

THE AUDITION

A 10-minute play

by Linda Kampe

Characters:

GRIMM: A man or woman, any age.

REGINALD: A wolf, with Shakespearean aspirations

SPIKE: A wolf just looking for his big break, and maybe a meal

Grimm sits in a chair stage right, facing toward the back left corner of the stage. He or she has a binder full of papers and a pen. A drink sits on a small table beside him/her. Grimm speaks into his/her phone.

GRIMM

Yeah, I'm ready for them. How many showed up for the audition? (*Listens to response.*) Two? That's all? I've got a big season coming up, and I have to get these productions cast now! Are you sure? (*Listens.*) Yes, I know. I was just hoping for more. (*Listens.*) Yeah, okay, send them in.

Reginald and Spike enter. They stand stage right, facing Grimm.

GRIMM

Good evening! Welcome to this year's auditions. Please tell me your names.

REGINALD

Reginald P. Wolfson. Pleased to meet you, Ms. ...

GRIMM

You can call me Grimm.

REGINALD

Pleased to meet you, Ms. Grimm.

SPIKE (*A little overenthused.*)

I'm Spike!

GRIMM

Spike ...?

SPIKE

What?

GRIMM

Do you have a last name?

SPIKE (*Puzzles for a moment, clearly taken aback by the question.*)

Huh. Getouttahere. That must be my last name. Everyone always calls me Spike Getouttahere.

GRIMM

Do they. Okay. Well, we might want to work on a stage name for you. How about if you each tell me a little bit about yourself. Your experience, your strengths, etc.

REGINALD

I would be delighted Ms. Grimm. I am, as I said, Reginald P. Wolfson. I am classically trained in the theatrical and literary arts. I sing, I dance. I am the president of the Performing Animal Artists Guild.

GRIMM

I see. *Nods.* Very impressive! And how about you, Spike?

SPIKE (*With enthusiasm.*)

I'm Spike.

GRIMM

Uh-huh. Any acting experience?

SPIKE (*Ponders.*)

I can fake a limp.

GRIMM

Okay. Well, thank you for coming out tonight, both of you. I've got a couple of story lines I need to cast, so there is a role available for each of you. I'm really trying to get a sense of your strengths, personality, and so forth here in an effort to cast you most effectively.

Spike and Reginald smile.

GRIMM

Let's get this under way. (*Consults the binder.*) First, let's see what big eyes you have.

Spike and Reginald make their eyes as big as they can.

GRIMM

Good. Very nice. (*Scribbles a note in the binder.*) Next, let's see what big ears you have.

Spike proudly shows off his ears. Reginald hesitates, seemingly perplexed by the question, but then shows off his ears.

GRIMM

Huh. Okay. For some reason, I was thinking they'd be bigger. But those will do. Finally, let's see what sharp teeth you have.

Spike is in his element. He shows off his menacing grimace. Reginald, again slightly puzzled, flashes a movie-star smile.

GRIMM

Excellent! Just what I was hoping for.

Spike and Reginald smile/grimace at one another. Grimm scribbles in the binder again.

GRIMM

Have either of you ever performed in drag?

Spike and Reginald abruptly stop smiling. They look at each other in alarm, then at Grimm.

REGINALD

In drag?

GRIMM

Yes, yes, in drag.

REGINALD

Ma'am, I was led to believe that this would be a serious artistic endeavor.

GRIMM

I assure you, this story is a classic.

REGINALD

And it involves a wolf in drag? (*Grimm nods.*) What could *possibly* be my character's motivation?

GRIMM

This wolf encounters a little girl in the woods. She tells him she's on her way to her grandmother's house with a basket of goodies.

REGINALD

I see...

SPIKE

I *like* goodies!

GRIMM

Of course! Who doesn't? So the wolf runs ahead to the grandmother's house, where he, um, eats the grandmother—

REGINALD

What?!?!

GRIMM

Then he dresses in the grandmother's clothes to trick the little girl into giving him the goodies.

REGINALD

Let me get this straight. The wolf kills and eats an entire woman just so he can trick a little girl into handing over a few Danish?

SPIKE

I *like* Danish.

GRIMM

Well, mostly the wolf wants to eat the little girl.

REGINALD

Wolves do *not* eat little girls! I cannot believe you would perpetuate this kind of a damaging myth.

SPIKE (*Hungrily.*)

Why doesn't the wolf just eat her in the woods?

