down into sections to further help director/choir communication.

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Section A

- 1 ALL:** THE FORESTS ALL WERE TINDERWOOD,
- 2 MALE VOICES:** THE AIR WAS HOT AND DRY.
- 3 ALL:** THE ENDLESS SKIES WERE BLUE AND BRIGHT,
- 4 FEMALE VOICES** THE WIND WAS BUT A SIGH.
- 5 ALL:** THE GRASS WAS STIFF AND BROWN AND
SPLIT,
- 6** ITS ROOTS LOOSE IN THE DIRT.
- 7** SO WHY? YOU ASK, WOULD CAMPERS SAY...
- CAMPER**
8 QUARTET: "A LITTLE FIRE WON 'T HURT!"

Section B

- 9 CAMPER 1:** "A LITTLE FIRE TO COOK OUR LUNCH,"
- 10** "TO GIVE US LIGHT AT NIGHT,"
- 11 CAMPER 2:** "IT'S NOT AS THOUGH WE'RE UNAWARE
- 12** HOW DEEP A FIRE CAN BITE."
- 13 CAMPER 3:** "AND WE ARE THOUGHTFUL CAMPERS;
- 14** WE'RE CAREFUL AS CAN BE."
- 15 CAMPER 4:** "WE ALWAYS PUT OUR FIRES OUT!"
- CAMPER**
16 QUARTET: "WE DON'T LIVE DANGEROUSLY!"
- 17 MALE VOICES:** THEY SPENT THE NIGHT BENEATH THE TREES;

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- 18** THE AIR WAS SWEET AND CLEAN.
- 19 FEMALE VOICES:** THEY ROSE AT DAWN TO CARRY ON,
- 20** AND COOKED UP THEIR CUISINE.
- 21 ALL:** THEY PACKED AND STOWED THE CAMPING
GEAR
- 22** AS QUICKLY AS COULD BE,
- 23** THEN FINALLY PUT THE FIRE OUT
- 24 SOLO 1:** AND DID IT CAREFULLY!

Section C

- 25 MALE QUARTET:** THEY PULLED BACK ON THE HIGHWAY,
- 26** AND SPED AWAY CONTENT
- FEMALE**
- 27 QUARTET:** HAT THEY HAD DONE WHAT SHOULD BE DONE
- 28** AND IT WAS TIME WELL SPENT.
- 29 ALL:** BUT BACK AT CAMP, THE FIRE,
- 30** WHICH WAS SURELY DEAD AND OUT,
- 31** CAME BACK TO LIFE QUITE SLOWLY
- 32 SOLO 2:** WITH A LITTLE SMOKING SPOUT!

Section D

- 33 ALL:** THOUGH THEY HAD STOMPED THAT FIRE,
- 34** POURED WATER ALL AROUND,

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35 THEY HAD NOT KILLED THE HEAT
36 THAT HAD BUILT UP UNDERGROUND!
37 FEMALE VOICES: AND IN THAT TINDER FOREST
38 ON THAT BAKING SUMMER DAY
39 MALE VOICES: THE FIRE THEY HAD JUST PUT OUT
40 WAS SOON TO BLAZE AWAY!

Section E

41 ALL: THE FLAMES AT FIRST LICKED AT THE GRASS
42 AND THEN THEY JUMPED UP HIGHER
43 AND SOON THE TREES WERE CANDLE-ING;
44 EACH TRUNK A FUNERAL PYRE!
45 FROM TREE TO TREE THE RED FLAMES FLEW,
46 THE GREEN WAS TURNED TO BLACK
47 AND WHEN THE WIND STIRRED IN THE WEST,
48 THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK.

Section F

49 MALE VOICES: FROM A ROARING FOREST FIRE,
50 IT TURNED TO AN INFERNO!
51 WITH HEAT TO MELT THE PAVEMENT
52 AND A TOWN AHEAD TO BURN!