

STAMPEDE! Reader's Theater Script (Long Version), by Laura Purdie Salas and Maddie Salas

CAST: TEACHER, KIDS 1-13, CHORUS (kids in the production OR the rest of the class)

The optional highlighted parts have students reading poems aloud from the book *Stampede! Poems to Celebrate the Wild Side of School*, by Laura Purdie Salas (Clarion Books, 2009)

## STAMPEDE! POEMS TO CELEBRATE THE WILD SIDE OF SCHOOL

CHORUS:

### Swarm

We crowd the empty schoolyard,  
a flood of bumblebees.

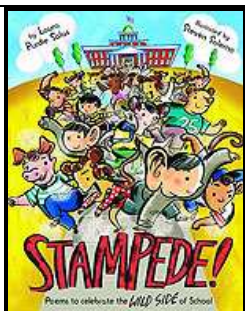
We buzz and flitter-tumble,  
trade gossip on the breeze.

I brought a kickball—  
Want to play?

I wonder what's  
for lunch today.

When the doors swing open wide,  
we bumblebees all fly inside.

TEACHER: Good morning, everyone! OK, let's stop buzzing around and start our day.



STAMPEDE! POEMS TO CELEBRATE THE WILD SIDE OF SCHOOL  
(Clarion Books, 2009)

by Laura Purdie Salas, illustrated by Steven Salerno

poet and writer for kids - [www.laurasalas.com](http://www.laurasalas.com)

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**KID 1:** Who are you?

**TEACHER:** (*Claps twice*) I am your substitute teacher. I work at the zoo 3 days a week, and I'm now working in classrooms on the other 2 days. It will be SO nice to work with real people!

**KID 2:** I'd like to work with animals.

**KID 3:** Did you know I have a dog?

**CHORUS:** (*All kids start shouting out what pets they have*)

**TEACHER:** Wow, this place is a zoo! It's great that you all have pets, but it's time to get started. Miss Jones left LOTS of work for us to do today.

**CHORUS:** (*Groans*)

**KID 4:** (*Tiptoes into room*) Um...

**TEACHER:** Please take out your science books...

**KID 4:** (*Whispers*) Um...

**TEACHER:** ...and turn to page 31.

**KID 4:** (*In soft voice*) Excuse me...

**TEACHER:** Oh! Hello! You're so quiet I didn't see you. Sorry about that!

**KID 4:** I'm new today. I got lost...the halls...they all looked alike...

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[Optional: KID 4 reads *New Mouse* CHORUS squeaks after poem is finished]

**TEACHER:** A new school can be scary, can't it? I even got a little bit lost! Don't feel bad.

**KID 4:** *(Smiles)*

**TEACHER:** Look at the top of page 32—

**KID 5:** *(Coming into classroom)* Here's my pass.

**TEACHER:** Wow! What happened to you?

**KID 5:** What?

**TEACHER:** Look at your shoes. And your shirt. And your pants. And your...hair?

**KID 5:** Oh. That. You know how it rained yesterday?

**TEACHER:** Yes.

**KID 5:** All that rain made great mud puddles.

**TEACHER:** Ah.

**KID 5:** So I jumped in the puddles, like this. And this. And—

[Optional: KID 5 reads *Whole Hog*, CHORUS oinks afterward]

**TEACHER:** I think I got the picture! You look like you rolled around in a pigpen. This place...

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**CHORUS:** IS A ZOO!

**TEACHER:** Hey, was that thunder?

**KID 1:** I don't hear anything.

**TEACHER:** I did. A low, roaring sound.

**KID 2:** Oh. That was me.

**TEACHER:** You?

**KID 2:** It was my stomach growling.

**TEACHER:** (*Amazed*) That was your stomach? Sounds like you've been hibernating too long.

**KID 2:** I have! Is it lunch time yet?

[Optional: KID 2 reads Rumble, Grumble, Growl CHORUS growls afterward.]

**TEACHER:** Not yet. But it's time for me to pass out an important paper. This is the form for your school pictures. You need to bring it back tomorrow, because tomorrow is picture day.

**CHORUS:** (*Mostly excited talking*)

**KID 1:** Tomorrow?

**TEACHER:** Yes, tomorrow. Isn't that exciting?

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**KID 1:** Oh no.....

**TEACHER:** What's wrong?

**KID 1:** Look at me. My hair and my teeth and, and, and everything! I don't want a picture taken.

[Optional: KID 1 reads Tomorrow Is Picture Day?]

**TEACHER:** You look just fine! I don't like to get my picture taken, either. Maybe it would help if you think of it like this. This is just one picture of how you looked on one day from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

**KID 1:** (*Groans and runs away*)

**TEACHER:** Um, I guess that didn't help. Class, how can she feel better about picture day?

**KID 5:** She could wear a mask.

**KID 6:** Or a paper bag!

**TEACHER:** That is *not* what I meant. What do you all do if you feel sad or worried?

**KID 3:** I like to just sit in my desk and be quiet sometimes.

**CHORUS:** (*Groans*)

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**KID 3:** It's nice! I have stuff that makes me feel better. I look at them and it helps.

