



Stephen E. Rose

Inspired by the symphony *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei Prokofiev

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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Rapid City, SD 57709

CATCH THAT WOLF!

COMEDY FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES. When some sheep go missing, the Czar announces he will send three of his finest royal hunters to catch the wolf. The only problem is that the Czar's finest hunters are away on a mission, and there's just Boris, Anton, and Nicholas left. Not only is this bumbling trio horrible at hunting, they're terrified of wolves. And rumor has it that this wolf has sharp claws, vicious teeth, and a big appetite! But Petrova, who yearns to be a great hunter like her grandmother, sets out to catch the wolf with the help of a flighty bird, a "lucky" duck, and a sleepy cat. Youngsters will love this hilarious, action-packed comedy, which provides endless opportunities to showcase physical humor.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

ABOUT THE STORY

Peter and the Wolf is a children's symphony that was written by Sergei Prokofiev in 1936 for the Central Children's Theatre in Moscow. In the story, Peter asks a bird to fly around the wolf's head to distract him so that Peter can lower a noose and catch the wolf by his tail. With the help of some hunters, Peter takes the wolf to the zoo and everyone celebrates with a victory parade. *Peter and the Wolf* was first performed at the Moscow Conservatory with the Moscow Philharmonic on May 2, 1936. It debuted in the United States in 1938 at Symphony Hall in Boston with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

CHARACTERS

(4 M, 5 F, 2 flexible)

PETROVA: Adventurous, brave girl who yearns to be a great hunter like her grandma; female.

GRANDMA: Petrova's grandmother, who was once the best hunter in all of Russia; female.

CZAR: Russian leader whose best friend is a teddy bear; male.

NATOSHA: Czar's loyal personal assistant; female.

BORIS: Leader of the Royal Hunters who loves to brag about being a great hunter; male.

NICHOLAS: Royal hunter who is always hungry; male.

ANTON: Royal Hunter who is terrified of the wolf; male.

WOLF: Wiley wolf; flexible.

OLGA: A lucky duck who loves to bicker with Anya; volunteers to be Petrova's supply sergeant female.

ANYA: A flighty bird who runs in circles when she's scared; volunteers to serve as Petrova's hunting scout; terrified of Alexis the cat; female.

ALEXIS: Sleepy cat who likes to drink fresh milk every morning, take a catnap in the barn, and chase birds; female.

VILLAGER 1-3 (opt.): Villagers who are upset that a wolf is eating their sheep; flexible. Note: A voiceover may be used, if desired.

NOTE: Czar, Boris, Nicholas, and Anton may be played by females dressed as males. For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

SETTING

Woods outside a small Russian village.

SETS

Woods. A backdrop of a forest may be used. There is a large tree off to one side with steps behind it so Petrova can “climb” the tree. There are bushes and a rock large enough for the Wolf to hide behind. There is a log large enough to sit on.

Front porch of Grandma’s house. A backdrop of the house may be used. There is a chair on the porch.

Interior of Grandma’s house. There is a chair near a wall where a rope hangs.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: The woods.

Scene 2: Grandma’s front porch.

Scene 3: Inside Grandma’s house.

Scene 4: The woods.

PROPS

Notepad and pencil, for Natosha

Feathers

Large bone

3 Toy hunting rifles/shotguns, for Royal Hunters

Pack(s) of assorted supplies (e.g. sleeping bags, canteens,
hunting boots for Czar, etc.)

Teddy bear, for Czar

Toy rifle/shotgun, for Grandma

Blanket

Berries

Sticks

Wood

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Bird chirping
Duck quacking
Cat meowing
Footsteps approaching
Door creaking
Campfire (lighting effect)
Rustling sound of bushes/leaves
Sound of a gunshot
Sound of rope creaking

"HE IS SMART, FAST, AND STRONG
AND VERY, VERY CLEVER.
HE'LL SNEAK UP ON YOU AND ATTACK
WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT."

—CZAR

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SCENE 1

(AT RISE: *The woods. There is a rock large enough for the Wolf to hide behind. Note: Villagers 1-3 may be planted in the audience, if desired.*)

VILLAGER 1: (*Offstage, shouts.*) We demand action! We don't feel safe anymore!

VILLAGER 2: (*Offstage, shouts.*) You've got to do something about that wolf! He is causing us to lose our crops and food!

VILLAGER 3: (*Offstage, shouts.*) I can't even let my kids play outside, knowing that wolf is loose! He's a menace, and it's your job to see our citizens are safe!

