

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
ACT ONE

1 LIGHTS UP on the FORESTAGE in front of the CURTAIN.
CHRISTMAS MUSIC (or classical music) is heard OFFSTAGE.
ANDREW runs IN DOWN RIGHT, carrying a new, plump rabbit toy.
Its brown and white spotted coat has flaps for arms and is cut straight
5 across the bottom with no legs. Pink sateen lines its ears. It has thread
whiskers. Simultaneously, NANA rushes IN DOWN LEFT. Her gray
hair is in a severe bun.

NANA: Andrew! I've been looking for you every—

ANDREW: (*Interrupts.*) Look, Nana! Right on the top of my Christmas
10 stocking! I'm going to show him my—

NANA: (*Interrupts.*) Don't interrupt, Andrew. (*Takes the rabbit toy.*)

ANDREW: But I want to show him the nursery!

NANA: Your uncle will be here soon. You're right, however. Toys
belong in the nursery. Even on Christmas.

15 ANDREW: (*Reaches for it.*) Rabbit!

NANA: In the nursery. And see you mind your manners at dinner.

UNCLE BRAD'S VOICE: (*OFF RIGHT.*) Andrew! Where's my favorite
nephew?

ANDREW: Uncle Brad!

20 NANA: (*Mutters.*) Favorite nephew? Only nephew.

UNCLE BRAD: (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT and crosses to embrace*
ANDREW.) How are you, my boy? Is Christmas being excellent for
you?

25 ANDREW: Oh, yes! I got chocolate almonds and oranges and nuts
and an engine and a wind-up mouse and my best one... Rabbit!

UNCLE BRAD: There's more waiting for you under the tree
downstairs. I know, because I brought them. Oh, and here's Nana!
Happy Christmas, Nana.

NANA: (*Stiff.*) Thank you, sir. Happy Christmas to you as well.

30 UNCLE BRAD: Still running the nursery with an iron hand?

NANA: As I learned to do, caring for you.

UNCLE BRAD: I was a handful, I'm sure. Andrew, I can see that's a
fine rabbit. When I was your age, I had a skin horse. Went with me
everywhere, even slept with me. Seemed real to me, that old skin
35 horse. Nana, is he still in the nursery?

NANA: Everything remains the same, sir.

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE PEOPLE

	<u># of lines</u>
ANDREW.....a young boy (can be played by a girl as ANDREA)	82
NANA.....his elderly nursemaid	68
UNCLE BRAD.....his uncle; late twenties	14
MOTHER.....his mother	21
DOCTOR.....attends to Andrew	9
PEAVEY.....servant	5

THE SPIRITS

TIMOTHY SPIRIT.....represents a wood-jointed toy lion	21
TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT.....represents a toy train	18
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT.....represents a toy horse	71
MODEL BOAT SPIRIT.....represents a toy boat	24
RABBIT SPIRIT.....represents a stuffed rabbit	120
SUMMER TREE SPIRITS.....represent the forest (about six)	9
NURSERY MAGIC FAIRY.....makes rabbit toy real	14

THE FOREST CREATURES

WILD RABBIT ONE.....has a real rounce in its step	13
WILD RABBIT TWO.....another	14
WILD RABBIT CHORUS.....at least two	4
BROWN RABBIT.....female; wise about the world	15

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: Christmas time in late-Victorian times.
ACT TWO: One early summer evening; then the following spring.

1 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** *(Speaks gently but with authority.)* Yes, Train Engine. Andrew knows the value of saving you for things other than play. Model Boat, have you broken?

5 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** I don't think so, Skin Horse, but my mainmast shivered. This is no way to treat a fine example of a sloop-rigged vessel. We have a proud history. We skim the waters, slice the waves—

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: *(Gently interrupts.)* Yes, yes, of course. Fine thing, a sloop-rigged vessel.

10 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** I could have been wrecked! Fit for Davy Jones' locker at the bottom of the sea. That woman's going to destroy me!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: It's criminal the way she sweeps through here. Tidying up, she calls it. I call it assault!

15 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** *(Still stalks.)* I have government connections. I could do something about her. I should.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: *(Moves to front of CUPBOARD.)* Yes, Timothy, of course. Fine thing to be made by disabled veterans.

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: 'Tisn't only that! I could go right to the top! After all, I'm real!

20 **TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT:** So am I! Real as can be! As Skin Horse pointed out, I'm being saved for better things than mere play.

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: I'm real, too! Goes without saying.

RABBIT SPIRIT: So am I! I must be. I can hear them talking. I'm talking.

25 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Who's that? I heard a strange voice!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: So did I! You needn't think you're special, Model Boat. *(Revs up and chugs from the CUPBOARD, reversing around to face it.)* Who's here?

30 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** *(Stalks closer.)* It's a blob. A brown-and-white-spotted blob. Your hull has landed on a blob, Model Boat.

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: *(Struggles to right herself.)* Get it off! Get it off! I must be fit! Ready for the fore-and-aft topsail when she comes. I can't have brown-and-white-spotted blobs dragging me down. I was born to skip the waves, dance in the spindrift!

35 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** As an official agent of the government, I have the power to right you, Model Boat. Where would you like to be? Here? There?

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Anywhere is better than this! Blob-ridden! Disgusting! Worse than having a rat-ridden hold!

1 **UNCLE BRAD:** I wonder... perhaps I could go in and...

NANA: You're wanted downstairs, sir, and I've work to do tidying up. Even on Christmas.

UNCLE BRAD: Oh, yes, of course. Well, then, I'll—

5 **MOTHER:** *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT. She's in her mid-30s and is smiling.)* Bradley? Andrew? We've more to do downstairs.

ANDREW: Yes, Mother. *(To NANA.)* Rabbit?

NANA: In the nursery, Andrew. *(Turns to face CURTAIN as it opens to reveal the nursery. She moves into the nursery as UNCLE BRAD, MOTHER and ANDREW EXIT DOWN RIGHT before the CURTAIN. She marches to the toy CUPBOARD past toys lying about the floor where they were dropped. The toys include a model boat, a train engine, a wooden lion and a horse model. She mutters. A LIGHT FADES UP on the CUPBOARD, where life-sized TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT and TIMOTHY SPIRIT are scattered in front of SKIN HORSE SPIRIT. MODEL BOAT SPIRIT is propped against the doorjamb. ALL are silently alive.)* Christmas! Always an uproar! *(Yanks open the CUPBOARD and tosses the rabbit toy inside. It lands silently.)* So many toys! *(Swings the CUPBOARD door closed as she bends to pick up more toys from the floor. The door bounces ajar as she works. Now, RABBIT SPIRIT can be glimpsed loling just inside by the doorjamb UPSTAGE from MODEL BOAT SPIRIT.)* A wonder they think he needs more! *(Straightens upright, bumping her head on the door.)* Oh! My head! *(Rubs her head as she tosses the additional gathered toys into the CUPBOARD behind the TOY SPIRITS. She turns away. Her activity has toppled MODEL BOAT SPIRIT, who lands on her chest atop RABBIT SPIRIT.)*

20 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Oooof! My hull!

NANA: I'm hearing things. Bound to after that nasty bump. I need to lie down. *(Pushes the CUPBOARD door closed. It doesn't quite close. Crosses LEFT.)* Work, work, work. Even on Christmas. *(EXITS LEFT.)*

30 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Is she gone? Timothy, can you see?

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: As a government associate, I'll reconnoiter. *(His paw pushes the door open. He glances around.)* She seems to be gone... but we can't be too careful. *(Steps from the CUPBOARD and pads forward, stiff-jointed.)* The rest of you stay in there. Cover my back.

35 **TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT:** Count on us, Timothy. *(To MODEL BOAT SPIRIT.)* Another chip on your paint, Model Boat? That's a lack of respect. Look at me! Not a chip or a dent on me! They respect me. They know value when they see it!

40

1 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** What? Oh, yes! It hurt for a while, but I'm a model sloop. Very tough, us sloops. Plus, of course, I'm real.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: A few more chips on your paint, Model Boat, and you'll begin to show signs of being real.

5 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** That's what you think. (Yawns.) Well, I must rest now. Recover my strength. Get ready for my next voyage. What a trip that'll be! (Sails past RABBIT SPIRIT into the CUPBOARD and props herself against its side wall.)

10 **TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT:** (Chugs after MODEL BOAT SPIRIT.) I must rest, too. Get ready for my next journey. Overland to the mountains, I should expect. Very important. Very important. (Rolls into the CUPBOARD past RABBIT SPIRIT and revs down by MODEL BOAT SPIRIT.)

15 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Excellent thinking. I must plan security, prepare for that woman's next assault. Oh, it's hard to be real! So many responsibilities! (Steps over RABBIT SPIRIT into the CUPBOARD and stands stiffly in the center.)

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Don't worry, Rabbit. They're only toys. They'll never really be real—although, as I said, Model Boat is beginning to show signs of it.

RABBIT SPIRIT: S-sir?

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Yes, Rabbit?

RABBIT SPIRIT: What is real?

25 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** That takes some explaining. Come out so we won't disturb the others.

RABBIT SPIRIT: W-well... but you see, I... (Stops, embarrassed.)

