

Teacher: Mrs. BELKACEM BOURICHA

Groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.

### **Third Year Second Semester**

*At the end of semester 6, the student is expected to be able to reach advanced speaking proficiency by broadening the range of vocabulary, learning to interact appropriately in everyday encounters, learning to narrate events in past and future time, learning to take part in predictable scripts, learning to convey emotional nuances through intonation, and learning to use all structures commonly used in oral speech. The student is assumed having developed an intermediate listening and speaking proficiency.*

#### **Activities**

To reach the above-cited objectives, the teacher is invited to elaborate the appropriate activities. For these specific goals, one can use storytelling and plays performance as activities.

#### **I. STORYTELLING**

**Storytelling** has long held an important role in history. People have passed down stories from generation to generation. It has served as a way to explain and understand the world. Storytelling has many key values in developing oral communication for both the individual telling the story and the people listening to the story being told. Among the values that storytelling instills in its participants is that it broadens learners' literary and imaginative skills. They improve their ability to listen, speak, imagine, compose phrases and increase students' vocabulary.. There are tremendous gains to be made through storytelling as a strategy to increase the oral language of second language learners in particular.

#### **Principles of Storytelling**

##### **❖ Preparing the Story**

- ***Read the main story out loud.*** Read it and locate its context. Look up unfamiliar words, places, or people. A good background for the story will make it easier to tell and remember.
- ***Visualize the story.*** Rather than memorize, visualize. The better you are able to picture the story in your mind, the better you can relate that picture to the others. Create story boards in your mind of the sequence of the events. Divide the stories into episodes and learn them episode by episode. Episodes change when the action,

scene or speaker changes. Use key, repeated words as your guide in “re-experiencing” the story. If you have to look back at the printed copy, you have not spent enough time preparing to tell the story. The story must become your story. Keep it vivid. Use words that paint mental pictures.

- ***Adapt the story.*** The story length should be about one minute for every year of a child’s age. This holds true for youth, but you can stretch it a little more with an interesting story. For adults, the art of story telling applies to your illustrations and testimonies of real life applications. Also consider the background, vocabulary level, and characteristics and interests of your intended listener.
- ***Practice.*** Practice stories in the dead spaces of time—while trying to fall asleep, driving the car, waiting for an appointment, taking a bath or shower. Practice telling the story in front of a mirror. Record the story so you can listen to it. By listening, you are able to learn and refine the story, making it your own. The more you practice, the easier the story will flow.

#### ❖ **Telling the Story**

- ***Use a natural and relaxed manner and an expressive tone of voice.*** Hold the attention of the listeners with your voice. Speed up, slow down. Lower your voice or raise it. Express delight and surprise. Create suspense.
- ***Make eye contact with each person or scan the audience.*** With children, remember to sit on their level.
- ***Grab the listener’s attention with the first sentence.*** Get the action going.
- ***Alter the timing or pace of the story.*** Think about how boring music or life would be if everything existed at the same speed.
- Portray characters and events with your voice and your gestures, keeping in mind that gestures should be genuine, but not exaggerated.
- ***Avoid too many details.*** Excessive detail also tends to confuse.
- ***Keep it brief.*** Let the story simmer in your listeners’ minds. Let the story speak for itself. Don’t make it a sermon. Stories enhance sermons; sermons do not enhance stories.

### ❖ Tools for Storytelling

- **Voice.** Your voice is your most important tool in telling stories. The tone and mood of your voice should interpret the story. The feelings of fear, sadness, anger, frustration, or even sleepiness should be evident in your voice to the same degree that they are evident in the story. The speed and direction of your voice will communicate. Example: “James was put into a hole in the ground. He went down, down, deep, deep down in the hole.” Your voice can drop with the words “down” and “deep.” Also, using action words and sound words (“Slap,” “Crash,” “Smack”) can add interest, movement, and meaning to the story. The pitch and inflection of the voice should be used from time to time to indicate different characters in a story. Be careful. Too much character can distract from the story. Don’t panic in the pauses. Pauses actually can be used to great dramatic effect. In pauses, listeners feel the presence, not the absence of characters.
- **Facial Expression.** Your face is the movie screen of the story. It can be blank with sound only or filled with the action of the story. A smile or a frown can help project the image of the place and people. As you portray different people in the story, think about what their faces would look like.
- **Gestures and Movements.** It has been said that if you tie the hands of a storyteller, he or she will forget the story. Use your hands and body to tell and live the story. The best rule for using gestures is to use only meaningful gestures and to use them on a limited basis. Storytellers who use gestures and movements for every event or person in the story risk losing the preschoolers or making gestures and movement less significant by overuse.

Example of a short story to be told:

## The Man Who Planted Trees

By Jean Giono

For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If this performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it is absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that, in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.



About forty years ago I was taking a long trip on foot over mountain heights quite unknown to tourists, in that ancient region where the Alps thrust down into Provence. All this, at the time I embarked upon my long walk through these deserted regions, was barren and colorless land. Nothing grew there but wild lavender.

