



Tracy Wells

Adapted from the novel by Kate Douglas Wiggin

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*For Vanessa—
Thank you for
showing me
what true friendship is.*

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm

CLASSIC. Adapted from the novel by Kate Douglas Wiggin. With Rebecca's family barely scraping by after the death of her father, she is sent to live with her two aunts, Miranda and Jane, to help with household chores. Rebecca dearly misses Sunnybrook Farm and her mother and six siblings but tries to make the best of her new home. Miranda and Jane—expecting the arrival of Rebecca's older, levelheaded sister—are at first taken aback by the lively, imaginative Rebecca. Rebecca finds it difficult to please her stern Aunt Miranda and abide by her rigid rules, but Rebecca quickly forms a close bond with her Aunt Jane, who teaches her how to sew. Determined to guide Rebecca into becoming a proper young lady, Miranda and Jane send Rebecca to school, where she proves to be an excellent student. Over time, Rebecca's charming, energetic personality wins over her aunts and classmates and even attracts the attention of a wealthy businessman, who takes an interest in her education. Audiences are sure to be charmed by this heartfelt play.

Performance Time: Approximately 120 minutes.



Kate Douglas Wiggin (1856-1923)

About the Story

Educator and children's author Kate Douglas Wiggin (1856-1923) was born in Philadelphia. After her father died, Wiggin's family moved to Portland and then to the small village of Hollis, Maine. Wiggin devoted her life to educating children, who were commonly viewed as a source of cheap labor. In 1878, Wiggin started the first free kindergarten in San Francisco. Wiggin and her sister worked to establish more than 60 kindergartens for poor children in the San Francisco and Oakland area. When Wiggin married, she had to resign from her teaching job, as was custom for women to do so at that time. The couple moved from California to New York, where Wiggin began writing books for children. Though Wiggin had no children of her own, she published several children's novels during her lifetime. Today, she is best known for her 1903 children's classic *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. At 66, Wiggin died from pneumonia and requested that her ashes be scattered over the Saco River in Maine.

Characters

(8 M, 18 F, extras)

(With doubling: 6 M, 12 F)

REBECCA RANDALL: Smart, precocious, imaginative girl who is sent to live with her two aunts, Miranda and Jane, to help them with household chores; wears her hair in braids and then in a more adult style in Act II; female.

AURELIA RANDALL: Rebecca's mother, a widow, who is barely able to provide for her seven children on Sunnybrook Farm; wears a worn, tattered dress; female.

L.D.M. RANDALL: Rebecca's late father who had a reputation for being an adventurous daydreamer; worked as a dance instructor and violinist; wears nice clothing and a hat; male.

HANNAH RANDALL: Rebecca's older sister, who is known as the gentle, sweet, helpful daughter; female.

JOHN RANDALL: Rebecca's younger brother who wants to be a doctor; male.

JENNY RANDALL: Rebecca's younger sister; female.

MARK RANDALL: Rebecca's humorous younger brother; male.

FANNY RANDALL: Rebecca's younger sister; female.

MIRA RANDALL: Rebecca's younger sister; female.

MIRANDA SAWYER: Aurelia's older sister and Rebecca's aunt; a stern spinster who insists that Rebecca adhere to strict rules; female.

JANE SAWYER: Aurelia's older sister and Rebecca's aunt; a kindly spinster who teaches Rebecca how to sew; female.

JEREMIAH COBB: Stagecoach driver and neighbor to Miranda and Jane; wears modest clothing and a hat; male.

MISS DEARBORN: Rebecca's teacher; female.

EMMA JANE PERKINS: Rebecca's best friend who attends school with Rebecca and is accepted to the prestigious Wareham Boarding School along with Rebecca; female.

ALICE ROBINSON: Rebecca's classmate; female.

MINNIE SMELLIE: Rebecca's classmate, who often chastises the Simpson kids for being poor and having a jailbird father; female.

SAMUEL "SEESAW" SIMPSON: Rebecca's neighbor and schoolmate who has a crush on her; male.

