

THE WILD AND WACKY
RHYMING STORIES OF
MISS HENRIETTA HUMPLEDOWNING

by Tom Smith

www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com

Cast of Characters

If single cast, 11 females, 7 males and 4 either—or more if you'd like to split the four narrators among many.

Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Narrator 3
Narrator 4
Dori
Trevor
Frankie
Frankie's Mom
Frankie's Dad
Madison
Earl Greene
Madison's Mom
Earl's Dad
Earl's Mom
Storeowner
Girl
Zachary
Gnome 1
Gnome 2
Zach's Mom
Glory
Zach's Granny

This play may also be doubled with 2 females, 2 males, as suggested below:

Female 1	Narrator 1, Frankie's Mom, Madison, Gnome, Glory
Female 2	Narrator 3, Dori, Madison's Mom, Earl's Mom, Girl, Gnome, Zach's Mom, Zach's Granny
Male 1	Narrator 2, Trevor, Frankie's Dad, Zachary
Male 2	Narrator 4, Frankie, Earl Greene, Earl's Dad, Storeowner

THE WILD AND WACKY RHYMING STORIES OF
MISS HENRIETTA HUMPLEDOWING

NARRATOR 1

Yesterday I heard a story
Kinda funny, kinda gory
About a girl whose name was Dori
Who lost herself to find some glory.

NARRATOR 2

Yesterday I heard a tale
One that I shall now regale
About a boy who grew a tail
Then cursed to eat just greens and kale.

NARRATOR 3

Have you heard about the girl
Who when she went to fix a curl
Her heart began to heave and hurl
For she'd become a boy named Earl.

NARRATOR 4

And have you heard the anecdote
About Zach Taylor's small gnome boat?
He poured a potion down his throat
That made him grow and swell and bloat.

NARRATOR 1

Where'd you hear about Zach Taylor?

NARRATOR 2

And where'd you hear about that tail?

NARRATOR 3

I recall someone just told me...

NARRATOR 4

Crazy stories to regale!

NARRATOR 1

Who was telling me that legend?

NARRATOR 3

Who gave me such strange accounting?

NARRATOR 2

I remember now it was—

NARRATORS 1, 2, 3 and 4

Miss Henrietta Humpleddowning!

NARRATOR 4

She always has new tales to tell

NARRATOR 3

A yarn to spin—

NARRATOR 2

—that casts a spell.

NARRATOR 1

She told me this one just last week
It's guaranteed to make you shriek!
Who wanted so to be seen as pretty
That it filled her life with doom and pity.

DORI LEE

DORI

I am as lucky as can be
 To be a her and not a he
 With eyes so big and teeth like pearls
 I am the prettiest of all girls.
 Sometimes it's sad that all I see
 Are little girls less cute than me.
 But I suppose that I've been blessed
 Or someone else would be the best.

NARRATOR 1

Dori skipped herself to school
 Where all the kids thought she was cool
 All that is except for Trevor
 Ignoring Dori since...forever!

DORI

Trevor Mitchell, I do declare!
 Is any girl you know as fair
 And smart and charming as little ol' me?

TREVOR

Oh hey, good morning, Dori Lee.

DORI

Good morning, Trevor!

TREVOR

And how're you?

DORI

My smile's as bright as the sky is blue!

TREVOR

Ok, then, Dori, see you 'round.

DORI

Wait, Trevor, stop! Turn back around!
 You haven't paid me a compliment.

TREVOR

You did so yourself without my consent.

DORI

I don't mean to be vain, Trevor, that's the truth.
It's just that I'm the most beautiful youth
Or at least everyone says so: everyone but you.
Why is that? Don't you find it true?

TREVOR

Dori, I've got to get to class
There's a science test I have to pass.

(He exits.)

NARRATOR 1

Try as she might, and though she preferred,
Dori couldn't get Trevor to say a kind word.

DORI

Why do I care what Trevor thinks about me?

NARRATOR 1

But she did 'cause she liked him--of course, secretly.

