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# **The Velveteen Rabbit**

A MUSICAL PLAY

Book, Lyrics and Music by  
Barnes Boffey and Paul Pilcher  
Additional music by Bob Love

Based on book by Margery Williams



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(THE VELVETEEN RABBIT)

ISBN 0-87129-385-4

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THE VELVETEEN RABBIT  
*A Full-Length Musical*  
For Four Men, Two Women and Twenty-Four Toys\*  
(plus a number of small parts)

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CHARACTERS  
(In order of appearance)

NARRATOR	FIRST BUILDING BLOCK
AUNT SALLY	SECOND BUILDING BLOCK
UNCLE FRED	THIRD BUILDING BLOCK
THE LITTLE BOY	FOURTH BUILDING BLOCK
NANA	SPINNING TOP
VELVETEEN RABBIT	BABY DOLL
FIRST TIN SOLDIER	FIRE TRUCK
SECOND TIN SOLDIER	SKIN HORSE
THIRD TIN SOLDIER	MUGGSY
FOURTH TIN SOLDIER	BUGGSY
EIGHT ADDITIONAL TIN SOLDIERS	HUGGSY
MODEL BOAT	EIGHT OTHER REAL RABBITS
CLOWN	DOCTOR
JACK-IN-BOX	GOOD FAIRY

TIME: *Present.*

PLACE: *The little boy's home; the toy closet;  
the forest.*

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\*The narrator, doctor, fairy, toys and rabbits may be played by either men or women.



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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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**SCENE:** Living room: A bench DR and a chair DL angled to face each other and the audience; a sofa C, a long coffee table in front of the sofa with several packages on it. The **VELVETEEN RABBIT** sits on top of all the packages with a yellow ribbon between his paws. Note: The bench should be masked in such a way that a person can hide behind it and manipulate the Velveteen Rabbit when called for later on.)

**AT RISE OF CURTAIN:** **AUNT SALLY** and **UNCLE FRED** are seated on the sofa. **AUNT SALLY** is reading a magazine and **UNCLE FRED** is reading the newspaper. The **NARRATOR** stands or sits on a high stool in a far DR corner of the stage almost in darkness and may remain there for the entire play.)

**NARRATOR.** There was once a velveteen rabbit and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and buncy as a rabbit should be. His coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers and his ears were lined with pink sateen. On the boy's birthday, when the rabbit sat atop the pile of packages with a yellow ribbon between his paws, the effect was charming.

(The **BOY** comes running in excited, speaking

as he runs.)

BOY. Is it time yet? (AUNT SALLY and UNCLE FRED look at each other, shrug, then nod. ) Oh, boy! (Looks around spots VELVETEEN RABBIT.) Wow! Is that for me? (AUNT SALLY puts down magazine and nods.) Look at this rabbit! Gee, this is the best present I've ever had. . . . There now, rabbit, you must sit right there. (Puts VELVETEEN RABBIT on bench DR. UNCLE FRED puts newspaper down and holds up a package. BOY runs over.) Is that for me? (Opens package, throws wrapping paper anywhere.) Oh, neat, a whole army of toy soldiers. Thanks, Uncle Fred, this is the best present I've ever had. (AUNT SALLY is holding an even bigger package.) For me? (She nods. BOY drops toy soldiers where he is and runs to Aunt Sally's side of the sofa, takes the package from her and rips it open, scattering the paper around.) Wow, a jack-in-the-box! Gee, thanks, Aunt Sally! This is absolutely the best present I've ever had. (BOY drops the jack-in-the-box where he is and runs offstage. AUNT SALLY and UNCLE FRED look around, shake their heads. The room is a shambles.)

AUNT SALLY. Whew! What a mess. You'd hardly believe it was the work of one boy!

UNCLE FRED. Well, dear, that's why we've got a nana. She'll clean it up.

AUNT SALLY. Uh, hum. . . . Complaining every step of the way! (They exit.)

(Curtain closes behind bench and chair, leaving VELVETEEN RABBIT on bench in front. NANA enters.)

NANA. Ooh, my aching back! I hate birthdays! All I ever do is pick up, pick up, and pick up some more. . . . Birthdays! Fun for everyone except the nana! . . . I declare I ought to get overtime. . . . (Sits in chair DL.) Ah, there, that's better. What a day, what a day. . . . (Spots VELVETEEN RABBIT.) Oh, for goodness sake, what's this? Can't that boy pick up anything? (To VELVETEEN RABBIT.) You know, if I was really smart, I'd send you back to the bunny farm or wherever it is you came from. Hah! The bunny farm . . . that's what I should do. Then maybe I'd start to get a little cooperation around here. . . . (Looks at VELVETEEN RABBIT again.) Well, it was a nice idea. Ahh, my aching feet . . . (She leans back, kicks off her shoes and stretches out her legs.) . . . ohh, that feels good. (Becomes conscious of VELVETEEN RABBIT staring at her.) Mmm, it feels so good to relax. (She can't stand it any more; turns VELVETEEN RABBIT so he faces other way. As she begins to close her eyes and relax again, VELVETEEN RABBIT slowly turns back toward her. Note: VELVETEEN RABBIT can be manipulated by someone hiding behind the bench. Again she feels his eyes boring into her. Cautiously, she opens her eyes.) Oh! Why, how did you do that? (Hardening.) All right, my furry-eared friend. I can see that you're going to be a trouble-maker. Probably one of those toys that always manages to fall behind the bureau! Or maybe under the couch? Or cleverly sneak around in back of the door so I don't find you until after I've locked the toy closet. . . . I know your type! . . . You can just forget any

