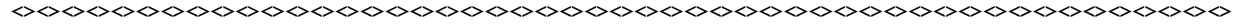


The Fish Tank

by Lee Karvonen

The following script works well for some upper elementary school students, middle school students, and/or jr. high students.

Characters: (9) Narrator 1 Narrator 2 Narrator 3 Narrator 4 Father
 Mother Brother Mathew Sister



Narrator 1: The Fish Tank

Narrator 2: Matthew lived in a noisy house.

Narrator 3: His father always yelled when he spoke to anyone.

Father: "A noisy house is a busy house!"

Narrator 4: His mother always seemed to be nagging him loudly.

Mother: "Matthew! Have you cleaned up that junk pile you call your room?"

Narrator 1: His brother played his CD's so loudly that the wall between their rooms would shake.

Narrator 2: And sometimes his brother would sort of yell along.

Brother: "Ooh, Baby! Ooh, Baby! Ooh, Baby! Ooh!"

Narrator 3: Matthew didn't like all the noise. Often, he retreated to the quiet of his bedroom and spent hours staring at his aquarium. The aquarium stood on a night stand right beside his pillow and was filled with beautiful, multi-colored tropical fish.

Mathew: "You fish are so lucky. You get to live in a quiet, peaceful world. As long as I feed you, you have no worries at all."

Narrator 4: Sometimes his sister burst into his room.

Sister: "Matthew! Why don't you let those poor fish go?"

Narrator 1: His sister had taken an environmental unit in school and now wanted to free every animal in the world, including the neighbor's dog.

Sister: "Are you as stupid as those poor fish or are you going to answer me?"

Mathew: "They like it in the tank. It's safe for them."

Sister: "How would you like to live in a tank, Matthew?"

Narrator 2: Matthew smiled and thought about that.

Mathew: "I think I'd like it. It would be so peaceful and quiet."

Sister: "You're impossible!"

Narrator 3: Matthew's sister slammed the door as hard as she could.

Narrator 4: Downstairs Matthew's parents were becoming tired of all the yelling, door slamming, and music blaring, so they yelled up.

Father: "That'll be enough of that kind of noise! How about a bit of busy noise?"

Mother: "Matthew! Have you cleaned your room yet?"

Narrator 1: Upstairs Matthew's brother opened his bedroom door called out,

Brother: "No, mom! He's too busy watching his little fishies!"

Narrator 2: Matthew opened his bedroom door too, but he didn't speak, he just listened.

Father: "I don't know what's wrong with the boy! He just does not have any ambition!"

Mother: "Please, George, lower your voice. He'll hear you!"

Father: "Oh, no, he won't! He'll be too busy staring at those fish to hear a word we say. Why can't he be like a normal boy and play hockey or football or even ride a bike? Now that's normal!"

Mother: "I know, George, but we can't force him."

Father: "Maybe we can! Maybe, without his precious fish, we'd get a little cooperation out of him!"

Narrator 3: Upstairs Matthew felt a chill run through his body. He ran across the room and hugged the tank, pressing his cheek against the cool glass.

Father: "No! Please, no! Not my fish!"

Narrator 4: Matthew gazed at his beautiful fish, gliding carefree among the rocks, reeds, and tiny castle in the tank.

Mathew: "You fish are so lucky! I wish I could be just like you. No worries. No family. Just peace and quiet, always."

Narrator 1: Matthew hugged the tank even harder and just watched his fish. An hour passed,

Narrator 2: and Matthew finally began to relax. Gradually he drifted off to sleep.

Narrator 3: Downstairs the rest of the family gathered to watch T.V. in the family room.

Narrator 4: Suddenly, outside, the sky split open with a giant fork of lightning.

Narrator 1: The lights flickered and then the house seemed to tremble with the following explosion of thunder.

Sister: "This storm is going to ruin my favorite program! I'm going to bed!"

Brother:: "Scared of a little thunder, aren't ya? Gonna hide?"

Father: "That'll be enough of that! I think it's time we all went to bed!"

Mother: "Yes, remember, school tomorrow."

BRO/SIS: "Mom! Don't remind us!"

Narrator 2: The house was soon dark, except for the glow from the tank light. Matthew slept deeply, through the noise of the storm.

Narrator 3: Suddenly lightening flared in the room and Matthew woke with a start.

Narrator 4: He looked at his reflection in the side of the tank and could not believe his eyes.

Narrator 1: His wish had been granted. He had been transformed. He was a fish!

Mathew: "I'm a fish! Wow! I'm really a fish! This is awesome!"

Narrator 2: Happily, Matthew dove deep into the fish tank, heading toward the tiny castle. Then he turned pure porpoise, exploring every corner of his watery paradise at full speed.

Narrator 3: And for the next while, Matthew had the time of his life, diving, swirling, and racing past the other fish in his fish tank.

Narrator 4: Suddenly, Matthew felt his stomach growl. A flash of lightning revealed his bedside clock. It was time to feed his fish.

Mathew: "Wait a minute! How can I feed the fish? I am a fish!"

