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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

Fairy Tale Courtroom

by Dana Proulx

SAMUEL FRENCH

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For "The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf", special thanks goes to my assistant directors Lars Knudsen and Scot Wingo for their invaluable help in seeing this project through. Thanks also goes to my original Wolf Trial cast, the 1993 Scarborough Faire Children's Theater actors, for their enhancement of this project, and for the Witch Trial, thanks goes to the 1994 Summer Jr. Player's Guild drama camp participants from Exall Center.

Original Cast.

WOLF.....James Benthul
JUDGE.....Tim Shane
DISTRICT ATTORNEY.....Steve Hacker
BAILIFF.....Chris Williamson
PIG #1.....Debbie Ramsey/ Jamaica Storie
PIG #2.....Noel Pike / Trisha Storie
PIG #3.....Tasha Walen / Katie Storie
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.....Jessica Brown
GRANDMOTHER.....Beverly Brannon
BOY WHO CRIED WOLF.....Josh Cossimo
BADGER.....Don Walters
CHEF/SOUND EFFECTS.....Gwen Benthul
CLERK/STAGE ASS'T/UNDERSTUDY...Robert Storie

Special thanks also goes to Stages Repertory Theater in Houston, TX, who presented the first professional reading of "Fairy Tale Courtroom" when it was honored in their Southwest Festival of New Plays contest for the year 2000.

DIRECTOR: Brian Bymes

PLAYERS: Leraldo Anzalda, Celeste Cheramie, Nathalie Cunningham, Bethany Daniels, William Hardy, Marie Henneberry, Deborah Hope, Leslie Maness, Mark Roberts, Susan Shofner

Also thank-you to the Navasota Theater Alliance, who in conjunction with the Brazos Valley Troupe performed the first full production of "Fairy Tale Courtroom" in its entirety.

DIRECTOR: M. A. Sterling

PLAYERS: David Strawn, Joshua Jackson, Matt Jones, Nat Chilton, Maya Smith, Jacob Sweet, Dori Thompson, Daniel Lane, Mindy Brewer, Bram Carlson, Catherine Miller, Andrew Robertson, Justin Smith, Emily Galey, Ashleigh Sowell, Brandon Miskimen, Danielle Leitch, Morgan Rogers, Annie Houston, Kate MacLauchlin, Michael Lane, Taryn Sweet

AUTHOR'S NOTE

"Fairy Tale Courtroom" is an extremely adaptable script. For smaller casts many parts can be double cast or cut out completely. In "Trial of the Big Bad Wolf" the easiest places to cut characters are the Sound effects person/chef, Clerk, Grandmother, the badger and the Boy Who Cried Wolf. In "Witch on Trial" the dwarfs, the magic mirror, the flying monkey, the Clerk and the Scarecrow are all removable. This cuts show running time, and of course all references to those characters in context must also be edited. Many of the witnesses from the Wolf trial can change costumes during "recess" and return as different witnesses for the Witch trial, for example. the three pigs, if cast as females, can double as Dorothy, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty in the Witch trial. I encourage you to be creative with your use of the script.

"Recess" is a high energy gratuitous bit, easily cut from the show. The use of the bit "recess" is also quite adaptable; it can be a false intermission, inserted between the two trials, or if an actual intermission is used in the show, "recess" can be inserted anywhere within either trial at the director's discretion. I recommend inserting it between two less-active witness testimonies as a way of maintaining energy and pacing.



To Chuck Pascoe, who first inspired me in children's theater
To Kathi Appelt, who inspires me in writing
And to John Willis, who inspires my life

CHARACTERS

In Both Parts:
JUDGE
BAILIFF
DISTRICT ATTORNEY (D.A.)
CLERK (A HAND ONLY)

In The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf only:
WOLF
PIG #1
PIG #2
PIG #3
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
GRANDMOTHER
BOY WHO CRIED WOLF
BADGER
SHORT ORDER CHEF

In Witch on Trial only:
DEFENSE ATTORNEY
SCARECROW
FLYING MONKEY
DOROTHY
WITCH
HANSEL
GRETEL
SLEEPING BEAUTY
SNOW WHITE
PRINCE
SEVERAL DWARVES

FAIRY TALE COURTROOM

PART I: THE TRIAL OF THE BIG BAD WOLF

(At rise: The stage is set in a modified courtroom manner, with the judges desk elevated on SL. Beneath the small desktop is a drop with a hole for Clerk's hand to stick through. Clerk has no lines, and is equipped only with a quill pen and tablet. Clerk writes, holds evidence, responds via movement of the one hand only. The witness stand chair is CS. All witnesses brought in to testify sit in audience chairs. GRANNY is holding a plate of cookies that PIG #2 is eating hungrily. BOY WHO CRIED WOLF is sitting in the audience a few rows back.)

