The Adventures of Peter Cottontail

Dramatized by R. Eugene Jackson

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THE ADVENTURES OF PETER COTTONTAIL

CHARACTERS

PETER RABBIT (COTTONTAIL)   HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL
GRANNY FOX                REDDY FOX
JIMMY SKUNK              THE MERRY LITTLE BREEZES
SAMMY JAY                 MR. SUN
OLD MR. TOAD                   MISS MOON
JOHNNY CHUCK            SHADOW THE WEASEL
BILLY MINK                  BOWSER THE HOUND
SPOTTY THE TURTLE       A SHEEP
PRICKLY PORKY            BLACKY THE CROW

* NOTE: For a smaller cast or for touring, many roles may be doubled and/or eliminated.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: In and around the Green Meadow.

A REDUCED CAST

ACT ONE: "PETER'S NEW NAME"
Granny Fox
Peter Rabbit
Jimmy Skunk
Actor Five: Sammy Jay
Actor Six: Prickly Porky
Actor Seven: Old Mr. Toad
Actor Eight: Spotty the Turtle

"REDDY'S INVITATION"
Granny Fox
Reddy Fox
Peter Rabbit
Actors Five, Six: Merry Little Breezes
Actor Seven: Mr. Sun
Actor Eight: Miss Moon

"REDDY CATCHES GRANNY"
Granny Fox
Reddy Fox
Peter Rabbit

"SHADOW THE WEASEL JOINS REDDY"
Peter Rabbit
Reddy Fox
Actor Five: Shadow The Weasel
Granny Fox
"THE BIG CHASE"
Reddy Fox
Peter Rabbit
Jimmy Skunk
Actor Six: Bowser The Hound
Actor Seven: A Sheep
Actor Eight: Spotty The Turtle
Actor Five: Sammy Jay

ACT TWO: "PETER'S NAME"
Peter Rabbit
Jimmy Skunk
Actor Five: Sammy Jay
Actor Six: Prickly Porky
Actor Seven: Old Mr. Toad

"THE STRANGEST THING IN THE WORLD"
Actor Eight: Blacky The Crow
Reddy Fox
Peter Rabbit
Granny Fox

"REDDY DIES"
Actor Seven: Old Mr. Toad
Peter Rabbit
Reddy Fox
Jimmy Skunk
Actor Five: Sammy Jay
Actor Six: Prickly Porky
Actor Eight: Blacky The Crow

"JOHNNY CHUCK AND THE HORNETS"
Actor Seven: Johnny Chuck
Jimmy Skunk
Reddy Fox

"PETER IS CAPTURED"
Peter Rabbit
Reddy Fox
Jimmy Skunk
Granny Fox
Actor Five: Sammy Jay
Actor Six: Prickly Porky
Actor Seven: Johnny Chuck
Actor Eight: Blacky The Crow

With this reduced cast, it is sometimes necessary to eliminate a line or to assign it to another character.

For a briefer show, some scenes may be omitted. "SHADOW THE WEASEL" from ACT ONE and "JOHNNY CHUCK AND THE HORNETS" from ACT TWO, for example, may be cut to reduce the playing time of the show and remove the extra characters of Shadow The Weasel and Johnny Chuck.
THE ADVENTURES OF PETER COTTONTAIL

ACT ONE

"PETER'S NEW NAME"

SETTING: The locale is in and around the Green Meadow. No particular place should be depicted. There should be trees, stumps, small boulders, and one area set aside as Peter’s brier patch. A mostly open stage would be appropriate.

AT RISE: PETER RABBIT, a carefree and pleasant animal, hops onto the stage eating a carrot.

GRANNY FOX: (OFFSTAGE.) Ah-choo! Ah-ah-ah-chooooooo!
PETER: (To Audience.) You know what? I think I’m being followed.
GRANNY FOX: (OFFSTAGE. In quick succession.) Ah-choo, ah-choo, ah-choo!
PETER: I know I’m being followed.
GRANNY FOX: (Appears with a huge purse.) Ah-ah-ah-choo!
(Speaks with a "stopped-up" nose.) I’ve got you this time, Peter Rabbit.
PETER: Granny Fox, why don’t you go home and sit in your rocking chair. You’re no match for a young, quick rabbit like me.

GRANNY FOX: Oh, no? A fox always gets her rabbit. Take that! (She swings her purse at him. He ducks. She spins around.) Ohh-ohhh-ohhh!
PETER: You’re going to hurt yourself, Granny Fox.
GRANNY FOX: Oh, yeah? Take that! (She swings her purse down, but he dodges it. It is so heavy that, when it hits the ground, it pulls her down with it.) Oh-ohhh-ohhh!
PETER: Let me help you up.
GRANNY FOX: Unhand me, you rascally rabbit. A bunny doesn’t help a fox. A bunny is eaten by a fox. Take that! (She swings her purse up at him. He dodges. The heavy purse pulls her backwards OFFSTAGE. There is a loud crash.) Ohh-ohhh-ohhh!
PETER: (To Audience.) I warned her.
GRANNY FOX: (ENTERS, limping, barely able to move.) You can’t treat old Granny Fox like this. First, you push me off the bluff into the river.
PETER: You fell into the river when you tried to push me and I ducked.
GRANNY FOX: And give me this terrible (Cough, cough.) cold. And now you shove me into that pile of garbage out there.
PETER: You ran into it when you tried to hit me and I dodged.
GRANNY FOX: And give me a broken leg. Ohhh, it hurts.
   The pain.
PETER: You shouldn’t fool with Peter Rabbit. I’m too tricky for you.
GRANNY FOX: Maybe so. But I’m calling in reinforcements.
PETER: Reinforcements?
GRANNY FOX: Yes. I’ll get you yet, Peter Rabbit. I’ll get you if it’s the last thing I do. *(She storms off in pain, sneezing.)*
PETER: *(To Audience.)* Hmmm, I’d better be on my toes.
   Reinforcements, eh? I’ve got to be sure my briar patch is in good working condition.
JIMMY SKUNK: *(ENTERS.)* Peter Rabbit?
PETER: As long as the briars are between me and any unexpected attacker, I’m safe.
JIMMY SKUNK: Peter Rabbit? Peter, do you hear me?
PETER: Are you speaking to me, Jimmy Skunk?
JIMMY SKUNK: Is there another Peter Rabbit standing where you are standing?
PETER: I’m sorry, I don’t know anyone by the name of Peter Rabbit.
JIMMY SKUNK: Huh? *(Other ANIMALS scurry onstage. THEY include SAMMY JAY, OLD MR. TOAD, JOHNNY CHUCK, BILLY MINK, SPOTTY THE TURTLE, PRICKLY PORKY, and HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL.)*
SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, Peter Rabbit!
PRICKLY PORKY: Ohhh, do we have bad news for you.
OLD MR. TOAD: Bee-deep, bee-deep, bad, bad news.
PETER: Quiet, everyone. My curiosity is up, but I’m afraid I don’t know to whom you are speaking.
SAMMY JAY: We’re speaking to you, Peter Rabbit, chirp, chirp.
PRICKLY PORKY: How many other Peter Rabbits are there in the Green Meadow?
PETER: I don’t know of any.
OLD MR. TOAD: What?
JIMMY SKUNK: That’s what he said to me, too, all righty, all righty. I think he’s playing a trick on us.
PETER: No trick. There is no longer a Peter Rabbit. Now, tell me the news.
PRICKLY PORKY: Ohh, it’s bad . . . bad.
OLD MR. TOAD: Phooey, Prickly Porky. If this is not Peter Rabbit, then we have come to the wrong person. We can’t tell him the news . . . even though it could mean life or death to Peter Rabbit.
PETER: Life or death?
JIMMY SKUNK: I see what you mean, Old Mr. Toad. We must find Peter Rabbit.
SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, but if Peter Rabbit is not here, we must find him elsewhere.
SPOTTY THE TURTLE: (As THEY start OFF.) And give him the life or death news.
PRICKLY PORKY: Ohh, it is such bad news. Tsk, tsk, tsk.
PETER: But, I . . . but, but, but . . . (THEY are almost gone.) All right, all right, I’m Peter Rabbit.
JIMMY SKUNK: You are?
SAMMY JAY: Are you, chirp, chirp, sure? We don’t want to give this news to the wrong creature.
PETER: I’m Peter Rabbit, I’m Peter Rabbit. See, I hop like a rabbit, I have long ears like a rabbit. What is the news?
JIMMY SKUNK: It’s what I was trying to tell you earlier, I was, I was. Old Granny Fox is so angry about not catching you, she has brought in her grandson, Reddy Fox, to catch you or else.
PETER: Reddy Fox . . . the notorious rabbit snatcher?
SAMMY JAY: He’s a young one.
OLD MR. TOAD: And a mean one. Phooey.
SPOTTY THE TURTLE: We thought you needed to know. He’s very dangerous to many creatures in the Green Meadow . . . but especially to you.
PETER: Thank you, friends. It is bad news, but now that I know about it, I’ll be on my guard. I can take care of myself.
JIMMY SKUNK: We know you can, all righty, all righty. Tell us, Peter, why wouldn’t you answer to your name just now?
PETER: I’ve changed my name.
SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, but why?
PETER: I’m tired of being called Peter Rabbit all the time.
JIMMY SKUNK: What is your new name?
PETER: I don’t know.
OLD MR. TOAD: What a strange name.
PETER: No, no, Old Mr. Toad. I haven’t chosen one yet. I’m thinking on it.
SPOTTY THE TURTLE: What are we to call you in the meantime?
JIMMY SKUNK: How about Max?
SAMMY JAY: I think Timothy.
PRICKLY PORKY: I like Thorndike . . . if you like it, Peter.
PETER: You don’t understand. I like my first name. I want to change the last one.
JIMMY SKUNK: Rabbit?
SAMMY JAY: But you ARE a rabbit. You can’t be something else.
PETER: Maybe I can.
PRICKLY PORKY: I know . . . Peter Hare.
SAMMY JAY:  Peter Fluffy.
JIMMY SKUNK:  Peter Bunny.
OLD MR. TOAD:  Phooey.  I like Peter Big-Ears.
PETER:  No, no, no.  Something better.  Something more "me".
      Something exciting, exotic, but descriptive.
SAMMY JAY:  Chirp, chirp, I don't know, Peter.  That's a hard
      one.  I'll think on it.  Goodbye.  (He EXITS.)
JIMMY SKUNK:  Yeah, me, too, all righty, all righty.  See you.
      (He EXITS.  OTHERS nod similar sentiments as THEY scatter.)
PETER:  Goodbye.  And thanks for the news... even though it
      was bad.  Now, what kind of name can I name myself?  Peter
      Skunk?  No, I'm not a skunk.  Peter Hamster?  No, no, I'm
      not a hamster either.  I'm a rabbit.  Peter Rabbit?  No, no, no,
      that's the name I already have.  (To Audience.)  I'll think of
      something.  Meanwhile, I had better check out my anti-fox
      maneuvers... in case Reddy Fox tries to drop in unexpectedly.
      (He hops a few times, sidesteps, runs in a circle, jumps, twists
      and stops.)  Yep!  I'm as good as ever.  (He EXITS.)

