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Dramatic Publishing



Based on the book by Eleanor Estes

The Hundred Dresses

**One-Act Version
Drama/Comedy by
Ralph Covert and G. Riley Mills**

The Hundred Dresses

(One-Act Version)

Drama/Comedy. By Ralph Covert and G. Riley Mills. Based on the book by Eleanor Estes. Cast: 3 to 5m., 5w. The authors of the musical version of *The Hundred Dresses* have rewritten the musical as a one-act straight play that's perfect for competition! Wanda Petronski, a second-grader, lives way up in a shabby house in Boggins Heights, and she doesn't have any friends. Every day she wears a faded blue dress, but she tells her classmates that she has a hundred dresses at home of all fabrics and colors. Soon Maddie, Peggy, Jack and their classmates make a game of teasing Wanda about her hundred dresses until one day she disappears from school, leaving just an empty seat where she once sat. As feelings of guilt overtake the children, Maddie and the others decide they must find out what happened to Wanda and make amends for the way they treated her. But is it too late? Bullying, friendship and forgiveness are all touched upon in this beloved Newbery Honor Book by Eleanor Estes. *One int. set. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: HHI.*

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The Hundred Dresses

(One-Act Version)

By

RALPH COVERT and G. RILEY MILLS

Based on the book by

ELEANOR ESTES



Dramatic Publishing Company

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(THE HUNDRED DRESSES [ONE-ACT VERSION])

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Adapted by

Ralph Covert and G. Riley Mills

Based on the book

The Hundred Dresses

by Eleanor Estes

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The Hundred Dresses

(One-Act Version)

CHARACTERS

WANDA PETRONSKI

JAN PETRONSKI: Wanda's father

MADDIE MARTIN

PEGGY HAWTHORNE

JACK BEGGLES

CECILE CALDWELL

WILLIE BOUNCE

MISS MASON: the teacher

OLD MAN SVENSON

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in and around Franklin Elementary School: the classroom and schoolyard, as well as one scene on the road to Boggins Heights.

The Hundred Dresses

(One-Act Version)

SCENE 1

(Lights rise on an empty schoolyard. MADDIE MARTIN enters. She looks around, taking a deep breath as she prepares for school. PEGGY HAWTHORNE enters.)

MADDIE. Hi Peggy.

PEGGY. Hi Maddie.

MADDIE. That dress is so beautiful.

PEGGY. Thanks. Yours is cute too.

MADDIE. You like it?

PEGGY. It's for sure better than that one you wore last week.

This must be the kind of day they meant when they say, "October's bright blue weather."

MADDIE. Right!

PEGGY. Look at that sun. I wish we could stay out here all day.

MADDIE. That'd be nice.

(MISS MASON, their teacher, enters.)

PEGGY. Instead we have to spend the whole day inside listening to Miss Mason's boring lectures.

MADDIE *(trying to get PEGGY's attention)*. Uh, Peggy ...

PEGGY. Every day, another boring lecture! She's so boring!

(MISS MASON stops.)

MADDIE. Good morning, Miss Mason.

MISS MASON. Good morning, Maddie. Why, hello, Peggy.

PEGGY. Hi.

MISS MASON. Ready for the quiz today?

PEGGY. Yes, Miss Mason.

MISS MASON. Good. See you girls in class.

(She exits. JACK BEGGLES and CECILE CALDWELL enter.)

MADDIE. Well, her lectures certainly can be boring.

PEGGY. Not all of them, of course.

MADDIE. Oh, no.

CECILE. I love your dress, Peggy.

PEGGY. Thanks, Cecile.

JACK. What a perfect day!

MADDIE. It sure is, Jack.

(WANDA PETRONSKI and her father, JAN PETRONSKI, enter with MISS MASON.)

MISS MASON. I'm sure your daughter, Wanda, will feel right at home here.

JAN. Yes, this I hope. She is bright girl, funny. She dances, she draws. In Poland, all the girls love her.

MISS MASON. She'll make lots of new friends in no time, I'm sure.

JAN. Her mother ... the journey was a hard one. We did not all make it.

(He takes out a locket, putting it around WANDA's neck.)

JAN (*cont'd*). For you, my little moonbeam.

WANDA. This was Momma's.

JAN. It's yours now.

WANDA. Thank you, Poppa.

(JAN exits.)

CECILE. Did you see the new girl?

MADDIE. How do you know she's new?

CECILE. Well, for one, I heard my mother and father talking—and, for two, she's new.

PEGGY. Maddie, some days you seem so hopeless. If you've never seen her before, she's probably new.

CECILE. Not to mention being walked to school by her dad.

