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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Gossamer



Drama  
By  
Lois Lowry

“A startlingly beautiful ... adaptation.”

—CenterStageChicago.com

**Gossamer** – Drama. By Lois Lowry. Adapted from her book by the same title. Cast: 6m., 5w., 1 either gender. 4m., 4w. with doubling. 4 to 6 ensemble roles may be added. This fanciful and poignant play explores the power of dreams and the magical creatures that create them. An eager new dream-giver known only as Littlest One struggles to heal the hearts of an abused young boy, his grieving caregiver and his estranged mother before the haunting memories each of them carries become more than they can bear. But are the dreams Littlest One weaves strong enough to fortify and protect the fragile humans in her care? “A startlingly beautiful—and faithful—adaptation that promises to evoke smiles, provoke a few tears and inspire audiences to think about bravery, confidence, family and love.” (*CenterStageChicago.com*) “*Gossamer* is a wonderfully imaginative play ... The task is for the newest dream-giver, aptly called Littlest One, to build up the broken-down ego of a boy, John, suffering emotional fallout from an abusive father, all while battling the nightmare-inducing Sinistees.” (*Chicago Critic*) “Takes audiences into an imaginary world filled with depth, color and charm.” (*Montgomery Media, Pa.*) Commissioned by Oregon Children’s Theatre and First Stage Children’s Theater. *Flexible set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: GC5.*

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# GOSSAMER

By  
LOIS LOWRY

Adapted from the book *Gossamer*  
by  
LOIS LOWRY



**Dramatic Publishing**

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LOIS LOWRY

Based upon the book *Gossamer* by

LOIS LOWRY

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GOSSAMER

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“Originally commissioned by Oregon Children’s Theatre  
and First Stage Children’s Theater in September 2008”

*Gossamer* premiered at Oregon Children's Theatre, Portland, October-November 2008, with the following:

## CAST

Thin Elderly . . . . . JIM CRINO  
Trooper / Toby (YP Apprentice-Directing) . . . FERGUS FIRTH  
John . . . . . CHASE KLOTTER  
Dowager / Mother . . . . . REBECCA MARTINEZ  
Most Ancient . . . . . ERIC HULL  
The Woman . . . . . VANA O'BRIEN  
Fastidious . . . . . KERRY RYAN  
Littlest . . . . . WINTER WAGNER

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director . . . . . STAN FOOTE  
Stage Manager . . . . . ANN MOORE  
Assistant Stage Manager . . . . . CORINNE LOWENTHAL  
Scenic Design . . . . . MARK HAACK  
Lighting Design . . . . . PETER WEST  
Master Electrician . . . . . MARK LAPIERRE  
Sound Design . . . . . RODOLFO ORTEGA  
Costume Design . . . . . MARGARET CHAPMAN  
Puppet Design . . . . . TONY FUEMMELER  
Sign Interpreter . . . . . DON COATES  
YP Apprentice (Special Projects) . . . . . BROOKE BARON  
YP Apprentice (Lighting Design) . . . . . AMELIA BEAR  
YP Apprentice (Set Design) . . . . . DREW MATTE  
YP Apprentice (Directing) . . . . . MADELEINE ROGERS  
Production Manager . . . . . BILL ANDERSON  
Production Associate . . . . . KIRA LOMBARDOZZI  
Community Relations Director . . . . . SHARON MARTELL

# GOSSAMER

## CHARACTERS

### DREAM-GIVERS

FASTIDIOUS . . . . . prim, officious, elderly female  
LITTLEST ONE. . . . . very small, new at the job  
MOST ANCIENT . . . . . the aged patriarch of The Heap  
THIN ELDERLY . . . . . gentle mentor to Littlest  
THE HEAP. . . . . amorphous group of dream-givers  
TROOPER & DOWAGER. . . . . part of The Heap

### HUMANS

THE WOMAN . . . . . seventy-plus  
JOHN . . . . . a troubled eight-year-old  
YOUNG WOMAN. . . . . John's mother, in her twenties  
THE MAN (Duane) . . . . . John's father  
SOLDIER . . . . . WWII enlisted man  
TOBY . . . . . the dog





# GOSSAMER

## SCENE 1. EXTERIOR OF HOUSE.

*Night. Moonlight. We can see a granite step in front of an ordinary door with a brass knocker. On either side of the steps are bushes. The step, door and bushes are all huge. A slight breeze creates moving shadows of trees across the moonlit door. There are nighttime sounds: tree frogs, crickets, the occasional hoot of an owl. Perhaps we can see fireflies.*

*Suddenly, wriggling under the door from the inside, a creature appears. She stands, brushes herself off, then leans down and reaches a hand to help the second, less agile creature wriggle under and then stand with some difficulty and some ill-humored attention to stiff joints. These are FASTIDIOUS and LITTLEST ONE, and because of the contrast with the door and step, we can see that they are very small, and one much smaller than the other. They are a shade of silver, and LITTLEST ONE is lighter, more translucent than FASTIDIOUS.*

*The owl hoots again more loudly, closer, and we can hear the swooping wing sounds as its shadow crosses the door.*

LITTLEST. Oh! What is that?

FASTIDIOUS (*irritably and impatiently*). Oh, do hush, Littlest. It's just a kind of bird.