Narrator 1: Matthew was the only person in the family who ever fed the fish. He was in trouble.

Narrator 2: As the night crept on and the storm slowly ebbed, Matthew began to have second thoughts about being a fish.

Mathew: "I could starve to death! My fish and I are in trouble!"

Narrator 3: Soon morning arrived. Mother was downstairs and breakfast was almost ready.

Mother: "George! Children! Come and get it!"

Father: "You don't have to call me twice! I could eat a horse!"

Sister: "Dad! That's so gross! We shouldn't eat animals!"

Brother: "Are we having horse for breakfast? I was hoping for a little fried fish!"

Mother: "That's not funny! Now call your brother. He loves pancakes."

Narrator 4: Matthew's brother leaned into the hall and yelled up to Matthew.

Brother: "Hey, fish lips! Breakfast!"

Narrator 1: There was no answer.

Narrator 2: Matthew's mother went up to his room.

Narrator 3: She saw the unmade bed. A frown spread across her face.

Mother: "Matthew? Matthew, where are you? Matthew!"

Narrator 4: Now she was worried. She looked in his closet. She rushed to the bathroom.

Mother: "Matthew? Please answer me! Matthew?"

Narrator 1: Everybody ran up to Matthew's room. They all looked worried. Matthew watched, not really able to believe that his family was so concerned.

Mathew: "I didn't think they cared if I was around or not. They all seemed to hate me and everything I did."

Narrator 2: Matthew wished he could tell them where he was, that he was all right.

Narrator 3: Then his father suddenly left the room.

Narrator 4: He was back in a few minutes, his head hanging.

Father: "I phoned the police and the hospital. No one answering Matthew's description is there."

Narrator 1: He slumped onto the bed, his head in his hands.

Sister: "Mom? Do you think Matthew ran away?"

Mother: "He'll be back. I know he'll be back."

Father: "Maybe it was me! Maybe I drove him away! I was awfully hard on him!"

Narrator 2: Matthew swirled around the tank, trying to get their attention, but they didn't look toward the tank. Even if they had, none of them would have known the silvery fish pressed to the glass was Matthew.

Narrator 3: Finally they left and the day dragged on.

Narrator 4: Later that night, Matthew's family lay in their beds, restless and unable to sleep. Each one thought about Matthew.

Father: "I know he ran away. It's all my fault."

Mother: "I hope he's warm enough and has something to eat."

Brother: "He's not such a bad kid. I wish I hadn't been so mean."

Sister: "He really did look after those fish. I guess he really cares about animals too."

Narrator 1: Matthew swam faster and faster in the fish tank. He tried to think.

Mathew: "How did I get into this mess? How do I get out of it? I don't want to be a fish anymore."

Narrator 2: At that moment the sky was again shattered by a fierce electrical storm.

Narrator 3: The lightning turned the night into day each time it ignited.

Narrator 4: While lightning ripped the sky, the timpani of thunder rattled the glass and shuddered the very air.

Narrator 1: Inside the tank, the fish seemed suspended, awestruck, while the enraged elements assaulted the town.

Narrator 2: Matthew blinked, feeling the coolness of the tank against his cheek.

Narrator 3: He stretched and yawned, then stared at the tank.

Narrator 4: His hands flew to his face, stomach, and legs.

Narrator 1: He ran to the window, yanked it open, and filled his lungs with rain-sweetened air. He yelled,

Mathew: "I'm back! I'm Matthew! I'm really Matthew!"

Narrator 2: His father burst through the door, followed almost immediately by everyone else.

Narrator 3: His father grabbed Matthew and squeezed him so hard he nearly cried.

Narrator 4: His mother's arms were around his neck a moment later.

Narrator 1: Soon he felt the arms of his brother and sister.

Narrator 2: Then everybody began to talk at once.

Brother: "Where were you?"

Sister: "What happened?"

Mother: "We were worried sick!"

Father: "Matthew, we've been scared to death. Where have you been?"

Narrator 3: Matthew knew he could never tell them the truth. They'd never believe it. He wasn't even sure he believed what had happened.

Father: "Matthew? Matthew, please tell us what happened?"

Mathew: "I ran away. I thought nobody would miss me. I didn't think anyone cared."

Father: "Nobody miss you? That's crazy, son. You're a big part of this family."

Narrator 4: This was music to Matthew's ears.

Mathew: "I'm sorry I got you all so worried. I just didn't think anybody really cared."

Father: "I hope you know now that we care for you very much."

Narrator 1: Then Matthew and his family sat and talked together for a long long time.

Narrator 2: Finally, mother kissed Matthew's forehead and shepherded the others out of his room.

Narrator 3: As the door closed behind them, Matthew walked over to the tank and crouched beside it.

Mathew: "Well, guys. Time to eat. Is everybody ready?"

Narrator 4: He gently shook an extra portion of food onto the water and dozens of tiny lips broke the surface, scrambling for the very late meal.

Mathew: "Fill your faces, guys. That's what I'm gonna do. I hope Mom filled the fridge. And I'm sure glad to be home, even though it is a noisy house!"

THE END