

A Reader's Theater Script for **The Boy Who Cried Lunch Monitor**

Adapted from "The Boy Who Cried Lunch Monitor," a chapter in *The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary School*, written by Candace Fleming, Schwartz & Wade, 2007. (For grades 2-5.)

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ROLES: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Narrator 4, Narrator 5, Mrs. Bunz, Lenny, Jackie, Victoria, Calvin, Melvin, Students

NOTE: If you want everyone in your class to have a role, expand the number of narrators. One child can be Narrator 1 on pages 1 and 2, and another can be Narrator 1 on pages 3 and 4, and so on. You could have 12 narrators this way. The role of Students can be played by the remaining children. They act as a sort of chorus. When you compare the script to the original chapter, you'll note that the many children have been consolidated into 5 roles, to make sure they everybody gets a decent amount of lines.

NARRATOR 1: The fourth grade class at Aesop Elementary School had a reputation among all the teachers for being —

NARRATOR 2: Precocious.

NARRATOR 3: High energy.

NARRATOR 4: Robust.

NARRATOR 5: Because Mrs. Bertha Bunz, the lunchroom monitor, wasn't a teacher, she felt free to speak the truth.

MRS. BUNZ: Humph! Those kids are just plain naughty!

NARRATOR 1: Mrs. Bunz ruled Aesop Elementary's lunchroom with an iron fist.

LENNY: No kid dared blow bubbles in his milk, or slurp her spaghetti, or stick a straw up his nose. If one of them did . . .

MRS. BUNZ: *(bellowing into her bullhorn)* **LUNCHROOM INFRACTION! Five minutes . . . on the WALL!**

JACKIE: On the wall. Those three words stuck fear into the heart of every student at Aesop Elementary.

STUDENTS: *(Students hug arms and shiver and shudder)* **On the wall. Oooooohhhhhh.**

VICTORIA: On the wall. It was Mrs. Bunz's favorite punishment. A form of torture so horrible that anyone who endured it never again left his bread crusts uneaten, or chewed with her mouth open.

NARRATOR 2: Still, at the beginning of every school year, there was always one kid foolish enough to tangle with . . .

STUDENTS: **BIG BAD BUNZ.**

CALVIN: *(hollering)* **You know what I'm having for lunch?**

NARRATOR 3: Before anyone could warn her, she would open her mouth wide so all could see the gob of half-chewed baloney with mustard and pickle relish on pumpernickel lurking inside.

CALVIN: *(opens mouth wide)* **SEAFOOD!**

MRS. BUNZ: *(bellowing into her bullhorn)* **LUNCHROOM INFRACTION! Five minutes . . . on the WALL!**

STUDENTS: **On the wall. Oooooohhhhhh.** *(Students hug arms and shiver and shudder)*

MRS. BUNZ: *(bellowing into her bullhorn)* **I think you have something to say to your classmates!**

CALVIN: *(looks bewildered)* Huh?

MRS. BUNZ: *(bellowing into her bullhorn)* **An apology. You owe us all an apology!**

NARRATOR 4: No one could bear to watch.

NARRATOR 5: One hundred elementary school students would quickly look down at their carrot sticks or stare at their apple slices.

CALVIN: *(looks embarrassed, stammers)* I . . . I don't understand.

NARRATOR 1: That was when Mrs. Bunz would pull the note card, yellowed with age and wrinkled from much use, from her pocket.

MRS. BUNZ: Read it.

CALVIN: *(in a quivering voice)* I apologize for my rudeness and promise to use my best table manners the next time I sit down to lunch.

MRS. BUNZ: Thank you.

NARRATOR 2: Then she'd walk away, leaving the kid to simmer in her own embarrassment for five minutes . . .

NARRATORS: **ON THE WALL.**

CALVIN: *(puts arm straight out against wall, palms back, a mortified look on his face)*

STUDENTS: **On the wall. Oooooohhhhhh.** *(Students hug arms and shiver and shudder)*

NARRATOR 3: No wonder the children in Aesop's Elementary's lunchroom sat up straight, ate in silence, and cleaned up all their trash.

MRS. BUNZ: Lunchtime isn't about enjoyment. It's about discipline, and maintaining order.

NARRATOR 4: There was an emergency in the school and Mrs. Bunz was called to help with her bullhorn.

MRS. BUNZ: I'm on my way! (*stomps out*)

NARRATOR 5: Left unmonitored, the students sat in silence for a moment. Then . . .

NARRATOR 1: Lenny glanced furtively around the lunchroom. He took a big swig of his Mr. Fizz and . . .

LENNY: **B-U-U-U-R-P!**

NARRATORS 1-5: The doors of restraint were belched wide open.

JACKIE: **Hey, Calvin. Catch my Cheesy Puffs.** (*tosses one in Calvin's open mouth*)

CALVIN: (*catches Cheesy Puff and chews it*) Good throw, Jackie!

VICTORIA: Watch me put a pretzel stick up my nose!

STUDENTS: (*laugh and yell and gargle their chocolate milk*)

NARRATOR 2: The only fourth grader not laughing or talking or joining in the fun was Melvin Moody.

