A TWIST OF THE TONGUE

Book by CYNTHIA DAVIES and STEVEN FENDRICH
Music and Lyrics by STEPHEN MURRAY

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## A TWIST OF THE TONGUE

**A Tongue-Twisting Musical Farce**

By CYNTHIA DAVIES and STEVEN FENDRICH  
Music and lyrics by STEPHEN MURRAY

### CAST OF CHARACTERS  
(In Order of Appearance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>YOUNG MOSES ROSES</td>
<td>teenage boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>YOUNG SALLY SEASHELL</td>
<td>teenage girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>GAME SHOW HOSTESS</td>
<td>seen, but not heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>YOUNG DORA DIMBULB</td>
<td>teenage girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>WINK HUGBETT</td>
<td>game show host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>JOHNNY JAY</td>
<td>game show announcer; a familiar voice heard, but not seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>YOUNG HAZEL HAZELNUTT</td>
<td>teenage girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>MR. ROSES (The grown-up version)</td>
<td>English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>MR. HYGIENE</td>
<td>an elderly school custodian, a very tidy man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>TWILA</td>
<td>brainy student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>TARA</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>TAMARA</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CHUCKIE</td>
<td>athletic student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>CHERRY</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CHARMAIN</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>WALLY</td>
<td>member of the Pep Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>POLLY</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>MOLLY</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>MS. SEASHELL (The grown-up version)</td>
<td>principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>MS. DIMBULB (The grown-up version)</td>
<td>dedicated assistant to the principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>STUDENT ONE</td>
<td>walking home from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>STUDENT TWO</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>STUDENT THREE</td>
<td>another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>HAZEL HAZELNUTT (The grown-up version)</td>
<td>Nettie’s Knitting School faculty member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NEDRA</td>
<td>student at Nettie’s Knitting Night School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NORBERT ....................... another 1
NELLIE ........................... another 1
PETER PIPER ........................... jolly farmer and tongue-twisting expert 7
ALICE AXEL ........................... professor and tongue-twisting expert 7
GRETTA GUMDROP ................. veteran tongue-twister 7

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
Scene One: Thirty years ago in Bitter Batter’s auditorium
Scene Two: Present day in Mr. Rose’s Classroom
Scene Three: A few minutes later in the same classroom
Scene Four: A few days later in a school hallway
Scene Five: Contest day in the auditorium
SEQUENCE OF MUSICAL NUMBERS

MC 1   A Twist of the Tongue—Prologue. Company
MC 1a  Scene Change Music............... Instrumental
MC 2   Here’s to the Bard ...................... Mr. Roses
MC 3   We are Ready to
       Twist and Shout........................ Chuckie, Cherry, Charmain
MC 4   Please, Mr. Roses ................ Students, Mr. Roses
MC 4a  Scene Change Music............... Instrumental
MC 5   How You Gonna Dance? .......... Mr. Roses, Ms. Dimbulb
MC 6   Whom to Choose? ..................... Mr. Roses, Student soloists
MC 6a  Scene Change Music............... Instrumental
MC 7   The Bahamas .......................... Ms. Seashell, Ms.
       Dimbulb, Cherry, Wally, Twila
MC 8   We Have Some Work to Do........ Students and Mr.
       Hygiene
MC 8a  Scene Change Music............... Instrumental
MC 9   School Song .......................... Molly, Polly, Tara,
       Tamara, Chuckie, Charmain, Bitter Batter
       Boosters, Nettie’s Knitting Students,
       Fans,
MC 10  It’s Time to Do-Si-Do .......... Mr. Roses, Ms.
       Seashell, Bitter Batter Students
MC 11  Curtain Call—A Twist of the
       Tongue (Reprise) ...................... Company
MC 12  Exit Music ......................... Instrumental
A TWIST OF THE TONGUE

Prologue

AT RISE: MUSIC CUE 1: “A Twist of the Tongue—Prologue.”
COMPANY ENTERS in the dark during MUSIC INTRODUCTION.
LIGHTS UP when COMPANY is ONSTAGE.

COMPANY: (Sings.) Come on, everybody, won’t you be a witness
To the latest craze in physical fitness?
It doesn’t help your hips. It doesn’t help your thighs.
It’s a different kind of exercise.
Everyone can do it, whether old or young.
And all it takes is a twist of the tongue.

