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Dramatic Publishing

**THE ADVENTURES OF
BEATRIX POTTER
AND
HER FRIENDS**

**A Full Length Musical
Based on the Life and Stories of the Creator of
“Peter Rabbit”**

**Book by
JOSEPH ROBINETTE**

**Music and Lyrics
EVELYN SWENSSON**



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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THE ADVENTURES OF BEATRIX POTTER AND HER FRIENDS

A Full-Length Musical
For a Cast of 12 to 50*

CHARACTERS (In the Life of Beatrix Potter)

BEATRIX POTTER	.....	a writer
HELEN POTTER	.....	her mother
RUPERT POTTER	.....	her father
ANNIE (CARTER) MOORE	.....	her governess
EDWIN MOORE	.....	Annie's husband
NOEL	}	the Moore children
ERIC		
MARJORIE		
FREDA		
NORAH		
NORMAN WARNE	.....	an editor
YVETTE	.....	a maid

THE PLACE: England.

THE TIME: A few years before and after
the turn-of-the-century.

Opening and closing scenes, 1950.

* See Page 6 for role distribution for 5 men and 7 women.

(In the Stories of Beatrix Potter)

THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

FLOPSY
MOPSY
COTTON-TAIL } rabbits
PETER
MOTHER RABBIT
MR. MCGREGOR a farmer
TWO SPARROWS birds

THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER

TAILOR a poor man
SIMPKIN a cat
THREE (or more) MICE friends of the Tailor
FOOTMAN an aide to the Mayor
MAYOR a high-ranking official

THE TALE OF TWO BAD MICE

LUCINDA } dolls
JANE }
TOM THUMB } mice
HUNCA MUNCA }
POLICEMAN an officer, also a doll

THE TALE OF MR. JEREMY FISHER

MR. JEREMY FISHER a frog
MR. ALDERMAN PTOLEMY TORTOISE a tortoise
SIR ISAAC NEWTON a newt
JACK SHARP a spiny fish
TROUT a large fish

THE TALE OF JEMIMA PUDDLE-DUCK

JEMIMA PUDDLE-DUCK }
REBECCA PUDDLE-DUCK } ducks
FARMER'S WIFE their mistress
FOX a wily fellow
KEP }
BARNEY } dogs
CHUTNEY }

SUGGESTED ROLE DISTRIBUTION

For a cast of 5 men, 7 women

<u>1ST ACTOR</u> (f) Beatrix Potter	<u>2nd ACTOR</u> (f) Annie (Carter) Moore	<u>3RD ACTOR</u> (f) Helen Potter
<u>4TH ACTOR</u> (m) Noel 1st Sparrow Policemen Sir Isaac Newton Fox	<u>5TH ACTOR</u> (m) Eric Peter Rabbit Mouse Mr. Jeremy Fisher Barney	<u>6TH ACTOR</u> (m) Edwin Moore Mayor Tom Thumb Trout Kep
<u>7TH ACTOR</u> (m) Rupert Potter 2nd Sparrow Tailor Jack Sharp	<u>8TH ACTOR</u> (m) Mr. McGregor Footman Norman Warne Mr. Alderman Ptolemy Tortoise	<u>9TH ACTOR</u> (f) Marjorie Mother Rabbit Hunca Munca Rebecca Puddle-duck
<u>10TH ACTOR</u> (f) Freda Flopsy Mouse Lucinda Chutney	<u>11TH ACTOR</u> (f) Norah Cotton-tail Mouse Jane Jemima Puddle-duck	<u>12TH ACTOR</u> (f) Yvette Mopsy Simpkin Farmer's Wife

