

= Watership Down =

Watership Down is a classic adventure novel , written by English author Richard Adams , published by Rex Collings Ltd of London in 1972 . Set in southern England , the story features a small group of rabbits . Although they live in their natural environment , they are anthropomorphised , possessing their own culture , language , proverbs , poetry , and mythology . Evoking epic themes , the novel follows the rabbits as they escape the destruction of their warren and seek a place to establish a new home , encountering perils and temptations along the way .

Watership Down was Richard Adams ' first novel . Although it was rejected by several publishers before Collings accepted it , it won the annual Carnegie Medal , annual Guardian Prize , and other book awards . It was adapted into the 1978 animated film Watership Down . Later there was a television series also titled Watership Down which ran from 1999 to 2001 .

Adams completed a sequel almost 25 years later , Tales from Watership Down (Random House , 1996 ; Hutchinson and Alfred A. Knopf imprints) . It is a collection of 19 short stories about El @-@ ahrairah and the rabbits of the Watership Down warren , with " Notes on Pronunciation " and " Lapine Glossary " .

= = Origin and publication history = =

The title refers to the rabbits ' destination , Watership Down , a hill in the north of Hampshire , England , near the area where Adams grew up . The story began as tales that Richard Adams told his young daughters Juliet and Rosamond during long car journeys . As he explained in 2007 , he " began telling the story of the rabbits ... improvised off the top of my head , as we were driving along . " The daughters insisted he write it down ? " they were very , very persistent " . After some delay he began writing in the evenings and completed it 18 months later . The book is dedicated to the two girls .

Adams 's descriptions of wild rabbit behaviour were based on The Private Life of the Rabbit (1964) , by British naturalist Ronald Lockley . The two later became friends , embarking on an Antarctic tour that became the subject of a co @-@ authored book , Voyage Through the Antarctic (A. Lane , 1982) .

Watership Down was rejected seven times before it was accepted by Rex Collings . The one @-@ man London publisher Collings wrote to an associate , " I 've just taken on a novel about rabbits , one of them with extra @-@ sensory perception . Do you think I 'm mad ? " The associate did call it " a mad risk " in her obituary of Collings ; " a book as bizarre by an unknown writer which had been turned down by the major London publishers ; but it was also dazzlingly brave and intuitive . " Collings had little capital and could not pay an advance but " he got a review copy onto every desk in London that mattered . " Adams wrote that it was Collings who gave Watership Down its title . There was a second edition in 1973 .

Macmillan USA , then a media giant , published the first U.S. edition in 1974 and a Dutch edition was also published that year by Het Spectrum . According to WorldCat , participating libraries hold copies in 18 languages of translation .

= = Plot summary = =

In the Sandleford warren , Fiver , a young runt rabbit who is a seer , receives a frightening vision of his warren 's imminent destruction . When he and his brother Hazel fail to convince their chief rabbit of the need to evacuate , they set out on their own with a small band of eleven rabbits to search for a new home , barely eluding the Owsla , the warren 's military caste .

The travelling group of rabbits finds itself following the leadership of Hazel , previously an unimportant member of the warren . They travel through dangerous territory , with Bigwig and Silver , both former Owsla , as the strongest rabbits among them . Eventually they meet a rabbit named Cowslip , who invites them to join his warren . However , when Bigwig is nearly killed in a snare , the rabbits realize that the new warren is managed by a farmer who protects the rabbits but also

harvests a number of them for his own purposes , and the residents of the new warren are simply using them to increase their own odds of survival . After Fiver rescues Bigwig from the snare they continue on their journey .

Fiver 's visions promise a safe place in which to settle , and the group eventually finds Watership Down , an ideal location to set up their new warren . They are soon reunited with Holly and Bluebell , also from the Sandleford Warren , who reveal that Fiver 's vision was true and the entire warren was destroyed by humans .

