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Family Plays

DOCTOR HOO

Comedy/Drama by

Betty Marrapodi



DOCTOR HOO

“This was the first time that we attempted a public performance at our school. It was such a success that we have been asked to do another show in the spring! *Doctor Hoo* gave the students a sense of accomplishment and greatly increased parent involvement with the school.”
(Hancock Central Elementary School, Sneedville, Tenn.)

Designed especially for presentation by junior-high or elementary-school actors, this one-act play offers an important message about the dangers of pollution. Basically a comedy, the play has many touching moments designed to encourage young audiences to take care of our world. Easily performed by children in grades one through six.

Comedy/Drama. By Betty Marrapodi. *Cast: 8 actors, flexible.* Dr. Hoo (an owl) is in charge of an emergency clinic for animals. But he and his nurse, Miss Nanny (a goat), can hardly take care of all the animals who come to them: a blue jay who was blinded by smog and flew into a building, a fish who is ill from the polluted water in which he has to live, a hen whose baby chick ate a worm poisoned by insecticide, a leopard who is burned in a forest fire set by a careless camper, and an alligator who is afraid he will become a pair of shoes. Ideal for assembly programs, PTA or civic club meetings and touring by high schools or older groups to junior high and elementary schools. It can be an all-girl or all-boy play or any mixture of boys and girls. *Set: in a doctor's reception room. Very easy to stage. Animal costumes and makeup may be used, or each animal may be suggested by some characteristic feature, such as ears. A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging, and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 15 to 20 minutes. Code: DD6.*

Family Plays

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Doctor Hoo

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An Ecological Play for Children

in One Act

By BETTY MARRAPODI

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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(DOCTOR HOO)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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ABOUT THE PLAY

“With all the talk of saving our environment,” Betty Marapodi says, “an emphasis has been placed on the ecological education of our children.” There is no better way to teach youngsters a lesson than through the theatre.

Designed as a play for child actors and child audiences, DOCTOR HOO is an adventurous, sometimes humorous, sometimes touching journey into the heart of the animal kingdom. Dr. Hoo is an owl. Through his clinic passes a parade of animals which have been injured, harmed, or defeated by man’s carelessness and pollution. They come for emergency treatment, and they reveal their animal reaction to pollution and its dire effects.

The play is designed to be presented as a comedy. But it has enough touching moments to send the message home to the heart of every young viewer.

Perhaps the most important message for the actors to get across is this: Animals can do nothing about man-made pollution but “grin and bear it.” Only humans can stop pollution.

The actors can be all boys, all girls, or any mixture of boys and girls. One or two characters’ names and a few words of dialogue must be changed to convert it to an all-boy or all-girl play.

Animal costumes and make-up may be used. Or the animal character may be suggested by just a few props and touches of make-up. For example, Miss Nanny might wear a nurse’s cap with goats’ ears. Dr. Hoo might wear big horn-rimmed glasses and a beard made of feathers. Leo may wear a leotard, and whiskers may be painted on his/her face with eyebrow pencil.

DR. HOO is a very easy play to stage, but it has a strong and beneficial effect on the audience.

A Director’s Production Script, with costume sketches and a myriad of other suggestions for staging DOCTOR HOO, is available from the publisher.

DOCTOR HOO

CAST

(in order of appearance)

DOCTOR HOO, *an owl*

MISS NANNY, *a goat*

***MR. B. J.**, *a blue jay*

***MR. BASS**, *a fish*

MRS. HENNA, *a hen*

***WALLY**, *an alligator*

MR. COCK, *a rooster*

***LEO**, *a leopard*

PLACE: *Dr. Hoo's clinic*

TIME: *Today*

*These roles may be played by boys or girls. With just a few changes in the names and dialogue, this play may be acted by an all-girl or an all-boy cast.



DOCTOR HOO was first presented at the Schulenburg Theatre Festival March 28-29, 1974, under the direction of Mrs. Diane Kaase Herzik. Two casts of junior high students appeared on alternate nights:

Doctor Hoo Bill Brittain, Neal Heinrich
Miss Nanny Donna Kusy, Gay Hawkins
Blue Jay Phyllis Franklin, Lynne Brauner
Bass Becky Franklin, Rene Batchelder
Mrs. Henna Gail Peschke, Liz Manning
Mr. Cock Howard Stoner, Stanley Powe
Wally Vernell Matthews, Mary Lou Segura
Leo Rhonda Strickland, Tracy Bucek

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For many years Betty Marrapodi owned and managed the Wetumpka Players, a New Jersey children's repertory theatre. The group toured shows to schools and children's theatres in north, central, and south New Jersey.

Ms. Marrapodi studied writing at the Palmer Institute of Writing in California and drama at the Metropolitan-Geographical Studios in Hollywood. She has directed and acted in community theatre and children's theatre.

