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Dramatic Publishing

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Bambi:

A Life in the Woods
Adapted by James DeVita

Bambi:

A Life in the Woods

A.A.T.E. Distinguished Play Award Winner

Drama. Adapted by James DeVita. Based on the story Bambi by Felix Salten. Cast: 4m., 5w., with doubling, or up to 13 (5m., 8w.) Here for the first time is a stage version of the original story of *Bambi* written by Austrian novelist Felix Salten in the 1920s. *Bambi: A Life in the Woods* is an eloquent and haunting tale of growing up in a superbly theatrical and sensitive work of theatre, appealing to children and adults alike. Bambi becomes heir to his father, the great prince. After Bambi encounters and masters for the first time the novel feelings of love, fear, loneliness and independence, he comes to understand that all of Earth's creatures are guided by a greater force than themselves—all are dependent on each. Intertwined in this great story is Bambi's growing awareness of the fragility of the forest environment and the impact of human encroachment on all of the forest inhabitants. *Open stage and light. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: BE7.*

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Bambi: A Life in the Woods



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Bambi: A Life in the Woods

By
JAMES DEVITA



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ORIGINATING PRODUCTION CREDITS to be printed in the publication of the play are as follows:

The play was originally produced by First Stage Milwaukee on March 4, 1994; directed by Rob Goodman. Scenic design by Chuck Erven, Lighting design by Michael Rourke, Costume design by Rick Rasmussen, Sound design by Kostia, Movement by Ron Anderson and the Stage Manager was Thomas Traband. The original cast was as follows:

Bambi: Victor DeLorenzo
Mother: Jane Hannemann
The Great Prince: Ron Anderson
Faline: Ann Marie Gay
Gobo: Tony Clements
Marena: Deanne Phillips
Friend Hare: Ray Jivoff
Jay 1: Margaret Pierson-Bates
Jay 2: Raeleen McMillion
Ronno: Ray Jivoff
Nettla: Margaret Pierson-Bates
Ena: Raeleen MacMillion
Screech Owl: Deanne Phillips

The originating theatre shall receive billing credit in all future productions of the play and in all programs and publications of the play in book or in magazine form substantially as follows:

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BIO:

Jim DeVita, a Long Island native, is an actor and playwright. His works for the stage include: *After Ours*, *Lake View*, *Waiting for Vern*, and *Accessories: Monologues in Fugue*. He is also the resident playwright at First Stage Milwaukee Theater for Young People. His other plays for young audiences include *A Little House Christmas*, *Treasure Island*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, and his original play *Dinosaur!* Other works include *Sea Scamps: A Collection of Poems About the Sea* and his young adult novel, *Marlin in my Pocket*. Jim lives in Spring Green, Wisconsin with his wife, Brenda Bedard and his son, Gale James.

CHARACTERS:

Bambi
Mother
Ena
Faline
Gobo
Nettla
Ronno
The Great Prince
Marena
Friend Hare
Jay 1
Jay 2
Screech Owl

Breakdown:

Nine actors (Various double casting)
5 women
4 men

SCENE 1

(Dawn in the forest in a glade, the lights come up on a newborn deer struggling to gain his first footing. His mother is standing behind him, quietly watching his progress, nudging him gently when he happens to stagger her way, steadying him. Unseen in the forest around them we hear whispered voices and playful laughter.)

SCREECH: What a beautiful child!

MALE VOICE: He is, isn't he!

HARE: Yes indeed!

ENA: Lovely!

HARE: Remarkable, just remarkable!

FALINE: Isn't he cute!

GOBO: Boys aren't cute!

FALINE: Are too!

SCREECH: SHH! You'll scare him.

GOBO: Will not!

NETTLA: My, but he is beautiful.

HARE: Isn't he though?

FALINE: What's his name!?

MALE VOICE: I don't know.

SCREECH: He was just born, silly.

ALL: Look! He's falling!

NETTLA: Oh, goodness!

ENA: She's got him!

HARE: Good catch!

SCREECH: SHHH!

GOBO: His legs are so skinny.

FALINE: Wonder what she'll call him?

ENA: Walking already.

HARE: Yes . . . yes . . .

