



Red Riding Hood

by Stephen Duckham

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RED RIDING HOOD

Roberta Hood	Red Riding Hood
Florence Farquharson	Aunt Flo
Tongue-tied Timmy	Her nephew
Bo Peep	A keeper of sheep
Lionel Lupin	A market gardener
Peter	A Woodcutter
PC Billy	The village policeman
Baroness de Brexit	An evil witch
Dull	(Her servant)

Pinky	
Perky	3 little pigs (children + chorus)
Porky	

Granny Hood	Small role at the end of the story
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Chorus of Villagers and creatures of the Gnarled Forest

In the first scene, the head Wizard appears. It is intended that he is in a film sequence. If this is impractical, the scene can be played in black tabs with a member of the chorus playing the part.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1	A COVEN OF WIZARDS AND WITCHES
SCENE 2	THE VILLAGE OF FERMLEY ON THE FIDDLE
SCENE 3	ON THE NET
SCENE 4	FERMLEY ON THE FIDDLE VILLAGE HALL
SCENE 5	THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE
SCENE 6	THE HOUSES OF THE THREE PIGS

ACT TWO

SCENE 1	ON THE NET AGAIN
SCENE 2	THE VILLAGE OF FERMLEY ON THE FIDDLE
SCENE 3	THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE
SCENE 4	THE GNARLED FOREST
SCENE 5	THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE
SCENE 6	GRANNY HOOD'S COTTAGE
SCENE 7	BACK HOME
SCENE 8	THE VILLAGE OF FERMLEY ON THE FIDDLE

CHARACTERS

Roberta Hood (Red)	A level-headed young lady. A friend to everyone and also the owner of a small rustic guest house. A good singing voice is required.
Florence Farquharson	(Aunt Flo) Larger than life panto dame. As she is an ex-performer, her character is always theatrical, whether it be dramatic or comic. Able to put a number over with theatrical flair.
Tongue-tied Timmy	As the name suggests, he is always trying to find the words to express his feelings for Bo Peep. With other characters, he is fine, but with her, he needs the audience to help him get the words out. A good rapport with the audience is essential. Nice singing voice an advantage.
Bo Peep	An engaging, sweet-natured girl with a soft spot for Timmy. A good range singing voice is an advantage.
Lionel Lupin	As this character becomes the Wolf, he must have two contrasting personalities. Lionel is a meek and mild man, but when under the spell of the Baroness, he becomes a snarling, growling-voiced animal. Should be able to sing.
Peter	Handsome, charming with a good physique. A typical panto hero. Needs a good, strong singing voice.
PC Billy	The 'good fairy' of the pantomime. Unlike the usual immortal, he interacts with the rest of the characters. A likeable, easy-going chap. Mainly sings with the rest of the company.
Baroness de Brexit	The archetypal villainess. A magical creature in human form who will trample over everyone and everything to achieve her ambitions. Strong character able to cope with whatever the audience throws at her. Please note her name is pronounced with a soft 'T'. (de Brexee)
Dull	Just as the name sounds!
3 Little Pigs	Usually played by children.
Granny Hood	Cameo role for a member of the chorus

The chorus represents Villagers and Creatures of the Gnarled Forest.

PRODUCTION NOTES

ACT ONE Scene 1

Film sequence: In the original production, a short film of an actor playing the Head Wizard was shown at the start of the scene. If it is not possible to achieve this, someone (maybe a chorus member) can play this part and record the lines for a voice-over for all the other sequences throughout the production.

In the original production, much was made of the reference to *HS2 and a bit!* This was because the proposed HS2 rail link was due to run nearby. This can be changed to a new Motorway, By-pass, Airport runway – in fact, anything that would be likely to disrupt the quiet life of a small village.

Trick vegetables:

The various vegetables mentioned are described in the stage directions and are not difficult.

to make. The 'Leek' can be a plastic bottle with a twist-top, turned upside down, and covered to resemble a leek. For the 'rocket', get a children's stick pump and cover the end to represent rocket leaves. The spring onions can be easily mounted on a piece of wood with a spring device that is released, so they stand upright. If you have an imaginative props team, I am sure they can easily create all the desired effects.

