

Winnie-the-Pooh



and the Wrong Sort of Bees

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Adapted from "Winnie-the-Pooh and Some Bees" by A.A. Milne
Illustrations by E.H. Shepard

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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Big Dog Publishing

P.O. Box 1401

Rapid City, SD 57709

*“Hand in hand we come,
Christopher Robin and I
To lay this book in your lap.”*

—A.A. Milne

Winnie-the-Pooh and the Wrong Sort of Bees

CLASSIC. Adapted from the story *“Winnie-the-Pooh and Some Bees”* by A.A. Milne. In this story within a story, A.A. Milne tells his young son, Christopher Robin, a bedtime story about his stuffed bear, Winnie-the-Pooh. Out of honey, Winnie-the-Pooh hears a buzzing sound coming from a tall oak tree. He assumes there must be bees nearby, and therefore honey, since “the only reason for being a bee...is making honey.” Pooh devises a plan to trick the bees into thinking he is small black rain cloud so that he can take their honey. Pooh rolls around in the mud to make himself look like a dark cloud and borrows Christopher Robin’s blue balloon to float to the top of the oak tree, where the hive is located. Meanwhile, at Pooh’s request, Christopher Robin marches back and forth under the tree and repeats, “Tut-tut it looks like rain” to help Pooh deceive the bees. Young audiences of all ages will love this charming classic.

Performance Time: Approximately 20-30 minutes.



Left: Alan Alexander Milne with his young son Christopher Robin Milne and his teddy bear, Edward Bear, at Cotchford Farm, their home in Sussex, 1926. Photo by Howard Coster. Right: The actual stuffed toys owned by Christopher Robin and featured in the Winnie-the-Pooh stories as displayed in the New York Public Library Main Branch in New York: Tigger, Kanga (baby Roo was lost in an apple orchard in the 1930s), Edward Bear, and Eeyore.

About the Story

A.A. Milne (1882-1956) is the author of poems, essays, novels, and plays, but he is best known for his two children's books, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928). *Winnie-the-Pooh* is based on the stories Milne told his young son, Christopher Robin. The characters are inspired by Christopher Robin's stuffed animals: Edward Bear, Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, and Tigger. Milne bought Christopher a stuffed bear for his first birthday in 1921 and Christopher named the bear Edward. The teddy bear was renamed "Winnie" (for Winnipeg, Canada) after a tame Canadian brown bear was given to the London zoo. "Pooh" was originally the name of a swan Christopher Robin met while on holiday with his family. In 1925, Milne and his wife, Dorothy, purchased a country home, Cotchford Farm, in Hartfield, East Sussex. The fictional Hundred Acre Wood, where the Pooh stories are set, is modeled after the 5,000-acre Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, located about 30 miles outside London. Milne described Ashdown Forest as "...that enchanted place on the top of the forest a little boy and his bear will always be playing." The first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh* was adapted from Milne's story, "The Wrong Sort of Bees," which was first published in the *London Evening News* in 1925. The much-loved bear also appeared in Milne's poem collections *When We Were Young* (1924) and *Now We are Six* (1927).

Characters

(1 M, 1 flexible, 1 boy)

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: Kind, adventurous young boy who loves his father's stories about Winnie-the-Pooh's adventures in the Hundred Acre Wood; loves to play in the woods, explore nature, and go on adventures; male.

WINNIE-THE-POOH: Christopher Robin's stuffed teddy bear whose love of honey often leads him into trouble; lives in the fictional Hundred Acre Wood and is described as a "bear of very little brain" but is sweet, curious, and loves to create humorous poems and songs; flexible.

A.A. MILNE: Christopher Robin's father, the narrator, who tells stories about Winnie-the-Pooh's exploits in the fictional Hundred Acre Wood; male.

Note: Winnie-the-Pooh is to be depicted as a talking stuffed bear, not a talking animal.

Settings

Milne home and the Hundred Acre Wood, an imaginary forest where Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends reside.

Sets

Interior of the Milne home. There is a sitting room with a wooden staircase that leads upstairs (unseen). There are two armchairs off to one side that remain onstage throughout the play. The armchairs flank a fireplace (opt.). Note: The staircase needs to be easily moved on and off.

Exterior of Winnie-the-Pooh's home in the Hundred Acre Wood. A forest clearing. There is a large oak tree SR with a large beehive near the top and a gorse bush at its base. The oak tree has a series of steps that look like branches from the front. Winnie-the-Pooh's home is SL. The front door has a sign over the door that reads "Sanders" in gold letters. Both the house and tree need to be easily moved on and off.