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Oh, yes, I see, I see. Difficult to walk with no legs. Can you shuffle about?

RABBIT SPIRIT: I can try.

30 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Do. It's good for a rabbit to know he can get around. (Watches as RABBIT SPIRIT flops from the CUPBOARD to sprawl on the floor.) Are you comfortable, Rabbit?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Well, I... sir, if you could just plant your hoof, maybe I could lean up against it and sit.

35 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Certainly. (Plants a hoof. RABBIT scoots or shuffles over to SKIN HORSE SPIRIT and leans against him. [NOTE: The way in which RABBIT SPIRIT moves is up to the director. If preferred, the ACTOR may roll from place to place. Just make sure RABBIT SPIRIT'S movements indicate that he

1 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Hrrummp! Easily done. With the power invested in me. (Leans MODEL BOAT SPIRIT back against the doorjamb.) Now we'll get to the bottom of this. (Turns to RABBIT SPIRIT and pokes him.) It's stuffed with something!

5 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** A stuffed blob? Ooooh, yuck! (Sails from the CUPBOARD, circles to join TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT. They stare at RABBIT SPIRIT.) What is it?

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Is it dangerous?

10 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** (To RABBIT SPIRIT.) Here, you! What are you? Speak up!

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Maybe it can't talk.

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Maybe it has secrets.

15 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Its secrets aren't safe from me. I'm an agent of the government! (To RABBIT SPIRIT.) Speak up! What are you!

RABBIT SPIRIT: H-hi. I'm a rabbit.

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: Says he's a rabbit.

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Never heard of a rabbit!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: What's a rabbit?

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** A rabbit is an animal.

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: That's no help! What's an animal?

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Never heard of an animal!

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: But you've heard of me. I'm a horse. Horses are animals. (Emerges gravely from the CUPBOARD.) And you know Timothy. He's a lion. Lions are animals. (Turns formally to RABBIT SPIRIT.) Welcome, Rabbit.

25 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** But this creature isn't like us. You're hard, I'm hard, this is a blob.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Rabbit was made to be soft. He's probably stuffed with sawdust.

30 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Sawdust?!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Disgusting!

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Nothing to mention in public!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Unmentionable anywhere. They're letting the riffraff in!

35 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Why, this isn't even a model of something!

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: It's wise to be soft. Sawdust doesn't trap a hurt. Is your hull feeling better, Model Boat?

1 **UNCLE BRAD:** (ENTERS RIGHT. He smiles down at ANDREW, asleep in his arms.) Sound asleep already. (Carries ANDREW to bed and removes his shoes.) Well, my boy, we won't bother with a nightshirt tonight. Nana will be upset, but... (Pulls a blanket over ANDREW.) Good night, Andrew. (Turns the NIGHT-LIGHT ON, then turns to EXIT RIGHT, pausing at the CUPBOARD.) You know, I wonder... no, best to keep the memory. Good night, Skin Horse, if you're here. I haven't forgotten you. (SKIN HORSE SPIRIT whickers.) I could swear I heard... no, couldn't be. Sounded just like him, though. Good old Skin Horse! (EXITS RIGHT. A DIM LIGHT remains on CUPBOARD.)

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Skin Horse? Did you hear?

10 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Yes. Bradley was here. My boy.

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** He heard you.

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Did he?

25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Oh, yes. He smiled when you called. I saw him. Are you pleased?

30 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Very much. (Turns and comes back to the front of the CUPBOARD. He steps into room, looking OFF RIGHT.) Wish I'd seen him. Go to sleep, Rabbit. (DIM LIGHT FADES OUT on CUPBOARD.)

35 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Yawns.) Yes. I'm very tired...

40 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** (ENTERS SPOTLIGHT DOWN RIGHT as the CURTAIN closes. To AUDIENCE.) So it went for many nights. Sometimes Rabbit and I would be together in the toy cupboard. Sometimes we'd be outside it, flung up against the fireplace fender where Andrew had tossed us. Being outside the cupboard was the best. Rabbit and I had privacy there. We had long talks, and I began to grow very fond of him. Well, someone had to be. He was so shy, and the others sneered at him. They called him not a model, not real, not even much of a toy, just a blob. And Andrew didn't stick up for him. Andrew preferred his china dog to all of us. That was how things were for many nights. But not forever... (SPOTLIGHT FADES. CURTAIN OPENS and LIGHTS FADE UP on the nursery. The CUPBOARD is DARK. ANDREW, now wearing a nightshirt, searches frantically. The rabbit toy is flung up against the fireplace fender.)

45 **ANDREW:** Where is he? I have to find him! I have to!

50 **NANA:** (ENTERS LEFT.) Not in bed, Andrew? It's time for sleep. (Turns NIGHT-LIGHT ON.)

1 does not have hind legs at this point.) Excellent! Now, you asked what is real.

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Does it mean having stick-out handles and things inside you that buzz?

10 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Oh, no, Rabbit, real isn't how you're made or the sounds you make. Real is something that happens to you.

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I don't understand.

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Let me put it this way, real is magic. Nursery magic.

25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Still confused.) Oh. Well, yes, but...

30 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** When a child loves you, not just to play with, but really loves you, then you become real.

35 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Does it hurt?

40 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Sometimes.

45 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Oh. Well, that doesn't sound...

50 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** But when you are real, you don't mind being hurt.

55 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Does it happen all at once, like being wound up?

60 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** No. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to toys that break easily or have sharp edges or have to be carefully kept. Usually by the time you become real most of your hair has been loved off, your eyes drop out, you're loose in your joints and you look shabby. But that doesn't matter. Once you're real, you can't be ugly. Except to those who don't understand, of course.

65 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I suppose you are real? (SKIN HORSE SPIRIT laughs gently.) Oh, I didn't mean—excuse me, sir. It's just that it's been such a long day, lots of new things going on, and I—

70 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** I understand. I am shabby. Andrew's Uncle Bradley made me real a great many years ago. And once you're real, you're real forever.

75 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** And you can hurt all that time?

80 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Perhaps you'll understand one day, Rabbit. Now I am weary. We'll talk again.

85 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Guess I'll rest, too. Um... would you...?

90 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Certainly. (RABBIT SPIRIT shuffles to the CUPBOARD. SKIN HORSE SPIRIT plants a hoof. RABBIT SPIRIT leans against his leg, gaining the momentum to maneuver into the CUPBOARD. SKIN HORSE SPIRIT EXITS into the CUPBOARD and moves to the back. The door remains open. The LIGHT DIMS on CUPBOARD.)

1 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** You'll have many surprises.
RABBIT SPIRIT: Skin Horse, he said there were real rabbits...
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Oh, yes, there are. I've seen them.
RABBIT SPIRIT: Am I a model after all?
5 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Oh, no.
RABBIT SPIRIT: (*Disappointed.*) Oh.
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: You may become something better than a model, Rabbit. You may become real.
RABBIT SPIRIT: (*Awed.*) Me? Real?
10 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Yes. We'll have to wait and see. Go to sleep, Rabbit.
RABBIT SPIRIT: (*Yawns.*) All right. (*Inches back under the bed.*)
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: (*A beat. Softly.*) Rabbit? (*A beat.*) I hope the magic does come to you, Rabbit.
15 **ANDREW:** (*Murmurs in his sleep, then bolts upright in bed.*) Rabbit? (*Panicked, he looks under the covers.*) Rabbit! (*Looks on the floor beside the bed.*) Rabbit! What're you doing? It's time to sleep! (*Reaches for the rabbit toy, settles back in bed.*) Rabbit, you have to stay by me. Can't go off... flying... solo... (*Cuddles the toy under his chin and sleeps again.*)
20 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (*From under the bed.*) Skin Horse?
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Yes?
RABBIT SPIRIT: I think I'm starting to like this. What's it called?
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: A hug, Rabbit. You're experiencing a hug. Go to sleep.
25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Yes... all right... I'll... (*Yawns. CURTAIN begins to close as SPOTLIGHT FADES UP DOWN RIGHT.*)
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: (*Comes through CURTAIN to ENTER SPOTLIGHT. To AUDIENCE.*) So it began, and so it went on. Rabbit grew to love it. He didn't notice how shabby his fur was getting, how loose his tail, how much pink Andrew kissed from his nose, how limp his whiskers. (*We hear the TWITTER and SONG OF SPRING BIRDS. LIGHT FADES UP DOWN LEFT.*) When spring came, Andrew took Rabbit into the garden. They played outside during the long, long days. (*NANA ENTERS DOWN LEFT before the CURTAIN, carrying a picnic basket. A cloth is folded over her arm. She lays out ANDREW'S tea DOWN LEFT.*) Rabbit had many things to see and smell and feel and learn. There were rides in the wheelbarrow.

