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## **JOHNNY AND SALLY ANN:**

### **The true-life tall tales of Johnny Appleseed and Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind**

**By Tom Smith**

#### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**ACTOR 1: Johnny Appleseed**

**ACTOR 2: Pete**

**ACTOR 3: Woman, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind, Betsy Ross, Belinda**

Alternately, if you'd like to cast a larger group of actors, you may include the optional scene indicated in the script. In that case, the cast would look like this:

**JOHNNY APPLESEED**

**PETE**

**WOMAN 1**

**SALLY ANN THUNDER ANN WHIRLWIND**

**STUDENTS (2 to 27 boys or girls)**

**MISS TANNEHILL**

**BETSY ROSS**

**BELINDA**

**VOICE**

#### **DEDICATION**

**To Kevin Andrew, who is even more amazing than a true-life tall tale.**

*(The American wilderness, circa 1794. JOHNNY APPLESEED comes walking through. He is about 20, congenial, dressed poorly in hand-me-downs and clothes made from sacks. He wears a pot on his head. He stops at a fence post outside a remote cabin.)*

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Excuse me... Miss? May I talk to you for a moment?

**WOMAN:** *(Walking on:)* What is it, Mister? You'd better not be trying to sell me anything. I've got a mess of chores to finish up, and I don't want to waste my time talking to some salesman.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I'm not a salesman. My name is John Chapman.

**WOMAN:** Never heard of ya.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Perhaps you know me by my nickname: Johnny Appleseed?

**WOMAN:** Never heard of ya.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Really? I'm quite famous around these parts.

**WOMAN:** Not to me. What do you want?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, I've been going around the country and planting apple trees. I don't have any money, but I do have these. Apple seeds.

**WOMAN:** Yeah? So?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, I was wondering if you might be interested in a little trade: some apple seeds for a nice dinner.

**WOMAN:** What would I do with apple seeds?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Why, what can't you do with apple seeds? You can plant them and watch them grow up into tall, tall trees. The trees will give you shade on sunny days like today. You can hang a swing from their branches and swing and swing so that you don't have to fan yourself. Or, you can hang a hammock between their trunks and just lie back and listen to the crickets chirp. You can eat the apples. Or you can make apple pie, apple pancakes, apple crisp, apple dumplings, apple turnovers, apple butter, apple fritters, applesauce, candied apples, caramel apples, or whatever. And you can wash all that down with apple juice or apple cider. Plus, you can make apple head dolls from the apple cores, or candied apple peels from the peels, or figure out the initial of your next boyfriend by twisting the apple stem while saying the alphabet and seeing which letter it comes off on. Then you can take the seeds and plant more trees, and eventually you'll have enough apples to eat for the rest of your life, apple juice to drink for the rest of your life, and enough trees to build a house!

**WOMAN:** I already have a house.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I know that. But maybe you'll get married to some nice fella and he'll build an even nicer one for you.

**WOMAN:** All that from just these few seeds?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I guarantee! Or my name isn't Johnny Appleseed.

**WOMAN:** Well... I did make more supper than I can eat...

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I'll even throw in a few apples for dessert.

**WOMAN:** All right, Mister, you made yourself a deal. Now come on in for some stew. It ain't much, but it's all I got.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** It'll be just fine!

*(They exit into her house. From offstage we hear:)*

**PETE:** *(Off:)* Betty? Betty? Where are you girl?

*(PETE walks in carrying an empty rope. He is about 16, dressed well but with poor taste.)*

Here Betty, Betty, Betty. Here girl. Where are you? Mama's gonna be really upset if I don't bring you back home, you dumb ol' cow. You shouldn't have run away like that: opening up your pen and taking off like lightning. Well, maybe your pen forgot to get shut. Well, maybe I forgot to shut your pen because I fell asleep instead of finishing up my chores. All I know is that I've got to get you back home. Mama's gonna be awfully mad at me if I don't. You're the only cow we got left. Betty? Here Betty, Betty, Betty. Here girl.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** *(Re-entering, calling off:)* Thanks again for the stew, ma'am. I surely do appreciate it! And good luck with those seeds.

**PETE:** Hey, Mister. Have you seen my cow, Betty?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Nope. Then again, I haven't really been looking for her. What's she look like?

**PETE:** A cow.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I know that, but what color is she?

**PETE:** Oh. She's brown. About yea high. Big sad eyes. Kinda skinny.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I haven't seen her.

