

THE LOST ENDING

By Brad Gromelski

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Written for seven players, but the cast size may be altered with any combination or number of players, at the decision of the director of the play. For example, the play can be performed with sixteen actors, male and female, each playing one part).

SEVEN PLAYERS

NARRATOR
GOOSE
KANGAROO
BEAR
LITTLE GIRL
OLD LADY
ADVISOR
QUEEN
PRINCESS

SUGGESTED CASTING OF PARTS

Player One

Prologue: PLAYER ONE
Tale One: NARRATOR
Tale Two: QUEEN
Tale Three: NARRATOR

Player Two

Prologue: PLAYER TWO
Tale One: GOOSE
Tale Two: OLD LADY
Tale Three: PRINCESS

Player Three

Prologue: PLAYER THREE
Tale One: KANGAROO
Tale Two: ADVISOR
Tale Three: PLAYER THREE

Player Four

Prologue: PLAYER FOUR
Tale One: BEAR
Tale Two: NARRATOR
Tale Three: PLAYER FOUR

Player Five

Prologue: PLAYER FIVE
Tale One: PLAYER FIVE
Tale Two: LITTLE GIRL
Tale Three: PLAYER FIVE

Player Six

All Tales: PLAYER SIX

Player Seven

All Tales: PLAYER SEVEN

PROP LIST

PROLOGUE:

Trunk on stage, filled with properties and costume pieces.
Clothes rack opposite side of stage from trunk.

TALE ONE:

20 foot long white rope, used as river (PLAYER FIVE and NARRATOR).
Brown fabric, used as mud (BEAR).
Egg-shaped container, with scroll inside (GOOSE).
Apron with pouch (KANGAROO).
Boxing gloves (KANGAROO).
Frying pan, off stage (BEAR).

TALE TWO:

Gold cardboard crown, gold paper chain bracelets (2) and gold paper chain necklace (QUEEN).
Basket, with cotton inside (OLD LADY).
Whiffle bat, used as cane (OLD LADY).
Pair of high work gloves (ADVISOR).
Barrel (throne) covered with velvet fabric, off stage (PLAYER SIX).
Two poles with black fabric attached, to hide QUEEN, off stage (PLAYER SIX and PLAYER SEVEN).
Two wooden, folding clothes-dryers, from which hang Styrofoam balls (dilly berries), off stage, opposite sides (NARRATOR and PLAYER FIVE).

TALE THREE:

Crown, bracelets, necklace (PRINCESS – same as for QUEEN in Tale Two).

COSTUMES LIST

GENERAL NOTE:

MEN – black turtlenecks, black trousers, black socks, black canvas shoes, black belts, white shirts.

WOMEN – black leotards, black tights, black skirts which are long, black ballet slippers and white blouses.

ALL CAST – Use splashes of colored material to suit each character played.

TALE ONE:

GOOSE: bonnet, swim fins, feather boa, shawl, wire-rimmed glasses, basket and egg with scroll, knee pads, tutu.

KANGAROO: khaki jacket, apron with pocket, boxing gloves.

BEAR: pith helmet with mosquito netting, brown gloves, brown fur slippers, oval fur breastplate.

TALE TWO:

OLD LADY: wire-rimmed glasses, shawl, whiffle bat as cane, babushka, long skirt in a print fabric, basket.

LITTLE GIRL: bare feet, clothes tattered, patchwork look, wig-braids with ribbons, torn and dirty peasant blouse, torn skirt.

ADVISOR: fake tuxedo front, black tails jacket, garden gloves (BEAR's).

QUEEN: blue robe, necklace, bracelets and crown.

TALE THREE:

PRINCESS: long black skirt, scarves tied around waist, crown, necklace and bracelets (QUEEN's).

SET LISTS AND REQUIREMENTS

No stage is needed. No set is required. Lighting effects may be added, if desired.

Properties and costume pieces should be pre-set on the right side of the stage, inside a trunk. Items are retrieved as needed, as if they had all been in storage.

Through pantomime, imagery and clever use of properties and costume pieces, effective visuals fill the stage.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

■ Chosen as opening performance of the East Central Theatre Conference annual convention (American Theatre Association) at the Milford-Plaza Hotel, Manhattan, 1985.