1 **ANDREW:** I can't find my china dog! I can't sleep without my—
NANA: (*Interrupts.*) Nonsense! Come along now, hop into bed.
ANDREW: I can't sleep without my china dog!
NANA: You can't sleep without getting into bed! (*Sees the rabbit toy.*) Here! Take your old-bunny. He'll do to sleep with you. (*Lifts the rabbit toy by an ear and plops him into ANDREW'S arms as she trundles them to bed.*)
5 **ANDREW:** But I can't—
NANA: (*Interrupts.*) Your old bunny will have to do! Good night, Andrew. (*LIGHTS GO OUT as she flips light switch on the STAGE LEFT wall and EXITS LEFT.*)
ANDREW: (*Sits up.*) I can't! (*Tosses the rabbit toy aside with a tragic sigh.*) Stupid old bunny! (*Considers, then retrieves the toy.*) Will have to do. (*Pokes the toy.*) You're soft! (*Pokes the toy again. It falls over. ANDREW laughs.*) Floppy old rabbit. Got no legs. How do you get anywhere? Fly? (*Flaps the toy's arms.*) Yeah, that's it. You fly. (*"Flies" the toy into the air.*) It's fun to fly you! (*"Flies" the toy into a hug.*) I'll fly you again tomorrow. (*Yawns.*) Maybe I can sleep with you. C'mon, Rabbit, get under the covers. I'll make a burrow for you. Real rabbits live in burrows, you know. Tomorrow... we'll have... fun... tomor... (*Sleeps.*)
20 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (*Pops his head up above the bed's headboard.*) Skin Horse?
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: (*Crosses to RABBIT SPIRIT.*) What is it, Rabbit?
25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** He's choking me.
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Bradley did that, too. Go to sleep, Rabbit.
RABBIT SPIRIT: You're telling me to get over it? You're saying you survived, so will I?
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: (*Gentle laugh.*) You'll get to like it, Rabbit.
30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Promise?
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Promise. (*ANDREW murmurs and turns over, flinging the rabbit toy to the floor.*)
RABBIT SPIRIT: (*His head jerks down behind the headboard.*) Whoa!
35 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Now you see the value of being soft.
RABBIT SPIRIT: Kind of a surprise, though. (*His head pokes out from under the bed, hiding the rabbit toy.*)

1 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (A beat as RABBIT SPIRIT ENTERS in the darkness and hides behind wheelbarrow.) It's lonely here without Andrew. Hope his tea doesn't take long. (LIGHT FADES UP DOWN LEFT. His head appears behind the wheelbarrow. Calls.) Skin Horse? (A beat.) Guess he can't hear me. It's a long way to the nursery from here. I'll just wait. Someone will come for me. (A beat.) Hope someone comes before dark. I've never been out alone in the dark before. (LIGHT DIMS.) Getting coldish. Dampish. I wish someone inside could hear me. If Timothy could, he could carry me inside. Or Train Engine could collect me. Wonder if Model Boat can sail on the dew? (Curts up in a ball beside wheelbarrow.) Bet it's warm in the nursery. (A beat.) Someone will come before it gets too dark. Wouldn't like that... to be alone out here all night... (A beat.) Tea never lasts long in the nursery. But maybe tea takes longer when you have to get dressed all over again and go out. Must be a very important tea to take this long. (LIGHT DIMS further. Shuffles to the front of the wheelbarrow.) I've never seen night come before. It's... interesting. A valuable learning experience. I'll be wiser for knowing how night comes. (LIGHT DIMS further. RUSTLING SOUNDS.) For example, I'll know what makes those sounds. (A BIRD CRIES.) And I'll know what makes that sound. When Andrew comes, he'll tell me. So I'll just wait. Nothing to be afraid of. (A DOG HOWLS. RABBIT SPIRIT hastily retreats behind the wheelbarrow.) I wish Andrew would come. I wish! (LIGHT FADES OUT. From behind wheelbarrow.) I'll just wait.

25 **ANDREW:** (ENTERS CENTER through CURTAIN, wearing a nightshirt. Calls.) Rabbit!

NANA: (Snatches ANDREW back as the CURTAIN OPENS. The NIGHT-LIGHT is ON, and a DIM LIGHT is ON the CUPBOARD. TOY SPIRITS rest in the CUPBOARD.) It's late, Andrew. Come to bed immediately!

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (From behind the wheelbarrow.) Funny... I thought I heard Andrew.

ANDREW: (Frees himself.) Rabbit's outside!

35 **NANA:** You can't go outside!

RABBIT SPIRIT: But he didn't come. I must try very hard not to hear things. It's scary to hear things. Maybe I'll just sleep.

ANDREW: (LIGHT FADES UP on CUPBOARD. ANDREW runs to it and tosses out small toys and books. TOY SPIRITS huddle against the back wall of CUPBOARD.) I want Rabbit!

1 **ANDREW'S VOICE:** (OFF RIGHT.) C'mon, Rabbit! (SKIN HORSE SPIRIT watches ANDREW ENTER DOWN RIGHT. ANDREW wears play clothes with short pants and pushes a wheelbarrow, in which the rabbit toy rides.) It's teatime! I'm famished. I expect you are, too!

5 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** There were picnics on the grass. (NANA EXITS DOWN LEFT.)

ANDREW: (Lifts the rabbit toy from the wheelbarrow and holds him as they sit to rummage in the picnic basket.) Wonder what's in the basket, Rabbit. Treacle tart! And cucumber sandwiches... I asked for those 'specially for you. And some fish paste ones for me, and a cooked egg in a shell and lemonade in a jug. What first? Tart! (Takes a bite.) Want some, Rabbit? (Brings tart to rabbit toy's mouth.) You like it, too. I can tell. (Takes another bite.) Want a cucumber sandwich? Right, that's what we'll have, then. You sit there... (Sets the rabbit toy on the picnic cloth.) I'll put the rest of my tart here by you... (He does.) ...and fix your sandwich. Nana doesn't know about your sandwiches, but I do. (Removes a sandwich, sets a cucumber slice from it before the rabbit toy.) You don't have to eat it all. Whatever you don't want, we'll leave for the other rabbits. (Picks up the tart, takes a bite.) After tea, we'll build a fairy hut. You'll like fairy huts. We'll go under the raspberry canes behind the flower border. Will that be fine? (Consults the toy's face.) Thought so. I like that place, too.

25 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Yes, it was a splendid spring. And it would be a splendid summer. Longer than that—well, no one can see forever. (EXITS CENTER through closed CURTAIN as SPOTLIGHT FADES OUT DOWN RIGHT.)

NANA'S VOICE: (OFF LEFT.) Andrew! (ENTERS DOWN LEFT in a rush.) You're to go out for tea, Andrew. You must change. Come along, no time to waste! (Gathers picnic things and tosses them into the wheelbarrow.) Don't dawdle! Mother's coming to collect you! Bunny in the barrow! (Picks up the rabbit toy by one ear and drops him behind the wheelbarrow in her haste.)

30 **ANDREW:** You dropped Rabbit!

NANA: Never mind, Andrew! (She and ANDREW begin to EXIT through the CURTAIN into the nursery.)

ANDREW: I want Rabbit!

NANA: Mother wants you! This is a very important tea! Come along! (Hustles ANDREW through the CURTAIN as LIGHT DIMS DOWN LEFT.)

1 of **ANDREW'S** bed. **NANA** mutters.) Chasing around in the dark of night! I can barely see and I'm... (Stops to "light" her candle. Its light marks her course in the dark garden **DOWNSTAGE**.) Now, where were they when I... (Uses candle to get her bearings, then sets off **DOWN CENTER**. She stumbles.) Oh! Who pushed me? Who's there? (Moves the candle as she checks behind her.) No one. (Checks the ground.) Tree root! Peavey should tidy that up! What good are gardeners if they don't tidy up tree roots? (Continues **DOWN LEFT**. She stumbles again.) Ow! My shin! Hit it on a... (Lowers the candle to checks at shin level.) ...wheelbarrow! So that horrid bunny should be... (She moves candle around the wheelbarrow.) There! (Snatches up the rabbit toy and retraces her route back to the nursery.) Have to watch for that tree root... speaking to Peavey about that tomorrow, see if I don't—what? (Mimes seeing an imaginary moth.) Go away! Go away! (Swats at the air with the rabbit toy.) Blasted moths! ("Blows out" the candle, **EXITS DOWN RIGHT** and immediately **RE-ENTERS RIGHT**. **NIGHT-LIGHT FADES UP**.) The nursery. At last! All this chasing around in the dark of the night... it gets to a person...

20 **ANDREW:** Rabbit!

NANA: And a grubby old bunny it is. (Wipes the rabbit toy with a corner of her apron.) Damp and dirty.

ANDREW: Give me Rabbit!

NANA: (Hands the toy to **ANDREW**.) Fancy all this fuss over a toy!

25 **ANDREW:** He's not a toy! He's real!

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Real?

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Real?

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Real?

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: Real?

30 **NANA:** Your bunny, real? Nonsense!

ANDREW: He is so real!

NANA: Very well. I do not wish to argue. Good night, Andrew. (**EXITS LEFT**.)

35 **ANDREW:** You are real, Rabbit. I'm glad you're home. Tomorrow I'll teach you to hop. C'mon Rabbit, get under the covers. You must be cold. Spring nights are cold. Nana said so. And you didn't have a shawl or anything. We have to go to sleep now. Good night, Rabbit. (Snuggles down. A beat.)

40 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Head appears above the headboard.) Skin Horse?

