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A PLAY IN ONE ACT

Little Red Riding Hood

by
EUGENE SCHWARTZ

translated by
GEORGE SHAIL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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GEORGE SHAIL
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(LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD)

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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
A Play in One Act
For Six Men, Four Women, extras

CHARACTERS

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

THE MOTHER

THE GRANDMOTHER

THE RABBIT BELOUKH

A GRASS SNAKE

THE BEAR MISHENKA

THE FOX, *a false friend of Little Red Riding Hood*

THE WOLF, *the enemy of Little Red Riding Hood*

THE MOTHER BIRD and
BABY BIRDS

COMRADE FORESTER, *who looks after everyone
and everything in the forest*

RABBITS, *relatives of Beloukh*

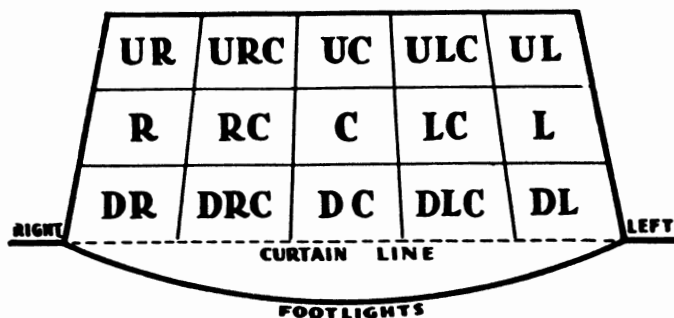
BEEES

A DOG, *the helper of Comrade Forester*

PLACE: *In and about the great forest in which dwell
Little Red Riding Hood, her relatives, her
animal friends, and her enemy The Wolf.*

TIME: *Today in Russia.*

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

Scene 1

The exterior of a tiny house in the forest. **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD** and her **MOTHER** emerge from the house. **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD** is carrying a basket which contains a bottle of milk and a large piece of pie. Over her shoulder she wears a satchel.)

THE MOTHER. Well, good-bye, Daughter.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Good-bye, Mama.

THE MOTHER. Be careful, Daughter, when you go by the swamp. Don't stumble. Don't slip. Don't trip. Don't fall in the water.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (speaking in the same manner as her Mother). And you, Mother, don't daydream. Don't stare into space. Don't worry about me while you're sewing, or you'll prick your finger.

THE MOTHER. And, Daughter, don't stop to talk with anyone except Comrade Forester.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. All right. And, Mother, don't forget to put your scissors, needle, and thread in your pocket, or you'll lose them.

THE MOTHER. All right. Well, good-bye, Daughter.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Good-bye, Mama. (Waves farewell.)

THE MOTHER (about to cry). Oh dear, oh dear!

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. What's wrong, Mama?

THE MOTHER. I'll worry until you get back.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Mama, who will harm me in the forest? All the animals are my friends.

THE MOTHER. What about The Wolf?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. He wouldn't dare to touch me. He knows my friends will protect me. . . . Well, good-bye, Mama. (Kisses her.)

THE MOTHER (sadly). I know you have to go because Grandmother is sick. In your basket you have milk and pie for her. Good-bye, Daughter. It will be dull without you. Hurry back soon. (Sighing deeply, she returns to the house as LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD turns toward L.)

(As LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD departs,
a RABBIT hops from behind the bushes
and addresses her shyly.)

THE RABBIT. Little Red Riding Hood.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Who's calling me?

THE RABBIT. It's Beloukh, the rabbit.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Hello, Beloukh.

THE RABBIT. Hello, dear, sweet, intelligent, kind Little Red Riding Hood. I have to talk with you about something very, very important.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Well, come here, please.

THE RABBIT (remaining in the bushes). I'm afraid.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Still afraid?

THE RABBIT (agreeing). Excuse me.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Didn't I give you courage?

THE RABBIT. Yes, you did.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Didn't I read books to you?

THE RABBIT. Yes, you did.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Didn't I teach all of the rabbits?

THE RABBIT. You taught us.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. What did I teach you?

THE RABBIT. Bravery. And now we know The Wolf, The Fox and all the other horrible creatures. Because we're not afraid of them, we hide bravely. Aren't we wonderful?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. And you're afraid to come to me?

THE RABBIT. Oh, excuse me, but your new boots squeak loudly. They frighten me. (He trembles.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. That means I've wasted my time teaching you.

THE RABBIT. No, we just haven't got past squeaky boots yet.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Farewell.

THE RABBIT. Oh, no, no, if you leave--excuse me--I'll fall over dead.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Well, Rabbit, come here then. Well! (The RABBIT keeps coming closer, then jumping back as he speaks. By the end of the following passage, he is next to LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Firmly but kindly:) Come here, take a good look. It is I, your friend. Would I scare you? Would I harm you? And if I scold you, I scold you from love. It is I, your friend. (THE RABBIT extends his paw and shakes her hand.) Good! Well, what did you want to tell me?

THE RABBIT. I implore you. Go back inside and lock all your doors.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Why?

THE RABBIT (stuttering in fear). The Wolf is looking for you.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Shhh! Mama might

hear you.

THE RABBIT (whispering). The Wolf has come for you from deep in the forest. He is lurking here and keeps threatening, "I'm going to eat Little Red Riding Hood. Just let her leave the house and I'll get her." Run back quickly.

(**LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD** smiles and puts down her basket.) Why are you smiling?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'm not afraid of him. He's not going to eat me. Good-bye, little Beloukh. And thank you. (She shakes his paw once more, picks up her basket and starts to leave.)

THE RABBIT (trying to hold her). Oh! You can't do it. I--excuse my roughness--won't let you go. . . . (Tugs at her.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (easily freeing herself from his hold). Good-bye, little rabbit.

THE RABBIT. Oh dear, oh dear! I'll never see Little Red Riding Hood again. Poor girl. Poor us! (Weeping, he exits into the bushes.)

(**A GRASS SNAKE** enters.)

THE GRASS SNAKE (hissing). Ssss . . . Hello . . . sss . . . Little . . . sss . . . Red . . . sss . . . Riding . . . sss . . . Hood . . . sss . . .

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Hello, viper.

THE GRASS SNAKE (annoyed). I'm no viper . . . sss . . . I'm a grass . . . sss . . . sss . . . snake. I'm not dangerous . . . ssss . . . (He moves toward her.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'm not afraid of you. (She squeals:) But don't touch me.

THE GRASS SNAKE. Ssssss . . . stop. I crawled here . . . sssss to tell you . . . sssss . . . something. Stay home today . . . sssss.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Why?

THE GRASS SNAKE. The Wolf is prowling about.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Shhh! Mama might hear you.

THE GRASS SNAKE. Excuse . . . ssss . . . me. (Lowering his voice.) Listen to me . . . ssss. I'm friends with the cows . . . sssss. I'm crazy about milk . . . ssss. The Wolf told a cow-friend of mine that he would . . . ssss . . . have eaten . . . ssss her, except that . . . ssss he had to leave . . . ssss . . . a place . . . ssss . . . in his . . . ssss . . . belly for Little Red Riding Hood! Do you hear me . . . sssssss?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (absolutely calm). I hear you, but I'm not afraid of The Wolf.

THE GRASS SNAKE. He'll eat you . . . sss. He'll eat you . . . sssss. He'll eat you . . . sssss.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. That will never happen. Good-bye. And thank you.

THE GRASS SNAKE. I wish you would lis . . . sss . . . ten. Lis . . . sss . . . ten. (THE GRASS SNAKE disappears into the bushes.)

(THE BEAR emerges and comes toward LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.)

THE BEAR. Hail, Little Red Riding Hood!

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Hello, Mishenka. (She starts to hurry toward L, into the forest.)

THE BEAR. Stop! I have a couple of things to discuss with you.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. All right, Mishenka, but I'm in a hurry.

THE BEAR (emphatically). Two things. First, smear my face, please.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. What?

THE BEAR. My nose is all swollen because some bees--impudent things--stung me. Smear me with iodine.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'll take care of you. Sit down. (She removes a bottle of medicine from her satchel and gently swabs the nose of THE BEAR with iodine. Immediately he lets out a scream and does cartwheels about the forest.)

THE BEAR. Oh, it stings! It stings!

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. You'll feel better, friend Mishenka.

THE BEAR. Thank you. Now, let's get to the second thing. Namely, you should go home because . . .

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Once again? Why?

THE BEAR. The Wolf . . .

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Quiet, Mama might hear you.

THE BEAR. Run right home. I'm telling you . . .

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'm not afraid of The Wolf.

THE BEAR. But what can you do, my dear? With your short human nose, you won't be able to smell The Wolf from a distance. With your short human legs, you won't be able to run away. With your short human teeth, you won't be able to protect yourself. He'll eat you like a cookie. (He sobs.) Only this morning, The Wolf said to me, "I'll . . ." he said, "eat," he said, "her," he said, "like a cookie," and, he said, "without fail." I would have struck him, but I'm forbidden to, or rather, I'm not supposed to because he's my first cousin.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (undaunted). I'm not afraid of anything. Thank you for the warning. Good-bye, Bear. (She goes into the forest off

stage L.)

THE BEAR (sobbing). Too bad, Red Riding Hood.
"Like a cookie," he said.

(THE GRASS SNAKE rises above the bushes.)

THE GRASS SNAKE. He'll eat her ssurely . . .
sss.

(THE RABBIT leans out from the trees.)

THE RABBIT. I implore you. Please save her.

THE BEAR. Er . . . ah . . . But how?