(*Czar enters. Natosha follows him on.*)

CZAR: (*To audience as if they are Villagers.*) Ladies and gentlemen, I understand your concerns, and let me assure you everything is being done to take care of this problem. As your Czar, let me tell you...we are working day and night on this important problem, and as your Czar, I promise to personally see that he is caught. Natosha, take note! (*Natosha takes out a pad and pencil.*) "Catch the wolf! Important mission must not fail!" And so on and so forth. Pass it on to the correct people. Sign it, "Czar."

NATOSHA: Sir, would you like that in triplicate?

CZAR: No, just three copies.

(*Czar and Natosha exit. Feathers fly out from behind a large rock. Wolf pops his head out from behind the rock. He is holding a large bone in one hand and patting his stomach with the other hand. Licking his chops, Wolf finds a comfortable spot to lie down and falls asleep. Just as Wolf falls asleep, he is awakened by a bird chirping. After stirring a bit, he settles down and falls asleep. Just as he falls asleep, he is awakened by the sound of a duck quacking. After stirring a bit, he finally settles down and falls asleep. Just as he falls*)

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asleep, he is awakened by the sound of a cat meowing. Wolf sits up, looks around, and settles down for his nap. Just as he falls asleep, he is awakened by the sound of Petrova and Alexis the cat approaching. Wolf hides behind the large rock. Petrova and Alexis enter.)

PETROVA: Alexis, all this summer I've wanted to have a real adventure, but nothing exciting happens. Nothing exciting ever happens around here. Do you know what I mean?

ALEXIS: Me do. Me do. *(Yawns.)*

PETROVA: Alexis, you get to hunt and chase birds and ducks around the pond all day. I guess you can't understand why I am so bored.

ALEXIS: Me do. Me do.

PETROVA: Oh, you understand? Well, that's great! At least you understand. I've got an idea! Maybe we can play a game or chase a bird or even hunt something today! How about it? You're an old hunter from way back. I've seen you stalk your prey and move so quickly and quietly that other animals in the barn never know you're around. Those mice don't stand a chance with you around. Do you remember the day the mice tried to tie a bell around your neck so they would be able to hear you coming? Ha! Ha!

ALEXIS: Me do. Me do.

PETROVA: Well then, old friend, what do you think about going on a hunt right now? What do you think about that?

ALEXIS: *(Yawns.)* I'm sleepy after all that milk and cream I ate for lunch, Petrova. Maybe later. I think right now I'll go to the barn and take a little catnap. Oh, I'm so sleepy. *(Yawns.)* I'll see you later, Petrova. Goodbye. *(Exits.)*

PETROVA: *(Calls.)* Goodbye, Alexis, you old fat cat! *(To herself.)* Now what can I do? There is no one to play with around here. *(Points to tree.)* I think I'll climb that tree. That'll be fun! Maybe I can see the pond from up there and watch the ducks swim. Yes, I will see my friend Olga, the duck. I'll just stay up there and watch her swim.

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(Petrova goes behind the tree and "climbs" it. For the following, Petrova remains hidden in the branches. Wolf emerges from his hiding place and settles in for a nap. After stirring a bit, Wolf falls asleep. Just as he falls asleep, Wolf is awakened by the sound of someone approaching. Wolf hides again. Boris, Anton, and Nicholas march on.)

BORIS: *(To Anton and Nicholas.)* Hup, 2, 3, 4! Hup, 2, 3, 4! Hup, 2, 3, 4! Company, halt! *(Anton and Nicholas keep marching. Shouts.)* Stop! Don't you know that "halt" means "stop"?! Stop! *(Louder.)* Stop! *(Anton and Nicholas stop marching.)* Now...attention! *(Anton and Nicholas stand at attention.)* Good! Very good! Present arms! *(Anton and Nicholas show Boris their arms. Shouts.)* No, no, no, you idiots! Show me your guns! *(Anton and Nicholas point their guns at Boris. Shouts.)* No! Don't point them at me! Put them back on your shoulders! What am I going to do with you two? Will you ever learn? Now try to act like soldiers when you meet with the Czar. Please!

ANTON: The Czar?! Are we really going to meet with the Royal Czar?!

BORIS: Yes, Anton. That is why we must be in marching shape! The Czar told me to meet him in the woods with you and Nicholas.

ANTON: *(Flattered.)* He asked for me?! Imagine that!

NICHOLAS: *(To Boris.)* Are you sure he asked for me?

