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Dramatic Publishing

E. B. White's

*The
Adventures
Of*

Stuart Little



*Dramatized
by
Joseph Robinette*



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Stuart Little

The many adventures, both big and small, of Stuart Little are brought vividly to life in this story theatre presentation. The acting ensemble plays many human and animal roles in a series of delightful scenes that make up the marvelous maneuverings of a mild-mannered mouse trying to survive in a "real people's world."

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STUART LITTLE

A Play in One Act for Children

**Based upon the book
by
E. B. White**

**Adapted for the stage
by
Joseph Robinette**



The Dramatic Publishing Company
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JOSEPH ROBINETTE

Based upon the story *STUART LITTLE* by

E. B. WHITE

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(STUART LITTLE)

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STUART LITTLE

A Play in One Act
For 7-25 actors (or more)

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR(S)
STUART LITTLE, a mouse
MR. LITTLE, Stuart's father
MRS. LITTLE, Stuart's mother
GEORGE, Stuart's brother
NEIGHBORS
DOCTOR
SNOWBELL, the Little's cat
BUREAU CHIEF
DOGS (2)
WOMAN WITH NEWSPAPER
PASSENGERS
BUS DRIVER
DR. CAREY, a dentist
LEROY, a bully
REFEREE
SPECTATORS
REPORTER
MARGALO, a bird
ZEKE, a trashman
HANK, a trashman
MALTY, a cat
BABETTE, a cat
TIGE, a cat
ANGIE, a cat

PIGEON

MR. CLYDESDALE, a dental patient

MISS SWENSON, a dental assistant

AUTOMOBILE DRIVERS (optional)

STOREKEEPER

HARRIET AMES, a girl about Stuart's size

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

SCHOOL CHILDREN

TELEPHONE REPAIRMAN

NOTE: All roles except for Stuart may be performed by an ensemble of six or more actors—(See following page for suggested role distribution.)

THE PLACE: In and around New York City and southern New England.

THE TIME: A few years ago.

SUGGESTED ROLE DISTRIBUTION

For a cast of seven (4m, 3f or 3m, 4f)

1ST ACTOR (male or female)

Stuart Little

2ND ACTOR (male)

Mr. Little

Hank

Tige

Storekeeper

School Superintendent

3RD ACTOR (male)

George

Leroy

Angie

Mr. Clydesdale

4TH ACTOR (male)

Doctor

Snowbell

Bus Driver

Dr. Carey

Zeke

Telephone Repairman

5TH ACTOR (female)

Mrs. Little

Reporter

Malty

Miss Swenson

6TH ACTOR (female)

Neighbor

Bureau Chief

1st Dog

Referee

Margalo

7TH ACTOR (female)

Woman with Newspaper

2nd Dog

Babette

Pigeon

Harriet Ames

(The 2nd-7th Actors will also play Narrators, Passengers, Spectators, Automobile Drivers (optional) and School Children.)

The first professional production of *STUART LITTLE* was presented by The Glassboro Summer Children's Theatre, New Jersey, with the following cast:

STUART LITTLE Rus Rainear

THE ENSEMBLE Justin Candelora,
Laura Lynn Diamond, Brenden Dougherty,
Holly Eckman, Mark Jacobs, Gina Ricci

The first non-professional production of the play was presented by The Young Troupe of Monroe, Louisiana, directed by Cathy Webb, with the following cast:

STUART LITTLE Jason Harrison, Matthew Jackson

THE ENSEMBLE Matt Armstrong, Jeremy Babcock,
Holly Brooks, Benjy Canales, Ann Claire Crawford,
Jeremy Dowdy, Jason Dunavant, Molly Hart,
Stephen Haedicke, Matt Helmer, Sharon Jackson,
Laura Koepke, Amy Lenard, Daniel Mayer,
Robert Medford, Audrey Stevenson

PRODUCTION NOTES

USE OF BOXES

If wooden boxes are used, as suggested at the beginning of the play, they should be constructed as cubes with each side approximately 14 to 18 inches in diameter. Twelve boxes are suggested, though more may be used. The bottom six boxes would read L-I-T-T-L-E. These boxes would be closed, or covered, at the top since they would be used to sit on, climb on, etc. The bottoms of these boxes may be left open to reduce their weight.

