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Little Red, the Riding Hood

A Rebellious Red Gone Bad?!

by

Larry Damico

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CHARACTERS

5F / 6M / 1 Either

LITTLE RED: *Slightly on the spoiled side; trying really hard not to be so nice, but torn between wanting to be rebellious and her love for Granny.*

GRANNY: *Sweet & feisty; needles Little Red about litte things.*

NOR, THE WOODSMAN: *A bit of a loon; swings his axe (handle) at will, but does little damage with it. He speaks with Norwegian accent.*

LEROY WOLFBIG (WOLF): *A master at manipulation; smart and in control, until the end.*

FROG/CHARMING: *The narrator; a frog. Thinks he's funny, but more of a bad comedian. Even though he is constantly on stage, he has very little interaction with the other characters.*

SLEEPING BEAUTY: *A narcoleptic. She quickly makes friends with Little Red and helps her find her true self.*

JACK HORNER: *Your basic nice guy; not much of a hero, but tries so hard. He is a friend and protector of Red.*

OUI OUI: *A weasel with a bad French accent; Wolf's friend.*

MIMI: *A mole in thick glasses. She giggles often, is overdressed with a little "50's" girl in her. Wolf's friend; interested in Jack.*

THREE BEARS:

MAMA BEAR: *An overly-motherly type.*

PAPA BEAR: *Uninterested, surly.*

BABY BEAR: *Gentle, silent; Male or Female*

SETTING

A long time ago

The cottage of Little Red and Granny, the surrounding Forest, and Echo Creek

SCENES

- 1: Frog stump
- 2: Little Red and Granny's cottage and area outside of cottage
- 3: Cottage interior
- 4: Cottage
- 5: Forest
- 6: Forest
- 7: Deep and dark Forest
- 8: Forest, Frog Stump
- 9: Forest
- 10: Forest
- 11: Echo Creek

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

Traditional Storybook Costumes: knickers, blousy shirts and vest; long peasant skirts, aprons, etc. However, character diversity may be best represented through an interesting mix of costumes. For example, Granny could be a bit western; Red can wear a short skirt, something contemporary or riding knickers; Wolf can wear a sport coat and tie, and Mimi a poodle skirt. Animals are easily represented with appropriate ears and tails. It is the playwright's intention that Charming should be a large frog puppet. However, since only his head and mouth need to move, a stuffed frog could easily be made into a puppet for the production. The bigger the better. Charming transforms into a person at the end of the play.

SET NOTES

Simple, colorful cut-out trees provide a background for the various locations that are easily represented by minimal set pieces that can be easily moved on and off stage.

PRODUCTION NOTES

- Keep tempo moving
- Observe cut-off lines, of which there are many
- Over exaggerate the unique, fun qualities of the characters
- Choreograph all physical actions
- Keep movement across the stage always in the same direction as characters travel towards Echo Creek

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SCENE 1

(AT RISE: In darkness, we hear the blood-curdling howl of the WOLF then LIGHTS UP on FROG/CHARMING seated on a tree stump.)

FROG

(Spoken with fear at first, then lightens up) Hello? Did you hear that? Anyone out there? Can you hear me? Can you see me? *(Chuckle)* Probably not. That's okay. I'll describe myself to you. First of all, my name is Charming. And I am. I'm about 6'3", dark, wavy hair. Chiseled features, and I'm *(lights up)*...a frog. *(Addressing light booth)* Hey, I thought I told you guys we were doing this play in the dark! *(To audience)* Things aren't what they always seem to be in the dark...or in the light for that matter. See, you think in the light of day you know this story, the one about Little Red Riding Hood. But you don't! You don't know the real story; the one I'm going to tell you. And it's not so, unlike myself, charming. *(Chuckle)* This story is the fabulously fascinating story of Little Red, the Riding Hood, and her association with *(Howl; he shakes)*...the Wolf. It is, in a word, ribbeting. *(Repeats)* Ribbeting *(Looks around; speaks off stage)* I think we have the wrong audience out here! This story took place exactly a VERY LONG TIME AGO. And it happened in a place called...*(Looks around the set)* THE PLACE OF GREEN TREES AND COTTAGE. *(Nods)* Yes, that's it. *(Lights dim)*. It was a very dark night, not even the moon to help her. Little Red, that is. She was coming through the woods, terror in her eyes, fear in her step and a loaf of stale bread in her basket. *(Little RED enters. She looks frightened. Stops cs, looks around as if unsure where to go. She gasps, frozen with fear.)* And close behind her was *(howl)* The Wolf! The biggest, baddest...Leroy Wolfbig.. *(sings)* "baddest dog in the whole dang town." *(Howl again)*. Ooh, he sounds nasty. I think we should stop talking and listen. Let's do that. Hey, someone is still talking...oh, it's me! Shhhh!

SCENE 2

(RED runs towards the cottage in the woods.)

RED

Help! Grandma! help!

(Grandma enters, as if from some other part of cottage.)

GRANNY

Little Red, what's wrong?

RED

Oh, Grandma, help me!

GRANNY

What is it? Is it that low-down low-life of a wolf again? Did you wipe yer feet? (*RED wipes her feet as GRANNY gets her very large frying pan.*) You stay here, honey...I'm gonna try'n scare him off. And don't let anyone in. And stand up straight! (*RED does.*)

RED

Oh, Grandma, don't go out! Please!

GRANNY

Now little Red, don't you fret 'bout me, I'm a tough old bird. Ain't no furry excuse fer a wolf gonna upset me. You just stay put. You're my "Precious Pearl" and I ain't about to let nothin' hurt you. Here's your dolly. And quit smackin' that gum!

(*GRANNY exits the cottage. RED watches as GRANNY looks around and exits off. Much calmer now, RED removves her cape, crosses to phone – or takes out cellphone – and begins to make a call, humming and chewing gum.*)

RED

Hey LeRoy? Yeah, it's me. The coast is clear. She'll be out for at least an hour looking for you, you big bad wolf! (*Chuckles*) See yeah soon. (*Fusses with/dress/doll*)

FROG

Well there you have it! There's a little Red devil under that hood!! (*Sings*) "She's the devil with the Red dress, Red dress on, the devil with the Red dress on..." And sure enough, who arrives at her door step but that furry-faced, bad boy villian, LeRoy!

