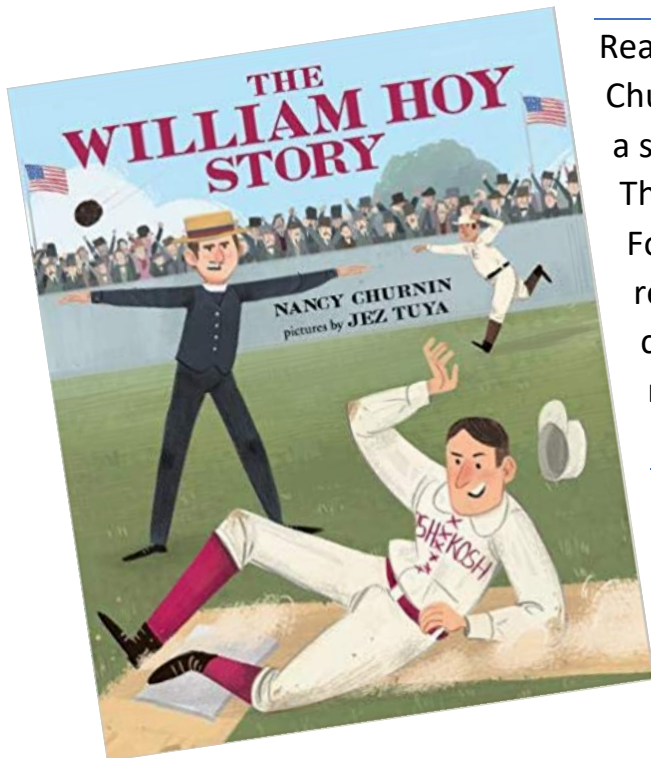


# The William Hoy Story

Readers Theater

by Marcie Colleen



Read aloud *The William Hoy Story* by Nancy Churnin, illustrated by Jez Tuya. Then, hand out a set of photocopied scripts to twelve children. The remaining children will be the audience. For the first run-through, children will simply read their role aloud. Once all readers are comfortable with their parts, a second reading can include props and costumes, if desired.

## Roles:

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

William

Mother

Father

Player 1

Player 2

Player 3

Player 4

This script was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU.

Marcie can often be found writing books of her own in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

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Narrator 1: William scooped dust to dry the sweat off his slick rubber ball.

Narrator 2: He stared at the small X he'd chalked on the barn wall.

William: He closed his eyes.

Narrator 1: He opened them and threw.

Narrator 1, 2, & William: Bam!

Narrator 1: He hit the mark.

Narrator 2: He stepped back

William: so he could try again.

Mother: His mother waved her arms.

Narrator 1 & 2: She was applauding him.

Mother: She touched her fingers to her mouth to signal eating.

William: He read her lips as she said

Mother &

William: "Dinner."

Narrator 1: William pulled out his pad and pencil.

Narrator 2: He scribbled:

Narrator 2 & William: "Just a few more?"

All: "I want to be perfect for tryouts."

Mother: His mother nodded.

Narrator 1 & 2: His family was passing the mashed potatoes around the table

William: when William pushed open the door.

Father: He read his father's lips telling him to wash up for dinner.

William: He also read what his father's lips mouthed to his mother.

Father: "Baseball. It will never last."

Narrator 1: Still, William couldn't wait to try out at his school

William: the Ohio State School for the Deaf.

Narrator 2: At tryouts, he threw the ball.

Narrator 1: He caught it.

Narrator 2: He batted.

William: He waited.

Player 1: Too small.

Narrator 1: William never got much taller than five-foot-five.

Narrator 2: He couldn't do anything about that.

William: But maybe they'd give him another chance

Player 2: if he aimed better

William: and ran faster.

All: So every day, after homework and chores

William: he practiced.

Narrator 1: One day William was standing outside the cobbler shop where he fixed shoes

William: wistfully watching men play baseball in a far-off field.

Player 1: A foul ball crashed by his feet.

Player 2: With his

All: strong, sure arm

William: he threw the ball

Player 2: straight into an amazed player's waiting hand.

Player 1: Hey kid!

Players 1 & 2: Want to join us?

Narrator 2: But William couldn't read the player's lips from where he was.

William: So he turned back to work.

Player 1: The man ran to William and tapped his back to get his attention.

William: William whirled around

All: and this time

Player 1: when the man repeated the question

William: he understood.

All: He scrambled happily to the outfield.

Player 3: William threw the ball smack into his teammates' hands.

