

Levels: Grade 3 (Upper)

Word Count: 1,340

Script Summary:

A long time ago in the Amazon rainforest a village of people forgot how to work hard, clean up after themselves, and solve their problems. One day, an old man whittled stick after stick into little figures that grinned like mischievous monkeys to be servants for the villagers. Wary at first, the villagers soon requested hundreds and then thousands of servants to do not only their cleaning but also their thinking and dreaming for them. The village became quite crowded, and soon the servants needed their own servants because they had become lazy too. One day, the lazy servants had enough of the overcrowding and escaped to the forest, where they grew hair and became monkeys. Learn what happened to the lazy people once their servants were gone in this story based on a South American folktale.

Objectives and Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently read their lines with appropriate rate and accuracy
- consistently read their lines with appropriate expression, including pause, inflection, and intonation
- follow along silently and listen for spoken cues

Using the Scripts:

- Each role is assigned a reading level according to the syntactic and semantic difficulty encountered. Feel free to divide roles further to include more readers in a group.
- Discuss vocabulary and encourage readers to practice their lines to promote fluent delivery of the script.
- Have readers highlight their lines on the scripts, and encourage them to follow along as everyone reads.

Vocabulary:

Story words: chores, complain, escaped, figure, generous, hardworking, lazy, pleasure, servants, solution, unfortunately, village

Cast of Characters:

Grade 3 (Upper)		
Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Old Man
Lazy Head	Lazy Bones	Lazy Susan
Droopy		

Cast of Characters:

Parts		
Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Old Man
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Droopy		

Narrator 1:

A long time ago, in the Amazon rainforests of South America, there lived a **village** of happy, **hardworking** people. They built simple huts around a lake that gave them cool, fresh drinking water and they picked tasty fruits and nuts from nearby trees.

Narrator 2:

The villagers made a nice life for themselves and lived well for many years. But over time, they forgot their hardworking ways. Rotten fruit skins began to pile up and nasty flies moved in. Rather than clean up the mess, the villagers moved to another spot along the lake.

Narrator 1:

Unfortunately, the villagers brought their **lazy** habits with them. Whenever piles of rotting fruit attracted flies, the villagers moved on. Eventually, they had moved into every available spot along the lake and found themselves back where they started.

Narrator 2:

The village leaders met to talk about the problem. Talking about problems was one of the few things the lazy villagers still did with any gusto.

Script *(continued)*

The Tale of the Lazy People

Lazy Head:

Something must be done about this mess.

Lazy Bones:

We're meeting. That's something.

Lazy Susan:

What we need is an idea.

Lazy Bones:

That's an idea in itself.

Lazy Head:

I have a better idea. I'll take a nap. I do my best thinking when I sleep.

Lazy Bones:

A nap is a wonderful idea. I will wake rested and ready to think about a **solution**. After all, we are people. Thinking is what separates people from monkeys.

Lazy Susan: *(yawning)*

Maybe I will dream up a solution.

Droopy:

Maybe if I sleep long enough, the problem will be gone when I wake up.

Narrator 1:

Everyone in the village slept through the night and half the next day. When they woke up, a strange Old Man greeted them.

Narrator 2:

He stood in front of a newly built hut and there were no rotten fruit rinds on the ground outside or flies buzzing about.

Lazy Head: *(yawning)*

Say there, Stranger, how is it you have a new house when none was there last night?

Lazy Susan:

And it is so clean.

Droopy: *(smacking his lips)*

And that is such a delicious-looking pile of fresh-picked fruit.

Lazy Head:

Don't tell us you worked all through the night!

Old Man:

No, I slept quite well last night. I didn't have to lift a finger. I would be happy to share my fruit with you. In fact, I will share my secret with you as well.

Narrator 2:

The Old Man picked up a stick from the ground. He brought out a small knife and quickly carved a **figure** of a little person with a tail.

Old Man:

Now watch. When I clap my hands, my stick figure will come to life.
(claps three times)

Narrator 1:

True to the Old Man's words, the little figure sprang to life and stood at attention.

Old Man:

This little guy will do whatever you ask. But he can only do one job. If you need more figures, I will carve them.

Narrator 1:

The Old Man whittled stick after stick. Dozens of little figures, each grinning like a mischievous monkey, stood ready for orders.

Narrator 2:

The lazy villagers were very excited about having **servants** to do all their **chores**—everyone except Lazy Head. He was worried the Old Man might think the villagers needed his little people and start charging for their services.

