

'HAPPY EVER AFTER'

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY JIM BLYTHE

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Characters

DI Paul Baker	a policeman
DS Sarah Lake	a policewoman
Alex Jones	a woodcutter
Ma Hood	a grandmother
Red Riding Hood	her granddaughter
The Big Bad Wolf	a gangster
Catya	his favourite assassin
Mickey Fox	another assassin
Mary Mary	a witness
Lawyer	a lawyer

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Act 1.

THE LIGHTS COME UP TO SHOW A DESK IN A POLICE STATION. DI PAUL BAKER IS LEAFING THROUGH A FILE AND MAKING NOTES ON A PAD. DS SARAH LAKE ENTERS LOOKING FLUSTERED AND HEADS OVER TO THE DESK.

LAKE. Morning Guv.

BAKER. Morning Sergeant. How nice of you to join me.

LAKE. I'm sorry Guv, the traffic was a right state.

BAKER. Yeah, well I've got an even worse state for you to worry about here.

LAKE. *(SITTING)* Why, what's happened?

BAKER. A murder. And a particularly nasty one at that. Last night a Mr Wolf got hacked to pieces in a cottage in the woods.

BAKER HANDS LAKE THE FILE. SHE GLANCES THROUGH IT WITH A LOOK OF DISTASTE.

LAKE. My God. *(PUTS THE FILE DOWN)* Ok, so what do we know?

BAKER. The cottage is the property of an elderly lady, a Mrs Hood. Widowed several years ago, she lives on her own. She was at the property at the time of the murder with her granddaughter and a local woodsman. They're all down in the cells now.

LAKE. And we think they did it?

BAKER. We know they did it – they're not denying that. They're saying that the victim broke into the house and attacked them.

LAKE. So they killed him in self-defence?

BAKER. So they say.

LAKE. But you don't believe them.

BAKER. I don't really care. We've got a victim, we've got the killers; we've even got the weapon.

LAKE. OK, so we just get on and charge them. So if it's that simple then why the big panic this morning?

BAKER. Because it isn't that simple. I'm positive there's more to this than they're saying; I'll tell you why after you've met our friends in the cells. In the meantime, I've got our boys out combing the woods for clues, questioning the neighbours and doing the background work.

LAKE. This isn't going to be a nice, quick conviction then Guv?

BAKER. That'd be nice wouldn't it but I tell you now, this one's not going to be simple. This one could get very messy indeed.

LAKE. What's the plan?

BAKER. I've already had a chat with the three of them but I'd be interested to see what you make of them.

LAKE. Am I looking for anything specific?

BAKER. I'd like to know what you think of their stories and whether you think they're telling the truth. Once we're done I'll tell you the rest.

LAKE. Why not tell me now?

BAKER. No, we do this my way. We know what happens when you do things your way.

LAKE. That's not fair...

BAKER. Isn't it? Do I have to remind you about the poisoning of Princess Aurelia? All you had to do was collect the forensic evidence from the spinning wheel and we could've nailed the bad fairy. But, oh no, you had decided to do a stakeout and catch her when she came back for it.

LAKE. Which she did.

BAKER. And the result was that half of our police force is now asleep for the next hundred years. Christ alone knows what their pension schemes are going to do for our funding. To add insult to injury you wasted a whole lot of time and money.

LAKE. Anyone can make a mistake Guv.

BAKER. Well that particular mistake cost us the chance to put away a notorious criminal and put your career back years. So if it's all the same to you Sergeant, I'll let you know the information as and when I'm comfortable to let you have it. Alright?

LAKE IS CLEARLY UNHAPPY.

LAKE. Alright.

BAKER. Good. Let's get to it then shall we.

BAKER RISES. LAKE SITS FOR A FEW SECONDS LONGER, STILL SMARTING FROM BAKER'S WORDS.

BAKER. Sergeant?

LAKE. Coming sir.

*AS SHE STANDS THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AGAIN QUICKLY. THE STAGE IS SET WITH TWO TABLES. **ALEX SITS AT ONE, MA HOOD AT THE NEXT. THE LIGHTS GO UP TO REVEAL **BAKER AND LAKE AT ALEX'S TABLE. HE IS NERVOUS AND FIDGETY.*****

BAKER. Right then Alex, let's start again shall we, for Sergeant Lake's benefit.

ALEX. I already told you everything I know.

BAKER. And now you get to tell me all over again. Aren't you the lucky boy?

ALEX. Look, I want a lawyer.

LAKE. We'll get you a lawyer Alex, it's not a problem. But for now we just want you to repeat what you've already said.

ALEX. Look, this is crazy. I was just walking through the woods on my way home from work when I heard screaming. I wasn't just going to ignore that was I, so I ran towards it. Turns out it was coming from this cottage, see. I looked through the window and saw that Wolf bloke threatening the girl who was in there. So I broke down the door and went in to help her.

LAKE. And how did you come to kill Mr Wolf?

ALEX. I shouted to him to leave the girl alone. But he turned on me so I had to defend myself and the only thing I'd got to hand was my axe.

LAKE. You attacked him with your axe?

ALEX. I was defending myself; the guy was like an animal.

LAKE. I see.

ALEX. What else was I supposed to do?

BAKER. I dunno Alex, but the thing is it's a little over the top don't you think? Hacking a man to pieces in self-defence?

ALEX. I didn't hack him to pieces; I only swung the axe once.

BAKER. But accurately enough to kill him outright.

ALEX. Well, yes, but...

BAKER. And hard enough to lob his head clean off.

ALEX. Look, none of this was my idea, I just...

*HE TAILS OFF. **BAKER AND LAKE** EXCHANGE A GLANCE AND THEN STARE AT HIM IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. **ALEX** FIDGETS, LOOKS LIKE HE IS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING BUT STOPS HIMSELF.*

BAKER. You just, what?

ALEX. Look, I'm not saying anything more without a lawyer present.

*THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AGAIN QUICKLY. **BAKER AND LAKE** ARE NOW AT **MA HOOD'S** TABLE. SHE IS A DODDERY, CONFUSED OLD LADY.*

LAKE. Can you tell me what happened at the cottage please Mrs Hood.

MA HOOD. I'm sorry dear?

LAKE. The cottage, last night. I need you to tell me what happened if you can?

MA HOOD. Oh dear me, I'm afraid it's all a bit of a blur.

LAKE. Well just do the best you can.

MA HOOD. Well now, I was in my nightgown ready for bed. I've not been well you see, what with my hip. Just a bit of arthritis the doctor says but I'm not so sure. It's not as bad in these warmer months mind but in the winter it plays up something dreadful.

LAKE. Go on.

MA HOOD. Go on where dear?

LAKE. You were telling us about last night.

MA HOOD. Last night?

LAKE. Yes, last night.

MA HOOD. Oh yes. Well now, I was in my nightgown, ready for bed. I'd just finished watching the news, I think. Or was it that nice Noel Edmonds. I forget but I don't suppose it really matters does it? Anyway, as I was saying my hip was playing up so I was in my nightgown, ready for bed. It was early but I can't get out much you see.

BAKER. Really, how interesting. Maybe we can skip forward a bit? Cos much as I love hearing about your ailments I'm a bit more concerned with events at the cottage.

MA HOOD. What's happened to the cottage?

BAKER. Nothing's happened to the cottage. The cottage is fine. We just need to know what happened there last night. Do you think you can manage that?

LAKE. *(QUIETLY AND REPROACHFUL)* Guv.

MA HOOD. Oh yes. Well, my Grand daughter was on her way over - she does my shopping for me, you see. Well, I can't get out much these days what with my hip and everything. I'd use the internet but I don't like the idea of putting my card details on there – you hear so much about this identity theft don't you and I wouldn't want that. I mean, if someone were to steal my identity, who would I be then? No, I've got enough problems, what with my hip and everything. Anyway, as I was saying, I was in my nightgown, ready for bed...

BAKER ROLLS HIS EYES IN DESPAIR AS THE LIGHTS GO DOWN. QUICKLY UP AGAIN TO REVEAL BAKER AND LAKE ARE BACK AT THE FIRST TABLE, THIS TIME WITH RED. SHE IS CLEARLY SHAKEN UP BY EVENTS AND IS TRYING HER BEST TO HOLD HERSELF TOGETHER AND HELP.

LAKE. Now, Miss Riding Hood, you're Mrs Hood's granddaughter I believe?

RED. That's right.

LAKE. Do you live at the cottage with her?

RED. No, but I spend a lot of time there. She gets very lonely being on her own since my grandfather passed away.

LAKE. I see. And what took you to the house yesterday?

RED. I'd just done my grandma's shopping for her. I was just going to drop it in and then head home before it got too dark.

LAKE. And what happened?

RED. Well, when I got there the house was very dark. I let myself in as I always do and grandma was already in bed. It was early but I wasn't surprised. She hasn't been well you see; she has arthritis in her hip. Not that you'd know, she never complains.

BAKER AND LAKE EXCHANGE A GLANCE.

LAKE. Do go on.

RED. We talked for a few minutes when I realised she didn't look herself.

LAKE. In what way?

RED. Her ears, nose, teeth and eyes all seemed bigger than usual. And that's when I realised it wasn't her at all - it was that horrible Wolf. He attacked me and I had nothing to defend myself with. I screamed for help and by good luck the local Woodcutter was passing.

LAKE. Alex?

RED. Sorry?

LAKE. Alex Jones, the local woodcutter?

RED. I don't know his name. I suppose.