The top six boxes would read S-T-U-A-R-T. They would be closed at the bottom and open at the top to serve as prop boxes throughout the play. These boxes should be placed at various points about the stage, perhaps in a large semi-circle beginning DR, going UC, then finishing DL. Entrances and exits should not, of course, be blocked by the prop boxes. Each box should contain at least one prop to establish its function as a prop box. The prop boxes should not be moved or used in conjunction with the six bottom boxes which would be utilized in various configurations to suggest different locales.

The movement—or shifting—of the bottom boxes from one scene to another need not be complicated nor elaborate. Sometimes the mere setting of one box atop another, or the separation of two boxes from two others, would be sufficient to suggest a "scene change." These changes may be activated by the onstage actors, or by other actors who enter, move the boxes, then exit. Sometimes the Narrator himself may make a box shift during his narration.

If large numbers of actors are used in the cast, several may be designated as permanent "scene changers" to augment their participation as Spectators, Passengers, School Children, etc.

It is recommended that during the first shifting of the boxes, the lettered sides be turned upstage so the letters do not become a distraction during the play. At the end, of course, when the boxes are placed in their original positions, the letters will be visible, again reading S-T-U-A-R-T L-I-T-T-L-E.

STUART'S FIRST ENTRANCE

If possible, Stuart may lie prone on the floor behind the boxes reading L-I-T-T-L-E. The first shift of these boxes may simply be the placing of the "L" box atop the "T" box and the "E" box atop the other "T" box. In that case, when Stuart is first introduced, he can pop up from behind the boxes instead of entering from offstage.

THE BOAT RACE

The use of cloth fabric to represent the "pond," with small two-dimensional boats "sailing" behind the fabric, is only one method of staging the boat race between Stuart and Leroy. A more realistic approach may be employed by using larger boats, one of which can be ridden in by Stuart. This method would, of course, be more complicated and might necessitate the use of offstage rigging to "propel" the boats.

THE FINAL SCENE

While Stuart's voice may simply be heard offstage during the final scene, the use of an upstage scrim and back-lighting might be used to reveal Stuart's silhouette as he speaks his final lines.

THE NARRATOR

The Narrator may be played by one actor; however, it is recommended that the Narrator be performed by various actors throughout the play.

USE OF MUSIC

It is suggested that music be employed to cover several of the scene changes and to be used before and after the play. In the premiere professional production, excerpts from Mozart sonatas were recorded and used during scene changes and the "driving" scenes. In the first non-professional production, live incidental music was played on a keyboard. Portions of familiar songs, as well as "improvised" sound effects, underscored the proceedings from time to time. The use of music is optional, however, and not mandatory for the success of the production.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING about *Stuart Little*...

"Very workable. Easy on a budget while maintaining the desired effects."

*Chairman, Dept. of Theatre and Dance,
Murray State University, Murray, Ky.*

"Good play for touring. Easy set and props. K-3 audience loved it! Works best with a keyboard player for sound effects and incidental music between scenes."

*Pam Benson,
Avon Middle School, Avon, Conn.*

"Great piece of 'story theatre,' easy to produce, includes large cast, short enough for child audience. Fun for all involved."

Carolyn Reid, Westview High School, Portland, Ore.

"*Stuart Little* is a charming adaptation of a wonderful children's story. School groups love it; audiences of all ages love it. I wish there were more story theatre pieces as well written as this."

*Joanna Naumes,
Seacoast Rep. Youth Theatre,
Portsmouth, N.H.*

"...A great script, a lot of fun for children to perform or watch. It's a very creative dramatization by Joseph Robinette."

*Lisa Lincoln,
El Dorado Children's Theatre, Santa Fe, N.M.*

"Nice flexibility in casting. Good production suggestions (boxes). Good choice for community theatre—parts for all ages."

Roberta Weiner, Prana Productions, Holliston, Mass.

"This tale with a 'tail' was extremely delightful and this version worked really well with an all-youth cast."

*Production Manager,
UCF Civic Theatre, Orlando, Fla.*

"Perfect for middle-school theatre."

*Kim Hutchens,
Clay-Chalkville Middle School, Trussville, Ala.*

"Delightful version for the stage of a classic story for children! Very flexible staging—always a plus."

*Dr. Susan Steadman,
Offshoot Productions, Peachtree City, Ga.*

"One of the best-received children's shows we've done in years."

