

LITTLE RED RIDING BOOTS & COOTER COYOTE: MASTER OF DISGUISE

By Bobbi A. Chukran

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-753-5

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*LITTLE RED RIDING BOOTS & COOTER COYOTE:
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**LITTLE RED RIDING BOOTS & COOTER
COYOTE: MASTER OF DISGUISE**

A Raucous, Rip-Roarin' One Act Comedy

By Bobbi A. Chukran

SYNOPSIS: Cooter is a crazy coyote who uses every trick in the book to snatch Little Red's saddlebags full of fried chicken, collard greens and pecan pie that she's taking to her sick Granny. Along the way, he meets Mrs. Mockingbird who won't stand for any nonsense, and puts him in his place. But Cooter doesn't give up easily and continues on his way to Red's granny's house where there is a hilarious confrontation. He's outsmarted by Little Red and her granny, with the marginal help of Sheriff Matt A. Dillo. Cooter leads them on a raucous chase around Granny's house until he is stopped by a huge cactus patch. Little Red feels so sorry for poor Cooter that she ends up inviting him to their picnic. An off-beat, quirky Texas-style re-telling of the Little Red Riding Hood story, with Ms. Chukran's signature twists. Little Red is a young, feisty female (who wears red boots), the hapless villain is a crazy coyote named Cooter and then there's Granny and Sheriff Matt A. Dillo. Not to mention the talking horse, Horace.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3-4 female, 2 male, 1 either, 0-10 extras)

LITTLE RED RIDING BOOTS (f) Young cowgirl, feisty, energetic
(32 lines)

MOTHER (f)..... Little Red's mother *(7 lines)*

HORACE (m/f)..... Little Red's talking horse in a horse
costume *(10 lines)*

GRANNY (f)..... Little Red's grandmother; a feisty older
type *(12 lines)*

COOTER COYOTE (m)..... Master of Disguise...a crazy coyote,
clueless *(37 lines)*

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD (f)..... A busy bird *(7 lines)*

SHERIFF MATT DILLO (m) An armadillo dressed as Sheriff
(5 lines)

CHORUS (optional).....Although this isn't written as a musical, it's possible to add additional musical interludes at various times in the play. Cowboy songs in the public domain such as Tumblin' Tumbleweeds, Back in the Saddle Again, Down in the Valley, etc. could be used.

NOTE: Mother and Granny can be doubled.

DURATION: 30 minutes

STAGING AND SET

This is a Texas-style version of the Little Red Riding Hood story in a very loose adaptation. The setting can be simple with just a few props---a kitchen table, a cactus patch made from cardboard, a bed, saddlebags with a table cloth inside for picnic, etc. There should be room around the cactus patch for the group to chase around.

SCENE ONE:

Little Red's kitchen, can be a minimal set with a table, a checked tablecloth

SCENE TWO:

Outside, a few shrubs and a huge cactus patch. The cactus should have bright red pears (fruit) on them for Little Red to pick.

SCENE THREE:

Same as Scene Two, perhaps add a few more trees/shrubs.

SCENE FOUR:

Granny's house, which can be the same as in Scene One with extra furniture--bed, a rug, etc.

SCENE FIVE:

Outside Granny's house. Can be same as Scene Two, with cactus patch. For the picnic, perhaps they sit on the floor on a cloth pulled out of the saddlebags.

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COSTUMES

LITTLE RED – Wears red cowgirl boots, red bandana, perhaps a blue jeans skirt or overalls...a general, simple cowgirl costume.

MOTHER – Wears simple country dress, perhaps with an apron. With a simple change of wig, apron and adding granny glasses, she can be Little Red's grandmother.

HORACE – Perhaps two actors in a horse costume, or one actor wearing horse-head mask with Little Red "riding" piggy-back

COOTER – A coyote with a big nose and exaggerated eyebrows. At first he is poorly disguised like a cowboy, with a huge obviously fake mustache, cowboy hat, maybe a string tie. The more fake it looks, the better. In SCENE THREE, as "Sue Ellen" he adds a dress and women's summer straw hat with a huge fake flower on it, carries a purse. As "Granny" a red apron can be added on top of the dress.