BAKER. So I take it you'd never met Alex before last night Miss?

RED. No. I'd seen him around but I'd never spoken to him before. But thank goodness he was around or I don't think grandma or I would have survived.

BAKER. I see. Please go on.

RED. The rest just happened so quickly. The woodcutter broke in and, I think he shouted. I just remember that Wolf turned on Alex. He tried to fight him off with his bare hands but he couldn't hold him off. Somewhere in the struggle he swung out with his axe and...

RED CHOKES BACK A SOB, CLEARLY DISTRAUGHT AT THE MEMORY.

RED. I'm sorry.

AS RED SOBS, THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AND BAKER AND LAKE ARE BACK WITH MA HOOD. LAKE IS SAT ACROSS FROM HER BUT BAKER IS PACING AND GETTING INCREASINGLY ANNOYED.

MA HOOD. Tied me up he did and dumped me in the broom cupboard. I ask you, what is the world coming to where people break into your house, tie you up and dump you in a broom cupboard? I thought to myself, “there’s something not right about this Marion”, I thought.

BAKER. Did you Mrs Hood? Well done. We’ll make a detective of you yet.

MA HOOD. On no, I wouldn’t fancy that dear. Not sure I’d be much help really, what with my hip. I can hardly move some days you know. Fortunately my granddaughter nips round with my shopping – such a good girl.

BAKER. Is there any chance we can get to the bit when anyone else turns up.

LAKE. So, Mr Wolf had dumped you in the cupboard Mrs Hood - what happened next?

MA HOOD. He shut the door dear.

LAKE. Right. And then?

MA HOOD. Well, it was terribly dark. And stuffy. My hip started to play up I can tell you.

LAKE. So you didn’t see anyone else arrive then Mrs Hood.

MA HOOD. Oh I was on my own in there the whole time dear.

BAKER. Not in the sodding cupboard.

MA HOOD. Sorry?

LAKE. Did you see your Granddaughter or the Woodcutter arrive at the cottage?

MA HOOD. Oh no. It was my granddaughter who let me out. There was a terrible mess out there you know.

*THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AND **BAKER** AND **LAKE** ARE NOW BACK IN POSITION AT BAKER’S DESK.*

LAKE. Their stories hang together.

BAKER. So they can tell a good consistent lie. This was pre-meditated; our wood-chopping chum virtually told us so.

LAKE. You want to lean on him some more?

BAKER. Not at the moment, no. I want to let them go.

LAKE. What? Why?

BAKER. Because, as I said earlier, this case is messier than it seems.

LAKE. Seems straightforward enough to me. Either they planned it and murdered Mr Wolf or he attacked them and it's manslaughter. Nothing to get too worked up about.

BAKER. That's your deduction is Sergeant? How about if I told you that we're dealing with more than just the murder of our Mr Wolf?

LAKE. And are we?

BAKER. Course we are, why the hell else would I have mentioned it?

LAKE. Well, don't keep me in suspense Guv.

BAKER. The victim was one Johnny Wolf. Heard the name before?

LAKE. Don't think so, should I have?

BAKER. Yes you bloody well should Sergeant. Mr Wolf was in here last week being questioned about the disappearance of the Three Little Pigs.

LAKE. The property tycoons?

BAKER. Who, I'm sure you are aware, went missing last week. Not only that, someone blew their latest properties down too.

LAKE. And so Wolf was bought in for questioning?

BAKER. That's right but we couldn't get a conviction even though witnesses saw him do it. We had to let the scumbag go.

LAKE. Why?

BAKER. The witnesses wouldn't testify – too scared. And Wolf had the best lawyers going.

LAKE. How did he manage that? Where's all this going Guv?

BAKER. Johnny Wolf has a powerful uncle – Sebastian Wolf, more commonly known in gangland as the Big Bad Wolf. He came over after the fall of the Soviet Union and set himself up at the centre of all local crime.

LAKE. How come I've never heard of him?

BAKER. He's clever, that's why. He's sets himself up as a pillar of society but I promise you he's as rotten as they come. CID has been after him for years, as have the FBI, MI5, MI6, KGB and lots of other organisations with acronyms for names.

LAKE. Right, so do you think he had something to do with the disappearance of the Pigs?

BAKER. I did. Now I'm not so sure. The Pigs were building on the edge of the Hood's land and we know that Mrs Hood opposed the build. Now they've disappeared and the man we believe did it has turned up dead at the Hood's cottage.

LAKE. And now you're thinking that the Hood's may have been connected with the Pig's disappearance.

BAKER. It's got to be worth looking at. There's a link there somewhere, there's got to be.

LAKE. But Mrs Hood's a dotty old woman, there's no way she could be at the centre of anything like that.

BAKER. I wouldn't be too quick to jump to that conclusion if I were you. You not heard of Marion Hood before?

LAKE. Marion Hood. Hang on wasn't her husband...

BAKER. That's right, a local bandit. He got his kicks from stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. We banged him up a while ago and he died a few years back.

LAKE. He was a bit of a folk hero though Guv.

BAKER. He was a dirty little scumbag who got what was coming to him.

LAKE. Still it's hard to believe his widow would suddenly start murdering people.

BAKER. So what do you reckon; the granddaughter then?

LAKE. Far too much of a goody two shoes. I just can't see it.

BAKER. Me neither. Which leads us back to this woodcutter character who just happened to be passing.

LAKE. Seems that way.

BAKER. Well one thing I do know for sure. They're in deep trouble. When the Big Bad Wolf finds out they bumped his nephew off he's going to be after revenge.

LAKE. Then you've got to keep them here, for their own protection.

BAKER. I don't. There no use to me in here, cluttering up my cells.

LAKE. Hold on. You're not going to use them as bait?

BAKER. Damn right I am.

LAKE. But Guv, you can't. He'll kill them.

BAKER. So then I won't have to bother charging them. We can arrest Wolf and everyone's happy.

LAKE. I'm not happy.

BAKER. Tough.

BLACKOUT.

*LIGHTS UP ON PART OF THE STAGE TO SHOW **RED, ALEX** AND **MA HOOD** LEAVING THE POLICE STATION. **RED** AND **ALEX** SUPPORT HER ON EITHER SIDE. AS THEY MOVE AWAY FROM THE POLICE STATION DOOR, **MA HOOD** SHRUGS THEIR HELP OFF AND STRAIGHTENS UP. THEY WALK AWAY WITH **MA HOOD** LEADING, **RED** AND **ALEX** AT EACH SHOULDER.*

BLACKOUT.

*LIGHTS STRAIGHT UP TO REVEAL THE WOLF'S LAIR. THE **BIG BAD WOLF** AND HIS CRONIES ARE PLAYING CARDS, SMOKING CIGARS, ETC. AT THE **WOLF'S** SHOULDER IS **CATYA**, HIS FAVOURITE ASSASSIN. CHIPS ARE BEING THROWN IN AND STAKES ARE BEING RAISED. AS IT COMES TO THE **WOLF'S** TURN THE MUSIC FADES TO BACKGROUND AND THE MOOD IS TENSE. HE PAUSES, PUFFING ON HIS CIGAR, BEFORE PUSHING A LARGE PILE OF CHIPS INTO THE CENTRE OF THE TABLE. HE EYEBALLS THE PLAYER OPPOSITE WHO SHIFTS NERVOUSLY.*

WOLF. Master Bunn, the Baker's son.

POKER PLAYER. Not at home.

***THE WOLF** LEANS BACK IN HIS SEAT AND SIGHS DEEPLY.*

WOLF. A great shame, my friend.

***CATYA** PULLS A GUN FROM BEHIND HER BACK AND SHOOTS THE **PLAYER** DEAD.*

WOLF. Now where can that troublesome Master Bunn be, hmmm?

*ONE OF THE OTHER PLAYERS HURRIEDLY HANDS THE CARD OVER. AS HE DOES SO **CATYA** NOTICES SOMEONE SIGNALLING TO HER OFF STAGE AND EXITS.*

WOLF. Thank you, my good friend. And it seems I win again.

*HE REACHES FORWARD AND SWEEPS THE CHIPS TOWARDS HIM. **CATYA** RE-ENTERS AND TALKS QUIETLY TO **THE WOLF**.*

CATYA. Mickey is here.

WOLF. Mickey? He shouldn't be here.

CATYA. He has bad news.

WOLF. Bad news. How very unfortunate. Bring him over.

***CATYA** SIGNALS TO **MICKEY** OFFSTAGE. THE OTHER PLAYERS LEAVE THE TABLE SWIFTLY AS **MICKEY** ENTERS AND APPROACHES THE TABLE A LITTLE NERVOUSLY. HE REACHES THE TABLE AND KNEELS BEFORE **THE WOLF**. **THE WOLF** PUTS OUT A HAND WITH A RING ON ONE FINGER WHICH **MICKEY** KISSES. HE STANDS AND THE TWO MEN EMBRACE.*

WOLF. Mickey, my good friend. You should not be here.

MICKEY. I apologise Mr Wolf, but this could not wait.

WOLF. I see. But what news of our comrade, Mr Dumpty.

MICKEY. Mr Dumpty wasn't able to arrange the funds we required. I'm afraid that he suffered a great fall.

WOLF. Such a shame.

MICKEY. We will recover the money Mr Wolf.

WOLF. I have no doubt. Now tell me, what news could be so bad that it has brought you here today?

MICKEY. This is hard for me to tell you. It concerns your nephew.

WOLF. Johnny? Is he in trouble?

MICKEY. He's dead, Mr Wolf.

