

Readers Theater:

The Case of the Disappearing Backpack Charms



Characters:

- Narrator
- Ava – Observant and curious, loves her backpack charm collection.
- Jayden – Funny and laid-back, Ava's best friend.
- Mia – Organized, carries a notepad for "detective notes."
- Noah – Easily distracted but has good ideas when focused.
- Principal Torres – Kind, fair, and a little dramatic.
- Mrs. Lin – Their friendly but busy classroom teacher.
- Squirrely – A mischievous squirrel (puppet or costumed student).

Optional Props:

- Backpacks with colorful charms or keychains
- Notepad and pencil for “detective notes”
- Magnifying glass (real or paper cutout)
- Trail of paper acorns or small brown pom-poms
- Plastic acorns or small leaves
- Squirrel tail or headband with ears for Squirrely
- A small “nest” made of yarn, leaves, and charms

Narrator:

It was the second week of September at Maplewood Elementary. The mornings were cool, the leaves were just starting to turn, and Ava's backpack jingled as she walked.

Ava:

(Admiring) This sunflower charm is my favorite. My grandma brought it back from her trip.

Jayden:

You have, like, a million charms.

Ava:

Eight. I rotate them.

Narrator:

The group of friends, Ava, Jayden, Mia, and Noah, were waiting for the first bell when Mia noticed something odd.

Mia:

Hey, where's my watermelon charm? It was here yesterday.

Noah:

Maybe it fell off?

Ava:

Or maybe it's missing.

(Scene: Later that week at recess.)

Narrator:

By Friday, Mia still had not found her charm. The Noah spoke up.

Noah:

Uh, my tooth charm is gone too.

Jason:

That's weird. Two missing charms in one week?

Ava:

Guys, last month I lost my dog tag charm. I thought I just dropped it, but now I'm not so sure.

Mia:

(Scribbling in notepad) Pattern emerging. Missing charms, random times, no witnesses.

(Scene: Monday morning.)

Narrator:

The friends met at their lockers before class.

Ava:

(Opening locker) Wait a second, my old and new blue star charm is gone!

Jayden:

That is three of us now. Definitely a backpack hanger.

Mia:

Newbie: The disappearing Backpack charms keep one, gather clues.

(Scene: In the classroom, the kids quietly ask their classmates.)

Narrator:

Before looking for clues, the friends decided to question their classmates one by one.

Mia:

Did anyone see Ava's blue star charm?

Classmate 1:

Nope, I was reading during morning drop-off.

Jayden:

What about Mia's watermelon charm?

Classmate 2:

I have never even seen a watermelon charm.

Noah:

Has anyone seen a football charm?

Classmate 3:

Sorry, no.

Narrator:

Every student shook their head. No one admitted to taking anything.

(Scene as the friends approach Mrs. Lin.)

Ava:

Mrs. Lin, some of our backpack charms have been disappearing.

Mrs. Lin:

Hmm, that is strange. I will keep an eye out today. In the meantime, check around your lockers and the playground. Sometimes small things roll away.

Jayden:

We already looked a little, but we will check again.

Mrs. Lin:

Good idea. Let me know if you find anything.

(Scene: Searching the hallway again.)

Narrator:

The friends scanned the floor near the lockers.

Jayden:

Look! Tiny paw print.

Noah:

Oh, tiny-tiny sneakers. Could be a very small human.

Mia:

Not likely. And... what is this? An acorn?

Ava:

None of us brought acorns for lunch.

Jayden:

Unless Noah is hiding a secret squirrel snack stash.

Noah:

(Offended) Hey! I am not!

(Scene: At recess, they follow the “clues.”)

Narrator:

The trail of acorns led them past the slide, behind the basketball court, and right to the giant oak tree.

Jayden:

Shhh, look up there. I see something colorful!

Noah:

(Squinting) Is that... sparkles in a nest?

Ava:

That is my star charm. And Mia's watermelon charm.

(Squirrelly appears, chattering and holding a charm.)

Ava:

It's you?! Did you take everyone's backpack charms?

Squirrelly:

(Playfully) I needed decorations. My nest was boring.

Ava:

You cannot just take our things without asking. Those aren't yours.

Squirrelly:

Sorry! I thought shiny things were for everyone.