BORIS: No, he asked for two of his finest Royal Hunters, but you two were the only hunters left on the force. All the others were on a mission. That's why I am bringing you with me to meet him, understand?

ANTON: *(Overjoyed.)* Imagine that! The Royal Czar of all Russia has personally asked for me! Me! Just wait until I tell the folks back home!

BORIS: Anton, you don't understand what I just said. I said –

NICHOLAS: Never mind, sir. He won't hear you. He only hears what he wants to hear. Don't burst his bubble.

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BORIS: Bubble?! (*Indicating Anton.*) He's a bubble brain! (*To Nicholas and Anton.*) It is getting late. It's time to march on. Attention! (*Nicholas and Anton stand at attention.*) Forward March! Hup 2, 3, 4. Hup 2, 3, 4.

(*Boris, Anton, and Nicholas march off. Czar enters and stands near a tree.*)

CZAR: (*To himself, looking around, angry.*) Where are those three? They are to meet me here this minute! No one's ever late for the Czar!

(*Boris, Anton, and Nicholas march on opposite. They do not see the Czar standing near the tree.*)

BORIS: (*To Anton and Nicholas.*) Hup, 2, 3, 4. Hup, 2, 3, 4. Company, halt! (*Anton and Nicholas halt and adlib excitement.*) Quiet, you idiots! Shhhhhhhhhhhhh!

(*Czar doesn't see them since the tree obscures his view.*)

CZAR: (*Calls.*) Hello, is anyone there?

BORIS: (*Calls.*) Hello?! (*To Anton and Nicholas.*) I think I heard somebody by that tree.

ANTON: (*Scared.*) I hope it's not a dangerous somebody.

BORIS: Shhh! Quiet!

(*Boris, Anton, and Nicholas listen intently. Czar pokes his head out from behind the tree and sees Boris. Note: Anton and Nicholas are standing behind Boris, so the Czar doesn't see them.*)

CZAR: (*Startled.*) Ohhh!

(*Boris sees Czar.*)

BORIS: *(Surprised.)* Oh! A thousand pardons, Your Royal Czarness! *(Stands at attention.)*

CZAR: At ease, Boris. Where are your comrades? I've been looking forward to meeting the two finest hunters in my command.

(Nicholas steps out from behind Boris.)

NICHOLAS: *(To Czar.)* Right here, at your command, sir.

CZAR: Nicholas?! *(Indicating Anton.)* And who is this young man?

ANTON: Anton, sir. At your command.

CZAR: *(Disappointed, angry.)* Boris, I thought I told you I wanted the *finest* hunters in my domain. Not these, these, these—!

BORIS: Sir, they were the only ones who weren't on another mission, sir. They're eager to please. Please, sir, give them a chance to prove themselves to you. I'll be responsible for them, sir.

CZAR: *(Reluctantly.)* Well, I guess I have no other choice. I'll hold you responsible, Boris! This is a very important matter! There is a very grave danger in the woods!

BORIS: *(Scared.)* A danger?

NICHOLAS: *(To Czar, scared.)* A danger?

ANTON: *(To Czar, scared.)* A danger?

WOLF: *(Pokes his head out and mouths, mimes.)* Danger?

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* I want the woods to be a safe place for all the people in my domain, so that's why I called you here today. Now don't fail me! The whole town's counting on you! Now, are there any questions?

BORIS: *(Trying to be brave.)* No, we will take care of everything. You can count on us, sir! There is no danger we can't face! We know no fear! We laugh at danger! *(Fake laugh.)* Ha! Ha! With a song in our heart, and the pride of Russia in our souls, we are prepared to meet any danger for

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you, the Czar! Any danger! *(Short pause. Thinks. Worried.)*
But what is it?

CZAR: Well, it has terrible claws.

BORIS: *(Scared.)* Terrible claws?

NICHOLAS: *(Scared.)* Terrible claws?

ANTON: *(Scared.)* Terrible claws?

(Wolf pokes his head out and looks at his "claws.")

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* And vicious teeth!

BORIS: *(Scared.)* Vicious teeth?

NICHOLAS: *(Scared.)* Vicious teeth?

ANTON: *(Scared.)* Vicious teeth?

(Wolf pokes his head out and feels his teeth.)

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* And a big appetite!

ANTON: *(Relieved.)* Oh, it's Nicholas!

CZAR: No, you idiot! It's a wolf!

BORIS: *(Scared.)* A wolf?!

NICHOLAS: *(Scared.)* A wolf?!

ANTON: *(Scared.)* A wolf?!

(Alarmed, Wolf pokes his head out.)