I was crossing the area at its widest point, and after three days' walking, found myself in the midst of unparalleled desolation. I camped near the vestiges of an abandoned village. I had run out of water the day before, and had to find some. These clustered houses, although in ruins, like an old wasps' nest, suggested that there must once have been a spring or well here. There was indeed a spring, but it was dry. The five or six houses, roofless, gnawed by wind and rain, the tiny chapel with its crumbling steeple, stood about like the houses and chapels in living villages, but all life had vanished.

It was a fine June day, brilliant with sunlight, but over this unsheltered land, high in the sky, the wind blew with unendurable ferocity. It growled over carcasses of the like a lion disturbed at its meal. I had to move my camp.

After five hours' walking I had still not found water and was nothing to give me any hope of finding any. All about the same dryness, the same coarse grasses. I thought I glimpsed in the distance a small black silhouette, upright, it for the trunk of a solitary tree. In any case I started toward a shepherd. Thirty sheep were lying about him on the baking earth.



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He gave me a drink from his water-gourd and, a little later, took me to his cottage in a fold of the plain. He drew his water - excellent water - from a very deep natural well above which he had constructed a primitive winch.

The man spoke little. This is the way of those who live alone, but one felt that he has sure of himself, and confident in his assurance. That was unexpected in this barren country. He lived, not in a cabin, but in a real house built of stone that bore plain evidence of how his own

efforts had reclaimed the ruin he had found there on his arrival. His roof was strong and sound. The wind on its tiles made the sound of the sea upon its shore.

The place was in order, the dishes washed, the floor swept, his rifle oiled; his soup was boiling over the fire. I noticed then that he was cleanly shaved, that all his buttons were firmly sewed on, that his clothing had been mended with the meticulous care that makes the mending invisible. He shared his soup with me and afterwards, when I offered my tobacco pouch, he told me that he did not smoke. His dog, as silent as himself, was friendly without being servile.

It was understood from the first that I should spend the night there; the nearest village was still more than a day and a half away. And besides I was perfectly familiar with the nature of the rare villages in that region. There were four or five of them scattered well apart from each other on these mountain slopes, among white oak thickets, at the extreme end of the wagon roads. They were inhabited by charcoal burners, and the living was bad. Families, crowded together in a climate that is excessively harsh both in winter and in summer, found no escape from the unceasing conflict of personalities. Irrational ambition reached inordinate proportions in the continual desire for escape. The men took their wagonloads of charcoal to the town, then returned. The soundest characters broke under the perpetual grind. The women nursed their grievances. There was rivalry in everything, over the price of charcoal as over a pew in the church, over warring virtues as over warring vices as well as over the ceaseless combat between virtue and vice. And over all there was the wind, also ceaseless, to rasp upon the nerves. There were epidemics of suicide and frequent cases of insanity, usually homicidal.

The shepherd went to fetch a small sack and poured out a heap of acorns on the table. He began to inspect them, one by one, with great concentration, separating the good from the bad. I smoked my pipe. I did offer to help him. He told me that it was his job. And in fact, seeing the care he devoted to the task, I did not insist. That was the whole of our conversation. When he had set aside a large enough pile of good acorns he counted them out by tens, meanwhile eliminating the small ones or those which were slightly cracked, for now he examined them more closely. When he had thus selected one hundred perfect acorns he stopped and we went to bed.

There was peace in being with this man. The next day I asked if I might rest here for a day. He found it quite natural - or, to be more exact, he gave me the impression that nothing could startle him. The rest was not absolutely necessary, but I was interested and wished to know more about him. He opened the pen and led his flock to pasture. Before leaving, he plunged his sack of carefully selected and counted acorns into a pail of water.

I noticed that he carried for a stick an iron rod as thick as my thumb and about a yard and a half long. Resting myself by walking, I followed a path parallel to his. His pasture was in a valley. He left the dog in charge of the little flock and climbed toward where I stood. I was afraid that he was about to rebuke me for my indiscretion, but it was not that at all: this was the way he was going, and he invited me to go along if I had nothing better to do. He climbed to the top of the ridge, about a hundred yards away.

There he began thrusting his iron rod into the earth, making a hole in which he planted an acorn; then he refilled the hole. He was planting oak trees. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered no. Did he know whose it was? He did not. He supposed it was community

property, or perhaps belonged to people who cared nothing about it. He was not interested in finding out whose it was. He planted his hundred acorns with the greatest care.

After the midday meal he resumed his planting. I suppose I must have been fairly insistent in my questioning, for he answered me. For three years he had been planting trees in this wilderness. He had planted one hundred thousand. Of the hundred thousand, twenty thousand had expected to lose half, to rodents or to the unpredictable designs of Providence. There remained ten thousand oak trees to grow where nothing had grown before.

