

5-2001

## **“To please a child”: A practical analysis of a children's theatre production from planning to performance**

Brian James Warren  
*University of Texas-Pan American*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg\\_etd](https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd)



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Warren, Brian James, "“To please a child”: A practical analysis of a children's theatre production from planning to performance" (2001). *Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA*. 446.  
[https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg\\_etd/446](https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd/446)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact [justin.white@utrgv.edu](mailto:justin.white@utrgv.edu), [william.flores01@utrgv.edu](mailto:william.flores01@utrgv.edu).

"TO PLEASE A CHILD"  
A PRACTICAL ANALYSIS OF A CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRODUCTION  
FROM PLANNING TO PERFORMANCE

A Thesis

by

BRIAN J. WARREN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Texas – Pan American  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS


May 2001

Major Subject: Theatre Arts

"TO PLEASE A CHILD"  
A PRACTICAL ANALYSIS OF A CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRODUCTION  
FROM PLANNING TO PERFORMANCE

A Thesis  
by  
BRIAN J. WARREN

Approved as to style and content by:



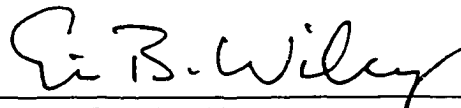
---

Dr. Marian F. Monta  
Chair of Committee



---

Dr. Salma Ghanem  
Committee Member



---

Dr. Eric Wiley  
Committee Member

## ABSTRACT

Warren, Brian J., “To Please a Child” – A Practical Analysis of a Children’s Theatre Production from Planning to Performance. Master of Arts (MA), May, 2001, 146 pp., references, 6 titles, 9 local performances.

The purpose of this creative thesis and study was to examine, through a comprehensive analysis of the processes, how an original children’s play was conceived, written, and produced, using the play *Enough of the Huff and Puff*, as the study’s basis.

The study begins with an examination of goals of the drama program at South Texas Community College, and subsequently establishes a justification for children’s theatre. It continues with a detailed analysis of how the play came to be written. Also included are, as the title indicates, explanations of practical considerations such as staging difficulties encountered and overcome, casting decisions, set design challenges, and acting methodologies for children’s theatre (which included practical considerations when acting for an audience of primarily children).

Since the creative work of actually writing the play was an integral part of this thesis, the full original script is included here, as well as the revised script that was written following the original production.

Changes to the original, along with brief annotations explaining the artistic reasons why the change was deemed necessary, are included as footnotes on the original script. Performances of the revised play were given at the University of Texas – Pan American, Edinburg, Texas (December 1 – 3, 2000), at and Edcouch-Elsa High School in Edcouch, Texas (December 16 – 18, 2000).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Marian Monta for her continued support and encouragement throughout my bold foray into the frightening world of children's theatre. Well before chairing my thesis committee, she was my first contact with the University of Texas – Pan American, directing the musical *Man of La Mancha* in which I played a small role. Subsequently, she has served as my instructor, advisor, and, I am proud to say, good friend. Thank you, Dr. Monta, for your time, wisdom, and patience.

I would also like to express my appreciation to committee members Dr. Salma Ghanem and Dr. Eric Wiley. Especially in their great professionalism as professors and dedication to students, both professors serve as role models to me.

Sincere thanks must go to the fine members of the original cast of *Enough of the Huff and Puff*. Without their hard work and creativity, neither the play nor this thesis would have been possible. Thank you Jerry Sanchez (“Easy Ed, the Wolf”), Michael Hinojosa (“Farmer Bates”), Anissa Garcia (“Mother Pig”), Marissa Hernandez (“Lulu”), Jason Sandoval (“Lenny”), Mauro Flores, Jr. (“Larry”), and Holly Retherford (“Little Red Riding Hood”).

Next, I would like to thank Dr. Richard Abel and Jenny Robinson at South Texas Community College. I am most fortunate at STCC to have colleagues such as you, who offer boundless energy and unhesitant support to the fledgling drama program at the college.

Thanks to Kent Smither and Carlos Garza, Jr. for several helpful suggestions on the revision of the play for performances beyond the STCC confines.

Lastly, I wish to thank my family and friends. Most of all, I thank my mother, Joyce Kramer, who instilled in me awareness of the wonder and joy of life, especially in the eyes of a child, my father, Robert Warren, who taught me the pursuit of excellence is never-ending, my dear wife, Shannon Warren, who is my constant source of strength and love, and my beautiful daughters Meagan, Courtney, Shaney, and Kylie. May the world stay forever magical for you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
<b>CHAPTER 1. “WHYS AND WHEREFORES” OF CHILDREN’S THEATRE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. CHILDREN’S THEATRE IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DRAMA PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3. THE PLAY’S CONCEPT AND APPROACHES TO ITS WRITING.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4. THE FIRST DRAFT (ORIGINAL PRODUCTION SCRIPT) OF “ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF – AN ADAPTATION OF ‘THE THREE LITTLE PIGS’ “.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5. THE REVISED DRAFT OF “ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF – AN ADAPTATION OF ‘THE THREE LITTLE PIGS’”.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6. THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION FROM CASTING TO PERFORMANCE: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>WORKS CITED.....</b>	<b>142</b>



## CHAPTER 1

### “WHYS AND WHEREFORES” OF CHILDREN’S THEATRE

Across the country, educational theatre is constantly faced with the following dilemma: to produce theatre that will educate and challenge our theatre students using the wonderful canon and variety of genres of drama in the western world; and yet, produce theatre that will sell tickets so that we can justify our efforts to academic administrators. This dilemma is present with our very young theatre program at South Texas Community College. We face an extremely frustrating “catch-22”: we will receive no monies until we prove our worth to the administration; however, it is difficult to produce worthy theatre without the monies to do so! Furthermore, we feel that the arts require no justification. To expand successfully, the arts must be recognized and subsidized by our leaders so we produce theatre that is worthy for many reasons.

*Enough of the Huff and Puff! An Adaptation of “The Three Little Pigs”* was written in part to address this issue – acquiring recognition and support from our administration -- while helping to build the theatre program and start a theatre tradition at South Texas Community College. It was also written as a manifestation of a lifelong interest in children’s theatre, and in response to the lack of children’s theatre in the Rio Grande Valley. *Enough* is a play for children.

Other than some of the drivel currently playing for children across our television sets and the periodic and formulaic Disney feature film, what entertainment exists for our children in the Rio Grande Valley? There is a decided dearth of quality entertainment for children. This statement is based in part on frequent conversations with parents such as me, and in part on personal observation. Out of this need arose the concept for *Enough of the Huff and Puff*.

Why is live theatre worthwhile for children? In his book Children's Theatre: A Philosophy and Method, Moses Goldberg writes, "Aesthetics, pedagogy, and psychology are the three basic areas into which I group the values to children of good theatre" (14). *Enough of the Huff and Puff* is valuable aesthetically because it provides visually stimulating entertainment *while* giving the children an opportunity to take part in the creative process. It is based upon a well-known children's story, so the complex and lengthy exposition that many restless children find tedious is unnecessary. The title alone is enough to excite interest; although, the audience base for a good children's play, given the *need* that existed ready to be served, was already present. In STCC's Spring 1999 Children's Theatre productions of *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella* (written by Dan Donahue), weeks before our production dates interested parents and elementary teachers, desperate to find different entertainment for their children, were calling the STCC Speech and Drama Department for ticket prices and show times. The same infectious interest was generated when *Enough of the Huff and Puff* was announced in February 2000.

The play had a built-in attraction as an adaptation of a well-known story, but nonetheless would it be *worthwhile* for children to see, and include the children in its creative process? There were several factors to ponder involving the work's worthiness. Although my version of the story certainly has its share of frantic chases and low physical comedy, I did not want to write a play with only mindless entertainment, like a "Tom and Jerry" cartoon. Let television hold dominion on those types of shows. Produced as it would be on one of the campuses of an institution of higher learning, I wanted *Enough* to edify – fulfilling Goldberg's second principle of good children's theatre, that it be pedagogical – as well as entertain, for, in spite of the popularity of many of the empty children's cartoons, children crave edification, too. "Yasha Frank's often quoted remark bears repeating: 'Children love to learn, but hate to be taught' (Goldberg 15). The pedagogical aspects in this play have been disguised as much as possible; nonetheless, it is a morality play of sorts.

The play is also complete with psychological aspects that Goldberg thought important. The children who view *Enough of the Huff and Puff* see problems solved – problems, to be sure, that the children may have already experienced. In the communality of the theatre audience, the child observes major problems handled by characters probably much less competent than the child herself; thus, the child's self-concept is given a reassuring psychological stroke. For example, the child sees the following: two of the little pigs – "Lenny" and "Larry" – are apparent brats. They do not listen to their mother, and they are only too glad to scurry away from her into the brave, new world, certain that their

youth and vigor, and, in Lenny's case, his imagined smarts, will carry them to success. Of course, they ultimately receive their comeuppance, so the play thereby – here's a clear pedagogical aspect – conveys the value of obeying your parents, since they usually have the child's best interests in mind, and the value of preparedness when you venture forth to face the world. Lenny and Larry are unprepared, and it almost dooms them. Interestingly, both (especially Lenny) *think* they are prepared, but this is hollow bravado; thus, the play teaches that preparedness is not just a word, but also a way of life that will eventually be called into use. Superficiality will ultimately be revealed. This idea is increasingly important in a world where falsity is sometimes seen as a requisite to life; where even world leaders are caught in bald-faced lies. So, even though they are not qualified to do so, the little pigs, especially Lenny and Larry, face and defeat a problem, albeit not without help, and the lesson to the child is clear. It *is* better to be prepared.

Goldberg's keys of aesthetics, pedagogy, and psychology are apparent throughout the play, as the child, through a creative unity with the characters on stage (aesthetics) faces and solves major, even life-threatening problems (psychology), and learns life lessons in the process (pedagogy). Thus by these standards the play achieves worthiness.

The pedagogy of integrity anthropomorphizes itself in the character of "Lulu," the youngest and smartest of the little pigs. Listening to her words and watching her behavior reinforces in the audience what key qualities lead to success. Lulu is certainly no prim do-gooder (she berates her goofball brothers

like any pesky sister), although she is obedient, she listens, she works hard (and is thereby prepared), she loves her family unconditionally, she sees through deceit, and she abhors it in herself. My hope was that, even though she is part of a fantastical story, the children in the audience would learn through her success the characteristics that lead to success for anyone, fantasy world or not.

The character of “Easy Ed” is also part of the edifying elements of *Enough*. Here we have an immoral mountebank, a conniving creature with few redeeming qualities. We grudgingly admire his resourcefulness, especially when he disguises himself as an Avon lady in a bold attempt to capture Lulu, but since we know this very resourcefulness is based on lies, our admiration is brief and only for his audacity. Easy Ed is the polar opposite of Lulu, and even though he is glib, charming, and even attractive (for a hairy wolf), his way is revealed as the wrong way, for it leads to a humiliating end tethered to a leash. Honesty, courage, and family love defeat Easy Ed. Presented in an entertaining fashion so that the children in the audience are not aware that a lesson is being reinforced, the fact that evil can be attractive, even nice, does not prevent it from being evil. This is an invaluable lesson for children of all ages.

Finally, we have “Mother Pig”. Parents often baffle children. The child cannot see the logic in many parental disciplinary actions. A child may think, “Here is a cookie. The cookie tastes good. If I eat it, I get happy. Therefore, the more I eat, the happier I will become.” Along comes an adult, usually a parent, who tells the child he can’t have the cookie because “it’s not good for you, “ or, “this isn’t the right time.” To a child, these explanations are completely illogical,

given the “cookie=happiness” equation. When I penned the character and actions of Mother Pig, I wanted her to be an embodiment of explanation as to why parents act the way they do – how completely and fallaciously *human* parents can be. Quite early in the play, she does what many children might construe as a “mean” thing to her own children – she tosses them out to live on their own, all because one of them ate her last Twinkie! However, by the end of the play children in the audience will clearly understand that what Mother Pig did was an act of “tough love”, to use the popular vernacular. Her three little pigs are better pigs at the end of the play for Mother Pig’s unflinching discipline, even though at the time it seemed impossibly cruel. Indeed, subsequent to throwing her charges out to the wolves, Mother Pig follows, and saves the pigs in the end.

There is a final, and key, lesson that the play teaches. Toward the end, Lulu has apparently duped Easy Ed and escaped, but a last desperate trick puts her in the same predicament as her brothers; that is, ready to be stewed and eaten. At this point, things look dire for our swine friends, but hope, the greatest of the gifts from the gods, should never be relinquished, for Mother Pig arrives just in time to save her brood and overcome the Wolf. This climactic scene reinforces two key ideas: without hope, we are lost; and we all, on occasion, need help.

A key aspect is that in all of the troubles that the family Von Pork encounters, and even in the machinations of the Wolf, the play was penned so that the children in the audience have constant input into the story, actually helping it conclude the way it does. For example, the little pigs ask for advice and suggestions, Farmer Bates gives periodic oral quizzes, and the Wolf confides in

the children and receives comments on his behavior. In all of this is the aesthetic aspect of good children's theatre fulfilled, and we can witness the creative process in action between performer and audience. This is theatre in its truest sense.

In summary, none of the messages contained within *Enough* are profound revelations. Children are taught the same concepts when they watch *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Blue's Clues*, *Jay-Jay the Jet Plane*, or a host of other popular children's programs on television. However, these television shows do not have the distinct advantage that live theatre does – the electric connection between actor and audience. Children can suspend their disbelief much easier than most adults, and thus much more easily feel that the characters on stage are “real” and that their situations are “real.” The lessons, therefore, are that much more immediate and intense when provided by the actor directly and without interference from sponsors interested in pushing unnecessary consumerism. This is why, after the many, many years of theatre, it will never face extinction, especially in our children's eyes. Theatre is a better conveyor of life's truths, and children, more than any other group, are perceptive and instinctually grasp the message of truth. One had only to watch the rapt attention of the children at any performance of *Enough of the Huff and Puff* to see how this must be true. As William Goldman writes in his book The Season, when describing the audience of children at a matinee performance on Broadway, “...and the curtain began to open, and as it did, there was that sound again, the ‘buzz-buzz-buzz’ of wonder” (50). I hoped to re-create this “buzz” by writing *Enough of the Huff and Puff*.

## CHAPTER 2

### CHILDREN'S THEATRE IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE DRAMA PROGRAM

In addition to the benefits of the play for our community's children, I wanted the play to behoove South Texas Community College. For a long time the site of a mostly technical college, Texas State Technical College, liberal arts and humanities programs have consistently been overlooked by the administration since the inception of the current institution in 1993. Only recently have strides been made in this regard, with, for example, the addition of a music program in our newly formed Program of Communication and Creative Arts within the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Division. The drama program within this giant division has perhaps been the most overlooked of all the liberal arts programs, even though we are certainly the most visible. Only two courses, Theatre Appreciation and Acting I, are currently being taught in the drama program; however, the department has made part of its mission to produce worthwhile theatre that would not necessarily be seen anywhere else in the Rio Grande Valley. We have met this departmental goal each semester I have been involved with the college, in spite of a distinct lack of facilities (plays are performed on a small, ancient proscenium stage in the "cafetorium" of an old elementary school that serves as the downtown campus for the college).



*Enough of the Huff and Puff* was written to help keep our commitment to “unusual” theatre in the Valley, while attracting consistent audiences. Children’s theatre is in keeping with the “unusual” because it is a relative rarity in the Valley. Occasionally, a touring company will put on a show to the McAllen Civic Center, or the Edinburg civic leaders will sponsor a children’s touring show, but these are once or twice yearly events that cannot hope to be seen by the majority of the Valley’s children, if only because of their limited runs. As *Enough* is the second Spring’s Children’s show at STCC in what we hope to make an annual event, we have begun a tradition that meets a need for our children.

Another benefit that *Enough* provides to STCC and our drama program is a desperately needed avenue of artistic expression for the beginning actors that roam our four campuses. Sometimes these freshmen do not even realize they are potential thespians until I point it out to them! Indeed, the vast majority of our actors are people who are only just discovering, sometimes years after high school, their personal desire for something more than technical job training, and this hunger strikes with a vengeance. Where to appease it? Where to audition? Where to “break into” performing? Many times, the aura of the University of Texas – Pan American with its long tradition and distinguished alumni and faculty is simply too intimidating, and there are very few other places to act once one leaves high school in the Rio Grande Valley. *Enough*, as well as other plays, particularly ones produced by *Teatro Nuestra Cultura* at STCC, provide one sorely needed acting venue. Additionally, the seven roles in *Enough* are ideal for the beginning actor because they were written with broad pen strokes, foregoing

the subtle complexities of character that typify many plays for adults. This is not to say that the roles in *Enough* are easy, for playing before an audience composed of initially cynical kids can be a traumatic experience. No, the roles in *Enough* ease the beginning actor into his craft because they are brief and with an unusually high degree of physicality written into them. This will comfort the novice actor with the requisite high level of “What do I do with myself on stage?” syndrome.

Finally, *Enough* was penned with the knowledge that the actors would be allowed to adapt and change their lines, with the approval of the director/playwright, to words that still capture the sense of the scene but are more comfortable to the actor struggling to enunciate. This ensemble approach, a writing workshop, if you will, is of course impossible in companies that pay royalties for established plays. Royalty agreements usually stipulate a strict adherence to the exact words of the script. How wonderful, however, is the chance for actor revision to the young actor who finds a turn of phrase nearly impossible to interpret so that the audience understands! As the director, I actively encouraged this method, and by the second week of rehearsals I had twelve notations on rewordings and deletions. The cast and I were effectively progressing to making the play that much less “unspeakable”. The playwright in me may have cringed, but I also understood that one of my limitations as a playwright is probably that I write dialogue that is effective to read, but not that easy to speak. My talented group of actors helped overcome that flaw in this

play. Overall, this play allows the actor input that fosters increased confidence and poise for the rookie thespian typical of the STCC drama student.

...

## CHAPTER 3

### THE PLAY'S CONCEPT AND APPROACHES TO ITS WRITING

The idea of writing and directing a children's play first occurred to me in the spring of 1999. I took my two older daughters to a children's play entitled *Beauty Lou and the Country Beast* by James Caron, produced by the Missoula Children's Theatre for the Edinburg 2020 Cultural Activities organization. Although the concept is by no means a new one – witness the *Fractured Fairy Tales* television success, or Shelley Duvall's series in the 1980's called *Faerie Tale Theatre* produced by HBO, or even the 1994 #1 bestseller Politically Correct Bedtime Tales by James Finn Garner -- it still struck me afresh how entertaining new versions of the old favorite children's stories can be.

Garner's slim volume spoofs "The Three Little Pigs," among several other classic fairy tales. In Garner's version, the pigs build their respective houses using materials that were "indigenous to the area," including a house of "dung, clay, and creeper vines shaped into bricks, and baked in a small kiln" (9). Garner pens the conclusion, following the demise of the wolf, as such: "The three little pigs rejoiced that justice had triumphed and did a little dance around the corpse of the wolf. Their next step was to liberate their homeland. They gathered a band of other pigs who had been forced off their

lands. This new brigade of *porcinistas* attacked the resort complex with machine guns...and slaughtered the cruel wolf oppressors..." (11). Telling a classic story dramatically and *irreverently* appealed to me. It seemed possible to include some slight satire in my play so that adults too would find the experience enjoyable; plus, I certainly wanted to write something more than yet another tired telling of the old story that everyone has memorized anyway.

*Beauty Lou* was my most vivid inspiration. This play told the classic "Beauty and the Beast" tale, except this version was set in a Montana mining camp, where the Beast was a lonely old miner living on the edge of town, and the beauty was a sweet young thing from "Buckaroo Bob's" family of ten children. After watching this play, which used local children for many of the small roles and inserted various local references in the dialogue, my inspiration was complete. I immediately began to plan a similar concept, including Valley allusions and Spanish-language references, for our spring "Family Theatre" at STCC.

My first task was to decide which children's story to dramatize. I felt certain I did not want a children's love story, such as *Cinderella* or *Snow White*. My theory was that children would respond more to action than to mushy love. I believe that younger children, ages five to ten, want to see problems more practical overcome, more practical and immediate than the mysterious world of adult love. Therefore, I initially considered three famous stories simply because they appealed to this logic: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Jack the Giant Killer*, or *The Emperor's New Clothes*. However, I rejected them all. I wasn't

sure how to insert local flavor into *Goldilocks*; *Jack the Giant Killer* seemed too daunting to mount on stage, what with huge bean stalks and even bigger actors as giants, or, at least, expensive stage effects; and *The Emperor's New Clothes* needed a scene with a naked Emperor, didn't it? Not to be cowardly, but that may scare off some of our potential audience! I realize that the shock value worked for *Hair* in 1968, but for children's theatre? I didn't think so.

Then, in the summer of 1999, I was visiting my mother in Iowa and I stumbled across one of her volumes of children's stories that she uses in her kindergarten classroom. Inside was that old chestnut, *The Three Little Pigs*, one of the stories in a volume called Best in Children's Books (65), edited by Joseph Jacobs. Of course I was familiar with the story, but I read through it anyway. Immediately, it sparked my theatrical imagination in its suitability as a children's theatre production. What were these little pigs other than naïve children facing the big, bad, unknown world as all children eventually must? They had outgrown their mother -- I quickly saw the comedic possibilities with that element -- still, they needed her teachings to survive in the world without her. The wolf was undoubtedly a classic antagonist; at the beginning, the wolf was apparently stronger and much more clever than the little pigs. Indeed, the little pigs seemed pathetic against this capable, confident predator. Plus, any child loves to watch unconscionable wickedness get its comeuppance, and the wickedness in and of itself is fun to watch. The story had colorful characters, sibling rivalry, houses that are destroyed (destruction is always fun), and a happy ending.

I also consulted a checklist on choosing plays for children in Viola Spolin's landmark book, Theater Games for the Classroom (178). One of Spolin's questions on her checklist particularly intrigued me: "Will the play respond to my work on it?" I interpreted Spolin's question to mean that the good play should present the blueprint for the production, but not end on the printed page. This is true in the acting sense, and assuredly the case with this play in the writing sense. The version of the story I read by Joseph Jacobs was the barest bones of the tale, so I had plenty of opportunities to make this play a unique theatrical event, notwithstanding the familiar source. Another key question Spolin recommends to ask about the script before beginning the production is "Will it (this play) be a creative experience for all?" In the script I devised, I made sure my theatre students, actors and technicians, would have a wide window in which to create. In all, it quickly became clear that *The Three Little Pigs* was an ideal play source.

Writing the play was a joy. I worked during the June mornings of 1999, taking always as my inspiration a quotation, which I later included in the program, from L. Frank Baum, the imaginative writer of the *Wizard of Oz* book series:

"...I have learned to regard fame as a will-o-the-wisp which, when caught, is not worth the possession; but to please a child is a sweet and lovely thing that warms one's heart and brings its own reward..."

However, pleasing the potential audience of children with this play became more difficult as the work progressed beyond planning to dialogue and scene. How could my little play hope to compete with the Disney juggernaut that inundates us with magical worlds resplendent with cute sidekicks? The answer to that anxious question was, of course, it can't – at least in the stunning visual sense. However, it can compete with and surpass Disney in the sense of theatrical participation. The strengths of theatre in general, most especially the audience connection to the performers, would serve me well.

I concentrated much of my writing time on the Wolf, who was pivotal as the antagonist. The character operates on the principle that, subconsciously or not, children like being frightened. Safe within the environs of the theatre, the horrible Wolf is even rather appealing. As Neil Postman, in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood*, writes, "...the importance of fairy-tales lies in their capacity to reveal the existence of evil in a form that permits children to integrate it without trauma" (113). *Enough* certainly presents the Wolf as evil, but in a way that is palatable for children. His evil becomes foolish and harmless as he meets his match in the resourceful Lulu and the determined Mother Pig. He is also crucial because he provides the conflict through which the little pigs discover their strengths.

Although the Wolf is a forceful and slick salesman, he also is capable of just enough buffoonery so that his eventual defeat is foreshadowed, and his evilness is not overpowering to an audience composed children. The scene where



he is overcome by Lulu's dazzling briefcase is the first to establish his foolishness under a façade of evil, and Lulu's strength of conviction.

To establish the fear factor and a clear understanding of the character, the scene that introduces the Wolf must be of impact. I decided to have the wolf "sell" himself to the audience. I set him alone on stage, hawking the wares of Easy Ed's Emporium to no one in particular, but definitely establishing his forceful and convincing, not to mention comedic, personality, while making it clear how he will provide for himself an advantage by selling inferior building products when he preys upon the little pigs. This is accomplished in a brief scene where the Wolf denounces Wal-Mart and shouts the praises of his Emporium.

In the original children's tale, nothing is written to explain the little pig's initial journey into the woods to seek their respective fortunes other than "There was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune"(Jacobs 65). Since children are basically logical, clearly the children would crave more of an exposition than that. There needed to be a *reason* why any mother, even a mother pig, would even dream of setting her young charges loose upon the world. For the children so attuned to logic and justice, there must be a beginning that delineates *why* the little pigs ventured from their home. Therefore, my opening scene depicts Mother Pig lining up her pigs like military recruits in order to chastise their gluttonous eating habits. Gluttony, of course, is a logical flaw in pigs that children can accept and even identify with, recalling their own eating history and punishment involving corn dogs, frito pies, or all-day lollipops. Additionally, gluttony is just naughty

enough for children to appreciate. As Wood points out, “Children are healthily subversive. They find ‘rude’ things fascinating and funny” (23). Indeed, much of children’s literature involves the subversive view of a child in a world peopled by adults. One need only look at the enormously popular children’s books of Roald Dahl or J.K. Rowling to understand this principle. In the latter’s “Harry Potter” series, Harry and his friends belch slugs and view disgusting spiders, among many other unorthodox but certainly intriguing events, as they attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Lulu, although she is lined up with the rest, is the only sibling not guilty of gluttony. After a long and humorous harangue during which she bemoans the loss of a favorite Twinkie she had been saving as a special treat for herself, Mother Pig sends her brood out into the world, albeit with a hug and a wad of money. This scene gives the audience a reason for the pigs to be alone in the woods and to stumble upon Easy Ed’s Emporium, plus foreshadow the eventual moral, and provide a sense of completion to the play. The former is done because Mother Pig is full of suggestions and advice that Lulu listens to, but not Larry and Lenny. They will learn the folly of ignoring their parents later in the story. The latter is accomplished because Mother Pig, the one who set them loose upon the world in the first place, is the one to save them from being devoured in the play’s climax; thus, any child who still questioned Mother Pig’s “tough love” will realize at the end that her love was there all along.

