

## Talking Pets–Beyond Earth Day

Performance Time = about 5 1/2 minutes

Readability = grade 4.8

Cast (6):

Announcer

Calamity Cat

Dr. Dog

Professor Parrot (most difficult)

Hurricane Hamster

Sir Horse

**NOTE:** Our family experienced a nightmare when my body hit “overload” from being exposed to dryer sheets on my mother’s clothes when she came to visit. Laundry toxins added another toxic load to my body. It rebelled with serious symptoms of Environmental Illness. My family wondered if I was dying. But, that’s another story...

This short Readers Theater script shares a pet’s imaginary perspective of laundry. It may be used to help communicate basic truths about toxic laundry to a younger audience OR a pet-loving audience. It may also be used to launch a discussion or a unit study on toxins in our world.

### Vocabulary:

interview	discovered	canaries
introduce	research	regularly
Calamity	convinced	sobering
Professor	quality	spied
Hurricane	attention	edible
important	negative	unfortunately
prefer	remember	especially
laundry	heritage	alarmed
toxic	stewards	boggling
residue	individual	communicate
allergic	absolutely	
reaction	chemical	
suds	fragrances	
interesting	contaminants	



## Talking Pets–Beyond Earth Day

A Readers Theater Script

By Carol Montgomery

**Announcer:** Welcome to “Talking Pets,” the radio talk show where we interview people’s pets. Last week we interviewed our panel of pets on the topic of food. Today’s topic is laundry. But, first let me introduce our pet panel of experts: Calamity Cat...

**Calamity Cat:** Meow. Hello.

**Announcer:** Dr. Dog...

**Dr. Dog:** Ruff! Good day!

**Announcer:** Professor Parrot...

**Professor Parrot:** Aloha, people!

**Announcer:** Hurricane Hamster...

**Hurricane Hamster:** What’s up?

**Announcer:** And Sir Horse...

**Sir Horse:** Neigh! Greetings!

**Announcer:** With the topic of laundry...today’s first question is, “How important is your owner’s laundry choices to you?” Calamity Cat?

**Calamity Cat:** I prefer for my owner to leave the laundry out anywhere. She can choose to leave it on the bed, on the sofa, on the chair, on the floor, or anywhere. As long as it’s out—clean or dirty, I’m happy.

**Announcer:** Are you against putting laundry away?

**Calamity Cat:** No, I’m FOR having as many soft places for me to sleep as possible!

**Announcer:** *(smiles)* I see. Dr. Dog?

**Dr. Dog:** My owner’s laundry choices don’t affect me much. I love them no matter how they smell. However, when it comes time to give me a bath I really would prefer safe suds.

**Announcer:** Safe suds?

**Dr. Dog:** In my research I've discovered that there are safe suds and toxic suds. The residue of the suds sticks in my fur and in their clothes. So, knowing what I know about allergic reactions and even cancer, I vote for safe suds.

**Announcer:** Very interesting. Professor Parrot, how important is your owner's laundry choices to you?

**Professor Parrot:** Well, I'm glad Dr. Dog brought up his research. As I review the research on laundry I'm convinced that my owner would have a higher quality of life for more years if he would pay attention to the things that can have a negative effect on his health—including toxic laundry. But, beyond that, when I remember my jungle heritage, I must admit I consider myself a Greenie—and that's going beyond my feathers! As a Greenie, I LOVE the idea of taking care of the earth. We are simply stewards of the soil, the water, and the air.

**Announcer:** So, you believe laundry choices affect more than the individual?

**Professor Parrot:** Absolutely! My feet touch the clothes that were washed. We all breathe the air with chemical fragrances or contaminants. I'm just glad I'm not the canary in the coal mine.

**Announcer:** What do you mean?

**Professor Parrot:** You know the story of the canary in the coal mine, don't you? Canaries used to be used regularly in coal mines as an early warning system of toxic gasses. The toxic gases would kill the canaries BEFORE the miners, so the miners would be warned to get out quickly. If I was a canary, I might not be here today.

**Announcer:** Wow, that's sobering. Hurricane Hamster, how important is your owner's laundry choices to you?

**Hurricane Hamster:** I don't care much. I eat. I sleep. I destroy stuff. I run. I spin. I spy. I spied a bunch of laundry stuff by the washing machine, but nothing worth eating. If you can't eat it, what good IS it?

**Announcer:** I suppose no laundry products are edible.

**Hurricane Hamster:** Not by the warnings on the packages! I stay FAR away from nasty stuff. Too bad my humans don't do the same.

**Announcer:** I thought you didn't care much.

**Hurricane Hamster:** I care about eating! I have to take care of my humans so they can take care of me!

**Announcer:** Good point. Sir Horse, you've been around many years, how important is your owner's laundry choices to you?

**Sir Horse:** Thanks for asking this old guy. I've been through a lot with more than one owner, unfortunately. I have noticed a difference in the way the horse blankets are cared for... but not many ride me bare back, so I don't feel toxic clothes very often. Not that I would notice. I'm kind of like Professor Parrot, I guess.....I like to think green—especially in regards to food. But, that was last week's topic.

**Announcer:** Anyone else?

**Calamity Cat:** Meow! Yes, sir! What do you mean our owners can have toxic laundry? Do you mean that I could be sleeping in a chemical soup?