Jayden:

Maybe we can make you some decorations that are not our stuff. Give us a little time and we'll be back!

(Scene: The friends gather yarn, ribbons, and beads for Squirrelly.)

Ava:

Look, Squirrelly, we made you some shiny beads and colorful ribbons.

Mia:

And we even added a little bell so your nest can tingle in the wind.

Mia:

These are all yours to keep. No one will take them away.

Squirrelly:

(Excited) Wow, these are amazing! My nest will sparkle like never before!

Ava:

And we will take our backpack charms back, if that is okay.

Squirrelly:

Of course. Thank you for making me my very own decorations. My nest looks amazing!

Principal Torres:

(Smiling) Case closed, and with kindness.

Narrator:

From then on, Squirrelly's nest was the most stylish in the park, and the backpack charms stayed right where they belonged.

Name: _____

Date: _____

What did the kids do before looking for clues outside?

Who was taking the charms, and why?

How did the kids solve the problem?

Ava



Jayden



Mia



Principal Torres



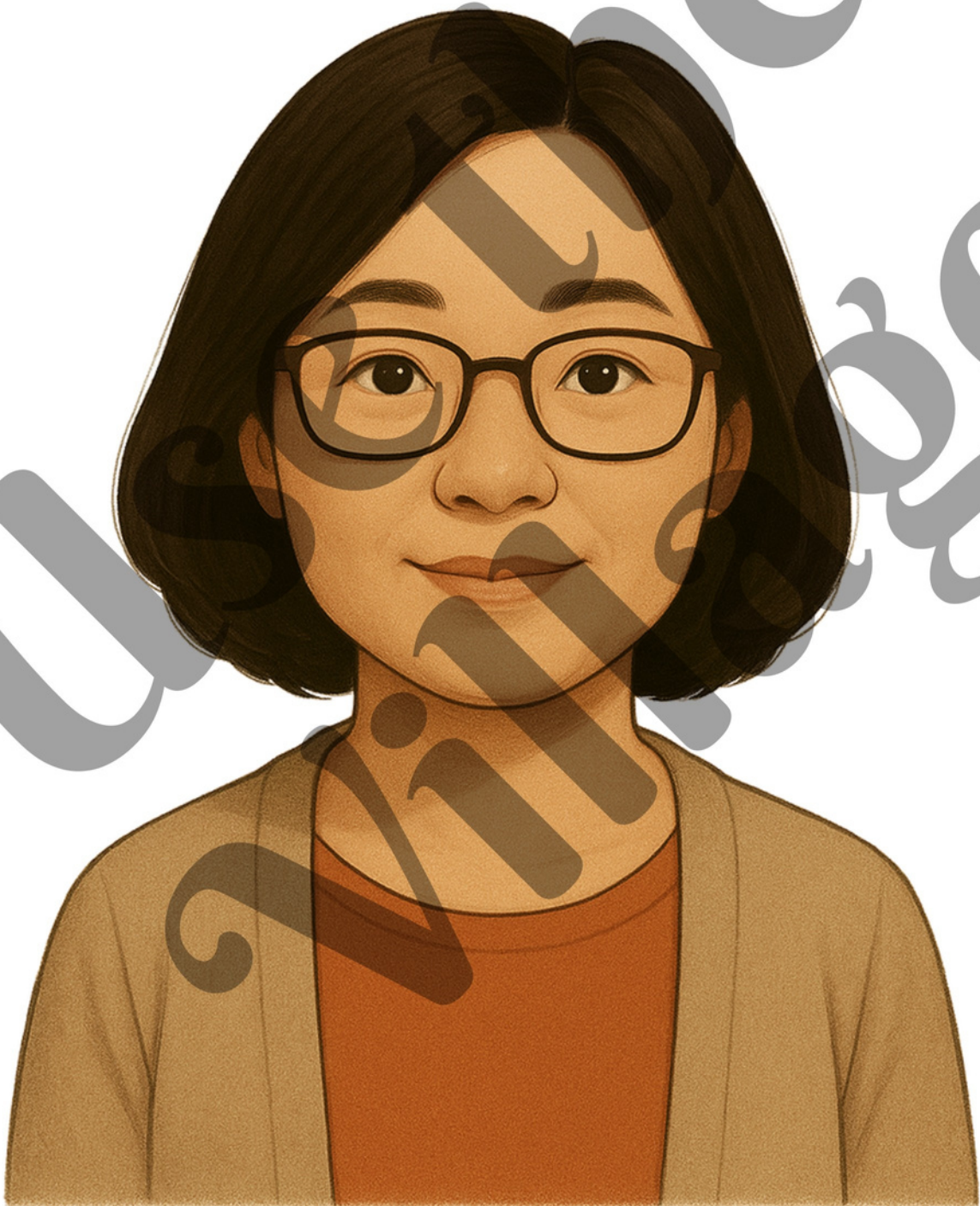
Noah



Squirrely



Mrs. Lin



Narrator



Ava



Jayden



Mia



Principal Torres



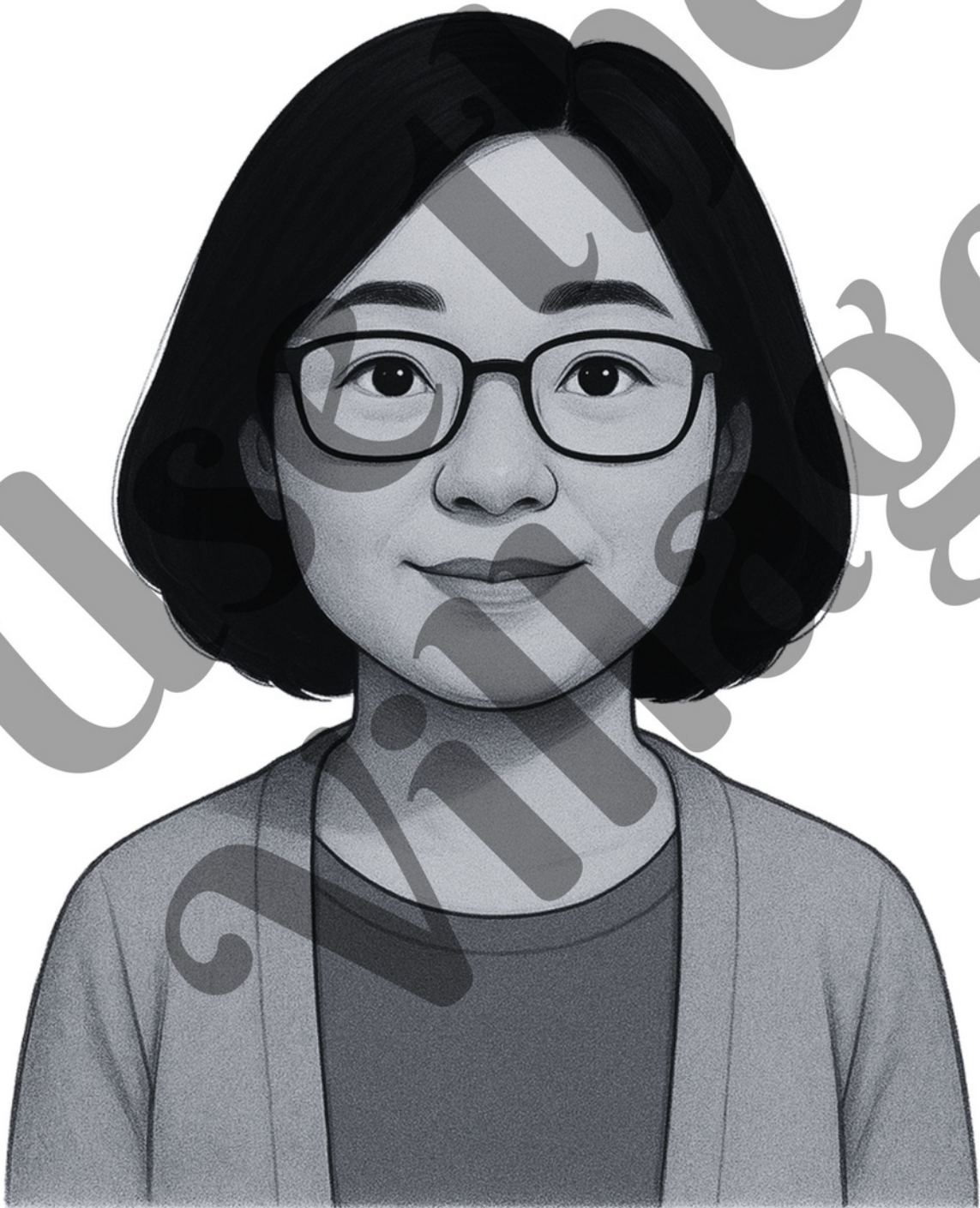