**PETE:** I'm gonna get in so much trouble!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** How did you lose her?

**PETE:** Somebody left her pen open.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Who?

**PETE:** I'm not sure. Maybe a cattle rustler or something. *(Beat.)* Or a monster. *(Beat.)* But it was probably me.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, I haven't run into her. But if I do, I'll tell her to get back home.

**PETE:** Hey, Mister, wait a minute! I don't mean to be nosy or anything, but how come you're wearing a pot on your head?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, a while back I traded some apple seeds for it. I figured I might need a pot for cooking. I like to travel light, and I didn't want to carry it around with me, so I wear it on my head. Keeps the rain and the snow out. Plus, I can use it to make music.

*(He bangs on it like a drum and sings badly off key.)*

**How's it sound?**

**PETE:** Maybe you should have traded for a skillet instead.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** So maybe it doesn't make the prettiest sound in the world. But how does it look?

**PETE:** Like a pot on your head.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, I'm not trying to win any beauty contests.

**PETE:** That's good.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** My name's John Chapman. But most folks know me by the name Johnny Appleseed.

**PETE:** Never heard of you.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** That's all right. I'm not trying to win any popularity contests either. What's your name?

**PETE:** Pete.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Just Pete?

**PETE:** I guess so. I haven't ever been called anything else.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, Pete, nice to meet you.

**PETE:** What are you doing around these parts?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, I'm walking around passing out apple seeds to people.

**PETE:** How come?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Times are hard. Some people don't have very much to eat. So I trade them these seeds so they can grow apple trees and that way they can eat for the rest of their lives.

**PETE:** No offense, Mr. Appleblossom—

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Appleseed. And call me Johnny.

**PETE:** —Johnny. But who'd want to eat just apples for the rest of their lives?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** They don't have to eat just apples. There's a whole heap of things you can do with apple seeds.

**PETE:** Oh yeah? Like what?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Why, what can't you do with apple seeds? You can plant them and watch them grow up into tall, tall trees. The trees will give you shade on sunny days like today. You can hang a swing from their branches and swing and swing so that you don't have to fan yourself. Or, you can hang a hammock between their trunks and just lie back and listen to the crickets chirp. You can eat the apples. Or you can make apple pie, apple pancakes, apple crisp, apple dumplings, apple turnovers, apple butter, apple fritters, applesauce, candied apples, caramel apples, or whatever. And you can wash all that down with apple juice or apple cider. Plus, you can make apple head dolls from the apple cores, or candied apple peels from the peels, or figure out the initial of your next boyfriend by twisting the apple stem while saying the alphabet and seeing which letter it comes off on. Then you can take the seeds and plant more

trees, and eventually you'll have enough apples to eat for the rest of your life, apple juice to drink for the rest of your life, and enough trees to build a house!

**PETE:** No offense, Johnny Applepudding, but that sounded a little rehearsed.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** People ask the same question a lot. Hey, I got an idea! Why don't you walk with me a spell? I'm going to be wandering around, looking for the next cabin or house or whatever, and you can keep me company. Maybe we'll run into your cow, Betty.

**PETE:** That's a great idea!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, come on then.

*(They start to walk.)*

**PETE:** Ummm...do you really wear that pot as a hat?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Don't see why I shouldn't.

**PETE:** Ok. But maybe we can trade it for a real hat somewhere.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Only if I can cook in it.

*(They exit. Time passes. A week or so later.)*

**PETE:** Slow down. You're walking like your britches are on fire!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Sorry. I'm just so used to traveling on my own that I forget there's someone else. I'm sorry we never did find Betty.

**PETE:** That's ok. She probably made her way back home by now anyway.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** You think so?

**PETE:** Sure. And if not, I wouldn't want to be back home anyway. Mama will be awfully mad at me losing our last cow like that. And you don't want to see Mama when she's mad! Whew, it's getting hot! Sun's almost directly overhead. Must be right around lunchtime.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Are you hungry, Pete?

**PETE:** Not for apples! Don't get me wrong, I like apples. I even liked that dessert you made last night and named after my cow, Apple Brown Betty. But we've been eating apples, apples and nothing but apples for days now. How can you stand it?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I don't know. I just love the taste of a good apple. And ever since I've been eating them, I've never gotten sick. Not a cold, not a sneeze, not even a sniffle. I guess an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

**PETE:** Can I ask you a personal question, Mr. Applecore?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Appleseed. I suppose so.