**Dr. Dog:** Don't be alarmed. Not everyone has an owner with toxic laundry. You'll have to ask your owner to make sure she has safe laundry products—especially if you sleep on her bed!

**Calamity Cat:** You bet I will! And, she better change if it's not right. She knows I'm in charge of that house and I will NOT choose to have my beautiful fur contaminated by her toxic fumes. It's mind boggling I never heard this before!

**Hurricane Hamster:** Cool your jets, Calamity Cat. At least you're not the one to snuggle in somebody's pocket like I do.

**Sir Horse:** I wish I COULD snuggle in somebody's pocket!

**Professor Parrot:** The point is, HOW can we communicate to our humans that we want to protect them from toxic laundry because we LOVE them?

**Announcer:** Good question. I think you just did.



### Curriculum Links (Valid in 2014):

<http://www.epa.gov/students/teachers.html>

Environmental Protection Agency's page of "Teacher Resources and Lesson Plans." Includes under "Health": "Chemical Safety Resources for Middle School Teachers" for grades 5-8, "Learn About Chemicals Around Your House" for grades K-5. Check under "Water" for : "Build Your Own Aquifer" for grades 3-4, "Darby Duck and the Aquatic Crusaders" for grades K-5, "Thirstin Builds an Aquifer in a Cup (Aquifer on the Go)" for grades K-2.

[http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text\\_version/teachers5.php](http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/teachers5.php) Resources for teachers from NIH's National Institute of Medicine on "Tox Town—Environmental health concerns and toxic chemicals where you live, work, and play. This appears to be an online activity for **middle school through college students**, but probably has some parts that would be adaptable for younger, gifted students. LOTS of resource links for chemicals, food safety, environmental science, and water quality.

<http://www.discoverwater.org/>

Discover Water presents "The Role of Water in Our Lives" for **students ages 7-12**. It's interactive, but sponsored by WET Foundation and Nestle Waters North America (advertising)? I didn't review the entire site, but it looks intriguing. There are suggestions for parents and teachers, as well as LOTS of interaction for the students. The video on hydration was clever.

<http://www.ewg.org/guides/subcategories/49-LaundryDetergentHE>

Environmental Working Group's page on Laundry Detergents with ratings from A-F. **Where is YOUR laundry detergent on the list?**

<http://www.womensvoices.org/2013/01/25/tide-reformulates-detergents-to-reduce-cancer-causing-chemical/>

Press release from "Women's Voices for the Earth": "**Tide Reformulates Detergents to Reduce Cancer-Causing Chemical.**" **NOTE: In a library book Pick Your Poison, the chemist author explains how companies that take one cancer-causing chemical out of a product often just substitute a related chemical that has not yet been proven to be carcinogenic.** Here's the link to the book where you can read reviews:

<http://www.amazon.com/Pick-Your-Poison-Chemical-Utopia/dp/0470550910>

Amazon's listing and reviews of Pick Your Poison: How Our Mad Dash to Chemical Utopia is Making Lab Rats of Us All. Excellent book for YOU and those you love.

<http://healthychild.org/>

Excellent source of healthy information for YOU from Healthy Child Healthy World. Protect yourself and your loved ones.

<http://epa.gov/dfepubs/laundry/techfact/keychar.htm> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Key Characteristics of Laundry Detergent Ingredients".

<http://www.itchybaby.co.uk/laundryandclothing.html>, "Laundry, Clothing, and Eczema" article with a photo showing eczema being triggered from a "non-bio" laundry detergent. This website is based on a mom's experience with eczema in her child and the laundry solutions she found.

[http://depts.washington.edu/exposure/press\\_release.html](http://depts.washington.edu/exposure/press_release.html) University of Washington Professor Anne Steinemann's 2010 press release: This three-page press release summarizes the study that discovered toxins in fragranced products--even in some green products.

## Earth Day

<http://www.earthday.org/knowgreen-lessons>  
Lesson plans from the Earth Day Network—grade K-5, 5-8, and 9-12. Covers recycling, plastic bags, pollutants, water, and more.

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/earth-day-lesson-plans-matt-davis>  
Edutopia's page on Earth Day (2013): "Lesson Plans, Reading Lists, and Classroom Ideas."

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/earth/index.html>  
DLTK's page on "Earth Day Activities"—crafts, poems, songs, printables, puzzles, and more.

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/Earth-Day-Curriculum-Resources-Grades-K-5.html>  
"Earth Day Curriculum Resources, Grades K-5" from the National Education Association.

<http://www.pinterest.com/carrotsrorange/earth-day-activities-for-kids/>  
Pinterest board: "Earth {Day} Activities for Kids"

<http://pastiche.squidoo.com/earth-day-crafts-recycle>  
"Earth Day Crafts for Kids" on Squidoo lens.

**NOTE:** Although I usually do YouTube links for you, this topic is so broad that I'm including only one link for YOU:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRDpcWZUEiU>  
"Children Who Are Allergic to Foods & the Environment"—interview of Dr. Doris Rapp (pediatric allergist) with Phil Donahue. This is INVALUABLE and WORTH YOUR TIME! PLEASE, watch it—for the sake students and parents. 43:23

