LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

A Children's Musical – Book, Music, & Lyrics by David Warrack

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

RED:	The spunky kid, with her own little world. A bit gullible, but definitely loveable..
ELSA:	Red's Mom. A bit of a flake, and somewhat full of herself, but always trying to do the right thing.
GRANNIE:	Even Elsa, her daughter, calls her that. She is world-wise enough to know that she is a mark.
BEN:	A huge man, a woodcutter who is maybe a bit simple, but understands the woods are full of danger as well as beauty.
CHATTER	A bird. The wisest of them all, but heard only by Red. A cynic.
THE WOLF	Charming, dangerous.

SCENE BREAKDOWN:

Scene 1 – Elsa's Cottage

Scene 2 – The woods

Scene 3 – Grannie's Cottage

SONGS:

1. Red's Rap
2. A Bird Like You
3. The Face of Danger
4. My Favourite Path
5. Are You Looking For A Friend?
6. There Have To Be Rules
7. Chatter's Ballet
8. A World Without Trust
9. All the Better ..
10. All's Well In The Woods

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SCENE 1 The lights rise on the inside of Elsa's cottage, where Elsa and Grannie are admiring an obviously new cape with an absolutely obnoxious hood. Oh, … and it's red.

ELSA

Oh, Grannie. It's just gorgeous. Red will be thrilled.

GRANNIE

Well, I must admit. I am a trifle proud of it.

ELSA

So where did I go wrong? Why didn't you make anything like this for me when I was a kid?

GRANNIE

I did. You lost it.

ELSA

Seriously?

GRANNIE

Well, alright – it was a pair of mittens. Don't you remember? I knitted them for your birthday.

ELSA

Mittens? My birthday is in June.

GRANNIE

So was I supposed to knit yu a bathing suit? Kids – they're so ungrateful.

ELSA

Red won't be. I promise you. You know how excited she gets about presents. Sometimes I think it's because her father always brought them every time he came home from one of those trips into the city.

GRANNIE

You miss him, don't you?

ELSA

Of course I do. But I think I always knew there'd come a day when he wouldn't return. I just hope he's happy.

GRANNIE

Are you?

ELSA

Thinking for a moment, and then coming to a definite decision.

Yes. I have Red, and I have you, and I love this cottage, and I love the wooods.

There is a clatter offstage. Elsa and Grannie look knowingly at each other.

And Ben.

There is a knock at the door.

Come in.

Ben, a giant of a man, opens the door and limps in.

BEN

Hi Elsa, Grannie. You won't believe this, but I knocked over …

ELSA, GRANNIE, BEN

The wheelbarrow.

GRANNIE

Again.

BEN

That obvious, huh? Sorry.

ELSA

Don't be. We'll move it somewhere else.

BEN

But that's what you always say …

GRANNIE

And that's what she always does.

BEN

The how am I supposed to avoid it if I don't know where it is?

ELSA

To Grannie.

It's called lumberjack logic.

GRANNIE

Ben, do you run into trees?

BEN

Of course not. They don't move.

ELSA, GRANNIE

Right.

ELSA

Ben, look at this. Grannie made it for Red.

Ben takes the cape and admires it.

BEN

Wow. It's wild. That Red's one lucky child!

SONG #1: RED'S WRAP

NOW I'VE SEEN CAPES OR WRAPS BEFORE,
BUT THIS ONE REALLY HAS ME ON THE FLOOR.
DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE COLOUR, DON'T KNOW IF IT'S THE STYLE,
BEATS EVERY WRAP IN THE COUNTRY BY A COUNTRY MILE.
NOW YOU KNOW I DON'T USUALLY SAY TOO MUCH,
BUT I HAVE TO SAY IT'S A JOY TO TOUCH,
AND I'D BET MY BOOTS IT'S A JOY TO WEAR.
IT'S A WRAP WITH A RHYTHM. IT'S A WRAP WITH A FLAIR.

RED'S WRAP IS RED,
AND IT COMES WITH A HOOD THAT FITS AROUND THE HEAD,
AND YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT IF SHE HAD A HORSE
TO RIDE THROUGH THE TREES AND CATCH THE BREEZE,
THAT CAPE WOULD FLY. ME, OH MY,
LIKE A RADICAL WRAP WITH A RADICAL FLAP SHOULD,
LIKE THE REALLY RADICAL WRAP FOR LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

ELSA

Why Ben, what's come over you?

BEN

I confess. I'm a closet wrapaholic.

ELSA

CAN A WRAP REALLY TAP THAT RHYTHM IN YOU?
JUST IMAGINE WHAT A PAIR OF MITTENS WOULD DO!
IT MAKES ME WANNA KNIT, AND SEW, AND SEE
IF I COULD SET UP A COTTAGE INDUSTRY.
ROLL OUT THE BANNERS, ROLL OUT THE BANDS.
LET'S CELEBRATE THE WORK OF A GRANNIE'S HANDS.
THERE IS'NT A GIFT ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH
THAT'S WORTH WHAT A HOMEMADE GIFT IS WORTH.

ELSA, BEN

RED'S WRAP IS RED,
AND IT COMES WITH A HOOD THAT FITS AROUND THE HEAD,
AND YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT IF SHE HAD A HORSE
TO RIDE THROUGH THE TREES AND CATCH THE BREEZE,
THAT CAPE WOULD FLY. ME, OH MY
LIKE A RADICAL WRAP WITH A RADICAL FLAP SHOULD,
LIKE THE REALLY RADICAL WRAP FOR LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

GRANNIE

Excuse me, but is there an age limit for fancy rapping?

BEN

The floor's … yours!

GRANNIE

NOW I REALLY HAVE TO SAY YOU'RE BOTH TOO SWEET.
IT'S REALLY NOT SUCH AN AMAZING FEAT.
JUST A GRANNIE-KIND-OF-THING, LIKE AN APPLE PIE
FOR A GRAND-DAUGHTER WHO'S THE APPLE OF MY EYE.
STILL I HAVE TO ADMIT, I HAVE TO CONFESS,
I'M RELIEVED YOU SEE IT AS SUCH A SUCCESS.
I COULD HAVE SIMPLY BOUGHT ONE ON A TRIP TO TOWN,
BUT NOTHING THAT I SAW MADE ME WANNA "GET DOWN"!

BEN, ELSA, GRANNIE

RED'S WRAP IS RED,
AND IT COMES WITH A HOOD THAT FITS AROUND THE HEAD,
AND YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT IF SHE HAD A HORSE,
TO RIDE THROUGH THE TREES AND CATCH THE BREEZE,
THAT CAPE WOULD FLY. ME, OH MY,
LIKE A RADICAL WRAP WITH A RADICAL FLAP SHOULD,
LIKE THE REALLY RADICAL WRAP FOR LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

ELSA

Help us out now. Show us you've been listening. What colour is Red's wrap?

AUDIENCE (please God!)

Red.

BEN

And it comes with a hood that fits around what?

AUDIENCE

The head.

GRANNIE

And you know, of course, that if she had a …?

AUDIENCE

Horse.

ELSA

To ride through the trees and catch the …?

AUDIENCE

Breeze.

BEN

Now, here's the tough one.

Slowly.

Like a really radical …?

AUDIENCE

Wrap.

BEN

With a really radical …?

AUDIENCE

Flap.

BEN

Should.

GRANNIE

Like the really radical wrap for who?

AUDIENCE

Little Red Riding Hood!

Grannie gives them a thumbs up.

ELSA

Yes! Now, that wasn't so hard, was it?

BEN

Come on. Everybody!

ALL

RED'S WRAP IS RED,
AND IT COMES WITH A HOOD THAT FITS AROUND THE HEAD,
AND YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT IF SHE HAD A HORSE,
TO RIDE THROUGH THE TREES AND CATCH THE BREEZE,
THAT CAPE WOULD FLY. ME, OH MY,
LIKE A RADICAL WRAP WITH A RADICAL FLAP SHOULD,
LIKE THE REALLY RADICAL WRAP FOR LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

BEN, ELSA, GRANNIE

GOOD!

Red and Chatter enter.

RED

Gee, you guys sure make a lot of noise.

CHATTER

She dances every time she wants to say something, and Red translates.

(The birds can't even hear themselves sing)

RED

Chatter says the birds can't even hear themselves sing.

GRANNIE

Maybe they should have tried singing along with us. We were having a good time.

CHATTER

(They weren't even singing)

RED

Exactly. Chatter says you weren't even singing.

GRANNIE

Deadpan to the house.

It's a new world.

ELSA

Red. Come here. Look what your Grannie made you!

RED

Too much. I love it. You made this?

GRANNIE

Didn't even have a pattern!

RED

Wow. An original. First kid in the woods. I'll be the trend-setter. I can see it all now – Red, the Hood. Or the Caper Crusader! No, I've got it: Bib Red Rides Again!!

ELSA

Oh, sweetheart. I don't know how to tell you this, but we sort of had settled on "Little Red Riding Hood".

Chatter has a fit of dancing laughter.

RED

Do I need to translate that?

BEN, ELSA, GRANNIE

No.

BEN

I guess I sorta came up with it, Red. I hope you don't mind. I mean, you don't have to go with it unless you want to. I'd be fine with that.

RED

Hah. Sure. Why not? It actually has kind of a nice ring to it.

Chatter repeats her laughing take.

Chatter! Stuff a sock in it!

GRANNIE

Well, the main thing is that you're happy with your gift.

RED

You bet I am. Thanks Grannie. It's super!

Hugs, kisses, etc.

GRANNIE

Well, it's time for me to head off to my cottage. All this excitement has left me a little dizzy!

ELSA

Why don't you just crawl into bed when you get home and have a good nap? You deserve it!

GRANNIE

Thank you, dear.

BEN

I'd better see you out. Don't want you tripping over that wheelbarrow.

GRANNIE

Good-bye Red, and …

Looking the bird up and down.

RED

Chatter.

GRANNIE

Chatter.

Chatter dances good-bye. Grannie shakes her head and starts to exit.

Maybe I should have made a hood for the bird too.

ELSA

Following her out.

Oh, Mother.

BEN

Don't worry about it. I'll build her a birdbath.

He exits after them.

RED

Bye Grannie. Thanks again.

CHATTER

When there is no one for Red to translate to, Chatter's dances are shown in text on the upstage wall.

(A birdbath? What's that all about? Do I look dirty?)

RED

Hey, Chatter, don't be like that. He was just trying to be nice, so you wouldn't feel left out.

CHATTER

(Give me a break. The man's out to lunch.)

RED

Well, I like him. Don't be so high and might.

CHATTER

Bowing.

(Forgive me)

SONG #2: A BIRD LIKE YOU

RED

WHAT AM I TO DO WITH A BIRD LIKE YOU,
AND YOUR OH, SO CRITICAL BEAK?

YOU FLY OFF THE HANDLE, I SWEAR YOU DO,
AND BEFORE YOU EVER THINK, YOU SPEAK.

While dancing.

MOST BIRDS HAVE A BIT OF CONTROL.
IF THEIR FEATHERS GET RUFFLED, THEY COPE.
YOU – YOU THINK, THEN YOU SAY IT.
YOU DON'T CONSIDER THE WAY IT
MIGHT HURT SOMEONE'S FEELINGS.
PUT SOME TACT IN YOUR DEALINGS,
I BEG YOU, LITTLE BIRD.

Chatter is busily occupied, pretending not to hear her.

YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD!

WHAT AM I TO DO, MY FEATHERED FRIEND,
WITH YOUR OH, SO CRITICAL CHIRP?
YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND, AND YOU WILL NOT BEND.
YOU CALL A SPADE A SPADE, AND A TWIRP A TWIRP.
I ADMIRE YOUR HONESTY. HONESTLY, I DO.
AND THOUGH NOW AND THEN I WISH
YOU WERE A FISH
WITH A WATERED-DOWN VIEW,
I'M NOT TOO SELECTIVE, SO I NEED THE PERSPECTIVE
OF A BIRD LIKE YOU.

Chatter reacts, and Red responds.

YES, YOU'RE WISE.
YES, ONE WHO FLIES
CAN SEE ALL SORTS OF THINGS.
YES, I WISH I HAD WINGS.
YES, YOU ARE
MY BEST FRIEND, BY FAR.
THE SQUIRRELS AND THE BUTTERFLIES
ALL TAKE SECOND PRIZE
TO YOU.
SO WHY DON'T YOU MAKE IT EASY ON ME?
WHY DON'T YOU WANDER DOWN FROM YOUR TREE?

DOWN HERE, WHAT SEEMS CLEAR
UP THERE, HAS ROOM FOR DOUBT TO SPARE.

WHAT AM I TO DO WITH THIS BIRD ON MY HANDS,
AND HER OH, SO CRITICAL WORDS?
THANK GOODNESS, NOBODY ELSE UNDERSTANDS
ALL THE CRAZY LANGUAGE OF THE BIRDS.
I ADMIRE YOUR TURN OF PHRASE.
IN MANY WAYS, I DO.
AND THOUGH NOW AND THEN, I GUESS
I MUST CONFESS
I WISH YOU WERE A GNU.
A HOOD'S NO PROTECTION. I NEED THE DIRECTION
OF A NO-NONSENSE FLIER WHO'S BOLDER WHEN I'M SHIER.
IN OTHER WORDS, A BIRD LIKE YOU

THOUGH I HATE TO ADMIT IT.
I NEED YOU.
SO THIS SONG, I MUST QUIT IT.
AND THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO,
EVEN IF YOU MAKE ME WONDER.

Elsa enters.

ELSA

Oh, Red, darling, I was hoping you hadn't wandered off again. I took a moment to change things around out front, so I could find a place for …

There is an offstage clatter.

RED, ELSA

The wheelbarrow.

Ben limps on.

ELSA

Ben, how about if I just move it out back?

RED

Or bury it.

Chatter, of course, convulses.

ELSA

Come on, you two. Enough.

BEN

Don't blame them, Elsa.

ELSA

Well, O.K. But what are you doing back here? I thought you wanted to finish up at the clearing this afternoon.

BEN

I do. But I ran into a couple of the guys, and they mentioned that a pesky wolf has been hanging around all day. I thought I'd let you know, in case any of you were planning to go out.

ELSA

Actually, I did want to send Red over to Grannie's with a basket to thank her for the cape. She seemed a bit out of sorts, and I thought it might cheer her up. But if you don't think it's safe …

RED

Oh, Mom – don't worry. I know the woods like the back of my hand. Anyway, Chatter will be with me.

BEN

She's right. Just keep your eyes open, and if you do spot anything, make lots of noise. We'll be there in a flash.

Chatter does a march like the army coming to the rescue.

ELSA

Now, what's she saying. Wait – let me guess.

SONG #3: THE FACE OF DANGER (Chatter dances throughout)

YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE FACE OF DANGER.

RED

You've got that right.

BEN

WHEN THE PHONE'S NOT NEAR AND YOU CAN'T DIAL 911.

RED

Full points.

ELSA

IT'S A PROVEN FACT THAT IF YOU KNOW HOW TO REACT,

BEN

OFTEN AS NOT, THE DANGER DISAPPEARS.

RED

Have you two been studying?

YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW WHEN TO STAY AND WHEN TO RUN.

ELSA, BEN

DANGER HAS A WAY OF PICKING ON EASY PREY.

RED

NOT THOSE WITH …

She points to Ben.

BEN

OPEN EYES.

Red points to Elsa.

ELSA

AND OPEN EARS.

ELSA, RED, BEN

OO, DANGER.
ALWAYS GONNA BE THERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE AWARE.
OO, DANGER.
JUST AROUND THE CORNER, SO YOU'D BETTER PREPARE.

RED

YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THE PATH GETS NARROW.

BEN

YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THE LIGHT GROWS DIM.

ELSA

TAKE A FEW STEPS BACK, KEEP A FLASHLIGHT IN YOUR PACK,

RED

AND IF SOMEONE ELSE IS THERE, TREMBLE AS A TEAM.

ALL FOUR

Shivering.

VVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV

RED

NOT EVERYONE HEADS ON OUT WITH A BOW AND ARROW.

ELSA

NOT EVERYONE'S CUP OF COURAGE IS FULL TO THE BRIM.

BEN

SO IF THINGS GO AWRY, WHETHER YOU ARE A GAL OR GUY,

BEN, ELSA, RED

YOU CAN ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS SCREAM!

OO, DANGER -
ALWAYS GONNA BE THERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE AWARE.
OO, DANGER -
JUST AROUND THE CORNER, SO YOU'D BETTER PREPARE.

As they have been singing, they have been preparing Grannie's basket. Now it is ready.

ELSA

To Red.

Do you have everything, sweetheart?

RED

Sure do. I've even got a whistle.

She blows it … loudly. The others react … badly.

BEN

Yep. I think we should be able to hear that!

ELSA

Alright, dear. Off you go.

RED

I'll be careful, Mom. I promise.

RED, BEN, ELSA

OO, DANGER -
ALWAYS GONNA BE THERE. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE AWARE.
OO, DANGER -
JUST AROUND THE CORNER, SO YOU'D BETTER PREPARE.

Red and Chatter exit with a wave.

RED

Bye.

ELSA

Oh, I hope we're not being foolish, Ben.

ELSA, BEN

OO – THE FACE OF DANGER.

Blackout. End of Scene 1. In the dark, we hear a distant wolf howl.

SCENE TWO:

The woods, or some suggestion thereof. Red enters with Chatter fluttering close behind. During the song, she should go out into the audience.

SONG #4: MY FAVOURITE PATH

RED

THERE'S SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WALKIN' ALONG
MY FAVOURITE PATH -
MAKES ME DANCE, MAKES ME SING.
CUZ AT THE END OF THE PATH IS SOMEONE I LOVE,
WAITIN' FOR THE BASKET OF GOODIES THAT I BRING.

THERE'S SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WALKIN' ALONG
MY FAVOURITE PATH -
MAKES THE JOY OUT OF MY HEART POUR.
CUZ AT THE END OF THE PATH IS SOMEONE THAT I LOVE,
LONGIN' TO HEAR MY KNOCK UPON HER DOOR.

ISN'T IT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PATH
YOU'VE EVER, EVER SEEN?
IS THERE ANYWHERE ELSE WITH FLOWERS SO FAIR,
OR LEAVES SO GREEN?
DOESN'T IT JUST CURVE IN SUCH A WAY
THAT YOU WANT TO FOLLOW IT FOREVER AND A DAY?
I LOVE EVERY ANIMAL, LOVE EVERY TREE,
AND I LIKE TO THINK THAT THEY ARE
JUST AS FOND OF ME.

THERE'S SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WALKIN' ALONG
MY FAVOURITE PATH –
MAKES ME LAUGH, MAKES ME CHEER.
CUZ AT THE END OF THE PATH IS SOMEONE THAT I LOVE,
LISTENIN' FOR MY FOOTSTEPS DRAWING NEAR.

THERE'S SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WALKIN' ALONG
MY FAVOURITE PATH.
THERE'S SOMETHIN' 'BOUT WALKIN' ALONG MY FAVOURIE PATH.

She stops suddenly. Chatter bumps into her and falls down.

Oh my gosh! Chatter! I did it again?

CHATTER

(What did you forget this time?)

RED

I forgot Grannie's cookie jar.

CHATTER

(You finished the last batch already?)

RED

Yes, it's empty.

CHATTER

(Oink, oink.)

RED

Chatter, please. Fly back and get it. Grannie will be up and around soon, so she might as well have something to do.

CHATTER

(Don't move or I won't be able to find you.)

RED

Don't worry. I'll stay right here. Hurry.

Chatter flies off. Red busies herself picking flowers. Humming to herself, she doesn't notice the wolf entering. He looks around to assure himself that she is alone. Then he assumes the pose of a dandy. Red works her way over to his feet. She looks up, and is not for a moment startled.

Excuse me, but you're standing on the flowers.

WOLF

How clumsy of me. I apologize to you, and to the flowers.

RED

O.K. But be more careful in the future. Flowers are precious, to be enjoyed, or made into a bouquet, not to be trampled upon.

WOLF

I shall indeed be more careful.

A pause.

And, if I may, I'd like to offer you the same advice.

RED

What is that supposed to mean?

WOLF

The woods are full of danger. People, especially small, red-hooded, delicious people can get eaten alive.

RED

Oh, the mosquitoes never bother me. They go for lighter coloured hair.

WOLF

But perhaps, when the menu is limited, one, even if one is a mosquito, cannot afford to be so choosy.

RED

Boy, you are one strange creature!

WOLF

These are strange times, my darling girl, and one does what one must to survive. Now it seems to me that, strange or not, I am the one living … "creature" … at this moment who can be counted upon to relieve you from the relentless boredom of a lonely walk in the woods. Would you truly dare to turn me away?

RED

Wouldn't even hesitate. I'm not supposed to talk to strangers.

WOLF

Then get to know me!

RED

Not looking at him. Still concentrating on the flowers, but somewhat uneasy.

I can always call for help, you know.

WOLF

Of course you can.

RED

The woodsmen are working in the next clearing, and I've got a really loud voice.

WOLF

Of course you have.

RED

Anyway, my friend Chatter will be back any second.

WOLF

Aside, licking his lips.

Mmmmmm. Dessert.

RED

I beg your pardon.

WOLF

Oh, I said , "The hurt" – the hurt I am feeling that you should consider my small attempts at establishing a relationship in any way sinister.

RED

Hey, I'm sorry. No hard feelings?

WOLF

No hard feelings.

They shake hands.

RED

Wow! Do you ever have big hands!

WOLF

All the better to … pick flowers with, my dear. Here, let me help you.

He does.

RED

Gee, maybe you're not such a bad guy after all.

WOLF

I'm a prince.

RED

Well, let's not get carried away.

WOLF

So, what do they call you, my little one?

RED

I'm Red. And you?

WOLF

I'm not.

Red gives him an exasperated look.

Just a tiny bit of humour. My name is …

He looks out into the house and declaims a la Shakespeare.

Wolfgang.

He senses, rather than sees Red.s reaction. He turns to her.

It's German.

RED

Nice to know you, … Wolfgang.

SONG #5: ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRIEND?

WOLF

IT CAN BE A LITTLE LONELY IN THE WOODS.
DON'T PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.
LIFE'S TOO SHORT, THE PATH'S TOO LONG
TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME
SEPARATING RIGHT FROM WRONG.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRIEND?
SEARCH NO MORE.
NOW I NEVER WOULD PRETEND
I'M EVERYTHING THAT YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
I DON'T HAVE MOEY, NO MATTER HOW I SAVE,
AND WHERE I LIVE IS NOT MUCH MORE THAN JUST A CAVE.
BUT IF YOU WANT SOMEONE TO HELP YOU IN A JAM,
HERE I AM.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRIEND?
I AM FOUND.
WE COULD MAKE THE PERFECT BLEND,
OF ANY SWEET AND SOUR PALS AROUND.
I'M NOT GOOD LOOKING, I'VE A BIT OF A POT,
AND AT CERTAIN TIMES OF DAY I TEND TO DROOL A LOT.
BUT IF YOU'RE IN A PICKLE, DON'TCHA WORRY, DEAR -
I'LL BE HERE.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRIEND?
LET'S BE A PAIR.
CUZ I AM READY TO DEFEND
YOU FROM THE EVILS THAT ARE EVERYWHERE.
MY NOSE IS FAR TOO BIG FOR MY FACE,
AND WHERE I HAVE TO BUY MY SHOES IS A DISGRACE!
BUT IF YOU WANT A GREAT BIG LUG AT YOUR SIDE,
I WON'T HIDE.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRIEND?
ALLOW ME TO BEAT MY DRUM.
I'LL BE WITH YOU TO THE END.
YOU'LL NEVER FIND A MORE ATTENTIVE CHUM.
I'M NOT A GREAT SLEEPER CUZ I WANDER AT NIGHT,
AND I'VE SIMPLY GOT AN OVERWHELMING APPETITE,
BUT IF YOU WANT SOMEONE TO SHARE THE BEST OF YOU,
WON'T I DO?

I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE, NEVER FAR AWAY,
READY TO EAT UP … EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR DAY.
I INTEND TO BE YOUR FRIEND!

RED

Listen, I really appreciate the offer and all that, but I just can't.

WOLF

Why?

RED

Trying to soften the blow.

Because you're a wolf.

WOLF

Oh. You noticed.

RED

Sorry. It's fairly apparent.

WOLF

Oh. Well I hope you're not going to believe everything you've heard about wolves, are you?

RED

No, it's not that. It's just that … well, you know how parents are.

WOLF

Of course. And they're right to warn you. But not about me. I'm different.

Chatter enters just as the wolf is creeping up on Red, who is looking the other direction.

CHATTER

(Red! Look out behind you!)

RED

Oh, hi Chatter. You're back. That didn't take long.

CHATTER

(What are you doing? Don't you know who this is?)

RED

Of course I know who this is. Chatter, meet Wolfgang.

The Wolf extends his hand. Chatter flies to the other side of the stage.

CHATTER

(Run!!!)

RED

Chatter, it's O.K. There's nothing to be afraid of.

Chatter flies around the stage in a frenzy, talking a blue streak.

Settle down. Don't be so critical. He's not really that bad.

Chatter is right in Red's face.

CHATTER

(Not all that bad? Are you crazy? He'll eat you up!)

RED

To the Wolf.

I apologize for my friend. She goes a little overboard sometimes.

WOLF

I understand. Perhaps I should leave you two alone for a bit.

RED

Maybe that would be best. We have to go anyway. We're on our way to my Grannie's to deliver this basket.

Chatter falls down.

CHATTER

(Don't tell him where you are going! You are being, forgive me, an idiot!)

WOLF

Oh yes, of course. She has that lovely blue and white cottage just outside of town.

RED

No, actually hers is the red one just outside of the woods.

Chatter jumps up and covers Red's mouth.

WOLF

You don't say. Well, I must run now. Lovely to meet you. I won't say farewell, because somehow I just know we are going to meet again, and soon! Toodleoo.

He disappears. In a flash.

RED

Removing Chatter's wing from her mouth and waving.

Good-bye. Wow! Where did he go? There, you see Chatter. There was nothing to be afraid of.

CHATTER

(I give up.)

RED

You just have to stop pre-judgng people … even when they aren't people.

Ben and Elsa enter.

ELSA

Red! Is this as far as you've gotten? What have you been up to?

RED

I forgot Grannie's cookie jar. Chatter flew back and got it for me.

BEN

That's one strong bird.

RED

How come you're here. Have you decided to come with me?

ELSA

No, we just wanted to pick some flowers for the dinner table, and this is where they grow more than anywhere else.

RED

Well, here – take these. I picked them while I was waiting for Chatter.

CHATTER

(I don't suppose you are going to bother to tell them about the wolf!?)

BEN

What's she on about now?

RED

Oh, nothing. Nothing really. I'd better run. I'll never get home before dark if I don't leave now.

ELSA

Then hurry, dear. And just remember …

RED

I know, I know: "Don't talk to strangers, stick to the path, don't dawdle along the way, see if Grannie needs anything, come straight home after your visit, and watch out for bear poop." Does that cover everything?

BEN

And, … Keep your eyes out for the wolf.

ELSA

Absolutely. Off you go. Have a good time.

BEN

Bye, Little Red.

RED

Bye, Big Ben. Bye Mom. Come on, Chatter.

Red and Chatter exit.

ELSA

Should I worry that I have a daughter who speaks to birds?

BEN

She's a charmer. Like her Mother.

ELSA

You don't think her mother makes too many rules? I feel a bit silly when she lays them all out like that, and I hear myself talking.

BEN

What you hear is a Mom doing her job.

ELSA

Really?

BEN

Really. What you hear is the echo of the words of wisdom your Mother told you.

ELSA

Do you really think so?

BEN

I know so. On a scale of ten, you rate an absolute eleven for Mummery.

ELSA

Oh. Thank you. I feel better already!

BEN

And there is no doubt in my mind that you'll be just like Grannie one day!

ELSA

Not sure how to react to that.

Oh!

BEN

Realizing what he has said.

I mean …

BOTH

Oh!

ELSA

That's depressing.

BEN

You're telling me. Oh, don't me wrong. Grannie's great. But, wow. Imagine.

ELSA

Do you think we all grow up to be like our parents?

BEN

In some ways, I guess we can't help it.

ELSA

So I'm dying to ask … Did your father trip over wheelbarrows?

BEN

No. He made it a rule to only see ladies with proper equipment sheds.

ELSA

Sounds like a wise man.

BEN

He also made it a rule not to remind people of their most embarrassing moments.

ELSA

Hey, I was just kidding.

BEN

He also made it a rule …

ELSA

Hey, enough. Your father had a lot of rules.

BEN

That's why I turned out so perfect.

ELSA

I can't wait to tell Red.

SONG #6: THERE HAVE TO BE RULES

I'VE ALWAYS TOLD MY DAUGHTER,
"RULES ARE FOR EVERYONE."
WAIT TIL SHE SEES WHAT A SET OF DECREES
HAVE GONE AND DONE.

She swoons.

Utter perfection.

JUST PROVES THERE HAVE TO BE RULES
THAT HAVE TO BE FOLLOWED
OR WE'D ALL BE CONFUSED.
THERE HAVE TO BE LIMITS
THAT HAVE TO BE SWALLOWED
AND SOMEONE WHOSE NOT VERY AMUSED
AT THE PEOPLE WHOSE REACTION TO A RULE
IS THAT THEY BREAK IT.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THAT'S A BAD ATTITUDE.
ANYONE WHO HAS IT HAD BETTER LEARN TO SHAKE IT.

BEN

THERE HAVE TO BE RULES
THAT MUST BE ABIDED BY,
AS LONG AS THEY ARE SIMPLE AND JUST.
THERE HAVE TO BE GUIDELINES
THAT PEOPLE ARE GUIDED BY.
A WELL-ORDERED WORLD IS A MUST.

BOTH

IN THE HOME OR IN THE WOOD,
YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT'S BAD AND WHAT IS GOOD.
PLAYGROUND OR SCHOOLS, THERE HAVE TO BE RULES.

ELSA

IMAGINE IF YOU WILL, WALKING DOWN THE STREET
AND COMING TO A CORNER WITH A RED LIGHT,
NOT A "GO-AHEAD" LIGHT, NOT GREEN.
WHAT DO YOU DO? YOU STOP, CUZ THAT'S THE RULE,
AND IF NOBODY FOLLOWED IT, WE'D RUN INTO EACH OTHER
EVERY CORNER OF OUR LIVES.

BEN

IMAGINE IF YOU WILL, STANDING IN A LINE
AND WAITING FOR A MOVIE CALLED "DEFIANT"
WHEN A GIANT CUTS IN. WHAT DO YOU DO?
YOU STOP HIM. THAT'S THE RULE.

ELSA

Unless he's a really BIG Giant.

BEN

CUZ IF NOBODY DID, THERE'D BE NO WAY
TO TELL WHO CAME FIRST IN THE LINEUPS OF OUR LIVES.

ELSA

I CAN SEE WHAT A STRANGE WORLD THAT WOULD BE.

BOTH

THERE HAVE TO BE RULES
THAT HAVE TO BE MENTIONED,
SO EVERYBODY KNOWS HOW TO ACT.
FROM THE TIME YOU CAN SPEAK,

TO LONG AFTER YOU ARE PENSIONED,
THE RULES OF LIFE ARE JUST A SIMPLE FACT.
IN YOUR HOME, YOU KNOW THE RULES, WELL YOU SHOULD.
YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT'S BAD AND WHAT IS GOOD.
PLAYGROUND OR MEETINGS, HANGING OUT IN YOUR HOOD,
DRIVING DOWN THE HIGHWAY OR WALKING IN THE WOOD,
IN YOUR CLUB, IN YOUR OFFICE, IN THE LAKE OR IN THE SCHOOLS,
THERE SIMPLY HAVE TO BE RULES!!

Cross-fade to Red and Chatter in another part of the woods.

RED

Chatter, please try to keep up. We still have a ways to go.

CHATTER

(I'm no longer sure that my presence is desired.)

RED

Don't be silly. Of course I want you around.

CHATTER

(As long as I do what I'm told?)

RED

I don't want you to stop telling me what you're thinking. I just want you to think a bit more about some of the things you say.

CHATTER

(So I should tell you the Wolf was an upstanding citizen?)

RED

Who knows. Maybe the wolf is simply misunderstood.

CHATTER

(Ha!!)

RED

Think how frightening Big Ben would look if you didn't know what a gentle soul he was.

CHATTER

(Forgive me, but I find it difficult to be afraid of someone who trips over wheelbarrows.)

RED

I give up.

She turns to leave.

Are you coming or not?

Chatter, her feelings hurt, does not answer.

Suit yourself. Well, you know where I'm going. Catch up if you change your mind.

She turns to exit.

Birds!

She leaves. Chatter turns to call after her, but her pride stops her.

SONG #7: CHATTER'S BALLET

*** Ballet format: She is initially upset at Red's attitude, and does a lot of "Well, if she doesn't need me, I don't need her!" kind of business. Gradually, though, she softens, and remembers how much fun Red is, and the good times they've had together. Then suddenly, she remembers the Wolf, and realizes she has to fly after Red and remind her to be careful. She immediately takes off, and the dance is done.

Blackout. End of Scene.

SCENE THREE:

We are at Grannie's cottage, a cozy, small space dominated by her big bed. Stage left is the porch and her front door. The lights rise on Grannie, in bed, reading. There is a loud knock on the door.

GRANNIE

Hello. Who's there?

As she speaks, the lights rise on the wolf outside her door.

WOLF

In a high voice.

It's me, Grannie. It's Red.

GRANNIE

My goodness, child. It doesn't sound like you at all. Have you picked up a cold since this morning?

WOLF

I'm afraid so, Grannie. It's very damp in the woods.

GRANNIE

It is? How very strange! I just came through there myself not long ago, and it was quite dry. Has it rained?

WOLF

Accidentally using his own voice.

Yes.

Clearing his throat, switching up.

Yes.

GRANNIE

Suddenly suspicious.

Are you sure that's you, Red. Are you alone?

WOLF

All alone. And scared. Please let me in.

GRANNIE

That can't be Red. She's never been afraid of anything. Go away, whoever you are.

WOLF

Oh, grannie – I can't believe this is happening.

He fakes a few sobs. Then he sings, in a really ugly, bad audition falsetto.

SONG #8: A WORLD WITHOUT TRUST

I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD WITHOUT TRUST.
WHY IS EVERYONE DETERMINED TO BE SO SUSPICIOUS?
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE I MUST
ASSUME THE WORST FROM THE FIRST.
WHY CAN'T WE GIVE A BIT MORE,
ESPECIALLY TO SOMEONE KNOCKING ON OUR DOOR?
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD WITHOUT CARE.
WHY IS EVERYONE DETERMINED THE REST ARE VICIOUS?
I DON'T WANT TO BE LIVING FULL OF DESPAIR.
MY ADVICE IS THAT WE BREAK THE ICE,
AND BELIEVEIN WHAT OTHERS CAN GIVE.
A WORLD WITHOUT TRUST
IS A WORLD IN WHICH I DON'T WANT TO LIVE.

Grannie

Crying, as music continues.

Oh, red. Forgive me. I don't know what has turned me into such a suspicious old woman with bad hearing. Just give me a moment and I'll unlock the door for you.

The process is torturous. She has to get rid of her book. She then has to lift the heavy blanket up, and slide her legs to the floor.

WOLF

I'm waiting, Grannie. No need to rush.

She stands up and puts on her slippers. She grabs her dressing gown from the hook on the wall, and takes forever putting it on.

Is everything O.K.?

GRANNIE

Hang on. I'll be right there.

She sees herself in the mirror, grabs her brush off the dresser, and fixes her hair.

Coming.

WOLF

No rush!

He checks his watch to see if it's working. Grannie puts the brush down and starts for the door. She looks at the bed.

GRANNIE

Oh, dear.

She pulls the covers up, puffs the pillow, and stands back to admire her work.

WOLF

Grannie. I have to be home before dark. It's dangerous in the woods.

GRANNIE

Coming. Hold your horses.

She reaches the bottom of the bed, and takes her cane off the bedpost. She straightens herself up and heads for the door.

WOLF

Grannie?

GRANNIE

Here we go!

She unlocks the door. The Wolf springs in as if to scare Grannie, but she doesn't react. Rather, she turns her back on the Wolf and heads over to the sidetable on the other side of the bed. The Wolf is disconcerted, used to striking fear in Grannies ' hearts.

Just let me get my glasses, so I can see you, my dear.

She goes to the sidetable to get them Wolf springs in front of her.

Please dear. You're in my way, you little devil. I'm sure my glasses are here. Can you see them? Can't see a thing without those old specs, as you know.

She opens the sidetable drawer. Feels inside.

Hmmm. No glasses, but I have so many pills. Let me see what I can find for that cold of yours. Oh, but I can't see without my glasses. Good heavens.

Wolf, discombobulated, spots her glasses on top of the dresser. He gets them and gives them to her.

WOLF

Here they are, Grannie.

She takes them and moves back to the other side of the bed as she put them on.

GRANNIE

Now how about an afternoon snack to get you ready for dinner? Are you hungry?

Grannie and the Wolf are not on opposite sides of the bed.

WOLF

In his voice.

Yes. Very hungry.

Grannie looks up. She screams.

GRANNIE

AAAAAAAAAAAAA.

The Wolf jumps back and covers his ears.

WOLF

Don’t do that!

GRANNIE

Well, what do you expect?

WOLF

I kind of hoped you’d faint.

GRANNIE

Never was the fainting kind.

WOLF

Too bad.

GRANNIE

So what’s next? Are you going to eat me up?

WOLF

I would, but I've ordered something else.

GRANNIE

I suppose I should be hurt, but I'd be lying if I said I was. Look, if it's money you're after, you've sure come to the wrong place.

WOLF

What I want, dear lady, is your glasses and your nightgown.

GRANNIE

Incredulous.

It's not even your colour!

WOLF

I'm terribly sorry, but my time is limited.

He gestures.

Would you step in here for a moment?

GRANNIE

The closet? Uh, could we discuss the options?

He shakes his head.

I didn't think so.

She shrugs her shoulders and complies. As she passes him, he puts his paw on her shoulder and starts to take off his tie.

WOLF

An exchange. This lovely, hand-painted, woodland original tie for your ever so homely nightgown.

GRANNIE

I've never been much of a one for ties.

WOLF

Perhaps you've been putting them on wrong.

He ties it around her mouth.

There. Now into the closet you go. And off with your glasses and nightgown.

She hands them to him.

Thank you. Ta, ta.

He closes and latches the door, and walks away, putting on Grannie's glasses and nightgown. There is a knock at the main door.

And none too soon.

He again goes into his high voice, as he gets under the covers.

Who's there?

RED

Grannie? It's me, Red.

Wolf pulls the covers up to his chin.

WOLF

Come in. child. The latch is open.

SONG #9: ALL THE BETTER …

RED

HI GRANNIE. GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE LYING DOWN.
GOT A BASKET OF GOODIES FOR YOU.
HI, GRANNIE. WHAT A LOVELY DRESSING GOWN.
WHEN YOU MADE MY CAPE, DID YOU MAKE THAT TOO?

YOU'VE REALLY GOT A WAY WIH YOUR HANDS,
BUT IF I WEREN'T YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER,
I WOULD SAY THAT YOUR HANDS ARE BIG.
OH, GRANNIE, WHAT BIG HANDS YOU HAVE!

WOLF

ALL THE BETTER TO HOLD YOU WITH, MY DEAR.

RED

OH, GRANNIE, I HAVE BROUGHT YOUR COOKIE JAR.
WENT AND FINISHED OFF YOUR GINGERBREAD.
NOW GRANNIE, I KNOW YOU'RE NOT UP TO PAR,
AND YOU CAN'T BE BAKING COOKIES FROM YOUOR BED.

She shows her the empty tin.

JUST TAKE A LOOK AND SEE WITH YOUR EYES,
BUT IF I WEREN'T YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER
MY SONG WOULD BE THAT YOUR EYES ARE
BIG. OH, GRANNIE, WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE.

WOLF

ALL THE BETTER TO SEE YOU WITH, MY DEAR.

RED

WELL, IT'S A STRANGE, STRANGE THING
WHEN YOUR OWN GRANDMOTHER
ISN'T HERSELF, OH NO.
I DON'T REMEMBER EARS LIKE THAT.
DOES BEING SICK MAKE YOUR EARS GROW?
SO IT WOULD APPEAR.

WOLF

ALL THE BETTER TO HEAR YOU WITH, MY DEAR.

RED

OH, GRANNIE, DID I TELLYOU? ON THE WAY
TO YOUR COTTAGE, I MET A NEW FRIEND?
WELL, GRANNIE, HE WAS BIG AND HE WAS GREY,
AND OH YES, HE WAS A WOLF BUT I INTEND
THAT THIS WILL BE A FRIENDSHIP WITH TEETH.

And speaking of teeth.

IF I WEREN'T YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER,
I WOULD SAY THAT YOUR TEETH ARE
BIG. OH, GRANNIE, WHAT BIG TEETH YOU HAVE.

WOLF

ALL THE BETTER TO EAT YOU WITH!

He springs out of bed, and the chase is on!

RED

GRANNIE, THIS IS NO JOKING MATTER.

You're not grannie!

WOLF

Very observant.

GUESS YOU'LL DO, THOUGH I WISH THAT YOU WERE FATTER.

RED

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER OR I'LL BLOW ON MY WHISTLE.

WOLF

DINNER MUSIC. WHAT A CHARMING THOUGHT!

RED

THINK I'M KIDDING? I AM NOT!

She blows on the whistle.

RED

HELP IS NEAR,
DO NOT FEAR.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH GRANNIE?

STAY ALIVE,
THEY'LL ARRIVE.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH GRANNIE?

SOMEONE MUST HAVE HEARD.

OH, PLEASE, I BESEECH

ALL I HAVE TO DO

IS STAY OUT OF REACH.

WOLF

BY THE TIME THEY GET HERE
IT'LL BE TOO LATE.
SHOULD I USE A NAPKIN?
SHOULD I USE A PLATE?
SHOULD I USE MY HANDS OR
GRANNIE'S KNIFE AND FORK?
DEVOURING LITTLE GIRLS IS
NOT LIKE EATING PORK.

WHY NOT JUST SUCCUMB?

EVENTUALLY I'LL WIN.

DON'T YOU FEEL A LITTLE DUMB

FOR THE PREDICAMENT YOU'RE IN?

The music stops suddenly as there is a huge clutter outside. Red and the Wolf look at each other in disbelief. Red smiles, and the Wolf shrivels.

WOLF

To Red, quietly.

Excuse me, but does your grandmother, by any chance, keep a wheelbarrow on her front porch?

RED

In a whisper.

Yep.

WOLF

Help!

He runs and jumps through the window as Ben opens the cottage door and limps on from the other side carrying an axe, followed by a cautious Chatter.

BEN

Red. Are you alright?

RED

I'm fine.

CHATTER

(Where's the Wolf?)

RED

Pointing to window.

He went thataway.

Ben runs to window. He comically tries to get through the window. Red turns to Chatter.

And where did you get to when I needed you?

CHATTER

(I brought Ben).

RED

You brought ben? I thought my whistle …

CHATTER

(He was working in the clearing on the other side of the woods. You and Ben didn't think it out too well. He was too far away to hear you.)

RED

So you went and got him. Thanks Chatter. You're a real pal.

Chatter preens. They hug. Ben gives up his attempt to get through the window.

BEN

Well, he's gone, and I don't think he'll bother you again. Where's Grannie.

RED

You don't think …?

BEN

I'm afraid we have to assume the worst.

RED

Oh no. Poor grannie. And it's all my fault.

Elsa enters, on the run.

ELSA

Red?

BEN

Gesturing to Red.

She's fine. But we can't find your Mother.

ELSA

You don't mean …?

BEN

I'm afraid it's possible.

ELSA

Oh no!!

Through all of this conversation, Chatter has been nosing around. When she comes to the closet door, she listens, and suddenly gets very excited. She runs over to Red and screams.

RED

Chatter! You can talk?

CHATTER

Only when it matters. Open the closet.

RED

The closet?

ALL THREE

The closet!!

Red runs over and opens it.

Grannie!!!

ELSA

We thought the worst.

Red takes the tie off her mouth.

RED

We'd given up hope!

BEN

We thought the Wolf got you for sure.

Elsa has gotten Grannie's nightgown and glasses from the floor, dropped in the Wolf's escape. She takes them to Grannie and helps her put them both n.

ELSA

There you go. Looking perfectly Grannyish again!!

GRANNIE

Thank you dear. Now, anyone for cookies?

Wolf peeks his head through the window.

WOLF

Cookies.

GRANNIE, RED, CHATTER, BEN

Buzz off!!!

He does.

SONG #10: ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS

BEN

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
ALL'S JUST AS IT OUGHTTA BE.
SETTING SUN'S SHINING THROUGH THE TREES.
THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS ARE DOING AS THEY PLEASE.

ELSA

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
NO REASON TO BE AFRAID.
THE BIG, BAD WOLF IS HISTORY.
TIME FOR PLAYING, TIME FOR SAYING,

CHATTER

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.

RED, ELSA, BEN, GRANNIE

Chatter's singing!!

CHATTER

ALL FEELS AS IT OUGHTTA FEEL.

GRANNIE

DUCKS SWIMMING IN THE STREAM.
THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS ARE TAKING TIME TO DREAM.

RED

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
NO REASON TO GO AND HIDE.
THE BIG, BAD WOLF DOESN'T SEEM SO BIG.
GOT HIS NUMBER. TIME FOR SLUMBER.

RED, ELSA, BEN, GRANNIE, CHATTER

SLEEP WELL IN THE WOODS,
TONIGHT YOU'RE SAFE AND SOUND, LOOK AROUND:

ELSA

NO DARTING EYES LOOKING OUT FROM BEHIND EVERY TREE.

RED

ALL OF THE SOUNDS OF THE WOODS ARE JUST AS THEY SHOULD BE.

GRANNIE

WHIPPOORWILLS.

CHATTER

Crickets too.

BEN

WHY DOES THAT SOUND ALWAYS SOUND SO NEW?

RED, ELSA, BEN, GRANNIE, CHATTER

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
ALL LOOKS AS IT OUGHTTA LOOK.
FROGS LEAPING IN THE CREEK,
THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS ARE PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK.

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
NO REASON TO CHECK AROUND.
THE BIG, BAD WOLF IS ON THE RUN.
TIME FOR CLINGING. TIME FOR SINGING.

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.
ALL'S WELL IN THE WOODS.

TAKE OUR WORD.

All exit except Grannie. She carefully locks the door behind them, closes the window and latches it, gets into bed, and picks up a book with the large title of LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD. Lights fade to black as she speaks.

GRANNIE

My, oh my. What an interesting day!

Blackout. End of play.