

***Do Unto Otters:
A Book About Manners***
by Laurie Keller

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

Characters: Mr. Rabbit Otter 1 Otter 2 Otter 3
 Owl Narrator 1 Narrator 2 Narrator 3

Mr. Rabbit: DOO-DEE-DOO DOO-DEE-DOO
 DOO-DEE-DONK!

Otters 1, 2, 3: Hello, Mr. Rabbit. We're your new neighbors
 the OTTERS!

Mr. Rabbit: Otters? Otters? My new neighbors are
 OTTERS! I don't know anything about otters.
 What if we don't get along?

Owl: Mr. Rabbit. I know an old saying. Do unto
 otters as you would have otters do unto you.

Mr. Rabbit: What does THAT mean?

Owl: It simply means treat otters the same way
 you'd like otters to treat you.

Mr. Rabbit: Treat otters the same way I'd like otters to treat me?

Hmmm ... How would I like otters to treat me?
Well ... I'd like otters to be friendly.

Otter 1: A cheerful hello.

Otter 2: A nice smile.

Otter 3: Good eye contact.

Otter 1, 2, 3: They are all part of being friendly.

Mr. Rabbit: Friendliness is very important to me — especially after my last neighbor, Mrs. Grrrrrrrr.

Narrator 1: Voted "Meanest Neighbor" six years in a row.

Mr. Rabbit: I'd like otters to be polite.

Narrator 2: They should know when to say please.

Otter 1: I can say "please" in 5 languages:

Por favor (Spanish)

S'il vous plaît (French)

Bitte (German)

Kudasai (Japanese)

Easeplay (Pig Latin)

Mr. Rabbit: They should know when to say thank you.

Otter 2: I can say “thank you” in 5 languages:

Gracias (Spanish)

Merci (French)

Danke schön (German)

Arigato (Japanese)

Ankthay ouya (Pig Latin)

Mr. Rabbit: And they should know when to say “excuse me.”

Otter 3: I can say “excuse me” in 5 languages:

Dispénseme (Spanish)

Pardonnez-moi (French)

Entschuldigen Sie (German)

Sumimasen (Japanese)

Excuseway emay (Pig Latin)

Mr. Rabbit: Otters should be honest.

Narrator 3: That means they should keep their promise, not lie, and not cheat.

Mr. Rabbit: I’d like otters to be considerate.

Otter 1: You know... being a good listener, asking before borrowing something and not littering.

Otter 2: Being patient, caring for all creatures, big and small, and opening the door for someone.

Otter 3: Being on time, respecting the elderly, helping neighbor untangle ears.

Narrators 1, 2, 3: It's always good to be a considerate neighbor.

Mr. Rabbit: It wouldn't hurt otters to be kind.

Narrators 1, 2, 3: Everyone appreciates a kind act no matter how bad it smells.

Mr. Rabbit: Oh, and what's that word? Cooperate! Otters should learn to cooperate.

Narrator 1: Co-operate: to work well together.

Otters 1, 2, 3: We know how to co-otter-ate!

Mr. Rabbit: I see otters like to play. I hope they know how to play fair.

Otters 1, 2, 3: Otters' rules for fair play:

Otter 1: Be a good sport.

Otter 2: Play by the rules.

Otter 3: Take turns.

Otter 1, 2, 3: Include everyone, even bees.

Mr. Rabbit: I'd like it if we could share things.

Otter 1: Our favorite books.

Otter 2: Our favorite activities.

Otter 3: Our favorite treats.

Otters 1, 2, 3: hmmm maybe not the treats.

Mr. Rabbit: I hope otters won't tease me about: My doo-dee-doo song, my extra-large swim fins and my bad hare days. I hope otters won't tease anyone about anything ...

Otter 1: Teasing is mean.

Otter 2: It's the worst.

Otter 3: It's worse than having a clam snap shut on your nose.

Mr. Rabbit: I think otters should apologize when they do something wrong.

