

THE GIRL IN THE RED HIJAB

By Jim and Jane Jeffries

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-869-3

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PUBLISHED BY BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS

1-888-473-8521

THE GIRL IN THE RED HIJAB

A One Act Social Issues Drama

By Jim and Jane Jeffries

SYNOPSIS: Samira, an outspoken and articulate Muslim girl, gets on the wrong side of a group of students by challenging them on their assumptions about Islam. Offended, they nominate her for homecoming court as a way to embarrass her and then follow with a nasty text campaign. Two of her Christian friends must decide whether to just be bystanders, and a new Muslim student, who just wants to fit in, must decide if it is time to stand out. This script explores different prejudices and misinformation about Muslims in America and is also another look at bullying in general.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 females, 3 males, 4-15 extras)

| | |
|------------------|--|
| SAMIRA (f) | An articulate, outspoken Muslim girl who likes to wear a red hijab. <i>(73 lines)</i> |
| LEENA (f) | A Muslim girl and new student; she chooses not to wear the hijab. <i>(58 lines)</i> |
| JOSIE (f) | A Christian teenager who befriends Leena and Samira. <i>(56 lines)</i> |
| DUSTIN (m) | A bigoted, insensitive teenager who would like to date Leena. <i>(82 lines)</i> |
| RILEY (m) | A shy teenager who would also like to date Leena. <i>(49 lines)</i> |
| ED (m) | A lazy teenager who is pretty vocal about his prejudice against Muslims. <i>(48 lines)</i> |
| ELLYN (f) | A very liberal, feminist teenager who doesn't like her opinion challenged. <i>(60 lines)</i> |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| MARIAM (f)..... | A Muslim teenager who wears the hijab, either by choice or family pressure. (10 lines) |
| AALIA (f)..... | A Muslim teenager who wears the hijab, either by choice or family pressure. (11 lines) |
| RAZIA (f)..... | A Muslim teenager who wears the hijab, either by choice or family pressure. (9 lines) |
| EXTRAS (m/f)..... | 4-15 students. (Nonspeaking) |

DURATION: 35 minutes.

SETTING: American high school cafeteria.

PROPS

- Lunch bags with food for various actors
- 5-10 lunch trays with food
- Backpacks, notebooks, or other school supplies
- Class schedule for Leena
- Cross necklace for Josie
- Super Gulp drink for Ed
- A quarter for Ed
- French Fries for Dustin
- Ballot for homecoming
- Cell phones
- Red scarfs or shirts or caps for the ending scene

SOUND EFFECTS

- School Bell Rings

COSTUMES

LEENA – Should wear a long-sleeved shirt and jeans.

AALIA, MARIAM, SAMIRA, and RAZIA – Wear a hijab but can wear long-sleeved shirts with jeans.

ELLYN – Should wear a tank-top and jeans.

MALES – Modern high school outfits.

Extras students should wear outfits similar to Ellyn's or Male's. All actors should be able to change up costume pieces that indicate another day.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

You may change the city where this takes place or keep Minneapolis. This could be any high school in the U.S. In the play Americans would pronounce the word Muslim, "muhz-lum." Muslims would pronounce the word "moose-lum" with a hard "s."

PRODUCTION HISTORY

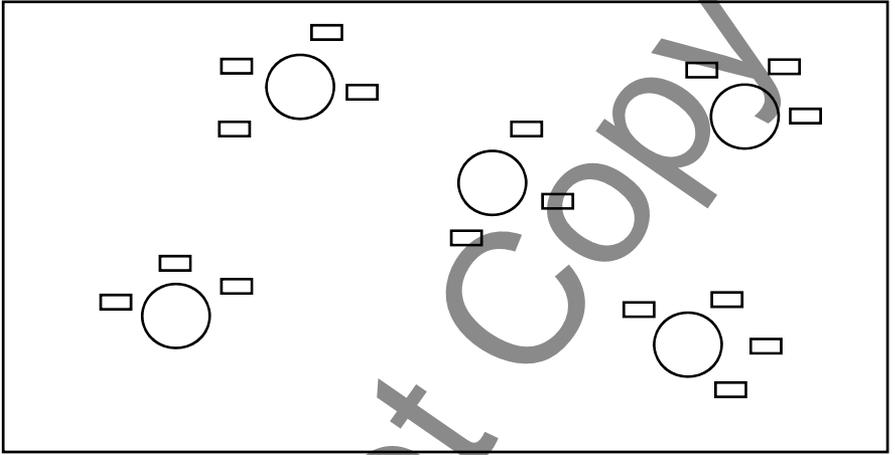
Special thanks to Hudson High School drama students in Hudson, WI, for performing this show at the WHSFA One-Act Festival in October 2013.