BLACKOUT

"REDDY'S INVITATION"

AT RISE:  GRANNY and REDDY FOX are in their den.

GRANNY:  (Ill-tempered, with a fever, a "stopped-up" nose, and a
        limp.)  Well, Reddy Fox (Cough, cough.)  I've been confined to
        this den for three days now (Cough, cough.)  with these broken
        bones and this nasty (Cough, cough.)  head-cold.  My head aches,
        my legs are weak, and my fever has gone over a hundred and
        four.
REDDY:  I know, Granny Fox, and I...
GRANNY FOX:  Hush.  Don't (Cough, cough.)  chatter when your
        Granny is (Cough, cough.)  coughing, uh, speaking.  I want to
        know what you've gotten me for my lunch.  I'mstarved.  I
        could eat a (Cough, cough.)  horse.
REDDY:  I couldn't find a horse.
GRANNY FOX:  What could you find?
REDDY:  (Pulls a chicken from a big bag.)  I snared this plump
        chicken from Farmer Brown's henhouse.
GRANNY FOX:  (Snatches it.)  Chicken? (Tosses it out.)  You
        expect your deathly ill Granny to settle for a scraggly chicken?
REDDY:  (Pulls a fish from the bag.)  How about this fat fish I
        took from Billy Mink's supply?
GRANNY FOX:  (Snatches it.)  A fish? (Tosses it out.)  I said
I was deathly ill. I didn't say I was dying. You don't really expect me to settle for a (Cough, cough.) scaly fish, do you?
REDDY: I thought you liked fish.
GRANNY FOX: I like . . . rabbit . . . better.
REDDY: Rabbit?
GRANNY: Nothing could make me feel (Cough, cough.) better than to sink my teeth into a juicy morsel of barbequed rabbit. Mmmm, just the thought lifts my spirits. Now, you catch that ornery Peter Rabbit for me, and I expect I'd be grateful the rest of my life.
REDDY: But he's a tricky rabbit.
GRANNY FOX: You're trickier.
REDDY: He's crafty.
GRANNY FOX: You're craftier.
REDDY: He's a pack of trouble.
GRANNY: And you're going to be in a pack of trouble (Cough, cough.) if you don't bring that (Cough, cough.) Peter (Cough, cough.) Rabbit (Cough, cough.) to me for dinner. Now, get! (She kicks him out and coughs as she EXITS. MR. SUN ENTERS and stands brightly.)
REDDY: Yes, Granny. All right, Granny. Anything you say, Granny. (To Audience.) I wish you had my Granny and I had yours. (Looks at MR. SUN.) Well, I see the sun is up. This is going to be a problem. Peter Rabbit is quick on his feet, and he lives in a briar patch where no fox can go without being scratched and stuck to death on the thorns. I'll have to devise a plan . . . a very ingenious plot . . . to get him away from the briar patch. Let me think. A fox is sly, you know, so I'll think of something. I'll think of some good . . . I've got it. The perfect plan. I'll need a messenger. Oh, here come the Merry Little Breezes. (MERRY LITTLE BREEZES breeze on making appropriate sounds and motions. REDDY hangs onto his clothes so they will not be blown away.) Pardon me, Merry Little Breezes, will you carry a message for me?
BREEZES: Oh, yes, we'd be delighted. Sounds like fun. As long as the message is going the same way we're blowing today.
REDDY: It is, it is. When you pass Peter Rabbit's briar patch, tell him I have discovered a patch of newly sprouted carrots in Farmer Brown's garden, and if he'll meet me at sunup, I'll show him where they are. (Giggles at his plan.)
BREEZES: (As THEY continue their blowing.) Peter Rabbit, carrots, briar patch. We'll deliver it. (THEY EXIT.)
REDDY: (Licking his chops.) Wonderful, devious, deceptive, sly Reddy Fox . . . that's me. Now, all I have to do is wait for nighttime moon. (MR. SUN quickly CROSSES the stage and is replaced by MISS MOON.) And another sunrise. (MISS MOON
EXITS as MR. SUN appears in the East.) That was quick. Now to meet Peter Rabbit at the briar patch. Oh, what a sly one I am! (He CROSSES to the briar patch, looks around, taps his foot impatiently, and paces.) Where is that Peter Rabbit? (To Audience.) Have any of you seen him? I know. Maybe he went ahead to the carrot patch to meet me there. I’ll run over and see. (He runs to carrot patch.) What? All the carrots are gone! There’s nothing left but paw prints . . . rabbit paw prints . . . Peter Rabbit paw prints! That sneaky rabbit got here before sunup, ate all the carrots, and got back to the briar patch before I arrived. (_extremely angry.) Aaaaeeegggghhh! Unfair! Deceitful! Treason! What is Granny Fox going to say? That dirty rabbit. Aaaaeeegghhh!

BREEZES: (ENTER, blowing as before.) Is something wrong, Reddy Fox?

REDDY: (Suddenly polite and controlled.) Wrong? Oh, my, no. What could possibly be wrong? Everything is fine, fine. (To himself.) Except Granny Fox is going to skin me.

BREEZES: What?

REDDY: Oh, nothing, nothing.

BREEZES: Peter Rabbit asked us to tell you that he is sorry he couldn’t meet you this morning. He said the thought of all those delicious carrots standing alone in Farmer Brown’s garden were too much temptation. He arose before sunup and ate them.

REDDY: Before sunup?

BREEZES: Yes. He thanks you for telling him about them.

REDDY: He thanks me?

BREEZES: Very much.

REDDY: (Steaming but controlled.) Well, you tell Peter Rabbit how happy I am he enjoyed the carrots. And tell him I found a clump of sweet clover over near the hickory tree. If he would like some, ask him to meet me at the briar patch at sunup tomorrow.

BREEZES: Clover, hickory tree, sunup. We’ll tell him. Goodbye. (THEY EXIT.)

REDDY: (To Audience.) No stupid Peter Rabbit is going to fool me twice. I’ll be at the clover clump an hour before sunup tomorrow, and then we’ll see who’s the craftiest. (He chuckles to himself.) I just need to wait for nighttime moon. (MR. SUN EXITS in the West. MISS MOON ENTERS.) A little nap wouldn’t hurt anything. (He lies down and falls asleep.)

PETER: (ENTERS from his briar patch.) It must be about two hours before sunup. Time to visit the clover clump. (To Audience.) When Reddy Fox tries to help me find food, I think he has something else on his mind. So I think I’ll have
my clover breakfast now. \textit{(He hops to the clover clump.)}
Mmmm, clover, clover, clover . . . one of my most favorite
foods. \textit{(He eats and eats, making chewing noises and comment-
ing on the good food. His tummy inflates.)} Oh, I’m so full
I can hardly hop.

REDDY: \textit{(Yawns and awakens on his side of the stage.)} About
one hour before sunup. Peter Rabbit will be shocked to find
me in the clover clump when he arrives this morning. \textit{(He
chuckles.)}

PETER: Uh-oh, I think I see Reddy Fox headed this way. Ohh,
I hope I can get back to the briar patch before he catches me!
\textit{(He manages to hop away just before REDDY arrives.)}

REDDY: Here I am and it’s still . . . \textit{(Looks down.)} Where’s
the clover? It was right here. There was a big clump about
this tall and this wide. \textit{(Indicates.)} I know it was here because
I saw it only yesterday. I know it was . . . \textit{(To Audience.)}
Oh, no! I think I’ve been tricked again by that sneaky rabbit.
I’ll soon find out. I’ll run over to the briar patch and see.
\textit{(As he does, MISS MOON is replaced by MR. SUN.)}

PETER: Good morning, Reddy Fox. The sun is out and it’s a
fine day.

REDDY: Morning to you, Peter Rabbit. Are you ready to go over
to the clover clump?

PETER: \textit{(Laughing to himself.)} Oh, I’m so sorry, Reddy Fox, but
visions of that clover clump danced in my dreams all night so
bad I couldn’t sleep. I went over there two hours before sun-
up and had my fill. I couldn’t wait.

REDDY: Two hours before sunup?

PETER: Yes. I’m so happy you told me about it. Delicious.

REDDY: Aaaeeeggghhh!

PETER: What?

REDDY: \textit{(Controlling himself.)} Uh, nothing, Peter. My, uh,
tummy was growling.

PETER: You’re not upset with me, are you?

REDDY: Upset? Of course not. \textit{(To himself.)} Granny will just
nail my hide to the wall, that’s all.

PETER: What?

REDDY: Oh, I was just thinking about that new crib of cabbage
Farmer Brown put up yesterday.

PETER: Cabbage?

REDDY: Huge heads.

PETER: Another of my most favorite foods.