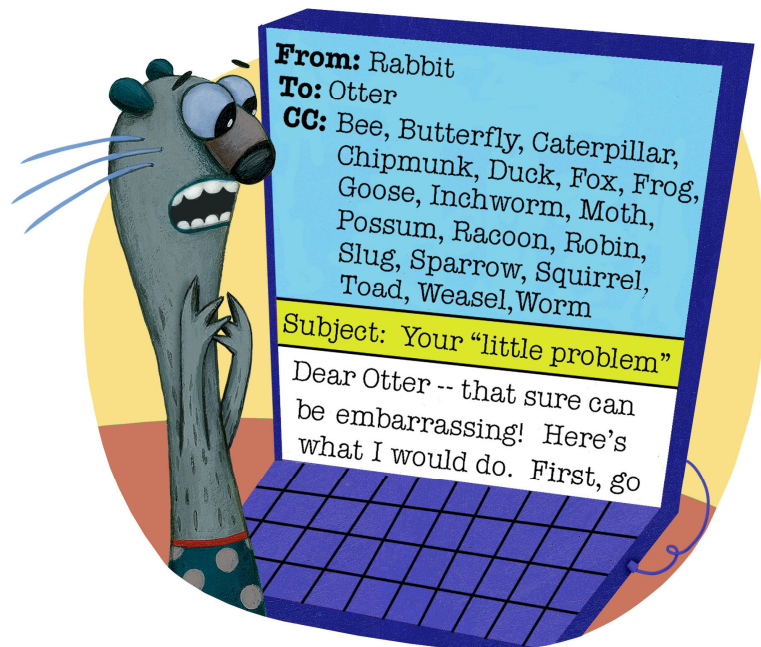
Otter 1: I'm sorry I used your ear as a tissue.

Mr. Rabbit: And I hope they can be forgiving when I do something wrong. So there, that's how I'd like otters to treat me.

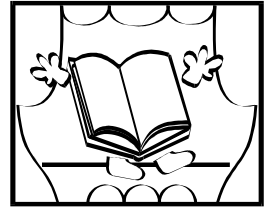
Owl: You see, Mr. Rabbit, I told you it was simple.

EVERYONE: Right! Just doo-dee-doo unto otters as you would have otters doo-dee-doo unto you!

Do not overuse "Reply to All" or "CC".



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A Frog Thing

by Eric Drachman

illustrated by James Muscarello

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

Characters: Frank Frank's Mom Mother Bird
 Frank's Dad Narrator 1 Narrator 2
 Narrator 3

Narrator 1: Frank wanted to fly. But he was a frog,
and frogs can't fly.

Narrator 2: Frank was different, though.

Narrator 3: Special.

Narrator 1: Aerodynamic.

Frank's Mom You can do whatever you set your mind
& Dad: to, Frankie.

Narrator 2: So Frank set his mind to flying.

Narrator 3: But, it was more like falling than flying.

All Narrators: Everyone laughed at him.

Narrator 1: Tired and discouraged, Frank buried his head in his big webbed feet.

Narrator 2: And that's how Frank's parents found him.

Narrator 3: Frank explained his problem to them.

Frank's Dad: When we said you could do anything you set your mind to, we meant any ... FROG THING.

See, flying is a BIRD THING, just like staying underwater forever is a FISH THING.

Frank's Mom: Yes, you should find a frog thing.

Frank: But I want to fly!

Dad: I'm sorry, kiddo, but frogs can't fly.

Mom: No, we swim and we hop, but we don't fly.

Frank: I'll show them. I'll learn to fly right over the pond.

Narrator 1: He jumped and ran.

Narrator 2: And leapt and dove.

Narrator 3: He flapped and flapped and flapped and finally just flopped on top of a leaf to rest. He soaked his sore feet and hung his heavy head until SPLASH!

Narrator 1: Something crashed into the water and started to sink.

Narrator 2: Frank leapt into action.

Frank: It's a little bird.

Narrator 3: He swooped down, swept her up and swam her back to shore.

Narrator 1: The mother bird hugged her baby tight.

Narrator 2: The mother bird turned and kissed Frank right on the cheek. He was very surprised and a little embarrassed.

Mother Bird: Thank you, thank you. What a great swimmer you are! How can I ever repay you?