THE RABBIT. I implore you. Let's run after her.

THE GRASS SNAKE. Yes, let'ssss.

THE RABBIT. And we'll protect her. I can't do
it alone. I'm a coward. But if you're with me,
it won't be so awful. You won't eat me, will
you, Bear?

THE BEAR. Of course not. You're a friend of
mine.

THE RABBIT. Thank you very much. Let's go
after her quickly.

THE BEAR. I agree. Although The Wolf is my
first cousin, I won't hand Little Red Riding
Hood over to him.

THE RABBIT. No, let's go.

(THE RABBIT, THE GRASS SNAKE, and THE
BEAR hurry off. They have barely disappeared
when THE FOX runs out from behind a tree.)

THE FOX. Hee, hee, hee. (To the audience.)
Look at those stupid, stupid animals. (Imi-
tating them.) "Let's run, let's crawl, we'll
protect her." I just stood behind a tree and
laughed. Hee! Hee! Hee! I found out every-
thing! (Thinking.) No, not quite everything.

Little Red Riding Hood is a sly one. She's thought of something, or else she would be afraid of The Wolf. I'll run after her and find out. Then I'll tell everything to The Wolf. He'll eat the girl, and people will be angered with him and drive The Wolf away. And then the forest will be mine. No Wolf, no girl. I'll be the master here. I, The Fox. Hee, hee, hee. (He runs out laughing.)

END SCENE ONE

Scene 2

A forest glade. THE MOTHER BIRD and her BABY BIRDS are talking back and forth in the tree-tops. THE BABY BIRDS are still in their nest. When LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD enters, THE BIRDS chirp joyfully.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Hello, Birds.

THE BIRDS. Hello, Little Red Riding Hood! Hello, hello . . .

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. How are you feeling?

THE BIRDS. Very well, very well.

THE MOTHER BIRD. I have hatched some young.

THE BABY BIRDS (in chorus). We've been hatched, we've been hatched. We see you, do you see us?

THE MOTHER BIRD. Children, don't pester us. Little Red Riding Hood, aren't my fledglings smart? Only two weeks old and already they can talk.

THE BABY BIRDS. Aren't we smart? Aren't we smart?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Yes, very smart. (She takes the satchel from her shoulder and puts it on the grass with the basket.) Do you remember how the farmer's son was destroying your nests?

THE BIRDS. We remember, we remember. Of course, we remember.

LITTLE RIDING HOOD. Didn't I help you?

THE BIRDS. Yes, yes. You convinced him that he

was wrong and now he is our friend. Thank you.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. And now will you help me?

THE BIRDS. Help you? Who is wronging you?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. The Wolf! (Immediately THE BIRDS become silent.)

(THE FOX looks out from behind a tree.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Why are you all so silent?

THE MOTHER BIRD. We're terrified!

THE BABY BIRDS. Mother, climb higher in the tree. We're afraid, Mama!

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Don't be alarmed, Birds. I can foil The Wolf, if he doesn't attack me by surprise.

THE BIRDS. How? Tell us how?

THE FOX. Please tell them. Do! (He strains to listen.)

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I've thought it all out. I have some pepper with me!

THE MOTHER BIRD. What for?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'll throw it in his nose.

THE BABY BIRDS. And what will he do?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. He'll sneeze.

THE BABY BIRDS. And what will you do?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'll take a dry branch and light it.

THE BABY BIRDS. And what will he do?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. He'll sneeze and come after me.

THE BABY BIRDS. And what will you do?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'll wave the branch as I walk.

THE BABY BIRDS. And what will he do?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. He'll run after me, but he won't dare to touch me, because he's afraid of fire. And that's how I'll catch him.

THE BABY BIRDS (not understanding). How?

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. I'll lead him to the Old Oak Tree near the Wild Swamp. The hunters have placed a trap there. I'll step over the trap, and The Wolf will follow me. The trap will go "snap" and The Wolf will yell "Ouch." And he'll be caught.

THE MOTHER BIRD. Very good, very good, very good!

THE BABY BIRDS. Mama, have her explain it again. We liked hearing it.

THE MOTHER BIRD. Quiet, children.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. In a word, I'm going to war with The Wolf.

THE BIRDS. Very good, very good.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. But what's a war without reconnaissance? This is where I need your help.

THE BIRDS (chirping). We'll help, we'll help, we'll help!

THE BABY BIRDS. Mama, what's reconnaissance?

THE MOTHER BIRD. Quiet. I don't know myself. She'll explain it.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. If The Wolf attacks me without warning, I won't be able to throw the pepper at him. But you can see everything from up high. And if you see The Wolf, shout, "Watch out!" Will you be my airborne reconnaissance?

THE BIRDS. Yes, oh, yes. Oh, yes.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Thank you. Well, look around carefully and report back to me.

THE BABY BIRDS. Mama, don't fly away. We're afraid.