That was when I began to wonder about the age of this man. He was obviously over fifty. Fifty-five, he told me. His name was Elzéard Bouffier. He had once had a farm in the lowlands. There he had his life. He had lost his only son, then this wife. He had withdrawn into this solitude where his pleasure was to live leisurely with his lambs and his dog. It was his opinion that this land was dying for want of trees. He added that, having no very pressing business of his own, he had resolved to remedy this state of affairs.

Since I was at that time, in spite of my youth, leading a solitary life, I understood how to deal gently with solitary spirits. But my very youth forced me to consider the future in relation to myself and to a certain quest for happiness. I told him that in thirty years his ten thousand oaks would be magnificent. He answered quite simply that if God granted him life, in thirty years he would have planted so many more that these ten thousand would be like a drop of water in the ocean.

Besides, he was now studying the reproduction of beech trees and had a nursery of seedlings grown from beechnuts near his cottage. The seedlings, which he had protected from his sheep with a wire fence, were very beautiful. He was also considering birches for the valleys where, he told me, there was a certain amount of moisture a few yards below the surface of the soil.

The next day, we parted.

The following year came the War of 1914, in which I was involved for the next five years. An infantry man hardly had time for reflecting upon trees. To tell the truth, the thing itself had made no impression upon me; I had considered as a hobby, a stamp collection, and forgotten it.

The war was over, I found myself possessed of a tiny demobilization bonus and a huge desire to breathe fresh air for a while. It was with no other objective that I again took the road to the barren lands.

The countryside had not changed. However, beyond the deserted village I glimpsed in the distance a sort of grayish mist that covered the mountaintops like a carpet. Since the day before, I had begun to think again of the shepherd tree-planter. "Ten thousand oaks," I reflected, "really take up quite a bit of space."

I had seen too many men die during those five years not to imagine easily that Elzéard Bouffier was dead, especially since, at twenty, one regards men of fifty as old men with nothing left to do but die.



He was not dead. As a matter of fact, he was extremely spry. He had changed jobs. Now he had only four sheep but, instead, a hundred

beehives. He had got rid of the sheep because they threatened his young trees. For, he told me (and I saw for myself), the war had disturbed him not at all. He had imperturbably continued to plant.

The oaks of 1910 were then ten years old and taller than either of us. It was an impressive spectacle. I was literally speechless and, as he did not talk, we spent, the whole day walking in silence through his forest. In three sections, it measured eleven kilometers in length and three kilometers at its greatest width. When you remembered that all this had sprung from the hands and the soul of this one man, without technical resources, you understand that men could be as effectual as God in other realms than that of destruction.

He had pursued his plan, and beech trees as high as my shoulder, spreading out as far as the eye could reach, confirmed it. He showed me handsome clumps of birch planted five years before - that is, in 1915, when I had been fighting at Verdun. He had set them out in all the valleys where he had guessed - and rightly - that there was moisture almost at the surface of the ground. They were as delicate as young girls, and very well established.

Creation seemed to come about in a sort of chain reaction. He did not worry about it; he was determinedly pursuing his task in all its simplicity; but as we went back toward the village I saw water flowing in brooks that had been dry since the memory of man. This was the most impressive result of chain reaction that I had seen. These dry streams had once, long ago, run with water. Some of the dreary villages I mentioned before had been built on the sites of ancient Roman settlements, traces of which still remained; and archaeologists, exploring there, had found fishhooks where, in the twentieth century, cisterns were needed to assure a small supply of water.

The wind, too, scattered seeds. As the water reappeared, so there reappeared willows, rushes meadows, gardens, flowers, and a certain purpose in being alive. But the transformation took place so gradually that it became part of the pattern without causing any astonishment. Hunters, climbing into the wilderness in pursuit of hares or wild boar, had of course noticed the sudden growth of little trees, but had attributed it to some natural caprice of the earth. That is why no one meddled with Elzéard Bouffier's work. If he had been detected he would have had opposition. He was undetectable. Who in the villages or in the administration could have dreamed of such perseverance in a magnificent generosity?

To have anything like a precise idea of this exceptional character one must not forget that he worked in total solitude: so total that, toward the end of his life, he lost the habit of speech. Or perhaps it was that he saw no need for it.

In 1933 he received a visit from a forest ranger who notified him of an order against lighting fires out of doors for fear of endangering the growth of this natural forest. It was the first time, that man told him naively, that he had ever heard of a forest growing out of its own accord. At that time Bouffier was about to plant beeches at a spot some twelve kilometers from his cottage. In order to avoid travelling back and forth - for he was then seventy-five - he planned to build a stone cabin right at the plantation. The next year he did so.

In 1935 a whole delegation came from the Government to examine the "natural forest". There was a high official from the Forest Service, a deputy, technicians. There was a great deal of ineffectual talk. It was decided that some thing must be done and, fortunately, nothing was done except the only helpful thing: the whole forest was placed under the protection of the

State, and charcoal burning prohibited. For it was impossible not to be captivated by the beauty of those young trees in fullness of health, and they cast their spell over the deputy himself.

A friend of mine was among the forestry officers of the delegation. To him I explained the mystery. One day the following week we went together to see Elzéard Bouffier. We found him hard at work, some ten kilometers from the spot where the inspection had taken place.