Frank: Oh, it was nothing, Ma'am.

Mother Bird: Please, I want to do something for you.
Anything.

Frank: Well ... I really, really want to fly.

Mother Bird: But, frogs don't fly.

Frank: I know.

Mother Bird: And you still want to fly?

Frank: I've set my mind to it.

Mother Bird: Wait here, I'll be right back.

Narrator 3: She came back with another bird and a twig
between them.

Mother Bird: Grab on!

Narrator 1: Before he knew it, they were high above the
trees. The morning sun streamed through the
sky, and the wind whistled over Frank's slick
green skin.

Narrator 2: It was a little scary at first, but soon he relaxed,
as they glided and rose and swooped and dove.

Narrator 3: Everyone hurried to see Frank fly. They watched from the bank as he and the birds passed high overhead.

Frank's Mom: This is no ordinary frog thing.

Narrator 1: When their flight was finished, the mother bird pulled Frank close.

Mother Bird: You are a very special frog.

Frank: Thank you! Thank you so much.

Narrator 2: Frank hopped home, somehow lighter than before.

Narrator 3: On his way, he met his folks.

Mom: Frankie, we saw you up there.

Dad: Fantastic! You can do anything you set your mind to.

Mom: Anything.

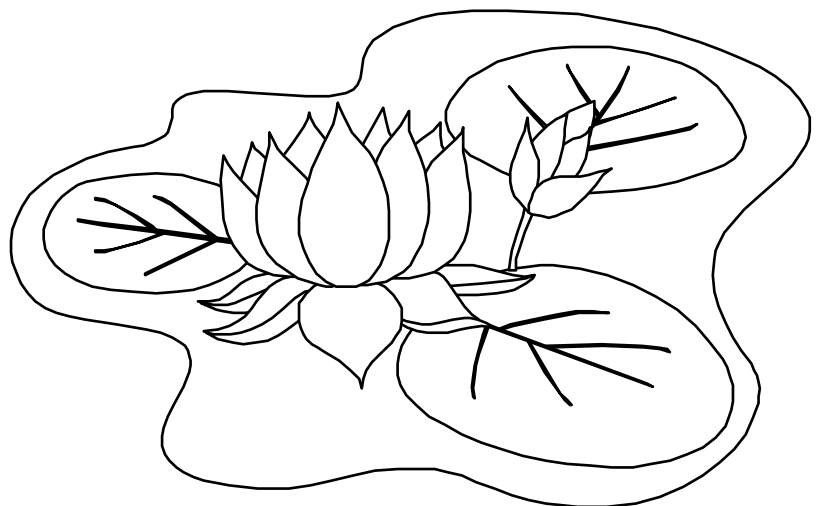
Frank: Well ... any frog thing, maybe. The birds were the ones flying. I was just holding on. But I do think I could be one of the great swimmers!

Narrator 1: His parents smiled proudly as Frank joined his friends in the pond.

Narrator 2: Frank had wanted to fly.

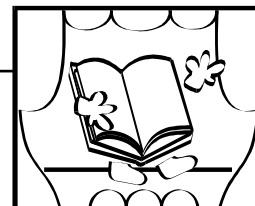
Narrator 3: But he was a frog and frogs can't fly.

Narrators 1, 2, & 3: But they sure can swim!



Readers' Theater

Millie Waits For the Mail by Alexander Steffensmeier



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

Characters: Mail Carrier Farmer Narrator 1
Narrator 2 Narrator 3

Narrator 1: Every morning while being milked, Millie stared out at the farmyard.

Narrator 2: This was her favorite time of day. Because there was something Millie loved more than anything else.

Narrator 3: Scaring the mail carrier and chasing him off the farm.

Narrator 1: Every day Millie searched for a new hiding place.

Narrator 2: On the days the farmer didn't get any mail Millie felt so let down.

Narrator 3: The farmer didn't share Millie's idea of fun. All her packages arrived broken. Millie had to be stopped.

Narrator 1: The mail carrier had terrible nightmares every night.

Narrator 2: But one morning, he finally had an idea.

Mail carrier: Maybe if I bring the cow a package she will like me.

