

# CHINESE NEW YEAR

## Reader's Theater



**GRADES**  
**4-7**

"Ting Ting and the Monster Nian"





# 7 SPEAKING PARTS

**READER'S THEATER**  
**"Ting Ting and the Monster Nián"**

Characters:

Narrator 1	Yé Yé
Narrator 2	Nián
Ting Ting	Kitten
Nǎi Nai	


Pronunciations:  
Yé Yé (grandfather): YEH-yeh  
Nǎi Nai (grandmother): NYE-NYE  
Nián (year): knee-ENNE

**Narrator 1:** Many years ago, before the Shanghai Tower tickled the skies and the HZMB Bridge connected Hong Kong to the mainland, a little girl named Ting Ting lived with her grandparents in a small village in China.

**Narrator 2:** Ting Ting loved to play outside more than anything, but today was the eve of the new year. Playing outside wasn't safe.

**Nǎi Nai:** (shouting) Ting Ting! It's time to come inside! Hurry, child! Nián comes out tonight!

**Narrator 1:** Ting Ting rushed inside, where her grandfather, Yé Yé, waited with a small bowl of steamed rice and a plate of dumplings for Ting Ting.



**Ting Ting:** Dumplings! My favorite!

**Narrator 2:** Nǎi Nai closed the front door and moved a chair to block the entry.

**Ting Ting:** Nǎi Nai, please tell me the story of Nián again. Do you really think the monster will come tonight?

... always comes on this night each  
... old buildings. If

**More speaking parts =  
More students involved**

# INFO FOR TEACHERS

## ABOUT THE SCRIPT

This story is a work of fiction, based on a traditional Chinese story about the monster Nián. I have lived in Shanghai since 2014, and it is 100% true that Chinese people hang red decorations, wear red, bang on drums, and set off fireworks on the eve of the Lunar New Year.

My script story is different from the one I've heard here in Shanghai. Like any story told in the oral tradition, this story has many different versions. In the version I've heard, the main character is not a little girl but a stubborn old woman who, like Ting Ting, discovers Nián's three fears by accident when she is outside at night on the eve of Lunar New Year.

### STORY SIMILARITIES

The story of Ting Ting is entirely my own invention, but I have left the major pieces of the legend intact. Generally, the different versions of this story (including my script) have several similarities:

- The monster is called Nián, which means "year" or "new year" in Chinese.
- Nián is a hungry monster waking from a long slumber.
- Nián lives either under the mountains or in the sea.
- Nián terrorizes the villagers by destroying crops and homes. Nián may also eat children.
- Someone accidentally discovers Nián's fears when the monster is out at night on the eve of the new year. I've also heard versions where a god or someone with divine knowledge tells the villagers about the monster's fears.
- In every version I've heard, the monster's three fears are: the color red, the sound of firecrackers, and the sound of loud noises.

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