(*WOLF enters, walks abruptly into the cottage and howls.*)

RED

Oh! LeRoy!

WOLF

So you ditched grams.

RED

Yeah, gets easier all the time! I just wish....

WOLF

Wish what?

RED

I just wish I didn't have to deal with Grandma at all.

WOLF

Do I smell a little rebellion, Little Red?

RED

It's always something. Stand up straight! Don't clomp your feet! Can't you wear something else beside that ratty old Red cape?

WOLF

Rebellious and independent...I like that!

(From off come screams and calls for help. OUI OUI and MIMI enter being chased by WOODSMAN. RED comes to their aid.)

FROG

Here come some crazy characters!

RED

(To MIMI and OUI OUI, who are terrified, pointing, screaming in fear) Quick into the house *(They run in the cottage and hide.)* Uncle Nor? Is that you?

(NOR enters, axe handle held high. He's dressed like a woodsman, but there is a little crazed look to him.)

NOR

(With a thick Norwegian accent) Didja see ver day vent? Doz little critters?

RED

You mean a weasel and a mole?

NOR

Yah! Yah!

RED

They headed off to the south end of the forest.

NOR

You tink so? Yah?

RED

Yes. That-a-way!

(NOR yells, wielding axe, and flies off stage.)

OUI OUI

Mon dur, who was that crazy man!

RED

That was Uncle Nor. He's always chasing something.

MIMI

Yeah, but that something was me...little Mimi! (*Screams; sobs*)

RED

He's harmless, you just need to keep him moving. And I don't think he's ever hit anything with that axe. But just in case, we took the blade off years ago. He's just—

OUI OUI

A few feathers short of a whole duck?

RED

—dear Old Uncle Nor.

WOLF

Red, I'd like you to meet my little friends here.

MIMI

I'm Mimi, the Mole? (*Takes RED's hand; shakes it vigorously*) Pleased ever so much to meet you (*Giggles; snorts*)

OUI OUI

(*Proclaims*) And I am Oui Oui le Weasel! (*Takes RED's hand*) And you...you are le beauty! (*Kisses hand*)

WOLF

(*Moving OUI OUI*) Let's just put your passion on simmer.

OUI OUI

Bot I was made for loff! [Love]

WOLF

(*Grabbing him*) You're gonna be made for a happy meal if you don't watch it.

OUI OUI

(*Quickly out of his passionate mood*) Oui, Oui!

WOLF

(*Closing in on RED*) So what d'ya say, Red? Up for a little trouble making? Wanna run with the pack for awhile?

RED

I'm ready!

(MIMI and OUI OUI give a little cheer/aplause to this. JACK HORNER enters. He is the the quintessential geek.)

JACK

Hello? Anyone home?

RED

Hi Jack!

JACK

(Lights up when sees RED) Hi Red! I just saw your grandma, and I said I'd come by and check on you. She said you were shaken up, 'cuz you had a run in with...*(Sees the WOLF)*...with that big ole ugly... *(WOLF waves)*...with him.

WOLF

With moi? *(Arm around JACK)* Oh, that hurts me so, Little Jackie.

JACK

That's Jack.

WOLF

I believe that's what I said.

JACK

No, you said—

MIMI

(Infatuated, quickly to JACK) Hi! So you're Jack!

JACK

Yes. Jack. *(Shows thumb with plum)* Jack Horner.

MIMI

(Giggles and points) Cute fruit! *(Offers hand. MIMI, being a mole, has bad eyesight. She gets uncomfortably close to JACK's face)* Pleased to meet you Jack Horner.

JACK

Oh, yeah. Hi, Mimi. Nice to meet you.

MIMI

We're here to take Red out—

OUI OUI

(Grandly) Oui, she ees ready for a night of fun! A night of fantasy! A night with Oui Oui!!

WOLF

You could say we're gonna paint the town with Red.

(All laugh, except JACK.)

RED

I'll be right back guys. Just gonna freshen up. *(Exits)*

MIMI

Say, why don't you come with us? It's always merrier with more!

OUI OUI

Oui, Oui!

WOLF

(Quickly, glaring at OUI OUI) I don't think so.

OUI OUI

No no?

JACK

Well, actually, I don't think you should be taking Little Red anywhere!

WOLF

Is that so, Jackie?

JACK

That's Jack. And that is so.

MIMI

Maybe he's right, Leroy. You know, her grandmother's gonna be back soon and—

WOLF

(Quickly) Say, Mimi. Why don't you go check up on Red, see if she's ready.

MIMI

Oh, okay. *(To JACK)* Bye, Bye, Jack. I hope I get to see you *around* *(Gestures a "circle")* ...cuz I know you're not a *square*. *(Gestures a square; laughs/snorts at her own joke.)*

WOLF

So, Jacko. What were you saying?

JACK

That's Jack, and I don't think it's a good idea for you to take Red.

Oh, you don't.

WOLF

No. It's, it's a bad idea and...I...I forbid it.

JACK

You do!

WOLF

Yes.

JACK

Well, then, I guess we can't take her out, can we Oui Oui?

WOLF

No?

OUI OUI

(Gives JACK the end of a long piece of rope) Here. Would you mind holding this Jackson?

WOLF

No problem, and the name is—

JACK

Thank you; you are so kind.

WOLF

(With OUI OUI's help, WOLF spins JACK into the rope, tying him up. As they talk, they lift JACK and carry him behind a set piece.)

You know, this is also a bad idea.

JACK

I don't think so.

WOLF

I think you should unwrap me. I think you should...

JACK

(WOLF stuffs gag into JACK's mouth.)

Sorry, can't hear you Jackson. *(Placing JACK so only his feet are visible)* Now you just make yourself comfy, and I'm sure someone will find you.