It’s a twist of the tongue, it’s a twist.
It’s something that shouldn’t be missed.
You don’t need your arms.
You don’t need your wrist.
All you need to do
Is to give your tongue a twist.

Everybody’s twisting tongues across the nation,
Working on their skills of pronunciation.
Your aunties and your uncles, your brothers and sisters
Are not sweating to the oldies, they’re doing tongue twisters.
Won’t you come and join us? We’ve got a whole list
Of tangled groups of words that will give your tongue a twist.

It’s a twist of the tongue, it’s a twist.
It’s something that shouldn’t be missed.
You don’t need your legs.
You don’t need your fist.
All you need to do
Is to give your tongue a twist.

GROUP 1: (Sings.) Peter Piper picked a peck of peppers.
Peter Piper picked a peck of peppers.

GROUP 2: (Sings.) She sells seashells by the seashore.

GROUP 3: (Sings.) Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat.

COMPANY: (Sings.) It’s a twist of the tongue, it’s a twist.
It’s something that shouldn’t be missed.
You don’t need your arms.
You don’t need your wrist.
You don’t need your legs.
You don’t need your fist.
Just follow our advice,
And you will feel blissed.
All you need to do
Is to give your tongue a twist.
All you need to do
Is to give your tongue a twist. (CURTAIN.)

End of Prologue

Scene One

SETTING: The twentieth annual tongue-twisting tournament, 30 years ago in the auditorium of the Bitter Batter school. (Played in front of the curtain.).

LIGHTS UP: YOUNG MOSES ROSES ENTERS RIGHT. YOUNG SALLY SEASHELL ENTERS LEFT. They stand CENTER with their backs almost completely to the AUDIENCE. A GAME SHOW HOSTESS ENTERS RIGHT, walking across the stage displaying a sign that reads, “Flashback: 30 years earlier.” She EXITS LEFT. YOUNG DORA DIMBULB stands LEFT and acts as cheering section. WINK HUGHBETT ENTERS RIGHT.

WINK: Wink Hughbett, here. Now for our final round of the championship. If little Dora Dimbulb, Sally Seashell and Moses Roses from Bitter Batter School complete these final two twisters in tongue twister form, they will be this year’s tongue-twisting tremendous triumphant team and continue a streak of wins for Bitter Batter School that has not been broken since the immortal Betty Batter started this tournament 20 years ago. Well, enough pressure. Tell them what they will win, Johnny Jay!

JOHNNY’S VOICE: (FROM OFFSTAGE RIGHT.) You bet, Wink! They will not only win the love and admiration of their peers, but they will also win the fabulous Bahama Mama’s Bikini Beach Bonanza vacation package! This all-expense paid trip gives each winner and his or her family a six-night stay at the swanky Bahama Mama resort and all the bananas they care to eat. And that’s not all! They also will receive the coveted Bitter Batter Banner and Trophy to display in their school’s trophy case—proof to all that they are indeed the undisputed grand champions! (GAME SHOW HOSTESS ENTERS LEFT and crosses the STAGE displaying a sign to the AUDIENCE that reads “Applause.” She remains FAR RIGHT.)

WINK: But, wait. What if they tragically fail?
JOHNNY’S VOICE: (FROM OFFSTAGE RIGHT.) Well, Wink, if they fail, their utter humiliation and empty trophy case will hopefully be forgotten when they receive the incredible consolation prize—the Tongue Twister Home Game for Teens!

WINK: Thanks, Johnny. Well, let’s get started. Remember, each twister must be said a minimum of five times. You will be judged on speed, dramatization and, of course, clarity. Sally, are you ready?

YOUNG SALLY: Yes, Wink.

WINK: Here we go. (Enunciates.) Elegant elephants.

YOUNG SALLY: (Takes a deep breath, then proceeds with the tongue twister.) Elegant elephants. Elegant elephants. Elegant elephants. Elegant elephants. Elegant elephants. ([NOTE: It doesn't matter if the actress does a masterful job on the tongue twister. Much of the humor of this show will come from the actors’ and actresses’ botched attempts at the tongue twisters. No matter how well they do, however, the judges will always give the scores as scripted. See PRODUCTION NOTES for more details.] GAME SHOW HOSTESS CROSSES RIGHT to LEFT with the “Applause” sign. She remains FAR LEFT.)

