

FLUENCY-BUILDING READER'S THEATER FOR GRADES 4-8

Penelope Ann Poe's
AMAZING The
Cell Phone: The

Tall-Tale
Heart



Aligns to
Common
Core

A Modernized
Version of Poe's
Classic Short Story

BY SCHOLASTIC & STORYWORKS PLAYWRIGHT MACKOWIECKI LEWIS

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Penelope Ann Poe's Amazing Cell Phone

An original classroom play by Mack Lewis ♠ www.mackowiecki.com

Based on Edgar Allan Poe's Tell-Tale Heart

Cast of Characters:

Cali (*our heroine!*)
Penelope (*a talkative sixth grader*)
Ms. Edgar (*a teacher*)
Principal Allan
Tommy Tubsworth (*another student*)
Narrator #1 & Narrator #2
The Ring Tone (*bbrrring, bbrrring!*)

SCENE ONE (and only!)

CALI (*while opening the curtains*): I'm not a thief! Really I'm not. Why would I steal from my best friend?

NARRATOR 1: The tale begins with Penelope Ann Poe. She's what you call, "plugged-in."

NARRATOR 2: She's got all the latest techno-gadgets.

CALI: They sometimes get in the way of our friendship. . . . Hey Penelope, can you help me with problem number nine? . . . Penelope? . . . **PENELOPE!**

PENELOPE: Sorry, Cali. I was listening to Miley Cyrus. She's the best!

CALI: I kinda thought so. I can always tell when you're plugged in 'cause you're so tuned out.

PENELOPE: What did you say?

NARRATOR 1: Even Ms. Edgar had a hard time getting Penelope Ann to stop.

MS. EDGAR: Penelope Ann, put away that iPod and get back to conjugating those verbs!

PENELOPE: Yes, Ma'am. Hey Cali, check out this *YouTube* video I just downloaded. It's hilarious.

CALI: Didn't you hear what Mrs. Edgar said? You're gonna get us in trouble!

PENELOPE: Come on, Cali. Have a little fun once in awhile. This is wicked cool!

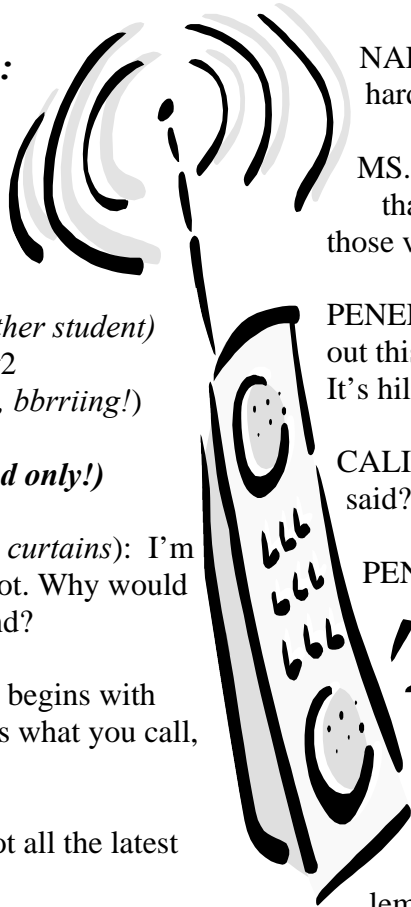
CALI: All you ever do is listen to music and talk on the phone! Hello! There's more to life than that! What about your friends? What about your grades? What about problem number nine?

PENELOPE: Oh! Speaking of phones, you should see my new Ruby Red. It's like so awesome.

NARRATOR 2: That's right. If it wasn't her iPod, it was her cell phone.

PENELOPE: Here, let me text you . . . *A-N-S-W-R-2-#9 = LAME! LOL (smiley face) ☺*.

CALI: That's not funny, Penelope. Aren't you listening to anything I'm saying?





PENELOPE: This phone is sick. Check out the ring tone. It sounds just like a beating heart!

RING TONE: *Thump, thump. Thump, thump.*

PENELOPE: Or how 'bout this one . . .

RING TONE: *Bbriing, bbriing.*

PENELOPE: It's an old-fashioned phone!

CALI: Penelope, all you do is talk and text, text and talk. Talk, text, text, talk! It's getting a bit annoying!

PENELOPE: Just a sec, Cali, I think I'm getting a call!

NARRATOR 1: That's when something snapped in Cali's brain. Penelope Ann's perplexing passion for electronic gab, the unceasing chatter, the endless buzzing and ringing and beeping . . .

. . . iT dRovE Cali bONkeRs!

RING TONE: *Bbriing, bbriing.*

NARRATOR 2: Oh that cell phone!

CALI: Ugghhhhhhhh! I just had to do something about Penelope Ann Poe's Annoying Cell Phone!

NARRATOR 1: That's when she started scheming.