Although Watership Down is a peaceful habitat , Hazel realizes there are no does (female rabbits) , thus making the future of the warren certain to end with the inevitable death of the rabbits present . With the help of a black @-@ headed gull named Kehaar , they locate a nearby warren , Efrafa , which is overcrowded and has many does . Hazel sends a small embassy to Efrafa to present their request for does . While waiting for the group to return , Hazel and Pipkin scout the nearby Nuthanger Farm to find two pairs of hutch rabbits there ; Hazel leads a raid on the farm the next day and rescues two does and a buck from the hutch . When the emissary returns , Hazel and his rabbits learn Efrafa is a police state led by the despotic General Woundwort , and the four rabbits dispatched there manage to return with little more than their lives intact .

However , the group does manage to identify an Efrafan doe named Hyzenthlay who wishes to leave the warren and can recruit other does to join in the escape . Hazel and Bigwig devise a plan to rescue the group and join them on Watership Down , after which the Efrafan escapees start their new life of freedom .

Shortly thereafter the Owsla of Efrafa , led by Woundwort himself arrives to attack the newly formed warren at Watership Down , but through Bigwig 's bravery and loyalty and Hazel 's ingenuity , the Watership Down rabbits seal the fate of the Efrafan general by unleashing the Nuthanger Farm watchdog . A formidable fighter by rabbit standards , Woundwort fearlessly stands his ground when the dog closes on him for the kill . His body , however , is never found , and at least one of his former followers continues to believe in his survival . Hazel is nearly killed by a cat , but is saved by the farm girl Lucy , the owner of the escaped hutch rabbits .

The story 's epilogue tells the reader of how Hazel , dozing in his burrow one " chilly , blustery morning in March " some years later , is visited by El @-@ Ahirrah , the spiritual overseer of all rabbits , and hero of many rabbit stories , who invites Hazel to join his own Owsla . Leaving his friends and no @-@ longer @-@ needed body behind , Hazel departs Watership Down with the spirit @-@ guide , " running easily down through the wood , where the first primroses were beginning to bloom . "

= = Characters = =

Hazel : The protagonist , Fiver 's brother ; he leads the rabbits from Sandleford and eventually becomes Chief Rabbit . Though Hazel is not particularly large or powerful , he is loyal , brave , and a quick thinker . He sees the good in each individual , and what they bring to the table ; in so doing , he makes sure that no one gets left behind , thus earning the respect and loyalty of his warren . He often relies on Fiver 's advice , and trusts in his brother 's instincts absolutely .

Fiver : A runt rabbit whose name literally means " Little Thousand " (rabbits have a single word , " hrair " , for all numbers greater than four ; Fiver 's name in Lapine , Hrairoo , indicates that he is the smallest of a litter of five or more rabbits) and Hazel 's younger brother . As a seer , he has visions and very strong instincts . Fiver is one of the most intelligent rabbits in the group . He is quiet and intuitive , and though he does not directly act as a leader , the others listen to and follow his advice . Vilthuril becomes his mate .

Bigwig : An ex @-@ Owsla officer , and the largest and bravest rabbit of the group . His name in Lapine is Thlayli , which literally means " Fur @-@ head " and refers to the shock of fur on the back of his head . Though he is powerful and fierce , he is also shown to be cunning in his own way when he devises a plan to defeat the larger and stronger General Woundwort . His final battle with Woundwort leaves him severely wounded , but he survives and becomes the leader of Hazel 's Owsla .

Blackberry : A clever buck rabbit with black @-@ tipped ears . He is often capable of understanding concepts that the other rabbits find incomprehensible . He realises , for instance , that wood floats , and the rabbits use this tactic twice to travel on water . He also works out how to dismantle the snare that almost kills Bigwig , saving him . He is one of Hazel 's most trusted advisors , given the task to plan a way to rescue does from Efrafa .

Holly : Former captain of the Sandleford Warren Owsla , escapes with Bluebell when his warren is destroyed by men . He is near death when he finds the warren at Watership Down , but is nursed back to health and becomes one of Hazel 's most trusted companions .

Bluebell : Buck rabbit who escapes with Holly during the destruction of Sandleford and tells jokes to cope and help Holly

Strawberry : Buck from Cowslip 's warren who leaves with the Watership Down rabbits after his doe is killed by a snare . Strawberry is strong and sleek but not as hardy as the other rabbits given his warren upbringing but learns quickly and gets along well with the group . It is for this reason that he is selected to represent the rabbits on an expedition to Efrafa .