1 **NANA:** Andrew, what has come over you? (Tosses toys and books back into the **CUPBOARD**.) Stop, Andrew! I can't spend all night tidying up!

5 **ANDREW:** (Tosses things out of **CUPBOARD**.) I can't sleep without Rabbit!

NANA: (Picks up toys **ANDREW** has tossed.) Of course you can. Here, take this train engine, that'll—

ANDREW: (Snatches the train engine toy.) I hate this train engine. It's got pokers. (Flings the train engine toy into the **CUPBOARD**.)

10 **TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT:** (Recoils.) Oooof!

NANA: It does not have pokers, Andrew. It has a wind-up key.

ANDREW: (Tosses things.) It pokes!

NANA: (Picks up the model boat toy.) Then here, take this. You used to like this boat.

15 **ANDREW:** No! No, no, no, no! (Stomps to his bed and tosses himself down, pounds his pillow with his fists, sobs.)

NANA: This won't do. This won't do at all. Andrew, stop! (**ANDREW** doesn't.) Very well, then... (Tosses the toy model boat into the **CUPBOARD**.)

20 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** (Topples over.) Oooof! Again!

NANA: (Crosses to **ANDREW**, leaving the **CUPBOARD** open.) I'll go out and find your bunny if you'll calm down. Will you calm down? If I bring your bunny?

ANDREW: (Small voice.) Yes.

25 **NANA:** Very well, then. No need to wake the whole house.

ANDREW: (Sits up to watch her **EXIT LEFT** to her quarters.) You said you were going to—

NANA'S VOICE: (**OFF LEFT**.) I am going to get your bunny! I need my shawl. Spring nights are cool.

30 **ANDREW:** Rabbit doesn't have a shawl. Rabbit might be freezing this very minute!

NANA'S VOICE: (**OFF LEFT**.) Nonsense. (**RE-ENTERS LEFT**, wearing a shawl and carrying a candlestick with an unlit candle. [NOTE: Use a battery-operated candelabra for safety.] I'm going now, Andrew. You stay in bed. (**ANDREW** sits anxiously in bed as she **EXITS RIGHT** and **RE-ENTERS DOWN RIGHT**, in front of the **CURTAIN**. **LIGHT** on **CUPBOARD** and **NIGHT-LIGHT FADE OUT**. In the darkness, **RABBIT SPIRIT** moves behind headboard

35

1 **NANA'S VOICE:** (OFF LEFT.) Andrew, what's all that racket?
TIMOTHY SPIRIT: Watch out! She's on the loose! (TOY SPIRITS, except SKIN HORSE SPIRIT and RABBIT SPIRIT, flee into the CUPBOARD.)

5 **ANDREW:** (Stirs.) Did you say something, Rabbit?

RABBIT SPIRIT: I said I'm happy!

ANDREW: I'm happy, too, Rabbit. (A beat.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: Skin Horse, Andrew heard me!

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Of course he did, Rabbit. You're real. (CURTAIN CLOSSES.)

10 End-of-ACT ONE

ACT TWO

AT RISE: An early summer Sunday evening in the nursery. MOTHER sits on ANDREW'S bed, reading aloud from a book. ANDREW, in a nightshirt, sits cross-legged on the floor, holding the rabbit toy, which has lost its fluffiness and is now limp and shabby. TOY SPIRITS, except for RABBIT SPIRIT, who is hidden behind headboard, listen in the DIM LIGHT of the CUPBOARD.

MOTHER: (Reads.) "Willie always speaks to me when he can and treats me as his special friend. My ladies have promised that I shall never be sold, and so I have nothing to fear. Here my story ends. My troubles are all over, and I am at home. Often before I am quite awake, I fancy I am still in the orchard at Birtwick, standing with my old friends under the apple-trees." (Closes book.) The end. Black Beauty is a wonderful book, isn't it? Treating animals as if they were real, being as kind to them as if they were people... well, that is, as people want to be treated.

25 **ANDREW:** Yes, Mother. Mother, Rabbit's tail is hurt. Can you fix it? (Rises and brings rabbit toy to MOTHER.)

MOTHER: (Sets the book aside and takes the rabbit toy.) But, Andrew, this is just a toy. And an extremely odd one, I must say. Look, he's coming apart at the seams, his ears are limp... and what's happened to his whiskers?

30 **ANDREW:** Rabbit's beautiful! It's just his tail that's wrong, it hurts him. He told Skin Horse. See, there's no sawdust in his tail, so it holds a hurt.

35 **MOTHER:** I see. In that case, I suppose something can be done to help this... rabbit.

1 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** (Comes out of CUPBOARD.) Yes, Rabbit?
RABBIT SPIRIT: Andrew says I'm real.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Then you are.

5 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** (Emerges from CUPBOARD, clutching her hull.) For a while perhaps.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Oh, no, Model Boat! Once you're real, you're always real. Skin Horse said.

10 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Didn't work that way in my case, but far be it from me to contradict Skin Horse. I'm merely a fine model of a proud sloop-rigged vessel. Tattered and bruised at the moment, but still a very fine model.

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: (Emerges from CUPBOARD, running crookedly.) You're bruised! How about me? Look what they did to my gear shaft! I'll never run true again! And I'm so young!

15 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** (Emerges from CUPBOARD, hobbling.) That last go-round was devilish! I'm likely to have broken a leg joint. Something has to be done about those two! (He, MODEL BOAT SPIRIT and TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT move in a circle around ANDREW'S bed.)

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** About Nana, perhaps, but we're only here because of the boy.

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: Sad plight we're in, all of us. For us to be here only because of the boy, then to suffer abuse from him and his nanny, something must be done!

25 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Rabbit has done something about it. Rabbit has become real.

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Easy enough for Rabbit!

MODEL BOAT SPIRIT: Rabbit doesn't have to do anything!

TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: Rabbit's got nothing to wind up.

30 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** No moving parts at all.

TIMOTHY SPIRIT: Not even any proper joints.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: That's true. Rabbit just has to be. I'm happy for you, Rabbit.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I'm happy, too, Skin Horse. So happy I could burst! Just take a good, deep breath and let it out with a whoop! I'm real!

35 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Don't breathe too deeply, Rabbit. You could split a seam.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I know! I'm shabby! Isn't it wonderful!

1 **ANDREW:** Thank you, Mother. (*SKIN HORSE SPIRIT whickers.*)
MOTHER: (*Startled.*) What was that?

ANDREW: Skin Horse. Sometimes he talks. Sometimes all the toys in the cupboard talk. Skin Horse talked now because he's special friends with Rabbit.

5 **MOTHER:** Andrew, do you mean Bradley's old skin horse?
ANDREW: I don't know. He's always just been there. Was it Uncle Brad's?

10 **MOTHER:** Yes. And Andrew... I think if I may give Skin Horse back to Bradley, I'll have the courage to operate on Rabbit's tail. May I?
ANDREW: Oh. Well, I...
MOTHER: It would please Bradley very much.
ANDREW: Well, yes, but—
MOTHER: Of course, if you'd rather I didn't, I won't. And of course I'll still operate on Rabbit's tail.

15 **ANDREW:** Tomorrow, Mother. You can take Skin Horse to Uncle Brad tomorrow. Skin Horse and Rabbit have to talk tonight.
MOTHER: I understand.
ANDREW: Do you, Mother?

20 **MOTHER:** Oh, yes, indeed I do. You see, Andrew, when I was your age, I had a doll that was very much like Rabbit, although they don't look at all alike. My doll's name was Muffy.
ANDREW: Muffy?
MOTHER: Yes.
ANDREW: That's a... funny name.

25 **MOTHER:** A funny name for an intelligent doll. She was smart! And such fun! I'll tell you about her next Sunday. I do love Sundays, don't you?
ANDREW: Oh, yes! You're home on Sundays!
MOTHER: (*Embraces ANDREW.*) Right now, we have just enough time to operate on Rabbit before your bedtime. We'll ask Nana for a needle and thread. (*They EXIT LEFT.*)

30 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** (*From inside CUPBOARD.*) Wonder if she could fix my main mast. Rotten kid tossed me keel-to-sky on the nursery floor yesterday. Won't be long before I'm tossed into the rubbish heap!

35 **TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT:** No one has bothered to straighten my gear shaft. All the attention always goes to that grubby sack of-sawdust!

1 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** What about me? I'm left in this cupboard for weeks to dry up and splinter. My government connections will be furious!
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: We've all been in the cupboard a long time. Timothy, why don't you open the door, let in fresh air?

5 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Excellent idea. (*Opens the CUPBOARD. The TOY SPIRITS crowd into the opening, but remain inside.*)
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: That's better. In fact, everything's better! It sounds as if I'll be going back to my boy! Oh, I know it won't be the same. Bradley has grown up. But how grand to see him every day! And sometimes we might play. Of course, I'll miss Rabbit... well, I'll miss all of you. Certainly, I will! Perhaps you'll come and visit me. You could come with Andrew when he visits.

10 **MODEL BOAT SPIRIT:** Fat chance! Andrew hates us.
TRAIN ENGINE SPIRIT: The only way we'll see you again, Skin Horse, is if you happen to pass by a rubbish heap!