WOLF. Dead?

THE WOLF'S Demeanour changes, his voice low and dangerous.

- WOLF.** How did this happen?
- MICKEY.** He did a job for a small time gang – the Hoods.
- WOLF.** The Hoods?
- CATYA.** A small, pathetic band headed by Ma Hood. They live in a cottage in the woods.
- MICKEY.** They seem to be getting big ideas. They hired Johnny to kill the Three Little Pigs. When he went to get his money they killed him. The Police have released them without charge.
- WOLF.** My boy. My poor, poor Johnny.
- MICKEY.** You want me to take care of them, Mr Wolf?
- WOLF.** You are a good boy Mickey. However, your methods can be a little heavy handed at times. Take Catya along with you; she can take care of any business that needs a gentler touch. But sit, my friend, tell me all about what happened.

MICKEY PUSHES THE DEAD CARD PLAYER FROM HIS SEAT AND SITS. CATYA STANDS BEHIND THE WOLF HER GUN TWISTING IN HER HAND.

BLACKOUT.

*THE LIGHTS COME UP ON MA HOODS COTTAGE AS **RED, ALEX AND MA HOOD** ENTER. **MA HOOD** IS IN GOOD SPIRITS, **RED** LOOKS MISERABLE AND **ALEX** LOOKS WORRIED. **MA HOOD** IS NO LONGER PLAYING THE PART OF A DODDERY OLD WOMAN AND IS SHOWING HER TRUE COLOURS AS A SHARP-MINDED, EAST END VILLAIN WHO WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO EXTEND HER EMPIRE.*

- MA HOOD.** Well, that was a good day's work. Got young Wolf out of the way, we're not a penny down and the rozzers ain't gonna touch us.
- ALEX.** Is that what you reckon? Look those coppers aren't stupid – they let us go for a reason.
- MA HOOD.** I can't think why they would. Unless of course someone said something they shouldn't have in the cells?

ALEX LOOKS A LITTLE GUILTY AND BREAKS EYE CONTACT. MA HOOD FROWNS AS SHE SITS AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE. RED STANDS JUST BEHIND HER MIRRORING THE WOLF/CATYA SCENE. ALEX SITS HIMSELF AT THE OTHER END OF THE TABLE.

- MA HOOD.** Anyway, we'll soon know if they've got anything on us. Did you bug the station girl?
- RED.** Yes Grandma.
- MA HOOD.** Then we're always gonna be a few steps ahead of them.
- RED.** But Grandma, you've got rid of the Pigs now; we can stop this and go back to how we were.
- MA HOOD.** Stop? Don't be soft you muppet. With that Wolf geezer out of the way, no ones got anything on us. Now's not the time to stop; now's the time to press on.
- RED.** Press on?
- MA HOOD.** Build ourselves our own empire. Think about it, we can rule these woods, no worries.
- RED.** But, Grandma, why?
- MA HOOD.** Why? Cos we can of course. We can't fail. We've got Alex's brawn and weaponry skills, your looks and electronic genius and my brains. Plus, look at us - a simpleton woodman, a scared little girl and a poor old grandmother. No ones going to suspect us of anything.
- ALEX.** What about the Big Bad Wolf? Do you think he'll just sit back and let you get a slice of the action?
- MA HOOD.** Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? We won't bother him and he won't bother us.
- ALEX.** You sure about that? What about William Winkie?
- MA HOOD.** Oh what about him?
- ALEX.** Started running a small time extortion racket so they say. Poor bastard had to a runner in the middle of the night in only his nightgown.
- MA HOOD.** Don't talk soft.
- ALEX.** A few people saw him running round the town for a while and then he just vanished.

MA HOOD. You don't want to go believing everything you hear.

ALEX. Everyone knows the Wolf got him. And he'll come after us too if we start making waves.

RED. Alex might be right Grandma.

MA HOOD. Oh, stop your whinging girl. You'll do as you're told and like it too.

RED LOOKS DOWNCAST AND A LITTLE FRIGHTENED.

RED. Yes Grandma.

MA HOOD. As for you, Woodcutter, fine. Bottle out now if you want. Just remember – you killed Mr Wolf and we saw you do it so I advise you to keep your mouth shut.

ALEX. Fine. Just give my money and you won't see or hear from me again.

MA HOOD. Money? What money?

ALEX. You hired me to kill Mr Wolf. Now give me the money.

MA HOOD. Oh, I'm sorry didn't I explain. We can shop you to the police if you don't clear out. Your freedom is your fee.

RED. Grandma, no.

MA HOOD. Shut it.

ALEX. You double crossing old hag.

ALEX GETS TO HIS FEET CLUTCHING HIS AXE. RED CRIES OUT AND MOVES BETWEEN HIM AND MA HOOD.

RED. Alex, don't please. She's just an old lady.

ALEX. What? How can you stand there and defend her after what she's done?

RED AVOIDS THE QUESTION BUT LOOKS AT HIM PLEADING. ALEX GLARES OVER RED'S SHOULDER AT MA HOOD.

ALEX. This isn't over Hood.

MA HOOD. It had better be, for your sake.

ALEX SMASHES OUT THE DOOR.

RED. Grandma, please, let's at least pay him.

MA HOOD. Why bother? He won't dare try anything.

RED. He might.

MA HOOD. If he was going to he would've just then, you onion. Nah, he's got no balls that one.

RED. That's still no reason to double cross him. He helped us.

MA HOOD. Stuff him. We won't be seeing him again.

RED. Doesn't leave you with much of a gang though, does it?

MA HOOD. Don't get smart-mouthed with me, missy. We just need to form a pact with some of the other local villains.

RED. Why do this Grandma? Can't we just go back to how we were?

MA HOOD. Nah, there's more money to be made this way. All we need is some muscle and I know where to find it.

RED. Where?

MA HOOD. I want you to go and see the Billy Goat's Gruff. They've just sorted out that troll who used to hang out by the bridge on the east side so they're serious muscle. Not the brightest so they should be easy to control.

RED. But Grandma, I don't want to, I just...

MA HOOD. You'll do it cos I told you to. You got some of them bugs that you're so good at making?

Yes.

MA HOOD. Good. Leave a couple of them there while you're about it. I like to know what my new friends are up to.

RED SITS FOR A MOMENT LOOKING MISERABLE.

MA HOOD. Well get to it girl.

RED STARES AT MA HOOD RESENTFULLY BEFORE RISING TO LEAVE.

*OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE **ALEX** IS STOMPING THROUGH THE WOODS FOLLOWED AT A DISTANCE BY A **POLICEMAN** WHO IS REPORTING IN THROUGH A CONCEALED RADIO.*

POLICEMAN. Alpha, Bravo, Tango, Mickey Rourke. Big Bird has left the Monkey Factory. I repeat Big Bird has left the Monkey Factory.

A CRACKLING VOICE RESPONDS BUT WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING SAID.

POLICEMAN. Currently proceeding in a Northerly direction at a brisk pace, arms swinging loosely by his sides in a non-threatening manner. Whistling rather tunelessly, not sure what the melody is supposed to be.

ANOTHER CRACKLY RESPONSE.

POLICEMAN. Understood. Will report back in shortly. Bye for now then. Out.

*THE **POLICEMAN** MOVES FOLLOWS ON AFTER **ALEX**. A FEW MOMENTS LATER **CATYA** ENTERS, SMILES AND FOLLOWS THE **POLICEMAN** AT A DISTANCE.*

BLACKOUT.

*LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL **BAKER** AT HIS DESK LOOKING THROUGH FILES. AFTER A MOMENT **LAKE** ENTERS.*

BAKER. What is it Sergeant?

LAKE. We've got a witness in for questioning Guv, thought you'd want to be involved.

BAKER. Damn right I do. Details?

LAKE. The witness is a landscape gardener, works in the area and lives not far from the Hoods. She was doing some contracting with the Three Little Pigs just prior to their disappearance.

BAKER. Interesting. So she might have an axe or two to grind.

LAKE. That's not in the best of taste Guv, with all due respect.

BAKER. So what's she come to tell us then?

LAKE. It's hard to be sure. She may have seen something useful, she may not.

BAKER. What's that supposed to mean?

LAKE. (SHRUGS) It's just hard to tell sir.

BAKER STARES AT HER FOR A MOMENT IN SILENCE.

BAKER. I see. Alright, let's see what we can get out of her. What's her name?

LAKE. Mary Mary Quite-Contrary.

BAKER. What sort of a name is that?

LAKE. Guess she didn't have very imaginative parents.

BAKER. I guess not. Come on then, let's have a chat to Ms Quite-Contrary.

CROSS FADE TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE AND THE INTERVIEW ROOM. MARY IS THERE WITH HER LAWYER. LAKE AND BAKER SIT ACROSS THE TABLE FROM THEM.

BAKER. What the hell is this?

LAWYER. Miss Quite-Contrary is more than happy to help you with your investigation. However, she is aware that the police have been known to bully witnesses and is not prepared to speak to you without a lawyer present. Hence, my presence.

BAKER. I see. And you agreed to this did you Sergeant?

LAKE. I didn't have a lot of choice sir.

BAKER. So, you don't trust the police then Miss Quite-Contrary?

MARY. Yes I do.

BAKER. Then why did you want a lawyer here today?

MARY. I didn't.

BAKER. This gentleman says that you did.

MARY. No he doesn't.

BAKER. Yes he does.

MARY. He doesn't.

BAKER. So did you call your lawyer?

MARY. No.

LAWYER. You did, you called me here not half an hour ago.

MARY. No I didn't.

LAWYER. You did.

MARY. I never.

BAKER. Would you prefer it if he left then?

MARY. No, no, he should stay.

BAKER. Ok, if you're sure.

LAKE. Right, so what brings you here today Miss Quite-Contrary.

MARY. Well, I heard about the incident at the Hoods cottage and thought I should come and speak to you.

LAKE. Did you see what happened at the cottage?

MARY. No.

BAKER. But you do know the Hood's?

MARY. I've never even heard of the Hoods.

BAKER. But you just mentioned them.

MARY. No, I didn't.

LAKE. You did, just a moment ago.

MARY. I never.

LAWYER. Kindly don't harass my client.

MARY. She wasn't.

BAKER. Did you know the victim, Mr Wolf?

MARY. I don't know what you're talking about, what victim?

BAKER. The man who was killed at the Hoods cottage.

MARY. I wouldn't know anything about that.

LAKE. But you came in to talk to us about it.

MARY. No I didn't.

LAKE. Then why did you come here today. Was it about the woodcutter?

MARY. What woodcutter?

LAKE. The one who was at the cottage with the Hoods.

MARY. No, I don't know anything about a woodcutter.

BAKER. Were you anywhere near the cottage last night?

MARY. No.

BAKER. So you didn't see anything?

MARY. No.

LAKE. So why do you think you can help us?

MARY. I don't think I can help you.

LAKE. So why have you come to speak to us?

MARY. I haven't.

LAKE. So why are you here?

MARY. I'm not.

*CROSS FADE BACK TO BAKERS DESK. **BAKER AND LAKE** ENTER AND SIT.*

BAKER. Thanks for that Sergeant I think we learned a lot there.

LAKE. Sorry Guv, I don't realise she was quite that contrary.

BAKER. Contrary? She's out of her bloody mind!

LAKE. I just thought we might get a lead from her.

BAKER. Well next time some lunatic comes in to talk to us, screen them first before you waste my time.

**LAKE HAS NOTICED A MESSAGE ON THE DESK.
SHE READS THROUGH IT.**

LAKE. Oh no.

BAKER. What is it, Sergeant?

LAKE. We've got a problem Guv.

BAKER. Oh I do hope not, I don't much care for problems.

LAKE. It's the surveillance unit. They've lost Alex, the woodcutter.

BAKER. How?

LAKE. They've just found the officer who was following him dead.

BAKER. *(MUTTERS)* It's started then.

LAKE. What's that Guv?

BAKER. The Wolf. I sense his hand in this. Didn't any of our boys see anything?

LAKE. Not a thing.

BAKER. Damn it, the whole point of releasing them was to trap the Wolf.

LAKE. Be fair Guv, they're a bit stretched.

BAKER. A bit stretched?

LAKE. DCI Mitchell had a whole load of them go to help all the kings' horses and all the kings' men put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

BAKER. Why, what the hells the point of that?

LAKE. They're hoping he might be able to identify his attacker sir.

BAKER. But he's dead isn't he?

LAKE. Technically yes. The King hopes that by putting him back together again he'll sort of, get over it.

BAKER. Brilliant. That's all I bloody need.

LAKE. Sorry Guv, there was nothing I could do.

BAKER. So, what is going on in those woods?

LAKE SCANS THE MESSAGE.

LAKE. The grand daughter left the cottage a short time ago.

BAKER. Well make sure our boys keep their eyes peeled this time. When the Wolf goes after her I want to make sure we see it happen.

LAKE. You don't want us to try and stop him then?

BAKER. Can't charge him if he hasn't done anything can I?

LAKE. No Guv.

BAKER. We're all nice and clear then. See to it Sergeant.

BLACKOUT.

*LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL **THE BIG BAD WOLF** SAT ALONE, BROODING. A FEW OF HIS CRONIES ARE AROUND, SOME PLAYING CARDS, ONE EMBROIDERING, ONE IS DOING THE HOOVERING. THERE IS A DISTURBANCE, OFF, AND **THE WOLF** LOOKS UP TO SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING. **MICKEY** IS SHOIVING A BADLY BEATEN UP **ALEX** INTO THE ROOM BEFORE HIM. **CATYA** FOLLOWS HIM IN A FEW PACES BEHIND.*

WOLF. Well now, who have we here?

MICKEY. This is the little weasel who chopped Johnny's head off.

MICKEY PUNCHES ALEX IN THE STOMACH DROPPING HIM TO HIS KNEES.

WOLF. I see.

THE WOLF TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE HOOVERING HENCHMAN.

WOLF. You! Stop that now. Check our torture chamber is ready! Feed the dogs! Re-stock the bar! Water my cactus! And bring me biscuits!

HENCHMAN. At once.

*HE BEGINS TO HURRY OFF. **THE WOLF** CALLS AFTER HIM.*

WOLF. Jaffa Cakes actually, make it Jaffa Cakes!

HENCHMAN EXITS. THE WOLF TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO MICKEY AND CATYA, IGNORING ALEX.

WOLF. You're sure this is one?

MICKEY. Positive Mr Wolf.

WOLF. And no one saw you invite him here?

CATYA. I saw to that personally. No one saw anything.

WOLF. Excellent. I am fortunate indeed to have two such efficient people on my staff. You will both be well rewarded for this.

THE WOLF TURNS HIS ATTENTION ON ALEX FOR THE FIRST TIME.

WOLF. And you. You murdered my nephew?

ALEX. Your... your nephew?

WOLF. My poor nephew, Johnny Wolf.

ALEX. He was your nephew?

WOLF. Chopped off his head so I hear. Now why would you do a thing like that?

ALEX LOOKS AROUND DESPERATELY. HE KNOWS HE ISN'T GETTING OUT OF THIS ALIVE.

ALEX. I didn't know. I swear.

THERE IS A SILENCE. THE WOLF STARES AT HIM. MICKEY IS BEATING HIS FIST INTO HIS PALM AND CATYA HAS BEGUN PLAYING WITH HER GUN. ALEX SNAPS IN SHEER FEAR AND PANIC.

ALEX. It wasn't my idea. I didn't know. It was the Hood's. They're power crazy, want to set up a gang to rival yours. But I wouldn't join them. See, I walked out on them. And I can help you get back at them. I can...

AS ALEX HAS BEEN TALKING THE HENCHMAN HAS RETURNED WITH A PLATE OF BISCUITS WHICH HE OFFERS TO THE WOLF. THE WOLF HOLDS UP HIS HAND FOR SILENCE AND ALEX TAILS OFF. THE WOLF LEANS FORWARD AND EXAMINES A BISCUIT.

WOLF. These are Garibaldis.

HENCHMAN. I'm sorry boss, there were no Jaffa Cakes.

WOLF. This is an atrocity!

CATYA GRINS AND SHOOTS THE HENCHMAN DEAD. THE WOLF LOOKS IN DISTAIN AT THE GARIBALDIS BEFORE RELUCTANTLY TAKING ONE. HE NIBBLES ON IT ABSENT-MINDIDLY FOR A MOMENT.

WOLF. So, what are the Hood's planning then?

ALEX. They're planning to form a gang of their own and take over the woods.

WOLF. Really? Catya, you know of these Hoods - how many are there in their gang?

CATYA. There were three - they're about to lose a member. Permanently.

WOLF. So this vicious gang of two are going to take over the woods are they? And how exactly are they planning to do that?

ALEX. I don't know but they're plotting something. Don't underestimate them, especially not...

MICKEY KICKS ALEX IN THE STOMACH SILENCING HIM.

MICKEY. Don't waste our time you toerag. This is just drivel - the little worm doesn't know anything Mr Wolf.

WOLF. I fear you might be right Mickey my boy. So what shall we do with our murderous woodcutter?

MICKEY. Well, I'm a great believer in karma Mr Wolf.

MICKEY GRABS ALEX BY THE HAIR, PULLS HIS HEAD BACK AND RUNS HIS FINGER ACROSS HIS THROAT.

WOLF. Catya?

CATYA. Can I kill him? I'll make it slow and hurt lots.

WOLF. Mickey and Catya aren't the most imaginative people I'm afraid but they're both excellent at what they do. Why did you kill my nephew?

ALEX. It wasn't my idea Mr Wolf I swear it. Ma Hood, she wanted the pigs dead so she hired your nephew to do it. Then, when he came for payment she hired me to kill him and claim it was done in self-defence. I don't know why, I think they wanted to get out of paying him. But if I'd known who he was or I'd never have done it.

ALEX TAILS OFF SOBBING WITH FEAR.

WOLF. My boy, my boy. I can see you're sorry for what you have done. And you know I can be merciful when I choose to be.

ALEX LOOKS UP IN HOPE.

WOLF. Catya will make it quick for you.

CATYA SMILES AND RAISES THE GUN. THE LIGHTS GO OUT AS WE HEAR A GUNSHOT.

END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2

*AS THE LIGHTS COME BACK UP WE OUR OUTSIDE THE HOOD'S COTTAGE. **ALEX'S** BODY LIES OUTSIDE WITH A NOTE ATTACHED TO IT. **RED** ENTERS, RETURNING FROM THE BILLY GOATS GRUFF. SHE CRIES OUT IN HORROR WHEN SHE SEES THE BODY. SHE TENTATIVELY REACHES FORWARD AND TAKES THE NOTE. SHE READS IT QUICKLY AND HER EYES WIDEN IN HORROR. SHE CAREFULLY STEPS ROUND **ALEX'S** BODY AND ENTERS THE HOUSE.*

RED. (CALLING) Grandma, Grandma, come quick.

MA HOOD ENTERS.

MA HOOD. What's all the fuss about? You get things sorted with the Billy Goat's Gruff?

***RED** JUST STANDS THERE CLOSE TO TEARS WITH THE NOTE HELD OUT IN FRONT OF HER. **MA HOOD** NOTICES HOW SHAKEN **RED** IS.*

MA HOOD. What's the matter with you?

***RED** CONTINUES TO HOLD THE NOTE OUT. **MA HOOD** SNATCHES IT FROM HER AND SITS DOWN. SHE READS THROUGH THE NOTE, FROWNING AS SHE DOES.*

MA HOOD. Where did you get this?

RED. It's Alex. They've killed Alex. His body's just outside and that note was pinned to it. What are we going to do Grandma. They'll come after us next.

MA HOOD. Oh shut up girl, panicking isn't going to help.

*WHIST **RED** GOES TO PIECES, **MA HOOD** IS TRYING TO STAY CALM ALTHOUGH SHE IS BADLY SHAKEN. SHE SITS IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT THINKING. SHE TURNS ON **RED** WHO IS PACING THE ROOM ANXIOUSLY, CLOSE TO TEARS.*

MA HOOD. You hired that goon you stupid tart – why didn't you check out who he was?

RED. I don't know. I didn't think.

MA HOOD. Damn right you didn't think. Now the Big Bad Wolf's after us.

RED. Oh Grandma, I'm sorry. What are we going to do?

MA HOOD. Well, we're not going to end up like that poor kid outside for starters.

RED. But how are we going to avoid it?

MA HOOD. I don't know. Not right now. (*SHE THINKS*) The body's just outside you say?

RED. Yes.

MA HOOD. Alright, well we'd better lose that sharpish. I want you to take him down to the shed and cover him up for now, 'til I think of something better.

RED. Me? Carry a dead body?

MA HOOD. Yes, because if you'd done your job properly we wouldn't be in this fix. You did check out young Alex's credentials I hope?

RED IS SILENT.

MA HOOD. Oh that's just soddin' marvellous. So we might even have some more vengeful relatives on our back before the day's out.

RED. I'm sorry.

MA HOOD. So you keep bloody saying. Just get out of my sight and get that body hidden. I'll take care of the Big Bad Wolf.

RED. How?

MA HOOD. Just leave it to me, alright?

RED NODS AND LEAVES THE HOUSE RELUCTANTLY. MA HOOD WAITS UNTIL SHE IS GONE AND THEN REACHES FOR THE PHONE. RED DRAGS ALEX'S BODY OFF AND RE-ENTERS. SHE IS ABOUT TO GO BACK IN THE HOUSE WHEN SHE STOPS AND THINKS FOR A MOMENT. SHE HEADS BACK OFF AND RETURNS QUICKLY WITH A LAPTOP. SHE TAPS AWAY AT IT AND ATTACHES SOME HEADPHONES. WITHIN A FEW SECONDS SHE TAPS INTO MA HOODS PHONE CALL. MA HOOD IS IN HER "CONFUSED OLD LADY" PERSONA AND IS TALKING TO MICKEY.

MA HOOD. I wouldn't know anything about it. I've been bed ridden you see. I have terrible problems getting around with my hip you see...

MICKEY. Yes, so you said. But Mr Wolf you see, he don't take to kindly to his nearest and dearest being bumped off by low life scum like you.

MA HOOD. Oh, now, young man, I'm sure there's no call to be rude. I'm an OAP you know.

MICKEY. Not for much longer you ain't.

MA HOOD. But I know nothing about it. It was that terrible Woodcutter you see. He forced himself in to the house and attacked that young Mr Wolf.

MICKEY. I ain't soft Hood, and nor's the Wolf.

MA HOOD. Well... oh dear me... I didn't want it to come to this but I fear my grand daughter may have put him up to the whole thing.

MICKEY. Your grand daughter?

RED SHAKES HER HEAD. SHE WAS EXPECTING THIS AND IS NOT AMUSED.

MA HOOD. I'm afraid she may have fallen in with the wrong crowd. I've been afraid that something like this might happen.

RED HITS A BUTTON ON THE PC AND THE CALL CUTS OUT. SHE THINKS FOR A MOMENT AND THERE IS A SUBTLE CHANGE IN HER FACE - SOMETHING HARD. THEN A SLIGHT SMILE CROSSES HER LIPS. SHE FOLDS UP HER LAPTOP AND REACHES INTO HER BASKET FOR HER PHONE. SHE DIALS AND AFTER A FEW RINGS WE HEAR AN IVR MESSAGE.

MESSAGE. Hello and thank you for calling the police. Your call may be recorded for quality and training purposes. Please choose an option from the following menu. If you are being attacked, please press one. To report a burglary, please press two. To report a murder, please press three...

RED PRESSES A BUTTON ON HER PHONE AND WANDERS OFF.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP. WE ARE BACK IN THE POLICE STATION WITH BAKER AT HIS DESK AS USUAL. LAKE ENTERS AND APPROACHES, LOOKING AS WORRIED AS EVER.

BAKER. What's the news Sergeant?

LAKE. Nothing yet Guv, I'm waiting for the surveillance boys to get in touch. We've got the extra staff back from the Dumpty murder scene.

BAKER. Oh good. So is Mr Dumpty all back together and chipper again?

LAKE. No, he's still dead. They couldn't put him together he was in such a bad state, never mind resurrect him.

BAKER. Really? Someone made quite a mess of him then.

LAKE. What's on your mind?

BAKER. Just wondering if there's a connection, that's all. Things are getting out of hand these days. We've had everything from that sex pest...

LAKE. Georgie Porgie.

BAKER. ...to those creepy kids who pushed that old lady in the fire and burned her to death.

LAKE: They said she was a witch.

BAKER. We can all say that. They just got off with ASBO's for God's sake. And then there's the Wolf.

LAKES MOBILE PHONE RINGS. SHE ANSWERS.

LAKE. DS Lake... What? ...When did that happen?... I see. Well, don't touch anything or move in until I've spoken to DI Baker ... I'll be in touch shortly.

*SHE HANGS UP. **BAKER**, WHO HAS BEEN THINKING QUIETLY, LOOKS UP.*

BAKER. This had better be good news Sergeant?

LAKE. I don't know about that Guv but it's certainly big news.

BAKER. Well don't keep me in suspense. I'm all ears.

LAKE. We've just had an anonymous tip off that Alex Jones...

BAKER. Who?

LAKE. The Woodcutter.

BAKER. Oh, right.

LAKE. Apparently he's been murdered by old Mrs Hood and we'll find his body in her shed.

BAKER. Really? Well that's somewhat unexpected.

LAKE. What do you think?

BAKER. What do I think? I think that tip off came from the Wolf. I think he'll have had the Woodcutter killed and is now trying to frame Mrs Hood.

LAKE. I thought you might think that. Still, we'd best if we check it out eh?

BAKER. In my experience, Sergeant, it's normally best to check out murders. Come on.

HE RISES FROM HIS SEAT AS THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

*LIGHTS UP. WE ARE IN **THE BIG BAD WOLF'S LAIR**. HE IS SAT IN HIS USUAL SEAT BROODING. THE WOLFS CRONIES ARE PLAYING TWISTER. THEY CONTINUE TO DO SO THROUGHOUT THE SCENE DESPITE THE EVENTS WHICH UNFOLD. AFTER A MOMENT **CATYA** ENTERS WEARING A BLONDE WIG WHICH SHE REMOVES IN THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION.*

WOLF. Ah, Catya my dear. How did your mission go?

CATYA. As planned. I have placed poison in the porridge and left it on the table for them.

WOLF. Such a shame but the Bears should not have tried to set themselves up against me.

CATYA. And I left plenty of evidence all round the cottage for the police to find.

WOLF. Such as...?

CATYA. Sleeping in their beds, sitting on their chairs; all the usual things she does to indulge her sick fetish.

WOLF. You made saw lots of witnesses saw you?

CATYA. Of course.

WOLF. Excellent. Then Miss Goldilocks will be arrested before the day is out and maybe she'll think twice before she breaks into my property again.

CATYA MOVES TO HER USUAL PLACE AT THE WOLF'S SHOULDER AND WATCHES THE TWISTER GAME WITH CONTEMPT. AFTER A MOMENT MICKEY ENTERS WITH A TRIUMPHANT SMIRK ON HIS FACE. HE IS SHEPHERDING RED AT GUNPOINT TO THE WOLFS TABLE. ONCE THEY GET THERE HE SHOVES HER TO HER KNEES. RED GLARES ROUND AT MICKEY BUT SAYS NOTHING.

MICKEY. Look who dropped in to see us boss.

CATYA. Well, well. If it isn't little dead riding hood.

AS SHE SPEAKS CATYA MOVES TO RED AND GRABS HER CHIN FORCING HER TO LOOK CATYA IN THE EYES. RED STARES BACK UNAFRAID.

WOLF. Did you bring Miss Riding Hood here Mickey?

MICKEY. No she just turned up.

WOLF. I see. You know Mickey, my boy, your manners are appalling; just look how you treat a guest.

WOLF ADDRESSES RED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

WOLF. You must be aware Miss Riding Hood that you are in my bad books just now. Why have you decided to walk in here and have your life ended so tragically?

RED. I'm here to tell you the truth about everything that's happened. I have done you no wrong so I have come to try and make my peace with you.

WOLF. Indeed? My understanding is that you are the person responsible for the death of my dear nephew?

RED. You were told that by my dear Grandmother?

WOLF. Ah yes. Family are such a joy.

RED. She lied to you.

WOLF. Did she?

RED. It was her. The whole thing was her plan from start to finish and she won't stop there. She plans to take over this whole city starting with the woods.

CATYA, MICKEY AND THE WOLF EXCHANGE SMILES.

WOLF. Your grandmother is a confused old woman. I fail to see how she intends to do that.

RED. She isn't though. It's all an act. She pretends to be this sad, little old lady but she's a cruel, evil villain.

WOLF. Perhaps you had better tell me everything Miss Riding Hood. Then I shall decide what the truth is.

RED. My grandmother used to live in the woods with my grandfather and his gang of robbers and bandits. When he was finally arrested she tried to keep the gang together and take over as the leader but they weren't interested. Some say they went their separate ways but no ones heard of any of them again.

MICKEY. That's true Mr Wolf, they all disappeared pretty much overnight.

RED. When I was growing up she taught me all kinds of tricks from pick pocketing and breaking and entering to how to fire weapons. But I've always hated it. Throughout that time she would always pretend to be a senile old woman to anyone else who came to the house.

WOLF. And what do your parents think about all this?

RED. My parents died when I was very young. The older I've got the more I've started to wonder how.

WOLF. And what has this got to do with my nephew?

RED. The Three Little Pigs got permission to build on the land that my grandfathers' gang used to live on. Grandma went spare when she found out and wanted it stopped. I can't be sure why but I suspect she was worried the bodies would be found. so to cover her tracks she got me to hire a hitman to get rid of the pigs and, I'm sorry to say, I hired your nephew.

CATYA. So you admit you hired him?

RED. Yes, but I didn't know how far my grandmother would go to protect herself. Your nephew carried out the hit as far as I can tell. We'd arranged for him to come to the house and pay him but when I got there the Woodcutter was there to. I didn't understand why until it was too late.

WOLF. So you are telling me that your Grandmother hired the Woodcutter to kill my nephew and you knew nothing about it?

RED. That's right.

WOLF. And why should I believe you?

RED. Because I came here and faced you. Because I need you to know the truth. And because someone's got to stop her. I can help you to do that.

WOLF. Why would you?

RED. She's gone mad, she's out of control. She tried to sell me out to you to save herself.

WOLF. So why don't you get rid of her yourself?

RED. I've done all that I can. I need your help.

THE WOLF CONSIDERS.

WOLF. I have no reason to trust you Miss Riding Hood. You're going to have to make sure I have reason if you wish to see this day out.

MICKEY. What are we going to do boss?

WOLF. Miss Riding Hood is going to help us kill her grandmother. If the old woman is as dangerous as she says then I'm sure there will be no objection.

RED. Kill her? That's not what I was thinking. Look, I've framed her for Alex's murder; she'll be in police custody by now. With your help we could make sure she goes to prison. She can be re-habilitated there, helped.

WOLF. No. If she is responsible for my nephew's death as you claim then I must have my revenge. So, here is your choice; help me kill Mrs Hood or Mickey and Catya will kill you. Make your choice.

MICKEY AND CATYA BOTH AIM GUNS AT RED'S HEAD. SHE CHEWS HER LIP FOR A FEW SECONDS AND THEN RELUCTANTLY NODS. AT A SIGNAL FROM THE WOLF THE GUNS ARE LOWERED AND RED IS ALLOWED TO STAND FOR THE FIRST TIME.

WOLF. An excellent choice. Now we just need to think about how best to do away with the old lady. She'll be with the police you say?

RED. I called them just before I came here, I'm sure they'll have been round by now. I was thinking that with the lawyers you've got we could ensure she gets sent down.

WOLF. And I have said no.

MICKEY. I have a suggestion Mr Wolf.

WOLF. You Mickey? No offence, my friend, but you aren't renowned for your planning. And anyway, how would we get Miss Riding Hood into the police station to kill her grandmother unnoticed.

RED. Me? Kill my grandmother? I can't do that. You've got your assassins; couldn't one of them do it?

WOLF. I'm sure they could my dear. But I think it should you who finishes the old lady. Consider it a sign of your good faith.

RED SWALLOWS HARD. SHE LOOKS TERRIFIED AT THE THOUGHT.

MICKEY. I appreciate what you're thinking Mr Wolf. However, I think we may need Miss Riding Hood to distract the police to give me and Catya time to do the job.

WOLF. Tell me this plan of yours then.

MICKEY. If Ma Hood has been arrested as the girl claims, then we can assume she'll be being interviewed. You, Hood, which officers are on this case?

RED. It was an Inspector Baker and a Sergeant Lake who I saw this morning.

WOLF. Ah, Inspector Baker. You know I don't think he likes me very much. I really must get round to killing him some day.

MICKEY. I imagine that they'll be eager to see Ma Hoods grand daughter when she turns up unexpectedly. Probably take her straight in for questioning.

CATYA. Leaving us the perfect chance to get to the old lady.

WOLF. How would it work?

MICKEY. Hood will need to keep the police talking for as long as possible. Provided you can do that you shouldn't have to get involved in any of the nasty business.

RED. Thank you.

MICKEY. I ain't being nice; I just don't want you to screw it up. I think Catya is the best person to get to the cells and kill the old woman.

CATYA. Me? I thought you'd have liked to do it yourself.

MICKEY. I would but you're quicker, quieter and less conspicuous than me.

WOLF. It's a good plan Mickey my boy. You know sometimes I don't give you the credit you deserve.

MICKEY. We're agreed then.

WOLF. Yes. Catya, make sure the job is efficient; we don't want any links back here.

CATYA. I guarantee it. But what will you be doing Mickey?

MICKEY. I'll be waiting outside the station as back up. If anything goes wrong I'll be there to try and resolve the situation.

RED. How will you know?

MICKEY. What?

RED. How will you know if anything's gone wrong if you're outside?

MICKEY. Oh, the usual. Shouting, screaming...

CATYA. Shooting.

MICKEY. ... you get to recognise the signs.

RED. I might be able to offer you something a little more efficient.

***RED REACHES INTO HER EVER PRESENT BASKET AND
PULLS OUT TWO RADIOS.***

RED. Take one of these each. If you keep those on channel five then the police can't tap in to them.

THEY LOOK AT HER, SURPRISED.

RED. I made them myself, they're quite secure. Consider it a sign of my good faith.

WOLF. You have hidden talents Miss Riding Hood. I might yet be able to find a use for you once all this unpleasantness is over.

***RED SMILES AT HIM THOUGH SHE IS CLEARLY LESS THAN
PLEASED AT THIS THOUGHT.***

WOLF. Let's do this.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP ON THE POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM. MA HOOD IS THERE WITH BAKER AND LAKE. SHE IS BACK IN HER "CONFUSED OLD LADY" PERSONA AGAIN. BAKER IS BARELY CONCEALING HIS IRRITATION WITH HER. LAKE IS CALM AND COMPOSED AS ALWAYS.

LAKE. I know this is difficult for you Mrs Hood but please try to keep up with us on this.

MA HOOD. I'll do my best dear but it's difficult. I've been all over the place today you know, hardly had a moment to catch my breath.

LAKE. You're doing very well. Now, Mrs Hood, can you tell us about what happened to Alex?

MA HOOD. To who, dear?

LAKE. Alex. You were with him last night at the cottage.

MA HOOD. Was I?

BAKER. Yes you were Mrs Hood. And now the poor bastard has ended up dead in your shed. Now how did he get there do you think?

MA HOOD. Dead?

LAKE. I'm afraid so. We went over this a few minutes ago, don't you remember?

THERE IS A SHORT SILENCE.

MA HOOD. We've met before somewhere haven't we dear?

BAKER. You're really starting to try my patience.

MA HOOD. Well, there's no need to be like that I'm sure.

LAKE. Please try to concentrate Mrs Hood. So, after you left here this morning the three of you went back to the cottage. Then, shortly after both Alex and your grand daughter left separately and you haven't seen either of them since?

MA HOOD. That's right dear. Well, I had to rest after all that happened. My hip was giving me terrible gip – you people don't help with these uncomfortable chairs you know.

BAKER. Oh I am sorry Mrs Hood, we'll try to get a nice comfy armchair in for next time shall we?

MA HOOD. Oh, now that would be nice. And a lovely cup of tea perhaps?

LAKE. We'll see, eh? So you've no idea how Alex came to end up in your shed?

LAKE'S MOBILE PHONE GOES OFF. SHE STANDS AND MOVES TO THE BACK TO TAKE THE CALL.

LAKE. DS Lake.

BAKER. Let's level with each other shall we Mrs Hood; you don't like me and I don't like you but...

MA HOOD. I like you.

BAKER. What?

MA HOOD. I like you. Why don't you like me? Was it something I said?

BAKER IS LOST FOR WORDS FOR A MOMENT.

MA HOOD. Oh dear.

BAKER. Whether or not we like each other isn't a major concern of mine right now Mrs Hood...

MA HOOD. Well you brought it up.

BAKER. ...The dead body in your shed is.

THERE IS ANOTHER SHORT SILENCE. LAKE HAS FINISHED IN THE PHONE AND MOVES BACK TO THE CONVERSATION.

MA HOOD. What body?

BAKER. Don't push your luck you stupid old...

LAKE. Guv.

BAKER SWINGS ROUND TO LOOK AT HER, ANNOYED.

BAKER. What is it Sergeant?

LAKE. There's someone here to see us.

BAKER. Tough. We're busy.

LAKE. This is important though. It's the grand daughter.

BAKER CONTINUES TO GLARE TO LAKE FOR A FEW MORE SECONDS, THEN RELENTS.

BAKER. Alright. We'll be back shortly, Mrs Hood. In the meantime, please enjoy the amenities.

LAKE. Can I have a quiet word.

BAKER. Make it quick.

THEY MOVE OUT OF EARSHOT OF MA HOOD.

LAKE. Might it be safer to put her in one of the cells? We don't want her wandering off?

BAKER. Alright, see to it and then come and join me.

BAKER EXITS. THE LIGHTS DIM ON THE INTERROGATION ROOM SIDE OF THE STAGE. ON THE OTHER, CATYA CREEPS ON. SHE LOOKS AROUND AND THEN TALKS INTO THE RADIO. WE HEAR MICKEYS' VOICE ON THE OTHER END.

CATYA. Mickey, are you there?

MICKEY (VO). How are we doing?

CATYA. Good. Baker has just taken Red Riding Hood off somewhere to talk to her.

MICKEY (VO). Good. Any sign of his sergeant?

CATYA. She's just taking the old woman down to the cells. I'll follow her down there.

MICKEY (VO). OK but don't do anything until she's gone. We just want the old woman dead, no coppers.

CATYA. Of course.

MICKEY (VO). You gonna be able to get into the cell ok?

CATYA. I'm more used to breaking out of them but it shouldn't be a problem.

MICKEY (VO). Hurry then. You may not have long.

CATYA. I'm on it.

THE LIGHTS FADE ON HER HALF OF THE STAGE AND COME ON THE INTERROGATION ROOM HALF. RED IS SAT WAITING. BAKER ENTERS AND SITS WITH HER.

BAKER. So what brings you back here today Miss Riding Hood?

RED. Why is my Grandmother in custody Detective Inspector? This is the second time today that that poor old woman has been dragged in here.

BAKER. That poor old woman has been arrested in connection with the death of your friend and saviour Alex Jones.

RED FEIGNS SHOCK.

RED. Alex? Dead? But... but how?

BAKER. He was shot. And having been shot his body ended up in your grandmothers shed.

RED. What?

BAKER. Does that help to explain why your grandmother is, again, helping us with our enquiries?

LAKE ENTERS.

LAKE. Sorry about that Guv.

BAKER GESTURES FOR HER TO SIT.

RED. I can't believe it. But you can't think that my grandmother would have anything to do with that?

BAKER. To be totally honest Miss Riding Hood, I don't think your grandmother had anything to do with the murder but we need to be sure.

RED. So what do you think happened?

BAKER IS SILENT, WEIGHING UP WHETHER HE SHOULD TELL RED WHAT IS HAPPENING. IN THE SILENCE, LAKE'S PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

LAKE. Sorry Guv.

LAKE ANSWERS THE PHONE AND EXITS AS SHE STARTS TALKING.

LAKE. DS Lake speaking.

BAKER. I have some bad news for you Miss Riding Hood.

RED. On no.

BAKER. The man who attacked you at the cottage last night, Mr Wolf. He was the nephew of a local gangster known as the Big Bad Wolf.

RED LOOKS BLANK.

BAKER. We believe he blames you for his nephew's death and is after revenge. I believe he killed Alex and is now trying to frame your grandmother.

RED. But it was self-defence, he was attacking us.

BAKER. I'm afraid that the Big Bad Wolf won't care too much about that. So you see your grandmother is here for her protection while I work out what to do next.

LAKE BURSTS BACK INTO THE ROOM.

LAKE. Guv, quick, we've got a problem.

BAKER LEAPS TO HIS FEET.

BAKER. What? What is it?

LAKE. Intruder in the building, sir. One of the Wolf's assassins we think.

BAKER. Oh crap. Stay here Miss Riding Hood. Sergeant, with me.

BAKER AND LAKE RUSH FROM THE ROOM. RED SITS BACK WITH A SMALL SMILE ON HER LIPS - EVERYTHING IS GOING TO PLAN.

LIGHTS DIM ON THE INTERROGATION ROOM. LIGHTS UP ON CATYA CREEPING TOWARDS MA HOOD'S CELL. SHE STOPS OUTSIDE AND DRAWS HER FAVOURITE GUN. SHE SPEAKS INTO THE RADIO.

CATYA. Mickey, are you there?

MICKEY (VO). I'm here. What's the situation?

CATYA. I'm at the cell. The sergeant is long gone so it should be safe to proceed now. It's our lucky day - she hasn't even locked the door.

*WITH A MANIACAL SMILE SHE STEPS INTO THE CELL. AS SHE DOES THE LIGHTS COME UP TO REVEAL **MA HOOD** DEAD. **CATYA'S** SMILE TURNS INTO A FROWN. SOMETHING IS VERY WRONG. SHE MOVES TO THE BODY.*

CATYA. I don't understand.

MICKEY (VO). Catya, what's happening?

CATYA. Mickey, I'm in the room and she's already dead.

MICKEY (VO). Excellent, all going to plan then.

CATYA. No, you don't understand – she was dead when I got here.

MICKEY (VO). No, you don't understand bitch; it's all going to plan. My plan.

CATYA. What?

MICKEY (VO). The Wolf's getting old and clumsy. I think it's about time that he stepped aside and let me take over. But of course I can't do that with you in the way. So I decided to let our friends in the force know you'd popped in.

CATYA. Then I'll have to deal with our friends in the force. And after that I'll kill you.

SHE HEARS FOOTSTEPS OFF RUNNING TOWARDS HER FAST. SHE FACES THE DOOR WITH HER GUN RAISED.

MICKEY (VO). You won't be killing anyone, at least, not with your gun. I dismantled the firing mechanism earlier.

***CATYA** PULLS THE TRIGGER. SURE ENOUGH, NOTHING HAPPENS.*

CATYA. I will get you for this.

MICKEY (VO). Not anytime soon you won't. Enjoy prison. I might even visit.

*THERE IS A CRACKLE AS **MICKEY** DISCONNECTS. **CATYA** THROWS THE RADIO IN FRUSTRATION AS **BAKER** AND **LAKE** RUN ON, BOTH ARMED.*

BAKER. Freeze. Put your hands in the air.

***CATYA** CONSIDERS HER OPTIONS AND THEN SLOWLY RAISES HER HANDS. **LAKE** MOVES ROUND TO **MA HOOD'S** BODY AND CHECKS FOR A PULSE.*

LAKE. We're too late Guv.

BAKER. Yes, thank you Sergeant I'd worked that out for myself. Right you *(TO CATYA)*, you have the right to remain silent but anything you do say will be ignored and replaced at trial by a statement I'll sort out myself over a nice cuppa this evening. Now shift.

BAKER GESTURES TO THE DOOR.

CATYA. You English pig dog.

BAKER. Shut it, you slag.

BLACKOUT.

*LIGHTS UP ON **THE WOLF'S LAIR**. HE IS SAT AT HIS TABLE PLAYING A GAME OF CHANCE WITH HIS CRONIES. **THE WOLF** THROWS TWO DICE AND COUNTS AS HE MOVES HIS PIECE FORWARD.*

WOLF. 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...ah!

HE HAS LANDED ON A SQUARE THAT IS NOT HELPFUL TO HIM. THERE IS AN AWKWARD PAUSE. ONE OF THE CRONIES QUICKLY CORRECTS ONE OF THE DIE.

WOLF. 9.

*ONE OF THE CRONIES PICKS UP THE DICE TO CONTINUE THE GAME AS **MICKEY** AND **RED** ENTER. THEY ARE LOOKING DISHEVELLED AS THOUGH THEY MAY HAVE BEEN IN A FIGHT.*

WOLF. My friends, you are returned.

MICKEY. Yes Mr Wolf.

WOLF. And has Ma Hood been dealt with.

MICKEY. She has.

WOLF. Excellent news. But where is Catya?

MICKEY. She's not here.

WOLF. Not here? Then where is she?

MICKEY. There was a complication.

WOLF. A complication?

MICKEY. I'm sorry Mr Wolf – the coppers caught her in the act.

WOLF. What?

MICKEY. She's been arrested, the police have her now.

THE WOLF IS FURIOUS. HIS VOICE DROPS TO A LOW GROWL.

WOLF. What? How did that happen? You were supposed to be working together and watching her back.

MICKEY. I don't know what went wrong Mr Wolf. Everything was going to plan. She got down to the cells and killed the old lady but before she could get out the coppers were down there and she got trapped. She contacted me and told me to get out before more police came.

WOLF. But she...

HE POINTS A FINGER SAVAGELY AT RED.

WOLF. ...was supposed to distract the police.

RED. I was distracting them. Everything was going fine until they got a call to say there was an intruder in the station. Don't blame me because Catya got careless.

WOLF. Catya was never careless. No, there is more to this than meets the eye. You girl, you're to blame for all this. In just one day I have lost my nephew and my dear Catya is in prison and you are the link. Mickey, you should never have let this happen, you were the back up man. Why didn't you go in and try to get her out?

MICKEY. It was Catya who told me to leave.

WOLF. But you shouldn't have. This was your plan which has led to this, you were her back up and should have stopped this and so you will go back now and break her out. Take as many men as you need.

MICKEY. Mr Wolf...

WOLF. Gah! But first, first we will deal with Miss Riding Hood here.

HE STANDS, FISTS CLENCHED IN ANGER.

WOLF. You have been nothing but trouble to me girl and now I shall be rid of you. I know that Catya would have loved to have done this herself but I suppose Mickey will have to do it on her behalf.

MICKEY LIFTS HIS GUN AND COCKS IT.

MICKEY. I'm afraid that won't be happening Mr Wolf.

THE WOLF REALISES THAT MICKEY IS POINTING THE GUN AT HIM.

WOLF. Mickey? What are you doing?

MICKEY. You sad, pathetic old man. You know, it's time for you to retire and let a younger man take over.

WOLF. What? Never? Mickey why are you doing this my boy?

MICKEY. There's only one thing that's kept you in charge so long and that's fear. But of course over the years it's not been you that this bunch is frightened of. It may have been your orders but it's been me and Catya who everyone's been scared of. But I've had enough of that arrangement and now that little psycho bitch is locked up, no ones going to fight your corner.

THE WOLF LOOKS TO HIS CRONIES BUT NONE OF THEM WILL MEET HIS EYE.

WOLF. But why?

MICKEY. Why? I do all your dirty work, take all the risks, put my life on the line while you just sit around here all day like a fat spider in the middle of his web.

WOLF. You always seemed happy with our arrangement.

RED. Oh he was. Until he met someone who convinced him he could do better for himself.

RED STROLLS OVER TO MICKEY'S SIDE AND THEY SLIP AN ARM AROUND ONE ANOTHER.

WOLF. You? What have you done?

RED. Mickey and I have been planning this for months now but you, so wrapped up in your own sense of self-importance, never saw it coming.

WOLF. But you... you're just a weak, scared little girl.

RED. Oh you think?

WOLF. Oh yes, I think. And neither of you will dare to kill me.

*HE TURNS TO FACE **MICKEY** AND LOOKS HIM IN THE EYE.*

WOLF. I found you on the streets Mickey and bought you up as my own. And now you betray me for this little strumpet? Are you man enough to look me in the eye and kill me?

***MICKEY** LOOKS UNCOMFORTABLE. HIS HAND SHAKES A LITTLE. THERE IS A SHOT. **THE WOLF'S** EYES WIDEN IN SHOCK. HE TURNS TO SEE **RED** HOLDING A GUN. HE COLLAPSES AND SLOWLY DIES. **MICKEY** STEPS OVER HIS BODY TO ADDRESS THE CRONIES.*

MICKEY. Ladies and Gentleman, this gang is under new management. All of the rules and regulations will be staying the same. For now. Any complaints can be taken up with my secretary.

***MICKEY** GESTURES TO **RED** WHO IS STILL CLUTCHING THE GUN. THE LOOK ON HER FACE MIRRORS CATYA'S LOOK AFTER A KILL.*

RED. Just one small thing Mickey darling.

MICKEY. What?

***RED** SHOOTS **MICKEY**.*

RED. I'm not your damn secretary.

***MICKEY** FALLS DEAD, SHOCK ETCHED ON HIS FACE. THERE IS SILENCE FROM THE CRONIES WHO ARE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT.*

RED. Please carry on with what you were doing. Under new management again, blah, blah, blah.

*THE SILENCE CONTINUES WITH EVERYONE JUST WATCHING **RED**. SHE GIVES A MAD SMILE AND SHOOTS THE NEAREST CRONIE.*

RED. I said carry on.

*THEY HURRY BACK TO THEIR BUSINESS. A **GANGSTER** ENTERS LEADING **LAKE** AT GUNPOINT TOWARDS **RED**. HE IS CONFUSED FOR A SECOND, SEES THE BODIES OF THE **WOLF** AND **MICKEY** AND GULPS.*

GANGSTER. Er, boss. I found this one snooping about.

RED. Hello Sarah, nice of you to join us.

LAKE. Red, what the hell are you doing, this wasn't part of the plan?

RED. On the contrary, this was the plan. Mission accomplished.

LAKE. You said you'd help me to bring down the Wolf.

RED. And I did.

***RED** POINTS HER GUN TO HER OWN HEAD AND PRETENDS TO PULL THE TRIGGER, A MANIACAL LOOK ON HER FACE.*

RED. Bang!

LAKE. Oh god. You're totally mad. Why have you done this?

RED. Why? Isn't it obvious? I'm the leader of the gang, I am.

LAKE. You planned this?

RED. Right from the start. First I hired Johnny Wolf to get rid of those troublesome pigs. Well, I couldn't have them building on the land where my grandfather kept all his loot hidden. They'd have covered it in cement or dug it up themselves and then where would I have been?

LAKE. You had the pigs killed?

RED. Oh yes. But even with all that loot it doesn't seem wise to spend too freely. So then I hired Alex at half the price to kill Johnny to get the Wolf's attention. And didn't I get lucky when my darling grandmother decided to double cross him and keep the cash.

LAKE. How did you know the Wolf wouldn't just have you killed?

RED. I'm sure it crossed his mind, but I had that covered too. You see by that time I'd already met dear Mickey. Not the brightest boy and so easy to manipulate. I convinced him that he was the power behind the Wolf and that it was about time he stepped up to remove the old fool. Of course, poor Mickey thought he'd be taking over. Part of his side was to make sure I was kept alive.

LAKE. But you couldn't be sure everything would work out the way you wanted.

RED. Once I'd made contact with you I could. Mickey knew of you and the mess you made of the so-called "sleeping beauty" case. Knowing how ambitious you are and that you'd get nowhere without a boost it was easy to persuade you to help me bring down the Wolf.

LAKE. So you had the police and the Wolfs henchman on your side.

RED. Yes, Mickey was able to make sure Alex was got rid of quickly by ensuring that crazy Catya went after him. Then we arranged to have the body dropped at the house so we could frame dear Grandma. I had the house bugged a while ago in case she decided to sacrifice me to save her own miserable life. So when she called up the Wolf, well... my conscience is clear.

LAKE. And then you went to the Wolf.

RED. That's right. I'd come up with the plan to get rid of my Grandma and briefed Mickey. He took a while to get his head round it, the poor fool. He presented it to the Wolf as his own and we dropped Catya right in the middle of it.

LAKE. Why?

RED. Her loyalty to the Wolf made her a liability. And we needed someone to take the rap for Grandmas murder. By the way, thanks for killing her Sarah, you're a pal.

LAKE. Given the rest of your plan, why didn't you just leave me to get caught?

RED. Far too difficult to engineer. And anyway, I need you still.

LAKE. For what?

RED. All in good time.

LAKE. So with all that done you came back here and killed the Wolf and Mickey knowing this lot will just blindly follow you?

RED. As easy as that.

LAKE. I can't let you do this Red.

RED. You can't stop me Sergeant.

LAKE. Maybe I told DI Baker all about your little scheme.

RED. What and admit that you killed a suspect to try to jump start your career? I don't think so.

LAKE. Please don't do this.

RED. Sorry doll, it's done. But that does bring me on to why I still need you. You see, there are a few bodies left lying around with no one wanting to take responsibility for them.

LAKE. What are you going to do?

RED. I think we'll say that you came here and finished off the Wolf and Mickey. Maybe you snapped after the awful events of the day.

LAKE. Red, no please.

RED IGNORES LAKE AND ADDRESS THE GANGSTER.

RED. Take Sergeant Lake away and deal with her will you. I'm afraid she knows too much.

DESPITE HER PROTESTS, LAKE IS DRAGGED OFF BY TWO GANGSTERS. RED SETTLES HERSELF IN A CHAIR AND LAUGHS TO HERSELF.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS BACK UP ON THE HOOD'S COTTAGE A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER. RED IS AT THE TABLE POLISHING A GUN AND SINGING TO HERSELF. THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. SHE HIDES THE GUN AND ANSWERS THE DOOR WITH A SMILE. IT IS BAKER.

RED. DI Baker, what a lovely surprise.

BAKER. I'll bet. Mind if I come in?

WITHOUT WAITING FOR AN ANSWER BAKER BRUSHES PAST RED INTO THE HOUSE. HER EXPRESSION CLOUDS FOR A MOMENT THEN SHE RECOVERS HER SMILE.

RED. And what can I do for you today?

BAKER. You can tell me the truth about what happened.

RED. I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about.

BAKER. Let me refresh your memory. All those people who died – your poor old gran, the Wolf, his associate Mr Fox, the pigs – need I go on?

RED. The paper says that Sergeant Lake was behind it all.

BAKER. I don't believe what gutter press like the Nursery Times says. Sergeant Lake is still missing; no one seems to know what's happened to her.

RED. Poor Sergeant Lake.

BAKER. Don't play games with me Miss Riding Hood. I know you're involved in this somehow. The Wolf may be gone but his gang's as active as ever so clearly someone's in charge. And that mental assassin we arrested reckons you're in this up to your eyeballs.

RED. Is that a fact Detective Inspector? All the evidence you have is the word of a psychopath.

BAKER. Oh I'm sure I can find plenty more than that.

RED. I suggest you get to it then. And if you manage it maybe you can pop back.

BAKER. And you'll just be here waiting will you?

RED. That's right; living happily ever after.

BAKER. We shall see.

BAKER STORMS OUT OF THE HOUSE. RED WAITS FOR A MOMENT AND THEN GETS THE GUN BACK OUT OF HIDING. SHE GOES BACK TO CLEANING IT, SINGING HAPPILY TO HERSELF AS THE LIGHTS GO DOWN. IN THE DARKNESS WE HEAR TWO GUNSHOTS.

THE END.