Exterior of Christopher Robin's home in the Hundred Acre Wood. Christopher Robin lives inside the carved-out trunk of a giant tree in another part of the Hundred Acre Wood. His house has a green door.

Synopsis of Scenes

Prologue: Before the curtain, stage is dark.

Scene 1: The Milne home.

Scene 2: Outside Winnie-the-Pooh's home in the Hundred Acre Wood.

Scene 3: Outside Christopher Robin's house in another part of the Hundred Acre Wood.

Scene 4: Winnie-the-Pooh's home in the Hundred Acre Wood.

Props

Stuffed Pooh bear
Green balloon
Blue balloon
Slingshot
Umbrella

Special Effects

"Bump" as stuffed Pooh hits the stairs
Loud buzzing
Sound of a branch breaking
"Mud" patches (brown cloth) can be stuck on Pooh's costume
with Velcro
"Ping"
Sound of air escaping as balloon deflates

*“Isn’t it funny,
how a bear likes honey?”*

—Winnie-the-Pooh

Prologue

(Before the curtain. Stage is dark. Spotlight up on A.A. Milne.)

MILNE: *(To audience.)* You can't be in London for long without going to the zoo. There are some people who begin the zoo at the beginning, called "Way In," and walk as quickly as they can past every cage until they get to the one called "Way Out." But the nicest people go straight to the animal they love the most and stay there. So when Christopher Robin goes to the zoo, he goes to where the bears are, and he whispers something to the third keeper from the left, and doors are unlocked, and we wander through dark passages and up steep stairs, until at last we come to the special cage, and the cage is opened, and out trots something brown and furry, and with a happy cry of "Oh, Bear!" Christopher Robin rushes into its arms. Now this bear's name is Winnie, which shows what a good name for bears it is, but the funny thing is that we can't remember whether Winnie is called after Pooh, or Pooh after Winnie. We did know once, but we have forgotten. So perhaps the best thing to do is to stop with introductions and get on with the story... *(Spotlight down.)*

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Home of A.A. Milne and Christopher Robin. There is a sitting room with two armchairs that flank a fireplace. A wooden staircase leads upstairs (unseen). Milne is sitting in an armchair.)

MILNE: (To audience.) Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now... (Christopher Robin appears at the top of the stairs and begins to descend the stairs, dragging his stuffed Pooh bear behind him. "Bumps" are heard as Pooh hits the stairs.) ...bump, bump, bump behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is better way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it. And then he feels that perhaps there isn't. Anyhow, here he is at the bottom, and ready to be introduced to you... (Christopher Robin proudly displays his stuffed Pooh bear.) ...Winnie-the-Pooh.

(Christopher Robin sits in the other armchair.)

MILNE: (To Christopher Robin, indicating stuffed Pooh bear.)

When I first heard his name, I said, just as you are going to say, "But I thought he was a boy."

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: So did I.

MILNE: Then you can't call him Winnie.

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: I don't.

MILNE: But you said—

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: (Correcting.) He's Winnie-ther-Pooh.

Don't you know what "ther" means?

MILNE: Ah, yes, now I do. (To audience.) And I hope you do too because it is all the explanation you are going to get. Sometimes Winnie-the-Pooh likes a game of some sort when he comes downstairs, and sometimes he likes to sit quietly in front of the fire and listen to a story. This evening—

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: What about a story?!



MILNE: What about a story?

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-ther-Pooh one?

MILNE: I suppose I could. What sort of stories does he like?

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: About himself...because he's that sort of bear.

MILNE: Oh, I see.

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: So could you very sweetly?