WOLF

MIMI

(Entering) She's just about ready.

WOLF

Good, because I've got a plan that maybe could help our Little Red. *(Ordering OUI OUI; snaps fingers)* Paper.

OUI OUI

Sacre belu! What do I look like to you?

WOLF

French fries, if you don't get me a piece of paper!

(OUI OUI moves quickly.)

WOLF

That's better. *(To MIMI)* Pencil!

(She scrambles, too. OUI OUI and MIMI hurry and stand at attention with items in hand. WOLF takes them.)

MIMI

Oh goodie! We're going to draw!

WOLF

Sort of. We're going to help Little Red with her grandmother issues. *(Writing)* 'Dear Granny, We have taken Little Red for a looong trip, somewhere west of Echo Creek.

OUI OUI

Echo Creek!

MIMI

Echo Creek?

WOLF

(Writing, speaking slowly) It may be awhile before you see your Precious Pearl again...maybe...never. Regards, LeRoy Wolfbig.'

OUI OUI

But, wiz your directions, she weell surely come after Red.

WOLF

That's the plan, Stan.

MIMI

(Laughs) His name isn't Stan. *(Laughs again)* Is it?

WOLF

We want her to find us! You see, I'm a little low on fuel *(They don't understand)*...my freezer is empty? *(Change pose; still don't get it)*... The cupboards are bare? *(Pause)* I plan on eating Grandma. *(Big reaction; startled screams, gasps; OUI OUI jumps into MIMI's arms.)* Now, now. Why are you all so surprised? I am, after all, the Big Bad Carnivorous Wolf.

MIMI

But when you tell Little Red—

WOLF

Why should I tell her? By the time she gets back after our little trip it might be days before she realizes Granny is gone. Besides, she'll never suspect it's us.

OUI OUI

Bot, eef she does?

WOLF

(Mater-of-factly) Then she becomes....lunch. *(Reaction again)* Oh, come come. This is Storybook Land, and I have a reputation to live up to.

OUI OUI

Bot I thought she was your friend.

WOLF

She is! *(With a snicker)* They make the best dinner dates, you know.

MIMI

(Unsure) Gee Oui Oui, I wonder what meal he sees in us.

RED

(Entering) Okay, everyone. I'm ready.

MIMI

Hey, where did Jack go?

WOLF

He's... tied up right now with some important business about a fruit pie.

MIMI

Gee, he didn't even say goodbye.

(As they head out the door we hear a muffled “goodbye” from JACK.)

MIMI

(Startled) What was that?

WOLF

Nothing, just your little mole ears playing tricks on you.

(WOLF, RED, OUI OUI and MIMI exit off.)

SCENE 3

(FROG, who has observed WOLF’s ruse, addresses the Audience.)

FROG

Well, there’s a howdy-do for ya! Isn’t that wolf just a snake? And you know as soon as Granny reads that note, she’s gonna head for the hills! Looking for Little Red! And poor Jack Horner, all tied up in the corner.

(GRANNY approaches.)

GRANNY

(Entering) Red, honey? Precious? Are you okay? *(Looks in cottage)* Red? Oh, where is she headed off to now? Sometimes that little Precious Pearl of mine is so headstrong. *(To Audience)* Course, I was much the same myself...still am! Kinda like to do things my own way. *(Beat)* But she sure does worry me. *(Her hand goes to pearl on string around her neck).* Precious Pearl, that's what I call her. Just like this here little pearl. It was Red's mama's pearl. *(Sniffs again, maybe wipes a tear, blows nose)* Oh, just look at me, such a silly sap! Not gettin' anything done doing this! *(JACK moves and makes a muffled cry. GRANNY listens.)* Hello? *(Muffled response. In the meantime, NOR enters behind her...not sneaking, he’s just there).* Hello?

NOR

(Big) Yah?

(GRANNY screams, grabs a frying pan and holds it up over her head. NOR screams and raises his axe.)

GRANNY

Nor!!

NOR

Yah!!

GRANNY

Put that thing down!

NOR

(Looks at axe) Yah!! *(Looks at frying pan)*

GRANNY

(Lowering the frying pan) Ya scared the livin' daylight out of me! I thought I heard something.

NOR

Vat did ya hear, dere?

GRANNY

(Looking around) Some noise.

NOR

Where?

GRANNY

There *(Points in the general direction; NOR barrels off in that direction, running clear off stage.)* It kind of sounds like....Nor? Nor? *(Tsk)* He's a nice man, but he's just a few peas short of a casserole. *(Finally spots note)* Oh! She left me a....*(Reads)*... Oh no! Oh that lowdown excuse of a wolf. Oh Red...Red *(Touches pearl on neck)* I'm coming Precious!

(GRANNY gathers some things, and still grasping the frying pan, exits.)

SCENE 4

(FROG addresses Audience.)

FROG

Once again, Granny heads out to save Little Red. But this time, she's in much more danger than she knows. And she has to travel quite a ways west to Echo Creek. Of course, the Wolf never did take Red that far, his goal was to get Granny out of the way...make a little Granny snack, if you know what I mean. A little Granny-o-la. *(Laughs at his own joke)* Parden my mirth.

(NOR enters; looks around; sees note.)

NOR

Offda, dat wolf is a naughty puppy! *(Barrels out, axe high)*

FROG

(Addressing Audience) Anyway, it wasn't too long before Little Red comes home...thinking Granny would be sound asleep.

(Little RED tiptoes in, carrying shoes.)

RED

(To audience) Shhh! *(Hears JACK's mumblings)* Granny, is that you? Uncle Nor?
(Cautiously sneaks over and discovers JACK) Jack! What happened to you!

(RED helps JACK to his feet but does not totally untie him. He hops to stool and mumbles something to RED.)

RED, *Continued*

I can't understand a word your saying. *(JACK mumbles something again.)* What? You want the gag off? Well, what's it doing on there anyway?

(JACK gives a groan, like "give-me-a-break".)

RED, *Continued*

(Removes JACK's gag.) Where's Granny?

