

The Tiny Crooked Crack

By Carol Montgomery

Performance Time = a little over 5 minutes

Readability = grade 4.0 (substituting "Nat" for "Narrator" when computing readability)
Cast (4-6-10+)

Narrator 1	Famous People (chorus?)
Narrator 2	Neighbors (chorus?)
Owner #1	Experts
Owner #2	Man
Owner #3	
Owner #4	

Note: For smaller groups (e.g., 4-6 readers)--

- use 2 narrators
- combine the owners into one or two parts (one reads odd #s and one reads even #s)
- let someone play the roles of the choruses and the man using different voices

Vocabulary:

attention	finally
fantastic	complicated
neighbors	estimates
suggestions	experience
compliments	principles
showering	excitedly
flattery	procrastinated
probably	options
photographed	measured
difficult	definitely
discussion	weighed
opinion	timely
decisions	analyzing
continued	guaranteed
current	

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Narrator 1: Once upon a time there was a tiny crooked crack in the ceiling of a big white house. No one paid much attention to the little crack because it was VERY small and barely seen.

Narrator 2: Besides, everything else in the big white house was working. Plus, VERY famous people were visiting often and saying...

Famous People: Oh, I just LOVE your big white house!

Narrator 1: The owners loved the compliments. And, the tiny crooked crack was ignored.

Narrator 2: Over time the crack split just a fraction wider. Still, since new owners lived in the big white house, they didn't know the little crack was getting bigger. After all, it was VERY small and barely seen.

Narrator 1: And besides, some VERY famous people were still visiting often showering the owners with flattery...

Famous People: Your house is so great! You must have us over again.

Narrator 2: The owners loved the timely flattery. Perhaps they believed the famous people were more important than a little crack in the ceiling?

Narrator 1: After a few years, the crack began to show a little more in the ceiling of the big white house. And the owners would say...

Owners #1 & #2: Maybe we should check that out?

Owner #1: But, it was here when we moved in. It's probably been here for years.

Owner #2: Besides, some VERY famous people are coming to see us in a few days, so we couldn't do anything right away anyway. Oh, I think they're here now...

Famous People: We're back! And, we still LOVE your fantastic house. What's for dinner?

Narrator 1: The owners were hungry, so the little crack in the ceiling of the big white house was soon forgotten.

Narrator 2: When some new owners moved into the big white house they saw the crack in the ceiling--only now it was bigger. When they asked the neighbors about it the neighbors replied...

Neighbors: Oh, that crack has been there for years. It's only the ceiling. We wouldn't worry about it. No one looks at the ceiling anyway.

Narrator 2: So, the little crack in the ceiling continued to grow slowly with no one paying attention.

Narrator 1: Several years later the little crack in the ceiling of the big white house began to leak. It's VERY difficult to ignore a leaky ceiling. Pots, bowls, buckets, and an old guitar case were set out to catch the drips.

Narrator 2: Even the famous people who came to visit couldn't ignore the crack in the ceiling. Some of the VERY famous people said...

Famous People: What ARE you doing about that crack?

Narrator 1: The current owners answered...

Owners #3 & #4: Oh, we've spent LOTS of money having experts come in, look at the crack, and give their suggestions.

Owner #3: We've measured it. We've photographed it.

Owner #4: We've weighed the water that comes into the pots, bowls, buckets, and the old guitar case.

Owners #3 & #4: It's a big leak, all right!

Owner #3: But, the new owners will have to decide what to do with it.

Owner #4: There are so many difficult options; we can't decide for them.

Narrator 1: So, the leaky crack in the ceiling became a repeated topic of discussion. Everyone had an opinion. Even the neighbors had opinions.

Neighbors: We sure did!

Narrator 1: But, no one did anything about the problem. They procrastinated and left the decision to someone else.

Narrator 2: Finally, the new owners arrived. They had heard of the problem; but they weren't experts at solving leaky cracks in ceilings either. So, they spent LOTS of money calling in more experts to come study the crack and give suggestions on how to fix it. First, they measured it.

Experts: It definitely WAS bigger.

Narrator 1: Next, they photographed it.

Experts: It definitely WAS leaking.

Narrator 2: They even weighed the water coming into the barrels placed under the leaky ceiling.

Experts: It definitely WAS leaking a lot!

Narrator 2: It was a big leak, all right! Everyone agreed.

All (not narrators): It was a BIG leak!

Narrator 1: But, there were so many other places in the big white house that needed attention.

Narrator 2: So, no one wanted to make a difficult decision about how to fix the leaky crack in the ceiling. They procrastinated instead.

Narrator 1: Finally, the owners of the big white house heard a knock on the door.

Man: (*knocks*)

Narrator 1: A simple man stood there in everyday clothes and asked...

Man: I heard you needed someone to fix a leaky crack in the ceiling of this big white house. Is that true?

Narrator 2: The owners answered...

Owner #3: That's true. But, we've had so many studies, photographs, and suggestions that we're not sure what is the best way to go about it.