Liz Hedges, Panola College, Carthage, Texas

"It was fabulous. The costuming was easy and the set was simple to create. The audience's imaginations were stimulated. Children were mesmerized."

*Sharon Rubel,
Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, Ill.*

STUART LITTLE

(Several ACTORS enter in front of the curtain and begin speaking to each other.)

ACTOR. Good morning.

ACTOR. Good morning.

ACTOR. Hello.

ACTOR. Hello.

ACTOR. Nice day.

ACTOR. Not bad at all.

ACTOR. By the way, did you hear—?

ACTOR. I certainly did.

ACTOR. How about you, did you hear?

ACTOR. You bet I did.

ACTOR. And you?

ACTOR. Yes, indeed.

ACTOR. Did you believe it?

ACTOR. Not at first.

ACTOR. I thought they were kidding.

ACTOR. So did I.

ACTOR. But it's true.

ACTOR. It certainly is.

ACTOR. The second son of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Little turned out to be a—

ACTOR *(clapping his hand over the previous ACTOR's mouth)*. Shh! *(Looking at audience.)* Maybe they haven't heard.

ACTOR. Perhaps you're right.

ACTOR (to AUDIENCE). Have you heard?

ACTOR. If you've heard, raise your hands.

ACTOR (after a moment). Some have.

ACTOR. Some haven't.

ACTOR. Maybe we should tell them.

ACTOR. I agree.

ACTOR. Go right ahead.

ACTOR. You tell them.

ACTOR. You can tell them.

ACTOR. Why don't you tell them?

ACTOR. I've got an idea. Why don't we *all* tell them.

ACTOR. Good idea.

ACTOR. So, where should we begin?

ACTOR. How about—at the beginning?

ACTOR. An excellent place to begin—

ACTOR. Then let's begin—

ACTOR. —the adventures of—

ALL. —Stuart Little!

(Curtain opens to reveal twelve wooden boxes—six atop the others—in a row across the stage. The letters S-T-U-A-R-T are written on the top six boxes. The letters L-I-T-T-L-E are inscribed on the bottom six. The ACTORS rearrange the boxes and place them at various points on the stage. The top boxes contain props and costume pieces. Other props and costumes are off-stage. The bottom boxes will be used in various configurations throughout the play to represent such locales as the Little's living room—as in the present scene—a general store, a classroom, a roadside, etc. See Production Notes for further details.)

(NOTE: All ACTORS except STUART will perform several characters throughout the play. Each character will be suggested by one or two props, costume pieces, etc. Simplicity is the key in this "story theatre" approach. All ACTORS remain onstage for the opening scene. They will take costume pieces and props from the on-stage prop boxes.)

NARRATOR. Stuart Little—

(STUART enters to light applause from the ACTORS.)

STUART. Thank you. Thank you. You're more than kind.

NARRATOR. —was the second son of—

MR. LITTLE. Mister—

MRS. LITTLE. And Missus—

BOTH. Frederick C. Little.

GEORGE. I'm George, their first son.

1ST NEIGHBOR. Did you notice? The Little's new baby is not much bigger than a—

2ND NEIGHBOR. He has the sharp nose and the long tail of a—

3RD NEIGHBOR. As well as the pleasant, shy manner of a—

4TH NEIGHBOR. I do believe that the Little's new son is—

DOCTOR. —a mouse! (Going to STUART, putting a thermometer in his mouth.) And I'm delighted with Stuart—though it is very unusual for an American family to have a mouse. Even in New York. (Examining STUART.)

NARRATOR. Temperature—

DOCTOR. Ninety-eight-point-six. Normal for a mouse.

NARRATOR. Chest and heart.

DOCTOR. Sound as a dollar. Maybe sounder.

NARRATOR. Eyes, ears, nose and throat.

DOCTOR. Check, check, check and check. He's in excellent condition. You have a fine son, there, Mr. and Mrs. Little. Feed him up. (*He exits.*)

GEORGE. I'm George, their first son.

NARRATOR. Unlike most babies, Stuart could walk as soon as he was born.

STUART. There *are* certain advantages to being a mouse.

NARRATOR. When he was a week old, he could climb lamps by shimmying up the cord.

STUART (*climbing up onto a box*). Youth has its privileges.