■ Chosen as the drama portion for a celebration of the performing arts for the International Year for Youth, sponsored by the County of Westchester's Executive Office, performed at the State University of New York at Purchase, 1985.

■ Performed by the Seton Players at Seton College, Yonkers, NY, 1985.

■ Selected for a Workshop for Junior High School students with cast, director and writer, Youth Interactions. 1985.

■ Grant as Playwright in Residence, State University of New York at Cortland. On tour for 34 performances at 24 schools in 4 counties, 1986.

■ Grant from the New York State Council for the Arts. Produced at the Masters Theatre, Dobbs Ferry, NY 1986.

** Winning Entry for the Kaleidoscope Showcase of the Southwest Theater Association national playwriting competition, Oklahoma City, OK 2003

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PROLOGUE

(PLAYER ONE enters, happily whistling, walks around the stage, looks for something, crosses again and exits. After three seconds, re-enters, worried, looks around again, in a panic and finally crosses down stage center, looks at the AUDIENCE.)

PLAYER ONE: *(to audience, nervously)* May I have your attention, please? *(verbally stumbles)* We can't begin yet, because. . . *(embarrassed)* . . . because my "Mother Goose Rhyme Book" is missing!

PLAYER TWO: *(enters, awed)* What? Your Mother Goose. . .

PLAYER THREE: *(enters from other side)* Rhyme Book. . .

PLAYER TWO AND PLAYER THREE: *(speak together)* Is. . . what?

PLAYER ONE: *(forlorn)* I can't find it.

PLAYER TWO AND PLAYER THREE: *(speak together)* Aw! No!

PLAYER ONE: *(apologetic)* Anywhere!

PLAYER TWO: *(scolding)* How can we have a story-hour if you lost the story book?

PLAYER ONE: *(in panic)* I don't know!

PLAYER FOUR: *(enters)* What's the problem here? *(looks at ONE)*

You look like Little Bo Peep, who lost her sheep and doesn't know where to find them.

PLAYER TWO: Its worse – the story book got lost!

PLAYER FOUR: Oh, oh! *(crosses, speaks to audience)* We're experiencing technical difficulty – please stand by. *(to ONE)* Do something, before we lose the audience!

PLAYER THREE: It's no use.

PLAYER ONE: *(to audience)* We're sorry, but there's no way that we can do a show today.

PLAYER FOUR: Wait – don't give up, yet. *(to audience)* We'll have something for you in half a minute.

PLAYER THREE: *(recriminating)* Where did you leave your story book?

PLAYER ONE: *(impatient)* I don't know.

PLAYER FOUR: We're running late. Let's get this show moving.

PLAYER TWO: How can we tell stories without a book?

PLAYER FOUR: Try to remember some.

PLAYER ONE: I'm so nervous, I can't remember my own name.

PLAYER THREE: Hey! I just remembered a good story.

PLAYER FOUR: You're a genius!

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PLAYER THREE: Leave everything to me. **(To audience, recites in a sing-song drone)** There was an old lady who lived in a shoe. She had so many children, she didn't know what to do. So she. . . **(forgets)** So she. . . uh. . .

PLAYER TWO: She what?

PLAYER THREE: **(shrugs)** I forgot it.

PLAYER FOUR: What kind of players are you? I wish there was a different kind of story. . . **(others huddle, heads together, to figure out a solution)**. . . about an old lady who didn't live in a shoe and didn't have any children! What would she do?

PLAYER TWO: **(breaks from huddle)** I think we may have found the answer.

PLAYER THREE: **(breaks from huddle, speaks to audience)** We're going to invent a few tales you never heard before and we'll tattle them to you.

PLAYER FOUR: Tattle tales?

PLAYER ONE: Yes – tattle tales!

PLAYER THREE: **(to audience)** We'll share them all with you.

PLAYER TWO: **(to audience)** Look at us – don't close your eyes!

PLAYER THREE: **(to audience)** Cross your fingers and get ready for some. . . ONE, TWO, THREE. . .

ALL: Tattle Tales!

PLAYER FOUR: Tattle Tales?

ALL: Tattle Tales!!

