

READERS' THEATER BASED ON  
**The Kite That Bridged Two Nations : Homan Walsh and the  
First Niagara Suspension Bridge**

Written by Alexis O'Neill  
Illustrated by Terry Widener

Copyright © 2013 by Alexis O'Neill and Terry Widener  
Published by Calkins Creek, an imprint of Highlights  
Reproduced by permission of the publisher

Arranged by CYRM committee members for classroom use only

Characters:

Narrator 1	Narrator 4	Father
Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Homan

Father:

Put the kite away. Apply yourself.

Homan:

Father wanted me to always study.

Narrator 1:

But Homan wanted to study the wind.

Narrator 2:

He wanted to read it, calculate its lift.

Narrator 3:

And gauge how long the line should be.

Homan:

A handbill caught my eye.

Narrator 4:

Kite flying contest

Narrator 1:

\$10 prize

Narrator 2: Be the first boy whose kite

Narrator 3:

Will reach from America to Canada.

Narrator 4:

The handbill was signed by an engineer.

Homan:

My kite string could start a bridge?

Narrator 1:

Homan's brain could only concentrate on the contest.

Narrator 2:

He built a new kite.

Narrator 3:

Homan called the kite Union.

Narrator 4:

Because in his head, Union bridged the gap between the countries.

Homan:

I took the ferry to the Canadian side of the falls.

Narrator 1:

Homan launched his kite from the icy river bank.

Narrator 2:

Union stayed aloft all day.

Narrator 3:

People gave him food throughout the day.

Narrator 4:

Homan's rivals were treated in the same way.

Homan:

I stomped my feet to stay warm during the night.

Narrator 1: Bonfires were on both sides of the falls to provide warmth.

Narrator 2:

The kite string snapped and broke.

Narrator 3:

Homan could not find his kite.

Narrator 4:

Ice filled the river and the ferry did not run.

Homan:

I had to stay in Elgin for eight days.

Narrator 1:

Homan went home as soon as the river cleared.

Father:

I found your kite in pieces. You can make it again.

Homan:

I started work immediately.

Narrator 1:

Homan began a second try to fly his kite across the falls.

Narrator 2:

He took the ferry to Canada once again.

Homan:

I launched my kite from a cliff.

Narrator 3:

The kite struggled in the wind.

Narrator 4:

Union took the breeze and sailed to the American side.

Homan:

Union had made the connection between the two countries.

Father:

A stronger string and then ropes stretched across until the cable could take its place.

Homan:

My line was the first step in beginning the bridge and even though I am older now, I still itch to fly a kite.