Narrator 3: The next day, Millie lay in wait, just as she did every morning.

Narrator 1: Millie scared the mail carrier, just as she did every morning.

Farmer: That's enough, stop right there!

Mail carrier: Enough already! This package is for you, silly cow.

Narrator 2: Millie slid to a sudden stop. A package? She had never received a package before. What on earth could it be?

Narrator 3: The box bounced right past her and landed under the wheels of the farmer's tractor.

Farmer: Oh, no!

Narrator 1: It was too late. The package was completely flattened.

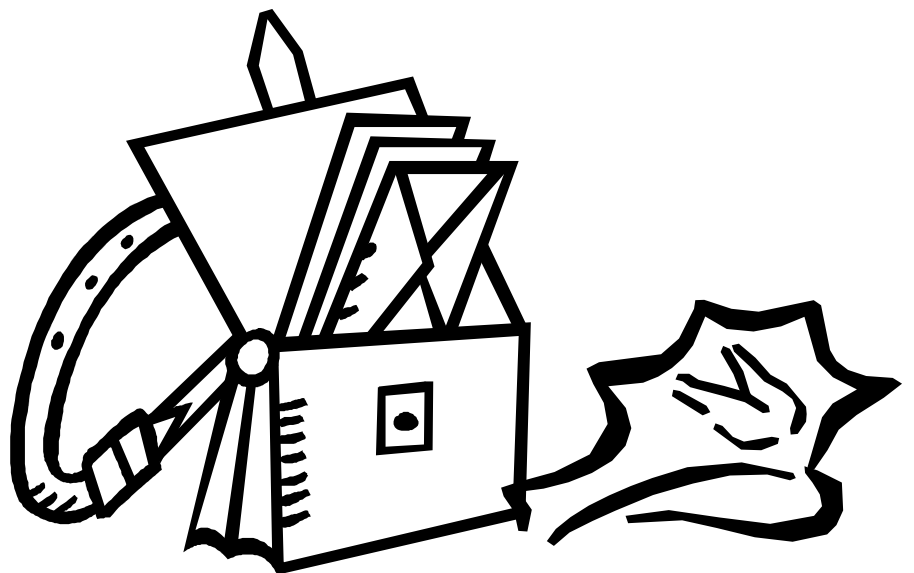
Narrator 2: Millie's heart dropped and her feet went out from under her.

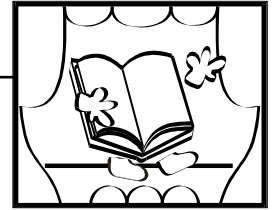
Narrator 3: When she pulled herself up the mail carrier's bicycle looked a little different.

Mail carrier: I'm ruined. How will I deliver the mail without my bicycle?

Narrator 1: Now, every morning Millie can't wait to finish her milking, because there is something she loves more than anything else.

Narrator 2: Delivering the mail.





My Life as a Chicken
as told to Ellen A. Kelley
illustrated by Michael Slack

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

Characters: Chicken Duckling Narrator 1
 Narrator 2 Narrator 3 Narrator 4
 Narrator 5

Chicken: On my nest I sit, spellbound. Underneath me I have found, perfect, smooth and almost round, my first, my lovely EGG.

Narrator 1: Hard at work she clucked and lay night and day— no time to play. Laying dozens was her fate, eggs in cartons, eggs in crates.

Chicken: But round my roost I hear suspicious words like “chicken pie, delicious.”

Narrator 2: Has farmer hatched a crafty plan to throw her in a frying pan?

Chicken: I'll be his special of the day at Cock-a-Doodle-Doo Café! BAWWWK!

Narrator 3: Hens, away! Out the gate, she must escape the dinner plate!

Narrator 4: To the brooding woods she scrambles, prickly briar'd, bristly brambled. She's chased by hungry brutes. She's spooked by swoopy hoots.

Narrator 5: Creeping through the leafy gloom a fox appears.

Chicken: I am doomed!

Narrator 1: She squeezes inside a log to hide. Fox is mad. He's stuck outside. He snarls and snaps.

Chicken: I flinch and flail then raise my cry. Pauline Prevail!