PEGGY. Not to mention her boots! Did you see those boots!

CECILE. I would die. I would sooner die than wear those boots!

MADDIE. That's a pretty dress she had on.

(CECILE and PEGGY laugh.)

CECILE. Good one. For a second there I thought you were serious!

(WILLIE BOUNCE enters, running by.)

WILLIE. Hi Maddie! Hi Peggy! Hi Cecile! Hi Jack!

(He disappears into the schoolhouse.)

CECILE. Willie Bounce!

PEGGY. That can mean only one thing ...

ALL. We're late!

(Bell rings. All exit into school. Lights change as we move to the classroom. The children slip into their desks just as the bell rings. MISS MASON stands before the class.)

MISS MASON. Good morning, class.

ALL. Good morning, Miss Mason.

MISS MASON. It's so nice to see that no one was tardy this morning.

WILLIE (*snickers*). Ha! Tardy ...

MISS MASON. As you may have noticed, we have a new student joining us today. Class, will you please welcome Miss Wanda Petronski.

ALL. Good morning, Wanda.

MISS MASON. Everyone please turn to page 12 in your science books. Peggy, will you please read from the top of the page.

PEGGY (*rises and reads*). "Individual elements when combined with one another form either mixtures, solutions or compounds."

MISS MASON. Excellent. Mixtures, solutions and compounds. Jack, please read on and tell us what a "mixture" is.

JACK (*stands*). "A mixture occurs when two or more elements are combined, but retain their original form."

WILLIE. I don't get it.

MISS MASON. If you put salt and pepper together in the same container, you'll still have salt and pepper, just mixed together.

WILLIE. Oh, I get it.

MISS MASON. Wanda, please read on and tell us what a "solution" is.

WANDA. "A. Solution. Is."

MISS MASON. Please stand, Miss Petronski, so we can all hear you.

(WANDA stands.)

WANDA. “Solu ... tion. Occurs when. An elem. An element. Is diss ... ohlved.”

MISS MASON. Dissolved.

WANDA. “Diss ... Diss ... ”

(PEGGY and others giggle. WANDA sits, clearly embarrassed.)

MISS MASON. That is quite enough, children. Willie, please continue where Wanda left off.

WILLIE. Yes, ma’am. “Solution. A solution occurs when an element is dissolved ... ”

(As WILLIE reads, lights fade.)

SCENE 2

(Lights rise on the playground. It is the following day. PEGGY is sunning herself. Across the playground, WANDA sits alone.)

MADDIE. That was kind of weird yesterday, huh?

PEGGY. You mean the new girl?

MADDIE. She didn’t even finish the sentence. I’m surprised Miss Mason didn’t make her stand back up and finish.

PEGGY. Maybe she doesn’t know how to read.

MADDIE. You think?

PEGGY. I don’t know. Or maybe she was just nervous.

MADDIE. It was weird.

(CECILE enters, wearing a red dress.)

CECILE. Hi, girls! Check out my new dress!

MADDIE. Oh my, it is so pretty!

CECILE. Thanks. I got it for my first dance recital on Saturday.

PEGGY. That dress is almost as pretty as some of mine.

CECILE. Come on, Peggy. I may have you beat with this one.

Look at it!

PEGGY. Well I can have my mother buy me one just like it.

CECILE. That's cheating!

MADDIE. It really is beautiful, Cecile.

CECILE. This part feels like a baby bird. Do you girls want to touch it?

PEGGY & MADDIE. Yes!

(The girls start to chatter excitedly about the dress. WANDA has been watching the scene from a distance and approaches, touching the dress herself.)

WANDA. I got a hundred dresses at home.

(Everyone freezes. They turn toward WANDA.)

CECILE. What did you say?

WANDA. I said I got a hundred dresses at home.

CECILE. A hundred? Dresses?

WANDA. Yes. All lined up in my closet.

CECILE. Why are you lying to us?

WANDA. I'm not.

PEGGY. No one can have a hundred dresses!

WANDA. I do.

(JACK and WILLIE enter, approaching.)

JACK. What's going on over here, Peggy?

PEGGY. This girl ... what is your name again?

WANDA. Wanda Petronski.

WILLIE. Petronski. What kind of weird name is that?

WANDA. Is Polish name.

WILLIE. Polish! Like a sausage?

PEGGY. Wanda claims she has a hundred dresses!

WILLIE. Yeah, right.

CECILE. Can you believe this liar?

JACK. A hundred? That's impossible.

WANDA. It's true.

WILLIE. Where are they then?

WANDA. In my closet.

MADDIE. Did you mean to say you have ten dresses?

WANDA. No, I have one hundred.

