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READER 1: Many many years ago in a remote village, there lived a young man named Thomas Stern.

(READER 4 STANDS).

READER 3: Although Thomas's name was Stern, his personality certainly was not. He was a very friendly fellow who liked to laugh, spent a lot of time with his friends, and was engaged to be married to his neighbor Mary Sillatoe.

(READER 4 SITS, READER 5 STANDS).

5/MARY: I am the luckiest girl in the world. I know I'll have a happy life.

READER 2: We're guessing that Mary sounds like a perfectly ordinary girl to you. But this was not so.

READER 1: What made Mary different was the goofy way she thought.

**READERS 1,2,3,
6,7,8:** Goofy!

(READER 5 SITS).

READER 3: For example, one day Mary was sitting under a tree looking through a book.

5/MARY: What a good idea I've had. Since I'm sure that everything in books is true, I've drawn pictures of what I want my life to be like and

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bound them into a book. Here is a picture of Thomas and me getting married. Here is a picture of the fine white cottage he will build for us. And here is a picture of the three children we will have. I'm sure all these things will come true.

READERS 1,2,3: Do you see what we mean?

(READERS 4 & 5 STAND).

READER 2: Twice a week Thomas had supper with Mary and her parents. One evening Mary went down to the cellar to draw some cool cider to go with the meal.

(READER 4 TURNS HIS BACK TO AUDIENCE).

READER 3: While the cider was pouring into the pitcher Mary happened to notice a very large hammer sticking out over the edge of a higher shelf. This set her to thinking.

5/MARY: Oh, no. Look at that hammer! What if the daughter Thomas and I will have grows up and then comes down here one day to draw cider. That hammer could fall on her head and kill her. What a dreadful thing it would be!

READER 2: Mary began to cry and cry. The cider flowed over the top of the pitcher and onto the floor.

READER 1: Upstairs, they began to wonder what was taking Mary so long.

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READER 3: Finally, Thomas went down to see what was the matter.

(READER 4 TURNS AND FACES AUDIENCE).

4/THOMAS: Mary, why are you crying and letting the cider run onto the floor?

5/MARY: Look at that hammer. It could fall down at any time. What if we have a daughter and she comes down to fetch cider someday and the hammer falls on her head? It could kill her. And then we would be so sad.

READER 1: Mary continued to cry and cry; the cider continued to flow and flow.

READER 2: Thomas turned off the cider tap and looked at Mary. Then he burst out laughing.

4/THOMAS: You are the silliest person in the world! That hammer has been exactly where it is for as long as I can remember. But if you are afraid it will fall, why not just move it?

READER 2: Mary looked at him with wide eyes.

READER 3: Thomas reached up, took the hammer off the shelf, and placed it on the floor.

READER 1: And then he said to her, laughing all the while:

4/THOMAS: I am not at all sure I can marry someone who is as silly as you are.

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5/MARY: But Thomas, you must. I've drawn the picture of our wedding and put it in my book.

4/THOMAS: Just because something is in a book doesn't mean it's true, Mary. I told you that before.

5/MARY: Oh, Thomas, you don't know anyone else you'd rather marry, do you?

READER 3: Thomas laughed again and shook his head.

4/THOMAS: No, I don't. But I don't want to be married to the silliest person in the world, either. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go on a trip, and if I meet anyone along the way who is sillier than you, we'll be married as planned.

(READER 5 SITS).

READER 2: The next day Thomas said good-bye to Mary her parents and started out on his horse.

READER 1: He rode a long way and finally came upon an old man working in his garden.

(READER 6 GETS ON HIS KNEES).

4/THOMAS: Good day, sir. Do you mind if I take a drink from your well?

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- 6/OLD MAN:** Not at all, young man. Help yourself.
- READER 2:** Thomas took a long drink at the cool well and then turned his attention to the old man.
- READER 3:** He was shocked to see that the old gent was trying to plant a puppy! He was holding the little pup in one hand while struggling to scoop soil around its little legs.
- READER 1:** But the puppy was not cooperating at all. It was squirming and yelping and trying to get away.
- 4/THOMAS:** My good man, what on earth are you doing?
- 6/OLD MAN:** Cannot you see? I am trying to bury this puppy's hind quarters in the ground.
- 4/THOMAS:** But why do you want to do that? What harm has the puppy done you?
- 6/OLD MAN:** No harm at all, sir. I have decided it would be nice to have a dogwood tree here in the front yard, so I am planting this puppy in the hope that he will grow into a fine big one.
- READER 2:** Thomas laughed so hard he had to bend over to catch his breath.
- 4/THOMAS:** But, sir, dogwood trees do not grow from dogs. You should go to town and buy some seeds.