



Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

For five readers

Narrator

Naomi

Owen

Gram

Skyla/Fabiola



Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

The author grants permission for this script to be used by educators or librarians for student or teacher performances in classrooms or educational settings. This script may not be sold or used in performances for profit.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **NARRATOR**

*Becoming Naomi León* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **NAOMI**

There we were, minding our lives with the same obedience as a clock ticking, and crowded around the drop-down table in the living-room/kitchen of Baby Beluga.

### **OWEN**

That was what Gram called our Airstream trailer.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

She was the absolute expert at calling things what they resembled and thought it looked like a miniature whale next to all the double-wides at Avocado Acres Trailer Rancho.

**OWEN**

We had already put away the dinner dishes from Wednesday chicken bake

**NARRATOR**

And Owen started racing through his second-grade homework like a horse on a tear. People were usually fooled by his looks and thought he was low in school.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**

This was due to being born with his head tilted to one side and scrunched down next to his shoulder. It straightened a little after three surgeries at



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Children's Hospital but he still talked with a permanent frog voice because of something inside being pinched.

### **GRAM**

Contrary to people's first opinions, he got the best grades in his class.

### **NARRATOR**

Gram, in her usual polyester pant suit and running shoes, was doing her weekly hair set, rolling what little blue hair she had on those new bristle rollers that require no hair pins.

### **NAOMI**

And I was putting the final touches on my latest soap carving. But I didn't get to finish because someone knocked on our door.

### **OWEN**

The knocking became a pounding and someone yelled,



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**SKYLA, hollering**

Anyone home?

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**  
**(Sounding confused)**

That's not Fabiola.

**NARRATOR**

Their neighbor, Fabiola, came over every night, Monday through Friday, to watch Wheel of Fortune. So far, Gram and Fabiola had watched 743 during-the-week episodes . . .

**OWEN**

. . .without missing once! It was their claim to fame.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**

Naomi, you expecting anyone?

**NAOMI**

I shook my head.

**SKYLA**

I said, 'Anyone home!'

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

The voice at the door sounded strangely familiar but I couldn't put it to a face. Setting my bowl of soap carvings aside, my hand twitched and I missed the counter.

**NARRATOR**

Everything tumbled to the floor in a rain of white feathery shavings.

**GRAM**

For heaven's sake, Naomi. That looks like a fox got into the hen house. Clean that up lickety-split and I'll get the door.

**OWEN**

Gram got up and turned off the television and reached the door in one step.

**GRAM**

I hope it isn't someone trying to sell me something and me in my clown head!



Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **OWEN**

She was referring to the yellow and purple curlers and Naomi and I never argued with her description because they **DID** give that effect.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **NARRATOR**

If it *was* a salesperson at the door, though, they'd have to talk to Gram through the screen because she never, ever set foot outside the trailer in her hair curlers.

### **OWEN**

Gram opened the door. She narrowed her eyes like she was trying to focus real hard.

### **NAOMI**





*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

While I cleaned up the soap mess, I craned my neck to see who was standing on the step.

**SKYLA**

Well, aren't you going to invite me in?

**NAOMI**

Gram truly looked like she'd seen an apparition.

**OWEN**

Which is what she calls a ghost.

**NARRATOR**

She finally stepped aside and a lady walked in pulling a big black plastic garbage bag, which she had to tug through the small door opening.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan



Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **SKYLA**

I got my belongings to fit in this one bag and that's a miracle. You all were hard to find. I looked in three phone books before I found the address. I never suspected you'd be living in a trailer park!

### **NARRATOR**

She wore jeans, red boots, a black leather jacket and a hefty splash of sweet gardenia perfume.

### **OWEN**

Her hair looked like that crayon called *maroon*, the one that's not purple and not red, but something in between.

### **NAOMI**

And for some reason I couldn't take my eyes off her lipstick. It was the exact same color as her hair and went up and down in a perfect rounded M on her top lip. Owen sniffed the sweet air. The lady looked at Owen and me.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**SKYLA (sing-song)**

Hi ---

**NAOMI**

When she got no more than a blink from us, she sat down on the covered bench that served as the seat for the kitchen table.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**OWEN**

She took a long look at us then turned to Gram, who was still holding the door wide open.

**SKYLA**

Just look at these babies!



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**

All I could think was that nobody in their right mind would ever mistake me for a baby.

**NARRATOR**

Gram finally shut the door.

**SKYLA**

My you two have gotten big!

**NAOMI**

A strange queasy feeling crawled around my stomach.