VOCAL SELECTIONS

ACT ONE

Hill Top Farm	Beatrix
Remembering: Verse I	Annie
Hill Top Farm: Duet	Annie and Noel
Remembering: Verse II	Annie
The Dream In My Heart	Beatrix and Mrs. Potter
We're Going To Have A Baby .	Annie, Edwin, Moore Children
I'm Going To Market	Mother Rabbit and her Children
Good Little Girls	Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-tail
I'm Naughty Peter	Peter
I Love Lettuce	Peter
Good Little Girls: Reprise . . .	Mother Rabbit and her Children
Cherry Red Silk	Tailor
Cherry Red Silk: Reprise	Simpkin
Three Little Mice	Mice
We Wish You A Merry Christmas .	"Tailor of Gloucester" Cast
The Dolls' Song	Lucinda and Jane
The Right And Proper Thing To Do . . .	"Two Bad Mice" Cast

ACT TWO

The Dream In My Heart: Reprise	Beatrix
Walk This Way	"Mr. Jeremy Fisher" Cast
First, We Need Some Seasonings . . .	Jemima, Fox and Dogs
Hill Top Farm: Duet Reprise	Annie and Noel
The Dream In My Heart: Reprise II	Beatrix
Finale	Story Casts

PRODUCTION NOTES

SETTING

The setting for the play may be as simple or as elaborate as desired. Only two specific locales—the Potter home and the Moore home respectively—are required. The suggestion of a parlor or drawing room at Stage Right might indicate the Potter home, while a living room or kitchen area at Stage Left could represent the Moore home. An open space between the “homes” as well as open spaces in the Downstage areas can be used for other scenes, story enactments and Annie’s narrative speeches.

If desired, simple drops—or a set piece or two—may be utilized to suggest such locales as Hill Top Farm and the outer office of Warne and Company. However, these scenes may be played in the open spaces without scenery.

Simple set pieces may also be used to denote the locales of the Five Stories. In *Peter Rabbit*, a ground row or two to suggest a garden, a free-standing gate, a bush covered with a net and a scarecrow will set the scene.

A table filled with cloth and sewing materials (and two hidden coats) along with a blanket on the floor to suggest a bed are the basics in *The Tailor Of Gloucester*.

A table, two chairs, a small cupboard and several plastic dishes to which are glued artificial food will suffice in *The Two Bad Mice*. (Two flats resembling the sides of Norman’s dollhouse may be added if desired.)

A simple ground row of “pond flora” such as cattails, lilies and buttercups can suggest the environs of *Mr. Jeremy Fisher*.

And the corner of a cottage and a tree at opposite sides of the stage may represent the Fox’s home and farm respectively in *Jemima Puddle-duck*.

Set pieces, if used for the stories, may be added and struck by the actors or by stagehands attired in dark clothing.

COSTUMES

The costumes for those actors playing one role only (i.e., Beatrix, Annie, Mrs. Potter) may remain the same for each character; however, one or two changes each during the course of the play will help suggest the passage of time. This is especially true of Beatrix who progresses from a teenager to a woman in her late thirties.

During Annie's narration concerning the death of Norman, Beatrix should enter the scene wearing a dark cloak or cape.

The costumes for the animals should be kept simple, especially if each actor plays several different roles. Full masks and/or elaborate costumes may tend to work against the "human" qualities of the animals.

**THE ADVENTURES OF BEATRIX
POTTER AND HER FRIENDS**

ACT ONE

SETTING: *An open space—suggesting a wooded area at Hill Top Farm.*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *The stage is dimly lit. A spotlight— or special—comes up to reveal BEATRIX POTTER at one side of the stage, or perhaps behind a scrim.*

(MUSIC #1 “HILL TOP FARM”)

BEATRIX (*singing*).

**WHEN I AM HERE BY LAKE WINDERMERE,
I LOVE THE CHARM OF HILL TOP FARM.
WHEN I AM NEAR THIS PLACE SO DEAR,
I LOVE THE CHARM OF HILL TOP FARM.**

(The spotlight goes out on BEATRIX and she exits. The lights come up slowly as the sounds of forest animals, birds and insects are heard softly in the distance—perhaps created by offstage actors. A man, NOEL, wheels an elderly woman, ANNIE, sitting in a wheelchair, into the area. ANNIE has a book in her lap.)

NOEL. Here we are, Mother.

ANNIE. Thank you, Noel...The view is even lovelier than I remembered.