Pigs' Houses (Act One Scene 6):

Both the house of Straw and the house of Sticks need to break apart when the Wolf blows them down. The simplest way to achieve this is to build three panels –front and two sides –

for each house made of light material, and have three members of the company in black hold them together. When the Wolf blows, the three panels can be 'blown around' and carried off stage while the pigs make their escape. The third house of bricks can either be built in the same way or hinged together to free-stand. If there is room, it can even be on a truck and just slide on up stage. Use an effective lighting sequence for each house blowing down.

Rat (Act 2 Scene 6):

In the original production, a large rat specially made to fit over a remote-controlled car was used and operated from the wings. It ran from one side of the stage to the other. If this is not practical, a toy rat pulled by a thin line will be just as effective. Or, if you have children in the cast, one could be dressed as a rat and run across. Keep the lighting low during this sequence.

Image from Newspaper (page 46):

If you have the facilities to project an image onto a flown screen, this gives the best effect. Otherwise, a board with an enlarged picture as described in the script can be pushed on from the wings.

SCENERY

The sets can be as simple or as lavish as your resources allow. The main scene is the Village with the two buildings on either side. Inside the Village Hall can be a half or three-quarter set made with drapes to give the impression of a stage area. The Three Little Pigs houses and the Gnarled Forest can be the same set with the addition of the houses as described in the script. Granny's House is an inset, and one front cloth and tabs are used throughout.

RED RIDING HOOD

ACT ONE

MUSIC - OVERTURE AND INTRO TO SCENE 1SCENE 1 A COVEN OF WIZARDS AND WITCHES

[The head Wizard is seen addressing the audience as though they were a board of directors. This could be a film sequence – see notes.]

WIZARD

And so, fellow Wizards and Witches, we come to the last item on today's agenda. The success of one of our illustrious members in gaining access to the Houses of Parliament in the recent by-election. By the power of thought transference, all the eligible voters of the - *[He uses the name of the local area.]* - constituency placed an X in our candidate's box! That resulted in a landslide victory! *[Applause.]* We have successfully infiltrated the seat of government and will soon have control of the whole of the country. *[More applause.]* So without further delay, I introduce to you the newly elected member - Baroness de Brexit.

[Applause. A cloud of smoke and the Baroness de Brexit appears down left. The Wizard disappears.]

BARONESS

[Oozing charm.] My dear friends. The first thing that needs to be done is to gain the confidence of the people at the top. To that end, we have a proposal that will give our party maximum attention. I put before you a new rail link to be known from now on as HS 2 and a bit! *[She reveals, as if by magic, a map that looks like a drawing out of a children's book that shows a nearby town and a train line to another town, with the local place being missed but cutting across part of the village of Fermley on the Fiddle.]* This projected rail link will not only cut the travelling time between *[Name of first town.]* and *[Name of second town.]* down by three and a quarter minutes, but it will help all those people who have a problem getting up in the morning to miss the rush hour traffic! *[Applause.]* However, there is a slight problem. Three houses are on the preferred route. They belong to three pigs who are, at the moment, proving very difficult to move. They have been offered a very stylish sty next to the airport runway, *[or a motorway etc.]*, but have refused it. But fear not, dear members, I have other ways of achieving a result without throwing any suspicion on us. *[Her voice grows in power.]* No one is going to get the better of the Baroness de Brexit!

[She gives an evil laugh and exits as the light fades on stage left and comes up on stage right. A man dressed in a white shirt and black trousers has his back to the audience. He will be known later as PC Billy. He turns and smiles at the audience.]

PC BILLY

Evening all! What do you make of all that then? That old witch is up to no good. But I'd better explain who I am. I am Wizard William Warlock, but you can call me Billy. I belong to a rival coven of wizards and witches who are only concerned with doing good. I've been given the task of keeping an eye on the Baroness ever since we found out about that plan. *[He holds his hand out to the right wing, and a policeman's jacket appears, which he puts on. He continues talking during this.]* The village in question is Fermley on the Fiddle, so why don't you come with me, and I'll introduce you to a few of the locals. *[Audience reaction.]* I have taken on the disguise of - *[He holds out his hand again, and a policeman's helmet appears. He puts it on.]* - you've guessed it - the village bobby, to fit in and not raise any suspicion! *[Finishing his disguise.]* There. All ready? Everyone's up early this morning, so here we go.

[The lights come up on -]

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SCENE 2 THE VILLAGE OF FERMLEY ON THE FIDDLE

[A bright country village scene with Roberta's Rustic Guest House on stage left and on the right is the Fermley on the Fiddle Village Hall. At first, the spot stays on Billy as another light picks up Bo Peep towards stage left.]

MUSIC - OPENING CHORUS

[Note that during the number PC Billy introduces various characters. This can either be done at points during the song or all at once.]

PC BILLY

[He speaks.] Here's Miss Bo Peep. She has a flock of sheep that tends to keep wandering off!

[Timmy enters from the village hall.]

And this is Timmy. *[Timmy notices Bo Peep. He gets very flustered as she waves to him and smiles. He goes to speak, but his mouth just hangs open, so he quickly exits the way he came. Bo Peep exits left. The Chorus have now entered and greet each other.]* We call him tongue-tied Timmy because every time he sees Bo, he can never find the words to say how much he likes her!

[Peter enters from one side of the stage carrying a bundle of wood, and Lionel Lupin enters from the other. Lionel has a box of vegetables. They meet centre stage.]

That's Peter, the woodcutter and odd job man around the village. And that's Lionel Lupin, who runs a small market garden. On the edge of Lionel's property live the three little pigs. And here they are now! *[Across the front of the stage walk the three pigs.]* Pinky.

PINKY

[With a nod to PC Billy.] Oink!

PC BILLY

Perky!

PERKY

[With a nod to PC Billy.] Oink!

PC BILLY

And Porky!

[Porky, the largest, is munching on a sandwich as they cross. He nods to PC Billy and burps. All three exit.]

Lionel supplies – *[He points to Roberta's Guest House.]* – Roberta's Rustic Guest House, run by Roberta Hood. But we all know her by her nickname, Red. And you'll see why as here she comes. *[Red appears at her door. She has a mass of red hair. Lionel gives her the box of vegetables and exits. Peter holds the door for her, and they smile at each other. Red goes back inside, and Peter exits into the village hall.]*

Well, I don't need to tell you that there's more than a little chemistry there! Actually, today is rather special as it's Red's birthday. But none of us are letting on because there is a surprise party arranged. More of that later. There is one other person you must meet. She is out in her car at the moment, but no doubt you will run into her very soon! That's as long as she doesn't run into you first. Well, it seems everyone is up early this morning. *[This is the end of PC Billy's introduction.]*

[At the end of the song, all exit except Red and PC Billy.]

And how are you this morning, Red?

RED

Fine, thank you, constable. Isn't it a lovely day?

PC BILLY

Yes, cleared up nicely after last night's rain.

RED*[Thinking he might say "happy birthday".]* The sunshine makes it such a special day.**PC BILLY**Oh, I don't know. Just like any other really! *[He gives a quick smile and a wink to the audience.]***RED***[Deflated.]* I suppose it is. And the news about this proposed railway line doesn't help matters. It could badly affect visitors – and my guest house is bound to suffer.**PC BILLY**Well, you will have plenty of customers today. *[He indicates the audience.]* Look at this lot that just arrived on a day trip!**RED**Oh yes. I'll have to make sure all the rooms are ready. *[To the audience.]* And in about an hour, I'll have coffee served in the visitors' annex! Through there. *[She points towards the foyer. Bo Peep enters.]* Oh, hello, Bo.

BO Hello Red. Constable.

PC BILLY Morning, Miss Peep. If you two ladies will excuse me, I'd better get about my constabulary duty. *[To the audience.]* Enjoy your stay. *[He winks at the audience and exits.]*

BO Oh dear, I'm in a bit of a panic this morning.

RED What's the matter?

BO My sheep! I nearly lost them last night. They are very timid, and that storm we had really spooked them!

RED Well, they should be alright today. The weather forecast says it's going to be glorious. *[Pointedly.]* A really special day!

BO Just like any other really!

RED Oh! *[Timmy enters from the hall.]* Morning Timmy. Lovely day.

TIMMY Just like any other really!

RED *[Slightly deflated.]* That's what Bo said.

[Timmy notices Bo and starts to get flustered.]

BO Hello Timmy.

TIMMY Hell...hell...hell...ooh!

BO I hope you are well.

TIMMY Well...I'm...well...I

BO *[With a sigh.]* I'd better get back to my sheep. See you both later. *[She exits.]*

RED Oh, Timmy. You really must get over your shyness.

TIMMY I know, Red. It's just that when I see her words seem to jam up in my mouth.

RED No wonder folks call you tongue-tied Timmy.

TIMMY It only happens with Bo. I'm fine with everyone else.