This forester was not my friend for nothing. He was aware of values. He knew how to keep silent. I delivered the eggs I had brought as a present. We shared our lunch among the three of us and spent several hours in wordless contemplation of the countryside.

In the direction from which we had come the slopes were covered with trees twenty to twenty-five feet tall. I remembered how the land had looked in 1913: a desert ... Peaceful, regular toil, the vigorous mountain air, frugality and, above all, serenity of spirit had endowed this old man with awe-inspiring health. He was one of God's athletes. I wondered how many more acres he was going to cover with trees.

Before leaving, my friend simply made a brief suggestion about certain species of trees that the soil here seemed particularly suited for. He did not force the point. "For the very good reason," he told me later, "that Bouffier knows more about it than I do." At the end of an hour's walking - having turned it over his mind - he added, "He knows a lot more about it than anybody. He's discovered a wonderful way to be happy!"

It was thanks to this officer that not only the forest but also the happiness of the man was protected. He delegated three rangers to the task, and so terrorized them that they remained proof against all the bottles of wine the charcoal burners could offer.

The only serious danger to the work occurred during the war of 1939. As cars were being run on gazogenes (wood-burning generators), there was never enough wood. Cutting was started among the oaks of 1910, but the area was so far from any rail roads that the enterprise turned out to be financially unsound. It was abandoned. The shepherd had seen nothing of it. He was thirty kilometers away, peacefully continuing his work, ignoring the war of '39 as he had ignored that of '14.



I saw Elzéard Bouffier for the last time in June of 1945. He was then eighty-seven. I had started back along the route through the wastelands; by now, in spite of the disorder in which the war had left the country, there was a bus running between the Durance Valley and the mountain. I attributed the fact that I no longer recognized the scenes of my earlier journeys to this relatively speedy transportation. It seemed to me, too, that the route took me through new territory. It took the name of a village to convince me that I was actually in that region that had been all ruins and desolation.

The bus put me down at Vergons. In 1913 this hamlet of ten or twelve houses had three inhabitants. They had been savage creatures, hating one another, living by trapping game, little removed, both physically and morally, from the conditions of prehistoric man. All about them nettles were feeding upon the remains of abandoned houses. Their condition had been



beyond hope. For them, nothing but to await death - a situation which rarely predisposes to virtue.

Everything was changed. Even the air. Instead of the harsh dry winds that used to attack me, a gentle breeze was blowing, laden with scents. A sound like water came from the mountains: it was the wind in the forest. Most amazing of all, I heard the actual sound of water falling into a pool. I saw that a fountain had been built, that it flowed freely and - what touched me most - that some one had planted a linden beside it, a linden that must have been four years old, already in full leaf, the incontestable symbol of resurrection.

Besides, Vergons bore evidence of labor at the sort of undertaking for which hope is required. Hope, then, had returned. Ruins had been cleared away, dilapidated walls torn down and five houses restored. Now there were twenty-eight inhabitants, four of them young married couples. The new houses, freshly plastered, were surrounded by gardens where vegetables and flowers grew in orderly confusion, cabbages and roses, leeks and snapdragons, celery and anemones. It was now a village where one would like to live.

From that point on I went on foot. The war just finished had not yet allowed the full blooming of life, but Lazarus was out of the tomb. On the lower slopes of the mountain I saw little fields of barley and of rye; deep in the narrow valleys the meadows were turning green.

It has taken only the eight years since then for the whole countryside to glow with health and prosperity. On the site of ruins I had seen in 1913 now stand neat farms, cleanly plastered, testifying to a happy and comfortable life. The old streams, fed by the rains and snows that the forest conserves, are flowing again. Their waters have been channeled. On each farm, in groves of maples, fountain, pools overflow on to carpets of fresh mint. Little by little the villages have been rebuilt. People from the plains, where land is costly, have settled here, bringing youth, motion, the spirit of adventure. Along the roads you meet hearty men and women, boys and girls who understand laughter and have recovered a taste for picnics. Counting the former population, unrecognizable now that they live in comfort, more than ten thousand people owe their happiness to Elzéard Bouffier.

When I reflect that one man, armed only with his own physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that in spite of everything, humanity is admirable. But when I compute the unfailing greatness of spirit and the tenacity of benevolence that it must have taken to achieve this result, I am taken with an immense respect for that old and unlearned peasant who was able to complete a work worthy of God.

Elzéard Bouffier died peacefully in 1947 at the hospice in Banon.

## II. PERFORMING PLAYS

*The use of drama* has been used over the course of history from the time of Aristotle, who believed that theatre provided people a way to release emotions. Performing plays is also useful in developing oral communication. It brings together and integrates listening, speaking, and reading skills like no other single activity. It gives students a heightened awareness of the power of literature to evoke emotions from an audience. It engages learners in critical thinking and discussion.