(MUSIC #1A "REMEMBERING: VERSE I")

ANNIE (*singing*).

**THE PURPLE SHADOWS CREEPING DOWN
RAVINES INTO THE VALLEY,
THE SCENT OF THE HEATHER ON THE HILL,
THE MUSIC OF THE MURMUR OF THE WIND IN
THROUGH THE TREES
I REMEMBER AND I ALWAYS WILL.**

NOEL (*speaking*). It's a bit chilly today, Mum. Shall I get your coat from the car?

ANNIE. My shawl, perhaps. Thank you.

NOEL. While you're up here reading and reminiscing, I'm going to walk down to the pond.

ANNIE. Your favorite spot.

NOEL. Why not? That's where I first met Jemima Puddle-duck.

ANNIE. How long ago was that, Noel?

NOEL. This is 1950. So it was at least forty years ago.

(MUSIC #1B "HILL TOP FARM: DUET")

ANNIE and NOEL (*singing*).

**WHEN I AM HERE BY LAKE WINDERMERE,
I LOVE THE CHARM OF HILL TOP FARM.
WHEN I AM NEAR THIS PLACE SO DEAR,
I LOVE THE CHARM OF HILL TOP FARM.**

NOEL (*speaking*). I'll get your shawl. (*He exits. ANNIE opens the book on which is printed The Adventures Of Peter Rabbit And His Friends.*)

ANNIE. "The Adventures of Peter Rabbit and His Friends" by Beatrix Potter. (*Looking at the audience.*) I know what you're thinking. But no—I'm *not* Beatrix Potter. (*Laughing.*) And I'm not Peter Rabbit either. But I *am* one of Peter's friends. And I was one of Beatrix Potter's friends, too. In fact, I was her *best* friend.

(*NOEL enters carrying a shawl.*)

NOEL (*putting the shawl around ANNIE*). Here you are, Mum. You know, while I'm down at the pond, I think I'll visit the barn and sheds as well. See you in a bit. (*He kisses her and exits.*)

ANNIE. Have a nice visit, Noel. (*A pause.*) That was Noel. He was Peter Rabbit's best friend. In fact, if it weren't for Noel, there might not be a Peter Rabbit. Truth to tell, if it weren't for my children, there might not be any stories written by Beatrix Potter. But before I tell you about all that, let me tell you who I am. My name is Annie—Annie Moore. When I first met Beatrix Potter, I was Annie Carter. I wasn't married then—and I was much younger, of course.

(MUSIC #1C "REMEMBERING: VERSE II")

ANNIE (*singing*).

AND EVEN THOUGH THE YEARS HAVE FLOWN
AWAY,
AND I AM OLDER,
I FEEL LIKE A YOUTHFUL WOMAN STILL.
THE MAGIC OF THE MEETING OF THE MIND
OF A FRIEND
I REMEMBER AND I ALWAYS WILL.

(She stands unsteadily and takes off her shawl. Speaking.) I didn't need a shawl to keep me warm in those days. And I didn't need glasses either. *(She removes her glasses.)* My hair was long and shiny. *(She quickly takes her hair down.)* And if you don't mind my saying so, I was right pretty. At least that's what my mama and papa told me. *(She straightens up, now looking years younger.)* Yes, I was a young woman then—ready to make my way into the world. I studied hard, worked long hours and at the ripe old age of nineteen, I became a licensed governess. Oh, and I certainly didn't need a wheelchair back then, did I?

(MUSIC #2 "INTRO: THE DREAM IN MY HEART")

(She pushes the wheelchair offstage and exits. The lights come up full to reveal a unit set which includes the Potter home, the Moore home, and open spaces for other locales as well as for the enactment of the five stories—see Production Notes for setting suggestions. MRS. POTTER enters the Potter home, followed by BEATRIX.)

(MUSIC #2A "THE DREAM IN MY HEART")

MRS. POTTER. No, Beatrix. You may not.

BEATRIX. Please, Mother, please.

MRS. POTTER. Don't argue with me now.