Haystack : One of the hutch rabbits who escapes in order to live with the wild rabbits

Buckthorn : A strong buck who was expected to be part of the Sandleford Owsla once he reached maturity .

Hawkbit : Described in the book as a " rather stupid rabbit " but is accepted by Hazel regardless .

Dandelion : A buck rabbit notable for his storytelling ability and speed . He is instrumental in luring the Nuthanger Farm dog into the Efrafans during the siege of Watership Down .

Silver : A strong buck rabbit , given his name for his silver @-@ gray fur , he fights alongside Bigwig and helps defend the rabbits during their journey . He is teased for his silver fur at the Sandleford warren which is one of the reasons he was more willing to leave .

Pipkin : A small and timid buck rabbit , who looks to Hazel for guidance and protection . Hazel encourages him , and Pipkin grows very loyal to Hazel . He proves to be a constant comforter , particularly for Holly after the destruction of Sandleford warren . His name is Hlao in Lapine .

Hyzenthlay : A doe who lives in Efrafa and assists Bigwig in arranging for the liberation of its inhabitants . General Woundwort , who suspects her of fomenting dissension , orders his guards to keep a close eye on her . She escapes Efrafa with Bigwig and becomes Hazel 's mate . Like Fiver , she has visions . Her name means literally " shine @-@ dew @-@ fur " , or " fur shining like dew " .

Blackavar : A rabbit with very dark fur who tries to escape from Efrafa but is apprehended , mutilated , and put on display to discourage further escape attempts . When he is liberated by Bigwig , he quickly proves himself an expert tracker and ranger .

Kehaar : A black @-@ headed gull who is forced , by an injured wing , to take refuge on Watership Down , and befriends the rabbits when they help him . He is characterized by his frequent impatience , guttural accent and unusual phrasing . After discovering the Efrafa warren and helping the rabbits , he rejoins his colony , but promises to visit . According to Adams , Kehaar was based on a fighter from the Norwegian Resistance in World War II .

General Woundwort : The main antagonist : a fearless , cunning and brutally efficient rabbit who was orphaned at a young age , Woundwort founded the Efrafa warren and is its tyrannical chief . Though larger and stronger than Bigwig , he lacks mercy and kindness . He even leads an attack to destroy the Watership warren as an act of revenge against Bigwig stealing does from Efrafa , which is narrowly defeated by Hazel 's ingenuity and Bigwig 's bravery . After his apparent death fighting the Nuthanger farm dog , he lives on in rabbit legend as a bogeyman .

Captain Campion : Woundwort 's most trusted subordinate , Campion is a loyal , brave and clever officer . After Woundwort disappears , he becomes the Chief Rabbit of Efrafa and reforms it , making peace with the Watership rabbits .

Vervain : The head of the Council police in Efrafa . When Woundwort 's forces storm the Honeycomb , he is ordered by Woundwort to kill Fiver , but Fiver 's supernatural calmness and prophesising of his (Vervain 's) death terrify him into fleeing .

Frith : A god @-@ figure who created the world and promised that rabbits would always be allowed to thrive . In Lapine , his name literally means " the sun " .

El @-@ ahrairah : A rabbit trickster folk hero , who is the protagonist of nearly all of the rabbits '

stories . He represents what every rabbit wants to be ; smart , devious , tricky , and devoted to the well @-@ being of his warren . In Lapine , his name is a contraction of the phrase Elil @-@ hrair @-@ rah , which means " prince with a thousand enemies " . His stories of cleverness (and excessive hubris) are very similar to Br 'er Rabbit and Anansi .

Prince Rainbow : A god @-@ figure who serves as a foil to El @-@ ahrairah . He attempts to rein in El @-@ ahrairah several times , but is always outsmarted by the rabbit .

