

Michael Chekhov

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CHARACTERIZATION

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Troublemaker-Doublemaker:

Nipsnuff: This part must be performed in such a way that the audience will immediately feel that he is absolutely healthy; he only loves to be sensitive and nervous. He moves and does all things in a lazy, slow fashion.

Limp: Limp must express all his ideas by whistling; his whistle should make clear what it is that he has in mind.

Mimsy: There are so many possibilities for Mimsy that it is difficult to know what is best. Perhaps we can try several and then decide. When Mimsy moves, she does so with speed, full of staccato and lightening; sharp. Also with the quality of a cat.

Richpickle and Silver King as Richpickle: The movements of these characters must be absolutely similar. Your task here is to try to accumulate as many such similar points as possible. They must be done symmetrically so that they are like reflections. Make the "Got out!" more forceful and with more character. Find something in the walk that is similar, and in how you hold your hands - but the characteristics should be original. When Silver King acts as Richpickle, he must not be as emphatic, and Richpickle as Dodderdolt must act as if watching himself.

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Gabby: Gabby must walk as if she is sliding or gliding so that there are no jerks. When she runs, she must do so quickly, but again without jerks. Her squeaks and whimpers should be emphasized.

Peter: Peter has an open character; he accepts everything. But although he is very open, he must not give the impression of being stupid. There is a love-sick quality about him. He runs as if sprinting, as they do in sports.

Silver King: Silver King might be a red Indian. He is a regal, imperial figure with the quality of silver. His gestures must not be stylized, but must be characteristic, and he is absolutely serious.

Try to find, individually, more original expressions for being sorry, afraid, obstinate, and all the other qualities which you can imagine in this fairy tale. Do powerful things with a feeling of ease. It is important to get outward characterizations, but the psychology is also important.

Each character must be an absolutely clear form; toy-like and clear. Everyone must try to find the point where he is absolutely petrified by Richpickle's rage. What is the most characteristic thing for each character to do at this point? It should be a complete and full gesture, not a half-way one. Each character has his own particular psychology and form for being petrified; and the figures when petrified

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must be at once quite characteristic, comfortable, and complete. It is a very "special" moment, but it is not painful. Do not do the form as "stopped life," but find an easy form which is not stiff - which can be held for hours if necessary.

When Richpikle as Dodderdolt meets the real Dodderdolt, he thinks he has gone out of his mind. Each of the other characters, upon seeing the two together, make some characteristic exclamation and then faint, falling into a position fitting to the individual character.

One thing is very necessary on this story: nothing must be dramatic. It is something very light and with an objective, and each actor must have this quality.