[Optional: KID 3 reads Nesting]

**TEACHER:** That's a great idea. Thank you for sharing. OK, it's almost time for lunch...

**CHORUS:** *(Kids are whispering, passing some message around)*

**TEACHER:** Hello? I get the feeling you're not listening to me.

**CHORUS:** *(Kids keep whispering)*

**TEACHER:** Quiet! Now, is there something you would all like to share?

**KID 6:** No! Nothing at all!

**TEACHER:** Are you sure?

[Optional: KID 6 reads Blush, CHORUS cheep cheeps afterward]

**TEACHER:** Your face is as red as can be.

**KID 6:** Please, can we go to lunch now. Pleeeeeaaase?

**TEACHER:** OK, but no more whispering. Right! Let's move along. It's time for lunch!

**CHORUS:** *(In a group, talking and giggling. They're touching walls and lockers.)*

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**TEACHER:** Hands in, everybody. Have you ever seen ducklings follow their mama duck?

**CHORUS:** *(Some say yes, others say no)*

**TEACHER:** They march right along behind her and do whatever she does. So pretend you're ducklings and just follow me. I'm the mama duck!

[Optional: TEACHER reads Ducks in a Row CHORUS quacks afterward]

**TEACHER:** Please stop touching the locker. Everyone has to have their hands at their sides.

**KID 7:** It's my brother's locker. He doesn't care.

**TEACHER:** I'm sorry, but that's the rule. Everyone needs to keep their hands to themselves.

**KID 7:** *(Mutters and looks mad)*

**TEACHER:** Aren't you prickly—like a porcupine. Haha. Get it? Porcupines are prickly!

**CHORUS:** *(Groaning)* We get it.

[Optional: KID 7 reads Prickly]

**TEACHER:** Let's walk. This place...

**CHORUS:** IS A ZOO! *(Everyone walks quickly)*

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**TEACHER:** That's right! You guys are just like my dogs—you hear the word food and you get all excited! Have a good time at lunch and recess!

[Optional: KID 8 reads *Here, Boy!* CHORUS barks afterward]

[Optional: CHORUS reads *Hide and Peek*]

[Optional: KID 9 reads *King of the Jungle*, CHORUS makes monkey noises afterward]

[Optional: CHORUS reads *Playground Sparrows* and then chirps and whistles]

**TEACHER:** Welcome back. I saw you all running and chasing and swooping and swinging. It looked just like the animal habitats at the zoo! Did you have fun?

**CHORUS:** *(Lots of yeses)*

**TEACHER:** Now, it's math time. Open your books to page 67, please. Miss Jones says you should do questions 14-30, evens only. Can I have a volunteer to write that on the board?

**KID 10:** I'll do it!

**TEACHER:** Great! Go for it. Um...what does that say?

**KID 10:** It says what you said. Page 67, 14-30, evens only.

**TEACHER:** Really? It says that?

**KID 10:** Yup.

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**TEACHER:** Oh my. That's some messy handwriting! It's like chicken scratch!

[Optional: KID 10 reads Printer Problems CHORUS clucks afterward]

**TEACHER:** I'll be walking around while you work. Raise your hand if you have a question.

**KID 11:** *(Quietly counting on his fingers and toes.)*

**TEACHER:** Do you need any help with this?

**KID 11:** No. *(Still counting, but getting frustrated.)*

**TEACHER:** Are you sure?

**KID 11:** I'm sure. I don't need help! I need...I need more fingers and toes, that's all. Like a—what do you call it—a centipede!

[Optional: KID 11 reads Counting on Me]

**TEACHER:** Ha! Centipedes must all be great at math...Eeeuuuw. What on earth...That smell...

**KID 12:** Hey, don't look at me!

**TEACHER:** I wasn't.

**KID 12:** Good, because that's not me. I don't know who that is. But it's not me. No way.

(Optional: KID 12 reads P.U.)

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**TEACHER:** My. It's like being in the skunk house at the zoo. This place...

**CHORUS:** IS A ZOO!

**TEACHER:** And not in such a good way. Well, let's go over our answers. Who got #14?

**CHORUS:** *(Everybody but KID 13 raises hands. KID 13 looks down.)*

**(Optional: KID 13 reads Turtleneck)**

**TEACHER:** Hmm...I see some of you worked hard, but some of you didn't. Oh, the bell's about to ring. Well, it's been a fun day. **A lot** more like the zoo than I expected. Goodbye, kids!

**CHORUS:**

The last bell rings.  
We spill outside,  
like captives finally freed.

We're thundering, fumbling  
elephants—  
an after-school **STAMPEDE!**

**CHORUS:** *(Makes trumpeting elephant sounds)*

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