Rabscuttle : Another mythical folk hero , Rabscuttle is El @-@ ahrairah 's second in command and the Owsla leader . He participates in many of the El @-@ ahrairah 's capers . He is considered to be almost as clever as his chief .

Black Rabbit of Inlé : A somber phantom servant of the god Frith who appears in rabbit folklore as a kind of analog to the grim reaper , and similarly ensures all rabbits die at their predestined time . " Inlé " is the Lapine term for the moon or darkness .

= = Lapine language = =

" Lapine " is a fictional language created by author Richard Adams for the novel , where it is spoken by the rabbit characters . The fragments of language presented by Adams consist of a few dozen distinct words , and are chiefly used for the naming of rabbits , their mythological characters , and objects in their world .

= = Themes = =

Watership Down has been described as an allegory , with the labours of Hazel , Fiver , Bigwig , and Silver " mirror [ing] the timeless struggles between tyranny and freedom , reason and blind emotion , and the individual and the corporate state . " Adams draws on classical heroic and quest themes from Homer and Virgil , creating a story with epic motifs .

= = = The Hero , The Odyssey , and The Aeneid = = =

The book explores the themes of exile , survival , heroism , leadership , political responsibility , and the " making of a hero and a community " . Joan Bridgman 's analysis of Adams 's works in The Contemporary Review identifies the community and hero motifs : " [T] he hero 's journey into a realm of terrors to bring back some boon to save himself and his people " is a powerful element in Adams 's tale . This theme derives from the author 's exposure to the works of mythologist Joseph Campbell , especially his study of comparative mythology , The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949) , and in particular , Campbell 's " monomyth " theory , also based on Carl Jung 's view of the unconscious mind , that " all the stories in the world are really one story . "

The concept of the hero has invited comparisons between Watership Down 's characters and those in Homer 's Odyssey and Virgil 's Aeneid . Hazel 's courage , Bigwig 's strength , Blackberry 's ingenuity and craftiness , and Dandelion 's and Bluebell 's poetry and storytelling all have parallels in the epic poem Odyssey . Kenneth Kitchell declared , " Hazel stands in the tradition of Odysseus , Aeneas , and others " . Tolkien scholar John Rateliff calls Adams 's novel an Aeneid " what @-@ if " book : what if the seer Cassandra (Fiver) had been believed and she and a company had fled Troy (Sandleford Warren) before its destruction ? What if Hazel and his companions , like Odysseus , encounter a seductive home at Cowslip 's Warren (Land of the Lotus Eaters) ? Rateliff goes on to compare the rabbits ' battle with Woundwort 's Efrafans to Aeneas 's fight with Turnus 's Latins . " By basing his story on one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages and Renaissance , Adams taps into a very old myth : the flight from disaster , the heroic refugee in search of a new home , a story that was already over a thousand years old when Virgil told it in 19 BC . "

= = = Religious symbolism = = =

It has been suggested that Watership Down contains symbolism of several religions , or that the

stories of El @-@ ahrairah were meant to mimic some elements of real @-@ world religion . When asked in a 2007 BBC Radio interview about the religious symbolism in the novel , Adams stated that the story was " nothing like that at all . " Adams said that the rabbits in Watership Down did not worship , however , " they believed passionately in El @-@ ahrairah " . Adams explained that he meant the book to be , " only a made @-@ up story ... in no sense an allegory or parable or any kind of political myth . I simply wrote down a story I told to my little girls " . Instead , he explained , the " let @-@ in " religious stories of El @-@ ahrairah were meant more as legendary tales , similar to a rabbit Robin Hood , and that these stories were interspersed throughout the book as humorous interjections to the often " grim " tales of the " real story " .