SUSAN SIMPSON: Seesaw's sister; speaks with a lisp; female.

ELIJAH SIMPSON: Seesaw's younger brother and Elisha's twin; male.

ELISHA SIMPSON: Seesaw's younger sister and Elijah's twin; female.

CLARA BELLE SIMPSON: Seesaw's sister; female.

ADAM LADD: Wealthy young man who is taken with Rebecca; wears fine clothing; male.

REV. AMOS BURCH: Traveling pastor; male.

MRS. BURCH: Reverend Burch's wife; female.

HULDAH MESERVE: Rebecca's snobby, boy-crazy classmate at the Wareham Boarding School; female.

MISS MAXWELL: Rebecca's teacher and mentor at the Wareham Boarding School; female.

EXTRAS: As Townspeople, Students 1-4, and Judges 1, 2.

Options for Doubling

HANNAH/SUSAN (female)

MARK/L.D.M. RANDALL (male)

JENNY/ALICE (female)

FANNY/CLARA BELLE (female)

JOHN/AMOS BURCH (male)

MIRA/MRS. BURCH (female)

MISS DEARBORN/MISS MAXWELL (female)

MINNIE/HULDAH (female)

Costumes

Costumes should reflect the early 1900s. The Simpsons and Randalls should wear tattered, worn clothing. The other characters wear middle-class clothing except for Adam Ladd, who wears fine gentleman's attire. In Act I, Rebecca's hair is in braids and she wears a modest brown dress, apron, and hat. In Act II, Rebecca is older and wears a more adult hairstyle and a finer dress.

Setting

Riverboro, Maine, early 1900s.

Sets

Note: The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

Train station. There is a railroad crossing CS with a bench SL.

Exterior of the brick house. There is an exterior of a brick house SL.

It has a front porch with two rocking chairs on it. A worn white picket fence is SR of the house with a few bushes bordering it.

Rebecca's bedroom at brick house/porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Rebecca's bed is SL to represent her bedroom at the brick house.

There is a set of wooden steps SR to represent the porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Schoolhouse. At SL is a large chalkboard with a stool next to it. The

stool has a water bucket and ladle on it. There are 10 desks or chairs for students and a desk for the teacher.

Boarding School classroom. It is similar to the schoolhouse with a

chalkboard and desks/chairs for the students and teacher but it has nicer décor like a bookshelf, podium, flowers on the teacher's desk, paintings on the walls, etc.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Train station.

Scene 2: Exterior of Jane and Miranda's brick house.

Before Rise: Rebecca's bedroom/porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Scene 3: Schoolhouse interior.

Scene 4: Exterior of the brick house.

Scene 5: Schoolhouse.

Scene 6: Exterior of brick house.

Before Rise: Rebecca's bedroom/porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Scene 7: Exterior of brick house.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II

Scene 1: Exterior of brick house.

Before Rise: Rebecca's bedroom/porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Scene 2: Train station.

Scene 3: Boarding school classroom.

Before Rise: Rebecca's bedroom/porch at Sunnybrook Farm.

Scene 4: Boarding school classroom.

Scene 5: Boarding school classroom.

Scene 6: Exterior of brick house.

Props

Pink parasol, for Rebecca	Wallet, for Adam
Suitcase, for Rebecca	Roll of money
Luggage	Can of white paint
Maps	Paint brush
Broom	Ring, for Jane
2-3 Letters	Large lamp
Violin	Jewelry box
Baby doll wrapped in a baby blanket	Locket
2 Candles (electric)	Suitcase, for Burches
Small piece of paper	Serving tray with 4 glasses of lemonade
10 Slates and chalk, for Students	Knapsack, for Rebecca, Emma Jane, Huldah
10 Books, for Students	Gift wrapped notebook
Chalk (red, white, blue)	Small notebook
Water bucket with ladle	Wallet with photo and cards
Brown dress, for Rebecca	Purse
Sewing kit	Coins
Needle and thread	Battered bouquet of wildflowers
Sled with a rope handle	Beautiful bouquet of flowers
Old watering can	Balloons, streamers for graduation
Wooden crates	Banner that reads, "Congratulations Graduates" opt.
Old boxes	Graduation cap and gown, for Huldah, Rebecca, and Students 1-4
Old plant pots	6 Diplomas
Sticks	2 Bunches of wildflowers
Pink dress, for Rebecca	Gift wrapped copy of <i>The Arabian Nights</i>
Box with paper strips and a partial paper chain	Ring box with engagement ring
Bucket	
Sponge	
Wagon	
Small boxes for soap	
Large box with a soap label	
Bar of soap	
Newspaper	

