

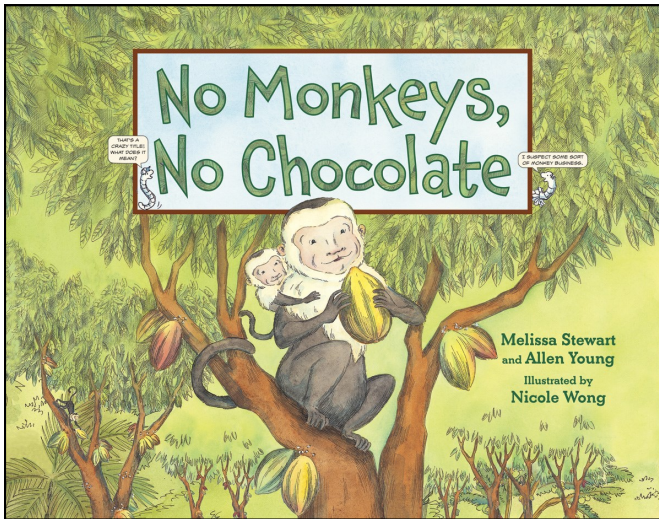
No Monkeys, No Chocolate

READERS THEATER

Developed by Melissa Stewart

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What does a capuchin monkey have in common with a pollen-sucking midge, an aphid-munching anole lizard, and brain-eating coffin fly maggots? Chocolate! Our favorite dessert comes from cocoa beans, which grow on cocoa trees in tropical rain forests. And those trees couldn't survive without help from a menagerie of rain forest critters. This book tells their story.

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Ages 5–8

GETTING STARTED

Many readers theater scripts have just ten or twelve parts, but this script has enough roles for every student in the class. The script also includes a variety of choruses (parts spoken by a group of children) to help keep students focused on the task.

The script includes twenty-seven plant and animal roles and a narrator. The plant and animal parts vary in difficulty to accommodate children at a variety of reading levels. The narrator text is the most challenging. It can be read by an adult or by an advanced young reader.

If you are working with a small group of children, some students can perform multiple roles. If you have a group larger than twenty-seven, some children can share a role.

After you have matched students with parts, ask the class to read through the script a few times. As the children practice, provide as much support and advice as needed.

PLANNING THE PERFORMANCE

When the children feel confident about their roles, you may want to set out a variety of art supplies and ask the students to make identification tags or animal hats to wear during the performance.

When the children have finished their “costumes,” ask them to think about staging. Then invite another group to come to your classroom for a performance.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

<i>Narrator</i>	<i>Coffin Fly 2</i>
<i>Cocoa Bean 1</i>	<i>Maggot 1</i>
<i>Cocoa Bean 2</i>	<i>Maggot 2</i>
<i>Cocoa Bean 3</i>	<i>Cocoa Stem 1</i>
<i>Cocoa Pod 1</i>	<i>Cocoa Stem 2</i>
<i>Cocoa Pod 2</i>	<i>Lizard 1</i>
<i>Cocoa Pod 3</i>	<i>Lizard 2</i>
<i>Cocoa Flower 1</i>	<i>Cocoa Root 1</i>
<i>Cocoa Flower 2</i>	<i>Cocoa Root 2</i>
<i>Midge 1</i>	<i>Fungus 1</i>
<i>Midge 2</i>	<i>Fungus 2</i>
<i>Cocoa Leaf 1</i>	<i>Fungus 3</i>
<i>Cocoa Leaf 2</i>	<i>Monkey 1</i>
<i>Coffin Fly 1</i>	<i>Monkey 2</i>

Narrator: Chocolate chip cookies. Chocolate ice cream. Moist, fudgy brownies. What makes all these desserts so delicious? Chocolate, of course. But you can't make chocolate without . . .

All Cocoa Beans: US! We're cocoa beans.

Cocoa Bean 1: We're the seed of the cocoa tree.

Cocoa Bean 2: That's right! We live in the tropical rain forests of Central and South America.

Cocoa Bean 3: You might be wondering how we turn into chocolate. Good question!

Cocoa Bean 1: First, workers spread us out in the sun. Then they roast us in a giant oven. Hot! Hot! Hot!

Cocoa Bean 2: Next, machines mash us into a thick paste. They squeeze out the liquid, and we—or at least what's left of us—become cocoa powder.

Cocoa Bean 3: Then we get mixed with milk, sugar, and all kinds of other yummy ingredients.

All Cocoa Beans: They make us taste even more delicious! Hooray!!

Narrator: Okay, you beans, settle down. That isn't the whole story, and you know it. You cocoa beans couldn't develop without . . .

All Cocoa Pods: US! We're cocoa pods.

Cocoa Pod 1: We're the fruits of the cocoa tree.

Cocoa Pod 2: That's right! And guess what grows inside us?

All Cocoa Beans: We do!

Cocoa Pod 3: Yep! There are 30 or 40 cocoa beans inside each one of us cocoa pods. That's enough to make one candy bar.