= = Reception = =

The Economist heralded the book 's publication , saying " If there is no place for Watership Down in children ? s bookshops , then children ? s literature is dead . " Peter Prescott , senior book reviewer at Newsweek , gave the novel a glowing review : " Adams handles his suspenseful narrative more dextrously than most authors who claim to write adventure novels , but his true achievement lies in the consistent , comprehensible and altogether enchanting civilisation that he has created . " Kathleen J. Rothen and Beverly Langston identified the work as one that " subtly speaks to a child " , with " engaging characters and fast @-@ paced action [that] make it readable . " This echoed Nicholas Tucker 's praise for the story 's suspense in the New Statesman : " Adams ... has bravely and successfully resurrected the big picaresque adventure story , with moments of such tension that the helplessly involved reader finds himself checking whether things are going to work out all right on the next page before daring to finish the preceding one . "

The " enchanting " world Prescott admired was not as well received upon its 1974 American publication . Although again the object of general approval , reception in the United States was more mixed , unlike the predominantly positive reviews of 1972 . D. Keith Mano , a science fiction writer and conservative social commentator writing in the National Review , declared that the novel was " pleasant enough , but it has about the same intellectual firepower as Dumbo . " He pilloried it further : " Watership Down is an adventure story , no more than that : rather a swashbuckling crude one to boot . There are virtuous rabbits and bad rabbits : if that ? s allegory , Bonanza is an allegory . "

John Rowe Townsend notes that the book quickly achieved such a high popularity despite the fact that it " came out at a high price and in an unattractive jacket from a publisher who had hardly been heard of . " Fred Inglis , in his book The Promise of Happiness : Value and meaning in children 's fiction , praises the author ? s use of prose to express the strangeness of ordinary human inventions from the rabbits ' perspective .

Watership Down 's universal motifs of liberation and self @-@ determination have led to the tendency of minority groups to read their own narrative into the novel , despite the author 's assurance (in 2005) that it " was never intended to become some sort of allegory or parable . " Rachel Kadish , reflecting on her own superimposition of the founding of Israel onto Watership Down , has remarked " Turns out plenty of other people have seen their histories in that book ... some people see it as an allegory for struggles against the Cold War , fascism , extremism ... a protest against materialism , against the corporate state . Watership Down can be Ireland after the famine , Rwanda after the massacres . " Kadish has praised both the fantasy genre and Watership Down for its " motifs [that] hit home in every culture ... all passersby are welcome to bring their own subplots and plug into the archetype . "

= = = Awards = = =

Adams won the 1972 Carnegie Medal from the Library Association , recognising the year 's best children 's book by a British subject . He also won the annual Guardian Children 's Fiction Prize , a similar award that authors may not win twice . In 1977 California schoolchildren selected it for the inaugural California Young Reader Medal in the Young Adult category , which annually honours one book from the last four years . In The Big Read , a 2003 survey of the British public , it was voted the

forty @-@ second greatest book of all time .

= = Criticism = =

= = = Gender roles = = =

The 1993 Puffin Modern Classics edition of the novel contains an afterword by Nicholas Tucker , who wrote that stories such as *Watership Down* " now fit rather uneasily into the modern world of consideration of both sexes " . He contrasted Hazel 's sensitivity to Fiver with the " far more mechanical " attitude of the bucks towards does , who Tucker considers are portrayed as " little more than passive baby @-@ factories " .

In " *Male Chauvinist Rabbits* , " an essay originally published in the *New York Times Book Review* , Selma G. Lanes criticized Adams 's treatment of gender . She observed that the first third of the story is a " celebration of male camaraderie , competence , bravery and loyalty as a scraggly bunch of yearling bucks ... arrive triumphant at a prospectively ideal spot " , only to realize that they have no females for mating . " Fully the last two @-@ thirds of Adams 's saga , " Lanes argued , " is devoted to what one male reviewer has blithely labelled " *The Rape of the Sabine Rabbits* " , a ruthless , single @-@ minded and rather mean @-@ spirited search for females ? not because *Watership Down* 's males miss their companionship or yearn for love , but rather to perpetuate the existing band . " For Adams , Lanes continued , the does are only " instruments of reproduction " to prevent the achievement of reaching *Watership Down* from " becoming a hollow victory . " As evidence , Lanes pointed to Hazel and Holly 's assessment of the rescued Nuthanger does ' value : " it came naturally ... to consider the two Nuthanger does simply as breeding stock for the warren . "

