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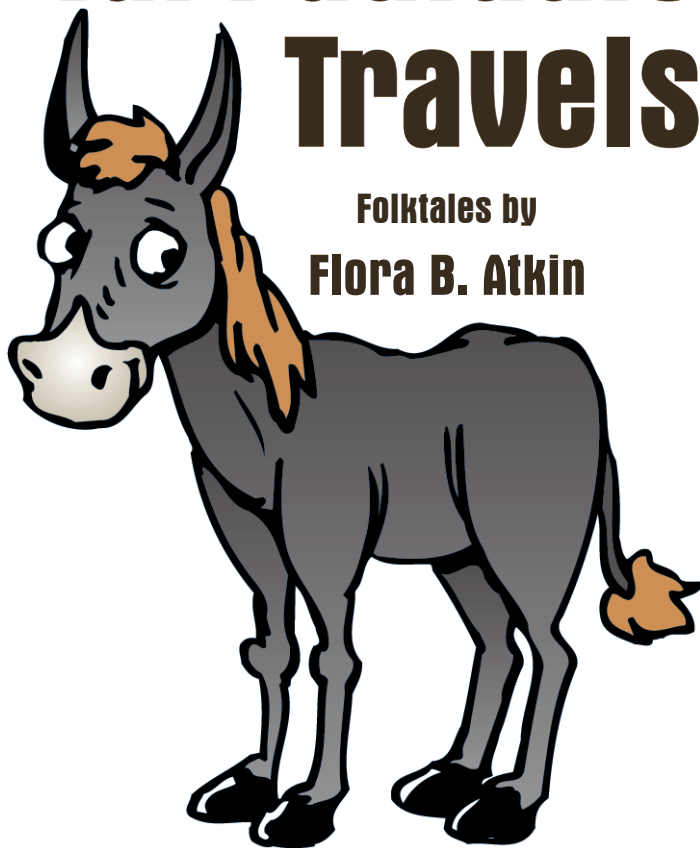
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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Tarradiddle Tales and Tarradiddle Travels

Folktales by  
Flora B. Atkin





# Tarradiddle Tales and Tarradiddle Travels

**Flexible to cast ... Easy to stage ... Portable to tour.**

“A fun-filled globetrotting set of stories for youngsters, most with a little moral appended at the end, just like Aesop’s Fables. There is a very much put-upon donkey and a very unhappy cap seller, thanks to some prankish monkeys. We have an extended African variation on the tortoise and the hare story. Finally, we meet Peter the Fool, a boy who gets spectacular results despite the fact that he is appropriately named.” —*The Montgomery County Sentinel*

**Folktales. By Flora B. Atkin.** *Cast: 6 to 10 either gender. Tarradiddle Tales and Tarradiddle Travels are two separate plays, each with its individual delights, each presenting a story theatre version of folklore from around the world. The stories (four in each play) are short and simple for young audiences. Some of the tales will be familiar (“Caps for Sale,” “The Tiger Trap”); others will be delightful discoveries (“Mouse Marriage,” “Peter the Fool”). Varied in their origins (from Japan to India to Africa to Denmark), these plays are flexible to cast, easy to stage, and portable to tour. Flexible set. Approximate running time for each play: 45 minutes. Code: TJ4.*

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Tarradiddle Tales and  
Tarradiddle Travels



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**AND**  
**TARRADIDDLE TRAVELS**

**Folktales by**  
**FLORA B. ATKIN**

Originally published in 1973 by New Plays, Inc.,  
under the management of Patricia Whitton Forrest.



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(TARRADIDDLE TALES and TARRADIDDLE TRAVELS)

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# Tarradiddle Tales

by Flora B. Atkin

**Prologue, Transition, and Epilogue**

**The present**

**The Tales (Timeless and Universal)**

The Donkey Ride

Mexican

The Magic Tree

Bantu

Caps for Sale

Sudanese

Peter the Fool

Danish

# Tarradiddle Travels

by Flora B. Atkin

**Prologue, Transitions, and Epilogue**

**The present**

**The Tales (Timeless and Universal)**

Mouse Marriage

Japan

Spider Talk

Ghana

Cricket Song

Puerto Rico

Tiger Trap

India

In both plays, a troupe of traveling players parades through the rear door of the auditorium, bringing its brightly colored boxes or baskets full of properties, musical instruments, masks, hats, and sound effects through the audience to the performing area. In action, word and sound, the performers tell the audience members they bring them tales from around the world and will make them come alive. They pull out the appropriate prop and tricks, and dramatize four folk tales, each in a different dramatic form. Players not directly involved in a tale react on stage or in the playing area as part of the design of the performance. The audience is involved through participation, reaction, and questions within the context of the performance. Each tale has a message; and the universal truth that people are much the same throughout the world runs through the production.