REDDY: I’ll show you where it is if you’ll meet me here at
sunup tomorrow.
PETER: Oh, yes, please. Here . . . at sunup.
REDDY: Good. So long, barbeque, uh, I mean, Peter Rabbit.
PETER: Goodby.
REDDY: (To Audience.) This time, this time, I will not be fooled, tricked, or bamboozled. I’ll be here two hours before sunup. That way I can’t miss. Here comes the moon now. (BOTH EXIT. MR. SUN is replaced by MISS MOON. REDDY ENTERS, sleeps. PETER sneaks onstage.)
PETER: He called me barbeque rabbit . . . a slip of the tongue that proves he’s up to no good. So instead of waiting until sunup, I’ll leave now . . . three hours early. I think I can find Farmer Brown’s crib of cabbage. (He hops to it.) Ah, I can’t believe it! Piled almost to the sky . . . cabbage, cabbage, cabbage! I love it, I adore it. Smell the aroma, feel the texture, taste the taste. Yum, yum, delicious! (He eats as before, crunching and nibbling, adding satisfying sounds. His tummy inflates. He can hardly move.) I believe . . . I think . . . I’ve had enough. (He tries to hop, but cannot.) Whoops! (Again, no luck.) Whoops-whoops!
REDDY: (Rises, stretches.) Two hours before sunup. This is going to be my lucky day. Rabbit stew for Granny Fox. And for me . . . proof that I am the craftiest animal alive. (He chuckles, heads for the cabbage crib.)
PETER: Whoops-whoops-whoops! I think I see Reddy Fox headed this way. What am I going to do? I’m too full to hop away. If I don’t think of something fast, I’ll end up on Reddy Fox’s barbeque spit. Uych!
REDDY: Reddy, you sly old fox, you.
PETER: (Sees a hat on the ground. Proportionally, it is large enough to cover PETER.) Farmer Brown’s hat! It’s my only chance! (He drags his bloated body under the hat a split second before REDDY appears.) Made it!
REDDY: (Singing to himself.) Rabbit today, rabbit today, I’m going to get that rabbit today. (To Audience.) Granny Fox would never let me live it down if I didn’t. (Looks around.) Where to hide? Behind this old hat. ’Come on, Peter Rabbit. Reddy is ready for you this time. (The hat bounces up and down.) What? W-w-w-what was t-t-t-that? (It bounces again.) Uh-oh! (Again.) A ghost hat! A monster hat! It’s going to get me! (Again.) Yeeeee! It’s after me! It’s after me! Yeeeee! (He runs in a circle, then OFF.)
PETER: (Looks out.) Whew! Saved by an old hat. Look at that Reddy Fox run! (He laughs, returns to briar patch. MISS MOON gives up her position to MR. SUN.)
REDDY: (ENTERS cautiously, CROSSES to briar patch.) Uh, good morning, Peter Rabbit. The sun’s up and I’m a little late.
PETER: So I noticed.
REDDY: But I have a good reason.
PETER: *(Giggling to himself.)* Really? Tell me about it.
REDDY: Well, uh, I went over to the cabbage crib a little before sunrise this morning and, well, you'll never guess what happened.
PETER: I give up.
REDDY: I was attacked by a ghost! A huge, gigantic ghost. It chased me across the Green Meadow and all the way home. I was so frightened by it, I was afraid to come out until the sun had come up. But I'm ready to go now. How about you?
PETER: *(Hardly able to control his laughter.)* You... you... you met a ghost, huh? And he chased you and chased you?
REDDY: All the way home?
PETER: *(To Audience.* I don't see anything so funny, do you?
REDDY: *(To PETER.)* What are you laughing at, Peter? What's so funny?
PETER: *(Still laughing.)* Tell me, Reddy Fox, did the ghost catch you?
REDDY: Never. I was too fast for it. But it chased me for miles.
PETER: Oh, maybe I had better stay home then. I don't want to be chased by a ghost. Besides, I have already had a big breakfast of cabbages this morning.
REDDY: You have?
PETER: Oh, yes. I just couldn't wait for morning, so I went to Farmer Brown's cabbage crib last night. Thank you for telling me about it. *(Stifles a giggle.)*
REDDY: *(A slow burn. To Audience.)* Have I been fooled again?
PETER: *(Audience responds. REDDY tries to control himself.)* You're welcome, Peter Rabbit. But didn't you meet the ghost, too?
PETER: Me? Meet the ghost? *(He goes into a fit of laughter.)* No, no, I didn't.
REDDY: All right, Peter Rabbit, what is so funny? Why are you laughing like that? You say you didn't meet the ghost and then you laugh. Why?
PETER: I didn't meet the ghost, Reddy Fox, because I WAS the ghost! *(He laughs hard.)*
REDDY: *(To Audience.)* He was the ghost?
PETER: It was an old hat someone had left in the garden. I saw you coming, so I hid under it. When I moved, you thought it was a ghost. And it was just poor little old frightened Peter Rabbit.
REDDY: Why you rascal rabbit! I'll... *(He leaps at PETER but is met by the sharp thorns.)* Ouch! Owww! Ohhh! Ouch, ouch, ouch! Ohhhh! *(PETER makes a hasty retreat.)*
PETER: Good old briar patch! Home sweet home!
REDDY: Ouch! Owww! *(He pulls himself free, looks at himself.)* Look at me. I'm cut. I'm slashed, pricked and jabbed. I'll get
you one of these days, Peter Rabbit. I'll get you!
PETER: Not as long as the rabbit can outFOX the fox! *(He giggles, EXITS.)*

BLACKOUT

"REDDY CATCHES GRANNY"

AT RISE: GRANNY FOX ENTERS beating REDDY with her huge purse.

GRANNY FOX: I tell you Reddy, you fumble-fox, if you don't catch that *(Cough, cough.)* Peter Rabbit before long, I'm going to tell the stork to come take you back *(Cough, cough.)* where you came from. Get that blasted rabbit! Get that *(Cough, cough.)* juicy bunny! Do you hear me? Get that *(Cough, cough.)* rabbit!

REDDY: *(Between her sentences.)* Yes, Granny Fox. Ouch! All right, Granny. Ow! Ouch! Ow! Ohh! I'll get him. I'll get him! If it's the last thing I do.

GRANNY FOX: If you don't, it WILL be the last thing you do! *(She EXITS, hobbling. REDDY rubs his bruises. Then he sticks his tongue out after GRANNY who is OFF. She returns and clobbers him with the purse.)* Don't you ever stick your tongue out at me, Reddy Fox!

REDDY: Ouch. You made me bite my tongue.

GRANNY FOX: Serves you right. *(EXITS.)*

REDDY: Peter Rabbit, say your prayers, because you're going to be rabbit stew by tonight. *(He sees PETER approaching, so he hides.)* Here he comes now.

PETER: *(Singing.)* La-de-da-da-dee. *(Stops, looks at Audience.)* Do I smell a fox? I think I smell a fox. *(Sneaks around behind REDDY, taps him on the shoulder.)* Pardon me.

REDDY: Go away.

PETER: Pardon me.

REDDY: I said go away. Can't you see I'm busy?

PETER: What are you doing?

REDDY: Waiting.

PETER: Waiting for what?

REDDY: For Peter Rabbit. He's coming down the path now. When he walks past here, I'm going to leap out and snare him.

PETER: Who?

REDDY: Peter Rabbit.

PETER: Oh, yes, I'm Peter Rabbit. How do you do? *(Holds out his paw.)*
REDDY: (Not thinking.) I'm Reddy Fox. How do YOU do? (Shakes hands, then returns to his "waiting". He thinks, gestures to Audience and to PETER.) Did I . . . was that . . . ? (He looks up, back to Audience.) I did. It was. Peter Rabbit! (He leaps for PETER, but he jumps away and laughs at REDDY. REDDY gets up, leaps again, but PETER sidesteps him. THEY do this a few more times until PETER is OFFSTAGE.)

PETER: Ta-ta!

REDDY: I'll get you! (He sets up, makes a big leap OFFSTAGE.) Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! (He immediately reappears being carried in GRANNY'S arms. He apparently attacked her by mistake. To Audience.) Uh, no!

GRANNY FOX: Reddy Fox, how dare you attack your own Granny! You crazy thing! (She puts REDDY down, beats on him as THEY EXIT.)

BLACKOUT

"SHADOW THE WEASEL JOINS REDDY"

AT RISE: REDDY stands staring into the briar patch and holding a large potato sack. PETER is washing himself and keeping an eye on REDDY.

REDDY: (Fakes a leap at PETER.) Awww! (PETER jumps. REDDY laughs.) Don't worry, Peter Rabbit. I'm not going to tackle those briers again. They're too much for a big fox like me.

PETER: I hope you learned your lesson, Reddy Fox. You'll never catch me.

REDDY: I sure learned my lesson, all right. (To Audience.) But I'm not through with him just yet. All I need is a good idea. And if I think long enough, one will come to me.

PETER: (To Audience.) I don't like the looks of this. He's up to something, I know it. I had better keep my ears perked up.

REDDY: (Walking away.) Just one idea. . . . that's all I need. And Granny Fox and I could have some delicious fried rabbit with black eyed peas and gravy. One fabulous idea. One stupendous idea. Even a tiny idea would do. (Sits, thinks.) Think, Reddy Fox, think.

SHADOW THE WEASEL: (Slithers by.) Howdy, Reddy Fox.

REDDY: Don't bother me, Shadow the Weasel. Can't you see I'm thinking?

SHADOW THE WEASEL: I see you sitting there with your chin resting on your paw, but I don't see you thinking.

REDDY: That's the way a fox thinks, Shadow. Now, scat. You're upsetting my concentration.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Humph! That's some way to treat a fellow animal. Goodbye. (Starts OFF.)
REDDY: A weasel. What good is a small, slithery weasel? (An idea pops into his head.) A small, slithery weasel? That's exactly what I need. (Throws an arm around SHADOW.) Shadow, good old pal, how fortunate for me that you just happened to be passing by.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: (Suspicious.) "Good old pal? Fortunate for you?" What are you up to, Reddy Fox?
REDDY: Why, Shadow, what makes you think I'm up to anything?
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Because I'm not your "good old pal," and you wouldn't put your arm around me for no reason.
REDDY: Well, to tell the truth . . .
SHADOW THE WEASEL: I knew it.
REDDY: I thought you and I might have a little fun.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Doing what?
REDDY: Chasing a rabbit.
SHADOW: A rabbit? What rabbit?
REDDY: (Screaming.) There's only one rabbit Granny Fox wants . . . Peter Rabbit!
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Oh, come on, Reddy Fox. Peter Rabbit is too smart for us. He's certainly too smart for you after he played that hat trick on you at Farmer Brown's garden.
REDDY: (Grabs him by his neck.) Listen, Shadow the Weasel, I don't want to hear about that hat trick thing again, got it?
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Okay, okay. I was just making conversation.
REDDY: I don't like that kind of conversation.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: You're wrinkling my neck. (REDDY releases him.) Do you have a plan?
REDDY: Of course I have a plan . . . my best plan ever.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: I hope it's better than the last one. (REDDY grabs him by the neck again.) Ugh! I know it is. I know it's wonderful.
REDDY: (Drops him.) You're small and slick. You can run through a briar patch without being pricked once.
SHADDOW THE WEASEL: I'm good at that.
REDDY: So if you ran through Peter Rabbit's briar patch, you could scare him so much he would come running out.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: So?
REDDY: So I would be waiting for him. Get it?
SHADOW THE WEASEL: No, I think YOU would get it.
REDDY: But I would share with you, Shadow. Cross my heart.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: And hope to die?
REDDY: Well, we don't have to go that far.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Let me get this straight. I run into the briar patch?
REDDY: Yes.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: And chase Peter Rabbit out?
REDDY: Right.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: You catch him?
REDDY: Unh-huh.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: And we share him?
REDDY: Well, uh, sure.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: You've got yourself a deal. (THEY shake on it.)