MADDIE. Why don't you ever wear them to school?

WANDA. They're too special.

WILLIE. Oh, my frog! *You're* too special!

(Everyone laughs. The children surround WANDA and chant.)

ALL.

KNICK KNACK PENNY PADDYWHACK

MY BROTHER TOLD A LIE AND HE WOULDN'T TAKE

IT BACK

SKIP A ROPE A DILLY DALLY DOPE

MOTHER'S GONNA WASH HIS MOUTH WITH SOAP
CINDERELLA'S GOLDEN TRESSES
WANDA'S GOT A HUNDRED DRESSES
PURPLE AND GREEN AND GOLD AND RED
MUST BE TRUE, 'CAUSE IT'S WHAT SHE SAID
HANG 'EM IN THE CLOSET, PUT 'EM ON THE ROOF
GIVE THE CAT A BONE AND SHE'LL GO WOOF
WE'RE JUST KIDDING, HAVING FUN
GOT A HUNDRED DRESSES, YOU ONLY WEAR ONE
5-10-15-20, 99 DRESSES SEEMS LIKE PLENTY
TEN COMMANDMENTS TEACH US WELL
TELL A LIE AND GO TO
HELLO MR. ELEVATOR OPERATOR

(The school bell sounds.)

MADDIE. Oh, come on, hurry. We'll be late!

PEGGY. Congratulations, Wanda. Your hundred dresses sound bea-u-tiful!

(More laughter. The children all file past WANDA and into school except for MADDIE, who lingers.)

WANDA. I really do have them. One hundred.

(MADDIE exits into school. Lights fade.)

SCENE 3

(Lights rise on the classroom.)

MISS MASON. Students, as you know, once a year Franklin Elementary School sponsors a drawing contest. As always, there will be two grand prizes ... *(She pulls out two gold medals.)* One for the winning girl's drawing and one for the winning boy's drawing.

(CECILE raises her hand.)

MISS MASON *(cont'd)*. Yes, Cecile?

CECILE. What are the subjects this year? Do we get to draw animals?

MISS MASON. No. This year, the committee has chosen two different subjects for the contest. If you are a boy, you will be designing a motorboat.

WILLIE. Cool!

JACK. Perfect!

WILLIE *(beat)*. Wait, how do you draw a motorboat?

MISS MASON. And if you are a girl entering the contest, you will be designing a dress.

(PEGGY leaps out of her seat.)

PEGGY. Yes! Yes! Yes!

MISS MASON. Please sit down, Ms. Hawthorne.

(PEGGY sits.)

MISS MASON *(cont'd)*. As always, you will each be allowed to submit as many drawings as you wish, but there will be only one winner for the boys and one winner for the girls.

(The bell rings.)

MISS MASON *(cont'd)*. Class dismissed.

(The children gather their books and start to exit.)

PEGGY. Can you believe it, Maddie? Dresses! Isn't that perfect?

MADDIE. I bet you'll win the contest again this year, Peg.

PEGGY. If I win this year, that will make it three years in a row—a new school record! Come on, let's go. We've got to find Wanda before she goes home so we can play the Dresses Game with her!

MADDIE. Do you think we should?

PEGGY. Of course. It's funny. Come on!

(They exit the classroom and approach WANDA, who sits on a bench.)

PEGGY *(cont'd)*. Hello, Wanda.

WANDA. Hello.

PEGGY. I forgot since last time, how many dresses did you say you have?

WANDA. A hundred. All lined up in my closet.

PEGGY. That closet much be humungous!

WANDA. It is.

PEGGY. Do you have any silk dresses?

WANDA. Yes. And velvet too.

PEGGY. I bet you even have dresses made out of magical moonbeams!

(PEGGY turns to MADDIE.)

PEGGY *(cont'd)*. Maddie, it's your turn. Ask Wanda a question.

(JAN enters, observing. The girls do not see him.)

MADDIE. Hey Wanda, how many shoes do you have?

WANDA. Sixty pairs. All lined up in my closet.

MADDIE. But yesterday you said fifty.

WANDA. Now I got sixty.

PEGGY. She must have gone shopping while we were at school! And are they all alike?

WANDA. Oh, no. Every pair is different.

PEGGY. You are the luckiest girl in the world, Wanda, to have a giant closet full of shoes. Too bad you have to wear those weird, high-laced ones every day! *(Starts to exit.)* Come on, Maddie. Let's go. I have to get home so I can start working on my drawings for the contest. Did I tell you that if I win this year it will make three years in a row, a new school record!

(PEGGY and MADDIE exit. WANDA sees JAN and crosses to him. He puts his arms around her. Lights fade.)