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Dramatic Publishing



Here Comes Gosling!

(Interactive Version)

By

SANDRA FENICHEL ASHER

Adapted from the book by the playwright, writing as Sandy Asher

Music by

RIC AVERILL



Dramatic Publishing Company

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Book and lyrics by SANDRA FENICHEL ASHER

Music by RIC AVERILL

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(HERE COMES GOSLING! [INTERACTIVE VERSION])

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of *Here Comes Gosling!* was a complicated process supported by many people to whom I owe enormous gratitude. It all began with a chance opportunity to attend a performance of *How Long Is a Piece of String?* presented by the Oily Cart company in London. I was enchanted by their total immersion storytelling. Inspired to try a total immersion script myself, I decided my picture book about Froggie, Rabbit, Goose, Gander and baby Gosling presented a perfect foundation. As I worked on the adaptation, I benefitted from suggestions and developmental workshop experiences provided by Patricia Zimmer, her Eastern Michigan University Theatre for the Young students, the teachers and children of the Washtenaw County Head Start (now the Beatty Early Learning Center) and Northwestern University's Purple Crayon Players. At the same time, Judy Matetzschk-Campbell expressed interest in a traditional version of the same story for her Pollyanna Theatre in Austin, Texas. As dramaturg and director, Judy offered guidance and encouragement as I took on the happy task of developing two different scripts at once, both enhanced by charming music composed by Ric Averill. After the premieres of the two scripts in Michigan and Texas, Kassie Misiewicz offered a second production of the interactive version at Trike Theatre in Bentonville, Ark., directed by Megan James. Heartfelt thanks to all of these folks, to their staffs and colleagues, and to the audiences who helped keep all of us flying in the right direction!

With loud honks of gratitude to
Patricia Zimmer, Judy Matetzschk-Campbell and Ric Averill

Here Comes Gosling! (Interactive Version) premiered at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich., in March 2011.

Cast:

Froggie Darius Hayes
Rabbit Jillian Carey
Goose Emily Vergin
Gander Antonio Cooper
Helpers Christopher Biek,
Hsin Chen, Megan Flynn
Musicians Bridgit Cook, Dean Bard

Crew:

Director Patricia Moore Zimmer
Musical Director Bridgit Cook
Stage Manager Ethan Hibbard
Scene Design Kenton Jones
Costume Design Sarah Donnellon, Haley Cavanaugh
Puppet Creation Dean Bard

The play was subsequently produced by Trike Theatre in 2014.

Cast:

Rabbit Matthew Murry
Froggie Mary Catherine Roland
Goose Carley Tisdale
Gander Jason Suel
Understudy Elliott James

Crew:

Executive Director Kassie Misiewicz
Director Megan James
Set Designer Eve Rosen
Costume Designer Jennifer Cozens
Lighting Designer Julie Gabel
Stage Manager Carley Tisdale
Musical Director Bill Hesse

Here Comes Gosling!

(Interactive Version)

CHARACTERS

RABBIT: Reserved, gentle, caring, obsessively tidy.

FROGGIE: Exuberant, impatient, childlike but not a child.

GOOSE: A loving but harried new mother.

GOSLING: A baby, may be a puppet handled mainly by GOOSE.

GANDER: A proud but inexperienced new father.

HELPERS: Two or more as needed, friendly, soft-spoken, dressed in a way that distinguishes them from the characters in the play while not competing for the audience's attention. Think "Mr. Rogers," calm, casual, confident. HELPERS may also serve as musicians and/or be doublecast as GOOSE, GANDER and the GOSLING puppet.

Note: HELPERS have ad-libbed lines only, and these should be kept to a minimum. Gesture and facial expression are as important as spoken language in guiding the children. Voice and movement should be low-key but inviting and fun. Ad-libs should slow the action as little as possible. RABBIT, FROGGIE, GOOSE, GANDER and GOSLING puppet also should not ad-lib any more than absolutely necessary to keep the children moving through the story.

Hint: Questions will almost always elicit the undesired response from a few children. Better to use statements instead, i.e., "Follow me," rather than "Would you like to follow me?" or "Who would like to follow me?"

Copies of the books *Too Many Frogs!* and *Here Comes Gosling!* are available online.

