

GROWING UP AND GROWING OLDER
A Theme Theatre Production

Opening Music: "Someone to Fall Back on" Jason Robert Brown

Assembling on Stage: Chairs in various positions-3 main focal points, CS, SL and SR

"LISTEN TO THE MUSTN'TS"
Shel Silverstein

- 1 Listen to the MUSTN'TS, child,
- 2 Listen to the DON'T'S
- 3 Listen to the SHOULDN'TS
- 4 The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS
- 5 Listen to the NEVER HAVES
- 6 Then listen close to me-
- 7 Anything can happen child
- All ANYTHING can be.

Transition: All say: "Anything can be."

MAGIC
Shel Silverstein

(2 Narrators, 6 people to act out the narration)

- Narrator 1 Sandra's seen a leprechaun, (*Sandra "sees" the leprechaun*)
Narrator 2 Eddie touched a troll, (*Eddie "touches" a troll*)
Narrator 1 Laurie danced with witches once, (*Laurie "dances" with witches*)
Narrator 2 Charlie found some Goblin's gold. (*Charlie "finds" gold*)
Narrator 1 Donald heard a mermaid sing, (*David "hears" a mermaid*)
Narrator 2 Susy spied an elf. (*Susy "spies" an elf*)
Both Narr. But all the magic I have known
Both Narr. I've had to make myself.

Transition: Half of the group sings the phrase: "Do you Believe in Magic"

“WHO?”

Shel Silverstein

- 1 Who can kick a football, from here out to Afghanistan? (*All act out action*)
All I can!
2 Who fought tigers in the street, while all the policemen ran and hid? (*All act out action*)
All I did!
3 Who will fly and have X-ray eyes-and be known as the man no bullet can kill? (*All act out action*)
All I will!
4 Who can sit and tell lies all night?
All I might!

Transition: All slump in their chairs and make groaning/sick noises

SICK

Shel Silverstein

- 1 "I cannot go to school today," said little Peggy Ann McKay,
2 "I have the measles and the mumps,
3 A gash, a rash, and purple bumps.
4 My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,
5 I'm going blind in my right eye.
6 My tonsils are as big as rocks,
7 I've counted sixteen chicken pox
8 And there's one more--that's seventeen,
9 And don't you think my face looks green?
10 My leg is cut, my eyes are blue--
11 It might be instamatic flu.
12 I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
13 I'm sure that my left leg is broke--
14 My hip hurts when I move my chin,
15 My belly button's caving in,
16 My back is wrenched, my ankle's sprained,
17 My 'pendix pains each time it rains.
18 My nose is cold, my toes are numb,
19 I have a sliver in my thumb.
20 My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,
21 I hardly whisper when I speak.
22 My tongue is filling up my mouth,
23 I think my hair is falling out.
24 My elbow's bent, my spine ain't straight,
25 My temperature is one-o-eight.
1 My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,

- 2 There is a hole inside my ear.
3 I have a hangnail, and my heart is--what?
4 What's that? What's that you say?
5 You say today is---Saturday?
All G'bye, I'm going out to play!"

Transition: One person says "Hey, who turned out the light?"

NO DIFFERENCE
Shel Silverstein

- 1 Small as a peanut,
 Big as a giant,
 We're all the same size
 When we turn out the light.
- 2 Rich as a sultan,
 Poor as a mite,
 We're all worth the same
 When we turn out the light
- 3 Red, black or orange,
 Yellow or white,
 We all look the same
 When we turn off the light.
- All 3 So maybe the way
 To make everything right
 Is for God to just reach out
 And turn off the light!

Transition: All make train noises

THE LITTLE BLUE ENGINE

Shel Silverstein

1 The little blue engine looked up at the hill.
 His light was weak, his whistle was shrill.
 He was tired and small, and the hill was tall,
 And his face blushed red as he softly said,

All “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.”

2 So he started up with a chug and a strain,
 And he puffed and pulled with might and main.
 And slowly he climbed, a foot at a time,
 And his engine coughed as he whispered soft,

All “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.”

