

The Adventure of PETER and the WOLF

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Young Peter has devised a plan to capture a “fearsome” wolf who has escaped from the zoo to raid villagers’ homes. Apparently the wolf has a rather large “sweet tooth,” or teeth, in this case! Despite warnings from Grandpa, Peter enlists the help of his two friends, Bronia and Sonia, and they set their plan in motion; aided by Peter’s animal friends, Natasha, a vain bird; Olga, a practical duck; Pavlov, a lovable dog; and Catrina, a sly cat.

In a hilarious scene, the wolf swallows Natasha, who gives him hiccups and a terrible tummy-ache, and he’s caught by Peter and the girls. Feeling sorry for the wolf, everyone agrees to keep his cravings a secret and to return him to the zoo where he will be safe - after he is turned upside down and Natasha is shaken out!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Flexible cast of 12, approx. 6 m, 6 w)

NATASHA: A beautiful, but vain bird.

OLGA: A sensible duck.

CATRINA: A sleek cat.

PAVLOV: A loyal dog.

GRANDPA: Peter’s jovial Grandpa *(or maybe Grandma?)*.

BRONIA: Friend of Peter.

SONIA: Friend of Peter, Bronia’s younger sister.

PETER: Young boy with lots of bravado.

ILYA: A brave hunter; leader.

IVAN: Another, not quite as brave.

BORIS: Another, not very brave at all.

WOLF: Escapee from the zoo; loves desserts.

Playing Time: About 45 minutes.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A peaceful summer's day. We hear chirping of birds. NATASHA is seen sitting on the bench, DSR, preening her feathers. Pause.)

NATASHA: Done! *(Stands and flaps HER wings and admires herself.)* I'll just check to see how beautiful I really am by looking into the pond. *(SHE moves from bench to pond and looks into the water. Overwhelmed.)* Oh ... my goodness! *(Looks again.)* Oh, my beautifulness. *(Looks once again.)* Natasha, Natasha, you are a splendid bird. I really don't think there's a more splendid bird in the whole forest ... if I say so myself. *(Pause.)* And, of course, I do. *(There is a squeak of the gate slowly opening.)* Oh, oh. Someone's coming! I'd better fly to safety. *(SHE "flies" to tree, SL, as gate squeaks and opens a little more.)*

(A duck foot is seen trying to push the gate open. Enter OLGA, finally, owner of the duck foot. She is wearing a shower cap and is carrying a rubber bathtub duck, a long-handled back brush, and a towel over a "wing." She waddles through the gate toward the pond. She stops and sings.)

OLGA: Oh solo mio. *(Clears HER throat. Again, louder.)*
Oh solo mioooo ...

NATASHA: *(Laughs at the sight of OLGA.)* Ha, ha, ha. Oh, ha, ha, ha.

OLGA: *(Indignantly turns to NATASHA.)* And what are you laughing at? Don't you appreciate fine singing?

NATASHA: Oh, I do, Olga! But I don't consider your singing ... *(Giggles.)* fine. You're going to scare all the animals in the forest.

OLGA: *(Continues waddling to the pond, irritated.)* Well ... I've never had any complaints ... except from you.

NATASHA: *(Flies to the bench, lounges, facing audience.)*
Olga, you're a duck and ducks can't sing. Only lovely birds like me can sing pretty songs. Listen. *(SHE stands on bench; lets loose with a series of trills. AT this point, CATRINA, the cat, slides through the open gate, yawning, licking her paws, stretching. She watches the action between NATASHA and OLGA with interest and begins to slink DSL to tree.)*

OLGA: *(Still irritated, pulls HER shower cap over her ears and continues to waddle to the pond.)* Humph! Perhaps you can sing a prettier tune but it doesn't mean I can't try. *(SHE puts her towel and rubber duck on the bench and jumps into the pond, carrying the brush, creating a large "splash" which NATASHA tries to avoid by jumping off bench.)*

NATASHA: Don't splash. You nearly got me wet!
(Smooths HER feathers.)

OLGA: *(Swimming around the pond.)* What's wrong with being wet? Splashing and swimming is fun!

NATASHA: Swim? Why should I want to swim and get my gorgeous feathers all wet and drippy? *(SHE fluffs her wings; much to the interest of CATRINA, who licks her lips.)* I've just spent hours fixing my feathers so that they're just right. *(Sits on bench; fixes feathers.)*

OLGA: *(Swimming about and brushing HER back with the back brush.)* Just right for what? *(Sees CATRINA near tree; waves to her. Catrina waves back; puts a finger to her lips to indicate "quiet." OLGA continues brushing.)*

NATASHA: Olga, I do have my reputation to uphold!
(CATRINA begins to creep up behind NATASHA.)
Besides that ... well-kept feathers help me fly with precision and grace ... and style. *(Stops fixing feathers.)*

OLGA: In that case ... *(Pointing to CATRINA.)* ... those feathers better move ... NOW! *(CATRINA pounces for NATASHA. A startled Natasha flies for the tree. OLGA enjoys a good laugh.)* Ha, ha, ha. Oh, ha, ha, ha. Such grace! Such style! Ha, ha, ha.

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NATASHA: *(From the tree.)* Catrina, you'll never catch me. Nobody will ever catch me because I'm also fast and smart. *(Smooths HER feathers.)*

CATRINA: *(Stalking around the tree.)* You wouldn't have made it to the tree if Olga hadn't warned you. One of these days, Natasha, I'll enjoy you for a tasty snack, after I've spit out your "beautiful feathers." *(Leans against tree.)*

(OLGA gets out of pond and puts brush on bench. Picks up rubber duck. PAVLOV enters through the gate, scratching, stretching, yawning, rubbing his ears. Watches OTHERS with interest.)