bright ideas you might have of tricking Nana. I've been around. And while you're at it, you might as well wipe that smart-aleck look off your face -- it won't do you a bit of good. . . . Humph! I can see we've got to get some things straight. Listen closely, bunny, because this is the way things are: (Music begins.)

(SONG: "TOP BANANA NANA")

NANA.

Are you ready little fuzzball  
For the rules of the game  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
And Gertrude's my name  
I'm the Tinker Toy Tsarina  
What I say better go  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
I'm runnin' the show

I'm the Top Banana Nana  
Though it seems somewhat queer  
'Stead of growing up on pablum  
I had pretzels and beer  
I chewed nails for a morning snack  
And tacks for dessert  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
Old Gatlin' Gun Gert

The teddy bears I terrorize  
The skin horse I can scarrorize  
A rabbit I can harrorize  
And bunny there's a reason why

As a powerhouse in nursery school  
I handled the job

Of the bossman and the strongarm  
Of our Toddler's Mob  
We muscled all the teachers  
Our report cards were good  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
A four-year-old hood

As a little girl I dreamed of days  
That I'd be in charge  
No one ever called me Gertie  
'Cause my nickname was Sarge  
Now I've almost reached the pinnacle  
Of power and fame  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
One hulkeva dame

Now that the birthday party's over  
You had better beware  
Or I'll tie your little ears in knots  
And shave all your hair  
So you better cool the "Bunny Bull"  
And fall into line  
I'm the Top Banana Nana  
I'm doin' just fine  
I'm doin' just fine. . . .

(Music out.)

NANA. What am I doing sitting here talking to a toy? This is ridiculous! I knew that sooner or later this birthday nonsense had to get to me. Oh, dear. Well, bunny, into the toy closet with you. (Heaves VELVETEEN RABBIT roughly by one ear offstage DR.) I guess that takes care of that! (Exits.)

QUICK BLACKOUT

## Scene Two

**SCENE:** Toy closet. In the toy closet, toys are portrayed by actors. Outside the toy closet, toys are portrayed by toys with the exception of the Velveteen Rabbit after he becomes real. For the toy closet, the curtain should be open three-quarters. When toys are thrown into the closet they come flying in from behind the closed portion of the curtain. Benches, chairs, etc. may be used for this purpose. The toys in the toy closet at present time are twelve tin soldiers, a model boat, a clown, a jack-in-the-box, a baby doll, a lion, and a mouse. Any other toys as desired.)

**AT RISE OF CURTAIN: VELVETEEN RABBIT** lands in the toy closet. The other toys on stage are frozen in various positions.)

**VELVETEEN RABBIT** (landing). Ouch! (Dusting off.) Now was that really necessary? Where am I, anyway? What did she call it -- a toy closet? (Looking around.) It's awful dusty in here -- and not very exciting, either. I mean, there's nothing to do. (Music begins, low at first, and steadily increases in volume as **TIN SOLDIERS** all come to life and begin marching.) Umm, what's that noise? (The **TIN SOLDIERS** begin marching and singing their song. During the "MARCH OF THE **TIN TOY SOLDIERS**" there is one soldier who is

always out of step, keeps bumping into the FIRST TIN SOLDIER. He is the FOURTH TIN SOLDIER.)

(SONG: "MARCH OF THE TIN TOY SOLDIERS")

(Bugle call.)

CHORUS.

Soldiers we, made of tin  
Shoulders back and our chins tucked in  
Marching on proud and free  
Keeping peace in the nursery

(Repeat.)

VERSE.

We do battle with any toy  
Right hand men of the little boy  
Squad turn left, then turn right  
Raise our rifles, start to fight  
When you're a tin soldier  
And we are tin soldiers

(Bugle Call.)

CHORUS.

Soldiers we, made of tin  
Shoulders back and our chins tucked in  
Marching on proud and free  
Keeping peace in the nursery

FIRST TIN SOLDIER (after song, to FOURTH TIN SOLDIER). Do you mind! (FOURTH TIN SOLDIER slinks back into line. FIRST TIN SOLDIER looks VELVETEEN RABBIT up and down.) Who are you -- or more to the point, what are you?

