

E. NESBIT'S THE  
**RAILWAY  
CHILDREN**

WRITTEN BY **MIKE KENNY** DIRECTED BY **DAMIAN CRUDEN**

**300m**

**KING'S CROSS THEATRE**

Good's Way, King's Cross, London N1C 4UR

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THE OLIVIER AWARD-WINNING SHOW RETURNS FROM 16 DEC!

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Who was E. Nesbit,  
the author of *The Railway Children*?

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Edith Nesbit was born in London in 1858. When she was four her father died but her mother bravely continued to run the agricultural college her husband, and before that, his father, had founded in Kennington, London.

Her childhood was shared with her sister, half sister and three brothers. She was educated on the continent when she accompanied her mother and sister Mary travelling throughout France, Germany and Spain. This was not an educational grand tour but an endeavour to get her sister well as she was suffering from tuberculosis.





Edith Nesbit grew up as a tomboy. As a little girl, she much preferred playing pirates to dressing dolls. The youngest of six children, she loved going on imaginary expeditions with her big brothers: digging caves, building rafts and generally getting dirty. It was a happy but unsettled childhood: her father died when she was only three and the family moved to France and Germany where she went to school before returning to Britain.



In 1880, at the age of 22, she married Hubert Bland, a bank clerk with a keen interest in politics. They would go on to have two boys and two girls together, but no sooner were they married than they suffered a double blow. Not only did Hubert come down with smallpox but while he was off work, his partner in a brush-making business ran away with all the money.



The two of them turned to writing as a way to support their family. While Hubert concentrated on journalism, Edith produced short stories, novels, poems and essays – anything to earn a living. She was a fast writer and her work kept them alive, but it was only when an editor asked her to write an article based on her childhood that she found her true voice.

“The happy memories of that golden time crowd thickly upon me,” she wrote as she reinvented herself as a children’s author at the age of 41. She became famous for *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*, the first of a series of adventure stories about the six children of the Bastable family. Edith, the former tomboy, made sure her young characters were always disobeying the grown-ups, getting into fights and having the kind of fun she had enjoyed as a child.

Her acclaim built with *Five Children and It*, *The Phoenix and the Carpet* and then, of course, *The Railway Children*, which she wrote for serialisation in *The London Magazine* in 1905.

Eventually she would write more than 60 children’s novels and anthologies including *The Enchanted Castle*, about a ring that could make you invisible, and *The House of Arden*, in which modern-day children travel back to the time of Guy Fawkes.



‘A GLORIOUS ADAPTATION  
OF E. NESBIT’S CHILDREN’S CLASSIC’

*Guardian*



‘AN ENCHANTING  
STEAM-POWERED FAMILY SHOW –  
SPIRITED, INVENTIVE AND MAGICAL’

*Time Out*





In 2008 *The Railway Children* was adapted for the stage by Mike Kenny and was originally staged by York Theatre Royal in partnership with the National Railway Museum in 2008, and ran for two packed

summer seasons on location at the museum in York. The show features a stage built around a real train track and a 60-tonne locomotive that steams into the theatre.

This is what Mike Kenny has to say about E. Nesbit. 'Edith Nesbit was a pioneer of children's literature and a fascinating woman. She writes with a conversational power that still feels natural over a hundred years later. It hasn't dated. Also,

she understands children and the way they intuit that something is wrong, even when the adult world tries to protect them from the knowledge. It's a story about communication and the things that get in the way, and the Railway becomes a symbol of that. It's the thing that takes their father away, and the instrument of their coming together at the end.'





In 2010, the production of *The Railway Children* transferred to Waterloo Station, playing to sell-out houses in the former Eurostar terminal. Returning in 2011, the show won the Olivier Award for Best Entertainment before crossing the Atlantic and opening in Toronto, Canada. Now, the show returns to London to King's Cross, set in a new, purpose built 1,000 seat venue complete with state of the art heating system. **ii.** Come and find *The Railway Children* at King's Cross Theatre, just a 5 minute walk away



COME AND FIND  
**THE RAILWAY CHILDREN AT  
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JUST A 300m AWAY



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