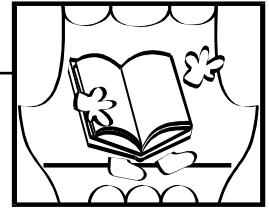


## Readers' Theater

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### *Bats at the Beach*

by Brian Lies



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

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3
	Narrator 4	Narrator 5	Narrator 6

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Narrator 1: Sun slips down and all is still,  
and soon we can't tell sky from hill.  
Now from barn and cave and rafter,  
bats pour out with shrieks of laughter.

Narrator 2: The rising moon can grow no fatter  
as sky lights up with gleeful chatter.

ALL: Quick, call out! Tell all you can reach—  
the moon is just perfect for bats at the beach!

Narrator 3: Soon we've got our buckets, trowels,  
banjos, blankets, books, and towels,  
strapped on backs and under wings.  
Have we forgotten anything?

Narrator 4: Launching out into the breeze,  
we sail above the darkened trees,  
flying fast, to wet our feet  
where land and foamy ocean meet.

Narrator 5: At last we hear the deep bass thump,  
as waves on seashore crash and bump.  
Now the shoreline spreads below;  
we pull wings in, and down we go.

Narrator 6: How delicious—oh, how sweet.  
To feel warm sand beneath our feet.

ALL: Quick, set up—spread blankets on sand!  
We want to get going when fun is at hand.

Narrator 1: We hurry down to test the ocean.  
Don't forget the moon-tan lotion!  
What's the first thing we should do?  
So many games before night's through.

Narrator 2: Like playing with the stuff we find,  
which others must have left behind.

Narrator 3: Burying friends from chin to knee,  
we're scratchy where no sand should be.

Narrator 4: Making friends from other places,  
with different foods and different faces.

Narrator 5: Or sailing to terrific heights,  
taking turns at being kites.  
Little bats dig their sand caves deep,  
as old bats lie in the moon, asleep.

Narrator 6: There's really no more thrilling ride,  
than surfing on a summer tide.  
Or sailing in the wing-boat races,  
with salty sea spray in our faces.

Narrator 1: Now it's munchtime; what's to eat?  
Baskets groan with yummy treats.

Narrator 2: Beetles, ants, and milkweed bugs,  
crickets, moths, and pickled slugs.  
Damselies, or salted 'skeeters—

ALL: No room here for picky eaters!

Narrator 3: Bug-mallows toast on slender sticks  
while cousins do their ocean tricks.

Narrator 4: And later on, though stomachs hurt,  
we'll try the snack bar for dessert.

Narrator 5: Quick, don't miss it—the old bats are singing  
the bat songs that *they* learned  
when *they* were first winging!

Narrator 6: Music rolls on, but no more games.  
As embers pop within the flames,  
little ones climb onto leathery lap,  
determined to rest but not to nap.

Narrator 1: Then east sky purples — sun is coming!  
A last few notes of banjo-strumming  
bring our beach night to an end,  
so say farewell to newfound friends.

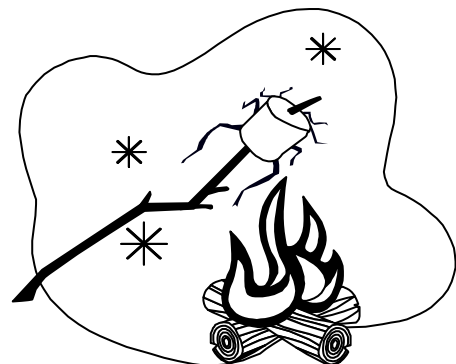
Narrator 2: Pack our things up, shake the sand out,  
give the noisy gulls a handout.

ALL: Quick, let's go, let's fly away —  
we've got to be home before it's day!

Narrator 3: Flutter homeward, drained and weary.  
Small bats doze off, tired and teary.