LITTLEST (*reaching over to take her hand, which she gives grudgingly*). This is very scary, Fastidious.

FASTIDIOUS. Scary? Oh, puhleeze! It's an average night. A good night, actually, with the moon. Sometimes it's much, much darker. Sometimes it rains. You've started your training on a very pleasant night.

LITTLEST (*looking at the place where the owl's shadow has come and gone, speaking in a loud, astonished voice*). We're birds, aren't we? We're a kind of bird!

FASTIDIOUS. Shhhhhh! Have I not been telling you and telling you: NO NOISE?!

LITTLEST (*trying to whisper*). But I just realized! Birds flutter! And so do we. At least I'm learning to. It's hard, still. But I think I must be a kind of bird! I've been wondering and wondering what we are, and now... (*She stops talking, abashed, when she realizes FASTIDIOUS is glaring at her.*) Sorry. (*She puts her thumb in her mouth.*)

*(Moving away from the door, they have reached the step now. FASTIDIOUS, accustomed to doing this, hoists herself down stiffly, then reaches up to help LITTLEST, who, being smaller, has to struggle a bit.)*

LITTLEST (*cont'd*). That was hard! Why can't we flutter down?

FASTIDIOUS. Fluttering wastes our energy. We only flutter when absolutely necessary. Please keep that in mind.

LITTLEST. I would think that it would be absolutely necessary, trying to get up and down that step, especially...

(*She notices FASTIDIOUS glaring at her again.*)  
Sorry.

FASTIDIOUS. I do hope I am not going to have to remind you every night to be quiet.

LITTLEST. I was quiet when we were inside, wasn't I?

FASTIDIOUS (*grudgingly*). You controlled yourself reasonably well, inside. There was a giggle or two, and a question, though.

LITTLEST. Well, it was my first time.

FASTIDIOUS. Do you remember why we must be quiet?

LITTLEST. Because she was sleeping. And we mustn't wake humans. We mustn't talk to them, laugh at them, touch them, and especially never wake them. They mustn't see us, *ever*.

FASTIDIOUS. Correct. Fortunately she didn't wake, tonight... But if they should happen to wake, for any reason? We must—what?

LITTLEST. Dissolve.

FASTIDIOUS. And you do know how to do that, correct?

LITTLEST. Yes. But it's very, very hard.

FASTIDIOUS. Of course it is. Let me see you do it, just so I'm certain you can.

LITTLEST (*closing her eyes and concentrating*). Well, first I close my eyes tight, and then I concentrate and concentrate...

FASTIDIOUS. Correct. You focus on your own form.

LITTLEST. Yes, I focus on my own form. (*Eyes still tightly closed, she sighs.*) I do wish I had wings. Everything would be easier if we had wings, don't you think? If we only had wings, we could...

FASTIDIOUS. You are not concentrating!

LITTLEST (*opening her eyes*). Sorry. I was just thinking...

FASTIDIOUS (*exasperated*). That's the point! How many times must I tell you: you are not supposed to *think*! You just do your job! Focus on your own form. Will it to break down, particle by particle, and dissolve!

*(LITTLEST closes her eyes again, takes a deep breath, and clearly is willing herself to dissolve. She begins to shimmer, and the shimmery light increases in intensity. Simultaneously, FASTIDIOUS has closed her own eyes and begun to shimmer as well.)*

LITTLEST (*suddenly, triumphantly*). I'm doing it! It's working! *(The shimmer on LITTLEST ends abruptly. She opens her eyes in surprise, looks for FASTIDIOUS, and cannot see her.)* Where are you? Oh my goodness, you've dissolved!

*(The shimmer on FASTIDIOUS stops. She opens her eyes. She is furious.)*

FASTIDIOUS (*tersely*). Two things.

LITTLEST. Yes?

FASTIDIOUS. One. Do not ever call out when you are mid-dissolving. See what happened? The instant you cried out, "I'm doing it!"...

LITTLEST (*sheepishly*). I stopped doing it.

FASTIDIOUS. Two. Never, never, *never* call attention to the fact that your partner has dissolved. This was only a practice session, of course, but if we had been in there... *(She gestures toward the house.)* Well! The reason for dissolving is to become—what?

LITTLEST. Invisible.

FASTIDIOUS. And we need to be invisible why? You did study this, didn't you?

LITTLEST (*nodding, and reciting*). So that humans won't see us, or know of us, or be aware of us.

FASTIDIOUS. And if I am dissolved, in there, in the human world, and suddenly someone shrieks— (*Sarcastically:*) “Oh my goodness, you've dissolved!”

LITTLEST. I'm sorry. But you know what? I was just noticing—

*(FASTIDIOUS whirls around and holds up her finger, silencing her.)*

FASTIDIOUS (*to herself*). I'm too old for this. This is ridiculous. I am not going to spend one more minute discussing the rules. Not one more *second*. We've wasted so much time, we're going to be late getting back. (*Turning irritably toward LITTLEST.*) Come. *Right now.* (*She sets off walking toward THE HEAP, with LITTLEST following her.*)

*(The owl calls again. Hearing it, LITTLEST pauses, listening, then holds her arms out, waving them slightly as if they were wings. FASTIDIOUS has moved on ahead, and LITTLEST, alone, makes a gesture with her arms, trying tentatively, and without success, to fly.)*