15 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Fact is, Skin Horse, I imagine that once you leave, we've seen the last of you. I join my colleagues here in wishing you the best of luck. The government also commends you for your years of service and... and... all that.
SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Thank you, Timothy. Thank you all. I shall think of you.

20 **TIMOTHY SPIRIT:** Harrummmp! All we ask, of course. (*Hears someone coming.*) Oops! Get back! (*The TOY SPIRITS crowd back. The CUPBOARD remains open.*)
ANDREW: (*ENTERS LEFT with NANA and MOTHER, who kisses ANDREW goodnight and EXITS RIGHT.*) Rabbit feels much better, Nana. Thank you for your needle and thread so Mother could operate.
NANA: Nonsense, of course. But harmless.
ANDREW: I have to go to bed now.

30 **NANA:** What?
ANDREW: So Rabbit can rest.
NANA: Oh, that's nonsense—fine, Andrew. Hop into bed. (*Switches NIGHT-LIGHT ON as ANDREW climbs into bed.*) Good night, Andrew. (*Tucks ANDREW in and glances at the rabbit toy.*) I swear, that bunny does have a knowing expression!
ANDREW: Rabbit's intelligent, Nana, very intelligent, indeed! (*Air of dismissal.*) Good night, Nana.

35

1 **NANA:** *(Taken aback.)* Yes, well... good night, Andrew. *(Pause.)*
Good night, Rabbit. **(LIGHTS GO OUT as she flips light switch and EXITS LEFT.)**

ANDREW: Rabbit, I'll sleep now. I know you and Skin Horse want to talk.

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** *(Head appears above the headboard.)* Thank you, Andrew.

ANDREW: You're welcome. Tomorrow I'll build you a special fairy hut. Skin Horse can come.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I'll see if he wants to.

10 **ANDREW:** Good night, Rabbit.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Good night, Andrew. Thank you for the surgery.

ANDREW: You're welcome, old Rabbit. I expect you'll want to talk privately. *(Carefully sets the rabbit toy on the floor beside his bed and turns over to look away.)* **RABBIT SPIRIT'S head sinks below the headboard.)**

15 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** *(Emerges from the CUPBOARD, closing the doors behind him.)* Rabbit?

RABBIT SPIRIT: *(Head emerges from beneath the bed, hiding the rabbit toy.)* Yes, Skin Horse.

20 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Did surgery hurt?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Not very much. I feel better now. I'll be fine by morning. Sawdust doesn't hold a hurt... you told me that. You told me lots of things, Skin Horse.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: We had some fine talks.

25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** If you leave, who will I talk to?

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Andrew, of course.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Sometimes Andrew goes away.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: But he always comes back. Just save up what you want to say and tell him when he returns.

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** It's not the same.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: No, it's not. But it's something. I'll miss you, Rabbit.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I imagine I'll stay with Andrew forever, won't I?

35 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Very likely, Rabbit. And we'll visit. I'm sure we'll have visits. When did Mother say Bradley was coming for me?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Tomorrow evening. Would you like to come to my fairy hut before then?

1 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Thank you, Rabbit, but no. We should make this a clean break. But I'll look forward to our visits. Perhaps Andrew could carry me down with you before you leave for outdoors?

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I'm sure he will, Skin Horse. *(Voice breaks.)* Good-bye, Skin Horse.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Tomorrow's soon enough for that. I'll stay with you tonight.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Yes. All right. Excellent. Good night, Skin Horse.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Are you comfortable, Rabbit?

10 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I think I... I'd rather be...

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Closer to Andrew?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Yes, Skin Horse. Do you mind awfully?

15 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** Not at all, old friend. I quite understand. I'll help. *(Plucks up the rabbit toy and returns it to ANDREW'S bed.)*
RABBIT SPIRIT'S head disappears from under it.)

ANDREW: *(Turns over to take the rabbit toy into his arms.)* Skin Horse?

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Be very still tonight, Andrew. Rabbit must rest.

20 **ANDREW:** I will. I hope you'll be happy with Uncle Brad.

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: I'm sure I will be, Andrew. Take care of Rabbit now. Rabbit needs you. *(ANDREW nods and carefully hugs the rabbit toy. He watches gravely. A beat.)* Rabbit? Andrew? *(A beat.)* Asleep. Both of them. **(SPOTLIGHT FADES UP DOWN RIGHT. Moves under it. To AUDIENCE.)** I didn't feel a bit sleepy. I was too excited. And a little scared. What if Bradley laughed and said, "Oh, get that old skin horse away, I've quite grown up"? What if Mother laughed and said, "Yes, of course, it was just a thought"? What if... well, I'd know soon enough. I contented myself with watching Andrew and Rabbit sleep and wondering where Andrew would build the fairy hut the next day. I hoped he'd find someplace with lots of ants. Rabbit liked to watch ants. Finally, I slept.

25 **NANA:** *(ENTERS LEFT, carrying ANDREW'S play clothes. LIGHTS COME UP as she flips the light switch. Turns the NIGHT-LIGHT OFF.)* It's morning, Andrew. Time to wake up.

ANDREW: *(Stirs.)* I'm awake.

NANA: *(Looks closely at ANDREW.)* You don't look well. Have you caught a chill?

ANDREW: *(Sits.)* Nonsense. *(Air of dismissal.)* Thank you, Nana.

1 **NANA:** Sir. I'll leave you to dress yourself. (Sets ANDREW'S clothes on his bed and EXITS LEFT.)

5 **SKIN HORSE SPIRIT:** (To AUDIENCE.) Andrew really didn't seem well that morning. (Behind SKIN HORSE SPIRIT, ANDREW climbs out of bed. He wavers dizzily, then slumps back to sit on his bed.) He looked shaky on his feet. (ANDREW tugs his short pants on under his nightshirt. He fumbles with the nightshirt buttons but can't manage them. He brushes his forehead with his hand, reaches for his socks.) He kept brushing his forehead as if he felt dizzy.

10 **NANA:** (ENTERS LEFT and looks at ANDREW'S back searchingly.) Buttons are difficult. As are shoes. If I may be permitted?

ANDREW: Thank you, Nana. (NANA crosses to him and crisply unbuttons his nightshirt. She pops him into his shirt and buttons it.) I don't require a sweater today, Nana.

15 **NANA:** As you wish. Your shoes?

ANDREW: Thank you. (Yanks on his socks as NANA watches him closely, then expertly slips on his shoes and ties them.) And I shall need Skin Horse. He's in the cupboard.

20 **NANA:** Certainly. (Goes to CUPBOARD, retrieves skin horse toy and brings it to ANDREW.)

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: Andrew's arm felt warm. Hot, almost. Upset, I thought. I thought he was sad to see me go. (Shrugs.) I was a bit sad, so I supposed everyone must be. I supposed that's what concerned Nana, too, because she kept watching Andrew.

25 **MOTHER'S VOICE:** (OFF RIGHT.) Andrew?

ANDREW: (Stands behind SKIN HORSE SPIRIT. His hand brushes his forehead.) Come in, Mother.

MOTHER: (ENTERS RIGHT.) I know what I said this evening, Andrew, but I couldn't keep such a surprise from Bradley. And he—

30 **UNCLE BRAD:** (ENTERS RIGHT behind MOTHER.) —was delighted! Sure you don't mind, my boy?
ANDREW: Skin Horse is happy. (Hands the skin horse toy to UNCLE BRAD.) Perhaps Rabbit minds a bit.

UNCLE BRAD: Oh, they'll visit. Of course they will! Often.

35 **MOTHER:** No doubt about that, Andrew! (Kisses ANDREW. She and UNCLE BRAD EXIT RIGHT. ANDREW picks up rabbit toy and follows.)

SKIN HORSE SPIRIT: (As CURTAIN CLOSES.) So quick. Such a clean break. I was almost sorry I was going. But we can't see

1 forever. We can't know... (EXITS DOWN RIGHT. SPOTLIGHT FADES. Simultaneously, a GROUP OF TREES file IN DOWN LEFT, carrying leafy RUSTLING branches, creating the woods. RABBIT SPIRIT ENTERS and hides behind TREES. We hear the melodious SONG and TWITTER OF SUMMER BIRDS.)

5 **ANDREW:** (ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, carrying the rabbit toy. Crosses DOWN LEFT and sets it behind a tree.) You sit here in the woods, Rabbit. I'll be right back. (EXITS DOWN LEFT through the woods. His hand brushes his forehead.)

10 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Head appears from behind the tree.) Oh, I don't like the woods! We've never had a hut in the woods before.

15 **ANDREW:** (RE-ENTERS DOWN LEFT, carrying raspberry canes, flower stalks, etc., to build the fairy hut.) This hut will be special, Rabbit. (Assembles some of the hut in front of RABBIT SPIRIT'S tree.) You'll see lots of new things here. Ants, too. I know you like ants. This'll be a giant fairy hut! A palace! 'Cause I know you're sad. I need more supplies. (EXITS DOWN LEFT through woods.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: I don't want a palace. I want a hut like before with flowers around me and not so much tree talk.

20 **BOY'S VOICE:** (OFF LEFT.) Andrew! Want to play brigands?

