Herb and Lois Walker's

SCRIPTS FOR SCHOOLS

**WHY THE EVERGREEN TREES
KEEP THEIR LEAVES**

**Re-told and Formatted
for Readers Theater
by Lois Walker**

A Story Poem Based on a
Well-Known Folktale and an
Old English Nursery Rhyme

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Why The Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves

Re-told and Formatted for Readers Theater

as a Christmas Story 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 <u>wind</u> will <u>blow</u>, we <u>will</u> have <u>snow</u>,

And <u>what</u> does a <u>lit</u>tle bird <u>then</u>, poor <u>thing</u>?

Find a <u>kin</u>dly <u>tree</u> who <u>might</u> a<u>gree</u>

To <u>gua</u>rantee <u>lodg</u>ing, 'til <u>spring</u>!

READER 1:   It was <u>cold</u>, we're <u>told</u>, a <u>long</u> time a<u>go</u>,

READER 2:   Then "<u>shiv</u>ered" and "<u>quiv</u>ered" by <u>win</u>ter's first <u>snow</u>,
                   The <u>birds</u> did their <u>thing</u>, as <u>each</u> took <u>wing</u>,

READER 3:   And <u>flew</u> away <u>south</u> to <u>wait</u> for <u>spring</u>.

READER 4:   One <u>wor</u>ried bird <u>stay</u>ed, <u>a</u>fraid, you <u>know</u> -
                   Couldn't <u>fly</u> in the <u>sky</u>, had to <u>stay</u> be<u>low</u>.

READER 5:   An ab<u>surd</u> little <u>bird</u> with a <u>brok</u>en <u>wing</u>,
                   A<u>fraid</u> to <u>think</u> what <u>win</u>ter might <u>bring</u>.

ALL: North <u>wind</u> will <u>blow</u>, we <u>will</u> have <u>snow</u>,

                        And <u>what</u> does a <u>lit</u>tle bird <u>then</u>, poor <u>thing</u>?

                        <u>Sit</u> in a <u>tree</u>, all <u>wrapped</u> in <u>leaves</u>

                        And <u>hide</u> his head <u>under</u> his <u>wing</u>?

READER 6:   That's <u>how</u> it be<u>gan</u>, the <u>plan</u>, the de<u>sign</u>.

READER 7:   We a<u>gree</u> that a <u>tree</u> could <u>suit</u> the bird <u>fine</u>,

                        But <u>finding</u> a <u>tree</u> to a<u>gree</u> caused the <u>trouble.</u>

READER 8:   For <u>this</u> bird was <u>broken</u> - all <u>stubble</u> and <u>rubble.</u>

READER 9
(BIRCH TREE):   <u>"No!"</u>

READER 8:   said birch <u>tree</u>,

READER 9
(BIRCH TREE):   "Are you <u>blind</u>, can't you <u>see</u>?

                        I <u>need</u> to be <u>free</u> to <u>take</u> care of <u>me</u>!

                        So <u>please</u> go a<u>way</u>, don't <u>stay</u>, I'm no <u>shelf</u>.

                        You <u>can't</u> perch on <u>me</u>, take <u>care</u> of your<u>self</u>."

ALL: North <u>wind</u> will <u>blow</u>, we <u>will</u> have <u>snow</u>,

                        And <u>what</u> does a <u>lit</u>tle bird <u>then</u>, poor <u>thing</u>?

                        <u>Sit</u> in a <u>tree</u>, all <u>wrapped</u> in <u>leaves</u>

                        And <u>hide</u> his head <u>un</u>der his <u>wing</u>?

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 8

(SPRUCE):   **"What would Jesus do?"**

READER 7:   Called a spruce tree nearby.

READER 8

(SPRUCE):   "Well, he'd offer you shelter – that *I* can 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,