

“Round-up!”

Scene 1

Narrator: “Our play begins in the family room of a modern home where two 11-year-old children are gathered around the TV.”

Mom: (entering from the kitchen) “Tyler! Nikki! I want to talk to you!” (The children stay glued to the TV.) “Nikki! Tyler! You’ll want to hear what I have to say!”

Tyler and Nikki together: “Okay, Mom, what’s up?”

Mom: “We have our plans for the family reunion. We’re going to a dude ranch with all the cousins. You’ll spend a week away from the TV—riding horses, rafting a river. You might even get to take part in a cattle round up!”

Tyler: “Cool! When are we going?”

Mom: “Next Friday.”

Nikki: “Can I ride with my cousin Brittany?”

Mom: “Everyone’s coming to our house to meet. I don’t think we’ll need to take everyone’s cars. Gas is so expensive, we might as well take as few cars as possible.”

Scene 2

Narrator: “Now the setting changes to the front yard outside Nikki and Tyler’s house. All the relatives are gathered to go to the reunion together. Nikki is standing by her mom, not really listening. Tyler is standing next to his dad.”

Tyler’s dad: “All right, everyone! Stand together! How many people do we have? Let’s see...I think we have 23 people, counting all the children. Each car we are taking has 5 seat belts, so how many cars do we need?”

Tyler: “That’s easy, Dad. $23 \div 5 = 4R3$. We need $4R3$ cars!”

Narrator: “A strange voice is heard above the crowd. Everyone freezes as it calls in a low, slow, Western drawl...”

Voice: “Round-up!”

Narrator: “Slowly the action returns, but Tyler acts as if he has been struck by lightning.”

Tyler: “Dad, no. We don’t need $4R3$ cars. I have to round up that remainder. We need 5 cars.”

Scene 3

Narrator: “We join our cast outside the main lodge at the *No-Remainder Ranch*. Nikki and her mom are standing in front of Wrangler John.”

Wrangler John: “Welcome, everyone! Gather round so I can assign you a bunk. Let’s see, there are 23 of you, and I can put 4 in a cabin. How many cabins do I need?”

Nikki: “I can do that problem in my head! $23 \div 4 = 5R3$. We need $5R3$ cabins!”

Narrator: “Again, a strange voice is heard above the crowd. Everyone freezes as it calls in a low, slow, Western drawl...”

Voice: “Round-up!”

Narrator: “Slowly the action returns, but now Nikki acts as if she has been struck by lightning.”

Nikki: “Wait! $5R3$ cabins doesn’t make any sense. I need to round up the remainder! We need 6 cabins for 23 people. One bunk will just have to be empty.”

Scene 4:

Narrator: “Join Nikki and Tyler’s family in a clearing next to the bank of a fast-moving river. Family members are putting on life jackets and waiting for instructions from Wrangler John. Nikki and her cousin Brittany are standing together.”

Wrangler John: “Be sure your life jacket is on properly. The river is fast and you will encounter some class 4 rapids. We haven’t lost anyone yet this year, and we don’t expect to. Each raft holds 6 guests, plus a guide who knows the river well. Let’s see...we have 23 guests. How many rafts do we need to take?”

Brittany: “That’s easy! 23 divided by 6 = 3R5. We need 3R5 rafts!”

Narrator: “Everyone suddenly becomes silent. Tyler and Nikki look around, as if expecting the voice. And, sure enough, seemingly out of nowhere, it calls...”

Voice: “Round-up!”

Narrator: “Brittany rubs her forehead as if she has been hit by lightning. Then she excitedly calls...”

Brittany: “Wait! 3R5 rafts doesn’t make any sense! I have to round up! We need 4 rafts.”

Scene 5:

Narrator: “It’s night time, and the guests of the *No-Remainder Ranch* are seated around a campfire. They are listening to Wrangler John tell stories about the mountains around them.”

Wrangler John: “Do you want to hear another story?”

Tyler, Nikki, Brittany: “Yes!”

Wrangler John: “Well, okay. This story has been around for a long time, and folks around here believe it to be true. Have you wondered, since you have been here, how the ranch got its name?” (The assembled guests nod their heads, and Wrangler John continues.) “A long time ago, people around here couldn’t stay safely through the winter. Gathering enough provisions took too much work, and it made sense to go down to town where it was warmer. So, early every November, after all the harvestin’ was done, the animals were driven down to lower ground. There wasn’t much of a ranch here, and it wasn’t named at all. Those who worked here came back after the animals were secure and gathered the last of their things and then went back to town in their wagons. This happened year after year without incident. That is until 1906. In 1906 snow came earlier than usual, and the cattle drive had to be put together quickly. Five men came back to the ranch after that, just to tidy things up and get the last of their provisions. They had to hurry, because a fierce storm was just a few hours away, and getting stuck at the ranch over the winter would be no picnic.”

Narrator: “Wrangler John looked carefully over his audience to see that they were paying attention. No one spoke.”

Wrangler John: “The men had one wagon, drawn by two work horses. They divided into teams of two for the last of their chores and then got into the wagon and drove away. What they didn’t realize was that in dividing 5 men by 2, they had left one man out. ‘Scorch’, as thy called him, because he usually burned dinner, had no partner, no job, and had been left to winter alone at the ranch. By the time they realized they’d forgotten ‘Scorch’, the high country was buried in three feet of snow and it was too late to go back and search for him.”

Tyler: “Was he ever seen again? What happened to him?”

Wrangler John: “No. The next spring, when the wranglers returned to the ranch, a careful search was conducted. But no remains were ever discovered. However, a strange legend surrounding

‘Scorch’s disappearance is told today. It is said that he protects people all over these parts from being left behind. Whenever a group is dividing into sets, and an important remainder might be forgotten, he calls in a low, slow drawl, ‘Round-up!’ and the group remembers to include the remainder. In fact, it’s after one such experience that the name of the ranch was changed to the *No-remainder Ranch*. But it’s just a legend. I don’t know anyone personally who has heard the voice...”

Narrator: “The crowd grows silent as Brittany, Nikki, and Tyler look at each other in amazement. They know THEY’VE heard the voice. Each time they were about to leave an important remainder behind, the voice instructed them to round up. And, as if to remind them forever, once more they heard the low, slow, Western drawl...”

Voice: “Round-up!”