“To God be the glory; to us be the blame.”

Do Not Copy

SET

There should be tables and chairs around the stage and some homecoming posters and any other banners that help identify it as a high school.



SCENE 1: Monday

AT RISE: *As lights come up, SFX: a school bell rings, signaling the end of class. Students enter a Commons area for lunch. MARIAM, AALIA, and RAZIA are already sitting at a table with 4 empty chairs. As other students enter, they note the empty spots but look for somewhere else to sit. One takes a chair from MARIAM'S table to sit at another table. JOSIE sits at a table by herself with one empty chair. LEENA hesitates and scans the room; she notes MARIAM, AALIA, and RAZIA then moves off toward JOSIE.*

LEENA: Is anyone sitting here?

JOSIE: I'm expecting someone.

LEENA: Oh. *(Looks around the cafeteria for another seat.)*

JOSIE: *(Sees LEENA'S dismay and relents.)* But, hey, he can find another chair. Have a seat. *(Beat.)* I'm Josie.

LEENA: Thanks. I'm Leena. *(She sits, opens her lunch bag, and brings out her food.)*

JOSIE: Nice to meet you. *(Looks over at the food.)* What's that you're eating?

LEENA: Lamb.

JOSIE: So, Leena had a little lamb?

LEENA: *(Smiles.)* It followed me to school one day. In my lunch bag. What are you eating?

JOSIE: Ham and peanut butter on rye.

LEENA: Ham and peanut butter?

JOSIE: The peanut butter gives it sort of a Thai flavor. Yours sounds better. *(Beat.)* I haven't seen you around. You new?

LEENA: We just moved here.

JOSIE: And what brings you to the great city of Minneapolis? [Or fill in the city of your choice.]

LEENA: Well, my father—

DUSTIN enters and sets down his tray by JOSIE. RILEY follows with his tray.

DUSTIN: Thanks for saving a seat, Josie. Be right back.

DUSTIN crosses to MARIAM'S table, takes a chair, and returns to JOSIE'S table. He sits as RILEY stands awkwardly.

DUSTIN: Grab a chair, Riley!

RILEY: *(Sets down tray and crosses to MARIAM'S table.)* Mind if I take a chair?

MARIAM: Go ahead.

RILEY: Thanks. *(Takes chair and returns to JOSIE'S table.)*

DUSTIN: Hey, Josie, how's the new semester going? Did you get MacDonald for World Studies?

JOSIE: Nope. I got Davis.

DUSTIN: You got the YouTube king?

JOSIE: Yep. And you got the essay Nazi.

DUSTIN: Life is tragically unfair. No matter. I'll just ask my mom to get me out of MacDonald's class.

JOSIE: Your mom won't let you.

DUSTIN: Sure she will. I've done it before. *(Speaks to JOSIE as if she is his mom.)* Mom, I need your help. I've got this teacher who's not meeting my needs as a student. I'm a visual learner.

JOSIE: No way.

DUSTIN: Worked last year with Mrs. Carpenter.

DUSTIN notices RILEY staring at LEENA. He snaps his fingers at RILEY.

Earth to Riley!

RILEY: *(Startled.)* What?

DUSTIN: *(Looks to LEENA.)* Hey. New girl I've never met. I'm Dustin.

LEENA: *(Smiles.)* Hi. I'm Leena.

DUSTIN and LEENA look at RILEY, who is still tongue-tied.

DUSTIN: And this is Riley. *(Looks at RILEY.)* Say "Hi," Riley.

RILEY: Hi. (*RILEY does a weak little wave. There is another awkward pause.*)

DUSTIN: Riley got a 5 on the AP Language test last year. He used up all of his language on the test.

