Red vs. the Wolf

By JUDY WOLFMAN

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SYNOPSIS

RED VS. THE WOLF re-tells the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but from the Wolf’s point of view. The Wolf is upset because he is known the world over as a bad guy, but he really is kind, sensitive, thoughtful, and cultural. After refreshing the audience’s memory regarding the “traditional” rendition of Red Riding Hood, the wolf tells it like it really happened. He exposes Red, and reveals his plan with Grandma to teach Red a badly needed lesson. Hopefully, the audience will see his side of the story, realize there are two sides to everything, and learn a lesson in humility and understanding.

The show runs approximately one hour, with no scene changes. The set is designed for continuous action, which takes place at Red’s house (stage right), Grandma’s house (stage left) and the woods (center stage). There are no unusual effects or technical requirements to be concerned with—just a few simple lighting effects.

CHARACTERS

RED RIDING HOOD ......................... In the first version, Red is sweet, lovable, and sincere. In the second version, she is bratty and not very popular.

WOLF .............................................. Wolf’s basic personality is of a likable character who enjoys life and the beauty around him. He’s a bit clumsy—almost like a buffoon. He is sensitive and is easily hurt. When he portrays the “bad wolf”, he assumes a deep, rather husky voice. He needs to be able to also sound a bit like a young girl, as well as an old woman.

GRANDMA........................................ A sweet little old lady, who enjoys playing tricks on her grand-daughter. She’s not too assertive, and gives up rather easily.
RED’S MOTHER.............................. A loving, dutiful mother, who dotes on her daughter and thinks her daughter can do no wrong. Loving to a fault!

DEER............................................ Kind and wise. A good friend of the Wolf’s.

RABBIT............................................ Active and rather feisty. He moves quickly and spontaneously.

SKUNK ............................................ Rather timid and shy, and easily intimidated.

BUTTERFLY ................................. Sensuous, beautiful, with a bit of a Southern drawl.

WOODCUTTER ............................... Burly, strong, hard worker, no-nonsense sort of man.

STAGE MANAGER ......................... Easily frustrated; barks rather than talks.

SETTING

The stage is basically divided into two halves. STAGE RIGHT is the forest, with trees and rocks scattered about. A path winds through the forest. There is an entrance from Red’s house STAGE RIGHT. STAGE LEFT is Grandma’s house, with a working door to enter it. A bed is UPSTAGE LEFT, with a chair to the RIGHT of it and a table DOWN LEFT.
RED VS. THE WOLF

WOLF and his ANIMAL FRIENDS ENTER through the audience. They are giving out flowers—real or artificial—to the members of the audience. The ANIMAL FRIENDS should ask “Could you hold these flowers for me? I’ll be back for them later.” They are pleasant and courteous to the audience. They go up on the stage, delivering the following lines as they go.

DEER: That was very nice of you, Wolf.

WOLF: What was very nice of me?

DEER: Giving flowers to the people out there. That was a very thoughtful thing to do.

RABBIT: Yeah, it was. I’ll bet they never thought they’d be getting flowers from you… bet it was a nice surprise.

SKUNK: I like surprises! (Nuzzling up against WOLF.) Do me a favor, will you Wolf?

WOLF: Sure, anything. What do you want me to do?

SKUNK: Scratch my back. (WOLF begins to scratch his back.) A little higher… now move over just a little bit to the right. Ahhhhh, that feels soooo good. Thank you, Wolf.

WOLF: Anytime, friend, anytime.

BUTTERFLY: (Flitting around, back and forth.) Oh, I feel so happy… giving things to others always makes me feel good.

WOLF: I know just what you mean. As a matter of fact, that’s why I gave away all those flowers. Did you see the faces of all those kids when I gave them a flower?

DEER: They sure were surprised—why I’ll bet they expected something else.

WOLF: What do you mean—something else?

DEER: Oh, you know. Who ever heard of a “good” wolf?

WOLF: What? We’ll see about that. (Turns directly to the audience.) You’ve heard of good wolves, haven’t you? (The audience will probably say “no”.) Awww, come on. Would a “bad” wolf give out flowers? NO! Would a “bad” wolf have such nice friends? (Gestures to the animals.) NO! I know—you figure I’m bad because I fooled Little Red Riding Hood into thinking I was her
Grandma, right? Do you think I ate Grandma? (To animals.) Ya see! That’s what everyone thinks.

STAGE MANAGER: (Appears DOWN STAGE LEFT.) Stop feeling sorry for yourself, and let’s get this show rolling!

WOLF: (Throwing a surprised look in the direction of the STAGE MANAGER, and continues. When he does so, the STAGE MANAGER EXITS the stage area DOWN LEFT.) Why, at the mere mention of my name, people get scared or mad at me. Look—think about it—would a wolf that has a kind heart, lots of friends and a love for flowers be mean? Does that really sound like someone to be scared of? You know, you’ve only heard one side of the story—Red Riding Hood’s side! And just in case you forgot, it goes something like this… (Curtain opens. WOLF “sneaks” onto the set with mincy steps. He goes to the tree, looks around, then hides behind it, out of sight. Meanwhile, the ANIMALS wander OFF STAGE. LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD opens the door from her house and steps IN. Her MOTHER is behind her, carrying a basket of food, covered with a cloth.)

RED: (Putting on her cape and hood.) Mother, I can’t tie my hood. Would you please tie it for me?

MOTHER: Of course, dear. (Ties hood.) There you are. And how pretty you look in your red cape and hood. Your Grandmother will be pleased to see you wearing it.

RED: It’s my favorite thing to wear. I’m so glad Grandmother made it for me.

MOTHER: (Giving RED the basket.) Now, sweetheart, take this basket to Grandma. She hasn’t been feeling too well, and I think she’ll appreciate the cookies we baked for her.

RED: (Peering into the basket.) What else did you put in the basket?

MOTHER: Some fruit and a sandwich.

RED: Oh, I’m sure she’ll like that, too! Mother, may I stay for a while and visit Grandma? She’s so sweet.

MOTHER: Yes. I’m sure she’d like that. But don’t stay too long. She tires quite easily.

RED: When I see that she’s getting tired, I’ll leave.

WOLF: (Sticks his head out from behind the tree.) You see what’s
happening? Right away, they hit you with what a “goody two shoes” Red is. It’s sickening, I tell you—sickening! (WOLF shakes his head violently and bumps his head on the tree. Reacts.)

MOTHER: Good. Now take the basket and run along. (RED starts to go.) Remember, dear, go straight to Grandma’s house. Don’t stop to play with the animals. And don’t talk to any strangers.

RED: All right, Mother. I’ll do as you say. ’Bye. (She waves to her MOTHER and heads down the path.)

MOTHER: Sweetheart. Aren’t you forgetting something?

RED: (Turns around.) Oh! I’m sorry, Mother, I did forget! (She runs back to her MOTHER and gives her a hug and a kiss.) There you are, Mother. (She resumes her walk down the path, turns once to wave to her MOTHER. MOTHER waves back and goes into the house. RABBIT, SKUNK, BUTTERFLY and DEER ENTER from behind the trees.)

DEER: What brings you into the forest, Red?

RED: I’m on my way to Grandma’s house.

RABBIT: Can I go with you? Grandma always gives me something good to eat!

SKUNK: (Shyly.) Can I go, too?

RED: (Petting them both and laughing.) Grandma isn’t feeling well, and I’m bringing her this basket of goodies. But, I’m sure you could walk with me.

BUTTERFLY: I don’t walk, but I’d love to fly with you.

DEER: Maybe Grandma wouldn’t want so many friends around when she’s not feeling well.

WOLF: (Sticking his head out from behind the tree.) Isn’t that “deer”? Now everyone will think that Red is kind to animals!

RABBIT: (Dejectedly.) Yes. Maybe we shouldn’t go.

BUTTERFLY: My presence would probably make Grandma feel better. I’m soooo beautiful and graceful.

SKUNK: (Hanging his head down.) Yeah. Maybe we shouldn’t go.

RED: You’re all so thoughtful. Mother did say that Grandma tires easily. (Looks into the basket and pulls out a big cookie.) I’m sure
Grandma won’t miss this cookie. Would you like a piece? *(She breaks off pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of each animal.)*

DEER: *(Chewing.)* Ummmmmm, this is good, Red.

RABBIT: You and your Mom sure do know how to make cookies.

SKUNK: This is deeeelicious.

RED: I’m so glad you like it. Now, dear friends, I must be on my way. I’ve stayed too long as it is.

DEER: Be careful, Red.

RABBIT: Don’t talk to any strangers.

RED: *(Laughing.)* You sound just like my Mother! Don’t worry, I won’t talk to any strangers, and I will be careful. ’Bye now. *(She waves to the animals and continues along the path. All of the ANIMALS EXIT, leaving only RED on stage.)*

WOLF: *(Steps out from behind the tree. He’s obviously upset, and begins to pace back and forth.)* I can’t! I just can’t do it. I’m supposed to come out now and scare that poor, sweet little girl. But I just can’t do it.

STAGE MANAGER: *(ENTERING DOWN LEFT.)* What do you think you’re doing? What do you mean you can’t do it? It’s in your contract, and you’ve no choice! Now take these and do what you’re supposed to do. *(He hands the WOLF a set of false fangs and stamps OFF DOWN LEFT. WOLF sighs heavily, puts the fangs in his mouth, shrugs at the audience and goes back behind the tree. He quickly reappears, clears his throat and says:)*


RED: *(Stops abruptly, takes a step back, looks at the WOLF warily.)* Oh! Hello. *(She begins to back away.)*

WOLF: Wait a minute. I won’t hurt you.

RED: But I don’t know who you are, and my Mother told me not to talk to strangers.

WOLF: Well, let me introduce myself to you. I am Willard, the Wolf, but you can just call me Wolf. Now you know who I am, so we’re not strangers any more.

RED: I guess it’s OK then, Mr. Wolf.
WOLF: Aw, you can call me just plain Wolf—drop the Mister. And what is your name, young lady?

RED: Mother and my friends call me Little Red Riding Hood.

WOLF: (Laughing.) And I can see why. That’s a pretty sharp outfit you’re wearing. (Returns to his “real” personality, goes over, feels the fabric, holds her cape out for a better look.) This is truly stunning, and I love the fabric. Is this silk or cotton? And the color is perfect for you! Wherever did you get it?

STAGE MANAGER: (ENTERING DOWN LEFT, mad, with clenched teeth and a tight fist.) Will you please stick to the script? There is nothing in the script that says anything about her outfit! Now, take it from the top and do it right! (Walks OFF DOWN LEFT in a huff.)

WOLF: Hmmmm, let’s see now. Oh, yeah… That’s a pretty sharp outfit you’re wearing.

RED: Thank you. My Grandmother made it for me. It’s my favorite outfit, and I wear it all the time.

WOLF: That figures. (To the audience.) Ever notice how Red and Orphan Annie wear the same outfits day in and day out? Disgusting! (Back to RED.) And where are you going, Miss Riding Hood?

RED: I’m going to visit my Grandmother. She hasn’t been well, and I’m bringing her this basket of goodies.

WOLF: And what is in the basket, may I ask?

RED: Oh, just a sandwich, some fruit and some cookies that Mother and I baked for her.


RED: (Confused.) Chocolate chip, I think.

WOLF: Ohhhhh, they’re my very favorite. Did your mother make them with Rice Krispies? I have this simply marvelous recipe for chocolate chip cookies with Rice Krispies. First you take butter, or margarine if you prefer, and…

STAGE MANAGER: (Storms IN DOWN LEFT, obviously annoyed.) This is not a Betty Crocker bake off—this is a show! Do you understand me? This is a show! Now, once and for all, get back to the story. Do you hear me?! Well, do you?
WOLF: (Very meekly.) Yes, I hear you. How could I NOT hear you?

STAGE MANAGER: Then do it! NOW! (Stalks OFF DOWN LEFT.)

WOLF: (After him.) All right, already. (Turns back to RED.) Hmmm, sounds good. And where does your Grandmother live?

RED: Not too far from here.

WOLF: I didn’t realize that anyone lived nearby. I thought I was the only one who lived in the forest. Exactly where is her house?

RED: Actually, she doesn’t live in the forest. She lives on the edge of the forest. I just take a short cut through the forest.

WOLF: I see. So tell me, how do you get to her house?

RED: Well, if you take this path, you’ll come to a big tree.

WOLF: Yeah, I know the one you mean.

RED: When you get to the tree, you turn right, and that path will take you right to my Grandma’s house. Goodness, I’d better get going. Grandma will be wondering where I am.

WOLF: Before you leave, why don’t you pick some of these lovely flowers for your Grandmother. I’m sure that would cheer her up.

RED: That’s a good idea. She does love flowers and they are quite beautiful. Thank you for the idea. (She begins to pick flowers.)

WOLF: Not at all. Well, I guess I’d better be going. I’ve kept you long enough. It sure was nice meeting you.

RED: And I enjoyed meeting you, too, Mr… er, I mean, Wolf.

WOLF: Yes… well, ahhhhh, I’ll just be on my way. Hope your Grandmother will soon be feeling better.

RED: Thank you. ‘Bye now. (Turns her back to the audience and mimes picking flowers UP RIGHT.)

WOLF: Good-bye. (He begins to go down the path, turns and speaks to the audience.) You’ve got to admit, I’m pretty smart. I get her picking flowers so that I can “hot foot” it over to Grandma’s. My mother didn’t raise any dumb puppies! (WOLF turns to his RIGHT, then to his LEFT, scratches his head, has a puzzled look on his face. Mumbles to himself.) Now, which way did she say to go? Was it this way? (Points to the RIGHT.) Or, this way? (Points to the LEFT. Turns to the audience.) Do you remember which way she said to go? (Audience should respond—WOLF listens
carefully—when he hears the way, he thanks them, runs down the twisting path to GRANDMOTHER'S house, leaving RED still picking flowers. WOLF arrives at GRANDMOTHER'S house and peers in the window.) Hmmmmmm, it's rather dark in there. Can't see a thing! (Bends his head further forward to see better, and bumps his head. He recoils, and falls flat on his back.) Owwww. I'm hurt. Someone help me. I think I broke my back. (He moans and groans.)

STAGE MANAGER: (Rushes IN DOWN LEFT.) Now what did you do? (Helps WOLF to a sitting position, while checking him over.) There's nothing wrong with you! (Helps WOLF to his feet.) Now get up and knock on the door.

WOLF: (Walks to door—slightly limping for effect—looks at the STAGE MANAGER all the while. STAGE MANAGER throws up his hands in disgust and EXITS. WOLF knocks on the door.)

GRANDMA: (From the bed. A thin, somewhat weak voice.) Who is it? Is that you, Red Riding Hood?

WOLF: (Disguising his voice to sound a bit like RED.) Yes, it is I, Grandmother. Little Red Riding Hood. (Turns to audience.) I do impersonations, too!

GRANDMA: Oh, Red, I've been expecting you. Just lift the latch and come on in. (WOLF opens the door, walks over to the bed. GRANNY looks up at him, and when she sees the WOLF, she panics—throws back the covers, jumps out of the bed and runs OUT the door yelling and screaming, EXITING behind the house.)

WOLF: (Picks up the shawl, attempts to wrap it around his shoulders, but gets tangled all up in it. Finally gets it situated. Then puts on the nightcap, which comes down over his eyes.) Help! Who turned out the lights? Where did everyone go?

STAGE MANAGER: (Running IN LEFT.) You idiot! Put your cap on TOP of your head—NOT over your eyes. (WOLF obliges. STAGE MANAGER stalks OFF LEFT, muttering to himself all the way. UP RIGHT, RED stops picking flowers and crosses along path. WOLF adjusts himself in bed, brings the covers up to his neck. He settles down in the bed just as RED arrives. She knocks on the door.)

RED: Grandma. Grandma. Are you awake?

WOLF: (Disguising his voice to sound a bit like GRANNY.) Yes, dear, I'm awake. Just lift up the latch and walk right in.
**RED:** (Opens the door and ENTERS the room. She goes over to the bed and stands next to it.) Hello, Grandma. Mother sent you this basket. It has a sandwich and some fruit and some cookies that Mother and I baked just for you. Would you like to have one now? *(She sets the basket on the table, pulls back the cover of the basket, reaches in for a cookie and extends it to “GRANNY”).*

**WOLF:** No, thank you dear. I’m not very hungry right now. Just leave everything on the table, and I’ll get it later.

**RED:** *(Does as she is told, then turns back to the bed. She sits on the chair next to the bed, pulling it a bit closer.)* My, Grandma, it’s so dark in here. Wouldn’t you like me to open the curtains and let some of the sunshine come in? It’s so beautiful outside.

**WOLF:** *(Quickly.)* Oh, no. The sun is too bright for my tired old eyes.

**RED:** *(Looking at the WOLF’S eyes.)* Poor, Grandma. Why, Grandma, what big eyes you have!

**WOLF:** Oh, the better to see you with, my dear.

**RED:** *(Looking at the ears sticking out from the nightcap.)* And Grandmother, what big ears you have!

**WOLF:** The better to hear you with, my dear.

**RED:** *(Noticing the WOLF’S nose.)* Grandmother, what a big nose you have.

**WOLF:** The better to smell you with, my dear.

**RED:** And Grandma, what big teeth you have!

**WOLF:** *(Throwing back the covers and lunging at RED.)* The better to eat you with, my dear. *(RED screams, WOLF chases her. There’s a lot of confusion as the WOLF chases RED around the room. Throughout it all, a WOODSMAN, carrying an ax, ENTERS from behind house. GRANNY is right behind him. Following GRANNY are DEER, RABBIT, SKUNK and BUTTERFLY. They burst IN the door. The following dialogue takes place almost simultaneously.)*

**DEER:** Red, are you all right?

**RABBIT:** What’s going on here?

**SKUNK:** Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my!

**BUTTERFLY:** I won’t let any harm come to you, Red.
GRANDMA: (Pointing to the WOLF.) There he is. He's trying to get my granddaughter. Stop him. Get him.

WOODSMAN: Okay, Wolf. You’ve had your fun. Now it’s over. (Rises his ax and chases the WOLF. WOODSMAN is followed by ANIMAL FRIENDS with GRANDMA and RED at the end. The chase is on—in a circular pattern, yelling and carrying on. After about 2 or 3 rounds, the WOLF steps out of the circle, while the others continue to run.)

WOLF: (Huffing, puffing, panting.) Yikes! This is more than I expected! Let me out of here! (He heads toward STAGE LEFT—STAGE MANAGER ENTERS DOWN LEFT, puts his hand on WOLF’S chest, pushing WOLF back on the set.)

STAGE MANAGER: Oh, no you don’t. Get back there! (When WOLF is back, STAGE MANAGER brushes his hands in satisfaction, and EXITS DOWN LEFT.)

WOLF: Well, here I go again! (He RE-ENTERS the chase scene. As they run, the following takes place: RED and GRANNY run to each other and hug each other.)

GRANDMA: Oh, my dear, sweet child. Are you all right? Did that mean old wolf hurt you?

RED: No, Grandma, he didn’t hurt me, but he tried to. Oh, Grandma, it was terrible.

GRANDMA: You poor thing. But how did he know you were here in the first place?

RED: I met him in the forest on my way over here and he (Her voice fades—she ends up just moving her lips and gesturing in animation as the WOLF begins to talk.)

WOLF: Huh? Whoa! (He whistles through his teeth.) Hold everything!

RED: (Her voice audible again.) But, Grandma, where were you? Why weren’t you here? How did the wolf get in? (Back to animation.)

WOLF: I don’t believe my ears! That’s the same story that’s been circulating for years!

GRANDMA: (Voice audible.) …and I thought it was you, so I let him in. But when I saw who it was, I ran away and got the woodsman. (Back to animation.)

WOLF: (To audience.) You see? You see? That’s the story people
have heard for years and years—makin’ me out to be the heavy! The bad wolf. I can’t stand it any more. *(To GRANNY and RED.)* Aw, come on, Grandma. You know that wasn’t the way it was. Tell the truth.

RED: *(Audible.)* Oh, Grandma, I’m so glad you’re all right.

GRANDMA: And I’m so glad that we got here in time so no harm could come to you.

WOLF: *(Very angry and upset.)* Now that’s quite enough! I can’t stand it any more. *(Everyone freezes.)* Now, since I have your undivided attention, I’m going to tell you what really happened. *(Turns to everyone in the house.)* Okay all of you... back it up. *(WOODSMAN backs OUT of the house OFFSTAGE LEFT; GRANNY backs up into the bed, pulls the covers up under her chin; the ANIMALS back up to their original positions in forest; RED backs up out of the house, up the twisting path, OUT RIGHT into her own house; WOLF backs up and stands behind the tree he stepped out from originally. PROPS PERSON comes IN DOWN LEFT, opens curtains at the window, puts the chair back in place, picks up the basket and takes it OFF STAGE RIGHT to give to RED. MAKEUP PERSON with an oversized powder puff ENTERS DOWN LEFT, crosses RIGHT and blots RED’S face a couple of times at edge of STAGE RIGHT. All of this is done simultaneously. [NOTE: All action can be done by STAGE MANAGER, if preferred.] When all of the action has stopped and everyone is in position, WOLF steps out from behind the tree.) Now, you have to understand—the forest is my home. I love it here and take a great deal of pride in my home. I have a lot of friends here... *(ANIMALS ENTER from forest as their names are called.)* Rabbit, Skunk, Butterfly and Deer, plus hundreds of birds and animals. But lately, I’ve been getting annoyed. Lots of people like to come to my woods—you know—to hike or camp. And they’re not always considerate. *(STAGE MANAGER crosses from DOWN LEFT, eating a candy bar. He throws the wrapper in front on the WOLF.)* Hey, what do you think you’re doing? Come back here, you, and pick that up!

STAGE MANAGER: *(Pointing to himself.)* Who? Me?

WOLF: Yes, you. Who do you think you are to come into my woods and throw your litter around? Boy, that really makes me mad! What do you think trash cans are for?
STAGE MANAGER: *(Looking around for a trash can.)* I don’t see any trash cans around.

WOLF: Then put the paper in your pocket and throw it away when you get home.

STAGE MANAGER: *( Picks up wrapper, puts it in his pocket.)* All right, all right. Don’t get in such an uproar. *(He EXITS STAGE RIGHT.)*

WOLF: See what I mean? People are always leaving their mess behind. And that’s how this story really begins. You see, one day, some inconsiderate campers left quite a mess. So, I prepared to go out and clean up after them, like I always do. About the same time that I was getting ready to go out, Red was also preparing to enter the forest. Now you’ll see the real Red Riding Hood.

MOTHER: *(Stepping IN RIGHT from her house.)* Come on, darling. I have prepared a nice basket of food for you to take to your Grandmother.

RED’S VOICE: *(From the house, OFF RIGHT.)* Hold your horses, Mother. I’ll be out when I’m ready.

MOTHER: All right, dear. But do try to hurry.

RED: *(ENTERING RIGHT.)* Gee whiz, Mom, do I have to go to Grandma’s? She’s so boring. Why don’t you go?

MOTHER: I have other things to do around the house. And besides, Grandma does like to have you around once in a while. She says you give her energy and make her feel so young.

RED: Well, she makes me feel old! Honestly, Mother, I don’t see why I have to carry this basket all the way through the woods, just to give her some food. Can’t she cook for herself? Why do I always have to be the one to take stuff to her? She’s always pinching my cheeks, and that hurts. Someday I’m gonna pinch her right back and see how she likes it!

WOLF: *(Popping his head out from behind the tree.)* Sweet kid, huh?

MOTHER: *(Sweetly.)* Why, Red, darling. I thought you loved your Grandma. After all, she is getting on in years, and since you’re her only grandchild, everything she has will be yours someday.

RED: *(Thinking about what MOTHER just said.)* Yeah... I guess I’d better be nice to her, or she just might leave everything to the Old Ladies Home.
MOTHER: That’s my good little girl. Now, let’s put on your red cape and hood—the one Grandma made for you.

RED: But…

MOTHER: (Interrupting her.) You know how much it means to Grandma to see you wearing this outfit. And it does look sweet on you.

RED: Yuk. I hate this outfit. It’s silly looking.

MOTHER: (Firmly.) Red.

RED: Oh, all right. Gimme the basket. (She grabs the basket from her MOTHER and begins walking down the path.)

MOTHER: (Waving to RED.) ’Bye, darling. Go right to Grandma’s and remember—don’t talk to any strangers.

RED: (Muttering to herself.) You’d think I don’t have any sense at all. (She stops to tie her shoe. RABBIT, SKUNK, BUTTERFLY and DEER slowly approach her. She looks up and sees them standing there looking at her.)

RED: (Haughtily.) Well, what are you gawking at?

RABBIT: (Shaking his head as if to break a trance.) Huh?

RED: I said, what are you gawking at? You’re staring at me, and that’s very rude.

DEER: Sorry. We don’t mean to be rude.

SKUNK: (Shyly.) No—we don’t mean to be rude.

RED: Well, you are. (She swings her basket around in a circle, making all of the ANIMALS jump back.) Get out of my way.

SKUNK: Ouch! (Runs behind DEER for protection.)

RED: What’s wrong with you? I missed by a mile!

DEER: Oh, he’s just sensitive, that’s all.

RED: (Moving toward SKUNK and sniffing.) Sensitive? Phew! He smells bad. (To SKUNK.) Don’t you ever take a bath?

SKUNK: (Puts his head down—insulted.) I can’t help it, that’s just the way I am.

WOLF: (Looks out at audience again.) We’re lucky he isn’t really upset, or we’d all have to clear out of here pretty fast!
BUTTERFLY: Why, I declare! You should be ashamed of yourself! You should accept him just as he is.

RABBIT: (Acting tough.) Yeah. That's the way he is. So quit picking on him.

RED: (Sarcastically.) Well, pardon me. (She pulls RABBIT'S ears.)

BUTTERFLY: (Flitting around in mimicry of RED—flapping her wings grandly.)

RED: What do you think you are? You think you're so grand and beautiful, don't you? Well, you're not—I'm prettier than you. And what's more, I can fly too. (RED holds out her cape and attempts to fly, but ends up looking awkward and silly. ALL of the animals titter. RED is enraged and lunges at the animals in mock chase, sending them to the perimeter of the area. In anger, she opens her basket, pulls out a candy bar, throws the wrapper on the ground and begins to walk away.) Now, if you don't mind, I'll be on my way.

WOLF: (Getting excited.) Did you see that? See what I mean? People just don't care. And she sure looks suspicious to me. See the way she has that hood over her head? Why, I'll bet she doesn't want anyone to recognize her—probably running away from home. I'll bet she's got her stuff packed in that basket and is high tailing it out of here.

STAGE MANAGER: (ENTERS from STAGE RIGHT.) Are you at it again? How many...

WOLF: (Interrupting.) Hey, you had your chance. This is my story. Now you stay out of it! Go! (MANAGER stands there with his mouth open in shock.) I said, GO! (STAGE MANAGER runs off DOWN LEFT.) There! That takes care of him. (WOLF approaches RED.) Ahem. Pardon me, young lady.

RED: (Startled.) Oh! (Then angry.) You scared me!

WOLF: Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you. I just noticed you...

RED: (Interrupting.) Well, you did scare me. Now, who are you, and what do you want?

WOLF: Why, I live here. And the question is, who are you and what are you doing in my woods?

RED: Your woods? Hah! Don’t make me laugh. These aren’t your woods.
WOLF: (Defensively.) They most certainly are. I live in these woods—it’s my home. And all of my friends are here, too. (Gesturing to the animals.) But you don’t live here.

RED: Of course I don’t live in the woods, stupid. I live in a house near the edge of the woods.

WOLF: I see. Then what are you doing here?

RED: Boy, are you nosey! It’s really none of your business.

WOLF: All right. (Changing the subject.) Errrr, what’s in your basket?

RED: You sure ask a lot of questions. (She opens the basket.) If you must know, I have some food for my Grandmother. (She pulls out a cookie.) See? Want one? (She offers it to the WOLF, who reaches out for it. Just as he nears it, she pulls it away and pops it into her own mouth.) Ha, ha—I fooled you. (As she is talking, the ANIMALS slowly come forward.)

WOLF: Yes, I guess you did.

RED: That’s an old trick, and you fell for it. You sure are dumb.

WOLF: (Defensively.) Well, I wouldn’t say that. My friends think I’m okay. (Turns to the ANIMALS.) Don’t you?

DEER: Yes, indeed. You’re a clever one, you are.

RABBIT: You’re not only clever, but you’re smart, too!

SKUNK: And you’re kind and nice.

BUTTERFLY: Why, you’re our best friend!

WOLF: See? They all think I’m okay. I just misunderstood you. (Changing the subject.) Ah—you mentioned that you were taking this food to your Grandmother. Does she live in the woods?

RED: No, dummy, she doesn’t live in the woods. Only animals live in the woods. Duh.

WOLF: Then where does she live?

RED: She lives on the other side of the woods. This path leads right to her front door. And now, if you don’t mind, I’ll continue my journey.

WOLF: Of course. Don’t let me detain you, Miss... err, I don’t recall your name.

RED: I never said it, but I’m called Red Riding Hood.
WOLF: (To audience.) I think they should call her “Red Riding Brat.” (To RED.) Ah, and I can see why. Well, then, Miss Riding Hood, I’ll not keep you any longer. Oh, perhaps you would like to pick some flowers for your Grandmother. They are quite lovely this time of year and would surely cheer her up. (He begins to pick the flowers. Speaks to the audience.) Say, we could use a little help. How about helping us pick some flowers for Red Riding Hood’s grandmother. My friends will come and get the flowers from you. (ANIMALS go into the audience, gathering the flowers that had been distributed at the beginning of the show.) You know, there’s something about a bouquet of flowers that makes the sickest person feel good. Don’t you think so? (Wait for audience’s response.) Flowers are so colorful, and they smell so good. (He sniffs one he’s holding in his hand.) I’m sure these will cheer your Grandmother up, Little Red Riding Hood. Why don’t you pick some, too?

RED: Yeah, I might as well. It’ll give me extra points with the old girl.

WOLF: I beg your pardon?

RED: You know, butter her up. (WOLF looks quizzical.) It will please her, and then she’ll remember me in her will.

WOLF: I see. Well, I’ll just leave you and all your friends to pick the flowers, and I’ll be on my way. (He hands RED the few flowers he has picked and walks away. Turns to the ANIMALS.) Hurry up, guys. Get those flowers for Grandma. (Glances back to RED, then to the audience.) That young lady needs to be taught a lesson. (RED stops picking flowers, goes to sit on a nearby rock—combs her hair, buffs her nails, etc. WOLF looks at RED and says… ) And I think Grandma is just the person I need to see! (WOLF runs LEFT toward GRANNY’S house.)

RED: (Looks at her watch, taps her foot impatiently. To ANIMALS in audience.) Hey, you guys, hurry it up, will you? I haven’t got all day. I want to go to Grandma’s and be back for supper and my favorite TV shows. Come on, bring the flowers here. (The ANIMALS run back ONSTAGE and give her the flowers they have gathered.)

DEER: Now, you have a lovely bouquet of flowers to give your Grandma.

BUTTERFLY: These flowers are almost as beautiful as my wings!
RABBIT: Sure hope these will help cheer Grandma up!

SKUNK: *(Shyly.)* I hope Grandma feels better.

RED: *(Dryly.)* Yeah, yeah. *(Grabs the flowers from each animal.)* Now, beat it! *(She holds the flowers in one arm, swings the other arm at the animals in Karate fashion. The animals are frightened, and run off in various directions. RED fusses with the flowers, her basket, and herself, while the WOLF has reached GRANNY’S house.)*

WOLF: *(Knocks on GRANNY’S door—lightly at first, then a little louder.)*

GRANDMA: *(Weak, thin voice.)* Who is there? Is it you, Little Red Riding Hood?

WOLF: No, ma’am, it isn’t Little Red Riding Hood. You don’t know me, but I’d like very much to talk with you.

GRANDMA: Are you a friend of Little Red Riding Hood’s?

WOLF: Well, I guess you could say that. I just left her after a very nice conversation with her. Please, may I come in?

GRANDMA: Very well. Just lift up the latch and come on in. *(The WOLF ENTERS, goes over to the bed and stands next to GRANNY.)*

GRANDMA: *(Seeing the WOLF, she gasps and is frightened.)* Oh, my! You’re a wolf! Help! Help!

WOLF: Please, ma’am, don’t be frightened. I won’t hurt you, I promise. I just want to talk with you.

GRANDMA: *(Still visibly shaken up.)* Well, what do you want to talk to me about?

WOLF: Well, you see, I just met your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood. She’s on her way to visit you and is bringing you a nice basket of food and some flowers. When she came through my homeland, the forest, I stopped to talk with her. Well, ma’am, I was as nice and polite as I could be, but she was rather rude. It occurred to me that perhaps she should be taught a lesson.

GRANDMA: A lesson? What do you mean? What sort of lesson?

WOLF: It just seems to me that she should be more pleasant, and not so… so… *(Looking for the word.)*
GRANDMA: Bratty!

WOLF: Yes... that’s it... not so bratty.

GRANDMA: I know exactly what you mean. It seems to be that the older that girl gets, the nastier she gets. In fact, just the other day, I said to her mother, “Red Riding Hood needs to have her bottom smacked every now and again.” But of course my daughter just thinks Red is perfect, and won’t lay a hand on her.

WOLF: Well, that’s not exactly what I meant. What I had in mind was... (WOLF leans toward GRANNY and whispers in her ear. GRANNY nods her head enthusiastically up and down, and a slow smile creeps over her face.)

GRANDMA: (Pulling back.) That’s a marvelous idea! Tell me more... (WOLF continues to whisper in her ear—she nods more vigorously, pulls away from the WOLF laughing heartily.) That’s terrific! I can’t wait ’til Red gets here. Oh, you’re so smart. Here, you take my shawl and night cap and climb into bed. (WOLF puts on the cap and shawl and climbs into the bed.) Now, I’ll just pull the covers up so she won’t see too much of you. (GRANNY jumps with glee, clicks her heels in the air.) I can’t remember when I’ve ever been so excited! I’ll just pull the curtains to make it a little darker in here. (She walks to the window and pulls the curtains. Lights dim.) There. Red will never know it’s you, and not me, in that bed. (GRANNY surveys the room and smiles contentedly.) Now, I’ll just slip outside and wait behind the house. (She EXITS through door and behind house. When RED ENTERS, GRANDMA REAPPEARS, peeking IN from behind house, giggling to herself.)

WOLF: She’s a sweet little old lady. And very cooperative. I sure hope my plan works. (RED RIDING HOOD has begun to walk down the path while GRANNY was talking and arrives near the house while the WOLF talks to GRANNY. RED is carrying the flowers and basket and knocks on the door after GRANNY leaves.)

WOLF: (In voice that is supposed to be like GRANNY’S.) Who is there?

RED: It’s me, Grandma. Little Red Riding Hood. Who did you think it was—the Avon lady?

WOLF: (In disguised voice.) The door is open, dear. Just lift up the latch and walk right in.
RED: *(ENTERS and walks over to the bed.)* Hi, Grandma. How ya doin'? Mommy and... I mean I baked some cookies for you this morning, and I brought some just for you. I worked real hard—read the recipe and did everything all by myself. I also have a sandwich and some fruit for you. *(Looks into the basket.)* Let me see now... I climbed way up in an apple tree and picked the reddest and juiciest apple I could find. And then I climbed up a pear tree and picked the best pear—just for you! And then I climbed up a banana tree and...

WOLF: *(Interrupting.)* A banana tree??? There are no banana trees around here.

RED: Oh... wellllll, I traveled to where there are banana trees. Oh, what's the difference. What would you like?

GRANDMA: *(GRANNY has heard everything, and has been reacting to RED'S obvious lies—shaking her head back and forth.)* My, how that child lies! Wolf was right—she does need to be taught a lesson. Well, I've heard enough. Think I'll pick some blueberries and make that nice Wolf a pie. *(She picks up a bucket that has been sitting near her door, and walks OFF STAGE.)*

RED: Well, which one do you want—the apple? The pear? Or the banana?

WOLF: Thank you just the same, dear, but I don't care for anything right now. Just put them on the table, and perhaps I'll eat them later.

RED: Well, that long walk sure made me hungry. I think I'll eat the apple.

WOLF: Why, of course, dear. Help yourself.

RED: *(Takes a bite of the apple.)* Nah, I don't feel like eating an apple. *(Puts it back on the table.)* Think I'll have the pear instead. *(She bites into the pear.)* This is a lousy pear Mom got... I mean, I picked. *(She puts the pear on the table.)* Guess I'll try the banana. *(Takes a bite of banana.)* Not in the mood for a banana. *(She puts the banana back on the table.)* Oh, I almost forgot. I picked these flowers for you, too. I found them in the woods and picked them all by myself... just for you. Wasn't that nice of me?

WOLF: Yes, dear. That was very thoughtful. Was that your idea?

RED: *(Bratty, haughty.)* Of course it was. Who else would have told me to do that?
WOLF: Oh, I don’t know. Your mother might have suggested it. Or maybe you met someone in the woods who gave you the idea.

RED: (Defensively.) No. I thought it up all by myself. (Changing the subject.) My, it’s dark in here. Would you like me to open the curtains and let some of the sunshine in?

WOLF: (Quickly.) No. No. The sun is too bright for my tired old eyes. Come here, dear, so I may see you better.

RED: (Moving closer to the bed and looking down at WOLF.) Good heavens, Grandma, you sure have big beady eyes. Funny, I never noticed them before. They sure look strange.

WOLF: (Gulps and puts his hand up to his mouth to make sure the following aside is not noticed by her.) Listen to that. She says my eyes are beady. I can’t help it—that’s the way they are. (Back to RED.) Well, my dear, that’s all the better to see you with.

RED: (Noticing WOLF’S ears.) And, Grandma, your ears—they are so big and funny looking.

WOLF: (Anger rises in him—another aside to the audience.) Another insult! Can you believe this girl? If I could control the looks of my ears, do you think I’d pick these? (To RED.) The better to hear you with, my dear.

RED: Hmmmmm. I guess... But Grandma, that nose just has to go—it’s so long. (Honks the WOLF’S nose.) Beep. Beep. What do you have to say about that?

WOLF: (Aside.) Grrrr. There she goes again. That girl is really getting to me. (Back to RED—touching his nose.) That? Oh, that. Well, that’s the better to smell you with, my dear.

RED: Aw, come on, Grandma. This is getting ridiculous. Your eyes, ears and nose never looked like that. I know, you’re playing a trick on me and you have a monster face on. (WOLF smiles, showing his teeth.) Wow! Grandma, what big teeth you have. They look like long, white knives.

WOLF: (Aside.) That does it. She’s gone too far, and I can’t take it any longer. (Back to RED—throwing off the covers, reaching for RED.) The better to eat you with, my dear!

RED: Oh, yeah? (She uses Karate, landing the final blow into WOLF’S stomach. WOLF doubles over and begins to scream in pain.) Take that! How dumb do you think I am? (Punches him
again—WOLF screams again.) I knew it was you, Wolf. Now, where’s my Grandmother?

WOLF: (Screaming in pain, and trying to ward off RED’S blows.) Ok, ok, calm down, Red, calm down. I didn’t mean any harm. Your Grandmother and I... (WOODCUTTER bursts IN with an ax. He sees the WOLF and RED. Immediately jumps to the conclusion that the WOLF is bothering RED, so begins to chase the WOLF.)

WOODSMAN: What’s going on here? What’s all the screaming and shouting about? So, it’s you Wolf. Trying to get this poor little girl, are you? Well, I won’t let you.

WOLF: No, you’ve got it all wrong. I was just...

RED: That’s right, Mr. Woodsman. Get him. Give him what he deserves.

WOODSMAN: Don’t you worry, honey. I’ll get him all right. (Swings the ax at the WOLF.) Take that. (WOLF dodges.)

WOLF: Hey, you could have killed me with that thing. Watch where you’re swinging!

WOODSMAN: Drat, I missed! But I won’t miss this time. (He swings again, narrowly missing the WOLF. The ANIMALS come running IN, all babbling at the same time.)

DEER: What’s all the screaming about?

RABBIT: Who’s getting killed?

SKUNK: What’s going on?

BUTTERFLY: Has something happened? What’s happened?

WOLF: (Calling.) Grandma! Grandma! Where are you, Grandma? (WOODSMAN begins to chase WOLF, swinging his ax back and forth. Animals chase the WOODSMAN.)

RED: (Yelling across the room.) What did you do with my Grandma?

WOLF: I didn’t do anything with her! (Calling again.) Come on, Grandma. I need you to help me!

WOODSMAN: (Swinging his ax low—WOLF jumps over it.) Now I’ve got you!

WOLF: (Steps out of the chase—others continue to chase around the room, over the bed, etc.) This is ridiculous. Everything is out of hand. I can’t calm anyone down long enough to explain.
I’d better get out of here while the gettin’ is good. *(He grabs the shawl, throws it over the WOODCUTTER’S head and knocks him down, while running for the door. WOLF runs out the door, and down the path to his tree, which he hides behind. The animals follow him and EXIT.)*

WOODSMAN: *(Throws off the shawl, picks himself up and looks around for the WOLF.)* Where did he go?

RED: He left. But where is my Grandmother? That’s what I want to know. *(Calls out.)* Grandma! Grandma! Where are you, Grandma?

GRANDMA: *(ENTERS, huffing and puffing.)* Here I am, Little Red Riding Hood. My goodness, what was all the commotion about?

RED: *(Runs to GRANNY.)* Oh, Grandma! Thank goodness you’re alive. I thought for a minute I’d have to carry all this food back home!

GRANDMA: Why, of course I’m alive. Why shouldn’t I be?

RED: I thought the wolf might have gotten you.

GRANDMA: The wolf? Oh, yes… the wolf. Well, now, the wolf came and…

RED: Oh, Grandma, let’s not talk about it. That mean old wolf had no business coming to your house.

GRANDMA: But, dear, the wolf just…

RED: *(Firmly.)* Now that’s enough, Grandma. It’s over.

GRANDMA: But I just…

RED: No. It’s done.

GRANDMA: You don’t understand. I…

RED: Grandma, that enough. I don’t want to hear another word. Let’s forget the whole thing. Understand?

GRANDMA: Yes, but…

RED: *(Menacingly.)* Grandma!

GRANDMA: Oh, all right. *(She looks at the audience, shrugs and sighs.)*

RED: Now, I brought you some delicious cookies and fruit. And I also picked up some flowers for you. See? *(She picks up the basket and shows GRANNY the contents.)*
GRANDMA: How sweet, dear. Why don’t we have some now? *(Turns to the WOODSMAN.)* Would you care for a cookie that my Granddaughter made?

WOODSMAN: Don’t mind if I do. *(Takes a cookie.)* Thanks. *(RED, GRANNY and WOODSMAN all stand around eating cookies and talking quietly. WOLF emerges from behind the tree.)*

WOLF: How do you like that? Grandma never did tell what really happened, so Red and the Woodsman spread the word that I was no good. After that, everyone became afraid of me. Wherever I go, people and animals run away from me, and I never even get the chance to tell my side of the story. *(After thought.)* Hey, maybe you could help me out. Now that you know what really happened, you could spread the word. Would you do that for me? I sure would appreciate it. *(Voices OFF STAGE are heard.)*

STAGE MANAGER: *(ENTERS.)* All right, places everyone. Let’s take it from the top—and let’s get it right this time.

WOLF: Oh, oh. Here we go again. *(Sighs.)* Well, now—don’t forget—spread the word about how I’m really not such a bad guy after all. *(WOLF ducks behind his tree as the curtain closes.)*

END OF PLAY
PRODUCTION NOTES
Whenever the Wolf makes any asides, the rest of the characters on stage should freeze. They will resume their action after the wolf has finished his dialogue or comments.

When Wolf is portraying himself in the first part of the story, he should develop a deep, growling voice to depict the stereotypical wolf.

Whenever possible, let the Wolf show a little clumsiness—tripping along the path, possibly bumping into the tree, somewhat confused, etc.

Red’s house should be a simple exterior flat. Grandma’s house should be interior—book flat with door or three walls.

PROPERTIES
Flowers (ANIMALS); basket of goodies, including cookies, apple, pear, banana (RED’S MOTHER); fake fangs (STAGE MANAGER); shawl (GRANDMA); ax (WOODSMAN); bucket (ONSTAGE)
RED VS. THE WOLF
Basic Floorplan
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