WINK: Judges? (Pause. Looks OFFSTAGE RIGHT to “see” judges’ scorecards.) A 9.3 out of 10! (GAME SHOW HOSTESS raises “Applause” sign FAR LEFT.) Well done, Sally. Okay, Moses. It’s up to you, now. Is it going to be Bahama Mama’s or our home game along with possible life-long traumas? It’s all up to you, my friend. Ready?

YOUNG MOSES: (Confident.) You bet I am, Wink.

WINK: Okay, Moses. Here is your twister. (Enunciates.) Cinnamon, aluminum, linoleum.


WINK: Judges? (Pause. Looks OFFSTAGE to “see” judges’ scorecards.) We have a score of... 2.5. I’m sorry, Moses. The win, the championship, the trip and the trophy all go to Nettie’s Knitting Night School! (SOUND EFFECT: APPLAUSE.)

YOUNG HAZEL: (ENTERS LEFT. Skips on over to YOUNG SALLY. To YOUNG SALLY.) Sally sold out today!

YOUNG SALLY: (To YOUNG HAZEL.) Be quiet, Hazel.
YOUNG HAZEL: (To YOUNG SALLY.) If you’re really nice, my Nettie’s Knitting Night School teammates and I might send you a postcard from the Bahamas. (She skips OFF LEFT, laughing.)

YOUNG SALLY: It seems she always wins everything.

YOUNG MOSES: (To YOUNG SALLY.) I’m so sorry, Sally. I think I bruised my tongue somehow.

YOUNG SALLY: No excuses, Moses Roses. You’ve made us all laughingstocks. You are a loser. A loser! A loser! (YOUNG SALLY EXITS RIGHT. WINK EXITS LEFT.)

YOUNG MOSES: (To DORA.) Oh, Dora. I am plagued with guilt.

YOUNG DORA DIMBULB: (Crosses RIGHT with YOUNG MOSES.) Hey, Moses, there’s always next year. (They EXIT RIGHT. BLACKOUT. MUSIC CUE 1a: “Scene Change Music.”)

End of Scene One

Scene Two

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP to reveal the present day in a classroom of the Bitter Batter School. MR. ROSES is STAGE RIGHT sitting behind his desk. His desk is overflowing with books, papers and files. STAGE LEFT are three rows each of three chairs and desks, angled for audience view. MR. ROSES is deep in thought. SOUND EFFECT: SCHOOL BELL.

MR. ROSES: (Startled.) Arrrrrg! (Tries to read watch.) It’s on backwards again. (Reads time.) Class in five minutes. (Looks for something on messy desk. Finds a variety of wild things, which he tosses aside. [NOTE: The odder the better—rubber chickens, pots and pans, head of lettuce, etc.])

MR. HYGIENE: (ENTERS LEFT, sweeping with a large broom. NOISE OF STUDENTS can be heard in the background.) Good morning, Mr. Roses.

MR. ROSES: Oh, good morning, Mr. Hygiene.

MR. HYGIENE: (Leans on broom.) Looking for something?

MR. ROSES: Yes, yes. I lost— (To himself.) Ohhhh, where… I can’t believe this is happening to me. How is it possible that she, that Sally Theeshell, I mean, Sally Flee-thell… I mean… that woman is now our principal? What could Auntie Betty have been thinking? I finally convinced her that Shakespeare’s artistic text came before that vulgar tongue-twisting. I realize that tongue twisters have always been one of Auntie Betty’s loves, but I want
her to appreciate fine literature even more. But now, Sally has literally come back to haunt me.

MR. HYGIENE: I assume you’re talking about Ms. Seashell, who has a big interest in tongue-twisting. Someone you know, Mr. Roses?

MR. ROSES: (To MR. HYGIENE.) No! No… uh… I… I… I was talking about a third cousin of mine, and I can’t even find my copy of “Hamlet.” (Attempts to cover up.) Well, I don’t know her exactly… I… uh, just think her name is uh… unusual. Yes, very unusual and hard to say. Wouldn’t you agree, Hister Mygiene? I mean, Mr. Hygiene. (Nervous laugh.) Well, I really must find that book. Students will be here any minute. If you will excuse me.