PLAYER FOUR: What's a "tattle tale?"

PLAYER TWO: Something you make-up on the spot

PLAYER ONE: But I never did anything like that before.

PLAYER FOUR: You'd better try

(PLAYERS TWO, THREE and FOUR drag a steamer trunk on stage and take-out various pieces of costumes and props.)

PLAYER ONE: How?

PLAYER TWO: Start with a title.

PLAYER ONE: I need a title for a tattle tale?

PLAYER TWO: Every tattle tale has a title.

PLAYER ONE: In that case, I'll dub it "Tattle Tale Number One."

PLAYER FOUR: Very original. We'll be around if you need us.

PLAYER ONE: Wait! Don't leave me all alone!

(OTHERS exit, leaving PLAYER ONE alone to tell the story. At this point, PLAYER ONE is described as NARRATOR.)

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TALE ONE

NARRATOR: ***(off to side, speaks to audience)*** Many, many “once upon a time ago” there lived a lady by the name of Mrs. Goose who “hatched” her stories nearly by accident. To tell you about it, we must go on an imaginary journey to Tattle Tale Town. Now, for some reason, this town was in Australia – the “Lost Continent.” And, since our story book is lost, maybe we can find it there! ***(shouts to others, off stage)*** I’m running out of words and I’m going to need your help, so get ready.

PLAYER THREE: ***(pokes head on stage)*** What do you want us to do?

NARRATOR: You’re so smart, you figure it out. ***(continues, to audience)*** The whole tradition of story telling started one spring day, just after breakfast. Mrs. Goose was about to hatch her very first egg. Wanting to be a good “Mother” goose, she carefully guarded her nest, day and night.

(GOOSE enters, sits stage center)

NARRATOR: But she got very thirsty just sitting there, hour after hour. She desperately needed a drink of water. But the nearest river was over a mile away, which was a problem.

(GOOSE and all others assume the physical and vocal mannerisms of all animals that follow.)

GOOSE: Honk! Honk! Oh, I’m so thirsty! My beak is parched! But I can’t waddle away from my nest and leave my beautiful egg un-guarded. What can I do?

NARRATOR: Just then, a Kangaroo – native of these parts – came hopping by.

(KANGAROO enters, hopping and hops over GOOSE, who is still sitting on egg.)

GOOSE: Hey – watch out! You almost hippety-hopped on my nest and scrambled my egg.

KANGAROO: ***(in Australian-type accent)*** Beg your pardon. Are you a squatter?

GOOSE: Where did you come from?

KANGAROO: Out of the “bush.” I’ve got to find a river, so that I can splash around and have a good wash for myself.

GOOSE: I know where there’s a river.

KANGAROO: Will you take me to it please?

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GOOSE: No! I can't leave my egg all alone in the nest.

KANGAROO: **(looks at egg)** Oooo! Cute little egg. Has it got a name yet?

GOOSE: I was thinking of calling it "Humpty Dumpty."

KANGAROO: That's ridiculous. What a silly name!

GOOSE: This is a special egg, so it needs a special name. It's almost ready to hatch and must be kept warm.

KANGAROO: Put the egg in my pouch and we'll take a fast trip to the river. It will be comfy and cozy in my pouch.

GOOSE: Good idea! **(puts egg in pouch, carefully)** But don't hop too high, or come down too hard.

KANGAROO: Don't worry – you'll have a perfectly safe "pouched" egg.

GOOSE: Hop to it!

(GOOSE and KANGAROO begin a pantomimed journey while NARRATOR speaks.)

NARRATOR: So the Kangaroo and the GOOSE hopped and waddled until they came to the outskirts of Tattle Tale Town, whose main boundary was the Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie River.

KANGAROO: **(stops, breaks character, says to NARRATOR)** What river?

NARRATOR: Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie

KANGAROO: Poh-ka-ta... what?

NARRATOR: Pel-zie!

KANGAROO: **(enjoys sound of word)** Poh-ka-ta. . .

GOOSE: **(joins in)** Pel-zie!

KANGAROO and GOOSE: **(together)** Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie!

NARRATOR: You've got it!

