

Curricular Connections

How Rabbits Got White Fur in Winter

Place-based Ecology and Natural History:

This story is based on a relationship between the snow-shoe hare and the golden crowned kinglet that I read about in Bernd Heinrich's book *Winter World*. This story shares information about winter adaptations for snow-shoe hares such as big feet for packing snow and changing from brown to white. Other characters include the fox as a predator and the beaver as a magic gift-giver. The gender roles have been switched in this story as well to better reflect the diversity of our places and family structures. The primary caregiver of the young rabbits is their father. The story also talks about what foods rabbit eat in the winter, which could be further expanded on.

Explore:

- Look for rabbit tracks or other animal tracks in the snow and follow them!
- Be a detective and solve the mystery of the tracks: where they are going, who might be following them, how fast the animal is moving, etc.
- Practice hopping like a rabbit with back feet out first to make similar track patterns.
- Play the Game Camouflage!
- Make a magic staff with a stick and decorate it. You can wrap it with yarn, add ribbon streamers, or make carvings on it with a knife. (Only use knives with experienced adults).
- Make dried clover tea and pretend you are a little rabbit!
- Illustrate the story yourself and retell it to others.
- Look for nests: they are easier to find this time of year when the foliage is gone.

Reflect and Share:

Learners can share how humans adapt for the winter and what might make their time outdoors even more fun and comfortable at this time of year. They can discuss predator/prey relationships and how this makes them feel.

Photos:



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