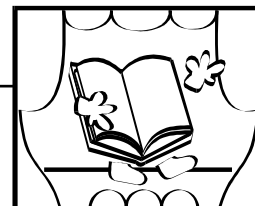


# Readers' Theater

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## ***Revolution is Not a Dinner Party*** by Ying Chang Compestine



(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Ling	Father	Comrade Li
	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3

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Narrator 1: Coming home from school, Ling saw Comrade Li standing in front of her apartment building with a loudspeaker in his hand. With a wide blue belt over his Mao uniform, he looked taller and skinnier.

Ling: I ducked behind the trunk of a milk tree and stared.

Narrator 2: Young people in Mao uniforms ran in and out of Ling's building. On their right arms they wore red armbands that said RED GUARD in yellow characters. Two of them carried Mrs. Wong's sewing machine. Four others had her refrigerator. Her heater was smashed into pieces near the stairs. Neighbors peeked out from behind their curtains.

Narrator 3: Comrade Li's voice boomed around the courtyard through the loudspeaker.

Comrade Li: WE CONFISCATE THESE BOURGEOIS ITEMS IN THE NAME OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

Ling: How could this be the same funny man who did magic tricks for me and who sang in the bathroom?

Narrator 3: She took a deep breath and ran upstairs. To her surprise, Mother sat by the dining room table staring at an empty wall.

Ling: Why wasn't she helping Mrs. Wong? Why didn't she call Father home to protect us? Would the Red Guards take our things next?

Narrator 1: But she was afraid to ask her mother these questions.

Ling: That night I had a horrible dream. Father was taken away by a mob without faces.

Narrator 2: She woke up and ran toward her parents' bedroom.

Ling: I found Father sitting in the living room with a heavy cotton blanket tented over himself and the radio that sat on the round end table. The yellow light from the small lamp cast his shadow on the wall. All I could hear was a humming like tiny mosquitoes.

Narrator 3: Her father had told her the government jammed foreign stations, because Chairman Mao wanted everybody to listen only to the Central China People's Broadcast from Beijing. It played Jiang Quing's propaganda songs and repeated Mao's speeches over and over.

Ling: *(Whispering)* Daddy! What are you listening to?

Narrator 1: Father turned off the radio and lifted up a corner of his blanket.

Father: *(Whispering)* The Voice of America.

Narrator 2: These days, they had to whisper a lot. Ling crawled onto her father's lap and snuggled with him under the blanket.

Ling: Daddy, why do people want to go to America?

Father: Shhh!

Narrator 3: They both glanced toward Comrade Li's apartment.

Father: *(Whispering)* They want to enjoy freedom.

Ling: *(Whispering)* What's freedom?

Father: Freedom is being able to read what you want and say what you think

