

A Reader's Theater Script for Jeanne Birdsall's *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*.

Adapted by Amy Fuller

© Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*, 2008, Alfred A. Knopf.

Readers:

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

Narrator 4

Mother

Aunt Claire

Rosalind

Skye

Jane

Narrator 1: In the Penderwick family, there are four girls.

Narrator 2: Rosalind is the oldest Penderwick girl.

Narrator 3: And there are three other Penderwick girls: Skye, Jane, and Batty.

Narrator 4: Just three weeks ago, Rosalind started seventh grade.

Narrator 2: And today, Rosalind was happy. It was a Friday in September, the leaves were turning colors and Aunt Claire was coming to visit.

Narrator 3: Aunt Claire is Father's sister. She didn't have any children of her own and doted on her nieces.

Narrator 4: Rosalind thought back to four years early. Four years ago to when Batty was born, Aunt Claire was here to help and Mother was in the hospital.

Rosalind: May I hold Batty, Aunt Claire?

Skye: And, Mommy, can you come home for a visit? The baby doesn't have to come with you.

Mother: When I do come home, Skye, Batty will be coming with me.

Aunt Claire: Girls, why don't you go the gift shop and by yourselves a treat?

Jane: But we don't have any money.

Aunt Claire: I'll give you some.

Narrator 1: Aunt Claire pulled some money from her wallet and had Rosalind put the baby in the bassinet beside her mother's bed.

Rosalind: Maybe we can buy the baby a present.

Skye: No, there's not enough money for her.

Mother: Skye, remember your manners.

Narrator 3: As the girls left the room and headed toward the gift shop, Rosalind took hold of Jane's hand while Skye bounded ahead.

Narrator 4: The girls said hello to many of the nurses they'd befriended during Mother's stay.

Narrator 1: Many times the girls had visited the gift shop but never had they had so much money. In fact, Aunt Claire had given enough for all of the girls to get something.

Narrator 2: Skye looked at the watches, Jane looked at everything, Rosalind decided upon on stuffed dog for Batty, and Rosalind herself wanted a new turquoise ring like her friend Anna.

Narrator 3: But when Rosalind got to the jewelry, she changed her mind about the ring.

Rosalind: We should buy this necklace for Mommy. It has one large heart with two hearts on either side.

Skye: But that will use up all our money.

Rosalind: Yes, but Mommy would like it because it's like her and us four girls.

Jane: Is Mommy still sick?

Rosalind: Yes.

Jane: Is it because of Batty that Mommy is sick?

Rosalind: No, it's because of the cancer. Daddy told us, remember? And she is going to get better soon.

Skye: The doctors are doing everything they can is what Daddy said.

Jane: Ok, let's get Mommy the necklace.

Skye: Rats!

Narrator 2: The girls purchased the necklace for Mother and headed back to Mother's room.

Narrator 1: Skye and Jane spotted Ruben, their favorite nurse, who always had time to give them a ride in a wheelchair.

Narrator 4: Rosalind hurried down the hall toward her mother's room but as she got closer she heard Mother and Aunt Claire talking.

Narrator 3: They were talking in a way that Rosalind gathered was talk for when children weren't around.

Aunt Claire: You sound like you've given up. No Lizzy, it's too soon to talk about this.

Mother: I'll never give up if there is hope. But in three or four years, you have to promise me you'll give Martin my letter. He's too shy to start dating without some encouragement. I don't want him to be lonely.

Aunt Claire: He won't be alone. He'll have the girls.

Mother: And when they grow up...

Narrator 1: Mother didn't get to finish her sentence. Ruben, Skye, and Jane arrived. Rosalind slowly followed the three into the room.

Narrator 2: Rosalind was trying to figure out what Mother had meant. Why would her father need to date?

Narrator 3: Aunt Claire put a blue envelope in her pocket.

Narrator 4: The girls happily handed Mother the necklace who put it on.

Narrator 2: All too soon it was time for the girls to leave and for Mother and Batty to get some rest.

Rosalind: I'll see you tomorrow, Mommy.

Narrator 4: Rosalind did want to see Mother tomorrow to ask her about the blue envelope, about Daddy being lonely, and about hope.

Narrator 1: But Rosalind never got the chance. Mother suddenly grew weaker and although the doctors tried their best, hope ran out.

Narrator 3: Elizabeth Penderwick was able to say goodbye to her girls and her husband and then died.

Narrator 1: And now as Rosalind heads home four years later, Aunt Claire is on her way for a visit.

Narrator 2: Is she bringing the blue envelope?

Narrator 3: Will she give it to Father?

Narrator 4: Will Father start dating?

Narrator 1: To find out what happens with the blue envelope and what other adventures lay ahead for Rosalind and the Penderwick family, read *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street* by Jeanne Birdsall.