NARRATOR 3: Melvin was used to not joining in. He was used to not being part of the group.

NARRATOR 4: Somehow, in Mr. Jupiter's class, Melvin always managed to blurt out the wrong thing, or pick his nose when someone was looking, or fumble the ball at recess and lose the championship kickball game.

NARRATOR 5: Now Melvin was suddenly seized with an uncontrollable urge.

MELVIN: (*leaps up, cups hands around mouth*) **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

LENNY: **Uh, oh!**

JACKIE: Victoria, get that pretzel stick out of your nose!

VICTORIA: Whoops!

NARRATORS 1-5: Fear swept through the room.

STUDENTS: *(sit up straight, fix their hair, fold hands)*

NARRATOR 1: A minute passed.

NARRATOR 2-3: Then another.

NARRATORS 1-5: And another.

VICTORIA: She's not coming.

LENNY: *(to Melvin, angrily)* You did it! You ruined the fun!

JACKIE: BOOOO!

CALVIN: *(sticks out tongue at Melvin)*

NARRATOR 1: Someone threw a banana peel.

NARRATOR 2-3: It hit Melvin on the back of the head.

NARRATORS 1-5: And Melvin loved it!

MELVIN: *(to audience, proudly)* I'm the center of attention!

NARRATOR 1: Melvin felt like a celebrity.

VICTORIA: There's that kid from the lunchroom.

MELVIN: I'm somebody!

LENNY: What a loser.

JACKIE: What's his name again?

STUDENTS: *(shrug and shake their heads)*

NARRATOR 2: The next day, Mrs. Bunz got a phone call in the office.

MRS. BUNZ: Tell them I'm busy. What? It's from my mother, the

marine? She's calling from boot camp? All right. I'm coming. *(stalks out)*

VICTORIA: Hey everyone, watch me squeeze all the cream filling out of my cupcakes.

LENNY: Let's have a cookie race down the table.

JACKIE: *(in sports announcer voice)* And the Oreo takes the lead. Followed by Hydrox and Girl Scout . . .

STUDENTS: *(laugh and yell and blow straw covers in the air)*

MELVIN: *(leaps up, cups hands around mouth)* **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

LENNY: Quick! Stuff the cookies in your mouth!

STUDENTS: *(sit up straight, fix their hair, fold hands)*

NARRATOR 3: Flushed and panting, everyone braced themselves for . . . nothing!

CALVIN: Not again! What's your problem, kid?

MELVIN: *(proud, grinning)* They're all talking about and recognizing ME! I am **SOMEBODY!**

NARRATOR 4: Fame was fleeting.

NARRATOR 5: By the middle of the following week, Melvin was as forgotten as last month's vocabulary words.

NARRATOR 1: Then, during lunch . . .

NARRATORS 1-5: CRASH!

NARRATOR 2: It was the secretary, Mrs. Shorthand, who had been standing on a swivel chair and hanging a sign in the hallway.

NARRATORS 1-5: MAYDAY!

MRS. BUNZ: I'm on my way! I'm coming, Mrs. Shorthand! *(runs out)*

JACKIE: Hey, everyone. Let's play Flick Your Peas!

STUDENTS: *(laugh and yell and flick their peas)*

MELVIN: *(to audience)* Oh, no. Here comes Mrs. Bunz. *(leaps up, cups hands around mouth)* **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

LENNY: Yeah, right!

MRS. BUNZ: *(starts coming back to lunchroom)*

MELVIN: *(hops up and down)* **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

MRS. BUNZ: *(gets closer)*

CALVIN: Knock it off, kid. Nobody believes you.

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Bunz pushed on the wide swinging cafeteria doors.

NARRATOR 4: Panicked and desperate, Melvin leaped onto a table.

MELVIN: *(hops up and down, waving his arms)* **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

NARRATOR 5: His behavior finally grabbed their attention.

STUDENTS: **HUH?** *(All swivel to gape at Melvin.)*

MRS. BUNZ: *(bursts into lunchroom, bellowing through her bullhorn)* **LUNCHROOM INFRACTION!**

MELVIN: *(hops up and down, waving his arms)* **LUNCH MONITOR! LUNCH MONITOR!**

MRS. BUNZ: Unbelievable! I'm gone just a few minutes and look how you behave! Melvin Moody, that's five minutes . . . **ON THE WALL!**

STUDENTS: **On the wall. Oooooohhhhhh.** (*Students hug arms and shiver and shudder*)

MELVIN: (*puts arm straight out against wall, palms back, a mortified look on his face*)

NARRATORS 1-5: MORAL.

EVERYONE: (*shake fingers at Melvin*) **LIARS ARE NOT BELIEVED
EVEN WHEN THEY TELL THE TRUTH.**

Judy Freeman (www.JudyReadsBooks.com) is a well-known consultant, writer, and speaker on children's literature, and the author of *Books Kids Will Sit Still For 3* (Libraries Unlimited, 2006) and *Once Upon a Time!: Using Storytelling, Creative Drama, and Reader's Theater with Children in Grades PreK-6* (2007).