MR. HYGIENE: (Sweeps.) Well, okay, Mr. Roses. Whatever you say. I hope you find what you’re looking for. By the way, Mr. Roses, you know what they say about cleanliness, don’t you?

MR. ROSES: Yes, yes, Mr. Hygiene. “Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

MR. HYGIENE: Nope. They say, “Cleanliness is what you get when you clear away all the crud.” You have a good day, Mr. Roses. (EXITS RIGHT. BELL RINGS and startles MR. ROSES. Books and paper fly off his desk.)

TWILA: (ENTERS RIGHT with TARA and TAMARA. They are brainy and they like to show it. They carry large backpacks or many textbooks.) Good morning, Mr. Roses. (Takes a seat in front row.)

MR. ROSES: Good morning, Twila.

TARA: Good morning, Professor. (Takes seat in front row and visibly mouths “What a mess!” to TWILA.)

MR. ROSES: Good day, Tara. (Fumbles without success to bring desk to order.)

TAMARA: (Stops in front of MR. ROSES’S desk.) Good morning, Mr. Roses. What are you doing?

MR. ROSES: Ah. Oh, yes. Good morning, Tamara. Well, I am, uh… looking for my copy of “Hamlet.” I can’t seem to find it. My desk, you see, is a tad disorganized and well—William Shakespeare, the Bard… wonderful. I wanted to begin our discussion about him today.

TAMARA: (Bends down and picks up a book, which she hands to MR. ROSES.) Is this what you are looking for, sir?

MR. ROSES: Why, yes. Thank you, Tamara. (MUSIC CUE 2: “Here’s to the Bard.” TAMARA takes her seat as MR. ROSES
sings.) Here’s to the Bard! Here’s to you, Shakespeare. Where would I be without you? Such wonderful plays. You wrote thirty-seven. Each one a slice of theatrical heaven. Here’s to the Bard! Here’s to you, William. I treasure each word from your pen. Without your “Othello,” I’d be a sad fellow. I read it again and again.

You gave us “The Tempest,” “King Lear,” and “Twelfth Night.” “Romeo and Juliet,” too. “The Merchant of Venice” and “Love’s Labors Lost,” And “...About Nothing” you made “Much Ado...” You wrote of the kings, Richard, Henry and John, And your marvelous “Dream” of “Midsummer.” It’s just “As You Like It,” but if your plays were gone, Forsooth, it would be such a bummer.

Here’s to the Bard! The writer of “Hamlet,” My favorite of all your creations. You’ve given a gift that affects all our lives. Thank you for Falstaff and those Merry Wives. Here’s to the Bard! Here’s to you, Willie. Your work is adored in all nations. You’re the king, you’re the best. You surpass all the rest. I adore every line. I think you’re divine. You are great, you are swell. “All’s Well That Ends Well.” Here’s to you, Shakespeare! Here’s to the Bard! (MUSIC OUT.)

CHUCKIE: (ENTERS RIGHT with CHERRY and CHARMAIN. They are top athletes at the school and are dressed as typical teenage athletes: team shirts, baseball hats, letter jackets, etc. They also have backpacks, but not so “loaded.” They are tossing a “Nerf” style ball back and forth. They spread out in the room and play catch.) Yahoo! Right here, Cherry! Bring it home to Papa!

CHERRY: (Throws the ball to CHUCKIE.) Yes! Way to go, Chuckie! Here’s the test, Charmain! Here’s the throw! (CHUCKIE throws the ball to CHARMAIN.) What a catch! It’s a last second victory! What a play! (CHERRY and CHARMAIN “high five.”)

MR. ROSES: No ball throwing! In your seats now! (The THREE sit in the second row.)
WALLY: (ENTERS RIGHT with MOLLY and POLLY. They are the peppiest members of the Pep Club, dressed to match in the school colors. They set their books on their desks, then proceed DOWNSTAGE, MOLLY and POLLY with pompons in hand. Yells.) Let’s go! Polly, give me a “B”!

