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Dramatic Publishing

A ONE ACT PLAY

Once Upon A Shoe

BY
JOSEPH ROBINETTE



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(ONCE UPON A SHOE)

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ONCE UPON A SHOE

or

The Rhymes and Mimes of Mother Goose
and Her Traveling Troubadors

An Entertainment in One Act For Children

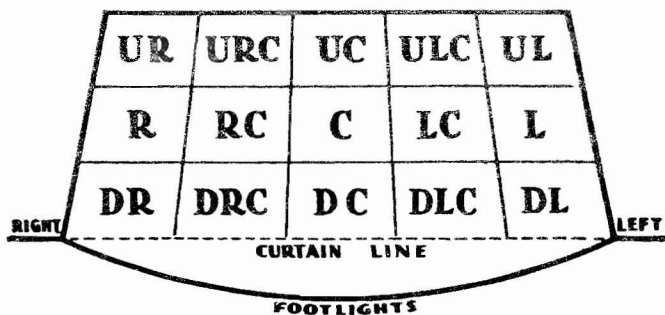
CHARACTERS

MOTHER GOOSE	A tired, yet spirited, old lady
HER CHILDREN	Any number from a minimum of five to a maximum of thirty. Typical children, aged eight through twelve or older.
MR. SMITH	A middle-aged gentleman, well-dressed. A bit stuffy at first, but becomes more friendly as the play progresses.

PLACE: The front yard of a shoe-shaped house.

TIME: The present.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

SCENE: The setting is the front yard of a large house which is shaped like a shoe. The house has one or more doors and several windows from which emerge the CHILDREN when their names are called by MOTHER GOOSE. The yard is that of a typical large family: gym equipment, tire swings, clothesline, assorted toys, bicycles, etc. [NOTE: The size of the house and the number of yard items may be scaled down for touring purposes.]

AT RISE: MOTHER GOOSE emerges from the house, hangs an item or two on the clothesline--or some other such business.

MOTHER GOOSE. Oh, dear. Oh, dear. It's so hard living in a shoe with so many children, I don't know what to do. We're all out of broth and all out of bread and eighteen* people sleeping in one bed. But it's such a lovely morning . . . almost too lovely to break the bad news to the children. They're going to be so disappointed. But it has to be done. (She takes out a roll book.) Time for roll call. Children! Children! Time to wake up. (She begins to read the names**.) Barbara and

*Since the cast is flexible, the number MOTHER GOOSE mentions will correspond to the number of children in this play.

**The names used in this script are those in the premiere production. M.G. should call the actual first names of the actors in this production. Also, the director should assign lines and characters in any way he/she sees fit.

Beth! Dean and Eric! (They enter with: "Here, Mother Goose!") George, Janis and Joey! (They emerge with: "Coming, Mother!") John, Joyce and Leigh! (They come on with: "On our way, Mother Goose!") Linda, Lois and Loretta! (They enter with: "We're here, Mother Goose!") Mike, Nadine, Pat! (They run on with: "Morning, Mother Goose!") Reeve and Robin! (They skip on with: "All present and accounted for, Mother Goose!") Very well, children. I'm afraid I have some news that's - that's not so good.

ALL. Not so good? What do you mean? What are you talking about? Etc.

JOEY. Not-so-good news means bad news, doesn't it?

MOTHER GOOSE. I'm afraid so. Children, we have to move away from our dear old shoe.

ALL. Oh, no! That's terrible. Etc.

MOTHER GOOSE. I'm sorry, but we don't have enough money to live here anymore. Just look at this poor shoe. The laces are coming out . . . there's a hole in the toe . . . and the heel is falling off. We simply have to move to a cheaper home . . . an old sneaker.

(The CHILDREN react negatively.)

BARBARA. Mother Goose, maybe we could earn some money to keep the shoe.

ERIC. We could mow lawns.

GEORGE. The lawn mower is broken.

JOYCE. We could rake leaves.

JOHN. You rake leaves in the fall, silly. This is spring (or winter, or summer).

NADEEN. Let's sell lemonade.

MOTHER GOOSE (gently). Do you know how much lemonade we'd have to sell to fix up this old shoe?

JANIS. Ten glasses?

MOTHER GOOSE. Ten *thousand* glasses.

LEIGH. I've got it. Let's have a yard sale.

ALL: Good idea! Let's try it. Why not? Etc.

LOIS. I'll sell my toy boat and my train and . . . no, I want to keep them.

PAT. I'll sell my bicycle and . . . but I like my bicycle.

LORETTA. I could sell my puzzles. But I don't want to sell my puzzles.

BETH. I don't think the yard sale is such a good idea.

DEAN. Me either.

MIKE. Nobody wants to sell anything. (All rack their brains for an "idea.")

REEVE. I've got it. Let's put on a show!

ROBIN. A show?

LINDA. What kind of a show?

LORETTA. A comedy! (She laughs affectedly.)

NADINE. A mystery! (She makes a scary sound.)

ERIC. A tragedy! (He does an elaborate "death scene" as all applaud.)

GEORGE. A melodrama! I'll be the villain. (Making his sweater into a cape and laughing villainously.)

REEVE. No, no. Not that kind of show. Something we can put together ourselves. Like . . . well, like the poems Mother Goose writes and reads to us.

JANIS. You can't put on a play with poems.

REEVE. Sure you can. We choose the poems we like best and act them out. Then we put on a show to save our shoe.

What do you think? (ALL whisper among themselves.)

BARBARA. It sounds so crazy . . .

ALL. It just might work.

MOTHER GOOSE. It's a wonderful idea, children. But maybe we'd better act out a couple and see how it goes.

(ALL agree as MOTHER GOOSE takes a poem from her pocket.) Here's one we can start with--"Little Miss Muffet." Leigh, you read it.

LEIGH. Okay, Mother Goose. All right, who wants to be Miss Muffet?

BARBARA. Me! Me!

LEIGH. Good, Barbara. We also need a tuffet.

JOYCE. Me, please!

LOIS. I want to be the tuffet!

JOYCE. I'm a better tuffet than you are.

LOIS. I'm the best tuffet in town.

LEIGH. Hold it! You can both be the tuffet. (JOYCE and LOIS are delighted, and they shake hands.)

LEIGH. Now I need curds.

LORETTA. Curds coming up.

LEIGH. Okay, Loretta. And whey. Who wants to be whey?

NADINE. Me! Oh, me. I've just gotta be whey.

LEIGH. All right, Nadine. You're whey.

NADINE. I'm so excited! Say, what is whey anyway?

LEIGH. Why it's . . . it's a lot like curds.

NADINE. Oh, I see. (To herself.) What's curds?

LEIGH. And finally . . . a spider.

GEORGE. You've got your basic spider right here.

LEIGH. Good. Now we'll act it out.

(The "Little Miss Muffet" cast finds a couple of impromptu props and costume pieces lying about to aid them in their roles. They take their places.)