READER'S THEATER

Instructor's copy

Pick five students to perform aloud pages 6–9 from the book. Prior to a public performance, have students look through the pages and identify their character. Students can then use the scripts provided on this CD-ROM to practice their part. Suggested props: an umbrella for Catherine Greene, tools for Eli Whitney.

Main Script

Scene One: Eli Whitney, Phineas Miller, and Catherine Greene are outside . . .

Narrator: In 1792, young inventor Eli Whitney went to the South to work as a tutor. But the job didn't work out. His friends Catherine Greene and Phineas Miller invited him to stay at Mulberry Grove in Georgia.

Phineas: Welcome to Mulberry Grove, Eli. I understand that you studied law in college. Do you plan to become a lawyer?

Eli: I don't know. I really love working with my hands. I once built a machine that made nails. Maybe I could do something like that.

Catherine: I'm sure you can, Eli. A mind like yours will be useful here in the South.

Scene Two: Phineas is showing Eli the plantation fields . . .

Narrator: The next day, Phineas, who managed the plantation, showed Eli the fields around Mulberry Grove.

Phineas: We've been trying to find a way to make money from cotton, Eli. But it's difficult to clean. Our slaves have to pull out the seeds one at a time.

Eli (thinking to himself): There must be an easier way to clean the cotton.

Narrator: Eli spent the next few weeks at Mulberry Grove helping Phineas with his duties. He spent his evenings keeping Catherine and her children company.

Scene Three: Eli and Catherine are in the house. Catherine is doing some needlework . . .

Catherine: This needlework frame keeps cutting into the work I've already done.

Eli: May I see? I think I could make a better frame for you.

(Eli goes to work on the frame. Some time later . . .)

Catherine: Eli, this new frame is splendid! It holds the fabric snugly and doesn't cut the threads. You're very talented.

Eli: Thank you. It took a few tries, but I'm glad you like it.

Scene Four: Later, at a dinner party at Mulberry Grove. . .

Narrator: Catherine often invited neighboring farmers to dinner at Mulberry Grove. Eli liked to talk with them and learn about their cotton crops.

Farmer: Cotton is very popular. We could make a lot of money from it. But green-seed cotton is so hard to clean.

Eli: Why does it take so long to separate the seeds from the cotton?

Phineas: The seeds are very small and sticky. The workers have to pull them from the cotton boll one at a time.

Eli: I've heard about a machine that can separate the seeds. Why don't you use it?

READER'S THEATER

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Eli: Why don't you just grow black-seed cotton?

Phineas: Only green-seed cotton grows well here. Black-seed cotton grows well only near the ocean.

Farmer: It costs too much to buy and keep enough slaves to do the work. I just can't make any money from cotton.

Catherine: Gentlemen, apply to my young friend, Mr. Whitney. He can make anything! He made this needlework frame for me.

Phineas: What fine work! What are your future plans, Eli?

Eli: I thought I'd return north to find work.

Catherine: Nonsense! You're going to stay right here and help with our cotton problem. I'm sure you can think of something.

Catherine Greene

Scene One: Eli Whitney, Phineas Miller, and Catherine Greene are outside . . .

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Eli: Why does it take so long to separate the seeds from the cotton?

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Catherine Greene

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Eli Whitney keeps cutting into

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READER'S THEATER

Eli Whitney

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READER'S THEATER

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Narrator

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Phineas Miller

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Phineas Miller

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