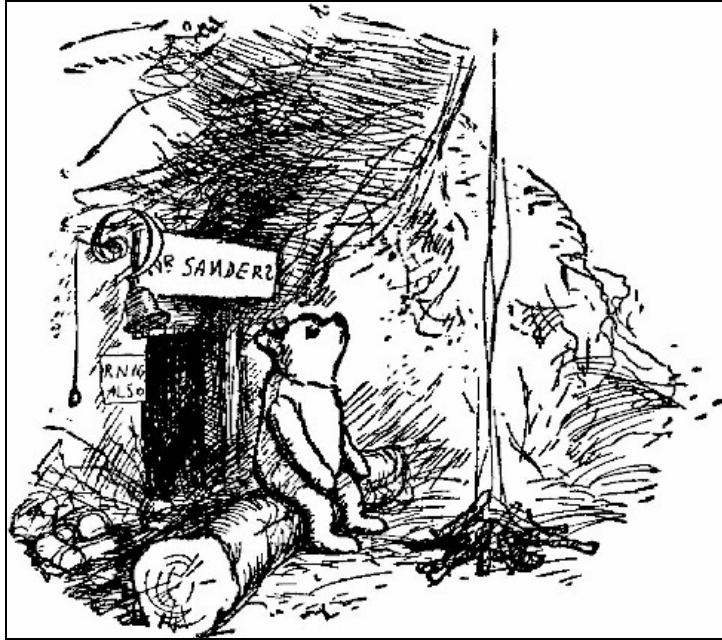
MILNE: I'll try. *(Slight pause.)* "Once upon a time, a very long time ago now, about last Friday, Winnie-the-Pooh lived in a forest all by himself under the name of Sanders."

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: What does "under the name" mean?

MILNE: It means he had the name over his door in gold letters and lived under it.

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: Winnie-ther-Pooh wasn't quite sure what it meant. *(As Pooh, in a growly voice.)* Now I do.

MILNE: Then I will go on. *(As he continues, lights slowly fade to black.)* "One day, when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak tree, and from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing noise..."



Scene 2

(AT RISE: A forest clearing in the Hundred Acre Wood where Winnie-the-Pooh lives. There is a large oak tree SR with a large beehive near the top and a gorse bush at its base. Winnie-the-Pooh's home is SR. The front door has a sign over the door that reads "Sanders" in gold letters. A loud "buzzing" is heard. Winnie-the-Pooh emerges from his home, sits down at the foot of the oak tree, puts his head between his paws, and begins to think.)

WINNIE-THE-POOH: (To himself.) That buzzing noise means something. You don't get a buzzing noise like that, just buzzing and buzzing, without it meaning something. If there's a buzzing noise, somebody's making a buzzing noise, and the only reason for making a buzzing noise that I know of is because you're a bee. (Realizes.) And the only reason for being a bee that I know of is making honey! (Rises.) And the only reason for making honey is so that I can eat it!

(Spotlight up on Milne and Christopher Robin SL. Note: For the following, Pooh's actions reflect Milne's narration.)

MILNE: (To Christopher Robin.) "So he began to climb the tree. He climbed and he climbed and he climbed, and as he climbed, he sang a little song to himself. It went like this..."

WINNIE-THE-POOH: (Sings.)

"Isn't it funny
How a bear likes honey?
Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!
I wonder why he does?"

MILNE: (To Christopher Robin.) "Then he climbed a little further...and a little further...and then just a little further. By that time, he had thought of another song."



WINNIE-THE-POOH: *(Sings.)*

“It’s a very funny thought that, if bears were bees,
They’d build their nests at the bottom of trees.
And that being so, if the bees were bears,
We shouldn’t have to climb up all these stairs.”

MILNE: *(To Christopher Robin.)* “He was getting rather tired
by this time, so that is why he sang a complaining song. He
was nearly there now, and if he just stood on that branch...”

*(Pooh is sitting or standing on a “branch” of the oak tree. The sound
of a branch breaking is heard.)*

WINNIE-THE-POOH: Oh, help! *(Steps to the “branch” below
him.)* If only I hadn’t— *(Steps onto a lower “branch.”)* You
see, what I meant to do... *(Steps on a lower “branch.”)*
...what I meant to do. Of course, it was rather— *(Steps to
the lowest “branch.”)* It all comes, I suppose... *(Says goodbye
to the last “branch,” spins round three times (opt.), and
hops/jumps gracefully into the gorse bush below. Note: Pooh hops
behind the prop bush.)* ...it all comes of liking honey so much.
Oh, help!

(Note: For the following, Pooh’s actions reflect Milne’s narration.)

MILNE: *(To Christopher Robin.)* “He crawled out of the gorse
bush, brushed the prickles from his nose, and the first
person he thought of was Christopher Robin.”

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN: *(To Milne, in awe.)* It was me? I
hardly dare believe it!

MILNE: It was you. *(Continuing.)* “So Winnie-the-Pooh went
round to his friend Christopher Robin, who lived behind a
green door in another part of the forest...”

(Winnie-the-Pooh exits. Blackout.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]