REDDY: (To Audience, aside, as he crosses his fingers.) My fingers were crossed, my fingers were crossed, so I didn't have to tell the truth. But don't tell Shadow the Weasel. (THEY CROSS to briar patch.) There it is, Shadow.
PETER: (Watches THEM closely.) Uh-oh. I think I see a plan beginning to hatch.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: (Rubs his hands together.) I'm ready.
REDDY: (Giving him a quick rubdown.) This will help loosen up your muscles for the big chase. Ready?
SHADOW THE WEASEL: No, you're Reddy.
REDDY: On your mark . . . set . . . GO! (SHADOW spins his wheels, but soon heads into the briar patch with his nose to the ground trying to smell PETER.) Get him, Shadow! Go get him! I'm ready to catch him! Send him to me, little weasel.
PETER: (To Audience.) Weasels follow their noses. I'll see if I can confuse him. (PETER hops in a big circle. SHADOW follows. PETER does a figure eight. SHADOW becomes confused when he crosses a former path, and goes off in the wrong direction. PETER continues to run all over, leaving his smell behind. SHADOW becomes more and more confused. PETER laughs.) He can't tell which way I went. I knew some creature would chase me through here some day. It's a good thing I had my emergency maneuvers planned.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: (Panting.) Where is he? I smell him everywhere. Come here, you pesky rabbit.
PETER: Oh, Shadow the Weasel?
SHADOW THE WEASEL: Who said that?
PETER: Over here, Shadow. (SHADOW runs toward him, but PETER jumps to another place.) No, no, over here. (Same business. Then PETER runs to several different places.)
SHADOW THE WEASEL: I'm going in circles. I think I'm getting a little dizzy.
PETER: Here I am, Shadow. *(SHADOW starts for him.)* PETER leaps over a puddle and turns to him.) Look out for that puddle of water.

SHADOW: *(Stops short.)* Puddle?

PETER: Right there in front of you.

SHADOW THE WEASEL: *(Tests the water with a toe.)* Brrrr! I'll go around. *(He does, but PETER jumps back to the other side.)*

PETER: Shadow? Yoo-hoo. *(SHADOW goes around again, but PETER leaps the puddle.)* Wrong side.

SHADOW THE WEASEL: I'll get you this time, Peter Rabbit! *(He tries to leap the puddle, but lands right in the middle of it. He sputters, complains.)*

PETER: *(Laughs.)* That's what you get, you wicked weasel. *(To Audience.)* I think the chase is gone from him now. Safe again. *(He EXITS. SHADOW dries himself off as best he can. He looks totally beaten.)*

REDDY: *(Still waiting outside briar patch.)* Where is that rabbit? It's been hours. Come on, Peter Rabbit. Nothing will happen to you, I promise. *(To Audience.)* I'll just skin you and eat you for dinner, that's all. *(He chuckles. SHADOW slowly makes his way toward REDDY.)* I hear him coming now. I've got you, Peter Rabbit, I've got you now. *(SHADOW appears, but REDDY is too hasty. He jumps on SHADOW, THEY fight.)* Give it up, Peter. You've breathed your last. Now that I've got you, you'll never get away again.

SHADOW THE WEASEL: Stop it! Let go. What are you doing? You ignorant fox! Let me go!

REDDY: It's no use fighting it, Peter Rabbit. It's all over for you. *(He pulls the sack over him.)* I'd better get out of here before Shadow the Weasel gets back and demands part of the rabbit. *(He pulls the sack to the side of the stage where he is met by GRANNY FOX and her purse.)*


REDDY: You're going to be very proud of me, Granny Fox, very proud. In this sack is the most prized possession of any fox. Hold onto your wig, Granny. Here it is... what you've always wanted. *(Opens the sack. SHADOW'S head comes out.)*

GRANNY FOX: Shadow the Weasel? Reddy, what kind of trick is this? *(Cough, cough.)*

REDDY: Huh? Shadow? What? Where's...? I mean... GRANNY FOX: Shame on you, Reddy Fox. Fooling your old Granny like this. You don't have a grain of respect for your elders. *(She beats him with her purse.)*
REDDY: But I can explain. *(Dodging blows from the purse.)*
Ouch! Ohhh! I had the rabbit, I know I did. Ouch!
Ouch! Owwwwww! Granny, stop! Ugh! No, no! *(She
chases him OFFSTAGE.)*

SHADOW THE WEASEL: Beat him, Granny! He deserves it!
He deserves every bit of it. *(To Audience.)* That’s the last
time I listen to Reddy Fox.

PETER: *( Watches the last part from a hiding place. He laughs
as SHADOW EXITS.)* One more plan bites the dust. *(To
Audience.)* Now you know why rabbits like to live in briar
patches. *(BLACKOUT.)*

"THE BIG CHASE"

REDDY: *(ENTERS, tired and sleepy.)* Granny Fox fussed at me
all night last night. I didn’t get a wink of sleep. Besides,
chasing rabbits tires a fox out. *(Yawns.)* Ahhh, for a nice
little nap. This looks like a comfortable spot. *(He sits by
an old stump.)* Ahhh, yes, nice. *(Sighs, drops off to sleep.)*
PETER: *(ENTERS from STAGE LEFT, singing loudly.)* La-dee-
da-dee-da-la-la-la-la. *(Sees REDDY.)* Oops! *(Sings in a whisper
and tiptoes past REDDY.)* La-dee-da-dee-da-la-la-la-la-la. *(Passes
him.)* Whew. *(Sings loudly again.)* La-la-la-la-la.

JIMMY SKUNK: *(ENTERS STAGE RIGHT, laughing.)* Oh, boy,
oh, boy, oh, boy! That’s a good one . . . a real good one,
all righty, all righty.

PETER: Hi, Jimmy Skunk. What’s so funny?
JIMMY: *(He can hardly control his laughter.)* Old Blacky the
Crow got himself caught.

PETER: Caught?
JIMMY: Got himself caught in a trap in Farmer Brown’s garden,
all righty, all righty.

PETER: It’s not like Blacky the Crow to get caught. He must
have been careless.

JIMMY: Yeah, he’s lucky other animals and I were handy to
help him out. Otherwise, it could have been curtains for him.

PETER: Curtains for him?
JIMMY: You know . . . the end, over, done with, zap!

PETER: Everyone has to be extra careful in some situations.

JIMMY: Sure. But you should have seen the sight. There was
Blacky the Crow with one leg caught in the trap a’ flapping
his wings like crazy, but going nowhere. *(He laughs.)* Mmmmm,
you know what?

PETER: What, Jimmy?
JIMMY: All that work to free him and all that laughing have
given me a big appetite. I could eat a fox, I could, I could.
PETER: Eat a fox? *(An idea hits him.)*

JIMMY: Yeah, but I’d settle for some beetles. Have you seen any today?

PETER: Well, uh, yes, yes, I saw some. *(To Audience.)* Time for a little fun with Jimmy Skunk and a little revenge on Reddy Fox. *(To JIMMY.)* I know where there’s a pile of beetles as high as my knees.

JIMMY: Oh, yum, yum! Where are they, Peter? Tell me, tell me.

PETER: I’ll do better than that. I’ll show you. *(To Audience.)* I’ve got to see this.

JIMMY: I can hardly wait. My mouth is watering for good, juicy beetles.

PETER: We go right up the Little Crooked Path a short way. . . *(THEY do.)* Until we come to an old pine stump.

*(The one where REDDY is sleeping out of their sight.)*

JIMMY: Here?

PETER: This is it . . . and here’s my plan.

JIMMY: Plan? What do we need with a plan? Can’t I just dive in and eat them up?

PETER: Of course not. You have to give the beetles a fighting chance.

JIMMY: Why?

PETER: To be a good sport.

JIMMY: I don’t want to be a good sport. I want to eat. The thought of all those beetles is driving me loony.

PETER: You sneak up on the stump.

JIMMY: I’ve never heard of sneaking up on a stump. *(To Audience.)* Have you?

PETER: Well, do it anyway. Sneak up on the stump. And when I thump my foot twice, leap over it and eat to your heart’s content.

JIMMY: You thump your foot twice.

PETER: Twice.

JIMMY: And I leap over the stump.

PETER: Leap over.

JIMMY: And eat to my heart’s content.

PETER: Eat, eat, eat.

JIMMY: I like the last part best, I do, I do.

PETER: Ready?

JIMMY: *(In position to leap.)* I’ve been ready for ten minutes.

PETER: Set.

JIMMY: I’m set, all righty, all righty.

PETER: *(Thumps his foot.)* Thump, thump!

JIMMY: Wheeee! *(He leaps . . . and lands on top of REDDY.)*
REDDY: (Awakened, shocked.) What? Huh? What is this?
   What are you doing on top of me?
JIMMY: (Meekly.) Eating beetles?
REDDY: Off, off, off! Get off me, you . . . skunk.
   Nobody jumps on Reddy Fox and lives.
PETER: (To Audience.) I think it's time for me to retreat.
   (Giggles, CROSSES the stage.)
JIMMY: I thought you were a pile of beetles.
REDDY: Do I look like a pile of beetles?
JIMMY: Uh, no.
REDDY: Then how could you possibly mistake a beautiful fox
   like me for a pile of insects? I may have to rip you to
   shreds.
JIMMY: I wouldn't if I were you. Skunks have protection.
REDDY: (Steadies himself.) Oh, yeah. Well, tell me why you
   jumped on top of me like that.
JIMMY: Peter Rabbit put me up to it.
REDDY: Peter Rabbit? Do you expect me to believe that?
JIMMY: It's true, all righty, all righty.
REDDY: Prove it.
JIMMY: All righty. Peter? (Looks around.) Peter? He's
   gone.
REDDY: Ah-ha. You told me a lie.
JIMMY: (Looks down the path.) No, I didn't. There he is.
   And look at him.
REDDY: He's laughing about something.
JIMMY: About the trick he played on us. (He laughs.) And a
   pretty good trick it was.
REDDY: Hmmmm, this is all beginning to make sense.
JIMMY: Now do you believe me, do you, do you?
REDDY: I believe you, I believe you. That devious Peter Rabbit.
   I'll get him this time! (Starts after PETER.) Here I come,
   rabbit! I'm going to get you this time!
PETER: (Sees REDDY. To Audience.) I think it's time for
   me to hop along. (He hops OFF.)
JIMMY: (Picks up a stick in the shape of a microphone, steps
   up on the stump.) And he's off, little creatures of the forest,
   all righty, all righty. The mighty Reddy Fox looks like a streak
   of red lightning as he dashes toward the unsuspecting Peter
   Rabbit. No, no, it appears that the rabbit has seen the fox
   coming. The rabbit hot-feet it down the Little Crooked Path
   with the fire-breathing fox in hot pursuit. (REDDY runs OFF
   after PETER. ANIMALS gather around JIMMY SKUNK.)
They are momentarily out of sight, little creatures, but I'm
sure they will be back with us shortly. Yes, yes, I think I
caught a glimpse of them dodging the trees. The rabbit pulls
a limb with him, then lets go. Bingo! It hits the fox in the face. Down he goes. The rabbit makes tracks, but the fox is up in a flash, zigging this way and that, and gaining on the smaller rabbit. And here they come. (ANIMALS cheer.)