WOLF: *(Gestures to himself, mouths.)* A wolf?

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* Yes, a wolf! Now, you know that wolves are the reason our sheep have been missing. Our food supply is slowly being cut off because of these wolves.

NICHOLAS: *(Rubbing his stomach, excited.)* Food?! Did you say "food supply"?!?

ANTON: *(Scared.)* So, Czar, sir, this wolf...how dangerous is he?

(Wolf pokes his head out.)

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WOLF: *(Gestures to himself, mouths.)* Me?

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* As far as I know, he's very dangerous. He is smart, fast, and strong and very, very clever. He'll sneak up on you and attack when you least expect it.

(Wolf pokes his head out.)

WOLF: *(Gestures to himself, mouths.)* Me?

CZAR: *(To Boris, Anton, and Nicholas.)* He must be caught before the village people begin to panic. My kingdom needs protection from this wolf. Do you understand?

BORIS: Yes, sir, Your Royal Highness, sir. We will take care of him.

NICHOLAS: *(To Czar.)* Yes, sir. You can count on us.

(Terrified, Anton is speechless. Wolf rushes off unseen by them.)

CZAR: Now, Boris, I'm counting on you to keep these two in line and catch that wolf. Is that clear? Now, go get him!

BORIS: Yes, sir. *(To Nicholas and Anton.)* Forward march! On to the hunt! *(Boris, Anton, and Nicholas start to march but Nicholas marches in the opposite direction. Shouts.)* No, Nicholas, this way! Follow me! *(Nicholas rushes over to Boris and Anton, and the three begin to march off.)* Hup, 2, 3, 4. Hup, 2, 3, 4.

(Boris, Anton, and Nicholas march off. Tree branches move, revealing Petrova is still in up in the tree. Petrova overhears the following.)

CZAR: *(To himself.)* Those idiots! Oh, if only I had more hunters like Ivana Huntski! But she's retired now, and rightfully so. She served me well and was an inspiration to all who hunted with her. *(Sighs.)* If only I could get more brave recruits willing to hunt for the Czar...

PETROVA: *(Calls down from the tree.)* Like me?!

CZAR: *(Looking around.)* Who said that? Who said that?
Where are you?

PETROVA: *(Calls.)* Up here, sir, in this tree!

CZAR: Come down here, girl! Come down at once!

PETROVA: Yes, sir, at your command. *(“Climbs” down the tree and approaches Czar.)*

CZAR: How long have you been spying on me?

PETROVA: I wasn't spying on you, sir. I was watching the ducks in my Grandma's pond. I'm Petrova, the granddaughter of Ivana Huntski, but I just call her Grandma.

CZAR: You are the granddaughter of Ivana Huntski?

PETROVA: Yes, and I want to join the Royal Hunters.

CZAR: I'm afraid you're too young to join the Royal Hunters. Besides, you must have a recommendation to train with them.

PETROVA: But I really want to serve you, sir.

CZAR: Well, since you're the granddaughter of Ivana Huntski, maybe you could have her teach you some of her fine hunting skills. Then we shall see. Now, run along home and ask her to teach you.

PETROVA: Yes, sir! You will see! I'll make a fine hunter for you, sir! Thank you! Thank you! *(Rushes off.)*

CZAR: *(To himself.)* Well, if all the young ones were like her, I'd have no trouble getting recruits. Those silly hunters Boris, Nicholas, and Anton! I think I'll probably end up hunting that wolf myself. I guess if you want something done right, you must do it yourself...with some extra help, of course. *(Calls.)* Natosha where are you?!

(Natosha enters, loaded down with supplies.)

NATOSHA: Yes, sir, I'm here. I've got all the supplies you asked for. Plus, I brought along some things that might

come in handy: sleeping bags, a canteen, and, of course, your comfortable hunting boots.

CZAR: And did you bring my *little* secret weapon...the *little* secret weapon no one else knows about?

NATOSHA: Trust me, no one will ever know about your little teddy bear.

(Natasha pulls the Czar's teddy bear out of the pack. Czar grabs his teddy bear and hugs it.)

CZAR: *(To Teddy bear.)* Ah! My little itty-bitty friend! The only one I can truly confide in! The only one who really understands me!

NATOSHA: *(To herself, under her breath.)* I'm outranked by a teddy bear. *(To Czar.)* Sir, I think we'd better get going. Remember the wolf, the people, the promise?

CZAR: Yes, let's go. I'll carry Teddy. You can carry the rest. Come along.

[END OF FREEVIEW]