### SOME PLAYS

#### **Sherlock Holmes and the mystery of the Aquilla Diamond**

##### **Parts Description**

**Sherlock Holmes:** Traditional Homes character, intelligent, superior, arrogant and selfconfident and always engrossed in the detective work.

**Doctor Watson:** A bumbling, upper-class fool. Idolises Holmes but just doesn't understand him. Amazed at everything that Holmes does. Good with a revolver and a stethoscope.

**Lady Aquilla:** (pronounced "a killer") Acts incredibly posh and self-important. Thinks that she's the most glamorous thing since sliced bread.

**Gertrude L'Escargo/ Cook** An outrageously OTT French accent masks a supreme criminal and "mistress of disguise". A difficult opponent for Holmes. Plays the cook with warts, a bad back and a West Country accent straight out of a Dickens novel.

**Crumpton (the butler)** Dead - that's all!

**Narrator:** Can stand on the edge of the stage for dramatic effect.  
**Voice:** Voice of the play's director offstage. Easily frustrated.

**Notes:** Some haunting violin music sets the scene well. A few props might be needed

Narrator: The story begins inside 221B Baker St. Holmes and Watson are sitting by the fire playing chess. There is a knock at the door.

Holmes: *Get that would you Watson.*

Watson: *Certainly Holmes (goes to the door, opens it, in bursts a woman in very expensive riding gear, boots and a riding hat perched on top of a large nest-like hairdo) Goodness me!*

Lady Aquilla: *Mr Holmes (addressing Watson) I need to speak with you immediately! It is of the utmost importance!*

Watson: *Well I never.... Goodness me!*

Holmes: *(coolly, without turning round) And Mr Sherlock Holmes will speak to you when he decides that he is good and ready!*

Lady Aquilla: *And who might you be Sir!*

Holmes: *(getting up and turning round) I, Madame, **might** be Mr Sherlock Holmes. In fact, I definitely was the last time I looked! And you, you are Lady Henrietta Aquilla of Porkington. You have rushed here, directly from riding in the hunt to ask me to recover the famous Aquilla Diamond which was, two days ago, stolen from your country house!*

Watson: *Goodness me! Jolly good show Holmes!*

Lady Aquilla: *(astonished) How on earth did you know all that Mr Holmes? I haven't breathed a word to anyone!*

Watson: It's just a talent that he has. But I'd like to know anyway.

Holmes: Elementary, my dear Watson, elementary. First, the knock on the door. Too loud for a hand, but not for the ornate silver riding crop that her Ladyship is holding. As for coming straight from the hunt, well, leather riding boots, fresh mud, and the unmistakable smell of horse manure, simple really.

Lady Aquilla: But my name! And about the diamond.

Holmes: Quite straight forward! You have a ridiculously expensive hairdo covered by an extremely sad hat, and your picture is in tonight's paper under the headline "Famous Aquilla diamond stolen from Lady Aquilla". It is this that has brought you in such a fervour and so quickly to 221b Baker St!

Watson: Marvellous! I told you he was a smarty pants! Good show Holmes!

Lady Aquilla: Yes, Yes! Very clever! But can you help me?

Holmes: Lady Aquilla, I would only be too pleased to help you. Let us make our way directly to the scene of the crime! Come Watson, the game is afoot!

Watson: I thought the game was chess Holmes?

Holmes: (sighs and sounds impatient) Watson, just call me a cab.

Watson: Righty-ho. You're a cab Holmes.

Holmes: Doh! You just can't get the staff nowadays!

All three exit.

Narrator: As night falls over old London town, (loud bang and scream off stage) our gallant detective and his trusty sidekick gallop their way through the steaming metropolis. Eventually, they arrive at Lady Aquilla's country mansion tired, travel sore and weary of the endless games of I-spy with my magnified eye. Losing no time they make directly for the scene of the crime, Lady Aquilla's study.

Lady Aquilla: This is where the diamond was kept Holmes, in this glass display cabinet.

Watson: Goodness me, it's been smashed Holmes!

Holmes: (mockingly) Well done Watson, very astute. How on earth did you work that out with all this broken glass in the way!

Watson: (extremely pleased with himself) Well, just a good guess really!

Holmes: Lady Aquilla, when was the theft discovered?

Lady Aquilla: At about 4:00pm two days ago. The maid Florence noticed it when she came to polish the silver.

Holmes: And someone, in the meantime, had polished off the diamond!

Watson: (laughs) Oh very good Holmes, very good.

Lady Aquilla: This is a very serious matter Dr Watson. Why that diamond has been handed down from generation to generation of Aquilla's It was only the other day that I was saying....

Holmes: (Holmes walks to the front of the stage) Over here Watson! What do you make of this? (points to something on the floor)

Watson: (excitedly) Why, it's a carpet Holmes!

Holmes: No idiot! On the carpet.

Watson: Goodness me! It's a footprint in the shape of a boot!

Holmes: Yes! And a strange yellow footprint at that. Notice that it is quite small and more pointed at the front and, if I'm not mistaken, has been repaired at least 3 times in the last year. (leans down and sniffs the footprint) Hmmm.