RED In that case, why don't you say hello to our visitors? I'll get on with the breakfasts. *[She exits.]*

TIMMY *[Looking out.]* Hello all. *[Audience reaction.]* I am in a bit of a muddle. As Red says, I get tongue-tied when I see Bo Peep. I do like her, but I can never find the words to ask her out. Have any of you got any suggestions of what I can do? *[If there is a reaction, he ad-libs. He picks someone out in the front row and goes down to them.]* Hello. You look like a nice, sensible person! Could you help me? *[Ad lib with person.]* When I get flustered, can you shout out 'Spit it out, Timmy'? Could you do that? You don't seem too sure! Maybe all of you could help. Will you? *[Reaction.]* That's great, but it will involve a practice – which may come as a surprise to some of you! *[He spots a girl in the front row.]* Excuse me, but do you think you can help me? Will you pretend to be Bo Peep, and then I'll get all flustered, and everyone can help me. *[He ad-libs with the girl. Maybe gets her onto the stage.]* Just say 'hello Timmy' and then I'll get all tongue-tied and all my new friends can help by shouting 'Spit it out, Timmy'. *[Timmy ad-libs the sequence a couple of times with the audience shouting out. At the end, he thanks the girl.]* Oh, that was really kind of you. Just keep helping me like that, and I'm sure in a couple of hours I'll be cured!

[A loud noise of screeching tyres and motor horns is heard. Flo can be heard shouting at someone.]

FLO *[Off.]* What do you think you are doing? Didn't you see the arrows?

TIMMY That's my aunt Flo.

[Flo appears looking slightly dishevelled. She wears an outrageous costume and motor-goggles.]

FLO Doesn't that bus driver know it's a one-way street?

TIMMY Yes auntie, but it's one way going the *other* way!

FLO Well, that's no good if I want to go this way!! I had to do a quick nine-point turn in order to miss the pedestrian crossing! And I bashed into the dashboard. *[Looking down at her bust.]* And it inflated both my airbags!

TIMMY If you're not more careful, something terrible might happen!

FLO I'll have you know I've been driving for years and never had an accident. Mind you, I have seen plenty in the rear-view mirror!

TIMMY Where have you been so early in the morning?

FLO To pick up a special birthday present for Red.

TIMMY Ssh! You know it's a surprise?

FLO Yes, and I'm going to present it to her later at the surprise party.

TIMMY What is it?

FLO It's a surprise! Now, aren't you supposed to be decorating the Village Hall ready for the party?

TIMMY Yes, I should. I was just chatting to my new friends. *[To the audience.]* See you all later. *[He exits into the hall.]*

FLO See who later? *[Sees the audience.]* Oh hello. Come on, say hello to Flo! *[Audience reaction.]* I hope you will have a pleasant stay with us in Fermley on the lovely River Fiddle. Most of the people who live here have been on the fiddle for years! Have you met all the locals? *[Reaction from the audience.]* All happy country folk. It's a bit like 'Emmerdale'! *[Or another TV soap.]* And you've arrived at a very special time. As I'm sure you've heard, it's our dear friend Red's birthday, and we've all arranged a surprise party. And now you're all invited! *[Reaction.]* I'm in charge of the entertainment and will be presenting the cabaret. I am an *artiste*, you know. I used to headline at all the top variety theatres. "Florence Farquharson, a smile, a song and a dance"! And I made all my own costumes – I still do. What do you think of this? *[She shows off her outfit.]* I'm very good with a needle. In fact, my first job was a machinist in a knicker factory in Weatherfield. You may have heard of it! *[She may have to mention Coronation Street.]* Oh, but there was such goings on there. Scandals, fires, robberies, murders – and that was just in the commercial breaks! Then one day, this big, handsome man who ran a theatrical company came in to enquire about costume repairs. One look at the fancy stitching around my D cups, and I was whisked away to better things. Mind you, he was a lot older than me. Our wedding night was a strange affair. Before he got into bed, my hubby took out his teeth and put them in a drawer. Then he took off his wig and put that in the drawer. Then he took out his false eye and put that in the drawer. Then he unscrewed his left leg and put that in the drawer. I didn't know whether to get into bed or into the drawer! Mind you, we had ten glorious years together, and then tragically, he was taken from me. *[Sympathy from the audience.]* But then I found out – the end could have been avoided. If only he hadn't avoided paying the tax bill, VAT, insurance and all his artists!

