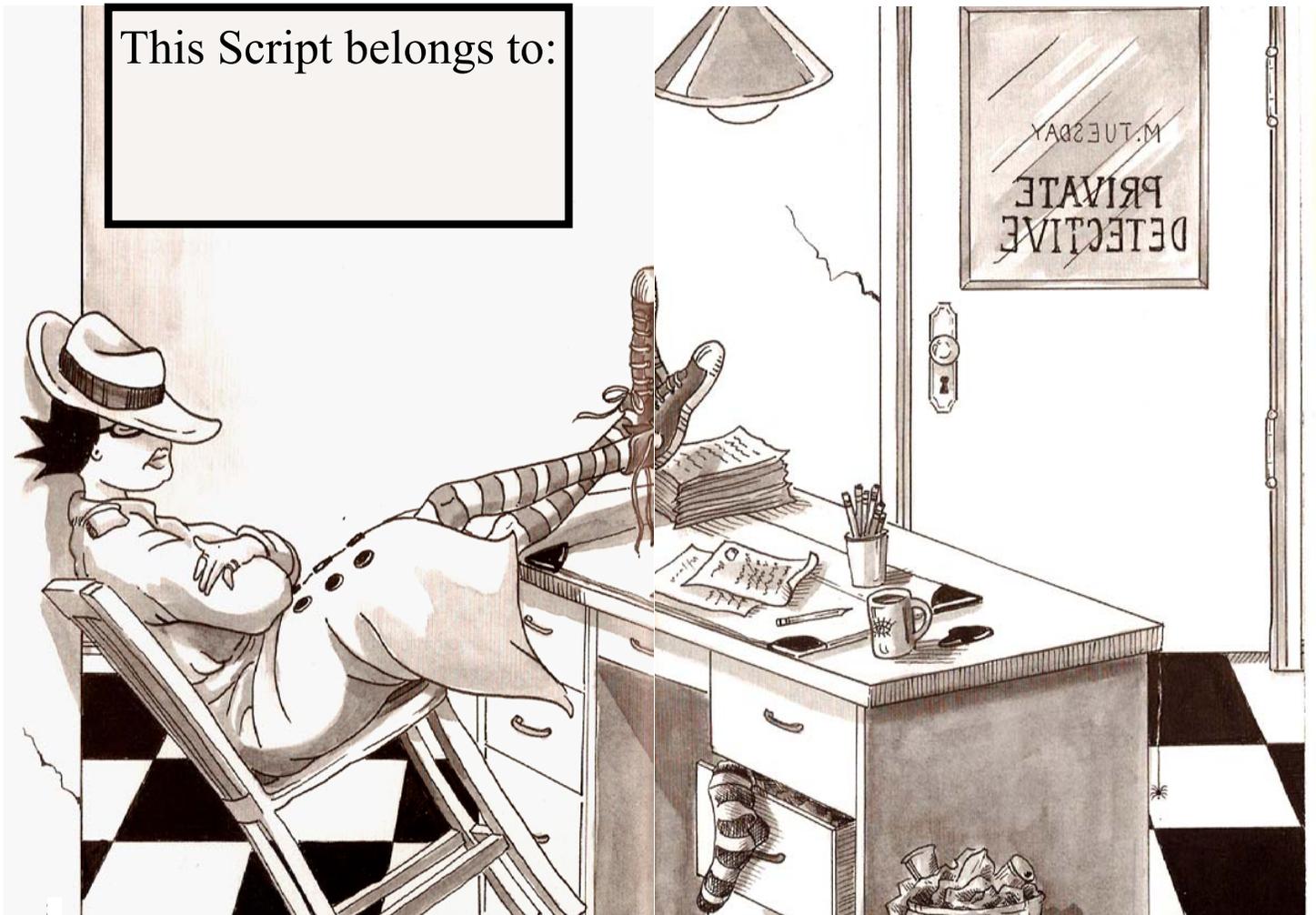


The Murky Water Caper:

A Mystery of Water Pollution

This Script belongs to:



The Murky Water Caper is written by Deborah Rodney Pex and published by the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators. Phone: (202) 898-0905. www.asiwpca.org And by America's Clean Water Foundation. Phone: (202) 898-0908. www.acwf.org

The story has been re-formatted into this play by Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, 1328 Dublin Rd., Suite 101, Columbus, Ohio 43215. (614) 486-9613. www.franklinswcd.org. Changes have been made by the East Dakota Water Development District, 132B Airport Drive, Brookings, SD 57006, www.eastdakota.org to make it more applicable to South Dakota.

The cover illustration and the transparencies used for scenes are from the book and the illustrations are by Diana Rice Bonin.