JACK

He got her away from here!

RED

Who did?

JACK

Your friend, Mr. Leroy Wolfbig!

RED

But he couldn't! I was with LeRoy ...and Oui Oui and Mimi.

JACK

They left a note, saying they had taken you. That's probably it right there. *(RED goes over, reads it)* The idea was to get Granny away for good.

RED

Oh, no! Granny will just keep looking for me, forever!

JACK

There's more. But I don't think I should tell you.

Jack, please. RED

No, I dont... JACK

Jack you must RED

Really— JACK

(*Grabs his shirt*) I'm gonna count to three, before I let you have it. One! Two!... RED

Okay! Okay! Wow, such violence today, and that's not good! Leroy wasn't just going to send Granny on a wild goose chase. He was going to...going to...eat her! JACK

(*Gasps*) No!! What else? RED

(*JACK looks at her in disbelief*) Did you not hear what I said?? That's not bad enough?
(*Stubbornly*) I'm not saying anything more. JACK

Jack! RED

That's all I'm going to tell you! You can do what you want, I won't say anymore. (*Grimaces and waits*) JACK

Oh Jack! I haven't anytime to lose. Do you know which way they went? RED

It was kind of hard to hear, but I think he said something about Echo Creek. JACK

Echo Creek? RED

Echo Creek. JACK

RED

That's a half-day's journey! *(Starts to leave)*

JACK

You can't go alone. I'm coming with you.

RED

No you're not! Look at all the trouble I've got you in already!

JACK

You can't stop me.

RED

(She reties him) Yes I can! You stay here!

(RED takes a moment to think if she needs anything, grabs an apple and quickly exits.)

JACK

Red! No! You can't go alone! Oh...this is so humiliating!

(JACK attempts to untie himself.)

FROG

(To Audience) And so Little Red, with the compulsory Red cape and basket, heads out to find Granny, wherever she is. Jack, meanwhile, is left to his own devices— *(JACK falls off chair; "Ow")* —which aren't many.

JACK

(Getting back onto his feet.) Help! Oh, help!

(JACK hops around with his back to the entrance to the cottage just as NOR backs onto stage with axe drawn. NOR backs closer and closer to JACK until they are virtually back to back. JACK turns, screams, NOR turns, screams, raises axe. BLACK OUT.)

SCENE 5

(SPOTLIGHT ON FROG as the scene shifts upstage to the Forest.)

FROG

(To Audience) Oh boy! What will happen to Granny? Can Red find her before she becomes grannyola, a high-protein snack for that cranky carnivoir, the wolf? And how about Red? Will this little episode make her change her ways, or will she still be a little Red Rebel. Can Jack Horner *ever* get out of the corner? Red, meanwhile, seems to be a little lost.

(LIGHTS RISE as RED enters.)

RED

Oh, I should know my way, but this is the furthest I've been in the forest alone. See, if I could only have been more independent, I would know my way around here! *(Sits)* Let's see, I came from that way, which would be in the direction of the Golden Gorge, so that means this way leads to Echo Valley...I think. *(Yawns)* This has been such a full day already...but I can't sleep *(Hears a snore. Startled)*. Was that me? *(Hears it again)*. That's not me!

(RED searches for the source of sound which comes from SLEEPING BEAUTY who is sleeping behind a log. With one more "snore" RED discovers SLEEPING BEAUTY.)

RED, *Continued*

(Shaking SLEEPING BEAUTY) Oh! Oh! Who are you?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Slowly sitting up, rubbing eyes, scratching, etc.) I'm up! I'm up! Hi! Did I nod off?

RED

The way you were sawing wood, that was a little more than a nod off.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Sorry. *(Yawns)* I wonder how long I've been sleeping.

RED

Well, it's early evening.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Scratching) That doesn't help. What month?

RED

Month! You think you've been sleeping for a month?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Well, I just never know. Sometimes its for a very long time, and other times *(Drops her head and snores, then awaks a moment later)* it's really short. *(Offers hand)* Hi. I'm Sleeping Beauty.

RED

Sleeping Beauty! Well, that explains things.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

From that get-up, you must be Little Red Riding Hood.

RED

(A little indignant) The name is *(With attitude)* Little Red.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(With a little attitude of her own) Oh. Excuse me.

RED

(Looking around) So, are you with someone? Like, a handsome prince?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Hah! That loser!

RED

Loser? You mean, you didn't live happily ever after?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

We didn't even start happily ever after!

RED

What happened?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

You see—there I was, all sleeping and beautiful, when along comes Mr. Charming himself. But did he give me a great big kiss on the old smacker like he was supposed to?? Noooo! He gives me this sweet-little-old-granny kiss on the forehead! So you see, I never fully woke up! He should have planted one right on my old kisser. *(Gets worked up)* Now that would have made me see stars, knocked me into never-never-land, launched me through the looking glass! *(Pause; quieter)* But no, just a little peanut peck and now I'm in this eternal state of every once in awhile dozing off into lala land. *(Sleeps)*

RED

(Trying to help). Well, couldn't your handsome prince just give you a great big wake-you-up kiss?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Awake) Too late. He'd taken off. We didn't last the day. He couldn't stand that I kept falling asleep.

RED

Because you're never really totally awake.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

No! Because he was so dang-blasted boring! You know what a handsome prince does all day? *Talks* about himself! 'Don't I look fabulous! Could you hand me that mirror? Where were we? Oh yes, we were talking about me.'—*(Exasperated at the memory of the situation)*

SLEEPING BEAUTY, *Continued*

—I fell so sound asleep, I didn't wake up for a week!

RED

Oh, that's too bad.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Really, for the better. When I woke up, he left me a note that said he ran off to live with someone more loveable and prettier.

RED

Who?

Himself

Himself!

RED

(Laughs) You are something else!

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Yeah! And so are you. So, where are you going?

RED

I'm trying to find my grandmother, she's been... *(Not sure she should tell her)*...She's up around Echo Creek.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Echo Creek?