ANDREW'S VOICE: (OFF LEFT.) Brigands? Yeeeee!

RABBIT SPIRIT: Brigands! I don't like the sound of that! I'll hide in the hut. (Shuffles around the hut.) Get something at my back... (Shuffles into the hut and leans against a back support.) Wait until Andrew comes back.

25 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** (ENTERS DOWN RIGHT with WILD RABBIT TWO. They creep to the hut.) Uh-oh! What's that?

WILD RABBIT TWO: Something new in the woods!

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Brigands! (Watches WILD RABBITS ONE and TWO approach.) But... they're rabbits like me! Still furry... must be brand new. Oh, they're jumping! They must have wind-up keys.

WILD RABBIT ONE: Guy seems safe enough. Peaceful, well fed.

WILD RABBIT TWO: Sort of looks like us. (To RABBIT SPIRIT.) Want to play?

35 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Play what? (WILD RABBITS ONE and TWO come closer.)

WILD RABBIT TWO: Oh, just hop around, see what's up.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Oh, well, uh... I don't feel like it right now.

WILD RABBIT ONE: Why not? It's fun.

1 **WILD RABBIT TWO:** And it's easy as anything. (*Hops sideways and stands on his hind legs.*)

RABBIT SPIRIT: Another time, perhaps. I've just had surgery. I must rest.

5 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** Why, I don't believe you can hop.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I can so hop! Higher than anything!

WILD RABBIT TWO: On your hind legs?

RABBIT SPIRIT: I just don't want to right now.

WILD RABBIT ONE: (*Checks.*) He hasn't got any hind legs!

10 **WILD RABBIT TWO:** Fancy a rabbit without hind legs! (*Both WILD RABBITS laugh.*)

RABBIT SPIRIT: I'm sitting on them.

WILD RABBIT ONE: Stretch them out.

WILD RABBIT TWO: Yeah. Like this. Dance! (*He whirls, hops.*)

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Dancing makes me dizzy. I'd rather sit still.

WILD RABBIT ONE: (*Sniffs RABBIT SPIRIT'S ears.*) He doesn't smell right. (*Jumps back.*) He isn't real!

WILD RABBIT TWO: Not real? (*Hops back.*)

RABBIT SPIRIT: I am real! I am real! Andrew said.

20 **ANDREW:** (*ENTERS DOWN LEFT through woods, runs past the WILD RABBITS and EXITS DOWN RIGHT. Shouts.*) Ho-ho! Can't catch me! (*Startled, WILD RABBITS ONE and TWO EXIT DOWN LEFT, fleeing through woods.*)

RABBIT SPIRIT: (*To WILD RABBITS.*) Come back! Come play with me! I know I'm real! (*A beat.*) Wish I could hop. It looks like fun... Oh, I don't like it here. (*Shuffles from hut and around it until he is hidden.*)

NANA'S VOICE: (*OFF RIGHT.*) Andrew! Teatime!

30 **ANDREW'S VOICE:** (*OFF RIGHT.*) Coming, Nana. I have to get Rabbit. (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, running. He comes to the hut, picks up the rabbit toy from behind it and runs to EXIT DOWN RIGHT.*) C'mon, Rabbit. Teatime! I bet you liked the woods. I do. (*Still hidden from view, RABBIT SPIRIT moves behind closed CURTAIN and hides behind headboard. ANDREW is OUT.*)

35 **TREE ONE:** (*Rustles over to the partial hut and the pile of supplies and picks up a branch.*) Why, this looks like Cousin Olive!

TREE TWO: (*Rustles over to pick up branches.*) And these are the sycamore sisters!

1 **TREE THREE:** We should put them back where they belong.

TREE FOUR: Good idea! (*The TREES rustle as they gather up branches.*)

TREE FIVE: These are the elders.

5 **TREE SIX:** Raspberry canes! And what's this?

TREE ONE: A mum.

TREE TWO: Poor mum.

TREE THREE: Oh, poor, poor mum!

TREE FOUR: And here's Lily.

10 **TREE FIVE:** Lily, lily, tiger lily, daylily—

TREE SIX: —all the little lily stalks, goin' back home.

TREES: (*In a chorus.*) Get 'em all, get 'em all! (*Gather materials until the STAGE is cleared. In a chorus.*) Got 'em, we got 'em! (*Look at one another. In a chorus.*) Then let's go! (*EXIT DOWN LEFT as CURTAIN opens into the BRIGHTLY LIT nursery.*)

15 **NANA:** (*ENTERS LEFT, carrying a tea tray.*) Cup of tea, that's what I need. (*Sets the tray on table.*) Now where is that boy? You'd think—

ANDREW: (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Here I am, Nana. (*Crosses to tea table.*)

20 **NANA:** What have you been up to, Andrew? You look more flushed than you did this morning. (*Reaches to check ANDREW'S forehead. ANDREW dodges and sits, placing the rabbit toy gently on the floor beside his chair.*)

25 **ANDREW:** We were playing brigands.

NANA: You and your bunny?

ANDREW: No, me and a boy I know.

NANA: (*Sits.*) Where were you playing?

ANDREW: A boy named John and I played brigands in the woods. I am allowed to play brigands with John in the woods. May I have my tea, please, Nana?

30 **NANA:** (*Pours two cups.*) Certainly, Andrew.

ANDREW: After tea, I shall lie down.

NANA: What?

35 **ANDREW:** I said, after tea I shall lie down.

NANA: Andrew, what's wrong? Your hand is shaking. You can scarcely lift your cup!

1 **ANDREW:** I—I don't feel well. *(Begins to slide from his chair.)*
NANA: *(Jumps up to catch ANDREW.)* Andrew!
ANDREW: Rabbit.

5 **NANA:** Yes, yes, of course! *(Grabs the rabbit toy and helps ANDREW to bed.)* Why, you're burning up! *(Covers ANDREW and the rabbit toy with a blanket.)* You get right under here. Here's your bunny. I'll speak to Mother and return immediately. Oh, dear... whatever is...? What will I do if...? *(EXITS RIGHT.)*

10 **ANDREW:** *(Tosses and turns feverishly.)* Hot.

RABBIT SPIRIT: *(His head appears above the headboard.)* Andrew! Andrew, listen! Remember the breeze when we build fairy huts? The breeze is cool.

ANDREW: Hot!

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Night is cool, too, Andrew. Spring nights especially, nice and cool.

ANDREW: Sun... bright.

RABBIT SPIRIT: When Nana comes back, she'll turn down the sun.

ANDREW: Eyes...

20 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Nana will put a cool cloth on your eyes. I've seen her do that for herself.

ANDREW: So bright.

RABBIT SPIRIT: When Nana comes, it'll be all right. It'll be all right, Andrew!

25 **NANA:** *(Rushes IN RIGHT.)* There's nothing to worry about. Mother's on her way. She's sent for the doctor. *(Touches ANDREW'S forehead.)* I'll get a cool cloth for your forehead. *(EXITS LEFT.)*

RABBIT SPIRIT: See, Andrew? Nana's not bad. She just doesn't know sometimes. *(Shuffles from behind ANDREW'S bed to be more visible.)*

30 **NANA:** *(RE-ENTERS LEFT, rushes to the bed and sets a cloth on ANDREW'S forehead.)* There you are, Andrew. You'll feel better in no time.

ANDREW: *(Fretfully pulls the cloth over his eyes.)* **RABBIT SPIRIT** watches anxiously, moves awkwardly to get NANA'S attention.) Bright.

RABBIT SPIRIT: The light's too bright, Nana. Nana, please listen.

NANA: *(Briskly.)* Bright. Well, we need light to care for him... and the cloth's over his eyes, so...

1 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** *(Shouts.)* Turn down the light!

NANA: Still, I could turn down the light. *(Turns NIGHT-LIGHT ON, crosses LEFT, flips light switch and LIGHTS GO OUT. The SPOTLIGHT FADES UP DOWN RIGHT.)* There! Now we'll just wait for the doctor. I'll just... tidy up a bit.

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** *(Shuffles under SPOT. Behind him, NANA quietly tidies up the nursery. To AUDIENCE.)* Then for a long time, Andrew was sick. He talked in his sleep. He was hot. I nearly burned up when he hugged me. Strangers came and went. *(NANA greets the DOCTOR, who ENTERS RIGHT, carrying a black satchel. DOCTOR goes to ANDREW, touches his forehead, shakes his head "no.")* Uncle Brad came. And Mother. That's when I knew Andrew was really sick. Mother was so busy. *(UNCLE BRAD and MOTHER ENTER RIGHT and join DOCTOR at ANDREW'S bedside. NANA rushes quietly to bring a chair from the tea table to the LEFT of the bed. MOTHER crosses to it and sits, her attention on ANDREW. UNCLE BRAD and DOCTOR move RIGHT for a whispered consultation.)* The night light burned all night and all day. I hid under the bedclothes, afraid someone might find me and take me away. I had to be there. Andrew needed me. *(DOCTOR EXITS RIGHT. UNCLE BRAD comes to the RIGHT side of the bed. ANDREW tosses, turns, moans.)* He needed me to remind him about playing in the garden. About the flowers and butterflies and ants in our fairy huts. About cool breezes. Night became day and day became night, and they were the same. All of time was just waiting for Andrew to get better, and I hid under the bedclothes and listened. *(NANA dispiritedly tidies up. UNCLE BRAD sets restraining hands on her shoulders. MOTHER watches.)* I heard Nana say...