**PETE:** Why do you wear all those hand-me-downs from people?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** What else should I wear?

**PETE:** You could buy yourself some new clothes. I saw you with a beautiful gold watch the other day.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** You mean, this one?

*(He pulls it out.)*

**PETE:** Yeah. Why don't you just sell that and buy yourself some clothes? Something nicer. Less...sack-like?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I could never sell this watch! It's the only thing I have to remind me of my family. My father gave it to me right before I left home. I promised him I'd always hold onto it.

**PETE:** I know, but it doesn't seem like you have much use for it wandering around like this. And you could use the money. For food or clothes.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** (*Putting it away:*) I'm happy with what I already have. These clothes came from people who barely had enough, but still they shared them with me in exchange for some apple seeds. To me, they're worth a lot more than any fancy duds.

**PETE:** Johnny, how many people do you think we've met over the last few days?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Oh, I'd reckon about five or six a day, so that makes it about 35, 40.

**PETE:** That's a lot of people. And they all seem to be struggling. I didn't know there were so many poor people here in America.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** You know, Pete, the Revolutionary War a few years ago took its toll on people. A lot of people lost their sons or their husbands. There're a lot of widows trying to make ends meet so they can feed their family. I like to help out if I can.

**PETE:** (*Seeing something offstage:*) What's that over there?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Where?

**PETE:** There, behind that tree. Listen.

(*They hear a RUSTLING NOISE.*)

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Sounds like a bear.

**PETE:** A bear!?! Let's get out of here!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** A bear won't do you any harm.

**PETE:** What are you talking about? Bears are dangerous. We need to scram!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Pete, now listen to me. I know for most people meeting a bear in the woods is a scary, scary thing. Heck, I even used to be scared of them. But I've been traveling around the wilderness for years and years, and all the animals in the forest have gotten used to me being around. Last winter I got so tuckered out from all my travels that I fell asleep in an empty tree trunk. It was warm and full of moss and I just ended up sleeping until the spring. Well guess what? That moss that was so soft and warm? It turned out to be a family of bears, sleeping in the same tree trunk. I got out of there, walked away, and they never bothered me. Stuff like that happens all the time to me.

**PETE:** Sleeping with a family of bears? Is that story really true, Johnny?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Pete, there's a lot of stories about me. Some of them are true, and some of them are all mixed up with a lot of tall tale. I can't remember anymore which ones are really true, and which ones are sort of true. It's all part of the true-life tall tales of Johnny Appleseed.

*(More RUSTLING, then the sound fades off in the distance.)*

See, we scared it away with all our talking. It didn't mean no harm.

**PETE:** Don't get me wrong, but I sort of wish we had seen a bear. I mean, I'm glad you're letting me come along with you, but with all these stories you've been telling me, I kinda thought your life would be a little more exciting than this. I thought I'd have all sorts of adventures I could tell my friends about.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Stick around, Pete. Something exciting always happens to Johnny Appleseed.

*(Just then SALLY ANN enters. She is a large woman, about 18, feisty and full of life. She carries an axe.)*

**SALLY ANN:** Who's there?

**PETE:** Who are you?

**SALLY ANN:** I asked you first.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Howdy, ma'am. I'm Johnny Appleseed and this is Pete.

**SALLY ANN:** I'm Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind. And this is my part of the woods. What do you want?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Nothing, ma'am. We're just passing through, planting apple seeds and trying to help people. Are you interested in some apple seeds?

**SALLY ANN:** What for? What can I do with apple seeds?

**PETE:** Don't ask him that.

**SALLY ANN:** Why not?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Why, what can't you do with apple seeds? You can plant them and watch them grow up into tall, tall trees. The trees will give you shade on sunny days like today. You can hang a swing from their branches and swing and swing so that you don't have to fan yourself. Or, you can hang a hammock between their trunks and just lie back and listen to the crickets chirp. You can eat the apples. Or you can make apple pie, apple pancakes, apple crisp, apple dumplings, apple turnovers, apple butter, apple fritters, applesauce, candied apples, caramel apples, or whatever. And you can wash all that down with apple juice or apple cider. Plus, you can make apple head dolls from the apple cores, or candied apple peels from the peels, or figure out the initial of your next boyfriend by twisting the apple stem while saying the alphabet and seeing which letter it comes off on.

