

I-128

Why The Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves

Re-told and Formatted for Readers Theater

by Lois Walker

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 10 SOLO READERS and ALL.

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!

READER 1: It was cold, we're told, a long time ago,

READER 2: Then "shivered" and "quivered" by winter's first snow,
The birds did their thing, as each took wing,

READER 3: And flew away south to wait for spring.

READER 4: One worried bird stayed, afraid, you know -
Couldn't fly in the sky, had to stay below.

READER 5: An absurd little bird with a broken wing,
Afraid to think what winter might bring.

ALL: 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?

READER 6: That's how it began, the plan, the design.

READER 7: We agree that a tree could suit the bird fine,
But finding a tree to agree caused the trouble.

READER 8: For this bird was broken - all stubble and rubble.

READER 9

(BIRCH TREE): "No!"

READER 8: said birch tree,

READER 9

(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: 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?

READER 10: Next came the oak, solid bloke of thick trunk.
He seemed ready and steady, a large solid hunk.

READER 1: But he swore and he roared, loud as orchestra horns

READER 2

(OAK TREE): "You're not welcome here. No! You'll eat my
acorns!"

READER 3: The bird fluttered and hopped, then stopped near a
willow
Whose leaves on display, seemed to sway and to
billow.

READER 4: And being polite, he asked if he might
Sleep in those billowing leaves that night.

**ALL: 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?**

READER 5

(WILLOW): "No, indeed,"

READER 4: said the tree,

READER 5

(WILLOW): "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!"

READER 6

(BIRD): "What a mess, this is hopeless",

READER 4: the little bird cried,

READER 6

(BIRD): "The trees won't protect me and I cannot fly."

READER 7: But a spruce tree nearby then heard his cry,
And called,

READER 8

(SPRUCE): "You need leaves? Well, I have a supply!"

**ALL: 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?**

READER 9: Then a pine chimed in, saying,

READER 10

(PINE): "I'll help too.
By blocking the north wind from both of you.
You won't be affected, but you'll be connected,
And ready for anything, quite unexpected.

READER 1: Next the juniper stirred, and said,

READER 3

(JUNIPER): "Little bird,
As a treat, eat my berries - I give you my word
My branches are loaded, with berries exploded,
They'll last you all winter, and won't be eroded."

**ALL: 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?**

READER 6: So the bird went to rest in a thick leafy nest,
Wind-ridden and hidden, and very impressed.

READER 4: With plenty to eat, life was now sweet.
He could live through the winter in splendid retreat.

READER 7: But the birch, the oak and the willow stood
Tall and proud, then spoke out loud: