

Reader's Theater:

"A Caterpillar's Voice"

To Read Aloud in Class or to Perform

Based on a story retold by Elaine L. Lindy
Adapted as a play script by Lindsay Parker

Characters:

NARRATOR or NARRATORS

(one person or more than one person)

HARE

CATERPILLAR

JACKAL

LEOPARD

RHINOCEROS

ELEPHANT

FROG

ACT 1

NARRATOR or NARRATORS:

[If one person is the NARRATOR, then that person introduces the play. If more than one person is a NARRATOR, then all of the NARRATORS together introduce the play.]

NARRATOR or NARRATORS:

This play is “A Caterpillar’s Voice.” It is a folk tale from Africa. It is brought to you by Whootie Owl. Once upon a time in Africa there was a Hare. The Hare lived in a nice cave. One day when the Hare was away, a Caterpillar went into the Hare’s cave.

[HARE starts out on the stage. He is sitting in a chair. This is his cave. He gets up and speaks.]

HARE:

I think it is a nice day for a walk. Maybe I will leave my cave and go visit a friend.

[Hare exits.]

[CATERPILLAR enters. It is good if CATERPILLAR can crawl.]

CATERPILLAR:

This seems like a very nice cave.

(sits on the chair)

This is nice. Maybe I will stay here. Oh, my! This cave has an echo. It makes my little voice sound big!

[HARE enters and looks around.]

HARE:

What is going on here? It looks like someone is in my cave.

(calls out) Who is in my cave?

CATERPILLAR:

(in a big, loud voice) It is I! I am the biggest and strongest one of them all.

HARE:

Oh dear! How am I going to get back in my cave?

[JACKAL enters.]

HARE:

Oh Jackal, please help me.

JACKAL:

How do you need me to help?

HARE:

There is some big, strong animal in my cave. Can you try to get it out?

JACKAL:

Sure, I can try. *(calls out)* Who is in the cave of my friend, the Hare?

CATERPILLAR:

(in a big, loud voice) It is I! I am the biggest and strongest of them all.

JACKAL:

Oh, Hare, I do not think I can help you. It sounds like you have a huge animal in your cave. Probably bigger than me. I must go now! Goodbye!

[JACKAL exits.]

[LEOPARD enters.]

HARE:

Leopard, please stop and help me!

LEOPARD:

Sure. What's the problem?

HARE:

There is a big animal in my cave. Can you get it out ?

LEOPARD:

Definitely. I am big and strong myself.

(calls out) Who is in the cave of my friend, the Hare?

CATERPILLAR:

(in a big, loud voice) It is I! I am the biggest and strongest one of them all.

LEOPARD:

Uh, oh. If that animal is the biggest and strongest, I do not want to think what he could do to me! I am sorry, Hare. I am out of here.

[LEOPARD exits.]

[RHINOCEROS enters.]

HARE:

Oh please, Rhino, you have to help me. You are big and strong.

RHINOCEROS:

Oh thank you, I am. How can I help?

HARE:

There is something in my cave. I am scared. Can you help me?

RHINOCEROS:

Of course I can. I am glad that you came to me for help. Nothing scares me.

(calls out) Who is in the cave of my friend, the Hare?

CATERPILLAR:

(in a big, loud voice) It is I! I am the biggest and strongest of them all.

HARE:

Oh Rhinoceros, can you get it out?

RHINOCEROS:

Hare, I am your friend. And nothing scares me.
Nothing, that is, except a big and loud voice in a cave!
You need a bigger and stronger animal than me.
Maybe an elephant?

[ELEPHANT enters.]

ELEPHANT:

Did I hear you talking about me?

HARE:

We were talking about how big and strong you are.

ELEPHANT:

What do you need? I can do anything. I am the
biggest and strongest animal in the forest.

HARE:

There is something in my cave. Can you help get it
out?

ELEPHANT:

Oh sure. Is that all?

(calls out) Hey, who is in the cave of my friend, the Hare?

CATERPILLAR:

(in a big, loud voice) It is I! I am the biggest and strongest of them all.

ELEPHANT and RHINOCEROS:

(screaming) AH!

[ELEPHANT and RHINOCEROS run off stage.]

HARE:

NOW what I am going to do?

[FROG enters.]

FROG:

Hare, what is wrong?

HARE:

Oh, it is just terrible. I am trying to go inside my home, but there is something in my cave. It says it is the biggest and strongest one of them all. I do not know what to do!

FROG:

Have you tried calling to the thing in your cave?

HARE:

Oh yes. I tried. So did Jackal, Leopard, Rhinoceros and Elephant.

FROG:

What happened?

HARE:

All the other animals were scared and ran away.

FROG:

I know I am not as big as Jackal, Leopard, Rhino, or Elephant. Still, can I try, too?

HARE:

You can try. Please help me get this animal out of my cave!

FROG:

(calling out) Who's in the cave of my friend, Hare?
I am the one who is the biggest and strongest of ALL the animals. Come outside this cave, right now!

CATERPILLAR:

Oh dear, what a loud voice! After all, I am just a Caterpillar. I am coming out. Please do not hurt me.

[CATERPILLAR gets off the chair, crawls over to the animals, and stands up.]

HARE:

What? All that time it was YOU in the cave?

FROG:

What happened?

HARE:

All the other animals were scared and ran away.

FROG:

I know I am not as big as Jackal, Leopard, Rhino, or Elephant. Still, can I try, too?

HARE:

You can try. Please help me get this animal out of my cave!

FROG:

(calling out) Who's in the cave of my friend, Hare?
I am the one who is the biggest and strongest of ALL the animals. Come outside this cave, right now!

CATERPILLAR:

Oh dear, what a loud voice! After all, I am just a Caterpillar. I am coming out. Please do not hurt me.

[CATERPILLAR gets off the chair, crawls over to the animals, and stands up.]

HARE:

What? All that time it was YOU in the cave?

[JACKAL, LEOPARD, RHINOCEROS and ELEPHANT enter.]

JACKAL:

Wow, it was only a caterpillar.

LEOPARD:

Boy, he sure fooled us.

CATERPILLAR:

Oops.

HARE:

I cannot believe that you were all scared of a little caterpillar.

FROG:

I think you were scared too, Hare.

HARE:

No, no, not of Caterpillar. It was only that loud voice.

RHINOCEROS:

You are right, Hare. How did such a little, tiny Caterpillar have such a loud voice?

CATERPILLAR:

Well, this cave was so cozy. And when I spoke, there was a wonderful echo! It made me feel BIG!

[JACKAL, LEOPARD, RHINO, and ELEPHANT all frown at CATERPILLAR. They look mad.]

CATERPILLAR:

Um, right now I think I will move on.

[CATERPILLAR crawls off stage.]

ELEPHANT:

Can you believe it? All of us were scared of that small, little caterpillar!

[All the animals laugh.]

HARE:

(pointing to FROG) All of us, that is, except one.

End of Act 1

THE END