The company was gone and so was he – to somewhere on the Costa del Sol! The curtain came down on my theatrical career, so I decided to retire. Now I just perform for special occasions. Weddings, funerals and Bah Mitzvahs, and I often perform for our servicemen. I entertained the army, the navy, the air force and a couple of cold stream guards – but that’s another story! And tonight I am the entertainment for Red’s surprise birthday party. It’s going to be wonderful.

MUSIC – SONG (FLO)

[Note the Chorus can be used in this number if the director wishes.]

[At the end of the song, Lionel enters. He pushes a wheelbarrow with assorted vegetables in. Some of these will be trick ones, so please refer to the notes at the end of the script.]

And here he comes. The man of my dreams!

LIONEL

Hello Flo.

FLO

How are you today?

LIONEL

To tell the truth, I’ve got a bit of a problem. My parsnips are a little limp, and my turnips are not as big as they were last year!!

[Flo is wide-eyed at this. She eventually looks at the audience.]

FLO

Now, before you start making up your own jokes, he is talking about the vegetables he grows! Let’s see what you’ve got today. *[She looks in the wheelbarrow.]* Potatoes, carrots, greens – oh look. *[She holds up some leeks that have water running out of them.]* Leeks!! And here we have some Rocket. *[She holds up a trick pump with a plastic end covered to look like a rocket. She fires it into the wings.]* Ooh, look – *[She holds up a line of runner beans shaped like runners in a race.]* – runner beans! And these are my favourites – *[She holds up a piece of wood with spring onions lying flat. She pulls a release clip, and they spring upright.]* – spring onions!! *[She then picks up a bunch of shallots.]* And that’s shallot. *[“That’s yer lot!”]* They all look wonderful, Lionel.

LIONEL

They would be if Bo Peep’s sheep stopped escaping and causing havoc in my garden.

FLO

I’m sure everything will be fine. Your market garden has always been a profusion of perfect produce!

- LIONEL** That's very kind of you. And may I say I am looking forward to your show tonight. I have made a special fruit punch for the occasion.
- FLO** Oooh, splendid. I hope it's the same as the one you made for my last birthday. That had quite a kick to it.
- LIONEL** Probably because of the bottle of gin you *accidentally* knocked into it!
- FLO** *[With a giggle.]* It was a little clumsy of me, wasn't it? Still, we all had a right rave! Now I must start getting things ready. *[She turns to go as Peter comes out of the Village Hall wearing a tool belt.]* Ah, Peter, is everything sorted?
- PETER** Yes. I've done the repairs to the floor.
- FLO** Wonderful. Now I can do my tap dance without fear of ending up in the splits!
- PETER** And I've fixed the broken chairs.
- FLO** Oh, you're so clever with your wood!
- LIONEL** I wish you could fix the situation with this new railway line. It's due to cut right across the far side of my land.
- FLO** Where those dear little pigs live.
- PETER** Surely they can't just turn them out?
- LIONEL** No, that's one thing they can't do. As long as the houses are standing, they are protected.
- FLO** I should think so. They have been the homes of the pig family since they were basic, dirty, filthy pigsties!!
- [Red enters.]*
- RED** Morning all.
- FLO** Hello, dear. How are you today?
- RED** Very well, thank you. Such a special day.
- FLO** Yes, it is. I've got a whole new act for tonight's entertainment.

RED Oh, I meant.....

FLO I hope you will be there.

RED Yes, of course.

FLO Splendid. *[Crossing to her shop.]* Come on, Lionel. Take those round the back to the kitchen, and I'll make you a cup of tea. And if you're very lucky, I might find you a cream horn to go with it!

[Flo exits into the Hall and Lionel wheels the barrow off up right.]

PETER I was hoping to see you alone.

RED *[Smiling.]* Really?

PETER Yes, I've got something for you. Wait there. *[He crosses to the exit and returns with a bunch of red roses.]* Here.

RED Oh, Peter, they're lovely.

PETER Wild roses. I saw them when I was in the forest this morning, and the colour reminded me of you.

RED And today of all days – you remembered.

PETER Well, I only noticed them today.

RED Yes, but today is special....

PETER Of course it is. Every day is special – when I get the chance to be alone with you.

[She goes to say something, but he starts to sing.]

MUSIC - DUET (RED AND PETER)

[At the end of the number, they exit into the Guest House. Mysterious music is heard, and Baroness de Brexit enters from the left, followed by Dull. He is her assistant and a man of few words. He carries a special solid case.]

