



**Lois Walker's
SCRIPTS FOR SCHOOLS**

**HOW THE JACKRABBIT
GOT HIS LONG EARS**

A Sonoran Desert Legend

**A Readers Theater Script for
Elementary School Readers**

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HOW THE JACKRABBIT GOT HIS LONG EARS

A Sonoran Desert Legend Retold in Rhyme

Adapted for Readers Theater by Lois Walker

ESTABLISHING THE RHYTHM: 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 readings will not clap throughout the entire piece during performance. **NOTE:** if you have trouble establishing the rhythm, email Lois and she will email you an mp3 sound file to help you establish the proper beat. (loiswalker@hotmail.com).

FORMATTING: This Readers Theater adaptation is formatted for 7 Solo Readers, an ALL chorus, and assorted ALL lines. During the reading, all of the readers will read narrator parts and some of the readers will also read character parts.

DIRECTOR TIPS: During this piece, readers not only share the narration but also read isolated character lines. They “double-up” on the reading parts. You might ask character line readers to change their voices to create a special voice just for their assigned character. When they go back to narration lines, they can also go back to using their regular voices.

NOTE: You can add more readers to this script by not doubling-up and assigning the character lines to your extra readers.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

ANIMAL FACTS THAT RELATE TO THIS SCRIPT:

DESERT TORTOISE: The desert tortoise is able to live where ground temperatures become extremely hot because of its ability to dig underground burrows to escape the heat. It is one of the most elusive inhabitants of the desert, spending most of its time underground to escape the heat of the summer and the cold of winter. They live in burrows which they dig. These can be 3-6 feet deep. They will spend November through February in a dormant state in their underground burrows. How fast do they move? (Answer: average speed is 0.2 mph).

CHEETAH: How fast does a Cheetah move? (Answer: the Cheetah is the fastest land animal, reaching speeds of 70-75 mph in short bursts covering short distances).

BOBCAT: Tail and Camouflage: The Bobcat is named for its very short stubby tawny-colored tail. Spots on the fur can be splattered all over the body or just on the underside creating an excellent camouflage.

Call of the Wild: The calls of a bobcat can sound strikingly similar to that of a domestic cat, although piercing screams and a coughing bark are uniquely its own.

ROADRUNNER: Roadrunners are fast enough to catch and kill a rattlesnake! They can run up to 20 miles per hour. Although this bird is capable of flight, it spends most of its time on the ground. During flight, the wings are short and rounded. Roadrunners generally prefer sprinting to flying, but will fly to escape predators.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

(Chorus)

ALL: Look at that rabbit,
 Hopping, hopping by,
 With great long ears
 Pointing right up to the sky.
 If you wonder where he got those ears
 And how they came about
 Just listen to this legend
 AND YOU'LL FIND OUT!

(Verse 1)

READER 1: Years ago the lonely desert
 Was a pretty empty space

READER 2: Until The Great Spirit
 Thought to populate the place.

READER 3: He created desert critters -
 Mammal, reptile, insect, bird,

READER 4: Then told his spirit helpers
 To go out and spread the word.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

(Verse 2)

GREAT SPIRIT (READER 7):

Yes, please spread the word
 I need a helper, an assistant
 Most important: He must LISTEN well!
 On that point, I am insistent.
 His job will be to take these critters
Down to desert land
 And teach them how to live there
 Upon the desert sand.

(Verse 3)

READER 5: And who got the job?
 By now you must have guessed.

READER 6: A short-eared rabbit
Applied and passed the test.

READER 1: Then the Great Spirit trained him,
 Taught him all about the critters,

READER 2: And sent him down to help them
Adapt and not be quitters.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

(Verse 4)

READER 3: A pokey desert tortoise
Was the first in need of aid.

READER 4: She finally found the rabbit,
Then settled in some shade.
She asked,

TORTOISE (READER 5):

"Oh clever rabbit,
Why can't I move faster?
I want to run like Cheetah.
My pace is a disaster!"

(Verse 5)

READER 6: But the short-eared rabbit
Really didn't know.
He hadn't *really* listened
When it came to fast and slow.
So he just made up the answer...

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

RABBIT (READER 1):

"I hate to break your heart,
You're slow because you're dumb as dirt
And Cheetah? Well – he's smart!"

(Verse 6)

READER 7: The pokey desert tortoise left,
Downhearted and depressed.

READER 2: Next in line was Bobcat
And he too looked quite stressed.
He said,

BOBCAT (READER 3)

"I want a bushy tail.
This nob is quite unfair."

READER 4: But the short-eared rabbit
Really didn't care.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

(Verse 7)

READER 5: He hadn't paid attention
 When it came to tail-type stories
 So he made up something quickly
 About lack of inventories.
 He said,

READER 1 (RABBIT):

"The bushy tails were gone
 By the time you joined the line,
 So you got the left-overs
 Hey, on you the bob looks fine!"

(Verse 8)

READER 6: As the Bobcat left,
Feeling blue and hated,
 A Roadrunner entered
Looking quite deflated.
 She cried,

READER 2 (ROADRUNNER):

"I met an eagle
 And I want to be like that!
 Flying high in the sky is
Really where's it's at!"

RABBIT (READER 1):

"No, no,"

READER 4: said the rabbit,

RABBIT (READER 1):

"An eagle is majestic.

You're just an ordinary bird

You're really quite domestic."

(CONTINUED)...

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!