

DUCKS

CHARACTERS

Lacrecia: Audrey

Billy: James

Lisa: Rachel

Magnolia: Cadence

Sissy: Alexa

Urlene: Elishka

Lorna: Kieriana

SCENE: A single bench sits by a pond---center stage.

(LACRECIA enters from stage left, leading Billy by the wrist. LISA follows, and then Magnolia, Urlene, and ????)

LACRECIA: *(Crosses to the far side of the bench and Sits Billy down on the far stage-right end of the bench.)* Now, Billy, you just sit right here where you can see all the ducks real good....

BILLY: Where did the other girls say they were going?

LISA: *(Sits on the bench next to Billy—before LACRECIA can cross back over to sit down.)*

LACRECIA: ...and I'll just sit right here, LISA. *(Cuts LISA a wilting look.)* They said go ahead and they were gonna get a Co-Cola and be right here.

LISA: *(Gets up and moves around behind the bench.)* I guess I'll just stand back here.

LACRECIA: That'll be just fine, LISA. Isn't that fine, Billy?

BILLY: I guess, yeah.

LACRECIA: Oh, very good. Now, Billy, here we are at the duck pond and we want you to tell us all about the ducks!

LISA: Yeah, Billy. Please tell us all about the ducks.

BILLY: Well, OK, but I gotta tell ya—there's a lot to know about ducks.

LACRECIA: *(a la Hermione)* Well, let's see, there's some Mallards over there. And right there's a Wood Duck—they're the purdiest ones, I think—don't you think they're purdy, Billy? And then that one over there isn't a duck; it's a goose. Geeses are different from ducks.

DUCKS

- BILLY: That's right, LACRECIA; geese are different from ducks. Now go on. *(Gestures toward the other ducks.)*
- LACRECIA: *(Looks shocked and disappointed.)* But we just got here.
- BILLY: LACRECIA, I don't mean for you to leave. I mean for you to go on tellin' about the ducks.
- LACRECIA: *(Embarrassed at first, and then happy to be accepted).* Oh. *(Smiling now).* Oh! OK, well there's the Mallards and the Wood Duck and that one's not a duck...
- LISA: *(Vying for attention from Billy.)* It's a goose. Geese are different from ducks.
- LACRECIA: *(Putting LISA in her place.)* We know that, LISA. Now, where was I, Billy? That one over there---that one with the red head—I can't remember what they call that.
- BILLY: It's called a Redhead.
- LACRECIA: Oh.
- LISA: Billy, I know a poem about ducks.
- LACRECIA: I don't think Billy wants to hear a poem about ducks. He was just about to...
- LISA: I'll bet he does want to hear a poem about ducks. Don'cha, Billy? Don'cha wanna hear my poem about ducks?
- BILLY: I've got some time. Sure, let's hear it.
- LISA: *(Sticks her tongue out at LACRECIA, and steps out around the bench—left—to be better seen.)* OK, here it is. It's got two parts, though. So I'll be doing both parts, like it's just me.
- LACRECIA: It IS just you.
- BILLY: Oh, you know the poem, too, LACRECIA?
- LACRECIA: Yeah, I know it purdy good, I guess.
- LISA: No, it's OK, I can do it by my...
- BILLY: Well don't be mean, LACRECIA, help her do the poem.
- LACRECIA: *(Grinning ear to ear at the opportunity.)* Sure, Billy, I'd be happy to help her—especially since **you're** wanting to hear it. *(Sticks her tongue out at LISA when Billy isn't looking.)*
- LISA: OK, here goes. I'll start it. You ready, LACRECIA?
- LACRECIA: I'm ready. You ready, Billy?
- BILLY: Yeah, I'm ready.
- (Enter the other girls, each with a Coke cup.)*
- MAGNOLIA: Hey! Wha'ch'all doin'?

DUCKS

BILLY: Oh, hey. They was just about to say a poim about ducks.

URLENE: OK, let's hear it. You want summa my Co-Cola, Billy? It's got peanuts in it.

BILLY: No, thanks.

URLENE: Suit yourself.

LISA: OK, here's the poim about ducks. (*Looks to LACRECIA*) I'll start it.

LACRECIA: OK, go ahead.

LISA: Mister Ducks

LACRECIA: Mister Not

URLENE: Oh, I love this one!