DORI

If there's one thing that I cannot remotely understand
It's how everyone loves me, and thinks me quite grand
Except this one boy, this boy Trevor Mitchell.
He doesn't right now, but some day I know he will!

NARRATOR 1

A day or two later, Dori walked through the halls
And saw posters posted on all of the walls
Announcing a contest for the greatest young beauty:
Dori knew she must enter; she felt it her duty.

DORI

I'm sure to win,

NARRATOR 1

Said Dori out loud,

DORI

Then Trevor will see me from out in the crowd
And realize what everyone else seems to know
That I'm the prettiest girl from my head to my toe!

NARRATOR 1

Dori entered the pageant and later that day
She saw Trevor walking his walk down her way.

DORI

Oh Trevor! Hey Trevor! Yo, Trevor, right here!
I've something to tell you: come closer, come near!

TREVOR

What is it now Dori?

NARRATOR 1

He said with a sigh,

TREVOR

If it's more self-promotion then I'm not your guy.

DORI

Self-promotion, you silly, it's not that at all
I just want to show you what I found on the wall.

TREVOR

A pageant on Friday in the gym just past noon?

DORI

Can you believe that it's going to happen so soon?
The class president will be one of the judges.

TREVOR

Where's it say that?

DORI

Right under these smudges.
The student body president will make the decision.
That's you, isn't it? Tell me what you envision!

TREVOR

Envision for what? Envision for who?

DORI

The winner, of course! Will her eyes be sky blue?
Will her teeth be bright white like the color of mine?
Will her hair be medium long, and incredibly fine?
It's foolish to have a contest, you know.
I'm a shoo-in to win this true beauty show.

TREVOR

Whatever. I'll see you on Friday, I guess.

DORI

I'm the favorite. Don't you think? Am I'm right? Please say yes!

TREVOR

We'll see at the contest on Friday, won't we?

(He exits.)

DORI

He didn't say yes, but I know it's to be!

NARRATOR 1

But later that week, Dori found herself nervous.

DORI

While the school seems to be entirely at my service,
What if Trevor doesn't pick me, or there's some big mistake?
My friends would all laugh; I'd be seen as a fake!

NARRATOR 1

As soon as class ended, Dori ran to her room
To try to squelch feelings of disaster and doom.
She went to her mirror, to try to assess
What to improve to guarantee her success.

DORI

How can it be possible that everyone I know
Compliments me so highly on my natural glow?
But Trevor somehow doesn't see it at all?
It's his eyes and his heart that I have to enthrall.
Maybe he thinks that my eyes are too little
If that is that case, then with them I'll fiddle!

NARRATOR 1

So Dori slipped into her mother's bedroom
And snuck out her makeup, her comb and perfume.
And back in her room she commenced to disguise
What she thought were the problems with her dainty eyes.

DORI

I'll make them look bigger by adding some liner!
Some shadow should make these small eyes look much finer!
A little dab here, and a little dab there!

DORI (cont'd)

My eyes will look perfect! But what of my hair?
 Maybe he doesn't like girls with straight layers
 So I'll tease them and curl them and use my hair sprayer!
 And then there's my cheeks, they look sort of sunken...
 I'll rouge them and blush them to make them less shrunken!
 But what of my teeth? Are they dull by comparison?
 I'll brush them real hard, so it won't look embarrassin'!
 And what of my shoes, they simply won't do
 After all the improvements I'll put my face through!
 And this dress won't be right; I'll need something brighter
 With dots and bold colors and then all will look righter!

(She starts to apply makeup, etc. From this point to the contest,
 Dori should never be seen, or only in silhouette, as she madly
 transforms herself.)

NARRATOR 1

With purpose and focus, Dori fixed up her look
 Never paying attention to the makeup it took.
 She worked through the night like a woman possessed
 Unable to realize that she looked her best
 When she looked like herself, not a magazine picture
 Or a mannequin on one of those mannequin fixtures.
 Dori worked through the dark, until it was dawn.

DORI

Today's the big day!

NARRATOR 1

She said as she yawned.
 She ran off to school, as giddy as can be.