3 With a squeak and a creak and a toot and a sigh,
 With an extra hope and an extra try,
 He would not stop — now he neared the top —
 And strong and proud he cried out loud,

All “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can!”

4 He was almost there, when — *CRASH! SMASH! BASH!*
 He slid down and mashed into engine hash
 On the rocks below... which goes to show
 If the track is tough and the hill is rough,

All THINKING you can just ain’t enough!

Transition: All echo: “Thinking you can just ain’t enough.”

GRAY

Constance Ananta Sobsey

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul II: 101 More Stories on Life, Love and Learning*

1 When I was a child
 I saw in black and white

2 Everything was obvious
 Either wrong or right

- 3 No arguments, no pros and cons
Choices were precise.
- 4 Pure and joyous clarity
Gave me a simple life.
- 5 So I grew and learned to face the world
Living life that way.
- 6 And now I feel so unprepared
'Cause black and white turned gray.
- 7 My unfaltering vision failed
Focus left my eyes.
- 8 Where choices were once obvious
I can't tell wrong from right.
- 9 Because today I am a teenager,
And nothing's quite so clear
- 10 I'm seeing through an adults eyes
A child's biggest fear.

Transition: All say "What if?"

"WHATIF"
Shel Silverstein

- 1 Last night, while I lay thinking here,
2 Some Whatifs crawled inside my ear
3 And pranced and partied all night long
4 And sang their same old Whatif song:
5 Whatif I'm dumb in school?
6 Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?
7 Whatif I get beat up?
8 Whatif there's poison in my cup?
9 Whatif I start to cry?
10 Whatif I get sick and die?
11 Whatif I flunk that test?
12 Whatif green hair grows on my chest?
13 Whatif nobody likes me?
14 Whatif a bolt of lightning strikes me?

- 15 Whatif I don't grow talle?
16 Whatif my head starts getting smaller?
17 Whatif the fish won't bite?
18 Whatif the wind tears up my kite?
19 Whatif they start a war?
20 Whatif my parents get divorced?
21 Whatif the bus is late?
22 Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?
23 Whatif I tear my pants?
24 Whatif I never learn to dance?
25 Everything seems well, and then
All the nighttime Whatifs strike again!

Transition: (All sigh)

WON'T YOU?
Shel Silverstein

- Love struck Boy Barbara's eyes are blue as azure (*Barbara take center*)
(*center stage*) But she is in love with Freddy (*Freddy walk off L with Barb*)
 Karen's sweet but Harry has her (*Karen cross L to R*)
 Gentle Jane is going steady (*Jane take center*)
 Carol hates me, so does May (*Carol walk forward SL, May SR*)
 Abigail will be mine, (*Abigail walk forward SL*)
 Nancy lives too far away..... (*Nancy walk forward SR*)
All Won't you be my valentine? (*Ask audience*)

Transition: All say "Won't you be my valentine?"

"AND THERE HE WAS"
Joanna Long

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul on Love and Friendship*

- Nervous Girl 1 And there he was,
 Staring into my eyes as a child stares at candy.
- Nervous Girl 2 He was an image of perfection.
 His sea blue eyes were as deep as the ocean,
 And, oh, so full of mystery, like a treasure waiting to be opened.
- Nervous Girl 3 He could win any girl's heart.

But he was awaiting *my* response to the question.
My stomach was churning like milk in a blender.

Nervous Girl 1 My heart was beating as if I'd just run a marathon.
I was so excited that he had asked me.
Not just any girl, but me.

Nervous Girl 2 All I had to do was get the words out,
But it was hard.
His perfection stunned my thoughts,

Nervous Girl 3 Yet I replied in a cool manner,
The words flowing off my lips, as water flows through a stream.

All Three Girls "Sure, you can borrow my pencil."

