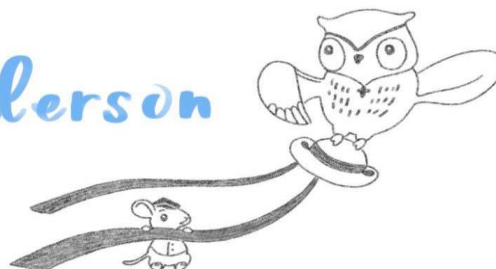


Sonja Anderson



Reader's Theater: A Play to Read Aloud

Sky Terrors

Excerpted and Adapted from *Sophie's Quest* by Sonja Anderson

In this scene, Timley Mouse's mother goes searching for her missing son. Thinking only of finding him, she calls and calls his name, quite forgetting the danger that she herself is in. In a moment of terror, she believes the end is near when a huge great horned owl swoops low, right over her head.

Characters:

Narrator

Mrs. Mouse (Timley's mother)

The Great Wise Horned Owl in the Park (Sophie's grandfather)

Salty Sam Seagull

I'm _____, and I play the Narrator.

I'm _____, and I play Mrs. Mouse.

I'm _____, and I play the Great Wise Horned Owl of the Park.

I'm _____, and I play Salty Sam, the seagull.

Narrator: After Mrs. Mouse discovers a note from her missing son, Timley, she heads out of her tree root home to search for him.

Mrs. Mouse (wailing):

Tim—ley! Tim—ley! Where are you? How could you do this to me? Where are you? Where are you? Timley, Timley!

Narrator: Mrs. Mouse sobbed into her hands. In her despair, she never noticed the large shape that silently glided closer and closer toward her. An enormous owl's sharp talons brushed the tops of her ears.

Mrs. Mouse: Aagh!

Narrator: The terrified mouse looked from side to side for a safe place to run, but her feet remained frozen in fright to the top of the stump. The owl made a u-turn and flew at her with his toes outstretched. Mrs. Mouse closed her eyes and waited for the end.

GWHO: Madam Mouse—Madam Mouse!

Narrator: The mouse squeezed her eyes shut even tighter.

GWHO: Excuse me, please. Mouse, open your eyes and talk to me. Are you-oo looking for someone?

Narrator: Astonished, Mrs. Mouse forced her eyes open and blinked up at the enormous owl, quite unable to speak. The owl was perched next to her on the stump. In his wing was a tiny piece of paper with blue mouse tracks on one side.

GWHO: You-oo see, my granddaughter is also missing. She was angry with me, so I went to her tree to talk to her. Everything was a mess! I found this note, but it doesn't say where she was going. When I saw you in distress, it made me wonder if you know something about it.

Mrs. Mouse: Oh me! Oh my! Those are Timley's tracks! I am sure of it. See? One of his toes is shorter on one paw than on the other. He had an accident when he was younger. What on earth was he doing in that owl's apartment?

GWHO: That owl's name is Sophie, and I am very worried about her as well.

Mrs. Mouse: Y-yes, I apologize Great Owl. I-I do know that tree very well. We live in its roots and I can't imagine what Timley was doing there. He has gone missing, too, and I am so worried about him. He has always been such a good boy—growing up so fast, you know. To tell you the truth, he wasn't very happy with me yesterday, either. I have been too afraid to let him grow up. Timley left us a note, too. He said he would be home by supper, but he wasn't. Do you think there might be a connection?

Narrator: Before the Great Wise Horned Owl could answer her, a gray and white seagull dove straight towards them out of the powder blue sky. The owl immediately spread his wings over the mouse to protect her from possible danger. The seagull landed nearby on a branch of an evergreen tree.

Salty Sam: E-url! Eurl!

GWHO: Who-oo are you-oo? What is your business here?

Salty Sam: You can come out, little lady mouse. I seen you already. Hee hee hee. If it ain't a mouse and owl paired up for the second time in a day. You two must be the ones I been searching for. A bit o' luck for ol' Salty Sam, and ain't it the truth. It's the Great Wise Horned Owl himself and Mother Mouse, I presume.

Narrator: Mrs. Mouse peeked out from under one of the owl's wings.

GWHO: Please tell us quickly all that you know! When did you see Sophie and Timley? Are they on their way home? Are they in trouble?

Salty Sam: Hee, hee, hee. It's my lucky day, for sure. The Great Wise Horned Owl himself, standing right here, asking ol' Salty the questions! Say, now that I think of it, I've been having trouble with a certain raven. You got some Great Wise Advice on how I can deal with that thieving low life?

GWHO: Not NOW, Salty Sam! About our children—

Salty Sam: Yes, it seems those two have a hankerin' for the sea. They're heading for some place that's full of holes. What did they call it? Hee hee! I remember. They're bound for Swiss Cheese Land. No, no, Old Sock Land. No, Donut Land! Hee hee! Haw, haw!

Narrator: Salty laughed long and hard at his own jokes. The Great Wise Horned Owl was not amused, and Mrs. Mouse just looked to the owl for help. She was very confused.

GWHO: Excuse me, Salty Sam! Excuse me! Would you please tell me what you know in plain English? No more jokes!

Salty Sam: Sophie and Timley are on a real pretty sailing ship headed out to sea. They're on their way to a Hole-y Land. They asked me to come find you to tell you not to worry. Oh, and Timley is sorry, but he won't be home for dinner. That's it.

Narrator: Mrs. Mouse fainted.

GWHO: Mrs. Mouse! Mrs. Mouse! Are you all right?

Narrator: Sophie's grandfather fanned her with one of his great wings while giving Salty Sam a set of directions himself.

GWHO: Seagull, keep an eye out for that ship, do you hear? If you ever see it again, will you come tell me right away? Just ask anyone in the Park and they will direct you to my tree. Thank you very much for your information. We are greatly in your debt. Come back later and we can discuss your raven situation. As you can see, I need to attend to Timley's mother.

Salty Sam: Will do! Glad to be of service to the Great Wise Horned Owl. Eurl! E-url!

Narrator: The seagull dipped his head in farewell. Soon, he was just a dot in the sky.