

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 ACTIVITIES: 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.