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD – Actor could perhaps wear a bird mask with top-knot, blue tee-shirt and pants with stripes, feathered wings

SHERIFF – Simple armadillo mask, ears and tail (grey dinosaur or lizard costume would work), covered with cowboy attire, perhaps a toy cowboy holster and gun, boots, giant tin star badge, rides a stick horse (cowboy gun/star kits can be bought inexpensively in most Dollar Stores or discount stores)

GRANNY – Wears a long nightshirt, nightcap (or country-style sunbonnet) and glasses.

CHORUS – (*optional*) If there is a chorus, they can wear standard cowboy/western clothing—jeans, flannel shirts, bandanas, hats, fake moustaches, boots, etc.

There are many ideas online for do-it-yourself, inexpensive costumes made from old clothing, thrift store purchases, etc.

PROPS

SCENE ONE: Table, checked tablecloth, fake food items, saddlebags, apple, hat

SCENE TWO: Shrubs, huge cactus patch. The cactus should have bright red pears (fruit) on them for Little Red to pick.

SCENE THREE: Same as Scene Two, perhaps add a few more trees/shrubs. Straw hat, large purse.

SCENE FOUR: Granny's house, which can be the same as in Scene One with extra furniture--bed, a rug, etc. red apron, granny glasses, pillow, quilt, nightcap, saddlebags, broom

SCENE FIVE: Outside Granny's house. Can be same as Scene Two, with cactus patch. For the picnic, perhaps they sit on the floor on a cloth pulled out of the saddlebags. Fake food, cell phone.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Little Red Riding Boots & Cooter Coyote: Master of Disguise was performed at the "Animal Antics" Summer Short Play Festival in Williston, North Dakota, June 2012 by Youth Education On Stage. It was awarded First Place Winner and Audience Favorite. The production was directed by Jack Dyville, the lead characters were as follows:

Cooter Coyote was played by Wesley Nygaard

Little Red Riding Boots was played by Paige Wold

With thanks to Little Sister, Betty & The Divine Miss C, Jack & Steph for your ongoing support. For David, for excellent editing. And for Rudy, as always.

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SCENE ONE

AT RISE: *Little Red's MOTHER is in the kitchen, preparing food for GRANNY. LITTLE RED RIDING BOOTS enters. She's dressed as a cowgirl—perhaps jeans or overalls, hat, red boots or denim dress with vest, hat and boots.*

LITTLE RED: Mornin' mama! What's that I smell? Sure smells good, whatever it is.

MOTHER: Mornin', Little Red. Your granny is feelin' poorly today, so I'm fixin' all her favorite foods. I want you to take them to her. It's a nice day for a horseback ride, anyway.

LITTLE RED: Whatcha cookin'? Sure smells good!

MOTHER: Let's see, there's all your granny's favorite comfort foods.....fried chicken, with no bones, because your granny doesn't have any teeth. There are mashed potatoes and red eye gravy and some collard greens...for fiber, because your granny sure NEEDS fiber. Then for dessert there's a big ol' pecan pie.

LITTLE RED: Wow, that sounds good! I'm sure granny will love it.

MOTHER: Here you are. Now pack these in your saddlebags, and be sure to wear your boots in case you have to stomp any of those rascally rattlers or scurrilous scorpions.

LITTLE RED: Yes, mama.

MOTHER: And wear your hat! The sun is fierce this mornin'!

LITTLE RED: Of course, mama. I'll wear my hat. I always wear my hat.

MOTHER: And watch out for cactus!

LITTLE RED: Sure will, mama. I sure hate to get stuck with those cactus spines.

MOTHER: And don't stop for strangers in the woods, the food will get cold!

LITTLE RED: I would never stop for anybody in the woods, mama.

MOTHER: That's my girl! And here's an apple for Horace. And give your old granny a big kiss from me.

LITTLE RED: Will do, Mama.

RED packs the food in her bags, takes the apple and exits. Lights down

SCENE TWO

Lights Up...Outside, near a cactus patch and a few scrubby bushes or trees, some rocks. RED is riding along, whistling a tune. All of a sudden COOTER COYOTE jumps out from behind the cactus. RED is scared so badly that she just plops HORACE down in the middle of the road. COOTER is wearing a really bad disguise consisting of a very long, black, handlebar mustache, a big black cowboy hat, boots, etc., the more comical the better.