(At this point, PLAYER FIVE comes on and takes a rope out of the trunk, attaches it to the NARRATOR's waist and goes diagonally up stage, waving the rope up and down, representing a river's surface as the OTHERS continue)

ALL: ***(sing-song rhythm)***

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie,

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie,

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie Ri-ver!

(Do a small, happy dance)

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie,

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie,

Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie Ri-ver!

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NARRATOR: **(stops)** Don't get carried away!

(GOOSE and KANGAROO resume their animal characters.)

NARRATOR: **(to AUDIENCE)** Where were we? Well, anyway – when they arrived at the banks of the “what-cha-ma-call-it” river, they were met by a very angry “Ka-la-wa-wa” bear.

BEAR: **(springs onto stage)** Grrrr! GRRRrrrr!

(GOOSE, petrified, freezes. KANGAROO, scared, quickly hops up and down.)

GOOSE: **(to KANGAROO)** Be careful, you Yo-Yo!

KANGAROO: **(stops)** Sorry – nearly forget about what's in my pouch!

BEAR: Where are you two going?

GOOSE: **(rapidly)** To the banks of the Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie – to quench my thirst.

KANGAROO: **(rapidly)** Into the Poh-ka-ta-pel-zie – to splash and wash.

BEAR: **(menacing)** Keep out of the Poh-ka-ta-...!

GOOSE AND KANGAROO: . . . pel-zie!

BEAR: Yeah – whatever it's called! This is my territory.

GOOSE AND KANGAROO: Why?

BEAR: I need all the water for myself.

GOOSE AND KANGAROO: Why?

BEAR: Stop blabbering! I tried to steal some honey from a hive, but I got stung by a pack of bees. I ran here to put a mud-pack all over myself, to soothe the pain.

GOOSE: We won't bother you, Mr. Ka-la-wa-wa. Take all the mud you need.

KANGAROO: All we want is the water, Mr. Ka-la-wa-wa.

BEAR: It's all mine.

KANGAROO: Can't I just have one little splash?

BEAR: No.

GOOSE: Can't I just have one little swallow?

BEAR: Never! I need all of it. I got one hundred and forty-four bee stings.

GOOSE: How gross!

KANGAROO: That's too bad, Mr. Ka-la-... .

GOOSE: **(helping)** . . . wa-wa!

BEAR: **(rubs belly)** I'm hungry!

KANGAROO: **(points off left)** There are thousands of berries in yonder bush.

BEAR: Too dangerous. The bees might get me again.

KANGAROO: There must be something else you can eat.

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BEAR: **(threatens)** Good idea. I'll eat the two of you.

GOOSE: But bears don't eat geese!

KANGAROO: Or kangareese!

BEAR: We do if we're starved – which I am!

GOOSE: You're nothing like a "Pooh" bear.

BEAR: That's right – I'm a "Boo" bear! **(growls)** Booooo!

(BEAR gets old, dirty fabric from trunk; this represents mud. BEAR forces GOOSE and KANGAROO to sit, as BEAR covers THEM with the mud-blanket.)

GOOSE: What are you doing to us?

BEAR: I'm sticking you two in the mud.

GOOSE: **(panics, shouts to KANGAROO)** Careful of my egg!!

BEAR: What egg?

KANGAROO: Never mind.

BEAR: **(looks into pouch)** Aha!! Egg food. **(peers closer)** And young!
(rubs belly) MMmmmm!!!

GOOSE: But you're a bear. Bears don't eat eggs.

BEAR: Not unless they're cooked. Now that you two are a couple of "sticks in the mud," I'll go to my den and get a frying pan.

GOOSE: Stay here, or else the bees might get you again.

BEAR: No, they won't. The bees are over. . . **(points left)** . . . there, and my den is. . . **(points right)** . . . over here. When I return, I'll cook a yummy snack of sunny-side up!

(BEAR exits. KANGAROO and GOOSE struggle to get free, but to no avail.)

KANGAROO: Oooo. Darn! Stuck!! **(to NARRATOR)** What's to be done?

NARRATOR: Don't ask me – I'm only the Narrator.

GOOSE: **(struggles)** Uh. Uhh! Trapped!!

KANGAROO: What happens next?

GOOSE: I'm speechless. All I can do is "honk."

