



# Read-Aloud What Orson Imagined

2



“No, no!” Orson burst onto the stage. He was the director, and this wasn’t at all what he imagined.

“Where’s Lena?” he shouted.

The stage manager appeared. “Yes, Orson?” Lena asked.

3



“This play is a mess! We open in two days and we’re nowhere close to ready!”

Lena looked at Orson, confused. “What do you mean?”

Orson pointed at the cardboard trees decorating the stage. “This is supposed to be a magic forest. What’s magical about these short little shrubs?” Orson gave a tree a kick. “They need to be bigger! Gigantic!”

4



Lena stood the tree back up. “Well, the set designer said—” But before she could continue, Orson raced to the costume rack.

“And what about this?” Orson demanded.

“The Fairy Queen’s dress? I think it looks great!”

Orson scoffed. “Look at these sleeves. They’re just boring, regular sleeves. They need to be long and flowing!”

“The problem with longer sleeves—” Lena began. But again, Orson interrupted.

**Ask:** “What do you notice? What do you wonder?”

5



“—and this fog machine!” Orson said.

Lena sighed. “What’s wrong with it?”

“How is our audience supposed to feel the spookiness of the scene without more fog? We need to bring it closer.”

“The plug only reaches so far,” Lena said. “We can’t—”

6



Orson threw up his arms. “None of this is how I imagined it would be!”

Lena took a breath and began to speak. “The whole crew thought really hard about these changes. We—”

7



But Orson had heard enough. “Never mind!” he said, waving Lena away. “If I want something done right, I’ll just have to do it myself.”

“But Orson—”

“Everyone go home,” he said. “I’ll see you all at rehearsal tomorrow.”

8



That evening Orson stayed late by himself. He made the Fairy Queen's sleeves long and flowing. He cut new trees out of cardboard so that they towered above the stage. He moved the fog machine closer by plugging it into an old extension cord.

Finally, things were shaping up like how he'd imagined.

 **Ask:** "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

9



The next day, Orson was excited to see his improvements. "Action!" he called.

Everything looked great. His stage looked like an ancient forest; his Fairy Queen looked ghostly and mysterious. But then he turned on the fog machine.

10



Fog rolled across the stage. Soon it became so thick, it was impossible to see. The Fairy Queen tripped on her sleeves and crashed into one of the cardboard trees. It fell over in a loud THWACK! Then another tree fell! And another!

"Cut! Cut! Cut!" Orson cried.

11



Lena unplugged the machine.

After a few moments, the fog cleared and Orson could see again. The set was in ruins. The actors were tangled on the floor. “What a disaster!” Orson cried. “There’s no way I can get all this ready for tomorrow’s show!”

Just then Orson felt a hand on his shoulder.

12



“Then let us help you,” Lena said.

Amazed at her kindness, Orson nodded.

The stage designer helped Orson build tall, but sturdy trees. The costume designer helped Orson lengthen the Fairy Queen’s sleeves—longer but not so long that she would trip over them. And Lena showed Orson where to place the machine so that the fog wouldn’t smother the stage.

**Ask:** “What do you notice? What do you wonder?”

13



The night of the performance, Lena and Orson waited backstage. The seats were filled with their friends, parents and teachers.

“Is it like you imagined?” Lena asked.

Orson looked around. Everything was ready. The actors were in their costumes. The beautiful props were on the stage. They’d done all this together.

“No,” Orson said. “It’s better.”