

THE WHITE RABBIT

By Greg Cummings

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:

In The White Rabbit I wanted to engage with my rage at Trump's racism and xenophobia by exploring elementary school teaching as early indoctrination. My influences include Beckett (particularly Catastrophe) and Pinter (esp. One for the Road and Mountain Language. *(Spacing is playwright's own.)*)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MS. DAVIS	F. First Grade Teacher. Caucasian.
MAN 1	M. Caucasian.
MAN 2	M. Caucasian.

SCENE

A government-run elementary school classroom.

TIME

Present day.

SYNOPSIS

A first grade teacher indoctrinates her young charges in the ways of the world.

1.

SETTING: A table,
center. On either side
of the table, two
chairs.

Enter MS. DAVIS, right. SHE
carries a book, *Alice in
Wonderland*. SHE addresses the
audience as her first grade class.

MS.DAVIS

Good morning, class! Sorry for the delay. The building principal
(looks off stage right)

The building principal just wants to make sure I'm on schedule.
(winks to the class)

Sometimes I think he thinks your Ms. Davis gets a little
distracted! (beat) But not today!

(looks off stage right)
Not today!

So, let's begin! But my, aren't we fidgety today! Jake, Connor,
Luke: separate yourselves. Good! And Jake, remember to sit
"crisscross applesauce"! There we go!

And Emma? I would really appreciate it if you and Abigail would
save your conversation until lunchtime. Thank you girls!

What is it, Claire?
(re: the book she carries)

Oh, well, I love *Alice in Wonderland*, too. Who loves *Alice in Wonderland*? Show of hands! Good!

(sits in her chair)

But today, before we go on to Chapter Two, let's first review Chapter One. Who is: the White Rabbit? Show of hands! Good!

(responding to raised hands)

He was in a hurry? Yes, he was in a hurry!

He wore a waistcoat? Yes, he did wear a waistcoat! Good job, Amy!

And, what's that, Cody? Yes! Yes! The White Rabbit could talk! What? A talking rabbit?

(laughs)

"Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!"

MS. DAVIS regards the principal off stage right, then stops laughing.

2.

MS. DAVIS (CONT.)

Back to business! Ms. Davis mustn't get distracted from doing the job she needs to do today, right children?

Perspective and context: *Alice in Wonderland* is just a story. A wonderful story. A magical story. But just a story nonetheless. A story somebody wrote a long time ago.

So now: how would you all like to hear a *real* story about a *real* rabbit? In the *real* world of today? A rabbit that Ms. Davis happens to know all about, because this very real rabbit lives in Ms. Davis's very own vegetable garden? Show of hands! Good!

Well then, once upon a time, there lived a lovely gardener.

(winks)

It was me, Ms. Davis! For the purposes of this story, we'll refer to Ms. Davis as "the lovely gardener".

And this lovely gardener had a lovely garden, right in back of her lovely tiny gingerbread house in the suburbs of the kingdom! And every day she would water and tend her garden. And she was so tender and loving, and she worked so hard, that all of her tomatoes and beets and carrots grew and grew and grew, every day.

In fact, she was such a good gardener that she grew so many tomatoes and beets and carrots that she couldn't even eat them

all by herself, so she brought them to the school to share with the wonderful children of the village.

(winks)

"Wonderful children of the village". That's you! You're the wonderful children of the village!

And so, it came to pass that the lovely gardener and the wonderful children of the village would make lovely, wonderful salads together, and thus share the tasty vegetables from the garden. And the lovely gardener and the wonderful children of the village would eat the salad and laugh and tell stories and have just the best of times together!

Until one day, the gardener came to class with no vegetables. And the children saw that she was sad.

And the children asked, "Where are the vegetables today, o lovely gardener? We'd so love to make another salad today."

3.

MS.DAVIS (CONT.)

And the gardener replied, "There will be no salad today, children. For there are no more vegetables. I tended them and watered them and loved them, but there are no more vegetables."

"But why", the children asked. "Where did all your lovely vegetables go?"

"Did they just disappear into thin air?"

"No", said the gardener. "A rabbit ate them all."

"A cute, funny little rabbit like the White Rabbit from *Alice in Wonderland* who wore a waistcoat and ran about, and said, 'Oh dear, Oh dear?'"

"No, children. This was not the White Rabbit. This was not that kind of rabbit. Not that kind of rabbit at all."

You see, children, this rabbit was a very scary rabbit. In fact, this rabbit was so scary that the gardener didn't know what to do.

One morning she even saw the rabbit eating the vegetables in her garden and yelled, "Stop".

But the rabbit wouldn't stop eating her vegetables.

The next morning she saw *two* rabbits eating her vegetables and she opened the back door of her lovely gingerbread house that looked upon the garden and she shook a broom at the two rabbits.