Watson: What is it Holmes, another clue?

Holmes: Can you smell anything Watson? Apart from Lady Aquilla's boots that is?

Watson: Why, yes! What on Earth is it?

Holmes: Garlic Watson! The overpowering smell of fresh garlic! (turns to Lady Aquilla) I would like to speak to the maid if you please.

Lady Aquilla: Certainly. I'll send for her at once.

A loud scream is heard off-stage, all gasp and rush off.

Narrator: With capes flying our dashing duo head off in search of the crime scene, speeding Our brave detectives head off in the direction of the scream. They arrive panting at the library to find the body of Crumpton, the butler, lying dead on the floor with a large kitchen knife sticking out from the back

Holmes rushes over and examines the body. He pulls out the bloody knife and holds it up for all to see.

Watson: (urgently) Is he dead Holmes?

Holmes: (sarcastically) I'd say that was a fairly safe bet Watson. Hmm! An interesting weapon.

Watson: Well Holmes, at least we know one thing.

Holmes: What's that Watson?

Watson: (smugly) The butler didn't do it!

Holmes: I'm not so sure Watson. Lady Aquilla, all this criminal activity is making me quite hungry. Is there any chance that you could lay on a Roast turkey dinner for us?

Lady Aquilla: Now? But shouldn't we call the police or something?

Holmes: Just trust me on this one Madam, just trust me.

All exit stage left and reappear stage right

Narrator: Just one hour later the great detective and the faithful Watson are seated around a candle-lit table with Lady Aquilla. With no butler, and the maid in shock, the cook herself has had to lay the table and serve the dinner, as well as cook it.

Lady Aquilla: I must apologise gentlemen for the very sparse service. The only member of staff that we have left is the cook and I'm afraid that **she** is best left in the kitchen!

Holmes: Don't you worry Lady Aquilla. Watson here is an Ex Indian Army man, he won't mind roughing it for Sunday dinner. Besides, I am most interested to meet Cookie. Ah here is the good lady herself!

Enter cook, hobbling with bent back and carrying a large covered roast dish.

Cook: (sounding old and servile) I'm so sorry hit's a bit late your Ladyship, but has we're so short staffed down below, I've 'ad to do everything myself, an' when you get to my age madam you don't want to be running round a field after a distraught Turkey with a large chopper!

Watson: (jumping up in amazement) You mean the turkey was armed!

Holmes: Sit down Watson! Shall we begin? Allow me to reveal this evenings savoury delights!

Holmes whips the top off the meat dish to reveal a decimated carcass.

Lady Aquilla: (gasps and stands) Cookie, what on earth happened to the turkey! It looks like it's been savaged by wild wombats!

Cook: (looking distressed) I. . . don't know what you mean madam? I. . . Is there something wrong?

Lady Aquilla: (sounding hysterical) Something wrong! We can't serve that to guests! It looks like it's been carved with a wood axe! Take it away this instant!

Cook: Yes madam, I'll remove it directly!

Holmes: (Leaping up and placing his hand on the meat dish as cookie tries to remove it) Not so fast Cookie! Watson, stand by the door if you please. Perhaps Lady Aquilla, I can shed some light on the matter.

Watson: I wish you would Holmes, it's rather dark in here!



Holmes: (Ignoring Watson) Now, Cookie. Could you please tell us all just what exactly, did you use to carve the joint?

Cook: (nervously) Why, a carvin' knife o'course!

Holmes: Would it be a carving knife similar to. . . THIS ONE . . . perchance!

Holmes whips out knife and bangs it on the table.

Cook: (getting agitated) I . . . I . . . suppose so, yes!

Holmes: (pointing his finger upwards as though a solicitor in court) Impossible! Because this was the **very** knife used to stab Crumpton, the butler!

Cook: It . . . It must have been another one, I was mistaken!

Holmes: (Still gesturing) Impossible again! Just before dinner your Ladyship, I took the liberty of checking the kitchen for another carving knife, and I found NONE! What do you say to that Cookie! (Holmes walks up to Cook) Or should I say (pulls off her hat and wig) MADAME GERTRUDE L'ESCAGO. Otherwise known . . . as 'Garlic Gertie' of Burgundy!

Garlic Gertie: (French accent) Oh no! I am undone! You'll never take me alive!

Watson: Goodness me Holmes!

Holmes: Watson, your service revolver!

Gertie runs towards Watson, He draws his gun and points it directly at her nose.

Gertie stops and puts up her hands. Watson forces her backwards at gunpoint.

Garlic Gertie: Ok! Ok! Take me alive! I surrender!

She is led to chair and Watson ties her hands behind.

Lady Aquilla: Goodness me Mr Holmes, this is just too much to believe. Are you saying that Cookie here is responsible for the murder of Crumpton and the theft of the diamond?

Holmes: I certainly am Madam.

Lady Aquilla: But how on Earth did you see through it all?