FROG

Echo Creek.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Is she lost?

RED

No.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Suspecting) Visiting someone?

RED

No, no.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Not buying it) Okay. *(Sleeps then quickly wakes)* My battery may flicker once and awhile, but I'm not that dumb. What's up?

RED

Oh *(Starts to cry; tries to stop)* I'm not going to cry. My friend, LeRoy Wolfbig took her, and—

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Wait, wait, wait. Rewind that. You said your *friend* Leroy Wolfbig?

RED

Well...yeah. He's a...a good friend.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Red, I think the only thing *good* from that friendship might be if you make him into a fur coat. LeRoy is the baddest, and *everyone* knows it.

RED

(Defense up again) Well, really, we just...you know... *(Does some "cool" hand movement)* chill together sometime.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Oh. I see. You just *(Repeats movement, with sarcasm)* chill with the Wolf.

RED

Yeah! That's what friends do. Chill.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Red, do you know what friends are for?

RED

Chillin'?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

No!! Friends are folks who are there for you, forever! Through thick and thin.

RED

Well, Leroy, He tells me he understands me.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Laughs) Yeah, like a bear understands honey, or a pig understands slop, or a frog understands a fly.

FROG

(To audience) Hey! I resemble that comment!

RED

I don't understand.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Red, LeRoy doesn't like people...He uses them. And when he's done they sometimes end up as an entree, or a blue plate special, or the sixth course in a—

RED

(Gets it; gasps) —in a seventh course meal!! Oh no!

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Friends maybe don't always say what you want to hear, but they usually are on your side, no matter what.

RED

(Upset) Oh Beauty, what have I done?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Nothing that can't be fixed! So what is Leroy planning on doing?

RED

(Crying) Eating Grandma!

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Comforting) Oh, Red.

RED

What am I going to do?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

You mean, what are WE going to do!

RED

No, you can't come with—it's dangerous.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Oh yes I can! I live for danger!

(SLEEPING BEAUTY strikes an heroic pose, sleeps, awakes.)

RED

No! You might get hurt.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Look at me (*Takes RED by the shoulders and looks her in the eye*) I have just become your friend. And this is the sort of thing real friends do.

RED

Alright! Let's go! (*Looks around*) Oh no!

SLEEPING BEAUTY

What?

RED

I don't remember which way I was going?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Well, that's the safest way to Echo Creek, but it's a little longer.

RED

And that way?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

That's the shorter route, but it goes right through the nasty, wicked forest, full of all sorts of hideous things.

(RED and SLEEPING BEAUTY look at one another and then grab one another; scrunch together, look at each other.)

RED

Oh my! (*Looks; points to the bad way*) Let's go this way!!

(RED and SLEEPING BEAUTY exit.)

SCENE 6

(FROG addresses Audience.)

FROG

Well Red has got a new friend in Beauty, and that sleepy head sure *is* a beauty. Has one of those familiar, friendly faces I think I've seen before. Hmmmm. (*Beat*) Anyway, they took the wicked way to Echo Creek, and they may find they're on the trail to trouble! (*A cry of "help" from JACK offstage.*) And that sounds like trouble!

JACK

(JACK enters, hops, still partially tied up, chased by Uncle Nor) Help! Help! (Falls)

NOR

(Entering close behind) Yaaaaaaaahhh! *(Towers over JACK)*

JACK

Uncle Nor!!!!

NOR

Yahh!!

JACK

It's me!!! Jack!

NOR

(Stops; looks; recognizes) Yah!!! Vat you doing down dere?

(NOR puts down the axe handle and starts to untie JACK.)

JACK

Leroy tied me up. And I gotta find Red—she's in trouble...And Granny and—

NOR

Dey in trouble!

JACK

Yes, and I think—

NOR

(Raises axe handle) Yootin' scootin' Bli med meg! *(Translation: Come with me!)*

(NOR extis.)

JACK

Uncle Nor! Wait! Wait for me!!!

(We hear "yah" from Uncle NOR off stage. JACK hops off in his direction, still tied up.)

SCENE 7

(FROG addresses Audience.)

FROG

Meanwhile, Red and Sleeping Beauty are just about to head into the baddest part of the forest, which isn't good for anyone!

(LIGHTS DIM; RED and SLEEPING BEAUTY enter. RED has a walking stick/branch in her hand, partly to help walk, partly for protection.)

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Red, this place doesn't look good for anyone.

RED

Well, we knew about it, didn't we?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Yeah, but it's always easier to be brave during the day. *(They hear a "Roar!")* What was that? *(Another "Roar!")*

RED

Quick, take this *(Hands SLEEPING BEAUTY a loaf of french bread from her basket)*

SLEEPING BEAUTY

I'm not hungry.

RED

No! Use it to protect yourself. You keep a look out in that direction.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Oh sure. You got the stick and I get day-old bakery!

RED

(Calling) Who's out there? *(More "Roars"– The girls circle back to back brandishing their "weapons".)* There's more than one.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(Scared, but trying to maintain a sense of humor) Well then, I'll just make some sandwiches. Got any mayo in there? *(SLEEPING BEAUTY looks opposite from RED. BABY BEAR enters and takes her hand).* Are you cold?

RED

No. Why?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Then why are you wearing gloves?

RED

I'm not wearing gloves.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

It sure feels like it.

RED

I'm not touching you.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Oh.

(Beat. Slow turn. Scream. RED turns, ready to strike, sees BABY BEAR who carries a Teddy Bear. PAPA BEAR enters, with a roar, startles RED. BABY BEAR runs to him. He puts BABY BEAR behind him, does a big bear growl at RED, who pokes him in the stomach. PAPA BEAR crumbles.)

PAPA BEAR

Ouch! You didn't need to do that!

RED

Well, you were sure letting out a lot of hot air!

MAMA BEAR

(From off) Yoo hoo! Are you there honey bear? *(Enters carrying purse; sees girls and jumps right into an introduction)* Oh, hi! My name is Betty...Betty Bear. This is my husband, Freddy, *(PAPA BEAR grumbles)*, and our little boy *(Or girl)*, Benny *(Or "Bernice")*.