FALINE: What's his name?!

GOBO: Yeah, what should we call him!?! (*Bambi falls.*)

MOTHER: (*Politely.*) SHHH! Please, my friends, forgive me, but we need to be alone right now. Please. I do hope you understand.

(*A short pause.*)

NETTLA: Oh, we're sorry dear.

HARE: Yes, yes, quite sorry. Of course we understand.

ENA: Come along children. Time to go.

GOBO: But what's his - -

ENA: SHHH! Come along I said.

FALINE: But Mom!

ENA: What did I just say?

NETTLA: What did your mother say?!

ENA: We'll visit you in a few weeks.

SCREECH: Give a yell if you need anything.

NETTLA: Such a beautiful child!

(They exit. Their voices fade off into the woods. The gentle songs of the birds can be heard again. The sun falls in through the webbed canopy above. Mother and deer snuggle together.)

MOTHER: *(Whispering.)* Bambi. *(She kisses him.)* Bambi. My little Bambi.

SCENE 2

(Bambi and Mother walking through a trail in the forest. Mother is teaching Bambi the trail. Bambi lags behind at times, playful and curious.)

BAMBI: And this one?

MOTHER: That's a birch.

BAMBI: That's an oak! I know that one. We saw that before.

MOTHER: That's right.

BAMBI: They're so beautiful! And big! Look, mother! *(Bambi runs around the oak and then hides behind it.)* You can't even see me.

MOTHER: Come along, Bambi. Stay on the trail now.

BAMBI: I am. How old are the trees, Mother?

MOTHER: Some are as old as the forest. They were here before any of us. (*Bambi wanders a little off the trail again.*) And some are as little as you. They have - - watch out for the - -

BAMBI: OW! OW!

MOTHER: - - thorn bush.

BAMBI: OW! Mother! Mother!

MOTHER: I'm here. I'm here. Hold still.

BAMBI: OW! It hurts!

MOTHER: Oh, it doesn't hurt that much. Now, just be still. It only makes it worse if you keep moving. Just lift your - -

BAMBI: OW!

MOTHER: Shh . . . shh . . . that's right. Just lift your leg . . . up . . . a little more - -

BAMBI: Ow . . . ow . . .

MOTHER: . . . a little more . . .

BAMBI: . . . ow . . .

MOTHER: There!

BAMBI: What was that!?

MOTHER: That was a thorn bush.

BAMBI: It's got teeth. Tried to eat me.

MOTHER: No it didn't, Bambi. You walked right on top of it. Those are thorns not teeth. That's only how it protects itself.

BAMBI: Yeah, but - -

MOTHER: Bambi?

BAMBI: What?

MOTHER: How many times do I have to tell you you're too young to go off the trail by yourself. OK?

BAMBI: Yes, mother.

MOTHER: No pouting . . . I'm not mad.

BAMBI: OK.

MOTHER: Come along, now and stay on the trail.

BAMBI: Who does this trail belong to, mother?

MOTHER: To us.

BAMBI: You and me?

MOTHER: Mm, mm. Watch your step there.

BAMBI: Just us?

MOTHER: No, to us deer. Ooh! Careful.

BAMBI: I'm OK. *(Pause.)* What are deer?

MOTHER: *(Laughing.)* You are a deer and I am a deer. We're both deer.

BAMBI: I'm a **deer**?

MOTHER: Yes.

BAMBI: I'm . . . a **little** deer?

MOTHER: Yes.

BAMBI: And you're a **big** deer?

MOTHER: Yes.

BAMBI: I understand now!! (*Jumping about!*) I'm a deer and you're a deer and you're a deer and I'm a deer!!! Deer! Deer! Deer! - -

MOTHER: Come along Bambi.

BAMBI: Deer, deer, deer, deer! - -

MOTHER: Bambi.

BAMBI: Coming! (*They continue along the trail. Quietly*) - - deer, deer, deer- Mother?

MOTHER: Yes?

BAMBI: Are there other deer besides you and me?

MOTHER: Oh, yes. Many of them.

BAMBI: Really!? Where are they?

MOTHER: Everywhere. This way, Bambi.

