



Herb and Lois Walker's

SCRIPTS FOR SCHOOLS

**The City Mouse and
the Country Mouse**

Original Script by
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Adapted for Readers
Theater by Lois

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**Read-Aloud Script/THE CITY MOUSE AND THE
COUNTRY MOUSE/Scripts For Schools**

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**By Lois Walker
3 readers, 7 ½ script pages**

**READER 1: Phoebe
READER 2: Mrs. Chipmunk/The Cat
READER 3: Valerie**

This script is meant to be read aloud and has been blocked or staged as a Readers Theater piece, not as a traditional theater piece.

STAGE SET-UP: Arrange three stationary stools in a line facing audience area. (Piano stools with swivel seats may be used, if desired). Leave enough space between stools to allow for movement in-between and around stools. Place three music stands in front of stools to hold script binders. Lower stands to a level which allows audience to see readers faces and upper bodies.

READER FOCUS:

Readers are asked to read all lines front (toward the audience) and not to each other. (As a reader, it is sometimes helpful to look just above the heads of the audience members and address all lines there).

ACTION AND MOVEMENT:

All mimed action is also directed to the audience. No traditional theater blocking is used. After each character enters for the first time, each remains on stage throughout the entire reading and simply turns his or her back to the audience and sits when not in the immediate scene.

DIRECTOR/READER OPTIONS:

However, if you do not wish to read the script as described above, ask your readers to read-aloud while relating to and establishing eye contact with each other, and create simple mime and stage movements to enhance the dialogue. Simple props and costume pieces might also be added. Unless your readers are entering an adjudicated Readers Theater competition, no strict rules need apply!

COSTUME POSSIBILITIES:

The script calls for a simple bonnet for the country mouse and an elaborate hat for the city mouse. Additional costume pieces might

include a shawl for Mrs. Chipmunk and cat ears and whiskers for the cat. All costume pieces must be pre-set on or beside stools before the reading begins.

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ENTRANCE: Pheobe and Mrs. Chipmunk enter from opposite sides of the reading area carrying their scripts with them. Both take their assigned places in front of stools and behind music stands. Both place their scripts on music stand in front of them. Mrs. Chipmunk sits on stool and turns her back to the audience as Phoebe speaks:

READER 1/Phoebe: I'm so excited! I've just received an invitation from my cousin Valerie who lives in the city! I've never been in the city, but I hear it's very glamorous and exciting. Oh, I can't wait! I'd better get ready. Let's see... I guess I won't bake today after all!

(Mrs. Chipmunk turns to face audience, stands, and reads):

READER 2/Mrs Chipmunk: Good morning, Phoebe. I've brought that recipe you wanted.

READER 1/Phoebe: Thank you, Mrs. Chipmunk, but I won't need it. I'm not going to the fair tomorrow.

READER 2/Mrs. Chipmunk: Not going! Why?

READER 1/Phoebe: My cousin Valerie invited me to visit her in the city. I'm leaving right away!

READER 2/Mrs. Chipmunk: Why, how lovely! I hope you have a marvelous time. I went to the city once. It's quite - well - different.

READER 1/Phoebe: So I hear! And *so much fun!*

(hesitating)

READER 2/Mrs.

Chipmunk: Er - well, that is a matter of opinion. Goodbye, my dear. Enjoy yourself.

(Mrs. Chipmunk sits and turns her back to audience once again)

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READER 1/Phoebe: I certainly will! Big city --here I come!

As Pheobe reads above line, she picks up a simple country bonnet - which has been pre-set on her stool - and puts it on. She smiles at audience, then sits on stool and turns back to audience. Valerie enters the reading area and mimes dusting arranging, and straightening as she makes her way to her stool and music stand. Her script has been pre-set on the stand. She mimes dusting the stand, looks around to inspect the imaginary room, then reads):

READER 3/Valerie: There, I think everything is ready.

(to the audience)

I do want my cousin Phoebe to have a good time. She's never been to the city before.

(Keeping back to audience, Phoebe's calls out):

READER 1/Phoebe: "Valerieeeeeee!"

READER 3/Valerie: Oh, good. She's arrived. Come in, Phoebe!

(Pheobe turns to face audience and stands. She is smiling)

READER 3/Valerie: Well, it's nice to see you, Phoebe! I'm so glad you could come! Hasn't it been ages since we met? Oh, it's so delightful to be together again!

READER 1/Phoebe: Oh, Valerie, it was so nice of you to invite me! I've been so bored in the country lately and I was so happy to get your invitation!

(looking around)

And what a lovely house you have!

READER 3/Valerie: It's underneath the kitchen cabinets of some very rich people. They drop the most *divine* crumbs! Now, let's sit right down...

(Keeping back to audience, READER 2 calls out):

READER 2/Cat: *MEOOOWWW!*

(Phoebe jumps. She is very afraid)

READER 1/Phoebe: What - w-what was *that*?

(exasperated)

READER 3/Valerie: That pesky cat! I thought they put him *outside!*

READER 1/Phoebe: You mean... a cat *lives* here?

READER 3/Valerie: Yes, and the people who live here adore him and spoil him. We'd better not take any chances. Let's go shopping. I'll get my hat.

(Pheobe looks around nervously)

READER 1/Phoebe: Goodness -- imagine living under the same roof with a cat! I'd be so nervous all the time. The cats in the country live in the barn, away from the house!

(READER 2 meows as before)

READER 2/Cat: *MEOOOWWW!*

READER 1/Phoebe: Oh no, that meow sounded closer! Let's hurry Valerie. Let's get out of here.

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(As Valerie reads the following line, she picks up a very elaborate hat - which has been pre-set on her stool - and puts it on)

READER 3/Valerie: Well, off we go, my dear. I'm sorry we have to skip lunch.

READER 1/Phoebe: Don't worry, I've lost my appetite.

(Phoebe and Valerie turn backs to audience, but do not sit. They silently count to three, then Valerie turns back to audience and reads):

READER 3/Valerie: Stay close to me, Phoebe -- and watch the traffic. Let's go into this store.

(Valerie again turns back to audience, but does not sit)

READER 1/Phoebe: I never saw such tall buildings and crowds of people and flashing lights! I don't know how you find your way around, Valerie --

(She realizes Valerie is gone)

Valerie! Valerie! Where are you?

(Pheobe is frightened and her face shows this. She turns her back to audience at the same moment Valerie turns to face audience)

READER 3/Valerie: Phoebe, I thought I you were right behind me. Phoebe? Phoebe!

(Valerie turns back to audience again as though looking for Pheobe. She calls Pheobe's name again. As she turns, Pheobe turns to face audience and calls Valerie's name. They do this several times, each with increasing panic. Phoebe finally stops facing the audience. Valerie stands with back to audience)

READER 1/Phoebe: I'm lost! I'm lost! Oh, what will I do? I'd better see if I can find Valerie's house. Oh dear, all the city houses look the same! I wonder if it's down this street

(She is confused. She turns her back to audience again)