Holmes: Elementary Your Ladyship. You see, the "modus operandi" of Garlic Gertie is known across the whole of Europe! I recognised it and was on to her from the very beginning. The smashed display cabinet; a cook who cannot carve a Sunday joint and who leaves footprints made by spilled custard powder; and of course, that tell tale smell of fresh garlic! It all added up to only one thing, Gertrude L'Escago! A fiendishly clever plot though!

Cook: Yes, and if it hadn't been for you meddling kids I'd 'ave gotten away with it!

Watson: All that remains then Holmes, is for her to tell us where she hid the diamond.

Holmes: Ah Watson, sadly that is the one thing that she cannot tell us. For up until now only one person knew the hiding place of the Aquilla diamond and he, unfortunately, lies dead in the library.

Watson: Crumpton! The butler did do it after all!

Lady Aquilla: Surely you must be wrong!

Holmes: I'm not wrong, and please don't call me Shirley! Crumpton had the misfortune to see Gertie take the diamond in the first place and thought that he could have it for himself. He stole it from her, hid it quickly but then paid the price when he would not give up the hiding place.

Holmes walks to the sideboard to pour everyone a drink. As he picks up the cut glass decanter, he pauses, and slowly holds up the top of the decanter (which is in fact the missing diamond) to the light.

Lady Aquilla: So what your saying Mr Holmes is that we are still no further on than when we started!

Watson: She's right Holmes, you can't deny her that!

Holmes: There is only one thing Watson, that I cannot deny Lady Aquilla, and that . . . is a celebratory drink.

Lady Aquilla: But Mr Holmes, what could there possibly be to celebrate?

Holmes: Only two things , your Ladyship. Firstly, that the great Sherlock Holmes has once again successfully resolved a baffling case and, secondly . . . (Holmes holds up the decanter stopper and slowly hands it to Lady Aquilla as he speaks) . . . the recovery of the .... beautiful...Aquilla ...DIAMOND!

Lady Aquilla gasps and hold the diamond up to the audience with a frozen look of amazement.

Watson: By God Holmes, how ever do you do it?

Holmes: Ah, Elementary my dear Watson, Elementary!

Whole cast freeze whilst ending music (Crossroads theme works really well and is funny) plays then audience erupts into applause!

END

## **PRINCESS FROM ANOTHER PLANET**

### **GENERAL**

Fire!

(Bullets, bombs and explosions are heard. Then silence a moment)

### **GENERAL (CONT.)**

Retreat!

(Lights come up on an Alien Space Princess)

### **PRINCESS**

Veeble brox not!

### **GENERAL**

Send in the translator.

(A nerdy looking Scientist with a bunch of equipment enters. A soldier is along side him protecting him as he sets up his equipment)

### **PRINCESS**

Noow wop not!

(Princess goes toward Scientist)

### **SOLDIER**

You sure that thing is going to work?

### **SCIENTIST**

There's one way to find out.

(Scientist turns on machine)

### **PRINCESS**

Your puny weapons have no effect on me.

### **SOLDIER**

It worked!

### **SCIENTIST**

Can you understand me?

### **PRINCESS**

I understand your words but not your actions. Why did you attack me? Why do you insist on destroying what you don't understand?

(Scientist turns to soldier)

### **SCIENTIST**

Why were you shooting at her?

### **SOLDIER**

The general told us to.

### **SCIENTIST**

"Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die."

### **SOLDIER**

Huh?

### **SCIENTIST**

Exactly.

(To Scientist)

**PRINCESS**

You seem different. Are you the wise warrior I seek?

**SOLDIER**

Warrior?

(He laughs and others can be heard laughing off stage. Scientist gives them a dirty look)

**PRINCESS**

Silence!

(She touches her necklace with one hand and makes a motion with the other at soldier and he gets pushed back and falls)

**GENERAL**

Fire!

**SCIENTIST**

No! Wait! I'm right here you idiots!

(Princess touches her necklace with one hand and waves her other hand)

**PRINCESS**

Their weapons are useless now.

**GENERAL**

Retreat!

(Sound of soldiers, tanks, etc. are heard and then fade away)

**SCIENTIST**

You appear to be pretty powerful. Why would you need our help?

**PRINCESS**

We may have power but we seek wisdom. My quest has brought me here. Are you the one?

**SCIENTIST**

I did graduate at the top of my class at Tech.

**PRINCESS**

Your Earth accolades are meaningless to me. What is this about your neck?

**SCIENTIST**

It's just a space rock I found. I follow shooting stars and collect meteorites.

**PRINCESS**

Oh follower of shooting stars. May I see your stone?

**SCIENTIST**

Uh... sure.

(He hands it to her)

**PRINCESS**

This is our message. You found it. You must be the chosen one. You have the knowledge we need to heal our planet.

**SCIENTIST**

Hey guys! I'm the chosen one!  
(Soldier laugh off stage)

**SCIENTIST (CONT.)**

I really hate those guys.

**PRINCESS**

Do you want me to destroy them?

**SCIENTIST**

Naw... not now. Maybe later.