DORI

One more hour or two until victory!
 I'm too nervous to sit through all my dumb classes!

NARRATOR 1

So she hid in a closet and avoided the masses.
 'Til finally the time for the contest was here!
 Backstage Dori snuck, sweet smelling victory near!
 The pageant began, first with Janet and Sue
 Then Olivia and Tessa, Kym and Cassidy too.
 As her turn got much closer, Dori started to grin
 For there wasn't another she thought that could win.

NARRATOR 1 (cont'd)

And suddenly Dori felt her nerves start to churn
For at last it was finally Miss Dori Lee's turn.

TREVOR

The final contestant, as you all may have guessed
Who is up for the prettiest and, of course, the best dressed
I suppose I can say without further ado
Here's our own Dori Lee, contestant one-twenty-two.

(Huge applause. Dori comes out looking like a clown: big wig, big shoes, bright dress, white face, overly made-up. Total silence.)

DORI

Hello everybody, you can probably see
It's the vastly improved: the new Dori Lee!

(A snicker. A few more. Then laughs. Lots of laughter. Dori is confused. She pulls out a mirror and looks at herself. It slowly dawns on her how ludicrous she looks. She begins to freak out. She rushes off the stage.)

NARRATOR 1

She looked like a clown, a jester, a fool!
Dori ran far away as she could from that school.
And they say there was something not right in that makeup
For scrub as she might, it never would take up
And she ended up looking like that all her life
Which is tragic, for who wants a sad clown for a wife?
There is one simple message from Dori's insanity:
It's ok to be pretty but avoid too much vanity.
No one ever found Dori, not Trevor, not me.
It's the sad but true tale of too-proud Dori Lee.

THE BOY WHO GREW A TAIL

NARRATOR 2

You call that a tale? You call that a story?
 Mine's three times more weird and four times more gory!
 I'll tell you a story that will make you turn pale!
 It's a tale that's quite literally a tale 'bout a tail!
 Once not too far from this very same spot
 Lived a young boy named Franklin O'Leary O'Scott.
 Frank was just like any other young lad
 Except for a secret he not-so-secretly had.

FRANKIE

I despise vegetables and I simply won't eat 'em!
 If some tasted good, I never did meet 'em!
 I hate carrots and broccoli, zucchini and beans
 Tomatoes and sweet peas and anything green!
 Won't eat them, won't touch them, I think that they're gross!
 Veggies are things that I hate the most!

FRANKIE'S MOM

But Frankie,

NARRATOR 2

Cried Momma,

FRANKIE'S MOM

Just give them a try!

FRANKIE

No way, I won't do it!

FRANKIE'S MOM

But why, Frankie, why?

FRANKIE

They're creepy, they're nasty, they grow in the dirt!
 The celery's stringy; the tomatoes they squirt!
 I'm happy with grains and with fruits and with meat
 But a vegetable's a thing I just will not eat!

NARRATOR 2

His father would yell and his mother would cry
 But veggies were something Frank just wouldn't try.
 He would whine, he would cry, he would shout, he would quibble
 He would try to eat dinner while hiding the vegetable.

NARRATOR 2 (cont'd)

He sat at the table refusing all night
And woke up at dawn, never taking a bite.

FRANKIE'S DAD

Don't you know what will happen,

NARRATOR 2

Cried his dad all upset,

FRANKIE'S DAD

If you don't eat your vegetables?

FRANKIE

No, what?

FRANKIE'S DAD

I forget.
But it's something quite awful, I know that for sure!
And eating your veggies they say is the cure.

FRANKIE

Whatever!

NARRATOR 2

Said Frankie, as his dad became scorned.

FRANKIE'S DAD

Fine then,

NARRATOR 2

Said dad,

FRANKIE'S DAD

Don't say you weren't warned!

NARRATOR 2

His dad stormed away very mad and despair-y
But Frankie thought,

FRANKIE

Dad 's just trying to scare me!

NARRATOR 2

Later that night as Frankie leapt into bed
 The threats of his father began filling his head.
 Frankie closed up his eyes, and snuggled in tight
 And struggled to juggle his dreams late that night.