BEATRIX. Please, Mother, please. You let Bertram go to school. Why can't I?

MRS. POTTER. Girls must have a governess.

BEATRIX. I'd rather die!

MRS. POTTER. Bertram goes to a private school where wealthy boys should go.

BEATRIX. But what about wealthy girls?

MRS. POTTER. They're tutored at home, you know.

(Singing.)

**GIRLS ARE MADE OF SUGAR AND SPICE
AND EVERYTHING THAT'S PRETTY AND NICE.**

BEATRIX.

**FROGS AND SNAILS AND PUPPY DOG TAILS—
THAT'S WHAT I AM MADE OF.**

(She takes a frog from her pocket. MRS. POTTER reacts in horror.)

MRS. POTTER.

GIRLS MUST HAVE A CHAPERONE.

BEATRIX.

I WANT TO WALK IN THE WOODS ALONE.

MRS. POTTER.

GIRLS MUST LEARN TO KEEP A HOUSE.

BEATRIX.

I WOULD RATHER KEEP A MOUSE.

(She takes a mouse from her pocket.)

MRS. POTTER *(speaking)*. Oh, Beatrix!

(Singing.)

**I WANT YOU TO LEARN HOW TO TRAIN THE
COOKS,
PLAN MENUS AND PARTIES AND DUST THE
BOOKS.**

**TO BE A GOOD HOSTESS IS REALLY AN ART.
OH, WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THE DREAM IN MY
HEART?**

BEATRIX.

I WANT TO PAINT ANIMALS WITH HUMAN
LOOKS.

I WANT TO WRITE STORIES AND PUBLISH
BOOKS,
TO KNOW ABOUT SCIENCE AND MUSIC AND
ART,

OH, WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THE DREAM IN MY
HEART?

MRS. POTTER.

I WANT YOU TO LEARN
HOW TO TRAIN THE COOKS,
PLAN MENUS AND PARTIES
AND DUST THE BOOKS.
TO BE A GOOD HOSTESS
IS REALLY AN ART.
OH, WHY CAN'T YOU SEE
THE DREAM IN MY HEART?

BEATRIX.

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WITH HUMAN LOOKS.
I WANT TO WRITE STORIES
AND PUBLISH BOOKS,
TO KNOW ABOUT SCIENCE
AND MUSIC AND ART.
OH, WHY CAN'T YOU SEE
THE DREAM IN MY HEART?

(*YVETTE, a maid, enters.*)

YVETTE (*speaking*). Beg pardon, ma'am, but the new governess is here.

MRS. POTTER. Thank you, Yvette. Tell her I'll be right out.

BEATRIX. Why are governesses always old and look like dried-up prunes?

MRS. POTTER. Shush! Mind your manners. She might hear you.

BEATRIX. I hope she does.

MRS. POTTER. Incidentally, I have instructed her that your sketch pad is to be used strictly for your lessons. You have been forbidden to draw until you have shown more progress in your studies. Do you understand?

BEATRIX (*resigned*). Yes, ma'am.

MRS. POTTER. I will send in the governess.

(She exits. BEATRIX quickly picks up a sketch pad, looks at the top sheet and starts to tear it out as ANNIE enters.)

ANNIE. Hello.

BEATRIX (*hurriedly puts the sketch pad behind her back*).

Oh...Hello. Who are you?

ANNIE. My name is Annie. Annie Carter.

BEATRIX. But—I was expecting my new governess.

ANNIE. I *am* your new governess.

BEATRIX. But you don't look like a—a—

ANNIE. A dried-up prune? (*She laughs as does BEATRIX.*)

BEATRIX. Not at all. But you do look like—like I might like you.

ANNIE. Let's hope so. What are you holding behind your back?

BEATRIX (*holding out an empty hand*). Nothing—really.

ANNIE. The other hand, please. (*Reluctantly BEATRIX hands her the sketch pad.*) It's a drawing.

BEATRIX. It's nothing really. Just a sketch of a rabbit.

ANNIE. I was told you are not allowed to draw until your studies improve.