**PRINCESS**

Why do they mock you?

**SCIENTIST**

I am a nerd... a loser.

**PRINCESS**

But you are an inventor. A creator of new things. They only destroy.

**SCIENTIST**

That's kind of how it goes here. We invent and they find a way to use it to destroy each other.

**PRINCESS**

We will not treat you so on my planet. Will you join me? Please come back to my planet and help us.

**SCIENTIST**

What happened to your planet?

**PRINCESS**

Our air has turned to poison. We can no longer breath outside and must hide indoors. The energy that once gave us light and power now destroys us.

**SCIENTIST**

Ever try wind or solar power?

**PRINCESS**

Whatever do you mean? How can we use the wind and sun?

**SCIENTIST**

Wow, this will be easy.

**PRINCESS**

Excellent. You will be a hero. You will be rewarded beyond your wildest dreams.

**SCIENTIST**

Seeing those soldier scattered was a pretty good reward.

**PRINCESS**

I can vaporize them too if you wish.

(She reaches for her necklace)

**SCIENTIST**

That's very nice of you, but it's not necessary. I don't want to stoop to their level.

**PRINCESS**

You are wise. I have chosen well. Come with me and save my planet.

(Princess takes Scientist's arm affectionately and Scientist smiles shyly. Nerdy woman, Lila, rushes on stage)

**LILA**

Wait, Peter. Please don't go!  
(Princess turns and stands between Scientist and Lila)

**PRINCESS**

What is the meaning of this?

**LILA**

That man there is my Peter... He's my boyfriend.

**PRINCESS**

He is mine now. He has given himself to me.  
(Lila looks very hurt)

**LILA**

Peter, is that true?

**SCIENTIST**

She needs my help. Her planet is in trouble.

**LILA**

How long will you be gone?

**PRINCESS**

You may return in a decade or two.

**LILA**

What?! 10 years!

**PRINCESS**

Or twenty. But I doubt he'll want to return. We'll reward him handsomely and give him anything he wants.  
(Princess goes behind Scientist and touches him lovingly. Scientist looks pleased)

**LILA**

How could you do this to me, Peter?

**SCIENTIST**

Do what?

**LILA**

Leave me?

**SCIENTIST**

I'll be back. Don't worry.  
(But he's look at the Princess all dreamy. Lila grabs him and pulls him away)

**LILA**

Stay away from him. You have him under some kind of spell don't you?  
(Lila puts herself between Scientist and Princess)

**PRINCESS**

How dare you! You will face my wrath!  
(Before the Princess can touch her necklace, Lila jumps forward and grabs the necklace and yanks it off her neck)

**PRINCESS (CONT.)**

What have you done?! You fool?  
(Scientist shakes his head and is startled when he sees Princess)



**SCIENTIST**

She looks mad.

**PRINCESS**

Give those back to me!

LILA

I don't think so.

**PRINCESS**

You are putting yourselves in terrible danger. Those jewels channel my power. Without them, I will lose control.

LILA

I think you lost control long ago. How dare you try and take my Peter away.

**PRINCESS**

Please, give them back to me. If the power in those are released in your world, it will change you all...

LILA

I don't care. I won't let you take Peter from me. I'll risk everything to save him.

**PRINCESS**

You would risk your entire planet for one man.

LILA

Not any man... this man. He's my world. I don't need anything else but him.

**SCIENTIST**

Lila... that's the sweetest thing you ever said to me.

LILA

Quiet. You're in trouble too mister.

**PRINCESS**

Please... help me, Peter. You're my only hope.

LILA

What a drama queen. Let's go, Peter.

(Peter seems torn)

**LILA (CONT.)**

I know I'm not perfect, but I do really love you. She's just going to use you. Chew you up, take what you have to offer and then spit you out. You are just a tool to her. A means to an end and then she'll cast you aside. You know I'm not like that. You know I love you for you and not what I can get out of you. So... what do you chose? A crazy, wild fling that will end in ruin... or simple, true, honest love?

(Lila gives Scientist the jewels and Princess looks hopeful)

**SCIENTIST**

I chose you, Lila.

(Scientist throws down jewels and stomps on them. Lila is happy and helps)

**PRINCESS**

No! What have you done?!

(Lila and Scientist leave and Princess goes to the jewels)

**PRINCESS (CONT.)**

You have released their power on your world. It will change everything as you know it. It will give some of you powers and make others of you go mad. Some of you will chose greatness and seek good with your new found power, but others of you will react with fear and anger and go down a path of evil.

(Soldier enters cautiously)

**SOLDIER**

Princess... you are under arrest. Please come with me.

**PRINCESS**

But perhaps there is hope. Perhaps there is a phoenix that will rise from these ashes. I will find a champion among you whose new found powers can be harnessed.

**SOLDIER**

Yeah, yeah. Save it for someone who cares. Let's go, Princess.

**PRINCESS**

I will have my champion destroy you first.

**SOLDIER**

General! She's being mean to me!

(Exit and lights fade to black)