(Frankie has crazy nightmares about vegetables.)

Strange visions of veggies had entered his dreams
 And Frankie awoke with a series of screams.

FRANKIE

How strange and upsetting my night was last night!
 But look, Dad was wrong, cause everything's right!

(He gets up. There is a small hump on his tailbone.)

I'd better get dressed or I'll be late for the bus.
 I can't believe Dad made such a huge fuss
 Over simply not eating a plateful of beans—
 Hey, wait, just a minute, something's wrong with my jeans!
 They don't seem to fit; and I can't pull them higher!
 But how can that be? It's my same old attire
 I wore just last night before heading to bed...

NARRATOR 2

With that Frankie's heart began filling with dread.
 In two seconds flat, his hands reached around
 And Frankie screamed out when he found what he found.

FRANKIE

My back! Hey what's that? There's a strange kind of lump!
 But how did I ever develop this hump?
 Maybe I fell out of bed in my sleep?

NARRATOR 2

Frankie said to himself, trying hard not to weep.

FRANKIE

That's probably it, and I guess it's just swelling...
 I'm sure it'll stop; I should cease all this yelling.
 I'll just wear my sweats 'til the lump goes away,

NARRATOR 2

And with that went Frankie off to school for the day.
 At school Frankie felt like things just were not right,
 Like lunch came and went without him taking a bite.
 The very same night, Frankie sat down to dinner
 When his mother she noticed he looked much less thinner.

FRANKIE'S MOM

Frankie, you're getting so chubby I fear!
It's from not eating veggies! Just try one, my dear.

FRANKIE

If I told you one time, I've now told you twenty
The rest of my food is much more than quite plenty.
I won't eat a vegetable, so don't even try!
I'm just not a veggie-loving kind of a guy.
Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to bed
See you all in the morning,

NARRATOR 2

Was what Frankie said.
He nestled down quietly in his own snuggly bed
But soon vicious vegetables danced in his head.
(More vegetable nightmares.)
He awoke as he did like the morning before
With screaming from nightmares and a fall on the floor.

FRANKIE

I've got to stop having those nightmares all night
They scare me so bad that it just isn't right!
I suppose I'll get dressed and head off to school,

NARRATOR 2

Frankie said to himself, keeping calm but not cool.
(Frankie gets up. His lower body is larger, and he has grown a kangaroo's tail.)
But as he got dressed, right there and right then
Frankie found he had problems pulling his pants on again!

FRANKIE

Is that bump still as big as it was yesterday?
Oh my goodness!

NARRATOR 2

Was all Frank could manage to say.
For when he reached back, his face turned quite pale
For Frankie O'Scott grew a kangaroo's tail!

FRANKIE

What's this? What has happened? What's going on now?
It feels like a tail! But where, when, why and how?

NARRATOR 2

And sure as snow's white and night is coal black
Frankie found a new tail on the tail of his back.

FRANKIE

I can't go to school with a tail, that's too strange!
I need to find out what has caused me to change,
So I can change back, and be like I was.
Oh my gosh! No what's this? A patch of brown fuzz?

NARRATOR 2

So Frankie hid out 'til his folks went to work
And calmly tried stopping from going berserk.

FRANKIE

There must be a reason, some virus or sickness
Explaining my tail and this patch of fur thickness.
For why would a boy grow a kangaroo's tail?

NARRATOR 2

He thought and he thought 'til his thoughts became stale.

FRANKIE

Well, maybe,

NARRATOR 2

He said about ten minutes later,

FRANKIE

It's growing to make my own balance much greater.
Or maybe it's something that other boys grow
And hide with their sweats too embarrassed to show!

NARRATOR 2

While Frankie O'Leary O'Scott sat there thinking
All his hopes for a cure began slowly sinking.

FRANKIE

My parents'll be home in an hour or so
And there isn't a way that my tail will not show!

NARRATOR 2

As minutes rushed by, to the time Dad was due
Frankie's ears started growing, and a pouch showed up too!
(Frankie slowly transforms into a kangaroo.)