BAILIFF *(to audience, who is the jury).* Hear ye, hear ye. On this *(fill in current numeric date)* day of *(fill in current month)* Mr. B.B. Wolf will be tried for his various offenses. Is he guilty or is he innocent? Only you can decide. *(Judge enters)* All rise . . . the honorable Judge I. L. Hangum presiding.

JUDGE. Thank-you, thank-you. You may be seated.

(He sits at his desk and begins trying to balance his gavel on its round side. Whenever it looks like it will balance, JUDGE makes a childlike gleeful face. When it falls over, he frowns and tries again. At any given point, he drops it on CLERK'S

area and CLERK picks it up and hands it back.
JUDGE pays little attention to the proceedings.)

BAILIFF. The defendant, Mr. B.B. Wolf, is being charged with breaking and entering, willful destruction of property, impersonating a sheep, corrupting a minor, attempted murder, assault with deadly natural weapons, and jaywalking.

(All WITNESSES oooohhh!)

JUDGE *(To WOLF).* How do you plead?

WOLF. Like this usually. *(falls to knees melodramatically)* I didn't do it! I'm an innocent victim of circumstance! It's not my fault! Please hear me, I beg you...

BAILIFF *(Cutting the WOLF off).* To the charges! How do you plea to the charges brought against you?

WOLF. Oh, that! *(gets up and brushes himself off)* Not guilty!

JUDGE *(Gets nudged by the BAILIFF and realizes it's his time to speak.).* Opening statements.

D.A. Your honor, I intend to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that *(points to Wolf)* this Wolf - this hideous fiend - is in fact guilty of all of the crimes that were just mentioned, and is a menace to society who should be put away for the good of all mankind.

WOLF. Your honor, in defense of myself, I intend to prove that the charges brought against me are just a big misunderstanding. It's all vicious rumor and hearsay. *(goes down on his knees again before the audience)* If you cut me, do I not bleed?

BAILIFF. Mr. Wolf ...

WOLF. Sorry. *(rises.)* Thank-you your honor. *(returns to seat.)*

JUDGE. You may call your first witness. *(Yawns, begins to doze off.)*

D.A. Your honor, I call to the stand Pig #1.

(PIG #1 comes to stand playing with a mud pie. BAILIFF holds "Grimm Brothers Fairy Tales" up to swear PIG #1 in, she puts her hand down mud-pie first on the book.)

BAILIFF. Pig #1, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you Brothers Grimm?

PIG #1. I do. *(Brushes mud pie off)*

JUDGE *(snapping awake).* I now pronounce you man and wife.

BAILIFF. Your honor! She's a witness!

D.A. Pig #1, are you the Pig who built the straw house?

PIG #1. Yes, I am.

D.A. And what happened to that house on the date of Feb. 30 at 3.15 PM?

PIG #1. It was blown down by that hideous beast Wolf!

BOY *(from audience).* It was Wolf! I saw him do it! It was Wolf! I saw the whole thing!

JUDGE. Order! Order!

(BAILIFF goes to BOY and physically silences him)

D.A. And is the Wolf you just referred to in this courtroom right now?

PIG #1. Yes.

D.A. Thank-you. No further questions.

(D.A. returns to his area, WOLF crosses to witness stand.)

WOLF. Now Miss Pig, where were you at the time that your house was blown down?

PIG #1. I was inside taking a mud bath.

WOLF *(Close and menacing).* Well, if you were inside wallowing, you couldn't very well have seen me outside, now could you?

PIG #1. No, but I -

WOLF. No further questions.

D.A. Your honor, I would like to ask Pig #1 another question. *(JUDGE nods, D.A. turns to PIG #1)* Piggy, after the Wolf blew your house down, you had a perfect view of him, did you not?

PIG #1. Yes. That's what I was trying to say.

D.A. And would you point out the predator, um, perpetrator of that foul deed?

PIG #1. It was him! *(points to WOLF)*

D.A. Thank-you. You may step down. *(PIG #1 returns to seat)* Next I would like to call Piggy #2 to the stand.

(PIG #2 takes the stand, noisily eating a snack)

BAILIFF. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you Brothers Grimm?

(PIG #2 grunts and nods head affirmatively, getting crumbs in the mud on the book. CLERK has pen poised, ready to write.)

D.A. Now, second little pig, you lived in the wooden house, did you not?

