

HOOD-WINKED

by Ken Bradbury



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(We are in the backstage area of a theatre. Amanda is nervously waiting for Jon's arrival. She paces a bit, looks at her imaginary watch, and constantly checks the wings for his appearance.)

JON: *(entering, hurriedly)* You gotta be kidding.

AMANDA: I'm not kidding. Now come on, it's nearly show time.

JON: Amanda, I'm not gonna do it!

AMANDA: You said you would.

JON: I did not! *You* said I would! I said, "No Way!"

AMANDA: But it's for a good cause.

JON: Wars are for a good cause, Amanda. Hunger strikes are for a good cause. Being burned at the stake is for a good cause. Putting on these stupid costumes and making a fool out of myself is just plain ridiculous.

AMANDA: You wanna disappoint all those kids waiting out there?

JON: Like I'm not gonna be a disappointment to 'em? They expect Koko the Clown and His Amazing Poodles, and all they're gonna get is Jon The Dork and His Stupid Costumes.

AMANDA: Look, you owe me, Jon. You were supposed to be in charge of this summer youth program ... but no, you wanted to play baseball instead. I took the job just to get you off the hook.

JON: My Mom signed me up for this job. It wasn't my idea. Kids make me nervous. They're so ... so short.

AMANDA: Two minutes 'til show time. Listen to 'em out there. They want a show.

JON: They want Koko.

AMANDA: You think it's my fault? You think it's my fault Koko tripped over a poodle last week and broke his leg?

JON: Koko's a klutz.

AMANDA: He's 64 years old.

JON: Then he's an old klutz.

AMANDA: Come on, here's your first costume.

JON: (*looking at what she's holding*) What's that?

AMANDA: The woodsman. He's the one who introduces the show.

JON: He wears tights?

AMANDA: They're not that tight.

JON: You can see right through them!

AMANDA: Only if you're looking. These are little kids.

JON: They'll think I'm a green poodle.

AMANDA: You owe me, Jon! They hired you to run this kid's program for two months. I took it off your hands and I'm just asking one day from you in return. You don't do this for me and I'll give you the job back.

JON: You wouldn't.

AMANDA: Seventy-two third graders. Five hours every day. Finger paint up to your eyeballs. Enough Kool-Aid to float a battleship. Sticky fingers all over your ...

JON: (*resigned*) Give me the tights.

AMANDA: Atta boy. I knew you'd see the light.

JON: I didn't see the light. I smelled the Kool-Aid. (*begins to undress, then*) Turn your back!

AMANDA: Oh Jon, you're such a prude. (*she turns away as he begins to dress*)

JON: (*putting on his tights*) Yea, and now I'm a green prude. After this, why should I worry about my pride?

AMANDA: Dressed yet?

JON: This is really humiliating.

AMANDA: Hurry up. They're just kids.

JON: (*still struggling with his tights*) I could kill Koko the Clown.

AMANDA: Hurry up, Jon.

JON: And his poodles.

AMANDA: (*turning to look at him*) Great! That looks great, Jon.

JON: This looks stupid, Amanda.

AMANDA: (*beginning to shove him out onto the stage*) Come on. It's time for your first entrance.

JON: Koko is dead meat.

AMANDA: (*still moving him*) Come on, Jon. That's show biz!

JON: Road kill. (*And she shoves him out onto the stage.*

This is accomplished by her guiding him in a small, quick, circle, ending up with Jon facing the audience and Amanda at stage right, huddling in the wings. Each time Jon enters the stage area, this same movement is made. It must be quick to give the impression of Jon coming through the curtains and suddenly being whisked out onto the stage.)

(Jon suddenly stops and sees the audience of children in front of him. He is momentarily tongue-tied. He adjusts his tunic, pulls on his tights then stands there.)

AMANDA: (*in a loud stage whisper from her position in the wings.*) Go on! (*Jon says nothing, still staring at his audience*) Say your lines, Jon!

JON: (*whispering to her out of the side of his mouth*) My lines are fine. It's the tights that're killin' me.

AMANDA: Say it!

JON: (*Jon says his lines stiffly, more like the appearance before a firing squad than an audience of children*) "Good morning, boys and girls. This is the story of Little Red Riding Hood. I am the woodsman." (*whispering to Amanda*) They're laughing at me!

AMANDA: They are not! They're just enjoying the show.

JON: I'm glad somebody's having fun. (*to the audience*) "So sit back and enjoy today's story." (*to himself*) Somebody's got to. (*and the above move is reversed, with Jon turning to his left with Amanda right behind him, giving the impression that he's quickly ducked through the curtains*) (*now backstage*) I have never been so embarrassed.



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