RED

(Still a little in shock) My...my name's Red, and this is Beauty. Nice to meet you, um, Betty, Freddy and Benny.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Very pleased to meet you.

(PAPA BEAR grumbles; makes his way off to the side; sulks. BABY BEAR stays with MAMA BEAR.)

MAMA BEAR

You'll have to excuse him. He's always grumpy before he has his bowl of porridge. And he never trusts young girls ever since *(Looking at him)* ...you know.

RED

Oh yeah, that thing with Goldilocks.

(They all three giggle.)

PAPA BEAR

I heard that!

MAMA BEAR

We just don't talk about it too much. (*Changing subject*) So what are you two nice girls doing in this awful part of Storybook Land?

RED

We're on our way to Echo Creek.

MAMA BEAR

Echo Creek?

PAPA BEAR

Echo Creek! Well, you chose the wrong path to take! This isn't a safe place for you.

RED

If it isn't a safe place for us, what are you doing out here?

MAMA BEAR

Most critters don't bother us, what with Fred's big growl. (*Aside*) Although his growl is much worse than his bite.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

He bites?

MAMA BEAR

(*Laughs*) Hasn't bitten anything for years!

PAPA BEAR

I heard that!

MAMA BEAR

Why do you want to go to Echo Creek?

RED

To help my grandma.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

She's been taken by LeRoy Wolfbig.

PAPA BEAR

(*Moves back into the conversation*) LeRoy! That little greasy flea-bag sad-sack imitation of a wolf? How do you know him?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

He's a friend of Red's...sort of.

MAMA BEAR

Honey, you don't need friends like that! (*Seriously*) Your grandma might be in serious danger.

RED

Yeah, I know that. But I'm not afraid of Leroy.

PAPA BEAR

Why not?

RED

(*With conviction*) Because I can take care of myself!

(*The OTHERS look at each other and break out laughing*).

MAMA BEAR

Honey pot, I just see one sweet, smart person who maybe needs to change her "best friends forever" list. See, I can judge a person's character faster than you can say 'three big bears in a big black barn.'

PAPA BEAR

Yep, that she can do.

MAMA BEAR

Little Red, (*Very deliberate*) Be yourself. And don't let a scraggly ole wolf decide who you are!

PAPA BEAR

That's right. Just look at me (*They do*). Until I started being myself, everyone saw me as nothing more than a big ole, honey eating, lazy lout of a grumpy grizzly.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

What do they see you as now?

PAPA BEAR

(*Shrugs*) Same thing.

MAMA BEAR

Oh, Fred. (*Moves the girls away from PAPA BEAR, sotto voce*). Don't listen to him, Honey.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

(*Quietly*) Does anybody?

PAPA BEAR

I heard that!

RED

Betty, thanks for the little talk.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Yeah, thanks. But we better keep moving, if we're going to try to get to Echo Creek soon.

MAMA BEAR

You know, we can surely come with you.

PAPA BEAR

I'd like to put a big ole bear hug on that weasly little wolf.

RED

No, we can do this alone. I got his number now.

MAMA BEAR

Well, you just look sharp, dearies.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Thank you so much! Bu-bye now.

(RED and SLEEPING BEAUTY waves, and with a last "bye", exit.)

MAMA BEAR

(Worried) Do you think they'll be alright?

PAPA BEAR

They'll be just fine dear.

MAMA BEAR

I don't know. Maybe we should stay close. *(PAPA BEAR gumbles.)* Please, honey bear?

PAPA BEAR

(Grumbling) Whatever you say dear.

MAMA BEAR

(To audience) He's such a softy.

PAPA BEAR

I heard that!

(THE BEARS exit.)

SCENE 8

(FROG looks off in the direction the others exited.)

FROG

Well now, Red and Beauty better keep high-tailing it to Echo Creek, 'cause Granny's getting close and...

NOR

(Charging through from one side to the other) I come fer u Granny!! Yaaaaah! *(Exits)*

GRANNY

(Entering) Hello? Little Red? Precious? Oh my what a mess! Red? Hello?

JACK

(From off) Hello?

GRANNY

Hello?

(GRANNY exits; JACK enters.)

JACK

Uncle Nor?? Where are you!! *(With despair)* I'm so lost!! *(Crumbles)* I couldn't even keep up with Uncle Nor, and now I couldn't find my way out of here with a map. No, that's wrong— *(Reaches into his back pocket; pulls out map)* —I have a map, and I still can't find my way out of here! *(Trying again)* Okay. *(Seats himself next to Charming, but doesn't see him. Reading map)* Take a left where the trail intersects the brick road. Follow the trail over the hill, down into the meadow, and through the dark woods. Stay on the trail till you pass the yellow oak. And I've done that....six times!!! Boy, what a big help I am! Okay Jack. Relax. *(looking at map again, repeating directions)* Left where the trail intersects the brick road...follow the trail over the hill..

(JACK looks and points in the direction of the FROG, sees the FROG and screams.)

FROG

(Screams back) Well, you sure are jumpy. Not that that's such a bad thing to be...most of my relatives are jumpy. *(Laughs at his own joke)*

JACK

(Looking around) Where'd you come from?

FROG

I've been here all along.

Really? JACK

Where were you going? FROG

In circles. I've been on this path for hours, and it's driving me crazy. JACK

This path? FROG

Yes! JACK

Well, of course it's driving you crazy. This is a psychopath. *(To audience)* Get it? Psychopath? *(Looks at Audience. Silence. Back to JACK)* We need a new audience. So why are you in such a hurry? FROG

I think my friend Red is in trouble. She's chasing after Leroy Wolfbig. JACK

She's in trouble. FROG

(JACK groans in despair.)

She's supposed to be just west of Echo Creek. JACK

Echo Creek? FROG

Echo Creek. JACK

She's up Echo Creek without a paddle! FROG

You're not really helping me! JACK

FROG

Well, I do know something that will help you. I spent most of my tadpole days in a brook right off of Echo Creek, and I know exactly where it is.