Noah



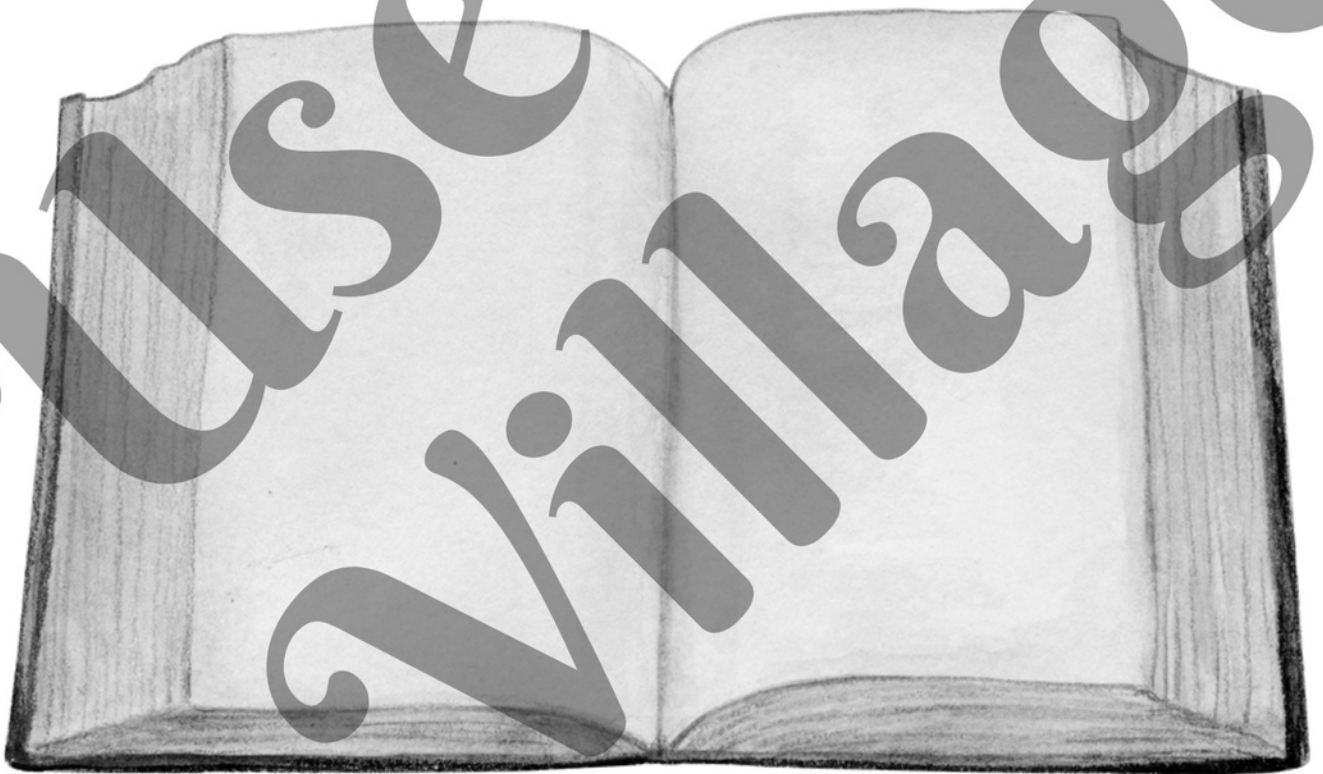
Squirrely



Mrs. Lin



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

- Charm Design Challenge – Students draw and color their own backpack charm design.
- Animal Habitats Research – Learn about squirrels and what they collect for nests.
- Create a Detective Badge – Craft a paper badge with a unique design and name.
- Act It Out with Props – Use backpack and charms for a class performance.
- Kindness Brainstorm – Make a chart of common problems and of ways to solve those problems kindly.

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