NARRATOR. And when he was a month old, his mother made him a fine little blue worsted suit with patch pockets—(*MRS. LITTLE gives him a jacket which he puts on.*)

STUART. —where I can keep my handkerchief, my money and my keys. (*He is handed the items by various ACTORS.*) Thanks, Mom. (*ALL except STUART, GEORGE and NARRATOR exit.*)

NARRATOR. As he grew older, Stuart was a great help to his parents.

GEORGE. And to his brother, George. That's me—the other son.

NARRATOR. Because he could do things a mouse can do. *And he was agreeable about doing them.* (*He exits.*)

GEORGE (*taking a ping-pong paddle from a prop box*). Stuart, my ping-pong ball just rolled behind the radiator. Can you get it for me?

STUART. Sure, George.

GEORGE. I'll be in the recreation room. (*GEORGE and STUART exit in opposite directions.*)

(*STUART returns almost immediately, pushing a large white ball. When he is at center stage, he rolls the ball offstage in the direction where GEORGE exited.*)

STUART. Here you go, George!

(*GEORGE enters, bouncing a normal-sized ping-pong ball off his paddle.*)

GEORGE. Thanks, Stuart. (*He exits.*)

(*MR. LITTLE enters, holding a drain plunger.*)

MR. LITTLE. Stuart, your mother just dropped her wedding ring down the bathtub drain. Could you be a good fellow and fetch it out?

STUART. I'll try, Dad. (*He exits as MR. LITTLE exits in the other direction.*)

MR. LITTLE (*to himself as he leaves*). Why was Mother wearing her ring in the bathtub?

(*STUART re-enters carrying a large golden ring, about the size of a hula hoop. He crosses to the far side of the stage and rolls it off.*)

STUART. Here your are, Mother!

(*MRS. LITTLE enters, slipping a normal-sized ring onto her finger.*)

MRS. LITTLE. Thank you, Stuart.

STUART. Sure, Mom. (*He exits as—*)

(*MR. LITTLE and GEORGE enter.*)

MRS. LITTLE. Isn't he terrific?

MR. LITTLE. A fine fellow. (*A pause.*) But there will be problems, of course.

MRS. LITTLE. No child's perfect.

MR. LITTLE. And one of those problems we'll have to deal with right away.

GEORGE. What's that, Pop?

MR. LITTLE. There must be no references to "mice" in our conversations. (*MRS. LITTLE takes a book from a prop box and rips a page from it.*)

GEORGE. Mom, what are you doing with that songbook?

MRS. LITTLE. Getting rid of a song.

GEORGE. What song?

MRS. LITTLE. "Three Blind Mice...see how they run."

MR. LITTLE. Good idea. We don't want our son to grow up fearing that a farmer's wife is going to cut off his tail with a carving knife.

GEORGE. I guess we'd better do something about this, too. (*He takes a book from another prop box and opens it.*) " 'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house—"

MRS. LITTLE (*looking over GEORGE's shoulder*). "Not a creature was stirring, not even a—" We can't say mouse.

MR. LITTLE. How about grouse?

GEORGE. I suggest souse.

MRS. LITTLE. What about louse?

MR. LITTLE. " 'Twas the night before Christmas when
all through the house—"

MR. and MRS. LITTLE. "Not a creature was stirring—"

ALL. "Not even a louse."

MR. LITTLE. I believe that's the best substitute.

MRS. LITTLE (*taking a pencil and changing the word*).

Then I'll just rub out "mouse" and change it to "louse."
(*The boxes are rearranged to form a "mouse hole."*)

MR. LITTLE. You know the thing that worries me the
most?

GEORGE. What's that, Pop?

MR. LITTLE. That mouse hole over there. Stuart does
look a good deal like a mouse. And I've never seen a
mouse yet that didn't like to go into a hole.

MRS. LITTLE. There will be problems.

MR. LITTLE. No child's perfect. (*They begin to exit.*)

GEORGE. Was I perfect, Pop?

MR. LITTLE. No child's perfect.

MRS. LITTLE (*aside*). Especially George. (*They exit as—*)

(*NARRATOR enters.*)

NARRATOR. The home of the Little family was a pleas-
ant place. In the mornings the sun streamed in through
the east windows. Stuart was an early riser. He was al-
most always the first one up in the morning. (*He exits
as—*)

(*STUART enters wearing a bathrobe and brushing his
teeth.*)

STUART. Ah, it's nice to have the place all to oneself in
the morning. (*He begins to exercise as—*)

(SNOWBELL, a cat, enters.)

