

LITTLE RED: LIFE IN THE HOOD

By Claudia Haas and Richard Cash

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STORY OF THE PLAY

It's a media moment! Little Red Riding Hood has come to tell her story on Terry Tellus's talk show, but is rudely interrupted by her Grandmother and the Wolf. It seems Red Riding Hood's version is nothing but a fairy tale! The Grandmother and the Wolf insist on equal air time and present their own truths as to what really happened on that fateful day at Granny's house. And how do Henny Penny, Chicken Little and Turkey Lurkey fit into the story? Why they're insurance agents, of course. And the three little pigs? And the three little kittens? They're present as we make our way through the twists and turns of the different versions.

Decide for yourself if Red is the heroine, the Valley Girl or every mother's nightmare. The play contains as many paths as Red's forest and a surprise around each bend.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*
(9 F, 24 Flexible)

STAGE MANAGER/ANNOUNCER: Brusque, to the point.
TERRY TELLUS: (F) Queen of the daytime talk show!
1ST RED: (F) The fairy tale heroine of all time.
1ST MOM: (F) The 1950s sitcom mom of all time.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Con-man insurance salesperson.
TURKEY LURKEY: Chicken's sidekick.
HENNY PENNY: Their flunky.
1ST SQUIRRELLY: Street-wise, gangster type squirrel.
1ST WOLF (WOLFGANG.): Diabolical.
FUNNY BUNNY: Darling, pathetic bunny.
SUNNY BUNNY: Another.
1ST GRANNY: (F) Helpless, frail old woman.
2ND GRANDMOTHER: (F) Energetic.
VALLEY RED: (F) The quintessential Valley Girl.
NEW AGE (2ND) MOM: (F) Trendy.
STRAW PIG: Chocoholic pig.
STICKS PIG: Environmentalist pig.
BRICKS PIG: Upscale pig.
2ND SQUIRRELLY: Campaign manager to 2nd Wolf.
2ND WOLF (WOLF DUDE): Cool, surfer dude, politician wolf.
SECREPARROTAT: Parrot who is secretary to 2nd Wolf.
HONEY BUNNY: Cheerleader, part of 2nd Wolf's entourage.
RUNNY BUNNY: Another.
CHUMMY BUNNY: Another.
3RD (NEW) WOLF: Kind, emoting, part Martha Stewart wolf.
3RD SQUIRRELLY: The repo squirrel.
3RD RED: (F) The fairy tale heroine gone askew.
3RD MOM: (F) TV watching, bonbon-eating, martyred mom.
CHUMLEY BUNNY: Smart aleck bunny.
SHUNNY BUNNY: Another.
LITTLE KITTEN: Cute kitty.
LITTLER KITTEN: Cuter kitty.
LITTLEST KITTEN: Cutest kitten.

ALTERING CAST SIZE: Secreparrotat and one of the cheerleader bunnies are easily cut. More bunnies can be added.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The fun of this play is in its theatricality. Costume very simply. Animal heads and tails, a red cape for the Reds. Lots of color and fun. 1950s dress for the 1st Mom. The 2nd Mom dressed as a chic hippie and the 3rd Mom in a muumuu, with bunny slippers and curlers in her hair. Anything goes. Previous productions used giant props made out of Styrofoam. The setting was a big book on wheels. The characters changed the pages as they moved from scene to scene. Three little houses could also be used.

SETTING: Fairy Tale Woods.

PROPS

TERRY TELLUS: Microphone.

1ST RED RIDING HOOD: Basket of goodies.

MOTHER: Pearl necklace.

CHICKEN LITTLE, HENNY PENNY, TURKEY LURKEY:

Attaché cases with "Sky is Falling Insurance," pen.

1ST WOLF: Giant bunny spices, giant fork and knives, cookbook, cape or tablecloth, cape and basket, soup pot at Granny's.

1ST GRANNY: Blanket, shawl, bonnet.

STAGE MANAGER: Hook, net (optional), piece of paper.

2ND GRANDMOTHER: Poker chips, playing cards, giant carrot, giant chocolate bar, bread crumbs, whistle.

2ND MOM: Crystal.

2ND WOLF: Giant fork and knives.

2ND SQUIRRELLY: A campaign sign reading, "Wolf Dude for Governor."

SECREPARROTAT: Steno pad and pencil.

3RD RED: Slingshot, remote control.

3RD WOLF: Milk pitcher, lemonade, mittens.

3RD MOM: Red's cape, money.

3RD SQUIRRELLY: Clipboard.

PROLOGUE

(AT RISE: ANNOUNCER'S opening monologue can be staged in a blackout or he/she can come on with a microphone and address the audience.)

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the ground-breaking show, *Truth or Fiction...* The show that dares to delve into the homes of America's most beloved families and ferret out the truth in their lives. There are no depths to which we will not stoop to bring you, our viewing audience, the truth. We will go after anyone and anything, at anytime to bring into your homes the slime of everyday life. There are no fairy tales left untouched, and no beloved childhood characters that we will not skewer for ratings, whoops, did I say ratings? Just a slip of the tongue, folks. I mean for reality - in short - the truth! Now, without further ado, I bring you the reigning Queen of the Nielsen's ratings, the talk show hostess who has turned more happy lives into a nightmare than any other talk show hostess in history, Terry Tellus!!

(TERRY TELLUS makes a grand entrance from the audience and speaks to them in a confiding manner.)

TERRY: Thank you for that warm welcome. I am here today with a heavy heart. On my show is a young lady I grew up admiring. Her sweetness and charm are the building blocks of bedtime stories. But for you, my viewing audience, the people who have made me wealthy beyond my wildest dreams, I will set aside my personal feelings and get my hands dirty discovering the truth in that young lady's life.

Today, we will find out what it is like to brave the woods to help a feeble, old lady and to encounter a wolf and emerge victorious. And so, I would like to welcome to our show, the young lady who made a red riding hood a fashion statement, THE ONE AND ONLY LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD!

(1ST RED RIDING HOOD enters wearing her famous cape.)

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RED: Terry, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for that warm introduction. And I would like to thank the viewing public for all their love and support throughout the years.

TERRY: We are so pleased that you chose our show to tell everyone your story.

RED: Actually, to speak the truth, and I know that the "Truth" is what this show is about - I really didn't have much choice.

TERRY: An interesting statement. Why do you feel that you had no choice?

RED: Your research assistants called me and explained that they were going to do my story. I was a bit hesitant as I didn't want to relive those traumatic memories of my encounter with the Big Bad Wolf!

TERRY: And what made you change your mind?

RED: Your assistants. They explained that they were doing the show with or without me and the only way to get my point of view across was to appear on the show. So here I am.

TERRY: Yes...well...we are very pleased to have you here, aren't we folks? So, let's get started. Here for the first time on live TV we have the story of Red Riding Hood as told by the characters who lived it. And we will begin at the beginning, with the story told in Red's own words. Are you ready, Red?

RED: Yes, I am. Here is my story.

End Prologue

Scene 1

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on a storybook set. There is a cottage that is the home of Red Riding Hood and her mother, and a path through the forest that leads to Grandmother's house. At this point, 1ST RED leaves the talk show and becomes part of the story.)

RED: *(Entering from cottage.)* Oh! What a perfectly bee-yo-tee-ful day! How lucky I am to live in such a charming forest!

MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* Red Riding Hood dearest! Where are you?

RED: Just outside, precious Mother, admiring the day.

MOTHER: *(Enters. SHE is the "perfect" mom.)* There you are, darling daughter! You shouldn't have let me sleep so late. Just let me get my pearls on... *(SHE fastens a string of pearls around her neck.)* There! I am ready to do the household chores!

RED: Why, dear mother, they are done.

MOTHER: Done, darling daughter? Why the sun is barely up.

RED: I was awakened by a nightingale singing so sweetly in the forest that I felt inspired to get up and do some old-fashioned hard work. I waxed the floors, did the laundry, painted the living room and weeded the garden. At the breakfast table you will find freshly-baked bread and some brand-new homemade jam for you to enjoy with your newly-ground espresso.

MOTHER: Red, you are such a treasure!

RED: Not at all, Mother sweet. I strive to be a dutiful daughter, but seem to run short of that goal.

MOTHER: Why, my radiant Red! Why would you think that?

RED: *(Bursting into tears.)* Oh, marvelous Mummy, you don't understand! I meant to fix the leaky roof and I didn't have time to get to it! *(SHE runs inside crying.)*

MOTHER: Ah! The little temper tantrums of the young! I am so grateful for them, for I see that she still needs her mother.

End of Freeview

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