

# Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

*Dramatic Publishing*

# CHEM MYSTERY

A children's play

by

CALEEN SINNETTE JENNINGS



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

© Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Illinois.

\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: [www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com), or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMIX by  
CALEEN SINNETTE JENNINGS

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(CHEM MYSTERY)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-643-2

## **IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

*Chem Mystery* premiered at Studio Theatre, Katzen Arts Center, American University, Washington, D.C., directed by Caleen Sinnette Jennings with the following:

## CAST

Leonard Lion, Simba, Mr. Rivera, Ojiisan . . . . . Austin Byrd  
Readin' Rabbit . . . . . Alex Cohill  
Sarah Spider, Ananse, Ao . . . . . Alysa J. Gillis  
Ominous Octopus, Carmen. . . . . Victoria Golden  
Charlotte Cheetah, Aka, Duma . . . . . Erika Hall  
Storytelling Snake . . . . . Cassandra Hannan  
Polly Puppy, Bonita, Kin . . . . . Maeve Koch  
Curious Cat . . . . . Ezree Mualem  
Panda Petrie, Mami Chiguapa . . . . . Amanda Rollins  
Muskular Muskrat . . . . . Hope Rollins  
Ominous Octopus, Melinda Monkey . . Frankie Gabrielle Solomon  
Bees . . . . . Katie Brobst, Vishal Vaidya

## PRODUCTION STAFF & CREW

Composer . . . . . Alex M. Temple  
Pianist . . . . . Taylor J. Williams  
Lighting Design/Technician . . . . . Erin L. Sullivan  
Studio Theatre Technical Manager . . . . . Joshua Dick  
Stage Manager . . . . . Cee Cee Swalling  
Assistant Stage Managers. . . . . Katie Brobst, Vishal Vaidya

### Special thanks:

Dr. Monika Konaklieva, Barbara Tucker Parker, Alex Temple, Fernando Benadon, The fall 2008 class of PERF 450—Children's Theatre, the faculty and staff of the Department of Performing Arts, American University, Janney Elementary School, Washington, D.C.

# CHEM MYSTERY

## CHARACTERS

STORYTELLING SNAKE . . . . .	scaly, slinky and cool
MUSKULAR MUSKRAT . . . . .	buff, carries handweights
READIN' RABBIT . . . . .	glasses, always has a book
CURIOUS CAT . . . . .	cuddly, carries a big question mark
PANDA PETRIE . . . . .	wears a white lab coat, carries the periodic table and a test tube
OMINOUS OCTOPUS . . . . .	has bags and sacks in each of her eight tentacles
SARAH SPIDER . . . . .	math
CHARLOTTE CHEETAH . . . . .	dance
LEONARD LION . . . . .	history
MELINDA MONKEY . . . . .	music
POLLY PUPPY . . . . .	poetry
AKA	
KIN	
AO	
OJISAN	
SIMBA	
DUMA	
KIMA	
ANANSE	
BONITA	
MAMI CHIGUAPA	
CARMEN	
MR. RIVERA	
BEE #1 (optional) . . . . .	set changer
BEE #2 (optional) . . . . .	set changer

**SCENERY:** Lightweight, hand-painted flats or butcher paper that is unrolled to show settings.  
Scarves create the sea, the wind, fish, etc.

**COSTUMES:** Character hats. Basic black costumes adorned with paper plates and pipe-cleaner versions of animal bodies.  
Movement and gestures to indicate animals.

**MUSIC:** The lyrics in this play may be sung to music you create, or spoken with movement and musical background, or spoken rhythmically like a rap. In fact, Muskular Muskrat's pieces about "Muscles" was meant to be chanted. Whatever decisions you make about music, I encourage you to be creative to satisfy the demands of your budget and your audiences.

# CHEM MYSTERY

STORYTELLING SNAKE.

SSSo happy to be here  
SSSurprising but it's true  
I'm SSStorytelling SSSnake  
With a sssstory for you  
Relax, I'm not scary  
I'm here to celebrate  
To solve the Chem Mystery  
You know what? I can't wait.

*(Sings excerpt from SONG: CHEM MYSTERY.)*

IN THE AIR, ON LAND AND SEA  
ALL AROUND IS CHEMISTRY  
MY TWO HELPERS—THESE TWO BEES  
LIVE AND THRIVE THROUGH CHEMISTRY  
COME ALONG, PLEASE COME WITH ME  
HELP SOLVE THE CHEM MYSTERY

I want to introduce you to a friend of mine. But you'll have to travel with me to a special corner of the Loony Verse, a place called Imagine Nation, a spot on the shores of the Whim Sea called Zooville. We're at Zooville School where students take only one class—their very, very favorite! *(School bell rings.)* Sarah Spider loves math.



SARAH SPIDER (*counting her eight legs*). 5-6-7-8! I love it!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Leonard Lion loves history.