OLGA: Now, now, you two. *(Waddling back to pond.)* It's too lovely a day for spats. *(PAVLOV begins to sneak up behind CATRINA.)*

NATASHA: I totally agree, but cats have little appreciation for the finer things in life.

CATRINA: Oh, cats are one of the finer things in life. *(Menacing NATASHA as PAVLOV positions himself behind CATRINA with his arms folded.)* And what's better in a cat's life than dining on a conceited bird such as yourself? And then taking a snooze in the sun. *(CATRINA takes a swipe at NATASHA.)* Psst! *(NATASHA avoids the swipe.)*

PAVLOV: WOOF! *(Startled, CATRINA jumps into the tree with NATASHA, who quickly flies to the bench for safety.)* I know what's better! Having a foolish cat to chase into a tree and then curling up under that tree to make sure it stays there for as long as I like.

OLGA: *(Quacks and does fancy swimming strokes in the pond.)* Now, now, Pavlov. Don't get your fur on end.

NATASHA: *(Flaps HER wings.)* Thanks, Pavlov, for frightening Catrina. You're a good dog.

CATRINA: *(Swipes down at PAVLOV with HER paw and hisses.)* You ruined my snack.

PAVLOV: *(Growls and snaps at CATRINA.)* Grrr. You don't need a snack, you chubby cat.

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CATRINA: Just look who's talking. Always begging for more, just like a dog. Grandpa feeds you too much already. *(Looking off SL.)* And here he comes, now!

PAVLOV: *(To CATRINA, menacingly.)* Grrr! Grrr!

CATRINA: *(Swiping at PAVLOV.)* Hsss! Hsss! Psst! Psst!

OLGA: Quack, quack, quack.

NATASHA: Tweet, tweet, tweet. *(ANIMALS continue scolding each other simultaneously.)*

(GRANDPA enters SL carrying a basket filled with fruit. He pauses, observing the antics of the animals, before putting the basket down.)

GRANDPA: *(Loudly.)* Quiet! Enough bickering. *(ANIMALS, frightened, immediately freeze in position. They shiver in fear. Pause. Then GRANDPA chuckles and begins to laugh louder and louder; bends over from laughing and slaps his thigh. Animals look at each other and then scold grandpa in unison. It's bedlam. Grandpa finally stops laughing as animals continue their "scolding.")* Very well, my fine animal friends. Very well. Quiet now. *(ANIMALS are quiet except for an occasional bark, quack, hiss or tweet.)* I admit I deserve your scolding for frightening you. If you could have seen how silly you all looked. *(Picks up the basket and continues to bench, sits.)* But, what if I had been the wolf ... *(Menacingly ... the wolf who escaped from the zoo and who is terrorizing the people of the countryside? (CATRINA comes down from the tree. PAVLOV and CATRINA sit by GRANDPA on the bench; occasionally growling and hissing at each other. NATASHA flies to the tree. Grandpa pets them as OLGA gets out of the pond, puts down duck and towels herself off. NATASHA approaches bench; but not too close, to listen. GRANDPA rises; acts out the WOLF'S escapades.)* The wolf is THIS big! *(ANIMALS react.)* He's always hungry and eats pies and cakes cooling on window sills or ... unsuspecting animals. Why, he could eat ... *(Points quickly at OLGA.)* ... YOU in one gulp.

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(OLGA hides behind bushes. GRANDPA laughs, ANIMALS scold him as BRONIA and SONIA run in SL, breathless. They circle grandpa tugging at his sleeves and pulling his arms as animals scatter.)

BRONIA: *(Quickly and breathlessly.)* Grandpa, Grandpa, quick we've got to hide. *(GIRLS look anxiously off SL.)*

GRANDPA: *(Surprised.)* Bronia, what's going on?

BRONIA: He's after us, Grandpa, and he won't quit until he finds us. *(Pulls at GRANDPA. OLGA comes out of hiding; approaches grandpa.)*

SONIA: Help us, please. *(GRANDPA is being swirled about, dazed. ANIMALS bark, meow, quack, etc., circle grandpa and girls.)*

BRONIA: Pleeeeeeeze, help us find a place to hide! He's going to catch us and it will be all over!

GRANDPA: Whoa, just a minute, Bronia. Just a minute. I'm getting dizzy! *(To SONIA.)* Help me sit down, Sonia. *(SHE does so.)* It's the wolf, isn't it? He's after you, isn't he? Thinks he can frighten everyone, does he? *(Before THEY can answer HE stands up.)* Well, if he shows his fangs around here I'll take care of him. *(HE assumes a fighter's stance and acts out his intentions as OTHERS watch in amazement.)* I'll punch him in the whiskers. I'll tie his tail in knots. I'll roll him into a ball and tie him into a bow. I'll ...

SONIA: *(Interrupts.)* No, no, Grandpa. *(Laughs as HE slowly stops punching empty air.)*

BRONIA: The wolf's not after us, Grandpa.

GRANDPA: He's not? Well, then who is?

BRONIA: It's Peter, Grandpa, it's Peter. He's pretending he's a mighty hunter.

SONIA: And we have to be wolves. *(Trying to catch HER breath.)* It's not easy being a wolf.

BRONIA: And we don't want Peter to find us so fast or we'll have to start another game of hunter and wolf and we're getting very tired.

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