NARRATOR 2 (cont'd)

His feet became long, and more hair came and grew...
 Changing Frankie O'Leary to a brown kangaroo!
 He heard Mom come home, and then he heard Dad
 How could Frankie explain the strange day he had had?
 When finally Frankie was called to the table
 He hopped down the stairs, as best he was able.
 At first there was silence; then his mother she fainted!
 Kangaroos in the house were quite unacquainted.

FRANKIE'S DAD

Where's Frankie? Where is he? Our pride and our joy?
 Oh no!

NARRATOR 2

Cried Frank's Dad,

FRANKIE'S DAD

Did you eat our dear boy?

NARRATOR 2

His dad began shooing young Frank from the table.
 Frankie tried to explain, but was no longer able.
 He had changed, don't you see, to a full kangaroo
 He stood there hop-hopping, as kangaroos do.
 Finally his mom, who revived on her own
 Sat up and yelled,

FRANKIE'S MOM

Go on! Leave us alone!
 Get out of here quick; we'll be forced to use violence!

NARRATOR 2

But Frankie just sat there, in kangaroo silence.
 His mom and his dad shoved him hard out the door
 And Frankie O'Scott had no family no more.
 He knocked on the door with his kangaroo paw
 But no one would answer, not his dad or his ma.
 With nowhere to go and nothing to eat
 Frankie hopped away slowly on his big kanga feet.
 He hopped away sadly into the black night;
 Until starving he started to look for a bite.
 And the thing he ate first, if you believe this strange tale
 Is a cabbage-like green that people call kale.
 He couldn't eat candy, and he couldn't eat meat
 He couldn't eat rice, bread, bananas or wheat

NARRATOR 2 (cont'd)

Instead for the rest of his life kale he nibbles
For kangaroos, you see, can only eat vegetables.

THE BULLY, EARL GREENE

NARRATOR 4

That story you told, do you think that it's true?

NARRATOR 2

I heard it directly from Miss you-know-who.
She told me that story; she said it was real.

NARRATOR 3

She told me one too; I know just how you feel.
She told me a story I think you'll enjoy;
It's tale of a girl who woke up as a boy.
There once was a girl named Madison Tunney
Whose family inherited a whole lot of money.
But unlike her friends, who shared what they had,
Maddy never gave money and never felt bad.
She never donated to the beggars who asked;
Instead she ignored them, going on with her task.
One day young Miss Tunney walked down to the store
And when she arrived and reached for the door
A cruel boy was there: a tough named Earl Greene.
He looked kinda scary and acted quite mean.

EARL GREENE

Who said you could walk on my sidewalk, rich girl?

MADISON

It isn't just yours; it's everyone's, Earl.

EARL GREENE

You think the whole world is yours to be bought.
But it isn't, no matter the money you've got.
I own this here block, and I'll give you 'til five
To get off my street and still stay alive.
One—yes, I'm serious, Two—and now Three—

MADISON

All right, I'll get going, now just let me be!

NARRATOR 3

So Maddy ran down the long street to its end
And hoped she and Earl would not meet again.
She waited an hour, which became quite a bore,
Then quietly snuck herself back to the store.

MADISON

I see Earl is gone, and the coast it seems clear!

NARRATOR 3

So she rushed in the store, her heart racing with fear.
When she finished her shopping, and left that nice place
Who should she bump into, but Earl, face-to-face!

EARL GREENE

I told you to stay off my part of the road
I'll teach you to listen and do what you're told!

NARRATOR 3

With that he pushed Maddy right down to the ground
Then ran as a small group of folks came around.
A nice lady helped Madison back onto her feet
And Maddy, embarrassed, ran away down the street.
She cried as she ran, heading straight for her house.
How she hated that Earl!

MADISON

(Entering her house.)

What a jerk; what a louse!
I hate that Earl Greene! I hate him so much!
He's as mean as a snake, and as slimy as such!
I wish, just this once, that he'd learn a big lesson
And realize with whom he's been so wrongly messin'.

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