Transition: One girl reads the following:

"THE OCEAN"

*By Megan J., Pompton Plains, NJ
Adapted from Teen Ink*

Clouds hug the tough shoreline
The rocks curve upward sharply against the water
Oozing mud surprises the soft sand on the beach
As her face swings toward the blue sky
Clinging to the belief that the soft kiss was real

"PRACTICAL APPLICATION"

Dan Clark

Adapted from Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul II: 101 More Stories on Life, Love and Learning

(Four Narrators, One Couple acting out the actions, One Father)

(Boy and Girl SL, boy kiss girl on each cheek once on the cue line)

Narrator 1: He's teaching her arithmetic,
He said it was his mission,
He kissed her once, he kissed her twice and said,

(Boy and Girl SL, boy kiss girl on cheeks again, girl do the same to boy)

Narrator 2 "Now that's addition."
And as he added smack by smack
In silent satisfaction

She sweetly gave the kisses back and said,
“Now that’s subtraction.”

(Boy and girl continue cheek kissing)

Narrator 3 Then he kissed her, and she kissed him,
Without an explanation,
And both together smiled and said,
“That’s multiplication.”

*(Enter Father SR, chase off couple on the cue and the stop and look at the audience on
“Now that’s division”)*

Narrator 4: Then dad appeared upon the scene and
Made a quick decision.
He kicked the kid three blocks away,
And said, “That’s long division.”

Transition: All blow a loud kiss to the audience

DEAF DONALD
Shel Silverstein

Narrator: Deaf Donald met Talkie Sue
But,

Donald: *(Sign I Love You)*

Narrator: Was all he could do.
And Sue said,

Sue: Donald, I sure do like you.”

Narrator: But

Donald: *(Sign I love you)*

Narrator: Was all he could do.
And Sue asked Donald,

Sue: “Do you like me too?”

Narrator: But

Donald *(Sign I Love you)*

Narrator: Was all he could do
Sue: “Good-bye then, Donald, I’m leaving you.”
Narrator: But
Donald: (*Sign I love You*)
Narrator: And she left forever, and she never knew, That
All: (*Sign I love You*)
Narrator: Means I Love you!

Transition: All Sign “I Love You”

MY RULES
Shel Silverstein

1 If you want to marry me, here's what you'll have to do:
2 You must learn how to make a perfect chicken-dumpling stew.
3 And you must sew my holey socks,
4 And soothe my troubled mind,
5 And develop the knack for scratching my back,
6 And keep my shoes spotlessly shined.
7 And while I rest you must rake up the leaves,
8 And when it is hailing and snowing
9 You must shovel the walk...and be still when I talk,
10 And--hey--where are you going?

Transition: All Hum beginning of Song: Love and Marriage

“DEAR GIRL”

Derek Whittier

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul III: More Stories of Love, Life and Learning*

(*Six Boys in a line SL*)

All Boys: Dear Girl,

Boy 1 I feel the time has come for me to have a girlfriend. I know you're out there somewhere. Don't worry, I'll find you.

And when I do, I hope that you will love me because I'm Derek, not because I'm Mike's younger brother. I hope you won't be embarrassed when my clothes don't match, or be annoyed when I want to watch the Lakers on ESPN instead of Party of Five.

Boy 2 I hope that you will remember that I play soccer, not football, and that I play midfield not defense, and that every weekend I live with my dad. I pray that you'll love me despite my tendency to forget birthdays, and if your parents invite me to dinner, please write their names really small on my hand so I can use it as a reference.

Boy 3 Please know that I will constantly act strong and in control, but inside I am actually lost and confused. (Just don't tell my friends.) Please don't worry if I hurt myself skateboarding. Instead by there to mend my wounds, with kisses.

Boy 4 Understand that loving each other means being together, but not all of the time. We should never bail on our friends. Also understand that I may at times act jealous and overly protective, but only because *I* have insecurities, not because *you* are doing anything wrong.

Boy 5 And if we fall out of love with each other, please don't hate me. And if I cry in front of you, please don't laugh at me. Please know that I am sensitive...in a manly, tough kind of way. Please be honest with me without being hurtful. After all, I am a *boy*. And I promise to always be honest with you, because you deserve honesty. And I promise to open doors for you and buy your ticket when we go to the movies.