NANA: Better work than worry.

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** ...when Uncle Brad told her to rest. And I heard Mother say...

MOTHER: The nursery is sufficiently tidy, Nana.

RABBIT SPIRIT: And Uncle Brad said...

35 **UNCLE BRAD:** It'll do no good if you come down with scarlet fever, too. *(NANA EXITS LEFT. UNCLE BRAD brings a chair from the tea table to the RIGHT side of the bed and sits.)*

40 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** So then I knew Andrew's sickness had a name. Scarlet fever. That's what it felt like to me, red and hot. I thought it would burn us all up. But then one day there was good news. *(DOCTOR ENTERS RIGHT. UNCLE BRAD stands. MOTHER'S attention fixes on DOCTOR as he touches ANDREW'S forehead.)*

1 **DOCTOR:** The fever has broken. The crisis is passed.
RABBIT SPIRIT: At least I thought it was good news.
DOCTOR: Now we've real work to do. (To MOTHER.) It's best if everyone knows what must be done.
5 **MOTHER:** Andrew will be well?
DOCTOR: Oh, yes, without a doubt, so long as my orders are followed implicitly.
MOTHER: (Stands.) I'll get Nana. (EXITS LEFT.)
DOCTOR: I recommend a long stay at the seaside. Can arrangements be made?
10 **UNCLE BRAD:** Of course.
DOCTOR: You're the boy's father?
UNCLE BRAD: His uncle. Andrew's father passed on.
DOCTOR: Makes it difficult.
15 **UNCLE BRAD:** We have our work, one another and Nana and the cook and Peavey, who gardens. We manage. (MOTHER and NANA ENTER LEFT.)
DOCTOR: Ah, there you are! This room must be disinfected. All the books and toys the boy played with in bed must be burned along with all his bedding.
20 **NANA:** Certainly, sir. (Immediately begins turning down the blankets.) Here's Andrew's old bunny! This, too, Doctor?
DOCTOR: That? Why, it's a mass of germs! Burn it at once!
NANA: Andrew's very partial to his old bunny.
25 **DOCTOR:** Nonsense! Get him a new one. He mustn't have that one any more! (NANA tosses the rabbit toy into her bundle of bedding.)
MOTHER: Take it to Peavey for burning, Nana. Thank you.
NANA: Ma'am. (Carries the bundle DOWNSTAGE. The CURTAIN closes behind her. SPOTLIGHT FADES UP DOWN CENTER. She drops the bundle under SPOT. Calls OFF RIGHT.) Peavey!
30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (To AUDIENCE.) That was me in that bundle. It was close and dark in there, and Andrew was gone.
NANA: (Shouts OFF LEFT.) Peavey!
PEAVEY: (ENTERS DOWN LEFT, carrying a garden hoe.) Aye, Miss! Here I be. You want summat?
35 **NANA:** Do I want something, Peavey. Mind your speech when you speak to your betters. And please remove your cap.

1 **PEAVEY:** (Snatches off cap.) Aye, Miss. You was wanting something?
NANA: You needn't grovel, Peavey. (Indicates pile.) Please burn this.
5 **PEAVEY:** Aye, Miss, that I will, right after I dig taters and gather them peas and—
NANA: (Interrupts.) Never mind! Tomorrow morning will do.
PEAVEY: Aye, Miss. Tomorrow morning it be burned. Scorched to ashes it be to fly in the wind, gone f'evermore to—
10 **NANA:** Never mind, Peavey. Burn this in the morning, no mistake.
PEAVEY: Aye, Miss. (Carries bundle OFF DOWN RIGHT, passing behind RABBIT SPIRIT, who watches. NANA marches UP CENTER to EXIT through the closed CURTAIN.)
RABBIT SPIRIT: (To AUDIENCE.) And so I was carried away in the closed, dark bundle to a shed. I knew I'd never see the seaside, and I had thought that would be fun. I'd never see ants again. Without Andrew, I wouldn't be real, and I'd never visit Skin Horse. I asked myself what good it was to be loved to shabby realness if it ended like this? (Shuffles DOWN CENTER. His SPOTLIGHT follows and merges with the CENTER SPOT.) I'd never fly again. I'd never hop when Andrew bounced me. I wished I could have hopped for real just once! (Tries to hop but can't.) It seemed cruel even to know about hopping now. (Sits up proudly, cross-legged.) But I did what I could. I struggled to get free, and I did... I got out, onto the lawn. It was night, but I wasn't afraid. I'd been out alone in the night before. (A NIGHT BIRD CRIES.) Being alone in the night was better than being in a closed, dark sack. (A DOG HOWLS.) The grass was damp. Dew, I knew about that, Andrew had told me about that. But I didn't know why my face was wet. My face hadn't touched the grass! What was I experiencing?
30 **FAIRY'S VOICE:** (From behind CURTAIN.) You're crying, little rabbit.
RABBIT SPIRIT: That was something Skin Horse would say. "You're experiencing crying, Rabbit." But what did that mean? And what good was it to be real if it all ended like this!
35 **FAIRY'S VOICE:** Little rabbit, you're experiencing tears.
RABBIT SPIRIT: (Twists and looks around to find speaker.) Did Skin Horse send you?
FAIRY'S VOICE: Skin Horse can't send me, Rabbit. I answer your call. (There is a SILVERY SOUND, and the LIGHTS BLACKOUT.)
40

1 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Who's there? (FAIRY laughs gently from behind CURTAIN. RABBIT SPIRIT turns to the sound.)

5 **FAIRY'S VOICE:** You haven't seen me yet, although you've visited me often, in so many huts. Wait, little rabbit. (A FLASH OF LIGHT illuminates the FAIRY, who has ENTERED UP CENTER through the CURTAIN. LIGHTS FADE UP.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: W-who are you?

10 **FAIRY:** I am the Nursery Magic Fairy. I take care of all the toys children have loved. When the toys are old and children don't need them anymore, I come and take them away with me. I turn them real.

RABBIT SPIRIT: I was real before!

15 **FAIRY:** You were real to Andrew because he loved you. Now you'll be real to everyone. (Gestures DOWN LEFT.) Look! (TREES filter IN under a MOONLIKE SPOTLIGHT.)

WILD RABBIT CHORUS: (ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, including WILD RABBIT ONE and WILD RABBIT TWO. They sing and dance to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell.")

We're rabbits in the woods!

We're rabbits in the woods!

High, low, we love to hop!

We're rabbits in the woods!

(TREES and WILD RABBIT CHORUS spread across the FORESTAGE as MOONLIGHT covers the STAGE. WILD RABBIT CHORUS continues under dialogue.)

(Sing.) We meet a rabbit friend.

We meet a rabbit friend.

High, low, we love to hop!

We meet a rabbit friend.

30 **FAIRY:** Would you like to join them, little rabbit?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Oh, yes! But I can't. I'm not like them, I can't—

FAIRY: Hop?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Yes.

35 **FAIRY:** (Touches the top of RABBIT SPIRIT'S head. A SILVERY SOUND.) Try.

RABBIT SPIRIT: But I can't—

WILD RABBIT TWO: Hey! Someone new in the woods! (WILD RABBIT CHORUS stops.)

WILD RABBIT ONE: Come and dance, rabbit!

1 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I can't!

FAIRY: Try, little rabbit. Try! (WILD RABBITS gather around.)

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** This is the worst night of my life! First, I'm going to be burned to cinders in the morning, and now you're all going to laugh at me... All right then, I'll try! If anybody laughs, I'll... I'll... (Tries to hop... and succeeds!) Hop! I hopped! I can hop! (Hops toward DOWN RIGHT.) I can hop. I love to hop! (Tries a dance step.) I can dance. I love to dance! (WILD RABBIT CHORUS applauds and laughs. RABBIT SPIRIT EXITS DOWN LEFT, dancing.)

10 **RABBIT SPIRIT'S VOICE:** (OFF LEFT.) Look! Look! My coat is changing! My coat is soft and shiny. Brown! I'm brown! With beautiful red spots! (Momentarily reveals a leg through the DOWN LEFT EXIT. WILD RABBIT CHORUS is drawn to watch RABBIT SPIRIT'S transformation through the EXIT.)

15 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** (To WILD RABBIT TWO.) Another rabbit to add to our clan wouldn't be bad.

WILD RABBIT TWO: (To WILD RABBIT ONE.) It might actually be nice.

RABBIT SPIRIT'S VOICE: (OFF LEFT.) My whiskers itch!

20 **WILD RABBIT CHORUS:** His whiskers itch! His whiskers itch!

WILD RABBIT TWO: No big deal, his whiskers are growing.

WILD RABBIT CHORUS: (Question overlaps.) Whiskers? Whiskers? Whiskers? Whiskers?

25 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** What did he say? Don't you listen? His whiskers are growing!