GRIMM

Well, that wouldn't have much suspense, now, would it? A wolf encounters a little girl in the woods and eats her? Not a very good story.

REGINALD

And a pastry-crazed wolf skulking about in a dead woman's clothing makes for a good story?

GRIMM (*Ignoring Reginald.*)

Dressed as the girl's grandmother, the wolf is able to persuade her to hand over the goodies. *Then* he eats *her* as well.

SPIKE (*Imagining himself in the role.*)

I would need a hand with the zipper. (*To Reginald.*) Women's clothes always have that zipper in the back.

Reginald stares at him in disbelief.

GRIMM

Oh, no. Not to worry. There are no zipper issues. It's her nightgown.

REGINALD

You want a wolf to perform in women's lingerie?!?! What kind of a sicko writes this tripe?

GRIMM

My brothers are the writers. I'm just the casting director. But I tell you, it's a classic.

REGINALD

And that's it? The wolf eats two people and a basket of pastries dressed in drag? Kind of dark, isn't it?

GRIMM

There's an alternative ending where a hunter comes along and kills the wolf.

SPIKE

So in this other ending, *everyone* is dead?

GRIMM

Not exactly. It turns out that the little girl and her grandmother miraculously survive being swallowed by the wolf. The hunter cuts the wolf open and they escape.

REGINALD (*Dramatically rolling his eyes.*)
Swallowed? Do either of us *look* like we could swallow a person whole?

SPIKE
I can swallow a donut whole.

Grimm and Reginald stare at Spike in confusion for a moment.

GRIMM
Hmm. Maybe we should talk about our other production. That might help us sort things out.

REGINALD
Do the wolves appear in drag in your other production?

GRIMM
No. Only that first one.

REGINALD
Well, thank heavens for that. Does the second one involve wolves eating small children?

GRIMM
No. In fact, this next one involves a wolf trying to catch three pigs.

SPIKE
I *like* pigs.

REGINALD
I concede that pigs are tasty, but they are also large. Why would a wolf need to catch *three* pigs?
Grimm consults the binder for a moment.

GRIMM
Well, it does say “three *little* pigs.”

SPIKE
I like little pigs. I can swallow a little pig whole.

GRIMM
No need for that.

REGINALD
You and your brothers are certainly fascinated by our eating habits. You know, wolves are noble, intelligent creatures. We form complex societies. We are caring, nurturing parents. We sing in chorus on beautiful nights. And we are, if I may say so myself, darned fine looking.

Spike smiles. Reginald gives him some side-eye.

And yet, everything in your repertoire seems to focus on what—or who—we're eating.

GRIMM (*Obsequiously.*)

All of those things are certainly true, Mr. Wolfson. But you must admit you are also skillful hunters—far more skillful than most animals, especially us humans. So you have to pardon us humans for our natural tendency to focus on a skill that we both envy ... and fear.

REGINALD (*Obviously flattered.*)

Well, I do understand that. So this next play is a dramatic exploration of the strategy and cunning employed by a wolf in hunting his prey?

GRIMM (*Pauses, thinks.*)

Uh-huh.

REGINALD

Then I apologize. Do go on.

GRIMM

Okay. So for this one, I'm going to need to see you huff and puff.

Spike chuckles. Reginald shakes his head with a condescending smile.

GRIMM

What's so funny?

REGINALD

I assure you, Ms. Grimm, that chasing a pig—especially a little one—would never leave any self-respecting wolf winded. We would *not* need to huff and puff. This is an understandable error, of course. You humans are neither as fast, nor in such fine shape as we are. Take my word for it. We would *not* be huffing and puffing.

Spike nods in agreement.

GRIMM

Understood....

REGINALD

Besides, as members of a pack, we are typically able to surround our prey. Most of the running we do is simply to ... maintain our fine physiques.

GRIMM

I see.

Spike shows off his fine physique.

REGINALD

So this story involves us chasing small pigs? I appreciate the action, but the suspense, as you say, would be lacking.

GRIMM

Actually, the wolf character, acting alone, will be going to the pigs' houses.

SPIKE

The pigs have houses?

GRIMM

Yes. In at least one case, a very nice house.

Spike shrugs.

REGINALD

A little artistic license, I see. That's fine.

SPIKE

And I would break down the door? (*Considers.*) *That might leave me a little winded.*

Reginald nods in grudging agreement.