Boy 6 And no, you aren't fat, so please don't constantly ask. And you don't need makeup either. Oh, and don't be upset if you cut your hair and I don't notice. I will love you even in Levi's and a T-shirt. I hope you don't think I'm asking too much of you. I just want to be happy making you happy.

All Boys: I'm coming to find you, so don't go anywhere. Stay where you are, whoever you are. And by the way, my name's Derek.

Boy 1 Your Always,
 Derek

“DEAR BOY”

Sarah Bercot

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul III: More Stories of Love, Life and Learning*

(Six Girls in a line SR)

All Girls: Dear Boy,

Girl 1 I do not know who you are, or where or when we will meet, but I do hope its soon. I pray that when we meet and fall in love, you will love me for me, and not hope for someone who is thinner or prettier. I hope you won't compare me to girls who may have brighter smiles. I hope that you will make me laugh, take care of me if I get sick, and be trustworthy.

Girl 2 I hope you will remember that I prefer daisies to roses and that my favorite color changes with my mood. Please know that my eyes aren't blue, they're gray, with flecks of navy.

Girl 3 Please know that I might be too shy to kiss you at first, but please don't be afraid to kiss me. I won't slap you or push you away. I'm sure your kisses will be perfect. When we go on a date, please don't stress about where to take me; what's important is that I'll be with you.

Girl 4 If I cry please know that it isn't because of you, just hold me close and I'll heal quickly. And if it is because of you, I'll heal just the same. And if we decide to break up, please understand that I may be bitter, but I'd like to be your friend if you'll let me. I promise to remember that you have feelings too, even though you'll never admit it, and when you are ready, we'll have a friendship.

Girl 5 Please tell me if anything I do bothers you, or if something just doesn't sit right. I would like you to always be honest with me. If I have a bad day, I hope you will shower me with confidence and smiles.

Girl 6 I hope you don't think I'm asking too much of you. I hope you understand that I'm a little bit nervous and very scared. I wish I could tell you how or when we will meet, and if we will be in love forever. Every relationship is a new game of cards and...(sigh)...I've never been good at cards.

All Girls: But I will try my best to be kind and love you dearly for all that you are, without expecting too much from you. Thank you for listening. This is all that I ask.

Girl 1 Yours Always,
Sarah

Transition: One Boy Reads the Following: _____

“Love is everything it’s cracked up to be. It really is worth fighting for, being brave for, risking everything for. And the trouble is, if you don’t risk anything, you risk even more.”

Erica Jong

THE SHELTER OF YOUR ARMS

By Rachael L., Phoenix, AZ

Adapted from *Teen Ink*

1 In the midst of the wretched storm
2 I’m in your arms, I’m in your arms
3 Though the rough winds start to blow
4 You take my hand, you lead me home
5 When the cold rain begins to pour
6 You hold me close, you hold me close
7 When the white snow begins to burn
8 You pull me near, you keep me warm
9 When I’m weak and slowly stop
10 Your gentle hands will pick me up
11 As the devil’s tongue tells me lies
12 You feed me truth, keeping me alive
13 Though the stiff air is wet and cold
14 You feed my fire, you make me burn
15 Though I walk this road alone
All You’re in my soul, you’re in my bones.

Transition: Girls say: “True friends last forever, no matter what.”

“FOR CLAIRE”

Rebecca Wicks

Adapted from *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul 101 Stories of Love, Life and Learning*