JACK

You do? I just hope I'm not too late.

FROG

Aw, come on kid, chin up. We'll get you there in no time at all. By the way, I'm Charming.

JACK

Oh, well you're interesting. But "charming" is pushing it a little...

FROG

No... that's my name. Charming.

JACK

Oh. Ooooh, I get it. Your name.

FROG

(To audience) Not the quickest on the draw, is he?

JACK

I'm Jack.

FROG

Like, Jack-be-Nimble?

JACK

No, like Little Jack Horner. Pleased to meet you. *(Reaches hand to shake; there is a plum on his thumb.)*

FROG

Um...is that a plum on your thumb?

JACK

Yeah. He he, my plum thumb!

FROG

(Gingerly shaking his hand) Well, I'm pleased to meet you. So, what's the problem with your friend? Other than she keeps really slimy company. *(To audience)* And I know about slime, let me tell you.

JACK

I think Leroy has plotted to hurt Red and her Grandma, and I've got to help her.

FROG

Oooh, a *croak* and dagger sort of story. My favorite.

JACK

I'll be sick if Red is hurt. So how do I get to Echo Creek?

FROG

Take that path west through the woods. At the fork, take a spoon. (*Laughs*) No, really, take a right. Go 'bout a mile, and you'll run right into Echo Creek.

JACK

(*As he heads off*) Thanks Charming. You've been a big help!

FROG

Just usin' the ole' frog nog!

(*JACK exits.*)

SCENE 9

(*FROG addresses Audience.*)

FROG

Meanwhile, back in the dark forest...

GRANNY

(*Entering, cautiously*) Red? My precious Pearl? Are you here? (*Giggles off*) Leroy? Is that you? Can we talk Mr. Leroy?

(*More giggles; OUI OUI and MIMI enter.*)

OUI OUI

(*Mimicking GRANNY*) May we talk, monsiur LeRoy?

MIMI

Oh, she's so cute.

GRANNY

(*Takes frying pan out, raises it; they react.*) Where's Red? You haven't hurt her, have you?

OUI OUI

No, we would not do that to our leetle friend, Red.

GRANNY

Oh, ya wouldn't?

MIMI

(Sincerely) No! I love Little Red.

GRANNY

(She lets down frying pan as WOLF enters stealthily.) So do I, that's why I'm here. Where's your friend, Mr. Wolfbig?

(WOLF sneaks up behind GRANNY and grabs the frying pan. As he does, OUI OUI grabs and holds GRANNY)

WOLF

Closer than you think, Granny. Oh, tsk tsk tsk. Would you really have beamed me with this thing?

GRANNY

In a heartbeat. What are you planning on?

WOLF

Dinner for about three, if you must know. *(Moves towards GRANNY)*

GRANNY

Dinner? Who?

WOLF

You!

GRANNY

Why you big bad fur bag! Help! Help!

(WOLF grabs GRANNY as LIGHTS OUT.)

SCENE 10

(The LIGHTS RISE on a shadowy forest as JACK enters searching for RED.)

JACK

Red? Little Red? Are you here?

(BABY BEAR enters and shadows JACK, following his every move. As JACK looks about, here and there, he begins to realize that something is following him...close behind He makes several quick moves with BABY BEAR right behind. Finally, BABY BEAR tugs on JACK's

arm and JACK quickly turns and puts him in a headlock just as PAPA BEAR enters. PAPA BEAR roars furiously and puts a headlock on JACK. MAMA BEAR enters quickly behind. BABY BEAR wraps his/her arms around JACK protectively – or affectionately. JACK attempts to free himself. PAPA BEAR and JACK ad lib line: "gotcha," "let go" "stop that".)

MAMA BEAR

Ooh! Get your hands off of him! (*MAMA BEAR is swatting JACK with her purse. She frees BABY BEAR*) Stop that! Who do you think you are? (*She really looks at him, even though he's still in headlock.*) Say, I know who you are! You're Little Jackie Horner.

JACK

That's Jack. And yes, I am! How did you know?

MAMA BEAR

That plum on your thumb kind of gave it away.

JACK

Oh, yeah. Say, could you...um....

MAMA BEAR

Yes dear?

JACK

Help me get out of this?

MAMA BEAR

Oh! Of course! Fred dear!

PAPA BEAR

(Realizing) Oh, yes. Jack. Of course.

(PAPA BEAR releases JACK and pulls BABY BEAR aside.)

JACK

(Twisting and checking his head and neck) Thank you. *(Recovering)* You wouldn't have seen a little girl running through these woods, would you? Name of Little Red?

MAMA BEAR

Oh! Well, we just ran into her and her friend. She seems to be in some bad cahoots with that Leroy Wolfbig.

JACK

I need to find my way through these woods to find her.

MAMA BEAR

Well, we let her go off alone, (*Soto voce*) but we're following her. (*Full voice again*) Would you like to come along?

JACK

The more the merrier! but let me go ahead, and you guys back me up.

MAMA BEAR

That works for me. (*Aside*) Papa Bear doesn't move so fast anymore!

PAPA BEAR

I heard that.

(*JACK exits with THE BEARS close behind as LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

SCENE 11

(*LIGHTS RISE on WOLF, OUI OUI, and MIMI surrounding GRANNY who is sitting in a stew pot. WOLF hands a container to GRANNY.*)

WOLF

(*To GRANNY*) Here, put this on.

GRANNY

(*Looking at bottle*) Suntan lotion?

WOLF

No, marinade. I figure you're a tough old bird, and a little seasoning would help.

(*WOLF check his cookbook.*)

GRANNY

(*Struggling*) Why you're nothin' but a mealy mouthed fur ball of a fry cook!

WOLF

Oh, I like that! (*Motices pearl around GRANNY's neck.*) Why Granny. What big pearls you have.

GRANNY

(*Thinks quickly; wants to strike a deal*) Mr. Wolfbig, here. Take the pearl. You can have it. It's worth lots of money. Just promise you won't harm Red.

