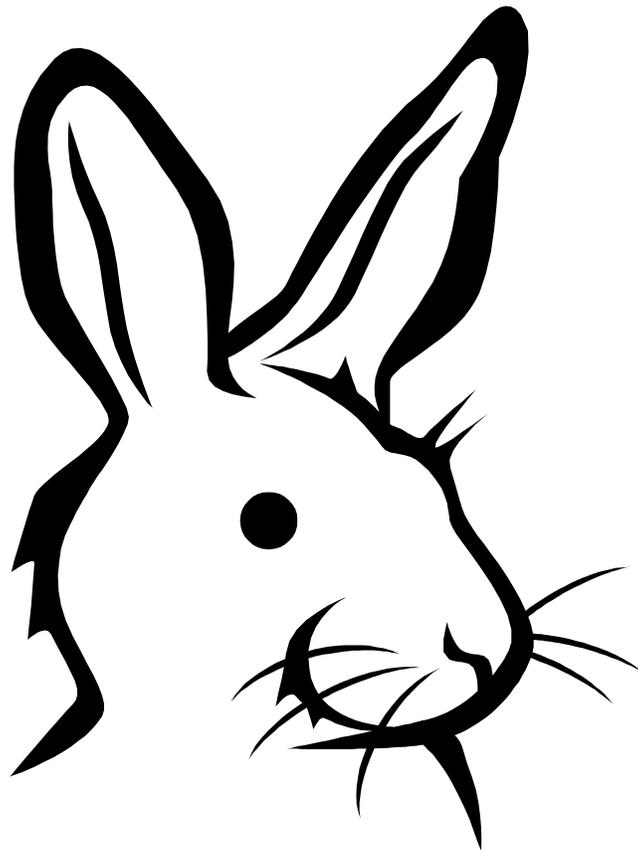


# The Peter Rabbit Operetta



By Lucy Jensen

# "The Peter Rabbit Operetta"

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A musical readers' theater based on the classic tale. Thanks to Cherry Carl for her collaboration on the songs: "Where is Peter?" and "The Peter Rabbit Scrunch."

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"Peter Rabbit" is a classic tale which is listed as core literature for primary grades in many states. The song sheets and charts can be used by kindergarten classes and early first grade. The script, full of dialog in the form of narration, chants, and song lyrics can be used by advanced first grade through third grade.

The script is designed for an easy production involving the whole class. All parts are interwoven so that students are involved through the operetta. The students and the audience form a theater-in-the-round with the action stage being in the center. (See diagrams with each scene.) Props are simple, song lyrics are attached to familiar tunes, and musical chords are included. Large song charts are recommended as a whole language approach to the "reading" of the lyrics and can also be used as décor in the classroom if they are colorfully illustrated.

# Characters

Mrs. Rabbit

Flopsy

Mopsy

Cottontail

Peter

8 Narrators

3 Helpful Sparrows (also part of the forest animal chorus)

The Forest Animal Chorus (the rest of your class)

McGregor

# Props

The costuming can be simple and the props basic. Headbands with animal ears can be worn by the rabbit family and forest animal chorus.

Peter:	Blue paper vest with yellow buttons Slipper shoes that come off easily
Mrs. Rabbit:	Apron, umbrella, basket for shopping Bread rolls to bring back
Flopsy, Mopsy: Cottontail	A pail to carry
McGregor:	Small, toy plastic rake and hoe Farmer's straw hat
Sparrows:	Some type of materials attached to the wings for flapping
Stage Props:	Small desk or table to crawl under for the garden gate. Attach sign that faces the audience ( <i>Garden Gate</i> )  Table or desk for scene III when Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail stand around it to eat their bread and blackberries.  Table or desk labeled <i>STOVE</i> for Mrs. Rabbit, a teapot, tablespoon and cup, three plastic glasses for the milk, and a pitcher for pouring.  Three chairs labeled: <i>WATERING CAN</i> <i>BUSH</i> and <i>WHEELBARROW</i>

Chairs for seating students and the audience

Scripts for Narrators only. Songs can be learned from the charts and memorized.

