



The Web Files

by Margie Palatini • illustrated by Richard Egielski

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

NARRATOR: 'Ducktective Web' voice over from backstage. clipped, short monotone voice.

DUCKTECTIVE WEB: lead detective. Speaks in short, clipped monotone voice as narrator.

BILL: Web's partner.

P. HEN: chicken / reports first robbery.

MISS MUFFET: injured / was tossed off tuffet.

LITTLE BO PEEP: distraught/ has lost her sheep.

THREE LITTLE KITTENS: crying / lost mittens.

JACK HORNER: suspect/ they've got him cornered.

LITTLE BOY BLUE: suspect / no alibi.

HORSE 1

HORSE 2

HORSE 3

SHEEP

DIRTY RAT: Main suspect / gangster-like voice.

POLICE DOG

3 POLICE OFFICERS: singing chorus

3 BLIND MICE

3 HOPPING RABBITS

POLICE PIG

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ACT I
SCENE 1

BACKDROP/ BARNYARD. DUCKTECTIVE WEB AND HIS PARTNER BILL, ARE IN THEIR POLICE CAR RELAXING. (OR EATING DOUGHNUTS) THREE OTHER POLICE OFFICERS ARE 'WALKING THE BEAT'. NARRATOR IS OFF STAGE.

NARRATOR: This is the farm.
6:32 a.m.
My partner Bill and I were working the barnyard shift. It was peaceful.
Quiet. Then we got the call.

(off stage sound effect) **COCK - A - DOODLE - DOO!**

BILL: *(answers phone. nods. hangs up and speaks to Web.)*
A lot of squawking going on down in the coop area,
Ducktective Web. Looks like fowl play. Report says feathers
are flying. Chief says we should check out the chicks.

WEB: *(raises eyebrow. slight grin)* **Chicks?**

BILL: Check.

WEB: Let's fly. *(web and bill 'fly off' -- and exit)*

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM.

SCENE 2

HEN'S HOUSE FACADE. ENTER DUCKTECTIVE WEB AND BILL

NARRATOR: 6:35 a.m. The hen's house. We knocked on the door. She answered.

P. HEN: (*very upset. flapping wings*)

P'awk! P-p-p-awk! p'awk! p'awk! p'awk!

WEB: (*calm, cool, and collected.*) Just the **facts**, ma'am. Just the facts.

(*Bill takes notes*)

P. HEN: I've been robbed! Robbed I tell you. Robbed! Robbed! Robbed!

WEB: So you're saying that you were **robbed**, is that right ma'am? What exactly is missing from the nest, ma'am? Eggs, ma'am? Chicks, ma'am?

P. HEN: P - p - peppers.

WEB: Peppers?

P. HEN: My perfect purple peppers that were just about ready to be pickled.

WEB: About how many perfect purple almost pickled peppers would you say were pilfered, pinched and picked? (*looks to audience. back to hen*) A bushel?

P. HEN: P'awk! P'awk! A peck! A peck! I tell you. A whole purple pepper pickin' peck!

WEB: Have any idea who would pick a peck of your perfect purple almost pickled peppers?

P. HEN: Not a clue.

NARRATOR: I turned to Bill and gave a quick quack.

WEB: (*quacks*) Round up the usual suspects.

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM

SCENE 3

POLICE HEADQUARTERS. CHARACTERS 'FROZEN' IN ACTION UNTIL SCENE BEGINS. THEN LOTS OF ACTIVITY. THREE BLIND MICE WALKING W/CANES. RABBITS HOPPING. MISS MUFFET COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING TOSSED OFF TUFFET, BO PEEP WORRIED ABOUT SHEEP. KITTENS CRYING. POLICE PIG AT FRONT DESK. JACK HORNER IN CORNER COWERING W/PIE ON LAP. BOY BLUE ON STOOL BEING INTERROGATED. POLICE CHORUS SHINING FLASHLIGHTS IN HIS FACE.

NARRATOR: 9:06 a.m. Headquarters was hopping. A Miss named Muffet had just been tossed off her tuffet and a gal named Peep was missing some sheep. I noticed that three little kittens had lost their mittens. They began to cry. I wanted to help. I couldn't. I had pickled peppers to worry about.