- 1 We giggled like the children we were as we balanced on the ledge of the girl’s bathroom and dangled our fingers out of the open window, trying to catch the snowflakes. We were supposed to be in class, but the teacher had left the room, and we’d run away for a moment to get a better view of the whitening world outside. Minutes later, we ran out of the bathroom and right into the principal. He’d seen our arms flailing around from his office in the building across the playground.
- 2 Wiping the snow from our freezing hands onto our navy blue V-neck sweaters, we were marched back into our classroom and reprimanded loudly in front of everybody. I twiddled my pigtails around my trembling fingers. You glanced at me nervously with beet-red cheeks. That’s the day we became friends. I’ll always remember how we crashed that go-cart into your horrible neighbor’s fence. How we stood there as the paint chipped off and the white post fell broken and twisted to the garden.
- 3 How each of us waited for the other to laugh first as we ran away, each of us shocked at the discovery of a conscience, at the realization that what we’d done wasn’t funny, it was just wrong. We hid in your bedroom behind blankets that hung from the top bunk, waiting for the inevitable ring of the doorbell-as long as we were invisible, we were untouchable. Your neighbor was angry. We wish we were cooler kids who didn’t care.
- 4 That same summer we stole a basket from a farmer’s field. We didn’t even need it for the miniscule amount of blackberries that grew alongside the roadside-we only wanted it because it wasn’t ours. The farmer caught us and shouted and screamed as we snickered shamelessly behind our hands. By then we were far *too* cool to care.
- 5 I had my first kiss before you did, and when I told you, you burnt the rice pudding you were cooking on purpose. We were supposed to have our first kisses on the same night at the school dance, with boys who were best friends, too, so we could be couples who double-dated. You had a real boyfriend before me. I always wished we still lived in the same town so we could still double-date. And I could burn your dessert like you said I would.
- 6 You rescued me from my first job at a fish shop for which I was getting paid so little. You asked your parents if I could be a waitress at their hotel. I learned to serve potatoes with fancy silverware and lock people in the refrigerator for kicks.

- 7 We used to have gymnastics lessons in the sports center every Saturday before we went swimming. We thought it was cool to wear bikinis to the local pool, even though it was full of granddads and mothers with babies. At the pool you showed me how to do a backward flip into the deep end and wouldn't give up on me until I did it. I felt so proud of myself. Once I showed some people I had never met, my new talent. The force of the water pulled my bikini bottoms down to my feet, and I still go red when I think about it.
- 8 A few months ago I wrote you a letter with some of these memories and all my gossip on four long pages. I sent a photo of me smiling and wrote a big "Hello" on the bottom in black Sharpie. I realized that too much time had passed between us. I really hope you read it. We went our separate ways in our quest to conquer the world. Life got in the way. But everything we did, in ways both big and small, led to this very moment. It's so easy to forget why we do what we do, or why we are what we are. I never want to forget.
- 9 You never wrote back.
- 10 Today I'd heard you died, and I went shopping. I don't know why I had to go shopping. I left what I was doing and went straight into Harold Square, lost myself in the clothes racks, emptied my brain of meaningful thoughts and filled it with passing snippets of other people's mindless conversation. "How's your dog?" "Do you want chicken for dinner?" "No, Tommy, you can't have an ice cream!" It all seemed so trivial. Didn't they know the world was different now?
- 11 Back in school we had a friend who died. She was fourteen. We took flowers to the scene of her car crash and remembered her smile. We never understood how God could have taken her away, but maybe now she can tell you. And you can tell me one day why you had to go, too.
- 12 Claire, I hope you're as happy now, as you are in my memories, laughing and smiling and chasing your dreams. I'll remember you whenever I jump into a swimming pool at the deep end, whenever I see a kid ride a go-cart, and whenever I stick my hands out the window to touch the falling snow.

Transition: Silence: Slowly move into next scene

ONE THOUSAND STARS
By Eleanor E., Salem, OR
Adapted from *Teen Ink*

- 1 Tonight, when the wheels of yesterday
have creaked haltingly to a stop,
but before the bright chariot of tomorrow arrives,