BARONESS Come along, Dull. Don't dawdle. We have important work to do. *[She looks around.]* Successfully pushing through the plans for the new rail link is vitally important for the country – and it won't do me any harm either. I intend to show people that the only person capable of ruling this land is me. Don't you agree?

- DULL** Er... um...
- BARONESS** Yes, I thought you would. Now, have you arranged accommodation for us?
- DULL** Um...well...
- BARONESS** Come along. There's got to be a six-star luxury hotel nearby! What have you found?
- DULL** Yes...er... *[He takes out a brochure from his pocket and hands it to her.]*
- BARONESS** Roberta's Rustic Guest House? Guest House?? I don't stay in guest houses. I'm used to splendid surroundings like Travel lodge or – *[Name of nearby hotel or guest house.]*
- DULL** Sorry. Only one here...
- BARONESS** *[Seeing Roberta's.]* Ahhh! Is this it? *[She looks at the brochure.]* Rustic? Old world charm? Old world – it's positively prehistoric!
- DULL** All there was.
- BARONESS** I suppose it will have to do. Hopefully, we won't be here long. Then we can get back to home comforts! *[She turns to open the attaché case, which is still being held by Dull.]* Now, let me make sure I have everything I need. *[She checks the case.]* Plans. iPad to contact the outside world! And most important of all – *[She takes out an ancient scroll.]* – the ingredients for the dreaded fear potion. Concocted by my ancestors in the Middle Ages, one drop and it turns someone into the animal they fear most. They then have to complete a task before getting the antidote to turn them back into human form.
- DULL** Ooooh!
- BARONESS** *[Putting the scroll back.]* It cuts out all the red tape and democratic ways of getting things done! *[She laughs. PC Billy enters.]* Be sure you follow the precise instructions when you make up the potion.
- PC BILLY** Good morning.
- [The Baroness slams the lid of the case down and turns around.]*
- BARONESS** How dare you creep up on someone? *[She realises she is talking to a policeman and turns on the charm.]* Oh, good morning, officer.

PC BILLY Have you arrived with our party of visitors?

BARONESS *[Looking out at the audience.]* With that lot? You must be joking! I don't associate myself with the great unwashed! *[Audience reaction.]* People of my social standing only travel regal class!

PC BILLY Oh yes? And who might that be?

BARONESS I am the Baroness de Brexit. My card. *[She gives him a card.]*

PC BILLY *[Reading.]* Baroness de Brexit. *(Hard 'T')*

BARONESS *[Correcting him.]* de Brexit! And this is my assistant, Dull.

PC BILLY *[Looking at Dull.]* You're not kidding!

BARONESS I am here on very important business.

PC BILLY Oh, not a pleasure trip then?

BARONESS Pleasure is not something I indulge in. Well, not your sort of pleasure – *[She crosses away from him and continues in more of an aside.]* – unless it is causing misery, mayhem and mischief! *[Audience reacts.]*

PC BILLY What was that?

BARONESS *[To him.]* Terribly sorry, but I can't stop idly chatting all day. I have to inspect my room in this *quaint* – little 'hotel'.

PC BILLY Oh, you're staying at Red's place.

BARONESS Red?

PC BILLY Roberta. We call her Red because of, well, you'll soon find out.

BARONESS *[Sarcastically.]* Could the day get any better? *[She crosses to the Guest House.]* Come along, Dull, don't dawdle. *[She exits into the Guest House.]*

PC BILLY She's a barrel of laughs, isn't she?

DULL Not allowed to laugh! *[He exits into the Guest House.]*

PC BILLY So she's arrived, and no doubt will soon be up to no good. But never fear, PC Billy is here. And I shall be keeping a careful eye on her and her weird friend!

[Timmy enters from the Village Hall.]

Is everything going to plan for tonight's entertainment?

TIMMY Sort of. Flo is getting on a bit of a flap because one of her backing group hasn't turned up. She's trying to sort it out now.

PC BILLY I'm sure it'll be alright on the night!

TIMMY I hope so. You know how seriously Flo is about her per...*[Bo Peep has entered, and Timmy sees her behind PC Billy.]* - per... per. ... *[He looks at the audience for help, and they shout out. Timmy spits out the word.]* Performance! *[To the audience.]* Thank you.