**Settings:** A bit of space, indoor or out, flat or raised, and children to watch, pretend, and participate.

**Characters:** Six to nine traveling players who can act, sing, narrate, dance, pantomime, and play simple musical instruments interchangeably, in search of a children's audience.

*Tarradiddle Tales* and *Tarradiddle Travels* (“tarradiddle” meaning: not quite true) were created to bring dramatic, educational and participatory experiences to children. In both programs, for 40 to 45 minutes, through action, word and sound, a group of traveling players dramatizes authentic folk tales from different parts of the world. A blend of pantomime and dialogue, narrative and dance deliberately leaves much to the imagination of the children.

*Tarradiddle Tales* and *Tarradiddle Travels* may be performed on a stage, in the round, in a multi-purpose schoolroom, or out-of-doors. Technically self-contained, they require no equipment from the host school, not even a light plug or a piano. They offer challenge to the adult performer, for they demand versatility from the cast members who must interpret many roles and employ constantly changing art forms.

Educational content, universal appeal, and flexibility of staging guided the choice of folk literature. Folk tales can be found in many versions and adaptations. I am deeply indebted to countless authors and compilers, for their research aided mine. I was constantly fascinated by the fact that variations on the same tales appeared in widely divergent cultures. For the sake of authenticity I have often adapted similar language as found in some of the literature, and in certain cases, I have used the same language. It would be impossible to acknowledge all the material from which I drew inspiration; but to the following works, upon which I leaned heavily, I wish to express my indebtedness:

Shopwalker, JB, *The Donkey Ride*. (Doubleday, 1967.)

“The Wonderful Tree” in Eleanor B. Heady’s *Jamb, Sincere*. (Norton, 1965.)

“Peter’s Adventures” in M. Jogendor’s *Noodlehead Stories from Around the World*. (Vanguard, 1957.)

“Mouse Wedding” in Hoshika Uchida’s *The Dancing Kettle and other Japanese Folk Tales*. (Harcourt Brace, 1949.)

“Talk” in Courlander and Herzog’s *The Cow Tail Switch and other West African Tales*. (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1947.)

“Perez and Martina” in Ricardo E. Algreá’s *The Three Wishes*. Harcourt, Brace, 1969.

“The Brahman, the Tiger, and the Six Judges” in K. D. Wiggins’ *The Fairy Ring*. McCleve, Phillips, 1906.

*Tarradiddle Tales* and *Tarradiddle Travels* were originally created for the In-School Players of Adventure Theatre in Montgomery County, Maryland. The many members of Adventure Theatre whose ideas, participation and encouragement helped bring the *Tarradiddles* alive played an important part in the development of these manuscripts.

Flora B. Atkin, 1971

# Tarradiddle Tales

**Music and Sound:** Theme song can fit the rhythm of many simple folk tunes. Scandinavian folk tune for “Peter the Fool.” Improvisations, sound effects, special rhythmic effects. Instruments may include melodica, xylophone, drum, guiara, claves, castanets, coffee cans with beans, coconut shell halves, mouth organ, Pipes of Pan, soda water bottle, bells.

**Costumes:** Basic black turtle-necked leotard, tights, slippers, with tunic of brightly colored stretch material. Colors of red, yellow, blue and green in pairs to correspond with colors of boxes and properties. For individual tales, masks, caps, shawls, etc. are added.

## Properties and Set Pieces.

Four boxes of varying sizes and shapes, colored and lettered to form names of tales, large enough to stack in many ways, and to house masks, hats, properties and instruments. Each box is painted red, yellow, blue, and green, one color to a side. Three sides each have a word from a different tale. The fourth side is left blank. Regardless of how the boxes are stacked, four colors should be visible. For each tale, three boxes spell the name of the tale, and the fourth box is turned with blank side front and holds the properties for that tale. Hint: paste card inside each box with colored diagram of how boxes are to be stacked for each tale. (Boxes originally designed by Sandra B. Gair for In-School Players production of *Tarradiddle Tales*.)

Standard and “Tarradiddle Tales” banner; music instrument box; toadstool with moneybag hidden underneath. Miscellaneous props for individual tales.

## The Donkey Ride

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Costume &amp; Props</b>	<b>Accompaniment</b>
Donkey	Straw hat with ears	Coconut shell halves
Farmer	Straw hat, vegetable basket	
Pepe, his son	Straw hat	
Four characters along the way (played by one actor)		
Woman	Broom, shawl	
Old man	Cane, sombrero	
Cat	Masks	
Musician	2-dimensional ukelele	Hums & sings in tango rhythm



**The Magic Tree**

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Costume &amp; Props</b>	<b>Accompaniment</b>
Narrator	Headdress	Drum
Chief -over-the-mountain	Headdress	
Villager who becomes		
Hare	Mask	Pipes of Pan
Kudu	Mask	Castanet
Lion	Mask	Guiara–scraped
Tortoise	Mask	Soda bottle–blown
Other Villagers		
	Tree, 2 dimensional, with fruit attached but able to be removed	Coffee cans with beans for fruit falling at end. Shaken by audience participants.