Special Effects

Train whistle

Sound of horses galloping/approaching

Sound of school bell

"Pomp and Circumstance"

"I'll always be Rebecca
of Sunnybrook Farm."

—Rebecca

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Train station. Railroad crossing sign is CS with a bench SL. Townspeople (opt.) enter and exit, carrying luggage and checking maps, etc. Aurelia enters followed by John and Jenny. Hannah enters, holding the hands of Mira and Fanny.)

AURELIA: *(In a hurry.)* Come along, children. The stagecoach will be here any moment.

JOHN: I don't know why you dragged us all down here, Mama.

AURELIA: What else was I going to do with the lot of you?

JENNY: Hannah could've minded us.

HANNAH: I would have if you needed me to, Mama.

(Aurelia turns to Hannah.)

AURELIA: *(Smiling.)* I know you would've, my darling, but I didn't want you to have to mind five small children for two whole days all by yourself. You're only 12 years old.

HANNAH: I'm almost 13! And I take care of the children all the time.

AURELIA: I know you do, darling, but I think it's only right that we see Rebecca off on her journey.

MIRA: Where is Rebecca going, Mama?

AURELIA: *(To Mira, bending down.)* She's going to live with my sisters, Jane and Miranda.

LITTLE MIRANDA: Hey! That's my name, too.

AURELIA: *(Patting Mira's head.)* I know. I named you after her. But we prefer to call you Mira.

FANNY: Who am I named after?

AURELIA: Your father named you. *(Looking down, sadly.)* Bless his soul.

FANNY: But why did he name me Fanny?

(Mark runs on.)

MARK: He named you Fanny because when you were born, the doctor dropped you on your—

AURELIA: *(Catching Mark by the arm.)* That's quite enough, Marquis Randall.

MARK: Hey! You know I like to be called Mark. "Marquis" is just so—

JOHN: *(With his nose in the air, strutting around.)* Fancy?

MARK: I was going to say "odd."

JENNY: Then I guess Papa chose the right name for you. *(Taps him on the back and runs away.)*

MARK: *(Chasing after Jenny.)* I'm going to get you, Jenny!

JOHN: Not if I get you first! *(Starts to chase after Mark.)*

AURELIA: John! You are the oldest boy and the man of the house. It's about time you started acting like it.

(John stops running.)

JOHN: Sorry, Mama. *(To Mark, teasingly.)* Stop your running, Marquis.

MARK: Stop calling me that!

AURELIA: Your father had a flair for the dramatics. He wanted your name to reflect that.

HANNAH: I really miss Papa.

AURELIA: *(Puts her arm around Hannah)* I do, too, Hannah. It's been hard on me caring for the seven of you and trying to take care of the farm.

FANNY: Is that why you're sending Rebecca away?

AURELIA: I'm not going to lie...it will be nice to have one less mouth to feed. But, no, Fanny, that's not the reason why.

JENNY: Then why are you sending her away?

AURELIA: My sister Miranda wrote to me and said she and Jane needed some help around the house. In exchange for the help, they will send Rebecca to school and give her a real, proper education.

MARK: Poor Rebecca. School is so boring.

HANNAH: I think Rebecca is quite lucky. She'll get to live in a real town and go to school for more than just a couple of months a year.

AURELIA: Miranda did ask for you, Hannah, but I'm sorry, I just couldn't spare you. You are so much help to me with the children and the farm.

