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*This play is dedicated  
to my wife, Ying-hsiu Lu,  
and to my son, David Braden (D2),  
who provide all that I need:  
peace, love, and laughter.*

## Sally and the Grouch

**CHILDREN'S COMEDY.** Sally lives next door to a big grouch! Everyone steers clear of Mr. Irks, but not Sally. She's determined to discover why he's so grouchy. But first, Sally must make her way through Mr. Irks' front yard, which is full of grouchy trees, grouchy bushes, and even a grouchy squirrel! It seems grouchiness is contagious. Will Sally turn into a grouch, too, or will her cheerfulness rub off on the grouches?

**Performance Time:** Approximately 15-20 minutes.

## Characters

(1 f, 10 flexible, extras)

**SALLY:** Grade-schooler; friendly, brave, and inquisitive.

**IRKS:** The biggest grouch of all! Can be male or female.

**TREE 1, 2, 3:** Grouches.

**BUSH 1, 2, 3, 4:** Grouches.

**SQUIRREL:** A grouchy complainer.

**HOUSE:** A grouchy snob; appears as a front door, or can be played as an offstage voice.

**EXTRAS (Optional):** As grouchy trees and bushes.

## Setting

Outside the Grouch's house, there is a sidewalk, a fence, and a yard with trees and bushes. Inside the Grouch's house, there is a couch, chair, window, and end table. The walls are decorated with framed pictures of relatives/friends, and there are stacks of loose pictures lying about the room. The furniture is covered with sheets.

## Synopsis of Scenes

**Scene 1:** Outside the Grouch's house.

**Scene 2:** Inside the Grouch's house.

**Scene 3:** Inside the Grouch's house.

## Props

Tree branch/stick	Nickel
Baseball cap	Photographs
Seashell	Picture frames
Fishing sinker	Photo albums
Plastic toy soldier	Sheets

## Sound Effects

Rustling tree branches  
Crashing/breaking branches  
Knock at the door

## Scene 1

*(AT RISE: Outside the fenced yard of the Grouch's house. Sally is on the sidewalk playing Sticks and Monsters. She has a stick in her hand and pretends it is a laser gun. She makes laser gun sounds as she pretends to shoot imaginary monsters. On the other side of the fence, Trees 1, 2, 3 and Bushes 1, 2, 3, 4 stand still. The House, dressed as a front door, stands to one side of the stage.)*

SALLY: No monster can get me! I am the fighting princess of the Forever Isles! Take that! Another one? Pow! Pow! *(She shoots again.)* Got him! I bet there's no monsters anywhere that could beat me.

IRKS: *(Offstage.)* Get away! *(Sally pokes her finger through the fence.)* I saw that! No trespassing! Get away!

*(Sally turns, points her stick through the fence.)*

SALLY: Grouchy monster! *(She turns away from the yard and begins playing with her stick again, this time using it as a sword and punctuating her words with slashes.)* That guy is wrecking everything. He takes away all the fun from the whole street. He's always yelling at everybody, and his house is a big mess. And his yard is big old mess, and he's nothing but a big mean monster! *(Sally stops, and facing the audience, raises her stick in a dramatic gesture.)* Everybody is afraid to fight the grouch! But I am not afraid. I am Sally! I will fight the grouch and beat him! *(Sally crosses to one side of the stage. She either slips beneath the fence or pushes a board to one side and squeezes through the fence. Trees 1, 2, 3 and Bushes 1, 2, 3, 4 wait for her on the other side. Sally stoops down, picks up a plastic toy soldier, and looks at it.)* Cool! *(She puts it in her pocket.)*

TREE 1: *(Slowly, in a deep voice.)* Leave!

SALLY: What was that?!

TREE 2, 3: Leave!

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SALLY: Wow, talking trees!

ALL TREES: Leave!

SALLY: You mean "leaf"? *(She mimics the trees, speaking very slowly with a deep voice.)* Leaf, leaf, leaf!

TREE 1: *(Normal voice.)* Just go, okay? You're not supposed to be here. You'll just fall down and hurt yourself, or run into something, or break something. So just go. Go, go, go.

SALLY: You're a grouch, and I don't want to go.

TREE 1: Well, you have to go. You must go. Go, go, go! That's all, and that's final!

*(The Trees wait, but Sally only shakes her head "no.")*

TREE 2, 3: Leave!

SALLY: Leaf? Sorry, but it's not working. I mean, what are you going to do, chase me?

TREE 1: Yes, we could chase you, but we really don't have time. We are all quite busy, and you are a bother.

SALLY: Busy? You don't look busy!

TREE 1: We are very busy. We have important work to do. Can't you see we're growing?

SALLY: I don't see anything.

TREE 1: Well, we're not in a rush. It takes time.

SALLY: Fine, then I'll stay and watch you grow. That should be very relaxing.

TREE 1: No! You're a bother! You keep talking, and we have work to do.