PETER: (As he hops by.) He’s catching up. What am I going to do?

REDDY: (After PETER.) I’m gaining. I’m gaining. (THEY EXIT.)

JIMMY: It certainly is an exciting race they’re putting on for us today, folks. Be sure you come out to the track next week for another goody. And here they come back!

PETER: (ENTERS.) Farmer Brown’s dog... that’s it.

Bowser the Hound.

REDDY: (ENTERS.) A few more feet and I’ll have him.

(THEY EXIT.)

JIMMY: And now a word from our sponsor, Happy Jack Squirrel.

JACK: (On the stump.) Help stamp out animal traps in the Green Forest! (ANIMALS cheer.)

JIMMY: And now back to the action. (BOWSER THE HOUND ENTERS.) It looks like, yes, I believe he is. Peter Rabbit is headed straight for Farmer Brown’s garden where... wait a minute... yes, I see him. Bowser the Hound lies in wait. This could be dangerous for Reddy Fox if he gets too close to the hound.

PETER: (ENTERS, heads for BOWSER.) Bowser the Hound is my only chance. He hates Reddy Fox.

REDDY: (ENTERS.) He’s as good as mine. Granny Fox will be so pleased. (He reaches out to grab PETER, but grabs BOWSER by mistake.)

BOWSER: Woof, woof!

REDDY: (Freezes.) Uh-oh!

BOWSER: Woof, woof, woof!

PETER: Reddy, I believe someone is speaking to you.

BOWSER: Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr!

REDDY: I think I know what that sound means. (BOWSER snaps at him.) I thought I knew what that sound meant. (He turns and runs OFF with BOWSER in pursuit.)

JIMMY: Well, folks, it looks like we’ve got a new face here. Peter Rabbit has graciously given his position over to Bowser the Hound, who is taking the role seriously. He is now chasing Reddy Fox, who appears to be tiring out.

REDDY: (CROSSING the stage wearily.) I don’t know... if I can make it...

BOWSER: (After him.) Woof, woof! Woof, woof!
(THEY EXIT as PETER laughs.)

PETER: How does it feel, Reddy Fox, to be the chasEE instead of the chasER?

JIMMY: The fox is twisting and turning and circling and crossing his own path to try to outwit the hound, but the dog remains a close second in this exciting race.

REDDY: (ENTERS, turns, goes in circles, gets dizzy.) I’m so tricky with these twists and turns, I think I’ve gotten myself lost.

BOWSER: Woof, woof!

REDDY: I just remembered where I am. (Runs in a circle.) A plan, a plan ... I’ve got to have a plan.

BOWSER: Woof, woof, woof. (Snaps at REDDY.)

PETER: Keep running, Reddy Fox. If you slow down, you’ll lose your tail.

REDDY: I’ve got it!

JIMMY: The fox seems to be running in a holding pattern plotting a new strategy. The dog is keeping his nose to the ground to keep the fox’s scent.

PETER: He’s gaining, Reddy Fox! Get him, Bowser!

REDDY: I’ve got to confuse the scent, and I know exactly how to do it.

BOWSER: Grrrrrr!

REDDY: And I had better do it fast. (He jumps on the back of a SHEEP.)

JIMMY: The fox has curiously leaped upon the back of a much slower sheep. What can his plan possibly be?

REDDY: (As if riding a horse.) Come on, sheep, let’s go. Giddyup, giddyup. (THEY go in circles.)

JIMMY: The fox’s plan is becoming clearer. The dog is now confused. (BOWSER whimpers as his nose stops where REDDY got onto the SHEEP.) The scent of the fox is mixed with that of the sheep. The dog doesn’t know what to do. (BOWSER shrugs his shoulders and wanders OFF.) He gives up! That’s right, critters, he gives up! The dog has lost! The fox has won!

PETER: (Taps JIMMY SKUNK on the shoulder.) I think I’m the one who won.

JIMMY: Correction. Peter Rabbit is the winner. He was the first one home free! (Great cheering.)

PETER: And my name’s not Peter Rabbit.

JIMMY: Then what is it?

PETER: I don’t know yet, but I’ll think of something. (PETER and ANIMALS EXIT, cheering.)
REDDY: *(Climbs off the SHEEP, gasping for breath.)* I’m still alive! I made it! Whew! I thought I was a goner for good. *(To Audience.)* So, Peter Rabbit wants to play tough, huh? All right, I’ll play tough. I’ve got more plans in my head than there are leaves in the Green Forest. I’ll get him yet! Out of my way, Sheep. *(He pushes the SHEEP aside, EXITS.)*

SHEEP: Baa! *(Sticks his tongue out at REDDY and rushes off the other side of the stage.)*

REDDY: *(RE-ENTERS. To Audience.)* Did that Sheep do what I think he did? I’ll get you, too, Sheep! I’ll get all of you! Just you wait! *(BLACKOUT. END OF ACT ONE.)*

ACT TWO

“PETER’S NAME”

AT RISE: PETER is trimming his briar patch, singing loudly.

PETER: *(To Audience.)* I needed to trim the hedges, but I don’t want to trim too much. I’m leaving all the thorns to repel invaders.

PRICKLY PORKY: *(Strolls on.)* Oh, I don’t know, Peter. Changing your name can get so involved.

PETER: What?

PRICKLY PORKY: I said . . .

PETER: I know what you said, Prickly Porky. What I don’t know is why you said it. I want a new name, so I’ll have a new name. I just don’t know when I’ll have a new name.

PRICKLY PORKY: If you’re still determined, I have a good one for you.

PETER: What is it?

PRICKLY PORKY: Peter Porcupine. Don’t you think it has a nice ring to it?

PETER: Peter Porcupine? I’m not a porcupine.

PRICKLY PORKY: I’ll make you an honorary one. All us porcupines like you.

PETER: And I like you, too, but that’s not the name for me. Thanks anyway.

PRICKLY PORKY: I knew you wouldn’t like it.

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: *(ENTERS.)* I have the perfect name for you . . . Peter Pumpkin.

PETER: I’m not a pumpkin.

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: Can’t you pretend?

PETER: No.

HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL: *(ENTERS.)* How about Peter Peanut Butter?
PETER: No.
HAPPY JACK: But I like Peanut Butter.
PETER: I do, too . . . but not as a name.
HAPPY JACK: Sorry.
SAMMY JAY: (ENTERS.) Chirp, chirp, I’ve got the ideal name.
        Really, it’s ideal.
PETER: What is it?
SAMMY JAY: Peter Ideal. You like it?
PETER: No, I don’t like it.
OLD MR. TOAD: (ENTERS.) I hope it’s not too late, because
        I have the perfect name for Peter.
SAMMY JAY: It’s not too late. He didn’t like any of our
        suggestions.
PETER: I like the suggestions. I didn’t like the names, Sammy
        Jay.
OLD MR. TOAD: You’ll love this one: Peter Peter.
PETER: That’s my first name twice.
OLD MR. TOAD: I’m glad you recognized that. Bee-deep, bee-
        deep. Yes. You said you liked your first name, so why not
        call yourself your first name twice? See? As you get older
        you can think up marvelous names like that.
PETER: I like my first name, yes, but I don’t like it enough to
        call me the same thing twice.
OLD MR. TOAD: Oh. Does that mean you won’t use it?
PETER: You are all my friends, and I appreciate your ideas, but
        I haven’t heard the real-me name yet. Please, keep trying.
PRICKLY PORKY: Some creatures are so-o-o-o-o hard to please.
        (THEY EXIT, mumbling among themselves.)
PETER: Come see me again. (To Audience.) Well, would YOU
        like to have any of those ridiculous names? (He EXITs.
        BLACKOUT.)

"THE STRANGEST THING IN THE WORLD"

AT RISE: REDDY FOX is pacing back and forth, thinking hard.
        BLACKY THE CROW flies in cawing. He CROSSES to REDDY.

BLACKY: Caw, caw, what are you doing, Reddy Fox?
REDDY: I’m thinking, Blacky the Crow.
BLACKY: Thinking about what?
REDDY: I’m thinking about how to catch Peter Rabbit. Granny
        Fox says if I don’t catch him soon, she won’t let me back in
        the den.
BLACKY: Maybe I can help you.
REDDY: Really? How?
BLACKY: I can help you think.
REDDY: Oh. (THEY pace with BLACKY mimicing REDDY.) Will you stop that?
BLACKY: Stop what?
REDDY: Following me. I've got a lot on my mind.
BLACKY: So have I.
REDDY: Impossible! You're nothing but a birdbrain.
BLACKY: Ah-ha!
REDDY: What is it?
BLACKY: The birdbrain has a brilliant plan.
REDDY: What is it? Tell me. Will it help me to catch Peter Rabbit?
BLACKY: Suppose you go to Peter Rabbit and say . . .
REDDY: It won't work. He would be suspicious right off. I've tried too many times to trick him.
BLACKY: Suppose I go to Peter Rabbit and say . . .
REDDY: Yes, yes?
BLACKY: I say, "Peter Rabbit, today I saw the strangest thing in the world."
REDDY: Yes? Then what?
BLACKY: Then I show it to him.
REDDY: That's a lousy idea.
BLACKY: Caw, caw, except the strangest thing in the world is you.
REDDY: Me? That doesn't make sense. I'm not strange. Well, maybe a little.
BLACKY: You don't understand, caw, caw. You lie in wait for him. I'll say there it is over there. When he steps over there, you are waiting, and you snatch him. Caw, caw.
REDDY: Snatch him?
BLACKY: Snatch him.
REDDY: Oh, what I wouldn't give to snatch him.
BLACKY: How do you like the idea?
REDDY: It's brilliant . . . if it works.
BLACKY: It'll work. Now, you hide behind this hollow log over here while I go get Peter Rabbit.
REDDY: (Jolly now.) Hide behind this hollow log. I'll hide, all right, and when he gets close, I'll reach out, take him by his neck, stuff him in my bag, and take him home to Granny. She'll be so proud of me!
BLACKY: Are you ready to hide?
REDDY: Hide?
BLACKY: Hide. Behind the hollow log.
REDDY: I can't wait. (He hides. BLACKY turns to go. REDDY pops up.) This will be so much fun.
BLACKY: Hide!
REDDY: Hide. Right! (He hides again.)
BLACKY: *(Flies to brier patch.)* Oh, Peter Rabbit, are you home? Ding-dong.