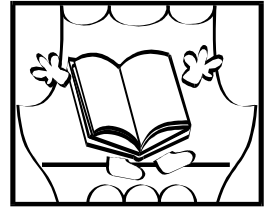
Narrator 4: Day birds start to chirp and peep;  
now back to crack and crevice creep.  
We sigh and snuggle close together  
to dream about the moony weather.

ALL: Shh — now sleep. The moon's out of reach.  
The night was just *perfect* for bats at the beach.



## Readers' Theater

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### *Hilda Must Be Dancing*

by Karma Wilson

illustrated by Suzanne Watts

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

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3
	Narrator 4	Hilda	Monkeys
	Rhinos	Water Buffalo	

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Narrator 1: Hilda Hippo loved to dance,  
and so each day she practiced hard.  
She'd twist and turn and whirl and twirl,  
dressed in her favorite leotard.

Narrator 2: She'd spin a pretty pirouette,  
then leap and land on tippy-toe.

Narrator 3: She tangoed oh-so-gracefully,  
and square-danced with a do-si-do.

Narrator 4: And while she danced in utter bliss,  
it sounded quite a lot like this:

ALL: KA-BUMP! KA-BUMP!  
CRASH! CRASH! SMASH!  
THUMPITY-BUMP! THUMPITY-BUMP!  
BOOM! BANG! BASH!

Narrator 1: The jungle floor would shake and quake,  
a tidal wave would fill the lake.  
Her friends would shout:

All Animals: For goodness' sake,  
**Hilda must be dancing!**

Narrator 2: They all hoped Hilda's hobby  
was a stage that soon would pass.  
But after one loud, shaky year,  
they knew this phase would last...  
and last... **and last.**

Narrator 3: While Hilda danced flamenco  
in her favorite pair of heels,  
bananas fell in gooey heaps,  
shaken from their peels!

ALL: SWISHA-SWISHA.  
CLAP! CLAP!  
JUMP, JUMP, JUMP!

Monkeys: Hilda must be dancing!  
Perhaps she'd take up knitting  
if we asked her, pretty please?

Narrator 4: Hilda tried to sit and knit.  
She didn't like it, not one bit.  
The yarn got tangled, so she quit.

Hilda: I think I'll stick to dancing.

Narrator 1: She rumbaed and she sambaed,  
in her favorite flowered skirt.  
She skipped across the crowded plains,  
and kicked up clouds of dirt.

ALL: HIPPA-HIPPA.  
BOUNCE! BOUNCE!  
THUMP, THUMP, THUMP!

Rhinos: Hilda must be dancing!  
If she'd only take up singing,  
then she wouldn't make a mess!

Narrator 2: Hilda tried to hum and croon,  
but found she couldn't hold a tune.  
She tired of it very soon.

Hilda: I think I'll stick to dancing!

Narrator 3: At the water hole she boogied,  
in her favorite disco pants.  
She muddied up the river,  
and she trampled down the plants.

ALL: SHAKA-SHAKA.  
BOOM! BOOM!  
BUMP, BUMP, BUMP!

Water Buffalo: Hilda must be dancing!  
If she'd only take up swimming,  
we might get some peace, you know?

Narrator 4: And so... Hilda wallowed by the shore.  
She'd never felt so grand before!

Hilda: Now, here's a hobby I adore...  
Water ballet dancing!

Narrator 1: In her favorite two-piece suit,  
she whirled and twirled with flair.  
Best of all, the ground stayed still!  
She floated light as air.

Narrator 2: And while she swam and danced in bliss,  
it sounded quite a lot like this:

ALL: KER-PLOP! KER-PLOP!  
PLUNK! DUNK!  
SWISH!  
GLUBBITY-GLUB! GLUBBITY-GLUB!  
SPLASH! SPLOOSH! SPLISH!



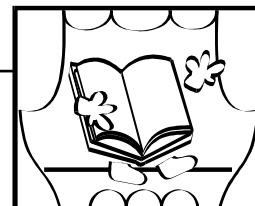
Narrator 3: A big crowd gathered at the shore.  
They cheered and clapped,  
and called for more!

Narrator 4: Her friends cried out...

All Animals: Hurray! Encore!  
Hilda, keep on dancing!

ALL: And so... she did.





***The Perfect Nest***  
by Catherine Friend  
illustrated by John Manders

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

Characters: Narrator 1    Narrator 2    Narrator 3  
                Jack                  Chicken        Duck  
                Goose                Baby Chick    Baby Duck  
                Baby Goose

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Narrator 1: Jack the cat gathered together everything he needed, then built the perfect nest—dry and cozy and just the right size.

Narrator 2: But the nest was not for Jack. With this perfect nest, he would attract a perfect chicken, who would lay a perfect egg, which would make a perfect omelet for a cat like Jack.

Narrator 3: Soon enough, a chicken came along.

Chicken: ¡Caramba! A perfect nest.

Narrator 1: She hopped up and laid a small egg. Then a duck waddled by.

Duck: **Sacre' bleu!** Zee perfect nest.

Narrator 2: The duck pushed the chicken out, hopped up, and laid a medium-size egg. Then a goose lumbered by.

Goose: **Great balls of fire!** A perfect nest.

Narrator 3: The goose pushed the duck out, hopped up, and laid a large egg.

Narrator 1: Jack's mouth began to water. Three eggs would make three omelets.

Narrator 2: But then the duck leaped onto the goose's back.

Duck: **Zees ees my nest.**

Narrator 3: The chicken flew up onto the duck.

Chicken: **No, this is *my* nest.**

Narrator 1: The three cackled and quacked and honked, but each refused to leave the perfect nest. They squished each other for days.

Narrator 2: Each day, Jack tried to get the birds off the eggs.

Jack: **Fire! Fire!**

ALL: They didn't move.

Jack: **Flood! Flood!**

ALL: They didn't move.

Jack: **Wolf! Wolf!**

ALL: But the chicken, the duck, and the goose **would not move.**

Narrator 3: Finally, Jack stood before them.

Jack: You birds are so silly. The next farm over has an even better nest, and it's empty. Why doesn't one of you use that nest?

Chicken: **An empty nest?** Without a goose to sit on my head? ¡Caramba!

Duck: **Sacre' bleu!** I am tired of smelling like zee chicken. Zat nest ees mine!

Goose: **Great balls of fire!** Outta my way!

ALL: And they all flapped away.

Narrator 1: Alone at last, Jack returned to the nest and peeked inside. He arranged the eggs neatly in a row: small breakfast, medium lunch, and **large** dinner. Jack's stomach rumbled.

Narrator 2: But then . . .

ALL: **CRACK!**

Narrator 3: The small egg broke open and out popped a wet baby chick, who looked up at Jack and said,

Baby Chick: ¡Caramba! ¡Hola, Mama'!

ALL: **CRACKETY-SNAP!**

Narrator 1: The medium-size egg broke open and out scrambled a wet baby duck, who looked up at Jack and said,

Baby Duck: Sacre' bleu! Bonjour, Maman.

ALL: **CRACKETY-CRACKETY BOOM!**

Narrator 2: The largest egg broke open and out stepped a wet baby goose, who looked up at Jack and said,

Baby Goose: Great balls of fire! Howdy, Ma.

Narrator 3: Jack stared at the babies. What was he to do?  
He couldn't make omelets out of *them*.

Baby Chick: Dry me, dry me, dry me.

Baby Duck: Feed me, feed me, feed me.

Baby Goose: **Play, play, play!**

Narrator 1: Jack hid in the barn.

ALL: The three babies found him.

Narrator 2: He hid in the woods.

ALL: The three babies found him.

Narrator 3: Jack hid under the tractor.

Narrator 1: The three babies found him and dragged him  
back to the nest. They were tired and  
shivering.

All Babies: Sleep, sleep, sleep. Cold, cold, cold.

Narrator 2: Jack scratched his head. Someone had to care for these babies, but there was no one else around.

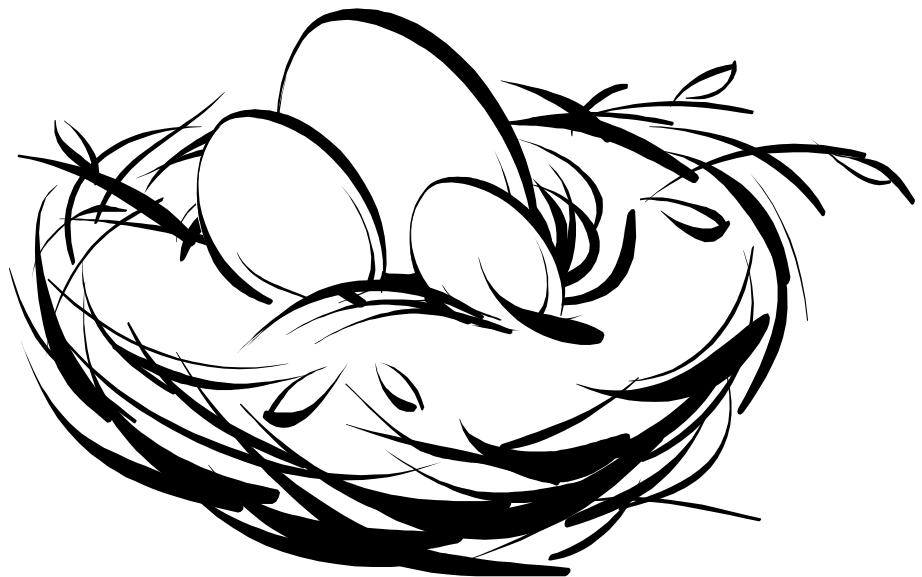
ALL: Jack lifted all three babies into the nest.

Baby Chick: Buenas noches, Mama'.

Baby Duck: Bonne nuit, Maman.

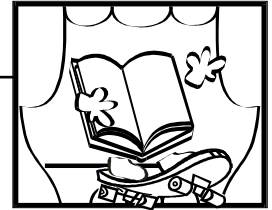
Baby Goose: Sweet dreams, Ma.

Narrator 3: Then Jack climbed into the nest, and the babies fell asleep. That's when he realized that this really *was* the perfect nest.



## Readers' Theater

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***Stanley's Wild Ride***  
by Linda Bailey  
illustrated by Bill Slavin

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

Characters:	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3
	Narrator 4	Stanley	Nutsy
	Elwood	Alice	

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Narrator 1: Stanley knew he wasn't supposed to leave the yard. But he'd been stuck in that yard practically his whole life.

Narrator 2: And it was always the same. Same old bush. Same old clothesline. Same old fence.

Narrator 3: Stanley stared at the big blue sky beyond the fence, and he longed with all his heart for something new. Something exciting. Something ... MORE!

Narrator 4: And one day, sniffing in a corner, he found it.

ALL: A hole!

Narrator 1: Just a weensy hole, as big as a bug. But when Stanley scratched, it got bigger.



Narrator 2: Soon it was as big as a dog's nose. All afternoon and into the evening, Stanley scratched and pawed and dug.

Narrator 3: Finally, the hole was as big as a whole dog. Stanley knew, because there he was—on the *other* side of the fence.

Stanley: Kruff!

Narrator 4: Then he noticed something even better. There was no leash attached to his collar.

ALL: And no person at the end of the leash!

Narrator 1: Stanley quivered with excitement. He ran all the way to the end of the block. Then he ran back. Then he did it again!

Narrator 2: Stanley felt like a million dog biscuits. He ran three whole blocks—without stopping—to see his best friend, Alice. When Alice saw Stanley running loose, she got very excited.

Stanley: Just dig a hole. It's easy.

Narrator 3: Alice tried, but the dirt was too hard.

Stanley: There must be a way.

Narrator 4: Alice poked at her fence, and prodded. Finally she found a loose board that was *exactly* the size of a dog.

Stanley: Run for it!

ALL: And they did!

Narrator 1: Next came Nutsy. With Alice's help, she broke out in seconds.

Narrator 2: Elwood's escape was tougher. And Gassy Jack *almost* didn't make it.

Narrator 3: But finally, there they were. Five dogs, out of their yards, and not a leash in sight!

Stanley: We can go anywhere! We can do anything we want!

All Dogs: Yep! Yep! Yep!

Narrator 4: And away they all ran, looking for the kind of fun you can't find in a yard.

Narrator 1: When they found some tasty garbage, they ate it. When they passed a fancy car, they soaked its tires. When they came across a tomcat, they chased it up a tree.

Nutsy: And *stay* there!

Narrator 2: They ran all around the wild side of town. And whenever they saw a road that went up, they took it—because that night, the sky was the limit!

Narrator 3: Up the dogs went, and up and up, until finally they reached the top of the Big Hill. With their eyes bugging out, they looked around.

Alice: We can see the whole world from here!

Narrator 4: Stanley stared in amazement. He had no idea the world was so big.

Narrator 1: Then he looked down. And *that's* when he saw it. Standing there in the moonlight. A strange, flat, red and black ...

ALL: Thing!

Narrator 2: Stanley shivered. He wasn't sure what the thing was, but there was something about it that made his fur stand up. He walked slowly over and sniffed.

Stanley: Smells like feet.

Narrator 3: The other dogs crowded close and took deep sniffs.

ALL: They *loved* the smell of feet.

Elwood: It's supposed to have a kid on it. Where's the kid?

Narrator 4: The dogs all looked around. No kid.

Narrator 1: As Stanley sniffed the thing some more, he accidentally touched it with his nose.

ALL: It moved!

Narrator 2: He touched it again. Slowly, very slowly, it started rolling ... down ... the ... hill ...

Alice: It's getting away!

Narrator 3: Stanley raced after the thing. He jumped on it with all four paws to stop it. But it didn't stop. It was going faster every second.

ALL: And it was taking Stanley with it!

Nutsy: Hot dog! Look at that pup go!

Narrator 4: Stanley had never gone so fast in all his life. His ears flew back. His fur flattened out. He held on so tight, his paws went white!

All Dogs: Go, Stanley!

Narrator 1: Tearing around a bend, Stanley ripped through a tunnel and over a curb. Finally, he glanced back and saw—

ALL: His friends had found things, too!

Stanley: OW-OW-OWOOO!

Narrator 2: Screaming into an intersection, he did a huge circling wheelie, and when he reached the top of the steepest slope in town, his friends were right on his tail!

All Dogs: OW-OW-OWOOO!

Narrator 3: With a rumble like thunder, the dogs roared down the hill. Faster than a squirrel! Faster than a rabbit! Faster than any dog ever *dreamed* of going.

All Dogs: OW-OW-OWOOOO!

Narrator 4: And all over town, dogs woke up and howled right back. And cats yowled, and babies wailed, and lights went on, and people ran out to watch the dogs go by.

Narrator 1: Even the *cars* were howling! There was one right behind the dogs. It was black and white and had a light on top. It sounded like this:

ALL: EEE-OOO! EEE-OOO!

Stanley: OW-OW-OWOOOOO!

Narrator 2: Stanley looked straight ahead at—

ALL: A fence!

All Dogs: OW! OW! OW! OW! OW! OW!

Narrator 3: Well, they didn't hit the fence *that* hard. But it must have been a very old fence because it fell right over, and there the dogs were—

ALL: In Stanley's yard!

Narrator 4: And there were Stanley's people on the porch, wearing their pajamas. Stanley went over to give them a lick. They tasted sleepy.