NARRATOR: So the Goose and the Kangaroo began to think. And think.

KANGAROO: **(to NARRATOR)** Is that the best you can do?

NARRATOR: I'm thinking!

KANGAROO: **(thinks aloud, in a humming sound)** Hmm.

GOOSE: **(thinks aloud, in a honking sound)** Honk.

KANGAROO: Hmm. Hmmm!

GOOSE: Honk. Honk!

TOGETHER: Hmm. Hmm. Hmmm! Honk. Honk. Honk!

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KANGAROO: Speak to me, Goosey. Ruffle up a feather. We're trapped inside a story and the plot is thicker than the mud. I'm beginning to worry about your egg.

GOOSE: Honk, honk, honk.

KANGAROO: Tell me, how do we get loose?

GOOSE: Honk, honk, honk! Honk, honk!

KANGAROO: You're no help, you silly goose!

GOOSE: **(angry)** Don't call me a silly goose!

KANGAROO: Hey, you're talking again!

GOOSE: That's because you got me angry.

KANGAROO: How?

GOOSE: It's all your fault, making me come here.

KANGAROO: How did I know that "killer" Ka-la-wa-wa was waiting in ambush?

GOOSE: I don't blame you, really, but when he returns, I'm going to be egg-less!

KANGAROO: No – I'm going to be eggless, because I'm the one who's carrying your egg. How will I ever stop Ka-la-wa-wa from picking my pouch?

BEAR: **(returns, with frying pan)** Grr. Ggrrrrrr!

GOOSE: Help. Help!!

BEAR: Shut your beak, Goose! Open your pouch, Kangarooose!

KANGAROO: Why?

BEAR: So I can get the egg and crack it open.

KANGAROO: **(plays stupid)** Egg? I'm a kangaroo. I don't lay eggs!

BEAR: Well, somehow, there's an egg in your pouch. **(reaches into pouch)** And that's a fact.

KANGAROO: **(slaps BEAR's hand)** Wait a minute, you pouch-snatcher! You're confused.

BEAR: I'm not confused – you are. You may be a kangaroo, but you got an egg and I want it.

KANGAROO: But inside my pouch there's a goose egg.

BEAR: Exactly.

KANGAROO: But a "goose egg" means "zero" – right?

BEAR: Right.

KANGAROO: And "zero" means "nothing," – right?

BEAR: Right.

KANGAROO: So – there's nothing in my pouch – right?

BEAR: **(confused)** RRrrrr. . . **(figures the trick)** WRRRong!! You can't fool me – Eggs are eggs!

KANGAROO: But I only have one!

BEAR: I wish I had a whole box of eggs!

GOOSE: **(has a brilliant idea)** Box? Box!! Kangaroos know how to box.

KANGAROO: We do?

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GOOSE: Instinctively! (**gets excited**) Honk, honk. Honk, honk, honk!!

BEAR: Stop your honking, you noisy flock of feathers!

GOOSE: (**pecks BEAR**) Honk, honk!

BEAR: Ow! Stop pecking on me!

GOOSE: (**to KANGAROO**) You're a boxer – give him a "box."

KANGAROO: (**boxes BEAR, lightly**) Give him the "peak of your beak," Goosey!

(GOOSE pecks and KANGAROO boxes.)

BEAR: Stop your boxing! Stop your pecking! I can't bear it!!

KANGAROO: (**picks up mud, raises it, ready to throw**) Here's "mud in your eye."

BEAR: Don't throw it. You win.

(BEAR pulls GOOSE and KANGAROO out of mud. KANGAROO hops a bit to loosen mud, GOOSE shakes off wings.)

BEAR: Now – can't we be friends?

KANGAROO: Be friends? "H'ive" got bee friends.

(KANGAROO tries to whistle for bees, but boxing gloves prevent this. KANGAROO gestures to PLAYER FIVE, who gives a loud whistle. All, except BEAR, make buzzing sound and pantomime the flight of bees, all of which encircle BEAR.)

BEAR: (**shouts, exiting**) Help! Ouch! The bees are after me again! Help! Ouch!!

KANGAROO: We did it.

GOOSE: Nice work. Shake my wing.

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