PETER: *(Appears.)* Did I hear my doorbell ring?

BLACKY: Yes. It is Blacky the Crow.

PETER: Really? What brings you to the brier patch? Are you selling brushes patch-to-patch?

BLACKY: Caw, caw, no.

PETER: Are you giving away samples of a new mouth wash?

BLACKY: Caw, caw, no.

PETER: You’re not delivering the mail, are you?

BLACKY: Caw, caw, no. I’ve come to tell you something.

PETER: *(To Audience.)* I smell a rat.

BLACKY: I’m a bird.

PETER: But I smell a rat. What is it, Blacky the Crow? What do you want to tell me?

BLACKY: Today I saw the strangest thing in the world.

PETER: You did? What was it?

BLACKY: I don’t know. Caw, caw, it was too strange to recognize. But I can show it to you, if you like.

PETER: *(To Audience.)* Yep, it’s a rat, all right. I’d better stay alert. *(To BLACKY.)* I don’t mind telling you, Blacky, that I’m mighty curious. Where is it?

BLACKY: *(As THEY CROSS to it.)* Over there, Peter Rabbit. It’s over behind that hollow log. Why don’t you take a peek.

PETER: Well, I, uh, over behind that hollow log, huh?

BLACKY: Caw, caw, the strangest thing in the world.

PETER: Can you describe it to me?

BLACKY: Well, it’s uh, large, uh, lumpy, uh . . .

PETER: You don’t seem to remember it very well.

BLACKY: No, well, it’s been hours since I saw it.

PETER: Can you describe it further? That way I’ll know it when I see it.

BLACKY: Well, it’s uh, large, uh, lumpy, uh . . .

PETER: You’ve already told me that part.

BLACKY: That’s all I remember.

PETER: I’ll tell you what. Why don’t you take another look at it so you can describe it better.

BLACKY: Good idea. Caw, caw. *(As he steps over the log, REDDY covers him with the bag.)*

REDDY: Ah-ha! Gotcha! Gotcha! At long last!

PETER: *(As he sneaks back to his brier patch.)* I thought so. A sneaky trick!


GRANNY FOX: *(ENTERS with her purse.)* What is it, Reddy? What do you have?

REDDY: Peter Rabbit! I’ve got Peter Rabbit in this sack.
GRANNY: (With much of her cold and limp gone. Cough, cough.) Now, listen here, Reddy Fox. You fooled your old Granny once. I don’t want to be fooled again.

REDDY: But this time it really is Peter Rabbit . . . honest. Look, I’ll show you. (He opens the sack. Out pops BLACKY.)

BLACKY: Caw, caw, what do you mean throwing that filthy sack over me?

GRANNY FOX: Sonny, you did it again! (She beats him with her purse.)

REDDY: I thought it was Peter, Granny, really I did. (Trying to protect himself from the blows.) Ouch! Stop! Stop! (THEY EXIT.)

BLACKY: (To Audience.) Trying to fool Peter Rabbit is for the birds! Caw, caw, caw! (He EXITS. BLACKOUT.)

"REDDY DIES"

AT RISE: OLD MR. TOAD hops ONSTAGE, looks around, spots a flying insect. His tongue reaches for it, but misses.

TOAD: Phooey. I’m getting so old, I can’t catch flying insects anymore. Wait, there’s a slow one. (His tongue reaches out again but misses.) Double phooey.

PETER: (Hopping by.) Howdy, Old Mr. Toad. Fine day.

TOAD: Phooey.

PETER: Maybe tomorrow will be better. (EXITS.)

TOAD: Phooey. (Snaps at another insect, misses.) Double phooey.

REDDY: (ENTERS.) If I don’t catch Peter Rabbit soon, Granny Fox is going to have ME for dinner . . . and I don’t mean as a guest. What are you doing, Old Mr. Toad?

TOAD: (Still trying to catch insects.) I’m trying to catch a meal.

REDDY: Any luck?

TOAD: Yes. All bad. The insects are as quick as ever, but my old tongue has slowed way down.

REDDY: What you need is a plan . . . a new method of attack.

TOAD: What I need is an insect. If I don’t catch one, I may just die. I may drop right here in my tracks and wither away. Then all my friends will gather around and say, “Now, why didn’t we think to bring him a jar of insects? One little jar would have kept him alive and well.” But it will be too late.

REDDY: Friends gather around? Yes, that’s it . . . a new plan. (Suddenly he begins to twitch.) Oh, ugh! What’s happening?
Oh, my head, my heart, my kneecaps!
TOAD: What is it, Reddy Fox?
REDDY: Can’t you see? I’m dying! (He clutches different parts of his body, staggers about.) Oh, oh, oh! My stomach, my shoulders, even my toesies!
TOAD: What’s wrong with them?
REDDY: I told you ... they’re dying. I ... I'M dying. Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. (He falls over, "dead").
TOAD: Redd? Reddy, old boy, what are you doing lying on the ground like that? Reddy Fox?
REDDY: I’m dead.
TOAD: Dead? How horrible. Oh, dear, Reddy Fox is dead, Reddy Fox is dead! (He hops about the stage, yelling. ANIMALS appear, including JIMMY SKUNK, JOHNNY CHUCK, BILLY MINK, SPOTTY THE TURTLE, SAMMY JAY, BLACKY CROW, PRICKLY PORKY, SHADOW THE WEASEL and HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL.)
JIMMY SKUNK: Reddy Fox ... dead? Impossible.
SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, I knew he would end up like this. He was no good.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: He wasn’t too bright, but he was a good fox. I remember the time we chased Peter Rabbit, and Reddy Fox took me for him, and stuffed me into a potato sack. (JOHNNY CHUCK laughs.) It was not funny! (He stops laughing.)
BLACKY THE CROW: Caw, caw, it’s hard to believe. Think of all the tricks he has played on each of us. He was a rotten fox. Caw, caw, caw.
JIMMY SKUNK: Remember the day I pounced on him thinking he was a nest of beetles? He was so angry, I thought he was going to strangle me, I did, I did.
BLACKY THE CROW: Caw, he knew better than to mess with me, a skunk, Jimmy.
JIMMY SKUNK: Yes, but he sure gave chase to poor ole Peter Rabbit, all rightly, all rightly.
SPOTTY THE TURTLE: Speaking of Peter Rabbit, where is he? Shouldn’t someone tell him the news? He’ll want to celebrate with us.
PETER: (ENTERS.) Did I hear someone mention celebrating?
That’s for me.
SPOTTY THE TURTLE: Oh, Peter.
PETER: What are we celebrating? Why didn’t somebody tell me about it? Who brought the food?
SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, it’s Reddy Fox.
PETER: He wants to stop the celebration, huh? I’ll put a stop to that. Where is he? (ALL point to REDDY.) All right,
Reddy Fox, what have you been doing to these poor creatures of the Green Forest? Confess. Come on, get up and face me nose-to-nose. Did somebody tie him down?

TOAD: Phooey.
PETER: He's taking a snooze?
TOAD: Double phooey.
PETER: He's sick.
TOAD: Very sick.
PETER: How sick?
TOAD: Dead sick.
PETER: That's very sick, all right. Really dead?

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: You see him all stretched out on the ground . . . lifeless.
PETER: I see him on the ground, but I don't believe he's lifeless. What did he die of?
TOAD: Hunger probably.
SAMMY JAY: Orneriness.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: A kind and weak heart.
PRICKLY PORKY: I would guess he tricked himself to death.
HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL: In short, we don't know.
TOAD: I was standing here when he just up and died . . . like this. (He goes through the same motions as REDDY.) And then he fell dead.
PETER: It seems strange that he would die without being sick first. Did anyone know he was ill? (THEY ad lib "no".)
This gets stranger by the minute. If I understand this, Reddy Fox was never ill. (THEY agree.) And then he just up and died right here. (THEY agree.) For no reason. (THEY agree.) I don't believe it. (THEY ad lib surprise.)

TOAD: Well, phooey, Peter Rabbit, how can you refuse to believe what you see? If you would open your eyes you would see that he is lying there as pretty and dead as you please. I mean, he looks dead to me.
SAMMY JAY: To me, too, chirp, chirp. After all, he's not chasing you. That should prove something.
PETER: I wonder. (Thinks.) Prickly Porky, would you do me a favor?
PRICKLY PORKY: Sure, Peter, but don't stand too close to me, or you know what might happen. You might get stuck with my porcupine quills. That would be awful.
PETER: (Hands him a long stick.) You're the only one who can get close enough to him in safety, so if you would . . . (Whispers in his ear.)
PRICKLY PORKY: Uh-huh, okay, sure, right, yes, Peter. If you say so.
PETER: Stand back, everyone, if you value your lives.
SHADOW THE WEASEL: What is this?
JIMMY SKUNK: I don’t understand, I don’t, I don’t.
PETER: Patience, folks, patience. Now, Prickly Porky, do your thing.
PRICKLY: *(He gingerly touches REDDY with the stick.)* Oh, dear. Nothing.
PETER: Again.
PRICKLY PORKY: *(He does it again.)* Nothing. He really must be dead. Tsk, tsk, tsk.
PETER: His foot. Try the bottom of his foot.
PRICKLY PORKY: All right. *(He does. REDDY’s foot moves slightly.)* It moved! *(OTHERS respond.)*
PETER: Again.
PRICKLY PORKY: *(Touches his other foot. It moves slightly.)* It moved, too, Oh, dear.
PETER: It looks like his feet are alive even if he isn’t. Now, try his nose.
PRICKLY PORKY: His nose?
PETER: His nose. Try it.
PRICKLY PORKY: If you say so. *(He does.)* Nothing.
PETER: Again. *(He does. REDDY breathes heavily and then lets out a gigantic sneeze.)*
PETER: Ah-ha! His nose is alive!
REDDY: *(Jumps up.)* Peter Rabbit, you spoil sport. I’ll get you for this! *(ALL scatter, screaming. REDDY starts toward PETER, but PRICKLY PORKY trips him with the stick.)*
PETER laughs. Trip me, will you? I’ll get you for that! *(He tries to hit PRICKLY PORKY, but is stuck by quills.)*
Ouch, oh, ouch, ouch! Ohhh!
PETER: Another trick tried and died, Reddy Fox.
PETER: If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again. *(He hops off. REDDY, nursing his wounds, starts after him, but trips on the stick again.)*
REDDY: Phooey! Double phooey! Triple phooey! *(BLACKOUT.)*

"JOHNNY CHUCK AND THE HORNETS"

SETTING:: To one side of the stage hangs a HORNETS’ nest above a huckleberry bush. PETER is asleep under it. JOHNNY CHUCK ENTERS from STAGE LEFT and JIMMY SKUNK from STAGE RIGHT. As JOHNNY turns to look at PETER, he runs into JIMMY.
JIMMY SKUNK: Watch where you're going, Johnny Chuck.