(Muffet, Peep, Kittens showing appropriate pantomimed emotions. Jack Horner in corner, boy blue being interrogated.)

We had Horner in the corner and were trying to make Little Boy Blue quack.

WEB: Okay, Blue Boy. Quit blowing your horn. Time to make hay. Suppose you just tell me where you were this morning.

BOY BLUE: I'm innocent, I tell you! Innocent! I was under the haystack. Fast asleep! Honest. Ask anybody.

WEB: Sure. Sure. I've heard that bedtime story before. *(looks to Bill)* Got any witnesses?

BILL: *(shakes head)* No. The sheep were in the meadow. Cows were in the corn.

NARRATOR: Things looked black for boy in blue. And then . . .
(sound effect: phone rings.) . . . we got another call.

Bill answers and hangs up.

BILL: There's been some horsin' around reported down near Barn and Pen. Look's like another robbery.

NARRATOR: We put the kid out to pasture.

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM

SCENE 4

CORNER OF 'BARN AND PEN'. FARM YARD. (AS ACTION BEGINS, HORSES COME RIDING IN ON SCOOTERS, ROLLER SKATES, TRICYCLE.)

NARRATOR: 10:43 a.m. Corner of Barn and Pen. Bill and I settled down the horses.

WEB: Whoa! Whoa! You there. Like to ask you a few questions if you don't mind, sir.

HORSE 1: (british accent) Na-a-a-ay. Not at all.

WEB: What do you know about a peck of unlawfully picked perfect purple almost pickled peppers?

HORSE 1: Peppers? Peppers? A peck of purple peppers? Not a thing. But somebody just high-tailed it out of here with a tub of my tartest tasty tom-ah-toes!

WEB: (*turns to audience. Stares. Then looks back at horse.*) Tomaytoes?

HORSE: You say to-**may**-toes. . . I say to- **mah**-toes . . . BUT Somebody just hauled the whole thing off!

SHEEP: (*distressed*) And find my lettuce while you're at it too! Somebody just lifted a load of my luscious leafy lettuce not just ten minutes ago! This is Ba-a-a-d! Really Ba-a-a-d! (*bleats like sheep.*)

NARRATOR: My partner looked at me and scratched his head.

BILL: (*scratches head like he can't figure out what's happening*)

Peppers? Tomatoes? Lettuce? . . . What do you make out of all of this, Web?

NARRATOR: There was only one thing to make out of all of this. . . .

WEB: *(looks at audience. Answers deadpan.)* Salad.

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM

SCENE 5

SQUAD ROOM. CRATE AS DESK.

NARRATOR: 11:47 a.m. The squad room. My partner and I were still trying to quack the case but we didn't have any idea who to I.D.

BILL: *(frustrated, Bill throws his notes to the floor.)* Rats!

WEB: *(Raises arm. still emotionless voice)* That's it!

NARRATOR: There was only one suspect who was sneaky enough, wily enough and tricky enough to pick a peck of perfect purple almost pickled peppers, take a tub of tasty tart tomatoes and lift a load of luscious leafy lettuce.

12:22 p.m.

My partner and I were hot on the tail of . . . That Dirty Rat.

(Web and Bill exit.)

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM

SCENE 6

DIRTY RAT'S HOME. GARBAGE LITTERED. TABLE W/EMPTY PLATE IN RAT'S 'HOLE'.
WEB AND BILL ENTER, CROSS TO GARBAGE CAN.

NARRATOR: 12:46 p.m. A real hole in the wall.

(Web and Bill pound on door. Show badges.)

WEB: We know you're holed up in there, you dirty rat. Let us in.

NARRATOR: He did.

DIRTY RAT: Eh, what's up, *Duck*?

WEB: There's been some trouble down on the farm. What do you know about a rash of recent robberies?

DIRTY RAT: *(innocently)* Robberies? Robberies? What makes you think *I* know anything about a robbery? I'm no cheesy snitch.

WEB: Can it, Ratz. You've been in nothing but garbage for years.

DIRTY RAT: *(grins)* Okay. Sure. Sure. Go ahead, flat-foot. Look anywhere you want. *(smirks)* But, make it quick, Quacker . . . you're interrupting my lunch."