**SKYLA**

Naomi? Owen? Get yourselves on over here and give me a hug!



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

Gram shook her head back and forth, still looking dazed.

**GRAM**

You can't just waltz in here after all these years and expect these children to recognize you.

**SKYLA**

Don't be silly! Children always know their mother. Don't you darlings?

**NAOMI**

The words swarmed in my mind.

**OWEN**

Our mother?



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**

My heart pounded so hard that I feared it would leap across the room, and my thoughts started jumping up and down on a trampoline and bouncing off the corners of my mind.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

Her face was round like Owen's and her skin was so white it was almost pink, like Owen's.

**NAOMI**

I supposed that comes from all the Oklahoma in her but she didn't look anything like the pictures of the blond teenager that Gram had shown us over



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

the years. Still, her eyes and the smell of her perfume were strangely familiar.

**GRAM**

Naomi. Owen. Go on in your room so I can talk to Terri Lynn.

**SKYLA**

Oh, that's not my name anymore. I changed it. To Skyla. Isn't it beautiful? Naomi and Owen, come on over here. I would like to hug my children.

**OWEN**

We looked at Gram and she nodded.

**NAOMI**

Owen went first and reached up to hug Skyla, but before he could, she said,



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**SKYLA**

Oh, look. You have something stuck to your shirt.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

She reached down and started to pull off the long piece of tape pressed across his chest. Owen clasped his hands over the tape.

**GRAM AND NAOMI**

No!

**NAOMI**

He...he likes it.

**GRAM**

It's just a little comfort thing he does.





*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **NARRATOR**

Some kids had blankets or stuffed animals they dragged around. Others got contentment from twirling their hair or sucking their thumbs.

### **NAOMI**

Owen had to have tape stuck to his shirt – the clear kind people used to wrap presents. For some reason it brought him a peculiar satisfaction.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **SKYLA**

**[Looking at Gram]**

He wears it on purpose? Woman, what have you done to this boy?

### **GRAM**



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

He's just fine. There's no harm done.

**NARRATOR**

Owen looked at Skyla as if she was a fairy princess, but he still didn't take his hands off the tape. He gave her his biggest jack-o-lantern smile.

**NAOMI**

I swore his mouth was too big for his face. Then he said, in a dreamy sort of way. . .

**OWEN**  
**(adoringly)**

It's all right. You didn't know.

**NAOMI**

I walked over to Skyla and she put her hands on my shoulders, keeping me at arms length.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

She did that sort of leaning-in type of hug, with a quick cheek-to-cheek touch. It was not the “I-haven’t-seen-you-in-seven-years” type of hug that Naomi would have expected. Then she finally did the same to Owen.

**NAOMI**

I put my arm around Mr. Starry Eyes and herded him to the bedroom. As soon as we were there, Owen grabbed my hands and started jumping up and down.

**OWEN**

It’s our mother! It’s our mother! Maybe she missed us and wants to know all about us and has presents for us...



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**

Shhhh. Owen, stop! We were only a lick and a promise from the living-room/kitchen and separated by a flimsy accordion door, which I did not shut. I wanted to hear the conversation word for word.

**SKYLA**

I need a place to hang out for awhile.

**GRAM**

These children don't know you.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**SKYLA**

Well it's about time they did.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**

You should have thought of that years ago. I'm not going to have you coming in here, Terri Lynn, and messing with their lives.

**SKYLA**

I told you, my name is Skyla.

**GRAM**

And where did that come from?

**SKYLA**

My new boyfriend, Clive. He said I didn't look like a Terri Lynn. He said I looked beautiful, like the sky. I'm Skyla Jones now. I went back to my maiden name. And for your information, I'm not here to mess up these kid's lives. I'm just here for a visit while Clive's at training.

**GRAM**



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Training?

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**SKYLA**

He's a tattoo artist. And don't look at me with that hard-eyed stare. There's good money in tattoos. He's learning dragons and flames from a guy in downtown San Diego. Clive is staying with him at the studio and it's too small for me too, so I thought since I was in the area, it would be a good time to you know, reconnect with my children.

**GRAM**

Where have you been all this time?

**SKYLA**

I've had some trouble...



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**

What kind of trouble?

**NAOMI**

Even though my ear was straining to catch a phrase, their voices gathered in a whorl of whispers I couldn't hear.

**SKYLA**

You can go along with me or not. I'm their mother and Clive says I have rights.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**

Rights? You took off for Mexico! There's no telling what went on there! Then you came back and left those children with me when Owen was a year



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

old and covered head to toe with infected insect bites. Naomi was four and didn't even talk until she was almost six...

