

FLUTTER

By Erin E. Moulton

A Reader's Theater

Props:

Top Hat for Dawn
Catamount claw hat or other fur cap for Maple
Oars
Tape to outline edges of canoe on the floor
Back pack
Book
Stick

Narrator: At this point in the story, Maple and Dawn Rittle have departed their sweet little home on the mountain to go in search of a miracle water to save their baby sister. They have procured a boat for the first leg of their journey. The early morning air of October has a chill to it and the water, which is flying into their canoe, feels colder than cold.

Dawn: Just one more big one. Hang on!

Dawn and Maple: *Woahhhhh! (M and D sway from side to side as the canoe jostles over the waves and then lands)*

Maple: I don't ever remember their being waves like this in the river. At least there not as bad when Papa brings us canoeing.

Dawn: That's because Papa knows how to stee—

Mr. Tooley: My God! Girls! What are you doing?

Dawn: *(Looking at Maple)* It's Mr. Tooley. Just act normal. *(Waving to Mr. Tooley)* Hello, Mr. Tooley!

Maple: It's a wonderful day for a boat ride, isn't it Mr. Tooley? I am sure you would agree and I'm sure my father will agree when we meet him just two miles down at the park. He said he would meet us there you know!

Mr. Tooley: *(Inching his way closer to the bank)* Hang on kids, I'll get you. Don't worry. *(Reaches down and picks up a branch)* If I can just hook you with this branch.

Maple: We'd better paddle.

(Girls pick up their paddles.)

Mr. Tooley: Wait kids, back paddle! Grab the branch

Maple: Faster!

(They paddle fiercely)

Mr. Tooley: Gotchy—Uh, Oooph. *(Mr. Tooley falls back)*

Dawn: We did it!

Maple: yes!

(Maple and Dawn slap five)

Mr. Tooley: Girls, wait! What are you doing? You have to stop! You have to get out here!

Dawn: Just stay focused. Keep going!

Mr. Tooley: No! You're headed straight for the Devil's Washbowl!"

Maple and Dawn look at each other, wide eyed.

Maple: The what?

Mr. Tooley: Do you hear me?! You're headed straight for the Devil's Washbowl! Please, listen to me, please! Harriet! Call the park ranger! The Rittle's are going down river!

(Mr. Tooley backs up and exits.)

Narrator: The girls watch in awe as they sail down river. Sheer rocks loom up around them on either side, casting dark shadows onto them.

Maple: Dawn?

Dawn: Yeah?

Maple: What was Mr. Tooley talking about? What's the Devil's Washbowl?

Dawn: I was going to ask you the same thing. It sounds familiar doesn't it?

Maple: It does sound familiar. But we've never been past the Tooley's before. I can't quite picture it.

Dawn: Maybe. Maybe it'll be in the book *(she unzips the backpack and pulls out a book. Flips it open and scans the index, then finds the page.)* Oh god.

Maple: What? What is it??

Dawn: *(reading)* The Devil's Washbowl can be found running through Peninsula State Park. It is revered by many adventurous kayakers and canoers of the highest caliber. But beware the expert and beginner alike, after a good rainfall it can sweep up into a whirlwind of rapids. *(she looks up eyes wide.)* It is unpredictable to say the least. The name, the Devil's Washbowl was given by Herman P. Quincy, a man who used to challenge the rapid every day in order to visit friends down the river. "I never met a stronger or more unpredictable rapid," said Quincy. The rocks appear out of it like Satan's fingers, trying to snatch you up and throw you over. That's why I call it the Devil's Washbowl."

Maple: You mean to say that we are headed for a heavy rapid?

Dawn: That is what I mean to say. *(Dawn pulls out a map)* We're here."

(Maple leans in)

Dawn: And the Devil's Washbowl is....here."

They both stare wide eyed

Maple: So, So, say, say, the Devil's Washbowl is coming up on us in a couple miles or so. Say these rock walls run a couple miles or so. Say they are all steep and sheer like the ones around us? How, how can we possibly a-avoid it?

Dawn: I don't know...I don't know if we can....

Maple: I don't know if we can?

Dawn shakes her head and they grip the sides of the boat.

Maple: But, then....what are we going to do?

Dawn: Um. I don't-- Just hang on tight. I guess. *(She grips the sides of the canoe)* Just hang on, Maple.

Narrator: Dead autumn leaves swirl in the air around them as the girls pick up speed. Clouds roll in overhead and the shadows become darker and the sky lets out a low groan. They're headed for a rapid. And it's going to storm.

Maple: Just hang on.

End Scene