CALI: I decided I would sneak into the class at recess and hide that metallic crimson Ruby Red cell phone with its amazing array of ring tones! Not steal it, mind you! I would hide it where it wouldn't bother us anymore!

NARRATOR 2: Every day for seven days she crept into the room and searched Penelope Ann's backpack.

CALI: But everyday the phone wasn't there. No doubt Penelope Ann was yapping away with it somewhere on the playground.

NARRATOR 1: On the eighth day she again crept into the room.

NARRATOR 2: She was unzipping the pack when . . .

RING TONE: *BBRIING, BBRIING. . . BBRIING, BBRIING. . . **BBRIING, BBRIING. . .***

CALI: There was the phone! And it was ringing! And it made me **FURIOUS** to hear that perturbing ring tone once more!

RING TONE: *BBRIING, BBRIING. . . BBRIING, BBRIING. . . **BBRIING, BBRIING. . .***

NARRATOR 1: LOUDER and **LOUDER!**

RING TONE: *BBRIING, BBRIING. . . BBRIING, BBRIING. . . **BBRIING, BBRIING. . .***

CALI: I could stand it no longer! I grabbed it. **Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!**

NARRATOR 2: **Ahhhhhhhh!**

NARRATOR 1: **Ahhhhhhhh!**

CALI: And I *SMaShed* it on the desk!

RING TONE: **Bbriing** Phhhpt.





(silence)

NARRATOR 2: It was over.

NARRATOR 1: Penelope Ann's Amazing Cell Phone was silent.

CALI: THAT HIDEOUS RING-TONE would trouble me no more.

(silence)

NARRATOR 2: The next morning Penelope Ann was in tears.

NARRATOR 1: Her face was red and her eyes were blood-shot.

CALI: She'd been crying all night.

NARRATOR 2: Ms. Edgar called for Principal Allan

NARRATOR 1: He came right away.

PENELOPE (*between sobs*): Someone stole my amazing, metallic crimson Ruby Red cell phone with the swiveling touchpad and the voice activated text messaging system!

MS. EDGAR: I warned you about having it out in class.

PENELOPE: But it was turned off and in my backpack, just like you said.

PRINCIPAL ALLAN: Well, this *is* perplexing. Children, this is precisely why we recommend you leave you electronic accoutrements at home.

MS. EDGAR: Perhaps it hasn't been stolen at all.

PRINCIPAL ALLAN: Yes, perhaps you've just misplaced it!

PENELOPE: No, I'm sure it was in my backpack.

MS. EDGAR: Remember the time you were certain you'd turned-in your homework, yet it was in your backpack all the while?

PRINCIPAL ALLAN: Happens all the time.

PENELOPE: It's not like that at all.

TOMMY: Hey, my marble bag is missing, too!

CALI: Have you tried calling it?

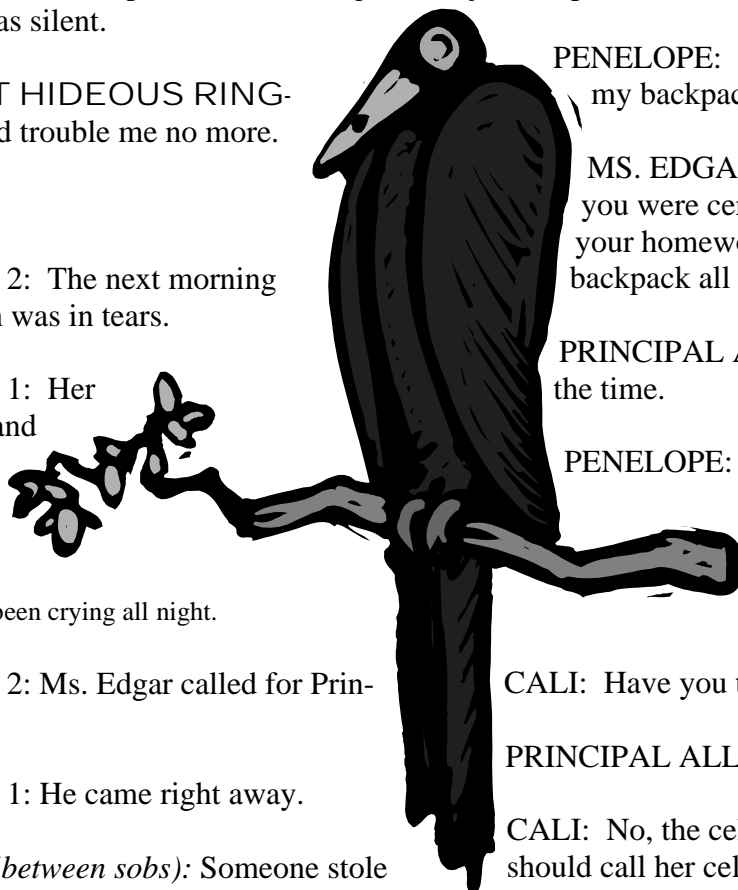
PRINCIPAL ALLAN: His marble bag?