Murky Water Caper Roles:

	Character	Gender	#of Lines
1	Narrator 1	Male or Female	22
2	Narrator 2	Male or Female	24
3	Narrator 3	Male or Female	22
4	Narrator 4	Male or Female	22
5	Detective Tuesday	Female	39
6	Billy Beaver	Male	9
7	Molly Duck	Female	12
8	Troy Trout	Male	10
9	Buster Bass	Male	10
10	Sally Sunfish	Female	11
11	Pete Perch	Male	9
12	Wendy Walleye	Female	8
13	Reggie Rat	Male	17

Suggested Props:

Fedora Hat
 Watch
 Box of Tissues
 Notepad & Pen
 Snorkel, Mask & Flippers
 Bag of Trash (plastic bags, crumpled paper, empty cans)
 Large Shell

SD Educational Standards: Language Arts: 4.L.1.1, 4.L.2.1, 4.S.2.2

Scene 1: The Office of Detective Michelle Tuesday

Narrator 1

The story she is about to tell isn't pretty. It's about pollution. And pollution is a dirty racket. Meet Detective Michelle Tuesday.

Narrator 2

It was Wednesday at 10:21 a.m. She had just wrapped up another tough case, put her feet up on the desk and was getting ready for a nap.

Narrator 3

As she shut her eyes, Billy Beaver burst through the door!

Scene 2: Billy Beaver and Desk

Narrator 4

He was upset. Detective Tuesday could tell because he chewed the corner off her wooden desk.

Billy Beaver

Detective, we beavers need your help. The water in our stream is getting more and more polluted!

Detective Tuesday

Why don't you take some weight off your tail and have a seat. Now, tell me all about it.

Billy Beaver

Last year, things weren't so bad. All of us beavers were minding our own business, building our houses, raising our children. Then we began to notice plastic, paper, pop cans and all kinds of nasty trash floating in our stream – which is our home. I brought some of it with me.

Narrator 1

He dumped the bag on the desk.

Detective Tuesday

That's a lot of trash. Do you have any idea who's dumping it?

Billy Beaver

Don't have a clue. And it's not just the litter; the stream is also getting muddier and muddier. If you don't help us, nobody can.

Narrator 3

The detective had to admit that she had connections. She seemed to get a lot of animal cases because she could talk their language. She didn't mean to brag, but she could also talk to the big shots and walk through the mud without getting dirty.

Detective Tuesday

I'll take this garbage down to the lab and check it for finger prints. I'll get back to you when I know something.

Narrator 3

Billy turned to leave, detective Tuesday stopped him.

Detective Tuesday

We'll find out who's doing this.

Narrator 4

As he left, the detective looked at her watch. It was 10:42. She didn't know a lot about the stream where Billy lived, but she was going to know a lot more before the day was over. She had just picked up her hat when the door burst open again.

Scene 3: Molly Duck

Narrator 1

This time, it was a duck named Molly.

Molly Duck

I read on the door that this is the office of Michelle Tuesday, Private Eye. I suppose that is you.

Detective Tuesday

You supposed right.

Molly Duck

I need your help. Down at the lake, we have a problem. Oil is getting into the water, and it's making a mess of my feathers.

Narrator 1

The detective asked her how long it had been going on.

Molly Duck

For a long time. I hate to quack, but it's getting worse. I'm lucky. Some of my friends can't even fly.

Narrator 3

She started to cry. The detective handed her a tissue, and she honked into it.

Detective Tuesday

Have you seen anything suspicious?

Molly Duck

There's a big pipe from a storm drain that sometimes dumps stuff into the water. There ought to be a law against it.

Detective Tuesday

There is. But if nobody notices, nobody reports it. And if nobody reports it, the authorities can't find those who are dumping oil and other waste down the storm drains.

Molly Duck

Doesn't anybody care what's happening to the water?

Narrator 4

She asked, getting her feathers all riled up.

Molly Duck

I'm beginning to feel like a lame duck.

Detective Tuesday

You've got a problem all right. But don't go off the deep end.

Molly Duck

So you'll help us, detective? For the birds?

Detective Tuesday

It sounds like a tough case. But I can quack it. I'll be in touch, so don't try to duck out on me. And Molly, when you live in a murky lake, sometimes you've got to make a big splash.

Narrator 1

With dry eyes, she waddled out the door.

Narrator 2

Detective Tuesday looked at her watch again and did some simple math. In 41 minutes, she had two cases involving water. Something was up, and she wanted to know what it was. For the second time, she picked up her hat.

Narrator 3

And the door opened again.

Scene 4: Troy Trout

Narrator 4

Standing there was the saddest-looking fish she had ever seen. Even the snapper she'd been served at the Red Spot Grill had looked happier.