SNOWBELL. You don't have the place *all* to yourself, bub.

STUART. Oh, hello, Snowbell.

SNOWBELL. You're up early, aren't you?

STUART. I thought I'd come down for a bit of exercise and brush my teeth.

SNOWBELL. Your teeth aren't big enough to brush. Want to see a good set? Look at mine. (*He bares his teeth.*)

STUART. Very nice. But mine are all right, too, even though they're small. And I'll bet with all the exercise I do, my stomach muscles are firmer than yours.

SNOWBELL. I bet they're not.

STUART. I bet they are. Like iron bands.

SNOWBELL. I bet they're not.

STUART (*pointing toward offstage*). See that window shade in the next room—with the pull-cord and ring?

SNOWBELL. What of it?

STUART. I'll bet I can leap up and grab the ring and chin myself three times.

SNOWBELL. Try it.

STUART. Okay. (*He takes off his bathrobe, setting it and his toothbrush down.*) Here goes. (*He exits, then calls from offstage.*) I got the ring! Now I'll chin myself! One! Two! Help! (*A whirring sound is heard offstage.*)

SNOWBELL. Holy mackerel. He rolled himself up in that window shade.

STUART (*offstage, in a muted voice*). Help—let me out!

SNOWBELL. I guess that will teach him to show off his muscles. My, my, this place needs tidying up a bit. (*He picks up the bathrobe and toothbrush.*) Maybe I'll just

set these out of the way. Next to the *mouse hole*. (He sets the items in front of the "hole," then goes to a corner and lies down.)

(MRS. LITTLE enters.)

MRS. LITTLE. Good morning. Are you up yet, Stuart? Stuart? (She sees the bathrobe and toothbrush near the "hole.") Oh, no! It's happened!

(MR. LITTLE and GEORGE enter.)

MR. LITTLE. What has?

MRS. LITTLE. Stuart's gone in the mouse hole. (Crying.) My poor dear little son! I know he'll get wedged in there somewhere. (GEORGE sticks his head into the "hole.")

MR. LITTLE. Now, Mother, just because you can't travel comfortably in a mouse hole doesn't mean that it isn't a perfectly suitable place for Stuart. Just don't get yourself worked up. (Pulling GEORGE out of the "hole.") George!

MRS. LITTLE. Let's call to Stuart. It's quite possible that he has lost his way in there.

MR. LITTLE. Very well. I will count three, then we will all call, then we will all keep perfectly quiet for three seconds, listening for the answer. (ALL get onto their hands and knees in front of the "hole.") One, two, three.

ALL. Stooooo-art!

STUART (offstage, unheard by the LITTLES). Look in the window shade!

MRS. LITTLE (crying). It's no use.

MR. LITTLE. Stay calm, Mother. I have an idea. *(He picks up a telephone from a prop box and dials.)*

(BUREAU CHIEF enters carrying a phone.)

BUREAU CHIEF. Bureau of Missing Persons.

MR. LITTLE. Hello. My son is missing.

BUREAU CHIEF. Can you give us a description of your son?

MR. LITTLE. Very short, whiskers, large ears. *(BUREAU CHIEF repeats each description.)*

BUREAU CHIEF. Sounds like a mouse to me.

MR. LITTLE. Actually, he *is* a mouse.

BUREAU CHIEF. What are you, some kind of joker? Why don't you call the Bureau of Missing Mice? *(He hangs up with a laugh as MR. LITTLE also hangs up.)*

MRS. LITTLE. Stuart must be—dead. *(She sobs.)*

MR. LITTLE. Nonsense, nonsense!

GEORGE *(melodramatically)*. If he *is* dead, we need to go into mourning. I'll pull down all the window shades. *(He exits.)*

MR. LITTLE. George, stop that. What are you doing?

(GEORGE re-enters.)

GEORGE. Pulling down the window shades so that everybody will know we're in mourning over Stuart. *(MRS. LITTLE emits a loud sob as GEORGE exits in the other direction.)*

MR. LITTLE. George, we are having enough trouble today without having to cope with your foolishness. *(A loud thump is heard offstage.)*

MRS. LITTLE. Goodness! What was that?