

**STORY AND PLAY  
READERS, VOL. III**

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Story and play readers, Vol. III by Anna M. Lütkenhaus & Margaret Knox

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**ANNA M. LÜTKENHAUS & MARGARET KNOX**

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READERS

# STORY AND PLAY READERS

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*T*O all the Boys and Girls  
who in the great public  
school system of America are  
reading the literature of all  
lands, this book is dedicated,  
with the hope that through its  
pages a deeper love for read-  
ing will be inculcated and a  
greater desire to read to others.

MARGARET KNOX,  
ANNA M. LÜTKENHAUS.



## INTRODUCTION

Making use of the dramatic instinct as a teaching asset has come to be an important thing in modern education. We are all recognizing its value and we are all dramatizing.

It is no uncommon thing nowadays, for a teacher to look at all the subjects of the Course of Study with a view to making use of the dramatic possibilities in them.

I have seen a lesson in technical grammar turned into a lively dialogue where the words of the sentence became personified and explained their use in the sentence. It was cleverly done and it certainly was attractive to the class beginning its lessons in that dry-as-dust subject, to see plain little girls impersonating the conjunctions "and" and "but" and taking hold of the hands of larger and handsomer girls who played the more important parts of verbs or nouns.

I have seen "borrowing in subtraction" taught in the same way,—always the acting of a part, always the doing of something which appeals so strongly to the child that the lesson is easily learned.

Civic lessons such as clean boys and girls, clean school buildings, clean premises about the building, and "Safety First" in the streets of the neighborhood, leading up to a love of the city and consequently to good citizenship, are all best taught by putting these things into a play and having the boys and girls do them.

Within the last few years there has been a great awakening in the method of teaching primary reading. We no longer have in our first year readers the mystic symbols of our language, the A, B, C's, which used to give the class its name,—the A, B, C Class. No longer is our primer made up of the one-syllabled word *ox*, *ax*, *to*, *up*, or the equally unintelligible symbols *ab*, *eb*, *ob*, *ib*, with a page of almost unintelligible reading beneath:

It is an ox.	The sun is up.
Go up ox.	Up boy up!
Ox go up.	See the sun.
See the ox go up.	(or) It is now day.

Through pages of this sort the weary little mind wandered, and wondered what it all meant.

Contrast that kind of reading matter and the drill on A, B, C's, and syllables necessary to train a child to recognize the words and read the pages of such a primer, with any of the modern primers. In these you will find no alphabet, no word or syllable list; but, instead, a beautiful story book, attractively gotten up, with fine paper and good print and on many of its pages poetry and pictures. Here are the stories of: "The House that Jack Built," "The Gingerbread Boy," "Peter Rabbit," "The Old Woman and Her Pig." Here the Mother Goose Rhymes are introduced with picture and song. With the teacher who understands how to make use of the child's instinctive love for stories, the child plays and acts himself into a knowledge of these printed pages.

Old Mother Hubbard and the dog and the cupboard are all enacted,—the big girl is Mother Hubbard and the tiny boy who can bark like a dog is the hungry dog. Mistress

Mary walks into her garden looking "quite contrary" and finds silver bells and cockle shells and the pretty maids all in a row, and she not only finds them but she finds the words that stand for these things on the printed page. And there you have it, the picture and the page and the pointing out of the name of each actor on the page, and presently the child is reading; for reading has been made easy by making use of the dramatic instinct.

Since it is true that the dramatic instinct is such a powerful factor in driving home lessons of all sorts, scientific, practical, material as well as ethical, I have been surprised at the sparing use that is made of it in the teaching of the subject of Reading itself in our schools.

In my experience as a teacher I have found that the children of the lower primary grades are taught to read well. With selections of the sort described above, Mother Goose Rhymes, stories that hold the little children's attention because of the repetitive or accumulative rhythmic swing, any teacher can train her children to read with expression because they have grasped the whole thought and it has become their own.

But when we get into the higher grades of the elementary school, we find that the reading deteriorates into a mere desultory, monotonous calling of words. The teacher, not alive to the possibilities there are, in calling forth the wonderful power that the child has of throwing himself into the character, and really becoming that character for the time being, shuts herself in and the child in, and the opportunity is lost for introducing a child to the heroes of all literature in a most interesting way. If the boy of six loves to be Tommy Tucker singing for his supper, will not