MAGNOLIA: Me, too, I love this poim!

LISA: OK, now, y'all are interuptin'. Let's start over, LACRECIA.

LACRECIA: OK, you start it.

LISA: OK, here goes. **Mister Ducks**

(The other girls join in the recitation with LISA and LACRECIA. Billy winces when he hears how it's going to go.)

LACRECIA: **Mister Not**

LISA: **OSAR** (*spoken as a single word, "Oh-sahr"*) **CuhMEDuhBuhDuh FEET?**

LACRECIA: **OIC! LIB! Mister Ducks!**

(All the girls giggle with delight---ad lib short lines about how they love that poem.)

LISA: Well, Billy, what did you think?

BILLY: Well, LISA, I've gotta say that's impressive how you all know that just the same way.

(Girls carry on again.)

BILLY: Did you know that that's not the most official way to read that poim?

LISA: Yeah it is; we learned it from a book Magnolia has.

BILLY: Yeah, but it ain't right.

LACRECIA: We got it wrong, Billy?

BILLY: Yeah, LACRECIA, I'm afraid you done got it wrong. There's some deep meanin' in that poim, and you need somebody to unlock it for you.

MAGNOLIA: (*angrily, with her arms crossed*) What do you MEAN we done got it wrong. We learned it right outta the book!

DUCKS

BILLY: But the way sumpn in a book makes sense to ya ain't always the way it made sense to the one who done wrote it. Sometimes you have to decouple from how you see it so's you can see it how they done seen it.

LACRECIA: (to Magnolia) Billy don't mean to sass ya, Magnolia. Just hear him out; he's good at explaining things.

BILLY: OK, y'all sit down and I'll explain it to ya.

(LACRECIA and LISA race to sit by Billy on the bench. LACRECIA wins and LISA sits on the far end.)

LACRECIA: *(To the other girls, gesturing to the ground in front of Billy.)* Y'all just come sit down here and Billy will explain it. *(They all sit down willingly---except Magnolia, who is looking up something on her smart phone.)* OK, Billy. I think we're all ready to listen. Would you please explain how we done got it wrong about Mister Ducks?

BILLY: Well, OK. First thang is that it ain't Mister Ducks.

MAGNOLIA: Yes, it is! It says so right here.

URLENE: Oh, she done pulled it up on her phone.

SISSY: I was gonna say why don't somebody Google it.

MAGNOLIA: I duck duck went it.

LACRECIA: Duck duck went?

MAGNOLIA: Yeah, I don't use Google. So right off, it says Mister Ducks. *(Holds the phone out for all to see.)*

BILLY: Magnolia, now you just hang on right there a second. Tell me, how do it spell mister?

MAGNOLIA: It spells it the right way.

BILLY: And how is that?

MAGNOLIA: It spells it M-R.

BILLY: Is that big M little r all bunched together with a period after it?

MAGNOLIA: No, it's big M big R with a space between and no period.

BILLY: And is that the right way to spell Mister?

MAGNOLIA: Close enough. We know what it means.

BILLY: But that ain't what it means! That's two words right there, and not just one.

MAGNOLIA: Whachoo talkin' 'bout, Willis?

BILLY: It's two words.

MAGNOLIA: No, it's two letters, and they spell Mister.

DUCKS

BILLY: No, it's two words.

MAGNOLIA: No, it's two letters and the first one's M and that don't spell nothin'.

LISA: She's right, Billy, M don't spell nothing.

BILLY: But it does spell somethin', LISA. *(To Magnolia)* Just say it out loud.

LISA: M spells somethin'?

LACRECIA: *(To LISA)*. Shhh. Let him talk.

MAGNOLIA: Em.

BILLY: Slower.

MAGNOLIA: EMMMMM.

BILLY: Uh-huh. And now say the next one.

MAGNOLIA: AR

BILLY: Slower.

MAGNOLIA: ARRRR.

BILLY: Now say 'em together and still slow.

MAGNOLIA: Em Ar

BILLY: There ya go!

MAGNOLIA: There I go what? Them ain't no words. They's nonsense.

BILLY: No, they ain't. Now say 'em again and put the next word with 'em.

MAGNOLIA: Em Ar Ducks

BILLY: Do you get it yet?

(Everybody looks puzzled.)

BILLY: OK, LACRECIA, you gotta help everybody here. You say this first line that Magnolia just said.

