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Family Plays

Aesop's Fables

A Rock Musical

Book by Ed Graczyk

Music by Shirley Hansen

Lyrics by Marty Conine & Ed Graczyk

"He took a poor defenseless wolf ... Me, and
made him into a mad, hungry, villian
... the brunt of his foibles
... Fables!
... Fables!"

Aesop's Fables

A Rock Musical

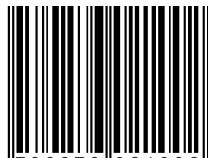
Musical. Book by Ed Graczyk. Music by Shirley Hansen. Lyrics by Marty Conine and Ed Graczyk. Cast: 4m., 9w., with doubling, or up to 17 (6m., 11w.). As a rock musical, this play is addressed to the current generation, to the beat of our times. Loosely based on a collection of infamous fables, this is a "laugh-in"-type revue. Taking its more-or-less plot from Sir Wilfred Wolf, who claims he has been wrongfully typed by Aesop as the bad guy, the play undertakes to overturn other fables. *Aesop's Fables* draws new morals from other fables, somewhat different from the old familiar ones. The play includes scenes of crazy fun as everybody does the "Rock, rock with old Aesop." *Simple set. Fanciful costumes. Approximate running time: Musical - 90 minutes. Non-musical - 65 minutes. Code: Musical - AD3. Non-musical - AJ5.*

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(AESOP'S FABLES)

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IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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CHARACTERS

WILFRED M. WOLF

JACK IN THE BOX

SADIE SHEEP

SOPHIE SHEEP

SHIRLEY SHEEP

CECELIA SHEEP

BOY

HORACE HARE

CLARISSA CROW

THADIUS T. TORTOISE

NURSE STORK

MISS ANT

MR. GRASS HOPPER

AMELIA EAGLE

MATHILDA MOUSE

MOD MOUSE

ANNA ANT

NOTE: The play is written for thirteen people. The Boy and Thadius are played by the same person, as are Shirley Sheep, Miss Ant and Anna Ant, also Sophie and Mod Mouse.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

AESOP'S FALABLES opened on the road, 7 February, 1969, at Amarillo, Texas, where it was shown before two high school audiences, and then repeated for the regional Children's Theatre Conference gathered at Amarillo from five states.

The play opened in its hometown 11 April, 1969, at the Midland Community Theatre in Midland, Texas. Following is a copy of the program on that occasion:



**The Pickwick Players
and
The Junior League of Midland, Inc.,
Present**

AESOP'S FALABLES

an original rock musical

Book by ED GRACZYK

Music by SHIRLEY HANSEN

Lyrics by MARTY CONINE and ED GRACZYK

Entire Production Designed and Directed by

ED GRACZYK

CAST

Wilfred M Wolf	Jimmy Heck
Jack in the Box	Nancy Mathys
Sadie Sheep	Natalie Harmon
Shirley Sheep	Carla Nance
Sophie Sheep	Emily Pavlovic
Cecilia Sheep	Kristen Griffith
Boy	Bill Thomas
Horace Hare	Lew Huffman
Clarissa Crow	Ann Thomas
Thadius T. Tortoise	Bill Thomas
Nurse Stork	Lindie Heck
Miss Ant	Carla Nance
Mr. Grass Hopper	Lucinda Huffman
Amelia Eagle	Bonnie Cooper
Mathilda Mouse	Diane Lago
Mod Mouse	Emily Pavlovic
Anna Ant	Carla Nance

Music Performed by SLEEPY'S GANG:

David Fields, Bobbie Conner, Jim McHargue, Tommy Territt

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE SETTING

A large prop box, just right of center, with "Prop Box" in Tinkertoy lettering on the front. Two small steps lead up the stage left side. A large opening in the back of the box permits the various characters to make their entrance from it.

Jack's box is downstage left, large enough to hold a person comfortably. The lid is very important. It must have a spring action, so that when it is released from inside, it pops up. A rope on the inside of the lid is pulled by Jack when he pops back into the box. The front of the box is hinged to fall forward.