Lanes argued that this view of the female rabbits came from Adams himself rather than his source text , Ronald Lockley 's *The Private Life of the Rabbit* . In Lockley 's text , by contrast , the rabbit world is matriarchal , and new warrens are always initiated by dissatisfied , young females . Hence , Lanes concluded , Adams 's novel is " marred by an attitude towards females that finds more confirmation in Hugh Hefner 's *Playboy* than R. M. Lockley 's *The Private Life of the Rabbit* . "

In similar vein , literary critic Jane Resh Thomas stated that *Watership Down* " draws upon ... an anti @-@ feminist social tradition which , removed from the usual human context and imposed upon rabbits , is eerie in its clarity . " Thomas did find much to admire about *Watership Down* , calling it a " splendid story " . For her , its " anti @-@ feminist bias ... damages the novel in only a minor way . " She later explained : " I wrote about *Watership Down* because I was angry and hurt when I read the book I felt he [Adams] had treated me and my kind with a contempt I couldn 't be silent about . "

Adams ' 1996 sequel , *Tales from Watership Down* includes stories where the female rabbits play a more prominent role in the *Watership Down* warren . It has been suggested that this might have been an attempt to modernise the story , to make it more in tune with the political sensibilities of the 1990s , when it was published .

= = Adaptations = =

= = = Film = = =

In 1978 Martin Rosen wrote and directed an animated film adaptation of *Watership Down* . The voice cast included John Hurt , Richard Briers , Harry Andrews , Simon Cadell , Nigel Hawthorne , and Roy Kinnear . The film featured the song " *Bright Eyes* " , sung by Art Garfunkel . Released as a single , the song became a UK number one hit .

Although the essentials of the plot remained relatively unchanged , the film omits several side plots . Though the *Watership Down* warren eventually grew to seventeen rabbits , with the additions of Strawberry , Holly , Bluebell , and three hutch rabbits liberated from the farm , the movie only

includes a band of eight . Rosen 's adaptation was praised for " cutting through Adams ' book ... to get to the beating heart " .

The film has also seen some positive critical attention . In 1979 the film received a nomination for the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation . Additionally , British television station Channel 4 's 2006 documentary 100 Greatest Cartoons named it the 86th greatest cartoon of all time .

= = = Television = = =

From 1999 to 2001 , the book was also adapted as an animated television series , broadcast on CITV in the UK and on YTV in Canada . It was produced by Martin Rosen and starred several well @-@ known British actors , including Stephen Fry , Rik Mayall , Dawn French , John Hurt , and Richard Briers , running for a total of 39 episodes over three seasons . Although the story was broadly based on that of the novel and most characters and events retained , some of the story lines and characters (especially in later episodes) were entirely new . In 2003 , the second season was nominated for a Gemini Award for Best Original Music Score for a Dramatic Series .

= = = Miniseries = = =

In July 2014 , it was confirmed that the BBC would be airing a new animated series based on the book . In April 2016 it was announced that the series would be a co @-@ production between the BBC and Netflix , and would consist of four one @-@ hour episodes . The series will have a budget of £ 20 million .

= = = Theatre = = =

In 2006 , Watership Down was again adapted for the stage , this time by Rona Munro . It ran at the Lyric Hammersmith in London . Directed by Melly Still , the cast included Matthew Burgess , Joseph Traynor , and Richard Simons . The tone of the production was inspired by the tension of war : in an interview with The Guardian , Still commented , " The closest humans come to feeling like rabbits is under war conditions ... We 've tried to capture that anxiety . " A reviewer at The Times called the play " an exciting , often brutal tale of survival " and said that " even when it ? s a muddle , it ? s a glorious one . "

In 2011 , Watership Down was adapted for the Lifeline Theatre in Chicago by John Hildreth . This production was directed by Katie McLean Hainsworth and the cast included Scott T. Barsotti , Chris Daley , Paul S. Holmquist , and Mandy Walsh .

