

THEATRE FOR YOUR MOTHER:  
**THE LITTLE RED  
RIDING HOOD SHOW**

*The Little Red Riding Hood story from a slightly more postmodernist point of view*

A play for children and their adults

by  
Russell Davis

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Revised August, 2003

**The Susan Gurman Agency, LLC**

a theatrical literary agency

1501 Broadway, 30<sup>th</sup> floor, NY NY 10036  
tel 212-749 4618 fax 212-864 5055

[www.gurmanagency.com](http://www.gurmanagency.com)

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characters:

JENNIFER, a girl  
who likes to tell stories

her MOTHER  
who doesn't listen

MALARKEY, a wolf  
who speaks and thinks and sees in color

a GRANDMOTHER  
who lies in bed

a HUNTER  
who comes at the end

settings:

A house in a village; another house all by itself; and the  
path through the forest in between.

time:

Long ago.

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**Prologue**

*Several trees upstage. The edge of a forest.*

*A house to one side. The door to the house opens.  
JENNIFER steps outside. She is very neat and tidy.*

*She comes downstage.*

JENNIFER

*(to audience)* I know the story of Little Red Riding Hood.  
Yes. I do.

You know it too. I know.

But I know it by heart. Every word, right here, in my  
memory. And I can spell too. Every word in this story.  
Wolf. W-O-L-F. Grandmother. G-R-A-N-D-M-O-T-H-E-R.  
Forest. F-O-R-E-S-T.

*JENNIFER looks over her shoulder at the edge of the  
forest.*

*Pause.*

JENNIFER

*(to audience)* That's why I've been chosen. Selected to tell  
you. S-E-L-E-C-T-E-D. Because of my memory, how good  
it is. I'm authorized. A-U-T-H-O-R-I-Z-E-D. To tell about  
my mother, what happened. And the visit, V-I-S-I-T, to my  
grandmother. The wolf too. And the hunter, H-U-N-T-E-  
R, at the end.

*JENNIFER looks over her shoulder.*

JENNIFER

Yep. That's what I'm here to tell. It's going to be very  
exciting. What I remember. I love when I get to tell this  
story all over again. It's got such a happy ending, you

JENNIFER(contd.) know, when we put those stones in the wolf's belly and he wants to run away, but he can't, he has to die instead.

*MALARKEY, a wolf, tiptoes onstage. He hides behind a tree.*

*JENNIFER doesn't see him.*

JENNIFER *(to audience)* I just want to warn you, though, before we start. The wolf in our show, he's very good. For an actor. But he doesn't always obey. No. He's not very well trained. He's just a wolf. He's only supposed to come on after I talk to my mother and then I go out of the house. But a lot of times he tries to sneak on before. He's like a dog. Which gets caught all the time sleeping on the bed. Or up on the couch. Gets caught trying to be in every scene.

*JENNIFER takes a quick look offstage behind the trees.*

*MALARKEY appears from behind a different tree. He waves. He disappears.*

JENNIFER He's pretty sneaky, this wolf. For a creature, I mean, which can't even see in color. Can't think like we do who are human. Can you imagine? Not seeing any color. Just black and white. The whole world, a bunch of gray.

*MALARKEY appears from behind a tree. He holds a sign with the word "B-L-U-E" on it with arrows pointing up at the sky. He crosses upstage.*

*JENNIFER turns upstage. MALARKEY is gone.*

JENNIFER Very sneaky. Yep. I know he's hiding somewhere, I can feel it, behind a tree. I just don't know which one. He likes to lurk where I can't see.

*MALARKEY dances around a tree. He disappears.*

JENNIFER

And he doesn't know his lines, this wolf. What he's supposed to say. Doesn't think it's good enough, our story. Doesn't fit his character. How he thinks about himself. Likes to imagine. And so if he adds to his lines, or subtracts, you mustn't listen. Not to him. That's not the story, what he wants to tell, no sir.

So I think you have to promise not to listen. If he says what he's not meant to. Don't listen. Just say, No. It won't be good for you, I promise. Listen only to me. The story we already know. What's authorized. A-U-T-H-O-R-I-Z-E-D. Because this wolf, he wants to tell you something else. What's not true.

*JENNIFER goes to the door of the house. She opens the door. She exits into the house.*

*MALARKEY comes out of the forest. He tiptoes downstage.*

*The door of the house swings open. JENNIFER jumps out. MALARKEY dives for cover.*

*JENNIFER looks around.*

JENNIFER

*(to audience)* If he sneaks on, this wolf, you have to ignore, you do. Don't encourage, no. That makes him do it more. Makes it worse.

*JENNIFER walks in and out through the trees.*

JENNIFER

I know you're in here, O, wolf. Sneaking around in these trees. Lurking where I can't see, you lurker, you. Making fun of me. Making faces. But you'll be sorry, you will. When we put all those stones in your belly instead of food. At the end.

MALARKEY'S VOICE *(offstage)* Aw, man,....

JENNIFER

*(to audience)* He doesn't like that. When I tell him about all the stones, S-T-O-N-E-S, in his belly. What makes him sink to the bottom of the river....

MALARKEY'S VOICE *(offstage)* Howl, groan,....

JENNIFER                    ....at the end.

JENNIFER *exits into the house.*

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**Scene One**

*The house opens up. A kitchen appears.*

JENNIFER *lifts up the window shade. Her MOTHER stands at the stove.*

JENNIFER                    *(to audience)* So, good. I'm Little Red Riding Hood. And this is where I live, my house. And right there is my mother. She's baking a cake. She's going to ask me to take it to my grandmother. Who lives not too faraway, if I take the path, or trail, T-R-A-I-L, to the other side of the forest.  
*(sitting at table)* So I think I'll just sit here. Study some more spelling. Until my mother finishes her cake.

JENNIFER *opens her spelling book. She mouths spelling words to herself.*

MALARKEY *looks through the window. He waves to the MOTHER.*

MOTHER                    Little Red Riding Hood?

JENNIFER                    *(studying)* Yes?

MOTHER                    Do you see what I see?

JENNIFER                    Why? What's there to see?

MOTHER                    Well, there's that wolf again. At our window.

JENNIFER                    What wolf?

MOTHER Right there. In the window.

JENNIFER Mother, there's no wolf.

MOTHER Yes, there is.

JENNIFER No, there's no wolf supposed to be there yet. In our story. There can be no wolf right now. In our window.

MOTHER Oh?

JENNIFER You don't listen. I wish you wouldn't do that.

MOTHER Do what, dear?

JENNIFER You're not supposed to see a wolf when there is no wolf.

*The MOTHER looks at the window again.*

*The WOLF is gone.*

MOTHER I supposed you're right. Yes. There's no wolf. It's gone.

JENNIFER It was never there, Mother, that wolf. It comes later.

MOTHER I must have just imagined it.

JENNIFER I think so too.

MOTHER Some wolf. Right there in our window. Playing peeky peeky poo, I suppose, in my mind.

JENNIFER I think you should just ignore it.

MOTHER What?

JENNIFER What you imagine. Ignore it.

*JENNIFER returns to her spelling book.*

*MALARKEY appears again at the window. He smiles. He slurps and smacks his lips. MOTHER is horrified. She ignores him. She glances at JENNIFER who mouths spelling words to herself.*

MALARKEY *taps on the window.*

*The MOTHER pulls the window shade down. There is a picture of a WOLF on the window shade. MOTHER puts the shade back up. MALARKEY is gone. MOTHER pulls the shade back down. The picture of the WOLF is gone.*

JENNIFER *(looking up from her studying)* Mother, what are you doing?

MOTHER *(opening shade)* Hmm, dear?

JENNIFER Why are you playing like that? With the shade?

MOTHER Have you noticed anything, honey? About our kitchen shade?

JENNIFER What, Mother?

MOTHER There was a wolf just now. On our shade.

JENNIFER A wolf, Mother?

MOTHER Oh, I know it sounds silly, I do. When I speak like this to you. When I have these moments. These things I see.

JENNIFER Yes, Mother. You're not supposed to be doing anything right now. Except baking a cake.

MOTHER Yes, of course. The cake.

JENNIFER You're probably just worried, that's all. *(to audience)* She's worried, I know.

MOTHER Worried, dear?

JENNIFER About my walk, yes, through the forest. To Grandmother's. *(to audience)* She's always worried. Does your mother worry?

MOTHER *(to audience)* Well, yes, of course, we worry. I'm worried, very, yes, Little Red Riding Hood. About your tendency to wander off the path.

JENNIFER I won't wander, Mother, I promise.

MOTHER                    No, you must stick to that path. Mustn't be curious, you know. About what might be in a forest.

JENNIFER                    I'm not curious, Mother, what's in a forest.

MOTHER                    No?

JENNIFER                    No, it's just dark, that's all, in forests.

MOTHER                    Yes, but what if there's a flower? You know how you like flowers.

JENNIFER                    There's no flowers, Mother, in a forest. Flowers like sun.

MOTHER                    No?

JENNIFER                    Forests are too dark.

MOTHER                    Well, but what if there's a meadow? An opening? Some pond or pool. And beside the pond are all these flowers. Right there in the middle of a forest opening. And then there are birds. You'll hear these birds which sing.

JENNIFER                    I don't think so, Mother. I'm not going to see any flower in the forest. No birds.

MOTHER                    Oh.

JENNIFER                    I think you should just pay attention now. To that cake.

MOTHER                    Yes, the cake.

JENNIFER                    And I'll study some more spelling. For when I grow up.

MOTHER                    Well, I'm just afraid, that's all. You know, something might lure you, L-U-R-E, right off that path. Get you lost.

JENNIFER                    No, Mother, I promise. I'll stick to that path. I won't be lured, you know, or lost.

MOTHER                    Thank you. Thank you, Little Red Riding Hood, for making that promise.

*The MOTHER returns to the oven. MALARKEY appears at the window. He waves. He slurps and smacks his lips. MOTHER ignores him.*

MALARKEY *taps on the window.*

MOTHER *glances at JENNIFER who mouths spelling words to herself.*

MALARKEY *opens the window. He hands MOTHER a piece of paper. He pulls down the window shade. There is a picture of a WOLF on the shade.*

*The MOTHER opens the shade. MALARKEY is gone. She closes the shade. The picture of the WOLF is gone. She opens the shade again.*

JENNIFER *(looking up)* Mother?

MOTHER Yes, I know, I'm sorry. Very, very sorry. I must be worried, that's all. About that path through the forest.

JENNIFER *(to audience)* My mother thinks she can see what I can't see, can you imagine?

MOTHER What, dear?

JENNIFER How's the cake?

MOTHER The cake? Yes, what's cooking for Grandmother, our cake.  
*(checking the over)* Ah, it's fine. Our cake is doing fine.

JENNIFER Good.

JENNIFER *goes back to mouthing words.*

*The MOTHER looks at the piece of paper from the WOLF.*

MOTHER It says here, malarkey.

JENNIFER Hm?

MOTHER Right here. Someone's written malarkey on this piece of paper. M-A-L-A-R-K-E-Y.

JENNIFER Malarkey?

MOTHER Yes, it's another word for nonsense, I believe. Foolish talk.