Bedroll for Peter in the last scene

# SCENE I: Mrs. Rabbit's Warning

McGregor

Parent aide

Parent aide

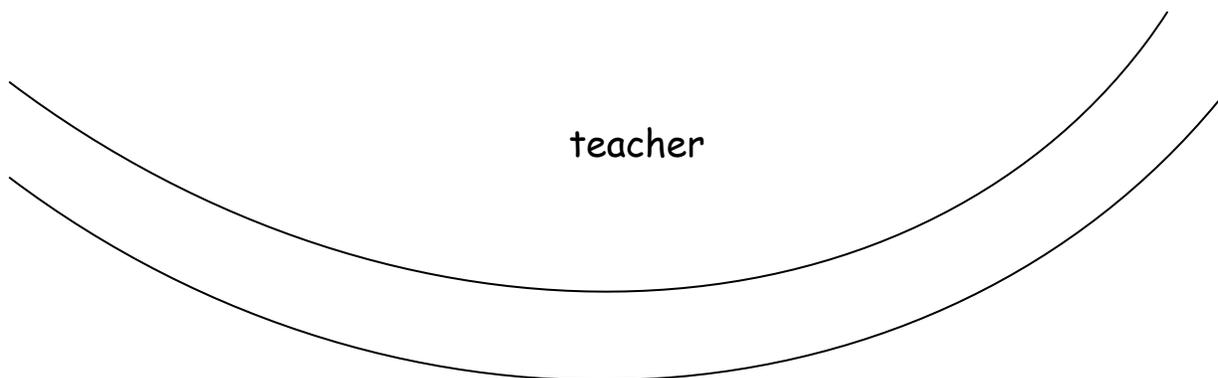
+ + + + + + +  
Narrators

x x x x x x x  
x x x x x x x  
Chorus

Mrs. Rabbit Flopsy Mopsy Cottontail Peter

Props stored here:  
Stove, table, dishes,  
watering can, bush,  
wheelbarrow, rake  
and hoe

Garden gate  
table prop  
stored here.



Audience seating

## Scene I: Mrs. Rabbit's Warning

(Narrators stand up in unison.)

Nar #1 Once upon a time there were four little rabbits.

Nar #2 Their names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail and Peter.

Nar #3 They lived with their mother underneath the root of a very  
big fir tree.

Nar #4 One day Mrs. Rabbit needed to go shopping.

Nar #5 She told her four bunnies they could . . .

Nar #6 Go into the field, or . . .

Nar #7 Go down the lane, **but** . . .

Nar #8 They could **not** go into . . .

Chorus: Mr. McGregor's Garden!!!

(Narrators sit down.)

Everyone, narrators and chorus sing "Mrs. Rabbit's Warning."

# "Mrs. Rabbit's Warning"

(Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle")

Mrs. Rabbit:

To the baker's I must run,  
To buy bread and currant buns,  
While I'm gone, have bunny fun,  
Picking berries one-by-one,  
Don't go near that garden gate,  
McGregor's hoe will be your fate!

Mrs. Rabbit and Animal Chorus:

Stay away from garden beans,  
Cabbages and parsley greens.  
Through the flowers you may hop,  
Near the garden you must stop.  
Listen to this warning, do,  
Don't become McGregor's stew!

Flopsy: Don't you worry, Mother Dear,  
Mopsy: Have no worry; have no fear.  
Cottontail: We'll pick berries one-by-one,  
Peter: Then come home when day is done.  
All Bunnies: Listen to our promise true,  
We won't be McGregor's stew!

(Narrators 1-4 stand up in unison)

Nar #1 Then Mrs. Rabbit took her basket and umbrella . . .

Nar #2 And went through the wood to the baker.

(Mrs. Rabbit exits stage right and sits in the off stage area)

Nar #3 Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail were good little bunnies.

Nar #4 Then went down the lane to pick blackberries.

(Narrators sit down.)

(Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail sing the following song twice as they exit state left and circle around behind the chorus to sit in the off stage area. While in this area, they can sing with the chorus during Scene II.)

(Tune: Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush)

We will pick some blackberries, blackberries, blackberries,  
Hopping down the lane we'll be,  
Good little bunnies, you'll see.

---

(Peter is still on stage, but when Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail are seated offstage, he sneaks off stage left and positions the Garden Gate so the audience can see it.)

(McGregor enters stage right with a rake. He places the rake on the floor, gets down on his hands and knees in the center stage area, and pretends to plant cabbages.)

Scene II props at right stage are positioned. The three chairs labeled Water Can, Bush, and Wheelbarrow are positioned as shown on the next page.