IMPORTANT: This is a "full-immersion" play, meaning that the children are encouraged to enter the world of the story and be involved in it through their imaginations and their senses. The difference between "full-immersion" and "participation" theatre can be subtle, but to this playwright's mind, participation theatre involves the children in meeting specific needs of the story, while full-immersion theatre uses the story to meet developmental needs of the children. The needs being addressed by the latter center on exploring their imaginations and their sensory environment in a community setting. For example, in this case, the picnic blanket raising and lowering activity is not about getting the blanket positioned correctly with the children's help in order to advance the plot. It's about a theatrical context in which a group of children experience together the delightful lift and fall of the blanket. Ideally, a balance is constantly maintained between allowing the children time to enter the world of the story, explore it and experience it as fully as possible and still keeping up the pace and professionalism of a satisfying theatrical performance.

TIME: Story time.

PLACE: An imaginary forest where rabbits, frogs and geese talk, bake carrot cake and change diapers. RABBIT's house and FROGGIE's house are at opposite sides of the stage or playing space. A winding, flowery path downstage—or through the audience—leads from one to the other. A garden patch near RABBIT's house sports signs for "carrots" and "spinach." A tree stands at some distance from RABBIT's house.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Honk-Honk, My Little One (Intro)	12
2. Wake Up, Froggie	12
3. Waiting for Baby	13
4. Carrots and Spinach	14
5. Bath Time	16
6. Honk-Honk, My Little One	17
7. What Could Be Wrong With Baby Gosling?	18
8. Perfectly Pleasant Picnic Spot	23
9. Dance Music	25
10. Toodle-oo	30

Here Comes Gosling!

(Interactive Version)

BEFORE RISE: *As the children and their adults arrive in the lobby, they discover RABBIT seated in a rocking chair, happily engaged in reading a book. HELPERS are seated nearby, also reading. Other books are waiting in one or more baskets, preferably books that deal with rabbits, frogs, geese and/or babies. In his quiet and gentle manner, RABBIT greets the children and invites each family to choose a book and find a cozy spot to read it while the rest of the audience arrives. RABBIT continues to model reading while HELPERS aid groups in choosing books and settling in to read.*

At about five minutes to “curtain,” HELPERS collect the books in a basket and invite the children and their adults to gather around the rocking chair for a story with RABBIT. At this point, some children will still be sticking close to their adult companions. That’s fine.

RABBIT. Hello, everyone. I’m so glad you’re here. My name is Rabbit and, as you can see, I like to read stories. I have a friend who loves to *listen* to stories. His name is Froggie. (*Indicates book.*) This is a story about how I met Froggie and how we became friends. It’s called *Too Many Frogs!* I’m going to read it to you, but I need your help. Here’s what I need you to do: Whenever Froggie arrives at my house, he knocks on the door. *Loudly.* Like this— (*Mimes knocking as he speaks.*) KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCK! (*Beat.*) Try that with me. (*Mimes knocking again as he leads audience response.*) KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCK! (*May “practice” this with the audience more than once if the response is weak.*) Very good! And every time Froggie leaves my house, he says— (*With a finger-wagging wave.*) TOODLE-OO! (*Beat.*) Try it with me. (*Waves again as he leads audience response.*) TOODLE-OO! (*Again, “practice” more than once if needed.*) That’s it! Now listen closely to the story and you’ll know when to help.

(NOTE: RABBIT shares the illustrations on each page as he reads. He may find his own way of reading expressively, such as using different voices for each character. To guide audience response, he may ad-lib “Sadly this time” before Froggie’s regretful “Toodle-oo” and “What do you think is missing?” after the final “But something was still missing ... ” It’s also effective to speed up Rabbit’s evening routine a bit each time it’s repeated in the text.)

RABBIT (*cont’d, reading*). *Too Many Frogs!*

Rabbit lived by himself in the hollow of an old tree.

He cooked for himself.

He tidied up after himself.

And at the end of each and every day, he read himself a story.

It was a simple way of life—no fuss, no clutter.

And Rabbit liked it.

But one rainy evening, he heard a KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCKing at his door.

“It’s Froggie,” croaked a deep voice. “Don’t care for this storm.”

Rabbit opened the door. “I was about to read myself a story.”

“Love to listen!” Froggie cried, and hopped right inside. “Don’t mind, do you?”

“I suppose not,” Rabbit said.

So Froggie listened while Rabbit read his story.