POLLY: “B”!

WALLY: Molly, give me another “B”!

MOLLY: Another “B”!

WALLY: Give me another “B”!

MOLLY/POLLY: Another “B”!

WALLY: What does it spell?

WALLY/MOLLY/POLLY: (Waddling fingers across lips making the “B” sound.) B-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-b-
hanky back to MS. DIMBULB. Goes back to addressing school.) Now, as the new principal of Bitter Batter School... (Menacing.) some things are going to change. As you know, our school once had a proud history of winning the annual tongue-twisting tournament. Unfortunately, for the past (With much emphasis.) 30 years in a row, we have lost. (Pause. MR. ROSES sinks in his chair.) Well, my Bitter Batter buddies, that is going to change. This year we will win. Today, three thuperior thtudents will be chosen. (Laughs at her little joke.) I mean, of course, three superior students who will lead our untwisted battle cry to tongue-twisting glory. We will reclaim our lost past. The Bitter Batter Banner and Trophy will once again grace our fair trophy case. (In an ominous voice.) As the school’s tongue-twisting teacher sponsor, Mr. Roses will be choosing the championship team. (Looks directly at MR. ROSES.) Choose wisely. I will be watching your every move. (With great enthusiasm.) As always, the winning team will go to the Bahamas this year. Bitter Batter will prevail. (STUDENTS CHEER. MS. SEASHELL and MS. DIMBULB EXIT LEFT.)

MR. ROSES: (Quite undone.) Well, yes, class. I guess you heard Ms. Seashell. After we study the brilliant words and plot structure of Shakespeare’s “Hamlet,” I will be choosing a team for this infernal event. I, uh, mean exciting challenge to compete for that musty old… I mean, marvelous trophy and insip… inspiring vacation. So, let’s begin to study the glory and wonder of William Shakespeare. Who can tell me at what point in “Hamlet” the line is crossed from sanity to insanity? (All hands in class shoot up enthusiastically.) Well, well, well. I see that Shakespeare has captured your hearts and imaginations. (Looks around class.) Well, let’s see. (Points to CHUCKIE.) Yes, Chuckie. Share with us your thoughts and insights. Let your brain reveal what is deep in your heart.

CHUCKIE: (Stands.) Well, Mr. Roses. I wanted to be the first to let you know that Cherry, Charmain and I are totally the right choice to represent Bitter Batter in the tongue-twisting tournament. (CHERRY, CHARMAINE and CHUCKIE whoop and “high five” each other.) We are proudly known, of course, as jocks and we have the muscle and strength to outlast any opponent. (They flex muscles.) We all know the tongue is the strongest muscle in the body. We are ready to twist and shout. Check it out! (MUSIC CUE 3: “We Are Ready to Twist and Shout.” Speaks in rhythm.) A flea and a fly flew up in a flue. Said the flea,

CHERRY/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.) “Let’s fly!”
CHUCKIE: (Speaks in rhythm.) Said the fly,

CHERRY/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.) “Let’s flee!”

CHUCKIE: (Speaks in rhythm.)
So they flew through a flaw in the flue!

CHERRY/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.)
So, they flew through a flaw in the flue!

CHUCKIE: (Speaks in rhythm.)
Said the flea, “Let’s fly!” Said the fly, “Let’s flee!”

CHERRY/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.)
So they flew through a flaw in the flue!

CHUCKIE/CHERRY/CHARMAINE: (Sing.)
We are ready to twist and shout!

MR. ROSES: (Tries to interrupt. Speaks.) Excuse—

CHUCKIE: (Shouts.) Take it, Cherry!

CHARMAINE: (Shouts.) Check it out!

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?

CHUCKIE/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
He would chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would chuck
If a woodchuck could chuck wood.

CHUCKIE/CHARMAINE: (Speak in rhythm.)
He would chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would chuck
If a woodchuck could chuck wood.

CHUCKIE/CHARMAINE/CHERRY: (Speak in rhythm.)
If a woodchuck could chuck wood.
(Sing.) We are ready to twist and shout!

MR. ROSES: (Tries to interrupt again. Speaks.) Will you please—

CHERRY: (Speaks.) Your turn, Charmain!