# SCENE II: In the Garden

Flopsy Mopsy Cottontail

Mrs. Rabbit

Parent aide

Parent aide

+ + + + +  
Narrators

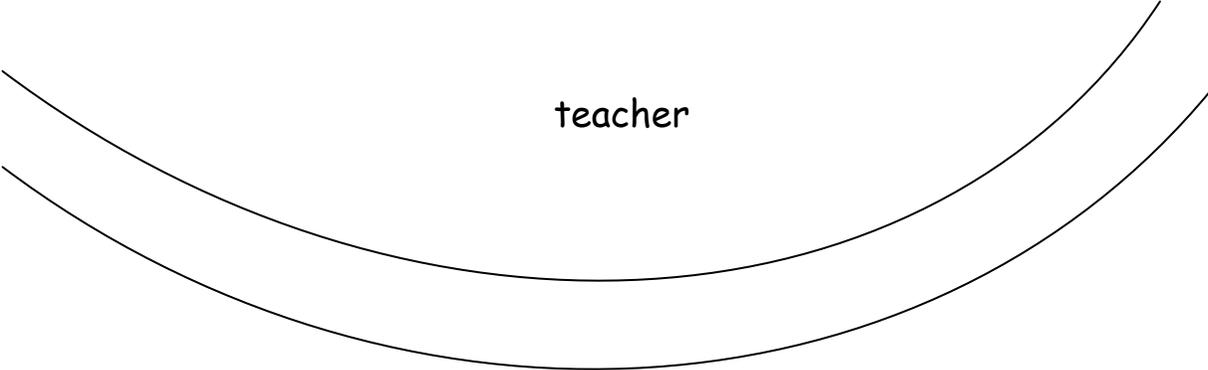
+ + + + +  
+ + + + +  
Chorus

McGregor

Wheelbarrow  
Bush  
Watering Can

Stove Table  
and Dishes

Garden Gate  
Peter



Audience seating

## SCENE II: In the Garden

Song: Where is Peter? Verses 1 and 2

(Tune: Skip to My Lou)

Flopsy - Mopsy - Cottontail,  
Putting berries in a pail,  
Being good, just like they should,  
Flopsy - Mopsy - Cottontail.

Peter squeezes under the gate and eats lettuce, etc.

Where is Peter? Do you know?  
Eating lettuce in a row,  
Chant: Ohhhhh, Nooooo! Ohhhhh, Nooooo! (no music)  
To the garden he did go!

---

(Narrators 5-8 stand in unison.)

(McGregor goes on planting. He doesn't see Peter.)

Nar #5 Peter was very naughty.

Nar #6 He had run straight to Mr. McGregor's garden!

Nar #7 First Peter ate some lettuce and French beans.

Nar #8 Then he ate some radishes.

(Narrators sit down and chorus stands.)

Everyone (narrators and chorus) sings "The Peter Rabbit Scrunch."

## "The Peter Rabbit Scrunch"

(To the tune of: "Down in the Meadow in an Itty Bitty Pool")

Down in the garden where the veggies are so green,  
Was Little Peter Rabbit munching on a lima bean,  
Run, Peter Rabbit, don't you know it's getting late?  
But he ate, and he ate, 'til he had a tummyache!

Hop, hop, nibble, nibble, hear that bunny crunch,  
Little Peter Rabbit wants a carrot for his lunch,  
Run, Peter Rabbit, don't you know it's getting late?  
But he ate, and he ate, 'til he had a tummyache!

(Peter sits down and rubs his tummy. McGregor quietly plants. He hasn't seen Peter yet.)

Peter: Ohhhhh, me! My tummy aches! I wish I were home. Mama would give me some chamomile tea, and then I'd feel better.

Everyone (narrators and chorus) sings "What Do You Take For a Tummy Ache?"

## "What Do You Take for a Tummy Ache?"

(Tune: "What Does the Puppy Say To Me?")

(Narrators join the chorus in a standing position)

What do you take for a tummy ache?

Lemonade? Chocolate cake?

Ask Mrs. Rabbit; she will brew

Camomile tea for You, You, You!

What do you take for a tummy ache?

Pizza pie? Cherry shake?

Ask Mrs. Rabbit; she will brew

Camomile tea for You, You, You!

What do you take for a tummy ache?

Syrup sweet? On pancakes?

Ask Mrs. Rabbit; she will brew

Camomile tea for You, You, You!