PC BILLY *[Wiping the spit from his face.]* Well, I'm really looking forward to it.

[Bo Peep waves at Timmy.]

TIMMY *[Tongue-tied again.]* Mm - me ... t t t *[Audience sequence.]* - toooo! *[To them.]* Thank you.

PC BILLY *[Noticing Bo Peep.]* Right, I'd better be off.

TIMMY *[In a panic.]* Are you sure you can't stay?

PC BILLY You don't want me here. There's a crowd, you know.
[He nods to Bo Peep and exits.]

BO Hello again, Timmy.

TIMMY I er... I've got to - er ...g g *[Audience sequence.]* ..go! *[To audience.]* Thank you.

BO Is everything alright, Timmy?

TIMMY *[With a glazed look in his eyes.]* Yes.

BO I'm looking forward to Flo's performance tonight, aren't you?

TIMMY Yes!

BO I think the whole village will be there.

TIMMY Yes.

BO *[Moving towards him.]* It would be nice if we could sit together.

TIMMY Yes.....

BO *[Laughing.]* Do you ever say anything but 'yes'?

TIMMY Yes – no – I mean.....

BO *[Laughing.]* Don't get so worried, I won't bite!

TIMMY I'm sorry. It's just – well...

BO Yes?

TIMMY I...I think...I think you're.....

[Lionel enters from behind the Hall and picks up the dialogue from Timmy.]

LIONEL Your sheep have got out again, Bo! And look – *[He points off stage.]* – they are nibbling my Brussels sprouts!

BO Oh, I'm so sorry, Lionel. I'll see to them at once. Goodbye Timmy. Will I see you tonight?

TIMMY To...to... *[The audience shouts out.]* ...night? *[To audience.]* Thank you!

BO *[Looking off.]* Stop it, you naughty sheep. Especially you, Blackie!!
[She exits quickly.]

LIONEL Still no luck talking to Bo then?

TIMMY Oh, Lionel. I always make such a hash of things when I see her.

LIONEL To tell you the truth, lad, I'm a bit like that with Flo. I've always had a soft spot for her, but never managed to say so.

TIMMY If it's any consolation, I think she feels the same way, too!

LIONEL Really? What a pair we are!

[They go into a duet about how difficult it is to talk to girls.]

MUSIC - DUET (TIMMY & LIONEL)*[See notes at the end of the script.]**[At the end of the song, Flo enters.]*

FLO Timmy, there you are. There's still a mountain of things to do. I need all my costumes sorted out for tonight's performance.

TIMMY I'm on to it. See you later, Lionel.
[He exits into the Hall.]

FLO I'll never be ready for tonight.

LIONEL Of course, you will.

FLO One of my backing group is late. I don't know what I am going to do.

LIONEL I'm sure people from the village will help.

FLO I'm a professional. I can't take a chance on the Village People! And there will be reporters from very high-class entertainment magazines coming. The Stage, The New Musical Express, Waitrose Weekly! *[Or local store magazine.]* Oh, it's going to be a disaster, darling! I can feel it in my water! *[She starts to panic, taking big breaths.]*

LIONEL Now, now, you are getting yourself worked up about nothing. Just take deep breaths. Don't hyperventilate!

[At this point, the Baroness enters from the Guest House.]

FLO *[Gasping for breath.]* I could do with an old bag to blow into! *[She turns and comes face to face with the Baroness.]*

BARONESS I beg your pardon?

FLO Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean you! *[To the audience.]* Mind you, 'old' and 'bag' might not be far from the truth!

BARONESS What was that?

FLO I said 'struth', what a lot of people we have visiting today!

