



Performance Notes for: *Baba Yaga*

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR— A thick modern-day coat and hat, to show they are out of their element in the cold weather.
- NATASHA— A simple red dress.
- GRIGORI— A thick moustache and simple practical clothing – a white shirt tucked into loose black trousers.



- INGA— A white dress and a fur hat.
- AGATA— A white t-shirt with a gate painted onto it, or a cardboard cut-out of a gate attached to upper part of body. This should be something simple to just give the idea of a gate. AGATA will also “operate” the big gate in Scene 3. (See prop notes for how to make this.)
- ANASTASIA— Dull-colored rags.
- YAKOV— All brown and a dog mask, or a full dog costume.
- BABA YAGA’S HUT— Yellow trousers or tights with stripes to represent chicken legs. Any shirt is fine, as it will be covered by the cardboard house. (See set notes for how to make the house)
- BABA YAGA— A black robe and a black witch’s hat.
- DIMITRI— All black and a cat mask, or a full cat costume.



PROPS

Scene 1

- Loaf of bread, real or pretend.
- Russian nesting dolls. If you can find actual Russian nesting dolls, then place them side-by-side on the table, from largest to smallest. If you don’t have access to a Russian nesting doll, then you can simulate this by cutting out images of Russian nesting doll from a largest size, to several smaller sizes; stand each one up by taping from behind a piece of cardboard, at right angles so it will stand, supported.
- Pin cushion.

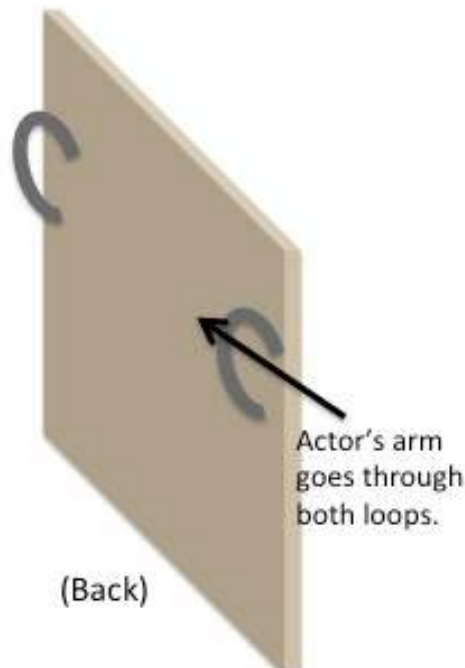
Scene 2





- Oil can, real or cut from cardboard and supported from behind to stand up.
- A Gate for AGATA to operate.

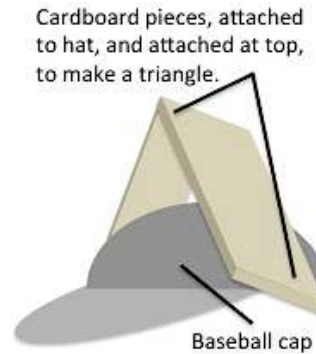
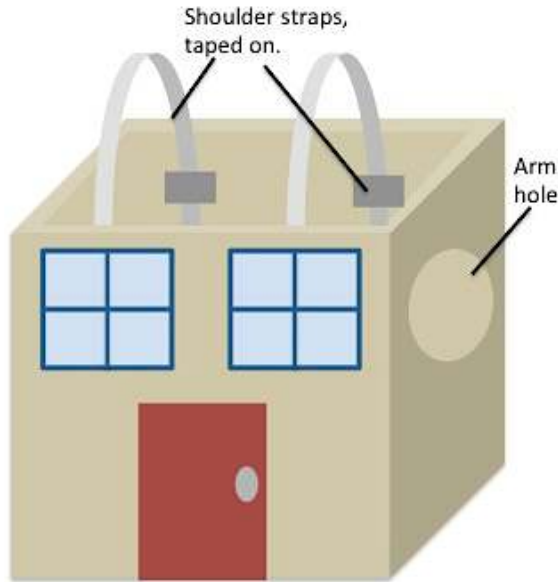
The gate piece can be simulated by painting a large gate onto cardboard (and cutting it out, if you want) and attaching to its back two loops near the top, in a row. The actor AGATA puts her/her right arm into the two loops, and in this way holds the door vertically. When AGATA moves her/his arm outward toward the audience, the door “opens.” When AGATA moves her/his arm back away from the audience, the door “closes.”