---

(Narrators remain standing and chorus sits down.)

Nar #1 Peter nibbled some parsley, but suddenly . . .

Nar #2 **Mr. McGregor saw Peter!!**

(McGregor waves his rake and circles the stage area pretending to chase Peter.)

Nar #3 Look out, Peter! McGregor's got a rake!

Nar #4 Run, Peter, run! Before it's too late!

McGregor: Stop, you thief! I'm going to catch you!

Tonight I'll have bunny rabbit stew!

Chorus: (Jumps up) Run, Peter, run! Before it's too late!  
Hurry and find the garden gate! (chorus sits down)

Nar #5 Peter ran as fast as he could all around the garden.

Nar #6 He lost one shoe in the cabbages. (drops shoe)

Nar #7 He lost the other in the potatoes. (drops other shoe)

Nar #8 And his little blue jacket . . .

Nar #1 Got caught on a gooseberry net!

(Peter stops in imaginary net and begins to struggle to get free.)

Nar #2 Peter began to cry, but some friendly sparrows stopped to help him.

(Narrators sit down.)

(Sparrows stand, flap wings and sing "The Sparrows Song")

# "The Sparrow Advice"

(Tune: "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

In the garden we were flying,  
Were flying, were flying,  
When we heard a bunny crying,  
It must have been you.  
Don't worry; just hurry!  
Don't worry; just scurry!  
You must leave your little jacket,  
Your jacket of blue.

(Sparrows sit down.)

(Narrators stand up in unison.)

Nar #3    Soon Peter wriggled free of his new jacket,  
            and he ran into the tool shed to hide.

Nar #4    Peter hopped into a water can.  
            It was still half full of water!

(Peter hides behind the chair labeled Watering Can. McGregor pretends to look under flower pots for Peter.)

Nar #5    McGregor looked under every flower pot in the tool shed,  
            but . . . he could not find Peter . . .

Nar #6    Until . . .

Peter:    Kerrrr-ty-choo!

Nar #6    Peter sneezed! Then he jumped out of the can!

Chorus:    (Jumps up) Run, Peter, run! Before it's too late!  
            Hurry and find that garden gate! (Chorus sits down.)

(Peter hides behind BUSH)

Nar #7 Peter escaped and hid behind a garden bush.

Chorus: You can rest now, Peter; McGregor is going.  
Back to his garden, to do some hoeing.

(McGregor shakes his head, picks up the hoe, and returns to center stage and pretends to hoe.)

Nar #8 Peter felt sad and lonely. His fur was still wet from the watering can, he couldn't see the garden gate, and he his tummy still **hurt!**

Nar #1 He wanted to go home to bed.

Peter: I've lost 2 shoes and my jacket of blue,  
Which caught on a gooseberry net.  
I should be in bed, but instead, in a shed,  
I got my bunny fur wet!

Chorus: (stands) You need to go home and nevermore roam,  
But, Peter, you mustn't fret,  
With a bad tummy ache, you ran from that rake,  
And **he** hasn't caught you yet! (chorus sits and points at McGregor)

Peter: That's right! He hasn't caught me **yet!**

Nar #2 Peter jumped upon a wheelbarrow to see what he could see.  
(Peter goes to prop labeled Wheelbarrow.)

Nar #3 There was McGregor hoeing onions . . .  
And beyond him was the garden gate!

(Narrators sit down.)

(Chorus sings "The Escape." During the song, Peter stays on the Wheelbarrow until the last word "Go!" Then he sneaks around McGregor to the gate.)

## "The Escape"

(Tune: "Old MacDonald had a Farm")

Old McGregor had a hoe! E - I - E - I - O!  
Planting onions in a row! E - I - E - I - O!  
With a scritch-scratch here,  
And a scritch-scratch there,  
Here, scritch, there, scratch,  
Everywhere a scritch-scratch,  
Old McGregor had a hoe! E - I - E - I - O!

Peter Rabbit saw the hoe! E - I - Oh, No, No!  
Said he from the wheelbarrow! E - I - Oh, No, No!  
With an Oh, No, here,  
And an Oh, No, there,  
Here, Oh, there, No,  
Everywhere an Oh, No!  
Peter Rabbit saw the hoe! E - I - Oh, No, No!