Lazy Head:

Thank you for your offer, Old Man. We are quite able to fend for ourselves. However, we are a **generous** people. If it will make you feel better, we will take a few of your little servants off your hands.

Old Man:

Have as many as you like. It is my **pleasure** to give them to you. For free.

Lazy Head:

Well, then, I might be able to use five or six.

Lazy Bones:

I'll take ten.

Script *(continued)*

The Tale of the Lazy People

Lazy Susan:

Twenty for me!

Droopy:

I'll take thirty!

Lazy Bones:

Maybe a few more for me, too. If your little people do all the cooking and cleaning, I will have time for thinking. That, after all, is what people are for.

Lazy Head:

Yes, we can spend our time writing down our great thoughts.

Lazy Bones:

We can write poems and make music.

Lazy Susan:

The possibilities are mind-boggling. But right now, my mind is so boggled with all the things I could be doing, I need to take a nap.

Droopy:

What a brilliant idea.

Lazy Bones:

See? We are using our brains already! Now, if one of your little people will help me into my hammock, I will get to work sleeping.

Narrator 1:

For the next few days, the villagers were happy. They lay about in their hammocks thinking great thoughts. The Old Man's little people did all the chores the lazy villagers would have done, if they hadn't been so lazy.

Narrator 2:

Soon, the lazy villagers ran out of servants, but there were still many chores to do.

Lazy Head:

Old Man, we do not want you to feel unwanted. To show our generosity, we will accept some more of your little people.

Old Man:

You are too kind. How many would you like?

Lazy Head:

Oh, just a few—

Lazy Bones:

A hundred would be nice!

Lazy Susan:

A thousand!

Droopy:

Two thousand!

Narrator 2:

As quickly as the Old Man carved new figures, the villagers put them to work. Clap, clap, clap. . . Little people rocked hammocks, fanned away the warm air, and brought the villagers snacks.

Lazy Head: *(claps three times)*

Come alive, little person. I am so busy thinking about the great thoughts I will be thinking. I need you to pull a handful of grapes from the bunch, peel them, and put one grape at a time into my mouth.

Lazy Bones:

Lazy Head, you are chewing so loudly I cannot think clearly to write a poem.

(claps three times)

Little person over there, come to life and write a poem for me. Ah, that's much better. All this clapping has tired me out. I'll sleep now.

Lazy Susan:

Chewing, snoring. . . How can you expect me to make beautiful music with all this ugly noise around?

(claps three times)

Little man, make music while I rest. Ah, much better. If only it were easier to fall asleep, I might be able to dream great dreams.

Droopy:

I know how you feel. Whenever I'm in a deep sleep, I'm awakened by a dream. How can I get any rest if I keep waking up? What I really need is one of the old man's little people to do my dreaming for me.

Narrator 1:

Sure enough, with a few more claps, the lazy villagers had a village worth of little people just to do their dreaming.

Narrator 2:

With everything being done for them, the lazy villagers got increasingly bored. In the rare moments when they found themselves awake, there wasn't much left to do but **complain**.

Lazy Head:

Eating is so much work. First, I have to use my jaw muscles. Then I have to swallow. What's worse, my stomach has to digest everything I eat.

Lazy Bones:

You think that is tiring? Just thinking about all the thinking I have to do is wearing me out.

Lazy Susan:

What are you complaining about? Look at all the breathing I have to do. In, out, in, out, all day and all night. It never stops, not even when I'm sleeping. No wonder I'm so tired.

Droopy:

Eating, thinking, and breathing are all very tiring. What's even more work is all the complaining that must be done about eating, thinking, and breathing. We need help!

Narrator 1:

The Old Man carved faster than ever.

Narrator 2:

It got quite crowded in the village. Soon the little people needed servants of their own to help them get their food and keep their flies away. They needed servants to rock their hammocks, write their poems, make their music, and dream their dreams.

Narrator 1:

It got so you couldn't tell the lazy villagers from the lazy little people. There was pushing and shoving and shoving and pushing. Nothing was getting done. Finally, the lazy little people **escaped** into the forest where they grew hair and became monkeys.

Narrator 2:

To this day, the monkeys continue their lazy ways, throwing fruit skins on the ground and never cleaning up their messes.

Narrator 1:

The lazy villagers, relieved to be rid of their lazy servants, got back to the business of living. They picked their own fruit and they cleaned up their fruit skins. They even cleaned up after the monkeys in the trees. And when their chores were done, they finally got around to writing poetry, making music, thinking great thoughts, and dreaming.