PIG #2 *(eating vigorously, grunting and nodding. CLERK adjusts pen a few times unable to write down what is happening. Finally, Clerk puts pen down and drums fingers, waiting for actual words to write down).* Ungh-hnghg.

D.A. And can you identify the individual who destroyed your home, assaulted you, and tried to kill you?

PIG #2. Uh. Um-eh-ah-hm. *(Gestures, nods, points at WOLF. CLERK gestures in disgust, still unable to write anything. Turns fingertips to face Pig #2 as if listening.)*

D.A. Thank you. No further questions.

WOLF. Now my swine little friend, *(WOLF pulls out a small pie and gives it to PIG #2)* Are you really sure it was me that you saw?

PIG #2 *(Considers this).* hum-um. *(shakes head in the negative, takes pie, now agrees with WOLF)*

WOLF. In fact, it was really not me at all was it? Didn't you just realize your mistake in identifying me?

PIG #2. Uhm-hm. *(Eats pie ravenously)*

D.A. Your Honor, I object, Wolf is feeding the witness!

JUDGE. Approach the bench. *(On a count of three, WOLF and D.A. perform Scissors, Rock, Paper. D.A. loses)* Objection overruled.

WOLF. Thank you, no further questions.

(PIG #2 exits, CLERK picks pen back up and begins recording the trial again.)

BOY. I saw it, I saw the whole thing! Wolf ran into the house! It was horrible, there was stucco flying everywhere! It was Wolf!

(While BOY is yelling this, BAILIFF advances to silence him)

JUDGE. Order! Order in the court! Order!

(BOY sits, BAILIFF returns to position and SHORT ORDER CHEF enters carrying pad and pencil)

CHEF. Yeah, What'll it be?

JUDGE. Ham and Swiss on rye.

BAILIFF. Pork Chop Platter.

D.A. Bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich.

WOLF. I'll take a pig in a blanket - I mean … the chef salad, with a low-cal dressing.

CHEF *(writing it all down)*. Coming right up.

D.A. I would like to call Little Red Riding Hood. *(She flounces to the stand, they flirt)* Hello Miss Hood, you're looking lovely today.

LIL RED. Why, thank you.

BAILIFF *(holding up the book that is now covered in mud and food bits)*. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you Brothers Grime - eh, Grimm?

LIL RED *(Using a stereotypical dumb blonde voice and giggle)*. Uh-huh!

D.A. Now Miss Hood, on the 31st of June were you not going along the path to your Grandmother's house when this fiend accosted you?

LIL RED *(she must think about it).* Yes.

D.A. And did he not frighten you?

LIL RED *(re-lives her fear).* Yes!

D.A. And ask you directions to your Grandmother's house, then go there and attack you?

LIL RED. Yes.

D.A. Could you point out this furry, ferocious, fiend for the court?

LIL RED. Him! *(points at WOLF)*

D.A. Thank you, no further questions.

BOY. Yeah, I saw that too. Wolf did it! Wolf assaulted the little girl in the blue dress! She was sitting on a tuffet, eating curds and whey when he hit her with a bag!

(BAILIFF again silences BOY)

JUDGE. Order! One more outburst like that and I'll fine you in contempt of court!

(Wolf advances to question LIL RED)

WOLF. Now, Red, didn't you tell me you were going to your Grandmother's house?

LIL RED. Well, yes.

WOLF. I thought it was an invitation. Didn't you point out to me that she lived just over the river and through the woods?

(WOLF points along directions, waving his finger up, down, left and right as he speaks and LIL

RED follows his pointing finger with her eyes first, then her head, then her whole body)

D.A. Objection! The Defendant is leading the Witness!

JUDGE. Approach the bench. (*Scissors, Rock, Paper bit repeats. D.A. loses)* Objection overruled!

LIL RED. No, that's not how it happened at all. You're confusing me. Here's what really happened. Why, I remember it like it was yesterday ...

(Harp music plays, actors begin undulating, spinning and twisting motions)

JUDGE. What's happening? Why are we moving like this?

D.A. This always happens when someone flashes back to the past.

(All but LIL RED and WOLF exit, undulating, and music stops when they clear)

WOLF *(looking menacing).* Hey there Little Red Riding Hood.

LIL RED *(Girlishly innocent).* Hiya Wolfie!

WOLF *(lascivious).* You sure are looking good.

LIL RED *(curious).* Who are you? *(sets basket down, WOLF slides it away from her with one foot)*

WOLF *(leering).* I'm the Big, Bad Wolf. Where are you going?

LIL RED *(sincere).* I'm going to visit my poor ill Grandmother.

WOLF *(licking his chops).* And where would that be?

LIL RED *(matter of fact).* Why everyone knows that, silly! It's over the river and through the woods.