"I have learned a lot about entertaining children," she says.

DOCTOR HOO

[The scene is the reception room of a doctor's office. At Down Right Center is a small desk and chair. A telephone is one of the items on the desk. Right of the desk is a filing cabinet. At Up Center is a door or passageway to the treatment rooms, including the emergency room. Right of the door, near the back wall, is a small table containing bottles and bandages for first aid and simple emergency treatment. Left of the door is a hall tree on which the doctor and nurse have hung a garment or two. At Down Left Center is a row of three or four chairs. The outside entrance is at Up Left. Below it is a window (this window may be pantomimed).

At rise: The nurse, MISS NANNY, is busy at her desk. At the moment, she is busy answering the telephone. (All characters may be fully costumed and made up as the animals they represent; or only a hint – such as goats' ears – may be used. Detailed suggestions for costuming are given in the Director's Production Script.)

MISS NANNY. Emergency, Miss Nanny speaking!...Yes, when did it happen? *[Takes notes as she talks]* Oh dear! You'd better come on down immediately!...*[Hangs up]* Poor Wilbert the Frog! he was in tears and he has reason to be. For years he's been waiting to try out for the "Toads Team." They're the greatest thing in baseball today. The manager of the team finally called and asked him to come down to the ball field to try out. He was so excited, he grabbed his cap, glove, bat, and dashed out of his house. On his way, he accidentally

stepped on a rusty nail attached to a piece of wood someone had carelessly discarded. Now he can't try out. He has to wait for another call. No wonder he was in tears! [*Phone rings again.*] ...Emergency, Miss Nanny speaking!...Doctor Hoo is in emergency. No, he can't come to the phone. Yes, I think that is best. Keep checking his temperature and if it doesn't go down in the next few minutes, bring him down. Goodbye! [*Phone rings.*] ...Emergency, Miss Nanny speaking!...Of course Doctor Hoo is busy! What do you think he's doing, counting his toes?...Ha! Ha! very funny! [*hangs up*] Some people are funny! [*Phone rings again.*] Emergency, Miss Nanny speaking!...You've got a *what* in your eye?...I don't believe it!...Yes, I do believe it! Anything is possible today. Come on down! [*Hangs up and speaks to audience*] Can you believe that? An apple core in her eye! My friend Betsy the cow was out by the road grazing when an apple core seemed to fly out of nowhere and hit her in the eye. Oh! I get so mad! A motorist must have thrown it out of the window without giving much thought to anyone. When are humans going to learn to use litter bags in their cars? Oh well, what next? [*Gets up and walks to her file cabinet. DR, HOO runs in, his surgical mask and stethoscope hanging from his neck.*]

DOCTOR HOO. Miss Nanny...QUICK! Call the blood bank. He's lost a lot of blood. [*Runs back to treatment room*]

MISS NANNY. [*Rushes to make call*] Hello! Blood Bank?...I need some blood immediately! ...type? Oh dear!...wait just a minute.... [*Opens emergency door slightly*] Dr. Hoo, you didn't give me his blood type. Yes, I've got it...[*rushes back to phone*] Type X...Yes, I know it's rare!...Hurry it up, will you? Thanks! [*Hangs up*] Baa! Baa!

DOCTOR HOO. [*Enters taking off his gloves*] HOO! HOO! ...Too late! He didn't make it. Poor

little fellow, He was swimming along, minding his own business. He decided to sit and rest for awhile. He sat on what he thought was a rock, but unfortunately, it was a broken bottle. He was cut bad. He didn't have a chance. Hoo! Hoo!

MISS NANNY. Baa! Baa! I get so angry! Why can't people learn to use litter baskets? Baa! Baa!

DOCTOR HOO. Hoo! Hoo! We must be patient, Miss Nanny. When they realize that they are not only destroying us, but themselves as well, they will be less careless.

[There is a faint knock at the outside door. A BLUE-JAY enters, one wing hanging as if broken. (NOTE: Most of the characters may be played by either boys or girls.)]

MR. B. J. Please help me! I think I'm going to faint. *[Collapses as DR. HOO and NANNY rush to his aid]*

MISS NANNY. What in the world has happened to you? *[Helps him to a chair]*

[B. J. stares in bewilderment.]

DOCTOR HOO. HOO! HOO! Now, now, young man. Don't panic. You're in good hands. Tell us what happened! *[He examines him with his stethoscope.]*

B. J. I really don't know, Doc. I'm an expert in my field. I've been flying for years. I can't believe what's happened to me. I've been a guiding light for all my friends and family. I taught them how to fly to avoid obstacles. What an example I've been!

DOCTOR HOO. *[Setting his wing]* HOO! HOO! You haven't told us how you broke your wing, B. J.

B. J. I will! I will! I'm just so upset. My beautiful wing, broken! Will it be all right, Doc?