- 2 I will wander out beyond the confined box of my bedroom
and run to the hammock,
painted in shadowy hues by the soft brush of midnight.
- 3 Lying there, feeling the silent energies of growing plants
and the soft yearning for light,
one thousand stars will fall out of the sky,
and land on my outstretched feet.
- 4 I will let them glimmer there for a moment,
imagining I have the anklets and toe rings of Orion
and diamond slippers illuminated with light,
- 5 and then I will get up slowly and tiptoe across the lawn,
balancing on the drops of dew still forming in the darkness.
- 6 Creeping soundlessly,
I will walk seven and three-fourths times around the world,
for good luck,
- 7 and while I am out I will discover there are others walking, too
people who escaped from crowded apartments and bamboo huts and city ghettos
but are all, really, just like me.
- 8 We will stand in the wide wet spaces between continents,
letting our shining feet drag across the moonless surface of the seas,
- 9 and then suddenly begin to play a game of soccer,
- All all as one team, kicking up stars with our toes,
- 10 and watching them soar in a bright blinking arc
into the ceiling of the heavens,
- 11 until each of us has only one glimmering star left on each toe,
and we must all sprint back to our homes
- 12 to live our somber lives, each quietly smiling, awaiting
tomorrow night.

Transition: All boys say: "Everyone has to get older sometimes..."

WHEN WE GET OLDER
By Amanda J., Clarkston, MI
Adapted from *Teen Ink*

- Sister: When wrinkles ambush our cheeks and forehead
 And the skin loosens on our hands
- Brother: And blue-green veins show through our transparently white skin
 We will remember
- Sister: When we stole Mom's car and withstood months of torture
 And snuck into the neighbor's backyard to go skinny-dipping at midnight
- Brother: And slid down the stairs in our new pillowcases disregarding parents'
 protests
- Sister: Not knowing that we were making memories
 For when we sit on the porch
- Brother: With our old legs dangling from rocking chairs
 And our aged faces soaking in western sunlight
- Sister: Reminiscing about
 When we jumped out of a plane at 30,000 feet
- Brother: And bungee-jumped out of a helicopter over Victoria Falls
 And found our feet in sunny California
- Both: When we got older

Transition: Fade (Human cross fade) into the next scene

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE OLD MAN
Shel Silverstein

- Narrator: Said the little boy,
- Little Boy: "Sometimes I drop my spoon."
- Narrator: Said the old man,
- Old Man: "I do that, too."
- Narrator: The little boy whispered,

Little Boy: "I wet my pants."
Old Man: "I do that too,"
Narrator: laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy,
Little Boy: "I often cry."
Narrator: The old man nodded,
Old Man: "So do I."
Little Boy: "But worst of all,"
Narrator: said the boy,
Little Boy: "it seems Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."
Narrator: And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
Old Man: "I know what you mean,"
Narrator: said the little old man.

Transition: One girls sings the phrase "I wish" from Into the Woods

LESTER
Shel Silverstein

1 Lester was given a magic wish
2 By the goblin who lives in the banyan tree,
3 And with his wish he wished for two more wishes--
4 So now instead of just one wish, he cleverly had three.
5 And with each one of these
6 He simply wished for three more wishes,
7 Which gave him three old wishes, plus nine new.
8 And with each of these twelve
9 He slyly wished for three more wishes,
10 Which added up to forty-six--or is it fifty-two?
11 Well anyway, he used each wish
12 To wish for wishes 'til he had
13 Five billion, seven million, eighteen thousand thirty-four.
14 And then he spread them on the ground

15 And clapped his hands and danced around
16 And skipped and sang, and then sat down
17 And wished for more.
18 And more...and more...they multiplied
19 While other people smiled and cried
20 And loved and reached and touched and felt.
21 Lester sat amid his wealth
22 Stacked mountain-high like stacks of gold,
23 Sat and counted--and grew old.
24 And then one Thursday night they found him
25 Dead--with his wishes piled around him.
1-5 And they counted the lot and found that not
6-10 A single one was missing.
11-15 All shiny and new--here, take a few
16-20 And think of Lester as you do.
All In a world of apples and kisses and shoes
He wasted his wishes on wishing.

Transition: All Say the following quote:

“It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves.”
William Shakespeare

THE SEARCH
Shel Silverstein

All: I went to find a pot of gold
That's waiting where the rainbow ends.
I searched and searched and searched and searched
And searched and searched and then—
There it was, deep in the grass,
Under an old and twisty bough.
It's mine, it's mine, it's mine at last...
What do I search for now?

Exit Music: “It's Only Life” from the musical “It's Only Life”