“Well done!” he cheered, when Rabbit had finished. “Storm’s ended, too. Thanks for your kindness. TOODLE-OO!”

The next evening, as usual, Rabbit finished dinner, tidied up and sat down to read himself a story.

But before he could begin, he heard another KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCKing at his door.

“It’s Froggie!” croaked the same deep voice.

Rabbit opened the door. “I was about to read myself a story.”

“I know!” Froggie cried, and hopped right inside. “Love to listen! But first, let’s fix ourselves a snack—or three! Don’t mind, do you?”

“I suppose not,” Rabbit said.

So Froggie hopped—and popped—and whipped—and flipped—and mixed—and fixed a snack. Or three.

Too much fuss, Rabbit thought.

But Froggie listened while Rabbit read his story.

“Well done!” he cheered, when Rabbit had finished. “Snack’s gone, too. Thanks for your kindness. TOODLE-OO!”

The next evening, Rabbit finished dinner, tidied up and sat down to read himself another story. But before he could begin, there was that same KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCKing at his door.

“It’s Froggie,” croaked the familiar voice.

Rabbit opened the door. “I was about to read—,” he began.

“I know!” Froggie cried, and hopped right inside. “About to read yourself a story. Love to listen! But first, let’s get ourselves all comfy-cozy. Don’t mind, do you?”

“I suppose not,” said Rabbit.

So Froggie fluffed—and puffed—and mooshed—and smooshed—and piled up billows—of pillows.

Too much clutter, Rabbit thought.

But Froggie listened while Rabbit read his story.

“Well done!” he cheered when Rabbit had finished. “Bedtime, too! Thanks for your kindness. TOODLE-OO!”

The next evening, Rabbit finished dinner, tidied up and sat down to read himself a new story. But before he could begin, there was that KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCKing again!

“It’s Froggie!”

Rabbit opened the door.

“I know!” Froggie cried before Rabbit could say a single word. “You were about to read yourself a story. Love to listen! But first, meet the family! Been telling them all about you and your stories. Love to join us! Don’t mind, do you?”

Rabbit looked at Froggie’s family, big frogs and little frogs, dozens and dozens, all wearing T-shirts: FROG FAMILY REUNION.

Too many frogs! he thought. Too much fuss! Too much clutter!

“But I DO mind, Froggie,” he said at last.

“You do?” Froggie asked.

“I never invited you in,” Rabbit explained. “I never invited you to fix a snack. I never invited you to get all comfy-cozy. And I never invited your family to join you. So I do mind. Very much indeed.”

“Uh-oh!” croaked Froggie. “This will never do. Thanks for your kindness. TOODLE-OO.”

Alone at last, Rabbit sat down to read himself a story.
For one anxious moment, he waited for a KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCKing at his door.
It never came.

“Don’t mind, do you?” he asked himself, with a chuckle.
“Most certainly not,” he answered himself, and began to read.
It was a good story.

But something was missing.
Snacks make a good story better, he thought.
So he fixed himself a snack and read on.
It was a very good story.

But something was missing.
Pillows make a good story better, he thought.
So he fluffed himself a pillow and read on.
It was an exceptionally good story.
But something was still missing ...

Rabbit blinked once. He blinked twice.
And then he sighed.
It’s Froggie, he told himself, at last. He loves to listen.
Rabbit opened his door.
There sat Froggie and his family, waiting patiently to say they were sorry.
“Never meant to be rude,” Froggie said. “Brought you a T-shirt: FROG FAMILY REUNION.”
“Thank you,” Rabbit said. “I was about to read a story. Would you like to join me?”
“Love to listen!” cried the frogs.

And in they all hopped, big frogs and little frogs, dozens and dozens.
Rabbit offered them a snack—or three—and helped them fluff their pillows.
Then every frog listened while Rabbit read a story.

“Well done!” they cheered when he had finished.
So many frogs! Rabbit thought. So much fuss! So much clutter!
It was a different way of life.
And Rabbit liked it.

The end!

(As RABBIT closes book, a HELPER appears at his side with a prettily decorated letter, perhaps with a picture of GOSLING on it.)

RABBIT *(cont’d)*. What’s this? A letter for me? I wonder who sent it! *(He opens the letter and reads.)*
Dear Rabbit,
Great news! We have a new baby. Her name is Gosling. We’re coming to visit you so that you can meet her. We’ll be there at 1 o’clock. Please tell Froggie about Gosling, too. See you soon!
Your friends,
Goose and Gander
(Indicating letter.) Goose and Gander have a new baby, Gosling! How exciting! We must tell Froggie.
Let’s tidy up here and then I’ll show you the way. Follow me!