VELVETEEN RABBIT. I . . . I'm a velveteen rabbit.

SECOND TIN SOLDIER. What's that?

VELVETEEN RABBIT. Well, er . . . ah . . .  
it's me!

FIRST TIN SOLDIER. Yes, but what do you do?

VELVETEEN RABBIT (in a daze). Do?

FIRST TIN SOLDIER. You know, do you wind up?

VELVETEEN RABBIT. Wind up . . . what's that?

FIRST TIN SOLDIER. Like this, silly. (SECOND  
TIN SOLDIER winds up FIRST TIN SOLDIER.  
FIRST TIN SOLDIER goes through routine.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT. No, I don't think so.

FIRST TIN SOLDIER (looking at VELVETEEN  
RABBIT's back side). No, I don't think so,  
either. Too bad. (He sniffs and moves back  
to his frozen position.)

MODEL BOAT (coming to life). Do you float?  
(Drags out "float" with bump at end.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT shakes his head.)

Just as well, since you don't have the superior  
advantage of double masts with triple cross-  
pieces stabilized by an adjustable backstay  
and an extra duty boom-vang. . . . Pity.

CLOWN (coming to life, stepping forward). Maybe  
you can put on a little act, huh? (Elbows  
VELVETEEN RABBIT.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT (gasping from the elbow).  
Well, I'm not sure. . . .

CLOWN (pushing VELVETEEN RABBIT out of the  
way). Watch! (Goes through acrobatics,  
juggling, etc.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT. Gee, that's really neat.  
(CLOWN motions him to try it.) No, I'm afraid  
not. That's not my style.

CLOWN. OK. Sorry, chum. (Moves back to his  
frozen position.)

THIRD TIN SOLDIER. Hey, I know, maybe you can  
pop up!

VELVETEEN RABBIT. Huh?

THIRD TIN SOLDIER. Watch. . . . (He goes to JACK-IN-BOX and presses button.)

JACK-IN-BOX (popping up). What's up, Doc. . . ?  
(Looks around, spots THIRD TIN SOLDIER.)  
You know, you could knock before pressing.  
I was trying to take a nap.

THIRD TIN SOLDIER. Sorry, Jack, but I was just showing you to the bunny.

JACK-IN-BOX. To the dummy? Ha-ha-ha -- that's a stupid name. Ha-ha-ha -- dummy, dummy, dumb dumb, dummy. (Disappears into box.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT. No, no, bunny, bunny. Oh, what's the use! . . . No, I don't pop up, either. Is there anything else?

(At VELVETEEN RABBIT's last line, FIRST BUILDING BLOCK has entered. All BUILDING BLOCKS have sandwich boards with different letters on each of their four sides. FIRST BUILDING BLOCK, who wears spectacles, is reading a book. He does not see VELVETEEN RABBIT and bumps into him.)

VELVETEEN RABBIT. Hey, why don't you look where you're going?

FIRST BUILDING BLOCK (startled out of his book). Huh? . . . Ahem! (Peers over spectacles.) You're obviously new here, aren't you? Well, I'll forgive you this time. . . . (Looks down at letters.) I do hope you didn't hurt my J. That's one of the hardest letters to replace, you know.

(Three other BUILDING BLOCKS rush onstage.)

SECOND BUILDING BLOCK. Are you all right?

**THIRD BUILDING BLOCK** (to **VELVETEEN RABBIT**).

Look what you did! Oh, you nasty creature!

(All three attend to **FIRST BUILDING BLOCK**.)

**VELVETEEN RABBIT** (after looking them over for a while). OK, I give up. What do you do?

**SECOND BUILDING BLOCK**. What do we do, indeed!

**FOURTH BUILDING BLOCK**. As if it's not perfectly obvious!

**FIRST BUILDING BLOCK** (pushing the others aside).

My boy, we are in the most sacred profession.

We are educators!

**VELVETEEN RABBIT** (a little disgusted now). Oh, big deal. . . . What does that mean?

**THIRD BUILDING BLOCK**. That means, we teach through the most modern educational methods.

**FIRST BUILDING BLOCK** (again asserting his authority). My associates and I will demonstrate. Watch closely now. (**FIRST BUILDING BLOCK** gives clap commands during following routine. In order, the **BUILDING BLOCKS** spell out the following words. For three-letter words, the **BUILDING BLOCK** not involved steps behind the row of the others. See Production Notes, page 56, for detailed instructions on setting up routine. Routine may be interrupted at any point.)

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. D-I-C-K | 10. J-A-N-E |
| 2. A-N-D   | 11. S-E-E-S |
| 3. J-A-N-E | 12. D-I-C-K |
| 4. R-U-N   | 13. R-U-N   |
| 5. D-I-C-K |             |
| 6. R-U-N   |             |
| 7. S-E-E   |             |
| 8. D-I-C-K |             |
| 9. R-U-N   |             |

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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