LITTLE RED: Whoa, Horace! *(Beat, while she takes COOTER in.)*
What in thearnation is that?

HORACE: Looks like we're in a spot of trouble, Little Red.
Remember what your mama said about talking to strangers.

RED climbs down off of HORACE and stares at COOTER.

LITTLE RED: *(To COOTER.)* What's the meaning of this? How dare you scare my horse like that!

HORACE: Yeah, what's the meaning of this? Answer the lady or you'll have me to answer to!

COOTER: *(Tipping his hat and bowing.)* Well, howdy there little lady! Fine day for a ride, isn't it? I was just out enjoying this fine day myself. It's such a nice day! And what's that you got there? A talking horse, eh? I've never seen a talking horse before. I have to say, he's not much of a horse if he's scared of an old cowpoke like myself.

LITTLE RED recognizes COOTER, and is not pleased.

LITTLE RED: Oh, it's you, Cooter. You mangy skulking critter. Get outta my way, you rascal! You're no cowboy. If you're a cowboy, then my name is Annie Oakley!

HORACE: Where'd you get that get-up, anyway? That's some saaaad disguise, Cooter. Why, we'd know you anywhere! It's pretty hard to disguise a coyote. You're just an old trickster!

COOTER: Dagnabbit! *(Stomping around.)* I am the master of disguise! Everybody says so. How did you recognize me?

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LITTLE RED: *(Wrinkling her nose.)* First of all, the smell was a dead give away! And that mustache looks fake—kinda like a dead rat crawled up on your face! And since when does a coyote wear a cowboy hat?

HORACE: She's got you there, pardner. That is the worse cowboy disguise I've EVER seen! I've been around a lot of real cowboys in my day and know what I'm talkin' about! I am an expert on cowboys!

COOTER: Well, confound it! I thought I did a purty good job. You can't blame a feller for tryin' can ya? So, what gave me away? The hat? The moustache?

All of a sudden, COOTER smells the food. Pointing to the saddlebags.

COOTER: Uh, whatcha got in them saddlebags? *(Makes a big production of smelling saddlebags.)* If I'm not mistaken, it smells like fried chicken! Wow, my mouth is watering like crazy all of a sudden! It's gotta be chicken. This mouth is never wrong. What else you got in there? Biscuits? I smell biscuits! And butter! *(HE howls.)*

LITTLE RED: I'm not even supposed to be talkin' to you, Cooter. But if you must know, it's food for my granny, and you can't have any! She's feelin' poorly this mornin'.

COOTER: I'm so sorry to hear that! I do hope she recovers soon. Please give her my regards and best wishes. But I must say, I am quite disappointed. You don't hafta pitch a hissy fit! I was just being neighborly. *(Beat.)* Say, look over yonder at all those prickly pears in that cactus patch! They're lookin' mighty tasty now. If I'm not mistaken, they're nice and red and ripe. I'll just bet your granny would be tickled pink if you took her some for makin' jelly. Prickly pear jelly is deeeeelicious! Don't you think so?

HE wiggles his eyebrows up and down to the audience.

HORACE: Watchit, Little Red! He's tryin' to pull a fast one on ya! You can't trust him. We'd better be on our way. Your mama will be worried if we don't get back soon. And if she finds out we were talking to Cooter, she's be as mad as a fire ant in a hot skillet!

LITTLE RED: *(To COOTER.)* Horace is right. Why should I trust you, anyway?

COOTER: My sweet smile? *(Beat.)* My sparkling personality? My overall good looks and charm? My wit? My wonderfully long, bushy eyebrows? *(Wiggles them up and down.)* Or perhaps it's my luxurious moustache? *(HE twirls the ends.)*

HORACE: Now that's just scary! Brrrrr! *(Shivers.)*

LITTLE RED: Nope, none of those. *(Beat.)* But, you are right about one thing. My granny sure does love prickly pear jelly, and I sure love to eat it when she makes it. So I suppose I can gather a few of these for her. *(To HORACE.)* I don't imagine it would hurt to pick a few. It'll only take a few minutes.