But the two rabbits wouldn't stop eating her vegetables.

So the gardener built a wall to keep the rabbits out.

But the wall didn't work. The next day *three* rabbits dug under the wall and ate her vegetables. And the next day *four* rabbits dug under the wall and ate her vegetables.

The gardener didn't know what to do! She wanted to harvest her vegetables to share with the wonderful children of the village, but she couldn't. The scary rabbits were eating them all.

In fact, the next morning the lovely gardener saw that *five* rabbits had invaded her garden and were eating her vegetables!

4.

MS.DAVIS (CONT.)

And every day more and more scary rabbits breached the wall and invaded her garden! Soon there would be no vegetables at all for the wonderful children, thought the lovely gardener!

"Oh no, oh no, oh no", she said.

The next day the gardener even called the police, but when the police arrived, the rabbits killed them all! The scary rabbits killed all of the policemen and women!

The gardener was at her wit's end! Because, if the scary rabbits weren't stopped, and stopped soon, why the village children would no longer be able to laugh, and eat salad, and tell stories together!

So the gardener thought and thought and thought, and finally, with the help of her special friends: she hit upon a plan...

MS. DAVIS nods to off stage right.

Two men in dark suits and sunglasses enter stage right. THEY carry a cage covered with a black cloth.

The two men place the cage on the table and sit in the two chairs facing the audience.

MS. DAVIS

That's right, children: poison.

All of the adult rabbits have superhuman strength, so the gardener knew that no poison would work on them.

So the gardener decided to poison the littlest rabbit, a baby rabbit. A new-born baby rabbit.

Oh, not enough poison to kill the baby rabbit. The gardener wanted to use just enough poison to make the baby rabbit groggy. Just groggy enough so the gardener and her special friends could overpower her. The lovely gardener and her special friends couldn't take any chances, you see. You never know: the newborn baby rabbit might have superhuman strength, after all!

5.

MS. DAVIS (CONT.)

And so, the very next day the gardener and her friends brought the poisoned, groggy, baby rabbit to the village school.

And they asked the wonderful children:

MS. DAVIS nods to the two men.

Each man stands, removes a hammer from his pocket and places it on the table. The men stand at either end of the table.

"Would you like to help us, children? Would you like to help us beat this poisoned baby bunny to death with a hammer, so the lovely gardener can take the bunny's dead body back to the garden and staple-gun it to the garden wall, as an object lesson to all of the other scary bunnies, so they will stop invading the garden? Show of hands! Good! That's the answer we wanted!"

So: please stand and line up, children! Good. Now, you'll each get only one whack at the bunny, so make it count. And don't be scared. The baby bunny can't hurt you, it's heavily sedated.

(SHE picks up one of the hammers

and strikes the table)
Like that! (beat) Don't cry, Wyatt. You know better than that.
Your parents chose this school for you for a reason, remember.

And anyway, it won't feel anything. It's not like you. You're a
human. It's just a bunny. A bunny in a cage. And, as you'll
see when I remove the cloth, children: the bunny isn't like us.
No, no, no! Not at all! See?

MS. DAVIS removes the black cloth
With a flourish.

MS. DAVIS
This bunny is brown! Oh, stop crying, Wyatt! You're first in
line so you go first. Here's the hammer. Now smash away, young
man! Make teacher proud!

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

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UPCOMING 2020 PRODUCTIONS

ALL THE WORLD'S BACKSTAGE (Kingston, TN)

2019 AWARDS

ILL MET BY MOOLIGHT

Semi-finalist for the Julie Harris Playwright Award.

THE WHITE RABBIT

Semi-finalist for Avant-Garage Productions Play Award.

THE LIGHT PRINCESS

Finalist, Paragon Festival. Otherworld Theatre, Chicago.

I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN

Semi-finalist, The Actors Theatre of Newburyport

2019 PRODUCTIONS

THE WHITE RABBIT (Avant-Garage Productions, Los Angeles)

THE LIGHT PRINCESS (Otherworld Theatre, Chicago)

GHOST LIGHT (Peekskill, NY)

A BRIEF PAUSE (Keene State College, NH)

KISS THEN TELL (University of South Carolina)

2019 PUBLICATIONS (Heuer Pub.)

ALL THE WORLD'S BACKSTAGE (related one acts), and

THE GREAT WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS STARRING CAMERON FITCH

I am a member of Dramatists Guild. My plays are published by French and Heuer, and have been produced at regional theatres, colleges, arts centers, high schools, and middle schools in thirty-five states, Canada, and England.

I have also taught playwriting and produced the plays of my students for over thirty years. I hold master's degrees from Wesleyan and Cornell University. As a result of my fellowship with The Geraldine R. Dodge Program for Teachers and Playwrights, for five years my plays were produced at various venues in New York and New Jersey.