Owner #4: We're getting estimates now and analyzing the process along with the expected results. We're not sure when we'll make a decision about the crack.

Owners #3 & #4: Why do you ask?

Man: I fix cracks in leaky ceilings, leaky walls, even leaky floors. I'm experienced. I've fixed cracks for years. I know what works and what doesn't work. I'd be happy to help you.

Narrator 2: The owners responded...

Owners #3 & #4: Have you ever fixed a crack that big before?

Narrator 1: The man replied...

Man: I've never SEEN a crack in the ceiling that big before, let alone fix one. But, the principles are the same. It just needs to be fixed. SOMEONE needs to fix it, right?
(smiles)

Narrator 2: The owners responded...

Owners #3 & #4: And, what would you charge to fix the crack?

Narrator 1: The man excitedly explained...

Man: Nothing. Just give me the time and a few helpers. We'll get it fixed. Guaranteed!

Narrator 2: Wide-eyed, the owners stared at the man and asked...

Owners #3 & #4: How do we know we can TRUST you?

Narrator 1: The man smiled and announced...

Man: Because you'll see the leaky ceiling fixed while you watch.

Narrators 1 & 2: The End.

Neighbors: Wait! You can't stop until we know if the crack in the big white house will be fixed or not.

Narrators 1 & 2: You decide. The End. Really.



Curriculum Links (Valid in 2012):

This script could be used many different ways with different interpretations to promote discussions. **Elections are based on choices** and the owners had choices to make. The question is HOW do you make a wise choice? (One interpretation of the “tiny crooked crack” = debt.)

Debt

<http://childparenting.about.com/od/schoollearning/a/teaching-kids-about-debt.htm>

“Teaching Kids About Debt--Helping Your Child Understand Debt,” briefly explains how to talk to children about debt for ages 5-8 and 9-11. You could have the students come up with examples.

<http://pbskids.org/democracy/parents-and-teachers/be-president/national-debt/>

“I.O.U.--An Introduction To The National Debt” lesson for 3-6th grade as part of PBS’s “Democracy Project” for grades 3-6. (More lessons on other topics.)

<http://www.firstladies.org/curriculum/curriculum.aspx?Curriculum=1848>

“The National Debt--Time to Collect?” includes several lesson plans for elementary students using computers and other activities.

<http://www.facingup.org/faculty>

“Facing Up to the Nation’s Finances” is a nonpartisan project on the long-term challenges of the federal budget. This is the page of teachers to access free classroom materials for middle school and high school students. (You must register to download. I did not register.)

Elections

http://www.proteacher.org/c/445_Elections.html

Activities suggested by 11 teachers of various grades to teach students about elections. Of course, elections are based on making wise choices. The RT script was about choices, too.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/election.shtml

Education World’s page on “Primaries, Voting, and Elections” sharing over 40 links to lesson plans, internet sites, and curriculum ideas to help teach on the process of elections. Since we serve so many different grades there’s no way I can figure out which of these may help you. Take a peek and see what pops off the page. :)

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2091.shtml

“Election Lesson Plan/Campaign Ad Critique” general lesson plan for grades 6-11. Note: Although the idea is good, you are expected to provide a variety of print and video (TV) campaign ads. This looks like a helpful link about “Analyzing Media: Political Ads”, for grade 10, but EASILY adaptable to middle school:

http://www.classzone.com/books/lnetwork_gr10/page_build.cfm?content=analyz_media&ch=29

("Analyzing Media: Political Ads"--middle school and high school)

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/elections/teacher-resources/6615.html>

Full page of lessons, printables, and activities on the "U.S. electoral process." These are the categories for most of their links:

Presidential Election Nominee and Candidates

Printables (including "Could You Be President?")

Lesson Plans

References & Quizzes

Language Arts, Math, History, Geography Resources

U.S. Presidents and Political Figures

Federal Government Resources (e.g., biographies and an Elections and Voting Quiz)

Procrastination

<http://www.organizeit.co.uk/2009/11/30/the-someday-disease-five-cures-for-procrastination/>

"The 'Someday' Disease: Five Cures for Procrastination" from Organize It. Tips you can share with your students to make this discussion personal.

<http://juliaenglishinmanchester.blogspot.com/2012/07/still-working-on-overcoming.html>

"Still working on overcoming procrastination, or...how to eat a frog" This blogger uses an example from Brian Tracy: procrastination is like being forced to eat a live frog.

Here are the steps to eating a live frog--doing that which we don't want to do:

1. Eat it first, so you can enjoy the rest of your meal.
2. Don't sit there looking at it too long, so it doesn't look worse than it is.
3. If you have two frogs to eat, eat the ugliest one first, so the worst task is done first. That makes the second frog look more beautiful.

<http://raisingceokids.com/2011/03/5-ways-to-stop-procrastination-now/>

"5 Ways to Stop Procrastination Now!" from Raising CEO Kids.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Procrastinate>

"How to Procrastinate" article that will stretch thinking skills and generate discussion.