CHUCKIE: (Speaks.) Check it out!

CHARMAINE: (Speaks in rhythm.)
Once a feller met a feller in a field of beans.
Said the feller to the feller, “Can you tell me what this means?
I met this other feller over in the field of greens. Can a feller tell a feller what another feller means?” Said the feller to the feller, “Well, I’m no fortuneteller. I’m an ordinary feller sitting in a field of beans. But I’d have to say a feller would be a sweller feller if he could tell a feller what another feller means.”

CHUCKIE/CHERRY/CHARMAIN: (Sing.)
We are ready to twist and shout!

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck?

CHUCKIE: (Speaks in rhythm.) A flea and a fly flew up in a flue.

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck?

CHARMAIN: (Speaks in rhythm.)
Can a feller tell a feller what another feller means?

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck?

CHUCKIE: (Speaks in rhythm.)
Said the flea, “Let’s fly!” Said the fly, “Let’s flee!”

CHERRY: (Speaks in rhythm.)
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck…

CHUCKIE/CHERRY/CHARMAIN: (Speak in rhythm.)
If a woodchuck could chuck wood?
(Sing.) We are ready to twist and shout! Twist and shout! Twist and shout! (MUSIC OUT. The JOCKS laugh and holler. OTHER STUDENTS are not impressed.)

MR. ROSES: (Finally gets their attention.) Cherry, Chuckie, Charmain! We will have no tongue-twisting in my classroom. Sit down, please. (CLASS comes to order.) Okay, that is much better. Now, let’s see. Where were we?

TARA: (Raises hand.) Insanity, Mr. Roses.

MR. ROSES: Ah, yes, my insanity. I mean, Hamlet’s insanity. Okay, class. When does Hamlet go insane? (All hands shoot up again. MR. ROSES is pleased.) Ah, yes. Much better, much better. You are focused in on Hamlet’s pain. Yes, yes. Let’s see. (To TWILA.) Twila. Share your thoughts with us.

TWILA: (Stands.) Mr. Roses. I am sorry to stray from the subject at hand. However, I feel compelled to inform you that Tara, Tamara and I are far better suited to represent our school in the tongue-twisting competition. Our superior intellectual capacity
helps us to successfully execute a tongue twister properly. Also, when we win, we vow to continue our studies of Shakespeare in our spare time when we visit the Bahamas. (TARA and TAMARA nod in agreement.)

CHERRY: No way, Twila!

TWILA: Ah, yes. An uncivilized attitude. Anyway, we would like to present the following classic. It is entitled (Clears throat.) “Your Bob Owes Our Bob.” (The following twisters are spoken as if giving a great lecture.)

Your Bob owes our Bob a bob,
And if your Bob doesn’t give our Bob the bob,
Our Bob will give your Bob a bob on the knob!

TAMARA: (Stands.) And further more…

There was a young lady named Kate
Who went to dinner at 8:08.
And it would be hard to relate
At this late date
What Kate and her date really ate.

TARA: (Stands.) And we shall never forget the classic…

Good, better, best—
Never let it rest
’Til your good is better
And your better is best!

(TWILA, TARA and TAMARA sit and applaud one another politely, yet smugly.)

MR. ROSES: No more! I am well aware of how loquacious you all are. But we must stay focused. Great literature awaits. Now back to Camlet—I mean Spamlet—arrrg! I mean “Hamlet.” (He regains composure.) Now, who can tell me about Hamlet? (All hands shoot up again. MR. ROSES is leery. He covers his eyes with one hand and points to POLLY with the other.) Please, oh please, Polly. What can you tell us about Hamlet?

POLLY: (Stands and pauses.) Hamlet’s insanity…

MR. ROSES: (Encouraged, peeks through his fingers.) Yes… yes… yes… yes…

POLLY: Hamlet’s insanity will be nothing compared to the insanity of choosing them (Points to CHUCKIE’S group.) or them (Points to TWILA’S group.), as opposed to us. (Points to other PEP CLUB MEMBERS.) Only those of us on the Pep Club have the spirit to represent Bitter Batter in the tongue-twisting tournament and win. Am I right, guys?
MOLLY/WALLY: (Cheer.) Right! (MOLLY and POLLY quickly pull out pompons again.)

