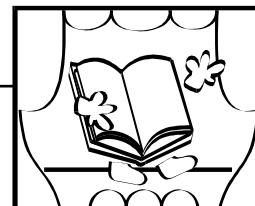


Readers' Theater

John, Paul, George & Ben

by Lane Smith



(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4
	Narrator 5	Paul	George	Tom
	Ben	Teacher/Mr. Douglas/George Washington's Father		

Narrator 1: Once there were four lads:
John, Paul, George and Ben.

Narrator 2: Make that five lads.
There was also Independent Tom
(always off doing his OWN thing).

Narrator 3: JOHN was a *bold* lad.

Narrator 4: At the start of every school year, the students were asked to write their names on the chalkboard, and every year it was the same story.

Teacher: John, you have lovely penmanship. John, your confidence is refreshing. But, John, c'mon...

(Display a huge signature of John Hancock)

Teacher: ...we don't need to see it from space!

Narrator 5: PAUL was a *noisy* lad.

Narrator 1: Before fun was invented, people joined bell-ringing clubs. As a member at Boston's Old North Church, Paul spent hours practicing in the belfry tower.

Narrator 2: Over time, that bell-ringing took a toll on young Paul. All day his head was filled with loud *bing*s and *bong*s. He had to practically scream just to hear himself talk.

Narrator 3: Now, that's fine around the belfry...but not at work.

Narrator 4: When Paul was working in a store, a rather large lady asked for some extra-large underwear. And Paul said, in a rather loud voice...

Paul: **EXTRA-LARGE UNDERWEAR? SURE WE HAVE SOME!
LET'S SEE. LARGE...LARGE...EXTRA-LARGE.
HERE THEY ARE. GREAT, BIG EXTRA-
LARGE UNDERWEAR.**

Narrator 5: Paul was like a bullhorn in a china shop.

Paul: **YOUR WIG? YES, IT'S COMING!
AND YOUR POLKA-DOT SHIRTS ARE COMING!
AND THE PINK BREECHES ARE COMING!**

Narrator 1: It took many years and a midnight ride for people to finally appreciate his special talent.

Paul: **THE REDCOATS ARE COMING.**

Narrator 2: Everyone except that big-underwear lady.
She was still mad.

Narrator 3: GEORGE was an *honest* lad.

Narrator 4: One day, he took his shiny new hatchet and chopped down his family's cherry tree. When his father discovered the tree, he asked George...

Father: Son, do you know who killed this beautiful little cherry tree?

George: I cannot tell a lie. T'was I who chopped down this cherry tree.

Father: Then run to my arms, dearest boy, for you have paid me for it a thousand-fold with your honesty.

George: Really? In that case, when I tell you I've taken out the apple orchard, leveled the barn, and made kindling of your carriage, you'll be a wealthy, wealthy man.

Narrator 5: Ben was a *clever* lad.

Narrator 1: Not only did he have a saying for every situation, he generously shared them with anyone. **Anywhere. At any time.**

Ben: Fish and visitors **STINK** after three days.

Narrator 2: He considered it his duty to provide frequent, free advice.

Ben: The sleeping **FOX** catches no poultry.

Those who in **QUARRELS** interpose must often wipe a bloody nose.

If your head is **WAX**, don't walk in the **SUN**.

THREE can keep a secret if **TWO** of them are **DEAD**.

Narrator 3: The townsfolk were so taken by his generosity, they came up with a saying especially for Ben...

ALL (Except Ben): **PLEASE SHUT YOUR BIG YAP!**

Ben: I like it. Short and to the point.
Work a *fox* or *turkey* in there,
and I think you've got something.

Narrator 4: Tom was an *independent* lad.

Narrator 5: One day his teacher, Mr. Douglas, asked the class to make birdhouses by gluing macaroni to ye olde balsa wood.

Narrator 1: Tom happily ignored him and used traditional building materials in a neoclassical design.

Narrator 2: When the class used their palms to make a "palm" tree, Tom took one look and said...

Tom: **NOT ON YOUR LIFE!**

Narrator 3: Then he quickly left to sketch his own tree.

Mr. Douglas: Young Thomas, would you mind explaining to the class why you insist on working so independently?

Tom: Certainly. In fact, I've taken the **LIBERTY** to list the very reasons. Fear not, sir, I've used small words for the benefit of the dullards.

Narrator 4: Tom learned the power of his words that day.

Narrator 5: Mr. Douglas told him to pursue all the **LIFE, LIBERTY and HAPPINESS** he wanted...

Narrator 1: independently...in the corner.
The other students pursued lunch.

Narrator 2: The rest is **HISTORY**.

Narrator 3: Say, you want a revolution?
Well, John, Paul, George, Ben and Tom sure did.
In April of 1775, they got one.

Narrator 4: The Redcoats were coming.
In fact, King George III's army was marching to Lexington and Concord to arrest John and other **SONS OF LIBERTY**...

Narrator 5: Fortunately, Paul Revere was a **NOISY** man. After his midnight ride, every Minute-man, woman, and child knew who was coming and what they'd be wearing. It was the start of the *Revolutionary War*.

Narrator 1: The Americans needed to formally state their separation from King George. Who better than Thomas Jefferson, an **INDEPENDENT** man, to write the Declaration of Independence?

Narrator 2: Simply signing such a document was treasonous. And dangerous. Ben Franklin, a **CLEVER** man, said it best...

Ben: We must all hang together or...
assuredly we shall all hang separately.

Narrator 3: One might think twice about signing his name.
Not John Hancock. A **BOLD** man, he was the first to scribble his name and, man, just look at the size of that John Hancock!

Narrator 4: The war was won thanks to General George Washington. Everyone thought he would make a great king for the new **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**. But George Washington was an **HONEST** man.

George: The last thing we need is another King George!