LEONARD LION. Zooville was first founded in Imagine Nation over 1,000 years ago. Yes!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Charlotte Cheetah spends her whole day dancing

(*CHARLOTTE dances across the room*)

CHARLOTTE CHEETAH. And one, and two, and three, and bow!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Polly Puppy is crazy for poetry.

POLLY PUPPY (*writing in her journal*).

I slipped on a peel  
And I have the proof  
It fell on the ground  
From the roof-roof-roof

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And Melinda Monkey just can't play enough music

(*MELINDA plays something haltingly on her recorder.*)

MELINDA MONKEY. I'm getting better every day!

READIN' RABBIT (*with his nose in a book*). Can you please keep it down!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Hey, Readin' Rabbit, introduce yourself.

**(SONG: READING)**

READIN' RABBIT (*singing*).

EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT  
AND EVERY TIME YOU LOOK  
YOU WILL FIND ME READING  
FROM A STORY IN A BOOK

STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD  
THEY SUIT MY TASTE JUST FINE  
EARLY MORNING, THROUGH THE DAY  
AND 'SPECIALLY AT BEDTIME.

READING IS MY PASSION  
READING IS MY JOY  
A STORYBOOK FROM ANY SHELF  
BECOMES MY FAVORITE TOY

READING IS DELICIOUS  
READING IS SUCH FUN  
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A READER  
READIN' RABBIT'S NUMBER ONE.

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT (*doing pushups*). Hey, hey,  
never mind that silly old book. Look what I can do.  
Watch me. Betcha can't do this!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. In and out of gym class,  
Muskular Muskrat always shows off.

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. GIMME AN M!

ALL. M

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. GIMME A U!

ALL. U

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. GIMME AN S!

ALL. S

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. GIMME A CLE!

ALL. CLE!

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. WHAT'VE YOU GOT?

ALL (*puzzled*). Moosl? Mewsclee?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. NO! M-U-S-C-L-E SPELLS  
MUSCLE!

**(SONG: MUSCLES)**

(Rapped by Muskular Muskrat)

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT.

I'M MUSKULAR MUSKRAT

WITH MUSCLES GALORE

I'M ALWAYS TRAINING

TO GET THE BEST SCORE

RUNNING AND JUMPING

RACING AND RIDING

HOPPING AND THUMPING

SWIMMING AND GLIDING

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. What's this on my arm?

ALL. A lump?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. It's a muscle!

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. What's this on my leg?

ALL. A bump?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. It's a muscle!

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT.

I'M MUSKULAR MUSKRAT

THE STRONGEST IN THIS SCHOOL

I'M PUMPED, I'M STOKED

AND 100% COOL.

I'M MUSKULAR MUSKRAT  
THE STRONGEST IN TOWN

ALL. HEY, MUSKULAR MUSKRAT  
MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. YO!  
ALL. PLEASE SIT DOWN!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. All the students at Zooville  
School work very hard.

CURIOS CAT (*from offstage*). Why?!!!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Did you hear something? (*She  
listens, then shrugs.*) As I was saying, all of the students  
at Zooville School...

CURIOS CAT (*from offstage*). Why?!!!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Okay, that time I definitely  
heard something.

CURIOS CAT (*from offstage*). Why, oh why?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Ah yesssssss. Here comes  
someone who does not go to Zooville School.

CURIOS CAT (*from offstage*). Why, oh why, oh why???

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Because she doesn't have a fa-  
vorite class, and because she's too busy asking...

(*CURIOS CAT enters and interrupts with a song.*)

**(SONG: WHY?)**

CURIOS CAT (*singing*).

WHY IS THE SUN SO BRIGHT?

WHY IS THE GRASS SO GREEN?

WHAT MAKES OUR MILK LOOK WHITE?

WHAT TURNS THE WATER TO STEAM?

WHY, OH WHY?  
WHY, OH WHY?  
WHY DO I HAVE THESE QUESTIONS?  
WHY, OH WHY?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. This is the special friend I told you about. This is Curious Cat.

CURIOUS CAT (*singing*).

WHY DOES THE SKY MAKE RAIN?  
WHAT MAKES A FLOWER GROW?  
WHAT WORKS INSIDE MY BRAIN?  
HOW WILL I EVER KNOW!  
WHY, OH WHY  
WHY, OH WHY  
WHY DO I HAVE THESE QUESTIONS?  
WHY, OH, WHY?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Curious Cat, have you picked a favorite class yet?

CURIOUS CAT. I wish I knew what I want to study.

READIN' RABBIT. You can share my book.

**(SONG: READING – reprise)**

READIN' RABBIT (*singing*).

EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT  
AND EVERY TIME YOU LOOK  
YOU WILL FIND ME READING  
FROM A STORY IN A BOOK...

CURIOUS CAT (*interrupting the song*). But what is your book made of? Why are the pages smooth? What would happen if I...?

READIN' RABBIT. Don't tear the pages!

CURIOUS CAT. Don't you want to know what the pages are made of?