POLLY: (As a cheer.) Ready, go!
Who washed Washington’s white woolen underwear
When Washington’s washer woman went west?

MOLLY: (Cheers.) Washington’s wife wouldn’t wash Washington’s
White woolen underwear when
Washington’s washerwoman went west.

WALLY: (Cheers.) Washington unwillingly washed
Washington’s white woolen underwear
When Washington’s washerwoman went west.
(The PEP CLUB MEMBERS jump, kick and shout. MUSIC CUE 4: “Please, Mr. Roses.” The CLASS stands, and they ALL start pleading with MR. ROSES.)

STUDENTS: (Speak; ad lib during introduction of song.)
They’re nothing but tongue-twisting twerps!
Choose us, Mr. Roses!
Please! Please! Please! (MR. ROSES can only sit and bang his head on the desk. Sing.)
Please, please, please, Mr. Roses.
Pick the team, Mr. Roses.
We can’t wait ’til you make the choice.
Please choose now, Mr. Roses.
Holy cow, Mr. Roses.
Listen to my tongue-twisting voice.

We’ve got class, we’ve got skill.
Pick us, Mr. Roses,
We know you will.
Please, please, please put me on the team.

(Speak; ad lib.) Pick us! Please, oh please. We promise we’ll like “Hamlet.” We’ll wash your car. You’re the best teacher in the world!

MR. ROSES: (Waves a white flag. Sings.) I give up. I surrender.
Put your brains in a blender.
Let’s toss “Hamlet” out with the trash.
My nerves are almost shattered.
Who knew tongue-twisting mattered?
Now I’m breaking out in a rash.
Take your seats. Sit side by side.
Be quiet, so I can decide.
MR. ROSES: (Sings.)    STUDENTS: (Sing.)
    Decide…           Please, please, please Mr. Roses.
    Decide…           Please, please, please Mr. Roses.
    Decide…           Please, please, please Mr. Roses.
    Decide…           Please, please, please Mr. Roses.
    Please, please, please!

MR. ROSES: (Shouts.) Recess!! (BLACKOUT. MUSIC CUE 4a: “Scene Change Music.”)

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

LIGHTS UP: It is a few minutes later in MR. ROSES’S classroom. MR. ROSES is sitting at his desk reading “Hamlet.” He is alone in the room.

MR. ROSES: (Reads dramatically.) “Whether ’tis nobler in the mind
to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take
arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them.” Oh,
I know about trouble. (Continues reading to himself.)

MR. HYGIENE: (ENTERS RIGHT with broom, sweeping and
  whistling.) Good afternoon, Mr. Roses.

MR. ROSES: Hello, Mr. Hygiene.

MR. HYGIENE: What are you reading, Mr. Roses?

MR. ROSES: The brilliant words of William Shakespeare’s “Hamlet.”
If I could only inspire my students to have the same passion for
the Bard that they do for those ridiculous tongue twisters.

MR. HYGIENE: Oh, tongue twisters aren’t all that bad. Have to
admit, I can’t say that I care that much for Mr. Shakespeare. Not
a very tidy fellow. Always using ten words when one would do just
fine. (Takes up book and reads.) “They clip us drunkards and with
swinish phrase, soil our additions in the pith and marrow of our
attribute.” (Shakes his head.) What’s this “swine” stuff? Why not
just call a pig a pig?

MR. ROSES: (Obviously irritated.) Mr. Hygiene, you shouldn’t
belittle these words. Take note to their poetic beauty.

MR. HYGIENE: I guess it’s a matter of taste. Well, I’m sure you got
a class coming in pretty soon. I’ll see you around. (EXITS LEFT.
MR. ROSES just waves, somewhat insulted by MR. HYGIENE’S
attitude toward Shakespeare.)

End of Script Sample
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ON STAGE: Scenes Two and Three: MR. ROSES’S chair and desk, littered with books, papers, files, rubber chicken, head of lettuce, white flag, other odd items. Nine chairs and nine desks for students. ON STAGE: Scene Five: Podium with banner reading, “Tongue-Twisting Tournament.” Three rows of benches or chairs. Three additional chairs for the judges with blank scoring cards and black markers. Two podiums or desks for the contestants.