Narrator 2: Now a windy whip-and-twirl sucks them up inside its swirl, then spits them out.

Chicken: Fox, log and me. I tumble to catastrophe.

Narrator 3: Swept away into a river, churn and turned she is delivered To the sea, dunked and washed, almost drowned, sippy-sloshed.

Chicken: Then pirates pull me from the foam. Why, oh why, did I leave home?

Narrator 4: She polishes brass and sweeps the scupper, but Captain wants her for his supper. The ship's cook reaches for her neck!

Chicken: I flap fast past the quarterdeck. By sneaking off this shifty ship, I'll give these scalawags the slip. Hours pass atop the mast, I wait. The sea cats snooze at last!

Narrator 5: She tiptoes aft. Steals a raft, braves the waves, and sails her craft.

Chicken: I face the fearsome typhoon's wail, clucking loud. Pauline, Prevail!

Narrator 1: Chicken overboard!

Chicken: I am tossed, tail over beak, landing hard, a wet-hen heap, in something bobbling on the tide: a basket — dry, unoccupied.

Narrator 2: What now?

Narrator 3: A pull, a lift, surprising! From the water she is rising, crossing sea, skimming moon, carried by a big balloon.

- Narrator 4: She navigates high altitudes, an aeronaut with fortitude. Above her burns a blaze of stars, below the view blurs fast and far. One hen aloft, so all alone—
- Chicken: Will I ever find a home? From the corner of my eye, I spy a speck high in the sky. It circles closer, and then arrives.
- Narrator 5: A Hawk!
- Chicken: I duck.
- Narrator 1: Claws out, it dives.
- Chicken: I hear a hiss, a pop. I'm dropping—plummeting to earth, no stopping! From the basket's rail I bail. "Be brave, " I cluck.
- Narrator 2: Then coming fast, hard on the right.
- Chicken: I see a paper bird. A kite! We meet. I leap and latch on tight. I ride the kite, cling and swing, wilted, wounded weak of wing.
- Narrator 3: Then fall, crashing hard and steep, deep into chicken sleep.

Chicken: Whispers wake me, gentle shy. Cradled,
smoothed, and soothed am I.

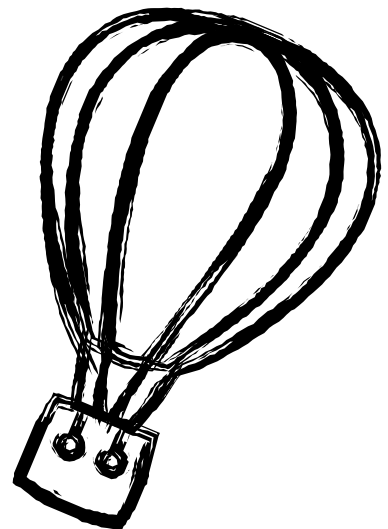
Narrator 4: Carried somewhere safe and warm: a soft
straw bed near coops of corn.

Narrator 5: Neighbors with the goats and sheep, piglets,
ducklings, chicks who peep.

Duckling: She's awake!

Chicken: I've found a paradise for me: new friends, new
nest, new family. My new home is this petting
zoo. I think I'll stay.

ALL: Now wouldn't you?





***Velma Gratch & the Way
Cool Butterfly***

by Alan Madison

illustrated by Kevin Hawkes

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

Characters: Velma	Mrs. Gratch	Principal Crossly
Fiona	Frieda	Mr. Plexipuss
Tour Guide	Narrator 1	Narrator 2
Narrator 3	Narrator 4	

Narrator 1: Velma Gratch was the youngest of the three Gratch sisters. Frieda, the oldest, had gone through first grade first, followed by Fiona. Now it was Velma's turn.

Narrator 2: The chorus teacher remembered Frieda best because she had a voice like an angel.

Narrator 3: The gym teacher remembered Fiona best because she ran like the devil.

Narrator 4: The first grade teacher, Mr. Plexipuss, fondly remembered both sisters because of Frieda's miraculous math and Fiona's spectacular spelling.