**Caps for Sale**

Peddler	5 colored caps	Bells
Monkeys	Masks	

**Peter the Fool**

Narrator/Mother	Cap	Scandinavian folk tune,
Peter	Cap and rope belt	played on xylophone and
Dog	Mask	whistled by Peter
Guard	Hat, sword-paddle	
King	Crown	
Princess	Crown, pigtails	
	On stage: toadstool with	
	Money bag underneath	

## Prologue

*Curtain open, toadstool and standard for banner up right. **Player 1** enters through front door of auditorium, playing theme song on melodica, struts through audience to rear of auditorium, and joins other players about to enter from rear.*

***Player 2** starts theme song rhythm on claves and continues until he and all others are on stage and in position. **Player 3**, carrying "Tarradiddle Tales banner, leads players in parade down aisle of auditorium to playing area. Other players carry boxes of props and musical instruments. All strut to rhythm of claves.*

*Players climb on stage. To rhythm of three slow clicks on claves, players raise boxes, set them down with blank sides facing audience, and assume poses in or in relation to boxes. **Player 4**, carrying music box, sits down right, takes out xylophone and felt mat, places mat on floor, xylophone upon it. **Player 3** stands center; other players with boxes or claves grouped around him.*

**PLAYER 3:** (Sings.) WE BRING YOU TARRADIDDLE TALES  
**PLAYER 5:** (Recites.) IN ACTION, WORD AND SOUND  
**PLAYER 3:** (Sings.) MAKING FRIENDS AND TELLING TALES  
 WE TRAVEL ALL AROUND

**ALL:** (Sing.) AROUND AROUND  
 AROUND AROUND  
 WE BRING YOU TARRADIDDLE TALES  
 WE TRAVEL ALL AROUND.

*All players assume new positions on or in relation to boxes.*

**PLAYER 6:** (Sings.) OUR STORIES ARE FROM MANY LANDS  
**PLAYER 5:** (Recites.) FROM MANY PEOPLES TOO  
**PLAYER 6:** (Sings.) FROM AFRICA TO MEXICO  
 SOME OLD ONES AND SOME NEW  
**ALL:** (Sing.) SOME OLD SOME NEW  
 SOME OLD, SOME NEW  
 EACH TIME WE REACH INTO A BOX

*All take out a prop.*

WE'LL ACT ONE OUT FOR YOU.

*Put prop back into box. All players resume first position.*

## TARRADIDDLE TALES

**PLAYER 3:** *(Sings.)* WE BRING YOU TARRADIDDLE TALES  
**PLAYER 5:** *(Recites.)* THEY REALLY AREN'T QUITE TRUE  
**PLAYER 3:** *(Sings.)* OF MEN SO WISE AND FOOLS SO GAY  
JOIN IN THE FUN, PLEASE DO!  
**ALL:** *(Sing.)* WON'T YOU? PLEASE DO!  
WON'T YOU? PLEASE DO!  
WE BRING YOU TARRADIDDLE TALES  
JOIN IN THE FUN, PLEASE DO!

*Player 4 continues tune on xylophone, as Player 3 takes banner and hangs it on standard, and other players juggle boxes, and stack them up left to read "The Donkey Ride."*

**PLAYER 3:** Our first Tarradiddle Tale is "The Donkey Ride.

*Player 4 fades out tune on xylophone and starts clip-clop rhythm on coconut shells. Four other players remain near boxes ready to assume roles in first tale, while others find places to sit or lounge to watch.*

### The Donkey Ride

*Clip-clop sound in varying tempi and rhythms accompanies all of donkey's action. Farmer, donkey and boy travel in place, center stage. "Characters" met along the way move full circle from up left, are first sighted by travelers at down left, then cross downstage of riders on dialogue, and continue up right and around to boxes to change characterization.*

*Player takes straw hat with ears from prop box, establishes character of donkey with sound (hee haws) and movement; prances around and ends down center.*

**DONKEY:** Once there was a farmer—  
*Another player reaches into prop box, pulls out straw hat and vegetable basket, starts downstage to donkey.*

*Who lived with his son.*

*Third player gets straw hat out of prop box, assumes character of son, and joins others.*

On a little farm in Mexico. Every Saturday they would to go the village market, and I their poor little donkey, would carry all the vegetables on my back.

*Farmer puts basket on donkey's shoulders. Farmer to left of donkey, boy to right of donkey. All face left. With stylized gathering of momentum, group moves backward a step or two then a bit forward, and then begins to move in place to trotting rhythm, accompanied by rhythm on coconut halves. Boy skips, Farmer walks, Donkey trots.*

**FARMER:** One Saturday morning after they had been walking along the road for an hour or so, they met a woman sweeping her walk.