Troy Trout

You Ms. Tuesday?

Detective Tuesday

That's right, and who are you?

Troy Trout

I'm Troy Trout, and I'm worried.

Narrator 1

The Detective had definitely noticed.

Troy Trout

The water in my stream is drying up, and the trees along the bank have been cut down. The trees used to shade the water and keep it cool. But now, the

water's getting warmer. And without the trees and other plants to hold it in place, the soil is being washed into the stream.

Detective Tuesday

Sounds like you're in hot water.

Troy Trout

Nobody thinks a fish is very important, but when we get together, we're gonna make some waves, Detective.

Detective Tuesday

This isn't a fish story, is it?

Troy Trout

We need your help, or soon we'll be all washed up.

Detective Tuesday

All right. I'll help you. There's obviously something fishy about this.

Narrator 2

Detective Tuesday knew as she watched him leave, that she needed to find some facts, and she needed to find them fast. She cancelled her nap and grabbed her scuba gear.

Narrator 3

The detective needed to pay a visit to some friends of hers.

Scene 5: The WaterWorks Club

Narrator 4

The school of fish at the WaterWorks Club was practicing when Detective Tuesday got there.

Narrator 1

Buster Bass was on drums, Wendy Walleye was on bass and Pete Perch was playing a mean piano. The lovely Sally Sunfish was at the microphone.

Narrator 2

When they took a break, the detective asked the musicians to tell her everything they knew about water.

Scene 6: a table at the club

Buster Bass

The Earth's water is found in lakes, rivers, streams and oceans. There's water underground, too. It's called "groundwater."

Sally Sunfish

Can you believe, with all the water on Earth, less than 1% of it is fresh drinking water?

Detective Tuesday

Why?

Sally Sunfish

Most of it is in the ocean and too salty to drink. Also, there's a lot of water in the ice caps, but it's frozen.

Narrator 3

The most surprising fact was the one that Pete added.

Pete Perch

The amount of water on the planet is the same as it always has been – and always will be.

Detective Tuesday

You mean, I drink the same water that the dinosaurs drank?

Sally Sunfish

That's right. The same water just gets recycled over and over again.

Buster Bass

So what kind of case you got this time?

Narrator 4

Detective Tuesday said she had a visit from some very scared characters. And if they didn't get some help soon, they'd be dead in the water.

Narrator 1

They all leaned in closer as she told them that Billy Beaver was finding all kinds of litter and dirt in the water where he lives. And that Molly Duck was getting sticky oil on her feathers.

Sally Sunfish

I read somewhere that if a quart of motor oil gets spilled on calm water, it can spread out and cover an area the size of a football field.

Buster Bass

It's really tough to clean water once it has oil on it. Your case is turning into one big enchilada.

Detective Tuesday

Don't get cheesy, just give me the facts.

Narrator 2

The detective laughed and kept on laughing. Then she realized no one else was.

Wendy Walleye

When the water's messed up, we're all in trouble.

Narrator 3

Then Detective Tuesday told them how Troy Trout's stream was drying up, and that the trees along the bank had been cut down, so the water was getting too warm and muddy.

Narrator 4

They all knew Troy and when they heard about the case they all wanted in on it. They agreed to check out the river along the waterfront and the creek that runs through the park.

Detective Tuesday

Be careful. This is dirty business. Don't get hooked.

Scene 7: The Lab Report

Narrator 1

On her way back to the office, Detective Tuesday checked on the lab report. Billy's garbage was fairly ordinary. It was the kind of trash we all throw away. There were so many sticky fingerprints, it was impossible to tell whose they were. The case was getting more interesting every minute.

Narrator 2

Then she remembered a shady character she had to talk to. She pulled Reggie Rat into her office. He had some information and she wanted it.

Scene 8: Reggie Rat

Reggie Rat

You can't pin anything on me.

Detective Tuesday

Look, you know something about how our water is getting polluted. Suppose you tell me about it.

Reggie Rat

I got nothing to say.

Detective Tuesday

Where do you live?

Reggie Rat

Same place I lived last week.

Detective Tuesday

So tell me where you lived last week.

Reggie Rat

Down by the drainpipe on Water Street next to the river. And that's all I'm telling you.

Detective Tuesday

Look, we have a serious problem with the water, and I think you have some information that could blow this case wide open.

Narrator 1

His eyes shifted back and forth, and the detective knew it was true.

Reggie Rat

I ain't blowing the whistle.

Narrator 4

The detective was getting a little steamed.

Detective Tuesday

I'm getting ready to blow a fuse, so talk! Now!

Narrator 3

She took a breath and, in a much nicer voice, said:

Detective Tuesday

You must have noticed that there's all kinds of garbage and mud in the water.