AT RISE: RABBIT and HELPERS model returning books to basket(s). As RABBIT leads the way, encouraging everyone to follow him, HELPERS pick up the basket(s) of books and bring up the rear of the procession. The path leads into the playing space, a colorful forest.)

(#1: “Honk-Honk, My Little One [Intro]”)

(Cheerful music greets the procession inside. RABBIT’s house and FROGGIE’s house are at opposite ends of the playing space. A forest path leads from one to another by winding around and through the audience area, if possible. There are two garden patches, one for “carrots” and one for “spinach,” near RABBIT’s house and a third area for “flowers.” A tree stands at some distance. The audience is shown to their seats, which might be “rocks” or “toadstools” for the adults, and “grassy” mats on the floor for children. Music fades.)

RABBIT *(cont’d, indicating houses)*. This is where I live. And that’s Froggie’s house, way over there.

(HELPERS set books down near RABBIT’s house and settle in with the audience.)

RABBIT *(cont’d)*. He’s probably still asleep. But that’s all right. I know he’ll be excited to hear the great news.

(#2: “Wake Up, Froggie”)

(Music. RABBIT sings as he travels the roundabout route to FROGGIE’s house. The first time, RABBIT sings alone. The second time through, HELPERS join in on lines in bold and encourage audience to sing along.)

RABBIT *(cont’d)*.

WAKE UP, FROGGIE!
WE’VE GOT GREAT NEWS TODAY.
WAKE UP, FROGGIE!
OUR GUESTS ARE ON THEIR WAY.
WAKE UP, FROGGIE!
WE’VE GOT A LOT TO DO.
WAKE UP, FROGGIE!
I’M WAITING HERE FOR YOU.

(Very softly and then with increasing volume. Avoid a frightening loudness; instead use more and more flamboyant styles of singing.)

RABBIT *(cont’d)*.

WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP

WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
WAKE UP
YOO-HOO, FROGGIE—WAKE UP! YEAH!

(Music ends.)

RABBIT *(cont'd, to audience)*. He's still asleep! Help me knock on his door. *(RABBIT knocks on FROGGIE's door.)* KNOCK-KNOCKETY-KNOCK. *(If needed, RABBIT may repeat this, encouraging the children to "knock" louder.)* Wake up, Froggie. I have great news.

FROGGIE *(opens door, peers out, blinks, yawns and stretches, all while holding his stuffed toy "Mr. Green")*. It's very early for news, Rabbit.

RABBIT. It's never too early for GREAT news. *(Shows FROGGIE the letter.)* Gander and Goose are coming to visit us, and they're bringing their new baby, Gosling.

FROGGIE *(instantly energized)*. Love new babies! Mr. Green loves new babies, too! When will they be here?

RABBIT. Soon.

FROGGIE. How soon?

RABBIT. One o'clock.

FROGGIE. That's not soon! That's *later. Much later.* Can't wait that long.

RABBIT. Yes, you can. We have a lot to do before our guests arrive.

FROGGIE. What is there to do except wait? And wait and wait and wait?

RABBIT. First, we need to find a pleasant spot for our picnic.

FROGGIE. Okey-dokey! Love picnics! Mr. Green loves picnics, too!

RABBIT. Let's go!

(#3: "Waiting for Baby")

(Music. As FROGGIE and RABBIT lead the way around the forest path, HELPERS stand and encourage children to follow. No need to insist; proceed with those who come along readily, adults included. As all dance along the path, FROGGIE sings his song, dancing Mr. Green to the music.)

FROGGIE.

WAITING FOR BABY

TO PLAY WITH ME.

WAIT—

(CAN'T WAIT.)

AND WAIT—

(GOTTA WAIT.)

AND WAIT—

(GONNA WAIT.)

AND WAIT AND SEE!

(Still dancing along the path, all repeat melody, substituting "Doot-doot-doot-doot-doot-doot-doot-doot-doooo" for the words. Eventually all end up at the "picnic spot" right in front of the audience seating area and somewhere between the two houses. Music ends.)

RABBIT. This is it! A perfectly pleasant spot for our picnic.