### **SKYLA**

Don't make out like it was such a big deal. Naomi was always stubborn and quiet, and Owen just had a few flea bites.

### **GRAM**

No, ma'am! Naomi went to a counselor for two years.

### **NARRATOR**

She had selective mutism – that's what it's called - from insecurities during her young life. That's what the counselor told them and she still didn't talk much. Owen had been on antibiotics for three months to get him cleared up.

### **GRAM**





Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

And now, seven years later, after you never made a telephone call to even let us know you were alive, you want to talk about your rights? Terri Lynn, they...they're tied to me. You promised I could raise them proper with no interference. That's what we agreed on before you left.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **SKYLA**

Naomi and Owen seem fine now so I couldn't have been *that* bad. And I've changed my mind about seeing them, that's all. Now, I'm going to meet Clive but I'll be back later. And I'd *appreciate* you calling me Skyla.

### **OWEN**

When the trailer door closed, the floor jiggled beneath our feet. We ran to the louvered window and looked out. There was just enough brightness from the porch light to see Skyla get into a red Mustang, touch up her lipstick and pull away from the trailer. She tore out of the trailer park going faster than the posted 15 mile per hour speed limit.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NAOMI**

Part of me couldn't wait to see her again. The other part of me was wringing my hands like a contestant in the worry-wart Olympics. All of a sudden I had a million questions.

**OWEN**

Why did she come back? How long was she going to stay? Would she like us? Would we like her?

**NAOMI**

My thoughts dived into a jumble in the middle of my mind, wrestled around until they were wadded into knot, and attached themselves to my brain, like a burr matted in a long-haired dog.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

Owen and Naomi hurried out to Gram.

**OWEN**

Where is she going to sleep? How 'bout she sleeps in my bed and I could sleep on the floor? I can pretend I'm camping.

**GRAM**

I think we're awful close to camping already. She can sleep on the fold-out under the table.

**OWEN**

Where did she go?

**GRAM**

Out.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **OWEN**

Maybe she'll be right back. Maybe she just went out to pick up a pizza and ice cream so we can sit around together and talk about what we've been doing for all these years.

### **NAOMI**

Gram and I looked at him. His never-ending good nature was grating on me.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

### **GRAM**

Owen, I give you more credit than that.

### **NAOMI**

We heard a quick double-knock on the door, then it opened.

### **FABIOLA**

*Hola!* Hello, I am here. I made tapioca.



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

It was Fabiola, just in time for Wheel of Fortune. She held a ceramic bowl and wore one of those flowered bib aprons that went over her head, but she was so short and round that the apron was rolled up at the waist so it wouldn't drag on the floor.

**OWEN**

Fabiola took one look at Gram's face and knew something was wrong.

**FABIOLA**

What has happened, Maria?

**NARRATOR**

Mary was Gram's given name but Fabiola always called her the Spanish version.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

**GRAM**

Terri Lynn was here. She's come back.

**OWEN**

But we're not supposed to call her Terri Lynn, 'cause she changed her name to Skyla, after the sky.

**FABIOLA**

Skyla?

**NARRATOR**

No one said a word.

**NAOMI**



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

It was so quiet I could hear water trickling from one of the neighbors' garden hoses.

**OWEN**

And within a few seconds, Fabiola's face changed to worry.

**FABIOLA**

Come! We must tell Bernardo.

Copyright Pam Muñoz Ryan

**NARRATOR**

Gram got up and put on her sweater. Then she handed Owen and Naomi their sweatshirts.

**NAOMI**

I looked at Owen. His eyes grew big and his mouth dropped open. He slid off the bench, opened the drawer, took out a roll of tape and studied it. Then



*Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Readers' Theatre Script

## *Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

he stuffed the whole thing in his pocket. I picked up my notebook, took Owen's hand, and followed Gram and Fabiola out the door.

### **NARRATOR**

That was the instant Naomi knew that Skyla walking in the door of Baby Beluga was life-changing serious. She knew it for two reasons Owen knew it too.

### **OWEN**

First, Gram had marched outside the trailer and was following Fabiola into the avocado grove still wearing her clown head.

### **NAOMI**

Second, and what locked the possibility of catastrophe in my mind, was that Gram and Fabiola were going to miss Wheel of Fortune and THAT was going to mess up their 744 nights-in-a-row record.





Pam Muñoz Ryan

Readers' Theatre Script

*Becoming Naomi León*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan

END OF SCENE – STEP BACK