RED carefully starts to gather some of the fruit from the cactus. COOTER watches for a moment.

COOTER: *(To LITTLE RED, pointing.)* There's a big one over there; don't miss it! And look, here's another one. Can't you just taste that jelly now? So juicy and sweet? Your granny will be so pleased that YOU thought of this!

While RED'S gathering the fruit, HE starts to sneak offstage.

COOTER: *(To the audience.)* Little Red will be here a while, picking that prickly pear fruit. Her granny will make a nice dinner for me. *(Beat.)* And I don't mean she'll cook it, either! It ain't chicken, but she'll have to do. *(HE rubs his stomach, licks his hairy lips, wiggles his big eyebrows up and down.)* It looks like Red's gonna be a while. I think I'll visit my neighbor for a few minutes and see what she's cooking for lunch. I'll still have plenty of time to get to Granny's house before Little Red does, if I hurry.

Lights down.

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SCENE THREE

Lights Up, COOTER is still near the cactus patch. This time he's added a dress over his outfit and has exchanged a woman's straw sunhat for the cowboy hat. He still wears the moustache. He carries a big purse.

COOTER: *(In a high voice.)* Yoo hoo, Mrs. Mockingbird? Are you here? It's me, Sue Ellen, your neighbor from down the road. I was wondering if you had a chicken... I mean, a cup of sugar, I can borrow?

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD enters.

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: A cup of sugar you can borrow? Sorry, I don't use sugar. It's bad for the beak. Who did you say you are? Sue Ellen? I don't recognize you. *(She turns her head sideways and peers at COOTER.)* WHO are you? I don't think we've met.

COOTER: Oh, sure we have! We met at that community picnic a few months back. I was wearing a different outfit then. *(Wiggles eyes at the audience.)* We had quite a nice chat at the punch bowl.

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: So, we had a nice chat at the punch bowl? I don't seem to remember that. Wasn't that the picnic where somebody stole all the bar-b-que chicken and left nothing but a pile of bones? A big ol' pile of bones?

COOTER: Uh, maybe. I don't seem to remember that part. I do remember you made the most scrumptious dish of chicken cacciatore and....

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: I made a dish of chicken cacciatore? Oh no, I'd never do that. That definitely was not me. I don't eat much meat. I'm omnivorous.

COOTER: Oh, I'm SOO sorry. I hope you get better soon. I hope it's not contagious.

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: Get better soon? Not contagious? No, you don't understand. That means I only eat things like beetles, earthworms, caterpillars—although caterpillars can be prickly this time of year--- grasshoppers, things like that. Things like that.

COOTER: Oh. I see. Earthworms, huh. That's not exactly what I'm in the mood for. I was so looking forward to more chicken cacciatore. Or even more bar-b-que chicken---OOPS!

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: Bar-b-que chicken---OOPS??? Wait a minute, I know who you are! You aren't my neighbor. You aren't Sue Ellen! You're that pesky Cooter Coyote everybody's been talking about. You're the trickster who stole the bar-b-que chicken! I knew it! And what's with that sorry disguise? That disguise didn't fool me. It's pitiful, that's what it is. Just pitiful, that's what it is.

MOCKINGBIRD commences to peck COOTER, flapping her wings at him, chasing him around in a circle, screeching.

COOTER: Curses! I'm the master of disguise! I must be having an off-day here. ALL I wanted was some chicken cacciatore! Is that too much to ask?

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: Is that too much to ask? Of course it's too much to ask! Go cook your own food and leave me alone!

SHE chases him again, pecking at HIM.

COOTER: OK, OK! Quit pecking at me! I'll go. I was just tryin' to be neighborly.

MRS. MOCKINGBIRD: Just trying to be neighborly, huh? If I ever see you around my nest again, Cooter, I'll peck your eyeballs out and feed them to the rattlesnakes! Now go on, git!

COOTER: *(To the audience as MOCKINGBIRD chases him off stage.)* Maybe it's time for me to go see Little Red's Granny. I know when I'm not welcome!

Lights down.

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