GRIMM

No, you're not able to get in. So you'll say, (*consults binder*) "Little pig, little pig, let me come in, or I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in."

Both wolves consider this for a moment. Reginald suddenly brightens.

REGINALD

That's brilliant!

GRIMM (*Skeptically.*)

It is?

SPIKE (*Totally confused.*)

It is?

REGINALD

Don't you see? We lure the pigs out by challenging them to a poetry slam. No one can resist a poetry slam!

Spike still looks confused.

REGINALD

It's ... it's like a rap battle.

SPIKE

Thinks briefly, then smiles.

Little piglet, made of bacon,
It's for you my jaws are achin'.

REGINALD

Outstanding!

He and Spike high five one another.

GRIMM

Well, I'm--

REGINALD *Strikes a regal pose.*

Shall I compare thee to a summer sausage?
Thou art larger and more succulent.

Reginald and Spike celebrate with another high five.

GRIMM

Umm--

The wolves ignore Grimm as they continue to celebrate their own artistry.

GRIMM *Clears throat loudly.*

Not to put a damper on it,
but the notes I have don't call for sonnet.

The wolves include Grimm in the high fiving, until they both simultaneously realize what she said.

REGINALD & SPIKE

What?!

For a moment, Grimm continues to revel in her own poetry, awkwardly attempts to flash a gang sign. Then she snaps back to the present action.

GRIMM

Um, like I said, it's not a poetry slam. From what I see here, it appears that your goal is actually to blow the house down.

SPIKE

Blow ... the ... house ... down?

REGINALD

That's ridiculous! We're wolves, for crying out loud, not ... not ... well, I don't even know if *any* animal could blow a house down.

GRIMM

It's art.

REGINALD

It's stupidity.

GRIMM

I'll be the first to admit there's sometimes a fine line. But that's the story we've got. Now, let's hear you huff and puff, as if you were going to blow a house down.

Reginald stares at Grimm for a moment, then blows out a tiny puff of air, like for a birthday candle.

GRIMM (*Matches Reginald's stare. Addresses him icily.*)

Thank you. (*Turns to Spike optimistically.*) Spike?

SPIKE

Unsure of what else to do, Spike begins huffing and puffing, very dramatically. He blows as hard as he can, once, twice, and then he accidentally whistles a single note. Spike is startled. He looks around, as if to determine where the whistling came from. Then he does it again. He is again startled, but less so. He smiles at the other two characters.

I can whistle!

Reginald puts his face in his hands. Grimm droops her head in resignation. Spike whistles a jaunty tune.

GRIMM

Okay.

Spike whistles a little more.

GRIMM (*Louder*)

Okay! Obviously, we'll need to use special effects to get the houses to fall down.

REGINALD

You mean, we're supposed to actually blow a house down?

GRIMM (*Consulting the binder.*)

Two! Two houses down.

SPIKE

So we get to eat two pigs?

GRIMM

Yes.

Spike is pleased to hear this.

REGINALD

What about the third pig?

GRIMM (*Consults binder.*)

The third pig lives in a brick house. You can't blow that one down.

REGINALD *Drily.*

Can't we.

SPIKE

I could whistle it down. *He whistles a few bars.*

REGINALD *to Grimm.*

That makes as much sense as anything you've got. So then what?

GRIMM

Well, the wolf attempts to go down the chimney, but he lands in a cauldron of boiling water and is killed.

Both wolves just stare at her.

REGINALD

So, in one story, the wolf runs around in drag. In the other story, the wolf is *boiled* to death?

SPIKE *Eagerly*

In one story, the wolf gets to eat two people and a whole basket of pastries, and in the other, he gets to eat two pigs?

REGINALD

Have some dignity, Spike!

GRIMM

The problem here is that I'm under a bit of a time crunch, and that means I'm going to need to cast each of you. I don't have time for another audition.

SPIKE

I *do* like pastries. And if the nightgown doesn't have a zipper--

GRIMM

It sounds like Spike might be the wolf for our first production. (*Considers.*) You know, Mr. Wolfson, there is an alternative ending to the second story in which the wolf simply faints from trying to blow down the third house.

REGINALD (*brightens, gasps in delight*)

Oh, I do a fine faint! It's one of my best things. You've got a deal!

GRIMM

Perfect. (*Picks up phone. Speaks into phone.*) Okay! I've got our two big, bad wolves!

Reginald engages in an elaborate, dramatic faint. Spike resumes whistling.

THE END