WILD RABBIT TWO: (To WILD RABBIT ONE.) Odd how a rabbit doesn't realize his whiskers are missing.

WILD RABBIT ONE: (To WILD RABBIT TWO.) When they come back, then the rabbit realizes they were gone!

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT'S VOICE:** (OFF LEFT.) My ears! I have fine, long, sticking-up ears!

WILD RABBIT TWO: (To WILD RABBIT ONE.) Yup, we got ourselves another rabbit.

35 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** (To WILD RABBIT TWO.) Fine by me. (To WILD RABBIT CHORUS.) Ladies and gentlemen! (WILD RABBIT CHORUS gathers around.) Welcome a new rabbit! (WILD RABBIT CHORUS murmurs.)

WILD RABBIT TWO: This is a grown-up red-and-brown spotted rabbit. (WILD RABBIT CHORUS murmurs.)

1 **WILD RABBIT ONE:** Ladies and gentlemen, make him welcome.
Sing him in!
WILD RABBIT CHORUS: (Sings.) He's a rabbit in the woods!
He's a rabbit in the woods!
High, low, he loves to hop!
He's a rabbit in the woods!

5 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (ENTERS DOWN LEFT, transformed. He looks fresh and new. Even better, RABBIT SPIRIT has clearly visible hind legs that work! [NOTE: See PRODUCTION NOTES.] ALL RABBITS draw back, awed.) I am real at last! I am happy. Happy!
(WILD RABBIT CHORUS continues to quietly sing during dialogue. TREES wave leafy branches in rhythm. SUMMER BIRDS SING harmoniously.) I could dance all summer!

FAIRY: So you shall, little rabbit.

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Dances.) Yes, yes! I could dance all fall!

FAIRY: (Laughs.) So you shall, little rabbit! (MOVING SPOTLIGHTS of autumnal golds and oranges transform the TREES to represent fall. We hear the CAWING and CACKLING of FALL BIRDS. WILD RABBIT CHORUS continues under. BROWN RABBIT ENTERS, wearing a brown leotard, tights, a fluffy cottontail and a winsome rabbit-ear headress. She approaches RABBIT SPIRIT.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: (Falters and stops, smitten.) Oh! Oh, my... (To BROWN RABBIT, shyly.) Do rabbits dance in winter?

BROWN RABBIT: Of course, Red-spotted Rabbit. (Hops sedately.)

25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Begins to follow, stops. To FAIRY.) Do we, Fairy? Do rabbits dance in winter?

FAIRY: (Amused.) So she said.

RABBIT SPIRIT: And in the spring?

30 **FAIRY:** (Amused.) Ah, little rabbit, spring has a magic all its own. (WILD RABBITS EXIT DOWN LEFT, dancing and singing. BROWN RABBIT remains. TREES quiet.) I must go. (Picks up her stalk. A FLASH OF LIGHT, and she vanishes.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: (To BROWN RABBIT.) I... I...

35 **BROWN RABBIT:** Exactly, Red-spotted Rabbit. I think so, too. Come, we must make a burrow. Winter winds will howl soon.

RABBIT SPIRIT: A burrow! I know about burrows, Andrew told me about burrows.

BROWN RABBIT: Exactly, Red-spotted Rabbit. (Hops sedately OFF DOWN LEFT.)

1 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** (Ecstatic.) I will have a burrow! (A few flakes of snow drift down. HOWL of WINTER WIND FADES IN and HOLDS until noted.) Oh! I'd better... I have to make a burrow! And it's snowing! I have to hurry! Have to scurry! (EXITS DOWN LEFT, following BROWN RABBIT. A GUST of WIND swirls the TREES OFF DOWN LEFT. More snowflakes sift down in ICY LIGHT. WIND HOWLS. ENTERS DOWN LEFT, hugs himself and shivers. BROWN RABBIT follows.)

RABBIT SPIRIT: Winter is c-cold!

10 **BROWN RABBIT:** That's why burrows are good. Have you never been cold?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Well... no. You see, I lived in a warm nursery.

BROWN RABBIT: What is a nursery?

15 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** A place where you live with other friends and children.

BROWN RABBIT: What is children?

RABBIT SPIRIT: Children are... well, they're short people, and sometimes one of them loves you enough to make you real.

BROWN RABBIT: Did you have a children in your nursery?

20 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** A child. One children is a child. Yes, I did. His name was Andrew.

BROWN RABBIT: And friends?

RABBIT SPIRIT: One special friend. His name was Skin Horse.

25 **BROWN RABBIT:** Perhaps you'll see them in the spring. Many wonderful things happen in spring. In the meantime, you have friends in the burrows.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Yes, that's true. (Shivers.)

BROWN RABBIT: But now it's winter, and you're cold. We must return to our warm burrow.

30 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** That would be g-good. (WIND HOWLS as he and BROWN RABBIT begin hopping OFF DOWN LEFT.) Brown Rabbit, how will we know when it's spring?

BROWN RABBIT: The wind stops. The snow melts. The birds sing. The flowers bloom.

35 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** Will I see Andrew then?

BROWN RABBIT: Perhaps. (She and RABBIT SPIRIT EXIT DOWN LEFT. HOWLING WIND FADES INTO cheerful SPRING BIRDSONG. A SPRINGY YELLOW-GREEN GLOW takes over the

1 **ICY LIGHT. TREES ENTER tentatively DOWN LEFT, confer and nod "yes." Then they ENTER completely, their branches sweeping away the snow.**

5 **ANDREW:** *(Now wearing long pants [optional], ENTERS DOWN RIGHT and looks at the woods.) Woods are coming alive. Spring... I love it! It's good to be back.*

NANA'S VOICE: *(OFF RIGHT.) Andrew! Your coat!*

10 **ANDREW:** *(Calls.) Coming, Nana. (Takes a deep, appreciative breath as RABBIT SPIRIT and BROWN RABBIT ENTER DOWN LEFT, hopping into TREES.) Spring bunnies! (Double take.) Extraordinary! That wild rabbit looks just like my good old Rabbit! Same soft nose, same round black eyes. I wonder... no, couldn't be. Rabbit left when I was sick. (ANDREW smiles and salutes RABBIT SPIRIT, who salutes back.) No, it's not old Rabbit! Rabbit couldn't salute. Still, it's a good red-spotted rabbit. Good-bye, bunnies. (Turns reluctantly and EXITS DOWN RIGHT.)*

RABBIT SPIRIT: Good-bye, Andrew.

15 **BROWN RABBIT:** Was that your child? The one who first made you real? *(RABBIT SPIRIT nods.)* He recognized you.

20 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** *(Clears his throat.)* He always thought I was real.

BROWN RABBIT: I think this child remembers. Perhaps all children do.

RABBIT SPIRIT: Perhaps.

BROWN RABBIT: Red-spotted Rabbit, I'm glad you're real.

25 **RABBIT SPIRIT:** I'm glad, too, Brown Rabbit. *(RABBIT SPIRIT and BROWN RABBIT touch noses. BROWN RABBIT demurely hops OFF DOWN LEFT. The liquid CALL OF A SPRING BIRD sounds. RABBIT SPIRIT looks up and smiles. He looks at the AUDIENCE.)* Perhaps all children remember. *(Salutes the AUDIENCE. Softly.)* Good-bye, children. *(EXITS DOWN LEFT. LIGHTS FADE to BLACK.)*

30
END OF PLAY

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE: Toy cupboard (large enough to house the five TOY SPIRITS), bed, blanket, tea table with four chairs, fireplace with mantle and fender (or can be painted on backdrop), night-light on mantle or small table, light switch on wall by STAGE LEFT EXIT, model boat toy, train engine toy, lion toy, horse toy, miscellaneous other Victorian toys—drums, books, balls, etc.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE:

Rabbit toy, small wheelbarrow (ANDREW)
Picnic cloth, picnic basket with food as suggested (treacle tart, cucumber sandwiches, fish paste sandwiches, egg, lemonade jug), shawl, candlestick (for safety, use a battery operated candleabra) (NANA)

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO:

Book (MOTHER)
Play clothes, tea tray with teapot, two cups and saucers and plate of sandwiches, cloth (NANA)
Branches, raspberry canes, flower stalks (ANDREW)
Leafy branches (TREES)
Black medical satchel (DOCTOR)
Garden hoe (PEAVEY)

COSTUMES

Costuming for the humans can reflect the late-Victorian era in which the play is set, though it is not limited to that style. Some suggestions:

ANDREW: Child's suit with short pants. At nighttime, he wears a nightshirt. Long pants for final scene, if possible.

NANA: Starched uniform with an apron.

UNCLE BRAD: Suit.

MOTHER: A late-Victorian era dress.

DOCTOR: Dressed in black.

PEAVEY: Work clothes, boots and cap.

Some suggestions for the FOREST CREATURES:

FAIRY: White chiffon skirt and diaphanous wings over white or silver leotards and tights. Flowers circle her neck and crown her head.

TREES: Brown tights, leotards and leafy, branching headdresses. They carry leafy branches.

WILD RABBITS: Tan leotards and tights, ear headdresses and cottontails. BROWN RABBIT wears the same, except with a brown leotard and a fluffier cottontail.