A large clothes ruck, about 8-9 feet long and 5 feet high, stretches across the back, hung very heavily with fake bright costumes. There is also a 3 foot stepladder to be used by Miss Sun and Wilfred, when he tries to reach the grapes.

Over the prop box is hung a large sign, "AESOP'S FALABLES," bordered with an abstract grapevine design of psychedelic color bunches of grapes—one of the bunches hanging lower than the sign, to be used in "The Wolf and the Grapes."

THE COSTUMES

Although all the characters, except the Boy, are portrayed as animals, animal costumes must not be used. These are real people, talking through the images of animals. They must be as "humanized" as possible, with only the mere suggestion of the animal. They should wear exaggerated "mod" costumes in bright psychedelic prints and colors.

THE MAKE-UP

Again, the suggestion of the animal only. Jack is a clown, so he should have a clown face. The rest of the characters need only painted whiskers, maybe enlarged eyes, but nothing extreme.

MUSIC NOTE

Original music for this play has been composed by Shirley Hansen. Complete piano score is available from the publisher. If desired, this music can be played by a rock and roll combo, using electric guitars and drums. The combo should be placed behind the clothes rack, and not seen until the finale of the show, when the clothes rack is rolled to one side and they join the cast.

Play Script Layout: Revised 2010

Play Script Layout & Design: Randy Blevins, jrbdesign

FOREWORD

AESOP'S FALABLES is something new in theatre, though it derives from several modern entertainment media, most particularly the television shows that our young people watch these days. Strict traditionalists will call it sacrilege, but I defy an audience of any age not to react delightedly to its up-to-the-minute charms.

To label it a family show would be to turn off the younger generation, but it does indeed appeal to all levels and age—its rock beat, brilliant colour, and constant action to the very youngest; its zany lines and comic sight gags to teenagers; and its hilarious spoof of old Aesop's stories, as well as its good natured lampooning of current television techniques, to those on the other side of the generation gap.

To create a spoof of this type requires a weird and wonderful imagination, and to bring it off successfully requires the good taste to keep it within bounds. Ed Graczyk has these talents. He understands the outlook of today's youth—and he provides, in his script, the greatest fun for both performer and audience.

A serious warning to producers—the greatest danger you face is in having so many interruptions of applause and laughter that your show may run too long. But your audience will forgive you.

So—"Rock, rock with Aesop!"

Ann S. Hill
Nashville, Tennessee
June, 1969

AESOP'S FALABLES

(There is no curtain, a light on the sign. The house lights fade to black with a light remaining on the sign. Jack enters and gets into the box. The stage lights come up dimly as the Boy enters, looking around. He carries a large key, like the kind one uses for winding toys. He crosses to Jack's box, inserts the key in the S.R. side, and with great effort, cranks. Music starts slow and draggy then builds to wild tempo. The Boy removes the key and exits S.L. Jack pops up, a spot comes up on him as he throws large pieces of day-glo paper in oranges, greens, pinks, etc., into the air.)

JACK: Hi, and welcome to "Aesop's Fables." I'm Jack, In The Box. . . The official Fable introducer. During the play I'll pop up, like I just did, and tell you when a fable is about to begin. *(Big smile)* You know fables are wonderful things. They may make us laugh, or cry, or even wonder. If it's a good fable it makes us think about ourselves, or the people around us, and why we behave the way we do—or why we love or hate, feel pleased by some things and hurt by others. A fable is really a story with a moral, or lesson at the end. Well, let me just show you what I mean—Oh, I almost forgot the actors. The people in a fable are animals. . .

(The Boy enters and opens the prop box lid. The animals begin to enter: Mr. Grass Hopper enters and helps Clarissa Crow out. Nurse Stork climbs the ladder behind the clothes rack. Sadie Sheep and Mathilda Mouse enter through the clothes rack. Horace Hare and Cecelia Sheep follow Clarissa out of the trunk. Sophie Sheep and Shirley Sheep follow Mathilda, from the clothes rack. They close the prop box lid and position themselves around the stage.)

