



Reader's Theater:

A New Year's Promise



Characters:

- Narrator
- Milo (an imaginative boy ready for a fresh start)
- Zara (Milo's best friend, practical and kind)
- Mr. Barkley (their slightly grumpy but secretly kind neighbor)
- Lena (a new girl in the neighborhood who's shy but brave)
- Mrs. Whitaker (a lonely elderly woman in the neighborhood)

Optional Props:

- A notebook and pen for Milo
- A scarf and gloves for Zara
- A cane and hat for Mr. Barkley
- A backpack or book for Lena
- A small bag of groceries for Mrs. Whitaker
- A toy kite for Milo
- A small toolbox for Mr. Barkley
- A plate of cookies for Zara's idea
- A trash bag and gloves for the park cleanup scene
- A piece of wood and some screws for the bench repair scene

Narrator:

It was a bright, chilly January morning, and the small town of Cedarville buzzed with the promise of a fresh start. Milo sat cross-legged in his living room, furiously jotting down ideas in his brand-new notebook. Beside him, Zara sipped hot cocoa, watching Milo with an amused expression.

Zara:

Milo, are you seriously writing “Learn to ride a unicycle” on your list again? Didn’t you try that last year and end up in a bush?

Milo:

(seriously) That was just a practice fall. This year, I’ll nail it! New year, new chances!

Narrator:

Before Zara could respond, there was a knock at the door. Milo opened it to find their neighbor, Mr. Barkley, holding a bag of tools.

Mr. Barkley:

(gruffly) Milo, you left your kite in my tree again. Next time, tie it down better.

Milo: (grinning) Thanks, Mr. Barkley! I’ll add ‘knot tying’ to my goals list.

Narrator:

As Mr. Barkley handed over the kite, a girl about Milo and Zara's age walked up and disappeared away. She wore a bright scarf and carried a book tucked under her arm.

Zara:

(whispering) Who's that?

Milo:

I think she's the new kid. Let's say hi!

Narrator:

The girl hesitated but smiled shyly when Milo waved.

Milo:

Hi! I'm Milo, and this is Zara. Welcome to the neighborhood!

Lena:

(thankfully) Hi. I'm Lena. Thanks. It's nice to meet you.

Narrator:

Just then Mr. Barkley cleared his throat.

Mr. Barkley:

(gruffly) Why don't you kids do something useful with your day? Like setting a goat to help someone. It's the new year, after all.

Zara:

(cheerfully) That's a great idea! What do you think, Lena? Want to join us?

Lena:

(surprised) Me.. Really? Sure, I'd like to!

Narrator:

The three decided to take a walk through the neighborhood to brainstorm their New Year's promises. They stopped at the park where children were playing on the swings and building snowmen. Milo sat on a bench, tapping his pen against his notebook.

Milo:

(excitedly) I've got it! I'm going to learn something new every week, starting with unicycling. But this time, I'll wear a helmet.

Zara:

(laughing) Good idea. I think I'll bake cookies for all our neighbors. Everyone loves cookies.

Lena:

(smiling) I've never really been good at meeting people, but I think I'll try to meet one new person every day. Maybe start with saying hi to my classmates.

Narrator:

As they talked, Mr. Barkley shuffled over, a small toolbox in hand. He eyed the broken bench they were sitting on.

Mr. Barkley:

(gruffly) This bench has needed fixing for months. Maybe my goal should be to actually get it done.

Milo:

(beginning) Great idea, Mr. Barkley! We'll help!

Narrator:

The kids and Mr. Barkley worked together to repair the bench. Lena lent the screws, Zara handed tools to Mr. Barkley, and Milo added 'learn basic carpentry' to his list. By the time they were done, the bench looked as good as new.

Lena:

(proudly) It feels good to do something helpful. Maybe we could work on another project next weekend.

Zara:

(nodding) Like cleaning up the park. There's trash by the swings that needs picking up.

Mr. Barkley:

(sincerely) Not a bad idea. Maybe I'll bring my rake.

Narrator:

As they walked home, the group passed a lonely elderly woman struggling to carry her groceries. Lena hesitated, then ran up to help her.

Lena:

(bravely) Hi, let me help you with those. My name's Lena.
Mrs. Whitaker (gratefully) Thank you so much. It's so kind of you to offer. I'm Mrs. Whitaker.

Narrator:

Lena beamed as she carried the bags. Mop and Zara joined in, and soon the groceries were delivered to Mrs. Whitaker's porch.

Mrs. Whitaker:

(smiling) You kids are wonderful. Happy New Year to all of you.

Narrator:

As they said goodbye to Mrs. Whitaker, Lena returned to her friends.

Lena:

(happily) Maybe this New Year's promise thing isn't so scary after all.