LACRECIA: What? Em Ar Ducks?

BILLY: Right. Now you just keep that in your head so you can say it whenever I point to you.

LACRECIA: OK, Billy. This is really fun.

BILLY: And LISA, you be ready to learn this next line when Magnolia reads it offen her phone.

LISA: OK, Billy. I'll be ready.

DUCKS

BILLY: OK, Magnolia—let's just do one more line, and then I think it's gonna make sense to ever-body.

MAGNOLIA: OK, so you're sayin' the first line is supposed to be Em Ar Ducks.

BILLY: Right. So now read the second line.

MAGNOLIA: OK, here goes. Mister Not.

BILLY: *(Face in hand.)* No, Magnolia. Read it like you read the first line.

MAGNOLIA: Do you mean, Em Ar Not?

BILLY: That's it! LISA, did you get that? Em Ar Not.

LISA: Em Ar Not. Is that right, Billy?

BILLY: Yeah, that's right. So let's put it together. First, LACRECIA says, *(gestures to LACRECIA)*.

LACRECIA: *(Looks a little lost.)* Uh, hey Billy?

BILLY: No, this is where ya say that thing I told you to be ready to say when I pointed to ya'.

LACRECIA: OH! THAT! OK, I'm ready. Let's try it again, Billy. Go ahead and point to me! Do 'gin!

BILLY: OK, go. *(Points to LACRECIA.)*

LACRECIA: Em Ar Ducks

BILLY: *(Points to LISA.)*

LISA: Em Ar Not.

BILLY: *(Looks to the group and gets no sign that they understand it yet.)* OK, let's try it again a couple of times. *(Points to LACRECIA)*

LACRECIA: Em Ar Ducks

BILLY: *(Points to LISA)*

LISA: Em Ar Not

BILLY: *(Points to LACRECIA)*

LACRECIA: Em Ar Ducks

BILLY: *(Points to LISA)*

LISA: Em Ar Not

BILLY: *(To the group.)* Y'all getting' it yet? *(They shake their heads, no.)* OK, so y'all just need a little more expression here. LACRECIA, when you...

LACRECIA: *(Interrupting eagerly)* Yes, Billy?

DUCKS

BILLY: When you say Ducks, I want you to say it louder than the other words. And LISA, when you say Not, I want you to say it louder than the other words. Got it?

LURENE: Got it

LISA: Got it.

BILLY: OK, let's go it again.

LACRECIA: This is so fun, Billy!

BILLY: *(Not entirely convincingly)* Yes, it's very fun, LACRECIA. Now here we go. *(Points to LACRECIA)*

LACRECIA: Em Ar **DUCKS**

BILLY: *(Points to LISA)*

LISA: Em Ar **NOT**

BILLY: Again. *(Points to LACRECIA)*

LACRECIA: Em Ar **DUCKS**

BILLY: *(Points to LISA)*

LISA: Em Ar **NOT**

URLENE: It's like they's arguin'.

SISSY: They ain't arguin'.

LORNA: *(Enters stage right—and stands behind the bench.)* Oh, yes they are!

LISA: I wasn't arguin'

LACRECIA: Yeah, we weren't arguin', we was just sayin' what Billy told us to say.

MAGNOLIA: O S A R!

LISA: No, we ain't!

MAGNOLIA: No, that's what it means.

LISA: What what means?

MAGNOLIA: The next line. That's what it means. O S A R.

BILLY: That's right, Magnolia. So let's add you in when I point to you. LACRECIA, we're going to start over. Are you ready to be pointed at?

LACRECIA: Billy, it's a honor to be pointed at by you.

URLENE: Oh, brother!

BILLY: OK, here we go. *(Points to LACRECIA)*

DUCKS

LACRECIA: Em Ar **DUCKS**

BILLY: *(Points to LISA)*

LISA: Em Ar **NOT**

BILLY: *(Points to Magnolia)*

MAGNOLIA: O S A R! *(Pause)*

BILLY: *(To Magnolia)* Well? Ain't you gonna go on?

MAGNOLIA: Uh, you gotta help me out with **CuhMEDuhBuhDuh FEET.**

BILLY: OK, Magnolia. You been read all the letters together all your life like they's words all together. But they ain't. They's words separate like. So say 'em one at a time like they's each one a word of its own.