Player 4: When he was up to bat, he sent it soaring where no one could catch it.

Player 2: "What's your name?"

All: *William Hoy.*

William: William wrote.

Player 1: The man looked at the piece of paper a long time.

Player 2: He seemed to be thinking.

Player 3: "Do you want to try out for our team?"

William: William grinned. He sure did!

Narrator 1: William soon learned life in the hearing world wasn't easy.

Mother & Father: Unlike his parents, few people used sign language in the 1880s

Player 1, 2, 3, 4: and certainly not in baseball.

Narrator 2: He won a spot on the first team he tried out for

Player 1: But the manager smirked when he offered William

All: less money than he paid the others.

William: "I quit," William told him with his notebook.

Player 2: He quickly found another team.

Player 3: But even on his new team

Player 4: some players talked behind his back

Player 1: so he wouldn't know what they were saying.

Player 2: Others hid their mouths

William: so he couldn't read their lips.

All: One day

Narrator 1: a pitcher played the meanest trick of them all.

William: William let three pitches go by because he thought they were balls.

Mother: He was too far to read the umpire's lips

William: and didn't know they were actually strikes.

Narrator 2: He stood gripping his bat,

Narrator 1 & 2: waiting for the next pitch.

Narrator 1: But the next pitch never came.

William: William was confused.

Player 1: Suddenly the pitcher burst out laughing.

All: He pointed to the fans in the stands laughing too.

William: William's face grew  
All: hot.  
William: He walked off  
All: quickly.  
William: He wasn't going to  
All: cry.  
William: Not about baseball, he told himself.  
Narrator 1: He jammed his hands in his pockets.  
Narrator 2: Paper crunched against his fist.  
Narrator 1: He pulled out a letter from his mother.  
Mother: He read again how much she missed him.  
William: William missed his family, too.  
Mother: He remembered how his mom would raise her arms to  
applaud him.  
All: *That's it!*  
Narrator 1: William pulled out his pad and drew pictures.  
Narrator 2: He scribbled words next to the pictures.  
William: He wrote  
Narrator 1, 2, & Mother: He wrote  
All: He WROTE!  
William: He ran to find the umpire.  
Player 1: The umpire read William's notes.  
Player 2: "yes, that could work," he said.  
Player 3: The next time William was at bat  
Player 4: the umpire raised his right hand for a strike

Player 1: and his left for a ball.

Player 2: He used American Sign Language symbols for safe and out.

Player 3: This time William got on base.

Player 4: He stole bases.

All: He scored!

Narrator 1: In his first year in the majors

Narrator 2: he led the National League in stolen bases.

Narrator 1: With his strong, sure arm

Narrator 2: he became the first player to throw out three base runners

Narrator 1: out at the plate in one game—

Narrator 1 & 2: from the outfield!

William: William taught his teammates signs so they could discuss plays without the other team hearing.

Players 1, 2, 3, 4: They loved it!

Narrator 1: The fans enjoyed learning signs too.

Narrator 2: In those days, before speakers and giant screens, hearing the umpire’s calls from the back of the bleachers was hard to do!

Narrator 1: Now, even the farthest member of the crowd could see the signals.

Player 1, 2, 3, 4: Teams begged for William.

Player 1: He played for several before signing with the

All: Cincinnati Reds

Mother & Father: near his family’s farm.

William: William was proud to show his parents  
Mother & Father: that the boy who didn't make the school team  
Players 1, 2, 3, 4: was one of the most popular players in baseball.  
Narrator 1: When William stepped up to the plate  
William: shaking his bat over his shoulder,  
Narrator 2: fans knew he'd hit or walk his way to first  
Narrator 1: then swiftly steal his way around the bases.  
William: Carefully watching the signals  
Player 1: he led the American League in walks in 1901.  
William: He was called  
All: the king of center field  
William: because for ten years  
Player 2: he was ranked among the top five outfielders  
Player 3: to get hitters out by catching hard-to-reach fly balls.  
Player 4: After William became a star, he thought nothing could  
surprise him.  
All: Then, one day,  
Narrator 1: when he ran out onto the field  
Narrator 2: fans waved their arms from the stands  
William & Mother: just as his mother did when he was a boy.  
All: They waved hats, too.  
William: William said he'd never cry about baseball.  
Mother: But he did cry at the sight of the deaf applause.  
William: All he wanted to do since he was a boy was find a way to  
play his favorite game.



Players 1, 2, 3, 4:

He never dreamed he'd change how the game was played.

Narrator 1:

But he did

All:

and we still cheer him today.