SAMIRA: (*Enters and crosses to MARIAM'S table.*) Aalia, did you get my text?

AALIA: Yeah, sorry. My battery died. I have AP Euro 2nd hour. Guess you and Razia will have to manage without me.

RAZIA: Have a seat, Samira.

SAMIRA: Actually, I have to talk to Josie. Mind if I take a chair?

AALIA: Not at all.

SAMIRA takes chair and moves to JOSIE'S table.

I swear, if there were only 4 available chairs in this place—all at our table—still no one would sit here.

MARIAM: There were 4 available chairs at our table. (*Looks around.*) Oh. Wait.

RAZIA: Don't take it personally. It's just the second week of school. It always takes time.

AALIA: I wish I were more like Samira. She just jumps in. (*Looks over to JOSIE'S table.*) Who's the new girl?

MARIAM: (*Glances over.*) Don't know. But notice that she's not sitting alone.

They continue in silent conversation.

DUSTIN: So, we dubbed him the YouTube king and the nickname stuck. Personally, I love his class.

SAMIRA: Why would you love a class that just shows movies?

DUSTIN: Hello. It's an easy grade.

SAMIRA: But don't you want to learn anything?

DUSTIN: I'd rather have the easy grade and get out of here. (*Pause.*)

So, Sabrina –

SAMIRA: Samira.

DUSTIN: Right. Isn't your table (*Points toward AALIA, MARIAM and RAZIA.*) over there? Why are you –

JOSIE: Relax, Dustin. We're in Speech class together. Group project.

RILEY: Already? But it's only the second week.

SAMIRA: Ms. Sampson doesn't waste time. And since that's our only class together, we decided to work together at lunch.

JOSIE: (*To SAMIRA.*) Samira, this is Leena.

SAMIRA: Nice to meet you, Leena. Are you new?

LEENA: Yeah, we just moved here.

SAMIRA: Oh yeah? From where?

LEENA: Uh, Michigan.

DUSTIN: The land of snow and cold.

SAMIRA: (*Looks around.*) I don't suppose anyone here has halal food?

DUSTIN: What's halal food?

RILEY: Halal is food that Muslims can eat.

SAMIRA: (*Looking at RILEY.*) You'd make a great Muslim, Riley.

RILEY: Uh . . . thanks?

DUSTIN: While I'm sure that all this talk of halafel—

JOSIE: That's halal.

DUSTIN: Whatever. I want to talk about the Dustin Walters Biannual Prank.

SAMIRA: You have a biannual prank named after you?

DUSTIN: I like to think of it as paying it forward. It's my legacy. I thought we could make homecoming more interesting this year.

JOSIE: It's the second week of school, and you're thinking about homecoming?

DUSTIN: It's never too early to be devious.

LEENA: (*Pulls out her schedule and speaks to JOSIE.*) Hey, could you tell me where this next class is?

RILEY: (*Cranes his neck over and interjects.*) Oh, you have Mr. Pfundheller. You and I have the same class. I could walk with you there. I mean, just to show you the way. I mean, not like you couldn't find the way yourself. I mean, in a purely friendly way I could –

LEENA: Thanks. That would be nice. (*She stands.*) It was nice meeting all of you.

RILEY and LEENA pack up. RILEY leaves his tray behind and walks LEENA off-stage.

DUSTIN: Nice meeting you! *(Turns to JOSIE.)* So, what's Leena's last name? What is she, a freshman?

JOSIE: I just met her, Dustin. All I know is that she has Pfundheller for History after lunch.

DUSTIN: Well, you're no help. Hold it. I have the Funman next! See ya later! *(Exits quickly.)*

JOSIE: *(Calls after him.)* Yeah, nice talking to you, too!

SAMIRA: Why does he do that?

JOSIE: Do what?

SAMIRA: Take digs at me all the time.

JOSIE: You shouldn't worry about people like Dustin. He's got a lot of growing up to do.

SAMIRA: I'm just trying to blend in. *(Touches her hijab.)*

JOSIE: You do sorta stand out with the hijab. And red makes you stand out even more. Why do you wear it?

