

RAVENS

By Jacek Zuzanski

Excerpt of the play

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Narrator
Sophie
Uncle Fred
Father
Grandma
Goodie Hatch
Brothers
Winds
Lizard
Sun
Wolf
Moon
Bat
Stars
Footman
Ravens

NARRATOR:

Once, in a house on the edge of a village surrounded by fields and forests, along with her mom and dad, lived Sophie. They lived in the house far from other houses in the village, and Sophie often played alone.

SCENE I

SOPHIE

UNCLE FRED

Hello Sophie. What are you scratching at there?

SOPHIE

Hi uncle. I am drawing.

UNCLE FRED

What is it?

SOPHIE

Children. Here is a girl and a boy is there.

UNCLE FRED

Didn't your dad leave something for me?

SOPHIE

No, nothing. The boy will have freckles.

UNCLE FRED

Are you sure he didn't give you anything for me?

SOPHIE

I'm sure. And he will be red-haired like you uncle.

UNCLE FRED

Oh well. I have to run to see your neighbor. Bye Sophie.

SOPHIE

Buy. And the girl will have blue eyes like mom.

FATHER

Sophie, Here you are... Uncle Fred will be passing by (here). Please give him this box

SOPHIE

Yes, but ...

FATHER

He should be here soon. Will you remember?

SOPHIE

I will, but...

FATHER

That's good. *(Leaves)*

SOPHIE

But dad, Uncle was just here. And now what? I don't know if he will be coming again.

GRANDMA

How is my Sophie?

SOPHIE

Oh granny, I have to run after uncle Fred. *(She runs out)*

GRANDMA

Gone...

GOODIE HATCH

Good morning Goodie Willow. Isn't Sophie growing up to be a pretty girl?

GRANDMA

That's true, she is pretty.

GOODIE HATCH

And how clever! Just think what kind of men her brothers would have been...

GRANDMA

Oh, dear, better not say that out loud!

GOODIE HATCH

True, that's the holy truth, you're right about that. But the boys, too bad. To think, everything could have been so different if only Sophie....

GRANDMA

Sophie has nothing to do with this.

GOODIE HATCH

True, that's the holy truth, but her brothers, don't you think that something should be done?

GRANDMA

I don't think there is anything to do.

GOODIE HATCH

But someone has to be guilty. Oh, I left a cake in the oven. Extend my greetings to the family! (*Runs out*)

GRANDMA

Thank you, thank you, and the best of health to you and yours.

SOPHIE

Grandma...

GRANDMA

Oh, here you are.

SOPHIE

I heard everything.

GRANDMA

What did you hear?

SOPHIE

Is it thru I have brothers?

GRANDMA

I shouldn't talk to you about it.

SOPHIE

Why not?

GRANDMA

It's not that simple.

SOPHIE

Not simple?

GRANDMA

You better ask your mom.

NARRATOR

Sophie was very anxious about what she overheard and she asked her mom about brothers. First Mom did not want to say anything, but Sophie begged and begged so finally mom told her about the day when Sophie was born. That night, Sophie could hardly sleep. And when she did, she had a dream.

SCENE II

BROTHERS

BROTHERS

They say mom is going to have a baby.

What do you think?

I don't know.

Do you think we will have a brother or sister?

There is seven of us boys already.

I would rather prefer a brother

I would like a sister better.

A sister would not be bad.

Everybody will like her.

When will it come?

Soon.

I want to see.

Me too!

They don't want us to disturb.

It would be good to have a sister.

We could teach her a lot.

I would show her how to do a slingshot.

Me too!
Girls don't use slingshots!
So what they shoot from?
They do not shoot.
Not at all?
They play with dolls.
I would carve her a doll.
Me too!
What would I do?
You could make a little bed for the doll.
This was my idea!
We don't know yet whether it will be a girl.
I want to do something to help.
You're too small.
You are too small yourself!

FATHER

Quiet boys. We need water. Take a jug and fast run to the well.

BOY

Dad, is this a girl?

FATHER

Yes, yes a girl, you have the little sister.

BROTHERS

We have a little sister, we have a little sister!

I will help you.

I want to help to.

I will help to hold it.