- Handkerchief for ANASTASIA.
- Another handkerchief to contain the bits of food from Natasha’s pockets.
- Bits of food (produced from NATASHA’s pockets). This can be anything small and doesn’t need to be real food.
- The house for BABA YAGA’S HUT to wear. To make the house, start with a cardboard box. Remove the top and bottom flaps from the box. Cut arm holes into the side. Paint the box to look like a house, with windows, and on the front paint a door. Add shoulder straps so that the actor can wear the box and move around easily. (Below is just an example of what the house might look like. You can also paint the whole box whatever color(s) you’d like the house to be and paint the door and windows over that.)



Use some excess cardboard to make a roof hat. Hot glue a triangular piece of cardboard to a baseball cap. Paint the roof to match the house.



Scene 3

- Bits of food (same as Scene 2).
- Towel (really a long, rolled up piece of transparent paper. Or an actual towel, and the actors pretend it has become a river.)

Scene 4

- Towel (Same as Scene 4)
- Large cut-out of a mortar and pestle. The mortar can be made from a large piece of cardboard, cut in the shape of a bowl or upturned semi-circle, large enough to hide BABA YAGA's bottom half. The mortar could even be made to be worn, to simulate BABA YAGA riding in it. You can do this by adding shoulder straps.

The pestle is simply held by BABA YAGA and can be cut out of cardboard. See below for image of mortar and pestle:



Scene 5

- Loaf of bread.
- Shovel.



SETS

To make scene transitions easier, you can set the stage up with three locations. If you want, you can make a backdrop that shows the three locations, or you can just rely on set pieces.

The three locations are:

- 1) Natasha's house, on one side of the stage.
 - 2) Forest, in the middle of the stage.
 - 3) Baba Yaga's house, on the other side of the stage.
- **Scene 1** — Natasha's house. A table and chairs sits in the center of this scene. If you have a backdrop, you can paint it to resemble the inside of a



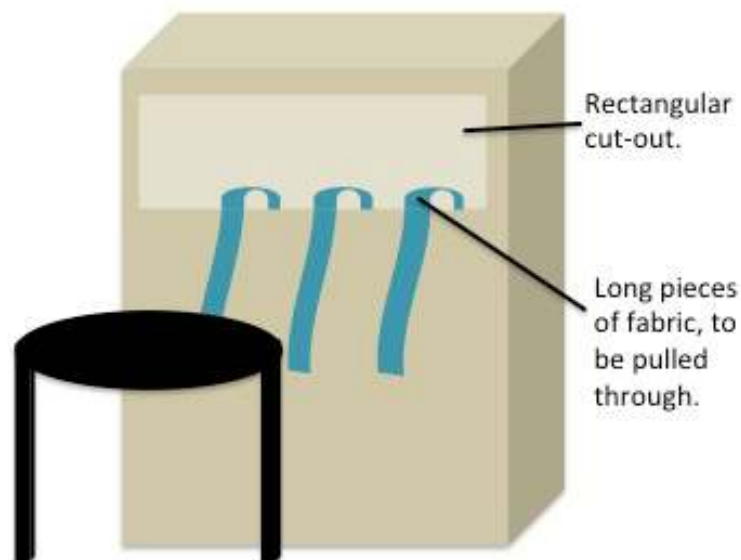
ramshackle wooden hut.

- **Scene 2**— The Forest. If you have a backdrop, you can paint it to resemble a forest. The rest of the scene is made up of actors wearing set pieces. AGATA will carry on and operate the piece that represents the gate, and BABA YAGA'S HUT wears the piece that represents just that. (See PROP notes for how to make these pieces). You can have AGATA stand in place somewhere in front of BABA YAGA'S HUT.

If possible, keep BABA YAGA'S HUT hidden from the audience until NATSHA sees it for the first time. You can do this by making cardboard trees, having stage hands hold them in place, and have BABA YAGA'S HUT hide behind them. BABA YAGA'S HUT can then pop out, or stage hands can pull trees apart. If no trees, you can have BABA YAGA'S HUT stay offstage until it is time to enter.

- **Scene 3**— Interior of Baba Yaga's Hut. If you have a backdrop, you can paint it to resemble the inside of a ramshackle wooden hut, similar to Natasha's house. A loom and a stool in one corner and a rocking chair in the other.

To make the loom - This can be constructed by having a tall cardboard box with a hole cut into it. Inside the box, place a few pieces of fabric, and the actor sits at a stool and slowly pulls out the fabric to simulate weaving. See image below.





- **Scene 4**— Forest. (Same as Scene 2)
- **Scene 5**— Natasha's house. (Same as Scene 1)