**SALLY ANN:** I don't want a boyfriend. I'm happy on my own.

**PETE:** I thought every girl wants a boyfriend.

**SALLY ANN:** Not me. I do just fine by myself. I've been taking care of myself for ten years already.

**PETE:** Really? But how? You're just a girl.

**SALLY ANN:** What do you mean, "just a girl"?

**PETE:** Well, you know... How are you going to feed yourself? You need a husband to work and make money.

**SALLY ANN:** I don't need money. And I catch my own food. Every day I walk over to that stream and I get 10 fish before you can say "lickety-split."

**PETE:** But fishing is man's work!

**SALLY ANN:** Not when a woman does it.

**PETE:** I don't believe you. I've never once seen a woman catch her own fish.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Pete!

**PETE:** Well I don't. Prove it, Sally Ann whatever-your-name-is. I'll tell you what; let's have a race. The first person to catch 10 fish from that stream is the winner.

**SALLY ANN:** Fine.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Sally Ann, you don't have to do this. Pete's just talking big.

**SALLY ANN:** I got no problem. It's Pete that should be scared.

**PETE:** I'm not scared of some girl. Ready? On your mark, get set, go!

*(Pete jumps in the stream, reaching at fish but missing each time. Sally Ann is stretching and yawning, taking her time walking over to the stream. Pete reaches in again and again, always missing, sometimes falling. Eventually, Sally Ann gets into the water.)*

**SALLY ANN:** Hey, Pete, what did I say that word was? You know, that one...?

**PETE:** You mean, "lickety-"

*(As he says it, she pulls out 10 fish.)*

What the...?

**SALLY ANN:** I told you. Ten fish before you could say lickety-split.

**PETE:** That's not fair. You cheated! You probably had those fish in your pockets or something!

**SALLY ANN:** I don't have any pockets!

**PETE:** Well, I still say you cheated!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Pete, c'mon. She won fair and square. Let's just—

**SALLY ANN:** All right then, choose something else. I'll prove to you that I'm faster, smarter, and better than any boy in any thing.

**PETE:** Ok, Miss Know-it-all: I challenge you to a foot race. From here to that tree way way over there and back again.

**SALLY ANN:** Fine.

**PETE:** On your mark, get set, go!

*(He takes off.)*

**SALLY ANN:** Your friend is a little pigheaded, Mr. Appleseed.



**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Call me Johnny. And yes, I know. But Pete is a good person at heart. Don't you think you should start running?

**SALLY ANN:** I'll give him a few more seconds head start. Three...two...one...be right back!

*(She runs off.)*

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Whew! Look at her run. She's like a cheetah! I've never seen a person run that fast before.

*(He pulls out his watch and times her. A few moments later, Sally Ann returns.)*

You ran that whole distance in under ten seconds! You're amazing!

**SALLY ANN:** I hate showing him up like that, but when boys think they're better than me just because they're boys, it really steams me up. That's a beautiful watch.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** My father gave it to me before I left home.

**SALLY ANN:** That was awfully nice of him.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Yes it was. What about you? Do you live out here by yourself?

**SALLY ANN:** Yep. I used to live with my 9 brothers, but things got crowded at home, so I thought I'd go out on my own. On my 8th birthday I decided to go live with the animals, and that's what I did. Been living out here in the woods with the animals ever since. Had a leopard teach me to run. A shark taught me to swim. I've arm-wrestled gorillas and learned to sing from the birds. Heck, I even enrolled in a school and learned all I could until I got as smart as the teacher. They didn't have anything else to teach me, so I just headed back out to the woods.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Wait a minute! You're not the same Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind who saw eagles attacking a man? They say you yelled at those eagles so loud that the feathers fell off their heads, and now they're bald eagles.

**SALLY ANN:** I was just trying to help.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I'm awfully glad to meet you in person, ma'am.

**SALLY ANN:** Likewise, Johnny. Have you been out in the woods a long time?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Yes, ma'am. Been living off the generosity of folks for the past few years. Trading them apple seeds for clothing and food and such. Helping a lot of them get back on their feet.

**SALLY ANN:** That's awfully big-hearted of you, Johnny. The world needs more kindness like yours.

**PETE:** *(Slowly running back on, panting heavily:)* No fair! You must have taken a short cut.

**SALLY ANN:** You saw me pass you going to the tree and then coming back again!

**PETE:** I know, but I still think you cheated. Maybe you have special shoes or something. One more test!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Now, Pete, c'mon... She won fair and square. Just like before.