WOLF *(looking at LIL RED hungrily).* Well, mind if I take a peek at your basket of goodies?

LIL RED *(Pleading, a bit fearful, yet firm).* You leave that alone, it's for my Grandmother! Come on, Wolfie.

(They do Scissors, Rock, Paper bit to see who gets the basket. LIL RED wins)

WOLF. Best two out of three?

LIL RED. No, what do you think I am, stupid?

(LIL RED freezes in place as WOLF steps forward)

WOLF. No! That's not how it happened at all, your Honor. Here is what really happened!

(Harp glissades play as actors do flashback undulations into places for WOLF'S flashback)

(LIL RED sashays up accompanied by risqué music or brush and drum rhythm. WOLF greets her in an open, friendly way)

WOLF. Hey there little Red Riding Hood!

LIL RED. Hiya' Wolfie. *(circles her hips vampishly around, bumping WOLF with hip)*

WOLF *(flustered, but sincere).* You sure are looking good!

LIL RED *(flirting).* Who are you?

WOLF. I'm B.B. Wolf. *(curious)* Where are you going?

LIL RED *(Bored, rolling eyes).* I'm going to visit my poor ill Grandmother.

WOLF *(Conversational).* And where would that be?

LIL RED *(Using a "come hither" tone).* Why, everyone knows that, silly! It's over the river and through the woods.

(LIL RED does a little shimmy and raises her eyebrows questioningly at WOLF)

WOLF *(covers his eyes with his hands, but peeks through his fingers at her obviously. He nervously changes the subject).* Well ... mind if I take a peek at your basket of goodies?

LIL RED. You leave that alone. It's for my Grandmother. *(LIL RED hides the basket behind her back just as WOLF is reaching for it, causing his hand to accidentally touch her. Using her flirtatious, invitational tone)* Come on, Wolfie!

(She grabs Wolf by his chest fur and pulls him off, harp glissades play again and people undulate, spin and twist back into their places for court)

WOLF *(shuddering in memory).* The emotional trauma still haunts me today. No further questions.

(LIL RED sits)

D.A. For my next witness, I call Grandmother, the sweetest, kindest old lady there is. *(While he talks, BAILIFF starts helping her to the stand)* Hello there Granny, got any more of those cookies?

(She pulls a napkin and a cookie from her pocket and hands it to him.)

BAILIFF *(holds out Grimm's Brothers book, which GRANNY covers with a napkin before placing her hand on it).* Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you Brothers Grimm?

GRANNY. Eh . . . ?

D.A. Good enough. Now Granny, could you point out for the jury the hideous beast who broke into your home, assaulted you and forced you into the closet?

GRANNY. Ahhh, *(she points forward, D.A. swings her arm around to point at WOLF)*

D.A. Thank you very much. No further questions.

WOLF. If it please the court, I would like to have Grandmother listed as a hostile witness. Now madam, you know what a hostile witness is, don't you? It is a person who feels hostility. When you want to get even with someone for calling a young lady such as yourself, old. Get back at someone who tries to milk you for your cookies. Doesn't that make you mad? Don't you just want to hit someone?

(GRANNY gets up at WOLF'S prodding and beats up D.A. using a slapstick style one-two-three that knocks the D.A. over. Slapstick and slide whistle sound effects accompany the action)

WOLF. Thank you, no further questions. For a character witness I call my old friend, Badger!

D.A. Your Honor, I object! He's witnessing the Badger!

JUDGE. Approach the bench! *(They each go hand over hand on the gavel's handle as if they're in a baseball game deciding who will bat first. The D.A. loses.)* Overruled. Swear him in.

WOLF. Thank you.

BAILIFF *(holds out Grimm's Brothers book, which BADGER spit-shines in an effort to kiss up).* Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you Brothers Grimm?

BADGER. Sure!

WOLF. Now Badger, how long have you known me?

BADGER *(thinks, holds up four fingers).* Seven years.

WOLF. That's right. Ever since I broke that mirror. And in that time, how would you describe my personal character? *(Holds out a bag of coins and drops it in BADGER'S hand)*

BADGER *(smiles at bag, then looks at notes in his hat).* I would say you are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, kind, considerate, and reverent.

WOLF *(covers and lowers the BADGER'S hands, his cheat sheet and the bribe quickly).* Thank you. *(drops another bag in BADGER'S hand)* Have you ever known me to do anything that could be construed as violent?

BADGER. Never.

WOLF. Thank you, no further questions.

D.A. How many years did you say you have known Wolf?

(D.A. holds out four fingers)

BADGER. Duh . . . seven, yeah, seven.

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