BEATRIX. Are you going to tell my parents?

ANNIE. I'm afraid so.

BEATRIX. Oh, no.

ANNIE. I'm going to tell them their daughter is a fine artist who should be encouraged to continue her work.

BEATRIX (*beaming*). Oh, I *am* going to like you, Miss... Annie. I predict we'll be great friends. Come, let's have tea before we begin my lessons. (*She exits as ANNIE remains on stage.*)

ANNIE. Beatrix's prediction came true. She and I became best friends. And as the months went by, I learned things from her as well. On our nature walks, she would tell me the names of wild mushrooms and mosses on the trees. And she would draw pictures of them at every opportunity.

(She exits. A moment later, MR. POTTER enters carrying some artwork.)

MR. POTTER. Beatrix!

BEATRIX'S VOICE *(from offstage)*. Yes, Father?

(BEATRIX enters.)

MR. POTTER. I bought these for you today. Some original paintings by a Mr. Caldecott.

BEATRIX *(taking the artwork)*. Thank you, Father.

MR. POTTER *(starting to leave)*. Oh—and Beatrix. I've decided—to allow you to take art lessons.

BEATRIX. Papa!

MR. POTTER. Your governess has convinced me that you may have a bit of talent.

BEATRIX *(embracing him)*. Thank you, Papa. *(MR. POTTER exits.)* Art lessons. At last.

(ANNIE enters.)

BEATRIX. Oh, Annie—thank you.

ANNIE. It took me almost two years to convince him.

BEATRIX. Well, he *is* a bit stubborn, you know. But he's a good heart—and so is Mum.

ANNIE. Beatrix, there's something else I spoke to your father about.

BEATRIX. Oh?

ANNIE. I told him...I shall be leaving soon.

BEATRIX. Annie—no!

ANNIE. I've met a wonderful man. His name is Edwin Moore. He has asked me to marry him.

BEATRIX. But—but what about me? Who'll go on walks with me? Who will I tell my secrets to?

ANNIE. Your friends.

BEATRIX. I have no friends—just you...I want to get married, too.

ANNIE. You will—someday.

BEATRIX. How can I? My parents keep me cooped up in this house all the time. Oh, I'm so miserable I could die.
(*She exits in tears.*)

ANNIE. Beatrix...(To the audience.) She didn't die, of course. But she did become quite ill for a time. The doctors didn't know what was wrong with her, but she recovered in a month or two. In the meantime, I was settling into my new home with my new husband. Before I knew it, a whole year had flown by.

(MUSIC #3 "REMEMBERING: INCIDENTAL")

(*The scene changes to the Moore home. EDWIN MOORE enters carrying a lunch basket.*)

EDWIN. Well, off to my job. Goodbye, luv. (*He kisses ANNIE.*)

ANNIE. I'll see you when you get home.

EDWIN. Say, you don't still miss *your* old job, do you?

ANNIE. I miss Beatrix, of course. But I like what I have now even better. (*She hugs him, then turns away coyly.*) And what I'm *going* to get even better yet.

EDWIN (*suspiciously*). Wait a minute...How did you know what you're going to get? Who told you?

ANNIE. The doctor, of course.

EDWIN. The doctor! Well, bless my soul. How did *he* know I was getting you a brand-new kitchen table for your anniversary?

ANNIE. He told me I'm getting a brand-new baby for *our* anniversary.

EDWIN. Must have been the carpenter. He lives on the same street as the—doctor told you what?

(MUSIC #4 "WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY")

ANNIE (*singing*).

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY.

EDWIN.

A BABY?

ANNIE.

A BABY! AND HE'LL BE BORN AT CHRISTMAS.

ANNIE and EDWIN.

SO WE WILL NAME HIM NOEL.

EDWIN.

OUR FIRST ONE WILL BE NOEL! (*He exits.*)

ANNIE (*speaking*). Go on with you—pretty soon Noel had a little brother.

(*EDWIN, followed by NOEL, enters holding a baby bundle.*)