



GOODNIGHT MOON EDUCATOR AND FAMILY RESOURCE

This production is inspired by the books *Goodnight Moon* (1947) and *The Runaway Bunny* (1942). Both books were written by Margaret Wise Brown and both books were illustrated by Clement Hurd.

ABOUT MARGARET WISE BROWN: was an American author and editor of children's books. Brown is best known for The Runaway Bunny (1942) and Goodnight Moon (1947).

Margaret Wise Brown's stories are told with central characters that are children, or young animals who encounter a diversity of lived experiences. Her characters face such encounters - with wonder and fear but always with courage and yearning for answers and independence.

As simplistic as the plot of *Good Night Moon* is - a tiny bunny whispers goodnight to objects within a great green room - the life of the book's author was much more complex.

Born in 1910, Margaret Wise Brown grew up in New York as the middle child of well-to-do parents who made no secret of their unhappy marriage. Brown used her imagination and her love of the outdoors to distance herself from her parents' unhappiness. Brown's childhood informed her adulthood in that she grew to remain her own person and retained a strong sense of the power of childhood and its stories and discoveries. Before writing and editing books full-time, Margaret Wise Brown was a teacher at a progressive school in New York City where learning was experience-based, interdisciplinary, and collaborative. During her time at this school, Bank Street School, Brown helped to define and write the curriculum grounded in the same themes found in her books - themes of empowerment and possibilities.

Margaret Wise Brown authored her books and collaborated with some of the most prominent children's book illustrators of the time, including Clement Hurd who illustrated both of Margaret Wise Brown's most prominent books, *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*.

Margaret Wise Brown published more than one hundred books during her lifetime. In all of the writing, even though she herself did not have children, Brown seemed to understand and honor the sensibilities of children and childhood – and certainly, when they are characters within the stories, how parents and caregivers of these children support and encourage their development through patience and imaginative play.

Margaret Wise Brown died unexpectedly from a blood clot, while in France, in 1952; she was 42.

ABOUT THE BOOK GOODNIGHT MOON: the book is an example of a here-and-now children's book. This genre, originating in the 1930's, favors the modern world over the imaginary worlds of fairy tales. The idea being that children will and can relate to stories that offer familiar surroundings and activities. Not at all an instant classic. Goodnight Moon was originally rejected by the New York Public Library but during the 1950's the book became an indispensable addition to bookshelves around the world, a trend that continues to this day. The book has been translated into at least fifteen languages and sells over 800,000 copies a year.

The book also references an earlier Brown/Hurd title, *The Runaway Bunny*, by incorporating a portrait of a bunny fishing that hangs above the room's bookshelf and the book, itself, open on the shelf. Why and how the book works so well might be due to the influence of Margaret Wise Brown's favorite author, Gertrude Stein. Stein was famous for her use of abstract/non-linear, heightened, and repetitive language.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE MOON: Goodnight Moon takes place during nighttime. Here are six facts about the moon:

- 1. The Moon goes around the Earth It takes about 1 month to make a full trip!
- 2. The Moon doesn't make its own light It shines because it reflects sunlight.
- 3. There are craters on the Moon Big holes made by space rocks!
- 4. The Moon has no air or water That's why astronauts wear space suits.
- 5. **The Moon looks different every night** These are called moon phases!
- 6. You can jump higher on the Moon Because it has less gravity than Earth.

DRAMATIC PLAY ACTIVTIES: Here are some interactive and fun activities inspired by the books, Goodnight Moon, and The Runaway Bunny for you to try.

Moon Walk Mission!

Objective: Introduce basic moon facts through movement, imagination, and teamwork.

Setup: Create a "moon surface" using mats, pillows, or paper circles. Scatter "moon rocks" (crumpled foil balls or bean bags) around the area.





Astronaut Training Warm-Up: Start with a fun warm-up: jumping like astronauts, floating in slow motion, and practicing moon walks.

Moon Fact Hunt: Hide simple moon fact cards around the room (e.g., "The moon has no air," "The moon is very dusty," "The moon goes around Earth"). Kids find them and act out the fact together.

Moon Rock Collection: Each child becomes an astronaut and collects moon rocks while moving in slow motion. Use crumpled paper for Moon Rocks. For each rock, they share a moon fact or make up a moon-themed character (like "Dusty the Moon Bunny").

NIGHTY NITE

A wonderful way in include dramatic play before bed is to act out (mime) your family's rituals for getting ready for bed:

- Putting on PJ
- Washing face and hands
- Brushing teeth
- · Reading stories
- Pulling up the covers
- Saying goodnight

BEDTIME STORIES

Create your own bedtime characters—like sleepy bunnies, talking stars, moon mice, or even a mischievous blanket—and explore the magic of getting ready for bed through movement, voice, and storytelling.

Warm-up games: Stretch and settle like sleepy animals or other characters in the stories

Character creation: Use your imagination and physical choices to stand, sit, and walk as a character from the stories

Acting exercises: Explore emotions and physical action of your characters like walking around very sleepy, moving with energy and curiosity, and happily discovering a comfortable place to sit peacefully.

Mini scenes: Say goodnight to your favorite things (just like in *Goodnight Moon*) or pretend to run away and be found again (like in *The Runaway Bunny*)

Performance: Share your bedtime character and acts out a short scene in a dreamy, moonlit setting.

I SPY IN THE GREAT GREEN ROOM

Open a copy of *Goodnight Moon* to any of the two-page illustrations.

- One player selects a detail of the illustration and begins a sentence with a clue with a specific the detail. For example, "I spy something with ears." Play continues until a correct guest is made.
- Variations can include:
 Using a shape ("I spy something round.")
 Using the first (or last) letter of the word of the detail

- Using a color ("I spy something red.")
- Advance the activity by labeling the room with directions (left/west, right/east, top/north, bottom/south) and play the activity with the sentence, "I spy something in the southern part of the room."
- For use with *The Runaway Bunny*, play is the same.

BEARS IN CHAIRS

Arrange chairs, one for each player, in a circle. Tape a picture of the moon onto one of the chairs. The players walk around the chairs (as in Musical Chairs). When the signal is given ("Goodnight bears"), players scramble to find a chair. The player sitting in the chair with the moon must yawn or growl loudly and leave the game (to hibernate). Once the player leaves, one of the chairs is taken out and the activity continues until only one player (and the chair with the moon on it) remains. The one of players who 'hibernates' will be the player who calls the next round of, "Goodnight bears."

For use with *The Runaway Bunny*, use the signal "runaway," replace the drawing of a moon with a drawing of a carrot, and players leave the game by saying, "shucks."

BEDTIME ACTIVITY

While reading the book, invite listeners to say, "Good night" using the voice of the object/animal who is being told "Goodnight." For example, when you read "Goodnight kittens" read the phrase using a kitten's voice and have your audience repeat the phrase in their best kitten voices. Continue reading the story and doing a new character voice for each character or object while allowing the audience time to echo the character voice however they choose.

For use with *The Runaway Bunny*, vocally activate the nouns in the text (fish/fisherman, rock/climber, etc.) to create a sense of character.