SAMIRA: I look good in red.

JOSIE: No, I meant –

SAMIRA: I know what you meant. *(Beat.)* Why do you wear it?

JOSIE: Wear what?

SAMIRA: That cross?

JOSIE: *(Touches her cross necklace.)* It's a symbol of what I believe. *(Looks at SAMIRA.)* Fair enough.

SAMIRA: Right. So, let's get going on our presentation. *(Pulls out her notebook; they work silently.)*

AALIA: They've already got posters up for homecoming this year.

RAZIA: Have you ever thought about homecoming?

MARIAM: Why would I think about homecoming? My parents would never let me go.

RAZIA: I don't mean going to homecoming. I mean thinking about homecoming.

AALIA: You are making less sense than normal.

RAZIA: I was thinking about homecoming as, like, an extended metaphor.

MARIAM: You've had Mr. MacDonald for less than two weeks, and he's already twisting your mind.

RAZIA: Think about it. There are the people who go to homecoming and the –

AALIA: Muslims?

MARIAM: The outcasts?

RAZIA: *(Beat.)* I was going to say the people whose lives are a little more interesting. They aren't so hung up on fitting in.

AALIA: Tell you the truth, I wouldn't mind fitting in. Just once.

They continue in silent conversation. Enter ELLYN with lunch tray and ED with a super gulp. They cross to another table and sit.

ED: All I'm saying is that you always pick some topic on women's rights, and you always pick me as your partner.

ELLYN: That's because no one at this school needs more education on women's rights than you do, Ed. That and the fact that you looked so pathetic sitting there all alone without a partner.

ED: I puke once during a presentation. You'd think people would be over it by now.

ELLYN: Hard to get over if you were there.

ED: I guess so. But do we have to do women's rights? Again? How about legalizing marijuana?

ELLYN: No.

ED: Lowering the drinking age to 18?

ELLYN: No.

ED: Homework ban?

ELLYN: Ed, this is important. Here we are in the 21st century, and women still make only 77 cents for every dollar that men make. Doesn't that bother you?

ED: *(Reaches in pocket and then hands ELLYN a quarter.)* Here's a quarter. Keep the change, babe.

ELLYN: *(Gives ED a death stare.)* What slot should I stick it in, Ed?

ED: (*Holds up hands in surrender.*) Sorry, sorry. C'mon, I was just pushing your buttons.

ELLYN: You shouldn't joke about this. It's unfair.

ED: Of course it's unfair. I just don't think one presentation in Speech is going to change anything.

ELLYN: We need to change people in order to change things. And it starts in Speech class.

ED: Fine. So, what exactly am I supposed to do for this presentation?

ELLYN: One, go to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website and get some stats. Two, put those stats in a 3D graph. And three: don't puke.

ED: Right. Well, number three rules out school lunch. (*Looks over at JOSIE and SAMIRA.*) So, who's the camel jockey with Josie?

ELLYN: Muslim, Ed. Shut your intolerant face. (*Beat.*) Hey, maybe we should switch our topic to women's rights in the Middle East?

ED: Why? Do women there only make 76 cents?

ELLYN: (*Absentmindedly smacks ED.*) It's a lot more than that.

ED: 80 cents? (*Really smacks ED.*) Look, I really don't want to do a speech about Middle East women.

ELLYN: Why not?

ED: They're a bunch of freaks. (*Looks to table with AALIA, MARIAM and RAZIA.*) Just look at them sitting by themselves.

ELLYN: Well, maybe no one bothers to sit with them.

ED: Because they are seriously weird. I hear that they're bald underneath those scarves.

ELLYN: Where on earth do you come up with this stuff?

ED: Prove to me that they have hair.

ELLYN: They're victims, Ed.

ED: They're not victims. The victims were all at the Boston Marathon.

ELLYN: You can't judge all Muslims by a few extremists.

ED: Why not? Muslim is as Muslim does. If we do a speech on Muslims, I want to talk about terrorism.

ELLYN: We are doing women's rights in the Middle East. (*Looks over at table with AALIA, MARIAM and RAZIA.*) Given that we get more of them every year, this seems like a good topic. Maybe you'll learn something.