Reggie Rat

As much as I love garbage, I have to say it's getting real bad.

Detective Tuesday

Then, you'll talk?

Reggie Rat

What's in it for me?

Narrator 4

The detective told him maybe he could help make sure there'd be enough clean water around for his grandkids.

Reggie Rat

Okay, okay. I'll talk. I see folks dumping used motor oil down the storm drains where the rain water goes.

Detective Tuesday

What did the people look like who were dumping the motor oil?

Reggie Rat

Just like regular folks. They change the oil in their cars and just dump it. They do the same thing with their left-over paint sometimes. And kids throw their trash. I don't even think they know what they're doing.

Narrator 1

He could have blown the detective over with a feather.

Detective Tuesday

You mean it's just regular people who are polluting our water and they don't even know it?

Scene 9: Buster Bass and Sally Sunfish at the waterfront

Narrator 2

Meanwhile, Buster Bass and Sally Sunfish swam over to the waterfront to check out the pipes dumping stuff into the water. On the way, they dodged plastic pop rings and a bottle of anti-bacterial soap. When they looked at the label, they couldn't even pronounce the active ingredient in it.

Sally Sunfish

People use this soap to stay healthy. They don't realize that same ingredient shows up in our lakes and streams, even after the sewage has been treated at the wastewater treatment plant.

Buster Bass

The plant cleans almost everything from the wastewater, but technology can't keep up with what people are putting down the drains. It's not funny that some of the things people clean with are making the water dirty.

Sally Sunfish

And look at what is coming out of those storm drain pipes!

Buster Bass

Litter, leaves, oil and what smells like paint thinner. More than just rain,

Scene 10: Wendy Walleye and Pete Perch in a Neighborhood Stream

that's for sure!

Narrator 3

Down at the neighborhood stream, Wendy and Pete were uncovering some clues, too. Somebody had forgotten to scoop up their pet's waste.

Wendy Walleye

When it rains, this stuff can get into the water. That's nasty. Who would want to swim then?

Pete Perch

And look, where kids ride their bikes, the stream bank is wearing away. When dirt gets in the water, it makes it murky, and we can't see our food or lay our eggs.

Wendy Walleye

Did you know that soil is one of the biggest causes of pollution in South Dakota's rivers and streams?

Pete Perch

That's right. It is such a big problem because soil erosion is happening in so many different places.

Narrator 4

Wendy took her shell phone out.

Wendy Walleye

Let's get this information to the Detective.

Narrator 1

Back at the detective's office, the phone rang. Wendy Walleye was hot under the collar. Or she would have been, if she'd had a collar.

Wendy Walleye

Detective Tuesday, pet waste and eroded soil are getting into the water, but we couldn't tell who was doing it.

Narrator 2

Then Pete got on the line.

Pete Perch

I saw people having a picnic and dumping their garbage in the stream. But I didn't get a good look at their faces.

Narrator 3

Then Buster called.

Buster Bass

Detective Tuesday, stuff is getting into the water from storm drain pipes along the waterfront.

Narrator 4

He didn't paint a pretty picture.

Narrator 1

Just as she hung up, the door opened, and Billy, Molly and Troy walked in.

Scene 11: Billy, Molly and Troy in Detective Tuesday's Office

Narrator 2

And they wanted answers.

Narrator 3

Relief flooded over her like a cool wave of water. It was simple. Like barbecuing a chunk of ice. We were all making a mess of the water, and we could all clean it up.

Detective Tuesday

All of us are polluting the water with garbage, oil, soil and chemicals. And we're cutting down trees, too, without even thinking about how it affects our waterways.

Narrator 4

Reggie smiled for the first time, and he wasn't a bad looking rat.

Reggie Rat

Even us rats need a break. It's up to all of us to stop pollution.

Scene 12: Reggie and Detective Tuesday

Narrator 1

Then Reggie offered his hand to the detective.

Reggie Rat

I think we solved the case. Do you need a partner, Ms. Tuesday? I'd make a pretty mean detective.

Narrator 2

As the detective shook his hand, she knew Reggie was right. She needed a partner – a whole lot of partners. She needed everybody to be Drip Detectives because every drop of water is important.

Narrator 3

It was as clear as a tall drink of water on a hot day. When everybody takes care of water, we can make a big wave!

Scene 13: Billy, Molly, Troy and Reggie

Billy Beaver

Keep garbage out of the water. Make sure it stays clean and clear!

Molly Duck

Protect the water. Don't let anything go down the storm drain but the rain.

Troy Trout

Volunteer! Plant some trees along a stream bank.

Reggie Rat

Tell your friends to help out, too.