Hasten, Peter, don't be slow! E - I - E - I - GO!  
The gate's beyond McGregor's hoe! E - I - E - I - GO!  
With a hip-hop here,  
And a hip-hop there,  
Here a hip, there a hop,  
Everywhere a hip-hop,  
Hasten, Peter, don't be slow! E - I - E - I - GO!

(When Peter gets to the gate and starts to wiggle under, McGregor sees Peter and waves the hoe.)

McGregor: Stop, you thief!  
I'm going to catch you!  
Tonight I'll have bunny rabbit stew!

Chorus: Stands and sings verse three of "The Peter Rabbit Scrunch"  
to the tune: "Down in the Meadow"

Stop, stop, wiggle, wiggle, do the bunny squeeze,  
Little Peter Rabbit knows he ate too many peas,  
Run, Peter Rabbit, don't you know it's getting late?  
So he scrunched, and he scrunched,  
Right under the gate!

---

Everyone (narrators and chorus) stand and sing verse four of "The  
Escape" to the tune: "Old McDonald"

If you wiggle to and fro, E - I - E - I - O!  
Underneath the gate you'll go! E - I - E - I - O!  
With a wiggle-waggle here,  
And a wiggle-waggle there,  
Here wiggle, there waggle,  
Everywhere a wiggle-waggle,  
Now you're free to safely go! E - I - E - I - O!

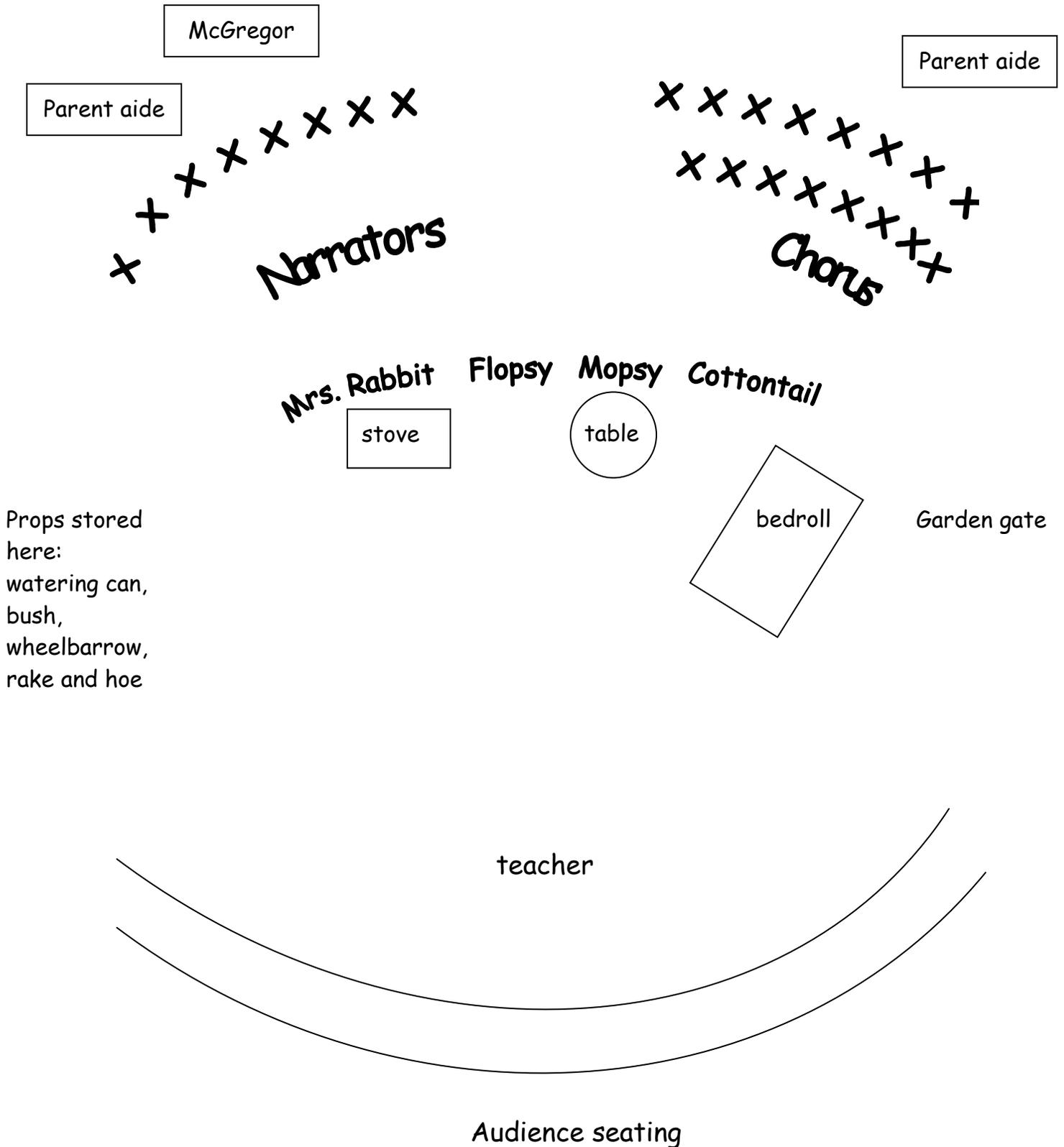
(Narrators and chorus sit down.)

