

Against All Odds – Readers’ Theater

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

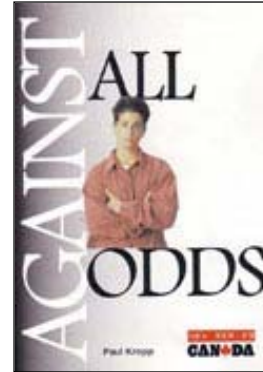
Larry – the older brother

Jeff – the younger brother

Tank – Jeff’s friend, a bully

Sound effects: clanging metal, rushing water, pounding, climbing steps.

Note: the boys are in a sewer tunnel, so any echo effect will add to the suspense.



NARRATOR 1: Chapter 7 of Against All Odds, performed by (student names)

NARRATOR 2: The three boys were trapped in the storm sewer. They were knee deep in cold water and very scared.

NARRATOR 1: Over their heads, on the surface, a storm had broken. The rain was sending torrents of water into the storm sewer.

NARRATOR 2: With each minute, the water in the tunnel was getting higher.

TANK: So did you bring help?

LARRY: Help?

TANK: Yeah, you brought somebody with you, right?

NARRATOR 1: There was a moment of silence. Larry was “the help.” And he had no idea what to do. His little brother, Jeff, didn’t know this.

JEFF: I told you Larry would save us.

LARRY: Yeah, right. I ... uh, ... well. Lena is calling the police.

NARRATOR 2: Tank got angry.

TANK: So you just came in by yourself? How dumb are you? You can’t play hero without some kind of plan.

LARRY: Well, I guess I didn’t think. Do you guys know where we are?

TANK: (sarcastic) Beats me, Larry. I was looking for a street sign but it’s kind of dark down here. You didn’t happen to bring a flashlight with you, or maybe a cell phone. I mean, that would have called for a little brainpower.

NARRATOR 1: Larry was upset. He had rushed into the sewer to save his brother. He didn't have a plan. He didn't know how to get out. All he knew was that Jeff was in trouble.

JEFF: Larry's got a light on his key chain.

LARRY: Yeah, let's see what's up there.

NARRATOR 2: Larry turned on the flashlight. He shone the light over the concrete walls. Then he saw a shaft that led up.

LARRY: What's up there?

TANK: It must be where the side sewer connects to the main line. That's a manhole cover up at the top of the shaft.

LARRY: So why don't we just climb out?

JEFF: Because the manhole cover is locked.

LARRY: Locked?

TANK: The city locked it down 'cause one day we kind of pushed it off.

NARRATOR 1: For a moment, there was silence. The only sound was water rushing through the sewer. That's when Larry had an idea.

LARRY: Jeff, give me your belt.

JEFF: My belt?

LARRY: Just take it off and give it to me. I'm going up to make some noise.

NARRATOR 2: In a second, Larry was climbing up the ladder. Jeff kept the flashlight aimed on the rungs. When Larry reached the top, he pushed on the manhole cover. (grunting sound)

NARRATOR 1: The manhole cover didn't budge.

NARRATOR 2: Then he began pounding on the metal, yelling for help.

LARRY: Hey, we're down here! (pounding) Help! (pounding) We need some help down here!

NARRATOR 1: At last, Larry heard a sound over his head. (sound effect: car, splashing water) It was a car running over the manhole cover.

LARRY: Oh, no! We're in the middle of the street! Nobody can hear us up there! It's hopeless!

NARRATOR 2: Larry climbed back down the ladder. (sound effect) By now, the water had gone up another two inches.

LARRY: Can we get out that side tunnel?

TANK: Too slippery.

LARRY: What about the big tunnel up ahead?

JEFF: It goes way down to the river.

NARRATOR 1: In front of the boys was the main line of the storm sewer. The water in the big tunnel was rushing by them like a real river. It was swirling and bubbling, with dirt and branches floating on the surface.

LARRY: So how about we go with the flow? Jeff's a good swimmer and there's enough air at the top of the tunnel. If we wait, the water will fill this whole place and we'll never make it.

JEFF: Hey, that's smart, Larry.

NARRATOR 2: The two brothers looked at Tank in the darkness. He was shaking his head.

LARRY: I think it's the best plan.

TANK: Yeah, maybe for you guys. But I can't swim.

(ominous music, sound of rushing water, to end)