CALI: No, the cell phone. Penelope Ann should call her cell number and see if it rings!

NARRATOR 1: They all stared at her.

CALI: (*to the audience*): Yes, it's true. I suggested she dial her own number. But was I worried? Of course not, for I had cleverly hidden the metallic crimson shards of the forever-silenced Ruby Red inside an empty crayon box in the deepest depths of my desk!

MS. EDGAR: That's a fine idea, Cali.





PRINCIPAL ALLAN: I'll be back with my own cell phone in a jiffy!

NARRATOR 2: While Principal Allan left the room to get his own cell phone, Ms. Edgar ignored Penelope Ann's sobs and returned to teaching.

MS. EDGAR: Today, children, we're discussing the classic short story, 'Tell-Tale Heart.'

CALI: As Ms. Edgar taught, I sat back and took pleasure in how I'd fooled them. It was painful to watch Penelope cry like that, but it had to be done! I'd put an end to Penelope Ann's Perturbing Cell Phone and no one was the wiser. *Our friendship was saved!*

NARRATOR 1: But it wasn't long before Cali found herself wanting to duck out to the restroom.

CALI: That's right, I felt sick to my stomach. Wasn't it about time for gym class?

MS. EDGAR: In the story, the narrator thinks he's gotten away with the perfect crime.

CALI: Then there came a ringing in my ears.

NARRATOR 2: A muffled buzzing sound, like a cell phone on vibrate.

RING TONE: BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ.

CALI: No doubt my stomach wretched. I raised my hand, but still Mrs. Edgar chattered on.

MS. EDGAR: But the villain in the story is

undone by his guilty conscience.

TOMMY: What does that mean, Ms. Edgar?

CALI: The buzzing grew louder until I realized it wasn't a buzzing at all, but a ticking sound.

NARRATOR 1: Like that of a watch,

NARRATOR 2: Or a clock,

NARRATOR 1: Or a timebomb.

RING TONE: TICK TICK TICK TICK
TICK TICK . . .

CALI: And it seemed to be **coming from MY desk!** I had to get out. I waved my hand, I clutched my stomach, but the teacher blathered on as if nothing was wrong!

MS. EDGAR: Your conscience is what's inside you that helps you tell right from wrong. In the story, the villain's conscience eats away at him until he finally confesses.

CALI: The noise grew louder.

RING TONE: : *BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . .*
*BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . . **BBRRIING,***
BBRRIING . .

NARRATOR 2: LOUDER,
LOUDER, LOUDER.

CALI: Couldn't they hear it? I stood up from my desk and paced to and fro. I coughed! I blew my nose! I gestured with my arms!

NARRATOR 1: Suddenly Principal Allan burst into the room.





PRINCIPAL ALLAN: I have it! I have my phone! I shall now make the dreaded call.

RING TONE: : *BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . .*
*BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . . **BBRRIING,***
BBRRIING. . .

CALI: They must be making fun of me! They were mocking me by pretending they couldn't hear the Ruby Red beating away in the depths of my desk!

NARRATOR 2: Oh, the agony!

RING TONE: : *BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . .*
*BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . . **BBRRIING,***
BBRRIING. . .

PRINCIPAL ALLAN: There is no answer. The line seems to be *dead!*

MS. EDGAR: You see, you've been a good girl and left it turned off and at home.

PRINCIPAL ALLAN: Problem solved then! Back to your lesson, Ms. Edgar! Be sure they do some 'Turn & Talk!'

PENELOPE (*sobbing anew*): What will I ever do without my precious cell phone?

CALI: LOUDER, LOUDER still! I could stand it no longer!

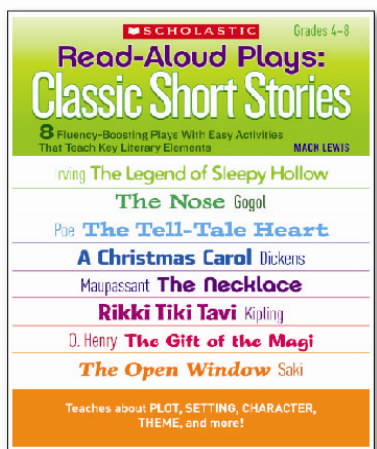
NARRATOR 1: She could stand it no longer!

RING TONE: *BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . .*
BBRRIING, BBRRIING. . .
BBRRIING,
BBRRIING. . .
Bbrrringgggggg . . .

CALI: Villains! Monsters! I did it! I confess! Search my desk! Here! Here! It is the RINGING OF HER ANNOYING CELL PHONE! ♦



Download the original Edgar Allan Poe story, watch an animated short, get tips on how to make your class play a hit, and much more at our website, www.mackowiecki.com.



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