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(Peter wriggles through the gate and exits to stage left. McGregor  
shakes his head and exits stage right. Nar #1 removes chair props  
from the stage and then puts the stove with teapot and cup and the  
table with the pitcher and glasses on it on the stage. Bedroll is places  
on the left side of the stage.)

Mrs. Rabbit enters at stage right and puts the basket of bread rolls on  
the table and then pretends to be busy at the stove. Flopsy, Mopsy,  
and Cottontail get ready to open Scene III with a song.

# Scene II: Camomile Tea



Props stored here:  
watering can,  
bush,  
wheelbarrow,  
rake and hoe

## Scene II: Camomile Tea

Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail: (enter singing and put a pail of blackberries on the table.)

Tune: "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush"

We filled our pails with blackberries,  
Blackberries, blackberries,  
Home we go, our mother to see,  
Good little bunnies are we.

---

(Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail stand in position around the table.)

Mrs. Rabbit:      Good little bunnies are you,  
                         Did Peter come with you, too?

Flopsy, Mopsy      No, Mother dear, Peter's not here,  
Cottontail           He went to the garden, we fear.

(Bunnies start to eat the bread rolls and blackberries. Mrs. Rabbit pours milk for them.)

(Narrators 4-8 stand up in unison.)

Nar #4      Mrs. Rabbit shook her head with worry about Peter.

Nar #5      Just then, Peter appeared!

Mrs. Rabbit:      Oh, Peter, my son, the day is almost done!  
                         I'm so glad you're home,  
                         But wherever did you roam?

Peter:              Oh, Mother dear, I forgot your warning.  
                         I'll tell my story in the morning.  
                         But now I'll rest and go to bed,  
                         My tummy aches and so does my head!

Nar #6                Mrs. Rabbit tucked Peter into bed:

Mrs. Rabbit:        You rest now, Peter. I'll make you some camomile tea.

(Narrators 4, 5, and 6 sit down.)

Chorus:             (Sings verses three and four of "Where is Peter?")

Flopsy - Mopsy - Cottontail,  
Took the berries in their pail,  
Home to make a pie to bake,  
Flopsy - Mopsy - Cottontail.

Where is Peter? Do tell me.  
Home in bed where he should be!  
Chant: Ohhhhh, Nooooo! Ohhhhh, Nooooo! (no music)  
All he gets is camomile tea!

---

(After the last verse, everyone can say together sorrowfully:)

Pooooooooor Peter Rabbit . . .

(Everyone, except for the rabbit family, stands and sings "Oh, Dear,  
What Can the Matter Be?")

## "Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?"

(Tune: "Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?"

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?  
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?  
Oh, dear, see Mrs. Rabbit, she's  
making some camomile tea.

Who's that, eating those blackberries?  
Who's that, eating those blackberries?  
Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail,  
won't need some camomile tea.

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?  
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?  
Oh, dear, poor Peter Rabbit, he's  
taking some camomile tea.

(Chorus sits down.)

---

(Mrs. Rabbit gives Peter a tablespoonful.)

Mrs. Rabbit: One tablespoonful to be taken at bedtime.

Flopsy, Mopsy: Good night, Peter. I hope you feel better.  
Cottontail

Peter: Thank you . . . (yawns) z z z z z z z (snores)

Nar #7: Do you think Peter will ever go back to Mr. McGregor's garden?

Nar #8: I don't know . . . but if he does,  
THAT will be another tale!!

The End!!!