READIN' RABBIT. NO! I just want to read the stories on them. Like the African story "Ananse and Her Magical Thread"...

CURIOUS CAT (*interrupting*). What's a spider web made from?

READIN' RABBIT. Or the Mexican story "The Chiguapas Who Live Underwater"...

CURIOUS CAT (*interrupting*). How do people breathe underwater?

READIN' RABBIT. Or the Japanese story "Aka and the Magic Color"...

CURIOUS CAT (*interrupting*). Why are there so many different colors?

READIN' RABBIT. Oh, Curious Cat, you never pay attention to my stories!

CURIOUS CAT. I'm sorry, Readin' Rabbit. Come back!

READIN' RABBIT. Can't. I'm going to Reading Class!  
(*He exits.*)

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. Psssst! Curious Cat, why don't you work out with me?

**(SONG: MUSCLES – reprise)**

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT (*rapping*).

RUNNING AND JUMPING

RACING AND RIDING

HOPPING AND THUMPING  
SWIMMING AND GLIDING

MUSKLAR MUSKRAT. Watch me lift these weights.

CURIOUS CAT. Why are they so heavy?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. Who cares? I can lift these  
twenty times. (*Counting.*) 1-2-3-...

CURIOUS CAT. Why do you sweat?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT (*still lifting and counting*).  
7-8-9-10!

CURIOUS CAT. What's sweat made of?

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. Curious Cat, you and your  
questions are driving us crazy!

CURIOUS CAT. I don't mean to! Come back, Muskular  
Muskrat!

MUSKULAR MUSKRAT. Gotta go to gym. See ya! (*She  
exits jogging.*)

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And Sarah Spider scurries off  
to math.

SARAH SPIDER (*as she scurries off*). Fractions, addition,  
division, MULTIPLICATION!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And Leonard Lion can't wait  
to memorize more dates.

LEONARD LION (*showing off as he exits*). The first presi-  
dent of Zooville was Harold Hippo. He was followed by  
Abigail Alligator and... (*He exits.*)

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Charlotte Cheetah's off to  
dance class.

CHARLOTTE CHEETAH. Turn, walk, walk, leap, leap!  
(*Exits.*)

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Polly Puppy can't wait to  
share her latest poem

POLLY PUPPY (*writing in her journal as she exits*).

Give me words

I want them now

Roof-roof-roof

And bow-wow-wow

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And Melinda Monkey marches to her merry melody...

(*MELINDA MONKEY exits playing joyfully.*)

CURIOUS CAT. Everyone has a class to go to except me.

STORYTELLING SNAKE (*to the audience*). Don't you think that's sssad? (*Audience response.*) Every day, when her friends leave for their favorite classes, Curious Cat just wipes away her tears. Then she goes looking for answers to her many questions. She walks up the mountains of Imagine Nation. The view is always spectacular. But instead of finding answers to her questions, Curious Cat just thinks up more.

**(SONG: WHY? – reprise)**

CURIOUS CAT (*singing*).

WHY ARE THE MOUNTAINS HIGH?

WHY ARE THE VALLEYS LOW?

WHY IS THERE BLUE IN THE SKY?

WHY'S IT SO HARD TO KNOW?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And the mountains are not helpful at all. Because they echo her question...

MOUNTAINS (*echoing*). Why-y-y-y-y.



STORYTELLING SNAKE. Then Curious Cat walks through the forests of Imagine Nation. The birds soar, and the tall trees wear brilliant green leaves. The surroundings are spectacular. But instead of finding answers to her questions, Curious Cat just thinks up more.

CURIOUS CAT (*singing*).

WHY DO THE BIRDS HAVE WINGS?

WHY DO THE TREES GROW TALL?

WHY DON'T I KNOW THESE THINGS?

WHY DO I KNOW NOTHING AT ALL?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And the tall trees and the soaring birds are not helpful at all. Because they sing out on the wind...

BIRDS & TREES. Why-y-y-y-y!

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Finally, Curious Cat arrives at her favorite place in all of Imagine Nation. The Whim Sea always welcomes her. Although she does not like the water (cats never do), she loves to stand on the beach and watch the waves roll in and out. The surroundings are spectacular. But instead of finding answers to her questions, Curious Cat just thinks up more.

CURIOUS CAT (*singing*).

WHY IS THE SEA SO WIDE?

WHY IS THE WATER DEEP?

WHY DOES THE SEAWEED HIDE?

WHY DON'T FISH GO TO SLEEP?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. And the fish are not helpful at all. Because they sing up through the water.

SEAWEED & FISH (*gurgling*). Glub-glub-why-glub-glub-why?

STORYTELLING SNAKE. Usually Curious Cat just turns around and goes home. But suddenly, she sees someone walking towards her, sssssinging an amazing ssssong!

*(PANDA PETRIE enters. She's in a white lab coat. She carries test tubes and a large poster folded under her arm. She starts singing softly but as she gets closer, she gets louder.)*