BROUGHT ON, Scene One: Signs reading “Flashback: 30 years earlier” and “Applause” (GAME SHOW HOSTESS).

BROUGHT ON, Scene Two: Broom (MR. HYGIENE); hanky, pencil, notepad (MS. DIMBULB); “Nerf” ball (CHERRY); pompons, (MOLLY and POLLY); backpacks or books (ALL STUDENTS).

BROUGHT ON, Scene Three: Pencil, notepad, glasses or wig, hand mirror, tape recorder, cowboy hat (MS. DIMBULB).

BROUGHT ON, Scene Four: Books/backpacks (STUDENT ONE, STUDENT TWO, STUDENT THREE); stopwatch (MS. DIMBULB); books/backpacks (TAMARA and TWILA).

BROUGHT ON, Scene Five: Applause sign, trophy (GAME SHOW HOSTESS); tape recorder, cowboy hat (MS. DIMBULB); purse (MS. SEASHELL); bag of candy containing a note and taffy (CHUCKIE); red flags (JUDGES); two pieces of paper (PETER PIPER).

SOUND EFFECTS

Applause, school bell.

FLEXIBLE CASTING

Make adjustments as/if needed. For example, WALLY could be DOLLY, NELLIE could be NICK, ALICE could become AL, etc. EXTRAS could be easily added in classroom scenes and the tongue-twisting tournament as additional students. Doubling can be utilized by having YOUNG SALLY SEASHELL and YOUNG DORA DIMBULB play the roles of MS. SALLY SEASHELL and MS. DIMBULB. Or YOUNG SALLY SEASHELL, YOUNG DORA DIMBULB and YOUNG MOSES ROSES can appear as the judges with costume changes.
COSTUMES

Costuming is simple. Dress the part. For example, WINK HUGHBETT should appear in “flashy” game show suit. The athletic students might wear letter jackets, pep squad in same school colors and the brainy students may dress conservatively. MR. ROSES, MS. DIMBULB, MS. SEASHELL and MS. HAZELNUTT will want to look “older.” Just use your resources.

DOING THE TONGUE TWISTERs

Much of the absurd humor of this show comes from the fact that your actors have to perform these tough tongue-twisters on cue, and they obviously won’t do them perfectly. There are several ways you can handle this. The easiest is simply to go ahead with the play, no matter how well or poorly each actor performs the tongue-twisting task. Your audience will hoot when an actor flubs a tongue-twister but the judges still give him a great score. If you are not comfortable with this, however, the options are limited only by your creativity. For instance, every time a tongue-twister is about to be recited, the game show hostess could hold up a sign that reads “Slow-Mo” so that the tongue-twister is presented in slow motion. Or, if an actor badly flubs a tongue-twister, the game show hostess can have a clapboard and suddenly shout out, “Take two!” Choose whatever will be the most fun for your audience… and your cast.

If it helps your actors’ sanity, some tongue-twisters can be printed on poster board so that the person reciting it need only to read it. If you choose this option, make sure you use it consistently in the tournament scenes.

GET YOUR AUDIENCE WARMED UP!

Have fun by putting a number of tongue twisters in your production program. Ask your audience to say these classics three times as quickly as they can.

A box of biscuits, a batch of mixed biscuits.
The sixth sick sheik’s sixth sheep’s sick.
Three free throws.
Knapsack straps.
Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?
Lesser leather never weathered wetter weather better.
Inchworms itching.
A noisy noise annoys an oyster.
The myth of Miss Muffet.
Friendly Frank flips fine flapjacks.
Vincent vowed vengeance very vehemently.
Cheap ship trip.
Lovely lemon liniment.
Gertie’s great-grandma grew aghast at Gertie’s grammar.
Tim, the thin twin tinsmith.
Fat frogs flying past fast.
Flee from fog to fight flu fast.
Greek grapes.
The boot black bought the black boot back.
Surely some sunshine shall shine soon.
Moose noshing much mush.
Ruby Rugby’s brother bought and brought her back some rubber baby-buggy bumpers.
Sly Sam slurps Sally’s soup.
Six short slow shepherds.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

Please feel free to save it permanently for future reference.

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