**Reader's Theater**

The Babbs Switch Story

by Darleen Bailey Beard

**Cast:**

**Ruth Ann Tillman**

**Elden Larrs**

**Miss Holman**

**Narrator**

**Narrator:** Just before Christmas 1924, students  sat in the one-room school house of Babbs Switch Oklahoma.  Ruth Ann  Tillman tried her best to listen to Miss Holman's history lesson.

**Elden:**Guess how *Webster's  Dictionary*defines *burp*?

**Narrator:**Ruth Ann didn't have to turn around to know who was speaking.  She could tell by the  hot breath on her neck.  It was Elden Larrs, the most disgusting boy in  School District 42.

**Elden:**I *said* guess how*Webster's Dictionary*defines *burp?*

**Narrator:**Ruth Ann twirled her hair  round her finger, feigning a sudden interest in Miss Holman's lesson on the Battle of Bunker Hill.  But she knew he would tell her anyway.

**Elden:**To eject wind noisily  from the stomach through the mouth.

**Ruth Ann:**Elden Larrs, you're  sick.

**Elden:**Thank you.  Just admit it.  You're crazy-mad-in-love with me, Ruth Ann Tillman, and you know  it.

**Ruth Ann:**I'd sooner be in love with a frog.

**Elden:**Would you kiss me if I were a frog?  I might turn into Prince Charming.

**Ruth Ann:**You?  Prince charming?

**Elden:**So how is Ding-Dong  Daffy doing?

**Ruth Ann:**Her name is Daphne,  and you know it.

**Elden:**Daffy?  Daphne.  What's the difference.

**Miss Holman:**Mr. Larrs?   Would you care to stand and finish this lesson?

**Elden:**Yes ma'am.

**Miss Holman:**Colonel Prescott issued his famous order, 'Don't one of you fire until you can see the whites of  their eyes.'  The Americans allowed the British to advance almost to the  base of the earthworks and then surprised them with open fire.

**Elden:**Is vomit spelled with  an *e* or an *i*?

**Ruth Ann:**Give me that dictionary!  If you'd quit looking up every revolting word you can think of  and start listening, you might accidentally learn something.

**Elden:**I'm learnin'.  I just learned somethin' that *you* probably don't know.

**Ruth Ann:**What?

**Elden:**Not gonna tell you.

**Ruth Ann:**Good.  I don't want to know.

**Elden:**Yeah, you do.

**Ruth Ann:**No, I don't.

**Elden:**Then I'll tell you,  anyway.  Earwax is one word, not two.

**Ruth Ann:**Elden Larrs!   When I get rich and famous and write my autobiography, I'm going to tell the  whole world how positively absolutely disgusting you are.

**Elden:**Oh yeah?  How the  heck are *you* gonna get rich and famous?

**Ruth Ann:**As a singer, naturally.  I'm going to be the next Bessie Smith, Empress of the Blues.

**Elden:**I wouldn't count on it.

**Ruth Ann:**Why not.

**Elden:**Cause you can't sing worth a lick.

**Ruth Ann:**I can, too, and you  know it.  You're just jealous.

**Elden:**Me?  Jealous?

**Ruth Ann:**Just wait until Miss Holman announces the parts for our Christmas Tree Celebration.  I'll be the  soloist.  You'll see.

**Narrator:**Elden couldn't argue much about  that.  Ruth Ann had sung the solo in the Christmas Tree Celebration for the  last three years.  Folks were always telling her that she sang like a canary.  And Ruthie's Pop said she sang before she learned to talk, which is why he called her Ruthie bird.

**Ruth Ann:**Someday you're going to hear me on the radio.

**Elden:**Radio!  That's a hoot.  We ain't got electricity in Babbs Switch, Oklahoma.

**Ruth Ann:**Well, Hobart has electricity.  Miss Holman says one day electricity will be as common as  cows!

**Elden:**Then Miss Holman don't know nothin'.

**Narrator:**Ruth Ann turned back around thinking that Elden Larrs made as much sense as a two-headed mule with half a brain.   So if you want to hear the whole story of Ruthie and Elden and what happens to  their tiny one-room school house, run to the library or bookstore nearest you and check out this exciting book,
***The Babbs Switch Story***, written  by Oklahoma author, Darleen Bailey Beard.