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*Dramatic Publishing*



# **THE RABBIT WHO WANTED RED WINGS**

**Dramatized from a Southern Folk-Tale**

**by  
Nellie McCaslin**



**The Dramatic Publishing Company**  
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# **THE RABBIT WHO WANTED RED WINGS**

**A Full Length Play  
For Twelve Actors**

## **CHARACTERS**

**LITTLE RABBIT  
MRS. RABBIT  
MRS. SKUNK  
THE 1ST DUCK  
THE 2ND DUCK  
MR. SQUIRREL  
MRS. MOUSE  
MR. MOUSE  
THE GYPSY GIRL  
THE RED-WINGED BIRD  
THE FAIRY  
THE GYPSY BOY**

**SCENE ONE: The forest. Early in the morning.**

**SCENE TWO: The same. Immediately afterward.**

**SCENE THREE: The same. The next morning.**

## INTRODUCTION

With the burgeoning of children's theatres throughout the country, the supply of suitable plays has run far short of the demand. Producers, both professional and nonprofessional, are constantly on the search for scripts which will meet the special requirements of the child audience. Despite the number of plays now available, there is general agreement that we need many more; that they be of good quality; that the production problems not be a deterrent to groups whose facilities and budgets are limited. Some producers have solved these problems by writing their own scripts. In many instances the results bear the marks of the playwright inexperienced in this highly specialized field. In a few instances these plays have been highly successful and have led to subsequent publication which has fortunately made them available to other producing groups.

More often the standard scripts have been repeated every three or four years, a practice which is not unsound inasmuch as the children's audience is a changing one. Nevertheless, the challenge of new material from time to time is stimulating to both audience and cast.

A new problem which has become evident within the past decade, however, is the widening age range of the audience. Whereas children's audiences were once largely composed of eight to twelve-year-olds, we now find boys and girls of three and four attending performances regularly, with the five to eight-year-olds often comprising the largest portion of the audience. The solution to this situation in some communities has been to organize two series of plays: one for the younger children and one for the older. In other communities the plays are geared to the

older children exclusively, with the younger ones left to grasp as much as they are able. Where auditoriums are small, this does not pose a serious problem but where they are large, the younger children often experience real difficulty in seeing, hearing, and sustaining attention for the length of the show. Even when the presence of younger children is acknowledged, however, there is the fact of almost no drama written for their particular level.

Because many audiences are consistently composed of these younger children, there has been a constant search for appropriate material which can be staged effectively and presented with their interests and needs in mind. The scarcity of published material with sufficient value for both small children and college casts has led me to the dramatization of stories suitable in content and possible to stage with imagination. Taking into consideration the attention span of the younger child, no play was written to run more than an hour, with one optional intermission.

The plots and underlying ideas, while within the comprehension of the youngest child, are basically sound. Vocabulary is simple but there has been no effort to "talk down" or over-simplify the dialogue. Action is a basic requirement for the very young but allowances have been made for the so-called "quiet moments," too. Where music and dance are included, they are an integral part of the production and not inserted for the sake of variety.

The response to these plays has been enthusiastic both in our own college auditorium and elsewhere, when we have toured them to suburban communities. One play, *The Little Snow Girl*, has had, in addition, an extensive professional run. It was produced by the Merry Wanderers' Children's Theatre of New York City, under whose auspices it

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enjoyed two seasons of combined touring and Off- Broadway production.

Because audiences have enjoyed these plays so much, I have prepared them for publication so as to make them available to other groups with similar needs. It is hoped that this will encourage a recognition of the fact that plays, like books, are most enjoyed when experienced at the appropriate age. By respecting the interests of both younger and older children in the community, we are serving the audience of today and the living theatre of tomorrow.

