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I Was a Rat!

Rebeca Wallin

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Play Review

Title: I Was a Rat!

Author: Barbara Field

Reviewer: Rebeca Wallin

Publisher: Plays for Young Audiences

Publication Year: 2009

Number of Pages: 67

Estimated Run Time: 1 hour

Number of Acts: 2

Number of Characters: 29

Reading/Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Review

Bob and Joan, a childless couple, are surprised one night when a young boy appears at their door and announces that he used to be a rat. Confused but kind-hearted, they take him in, care for him as their own, and call him Roger, though they indeed notice many rat-like tendencies. After a mishap at school, Roger is taken advantage of by a side-show owner and a thief, and is eventually reduced to living in the gutter with the rats, hunted by the town as a menace to society. Meanwhile, Bob and Joan tirelessly search for him. When Roger is wrongly accused and sentenced to extermination, Bob and Joan desperately go to the new princess for help. Realizing who Roger is, the princess saves him, and Bob, Joan, and Roger live happily ever after.

This clever, funny, and heartfelt take on a classic will entertain audiences young and old. The interesting cast of characters ranges from the patient and caring couple Bob and Joan, to the conniving side-show owner and his wife, to funny and dogged Roger, to a caring and strong princess, all of whom drive the show with the exciting plot and flowing dialogue. The script is full of situational humor, as well as satire on newspaper articles and their effect on the public. Post-show discussion topics are abundant with the aforesaid discourse on "news," as well as the themes of greed, unconditional love, ignorance, and self-discovery evident throughout the script. Though well-paced and interesting overall, the script lags and becomes somewhat convoluted once or twice mid-way through – something that a few well-placed cuts could have easily fixed.