(*GRANNY removes the pearl and offers it to WOLF.*)

WOLF

Really? Hmmm. I like a good bargain.

(WOLF takes the pearl, holds it up and studies it as he while he strolls to one side. GRANNY is hopeful.)

WOLF, *Continued*

Hmm...um hmmm. *(Tosses pearl off)* Sorry Granny, pearls just don't work for me.

(WOLF laughs into howl.)

GRANNY

You mangy excuse for a dog!! Help! Help!

MIMI

(Fretting) Oooo, I don't like this.

GRANNY

You're never going to get away with this! I wouldn't doubt if Red is on her way here.

WOLF

(Securing GRANNY's hands behind her back) Oh, I don't doubt that either. As a matter of fact, I hope she is!

GRANNY

Well, you might think she's your friend, but I know Red, and she wouldn't let anyone harm me.

WOLF

If that's the case, it looks like I'll have lots of leftovers!

MIMI

I don't get it.

OUI OUI

Sacre bleu! He ees going to cook them both.

MIMI

Cook who both?

OUI OUI

Le grandma, and Leetle Red.

MIMI

(Wailing) Noooo!

(MIMI catches herself and slaps her hand across her mouth)

MIMI, *Continued*

(Grabs OUI OUI; soto voce) Oui! Oui! Come here! *(Pulls him aside)* We've got to get out of here and get some help!

(WOLF sneaks up behind)

OUI OUI

Oui! But, he weel get us too, no?

MIMI

Not if we take off real fast and head into the woods.

WOLF

(Also soto voce) Or better yet, why not wait until he eats, because then he'll be much slower.

MIMI

Yes! That's a great idea!

(Slowly dawning, they turn and scream. MIMI and OUI OUI take a step forward as if to bolt as WOLF grabs them each by a shoulder.)

WOLF

Oh come, come now. I was so hoping you would stay for dinner. Why don't you just help me a bit, so we are ready to dine when little Red shows up?

MIMI

Red?

OUI OUI

Red?

(RED and SLEEPING BEAUTY dash in.)

RED

(Boldly confirming) Red!

GRANNY

Oh, little Red, I knew you wouldn't fail me!

WOLF

Well, look who's here! And with a new friend for me?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Save it, fur face. I know you and... *(Fall asleep)*

WOLF

Charming conversationalist.

RED

Oh, Granny, I'm so sorry.

(RED hugs GRANNY and begins to untie her.)

WOLF

(Taking RED by the arm) I don't like people who play with my food.

RED

I think I've had enough of you.

WOLF

So, you want to take on the Big Bad Wolf all by your Big Bad self?

MIMI

She's got me, LeRoy!

OUI OUI

And Oui Oui, too.

WOLF

So much for loyalty. *(Laugh/howl)* Do you think this little troupe of storyland misfits can take on Mr. Wolfbig alone?

JACK

(As enters) They won't have to do that alone. They've got me too!

MIMI

Jack!

RED

Jack...how did you find me?!

JACK

Long story, longer journey! Come on Red, let's get out of here.

WOLF

That's not my plan, Jackton.

JACK

It's Jack! And put this in your plan

(JACK hits WOLF with an uppercut to the jaw. WOLF is momentarily stunned and JACK turns to help RED. As he does, WOLF recovers and puts a cooking bucket over JACK's head. MIMI screams and runs to help JACK trying her best to dislodge the bucket from his head. RED turns to confront WOLF.)

GRANNY

Red! No!

RED

Hands off him, Leroy!

(A struggle/battle ensues. OUI OUI gets knocked out falling over SLEEPING BEAUTY waking her long enough for her to sit up and lie back down again. WOLF grabs RED; MIMI gets bucket off JACK's head but somehow it gets on her head. Add as much action here as you like, just keep it clean and choreographed. At the end of the battle MIMI still has bucket on her head, JACK and OUI OUI are crumpled on the floor, SLEEPING BEAUTY is asleep, GRANNY is still tied up, and the WOLF is holding RED. WOLF gives a triumphant howl, which turns into a scream of pain as RED stomps on his foot. RED runs but WOLF manages to grab her by the wrist just as THE BEARS enter.)

MAMA BEAR

Alright Mr. Leroy! Unhand that girl!

WOLF

Oh boy! The porridge eaters are here.

(The battle resumes with lots of noise and mayhem: more buckets on heads; MIMI mistakenly jumps on PAPA BEAR; lots of chasing back and forth; etc. NOR makes a huge entrance; EVERYONE on stage freezes for a second, including NOR, to acknowledge his entrance. NOR screams which breaks the freeze and the fight resumes. At the end the WOLF stands on a stump, with everyone surrounding him in strong poses with NOR raising his axe ready to strike.)

JACK

Come on, Leroy, it's time to give it up.

WOLF

(Looks around) Fine.

(WOLF steps down and NOR and PAPA BEAR secure his hands behind his back. RED runs to GRANNY and unties her.)

WOLF

(As his hands are bound) So what are you going to do Red? Going to live with your “I can’t breath!” smotherin’ ya day in and day out Granny? *(To GRANNY, referring to RED)* Hey, Granny, think you’re ever gonna trust that little hoodlum there ever again?

GRANNY

Oh, Red...I've been *smothering*, ain't I?

RED

No, Granny! But, I can’t always be the little lady you want me to be.

WOLF

I don’t know Granny, she doesn’t sound—

RED

(Cutting him off) Don’t listen to him! Granny, I, I

(GRANNY doesn’t know how to respond. For a moment she only stares at RED. Then she reaches for her pearl, realizes it is missing and rushes off. RED misinterprets her leaving. There is a short pause.)

RED, *Continued*

(Looking after GRANNY) I love you.

WOLF

Well, well, well. Look at you, Little Red. Or should I say, Little Loser. You lost your Granny. All I’ve lost is my lunch... *(Looking off where GRANNY exited)* and it really wasn’t all that appetizing to begin with.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes