

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

*A play in one act for young audiences
By George Halitzka*

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Cast of Characters

HELGA, the Receptionist
LITTLE RED, the one with the Riding Hood
SARAH, her daughter
GREGORY WOLF, son of the infamous "Big Bad"
CINDERELLA, now known as "Princess Ostentasia"
CLARISSE, her daughter
SERVANTS to Cinderella (at least two)
BERTHA SWINE, 1/3 of the Three Little Pigs
FREDERICK SWINE, same
HORACE J. SWINE, same
SHAYNA, one of Horace and Bertha's piglets
OTHER PIGLETS (at least two)
JACOB GRIMM, the famous teller of tales

The Time

Sometime after lunch.

The Place

The outer office of the Brothers Grimm,
renowned storytellers.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

(The lights rise on a waiting room. On the walls are posters depicting various fairy tales. A young wolf, GREGORY, sits nervously in one of the chairs, fidgeting as he reads a magazine. Off to one side, HELGA sits behind a desk, looking somewhat bored. LITTLE RED, with her daughter SARAH in tow, enters and approaches the desk.)

LITTLE RED
We have an appointment?

HELGA
Last name?

LITTLE RED
Hood.

HELGA
(handing her a clipboard)
Sign here, please.

SARAH
Mom, I'm scared--

LITTLE RED
Shh!
(smiling at HELGA)
No, she's not.

SARAH
Look!
(SARAH points to GREGORY.)

LITTLE RED
Grimms preserve us! Is that *him*?

HELGA
He has an appointment--

LITTLE RED
And you didn't cage him?

HELGA

Says he's a vegetarian.

LITTLE RED

Tell it to my Grandmother!

HELGA

Look, have a seat--

LITTLE RED

We are *not* waiting in the same room with that beast! Do the Grimms know about this?

HELGA

They invited him.

LITTLE RED

Are you *serious*?

(righteous indignation)

My daughter and I are going to *Andersen*.

HELGA

Good ol' Hans Christian. Well, don't say I didn't warn you.

LITTLE RED

What?

HELGA

Remember Little Mermaid?

(LITTLE RED nods, regarding HELGA warily.)

Used to be Mr. Wilhelm's client; nice happy ending. But then she went to Andersen--

LITTLE RED

Did she find a wolf in the office, too?

HELGA

--Now she's foam on the sea.

(A beat.)

LITTLE RED

We'll wait.

(HELGA nods smugly.)

LITTLE RED (*cont'd*)

Under protest, of course.

HELGA

Protest away.

(LITTLE RED and SARAH find seats, as far away from GREGORY as possible.)

LITTLE RED

Let's practice again.

SARAH

Mom--

LITTLE RED

You think I got this red hood by chance? Listen--

SARAH

"Happily Ever Afters are never an accident." I know--

LITTLE RED

This is about the rest of your life! Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are--

SARAH

--"The most powerful men in the world." I know; they write my story--

LITTLE RED

Which means you could be wolf meat--

SARAH

They would never--

LITTLE RED

What are you going to say first?

SARAH

Mom--

LITTLE RED

"Good morning, Mr. Grimm"--

SARAH

(with a sigh)

"Good morning, Mr. Grimm. I brought you these cookies that Grandma baked" . . . But Grandma's dead; you stopped at Wal-Mart®--

LITTLE RED

They don't know that. *Then* what do you say?

SARAH

"I'm really hoping for a Happily Ever After, just like Mother--"

HELGA

Excuse me, Mrs. Hood--

LITTLE RED

Miss Hood. That no-good woodcutter--

HELGA

Are you trying to bribe the Grimms?

LITTLE RED

It's just a little gift--

HELGA

(snatching the cookies from SARAH)

I'll take that.

LITTLE RED

I paid good money for those!

HELGA

(looking at the cookies)

I love white chocolate.

(LITTLE RED, rather miffed, picks up a copy of the *Fairy Tale Tattler* and starts reading. SARAH looks around the room nervously; she catches GREGORY staring at her. He quickly looks away.)

SARAH

Mommy . . .

LITTLE RED

What?

SARAH

That wolf was staring at me.

LITTLE RED

(eyes narrowing)

The *wolf*?

SARAH

It looked hungry--

LITTLE RED

(to HELGA--who ignores her)

And she said it was safe!

(LITTLE RED walks over to GREGORY. She speaks slowly and loudly, using exaggerated hand gestures as though with a deaf child.)

LITTLE RED

Wolf understand people-talk?

(GREGORY nods, looking confused.)

This *daughter*--not *dinner*. Taste yucky.

GREGORY

(trying to imitate LITTLE RED'S mannerisms)

Wolf vegan. Eat plants--leaves.

(LITTLE RED and SARAH draw back and whisper to each other.)

LITTLE RED

I think it's trying to communicate!

SARAH

What's a "vegan"?

LITTLE RED

It probably means "girl eater."

(to GREGORY; pointing at SARAH)

You touch--I call Woodcutter. Slice Wolf with ax.

GREGORY

I don't mean to be rude, but can we speak in complete sentences?

(LITTLE RED and SARAH jump backwards.)

SARAH
It speaks English!

GREGORY
Look, ma'am--

LITTLE RED
Stay back!

GREGORY
I don't even *like* meat--

LITTLE RED
I know your kind. Pretty soon you'll head for Grandma's house, crawl into a nightie, and eat us all!

GREGORY
I'm really sorry about my father's behavior. In your story. But I eat carrot sticks.

(To demonstrate, GREGORY pulls some carrots from a backpack under his seat.)

See?

(Unfortunately, as GREGORY tries to reclose his bookbag, a canned ham falls out.)

LITTLE RED
Explain *that*!

GREGORY
(trying to shove it back inside his bag)
I don't know how it got there--

SARAH
(appalled)
He turned the Three Little Pigs into Spam@!

LITTLE RED
Don't look, Sarah--

GREGORY
It's a present for Mr. Grimm! They say he loves ham--

LITTLE RED

(to HELGA)
Get me a leash! A muzzle! An ax--

HELGA

How about a clue?

LITTLE RED

Vegetarian, my Aunt Rapunzel! That animal's dangerous!

HELGA

Yeah, he could really hurt somebody with that can.
(taking it from his paws)
Sorry, Wolfie--no bribes.

GREGORY

But it's not--

HELGA

"Just a little gift"; I know. Good thing I didn't pack lunch.

(The phone buzzes; HELGA picks it up.)

Yes, sir? . . . I'll send her right in.

(to SARAH)

Mr. Jacob will see you now.

(LITTLE RED and SARAH both stand up.)

SARAH

Mom, I don't think you should come--

LITTLE RED

Don't you want a Happily Ever After?
(pointing at GREGORY)
Or would you rather end up like a Wolf?

SARAH

Mom . . .

LITTLE RED

Come on.

(to GREGORY)

I hope your story gets you chopped open, too. Just like your father!

(LITTLE RED and SARAH exit. HELGA walks over to GREGORY, carrying the ham.)

HELGA

This wasn't for Mr. Grimm, was it?

GREGORY

(downcast)

People feel better around Wolves when we eat carrots.

HELGA

(trying to hand him the ham)

I won't tell. Here.

GREGORY

I'm not hungry.

HELGA

I'm sorry about your Dad.

GREGORY

Well, he did eat Grandma.

HELGA

Maybe you'll get a better ending.

GREGORY

Ever heard of a Wolf living Happily Ever After?

(CINDERELLA enters, trailed by her daughter CLARISSE and a gaggle of SERVANTS. CINDERELLA is calling out a steady stream of orders.)

CINDERELLA

--And I want a royal feast from the kitchens tonight. NO LEFTOVERS!

A SERVANT

Yes, Your Majesty.

CINDERELLA

Clarisse, stand up straight.

(turning to a SERVANT)

Tell my dear prince to get his royal tush home by five. We're celebrating our daughter's Happily Ever After!