

Performance Notes for Boots & His Brothers

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY:

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- PAPA, BOOTS, PETER and PAUL — Earth-toned cloth.
- AXE — Gray or brown sweats or a wind suit. Attach black strips of felt vertically onto the sweat suit or the wind suit using fabric glue. Use iron-on letters available at craft stores to spell out the word "AXE" on the chest of AXE's shirt.
- SHOVEL — Similar to AXE, but if you use brown for AXE, use gray or black for SHOVEL.



- **WALNUT** — Large, round looking and brown. Start with two brown pillowcases. Take one pillowcase and turn it so the opening is toward the ground. Use iron-on letters to spell out “WALNUT” on the case. Next stuff each pillowcase with cotton batting and sew it shut or close it with glue. Once the cases are stuffed, sew them to the front and back shoulders of a brown sweatshirt to create a puffy rounded effect. When WALNUT is dressed, the pillowcases cover the front and back of him or her.

During the play, WALNUT places a piece of felt on the front of his costume. In order to do this, attach a small piece of Velcro to the front of WALNUT’s costume and a small piece to a piece of colored felt for WALNUT to place on top.

In the third scene, WALNUT produces several handfuls of blue confetti and tosses it into the air. A bag of blue confetti can be concealed beneath WALNUT’s stuffed pillowcases to create this effect.

- **KING** — Very regal looking dress clothes, a crown and a cape.
- **SOLDIER** — A uniform, such as a Boy Scout uniform or he or she could wear something as simple as khaki slacks and a white shirt with a cape.
- **FEMALE TOWNSPEOPLE** — Long skirts, simple shirts and shawls of earth-toned fabrics.
- **MALE TOWNSPEOPLE** — Simple clothing and be draped in earth-toned fabrics.



PROPS

Scene 1

- Wooden bowls, spoons and other implements for cottage scene.
- A net with two fish in it for PAUL to carry. These can be plastic or paper fish.
- Wooden pegs to stick in cottage walls so the actors can hang up their cloaks.
- A trumpet, tuba or any kind of horn for SOLDIER.
- A roll of paper to represent scroll for SOLDIER.



Scene 2

- A Fire. To make this, assemble blocks and tape onto the blocks large, leaf-shaped “flames” cut from construction paper in bright oranges and reds.
- Wooden blocks to clap together offstage when AXE chops.
- Rain- A recording of the sound of rain. Or one actor can pour a bucket of water into another bucket.
- Sandpaper and a microphone to create a sound of shoveling when SHOVEL digs.
- Black confetti for SHOVEL to toss into the air.
- Roll of blue streamer paper to be rolled out for the brook.
- A small piece of colored felt with velcro for WALNUT to put on his costume.
- Blue confetti for WALNUT to toss into the air.
- Recording of water sounds to be played when WALNUT tosses confetti into the air (or again, two buckets for pouring water from one to another).
- Note — if recording are used, you may need a microphone to amplify the sound.

Scene 3

- A treasure chest sitting on stage.
- A handful of fake coins in the treasure chest (Later, KINGs hands this to BOOTS)
- Wooden blocks to clap together offstage when AXE chops.
- A rock for BOOTS to stub his toe on.
- Sandpaperer and a microphone to create a sound of shoveling when SHOVEL digs.
- Black confetti for SHOVEL to toss into the air.
- Recordings of water sounds to be played when WALNUT tosses confetti into the air. (or two buckets for pouring water from one to another.)
- Confetti and glitter for WALNUT to throw into the air.



SETS

Note: A painted forest backdrop appears in all three scenes.

- **Scene 1** — A painted forest backdrop. A table and chairs for BOOTS, PETER, PAUL and PAPA.
- **Scene 2** — Fire for BOOTS and his brothers to sit beside. Make this by painting cardboard rolls from boxes of aluminum foil orange, yellow and red. Glue them together and glue onto them red, orange and yellow “flames” cut from construction paper. Add glitter.
- **Scene 3** — Remove the “fire” and add a painted castle backdrop, a treasure chest brimming with shiny coins and a large fake tree. To make the tree, paint a tree onto thin cardboard or rolled brown paper. Prop it against the castle backdrop or tie it at the top, but remember, the AXE has to be able to “kick” it down. Make sure no actors are nearby when AXE kicks down the tree.