Narrator 1: Everyone from the class guinea pig to the principal had magnificent memories of the older Gratch girls. But they could hardly even recall Velma's name.

Narrator 2: This made Velma feel as if she did not belong in the first grade at all. She wanted to curl into a ball and roll right back into kindergarten.

Mrs. Gratch: Of course you belong. You've only just begun. Soon everybody will notice you.

Narrator 3: Velma couldn't wait. She needed to be noticed—now!

Narrator 4: In chorus she sang loudest so that the teacher could hear her best.

Narrator 1: In gym she ran slowest so that the teacher could see her best.

Narrator 2: In class she refused to read and muddled her math. Mr. Plexipuss lamented that she was the first Gratch sister ever sent to the principal's office. This brought a smile to Velma's lips.

Principal Crossly: Why are you singing so loudly in chorus and running so slowly in gym?

Velma: Because I want you to remember me just like you remember Frieda and Fiona.

Principal Crossly: But my dear, those Gratches are remembered for good things.

Narrator 3: Velma's small smile pretzel-twisted into a full-blown frown.

Narrator 4: Science was Velma's favorite subject. She had learned many fabulous facts, like how a rainbow is born and why a volcano burps.

Narrator 1: The latest lesson was about butterflies.

Narrator 2: Mr. Plexipuss explained that a butterfly starts as an egg. The egg turns into a caterpillar. The caterpillar disappears into a chrysalis, which is a little sack, and does not come out until it has changed into a beautiful butterfly.

Narrator 3: He called this changing metamorphosis. Velma didn't want to forget this extra-long word, so she repeated it again and again as she walked home.

Velma: Metamorphosis, metamorphosis, metamorphosis. Frieda, when you were in first grade, did you study butterflies?

- Frieda: No, we learned worms.
- Velma: Fiona, when you were in first grade, did you study butterflies.
- Fiona: No, we found out about frogs.
- Velma: Well, we are studying butterflies and ... and ... metal-more-for-this.
- Frieda: That's way cool.
- Narrator 4: Fiona bobbed her head in "way cool" agreement.
- Narrator 1: Velma read everything in the library about butterflies. She discovered that there are 20,000 different kinds – which was a lot. She adored the ones with colorful names: brown elfin, frosted flasher, sleepy orange. And the ones with funny names: comma, question mark, American snout. Not to mention the ones with strange names: morpho, painted lady, gossamer-wing.
- Narrator 2: But her favorite butterfly of all was the orange and black monarch. When it got cold, all the monarchs would fly south to Mexico to stay warm. Velma thought this was an amazing coincidence, because last winter vacation she and her family had also flown south to Mexico to stay warm.

Narrator 3: In science, Mr. Plexipuss announced that they would take a class trip to the Butterfly Conservatory, a place where real butterflies were collected and cared for. Because Velma didn't want to forget this extra-long word, she repeated it again and again as she walked home.

Velma: Conservatory, conservatory, conservatory. Frieda, did you take a class trip in first grade?

Frieda: Absolutely. We went to the museum.

Velma: Fiona, did you take a class trip in first grade?

Fiona: Absolutely. We went to the aquarium.

Velma: Well, we're going to the can ... can ... can-serve-the-story."

Frieda: That's way cool.

Narrator 4: Fiona bobbed her head in "way cool" agreement.

Narrator 1: The Butterfly Conservatory was surrounded by fancy flower beds and bedecked with banners of butterflies. Velma was so excited, her knobby knees wobbled, her spaghetti arms trembled, and her carrot curls shook.

Narrator 2: A sharp-nosed woman holding a clipboard introduced herself.

Tour Guide: I am your tour guide. Inside, a butterfly might land on you. But please don't touch its wings. Does anyone know why?

Narrator 3: Velma's hand shot up.

Velma: Because they're made of teeny tiny scales that could rub off like dust, and that is not good.

Tour Guide: Precisely. What's your name?

Velma: I am Velma, the youngest of the three Gratch sisters.

Tour Guide: Hmmmm, I don't think I know your sisters.