JACK: . . . While they're getting ready, I'd better warn you the fables we're going to present today are a little different from the ones you remember your mom or dad reading to you at bedtime. We've rewritten them a little, perked them up a bit, added a little rock, a little roll, and a lot of fun. I have an idea. Why don't we show you a fable the way you remember it. and then we'll present it again . . . our new way. So, if you're ready—we present a fable: "The Country Mouse and the Pail of Milk." *(He goes into box, slamming lid.)*

(Mathilda Mouse steps forward with milk pail, stage lights dim, spot comes up on her.)

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MATHILDA: I'm off to market where I shall sell this pail of milk for a large sum of money. With the money I shall buy three dozen eggs. I shall put the eggs under our old hen and wait until they are hatched. Then I'll have a whole yard full of chickens. Then I'll sell them, and get enough money to buy a new dress, then maybe a coat, and hat with ribbons. They'll be in a matching color . . .

CLARISSA: Yellow (*Throws yellow ribbons in air; the ribbons are attached to a tambourine, and as each color is called out, they shake the tambourines.*)

MATHILDA: Perhaps, or. . . STORK; Green (*Throws green ribbons In air*)

MATHILDA: Everyone says I look lovely in green, or maybe

SHIRLEY: Blue (*Throws blue ribbons in air*)

MATHILDA: Blue really is my color on account of my blue eyes— although sometimes I think . . .

SOPHIE: Pink (*Throws pink ribbons in air*)

MATHILDA: . . . suits me best. Anyway. I'll have a beautiful new outfit for the fair. All the boys will dance with me and all the girls will be jealous. (*She sets down the pail and starts to dance around it. She kicks it over.*) . . . I spilled it.

SADIE: Goodbye, eggs.

SOPHIE: And chickens

SHIRLEY: And dress

CECELIA: And coat

CLARISSA: And hat with colorful ribbons.

HORACE: Goodbye, fair

STORK: And dancing boys

GRASS HOPPER: And jealous girls

MATHILDA: Goodbye, lovely day dreams.

JACK: (*Pops up*) Moral: Don't count your chickens until they're hatched. You may remember that fable. It's one of my personal favorites. Now, we're going to do it again . . . but this time our way. That's why we call our play "AESOP'S FALABLES." Do you know what a fable is? Here, I'll look it up in my dilapidated dictionary. (*He pulls out ragged book.*) It's a little ragged, but that's because I use it a lot when I'm looking up morals for all the fables. Here it is: "A falsehood" (*To audience*) That's kind of like a white lie. (*Back to book*) "A story that is meant to deceive the listener and change it from the original." (*He slams book closed*) Well, that's what we've done all right . . . All right hold onto your seats. (*To audience*) We now present . . . "AESOP'S FALABLES."

(*Song: "Rock, Rock With Aesop" sung and danced by the entire company*)

ALL: (*Sing*)

Rock, rock, rock with old Aesop
 We've rewritten all his fables
 So, we're bringing out the props
 And turning all the tables.
 Grab yourself a tambourine
 And shake it all you're able
 Join us as we sway and lean
 And rock and roll those fables.
 Moving and grooving
 Hopping and bopping
 Rolling and rocking
 With Aesop.

Before this song is over and done
 We'd like you to meet us - one by one.

(*Spoken, each introducing self*)

JACK: I'm Jack, In The Box, the morals I keep.
 I'm just the boy who tends all the sheep.

MATHILDA: Mathilda Mouse, I cook and I sew.

CLARISSA: Clarissa here. the crow in the show, caw...
 caw.

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GRASS HOPPER: Meet Mr. Hopper, a green teeny-bopper.

HORACE: And Horace T. Hare, the world's greatest
hopper.

SADIE & SHIRLEY: Sadie and Shirley, two sheep from the
barn.

SOPHIE & CECELIA: Sophie, Cecelia, two more in the yarn.

NURSE STORK: Nervous Miss Stork, an ace with the
bandages.

(Music reaches peak as chorus dances downstage)

ALL: *(Sing)*

Some are greedy, some always share
Some are unjust, while others are fair
On some you can always depend
While others can't even be a friend
So think of this as we rock
Through the fables with old Aesop.