This opening inquisition scene also clearly delineates the differences between the three little pigs. Larry is the dullard of the bunch, only interested in

food. Lenny, though a little smarter than Larry, is mostly a lazy back-talker. Lulu is obedient and kind to the frazzled and frustrated Mother Pig, and supportive to her brothers. Most children instantly recognized the potential for success indicative in Lulu, and the opposite in the two older sibling pigs. Thus, a compelling dramatic irony exists in the play, as brothers are blissfully unaware of their faults, and are even confident, while the audience is acutely aware of these flaws.

As previously explained, I decided to have Easy Ed the Wolf and his Emporium be the source of the building materials for the houses of the little pigs. Reasoning that he cannot vanquish them at once, he will find each house, destroy it due to its inferior substance sold to the pigs by him, and eat each pig singly. It is illustrative of the inner silliness of this Wolf that he changes his mind about eating them singly and tries to stick them all into a stew pot, ruining his clever idea of capturing them one by one.

The admittedly relatively lengthy selling scene accomplishes key plot and character elements. Lulu's drive for excellence is made clear, as is the Wolf's equal determination to accomplish his ends. Many successful plays create an antagonist that is apparently stronger than the protagonist; *Enough* follows the same formula, for, despite her spunk, what hope does Lulu have against the knavery of this Wolf? Her brothers will certainly be of no help, for their naiveté is made evident as they fall victim to Easy Ed's scheme and buy flimsy straw and worthless sticks.

The rest of the play follows Easy Ed's attempts to fulfill his evil – if you are a fan of herbivores -- culinary plans, while showing how the pigs respond to this threat, all the while teaching life lessons. My version of the story keeps intact the three separate visits to each house of straw, sticks, and the hurricane-proof qualities of the third pig's brick structure, but that is where similarities end. Easy Ed, after the quick capture of Larry, the first pig, decides to collect the siblings in his "pig prison", and then eat them in one climactic orgy of a feast. Even as he attempts to blow down each successive pig's house, the previous pig watches from this an offstage – yet visible to the audience – dungeon. Once Ed, through a cross-dressing scheme that finally fools the unflappable Lulu, has collected all the pigs, he pushes out his gargantuan stew pot and orders them to file into it. However, when Ed briefly leaves to find "some jalapenos" to spice the coming pork stew, Lulu leads a prison break. Ed returns to discover the escape attempt, and, in a tense moment, the pigs have no choice but to begin their last march into the pot. Just in time, Mother Pig and Little Red Riding Hood arrive and, with the help of the little pigs, knock Ed into his own pot, thus ending the Wolf's heinous plans and bringing the family together again. The original ending, which featured Mother Pig barreling over the Wolf by herself, was ineffective because it was too brief and contrived -- an implausible *deus ex machina*. The addition of Little Red Riding Hood and the three pigs themselves into the climactic fray provided the advantage needed to defeat the cunning Wolf – and also hint at a sequel involving the Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood.

I included the prison scenes for at least two reasons. For one, I felt it added to the suspense of the play to force the siblings to wait in misery as the rest of the brood is captured, so that, finally, not only does Lulu have to save herself from the Wolf, she also must try to save her brothers. It also added several opportunities for comedy as the hungry brothers “stew” in the prison. Secondly, I needed “breaks” from the action on the main stage for practical reasons. How could I find time for the stage crew to arrange the next house, built of a different material, and not force the audience to sit in darkness staring at a drawn curtain? The pig prison, located offstage right, close to the audience, provided the answer. While Larry and Lenny discussed their plight and asked the children and Farmer Bates for assistance, the stage crew could quickly prepare the next house without any loss in the continuity of the story. Several of Farmer Bates’ spiels of narration provided similar time for set changes.

By August of 1999, I had written my first draft. Yes, it was heavy on the morality (one cast member quipped, “First *Everyman*, now *Enough of the Huff and Puff*), but life lessons are exactly what children crave and receive too seldom. Also, I was acutely aware of the old comedy maxim, though now I have forgotten who coined the phrase, “If you’re going to write comedy, it has to be about something serious.” Here was a comedy with some serious messages for kids – though, as is apparent in the following section, the revisions were just beginning.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FIRST DRAFT (ORIGINAL PRODUCTION SCRIPT) OF “ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF – AN ADAPTATION OF ‘THE THREE LITTLE PIGS’”

Revision via actors’ ensemble began even during auditions. One young actor, auditioning for the role of Farmer Bates, voiced the line on page one, “Here’s my special call to the sow, Sucaffy” but he replaced my bland word “call” with “holler”, which I too found more effective for character and verb vividness. Instant revision! As another example, the actor playing Easy Ed added the phrase “Forget about it” which in context was funnier and more topical than what I had written. So, what follows here is the script with revisions made during rehearsal, so that one can examine the effectiveness of an actor ensemble as a revision tool. The story line and structure of my adaptation was set and ready, as well as much of the dialogue, but as in the above examples, I was willing to entertain suggestions for the more effective or “speakable” word or phrase. All revisions made by the actors or director during rehearsal are noted with an asterisk, and the change is explained at the bottom of the page.

*ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF! AN ADAPTATION OF "THE THREE LITTLE PIGS"*

by BRIAN WARREN

**PROLOGUE SCENE:** The Farmyard of William Robert (Billy Bob) Bates. We see the familiar barn and two other shed-type buildings. (These three "buildings"<sup>1</sup> will become "Easy Ed's" Emporium, and houses of the three little pigs.)

Farmer Bates appears at the entrance door of the theatre and begins to walk through the audience to the stage. He carries a pail, chews on a hayseed, and whistles "Old MacDonald"<sup>2</sup>

**FARMER BATES:** (*looks around the bare farmyard*). Doug? Latifa? Mortimer? Helga?<sup>3</sup> (*etc.*) Shoot-fire! Where in tarnation could those little piggies have run off to? (*pause, looking*) And here I am standing here like a dern fool with a pail full of hogslop! (*to audience*) Any of you'all seen three pink little oinkers trailing around after their mother? Huh? (*ad-lib interrogation of the audience*) No? Ok, then, nothing to do but give a little holler<sup>4</sup>.....(*he sucks in a cubic ton of air, hitches his overalls, wags his head, and hollers, after his voice breaks*): SOOOOOOOOEEEEEE!!! PIG-PIG-PIG SOOEE!!!! I took the blue ribbon at the '98 county fair with that call. Now here's my special holler to the sow, Sucaffy: SUUUCAFFFFFYYYYYYYY! (*pause*) Nuthin'. No piggies at'all. I wanna know what I'm gonna do with this here big bucket a' slop. (*thinks a while*) Say. You'all hungry? Maybe you'all would like some a this...Yea, sure you would. I mixed up some old Cream of Wheat with...(looks in bucket) rotten watermelon rinds, month-old bologna, curdled milk, bread crusts, Flintstones vitamins from the '70's<sup>5</sup>...greasy cold French fries, and, my favorite: putrid peach-pie. How about it? My mother used to tell me "Don't let nothing go to waste..."

**OFFSTAGE:** A WOLF howls, long and drawn out...

**FARMER BATES:** OK, enough of the teasing. You know, that wolf somewhere yonder, and my missing pigs, reminds me of

<sup>1</sup> After discussions with the technical designer, the "three buildings" were nixed in favor of a colorful backdrop suggesting bucolic pleasantries.

<sup>2</sup> The whistling was cut in lieu of incidental music provided by our composer/musician, Julio Caesar Benavides.

<sup>3</sup> Names, varied every night of performance, were ad libbed by the actor.

<sup>4</sup> Originally, the word was "call." Changed to "holler", after suggestion by the actor.

<sup>5</sup> Addition by the actor, accepted by the director/playwright.

**FARMER BATES**

(cont.):

little story...And I've a mind to set yonder and spin you'all this yarn. (*sits down on a SR stump*) First things first. Let me introduce myself proper. My name's Bill Bob Bates, this here's my farmyard, and I raise pigs. Just your normal, ever'day kind of pig. But...(*conspiratorially to audience*) Way back when, when the world was new, there was a diff'rent kind of pig. My own grandpappy used to tell of it. He'd sing,

*Once upon a time when pigs spoke rhyme,  
And monkeys chewed tobacco,  
And hens ate beans to make 'em mean,  
And ducks went quack, quack, quack, O!*

Well, that's just what grandpappy used to sing. Give him a break – he's old.<sup>6</sup> Now, let's see, oooo, this happened way back, according to old grandpappy. Once upon a time... (*Lights dim on Farmer Bates, come up on SL*)

**SCENE ONE**

**MOTHER PIG:** (*entering SL, she holds before her a plastic wrapper of some kind*) No, no, no, NO! Somebody *please* tell me this is not happening! That it is some kind of horrible nightmare! LARRY!! LENNY!! LULU!! Come here at once!

(LULU enters SL)

**LULU:** (*she is a sweet pig*) Yes, mother?

**MOTHER PIG:** Wait 'til your brothers get over here. LARRY! LENNIE!

**LENNY (offstage):** Aw, Mom!!

**MOTHER PIG:** (*looking offstage left*) Yes you, you naughty little porker! Get out of that mud hole this instant! Come here! Wait! Go back! Bring Larry!

**LENNY (offstage):** But Mom! Can't you see I'm busy! I'm making a mud fort for my friend Charlotte! And Larry's eating!!

**MOTHER PIG:** Again?! Grab him and get over here! That's just what

---

<sup>6</sup> Line addition by the actor, accepted by the director/playwright.



MOTHER PIG:           want to have a little family time about! You three little pigs and EATING!

*(LENNY enters SL. He is a short, dirty pig, ornery, kind of a know-it-all. He carries around a dirty threadbare blanket. He stands sullenly C. LARRY enters SL. He is a large, good-natured dullard of a pig. He is munching from a BAG of POPCORN. All the pigs wear OVERALLS, BACKPACKS, and BASEBALL CAPS WITH THE ARKANSAS RAZORBACK LOGO).*

LENNY:                   *(yelling offstage)*<sup>7</sup> Hey Charlotte! Write... “Some Pig” in the web next! That’ll catch some attention!

LARRY:                   Who called out “Larry”?

MOTHER PIG:           I DID! Me! Your mother!

LARRY:                   Oh.<sup>8</sup>

*(MOTHER PIG lines up the three pigs downstage right, then stands to the side of them like an Army Drill Instructor)*

MOTHER PIG:           What am I holding in my hand? *(She holds aloft the empty plastic wrapping)*

LULU                     A piece of plastic, Mom.

MOTHER PIG:           Yes. Very good, dear. A piece of plastic. Now, here’s another question. The million-dollar question. Do any of you know what this piece of plastic used to have inside it?

LENNY:                   How should we know, Ma?

LARRY:                   Gee, that’s a tough one. Say, Mom, ask me something about...multiplication tables! I know my zeros and ones. Or...state capitols! Listen... ‘The capitol of Texas is Houston. The capitol of Oklahoma is Fort Worth. The capitol of ...

MOTHER PIG:           *(struggling to maintain calm)* Larry. Please. Then none of you pigs can tell me what was in this wrapping? *(she waves it impatiently in front of their noses)*

LULU:                   *(she snorts and sniffs)* A twinkie!

---

<sup>7</sup>In performance, Lenny carried in a visible “Charlotte” and spoke to her directly.

<sup>8</sup> Line added late in rehearsals, to more clearly establish Larry’s mind state (or lack thereof).

- MOTHER PIG: YES!! A TWINKIE!! And not just any Twinkie. MY TWINKIE!! When you little pigs ate the burritos I'd been saving, I managed to ignore it. When you gobbled the enpanadas I had saved to eat during that Miss Piggy movie marathon on TBS, I cried, but I eventually got over it. But this...this was *my* TWINKIE! My favorite, my lovely, delicious, crème-filled friend! (*reading the ingredients*) Enriched wheat flour, high fructose corn syrup, canola oil, dextrose, whole eggs, polysorbate, calcium sulfate, yellow dye #5, and sugar<sup>9</sup>...(*she cannot control her sobbing as she lets the wrapper fall to the floor*).
- LARRY: BUURRPP. (*LENNIE laughs maniacally*)
- LULU: (*swats Lenny on the shoulder as she crosses to comfort Mother Pig*). Please don't cry, Mother.
- MOTHER PIG: (*dabbing at her eyes with a big hankie*) Oh, it's not just the Twinkie. It's much more than that. Lulu, do you remember that day we all went to the Golden Corral?
- LULU: Yes, mother.
- MOTHER PIG: Do you remember the horrible mess you all made? The butter globs thrown on the ceiling? The whole pies Lenny ate without chewing? When Larry picked up the salad bar and tilted it into his mouth?
- LARRY: Yeah. Those plates were crunchy.
- MOTHER PIG: Larry. Please. (*to Lulu*) Not only did that little evening cost me \$5,000 dollars to pay for the destruction, but I don't think I'll ever get over the embarrassment when the manager said he was considering changing the name from "Golden Corral" to "The Golden Hog Trough"! And I'm not even going to mention the Burger King incident, or the chaos at CiCi's Pizza. The memories are too painful. (*she moves CS*). Well, my three little pigs, I have had to make a decision.
- LARRY: What's that mean... "decision"?
- LENNY: Numbskull! It means she's made up her mind between making pie or cake for us for tonight's dessert.

---

<sup>9</sup> "Sugar", of course, is the line that really starts the tears flowing for Mother Pig

- LARRY: Which one? I like cake! (*he tosses the popcorn bag away and rubs his "hooves" together in anticipation*).
- MOTHER PIG: IT MEANS that I must turn you three loose into the world. I love you all, but I can no longer bear the burden of your appetites. It is time you each were allowed to seek your own fortune.
- LARRY: Fortune? Fortune Cookie? We're gonna eat Chinese food? (*he dances a clumsy jig, eventually using Lenny as a reluctant partner*)
- MOTHER PIG: (*after stopping Larry's dancing<sup>10</sup>, she says tenderly*) You are sweet and dear to me, my three little pigs. But you're spoiled! You must learn the way of the world, without your mother to take care of you all the time. I've got a little money saved up for each of you as a going-away gift. (*she hugs Larry, gives him money, then "scoots" him off SR*)
- LARRY: No Chinese food for dinner?
- (MOTHER PIG hugs LENNY, gives him some money, then "scoots him off SR)
- LENNY: Send me my PlayStation sometime, OK Mom? And don't clean<sup>11</sup> up my room in case I have to come back. Ciao, Mom.<sup>12</sup>
- (MOTHER PIG hugs LULU and is about to give her the last of the cash, but LULU refuses it.)
- MOTHER PIG: (*sighing*) Always thinking about food.<sup>13</sup> (*to LULU*) Remember, my dear, what I have always said "Good fortune comes with hard work," and...
- LULU (at same time): "What's worth doing is worth doing well."
- MOTHER PIG: (*another hug*) That's right. Good luck, sweetheart.

<sup>10</sup> She stops Larry's dancing with a withering glare, worked out in rehearsals.

<sup>11</sup> Originally, it was, "...don't mess up my room..." Changed by director for better comedy.

<sup>12</sup> Added for Lenny characterization; for a one-liner.

<sup>13</sup> Response line to Lenny's *ciao*. Again, the humor is based on a pun.

LULU: Thanks, Mom. I won't let you down. *(LULU goes off SR. MOTHER PIG is left standing Center as the lights dim, come up DR on FARMER BATES.)*

## SCENE TWO

FARMER BATES: So the old Mother Pig sent her brood off into the world. I reckon like all mothers, she just knowed when the time was right for them to "leave the nest", or in this case, scoot from the hog lot. Who do you think's gonna do the best? Now, what do you reckon might be the first thing to do went you go off into the world? *(kids yell out things like: "Get a job", "Go to the bathroom", etc.)* Well, kids, for these pigs it was "Find a place to live..."

*(The PIGS enter SL. LULU carries a SUITCASE)*

LULU: We've got to find a place to live...

LARRY: Yeah, it's gettin' colder...

*(the PIGS stop in unison to listen as the WIND BLOWS eerily)*

LENNY: And scarier...

*(same pose of attention as a WOLF HOWLS offstage)*

LULU: *(sniffs behind LARRY)* And stinkier...

*(again, same pose as LARRY FARTS)*

LULU: *(the pigs start walking again, but more huddled together. They move en masse out into the audience.)* Colder and Scarier and Stinkier...

LARRY & LENNY: Oh, my...

LULU: Colder and Scarier and Stinkier...

LARRY & LENNY: Oh, my!

LULU: Hold on! Let's just be calm, brother hogs. There's nothing frightening about these woods. I mean, just take a look around you...

*(LARRY and LENNY do a complete 360 turn)*

LULU (cont.): ...do you see anything horrible or disgusting?

*(LARRY and LENNY see FARMER BATES at the same time. They scream)*  
 YESS!! AHHHHH!!

FARMER BATES: Hey! Wal...at least Grandpappy thinks I'm cute!<sup>14</sup>

*(the PIGS, spooked, scatter through the audience. They eventually meet back on stage, out of breath<sup>15</sup>)*

LENNY: OK, Lulu, you're right – we've got to find a house. A warm, safe, relatively non-stinky *(looks at LARRY)* house. Since you're so darn smart, I guess you know where to find one?

LARRY: Maybe one with a big kitchen, huh? And a refrigerator.

LENNY: Let's just make sure *you* find one with a toilet and a shower. Well-stocked with soap.

LARRY: For what?

LULU: Listen you two! We're not going to find a house just lying there, waiting for us to move in! We've got to BUILD a house, and it's going to take some hard work. It's like Mom always said, "Good fortune comes with hard work." I've been thinking. To withstand the cold winds and keep out the scary things, and for easier de-scenting *(LULU gives a significant look at LARRY)* the house should be built solid... C'mon, you guys. Let's go find some solid building stuff...

LENNY: Hey! You're not the boss of me! *(but he follows her SR)*

LARRY: When's supper? I'll let you boss me if you can tell me where McDonald's is... *(he follows LENNY and EXITS SR as the lights dim)*

### SCENE THREE

FARMER BATES: *(as lights come up, he is singing to the tune of "Home on the Range") Oh, give me a home/Where young pigs don't*

<sup>14</sup> Line added after "Hey" to provide a better exit line for Farmer Bates

<sup>15</sup> Stage directions cut because it made for one too many audience runs. The three audience runs that remained in the show were exhausting enough for the actors.

*room/Where they stay inside all day through/Where they stay safe and dry/And don't ever cry/Unless Larry starts to go poo.*

Well, younguns, Lulu was a smart one. She knew that hard work was the ticket, especially since winter was coming. (a WOLF HOWLS *offstage*) And other things might be a'coming, too... (*lights dim on FARMER BATES, come up CS where a salesman, EASY ED, has his BOOTH set up. Clearly (at least if you are not a little pig), Easy Ed is a slicked up WOLF, though his back is turned to the audience as he finishes that last HOWL. Easy Ed's store is set up just like a carnival sideshow booth, but the wares are as varied as a K-Mart's. Prominent are COOKING UTENSILS, like a big saltshaker, a frying pan, a bottle of KETCHUP, etc.*)

EASY ED: (*as his howl ends and he clears his throat*) Thaaaat's riiiiight! Get on over here, especially all you herbivores, to Easy Ed's Emporium of... (*he looks around*) Stuff!  
*(thinks a while)* Hardware! That's right! Aw, we got yards and yards of canvas, rubber, cotton sheets, or tin foil. We got big boards, ball-peen hammers, and buckets of bolts. We got saws, sacks of shingles, sheets of cellophane, and sugar-candy for the young customers! And for any of you with the slightly "unusual" tastes, we got butt-nickers, eyeball pluckers, tooth-hair trimmers – and pooper-scoopers<sup>16</sup>! I'm tellin' ya, folks. You think Wal-Mart has stuff? Fuggedaboutit<sup>17</sup>! You just come over and look around Easy Ed's Emporium! Home Items Galore! You got bug problems? Just got in a shipment of Super Nitro Poison Kill-O-Rama. Two truckloads out back – the stuff'll kill anything that crawls, slinks, scurries, or... moves (*last is said as Easy Ed kills an unseen bug*). You got... (*he thinks, and as he is thinking the THREE LITTLE PIGS enter SL*) Ah! You got... weight problems? Anyone need an exercise machine? I got hip-sleds, stationary bikes, bench press, leg press, and a grape press for wine-lovers! How about you, sir?

LARRY: Hey, did you mention "grapes"?

<sup>16</sup> "pooper-scoopers" was added to "punch" the line and emphasize that, as a con-artist, Ed leaves no stone unturned.

<sup>17</sup> "Fuggedaboutit". Bronxish for "Forget about it" was added by the director to add more humor to Easy Ed's salesman assault on the audience.

(LARRY wanders nearer to Ed's Emporium)

EASY ED: Now here's a pig after my own heart... A health-food addict! (*aside to audience*: "I like fresh meat myself. Cooked rare.") C'mon over here, please. Sir, you'll find no processed foods or meat products here (*he picks a HAM up from the counter and throws it over his shoulder*). We got grapes, sure, and bananas, mangos, kiwi. We got kadota figs!<sup>18</sup> We got blueberries, huckleberries, raspberries, Frankenberry Cereal, straw...

LARRY: Yes, please.

EASY ED: How's that?

LARRY: All of the above. What you said.

LULU: (*grabs LARRY's elbow*) Sir, food is not what we're here for. We all need to get to work on building a house...

EASY ED: House building! You shoulda said so! (*conspiratorially*) Now, I can see you are a young pig with her head on straight. A house is a first thing to do, a first priority! And you've come to the right place, cuz Easy Ed's Emporium makes it Easy! It's one-stop shopping here – well, I have just about everything! (*here comes the 'Big Slogan'*) And if Easy Ed's Emporium doesn't have it...you don't want it!

LULU: Well, what do you have that would make a strong, sturdy home?

EASY ED: Kinda depends, my young porky friend...now, do you want "top of the line", or "bottom of the heap" – price-wise?

LULU: Well...

LENNY: (*Sotto Voce to LULU*) Don't let him "con" you, sister. I've heard about guys like this Mr. Ed...

EASY ED: Please, call me "Easy". I ain't no horse.

---

<sup>18</sup> This line, "We got Kadota figs!" was cut early in rehearsal when it became clear that no one but me knew what a Kadota fig was! If the actors didn't know, the youngsters in the audience certainly would not.

- LENNY: ...cheating young pigs like us so bad...well, he just slaughters 'em!
- LULU: *(turning to Ed just as he is about to SALT LULU)*  
Mister...Easy, I got enough money for something good and solid, all right? What do you got?
- EASY ED: Tell you what. I'm gonna lay it all on the line, seeing as how your such an honest, forthright pig. I've got a big sale on...uh...*straw* today *(he lifts out of big armful of the stuff)*. Buy 10 bushels of it...and I throw in a free cake! *(he lifts out a large cake)* See? It says "Easy Ed's Emporium" right on the top of it!
- LENNY: That *is* some deal.
- LARRY: I'll take it!
- EASY ED: Great!
- LULU: *(drawing LARRY away by his tail as he BELLOWS)* Larry! Straw? Straw for a house? Are you nuts?
- LARRY: Where?
- LULU: Where what?
- LARRY: Nuts. You said "nuts". Where? What kind? Peanuts? Cornuts? The *Chile con Limon* kind? Where? You must tell me! *(he grabs LULU in a violent, desperate manner)*
- LULU: No! Calm down, Larry. I mean it would be crazy to build a house out of straw! It'd be too flimsy, too...
- (EASY ED has come up behind the pigs and salivated over them. At the word "flimsy", he taps both on shoulders)*
- LARRY & LULU: Ahhhhhhh!
- EASY ED: Ahem. Ma'am, I know my straw, and I gotta say that straw is a lot more durable than it looks. And did I mention to you folks that the free cake, you know, that comes with every 10 bushel straw purchase, that this cake has chocolate and coconut sprinkles on top?



- LARRY: Sold! Mister, I'll take my cake right now! *(he shoves a wad of bills into Easy Ed's hand and grabs the cake)*
- EASY ED: What about your straw?
- LARRY: Oh, yeah. That too.
- LULU: Larry, no! Wait!
- LARRY: Out of my way! I've got cake! I'm running with cake!
- EASY ED: Yeah, let 'im alone!
- LENNY: You big, dumb hog! At least share some cake with your brother!
- (LARRY has already exited SR, through the audience. LULU gives chase into the audience, but LARRY had too much of a head start)*
- LULU: *(returning to the stage)* This is just great! Wonderful!
- LENNY: Aw, what do you expect from Larry? His brains are in his belly. Me, I'm a different sort of pig. Lulu, stand aside. No, don't interfere, little sis. Let me handle this. I've bargained with the best of 'em, and there is no way that this Easy Ed fellow can outsmart me.
- EASY ED: *(he pops up from behind the counter)* Hey!
- LENNY: No, sir! No straw, no grass, and no hay!
- EASY ED: OK, then! I see a young pig before me who needs solid building materials! Who knows what he wants!
- LENNY: That's right. So I want the best stuff you got. And no funny business. No one "sticks it to" old Lennie!
- EASY ED: Sticks? You know about them? I mean, I figured you for a smart, shrewd, business-wise pig, but they're brand new on the market...
- LENNY: Of course I knew about them...uh, about what?
- EASY ED: C'mon, don't kid me. You said it yourself!
- LENNY: I did?

EASY ED: Sure, you did! Sticks, boy<sup>19</sup>!

LENNY: Oh yes. Know all about them...

EASY ED: Then you know they are just the latest thing in housebuilding. Forget about your stucco; and aluminum siding is so blase!

LENNY: Of course! You're right about that! But sticks...?

EASY ED: Sticks! Natural, durable, and best of all, inexpensive!

LENNY: Ok, now. Don't give me none of this talk about inexpensive! Inexpensive means one thing to guys like you, and another thing to a young pig just starting out!

EASY ED: Young sir, for 10 bundles of prime, high-quality, just picked sticks, you are just not gonna believe the price. In fact, just so we don't get a stampede up here of stick-buyers (*ED regards the audience suspiciously*), I'm gonna have to whisper this price into your ear. (*he does so, while with his free hand he SALTS LENNY*)

LENNY: No!

EASY ED: And that includes packaging, delivery, and some help with installation!

LENNY: Let me get this straight. 10 bundles of sticks for... (*he whispers in EASY ED's ear; as he does so, EASY ED SALTS LENNY again*)

EASY ED: You heard me right, my friend. And I'll even let you take the first bundle with you right now!

LENNY: (*in a trance*) Wow. (*he drops a few coins on the countertop, and takes the sticks*)

LULU: (*she can take this no longer*) Lennie! Sticks?!

EASY ED: (*to audience*) Uncle Wiley Coyote<sup>20</sup> just lost that bet! He said I'd never be able to sell those twigs I find lying around

<sup>19</sup> "boy" added to give Easy Ed a more down-home fatherly spin to this con.

<sup>20</sup> Kept in the show only after the insistence of the director. Seems the young actors had little knowledge of the Warner Brothers animated coyote, and those that did, not like the obscure

EASY ED (cont): his old mesquite tree! Well, Uncle, wherever you are chasing for your meal, I just sold 'em!!

LENNY: *(to LULU)* What? You saw how I got him to sell his best stuff for rock-bottom dollar! I'm telling you, sis, no one's ever gotten the better of me!

LULU: But...sticks are hardly better than straw! A good, strong breeze, and...

LENNY: Didn't you hear him? Delivery and installation? Geesh!

LULU: Yeah, but...

LENNY: My house will be up in no time...

LULU: But...

LENNY: I'll be safe and dry in my stick house by nightfall...

LULU: But...

LENNY: Just "butt" out! And don't be knocking on the door of my new stick house either, asking if I need a roommate!

*(and LENNY is halfway through the audience. LULU runs after him. They go all the way through the audience and out the exit doors.)*

EASY ED: *(to audience)* Young pig. You know what I'm talking... Don't look at me like you don't know. Pork chops. Tocino. Chorizo. Carne de Puerco! See, I knew I couldn't eat them all at once. I'm no glutton. I'm a gourmet! Plus, those big pigs might have put up a fight, and 3 on 1? Heck, even Michael Jordan wouldn't like those odds. And did you see the size of those pigs? Whew! What do they eat?<sup>21</sup> But now I know they'll be separate, and I'll know what house to look for! And how easy will it be for ol' Easy Ed to break into a straw house and a stick house! *(pause)* Now, for that last little piglet... She should be no problem, either. A female. *(ED says this just as LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD skips by, causing him*

---

reference that they felt would be lost on the children. For sentimental reasons, the playwright/director wanted it kept.

<sup>21</sup> From "...did you see the size" to "what do they eat" was added for comedy relief in what is rather a long monologue for an audience of children, but necessary by way of plot explanation.

*pause*<sup>22</sup>) What do females know about houses? Quiet!  
Here she comes!

LULU: *(coming back through the audience)* Don't worry, Lenny, I won't set foot in your dumb stick house! And by the way, don't light any matches in it...and watch for birds borrowing parts of your house for their nests!!

EASY ED: Ah! Welcome back! The smartest, not to mention cutest, of the whole smart bunch, I can see that. Boy, do I have a deal for you!

LULU: Look. No cakes, no sticks, no straw. I want bricks.

EASY ED: Bricks?

LULU: Bricks.

EASY ED: *(to audience)* Maybe I should just eat this one right now. As an appetizer.

LULU: Yes, sir. Bricks. You know, those small heavy rectangles of hard substance...

EASY ED: Yes, yes. But you haven't considered the expense, surely...

LULU: I have. And don't call me "Shirley". Just sell me one wheelbarrow full, and that should be fine.

EASY ED: The customer is always right...

*(EASY ED has snuck up behind LULU, who moves SL just as EASY ED is ready to pounce and devour)*

LULU: Wrong. Sometimes I make mistakes. We all do. But my mother taught me that hard work will bring you success, no matter if you make mistakes...

EASY ED: Speaking of steaks...

*(again, he is almost upon her when she abruptly walks back SR)*

---

<sup>22</sup> We needed to establish early that Little Red Riding Hood would be a factor in the play somehow. Her briefly skipping by, and the Wolf's pause, foreshadows her later importance. This was added with two weeks left of rehearsal.

- LULU: Not only hard work, but a little brains, too. Unlike my brothers, I've thought a long time about what would make the best, strongest house.
- EASY ED: I know, I know...Bricks!
- LULU: Bricks! Ladrillos!
- EASY ED: *(to audience)* She won't stand still! *(to LULU)* Look, little Miss...Piggy, may I be frank?
- LULU: Sure, you can be anyone you want...but I thought you called yourself 'Easy Ed'?
- EASY ED: Huh? Oh! Yeah, that's me, but I meant 'may I speak frankly, or very plainly'.
- LULU: Oh. Sure.
- EASY ED: Frankly speaking, when I say expensive, I mean *expensive*. *(he walks back to his booth)* Bill Gates came by yesterday, and he wanted to build a house, too. *He* couldn't afford brick! *(LULU is walking closer to Easy Ed's Booth)* Then King Midas, you know, the gentleman with the golden touch, came shopping too. He accidentally touched a brick, turned it into gold, and actually *devalued* the brick! *(slams GOLD BRICK onto the counter top)* I use it as a paperweight now! No, no, no. Brick is just too much. You're gonna have to "show me da money" before I even let you take a peek at a brick...
- (LULU lays down a suitcase on the countertop)*
- EASY ED: What's this? Going somewhere? *(he opens up the suitcase)* Ulp...uh...*(stares into the suitcase)* I don't believe it!
- LULU: So...did I "show you da money"?
- EASY ED: *(still staring into suitcase)* Oh, yeah.
- LULU: I'd like some bricks, please.

- EASY ED: *(still staring into suitcase)* Huh? Yeah, yeah, sure, sure. Right there. Take the wheelbarrow, too. Take whatever you want.<sup>23</sup>
- LULU: *(begins to push WHEELBARROW FULL OF BRICKS offstage Right)* Thank you, Mister.
- EASY ED: But how...*(he is still mesmerized)*
- LULU: Started saving when I was six. *(to audience)* Start saving early, kids! *(she exits SR)*
- EASY ED: *(suddenly startled from his trance. Looks at audience)* OK! OK! I let her go. But...that suitcase is *full*. *(slams the suitcase shut)* Fine. Let her go. Let her build a brick house a mile thick! I'll *still* find a way to have her for dessert! First, her brothers! *(throws off "slick" jacket)* Ready or not, little pigs! Here I come for dinner! *(he HOWLS and exits through audience as lights dim)*

#### SCENE FOUR

FARMER BATES: *(to the tune of Brick House by the Commodores).*

*She 'll build a brick...house . . .  
It 'll be strong, it 'll be thick  
And much better than straw or sticks  
Oh it 's a brick...house*

*(sees audience)* Oh. Howdy. Had a little '70's Disco flashback for a second there...I had the grooviest green leisure suit. I was what you'd call "hip". Aw, but then I went to college, majored in Animal Husbandry, and started full-time work in agriculture, on the family farm. I forgot all about my dreams of being a disco-dancer *(he cries a little)*...Shoot, all that's another story. So...the three little pigs went their separate ways to set up a homestead, each with either a pile of straw, sticks, or bricks, and started work on a little house. Not one of the little pigs was exactly what you'd call a *carpenter*, but they done their

---

<sup>23</sup> Line "take whatever you want.." added to prompt the funny business of Lulu removing merchandise from the emporium, including the rocking chair she will eventually have in her brick home, all while Easy Ed remains transfixed by the contents of the briefcase.

best...<sup>24</sup> (*lights dim on Farmer Bates, come up CENTER on Larry and his straw house.*)

LARRY: (*he sits with his back to his straw house, the cake plate and a big pile of crumbs around him. He stretches*) Mmmm, that cake was moist and gooey. (*fart noise*)<sup>25</sup> I love eating dessert first! Gee, I guess I love eating it second, too. And third. (*he searches around him for any stray crumbs, picks up a handful of STRAW instead*). Look at my nice house. Easy to build, too. (*he throws his handful of straw at the house*). ‘Course, I had to hurry a little when I was building. I couldn’t wait to get to my cake! (*he finds a crumb and eats it*) So I cut a few corners – didn’t build every part exactly perfect? So what? (LARRY *stands and reaches to for the doorknob to open the door. The knob falls off*) Oops. (*he sticks the knob back in*) There. No problem. I’m gonna go in to my neato straw house, and take a nap before dinner...

EASY ED (WOLF): (*he enters SR*) Did somebody mention dinner? Ham sounds good. Rrrrrreal good. Well, what do you know?! A straw house! I wonder who might be living here?

(*a loud SNORE from LARRY within*)

WOLF: (*to audie:::c:*) A freight train? (*snore*) A chain saw? (*sniffs the air*) Ah! The home of a little pig. (*he peeks inside*) Make that a “big” pig. Ahem. (HOWLS)

LARRY: (*jumps up*) Yow! What a nightmare I had! I dreamt I was turning over and over above a fire, with all these hot coals. Then somebody stuck an apple in my mouth. Actually, that part was OK. Mmmmm...apples. Apple pie. Apple turnovers. Apple fritters...

WOLF: Oh, Little Pig!

LARRY: What’s that? Who’s that?

WOLF: It’s me! Little Red Riding Hood! (*clears throat – to*

---

<sup>24</sup> Deep into rehearsals it became clear that the last line here, “...but they done did their best...” was just not true to the play, for only Lulu does her best, not her brothers. The line was changed to: “...but they done did put up a house each. Somehow.”

<sup>25</sup> A case where a sound device changes a play. I was in possession of a “whoopy cushion”, which the Larry character used to great advantage and audience merriment here and elsewhere in the play.

WOLF (cont): *audience:)* Wrong story. I mean it's just a guest! I've come for...dinner!

LARRY: Oh yeah? What'd you bring? (LARRY *opens the door, sees the wolf*)

WOLF: What did I *bring*? I brought my appetite!

LARRY: Ahh! (*slams door*)

WOLF: (*mashes his nose on LARRY's door*). Just let me in. It will save a lot of trouble.

LARRY: You're the wolf!

WOLF: Duh! And I'm a hungry wolf!

LARRY: But you sold me this straw!

WOLF: All the better to eat you with, my...Darn! Wrong story again! I know I sold it to you, you dummy! Now let me in so I can eat you up. I'm hungry! (HOWLS)

LARRY: Gee, since you put it that way...I know what it's like to be hungry. (LARRY *opens door and starts to walk out*) What am I doing?!

WOLF: Yummy pork!

LARRY: (*slams door in Wolf's face. Wolf mashes his nose again.*) There's no food here! Believe me, I've looked.

WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let ME COME IN!

LARRY: No way!

WOLF: How 'bout for a piece of pie?

LARRY: Well...(Wolf *snarls hungrily*) Not even if you really had some!

WOLF: I said...Little pig, little pig, LET ME COME IN!

LARRY: No, no, not by the hair of my chinny chin chin. (*to audience*) Anyway, I shaved this morning.



WOLF: What to do? (*thinks*) Ah! Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blloooowwww your house in!

LARRY: Not! You said this was solid high-quality straw!

WOLF: Ha! Whatever.<sup>26</sup>

(*Wolf gathers a huge breath in an elaborate sort of wind-up, then BLOWS. BLACKOUT. Larry's straw house is removed from around him. Lights up.*)

LARRY: Uh-oh.

WOLF: Piece of cake.

LARRY: Where?

WOLF: No! I mean, that was easy! Now hold still while I take you to my cooking pot. (*he takes out his big SALT SHAKER*)

LARRY: Lennie! Lulu!

(*a chase through the audience. Wolf finally nabs LARRY CS*)

WOLF: Pig, you've irritated me. I don't mind blowing down houses, but I don't like chasing my meals! I leave that to Uncle Willy Coyote. For making me chase you, I'm going to give you a little "time out" before I eat you, while I find your brother and sister! (*thinks*) That's it! I'll capture them one by one, but eat them as one big family! Delish!

(*WOLF secures Larry in a CAGE situated on the right aisle of the audience.*)

Just sit there a while. Think about how you made me chase you. And think about how you'll feeling boiling in my stewpot with cabbages and radishes! Ha, ha, ha, ha!<sup>27</sup>

(*Wolf scurries off stage*)

## SCENE FIVE

FARMER BATES: (*holds up NEWSPAPER that reads:*) HOME IN SHAMBLES. HUFFING, PUFFING SUSPECTED.

<sup>26</sup> "Whatever" added as a nod to modern kid vernacular.

<sup>27</sup> From "Just sit there..." to "...cabbages and radishes" was cut a week prior to opening. It was apparent that the Wolf was a tad wordy in his capturing of Larry, and this deletion remedied the problem.

- (*looking down at Larry in his prison*) What a sorry sight. He looks as miserable as a wet cat under a garden hose.  
(*walks down to Larry's jail cell*) Look at this poor feller.
- FARMER BATES  
(cont.): That slickster Wolf has you corralled, huh? Like a lizard in a briar patch. Like a ...
- LARRY: Gee, why don't you quit jabbering and let me out?
- FARMER BATES: Like to, big boy, but no can do. I'm just telling the story – I can't take part.
- LARRY: Could you at least hook me up with some snacks?
- FARMER BATES: Snacks?
- LARRY: Snacks! Butterfingers, Mars Bars, Doritos, a couple of Cokes! Snacks! Snacks!
- FARMER BATES: Snacks before you become a snack? Oops! Sorry.
- LARRY: Ahhhhh! (*pause*) Wait a minute! My brother and sister will save me!
- FARMER BATES: Good for you, Larry! Don't get all sour-faced, like you just ate a ornery bite of shoo-fly pie. Who knows, that sis of yours might come by and sing: *If you're ever in a jam, here I am!*
- LARRY: Did he say "jam"? Mmmmmm. Jam. Jelly. Preserves..<sup>28</sup>
- FARMER BATES: (*back on SR*). You too, kids. Keep your hopes up, no matter what tries to get you down! So, soon, that old Wolf was up to his old tricks. He went about his evil plan to eat all of the little pigs... Who do you think is next on his horrible grocery list? (*audience voices their opinion*) Well, let's just see... (*Lights down on FB, up SC*)
- LENNY: (*putting the last of some sticks in place on his house*) And...there! (*walks around his stick house, appraising its beauty*) Yes! Has there ever been a house this beautiful? I could move the whole thing to Plazas del

---

<sup>28</sup>“preserves” changed to “with preservaeratives” to better fit the Larry character.

Lago Drive in Edinburg<sup>29</sup> and just fit right in! It's just breathtaking!

WOLF: *(entered SR and singing)* Pigs and Pork...and Pork and Pigs/ These are a few of my favorite things... *(stops when he sees LENNY's house)* Yuck!

LENNY: What's "yuck"?

WOLF: Oh, not you! You look yummy! It's that house! Eeoouu!<sup>30</sup>

LENNY: Hey, I worked for... *(looks at wrist, finds no watch, asks audience "what time is it?")* almost 10 whole minutes putting this house together!

WOLF: I can tell. It's making my eyes water.

LENNY: Wait a minute. You sound like Easy Ed the salesman, but you're...*(gives Wolf a good looking-over as the Wolf stands proudly)*

WOLF: Ain't I handsome?

LENNY: . . . You're the Wolf!

WOLF: Make that the "hungry" wolf!

LENNY: Ahhhh!

WOLF: *(a growl)* ARRRRRHHHH!

LENNY: My sturdy stick house will save me! *(runs inside)*

WOLF: Sturdy? Ha! I sold you mesquite branches from my uncle's yard! *(nevertheless, door slams and Wolf cannot get inside)* Open up!

LENNY: Yeah, right! I'm not that dumb!

---

<sup>29</sup>"Plazas del Lago Drive in Edinburg" changed to "La Mansion in McAllen to better reach the McAllenes who represented most of our audience.

<sup>30</sup> "Eeoouu" changed to "Yikes!" for better clarity (hard consonants).

WOLF: Oh yes you are! You bought these sticks for a house, didn't you?

LENNY: *(thinks)* Well, they're keeping you out, aren't they?

WOLF: *(considering, then decides to try the "sweet" approach)*  
Oh, little pig, won't you please let me in?

LENNY: Get lost!

WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let ME COME IN!

LENNY: No, NO! Not even by the hair of my chinny chin chin. Now why did I say that? That was corny.

WOLF: Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blowwwww your house in!

LENNY: Give it your best shot! I'm tellin' ya, I put this stick house together with considerable building talent.

WOLF: Uh-huh. Don't forget, I sold you those worthless sticks.

*(Wolf gathers an ostentatious breath and BLOWS. LENNY bows his head against the force of the wind, and the house holds).*

WOLF: Huh?

LENNY: Yeaaaaah! You see what good carpentry can do, Wolf? I'm safe.

WOLF: Maybe those sticks weren't so flimsy... All right, all right, just wait a second...

LENNY: Sure, I'll wait a "second". Just let me get my calendar and I'll time you. Ha!

WOLF: You're asking for it. *(this time, he gathers an even greater double-lungful of wind, in an even funnier display).*

LENNY: Careful, you might explode.

*(Wolf BLOWS. Again, Lennie must bow his head, and this time he must hang onto part of the house against the hurricane force. BLACKOUT. Lennie's stick house is removed. Lights up.)*

LENNY: Not Good.

WOLF: Whew. I need to get in shape.<sup>31</sup>

LENNY: Ahhhhhh! (Lennie runs, through the audience)

WOLF: Aw, don't do that.

*(he gives an initially tired chase. Wolf, in his fatigue, grabs a bold child and brings him on stage instead)*

WOLF: Now, just add a little salt... *(takes out his giant SALT SHAKER)* Hey! You're not that little pig! You're a little kid<sup>32</sup>! Well, I guess you'll do...No, get the pig. (Wolf returns the child to audience. Sees Lennie hiding.) Ha! You can run, but you can't hide! *(chase resumes. WOLF nabs LENNY on stage after a brief, World Wrestling-type struggle<sup>33</sup>)*

WOLF: Victory! *(WOLF plants foot on LENNY's chest)*

LENNY: Defeat. *(LENNY indicates Wolf's feet on him)*

WOLF: *(a he begins to bite)* Hold on. I believe I'll save you too. That way, I'll be so hungry when I catch your sister, it will make the feast all the more delicious! *(WOLF drags LENNY to the same cell where LARRY waits)*

LARRY: Lennie! You've come to save me!

LENNY: Not the same cell as Larry!

LARRY: Did you bring anything to eat?

LENNY: *(to WOLF)* You don't understand. You can't put mein there with him. It's the smell.

WOLF: Stop complaining. Both of you. Get in there.

*(WOLF shoves LENNY into cell. LARRY hugs him joyfully as LENNY cringes)*

---

<sup>31</sup> Inventive actor playing the Wolf may add reasons for being out of shape. The original Wolf usually said, "Too many *frijoles*."

<sup>32</sup> The line originally read, "You're a human child!" Changed for parallelism with "You're not a little pig."

<sup>33</sup>For a detailed description of the original choreography of the struggle between the Wolf and Lennie, please see the end page following this text of the play.

LENNY: Larry! Give me a break!

LARRY: OK. (*LARRY starts to crack LENNY in half, like when a person "pops" another's back*)

LENNY: Not that kind of "break", OK? Take it easy, Larry.

LARRY: Oh. OK. Gee, I'm glad to see you, bro.

LENNY: Yeah. I'm glad to see you, too. Only, now what are we gonna do?

LARRY: Uh...

WOLF: Do? I'll tell you what you're gonna do. You're gonna sit in there and kind of "simmer" while I apprehend your dainty morsel of a sister. Then, you'll all be together again. In my stewpot! How nice. (*WOLF runs off, chuckling*)

LENNY: Man, we *are* in a stew.

LARRY: Yeah.

LENNY: There's no way out of here, huh?

LARRY: Nope.

LENNY: I guess we'll wait for Lulu.

LARRY: Yeah.

LENNY: Larry, would you stop agreeing with me?

LARRY: OK.

LENNY: (*groans. Pause.*) Hey, what about him? Can he helpus? (*Points to FARMER BATES*)

LARRY: Naw. I already tried that. He doesn't even have any snacks.

FARMER BATES: Sorry.

LENNY: Great. That's just perfect. Well, I don't know about you, Larry, but I'm going to...scream.

LARRY: Ice cream? Where?

LENNY: HEEEELLLPPP! SOMEBODY! LULU!

LARRY: MOM!

LENNY: SOMEONE GET US OUT OF HERE!

LARRY: MI DUEL E PANSITA!<sup>34</sup>

*(and as the lights come up SR, attention shifts to FARMER BATES)*

### SCENE SIX

FARMER BATES: Gosh. *Two little pigs caught. It's a sad day for the Pig family. Wrote a little song about it – Go like this (sung to the tune of "In the Jungle, the Mighty Jungle, the Lion Sleeps Tonight"):*

*Near the farmyard – the dusty farmyard  
A Wolf hunts pigs tonight...  
He's captured two, now they're feeling blue  
'Cuz their sis might be next tonight...  
AhOOOOOOooooooWeeeeeooooay um bomdu way...*

LENNY: Hey! If we knew this singing was gonna be that bad, we woulda let the Wolf eat us in our houses!<sup>35</sup>

FARMER: *AhOOOOOO!*<sup>36</sup> What d'ya think? That good, huh. I just might retire from agriculture and embark upon a new career as a recording artist...Maybe N'Sync will ask me to join them...Anyhoo, thinks do look grim for the pig family. Far from their mother, hoodwinked into buying straw and sticks as building materials, preyed upon by a nasty wolf. I guess it's up to Lulu as the "last stand" against the wolf.  
*(Lights down on FB, up SC)*

---

<sup>34</sup> Translated means, "The little stomach hurts!" Added for our Valley bilingual audiences, to great comedic effect.

<sup>35</sup> Added for comedic effect. Farmer Bates' bad country versions of popular tunes have been grating on the audience all evening long. Lennie simply voices what the audience is probably thinking.

<sup>36</sup> Added to indicate Farmer Bates' confidence is intact. He continues the song nonplussed.

- LULU: *(she sits in a ROCKING CHAIR in her brick house, drinking a cup of tea.)* Ah, there's no place like home.
- WOLF: *(enters SR)* Hmmm. I don't believe it, but she built it after all. A regular ranch-style brick house.
- LULU: *(looking around her)* All the comforts of home.
- WOLF: Looks sturdy too.
- LULU: *(to audience)* A pig's home is her castle.
- WOLF: A little test. *(he raps his hand on the wall of the house)*  
Ow!
- LULU: Excuse me? Who's there? Yes, I am a sow.
- WOLF: I said "ow".
- LULU: No, I'm not a cow. I'm a pig. Look, I'm having trouble hearing because of my titanium-alloy, steel-reinforced door, so speak up. Who are you and what do you want?
- WOLF: *(Bronx accent)* Ah... This is Mr. Piscotti<sup>37</sup>, the cableguy? I understand you want the ah...Disney Channel?
- LULU: Excuse me? No thanks. Good-bye.
- WOLF: Oh, but I'm sure you'll love our great selection of channels. We've got ESPN, Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network, the Fright Channel...*(bares his fangs)*
- LULU: You really think I want all those channels?
- WOLF: Hey, we got the Cooking Channel! It has lessons on how to make gourmet meals: Eggplant Parmigiana, Orange Marmalade, Pork and Beans...
- LULU: *(with disgust)* No, thank you! I have all I want and need, snug and happy inside my brick home.
- WOLF: *(mocking)* Snug and happy inside my brick home...
- LULU: Pardon me? Go away, whoever you are!

---

<sup>37</sup> Originally, the cable guy's name was "Mr. Smithers." "Mr. Piscotti" fit the Bronx accent used by the original actor.



WOLF:                   Argggghhh! I've got to make her open this door! You two! (points to Larry and Lennie's cell) Make noise! Yell for your sister!

LENNY:                 No! We'll never betray her!

WOLF:                   Do it, or I will eat you first!

LENNY:                 LULU! LULU! HELP!

LARRY:                 WE'RE STARVING!

LULU:                   Hey! That sounded like...*(she opens her door)*

WOLF:                   Surprise!

LULU:                   You're no TV guy! You're a Wolf!

WOLF:                   A hungry Wolf!

LENNIE:                LULU! HELP US!

LARRY:                 A COKE! CHIPS! SOMETHING!

WOLF:                   OK, OK, that's good enough! The door's open!

LULU:                   What have you done with my brothers?

WOLF:                   Don't worry, you'll be with them soon...

*(WOLF charges the door, but LULU shuts it just in time, so that the WOLF butts his head on the solid door.)*

WOLF:                   OWWWWWWW! I *did* sell you my best bricks.

LULU:                   Yes, you did. Thank you. Mr. Wolf, you're going to regret treating my brothers like that.

WOLF:                   Oh? Listen, you can punish me as much as you like; just open the DOOR!

*(WOLF shoulder charges the door. LULU opens it just as the WOLF is almost upon it, so that his momentum carries him pirwheeling through the house to CRASH off-stage Left)*

LARRY: Yeah, Lulu!

LENNY: *(to audience)* That's our sister.

*(The WOLF emerges from SL, bedraggled, picking garbage out of his hair. He walks around to the front of LULU's house, throwing away a dead fish caught in his pockets.)*

WOLF: It's OK! I'll just walk it off!

LULU: Did you have a nice trip?

WOLF: Arrrrrghhh! Little pig, little pig, LET ME COME IN!

LULU: No, no, not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!

WOLF: *(sighs tiredly)* Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll...Bloowwwwwww your house in.

LULU: I don't think so!

*(WOLF takes in a huge breath and blows. Nothing.)*

LULU: My, there's such a nice, gentle breeze today.

WOLF: Bricks!

*(He takes in a super-huge breath and blows. Nothing.)*

LULU: My, I think I felt a little hot air!

WOLF: Hot air? OK, you smarty little pig, that's it! Herecomes, just for you and your special house, my Deluxe Megaton Hurricane Huff!*(WOLF performs an insane dance of mystic mumbo-jumbo<sup>38</sup>, conjuring up his lung-power. He finally blows, turning red, then green in the face. Nothing.)*

LULU: I think that might have rattled my shutters. Do you think so? Nah.

*(WOLF stands, hands on his knees, in stunned disbelief, breathing hard.)*

WOLF: Bricks! All right. You've won this round, little pig! I'll just have to think of some other way to get to you! I'm off

---

<sup>38</sup> This can be a truly funny moment in the play. As instructed by the director, the original Wolf built this into about a minute of stunning gyrations.

to think, think, think! I'll be back, just you wait! (*WOLF exits through audience.*)

LULU: (*through the window<sup>39</sup> of the brick house*) Think all you want, you'll never get me! And don't worry, brothers, I'm thinking of a way to get rid of that Wolf so that I can save you. I must sit in my house and think, think, think! (*Blackout.*)

## SCENE SEVEN

(*Lights come up on the JAIL CELL of LARRY and LENNY.*)

FARMER BATES: (*walking in front of the cell*) Meanwhile...back at the ranch...or I mean the pig prison...some other folks are doing some thinking, too...

LENNY: (*to FARMER BATES*) They know where we are, OK?

LARRY: Who?

LENNY: Them. The children.

LARRY: Oh. Say, any of you got anything to eat?

LENNY: Stop it, Larry. Don't you be bothering them, too.

LARRY: Aw, gee.

LENNY: You know, Larry, I've been doing some thinking...I mean, we've had quite a bit of time to just sit and think.

LARRY: I've been thinking about tacos. Mmmmmm.

LENNY: I've been thinking about what got us here!

LARRY: That's easy. The wolf brought us.

LENNY: Yes, yes. But Larry, what *really* brought us to this miserable place?

LARRY: Uh.....I'm tellin' you, it was the Wolf!

---

<sup>39</sup> Originally, this was a "cracked door." Our final set design made the open window a much better choice from which to say this line.

LENNY: No. Larry, what brought us here is this: we never listened to Mother Pig.

LARRY: C'mon! Whenever she yelled "Dinner!", I was always there!

LENNY: Right. But I mean about the important stuff. Do you remember what she used to say?

LARRY: Ummmm...

LENNY: Well I do. It came back to me while I was sitting in here wishing I was somewhere else. She used to say, "Good fortune comes with hard work," and... "What's worth doing is worth doing well."

LARRY: You know, you're right. She did say that a lot. But what's that got to do with us?

LENNY: Don't you get it, Larry? If we would have tried to live like what the words say, we wouldn't be here! We'd be safe, like Lulu! (pause) I picked sticks for my house 'cuz I thought they'd be easy to build with.

LARRY: Yeah. I picked straw so I could be done quick...in time for cake<sup>40</sup>...

LENNY: You see? So here we are.

LARRY: Wow. You're right. (Pause)

LARRY: Hey, Lennie...

LENNY: Yeah?

LARRY: I'm still hungry.

LENNY: Aw, stop thinking about your belly...

*(Blackout)*

## SCENE EIGHT

---

<sup>40</sup> Originally, "lunch". However, the Wolf's cake ploy and Larry's obsession with cake made the change logically and the line funnier – more in keeping with Larry.

FARMER BATES: Lulu was safe. But do you think that Wolf would give up?  
Heck no. He promised himself that he'd *never* give up.

*(Lights up stage center on LULU's brick house. LULU is rocking, enjoying her brick home, dusting some of her homey ecoutrements.)*

LULU: Ahhhhh. I sure do enjoy my lovely home. But I've got to think.<sup>41</sup>

*(WOLF appears SR. He is dressed in drag, carrying a huge purse and wearing a stylish hat.)*

WOLF: *(to audience)* Say what you want! I promised myself I'd never give up. And this outfit will help me get that pig, just you watch.

*(he stalks the house)*

Plus, this color looks great on me.

*(WOLF knocks on LULU's door)*

WOLF: Ow!

LULU: Wow? Yes, my house is something, isn't it?

WOLF: *(girl voice)* Oh, my! Yes, it is! Such a lovely, hardbrick!

LULU: I'm very proud of it. Built it myself, you know.

WOLF: You don't say? Gracious! How satisfied you must be!

LULU: *(finally opening door)* My gosh, pardon my rudeness...

*(LULU sees the WOLF, who, as a woman, is even more frightening. LULU SLAMS the door. The WOLF bashes his nose on the door)*

WOLF: Ow!

LULU: Yow! That was scary!

WOLF: Land sakes! Why, never in all my life have I been treated in such a fashion...

---

<sup>41</sup>"But I've got to think" was added when it became clear that, although she loves her home, Lulu must be very anxious about her brothers, as she was in the previous scene. It was the playwright's oversight to not initially include Lulu's worry as this scene opens.

LULU: *(through closed door)* Ma'am, I am sorry. It's just... well, you kind of took me by surprise!

WOLF: What in heaven's name do you mean?

LULU: Um... is today Halloween?

WOLF: Halloween? Why no, it isn't.

LULU: Oh. Ma'am, once again I certainly apologize. Now, who did you say you were?

WOLF: I didn't, actually, but since you ask, I'm Madge, the Avon lady. I came here to discover if you'd like to buy some... Avons.

LULU: Oh! In that case, won't you please come in? *(opens door and Wolf enters)*

WOLF: Thank you.

LULU: I'm so sorry I slammed the door... I... please, have a seat in my favorite rocking chair.

WOLF: Don't mind if I do.

LULU: *(pause)* Well, may I offer you something? A cookie? A cup of tea? A... twinkie?

*(As LULU searches for tea, or a cup, Wolf stands and walks directly behind her)*

WOLF: A ham sandwich.

LULU: *(turning and bumping into Wolf)* Eeeek! Excuse me?

WOLF: Oh, no, no, no. I'm fine... for now.

LULU: *(an awkward pause)* Ummmm... Oh! You mentioned you were selling something...

WOLF: Oh, gracious! Thank you, my dear, for reminding me...

*(Wolf reaches into his purse. However, at that moment, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD comes traipsing up to LULU's door, and KNOCKS)*

LULU: *(to Wolf)* Excuse me. Who's there?!

LRRH: It's me, Grandmother! I've brought you some bread, some cheese, and chicken soup<sup>42</sup> for your cold.

LULU: Grandmother?

WOLF: Chicken soup? Mmmmmm...chicken.

*(Lulu opens door)*

LULU: Who are you?

LRRH: Hey! You're not my grandmother! *(to Wolf)* Are you?

WOLF: *(in Wolf voice)* No!..er..no.

LRRH: Ooo. What big teeth that lady has...

WOLF: *(interrupting)* Little girl, if you would excuse us for the moment. However, I'll make sure to call upon you later!

LULU: Yes, you better run along. As you can see, this is not your grandmother's house.

LRRH: No, it isn't. And that Wolf dressed as a lady is too weird. *(LRRH leaves)*

LULU: Excuse me?

WOLF: What?

LULU: Did that little girl just say that...that...

WOLF: Well, you know kids these days. Such active little imaginations...*(sotto voce)* the little, snot-nosed, brat.

LULU: *(dawning horror)* ...You're the Wolf!

WOLF: *(reaching into her purse, pulling out a skillet and the salt shaker)*...No kidding! Yes. A HUNGRY Wolf!

LULU: I should have known! No woman could have been that ugly!

---

<sup>42</sup> Originally, LRRH only brought chicken soup. Then it was felt her grandmother would prefer a more balanced fare. Plus it makes the Wolf's "mmmm...chicken soup" funnier since he has picked the meat out of the whole menu.

WOLF: *(suddenly self-conscious)* Ugly? But this color goes so well with my eyes.

LULU: Right. Like Mustard Yellow meets Wolfman Brown.

WOLF: Never mind! Soon, you'll be slathered with mustard on brown bread!

LULU: *(beginning to run)* No way!<sup>43</sup>

WOLF: Way!

*(So begins a climactic CHASE. Through audience, around children, etc. Just when it seems as though the Wolf is too tired, and that Lulu may possibly escape, Wolf first scribbles, then hangs a sign on the door of the cell that reads: WORRIED ABOUT YOUR LIFE? COME ON IN FOR A FREE CONSULTATION. Lulu steps through the door)*

#### SCENE NINE

LENNY/LARRY: Lulu? Lulu?

LULU: Guys?

*(WOLF slams door behind her)*

LULU: What is this? That sign said...

WOLF: It said, "Worried about your Life". Well, worry no more. It's over! All that's left is to bring the garnishes, and some spices. Finally, it's time to EAT! *(WOLF runs off)*

LARRY: Lulu! He's going to cook us!

LULU: I know.

LENNIE: We'll be stewed!

LULU: I know.

LARRY/LENNY: What can we do?!

---

<sup>43</sup> Cut from the initial script was "LENNY/LARRY: Go Lulu, Go!". Cut because it made her eventual ensnarement less probable if her brothers were cognizant of her flight.



LULU: I'm still thinking...

LARRY: Lulu...!

LENNY: Lulu, listen: Larry and I have been doing a lot of thinking. We have realized how silly we have been. You always listened to Mom...you were smart... Yeah. *Were* smart! Whoa, how did that wolf blow down your house anyway?

LULU: He didn't.

LARRY: He didn't?

LENNY: You mean, he caught you outside the house? Lulu, come on! Not even Larry let him do that!

LARRY: *(first laughing, then catching on<sup>44</sup>)* Hey.

LULU: Lenny, the point is, he's got us, and we've got to think of a way to escape. Larry, don't just stand there with your hands in your pockets. Think!

*(LARRY pulls hands out of his overall pockets. Out falls a handy THREE-IN-ONE TOOL)*

LARRY: Ccc. . . . .

LENNY: You moron!

LULU: Give me that!

LENNY: We could have used that to escape long before now!

LARRY: Sorry. I forgot I had it. I guess I was too hungry.

LULU: It's all right! We have it now! *(she begins to work on the cell door)*

WOLF: *(returning, pushing his PIG POT)* Have what?

LULU: *(hiding tool)* Um...have...lost our desire to live!

LENNY: Yeah. *(fake sniffles)*

LARRY: They might have, but I haven't. I'm hungry!

---

<sup>44</sup>Comedic bit added in rehearsal by the actor playing Larry.

LULU/LENNY: Larry!

WOLF: That's OK, "Larry" is it? I'm hungry, too. However I'm afraid my hunger will be satisfied before yours. Now, all of you. Figure out who's gonna be first into my little pigpot.<sup>45</sup> C'mon, this should be easy for you since you've lost all desire to live...

LULU: Um...

WOLF: Oh, wait! I forgot the jalepenos! (*he scurries off once again*)

LENNY: Quick, Lulu!

LULU: I'm hurrying! (*she begins to work on the cell door with the tool*)

LARRY: Hurry, I'm hungry!

WOLF: (*returning*) No...jalapenos would make the stew too... What's this! A break-out!

LULU: (*caught in the act*) Yes! You'll never eat us!

WOLF: *Au Contrare!* The eating will begin in seconds!

LARRY: What are we having?

LENNY: Numbskull! He's having us!

LARRY: Oh, yeah.

WOLF: I'll take that pathetic little wrench!

(*WOLF come to grab it through the bars. LULU suddenly uses it to grasp and twist WOLF's nose*)

WOLF: Arrrrrgh!

---

<sup>45</sup>Originally, this line read "Step right over here into my stewpot." However since the cell door was still closed, how could the pigs just "step on over"? Therefore, the line was changed.

LULU:                    You may eat us, but you won't ever smell another piece of meat again!

*(WOLF finally succeeds in pulling free, crashing into his own pigpot.)*

WOLF:                    Enough of the horseplay...I mean pigplay! Everyone get your little keesters into my boiling pigpot!<sup>46</sup>

LARRY:                  Lulu...

LENNY:                  I think this is it...

LULU:                    Brothers, hold my hands...

LRRH:                    There he is! That's the one!<sup>47</sup>

MOTHER PIG:            Where?

LRRH:                    There! The one with the hairy paws!

WOLF:                    Who's that?

MOTHER PIG:            Your worst nightmare. An incensed mother.

LENNY:                  Mom! It's about time...                    . . .

MOTHER PIG:            My darlings!

LARRY:                  Mom! What's for supper?

WOLF:                    Cut with the sugar – I'm gonna need an insulin shot!  
Mother Pig, you can just climb into my pigpot too!

MOTHER PIG:            Red, let's get 'im.

---

<sup>46</sup>The line is a funny embellishment that we decided to keep of the original "Get into my pot!" .

<sup>47</sup> From Little Red Riding Hood and Mother Pig's entrance at the top of this page, to the thanking of Red a few pages later, represents a new ending, one that was not used in performance. Originally, Mother Pig came charging in just as things looked bleakest for the little pigs. She rushed past the Wolf, knocking him into his own pigpot, to save the day. After performances, I felt that ending was too anticlimactic. All along the Wolf had been very formidable, even against three pigs, and would the addition of a fourth change things so drastically? I think not. Having already introduced the "wild card" element of Little Red, I saw her combining forces with Mother Pig to bring about the Wolf's defeat. I also felt this ending sequeways to a sequel of sorts, a new version of "Little Red Riding Hood", in which Red and this Wolf are old enemies because of what she's done to stop him in this story.

WOLF:                   Huh? Hey, wait a minute...

LRRH:                   Yeah.

*(WOLF turns to retreat, sees the suddenly emboldened little pigs, who don't seem so little anymore. He turns back to RED and MOTHER PIG on his left, both full of righteous wrath)*

WOLF:                   Whoa! *(he counts heads)* One, two, three, four, five!

*(The little PIGS, MP, and LRRH slowly encircle the Wolf)*

WOLF:                   *(to audience)* I don't like these odds!

MOTHER PIG:         These odds don't like what you were about to do.

LULU:                   Yeah!

LENNY:                 Right, sis.

LARRY:                 *(pointing at RED)* Who's she?

WOLF:                   *(suddenly seeing FARMER BATES)* You! I pick you for my side!

FARMER BATES:       Sorry! You know what I can do, though! I'll sing you a sympathy song.

ALL BUT WOLF:       NO!!

WOLF:                   That's OK.

*(In desperation, the Wolf reaches into his pigpot and pulls out a LARGE FORK. The good guys pull back a bit)*

MOTHER PIG:         What's that?

WOLF:                   You should know. It's a CARVING FORK! The kind used when you're cooking *meat*.

*(the good guys draw further back, gasping in horror)*

WOLF:                   That's right. Just back up. Back up, or I'm gonna start carving.

*(and it seems the Wolf will actually force the pigs to do his bidding, but...)*

LRRH: Wait a minute. I recognize that kind of fork. Hey, that's a carving fork, all right. It's used on TURKEYS!

LARRY: Gobble, gobble.

WOLF: I'm telling ya, this is...*(he looks at the fork)* Oh.

*(The pigs SIGH IN RELIEF)*

MOTHER PIG: My babies!

*(Mother Pig and Red rush to the little pigs, knocking the Wolf into the PigPot on their way)*

WOLF: Ulp.

MOTHER PIG: Thanks, Little Red.

LRRH: It was nothing.

LARRY: Huh? I don't get it.

MOTHER PIG: When I came to check on you guys, I found your houses either empty or gone! So, I asked Little Red here where you might be, and she said look around here!

WOLF: *(poking his head out of the pot)* Her! I'll get her somehow!

MOTHER PIG: I think you're "getting" days are over.

WOLF: Boiled....I mean foiled again!

MOTHER PIG: *(to pigs)* I'm just glad you're safe!

*(Blackout. Cell [and wolf] are removed. Lights up.)*

## SCENE TEN

FARMER BATES: Well folks! And here we are! Everythin's hunky-dorry. And I think everybody involved learned a little lesson, don't you?

LRRH: If someone needs help, HELP! And teamwork is cool!

MOTHER PIG:           *(entering)* Every so often, check up on your kids.

LULU:                   *(entering)* A brick house is strong, but by itself, it won't protect you. *You* must be strong, too!

LENNY:                 *(entering)* What Mom said. Do it right the first time.

LARRY:                 *(entering)* Eat first! Then work.

ALL BUT LARRY:      Larry!

LARRY:                 Aw, you know what I mean...

ALL PIGS  
and LRRH:             Here Ed! Come here, boy!

*(FARMER BATES brings EASY ED in on a leash, which he gives to MOTHER PIG)*

WOLF:                 Stop it! You're choking me, you brute!

MOTHER PIG:         Now Ed...remember how you promised? Right after we fished you out of the soup pot? Now, sing!

WOLF:                 No! I don't care if I promised! I won't sing it!

MOTHER PIG:         Sing it...or...

WOLF:                 Or what?

MOTHER PIG:         I bought Kibbles today.

WOLF:                 So, I don't care<sup>48</sup>...Kibbles?

MOTHER PIG:         ...and if you want any...

WOLF:                 All right! Stop teasing! I'll sing it...I'll sing it!

MOTHER PIG:         Well?

WOLF:                 *I love you...You love me...  
Now I'm gentle as can be...  
I will eat no pigs – just Kibbles served with tea.  
Won't you be as nice as me?*

---

<sup>48</sup>The funnier "I don't care" was added to make the Wolf's abrupt interest, "Kibbles?"

*(PIG family and LITTLE RED exit with ED)*

FARMER BATES: *(shouting after the Pigs)* Say, does anyone want to hear me sing?<sup>49</sup>

PIGS: *(briefly returning to stage)* NOO!!

FARMER BATES: Oh. Well, thanks for the listen, folks! And remember, play it safe and *(a wolf howls offstage)* be careful!

Blackout

THE END

---

<sup>49</sup>The terribleness of Farmer Bates' singing became a running joke that we just had to include a reference to at the end.

## THE LENNY/EASY ED (WOLF) ORIGINAL FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY

Prior to the fight, the dialogue reads as follows:

**WOLF:** Now, just add a little salt... (*takes out his giant SALT SHAKER*) Hey! You're not that little pig! You're a little kid ! Well, I guess you'll do...No, get the pig. (*WOLF returns the child to audience. Sees LENNY hiding.*) Ha! You can run, but you can't hide! (*chase resumes. WOLF nabs LENNY on stage after a brief, World Wrestling-type struggle*)

After a chase through the audience, Lenny ends up center at the foot of the stage. The Wolf is there to but they are BACKING UP and don't see each other.

1. One 360 degree rotation, backs to each other, asking the audience where to find the other.
2. A sudden spin, grapple with one hand on each other's neck, the other on the opposite elbow – the “wrestler's grapple”.
3. Wolf twists Lenny's arm behind him; Lenny bellows in pain.
4. Wolf leaps to Lenny's back, (appropriately, “piggyback” style); Lenny circles twice to try to throw the Wolf off, Wolf shouts in surprise (“Whoa! Whoa!”); Wolf is finally throw off.
5. Wolf attempts a Three Stooges two-fingered eye gouge, Lenny blocks it in the classic maneuver.
6. Wolf grabs Lenny's snout with left hand, slaps his own hand with right, causing Lenny to stagger backward toward center stage.
7. Wolf “clotheslines” Lenny (forearm to chest), so that Lenny falls supine on the stage, profile to audience. Dialogue resumes:

**WOLF:** Victory! (*WOLF plants foot on Lennie's chest*)

**LENNY:** Defeat. (*Lennie indicates Wolf's feet on him*)

Seven steps to a brief, yet funny and effective, “battle” in which Lenny is subdued and subsequently imprisoned.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE REVISED DRAFT OF “ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF – AN ADAPTATION OF “THE THREE LITTLE PIGS””

The following draft is the one used by Carlos Garza, Jr., in his December 1-3 production of the show for UTPA as a play in its “Studio Series”, and in the December, 2000 production at Edcouch-Elsa High School, directed by Kent Smither. The major revision is the increased involvement of Little Red Riding Hood into the plot. I was still unsatisfied with her role in the first draft. She still seemed too much of a convenient character, a *deus ex machina*. Therefore, in the second draft, she is involved with the Pig family from the start, stumbling across Mother Pig just after she has discharged her piglets into the world. This would make for an even more plausible (if such a thing is possible in the zany world of children’s theatre) climactic defeat of the Wolf. The second draft also reflects a “cleaning up” of inconsistencies in character and dialogue; for example, Mother Pig feels much more obviously guilty after her “tough love” of her children; her feelings are exhibited in her dialogue with Little Red Riding Hood, who, as a child herself, bonds with the motherly Mrs. Pig. This makes their eventual

teamwork at the end logical, unlike in the first draft where it seemed purely haphazard. The entrapment of the pigs and the selling of the building materials are mostly the same, save for the “cleaning up” mentioned before. There are additional lines for Farmer Bates to help make the flow of the story clear, although I also cut several of his lines that seemed to only embellish his largely superfluous character in the realm of the story. Stage directions are cut where unneeded; trimmed wherever possible. In short, this draft of the play is a leaner, more consistent version, that much more suitable for an audience of easily distracted children.

*ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF! AN ADAPTATION OF "THE THREE LITTLE PIGS"*

by BRIAN WARREN

**PROLOGUE**

Scene: The Farmyard of William Robert (Billy Bob) Bates. We see the familiar barn and two other shed-type buildings.

FARMER BATES appears at the entrance door of the theatre and begins to walk through the audience to the stage. He carries a pail, chews on a hayseed, and whistles "Old MacDonald".

FARMER BATES: (*looks around the bare farmyard*). Doug? Latifa? Mortimer? Helga? Shoot-fire! Where in tarnation could those little piggies have run off to? (*Pause, looking*) And here I am standing here like a dern fool with a pail full of hogslop! (*to audience*) Any of you'all seen three pink little oinkers trailing around after their mother? Huh? No? Ok, then, nothing to do but give a little holler....(*He sucks in a cubic ton of air, hitches his overalls, wags his head, and hollers, after his voice breaks*):  
 SOOOOOOOOEEEEEE!!! PIG-PIG-PIG  
 SOOOEEEEEE!!!! I took the blue ribbon at the '98 county fair with that call. Now here's my special holler to the sow, Sucaffy: SUUUUCAFFFFFYYYYYYYYYY! (*Waits*)  
 Nuthin'. No piggies at'all. I wanna know what I'm gonna do with this here big bucket a' slop. (*Thinks a while*) Say. You'all hungry? Maybe you'all would like some a this...yea, sure you would. I mixed up some old Cream of Wheat with...(*looks in his bucket*) rotten watermelon rinds, month-old bologna, curdled milk, bread crusts, Flintstones vitamins from the '70's...greasy cold french fries, and, my favorite: putrid peach-pie. How about it? My mother used to tell me "Don't let nothing go to waste..."

(*OFFSTAGE: A WOLF howls, long and drawn out*)

FARMER BATES: OK, enough of the teasing. You know, that wolf somewhere yonder, and my missing pigs, reminds me of a little story...And I've a mind to set yonder and spin you'all this yarn. (*sits on a stump*) First things first. Let me introduce myself proper. My name's Bill Bob Bates, this here's my farmyard, and I raise pigs. Just your normal,

ever'day kind of pig. But...*(conspiratorially)* Way back when, when the world was new, there was a different kind of pig. My own grandpappy used to tell of it. He'd sing,

*Once upon a time when pigs spoke rhyme,  
And monkeys chewed tobacco,  
And hens ate beans to make 'em mean,  
And ducks went quack, quack, quack, O!*

Well, that's just what grandpappy used to sing. Give him a break – he's eighty-seven. Now, let's see, oooo, this happened way back, according to old grandpappy. Once upon a time... *(Dim on FB, lights come up full SL)*

### SCENE ONE

MOTHER PIG: *(entering SL, she holds before her a plastic wrapper of some kind)* No, no, no, NO! Somebody *please* tell me this is not happening! That it is some kind of horrible nightmare! LARRY!! LENNY!! LULU!! Come here at once!

*(LULU enters SL)*

LULU: *(she is a sweet pig)* Yes, mother?

MOTHER PIG: Wait 'til your brothers get over here. LARRY! LENNIE!

LENNY *(offstage)*: Aw, Mom!!

MOTHER PIG: *(looking offstage)* Yes you, you naughty littleporker! Get out of that mud hole this instant! Come here! Wait! Go back! Bring Larry!

LENNY  
*(still offstage)*: But Mom! Can't you see I'm busy! I'm making a mud fort for my friend Charlotte! And Larry's eating!!

MOTHER PIG: Again?! Grab him and get over here! That's just what I want to have a little family time about! You three little pigs and EATING!

*(LENNY enters SL. He is a short, dirty pig, ornery, kind of a know-it-all. He carries around a dirty threadbare blanket. He stands sullenly C. LARRY enters SL. He is a large, good-natured dullard of a pig. He is munching from a BAG of*

*POPCORN. All the pigs wear OVERALLS, BACKPACKS, and BASEBALL CAPS WITH THE ARKANSAS RAZORBACK LOGO).*

LENNY: *(carrying on a spider)* Hey Charlotte! Write... "Some Pig" in the web next! That'll catch some attention! Love ya, babe! *(He tosses Charlotte offstage)*

LARRY: Who called out "Larry"?

MOTHER PIG: I DID! Me! Your mother!

LARRY: Oh.

*(MOTHER PIG lines up the three pigs downstage right, then stands to the side of them like an Army Drill Instructor)*

MOTHER PIG: What am I holding in my hand?

LULU A piece of plastic, Mom.

MOTHER PIG: Yes. Very good, dear. A piece of plastic. Now, here's another question. The million-dollar question. Do any of you know what this piece of plastic used to have inside it?

LENNY: How should we know, Ma?

LARRY: Gee, that's a tough one. Say, Mom, ask me something about...multiplication tables! I know my zeros and ones. Or...state capitols! Listen... 'The capitol of Texas is Houston. The capitol of Oklahoma is Fort Worth. The capitol of ...

MOTHER PIG: *(Barely maintaining sanity)* Larry. Then none of you pigs can tell me what was in this wrapping? *(She waves it at them)*

LULU: *(snorting and sniffing)* A twinkie!

MOTHER PIG: YES!! A TWINKIE!! And not just any Twinkie. *MY TWINKIE!!* When you little pigs ate the burritos I'd been saving, I managed to ignore it. When you gobbled the enpanadas I had saved to eat during that Miss Piggy movie marathon on TBS, I cried, but I eventually got over it. But this...this was *my TWINKIE!* My favorite, my lovely, delicious, crème filled friend! *(Reading the ingredients)* Enriched wheat flour, high fructose corn syrup, canola oil,

**MOTHER PIG**

(cont.): dextrose, whole eggs, polysorbate, calcium sulfate, yellow dye #5, and sugar...*(uncontrolled sobbing)*.

**LARRY:** BUURRPP. *(LENNY laughs)*

**LULU:** *(swats LENNY)* Please don't cry, Mother.

**MOTHER PIG:** *(dabbing at her eyes)* Oh, it's not just the Twinkie. It's much more than that. Lulu, do you remember that day we all went to the Golden Corral?

**LULU:** Yes, mother.

**MOTHER PIG:** Do you remember the horrible mess you all made? The butter globs thrown on the ceiling? The whole pies Lennie ate without chewing? When Larry picked up the salad bar and tilted it into his mouth?

**LARRY:** Yeah. Those plates were crunchy.

**MOTHER PIG:** Larry. *(To Lulu)* Not only did that little evening cost me \$5,000 dollars to pay for the destruction, but I don't think I'll ever get over the embarrassment when the manager said he was considering changing the name from "Golden Corral" to "The Golden Hog Trough"! And I'm not even going to mention the Burger King incident, or the chaos at CiCi's Pizza. The memories are too painful. Well, my three little pigs, I have had to make a decision.

**LARRY:** What's that mean... "decision"?

**LENNY:** Numbskull! It means she's made up her mind Between making pie or cake for us for tonight's dessert.

**LARRY:** Which one? I like cake! *(tossing popcorn bag away)*

**MOTHER PIG:** IT MEANS that I must turn you three loose into the world. I love you all, but I can no longer bear the burden of your appetites. It is time you each were allowed to seek your own fortune.

**LARRY:** Fortune? Fortune Cookie? We're gonna eat Chinese food? *(Dancing a clumsy jig of joy)*

MOTHER PIG: *(stopping LARRY'S dancing)* You are sweet and dear to me, my three little pigs. But you're spoiled! You must learn the way of the world, without your mother to take care of you all the time. I've got a little money saved up for each of you as a going-away gift. *(hugging each pig in turn, and giving them money)*

LARRY: No Chinese food for dinner?

LENNY: Send me my PlayStation sometime, OK Mom? And don't clean up my room in case I have to come back. Ciao, Mom.

MOTHER PIG: *(sighing)* Always thinking about food. *(to LULU)* Remember, my dear, what I have always said: "Good fortune comes with hard work," and...

LULU  
*(simultaneously):* "What's worth doing is worth doing well."

MOTHER PIG: *(another hug)* That's right. Good luck, sweetheart.

LULU: Thanks, Mom. I won't let you down. *(LULU begins to exit)*

MOTHER PIG: Oh...and Lulu?

LULU: Yes, Mother?

MOTHER PIG: I almost forgot the most important thing. Remember...you are family. Rely on each other – help each other?

LULU: Sure! *(exits)*

*(MOTHER PIG is left standing, almost forlornly, center stage. LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD trips by...)*

LRRH: Um...hello!

MOTHER PIG: Hmm?

LRRH: Excuse me...do you know the way to my grandmother's house?

MOTHER PIG: Who? Who's grandmother?

LRRH: Who's? Why, mine, of course!

MOTHER PIG: Well...who are you?

LRRH: Me? Everyone knows me! I'm Little Red Riding Hood!

MOTHER PIG: Nice names.

LRRH: Anyway...ma'am, do you know my grandmother, Old Red? I've lost my way to her house. She lives in a white two-bedroom, kinda funky pad by a big mesquite tree in the big woods...

MOTHER PIG: Oh, Mrs. McGillicuddy? I didn't know her nickname was "red"! How come?

LRRH: Well, it's kinda funny... Whenever anyone asks her about any certain book, she says, "Oh, I read it.." so the name sorta stuck...

MOTHER PIG: Hmm... Well, Little Red, to answer your question...

LRRH: You know where her house is?

MOTHER PIG: Sure. See the forest path over there?

LRRH: Uh-huh.

MOTHER PIG: Stick to that, travel east, and you'll hit your grandmother's house in no time.

LRRH: Gee, thanks Mrs. Pig.

MOTHER PIG: Call me Mrs. P. Oh, one more thing. Don't stray from the path. Lotta wolves and such used to prowl around the woods down there, so I've heard.

LRRH: Don't worry, I can take care of myself, Mrs. P.

MOTHER PIG: I just hope my babies can. (*guiltily*) Maybe I could have stood their eating me out of house and home for *one* more month.

LRRH: Huh? What babies?



MOTHER PIG: Oh, never mind, my dear. Just stick to the path! (*exits*)

LRRH: OK. (*she starts off*) I won't forget your help. Someday I'll return the favor! (*runs off directly into FARMER BATES, who is entering*)

FARMER BATES: Oooof! Hey, careful now! You're like a whirlwind in a corn crib.

LRRH: Oh! Excuse me, sir!

FARMER BATES: Not a problem...my gut's taken worse...though I can't remember when...

LRRH: It's just that I'm in a hurry to get to my Grandmother's house, and I just now learned the way, and...

FARMER BATES: Your *grandmother*? Say...the cape, the hood...my land, you're Little Red Riding Hood!

LRRH: Yes, that's my nickname.

FARMER BATES: Land sakes! Why, I know your grandmother! Mildred McGillicuddy...danced with her at the box social in '65...

LRRH: Uh-huh. Anyhow, mister, I guess I should get going...

FARMER BATES: Wait a second, Red! What are you doing in this story? This one's about the three little pigs!

LRRH: Hmm...I don't know...Just skippin' through, I guess. (*And she skips off*)

## SCENE TWO

FARMER BATES: (*shaking his head*) Don't do to mix up the stories...I tend to get muddled...(*remembers the audience*) Anyhoo, old Mother Pig sent her brood off into the world. I reckon like all mothers, she just knowed when he time was right for them to "leave the nest", or in this case, scoot from the hog lot. Who do you think's gonna do the best? (*audience discussion*). Now, what do you reckon might be the first thing to do went you go off into the world? (*audience discussion*) Well, kids, for these pigs it was "Find a place to live..."

(LITTLE PIGS *enter through audience*. LULU *carries a suitcase*)

LULU: We've got to find a place to live...

LARRY: Yeah, it's gettin' colder...

(THE PIGS *stop in unison to listen as the WIND BLOWS eerily*)

LENNY: And scarier...

(*Same pose of attention as a WOLF HOWLS offstage*)

LULU: (*Sniffs behind LARRY*) And stinkier...

(*Again, same pose as LARRY FARTS*)

LULU: Colder and Scarier and Stinkier...

ALL: Oh, my...

LULU: Colder and Scarier and Stinkier...

ALL: Oh, my!

LULU: Hold on! Let's just be calm, brother hogs. There's nothing frightening about these woods. I mean, just take a look around you...

(LARRY and LENNY *execute a complete 360 turn*)

LULU: ...do you see anything horrible or disgusting?

(*The brothers see FARMER BATES at the same time. They scream*)

LARRY & LENNY: YESS!! AHHHHH!!

FARMER BATES: Wal...at least Grandpappy thinks I'm cute! (*exit*)

LENNY: OK, Lulu, you're right – we've got to find a house. A warm, safe, relatively non-stinky (*significant look to LARRY*) house. Since you're so darn smart, I guess you know where to find one?

LARRY: Maybe one with a big kitchen, huh? With a stove and refrigerator.

- LENNY: Let's just make sure *you* find one with a toilet and a shower. Well-stocked with soap.
- LARRY: For what?
- LULU: Listen you two! We're not going to find a house just lying there, waiting for us to move in! We've got to BUILD a house, and it's going to take some hard work. It's like Mom always said, "Good fortune comes with hard work." I've been thinking. To withstand the cold winds and keep out the scary things, and for easier de-scenting (*another significant look to LARRY*) the house should be built solid... C'mon, you guys. Let's go find some solid building stuff...
- LENNY: Hey! You're not the boss of me! (*but he follows her*)
- LARRY: When's supper? I'll let you boss me if you can tell me where McDonald's is... (*He follows LENNY. All pigs exit*)

### SCENE THREE

FARMER BATES: (*sung to the tune of "Home on the Range"*)

Oh, give me a home  
Where young pigs don't roam-  
*Where they stay inside all day through*  
*Where they stay safe and dry*  
*And don't ever cry*  
*Unless Larry starts to go poo.*

Well, younguns, Lulu was a smart one. She knew that hard work was the ticket, especially since winter was coming. (*A WOLF HOWLS offstage*) And other things might be a'coming, too...

(*Lights dim on FARMER BATES, come up CS where a salesman, EASY ED, has his BOOTH set up. Clearly (at least if you are not a little pig), EASY ED is a slicked up WOLF, though his back is turned to the audience as he finishes that last HOWL. Easy Ed's store is set up just like a carnival sideshow booth, but the wares are as varied as a K-Mart's. Prominent are COOKING UTENSILS, like a big saltshaker, a frying pan, a bottle of KETCHUP, etc.*)

EASY ED: (*his howl ends in some throat-clearing*) Thaaaat's riiiiight! Get on over here, especially all you herbivores, to Easy Ed's Emporium of... (*looking around*) Stuff!! (*thinking*)

EASY ED (cont.): Hardware! That's right! Aw, we got yards and yards of canvas, rubber, cotton sheets, or tin foil. We got big boards, ball-peen hammers, and buckets of bolts. We got saws, sacks of shingles, sheets of cellophane, and sugar-candy for the young customers! And for any of you with the slightly "unusual" tastes, we got butt-pickers, eyeball pluckers, tooth-hair trimmers – and pooper-scoopers! I'm tellin' ya, folks. You think Wal-Mart has stuff? Fuggedaboutit! You just come over and look around Easy Ed's Emporium! Home Items Galore! You got bug problems? Just got in a shipment of Super Nitro Poison Kill-O-Rama. Two truckloads out back – the stuff'll kill anything that crawls, slinks, scurries, or...moves (*last is said as Easy Ed kills an unseen bug*). You got...(*he thinks, and as he is thinking the THREE LITTLE PIGS enter*) ...weight problems? Anyone need an exercise machine? I got hip-sleds, stationary bikes, bench press, leg press, and a grape press for wine-lovers! How about you, sir?

LARRY: Hey, did you mention "grapes"?

(LARRY wanders nearer to Ed's Emporium)

EASY ED: Now here's a pig after my own heart...A health-food addict! (*aside to audience: "I like fresh meat myself. . . Cooked rare"*) C'mon over here, please. Sir, you'll find no processed foods or meat products here (*He picks a HAM up from the counter and throws it over his shoulder*). We got grapes, sure, and bananas, mangos, kiwi. We got kadota figs! We got blueberries, huckleberries, raspberries, Frankenberry Cereal, straw...

LARRY: Yes, please.

EASY ED: How's that?

LARRY: All of the above. What you said.

LULU: (*grabs LARRY's elbow*) Sir, food is not what we're here for. We all need to get to work on building a house...

EASY ED: House building! You shoulda said so! (*Conspiratorially*) Now, I can see you are a young pig with her head on straight. A house is a first thing to do, a first priority! And you've come to the right place, cuz Easy Ed's Emporium

- EASY ED (cont.): makes it Easy! It's one-stop shopping here – well, I have just about everything! (*Here comes the 'Big Slogan'*) And if Easy Ed's Emporium doesn't have it...you don't want it!
- LULU: Well, what do you have that would make a strong, sturdy home?
- EASY ED: Kinda depends, my young porky friend...now, do you want "top of the line", or "bottom of the heap" – price-wise?
- LULU: Well...
- LENNIE: (*Sotto Voce to LULU*) Don't let him "con" you, sister. I've heard about guys like this Mr. Ed...
- EASY ED: Please, call me "Easy".
- LENNY: ...cheating young pigs like us so bad...well, he just slaughters 'em!
- LULU: (*turning to ED just as he is about to SALT LULU*) Mister...Easy, I got enough money for something good and solid, all right? What do you got?
- EASY ED: Tell you what. I'm gonna lay it all on the line, seein' as how you're such an honest, forthright pig. I've got a big sale on...uh...*straw* today (*He lifts out of big armful of the stuff*). Buy 10 bushels of it...and I throw in a free cake! (*lifts out a cake*) See? It says "Easy Ed's Emporium" right on the top of it!
- LENNY: That *is* some deal.
- LARRY: I'll take it!
- EASY ED: Great!
- LULU: (*drawing LARRY away by his tail as he BELLOWS*) Larry! Straw? Straw for a house? Are you nuts?
- LARRY: Where?
- LULU: Where what?

LARRY: Nuts. You said “nuts”. Where? What kind? Peanuts? Cornuts? The *Chile con Limon* kind? Where? You must tell me! (*grabbing LULU desperately*)

LULU: No! Calm down, Larry. I mean it would be crazy to build a house out of straw! It’d be too flimsy, too...

(*EASY ED has come up behind the pigs and salivated over them. At the word “flimsy”, he taps both on shoulders*)

LARRY & LULU: Ahhhhhhh!

EASY ED: Ahem. Ma’am, I know my straw, and I gotta say that straw is a lot more durable than it looks. And did I mention to you folks that the free cake, you know, that comes with every 10 bushel straw purchase, that this cake has chocolate and coconut sprinkles on top?

LARRY: Sold! Mister, I’ll take my cake right now! (*shoves a wad of bills into ED’s paw and grabs the cake*)

EASY ED: What about your straw?

LARRY: Oh, yeah. That too.

LULU: Larry, no! Wait!

LARRY: Out of my way! I’ve got cake! I’m running with cake!

EASY ED: Yeah, let ‘im alone!

LENNY: You big, dumb hog! At least share some cake with your brother!

(*But LARRY has already exited. LULU gives chase, but gives up*)

LULU: (*Returning to the stage*) This is just great! Wonderful!

LENNY: Aw, what do you expect from Larry? His brains are in his belly. Me, I’m a different sort of pig. Lulu, stand aside. No, don’t interfere, little sis. Let me handle this. I’ve bargained with the best of ‘em, and there is no way that this Easy Ed fellow can outsmart me.

EASY ED: (*He pops up from behind the counter*) Hey!

- LENNY: No, sir! No straw, no grass, and no hay!
- EASY ED: OK, then! I see a young pig before me who needs solid building materials! Who knows what he wants!
- LENNY: That's right. So I want the best stuff you got. And no funny business. No one "sticks it to" old Lennie!
- EASY ED: Sticks? You know about them? I mean, I figured you for a smart business-wise pig, but they're brand new on the market...
- LENNY: Of course I knew about them...uh, about what?
- EASY ED: C'mon, don't kid me. You said it yourself!
- LENNY: I did?
- EASY ED: Sure, you did! Sticks, boy!
- LENNY: Oh yes. Know all about them...
- EASY ED: Then you know they are just the latest thing in housebuilding. Forget about your stucco; and aluminum siding is so blase!
- LENNY: Of course! You're right! But sticks...?
- EASY ED: Sticks! Natural, durable, and best of all, inexpensive!
- LENNY: Ok, now. Don't give me none of this talk about inexpensive! Inexpensive means one thing to guys like you, and another thing to a young pig just starting out!
- EASY ED: Young sir, for 10 bundles of prime, high-quality, just picked sticks, you are just not gonna believe the price. In fact, just so we don't get a stampede up here of stick-buyers (*ED regards the audience suspiciously*), I'm gonna have to whisper this price into your ear. (*He does so, while with his free hand he SALTS LENNY*)
- LENNY: No!
- EASY ED: And that includes packaging, delivery, and some help with installation!

LENNY: Let me get this straight. 10 bundles of sticks for...*(He whispers in EASY ED's ear; as he does so, EASY ED salts LENNY again)*

EASY ED: You heard me right, my friend. And I'll even let you take the first bundle with you right now!

LENNY: *(In a trance)* Wow. *(He drops a few coins on the countertop, and takes the sticks)*

LULU: *(she can take this no longer)* Lennie! Sticks?!

EASY ED: *(to audience)* Uncle Wiley Coyote just lost that bet! He said I'd never be able to sell those twigs I find lying around his old mesquite tree! Well, Uncle, wherever you are chasing for your meal, I just sold 'em!!

LENNY: *(to LULU)* What? You saw how I got him to sell his best stuff for rock-bottom dollar! I'm telling you, sis, no one's ever gotten the better of me!

LULU: But...sticks are hardly better than straw! A good, strong breeze, and...

LENNY: Didn't you hear him? Delivery **and** installation?

LULU: Yeah, but...

LENNY: My house will be up in no time...

LULU: But...

LENNY: I'll be safe and dry in my stick house by nightfall...

LULU: But...

LENNY: Just "butt" out! And don't be knocking on the door of my new stick house either, asking if I need a roommate!

LULU: Butthead! Mom said we're supposed to stick together!

*(But LENNY is halfway through the audience. LULU runs after him. They go all the way through the audience and out the exit doors.)*

EASY ED: *(to audience)* Young pig. You know what I'm talking...Don't look at me like you don't know. Pork



chops. Tocino. Chorizo. Carne de Puerco! See, I knew I couldn't eat them all at once. I'm no glutton. I'm a gourmet! Plus, those big pigs might have put up a fight, and 3 on 1? Heck, even Michael Jordan wouldn't like those odds. And did you see the size of those pigs? Whew! What do they eat? But now I know they'll be separate, and I'll know what house to look for! And how easy will it for ol' Easy Ed to break into a straw house and a stick house! *(pause)* Now, for that last little piglet... She should be no problem, either. A female. *(ED says this just as LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD skips by, causing him to pause)*

- LRRH: *(as she skips by)* Hi! I'm going to my grandmother's house...
- EASY ED: Hmm...wait! Quiet! Here comes that third little pig!
- LULU: *(coming back through the audience)* Don't worry, Lenny, I won't set foot in your dumb stick house! And by the way, don't light any matches in it...and watch for birds borrowing parts of your house for their nests!!
- EASY ED: Ah! Welcome back! The smartest, not to mention cutest, of the whole smart bunch, I can see that. Boy, do I have a deal for you!
- LULU: . . . . .  
Look. No cakes, no sticks, no straw. I want bricks.
- EASY ED: Bricks?
- LULU: Bricks.
- EASY ED: *(to audience)* Maybe I should just eat this one right now. As an appetizer.
- LULU: Yes, sir. Bricks. You know, those small heavy rectangles of hard substance...
- EASY ED: Yes, yes. But you haven't considered the expense, surely...
- LULU: I have. And don't call me "Shirley". Just sell me one wheelbarrow full, and that should be fine.
- EASY ED: The customer is always right...

*(ED has smuck up behind Lulu, who moves just as he is ready to pounce and devour)*

LULU: Wrong. Sometimes I make mistakes. We all do. But my mother taught me that hard work will bring you success, no matter if you make mistakes...

EASY ED: Speaking of steaks...

*(Again, he is almost upon her when she abruptly moves)*

LULU: Not only hard work, but a little brains, too. Unlike my brothers, I've thought a long time about what would make the best, strongest house.

EASY ED: I know, I know...Bricks!

LULU: Bricks! Ladrillos!

EASY ED: *(to audience)* She won't stand still! *(to LULU)* Look, little Miss...Piggy, may I be frank?

LULU: Sure, you can be anyone you want...but I thought you called yourself 'Easy Ed'?

EASY ED: Huh? Oh! Yeah, that's me, but I meant 'may I speak frankly, or very plainly'.

LULU: Oh. Sure.

EASY ED: Frankly speaking, when I say expensive, I mean *expensive*. *(walking back to his booth)* Bill Gates came by yesterday, and he wanted to build a house, too. *He* couldn't afford brick! *(LULU comes closer)* Then King Midas, you know, the gentleman with the golden touch, came shopping too. He accidentally touched a brick, turned it into gold, and actually *devalued* the brick! *(Slams GOLD BRICK onto the counter top)* I use it as a paperweight now! No, no, no. Brick is just too much. You're gonna have to "show me da money" before I even let you take a peek at a brick...

*(LULU lays down her suitcase on the countertop)*

EASY ED: What's this? Going somewhere? *(opening the suitcase)* Ulp...uh...*(stares into the suitcase)* I don't believe it!

- LULU: So...did I “show you da money”?
- EASY ED: *(still staring into suitcase like a scene from Pulp Fiction)*  
Oh, yeah.
- LULU: I’d like some bricks, please.
- EASY ED: *(still staring)* Huh? Yeah, yeah, sure, sure. Right over there. Take the wheelbarrow, too. Take whatever you want.
- LULU: *(pushing the WHEELBARROW FULL OF BRICKS offstage)* Thank you, Mister.
- EASY ED: But how...*(still mesmerized)*
- LULU: Started saving when I was six. *(to audience)* Start saving early, kids! *(exits)*
- EASY ED: *(emerging from his trance)* OK! OK! I let her go. But...that suitcase is *full*. *(slamming the suitcase shut)* Fine. Let her go. Let her build a brick house a mile thick! I’ll *still* find a way to have her for dessert! First, her brothers! *(throws off “slick” jacket)* Ready or not, little pigs! Here I come...for dinner! *(he HOWLS and exits through audience as lights dim)*

#### SCENE FOUR

FARMER BATES: *(to the tune of “Brick House” by the Commodores).*

*She’ll build a brick...house  
It’ll be strong, it’ll be thick  
And much better than straw or sticks  
Oh it’s a brick...house*

*(noticing audience)* Oh. Howdy. Had a little ‘70’s Disco flashback for a second there...I had the grooviest green leisure suit. I was what you’d call “hip”. Aw, but then I went to college, majored in Animal Husbandry, and started full-time work in agriculture, on the family farm. I forgot all about my dreams of being a disco-dancer *(a brief sob. LRRH skips by)*

LRRH: Gee, mister... what’s wrong?

- FARMER BATES: Well, I was just recollectin' about my dancing days...you! Little Red Riding Hood? Why ain't you at your grandma's yet?
- LRRH: Well, I just thought I'd pick a few flowers...then I sorta lost my way again...but then I found the path! And here I am again.
- FARMER BATES: You're a different story, Red! Will you scoot?
- LRRH: OK. See ya later!(*she skips away merrily*)
- FARMER BATES: Shoot, all that's another story. So...the THREE LITTLE PIGS – I don't rightly know about Little Red, at least not in this story – the three little pigs went their separate ways to set up a homestead, each with either a pile of straw, sticks, or bricks, and started work on a little house. Not one of the little pigs was exactly what you'd call a *carpenter*, but they done did put up a house each...somehow er other...(lights come up CENTER on LARRY and his straw house.)
- LARRY: (*sits with his back to his straw house, the cake plate and a big pile of crumbs around him. He stretches*)Mmmm, that cake was moist and gooey. (*loud fart*) I love eating dessert first! Gee, I guess I love eating it second, too. And third. (*he searches around him for any stray crumbs, picks up a handful of STRAW instead*). Look at my nice house. Easy to build, too. (*he throws his handful of straw at the house*). 'Course, I had to hurry a little when I was building. I couldn't wait to get to my cake! (*he finds a crumb and eats it*) So I cut a few corners – didn't build every part exactly perfect? So what? (*he stands and reaches to for the doorknob to open the door. The knob falls off*) Oops. (*he sticks the knob back in*) There. No problem. I'm gonna go in to my neat straw house, and take a nap before dinner...
- EASY ED (WOLF): (*entering*) Did somebody mention dinner? Ham sounds good. Rrrrrreal good. Well, what do you know?! A straw house! I wonder who might be living here?
- (LARRY snores from within)
- WOLF: (*to audience*) A freight train? (*loud snore*) A chain saw? (*sniffing the air*) Ah! The home of a little pig. (*he peeks inside*) Make that a "big" pig. Now to paralyze my prey with fear. Ahem. (HOWLS)

LARRY: *(jumps up)* Yow! What a nightmare I had! I dreamt I was turning over and over above a fire, with all these hot coals. Then somebody stuck an apple in my mouth. Actually, that part was OK. mmmm...apples. Apple pie. Apple turnovers. Apple fritters...

WOLF: Oh, Little Pig!

LARRY: What's that? Who's that?

WOLF: It's me! Little Red Riding Hood! *(LRRH comes skipping by...everybody does a "take". Then, WOLF clears throat – to audience)* Wrong story. I mean it's just a guest! I've come for...dinner!

LARRY: Oh yeah? What'd you bring? *(LARRY opens the door, sees the WOLF)*

WOLF: What did I *bring*? I brought my appetite!

LARRY: Ahh! *(slams door)*

WOLF: *(mashes his nose on LARRY's door)*. Just let me in. It will save a lot of trouble.

LARRY: . . . You're the wolf!

WOLF: Duh! And I'm a hungry wolf!

LARRY: But you sold me this straw!

WOLF: All the better to eat you with, my...Damn! Wrong story again! I know I sold it to you, you dummy! Now let me in so I can eat you up. I'm hungry! *(HOWLS)*

LARRY: Gee, since you put it that way...I know what it's like to be hungry. *(LARRY opens door and starts to walk out)* What am I doing?!

WOLF: Yummy pork!

LARRY: *(slams door in Wolf's face. Wolf mashes his nose again.)* There's no food here! Believe me, I've looked.

WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let ME COME IN!

LARRY: No way!

WOLF: How 'bout for a piece of pie?

LARRY: Well... (WOLF *snarls hungrily*) Not even if you really had some!

WOLF: I said... Little pig, little pig, LET ME COME IN!

LARRY: No, no, not by the hair of my chinny chin chin. (*to audience*) Anyway, I shaved this morning.

WOLF: What to do? (*thinks*) Ah! Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blllloooooowwwww your house in!

LARRY: Not! You said this was solid high-quality straw!

WOLF: Ha! Whatever.

(WOLF gathers a huge breath in an elaborate sort of wind-up, then BLOWS. BLACKOUT. LARRY's straw house is removed from around him. Lights up.)

LARRY: Uh-oh.

WOLF: Piece of cake . . . . .

LARRY: Where?

WOLF: No! I mean, that was easy! Now hold still while I take you to my cooking pot. (*he takes out his big SALT SHAKER*)

LARRY: Lennie! Lulu!

(A chase through the audience. WOLF finally nabs LARRY)

WOLF: Pig, you've irritated me. I don't mind blowing down houses, but I don't like chasing my meals! I leave that to Uncle Wiley Coyote. For making me chase you, I'm going to give you a little "time out" before I eat you, while I find your brother and sister! (*thinks*) That's it! I'll capture them one by one, but eat them as one big family! They'll be helpless in my stewpot. Delish!

(WOLF secures LARRY in a CAGE situated on the right aisle of the audience.)

WOLF (cont.): Just sit there a while. Think about how you made me chase you. And think about how you'll feeling boiling in my stewpot with cabbages and radishes! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*(WOLF scurries off stage)*

## SCENE FIVE

FARMER BATES: *(holds up NEWSPAPER)* HOME IN SHAMBLES. HUFFING, PUFFING SUSPECTED. *(looking down at LARRY in his prison)* What a sorry sight. He looks as miserable as a wet cat under a garden hose. *(walks to LARRY's jail cell)* Look at this poor feller. That slickster Wolf has you corralled, huh? Like a lizard in a briar patch. Like a ...

LARRY: Gee, why don't you quit jabbering and let me out?

FARMER BATES: Like to, big boy, but no can do. I'm just telling the story – I can't take part.

LARRY: Could you at least hook me up with some snacks?

FARMER BATES: Snacks?

LARRY: Snacks! Butterfingers, Mars Bars, Doritos, a couple of Cokes! Snacks! Snacks!

FARMER BATES: Snacks before you become a snack? Oops! Sorry.

LARRY: Ahhhhh! *(pause)* Wait a minute! My brother and sister will save me!

FARMER BATES: Good for you, Larry! Don't get all sour-faced, like you just ate a ornery bite of shoo-fly pie. Who knows, that sis of yourn might come by and sing:

*If you're ever in a jam, here I am!*

LARRY: Did he say "jam"? Mmmmmm. Jam...Jelly...with preservaeratives..

FARMER BATES: *(crossing away from jail)*. You too, kids. Keep your hopes up, no matter what tries to get you down! So, soon, that old Wolf was up to his old tricks. He went about his evil plan

FARMER BATES

(cont.): to eat all of the little pigs...Who do you think is next on his horrible grocery list? (*audience voices their opinions*) Well, let's just see...

LENNY: (*putting the last of some sticks in place on his house*)And....there! (*appraises the beauty of the house*) Yes! Has there *ever* been a house this beautiful? I could move the whole thing to Plazas del Lago Drive in Edinburg and just fit right in! It's just breathtaking!

WOLF: (*enters singing*) *Pigs and Pork...and Pork and Pigs/ These are a few of my favorite things... Yuck!*

LENNY: What's "yuck"?

WOLF: Oh, not you! You look yummy! It's that house! Yikes!

LENNY: Hey, I worked for... (*looks at wrist, finds no watch, shrugs*) several minutes putting this house together!

WOLF: I can tell. It's making my eyes water.

LENNY: Wait a minute. You sound like Easy Ed the Salesman, but you're...(*looking the WOLF over*)

WOLF: Ain't I handsome?

LENNY: You're the Wolf!

WOLF: Make that the "hungry" wolf!

LENNY: Ahhhh!

WOLF: (*a growl*) **ARRRRRRHHHH!**

LENNY: My sturdy stick house will save me! (*runs inside*)

WOLF: Sturdy? Ha! I sold you mesquite branches from my uncle's yard! (*nevertheless, door slams and WOLF cannot get inside*) Open up!

LENNY: Yeah, right! I'm not that dumb!

WOLF: Oh yes you are! You bought these sticks for a house, didn't you?



LENNY:                   *(thinks)* Well, they're keeping you out, aren't they?

WOLF:                   *(decides to try the "sweet" approach)* Oh, little pig, won't you please let me in?

LENNY:                   Get lost!

WOLF:                   Little pig, little pig, let ME COME IN!

LENNY:                   No, NO! Not even by the hair of my chinny chin chin. Now why did I say that? That was corny.

WOLF:                   Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blowwwww your house in!

LENNY:                   Give it your best shot! I'm tellin' ya, I put this stick house together with considerable building talent.

WOLF:                   Uh-huh. Don't forget, I sold you those worthless sticks.

*(WOLF gathers an ostentatious breath and BLOWS. LENNY bows his head against the force of the wind, and the house holds).*

WOLF:                   Huh?

LENNY:                   Yeaaaaah! You see what good carpentry can do, Wolf? I'm safe and snug.

WOLF:                   Maybe those sticks weren't so flimsy... All right, all right, just wait a second...

LENNY:                   Sure, I'll wait a "second". Just let me get my calendar and I'll time you. Ha!

WOLF:                   You're asking for it. *(gathering an even greater breath in a funny display).*

LENNY:                   Careful, you might explode.

*(WOLF BLOWS. Again, LENNY must bow his head, and this time he must hang onto part of the house against the hurricane force. BLACKOUT. LENNY's stick house is removed. Lights up.)*

LENNY:                   Not Good.

WOLF: Whew. I need to get in shape. Too many *frijoles*.

LENNY: Ahhhhhh! (*LENNY runs, through the audience*)

WOLF: Aw, don't do that.

(*WOLF gives an initially tired chase. Wolf, in his fatigue, grabs a bold child and brings him on stage instead*)

WOLF: Now, just add a little salt... (*takes out his giant SALT SHAKER*) Hey! You're not that little pig! You're a little kid! Well, I guess you'll do...No, get the pig. (*WOLF returns the child to audience. Sees LENNY hiding.*) Ha! You can run, but you can't hide! (*chase resumes. WOLF nabs LENNY on stage after a brief, WWF-type struggle*)

WOLF: Victory! (*WOLF plants foot on LENNY's chest*)

LENNY: Defeat. (*LENNY indicates WOLF's foot on him*)

WOLF: (*as he begins to bite*) Hold on. I believe I'll save you too. Two brothers stewing in my jail! Then, I'll be so hungry when I catch your sister, it will make the feast all the more delicious! (*WOLF drags LENNY to the same cell where LARRY waits*)

LARRY: Lennie! You've come to save me!

LENNY: Not the same cell as Larry!

LARRY: Did you bring anything to eat?

LENNY: You don't understand. You can't put me in there with him. It's the smell.

WOLF: Stop complaining. Both of you. Get in there.

(*WOLF shoves LENNY into cell. LARRY hugs him joyfully as LENNY cringes*)

LENNY: Larry! Give me a break!

LARRY: OK. (*LARRY starts to crack LENNY in half, like when a person "pops" another's back*)

LENNY: Not that kind of "break", OK? Take it easy, Larry.

LARRY: Oh. OK. Gee, I'm glad to see you, bro.

LENNY: Yeah. I'm glad to see you, too. Only, now what are we gonna do?

LARRY: Uh...

WOLF: Do? I'll tell you what you're gonna do. You're gonna sit in there and sort of "simmer" while I apprehend your dainty morsel of a sister. Then, you'll all be together again. In my stewpot! How nice. (WOLFf runs off, chuckling)

LENNY: Man, we *are* in a stew.

LARRY: Yeah.

LENNY: There's no way out of here, huh?

LARRY: Nope.

LENNY: I guess we'll wait for Lulu.

LARRY: Yeah.

LENNY: Larry, would you stop agreeing with me?

LARRY: OK.

LENNY: (*groans. pause.*) Hey, what about him? Can he help us? (*to FARMER BATES*)

LARRY: Naw. I already tried that. He doesn't even have any snacks.

FARMER BATES: Sorry.

LENNY: Great. That's just perfect. Well, I don't know about you, Larry, but I'm going to...scream.

LARRY: Ice cream? Where?

LENNY: HEEEEELLPPP! SOMEBODY! LULU!

LARRY: MOM!

LENNY: SOMEONE GET US OUT OF HERE!

LARRY: MI DUEL E PANSITA!

*(LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD comes tripping by)*

LRRH: What's wrong with you two?

LENNY: What's wrong? Look at us... we're in jail! *(pause)* Who are you?

LARRY: Got anything to eat?

LRRH: Oh, my name is Little Red Riding Hood, and I'm carrying this basket of goodies for my grandmother.

LARRY: Goodies? To eat?

LENNY: Your grandmother? Who's that? Mrs. McGillicuddy at the far end of the woods?

LRRH: That's her!

LARRY: What kind of goodies?

LENNY: That's quite a ways.

LRRH: Yes. I have had trouble finding my way...

LARRY: Any Tacos? How about Gummi Bears?

LRRH: Why are you two in this dank, dark place?

LENNY: It's a long story...but we've got time. See, there was this salesman, his terrible straw house, my structurally solid house but...let's just say the foundation was weak. Then this bad wolf came along. He huffed and puffed, and blew my house in. He did the same thing to Larry's house. Then he brought us here, and he says he's gonna eat us as soon as he catches our sister.

LARRY: Plus, he's STARVING us!

LRRH: Oh, you poor things...I'll help if I can. Look, I'm going to go see if granny can help...she knows a lot of folks...

LENNY: Good ol' Mrs. McGillicuddy!

LRRH: And we will come back and save you...and your sister!

LENNY: Wow! This is wonderful! You've saved us!

LARRY: YEAHH!

LRRH: Now...try not to worry. Just...try to stay comfortable. I'll be back soon! *(she exits)*

### SCENE SIX

FARMER BATES: Gosh. *Two* little pigs caught. It's a sad day for the Pig family. Wrote a little song about it – Go like this *(sung to the tune of "In the Jungle, the Mighty Jungle, the Lion Sleeps Tonight" )*

*Near the farmyard – the dusty farmyard  
A Wolf hunts pigs tonight...  
He's captured two, now they're feeling blue  
'Cuz their sis might be next tonight...  
AhOOOOOOooooooWeeeeeooooay um bomdu way...*

LENNY: Hey! If we knew this singing was gonna be that bad, we woulda let the Wolf eat us in our houses!

FARMER: *AhOOOOOO!* What d'ya think? That good, huh. I just might retire from agriculture and embark upon a new career as a recording artist...Maybe I'll start up a boy band...how about "The Barndoor Boys"?...Anyhoo, thinks do look grim for the pig family. Far from their mother, hoodwinked into buying straw and sticks as building materials, preyed upon by a nasty wolf, depending on a little girl as a last chance. Let's see how Lulu fares against "His Hairyness"...

LULU: *(she sits in a ROCKING CHAIR in her brick house, drinking a cup of tea)*  
Ah, there's no place like home.

WOLF: *(entering)* Hmmm. I don't believe it, but she built it after all. A regular ranch-style brick house.

LULU: *(looking around her)* All the comforts of home.

WOLF: Looks sturdy too.

- LULU: (to audience) A pig's home is her castle.
- WOLF: A little test. (He raps his hand on the wall of the house)  
Ow!
- LULU: Excuse me? Who's there? Yes, I am a sow.
- WOLF: I said "ow".
- LULU: No, I'm not a cow. I'm a pig. Look, I'm having trouble hearing because of my titanium-alloy, steel-reinforced door, so speak up. Who are you and what do you want?
- WOLF: (Bronx accent) Ah... This is Mr. Piscotti, the cable guy? I understand you want the ah... Disney Channel?
- LULU: Excuse me? No thanks. Good-bye.
- WOLF: Oh, but I'm sure you'll love our great selection of channels. We've got ESPN, Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network, the Fright Channel... (bares his fangs)
- LULU: You really think I want all those channels?
- WOLF: Hey, we got the Cooking Channel! It has lessons on how to make gourmet meals: Eggplant Parmigiana, Orange Marmalade, Pork and Beans...
- LULU: (with disgust) No, thank you! I have all I want and need, snug and happy inside my brick home.
- WOLF: (mocking) Snug and happy inside my brick home...
- LULU: Pardon me? Go away, whoever you are!
- WOLF: Arggghhhh! I've got to make her open this door! You two! (points to LARRY and LENNY's cell) Make noise! Yell for your sister!
- LENNY: No! We'll never betray her!
- WOLF: Do it, or I will eat you first!
- LENNY: LULU! LULU! HELP!

LARRY: WE'RE STARVING!

LULU: Hey! That sounded like...*(she opens her door)*

WOLF: Surprise!

LULU: You're no TV guy! You're a Wolf!

WOLF: A hungry Wolf!

LENNIE: LULU! HELP US!

LARRY: A COKE! CHIPS! SOMETHING!

WOLF: OK, OK, that's good enough! The door's open!

LULU: What have you done with my brothers?

WOLF: Don't worry, you'll be with them soon...

*(WOLF charges the door, but LULU shuts it just in time, so that the WOLF butts his head on the solid door.)*

WOLF: OWWWWWWW! I *did* sell you my best bricks.

LULU: Yes, you did. Thank you. Mr. Wolf, you're going to regret treating my brothers like that.

WOLF: Oh? Listen, you can punish me as much as you like; just open the DOOR!

*(WOLF shoulder charges the door. LULU opens it just as the WOLF is almost upon it, so that his momentum carries him pinwheeling through the house to CRASH off-stage)*

LENNY: Yeah, Lulu!

LARRY: *(to audience)* That's our sister.

*(WOLF emerges, bedraggled, picking garbage out of his hair. He walks around to the front of Lulu's house, throwing away a dead fish, or similar trash, caught in his pockets.)*

WOLF: It's OK! I'll just walk it off!

LULU: Did you have a nice trip?

WOLF: Arrrrrghhh! Little pig, little pig, LET ME COME IN!

LULU: No, no, not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!

WOLF: *(sighs tiredly)* Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll...  
Bloowwwwwww your house in.

LULU: I don't think so!

*(WOLF takes in a huge breath and blows. Nothing.)*

LULU: My, there's such a nice, gentle breeze today.

WOLF: Bricks!

*(He takes in a super-huge breath and blows. Nothing.)*

LULU: My, I think I felt a little hot air!

WOLF: Hot air? OK, you smarty little pig, that's it! Here comes just for you and your special house, my Deluxe Megaton Hurricane Huff!

*(Wolf performs an insane dance of mystic mumbo-jumbo, conjuring up his lung-power. He finally blows, turning red, then green in the face. Nothing. He collapses on stage)*

LULU: I think that might have rattled my shutters. *(to audience)*  
Do you think so? Nah.

*(WOLF staggers to his feet, hands on his knees, in stunned disbelief, breathing hard.)*

WOLF: Bricks! All right. You've won this round, little pig! I'll just have to think of some other way to get to you! I'm off to think, think, think! I'll be back, just you wait! *(exit)*

LULU: *(through her house window)* Think all you want, you'll never get me! And don't worry, brothers, I'm thinking of a way to get rid of that Wolf so that I can save you. I must sit in my house and think, think, think!

## SCENE SEVEN

*(Lights come up on the JAIL CELL of LARRY and LENNY)*



FARMER BATES: *(walking in front of the cell)* Meanwhile...back at the ranch...or I mean the pig prison...some other folks are doing some thinking, too...

LENNY: *(to Farmer Bates)* They know where we are, OK?

LARRY: Who?

LENNY: Them. The children.

LARRY: Oh. Say, any of you got anything to eat?

LENNY: Stop it, Larry. Don't you be bothering them, too.

LARRY: Aw, gee.

LENNY: You know, Larry, I've been doing some thinking...I mean, we've had quite a bit of time to just sit and think.

LARRY: I've been thinking about tacos. Mmmmmm.

LENNY: I've been thinking about what got us here!

LARRY: That's easy. The wolf brought us.

LENNY: Yes, yes. But Larry, what *really* brought us to this miserable place?

LARRY: Uh.....I'm tellin' you, it was the Wolf!

LENNY: No. Larry, what brought us here is this: we never listened to Mother Pig.

LARRY: C'mon! Whenever she yelled "Dinner!", I was always there!

LENNY: Right. But I mean about the important stuff. Do you remember what she used to say?

LARRY: Ummmm...

LENNY: Well I do. It came back to me while I was sitting in here wishing I was somewhere else. She used to say, "Good fortune comes with hard work," and... "What's worth doing is worth doing well."

LARRY: You know, you're right. She did say that a lot. But what's that got to do with us?

LENNY: Don't you get it, Larry? If we would have tried to live like what the words say, we wouldn't be here! We'd be safe, like Lulu! *(pause)* I picked sticks for my house 'cuz I thought they'd be easy to build with.

LARRY: Yeah. I picked straw so I could be done quick...in time for cake.

LENNY: You see? So here we are.

LARRY: Wow. You're right.

LENNY: She used to say something else too...what was it?

LARRY: I don't remember. *(pause)*

LARRY: Hey, Lennie...

LENNY: Yeah?

LARRY: I'm still hungry.

LENNY: Aw, stop thinking about your belly...

*(Blackout)*

## SCENE EIGHT

FARMER BATES: Lulu was safe. But do you think that Wolf would give up? Heck no. He promised himself that he'd *never* give up.

*(Lights up stage center on LULU's brick house. LULU is rocking, enjoying her brick home, dusting some of her homey ecoutrements.)*

LULU: Ahhhhh. I sure do enjoy my lovely home. But I've got to think.

*(WOLF appears. He is dressed in drag, carrying a huge purse and wearing a stylish hat.)*

WOLF: *(to audience)* Say what you want! I promised myself I'd never give up. And this outfit will help me get that pig, just

WOLF (cont.):           you watch. (*he stalks the house*) Plus, this color looks great on me.

(*WOLF knocks on LULU's door*)

WOLF:                   Ow!

LULU:                   Wow? Yes, my house is something, isn't it?

WOLF:                   (*lady's voice*) Oh, my! Yes, it is! Such a lovely, hard brick!

LULU:                   I'm very proud of it. Built it myself, you know.

WOLF:                   You don't say? Gracious! How satisfied you must be!

LULU:                   (*opening door*) My gosh, pardon my rudeness...

(*LULU sees the WOLF, who, as a woman, is even more frightening. LULU SLAMS the door. The WOLF bashes his nose on the door*)

WOLF:                   Ow!

LULU:                   Yow! That was scary!

WOLF:                   Land sakes! Why, never in all my life have I been treated in such a fashion...

LULU:                   (*through closed door*) Ma'am, I am sorry. It's just...well, you kind of took me by surprise!

WOLF:                   What in heaven's name do you mean?

LULU:                   Um...is today Halloween?

WOLF:                   Halloween? Why no, it isn't.

LULU:                   Oh. Ma'am, once again I certainly apologize. Now, who did you say you were?

WOLF:                   I didn't, actually, but since you ask, I'm Madge, the Avon lady. I came here to discover if you'd like to buy some...Avons.

LULU:                   Oh! In that case, won't you please come in? (*opens door and WOLF enters*)

WOLF: Thank you.

LULU: I'm so sorry I slammed the door...I...please, have a seat in my favorite rocking chair.

WOLF: Don't mind if I do.

LULU: *(pause)* Well, may I offer you something? A cookie? A cup of tea? A...twinkie?

*(as LULU searches for tea, or a cup, WOLF stands and walks directly behind her)*

WOLF: A ham sandwich.

LULU: *(turning and bumping into WOLF)* Eeeek! Excuse me?

WOLF: Oh, no, no, no. I'm fine...for now.

LULU: *(an awkward pause)* Ummmm...Oh! You mentioned you were selling something...

WOLF: Oh, gracious! Thank you, my dear, for reminding me...

*(WOLF reaches into his purse. However, at that moment, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD comes traipsing up to LULU's door, and KNOCKS)*

LULU: *(to WOLF)* Excuse me. Who's there?!

LRRH: It's me, Grandmother! I've brought you some bread, some cheese, and chicken soup for your cold.

LULU: Grandmother?

WOLF: Chicken soup? Mmmmmm...chicken.

*(LULU opens door)*

LULU: Who are you?

LRRH: Hey! You're not my grandmother! *(to WOLF)* Are you?

WOLF: *(in WOLF voice)* No!..er..no.

LRRH: Ooo. What big teeth that lady has...

- WOLF: Little girl, if you would excuse us for the moment. However, I'll make sure to call upon you later!
- LULU: Yes, you better run along. As you can see, this is not your grandmother's house.
- LRRH: Say, what's your name?
- LULU: Lulu.
- LRRH: Do you have two brothers?
- LULU: Why, yes, I do.
- LRRH: (*gasps*) Do you know where they are? (*to WOLF*) And this ugly, hairy lady has got to be... (*LRRH shrieks*)
- WOLF: (*interrupting*) Oh, poor red-headed darling, she must have seen a mouse! Oh, Well! Run along, you young...dearie. I think it's clear your grandmother is nowhere around here! (*ushering LRRH out of the house and slamming door*)
- LRRH: Oh, no! What to do? What to do? I've got to get help! (*she exits*)
- LULU: What's going on here?
- WOLF: What?
- LULU: You know, for a lady, you are *way* too hairy...
- WOLF: My electrolysis appointment is today! Pay no attention to that silly red-headed girl with the overactive imagination... (*sotto voce*) the little, snot-nosed, brat.
- LULU: (*finally getting it*) ...You're the Wolf!
- WOLF: (*reaching into purse, pulling out a salt shaker*) No kidding! And I'm a HUNGRY Wolf!
- LULU: I should have known! No woman could have been that hairy and ugly!
- WOLF: C'mon, ugly? I mean, "hairy" yes. But this color goes so well with my eyes.

LULU: Right. Like Mustard Yellow meets Wolfman Brown.

WOLF: Never mind! Soon, you'll be slathered with mustard on brown bread!

LULU: *(beginning to run)* No way!

WOLF: Way!

*(so begins a climactic CHASE. Through audience, around children, etc. Just when it seems the WOLF is too tired, and that LULU may possibly escape, WOLF first scribbles, then hangs a sign on the door of the cell that reads: WORRIED ABOUT YOUR LIFE? COME ON IN FOR A FREE CONSULTATION. LULU steps through the door)*

### SCENE NINE

LENNY/LARRY: Lulu? Lulu?

LULU: Guys?

*(WOLF slams door behind her)*

LULU: What is this? That sign said...

WOLF: It said, "Worried about your Life". Well, worry no more. It's over! All that's left is to bring the garnishes, and some spices. Finally, it's time to EAT! *(WOLF runs off)*

LARRY: Lulu! He's going to cook us!

LULU: I know.

LENNIE: We'll be stewed!

LULU: I know.

LARRY/LENNY: What can we do?!

LULU: I'm still thinking...

LARRY: Lulu...!

LENNY: Lulu, listen: Larry and I have been doing a lot of thinking. We have realized how silly we have been. You always

LENNY (cont.): listened to Mom...you were smart...Yeah. *Were* smart! Whoa, how did that wolf blow down your house anyway?

LULU: He didn't.

LARRY: He didn't?

LENNY: You mean, he caught you outside the house? Lulu, come on! Not even Larry let him do that!

LARRY: *(first laughing, then catching on)* Hey.

LULU: Lenny, the point is, he's got us, and we've got to think of a way to escape. Larry, don't just stand there with your hands in your pockets. Think!

*(LARRY pulls hands out of his overall pockets. Out falls a handy TOOL, e.g., a swiss army knife)*

LARRY: Gee.

LENNY: You moron!

LULU: Give me that!

LENNY: We could have used that to escape long before now!

LARRY: Sorry. I forgot I had it. I guess I was too hungry.

LULU: It's all right! We have it now! *(she begins to work on the cell door)*

WOLF: *(returning, pushing his PIG POT)* Have what?

LULU: *(hiding tool)* Um...have...lost our desire to live!

LENNY: Yeah. *(fake sniffles)*

LARRY: They might have, but I haven't. I'm hungry!

LULU/LENNY: Larry!

WOLF: That's OK, "Larry" is it? I'm hungry, too. However I'm afraid my hunger will be satisfied before yours.

WOLF (cont.): Now, all of you. Figure out who's gonna be first into my little pigpot. C'mon, this should be easy for you since you've lost all desire to live...

LULU: Um...

WOLF: Oh, wait! I forgot the jalepenos! (*he scurries off once again*)

LENNY: Quick, Lulu!

LULU: I'm hurrying! (*she begins to work on the cell door with the tool*)

LARRY: Hurry, I'm hungry!

LENNY: Yeah. C'mon, "McGyver".

WOLF: (returning) No...jalapenos would make the stew too...What's this?! A break-out!?

LULU: (*caught in the act*) Yes! You'll never eat us!

WOLF: *Au Contrare!* The eating will begin in seconds!

LARRY: What are we having?

LENNY: Numbskull! He's having us!

LARRY: Oh, yeah.

WOLF: I'll take that pathetic little wrench!

(*WOLF come to grab it through the bars. LULU suddenly uses it to grasp and twist WOLF's nose*)

WOLF: Arrrrrgh!

LULU: You may eat us, but you won't ever smell another piece of meat again!

(*WOLF finally succeeds in pulling free, crashing into his own pigpot*)

WOLF: Enough of the horseplay...I mean pigplay! Everyone get your keesters into my boiling pigpot!



LARRY: Lulu...

LENNY: I think this is it...

LULU: Brothers, hold my hands...

LRRH: There he is! That's the one!

MOTHER PIG: Where?

LRRH: There! The one with the hairy paws! And there's your children!

WOLF: Who's that?

MOTHER PIG: Your worst nightmare. An incensed mother pig.

LENNY: Mom! It's about time...

MOTHER PIG: My darlings!

LARRY: Mom! What's for supper?

WOLF: Cut with the sugar – I'm gonna need an insulin shot! Mother Pig, you can just climb into my pigpot too!

MOTHER PIG: Red, let's get 'im.

WOLF: Huh? Hey, wait a minute...

LRRH: Yeah.

*(WOLF turns to retreat, sees the suddenly emboldened little pigs, who don't seem so little anymore. He turns back to RED and MOTHER PIG on his left, both full of righteous wrath)*

WOLF: Whoa! *(he counts heads)* One, two, three, four, five!

*(The LITTLE PIGS, MP, and LRRH slowly encircle the WOLF)*

WOLF: *(to audience)* I don't like these odds! *(to PIGS and RED)*

WOLF: Hey, youse guys! Listen, there's laws, you know, about ganging up on a guy. I mean, c'mon, I didn't mean nothing, Mother Pig! I was just trying to scrounge up a little snack...

MOTHER PIG:        Snack! Out of my three babies?

LULU:                Yeah! That's right, Mom!

LENNY:              Right, sis.

LARRY:              *(pointing at RED)* Who's she?

WOLF:                *(suddenly noticing FARMER BATES)* You! I pick you for my team!

FARMER BATES:    Sorry! You know what I can do, though! I'll sing you a sympathy song.

ALL BUT WOLF:     NO!!

WOLF:                That's OK.

*(backed up and in desperation, the WOLF reaches into his pigpot and pulls out a LARGE FORK. The good guys pull back a bit)*

MOTHER PIG:        What's that?

WOLF:                You should know. It's a CARVING FORK! The kind used when you're cooking *meat*.

*(the five heroes draw further back, gasping in horror)*

WOLF:                That's right. Just back up. Back up, or I'm gonna start carving.

LULU:                OK, OK, Mr. Wolf. We'll do whatever you say...

LENNY:              Lulu!

MOTHER PIG:        Darling!

LARRY:              Gee.

LULU:                No, no...he's got us, family. We may as well face it. Mr. Wolf, do you mind if we huddle together and pray before you cook us.

WOLF:                Well...just don't be too long. I'm hungry.

*(LULU gathers the group around her. There is much whispering and gesticulating. LARRY says "Huh?" a few times)*

WOLF: C'mon, c'mon. The pigpot water is cooling down!

LULU: All right. We're ready. Family and friend, I will go first.

*(she marches stately up to the edge of the pot. She closes her eyes. WOLF comes up behind her, FORK in hand)*

WOLF: First one in, more to come! Take a bath, pig!

LULU: I don't think so! NOW, guys!

LARRY: What?

LENNY: Larry!

LARRY: I forgot!

MOTHER PIG: Oh, my poor dumb son!

WOLF: What's going on?

LRRH: The fork! The fork!

LARRY: Yes, I know I'm pork.

LENNY: The fork!

LARRY: Hey! I'm not a dork!

ALL but LARRY  
and WOLF: THE FORK!

LARRY: Oh, yeah!

*(LARRY and LENNY rush the WOLF. While LARRY pins WOLF's paws behind him, LENNY grabs FORK and tosses it to MOTHER PIG, who JABS WOLF in his arse as LULU ducks out of the way. WOLF jumps in pain and falls into the PIGPOT, floundering and flailing)*

MOTHER PIG: My babies! Lulu, you're brilliant!

WOLF: Ulp.

LULU: It's nothing. I just remembered, "Family. We rely on each other." Right?

MOTHER PIG: Right. And our friends. Thanks, Little Red.

LRRH: No problem. Granny will be so proud of me.

WOLF: Um...a little help? I'm drowning!

LARRY: (*indicating RED*) So she's the one who saw us in the jail.

MOTHER PIG: Yes. Then she told me. I knew my babies needed help!

WOLF: (*poking his head out of the pot*) Her! I'll get her somehow! Hmm...maybe another story?

MOTHER PIG: Quiet, you!

WOLF: Boiled...I mean foiled again!

MOTHER PIG: (*to pigs*) I'm just glad you're safe!

(*Blackout. Cell [and wolf] are removed. Lights up*)

## SCENE TEN

FARMER BATES: Well folks! And here we are! Everythin's hunky-dorry. And I think everybody involved learned a little lesson, don't you?

LRRH: If someone needs help, HELP! And teamwork is cool!

MOTHER PIG: (*entering*) Every so often, check up on your kids.

LULU: (*entering*) A brick house is strong, but by itself, it won't protect you. *You* must be strong, too!

LENNY: (*entering*) What Mom said. Do it right the first time.

LARRY: (*entering*) Eat first! Then work.

ALL BUT LARRY: Larry!

LARRY: Aw, you know what I mean...

ALL PIGS and LRRH: Here Ed! Come here, boy!

*(FARMER BATES brings EASY ED THE WOLF in on a leash, which he gives to MOTHER PIG)*

WOLF: Stop it! You're choking me, you brute!

MOTHER PIG: Now Ed...remember how you promised? Right after we fished you out of the soup pot? Now, sing!

WOLF: No! I don't care if I promised! I won't sing it!

MOTHER PIG: Sing it...or...

WOLF: Or what?

MOTHER PIG: I bought Kibbles today.

WOLF: So, I don't care...Kibbles?

MOTHER PIG: ...and if you want any...

WOLF: All right! Stop teasing! I'll sing it...I'll sing it!

MOTHER PIG: Well?

WOLF: *I love you... You love me ...  
Now I'm gentle as can be ...  
I will eat no pigs – just Kibbles served with tea.  
Won't you be as nice as me?*

*(PIG FAMILY and RED exit with ED)*

FARMER BATES: *(shouting to PIGS as they leave)* Say, does anyone want to hear me sing?

PIGS: *(briefly returning to stage)* NOO!!

FARMER BATES: Oh. Well, thanks for the listen, folks! And remember, play it safe, and *(a wolf howls offstage)* be careful!

Blackout

THE END

## CHAPTER 6

### THE CHILDREN'S PLAY IN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION FROM CASTING TO PERFORMANCE: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

When classes resumed for the Spring 2000 semester, I quickly began to plan the two-day audition sessions for the children's play. Actors, especially actors with some free time, are a rarity at STCC, so I wanted a week consisting of a barrage of publicity to attract as many interested actors as possible to the auditions. Enlisting the aid of Jenny Robinson, a colleague in the Speech and Drama Department of STCC and a former publicist for the Mission Consolidated Independent School District, we drafted and posted the audition notices ten days before the first audition, which was to be on Thursday, January 27, 2000, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, with the second day of auditions to be Friday, January 28, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Understanding that the student population of STCC is largely composed of non-traditional students (i.e., working parents, military veterans, and underprepared eighteen year-olds) I ascertained that my nonparallel time choices would coincide favorably with the schedules of such students who nevertheless wanted the chance to perform.

In spite of my preparations, I was under no illusions that the auditions would attract throngs of eager thespians, or even that the auditioners would be especially talented; however, I was happily wrong on both fears. In the cold and

rudimentary space of STCC's Downtown Campus stage, twenty-five actors showed up over the course of both days to audition. Among these actors were a 53 year-old legal secretary and a 45 year-old mother of two. My faith in Valley theatre awareness and acting interest was somewhat renewed. Though most of the auditioning actors were initially nervous and tentative, several truly not having any idea what they might be in for, once I had explained the play and its concept, they were eager and energetic; indeed, most stayed for the entire three-hour audition period on Thursday to read several times and they returned the following day.

That first day of auditions I received a piece of heartening news from the Speech and Drama Department chair. In an unusual show of recognition and support from the administration, the Division had allocated monies to offer a small stipend (\$100) to a person to serve as Assistant Director; additionally, I could entice a competent Technical Director by offering a slightly larger stipend (\$500). Since I was already teaching seven classes, this would free my time and reduce some stress. With this happy news, I went home for the weekend to cast the show. Basically, I operated under a list of key "selection factors": talent, which I observed from the intelligent readings and semblance of characterizations attempted during the auditions; work ethic, which I based upon any prior knowledge I had of the auditionee (it surprised me to discover that I did indeed know many of the young actors) and my own interview of most of the applicants; availability, which I based on the actor's own admission of his or her schedule on the audition form; and physical presence, which I felt was important to help the

children differentiate among the characters. To help the actors imagine the seven characters, each person who filled out an audition form received the following character analysis sheet:

### CHARACTER ANALYSES

Note: "Enough of the Huff and Puff! An Adaptation of The Three Little Pigs" is a children's play; consequently, none of the characters are deeply developed. Still, there is room for *some* subtlety in characterization, which is what the following attempts to describe

#### FARMER BATES

Billy Bob Bates is a genial and interesting storyteller, a bit prone to irrelevant reminiscences and therefore long-winded. He is lanky and bowlegged like a retired cowboy. The key word to describe both his mental and physical attitude might be relaxed. He is sincere in his love for children and never condescends to them.

The actor who plays Farmer Bates should have a powerful and expressive voice, for this is mostly a narrator role. He/She, if a college student, should be able to age a bit for the part, and speak with a slight country drawl, as a farmer might. The actor must command the attention of an audience largely composed of children. A familiarity with the various elements of farm life, like how to call a pig, is a plus!

#### MOTHER PIG

Mother Pig is a study in contrasts. She wants to lose weight and wears work-out attire, yet she becomes nearly hysterical when she finds her Twinkie missing. She loves her sons and daughter, yet she virtually tosses them out of her home, only to go searching for them later in the play. She is middle-aged, slightly overweight, and somewhat of a worry-wart. She rules her young pigs with an iron hand, yet many times can be sweet-talked (especially by Lulu, the youngest). In spite of her tendency toward vacillation, she shows a true mother's core of iron will, for in the end she saves the day for her little pigs.

The actor playing Mother Pig should command attention with a rather shrill voice. She should be able to easily express frustration, even to the point of hysteria. It is a difficult part for, as described above, complex contrasts are the norm for Mother Pig. For example, in the midst of great befuddlement might come a stern order for Larry. A great acting challenge!

#### LENNY

As described in the play, Lenny is an ornery pig, kind of a know-it-all. Perhaps because he is the middle pig, Lenny is the most obnoxious of the three. He has



a smart-alecky answer for most questions, for he has a bloated opinion of his own brains. However, Lenny most clearly learns the lessons of the play, and so is most transformed at end of the play.

The actor playing Lenny should be comically gifted in the sardonic vein. He should be quick-witted, and quick to pick up on cues from Larry. Picture a character in the Joe Pesci mold.

#### LARRY

Larry is a physically imposing, quite slow on the uptake hog. He never really “gets it.” He has one driving obsession: food. In most things, Larry takes his lead from his younger brother Lenny, whom he idolizes because he imagines Lenny to be so smart. Larry is incapable of craft or guile and is completely gullible.

The actor playing Larry has a wonderful opportunity for comic acting, for almost every word out of Larry’s mouth is funny, and there is a lot of physical comedy from Larry, too. The actor should loom over the other pigs, and must truly be able to capture the “huh?” look (not a problem for many college students!)

#### LULU

Lulu is the Albert Einstein of the three little pigs. She is observant, analytical, and fairly quick to judge. She has absorbed her mother’s lessons well, and has the courage to stick to what she was taught. She is the epitome of good pigginess.

The actress playing Lulu must project a sweetness despite of her mental superiority to her siblings; in other words, she must never condescend or appear prim. She should also be able to project a rugged strength of character that is important to the play’s message. Attractive, but not glamorously so, she should be the pig the children most readily respond to, partly because Lulu thinks like a smart child.

#### EASY ED (WOLF)

Easy Ed is the archetypal con-man, slick, charming, glib, and good-looking. He lets nothing stand in the way of his lust for food, but he is not one to use violence to achieve his aims. No, his *modus operandi* is craftiness. He is similar to his uncle Wile E. Coyote in this regard, though he is much more of a verbal huckster.

The actor playing Easy Ed must have vocal variety at his command, for Easy Ed uses a lot of different voices in his attempts to deceive the little pigs. The actor must also possess stamina, for Ed is constantly on stage. The actor should have a force of personality that will carry the whole show, and that interesting enough so that an audience of elementary school children will care what happens to him.

#### LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Red appears briefly, though at a key moment in the play. She is the same gullible little girl that we are so familiar with. Perky, energetic and full of wonder, the actress playing Red should resist the temptation to play her as Sondheim and

others have written her as a little girl with an innocent facade that masks strong fortitude and an awareness beyond her years. In this play, leave those qualities to Lulu, although Red, like most children, has a highly developed sense of justice. The actress should be cute, able to skip nimbly, and possessing of a piping soprano voice.

As a preemptive measure to combat the seemingly inevitable absenteeism common to some beginning actors, I also included on the back of my audition form an "oath" of sorts for the actor to sign if he was truly interested in being cast:

### **SPECIAL CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT STATEMENT**

I, the undersigned, about to audition for STCC Drama, agree without reservation that if I am cast in the show, I will attend ALL scheduled rehearsals, meetings, and performances, barring unforeseen *dire* circumstances, such as flood, fire, famine, plague, or similar acts of God. A "slight sniffle" is not a reason to miss a rehearsal. My signature below also indicates that I fully, and under no coercion, understand that a play, while fun, is a very large responsibility, one that I should not take lightly. When I miss a rehearsal, the whole production suffers.

Signed freely by me \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

After a weekend during which I agonized over the aforementioned "casting factors," I posted the cast list on Monday, February 7, 2000. I had allowed a week to go by between auditions and casting because I was out of town from February 2<sup>nd</sup> to February 6<sup>th</sup> attending the Texas Educational Theatre

Association annual conference. I wanted to be present should there be questions concerning the cast list, first read-thru date, etc. The time lapse did not flag interest; many calls were waiting on my answering machine upon my return prior to my posting of the cast, which follows:

STCC CHILDREN'S THEATRE 2000 – *ENOUGH OF THE HUFF AND PUFF*

ORIGINAL CAST LIST

<b>EASY ED THE WOLF</b> .....	Jerry Sanchez
<b>LULU</b> .....	Marissa Hernandez
<b>LARRY</b> .....	Rene "Kicker" Lara
<b>LENNY</b> .....	Jason Vincent Sandoval
<b>MOTHER PIG</b> .....	Anissa Garcia
<b>FARMER BATES</b> .....	Michael Hinojosa
<b>LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD</b> .....	Crystal Creech

As is often the case, what I had agonized over and finally felt was the "ideal cast" turned out not so ideal. Most were excellent in their roles during the first read-through; I felt my job was half over. However, headaches began quickly, for in spite of my ingenious "oath", one of the actors was not present at the read-through scheduled for Tuesday afternoon on February 8th. The casting of one of the actors was undoubtedly my biggest risk. From what I understood of him, this actor was an ex-gang member and high school dropout who heard of the auditions from one of his friends who is involved with our drama program. I was intrigued by his size – he stood about 6'4" – and I felt, for comedic purposes, that

physical size was a factor in the casting of certain characters. Of course, the physical “look” and demeanor of the actors is a primary consideration for any casting director. Plus, this actor had listed on his audition form that he was free every weekday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. on. I had reason to believe the veracity of this. This actor was free, talented, and interested in drama (he had acted before in several of the productions of *Teatro Nuestra Cultura*, our resident Hispanic theatre group at STCC). Still, he was noticeably absent at the first rehearsal, then the second, and the third, with nary a call or note to explain. After that third absence, my patience was at an end, for I could predict a rehearsal schedule fraught with a late, absent, or excuse-ridden and apologetic actor, and it was not a scenario I wanted to tolerate. I never could contact him directly (I assume the 2:00 pm to evening total freedom time-frame he boasted of was a lie); finally, I was forced to inform his mother that I had to replace him.

This absent actor’s replacement was a actor with similar physical presence, though with much better attendance habits, so I hoped. As I personally knew this young man, I felt I could use our friendship to gently prod him to be punctual, should the occasion arise when he might lapse. In the spring 1999 UTPA production of *Brigadoon*, in which he was cast, this young man was notorious for his tardiness. Still, as he was so ideal for the part, and because my options were dwindling as opening night loomed ever closer, I recast this young actor in the role of “Larry”.

Alas, the play was rapidly turning into a theatrical migraine called “The Trouble With Larry” (sounds like a television sitcom), for, despite our personal

friendship, Mr. Hagne was scarcely more punctual and present. Joseph, the fine actor that he is, has perfected the art of the plausible-sounding excuse, but that does not help the cast and I work around his absenteeism. With just under two weeks to go before opening night, I replaced Joseph with Mauro Flores, Jr., in the role. I would never have had the courage to do so were it not for my utter faith in Mr. Flores' skills, and the fact that, a week earlier, I had discussed with Mr. Flores the possibility of coming in to "save" the role of Larry, and he had agreed to help if there was a need. There was such a need, and Mauro filled the role wonderfully, much better than the two previous actors could have done. It must be true that the theatre gods work in mysterious ways. However, they may not always smile, so this replacement fiasco taught me that accurate knowledge of the work ethics of an actor is vital, even more so than great talent when casting.

Rehearsals began on Tuesday, February 8, with a read-through and discussion of the play. Several explanations of words and phrases were necessary, which I found surprising, but I should have realized that young people's vocabularies have shrunk. Jerry, reading "Easy Ed," did not know what kadota figs were, or even Frankenberry cereal, which I thought was a fixture on the breakfast cereal aisle. In retrospect, perhaps the problem was more due to my old-fashioned (circa 1980) sense of pop culture. There were several groans at jokes the cast considered "corny," including my "and please don't call me Shirley" one-liner, and many of the puns. However, the cast in general seemed quite pleased with the script, and they were especially pleased by the references to popular films of the 90's; for example, the scene where the youngest pig Lulu, in

payment for the wheelbarrow full of bricks she is purchasing from Easy Ed's Emporium (operated by the Wolf), plunks down on his counter a briefcase full of unseen yet glowing treasure, ala the climactic scene from 1994's *Pulp Fiction*. I enjoyed including such references that poked fun at popular culture in the play.

In the first few weeks of rehearsals, I impressed upon the cast the difficulty of acting for children. Several factors concerning the uniqueness of children's theatre were discussed as we rehearsed the play. For example, we tried to prepare for the different reactions that would occur, though knowing that an audience of children is quite unpredictable, this was difficult. How could Mauro, for example, have predicted that one performance night, trapped by the Wolf in the pig jail, he would ask for food as the play dictates, and actually receive a minor bombardment of candy from the audience? I could only warn the actors that, with children, expect the unexpected, and this credo proved true. In discussing this phenomenon, Wood states, "...some audiences will pick up a comment made by one child and latch on to it like a limpet" (25). This occurred during performance of *Enough* when Jerry, playing the Wolf but dressed in drag in order to fool Lulu, uttered, "And this color looks great on me." One young man in the front row just could not leave that alone the rest of the show. "That color sucks!" he shouted, and "You're ugly!" In his mind, it was no doubt all in the spirit and fun of the production, but Jerry later confessed it was all he could do not to shout back at this obnoxious kid, or at least to admonish him to shut up! I reminded him that from early rehearsals our catch phrase had been "expect the unexpected," coupled with "prepare for noise." Unlike the staid and attentive

adult audiences at many plays, we knew we had to prepare for the noisy responses and general boisterousness of the children.

Children have few qualms about voicing their displeasure or appreciation for scenes and characters; therefore, voice projection and improvisation were two skills stressed during rehearsals. They proved crucial, especially for the wolf, for during the show he was regularly booed and cat-called vociferously.

Meeting sporadically in February because the lead actress, Marissa Hernandez, and I were cast in UTPA's production of *Hair*, rehearsals continued usually on Thursdays and Fridays between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., well before *Hair* rehearsals usually began. During the week of the run of *Hair* (February 28 to March 5) we did not rehearse at all. In general, due the non-traditional nature of the students, including my actors, at STCC, I was forced to be very flexible and accomodating with my rehearsal schedule, rehearsing around work schedules, class schedules, other rehearsal schedules, etc. Some days we would rehearse from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., between my afternoon class which ends at 3:50, and my evening class, which began at 6:00 p.m. On other days we rehearsed during the more traditional time-slot, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. I found it effective and even necessary to discuss after every rehearsal the following day's rehearsal time: any new conflicts or problems? In other theatres, that practice might be considered amateurish, somehow condoning and even encouraging bad rehearsal attendance; however, dealing as I was with beginning actors unused to discipline in the craft, and also actors who are maintaining full school and work schedules, I only did what was necessary for a successful production. Still, despite my

countermeasures, the bane of my early rehearsals was attendance problems. As previously mentioned, my replacement Larry, Joseph Hagne, was hardly better than his predecessor in attendance habits. Joseph worked over forty hours per week at the local Home Depot, and this fact should have been a huge red warning flag. I had foolishly overlooked Joseph's work priorities. Up to the March 15 rehearsal, Joseph had only attended four times, and the infuriating thing about his absenteeism is that he would rarely call to report that work had, once again, got in the way of his attendance at rehearsal. Following yet another absence on Friday, March 10, I called Joseph and discussed in no uncertain terms that I felt it might be best if he were dropped from the role so that the show could go on! Faced with this possibility, Joseph began to negotiate. He really is a theatre fan, and my fury at his habitual absenteeism was tempered by my desire to prevent another "theatre casualty." In other words, here was a young man that needed to have the fire of his love for acting stoked, not extinguished. Eventually, I got his assurance that his work schedule the remaining days of March would be conducive to his continued participation in the play. Though even this eventually failed, and Joseph was replaced, I felt gratified that I had done what I could to preserve his participation.

"The Trouble with Larry" situation illustrates how difficult it is to make the student-actor aware of the intrinsic, and often long-term, rewards of theatre involvement. It is easy to see the weekly Home Depot or HEB check, to touch it and deposit it in a bank account. It is more difficult to feel the increased poise, confidence, and self-awareness the practiced actor gains; indeed, often these gains



only become evident in retrospect. This is a difficult problem for the director in a community college. Given the type of novice actors we must choose, how can we help them see these incentives? I would invariably resort to reminding them of their responsibility to their director. Since I had established a good rapport with them from the first meeting, this worked well. Often it would take only a stern glance at the tardy actor to admonish him and remind him of the importance of punctuality. Again, this is only effective once a friendly but firm relationship has been established with the actor, so that he feels, if he is late or transgresses in other ways, he has disappointed a good and respected friend. In general, I attempted to adapt the role in my directing technique to that of the helpful guide. While I wanted to be their colleague, I also wanted to establish my control, which of course is a tricky art, but, as Torrance writes, "One of man's most fundamental needs is for anchors in reality – some kind of structure, someone or something to help remove the fear of the unknown" (171). For much of the cast, they were venturing into an "unknown," which was the world of the children's play. Therefore, while maintaining my friendly demeanor, I quickly established myself as an authority on the children who would be attending so that the cast would listen to and be comforted by my expertise in acting for children. For example, one cast member asked about running into the audience during one of the "escape from the wolf" scenes. Should she allow the children to help her hide from the wolf, or should she act as if they weren't there? I recommended taking the children's advice (within reason, of course!), allowing them to vent some of their energies by interacting with her as she ran. This advice worked well during the

performances. It is a good example of the idea of mutual exploration in my to directing the show. I served as the safe anchor as the actors ventured forth into the world of the play for children.

I also employed the group cohesiveness tactic in my directing methodology. As the rehearsals progressed and each actor bonded with the ensemble of seven, I could see that it was more and more the ensemble each actor worried about disappointing, and less and less the director. This phenomenon became apparent when they were comfortable with the show about one week before performance. The actors looked to each other for approval, and refused to let each other down (thankfully, for my ulcer's sake). Finally, I reminded each actor of his or her responsibility to the children. Here was each actor's chance to infect a child with the theatre bug, just as each of them had been infected, and, as we know, once infected, the bug stays forever. I said, "If you rehearse and perform like I know you can, the children will never forget the performance." I can still recall a children's play I saw when I was ten, "Lemonade Joe Rides Again."

My strategies to combat the absenteeism and tardiness that plague amateur theatre failed me only with "The Trouble with Larry" fiasco and with my original "Little Red Riding Hood," Crystal Creech. I should have thought twice about casting poor Crystal in the first place – she is a flighty, sort of vacant girl, as many can be in the 17 to 20 year-old range. Still, Crystal had played "Red" the year before in the STCC inaugural children's play. Plus, this year "Red" was certainly not a difficult role; in the original script, the character spoke roughly ten

lines! So, in spite of my misgivings, I cast her. What nightmarish horror when, on the last dress rehearsal before opening night, Crystal's friend Anissa Garcia (Mother Pig) came into the stage area to inform me that Crystal wanted me to know she wouldn't be there that night, as she had "a lot of homework." I saw the proverbial "red" over this irresponsible "Red"! I immediately called her and told her clearly that if she was not at rehearsal that night, "lots of homework" or not, she would be summarily replaced. I was only inwardly surprised when she said something like, "Fine!" Now I had to find a quick-study replacement "Little Red"!

The solution was in the corner of my mind all the time; perhaps that is why my verdict on Crystal's eleventh hour defection was swift and merciless. My prop master and prompter was an entirely responsible and mature young woman named Holly Retherford. Now, as my eyes cast about while my mind feverishly thought of what to do for a "Little Red," for the first time, apparently, I became cognizant of Holly's hair and what a nice shade of natural red it was. Thus, the solution presented itself, and Holly was glad to help. As the prompter, she knew the lines, so she stepped into the role quickly and fairly effortlessly.

As the actors became more familiar with their lines, the phenomenon I call "elongation" occurred on a few occasions. Elongation refers to the tendency of confident actors to mug and draw out their funny scenes, sometimes to the point of creating a mini-monologue for him or herself. Although many times uproariously funny to fellow actors when rehearsals have reached a stagnant point, elongation can have the detrimental effect of creating a pattern of breaking

actor concentration, breaking character, and breaking continuity of the play. Therefore, although beneficial as stress relief during particularly taxing rehearsals, I found I had to keep the elongations mostly in check for the overall good of the show. I recall one instance that kept the cast giggling for many uncontrollable minutes. In the Lulu/Easy Ed “huffing and puffing at the brick house” scene, Lulu (Marissa Hernandez) had accidentally banged her knee on the rocking chair she used inside her brick home. Marissa lay on the floor of the stage for at least a minute in a paroxysm of pain, massaging her injury. The elongation came later when Easy Ed (Jerry Sanchez) the Wolf crashes against the door of the pig prison as he slams it on the pigs. In mockery of the incident with Marissa’s knee and the rocker, Jerry lay prone on the floor for the same length of time, until Marissa and the rest of the cast caught on and erupted into gales of laughter.

As a stress relief, and to keep the actors fresh, I allowed some of this malarkey. I think all directors do, or probably should from time to time in the rehearsal process. It is especially important for actors in children’s theatre to keep that spirit of play alive, and “crack-ups” like this do much to maintain that. Still, the danger of elongation is in part establishing the habit of allowing the “actor” to come through, overwhelming “character,” and in children’s theatre this is especially deadly. No child wants his imagination interrupted and confused by an actor revealing himself. As Goldman writes in his own bluntly refreshing style, “Who really cares about actors anyway? Actors are like toys for us; they take our mind off things while nurse prepares our bath, but we, dear God, do not want to

know how they work” (358). In a very real sense, the actors in *Huff and Puff* were like toys for the children to “play” the old tale out with; they were tools for the child’s imagination. As I had coached them to remember, the children would strive to take an active part in the performance – do not fight this phenomenon. Allow it, work with it, and use it to help tell the story.

As shown my use of the versatile Holly as a quick replacement Little Red Riding Hood, “Surround oneself with talented people,” was a director’s maxim I quickly put into effect. In addition to Holly, Jerry Sanchez, as assistant director, proved a godsend. In both his role as “Easy Ed the Wolf” and as my main sounding board and “idea-man,” Jerry’s energy and creative spark infected the rest of the cast (those that were in attendance) and carried many rehearsals. For example, in the huffing/puffing house demolition scenes, the little pigs were listless and unimaginative in their acting, until, spurred by the competitive urge that is inside most all of us, they began to react and meet Jerry’s theatrical energy as he went into near cardiac arrest in his efforts to destroy the houses and devour the pigs. He gathered breaths like the asthmatic wheezes of an exhausted octogenarian. He blew until he turned red in the face. Just before the ultimate blow, the third try at Lulu’s brick house, Jerry’s insane breath-gathering dance consistently sent the cast and me into hysterics. In general, Jerry’s over-the-top theatrics kept the cast happy, and set an excellent example of the children’s theatre acting motto: “You can never play it too big.” It taught me that in the ensemble approach to performance can benefit from an actor whose energy and spirit leads by example. Although I was initially wary of the enmity that can

emerge when outstanding talent threatens others and makes them uncomfortable, this ensemble was secure enough, each with his or her own unique skills, that this did not occur and Jerry was a non-threatening creative spark. No doubt his sense of humor removed the sense of fear and competition that sometimes occurs in casts that have great talents, but little humor. Also, Jerry's confidence was such that it would brook nothing but camaraderie from the others, who again fought from being overcome by giggling when Jerry first donned his dress, hat, pearls and purse in the scene where the wolf becomes "Madge, the Avon Lady." Usually, with beginning male actors, it is a difficult task surmounting their inherent and often artificial masculine sensibilities in order for them to exhibit a sensitive side in certain roles. Indeed, as Torrance points out, "In our longitudinal studies we are finding interesting examples of young people who sacrifice their creativity in order to maintain their masculinity..." (112). Thankfully, though he is a relative beginner, Jerry exhibited none of these creativity blocks caused by established gender roles, as his creative and hilarious portrayal of "Madge" clearly showed.

Mauro Flores matched Jerry in the talent department and surpassed him in his dedication and work ethic. Whereas Jerry sometimes was the typical "talent", i.e., arriving late, eschewing the script to improvise his own lines, etc., Mauro was the creative workaholic that one rejoices to find. Mauro stepped into the role of "Larry" with approximately 8 days until performance, and, invariably, he was the actor people mentioned when they reviewed the show or commented on the performers. Mauro asked for nothing; indeed, he seemed eager to be in the show

(when talking with Mauro in one of the several post-production, informal meetings, he admitted that children's theatre was a genre he previously had no experience with, and he had been anxious to add the experience to his repertoire). In short, Mauro's reward was the exercising of his own creativity.

The remaining cast members were all relative novices, except for Marissa Hernandez in the crucial "Lulu" role. Her University of Texas – Pan American mainstage experience served the production well, for she was consistently ahead of the game in the areas of line interpretation and memorization; thus, she was the leader by example to the rest of the cast. It was rare when I had to correct her or ask for a different approach to the role. It got to the point where one day, after rehearsal, she asked me in all incredulity, "C'mon. I know there is something. What am I doing wrong?" I usually had to disappoint her and offer no criticism, for her natural childlike spunk and courage fit the role so well. The other members of the cast benefited greatly from these three (Jerry, Mauro, and Marissa), and used their strong creative examples continually throughout the process of learning their roles.

The strong cast was of course only a part of the production team. Additionally, I knew I had to find exemplary technical assistants who could work with the meager facilities and tools we offered, and would even welcome the challenge.

Carlos Garza, Jr., who became our technical director, proved to be an invaluable asset. We met twice in February to discuss the design concepts and available work facilities and crew. I made it clear that STCC's tools, work space

and stage were prehistoric. A quick tour of the playing space proved I was not exaggerating. STCC's Downtown Campus is the site of what, until the early 1990's, was Sam Houston Elementary School. The Speech and Drama Department has staked a claim on what was the old school's "cafetorium." The wooden proscenium stage is twenty-four feet by twelve feet. A battered, moth-eaten, decades-old blue curtain frames this space, and an equally ancient, battered, and stained off-white curtain covers the back wall. The antiquated wood flooring creaks and groans in certain places that the actors quickly memorize and try to avoid. The overhead lights consist of three naked 70-watt bulbs – only recently have I replaced these meager bulbs with halogen lights.

Lest he become prematurely discouraged, I shared with Carlos the good points. One, the department had just purchased a two-tree, front-of-the-house portable lighting system with ten instruments – including ellipsoidal lanterns – and a modern dimmer board. He would help to initiate this system, something that is always interesting for technicians. Two, we did have a budget of sorts. I had managed to finagle \$2,000 to be allotted for Drama program use only. Three, we did have a storage room. Again by squatter's rights, I had claimed for Drama (I felt like Columbus planting a flag and exclaiming, "I claim this land in the name of her majesty...", only I was claiming space for the arts) the space, which was previously the small food service area for the elementary school. I cleared out most of the broken tables, rusty chairs, and assorted refuse that apparently the janitors did not have the heart to throw away, and found a spacious area with an inner closet perfect for squirreling away the more valuable theatre paraphernalia –



lights, props, and some costume pieces. Finally, from my \$2000, my head technician would receive a stipend of \$500.00. I also reminded Carlos that “bare bones theatre” can be a very good experience – what can we imagine and create even without the sanctuary of established academic theatre or the dollars of professional repertory theatre?

One design element thoroughly discussed was the three little pigs’ respective houses. I had written that each house should somehow “disappear” after the Wolf exudes his tremendous huffs. Carlos made the difficulties inherent with that clear. Finally, he hit upon the excellent idea of having each house exterior made up of panels velcroed onto the structure of the house. (Whatever did the theatre world do before the invention of that magical substance velcro?) Via velcro, each set of panels would suggest either straw, sticks, or bricks, depending on which scene, and each could be removed efficiently (without the awkward closed-curtain, minutes-long crew work). The frame of the house would remain the same for each pig. Also, my “pig-prison” concept gave Carlos pause. As the playwright I had envisioned a cell just off-stage right where the Wolf, in his grand plan to eventually throw all the pigs in his stew pot, sequesters each one. In this case, though the technician balked, the director won out, and Carlos helped build the cell. Perhaps the deciding factor was that we already had in storage long black bars that were used for a previous prison scene from a play that had been performed at the college.

These areas of concern were mostly worked out during two “design conferences” that took place in February. The actual building took place on two

days during the last week of March, and Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> (opening night was Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2000). These sessions were marathon but productive. Given the design requirements already discussed, Carlos had made two trips to Home Depot, where, using some of the \$2,000 Drama allotment, he purchased the necessary tools and building materials. Then, on the “building sessions,” he, his fiancée Diana Yzaguirre, his friend Mike Salazar, and I hammered, sawed, hinged and painted the pig-prison, the frame of the pig house with respective panels of straw, sticks, or bricks; Easy Ed’s Emporium which resembled a simple carnival side-show booth; and the back drop suggesting a farmyard. Two key signs were also painted: the “PIG JAIL” placard, and the slogan for Easy Ed’s Emporium, “IF WE DON’T HAVE IT, YOU DON’T WANT IT.”

The Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, building session is worth mentioning if only because it illustrates the great lengths one must sometimes go to for art’s sake at a community college where “art” may not be the priority. On Sundays, the Downtown Campus is closed, gated and locked so that no ingress is possible except by the armed security guards roaming the campus like sentries in No Man’s Land. Once a faculty member such as myself has yelled until hoarse for one of these guards, then the guard, after requiring a lengthy explanation, will probably unlock one of the gates so that the faculty member may enter the campus. On this Sunday, the first stage of the obstacle course was passed. Next came the challenge of finding a way into the stage area, the “cafetorium”. Two groups of special people have been issued keys: janitors and secretaries. Of course, neither one is available on Sundays, and I fall into neither of the categories. Carlos stood

aghast as I entered my own office (yes, we are allowed keys to our offices) and began my own athletic method, already honed to perfection, of entering the stage area. Climbing up onto a table, I pushed aside the corkboard faux ceiling square and pulled myself up into the girders. I squirmed and shimmied over to the adjacent office and dropped down to the carpet. From there it was only a few steps to the door of this office and then the door to the stage, which I opened from the inside and allowed Carlos entry so we could build in peace. Clandestine? Yes. Unlawful? I don't think so. It was either my athletic entry method, or wait 6 months to a year for somebody in the administrative annex to decide that a theatre teacher should have a key to the one place on campus that passes for a stage!

The three days it took to build and paint were enough to put together a set that provided just enough of a spark to the children's imaginations. It was simple, but colorful, basic, but highly suggestive of "way back when, when the world was new, and pigs spoke rhyme," as Farmer Bates might say. After discussion, Carlos and I decided that the major design theme for this production would be "Fast and Cheap." We were not interested in shoddiness, but time, as usual, was a factor, and our theatrical budget, as already described, was limited.

For the Pig Prison already referred to in the design discussion, Carlos constructed black "bars" from a cell that I had already constructed for a previous production. He adapted them by adding a hinge so the effect was two dimensional instead of the straight line of bars that I had built.

The backdrop was an interesting concept. The use of clear plastic sheeting has become the rage in scene design. After working on The University of Texas – Pan American’s Spring 2000 production of *Hair*, which made use of this sheeting, Carlos thought it might work just as well for *Huff and Puff*. Tom Grabowski, designer and Technical Director for UTPA’s *Hair*, noted that “It (the sheeting) worked well – it was relatively inexpensive for a one-run use. We spent \$35 on a very large sheet as opposed to approximately \$150 worth of muslin we would have had to use. Plus, the stuff is labor-effective. The time and trouble it takes to hang muslin was cut at least in half by the use of the plastic sheeting. Also, we wanted the translucent quality of the plastic for some special effects we had planned for *Hair*.” When asked about any drawbacks to the use of the plastic, Grabowski said, “The one major one is that it does not hold paint as well as other materials – it has a tendency to scrape off when touched by actors, what have you...”

For *Huff and Puff*, Carlos and several assistants spread a twenty-five feet by ten feet sheet on the campus grounds outside of the theatre, and worked an afternoon spray painting a colorful bucolic scene that served as the forest for the entire play. Lightweight but large, the plastic held the color well despite warnings to the contrary. We later observed during technical rehearsal that the harsh stage lights caused a slight sheen against the texture of the plastic, belying the translucent effect we had witnessed in *Hair*, but we unanimously agreed that this was a small price to pay for the ease of creation and cost-effectiveness that the plastic as backdrop provided.

The third ingenious design element was completely Carlos' brainchild, and, as such, his pride and joy – the houses of the Three Little Pigs. Carlos said, “Yes, I was proud of the final result of the little pigs' house(s), especially the fact that it was so inexpensive to build, around \$200 for the entire cost.”

Carlos, Diana and I thought of small touches to polish the look of the set. For example, Diana contrived a sign that the Wolf could hang on the door of the prison once he had captured a pig or two. The sign was rectangular, bright yellow, with black lines to symbolize a prison's bars. Spaced between the lines read the phrase “PIG JAIL”. Illustrating this sign were two little pigs on each end, dressed in overalls just like our three little pigs. Originally, the way Diana had painted these pigs, they looked more like small teddy bears than little pigs. Proving once again the power of collaborative theatre, I suggested painting pointed rather than round ears, and including the obligatory curly tail. These two adjustments worked perfectly, and the sign hung proudly on the pig jail during the show.

In summary, the set construction and result proved to be a vital element in the success of the show. Carlos Garza, Jr. exhibited inventive thought and the work ethic to accompany it, and helped put together an effective, though admittedly minimalist, set. To quote Carlos, “I liked a lot that I could try different ideas and work out my own solutions – that hasn't been true with some of the theatre projects I've worked on. Also, working at STCC forced me to remember to constantly keep options in mind and to be prepared for all sorts of spaces to

build in (*Huff and Puff* was a traveling show, meant to be taken to our branch campuses at Rio Grande City and Weslaco).”

With an outstanding ensemble cast and a main technician also worthy of high praise, an element remained that would add greatly to the show’s effectiveness – music.

A search for a collaborator to help transform the play into a musical of sorts began in earnest in November of 1999. I penned an e-mail note to a colleague at STCC, Dr. Michael Stone, chair of the Music Department, which read as follows:

“Dr. Stone: I don’t think we have ever met, but my name is Brian Warren, and I am the primary theatre instructor here at the college. We here at the Speech and Drama Dept., have recently had the good idea of affecting a collaboration of our departments with our Spring Children’s Theatre production...the play’s been written and I’d like to discuss with you how your talents could help create a musical from it. Let me know your thoughts, and then, if you’re still interested in the project, I could get you a copy of the script so that you could begin brainstorming on adding the music ...Brian Warren”

Here was a courteous note that hopefully might elicit a response and the burgeoning of a Warren/Stone tandem of musical theatre that one day might be as familiar as the duo of Gilbert and Sullivan, for example. Unhappily, I was immediately stonewalled, for Dr. Stone’s came back as follows:

“My only problem is where to find the time for a collaboration such as yours...My undergraduate degree is in composition, but I have never written a

“musical”, and we do not have enough instrumental music majors in our program to put much of anything together... The play actually sounds great... Sorry.”

Again, the feeling that at times arises from others in the Rio Grande Valley that anything “theatrical” is in essence a waste of time enveloped me, and I spent a few despondent weeks.

Then, by fortuitous coincidence I stumbled upon the show’s composer of original incidental music and its sound engineer, Julio Caesar Benavides. In my “Introduction to Human Communication” class at STCC, one of the assignments was to present an informative speech. Julio’s excellent speech was on the basic chords and technique of guitar playing. Upon questioning him, he revealed that he also owned a modern synthesizer and composed original music; indeed, he had written and even produced sheet music for several piano and violin concertos. Immediately, I recognized how useful such a talented young man could be for the children’s play. Necessity compelled me, and many others in less than plush theatrical situations, to weigh the “theatrical worth” of students, friends, colleagues, and relatives alike. Julio, fortunately, was excited by the idea of helping the show musically, and so he attended the Monday, April 3rd dress rehearsal. His improvisational skills at the keyboard astounded me. He was able to view the scene and compose appropriate incidental music on the spot. By the final dress rehearsal on Wednesday, he had, in addition to preshow tunes and complimentary music for key scenes, created a wonderful medley of forest noises, hurricane wind noises, crashes and bangs that accentuated the stage action superbly. Once again, the theatre gods had smiled upon me. There was no other

explanation for the lucky discovery of Julio's musical skill, although it helped that I was ever observant and receptive to talented people who crossed my path. The amateur theatre director must constantly be on the lookout for just such bits of "luck" as the discovery of Julio apparently was. There is no way of predicting what hidden talent lies dormant, waiting for you to bring it out for the collaboration of art that is theatre.

The third invaluable human asset was no undiscovered talent, but a known commodity. One of our Speech faculty members happens to have had a past life as a public relations director for a major school district, for Jenny Cummings and Associates in Houston, and for several other organizations in Texas, always serving as a communications specialist in some regard. Knowing her past experience, I hastened to enlist her aid in publicizing the night of theatre for children. I wrote the press releases, and the material for the program and the publicity flyers, but Ms. Robinson arranged the information so it was presentable, then she contacted each of the Valley newspapers that gave us space to publicize: *The Monitor*, *The Edinburg Daily Review*, *The McAllen Town Crier*, *The Mid-Valley Town Crier*, and *The Progress Times* in Mission. Each publication contained all or part of the following statement:

"The classic tale of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf takes on a modern twist in "Enough of the Huff and Puff."

The STCC Speech and Drama Department's  
Family Theatre Production runs April 6-7, 7:30 p.m.,



and April 8 at 3:00 p.m. at the STCC Downtown Center Auditorium and April 9 at 3:00 p.m. at the Weslaco Library Media Theatre. Narrator Farmer Bates set the story. Recently set loose upon the world by Mother Pig, Lenny, Larry and Lulu (the three little pigs) stumble upon “Easy Ed’s Emporium,” a supermarket that’s motto is “If We Don’t Have It, You Don’t Want It.” Easy Ed, owner and chief salesperson, who looks suspiciously wolf-like, sells cheap straw and sticks as house-building materials. Lulu, the youngest and smartest pig, coerces Ed into selling her a sturdier material: brick.

The rest of the play chronicles Easy Ed’s (the wolf) plans to eat the three little pigs one by one. Does he succeed? You may be surprised!

“To find out, come to one of the shows,” says writer/director Brian Warren, adding that this modern adaptation is “sure to please adults as well as children.”

In addition to issuing the press release to the publications listed above, Jenny submitted the statement to several in-house publications, including “STCC Community Talk – South Texas Community College Internal Newsletter”.

Because of such great publicity work, we had full houses each performance (about 125 people per performance).

This ensemble of stellar assistants did not prevent certain obstacles to a smooth production, in addition to the crises previously mentioned involving the cast and set up of the stage. One dilemma involved the scheduling of the stage space. At STCC, Dr. Richard Abel and I have dedicated the program to unusual, even *avant-garde* theatre, or at least theatre that is rarely performed in other venues in the Rio Grande Valley. To that end, the children's production was one result, as was our resident Hispanic theatre group, *Teatro Nuestra Cultura*, directed by local drama *aficionado* Pedro Garcia. The trouble arose when Pedro began the rehearsals for his spring production *Billy the Kid* just as the children's show was in its final two weeks of rehearsal. I was accommodating to his group, but also firm to the notion that, since we were closer to performance, we should control the use of the "cafetorium" (I'm sure this rickety stage never imagined it would be in so much demand!). Pedro understood, but it did make him anxious about enough on-stage rehearsal time for *Billy the Kid*. This made me more aware of the importance of advance scheduling. When we were the only show at STCC, this was never a problem, but now that *Teatro Nuestra Cultura* is so active, as well as the English Department's literary group, W.I.L.D., headed by Tom Fuschetto, that dabbles in performing dramatic skits, reserving the stage and keeping to a clear and well-publicized rehearsal and performance schedule is vital. Also Dr. Abel and I have to be much more selective in allowing theatre groups not associated with STCC, such as the local group that calls itself DIDK

Productions, onto the stage without permission. Such scheduling difficulties are at least proof that our drama program is a growing concern!

The concept of the show had been partially structured around the mobility factor. We wanted to take the show to either one, or both, of our main branch campuses, the Mid-Valley Campus in Weslaco, and the Starr County Campus in Rio Grande City. We understand that one of the reasons people do not go to plays is because of a perceived inaccessibility to theatres, and to remove that excuse, the set design was portable enough to travel to either one of those campuses.

Weslaco was chosen as the campus site to perform because of its close proximity. Actually, the STCC Mid-Valley campus has no theatre space, so we (Jenny Robinson, adjunct instructor Debra Wyatt, and I) contacted the Weslaco Public Library and asked to use their Media Theatre. They readily complied, so the Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. performance was scheduled there. Just after the Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> performance, I called the cast together and requested that they assemble on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> (no Saturday night partying) to help Carlos and I dismantle the set, load into the rental truck I had procured, and drive to Weslaco to arrive around 12:00 p.m. There, setting up the play, we all learned valuable lessons in flexibility when we discovered that this theatre consisted of a very shallow back stage, steeply raked seating, and other differences from our cafeteria stage that proved somewhat challenging to adapt to. Luck and good work ethic prevailed, and this show was also a success.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Children's theatre is at once the most frustrating and most rewarding theatrical endeavor. You face an eager and generally receptive audience, but they are devoid of subtleties and political agendas: they simply crave imaginative entertainment, and will immediately denounce the show that does not deliver this. As such, children are the toughest of audiences – they care not a whit for political correctness and they will immediately sniff out artificiality; i.e., actors not true to their characters, errors in plot logic, and justice not being served by the story and its dramatization. At the same time, the children's audience is the most imaginative one. They suspend their disbelief with alacrity, willingly, even joyfully allowing the production to lead them down the path of wonder – but it had better be wonderful. Therein lies the paradox, and it makes for a stimulating challenge for all the theatrical artists.

In accepting this challenge with the writing, casting, and directing of *Enough of the Huff and Puff!*, I felt even more responsible to my young audience than if I was writing a “regular” play for an adult audience. Presenting the play in an area that offers relatively little in the way of live theatre for children, I wanted

to present a triumphant example of the genre. I desperately wanted the audience for *Huff and Puff* to come away from it excited about plays, about the energy between them and the performers, about the exercise in imagination possible when some unseen movie director is not spoon-feeding them every sight, sound, and thought, and about the activation of their own creative energies. These were my goals. Sitting alone on opening night at the cafeteria table that served as our light booth, I watched the children's faces and reactions. Children were agog, open-mouthed at the live and talking little pigs. As the story progressed, the children stood spontaneously to deride the wolf, or shout encouragement to the little pigs, or whisper in ear-splitting stage whisper advice to Mother Pig. I felt satisfied that my goals were accomplished. Frank Baum's words, "...but to please a child is a sweet and lovely thing..." again came to mind. I felt the supreme gratification he was referring to as the children were pulled into the plight of the three little pigs and the theatrical imagination of the evening. It was indeed a sweet and lovely thing.

## WORKS CITED

- Garner, James Finn. Politically Correct Bedtime Stories. New York: Macmillan, 1994.
- Garza, Jr., Carlos. Personal Interview. 13 May 2000.
- Goldberg, Moses. Children's Theatre: A Philosophy and Method. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- Goldman, William. The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway. New York: Bantam Books, 1969.
- Grabowski, Tom. Personal Interview. 10 June 2000.
- Jacobs, Joseph, ed. "The Three Little Pigs". Garden City, NY: Nelson Doubleday, Inc., 1963.
- Spolin, Viola. Theatre Games for the Classroom. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1986.
- Stone, Michael: email communiqué. McAllen: STCC, 1999.
- Wood, David. Theatre for Children. London: Faber and Faber, 1979.

**Copyright**

**March 2, 2001**

**Brian Warren**

---