BAMBI: (*Looking about*) Everywhere!? I don't see any.

MOTHER: You will soon.

BAMBI: When?!

MOTHER: Soon. Stay close behind me now. Under. No, go under that one.

BAMBI: I got it. Mother?

MOTHER: Watch it doesn't swing back and - -

BAMBI: OW! I'm OK! I'm OK.

MOTHER: Bambi . . . Bambi . . .

(Something rustles in the grass ahead of them. Bambi freezes. Suddenly there is a high shrilled shriek.)

BAMBI: What was that?

MOTHER: Nothing, Bambi. It's OK.

BAMBI: Nothing?! But - - didn't you see that!? It was . . . it was - -

MOTHER: Yes, I know. Don't be frightened. A ferret has killed a mouse.

BAMBI: *(Pause.)* Why did he kill the mouse?

MOTHER: Because . . . Let's walk a little faster.

BAMBI: But mother - -

MOTHER: I'll explain it to you later, OK? Be a good boy now and keep up with me.

BAMBI: Shall we kill a mouse sometime, too?

MOTHER: No!

BAMBI: How come?

MOTHER: We don't do that.

BAMBI: Never?

MOTHER: Never.

BAMBI: Why not?

MOTHER: Because we never kill anything.

BAMBI: But why would the - - *(Loud cries shriek out from the trees above them. Two Jays are fighting over a nest)*

JAY 1: Get away! Get away you creep! I saw them first!
They're mine!

JAY 2: Would you just cut it out! You're gonna break them, you fool!

JAY 1: I'm not afraid of you! Let go! Let go or I'll - -oh, great!
See! You broke one!

JAY 2: You wouldn't let go!

JAY 1: Give me that!

JAY 2: *(Mocking him.)* "Give me that! Give me that!" You sound like a crow!

JAY 1: Stay out of my nest or I'll break your beak!!

JAY 2: You and how many other Jays? Huh?

(The Jays notice Bambi watching them. They stop fighting to yell at Bambi.)

JAY 2: What are you staring at you freak!!

JAY 1: Yeah, what are you lookin' at!

JAY 2: Get outta here! You nosy little - -

JAY 1: Mind your own business!

JAY 2: Go on! Leave us alone!

BOTH: SCRAM!!

(Bambi runs and catches up with Mother. The Jays return to their fighting.)

BAMBI: Why were they so mad at each other?

MOTHER: They were fighting over food.

BAMBI: They were so mean.

MOTHER: Yes, they were.

BAMBI: Will we fight over food sometime too?

MOTHER: No.

BAMBI: Why not?

MOTHER: Because there is enough for all of us. Always remember that, dear.

(They continue along the trail. Ahead of them the stage begins to brighten. They are nearing the end of the trail which finishes at the edge of the forest. They have reached the meadow. A bright, beautiful, open space is spread out before them.)

BAMBI: *(Amazed)* What is it?

MOTHER: It's the meadow.

BAMBI: What is a meadow?

MOTHER: It's a surprise! *(He moves forward Mother leaps in front of him.)* No! No! Not yet. *(She backs him into the forest again.)* I want to tell you something. Walking on the meadow's not as easy as it looks. Sometimes there can be danger in the meadow.

BAMBI: Danger? What is *danger*?

MOTHER: You'll find out when you're bigger.

BAMBI: But I'd rather know now.

MOTHER: I'll tell you later. Now, listen carefully. I'm going to go out into the meadow first. Don't leave the forest until I tell you.

BAMBI: OK.

MOTHER: If you see me start running back this way, turn around and run away as fast as you can. I'll catch up with you.

BAMBI: Yes, Mother.

MOTHER: No matter what you see or hear, even if I fall down, run away as fast as you can. Promise you'll do that?

BAMBI: *(Softly)* Yes, Mother.

MOTHER: OK. Wait for me to call you.

(Mother goes out into the meadow slowly and cautiously Bambi watches her closely, imitating her movements. Mother listens in all directions, snuffing the air about her. Suddenly she crouches down and freezes. Bambi does the same, ready to run. Then Mother relaxes. Satisfied that it's safe, she calls to Bambi.)

It's OK, Bambi. Come on!