Well, we've twisted these old tales
And proved they're not reliable
We've rewritten Aesop's Fables,
And now present his Falables.

Moving and grooving
Hopping and bopping
Rolling and rocking
With Aesop

(At the end of the song, Jack pops up.)

JACK: Falable: "The Country Mouse and Basket of Storks." *(He's down.)*

MATHILDA: *(Steps forward as before, stage lights dim, spot comes up on her.)* I'm off to the market to sell this pail of milk for a large sum of money.

(Grass Hopper steps forward with an apron that says "Dingle

dairy . . . we buy milk." She hands pail to him. He gives her money; she comes back to center as he moves back.)

MATHILDA: And with all this money . . . I'll buy three dozen eggs.

(Miss Stork comes through the clothes rack with a basket of eggs. Mathilda gives her the money. Stork returns to her ladder. Mathilda brings the egg basket back to center.)

MATHILDA: I shall put these eggs under the old hen and wait until they are hatched. Then I'll have three dozen chickens to sell . . . *(She looks around, and speaks to the group.)* Where's the old hen?

MISS ANT: She went off to Magpie Meadows to visit her old Mother Hen.

MATHILDA: What will I do? . . . Who will I get to sit on my eggs? ... I'll never get a new dress for the fair if I don't have chickens to sell.

CLARISSA: I'll do it for you, Country Mouse . . . I've had many years of experience, hatching eggs . . .

MATHILDA: *(Hands her the basket, Clarissa crosses to prop box and gets into it.)* Oh, thank you, Clarissa . . . be careful you don't break any.

CLARISSA: My dear Miss Mouse . . . I have a whole nestfull of fine, healthy crows . . . I pride myself with the fact that in all my years as a mother, I have never lost an egg. *(She's in box.)*

MATHILDA: Now I will be able to get my new dress and hat with ribbons, and be the fairest mouse at the fair.

(Music comes up as the entire company paces and chews their nails.)

JACK: Three days later . . . *(He's down.)*

(Mathilda is pacing back and forth, the expectant father?)

SADIE: Your first litter?

MATHILDA: Yes, and I'm nervous.

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SHIIRLEY: Good luck.

MATHILDA: Thank you.

(Lid pops up, Clarissa pops up, wipes her brow, she's exhausted.)

CLARISSA: Congratulations, you're a mother.

(Everyone cheers; congratulates Mathilda.)

MATHILDA: Where are they, let me see them.

(Clarissa holds up same basket with stork heads peering up from edge . . . much "cheeping")

CLARISSA: Aren't they darling?

ENTIRE CHORUS: Storks! Oh, no!!

NURSE STORK : *(From ladder)* My babies!

SOPHIE: You can't sell storks. . . who'd buy 'em?

MATHILDA: Oh, no. Where did I go wrong?. . . There goes my new dress and hat with colored ribbons.

JACK: *(Pops up)* Moral: Don't put stock in anything you buy from a stork.

(He's down, prop box lid slams as band leads directly into "Rock, Rock, With Old Aesop" reprise)

ALL: *(Sing)*

Rock, rock, rock with old Aesop
We've rewritten all his fables
So, we're bringing out the props
And turning all the tables.
Grab yourself a tambourine
And shake it all you're able
Join us as we sway and lean
And rock and roll those fables.

Moving and grooving
Hopping and bopping

Rolling and rocking
With Aesop

(Blackout, sign remains lit. A spot comes up on the prop box, From inside comes the strains of "We Shall Overcome" sung by Wilfred Wolf. The lid pops up and we see a sign, "Up With Wolves!" Then the Wolf stands up and climbs out of the box, straightens his clothes, clears his throat and marches around the box.)

WOLF: Up with Wolves . . . Unfair treatment to the lonely wolf . . . Down with Aesop, up with Wolves! *(He slams the prop box lid and spots the audience.)* Hi! . . . *(He crosses down to edge of stage.)* The name is Wilfred M. Wolf. You've probably heard of me before; they've written me into many fables and stories, but always as the bad guy! Never a hero. Well, I'm here on behalf of Pack 73, local order of wolves and foxes, with this message . . . We Quit!! *(Turn to exit, stops and turns to audience)* I hope you realize what this means . . . tonight when you're lying in bed and your mom or dad is reading you to sleep, there won't be any more wolves in the stories . . . And there won't be any more until they start telling the truth, what really happened . . . They're all lies . . . Take for instance "Little Red Riding Hood" . . . ill mannered child! All these years I'll bet you thought she was a real cute, well-behaved little girl and I was the meany. Lies!! *(Crosses to R. then L. crying)* All lies! *(Pulls out handkerchief and blows nose)* There I was minding my own business picking flowers for my mother when this kid in red comes skipping down the path.

(Jack pops out of box.)

JACK: Listen to this one real close boys and girls. This is a fable if I've ever heard one. The scary one is about to tell a big L-I-E! *(He pops down slamming lid.)*

(Wolf does big take and runs to box and sits on it.)

WOLF: Clowns who live in boxes shouldn't flip off their lids.
(Slams fist on box)

JACK: *(From inside box)* Ow!!

WOLF: *(Realizing what he has done, he opens his fist and smooths the top of the box with a big smile on his face)*
Mere accident. . . . As I was saying, this kid in red comes

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skipping down the path and I looked up at her and said, "Good afternoon Miss Riding Hood" (*He acts out this story playing both parts.*) She looked down at me, knocked all the flowers out of my tiny paws and screamed! (*He screams.*) Oh, my tiny ears are still ringing with that awful cry. She said, "What's a big, ugly oaf like you doin' pickin' flowers? What are ya 'some kinda sissy?' I could hardly believe my tiny ears. Just because I'm so big and healthy doesn't mean I'm not sensitive, gentle, kind, sincere . . .

JACK: (*Pops out of box again, waving his finger at the wolf*) Shame! . . . Shame! . . . Shame! (*Pops down*)

(*Wolf runs and jumps on box, starts to jump up and down; he remembers the audience and slowly climbs down, a big smile on his face.*)

JACK : (*From inside box*) Temper, temper!

WOLF: (*Starts to kick box, catches himself, resumes smile and floats to center stage*) As I was saying (*He opens lid of Jack's box leans in and yells.*) before I was so rudely interrupted . . . (*He slams lid.*) This little ragamuffin deliberately picked a fight. . . on purpose. . . just to get me mad at her. Then she walloped me over the head with her picnic basket, kicked dirt in my face and skipped off down the road yelling (*He skips around the prop box, and in a high squeaky voice he yells*) "Wilfred Wolf's a sissy . . . Wilfred Wolf's a sissy." She also kicked two frogs, threw a stone at a blue jay and threw candy wrappers in the animal park. . . I just had to uphold the honor of the wolf and teach her a lesson . . . That's why I did what I did. Why can't they tell the story *that* way, the way it really happened. She started it. You know, I shoulda' just told her mother. . . but she made me so mad! Look at me . . . real close. You think I could hurt anybody? Why I'm as gentle as a . . . a . . . lambchop . . . er . . . a . . . lamb.

(*Jack pops up from box.*)

JACK: Moral: Be careful when you lie, you just might get caught. (*Back in box, slams lid*)

WOLF: (*An embarrassed take*) Lies, that's what I said, all those lies that are told about wolves. That's why I quit . . . (*Yelling*) And I'm on strike until they start telling the truth in those stories. (*He starts to walk away, picking up his sign, he turns back.*) You know whose fault it is . . . You know who started all

this? Well, I'll tell you! It was that Aesop who started all this wrongness. If it wasn't for him, making us wolves look like mean, cruel animals, none of this would ever have happened . . . him and his falables!

JACK: (*Pops out of box*) Fable!

WOLF: (*To Jack*) Falable!! (*He exits S.R. shouting "Up with wolves" . . . "Down with Aesop, up with wolves."*)

JACK: Moral: "Never argue with a stubborn wolf." (*He pops down into the box, slamming lid.*)

(Music up as the four sheep enter S.L. on the way to work. They walk huddled together and talk in "Baa's." Clarissa enters S.R., passes them, then turns and speaks.)