= = = Role @-@ playing game = = =

Watership Down inspired the creation of Bunnies & Burrows , a role @-@ playing game in which the main characters are talking rabbits , published in 1976 by Fantasy Games Unlimited . It introduced several innovations to role @-@ playing game design , being the first game to allow players to have non @-@ humanoid roles , as well as the first with detailed martial arts and skill systems . Fantasy Games Unlimited published a second edition of the game in 1982 , and the game was modified and republished by Steve Jackson Games as an official GURPS supplement in 1992 .

= = = Music = = =

The song " Bright Eyes " was written by Mike Batt and performed by Art Garfunkel for the 1978 film adaptation of the book Watership Down . In addition to this song , numerous bands or musicians have made reference to Watership Down in their music :

Italian power metal band Trick or Treat released the first of their planned two Watership Down concept albums in 2012 . The album is called Rabbits ' Hill Pt . 1 . The tracklist includes a cover of the song " Bright Eyes " originally written by Mike Batt .

American folk rock trio America performed a song titled " Watership Down " , released by Warner Bros. Records in April 1976 on their Hideaway album . Composed by singer / songwriter Gerry Beckley , the song 's lyrics refer obliquely to the story elements , including the phrase " you might hear them in the distance , if your ear 's to the ground . "

Swedish progressive rock musician Bo Hansson recorded a suite named " Rabbit Music " which was based on the book , as part of his 1975 album Attic Thoughts . Two years later , Hansson released an entire album devoted to the novel , titled Music Inspired by Watership Down .

The British post @-@ hardcore band Fall of Efrafa is a concept band who has recorded a trilogy of albums based loosely on the mythology of Watership Down . This trilogy is known as The Warren of Snares and consists of the albums Owsla (2006) , Elil (2007) and Inlé (2009) .

The British electronic group Ladytron shot a music video for their single " Ghosts " , off their 2008 album Velocifero , which featured many references to Watership Down .

American art @-@ rock band ... And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead has a song on their 1998 self @-@ titled album called " Prince with a Thousand Enemies " .

American hip @-@ hop group Common Market recorded a song called " Watership Down " on their 2008 EP Black Patch War .

New Jersey @-@ based hardcore punk band Bigwig takes its name from the character in the novel . The cover art of its first album , Unmerry Melodies , features a rabbit resembling Bigwig , and the song " Best of Me " features a sample from the film Watership Down .

American rapper Sole , on his album Selling Live Water , references the story of El Ahrairah in the tunnel in the chorus of his song " Tokyo " .

American singer @-@ songwriter Vanessa Carlton 's 2011 album Rabbits on the Run was inspired by Watership Down and A Brief History of Time .

The song " Honey and the Bee " by Owl City contains the lyrics " The crow and the beanfield " , referencing the title of chapter 9 .

American electronic dance music dj and producer Skrillex named his record label OWSLA .

== Radio ==

In 2002 , a two @-@ part , two @-@ hour dramatization of Watership Down by Neville Teller was broadcast by BBC Radio 4 .

== Audiobooks ==

In the 1970s , the book was read by Roy Dotrice , with musical background ? music by George Butterworth performed by Academy of St Martin in the Fields under the direction of Neville Marriner .

In 1984 , Watership Down was adapted into a 4 @-@ cassette audiobook by John Maher in association with the Australian Broadcasting Company 's Renaissance Players . Produced by John Hannaford and narrated by Kerry Francis , the audiobook was distributed by The Mind 's Eye .

In 1990 , a 16 @-@ hour , 11 @-@ cassette recording read by John MacDonald was published by Books on Tape , Inc. of Santa Ana , CA . ISBN 0 @-@ 7366 @-@ 1700 @-@ 0

Andrew Sachs recorded a 5 and a half hour abridged version of the story for Puffin Audiobooks .

In 2010 , Audible.com released an unabridged digital download of the book , narrated by the multiple award @-@ winning Ralph Cosham .

== Parodies ==

In an episode of the British comedy show The Goodies , entitled Animals , nature presenters from the BBC are forced to escape in rabbit suits from the fury of animals now granted equal rights with humans . It features the music and animation in the style of the movies .

In the American TV show Robot Chicken , a parody of the book is done with the Fraggles , the main characters of the show Fraggle Rock , in place of the rabbits .