JOHNNY CHUCK: Oh, sorry, Jimmy Skunk. I was noticing
Peter Rabbit asleep under that huckleberry bush over there.

JIMMY SKUNK: Peter Rabbit? Asleep outside the briar patch?
Let me see. (Looks.) That's Peter Rabbit, all righty, all
righty.

JOHNNY CHUCK: His life is in danger any time he leaves the
briar patch.

JIMMY SKUNK: I know, I know. I hear old Granny Fox is
almost well. And is she angry with Reddy Fox!

JOHNNY CHUCK: Because he couldn't catch Peter Rabbit?

JIMMY SKUNK: That's it, all righty, all righty. She says she
is going to do all the planning from now on, and Reddy Fox
is going to do all the catching. And if he doesn't do the
catching, she says, she's going to barbecue him for dinner.

JOHNNY CHUCK: She must be awfully mad.

JIMMY SKUNK: Mad as a hornet, I'd say, I'd say.

JOHNNY CHUCK: Mad as a hornet?

JIMMY SKUNK: I'd say.

JOHNNY CHUCK: So Peter Rabbit should be especially alert.

JIMMY SKUNK: Yes. I'd hate to lose him. The Green Forest
and the Green Meadow wouldn't be the same without him.

JOHNNY CHUCK: I'll watch over him, Jimmy Skunk, until he
wakes up and heads home.

JIMMY SKUNK: Good idea. So long, Johnny Chuck.

JOHNNY CHUCK: See you tomorrow, Jimmy Skunk. (He
paces up and down like a soldier.) Hut, two, three, four;
hut, two, three four; halt; about face; forward march, hut,
two, three, four . . .

REDDY: (ENTERS.) What are you doing, Johnny Chuck?
Guarding something?

JOHNNY CHUCK: Uh, no, Reddy Fox.

REDDY: Guarding someBODY?

JOHNNY CHUCK: Uh, no, Reddy Fox.

REDDY: Guarding some RABBIT, maybe, huh?

JOHNNY CHUCK: Uh, oh, all right, Reddy Fox. You caught
me. I'm guarding Peter Rabbit. (To Audience.) Don't worry.
I won't let him hurt Peter.

REDDY: Peter Rabbit, huh? Just as I thought. Where is he?
Lead me to him. I'd give anything to get my paws on that
furry little creature.

JOHNNY CHUCK: I'll tell you where he is, Reddy, if you won't
tell him I told you.

REDDY: You'll tell me where he is? I thought you and he
were close friends.
JOHNNY CHUCK: We were . . . until this morning's argument. I called him Peter Whiskerface, and he called me Johnny Up-Chuck, and we got into a real fight.
REDDY: Awww, isn't that awful? And now you want to get even by telling me where he is?
JOHNNY CHUCK: I guess so.
REDDY: And what if I don't believe you?
JOHNNY CHUCK: I don't care.
REDDY: Oh. Well, tell me. Where is he hiding?
JOHNNY CHUCK: You run down this path right here and dive into that huckleberry bush at the end of it. (He begins to laugh.) Peter will be waiting for you.
REDDY: Peter Rabbit, I've got you now. (He rubs his hands, rolls up his sleeves.) Look out, here I come! (As JOHNNY CHUCK laughs, REDDY dashes down the path and dives toward the bush. He hits the HORNETS’ nest by mistake.) Uh-oh! (A buzzing sound is heard, then thousands of them.) Hornets! Hundreds, thousands, millions! Help me! Keep them off me! Ouch! Ohhhhhhh! (He runs with the HORNETS in close pursuit. PETER awakens to see the action. He and JOHNNY CHUCK laugh. REDDY runs in circles, yelling and screaming as he is stung again and again.)
JOHNNY CHUCK: Run, Reddy Fox, run!
PETER: I have a better suggestion, Reddy Fox. Duck under some water. They can't follow you there. Go jump in the lake!
JOHNNY CHUCK: Yeah, go jump in the lake! (THEY laugh as REDDY EXITS. BLACKOUT.)

"PETER IS CAPTURED"

AT RISE: PETER hops ONSTAGE and finishes off a carrot. He rubs his stomach and sighs.
PETER: Ahhhh, a delicious meal. And now for a little rest. (He stretches.) It's too far to walk back to the briar patch. I'll sit over here next to this big rock (stump). (To Audience.) Don't worry. Reddy Fox NEVER comes way out here. I'm perfectly safe. (Yawns again.) Ahhhhh. A little rest. (He snores away.)
REDDY: (ENTERS with bandages all over him. He limps slightly. BLACKY THE CROW follows him in.) That rascally rabbit and his friends have tricked me for the last time. BLACKY THE CROW: What happened to you?
REDDY: *(Angrily.)* I was stung by three billion hornets, that's what, and I don't want to talk about it. Is that clear?
BLACKY THE CROW: Clear.
REDDY: Now, this is my super-double-duper grand plan, Blacky the Crow. It's guaranteed to capture any small, furry creature that hops. It's a great plot. Well, actually it's Granny's plot, but I helped her think of it. It pulls out all the stops. It can't fail. It's full proof.
BLACKY THE CROW: Yes, but is it FOOL proof?
REDDY: There's nothing to worry about. It is, without a doubt, the best plan to snare a rabbit ever devised by a fox.
BLACKY THE CROW: Caw, caw, so what are we doing way up here away from Peter's briar patch?
REDDY: We are up here so we cannot be overheard, that's what. Peter Rabbit NEVER comes way out here. My aching muscles. I need to sit for a while. This big rock should do. *(He sits near PETER.)*
PETER: *(Awakens immediately, but unseen.)* What? *(Sees REDDY. To Audience.)* Oh, no!
BLACKY THE CROW: Caw, caw, what was that?
REDDY: What was what?
BLACKY THE CROW: I heard somebody say, "Oh, no."
REDDY: Forget it. There's nobody near us.
PETER: *(To Audience.)* What am I going to do? If I move, he'll see me. If I stay here, he may catch me.
BLACKY THE CROW: I tell you I hear somebody breathing.
REDDY: Of course you do, you crazy crow. That's me. I breathe all the time. It keeps me alive. Don't you know about breathing? We all do it from time-to-time.
BLACKY THE CROW: Not me.
REDDY: Yes, you do. That's how you stay alive.
BLACKY THE CROW: It is?
REDDY: Sure. Look. *(Takes several deep breaths.)* You try it. *(PETER takes several deep breaths.)* Good. Very good.
BLACKY THE CROW: But I haven't done it yet.
REDDY: What? Are you trying to make a fool out of me?
BLACKY THE CROW: N-n-n-n-o.
PETER: *(In a disguised voice.)* Yes.
REDDY: What?
BLACKY THE CROW: I said no.
PETER: But I meant yes.
REDDY: *(Shaking BLACKY.)* You can't talk to me like that. I could pull your feathers out one-by-one and make you run around naked. How would you like that?
BLACKY: I didn't do anything. Put me down. Caw, caw.
REDDY: *(He does.)* There. I don’t want to hear you calling
my names again, clear?
BLACKY THE CROW: Clear.
PETER: You foolish fox.
REDDY: What? You did it again. I’ll teach you! *(He shakes
BLACKY even more.)* Give up? Say uncle. Say uncle.
BLACKY: Caw, caw, uncle.
REDDY: And I thought you were my fine feathered friend.
BLACKY THE CROW: I am, I am.
PETER: I WAS until you got to be such a blockhead.
REDDY: Why you . . . *(Looks at BLACKY.)* You didn’t say
that.
BLACKY THE CROW: I told you.
PETER: Dim-witted fox!
REDDY: *(Whispering.)* Who said that?
BLACKY THE CROW: *(Pointing.)* I think it came from behind
that rock.
PETER: Featherbrain!
REDDY: I think you’re right. *(THEY look behind it and see
PETER. He does not see THEM.)*
PETER: Numbskull! *(BLACKY CROSSES behind PETER on
REDDY’S orders.)*
BLACKY THE CROW: *(Taps PETER on the shoulder.)* Pardon
me.
PETER: What?
BLACKY THE CROW: Hello. *(Waves at him.)*
PETER: Yeeyiii! *(Leaps up and runs into REDDY’S arms.)*
REDDY: Gotcha!
PETER: Oh, no! Help, help! Let go, let go!
REDDY: *(Laughing with BLACKY.)* It looks like we won’t need
Granny’s super-double-duper grand plan after all. I caught him
the easy way. *(He pulls his bag over PETER.)*
PETER: No, no, let me go, please! Help! Help! *(ANIMALS
peep into clearing but do not enter.)*
REDDY: Thanks for your help, Blacky. I’ll return the favor
some day . . . maybe.
BLACKY THE CROW: Caw, caw, it was nothing.
REDDY: I know. Granny will be so happy to see this! Woooo-
 wheee! Good old home-fried rabbit for dinner. Yaaa-hooo!
*(He EXITS with the bag as BLACKY waves to him. PETER
continues to call for help. As soon as THEY are OUT,
ANIMALS ENTER and surround BLACKY.)*
BLACKY THE CROW: *(Frightened.)* Caw, caw, uh, hi, fellas.
JIMMY SKUNK: We saw everything. Where is Reddy Fox taking
Peter Rabbit?
BLACKY THE CROW: Well, I . . .
JIMMY SKUNK: I’m going to put up quite a stink if you don’t tell, Blacky.

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: *(Drawing close to him.*) And when a turtle bites your leg, he doesn’t let go until sundown, you know.

PRICKLY PORKY: A porcupine can make some very sharp points in an argument.

OLD MR. TOAD: A toad can give you warts.

HAPPY JACK SQUIRREL: And we can put you back into that animal trap we saved you from.

SAMMY JAY: Chirp, chirp, I can whistle in your ear until you’re deaf.

JIMMY SKUNK: We’ve got the goods on you, Blacky, all rightly, all righty. You may as well come clean. We might give you a break if you spill the beans.

BLACKY THE CROW: All right, all right, I’ll tell. Only don’t put up a big stink.