BARONESS I am the Baroness de Brexit. My card. *[She gives Flo her card.]*

FLO *[Reading it.]* Baroness de Brexit! *(Hard 'T')*

- BARONESS** *[Correcting her.]* de Brexit! And I'm here on very important business, not some idling vacation.
- FLO** Pleased to meet you. I'm Florence Farquharson, entertainer extraordinaire and BYOB!
- BARONESS** And who is this fine figure of a man?
- LIONEL** *[Looking around and then realising it is him.]* Who – me? Oh, I'm Lionel Lupin.
- BARONESS** *[Stepping between him and Flo.]* Lionel. Such a strong, manly name!
- LIONEL** *[Embarrassed.]* Oh, really. I don't know about that.
- BARONESS** Lionel has the word 'lion' in it. A king amongst beasts!
- LIONEL** I'm not too good with animals. Big ones scare me – and wolves in particular!
- BARONESS** *[Slightly aside.]* Wolves eh? Interesting.
- FLO** *[Getting a word in.]* But he's very good with smaller, delicate creatures. *[She flutters her eyes at Lionel, then looks at the Baroness.]* And can recognise a snake in the grass anytime!
- BARONESS** *[Turning to face Flo.]* Really? You say you are in entertainment?
- FLO** I am. I shall be performing at this exclusive venue tonight. I'm expecting a large attendance. All my new friends are coming – *[To the audience.]* – aren't you? *[Reaction.]*
- BARONESS** In that case, I may come as well. I could do with a good laugh. *[Flo's mouth opens and closes, but the Baroness continues.]* And Lionel, will you be there?
- LIONEL** Indeed. I am providing the fruit punch for the party afterwards.
- BARONESS** Delightful. Then I shall certainly attend.
- FLO** *[Gritting her teeth.]* If you must!
- BARONESS** *[To Lionel.]* Until this evening. *[As she exits into the Guest House.]* À tout à l'heure!
- FLO** A toot a what?

LIONEL It's French.

FLO I don't care if it's mumbo gibberish – she's not insulting my cabaret act and getting away with it.

[Red and Peter enter from the Guest House.]

LIONEL Now don't upset yourself, on today of all days.

RED Is everything alright?

FLO Your new guest has rather a sharp tongue!

PETER She has just passed us with a big grin on her face.

FLO Which I shall wipe off if she tries to ruin tonight.

LIONEL I'm sure that won't happen.

RED She is rather odd. And that chap with her.

PETER Obviously not one of the locals.

FLO We do get a strange lot of visitors from time to time. *[She looks out into the audience.]* Not you lot! You look pretty normal – well, most of you!

[Bo Peep enters with PC Billy, who has bits of wool hanging from his uniform.]

BO The sheep are all under control, thanks to the help of PC Billy.

PC BILLY *[Picking off the bits of wool.]* All in the line of duty.

FLO *[To PC Billy.]* Look at you! Get me some knitting needles, and I'll run you up a winter vest!

[There is a crash from inside the shop.]

Timmy!

TIMMY *[Off.]* Nothing to worry about! *[He enters with some costumes over his arm.]* Nothing damaged. *[He holds up a large bra then sees Bo and, embarrassed, starts to mumble.]* Oh – I mean – *[To audience.]* Help! *[They shout.]* Thank you. *[He puts the bra and costumes back in the hall and crosses down to them.]*

FLO We still have a mountain of things to do.

PC BILLY Good job we're all up early then!

MUSIC - REPRISE (PART OF THE OPENING NUMBER)

[At the end, the lights fade and the black tabs close.]

SCENE CHANGE MUSIC

PantoScripts Perusal

SCENE 3 THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE

[A front cloth depicting a lane on the edge of the village with a signpost showing 'Fermley on the Fiddle' one way and 'The Gnarled Forest' the other way. The Baroness is down left and has the magical iPad. She speaks into it, and we hear the Wizard in V/O]

- BARONESS** Hello. Are you there? I'm Skyping you!
- WIZARD** So I see. What have you to report?
- BARONESS** All is well. I have looked around the village and selected the unwitting fool who will help me achieve success.
- WIZARD** Are you sure you have chosen the right one?
- BARONESS** *[With a sneer in her voice.]* Oh, I'm sure!
- WIZARD** Nothing must go wrong.
- BARONESS** Don't worry. Tonight I will use the potion. Dull is preparing it as we speak.
- WIZARD** Make sure he has the correct amount. Too much and the results would be catastrophic!
- BARONESS** I have given him precise instructions.
- WIZARD** He's not the sharpest knife in the box.
- BARONESS** I will check everything myself.
- WIZARD** Good. Report back when the first stage of the plan is completed.
- BARONESS** Very well. *[She cancels the call. Dull enters with a small bottle containing a coloured liquid.]* Ah, there you are. Is it ready? *[Dull nods.]* And you followed the instructions to the letter? *[He nods again.]* Good. Now to get ready for this celebration, where Mr Lupin's fruit punch will have an added ingredient tonight! *[She roars with laughter, then looks off stage.]* Look out. Someone is coming.
- [The Three Pigs enter left and cross the stage.]*
- PINKY** Good day.
- PERKY** Good day.