

# PETER AND THE WOLF

## PROLOGUE

As composer Sergei Prokofiev's famous story is introduced, an elderly man barges into the theater, interrupting the performance. Perturbed at the announcer's version of this tale, he takes over as narrator to tell the story as it really happened.

We learn that he met the Wolf in Peter's story many years ago, when as a rascally young man he was charged with tending the town's flock of sheep and became the infamous Boy Who Cried Wolf. After witnessing the Wolf eat the flock, he was so frightened he fell into a feverish dream, where he met Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Pigs, all of whom had also met the Big, Bad Wolf. The dream serves as a warning that someday the Wolf will return.

Years later, the Boy Who Cried Wolf has become a Grandfather, and he recognizes in his grandson Peter many of the same personality traits that he had as a young boy - impulsiveness, curiosity, and trouble following the rules. When news travels of the Wolf's return, he takes Peter and moves to a hidden cabin in the woods, where he hopes the Wolf will never find them.

## THE STORY BEGINS

As each character enters the story, they are represented by their own instrument:

The Grandfather - Bassoon  
The Cat - Clarinet  
The Duck - Oboe  
The Bird - Flute  
Peter - Strings  
The Wolf - French Horn

The Grandfather and Peter are living in a cabin in the woods, hiding away from the Wolf. Peter enjoys watching the animals that share their pond - a Duck, a Cat and a Bird, and they all feel safe in the woods. One day, the Bird greets Peter with friendly chirps, and he is entertained by the Duck swimming in the pond and the Cat sneaking around the tree. Just as the Cat is about to pounce on the Bird, Peter shouts out a warning, and peace is restored to the group.

Just then the Grandfather arrives, and sees that Peter, distracted by his animal friends, had forgetfully left the gate open. Grandfather scolds him, reminding him that the Wolf could be lurking in the forest. Peter, never having met the Wolf, is unafraid.

## THE RETURN OF THE WOLF

Suddenly, the Wolf does appear. He stalks the Duck, and though she tries to escape, he swallows her in one gulp. He sees the Cat and the Bird and hungrily circles the tree they are perched in. Peter, watching from the gate, makes a plan to catch the Wolf. He enlists the help of the Bird, who distracts the Wolf, while Peter readies a strong rope into a lasso.

As the Bird cleverly teases the Wolf, Peter manages to catch him by the waist, just as a group of hunters traveling through the woods pass by. Peter convinces the hunters to spare the Wolf and take him to the zoo.

## FINALE

Thrilled with having caught the Wolf, Peter leads the victory parade through town and to the zoo. Everyone celebrates, except for the Grandfather, who is worried that Peter still hasn't learned the importance of caution and planning. Suddenly, the Wolf, feeling ill, heaves up the Duck. Having been swallowed whole, she is still alive. Overjoyed at her return, Peter and the others celebrate once again.

## HISTORY

Born in 1891, Sergei Prokofiev was a Russian composer. He is regarded as one of the major composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his masterpieces include the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Prokofiev composed *Peter and the Wolf* in 1936 after being commissioned to create a musical symphony specifically for children. The intent of the *Peter and the Wolf* was to introduce children to the orchestra by assigning each character in the story a musical theme played by an individual instrument. Since its premiere, it has become his most frequently performed work.



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