Narrator 1: It took a while to sort everything out. Stanley's friends were loaded into the police car to go home. The things with wheels went into the trunk.

Narrator 2: As for Stanley, well, the hole got filled in and a new fence went up. And there he was, back in his yard. But he didn't mind. Not *too* much.

ALL: Stanley was dog-tired!

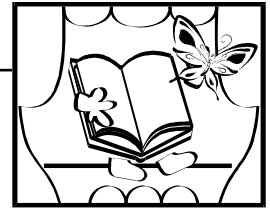
Stanley: Good old clothesline. Good old bush.

Narrator 3: His night out had taught him a *lot* about the world beyond the fence. How it's big and strange. How it's full of ups and downs. How it can give you the ride of a lifetime.

Narrator 4: But the most important thing that Stanley learned was this—

ALL: There is *always* a way past a fence!





### ***Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding***

by Lenore Look

illustrated by Yumi Heo

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

Characters: Narrator 1    Narrator 2    Narrator 3  
                  Narrator 4    Narrator 5    Narrator 6  
                  Narrator 7    Narrator 8

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Narrator 1: Uncle Peter is my father's baby brother, the coolest dude, a girl's best buddy. Today he's getting married. Everyone is happy.

ALL: Everyone but *me*.

Narrator 2: Uncle Peter is upstairs taking his wedding bath so he'll be clean as Monday morning. Except this is Saturday, and he should be with me, getting dirty at the playground.

Narrator 3: After a hot-dog lunch, we should be heading to the movies. "Jumbo popcorn, please," he'd say. "With extra butter for my special girl."

ALL: I'm his special girl. *Just me*.

Narrator 4: I am the jelly on his toast, and the leaves in his tea. Now, I am an umbrella turned inside out. I squeeze back my tears.



Narrator 5: Downstairs everyone is busy ooh-ing and aah-ing over the presents the bride's family gave Uncle Peter: a pair of shoes, so that he would go far; a wallet, to wish him wealth; a belt, to hold up his pants; a new suit, to help him look good.

Narrator 6: Now it's the lucky hour for Uncle Peter to pick up his bride. If this were a hundred years ago, she would ride in a special chair carried by his friends. Two hundred years ago, he would carry her on his back. But today he is using his car.

Narrator 7: Father tells us children to go along to bring good luck. My cousins scramble for the best seats and I end up squished.

Narrator 8: When we get there, Cousin Mei-Ming is blocking Stella's door. "You can't see her yet," she says. "Pay up." Now the groom must bargain for the bride, to show how much he'll give for her love.

Narrator 1: First Uncle Peter offers two bus tokens. Then, an earring. Finally Uncle Peter gives her — yikes — two hundred dollars. "Not enough," says Lucy Sue, the maid of honor.

ALL: Sing us a song. Climb a tree! Cartwheel!

Narrator 2: My cousins help Uncle Peter do everything he's asked, until...here comes the bride!

Narrator 3: Amazing Stella, hair like unwoven silk, eyes like two black pearls, is dressed from head to toe in red red red red to bring good luck.

Narrator 4: When Uncle Peter sees her, his face lights up like the aurora borealis and he reaches for her hand. I quickly grab his other one and pull.

Narrator 5: Someone pushes me here and shoves me there, until we wind up inside Stella's house, and right in place for family pictures.

Narrator 6: There is no place to stand except around Stella. She is the sun, and we are the rest of the universe. She twinkles and shines.

ALL: I feel like cosmic dust.

Narrator 7: The camera's flash explodes, and when I blink, a lost tear slides down my cheek.

Narrator 8: It rains birdseed and kisses when we all get back to Uncle Peter's house. "How about shooting a few hoops?" I shout to him, but he only laughs and winks at me.

ALL: Why does he think I'm joking?