**PETE:** One more.

**SALLY ANN:** Fine. One more.

**PETE:** Ok, the first one to move ten stones from here to over there is the winner. Ready, on your mark, get set, go!

*(He grabs the first stone. He slowly lugs it off. He comes back, exhausted, and reaches down for the second stone.)*

**Whatsamatter?** Too weak to do it?

**SALLY ANN:** No, I just don't know why you're doing it the hard way.

**PETE:** What do you mean?

**SALLY ANN:** Stand back for just a second.

*(She suddenly starts spinning, creating a tornado, which blows/pulls the 10 rocks off.)*

My fifth name's not Whirlwind for nothing, you know.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Now do you give up, Pete?

**PETE:** Let's arm-wrestle!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Pete!

**PETE:** C'mon! First one to—

*(Sally Ann pins his arm.)*

Ok, let's have a yelling contest.

*(Sally Ann roars, the force pushing Pete around.)*

How about singing?

*(She opens her mouth and out comes a beautiful aria.)*

I give up!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Finally!

**SALLY ANN:** Don't be upset, Pete. I didn't win all those contests just to make you look bad. I just wanted to prove to you that some girls are better than some boys at things. Just like some boys can be better than some girls. It all depends on the person.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** C'mon, Pete, we'd better get going. Sally Ann doesn't need our apple seeds; let's go find some people who do. It was great meeting you, Sally Ann!

**SALLY ANN:** You too, Johnny. Maybe we'll meet again sometime.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I'd like that.

**SALLY ANN:** Me too.

**PETE:** When we do, you'd better be ready. I took it easy on you because I didn't want you to cry when you lost. But next time, I won't hold back.

**SALLY ANN:** Good, Pete, I like a challenge! Bye!

*(She exits.)*

**PETE:** I can't believe it...beaten by a girl.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Not a girl: a faster runner, a stronger arm-wrestler, a better singer, a—

**PETE:** Ok, ok, ok. Let's just keep going. Yeesh!

*(OPTIONAL SCENE: Time passes. A group of STUDENTS rush up to Johnny and Pete. Each student line of dialogue may be assigned as your production sees fit.)*

**STUDENT:** Please, sir, can you help us?

**STUDENT:** We're lost!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Lost?

**STUDENT:** Yes. We were sent out by our teacher to look for samples of plants.

**STUDENT:** Leaves and such.

**STUDENT:** We're supposed to put them in a journal, identify them and write about them!

**STUDENT:** I've already collected seven. Look!

**STUDENT:** We were supposed to return to school an hour ago.

**STUDENT:** But we got lost.

**STUDENT:** Everything looks the same out here.

**STUDENT:** Our parents will get worried!

**PETE:** We can help you get back to your school!

**STUDENT:** You can?

**STUDENT:** Oh, thank you!

**STUDENTS:** Thank you!

**PETE:** Sure. Now, where is your school located?

**STUDENT:** Well, if we knew that, we wouldn't have bothered you.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** I think what Pete means is, what town is your school in?

**STUDENT:** Oh! Mansfield, sir.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Well, that's to the west of us. So you'll want to head... *(Pointing:)* that way.

**STUDENT:** How did you know that, sir?

**STUDENT:** You don't even have a compass!

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Just follow the sun. It rises in the east and sets in the west. So, just follow the sun's path and there you have it!

**PETE:** Would you like us to walk with you? We could take you back to your school ourselves.

**STUDENT:** Yes!

**STUDENT:** Oh, could you?

**MISS TANNEHILL:** *(Off:)* Children! Children, where are you?

**STUDENT:** It's our teacher!

**STUDENT:** We're over here!

**MISS TANNEHILL:** (*Rushing on:*) Children! At last I've found you. I've been worried sick!

**STUDENT:** We got lost.

**MISS TANNEHILL:** I can see that. And who's this?

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** John Chapman, ma'am. But you can call me Johnny Appleseed.

**MISS TANNEHILL:** You're Johnny Appleseed?

**STUDENT:** The Johnny Appleseed?

**STUDENT:** The one we've read about?

**STUDENT:** Goodness!

**PETE:** And I'm Pete.

**STUDENT:** We didn't read about you.

**PETE:** Not yet, you haven't! But I'm Johnny's best friend, and soon I'll be in your books as well!

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