HANNAH: I know, Mama. It's all right.

AURELIA: Rebecca is just so willful and boisterous. She's never been much help to me. She's always off daydreaming or getting into trouble. My sisters may be better suited to tame her wild spirit.

JOHN: Speaking of Rebecca, where is she?

AURELIA: *(Looking around.)* That's a good question.

MARK: She was right behind me. At least, I thought she was.

AURELIA: *(Calls.)* Rebecca Randall, get over here this minute!

(Rebecca enters, dreamily. She is carrying a suitcase and a pink parasol.)

REBECCA: Did you see the brook just behind the train station? I swear, the sound of the water bubbling over the stones was like a symphony to my ears.

(Aurelia crosses to Rebecca.)

AURELIA: *(Annoyed.)* Rebecca, the stagecoach will be arriving any minute and you must be on it! Your Aunt Miranda and Aunt Jane are expecting you.

REBECCA: I'm sorry, Mama. I didn't mean to dawdle. I just got swept away in my thoughts.

AURELIA: You're always getting swept away to anywhere except where you're supposed to be.

REBECCA: But there's so much beauty in the world. I can't help it if I get distracted. *(Looking down.)* I'm sorry if I've been a disappointment.

AURELIA: You are not a disappointment, Rebecca. I'm glad you see all the beauty this world has to offer. *(Taking Rebecca's hands in her own.)* Your father saw the world that way, too. That's probably why you remind me so much of him.

(Aurelia embraces Rebecca. Mr. Jeremiah Cobb enters. He takes off his hat and crosses to John.)

COBB: Hello, there. I'm Jeremiah Cobb. I drive the stagecoach from this station to Riverboro. Would any of these lovely young ladies happen to be the passenger I am to take to the Sawyer house?

MARK: *(Teasing.)* I don't know any lovely young ladies, but my sister Rebecca is supposed to go to Riverboro.

COBB: *(Chuckling.)* And which one is Rebecca?

HANNAH: *(Pointing at Rebecca.)* She's right over there with our mother.

(Cobb starts to cross to Rebecca. Aurelia sees Cobb and begins to straighten Rebecca's dress and hat.)

AURELIA: *(To Rebecca.)* It looks like it's time for you to be on your way.

(Aurelia wipes a tear from Rebecca's eye.)

REBECCA: I'm going to be just fine, Mama. Don't you worry about me. I've been on a journey before.

AURELIA: You've been to Wareham, and you only stayed overnight. That's hardly a journey.

REBECCA: It is so a journey! *(Loudly.)* I brought a nightgown and everything!

AURELIA: *(Puts her hand over Rebecca's mouth, embarrassed.)* Rebecca! How many times do I have to tell you not to talk about nightgowns in public? It isn't proper.

REBECCA: This is only the second time I've ever mentioned nightgowns in public.

MARK: More like the fifth time.

REBECCA: Okay, the fifth time. *(Takes Aurelia's hand.)* You worry about me too much, Mama.

AURELIA: *(With a chuckle.)* It's not you I'm worried about, Rebecca. *(Cobb approaches. Hands Cobb Rebecca's suitcase.)* You'll take care of my daughter on the journey to Riverboro, won't you, Mr. Cobb?

COBB: I'll care for her as if she were my own daughter.

AURELIA: Very well. *(To Children, calls.)* Say goodbye to your sister quickly so we don't miss the train home to Sunnybrook Farm.

(Note: Fanny, Hannah, John, and Mira hug Rebecca over the next couple of lines.)

COBB: Sunnybrook Farm? What a lovely name for a farm.

MIRA: It was called Randall Farm after our last name, but Rebecca changed it.

REBECCA: I had to! Sunnybrook Farm is a beautiful place with a shallow, chattering brook with a white sandy bottom and lots of little shiny pebbles. Whenever there's a bit of sunshine, the brook catches it, and it's always full of sparkles the livelong day. So, you see, it just couldn't be named Randall Farm.

[END OF FREEVIEW]