I will turn the crank.

Let me carry the jug.

Dad gave it to me.

You carried it before.

Now it's my turn.

Give it back, dad gave it to me!

But he wanted to give it to me.

You never walked for water.

So now I will.

Give it to me.

No.

Give it back.

I also want to.

You again!

I got it.

Let it go.

Let loose.
Leave it.
Do not pull.
Harder.
You'll see.
Not at all.
Let go.
Hold it.
Pull on.
That's mine!
Ours!

(The jug fell to the ground and broke)

Now what?

NARRATOR

As the boys looked down at the smashed pieces of the jug on the stony path, and watched the water disappear into the ground, people inside of the house were waiting.

GRANDMA

Where's the water. Has anyone gone for water?

FATHER

I sent the boys, they should be back already.

GRANDMA

We need it now!

FATHER

They should be here already. They are playing pranks again. Troubles all the time with these boys! I have had enough of this! I could have walked to the well and back three times already. The crows on the fence are of better help. I hope these kids turn into Ravens and fly away! I hope they get lost behind highest mountains. I don't want to see them again!

NARRATOR

Barely had the father uttered these words, when they heard sound of wings.

(Seven black birds circle above their heads. They circle around over the house and then flew away.)

SCENE III

WINDS

NARRATOR

Winds howled behind the window. The door squeaked. The winds torn down (ripped off)

leaves of the apple tree gusted them around whistled and whispered.

WINDS

This is all your fault.

They had to fly away to the end of the world.

It's your fault.

They live far away in hunger and cold, with no mother, no father, no sister and no heat in the fireplace.

It's your fault.

You do not deserve happiness.

You do not deserve love.

SOPHIE

What should I do? I cannot stay here. There is no longer any place for me here.

Maybe, at least, I can go and look for my brothers

WIND

It will be a long very long journey.

SOPHIE

I know. I'll take a little stool to sit on when I get tired.

WIND

The hunger will gnaw on your bones day after day.

SOPHIE

I'll take a loaf of bread for hunger.

WIND

You will perish of thirst anyway.

SOPHIE

For the thirst I'll take a jug of water.

SCENE IV

LIZARD

NARRATOR

And Sophie went on the road. In the evening, after wandering the whole day, she stopped to sit on her little stool and relax.

VOICE

Hey you!

SOPHIE

Who is it?

VOICE

It is I!

SOPHIE

Where are you?

LIZARD

Here.

SOPHIE

Can you come out so I can see you?

LIZARD

I am not exceptionally good looking.

SOPHIE

You are what?

LIZARD

They say I am rather ugly.

SOPHIE

I know what you mean.

LIZARD

Do they say you are bad?

SOPHIE

That's why I had to go away.

LIZARD

You ran away?

SOPHIE

I need to find my brothers.

(Lizard appears from behind his hiding place.)

LIZARD

What do they look like, these brothers of yours?

SOPHIE

They are ravens.

LIZARD

How many?

SOPHIE

Seven.

LIZARD

I know someone who will know where they are. If you want I will lead you to him.

SOPHIE

Will you?

LIZARD

We will need to cross this desert.

SOPHIE

Let's go then.

LIZARD

It's a long way to go. Give me this heavy jug, I'll help you carry it.

NARRATOR

The lizard took the jug of water from Sophie and they set off. First bushes disappeared, then the last clumps of grass, and finally after day long walk they were surrounded by the rocky glowing heat of emptiness.

SOPHIE

Is it far?

LIZARD

We are almost there.

SOPHIE

It is so terribly hot and there is not even a sliver of shade to hide in.

LIZARD

We are close to the sun's home. The sun should know where your brothers are.

SOPHIE

Let's sit down for a moment and have a drink of water

LIZARD

There is no much left.

SOPHIE

What do you mean?

LIZARD

This jug probably has a hole

SOPHIE

It is empty!

LIZARD

It has to have a crack.

SOPHIE

You drank it when I wasn't looking!

LIZARD

Imagine that! I am showing you the way, I am carrying this heavy jug of yours, and you repay me with accusations! From here on you're on your own. I have enough!

NARRATOR

The lizard turned away from Sophie and fled.