JIMMY SKUNK: Somebody take down his confession. We’ll need it in court when the judge throws the book at him.

BLACKY THE CROW: I said I’d talk, so lay off. Reddy Fox is taking Peter home to Granny. *(Gasps from ANIMALS.)*

OLD MR. TOAD: Phooey. That’ll be the end of him.

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: She’ll have him in a stew in no time.

PRICKLY PORKY: Tsk, tsk, tsk, so sad.

JIMMY SKUNK: Not if we hurry.

OLD MR. TOAD: Hurry where?

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: Turtles can’t hurry.

PRICKLY PORKY: You mean we should try to save him? I don’t know.

JIMMY SKUNK: Who else will? And think of the Green Forest without Peter Rabbit. No pranks, no jokes, no tricks.

SAMMY JAY: No fun. Chirp, chirp. *(THEY agree it would be boring, dull, etc.)*

JIMMY SKUNK: What do you say? Do we save him... or let him stew?

OTHERS: Save him! Save him!

JIMMY SKUNK: It means fighting Reddy and Granny Fox.

SPOTTY THE TURTLE: Maybe he could save himself.

JIMMY SKUNK: Without us, he’ll be barbeque by dinnertime.

OLD MR. TOAD: Phooey, I say let’s save him.

PRICKLY PORKY: I second that... if everyone agrees.

BLACKY THE CROW: I third it. *(ALL look at him.)* Well, I don’t want poor Peter Rabbit to be killed. I was just in it for the fun. And now it’s not funny any more.

JIMMY SKUNK: Everybody in favor of saving Peter, say “aye”.

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MOST OTHERS: Aye!
JIMMY SKUNK: Everybody NOT in favor of saving him had better keep his mouth shut. Come on, let’s go! (In a flurry of cheers, they march bravely OFF. From other side of stage, GRANNY FOX ENTERS. She is over her pains and cough. She is in her home.)
GRANNY: I don’t know what I’m going to do with that good-for-nothing grandson of mine. For weeks he’s been chasing Peter Rabbit, and the only thing he’s brought back has been excuses. Reddy is a disgrace to foxhood. If he brings one more sack of foolishness into this den, I’ll clobber him.
REDDY: (ENTERS dragging the sack with PETER in it.)
Guess what I have here, Granny?
GRANNY: Not another sack of foolishness! (She beats him with her purse.) When are you going to learn to stop playing games with your poor old Granny? I know what you’ve got in there. Another joke. Another bit of silliness. No more.
Do you hear me? No more!
REDDY: Ouch, oh! Ohhh! Granny, stop! Ouch, ouch, ohhh! (She stops pounding him.) This is no joke.
GRANNY: (Hits him once more.) You bet it isn’t. I’m not laughing, am I?
REDDY: Granny, listen to me. This is the real thing.
GRANNY: That’s what you said the last time you brought the sack home.
REDDY: But this time it really is.
GRANNY: You said that, too.
REDDY: Honest.
GRANNY: Well, that part’s new.
REDDY: This is Peter Rabbit . . . really and truly.
GRANNY: Cross your heart?
REDDY: And hope to die. Well, not really.
GRANNY: Hmmmmmmmmmm.
REDDY: Well?
GRANNY: Open it up. But you had better be telling the truth. (He opens sack. PETER pops out.) It has rabbit ears, rabbit nose, rabbit teeth.
REDDY: Rabbit paws, rabbit tail, rabbit TASTE.
GRANNY: I can’t believe my poor old eyes. It IS Peter Rabbit in the delicious flesh.
REDDY: Get the fire ready.
GRANNY: Grandson, the fire’s been ready for weeks. Bring him over here.
PETER: (Trying to appear calm.) You’re inviting me to dinner?
REDDY: Certainly, Peter. You ARE the dinner.
PETER: I was afraid you might say that.
GRANNY: *(Pulls a big, black pot into the room.*) All right, Peter, hop in.
PETER: *(Gulp.*) Hop in?
GRANNY: That's right. Hop in.
PETER: Thanks, but no thanks. I've already had my bath for the week.
REDDY: This is not bath water. This is cooking water. And when Granny says hop in, she means hop in. *(He lifts PETER into the pot.)*
PETER: Ouch! This is hot!
GRANNY: And it's going to get hotter. Stir up the fire, Reddy. *(He does.)*
PETER: You were right. It's getting hotter. Look, couldn't we talk this over? I mean, there are lots better things to eat than rabbits.
GRANNY: Like what, you scrumptious thing?
PETER: Well, uh, carrots?
GRANNY: *(Delighted.)* Soon it will be boiling, Reddy, and we will have the time of our lives. Rabbit stew, rabbit barbeque, French fried rabbit, rabbit hide; rabbit for breakfast, lunch and dinner, rabbit for midnight snacks.
REDDY: And rabbit pie for dessert.
PETER: It's getting hot in here. Couldn't we open the window and let the Merry Little Breezes in? *(Sound of ANIMALS is heard OFFSTAGE.)*
GRANNY: What's that noise?
REDDY: *(Frightened.)* Animals of the Green Forest. They must have found out about my catching Peter Rabbit. Quick, hide him.
GRANNY: No, no, let's cook him!
REDDY: If they see him in the cooking pot they might attack us. *(Pulls PETER from the pot, gags him, tosses him back into the sack.)*
GRANNY: What are you doing? Put him back in the pot! I want to cook him!
JIMMY SKUNK: *(ENTERS with OTHERS close behind.)* Where is he, Reddy Fox?
REDDY: Ha, ha, ha, where is who?
PRICKLY PORKY: You know who . . . Peter Porcupine, uh, Rabbit.
GRANNY: *(Wringing her hands, whimpering.)* I want to cook him.
REDDY: Hush, Granny. How should I know?
JIMMY SKUNK: Blacky the Crow said you took him, all righty, all righty. Now, where is he?
REDDY: Well, yes, I took him, but, uh, he escaped. You know how smart he is. He jumped out of my sack and ran off before I could catch him. Isn’t that right, Granny?
GRANNY: (Crying.) I want to cook him!
JIMMY SKUNK: You don’t mind if we look around, do you, do you?
REDDY: Don’t you dare. This is MY den.
GRANNY: MY den.
REDDY: My Granny’s den. (He steps in front of the sack, but PETER manages to lift his tail out andwiggle it.)
JIMMY SKUNK: (Sees it.) So Peter Rabbit is not here, huh?
REDDY: No, no, of course not.
GRANNY: Please, let me cook him!
JIMMY SKUNK: Then what is that tail doing waving around?
REDDY: Huh? Oh, that? It’s a piece of, uh, cotton, we have lying around the house. It’s not a tail. Just a piece of cotton.
JIMMY SKUNK: We think we’ll take a closer look, we do, we do. (ANIMALS step forward.)
REDDY: (Protecting the sack.) Oh, no, you don’t.
JIMMY SKUNK: Get him, creatures.
REDDY: Granny, I think we’re outnumbered! (Under a din of yelling and cheering, the ANIMALS dash forward, throwing REDDY out of the way, releasing PETER and removing gag.)
ALL: It’s Peter! Yea, yea! Peter Rabbit!
PETER: My friends! Thank you, one and all.
REDDY: You can’t do this to us!
PETER: Oh, no? (ANIMALS form a line. REDDY and GRANNY are forced to walk the line as the ANIMALS hit THEM. At its end, PETER tosses THEM OFFSTAGE one-by-one.)
JIMMY: Yea, Peter Cottontail!
OTHERS: Yeah, Peter Cottontail!
PETER: Peter who?
JIMMY SKUNK: Cottontail. Didn’t you hear what Reddy called your tail? A piece of cotton. And the name fits. You wanted a new name. Now, you have it, you do, you do.
PETER: Peter Cottontail? Peter Cottontail? Yes, yes, I like it. I love it.
ALL: Yea, Peter Cottontail!
JIMMY SKUNK: You really took care of that nasty old Granny and Reddy Fox, all righty, all righty.
PETER: WE took care of them, when we stood together. But you know what? Something tells me they won’t give up.
REDDY: (Peeping in with GRANNY FOX.) We’ll get you yet, Peter . . . Cottontail.
GRANNY: We'll get you if it's the last thing HE does.
PETER: (To THEM.) If at first you don't succeed, Granny and Reddy Fox, try, try again.
ALL: Yea, Peter Cottontail! (THEY carry him on their shoulders, march OFF.)

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY

PROPS

Carrot
Large purse
Large cloth bag with rubber chicken and fish
Large hat (set piece big enough for Peter to hide under)
Potato sack
Stick shaped like microphone
Hedge trimmers
Long stick
Bandages
Black pot (set piece large enough for Peter)
Stick for stirring fire
Gag for Peter

PESTER RABBIT
GRANNY FOX
REDDY FOX
PESTER RABBIT
REDDY FOX
JIMMY SKUNK
PESTER RABBIT
PESTER RABBIT
REDDY FOX
GRANNY FOX
REDDY FOX
REDDY FOX

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Although the play is divided into individual scenes, it is important that the play move quickly with no curtain except between acts. New scenes may be designated by a brief blackout or dimming of lights. An increase and dimming of lights should also be used for the entrances of Mr. Sun and Miss Moon, respectively. A follow spot, along with sound effects, will work well in the sequence where Reddy Fox is attacked by hornets.

Individual set pieces should be minimal, with pantomime substituting for much of Peter's briar patch. Pantomime should also be used for the "eating" sequences which take place in the carrot patch, the clover patch and Farmer Brown's cabbage crib. The fire under Granny's cooking pot at the end of the play may also be suggested by pantomime and/or special lighting.

COSTUMING NOTES

The various animals can be costumed by complete head-to-toe outfits representing each animal character, or by adding representational animal parts, such as ears, tails, mittens for paws, to colorful workclothes or story-book clothing such as shorts with suspenders and a baseball cap for BLACKY THE CROW and an apron and granny cap for GRANNY FOX.

SUGGESTED SET

The locale is in and around the Green Meadow. Several places should be depicted simultaneously in the following manner. At STAGE RIGHT is the briar patch with openings in the front and back. To the RIGHT and DOWN-STAGE is a huckleberry bush with a hornets' nest hanging from it. At RIGHT CENTER is a carrot patch marked by a garden sign that says, "Carrots". To its left is a small crib of cabbage. At LEFT CENTER are a stump and a dead log. The Foxes' den is suggested at STAGE LEFT by a table and chair that is pushed on just for those scenes and removed after them. UP CENTER is a log fence that stretches partway across the stage. The backdrop is of green hills and trees. The wings are sets of trees and their bright green leaves. At least one of the painted trees is a hickory.
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