ED: Why do I get the feeling that I'm not going to get a choice in this?

Lights down. AALIA, RAZIA, MARIAM, SAMIRA, JOSIE, ELLYN, & ED exit.

SCENE 2: Tuesday

AT RISE: *RILEY and LEENA enter and sit at a table with only two chairs. Lights up.*

LEENA: I don't know what you're complaining about. I like Mr. Pfundheller.

RILEY: But he doesn't like me.

LEENA: Just because you got a C on the assignment, you think he doesn't like you?

RILEY: Well, yeah. Pretty much.

LEENA: Oh, be honest. You did the assignment right before class started. *(Laughs.)* I'm thinking the C is a gift.

RILEY: I meant to do it last night, but I ran out of time.

DUSTIN: *(Enters with full tray.)* Hey, Riley, can you get me a chair? *(RILEY goes to get another chair. DUSTIN sits in the remaining chair next to LEENA.)* So, what's up, Leena?

LEENA: I'm trying to convince Riley that Mr. Pfundheller doesn't hate him.

RILEY brings chair and looks a bit discouraged when he sees DUSTIN next to LEENA. He sits in the chair he brought.

DUSTIN: You know, I've decided that the Funman isn't so fun after all. He clearly doesn't appreciate my jokes.

LEENA: Hate to break it to you, Dustin, but no one gets your jokes.

ELLYN: *(Enters with full tray.)* Riley, can you grab me a chair?

RILEY: *(Looks annoyed.)* Here, take mine. *(Crosses to get another.)*

ELLYN: And they say chivalry is dead.

ED enters. RILEY returns with chair; ED sits in it before RILEY can sit down.

ED: Thanks, man.

RILEY: Don't mention it. *(Stands there with an awkward pause.)*

ED: Aren't you going to grab another chair?

RILEY: You expecting someone else?

ED: For you.

RILEY: Oh. *(Goes to search farther afield for a chair.)*

DUSTIN: Leena, this is Ellyn and Ed, or as we call them, El-Ed.

ED: Ed-El.

ELLYN: We are not a couple.

ED: We're not?

ELLYN: No, we're not. We are just teaming up on a speech.

RILEY: *(Returns with another chair.)* What speech?

ELLYN: We've decided to do the oppression of women in the Middle East.

ED: We?

RILEY: Is that a wise speech to do?

DUSTIN: *(Laughs.)* Is it wise to do a speech with Ed?

ELLYN: He'll be fine. I won't let him talk.

ED: I'm doing special effects.

DUSTIN: Yep. Like last year?

ED: Would you let it go? Besides, that wasn't my fault. I ate hot lunch that day.

LEENA: So . . . what made you decide on women in the Middle East?

ELLYN: We noticed the Muslims at lunch.

ED: And Samantha is in one of my classes.

ELLYN: It's Sarah.

LEENA: Samira, actually.

ELLYN: Yeah, her.

DUSTIN: The mouthy one?

ELLYN: So, if a girl has an opinion, she's "mouthy"?

DUSTIN: Have you had a class with her? She never lets anyone else talk. And she's always correcting people.

ED: Sounds familiar.

ELLYN: *(Stares at ED.)* Does it?

ED: Nope. I guess not.

DUSTIN: She just acts like a know-it-all. I thought they were supposed to be submissive.

ED: *(Holds his head.)* I can't believe you just said that out loud.

ELLYN: *(Angrily.)* "Submissive"?

RILEY: What I think he means –

LEENA: What do you mean, Dustin?

DUSTIN: I'm talking Muslim chicks, here. No way are you girls submissive.

LEENA: You think all Muslim girls are –

ELLYN: Submissive. *(To ED.)* And that's why it's a good topic.

DUSTIN: *(Beat.)* Hey, I've got a great idea for the Dustin Walters Biannual Prank. Let's nominate her for homecoming court.

RILEY: Who?

DUSTIN: Samara. It's perfect. Can you see a towel head in the court? She would be, like, the anti-homecoming queen. It'd be hilarious.

LEENA: I don't think that's fun—

DUSTIN: And on top of that, for the first time in her life, Samara—

RILEY: Samira.

DUSTIN: Whatever—would be speechless.

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