MAGNOLIA: OK, let's see. The first letter is C, so you say to say it like that's a word all by itself?

BILLY: Right.

MAGNOLIA: OK, then. Well, I guess the first word, then, is See.

BILLY: Right.

MAGNOLIA: And the second word looks like it would be M, but that ain't a word, is it, Billy?

BILLY: Well, it ain't a proper word, but we use it all the time.

MAGNOLIA: See Em. See Em. See Em. I don't get it, Billy.

BILLY: It might help you if you keep going to them next four letters.

MAGNOLIA: *(studying the text)* Uh, do you mean E-D-B-D?

BILLY: Yes, what does that sound like?

MAGNOLIA: I'm not sure.

BILLY: Well, add the feet part onto it.

MAGNOLIA: E-D-B-D Feet? I don't get it.

BILLY: Well, let's work it out like this. Suppose I were to ask you if ducks have huge feet, and you said, "No, Billy, ducks have" *(gestures to her that it's her turn)*

LISA: Wait, Billy! I know a joke. Do you know why ducks have webbed feet?

BILLY: Well, Lisa, I do happen to know why ducks....

LISA: No, Billy---just say No. Please?

BILLY: OK, Lisa. No. Why do ducks have webbed feet?

LISA: It's for stamping out forest fires.

DUCKS

BILLY: That ain't funny.

LISA: Maybe not, but do you know why elephants have big round flat feet?

BILLY: No.

LISA: For stamping out burning ducks!

BILLY: (raffs) Now, THAT'S funny, Lisa!

LACRECIA: It ain't the right time for that, Lisa. Magnolia was just figuring out the part about the feet.

MAGNOLIA: Yeah. So what was you saying, Billy?

BILLY: Oh, yeah. Uh, Oh, yeah. I was asking you, suppose I were to ask you if ducks have huge feet, and you said, "No, Billy, ducks have..." (gestures to her that it's her turn)

MAGNOLIA: Wait, am I supposed to say something here?

BILLY: Yes, Magnolia. This is where you say the part you was just practicin'.

MAGNOLIA: Oh, sorry. I was sayin' E-D-B-D feet.

BILLY: So you answer me, "No, Billy, ducks have"

MAGNOLA: E-D-B-D feet? (still not quite getting it)

LISA: Itty bitty feet!

LACRECIA: What did you say?

LISA: Itty bitty feet!

MAGNOLIA: What? Ducks have itty bitty feet?

BILLY: Yes! That's it!

ALL GIRLS: Itty bitty feet!

URLENE: Let's say it all from the beginnin'!

SISSY: Yeah, let's do it altogether.

LISA: OK, let's do it.

ALL: Em Are Ducks
Em Are Not!
Oh 'es 'ey are! See 'em itty bitty feet?
'ell I be! Em ARE DUCKS!

(all giggle and celebrate)

LISA: We did it, Billy! And we couldna done it without you, Billy.

DUCKS

LACRECIA: Yeah, Billy, we couldna done it without you. How'd you get so smart, Billy?

BILLY: Well, it ain't nothing, really. I just spent my life paying careful attention to details. Speakin' uh which, (looking at his watch) I got ta go.

ALL GIRLS: *ad lib*—Oh, please don't go, Billy!

BILLY: I'm sorry, but it's almost time for Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom.

LISA: Oh, I used to watch that at Granny's house!

BILLY: Yeah, I like where Marlin Perkins says stuff like, "And now we'll watch as Jim single-handedly wrestles the 29-foot anaconda into the croker sack."

RACHEL: Maybe you'll come back tomorrow, Billy, and tell us more about the ducks?

ALL GIRLS: *ad lib*—agreeing with the question, and hanging on Billy's reply.

BILLY: Well, let's see. (*thinks*)

ALL GIRLS: (in rapt anticipation of his reply)

BILLY: OK, I can come back tomorrow.

ALL GIRLS: (celebration)

BILLY: Alright, see y'all about 2 o'clock. (*exits*)

ALL GIRLS: (*sighing with delight*)

LISA: I'm the one that got him to say he'd come back.

MAGNOLIA: I'M the one that solved the puzzle.

LACRECIA: Y'all couldna done any of this without my help!

URLENE: L I B!

ALL: Em Are Ducks!

(*Lights to black.*)