Cocoa Pod 1: But that's not all.

Cocoa Pod 2: Nope. All those beans are surrounded by sticky, icky, gummy, gooey pulp.

Cocoa Pod 3: Just like inside a pumpkin. Only our pulp is white, and guess what it tastes like?

All Cocoa Beans: Sprite!

Cocoa Pod 1: It's lemony.

Cocoa Pod 2: It limey.

Cocoa Pod 3: It's sweet.

Cocoa Bean 1: Just like the soda.

Cocoa Bean 2: But without the fizz.

Narrator: But you cocoa pods couldn't form without . . .

All Cocoa Flowers: US! We're cocoa flowers. Aren't we pretty?

Cocoa Flower 1: When my powdery pollen lands on . . .

Cocoa Flower 2: Me!

Cocoa Pod 1: I start to grow. Cocoa pods grow after cocoa flowers are pollinated.

Narrator: Pollinated?

All Midges: Ta-da! That's where we come in. We're midges.

Midge 1: We spread pollen from you (*Points to Cocoa Flower 1*) to you (*Points to Cocoa Flower 2*).

Narrator: But why do you bother?

Midge 2: Well, it's not on purpose. We're just looking for lunch.

Midge 1: That's right. We eat pollen, but some of it sticks to our bodies.

Midge 2: And when we fly to another flower, some of it falls off.

Narrator: And then it pollinates the second flower?

Everyone: BINGO! You're pretty smart for a human.

Narrator: But that's still not the whole story. Cocos flowers can't bloom without . . .

All Cocoa Leaves: US! We're cocoa leaves.

Cocoa Leaf 1: We soak up energy from the sun . . .

Cocoa Leaf 2: . . . and use it to make sugary food for the whole tree.

Narrator: Uh-oh, here come the leaf-cutter ants.

Cocoa Leaf 1: No problem! We've got friends in all the right places.

All Coffin Flies/Maggots: US! We're coffin flies.

Coffin Fly 1: We lay our eggs on top of the ants.

Coffin Fly 2: When the eggs hatch, tiny maggots wriggle out.

Coffin Fly 1: They're hungry. They need food.

All Maggots: So we burrow into the ants' heads.

Maggot 1: Then we eat their brains.

Maggot 2: Yum!

Narrator: Okay, so that gets rid of the ants that chomp away on the leaves, but cocoa leaves have another problem. They need . . .

All Cocoa Stems: WATER! That's where we come in.

Cocoa Stem 1: We're cocoa stems and we transport water to a plant's leaves. The leaves use water to make sugary food for the whole tree.

Cocoa Stem 2: We deliver minerals, too. We're VERY important.

Narrator: Yes, yes, you're important, but you stems need help when aphids attack you. Thank goodness for . . .

All Lizards: US! We're anole lizards.

Lizard 1: We eat aphids.

Lizard 2: They're deee-licious!

Narrator: Great. Problem solved. But I have a question for the stems. Where does the water you transport come from?

All Cocoa Roots: US! We're roots!

Cocoa Root 1: We absorb water from the soil.

Cocoa Root 2: We suck up minerals, too.

Cocoa Root 1: And that's not all. We also hold the whole cocoa tree in place.

Cocoa Root 2: Yeah, we're way more important than stems.

All Cocoa Stems: Hey, wait a minute.

Narrator: Settle down everyone. Keeping the tree healthy takes teamwork. Everyone has a job to do.

All Fungi: Even US! We're fungi.

Everyone: Hooray! There's fungus among us!

Fungus 1: That's right. We live in rain forest soil.

Fungus 2: Our hyphae grow out in every direction.

Fungus 3: Right, left, up, down. Even diagonal.

Narrator: Okay, I think we get the point. What do hyphae do?

Fungus 1: When they bump into a dead plant or animal, they release chemicals that break it down.

Fungus 2: Then they absorb the rotting bits. They digest the minerals we need to live and grow.

Narrator: But how does that help the tree?

Fungus 3: Easy. We don't need all those minerals, so some end up in the soil around us.

All Fungi: So the cocoa tree's roots can suck them up!

Narrator: Okay, but where do the monkeys come in? After all, they're in the title.

Everyone: Good question!

All Monkeys: Cocoa trees couldn't grow without us.

Monkey 1: When a cocoa tree is about five years old, it starts making fruit.

Monkey 2: Cocoa pods.

All Cocoa Pods: That's us!

Cocoa Pod 1: We don't fall off cocoa trees.

Cocoa Pod 2: Nope. We aren't like apples.

Monkey 1: That's why they need us monkeys.

Monkey 2: We gnaw holes in the fruit and pull out the lemony-limey pulp.

Monkey 1: As we eat it, we spit out the bitter seeds.

Monkey 2: Yuck!

Monkey 1: Some of those seeds sprout . . .

Everyone: . . . and grow into new cocoa trees.

Narrator: That's why you can't make chocolate without . . .

All monkeys: US!

Narrator: AND . . .

Everyone: US! We're all members of the cocoa bean team!