Narrator 4: The group entered the rain-forested room. It was a magical space slathered in tall trees and tangled vines. Water gurgled over rocks, and butterflies of every variety — giant swallow tails, short-tailed skippers, pygmy blues, and best of all monarchs — flew up to forever.

Tour Guide: When it gets colder in a couple of weeks I will take the monarchs into the park and let them go free, so that they can fly to Mexico. This traveling is called migration.

Narrator 1: Because Velma didn't want to forget this extra long word, she repeated it again and again as she walked through the rain forest.

Velma: Migration, migration, migration.

Narrator 2: A gorgeous green comma rested on Randy's head. The class oohed.

Narrator 3: A baby brown elfin settled on Sandy's nose. The class aahed.

Narrator 4: A big blue morpho alighted on Andy's shoulder. The class gasped.

Narrator 1: But not one single butterfly landed on any part of Velma.

Mr. Plexipuss: Time to leave.

Narrator 2: A tear formed in a distant corner of Velma's eye. All she wanted was one single tingly touch of a butterfly.

Narrator 3: On a nearby branch sat a most lovely monarch. How she yearned to pet those velvety wings! She moved slowly.

Narrator 4: The class was leaving. One more inch ... It was so pretty. She froze. If she touched its wings, it might ...

Narrator 1: Velma couldn't do it. She couldn't hurt a butterfly.

Mr. Plexipuss: Come on, Velma, we have to go.

Narrator 2: Sadly Velma turned away. And at that very moment the most marvelous thing happened.

Narrator 3: The monarch hopped from the branch and roosted right on Velma's finger.

Narrator 4: Delicate wings slowly folding, antennae twitching, weightless and wondrous, the insect sat.

Narrator 1: Velma was in heaven.

Mr. Plexipuss: The bus is waiting.

Narrator 2: Velma placed her finger next to the branch.

Velma: *(whispering)* Bye-bye, butterfly.

Tour Guide: We are closing.

Narrator 3: Velma lightly blew on the butterfly. It didn't budge.

Narrator 4: Without ever touching the butterfly's wings, everyone tried to get the monarch to fly, crawl or walk off Velma's finger. But nothing worked.

Narrator 1: At last Velma was told to leave with the butterfly still perched on her pointer.

Narrator 2: It stayed there when she slept and was still there when she awoke.

Narrator 3: It stayed during gym. Math, Reading! Ballet!!! Soccer!!!

Narrator 4: Day in and day out, it stayed put on that pointer.

Narrator 1: Soon everyone, from the class guinea pig to the principal, knew about Velma and her butterfly.

Narrator 2: Mr. Plexipuss lamented that Velma was positively the first Gratch ever sent to the principal's office twice! This stuck an oversize frown on Velma's face

Principal

Crossly: Velma, it is time for the butterfly to go.

Velma: Oh, I've tried to get it to go, but it just won't.

Principal

Crossly: Well, no one will ever forget this.

Narrator 3: Velma's frown pretzel-twisted into a small smile.

Velma: Hey, I know what to do. My-gray-sun.

Narrator 4: Velma paraded Principal Crossly, Mr. Plexipuss, her class, Frieda, and Fiona to the park.

Narrator 1: Car horns honked. People yelled. But despite all the commotion, the monarch did not move.

Narrator 2: A cool wind from the west blew through the field. In the middle stood the tour guide from the conservatory, carefully opening an enormous sack.

Narrator 3: A single monarch butterfly stepped out, looked around, and flitted away. It was trailed by ten, then ten more, soaring up and up until the sky overflowed with thick clouds of orange and black.

Frieda: What's happening?

Fiona: Why are you letting them go?

Tour Guide: Migration.

Velma: My-gray-son.

Narrator 4: The wind tousled Velma's hair and tickled her butterfly's wings. The monarch jumped onto her nose, as if to give her a kiss, and then took flight to join its friends. Over the treetops it flew, over the skyscrapers, and up into the wild blue, orange, and black yonder on its way to Mexico.

Principal
Crossly: Velma!

Velma: Oh no. Am I going to be the only Gratch ever to be sent to the principal's office three times?

Principal
Crossly: That was way cool.

Narrator 1: And one and all bobbed their heads in "way cool" agreement.