WEB: *(looks around table)* Lunch, eh, Rodent?

DIRTY RAT: *(hisses)* Hey, what's going on here? You're not going to pin this rap on me. Where's your evidence, you waddling webbed-foot? You got nothing on me. Nothing, see? I'm clean! Clean, I tell you. Clean!

(Web gets close to rat, and picks lettuce from rat's chin as narrator talks.)

NARRATOR: I picked a piece of lettuce from under his chin.

WEB: *(picks lettuce and smiles)* Not clean enough, you Dirty Rat.

NARRATOR: I smelled his breath. *(Web sniffs and nods)* Just as I suspected. Garlic mayo.

WEB: Book him, Ducko. His salad days are over.

DIRTY RAT: Over? But it can't be over! *(rat is crying, as he is cuffed and led away by POLICE DOG.)* I haven't even had my dessert!

(Bill can be eating rat's dessert --- twinkies, cupcakes, etc.)

BILL: *(pats Web on the back)* Looks like you quacked another one, Web. But how did you ever figure it was him?

WEB: *(looks at audience. back at Bill)* Just played a hunch he ate the evidence for lunch. . . . and forgot to use his napkin and brush his teeth . . . He's a dirty rat. He never did have good hygiene."

POLICE CHORUS: DUM DE DUM DUM

(ALL EXIT)

SCENE 7

ENTER DIRTY RAT HOLDING HIS 'NUMBER' AGAINST HIS STRIPED JAIL CLOTHES.
HOLDING A TOOTHBRUSH.

NARRATOR: The Dirty Rat was tried and convicted on three counts of vegetable vagrancy, offensive bad breath and not using a napkin to wipe under his chin. He was sent up the river and was sentenced to six months of farm labor with time off for good behavior, better table manners and clean teeth.
Case closed.

(As these lines are being read, all cast members come out on stage and all join in with last line.)

DUM DE DUM DUM. DUM!

PROPERTY LIST:

Notebook, pencil and cell phone - Bill.

Badges ---ID Bill, Web, Police Officers.

Staff - Bo Peep

3 pairs dark glasses (mice)

Pie

3 flashlights

tricycle, scooter, skates

crates

empty plate

hand cuffs

toothbrush

(green tissue paper for 'lettuce')

cut out car for Bill and Web (use lightweight foam core)

garbage can (aluminum)

haystacks

street sign of 'barn & pen'

nest

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS:

WEB and BILL: suit/tie fedora hats, glasses for Bill, duck bills, felt webbed feet - or orange sneakers.

P. HEN: dress w/apron, kerchief, chicken wings

MUFFET: fancy dress

BO PEEP: frilly blouse w/jumper, brimmed hat, staff

3 KITTENS: kids clothes, cat ears, tails, whiskered faces

JACK HORNER: knickers or shorts and knee socks, vest, pie

BOY BLUE: all blue attire, bugle

HORSES: helmets, socks pulled over shoes and hands to look like 'hooves', tails

SHEEP: black stockings, skirt, 'wooly jacket'

DIRTY RAT: jeans, tee shirt, dirty. mouse ears, black nose, tail, long underwear striped with black tape.

POLICE DOG, PIG, CHORUS: blue shirts, black ties, black pants, police hats, badges, pig nose, dog ears.

MICE: ears, tails, glasses (shirts can have numbers 1,2,3 on them)

RABBITS: bunny ears, tails

*Note: these are only suggestions. Characters are dressed as humans, with hint of their animal personas.

SET SUGGESTIONS:

Large canvas/or paper backdrop of farmyard painting. Have children paint barn, corn stalks, fence, trees, sun, etc. that remains constant throughout play, with props or small backdrops indicating new scenes.

(Or: individually painted large pieces of foam core. (trees) (barnyard) (hen house) etc. that 'stagehands' bring on and off as needed. (they hold up and stand behind).)

hen's house -- paint flat cardboard or foamcore like little chicken coop. Her name above.

headquarters -- crates as desks, barrels.

street sign that says: "barn" "pen"

dirty rat home --- garbage can on side with lid, crate as table, litter around

(If 'play' is for classroom use only --- just make large painted backdrop of farm and hang up against blackboard.)