SALLY: Then I'll go. *(She starts off toward the House.)*

TREE 1: Not that way! Oh, never mind, just go!

TREES 2, 3: Leave!

SALLY: Leaf, you grouchy old trees!

*(She trips over Bush 1.)*

BUSH 1: Oh, great, step on us why don't you?! First the trees take all our light and drop leaves all over us, and now you

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come along and step on us! It's terrible! It's horrible! It's awful! It isn't fair!

*(Bush 2 and Bush 3 speak quickly in squeaky voices.)*

BUSH 2, 3: Not fair! Not fair! Terrible! Awful! Horrible!  
Not fair!

BUSH 1: Why don't you just go away?!

BUSH 2, 3: Go away! Go away! Go away!

SALLY: All right, I'm going!

*(She turns and steps on Bush 4.)*

BUSH 4: Help! Watch where you're going!

SALLY: Sorry! I'm sorry. I'll be careful, okay?

BUSH 2, 3: Help! Help!

SALLY: I'm going. I'm going!

*(Enter Squirrel.)*

SQUIRREL: Wa-wa-wait a minute. What about me? You think you can just go around walking on bushes and talking to trees and forget all about me? Do you think my life is easy? Do you? Well?

SALLY: Okay then, what do you want?

SQUIRREL: I want you to go away, of course. I'm a very busy and important squirrel. I have nuts to store, if these stupid trees ever drop any, that is.

TREE 1: *(To Squirrel.)* Why should I go to all the trouble of growing nuts just so you can eat them?

BUSH 1: *(To Squirrel.)* Yeah, and you climb all over us!

SQUIRREL: I have rights! I'm supposed to eat nuts. I'm supposed to climb around. It's called the *ecology*! Don't you know anything?!

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SALLY: The squirrel has a point. Besides, he makes more trees because he buries the nuts and then forgets where he puts them all.

SQUIRREL: *(To Sally, angry.)* Forget, do I? How would you like me to forget your nose isn't a nut and bury that?

BUSH: *(To Squirrel.)* Yeah, and why don't you climb on her, too? Teach her to mind her own business!

SQUIRREL: *(To Sally.)* What are you doing here anyway? You're not important at all. Can't you see we're all very busy? We don't have time for silly little girls.

SALLY: I'm trying to leave, if you'll just let me.

SQUIRREL: Fine, just leave then! It's plain you don't care at all about trees and bushes and squirrels.

*(Sally starts off again toward the House and waves goodbye to them.)*

SALLY: Bye-bye.

TREES/BUSHES/SQUIRREL: Not that way!

SQUIRREL: There's a terrible grouch who lives there.

*(Sally laughs and continues toward the House.)*

SALLY: I have to keep going. I can't let all the fun get sucked out of the world by a bunch of grouches!

ALL TREES: Leave! Leave! Leave!

*(Blackout.)*

## Scene 2

*(AT RISE: Outside the Grouch's house. Sally approaches the House, whistling a merry tune.)*

HOUSE: Oh, stop that hideous noise!

SALLY: I'm just whistling. Nice day, isn't it?

HOUSE: Proper guests do not whistle.

SALLY: I was only whistling because I'm happy, and it's a nice day.

HOUSE: My paint is cracking in the sun, and my porch has dry rot. It is not a nice day.

SALLY: Sorry.

HOUSE: Indeed, and you have nothing to be happy about. You haven't even been invited here.

SALLY: I'm just happy because I'm happy.

HOUSE: Then you'll be happy to leave.

SALLY: I don't want to leave. I want to come in. I have someone to see.

HOUSE: That would be Mr. Irks. Feel free to take him with you when you go!

SALLY: You'll let me in then?

HOUSE: Certainly not.

SALLY: Why not? You don't seem to like him much. Why shouldn't I visit him?

HOUSE: Mr. Irks used to be an important man with an important family and lots of visitors. I was an important house. I have lots of rooms for very important things to happen in. You are clearly not very important.

SALLY: But you said Mr. Irks isn't important either, and he's already inside. So, why can't I come in, too?

HOUSE: Do you have any special talents? Are you famous for any reason at all?

SALLY: Well...my Mom says I'm the biggest nuisance in the whole world, and I can touch my nose with my tongue.

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Look! *(Sally makes a show of touching her nose with her tongue, or some other trick.)* And I can wiggle my ears, too. See? *(She moves her head from side to side or does some other trick to showcase one of her "talents.")*

HOUSE: That's the most disgusting display I've ever seen.

Your mother is right. You are a nuisance! Now, go away.

SALLY: I won't. I'll just knock on your door until someone opens it.

*(Sally knocks on the House.)*

HOUSE: You can't come in. Go away!

SALLY: If you don't let me in, I'll enter every contest in the whole world using this address. I hope you like lots of mail and salesmen!

*(She knocks on the House again.)*

HOUSE: All right, all right! You win, but I warn you, Mr. Irks is quite grouchy, and he won't be happy to see you.

**[End of Freeview]**