Milo:

(grinning) See? A fresh start can be pretty great.

Narrator:

And so, the group discovered that the New Year wasn't just about setting goals—it was about being brave, helping others, and sharing kindness. As the sun set on that crisp January day, friendship and hope warmed their hearts, proving that a little courage and a lot of heart could make any year extraordinary.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Why do you think Lena decided to set a goal to meet new people?

How did Milo, Zara, and Lena's actions inspire Mr. Barkley?

What other ways could the group show kindness in their neighborhood?

Milo



Zara



Mr. Barkley



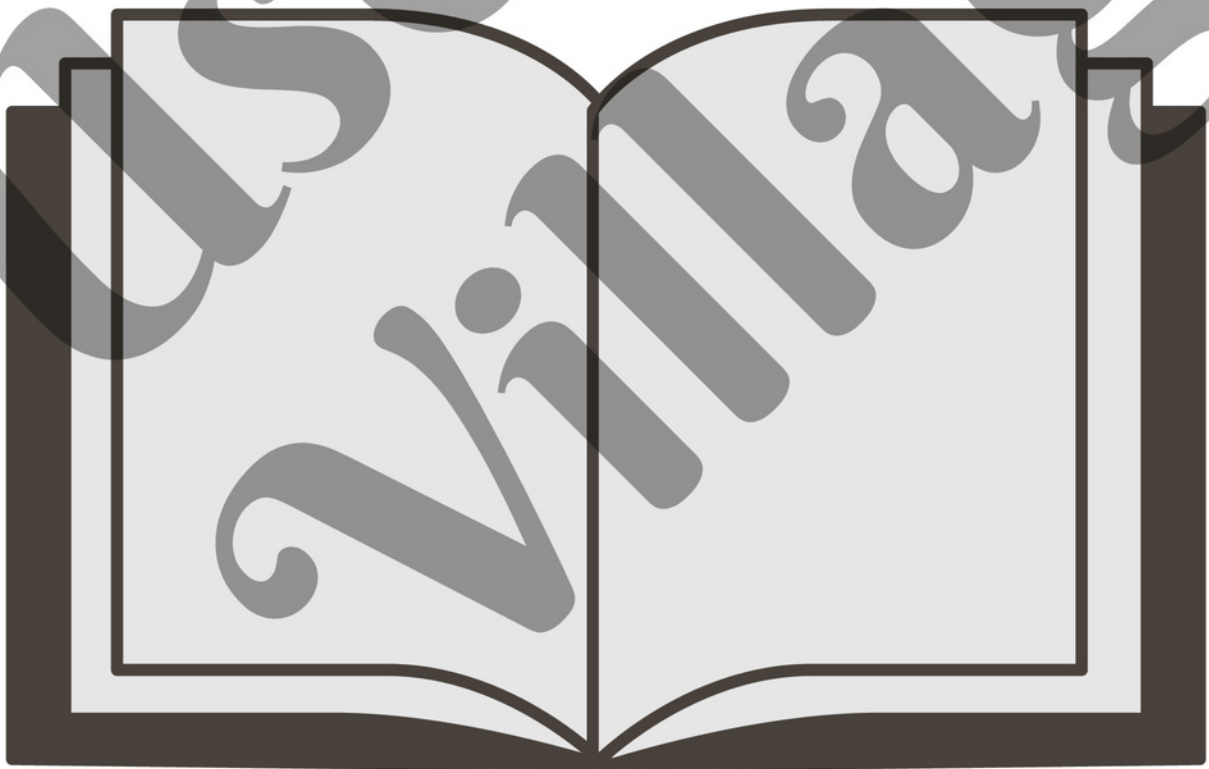
Lena



Mrs. Whitaker



Narrator



Teacher Suggestions:

Assigning Roles: Consider your students' reading levels and confidence when assigning roles. Encourage students to practice their parts at home or during independent reading time.

Practicing Fluency: Have students practice their parts multiple times to build fluency and expression.

Props & Costumes: Use the optional props list to create simple, engaging props.

Character Labels: Students can also use the provided character names to either cut out to hang around their neck to help identify characters to the audience or alternatively draw and illustrate what they imagine their character to look like.

Performance: Arrange a space in the classroom where students can perform. Invite other students to watch the final performance to boost students' confidence and make it more special.

Reader Response Questions: Use the provided questions to facilitate a post-performance discussion. This will help assess comprehension and encourage students to think critically about the play.

Extension Activities:

- **Write Your Own Goal:** Have students write their own New Year's promise and share how they plan to achieve it.
- **Design a Goal Poster:** Encourage students to create a poster illustrating their New Year's goals.
- **Role-play Kindness:** Let students act out how they would show kindness to a new friend or neighbor.