

# A NEW STORY FROM RABBIT AND FROG

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A short drama by  
Randy Reinholz

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALEX, organized and always gets an A. They care about presenting the correct answer. No particular race.

LOU, a fun trickster with the attitude of "...we don't have to get it right. It's an old story, no one will know if we are making it up." BIPOC.

RIVER, a withdrawn poet who also knows culture. BIPOC (Indigenous, Latinx or Black).

The gender pronouns should be changed to best reflect the identity of the performers in the production.

## SETTING

An unnamed border town along the US and Mexico demarcation. The present.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*A New Story from Rabbit and Frog* is based on the Kumeyaay story "Rabbit and Frog" as narrated by Jon Meza Cuero, recorded by Margaret Field, translated by Jon Meza Cuero, Amy Miller and Margaret Field, included in *Inside Dazzling Mountains: Southwest Native Verbal Arts*, edited by David L. Kozak.

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*(An unnamed border town along the US and Mexico demarcation. Day. A room next to the school auditorium.)*

*(ALEX, and LOU debate the upcoming performance. Lou presents strange movements and physicalizations of the character, Frog.)*

**LOU:** Something like this?

**ALEX:** Not like that. It's a Kumeyaay story, not a frog disco.

**LOU:** Well, something's not right with him.

**ALEX:** Why is Frog a him?

**LOU:** Frog is lazy, cocky and pushy. That's a guy.

**ALEX:** Maybe that's the guys you know, but the old story doesn't specify the gender.

**LOU:** The story says "he" and "him."

**ALEX:** Those are filler pronouns. Nothing in the story specifies their gender.

**LOU:** It doesn't matter as long as we fill the story with energy. *(Beat.)* Check it...

*(Lou moves as a dancing Frog on "the make" toward Alex playing Rabbit.)*

What's up, girl?

**ALEX:** No, no, no. I will play Frog.

**LOU:** No problem. *(With swagger:)* I can rabbit with the best of them.

*(Lou begins to hop around.)*

**ALEX:** *(As Frog:)* Dude. *(To Lou:)* Dude is unisex! *(As Frog:)* Dude, let me in.

**LOU:** *(As Rabbit, hopping:)* Not by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin.

**ALEX:** That's the wrong old story.

**LOU:** Rabbit has a hairy chin.

*(Lou continues hopping.)*

**ALEX:** Our story isn't about a pig building a stronger house. It's about Indigenous people letting strangers into their homes, like Rabbit lets Frog into their home.

*(Lou stops.)*

**LOU:** I thought it was funny. Frog talks his—*their* way into Rabbit's house, then eats everything.

**ALEX:** The story isn't funny, because Rabbit represents Native people and Frog represents invaders.

**LOU:** I keep thinking that at the end of the story, when Rabbit leaves, they're going to get other rabbits to push Frog out of the house.

**ALEX:** But the old story just ends with Rabbit leaving to find a new home, like Native Americans were forced off their lands.

**LOU:** Because they were put on reservations.

**ALEX:** I think River's grandma tells it as a warning, so that it doesn't happen again. Either way, we need to rehearse for this presentation.

**LOU:** How could River not be here for the all-school showcase selections?

**ALEX:** I'm going to ask Ms. Biggs not to partner me with her again.

**LOU:** So you get to say "her"?

**ALEX:** That's how *she* identifies.

**LOU:** I identify that she's a slacker.

**ALEX:** That's the pot calling the kettle black.

**LOU:** How's that not racist?

**ALEX:** It's an old expression: pot and kettle, like you calling River a slacker.

**LOU:** I work hard.

**ALEX:** You make it up as you go along.

**LOU:** Improvisation, baby. I'm here – showing up is halfway to winning.

**ALEX:** The important half is learning the material.

**LOU:** Well, if River doesn't show, I could probably make up a song for the beginning.

**ALEX:** It's not your song to make up. The old stories matter.

**LOU:** You've been here less than a year, but you're an expert on old stories? All we need is River to sing the Bird Song.

**ALEX:** Let's start from the beginning of the lines, after the Bird Song.

**LOU:** Then we can decide how to cover River's lines before we get called in for judging.

*(Alex and Lou begin lines from the "original" story. During the first few lines, they transform into Frog and Rabbit.)*

*(As Rabbit:)* It's an old story.

**ALEX:** *(As Frog:)* It's old.

**LOU:** It's old,

**ALEX:** It's old, I say,

**LOU:** *(As herself:)* How many times do we say, "it's old"?

**ALEX:** *(As herself:)* Five in all – there's one more.

**LOU:** *(As Rabbit:)* It's an old story, but –

**ALEX:** *(As mysterious Frog:)* Long ago,

**LOU:** *(As the mysterious Rabbit:)* people,

**ALEX:** people were here,

**LOU:** they were in this place.

**ALEX:** They were not people,

**LOU:** they were animals.

*(Lou and Alex begin their respective animal movements.)*

**ALEX:** *(Referring to Lou's animal movements:)* That's pretty good.

**LOU:** Thanks – they're gonna dig my Rabbit.

*(Lou's Rabbit movements becomes more exaggerated.)*

**ALEX:** *(As mysterious Frog:)* They were animals, but

*(Alex's Frog movement becomes more exaggerated.)*

**LOU:** *(As mysterious Rabbit:)* they were like people.

*(Phone alarm goes off.)*

**ALEX:** Five minutes till they decide if we are good enough.

**LOU:** River's such a jerk.

*(After overhearing, RIVER enters. Brief silence.)*

**RIVER:** Hi.

**ALEX:** Hi.

**LOU:** Hi.

**RIVER:** You rehearsing?

**LOU:** We are.

**ALEX:** For the selection committee.

**RIVER:** Sorry. Go ahead – I'll catch up.

**ALEX:** We were at *(As mysterious Frog:)* "They were animals, but –"



*(As herself:)* Lou, your line's next.

*(As mysterious Frog:)* They were animals, but —

**LOU:** *(As mysterious Rabbit:)* they were like people.

**ALEX:** *(As mysterious Frog:)* They spoke the People's Language,

**LOU:** they came, and they went,

**ALEX:** they went all over the world,

*(Silence.)*

River, that's you.

**RIVER:** What?

**ALEX:** I say, "They went all over the world," And you say, "They spoke the One People's Language."

**RIVER:** Right. *(As a character in the story:)* They spoke the One People's Language,

**LOU:** *(As mysterious Rabbit:)* they came, and they went,

**ALEX:** *(As mysterious Frog:)* they went all over the world,

*(Brief pause.)*

*(To River:)* And...?

**LOU:** *(Saying River's line:)* And, they spoke the One People's Language.

**RIVER:** I... I...

**LOU:** Come on.

**RIVER:** It's too hard today.

**ALEX:** Why?

**RIVER:** My sister was missing all night. This morning we found out that it was just because she hooked up with her stupid boyfriend. My Mom was freaked out, because *(Beat.)* Simon...

**LOU:** Right.

**ALEX:** Right, what?

**RIVER:** It's just...

**LOU:** (*To Alex:*) Her cousin, Simon...suicided.

(*Beat.*)

**ALEX:** I'm so sorry. It must have been before I moved here.

**LOU:** Simon was a good guy.

**RIVER:** Tomorrow is the second anniversary. He would have graduated this May.

**ALEX:** I wish I had known.

**LOU:** There's just stuff we don't want to talk about.

**ALEX:** I'll tell Ms. Biggs we need to postpone.

**LOU:** The other judges are in there.

**RIVER:** And – Grandma's here.

**ALEX:** Why?

**RIVER:** She's the one who made me come today. Said I had made you two a promise, so we have to tell our family's story.

**LOU:** Wow.

**RIVER:** Grandma says everything'll be alright.

**LOU:** You don't owe us anything.

**ALEX:** Your grandma gave us *Rabbit and Frog* for the presentation.

**RIVER:** And she expects us to perform it for them.

**LOU:** Not often we get to tell "old Kumeyaay stories" at this school.

**RIVER:** Yeah. All the other teams are doing presentations about Norse gods of war.

**ALEX:** We need more rehearsal.

**LOU:** We can improvise the parts we don't know!

**ALEX:** We have to respect the way your grandma told it to us.

**RIVER:** I'm not sure. Today, Grandma's story makes me think of Simon.

**ALEX:** But we are doing *Rabbit and Frog*, right?

**RIVER:** Like Lou said, there's stuff people don't like talking about. But I miss Simon and I want to talk about him.

**LOU:** The day he died was awful.

**RIVER:** But there were so many good days. When he laughed, we all laughed. I miss the joy he brought us.

**LOU:** So your story is about remembering Simon, the good stuff.

**RIVER:** A good story.

**LOU:** And a good time to tell it.

**ALEX:** What about others who are struggling? If you say what Simon did was alright, couldn't that make others...?

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