Narrator 1: Inside, the bride and groom light incense and bow to the faded photographs of Ancient-Grandpa and Ancient-Grandma. They bow to the other grown-ups, then to each other.

Narrator 2: Soon everyone is bowing, which is the Chinese way of saying, "Hello, you are important to me." I try bowing, but Stella passes by me without a nod.

Narrator 3: It's time for the tea ceremony where the family officially welcomes the bride. Stella will serve tea, showing she is no longer a guest but a member of the family.

Narrator 4: Suddenly I have an idea. I sneak into the kitchen where the hot Chrysanthemum Special is waiting in Grandma's fancy pot.

Narrator 5: When Stella pours, everyone peers into their tiny cups. It looks like water. It smells like water.

ALL:            It *is* water!

Narrator 6:    Mother looks straight at me. “Where’s the tea?” she asks.

Narrator 7:    In a quiet room I tell my mother about my sadness. Like water without tea leaves, it pours into her lap.

Narrator 8:    She tells me she will be sad, too, the day I leave her. But, she says, she will also be happy, knowing I am happy. Then, gently, she kisses my head.

Narrator 1:    Red packets of lucky money pass into Stella’s and Peter’s hands as they share the freshly made tea. My aunties drape Stella with buttery gold jewelry to wish her health and happiness.

Narrator 2:    Oldest Uncle writes Uncle Peter’s Chinese name on a red cloth; then he writes Stella’s. He gives them advice in Chinese, which sounds like a long, boring speech until Oldest Aunt clears her throat and gives him a little poke.

Narrator 3:    The happy couple exchange rings. And then—

ALL: Yuck.

Narrator 4: They kiss. Everyone claps and smiles.

Narrator 5: At last comes the fun part—the bed-jumping ceremony. My grandmas say the new couple will have as many children as will jump on their bed, which is covered with a ton of sweets. But my cousins get there before I do, and I end up with Aunt Louise’s tofu chips.

Narrator 6: Stella changes into her dress for the banquet. If this were a hundred years ago, she would change into a hundred different dresses to show off her family’s wealth; if this were two hundred years ago, she would have to change so many times that she wouldn’t be able to eat.

Narrator 7: While Grandpa is saying that Stella is a feast for the eyes, I feast on vegetables disguised as flowers, duck with skin like paper, and my favorite—long-life noodles, too slippery for chopsticks, but perfect to slurp from the edge of my plate.

Narrator 8: Then there are toasts to the bride and groom. My cousins like clanging on their water glasses to make the bride and groom kiss, which makes me squeeze my eyes shut and Auntie Lucy cough into her napkin.

Narrator 1: Then Stella changes into her dancing dress. Everyone shimmies to the band—even my great-grandmother, who can still get down at 103!

Narrator 2: Before I get to dance with Uncle Peter, it's time to go. The good-bye line moves too slow for baby Henry, who's tired and cranky, but too fast for me. Suddenly, "Come with me," someone says in my ear.

ALL: It's Aunt Stella.

Narrator 3: "I nearly forgot the most important thing..." she says, pulling me outside. She hands me a big box. "You are my first and only niece," she says. "I want you to do this."

Narrator 4: She dashes back to the line, but not before blowing me a kiss, and saying, "I hope you know I love you."

Narrator 5: I open the box a tiny bit. A butterfly flutters out, and then another. I open it all the way, and soon the air is filled with a thousand butterflies! The sight is so beautiful I can't even breathe.

Narrator 6: Everyone has come to join me now. They gasp and clap and I take a deep bow, and finally everything feels like it should —

ALL: Like a wonderful dream.

Narrator 7: “Great job, my awesome, special girl, “ I hear Uncle Peter say, and he scoops me into his arms.

Narrator 8: Aunt Stella hugs us both. “Thank you for sharing your amazing uncle,” she whispers just to me. Her good-bye dress looks like summer and she smells like trees and cart wheels. I hug her back.

ALL: *(in a whisper)* Welcome to the family.