*Old woman to down left, sweeping.*

“Good day, Madam,” said the Farmer. “It is pleasant with the sun melting the dew, is it not?”

*Clip clop and travel motion continue.*

**WOMAN:** Good day, indeed! Pleasant, indeed!

*Still sweeping, she crosses in front of travelers.*

(*Snorting.*) The sun is fairly scorching the dew, and you make that poor little boy walk. You should be ashamed of yourself.

*Woman stalks off, and changes at boxes into old man.*

**FARMER:** The farmer stopped—

*On “Stopped” clip clop sounds and everything else stop.*

And thought a minute. “That woman has a point,” he said. He lifted his son onto the donkey and rearranged the basket of tomatoes . . . and then they proceeded along.

*Boy suggests climbing on donkey, but keeps feet on floor. (“Riding” on donkey suggested by position and movement. Wearing of black tights by all adds to illusion.) Start as before, a bit slower. Continue for few seconds before next speech.*

**SON:** After a while they came to an old man sitting in the shade beside the road.

*Old man, seated, back to audience, down left.*

“Good day, Senor,” said the boy. “It is pleasant with the sun melting . . .”

**OLD MAN:** (*Interrupting.*) Good day indeed! What kind of a lazy good-for-nothing son are you who can ride while your poor old father walks? And you Senor, what kind of a father are you to raise such a boy?

*Muttering, goes off.*

**FARMER:** The Farmer stopped (*All stop.*) And thought a minute. “That old man has a point,” he said, and apologetically said to his son, “Climb down, Pepe my son, and let your poor old papa ride.”

**SON:** “Si Papa,” said the boy, and hopped off the donkey, feeling very upset at being such a thoughtless son.

*Boy “hops off.” Farmer “climbs on” upstage of donkey.*

**DONKEY:** His father climbed on, and we started off again.

*All start. Clip-clops, slower this time.*

**BOY:** Presently, they passed a cat stretching in the sun.

*Cat down left slinkingly, meowing.*

**CAT:** Meow, meow, how silly for only one of you to ride. (*To audience.*) I think the donkey must be smarter than the two of them. Such stupidity—one riding, one walking.

*Mumbling, meowing, and slinking off.*

**FARMER:** The Farmer stopped (*All stop.*) and thought a minute. “That cat has a point,” he said. “After all, my son, two can ride as easily as one. Climb up behind me, Pepe my son.”

*Reaction from Donkey: “Neigh.”*

**SON:** “Yes Father” . . . It took a bit of doing.

*Boy “climbs on” downstage of donkey.*

They were not very comfortable, but they both managed to fit on the donkey.

**DONKEY:** And we started off again!

*All start again, slowly.*

**SON:** They had not gone far when they passed a musician.

*Musician in view, humming and strumming.*

**MUSICIAN:** (*Sings, make-believe strumming in tango rhythm, to audience.*) How cruel to make the little donkey carry such a load. Farmer and son are strong enough to carry poor donkey down the road. (*Speaks.*) There they sit like two great lunks.

*Goes off singing.*

**FARMER:** The Farmer stopped and thought a minute. “That musician has a point,” he said. “There is something to what he sings. We must always be kind to dumb animals.”

*Boy and Father jump off, take basket off donkey’s shoulders. Boy puts basket on Father’s shoulders. Donkey brays, sits exhausted, and then falls prone. Father and son try to lift donkey, finally turn him over; Father grabs donkey’s legs; and move in place with donkey lying on his back.*

**DONKEY:** They lifted me up and carried me between them . . .

*New clip-clop rhythm, very irregular in tempo, rhythm, and walk, but eventually building to climax..*

I was not very comfortable, and I became very unhappy and started kicking and struggling until everything fell down.

*All fall down. Clip-clop stops abruptly.*

*(To Audience.)* I raced away out of sight.

*Donkey races around stage with hand motions to suggest more speed, and stops down right. Fast clip-clop.*

As I ran, I heard the farmer say to his son as he picked himself and his basket up:

**FARMER:** *(Exiting with son.)* Come, Pepe, my son, some people are never satisfied, and you can't please all the people all the time.

*All return to boxes and bow. Donkey neighs and bows. Final clip-clop.*

## Transition

*Properties replaced in box. Theme tune starts on xylophone. All players except musician return to boxes. Boxes are juggled around to form "The Magic Tree," and brought downstage to show name of tale. **Player 3** reads "The Magic Tree" and beckons players to replace boxes upstage again.*

*Musician stops xylophone, takes drum, and ceremoniously begins to beat it as one player dons headdress of Chief and strides across stage to up right with back to audience. Another player takes out narrator hat and puts it on, walks slowly down left and begins story. Drum beat stops.*