CLARISSA: Why, if it isn't the Sheep Sisters . . . good morning, ladies.

SHEEP: Good morning, Clarissa.

CLARISSA: Can't stop and talk, must hurry. (*She exits.*)

SADIE: Girls, have you noticed how old Clarissa is getting? . . . Why she's beginning to molt!

SOPHIE: I hear she dyes her feathers.

SHEEP: You don't mean it!

(The boy enters S.R. with a jacket that says "Acme Woolen Mills" on the back. He walks in fast small steps, never once stopping or looking up from his pad.)

BOY: Better hurry, girls. I'll have to dock your pay if you're late . . . hurry, hurry, hurry . . . time's wasting . . . *Tempus Fugit!* (*He's off.*)

SHIRLEY: And they think being a career sheep is all glamour and excitement. Wild luncheons . . . 30 minute coffee breaks . . . Ha! Why those wolves in the elevators are . . .

SOPHIE: I understand they've posted wolf notices all over the plan . . . They're out and at it again.

SADIE: Those wolves never learn! I tell you, if a wolf ever laid a

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hand on me, it would be the last sheep he'd ever tangle with.

BOY: (*Offstage*) Come on girls, Acme Woolen Mills don't pay their sheep to gaggle. Machines roll in one minute . . . hurry, hurry . . . *Tempus fugit!*

SHEEP: Nag, nag, nag.

(*Song: "Baa, Baa" sung by four sheep*)

SHEEP: (*Sing*)

Baa, baa, baa, baa! Must we work so hard?

We knit an inch; he asks for a yard.
Each day from sun-up to sun-down
We knit and purl beneath his frown.

Baa, baa, baa, baa! Life is sad and gloomy!

Baa, baa, baa, baa! Did they "Sock it to me!"

One for the master, and one for the dame
Baa, baa! Mother Goose is who I blame.

Baa, baa! Worry, worry! All day long,
Until he sounds the final gong.

One of these days we're going to quit,
Collect unemployment and never more
knit!!!

Baa, baa, baa, baa! Then what will he do?
Without us he's absolutely through.

Baa, baa! We'll just laugh and sing!!
We'll sing and swing and do our own
thing!!!

Do our own thing!!

Do our own thing!!

DO OUR OWN THING!!!!!!

(*During final chorus of song, Wolf enters S.L. picking flowers. At the end of the song he crosses to Sadie and taps her on the shoulder.*)

WOLF: Excuse me, Miss Sheep. Could you tell me where I could

pick up some sweet smellin' flowers ? *(To audience)* . . . for my mother!

SADIE: *(Screams)* You Wolf! *(She slams him with her purse; he falls to his knees.)*

WOLF: But I . . .

SOPHIE: *(Screams)* Masher! *(Hits him with her purse. The rest of the ladies join and attack him with purses, screaming.)*

SADIE: That will teach you to make passes at . . . young, attractive sheep!

CECELIA: You know, they're getting more and more forward every day.

SOPHIE: They should lock 'em all up! A girl just isn't safe on the streets anymore!
(They exit jabbering, but not until after Sadie gets one last blow at Wilfred.)

(Jack pops up as the ladies move off.)

JACK: Moral: A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth.

WOLF: *(Groaning, raises his head)* What's that supposed to mean?

JACK: Moral: If the shoe fits . . . wear it! *(He's down.)*

(Wolf raises up and crawls downstage.)

WOLF: Do you see what I mean? . . . I was just an innocent bystander . . . minding my own business. Did you see how those sheep just ganged up on me and . . . *(He starts to rise.)* Ooh, my head hurts . . . and my back . . . I think my arm's broken . . . *(He hobbles over to Jack's box, groaning all the way.)* It was that Aesop fellow that started all this . . . He took a poor defenseless wolf. . . Me, and made him into a mad, hungry, villain . . . the brunt of his foibles.

JACK : *(Pops up)* Fables!

WOLF: Falables!