(Dr.) Nellie McCaslin  
Professor of Educational Theatre  
New York University

# THE RABBIT WHO WANTED RED WINGS

SCENE: *The forest. Early in the morning. There is a clearing in the woods with the huge trunk of a tree DL. In it is a small doorway. URC is a pond surrounded by leaves, flowers and mushrooms. A large rock is DL of the pond. In the distance a rooster crows three times.*

AT RISE: *MRS. RABBIT appears in her doorway and MRS. SKUNK is seen UL, carrying a large basket. MRS. RABBIT ties her apron and calls to LITTLE RABBIT who is still in the house.*

MRS. RABBIT. Time to get up, Little Rabbit! Mr. Chanticleer has crowed three times. It's a beautiful day. *(Pause.)* Little Rabbit!

*(In a moment a sleepy LITTLE RABBIT appears in the doorway.)*

MRS. RABBIT. There you are. What a sleepy boy. Didn't you hear Mr. Chanticleer crowing? *(He shakes his head.)* Well, wash your ears in the pond and I'll get your breakfast.

LITTLE RABBIT. I don't want to wash my ears. And, anyhow, they're clean. Pink and clean.

MRS. RABBIT. They may be but the cold water will help wake you up. Now come along. *(She takes him to the pond and splashes water on his long ears. Then she dries them vigorously with her apron.)*

LITTLE RABBIT. Ouch! Don't scrub so hard. That hurts!

MRS. RABBIT. Nonsense. None of your brothers and sisters ever complained and their ears were scrubbed every morning—just like this. Now, let's see you. *(She looks him over.)* Yes, that's better. That looks more like my Little Rabbit. Now go inside and put on your vest while I get your breakfast. *(He goes inside the house. MRS. RABBIT notices MRS. SKUNK crossing slowly.)*

Good morning, Mrs. Skunk. Just getting home?

MRS. SKUNK *(yawning)*. Yes. I'm so tired, I'm sure I'll sleep until dark.

MRS. RABBIT. How was your hunting?

MRS. SKUNK. It was so good we stayed out all night. *(She comes closer.)* There was a fair in the village this week and what's left from the picnic baskets each day would feed all the skunks in the forest. You wouldn't believe what human beings throw away.

MRS. RABBIT. Any carrots?

MRS. SKUNK. Oh yes, lots of carrots—and lettuce. Fried chicken, cake, bread, *(Yawns again.)* and the best part of it is there'll be more tonight.

MRS. RABBIT. I wonder if I should go over?

MRS. SKUNK. Not in the daytime. There are too many people. Of course, you aren't as conspicuous as I am. But, even so, some people bring dogs. No, I wouldn't go till it's dark.

MRS. RABBIT. I don't suppose I'd do any better than right here in the garden at that.

MRS. SKUNK. With your preference for salads, I don't think you would. But I must say I like a picnic basket when I can find one. *(Yawns again.)* Well, I guess I'd better get on. Good morning, Mrs. Rabbit. *(She ambles off.)*

*(MRS. RABBIT pulls a carrot out from under a bush by her doorway as LITTLE RABBIT appears again. He now wears a vest.)*

MRS. RABBIT. Here's your breakfast, Little Rabbit. A nice fresh carrot I put away last night.

LITTLE RABBIT. What was that about picnics and chicken and bread?

MRS. RABBIT *(disdainfully)*. Oh, Mrs. Skunk had been to the fair. "Chicken and bread." We wouldn't care for such things. Now, eat your carrot.

LITTLE RABBIT *(chewing thoughtfully)*. How do we know we wouldn't care for them? I'd like to try something different. Every morning we have the same old carrot.

MRS. RABBIT. It's not the same at all. We're very fortunate to live so near a garden. And with no traps or dogs. Not every little rabbit is as lucky as you are. *(She sighs.)* And I must say, it's a relief. When I think of some of the other places we lived when your brothers and sisters were little. *(Pulls herself together.)* Well, here I am, talking the morning away and the washing not done. *(She bustles into the house, leaving LITTLE RABBIT chewing pensively on his carrot.)*

*(At this point TWO DUCKS waddle in from the left and survey the pond.)*

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