

The Epic Staging of “The Big Bad Wolf”

A Play With Songs By: Megan E. Tripaldi

PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE: In regard to music, use what you’ve got! There is no sheet music for the lyrics that are written, so even if you can only do it a capella, that’s great! As long as the characters are singing, that’s all that matters. These are the moments where “if you can’t speak, sing” come into play. Have fun with it!

CHARACTERS:

The 3LP Theater Company:

STAGE MANAGER - Our Narrator and, well Stage Manager

SYLVIA - A Pig, The Set Designer

GERTRUDE - A Pig, The Director

MILDRED - A Pig, The Costume Designer

PUPPETEERS/CHORUS - A group of actors that sing back-up and make shadow puppets

The Wolf Family:

BERNARD - The youngest Wolf, questioning his life/legacy

ZACK - The over-achieving older brother

DAD - The patriarch of the Wolf Family, trying to keep tradition alive

The Epic Staging of “The Big Bad Wolf”

SETTING: A stage with a shadow screen.

AT RISE: The STAGE MANAGER speaks from the back of the theater and comes to the stage.

PROLOGUE

STAGE MANAGER:

All right, all right let's get this show on the road. Lights!?

(The lights flicker.)

Good to know you're not asleep back there. I mean, I wouldn't blame you, it is super cozy and dark. All right. Music?

(A musician, or group of musicians thwang their instruments in a caucoughany.)

Ok, ok, ok! Good! Yes. Thank you! Don't turn anything up. You're fine. Great. Now, *audience!*

(They get the audience to cheer any way they can.)

Yeah! You folks are so great, this is why we do this! SO! Welcome! I am your humble Stage Manager slash Narrator. And this is the retelling of a classic story, but with a twist and that twist is:

(They make a trumpet noise)

It's a play!

(Waits for a response.)

Well, ok I mean *obviously*, but - ok. Let me start at the beginning. You all know the story of the Three Little Pigs, right?

(They check with the audience)

STAGE MANAGER:

Ok, I didn't see everyone's hand go up, so we're going to retell the short version for you now. Sound good? Ok. *PUPPETS READY!!*

PUPPETEERS (Off):

READY!

STAGE MANAGER:

Awesome. Here we go.

(The PUPPETEERS use shadow puppets to explain the action as the STAGE MANAGER tells the story.)

PUPPETEER 1:

Once upon a time there were three little pigs.

PUPPETEER 2:

One lived in a house made of straw, the second lived in a house made of sticks, and the third lived in a house made of bricks.

PUPPETEER 3:

Then, of course there was the big, bad wolf and he was hungry for bacon. So he came to the first little pig's house.

STAGE MANAGER:

And you all know this part, right? Say it with me: Little pig, little pig let me in!

PUPPETEERS:

Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!

STAGE MANAGER:

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the pig's house down!

PUPPETEER 1:

So the first little pig ran to the second little pig's house and they locked the door.

PUPPETEER 2:

But the Big Bad Wolf followed them to the house made of sticks.

STAGE MANAGER:

All together now! Little pig, little pig let me in!

PUPPETEERS:

Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!

STAGE MANAGER:

And he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the pig's house down!

PUPPETEER 3:

So the pigs ran to the third little pig's house and they locked the door!

PUPPETEER 1:

But the Big Bad Wolf followed them to the house made of bricks.

STAGE MANAGER:

Little pig, little pig let me in!

PUPPETEERS:

Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!

ALL:

And he huffed, and he puffed -

PUPPETEER 2:

But the house didn't blow down!

PUPPETEER 3:

The wolf huffed and puffed again and again, but no matter how hard he tried he still couldn't blow the house down!

PUPPETEER 1:

So he got an idea. He climbed up the house to the chimney and stuffed himself in.

PUPPETEER 2:

But the pigs were on to him! They lit a fire and placed a big pot of soup in the fireplace.

PUPPETEER 3:

And when the wolf came down he was boiled in the soup for the pig's supper.

ALL:

And they all lived happily ever after!

(The PUPPETEERS exit.)

STAGE MANAGER:

Pretty grim story, right? Not so great ending for the wolf. I mean he *was* trying to eat the pigs, but - well, anyway. Our version of the story is a bit different. It starts with - well, I shouldn't give away any spoilers, but I will say you might want to rethink your opinion about the wolf. Like the saying goes, don't judge a book by its cover. *LIGHTS!!*

(Lights change and the STAGE MANAGER exits.)

1: THE LEGACY

(We're now in BERNARD, the Wolf's house. He is sitting, reading a book when his DAD yells from offstage.)

DAD:

Bernard! Did you finish your homework?

BERNARD:

Yes, dad!

DAD:

Did you do your chores?

BERNARD:

All done!

DAD:

Did you finish your breathing exercises?

BERNARD:

I, uh...Oh, yeah I, uh -

(His DAD enters.)

DAD:

You didn't even start them, did you?

BERNARD:

I...no, dad. I'm sorry.

DAD:

Bernard, we talked about this.

BERNARD:

But what if I don't want to be a bad guy -

DAD:

Oh for heaven's sake. I've told you a million times we are *not* 'bad guys'! We are honest, hard working people just trying to live up to our ancestors glory!

BERNARD:

Yeah I know, but -

DAD:

You need to take a lesson from your brother. Take pride in our family.

BERNARD:

Oh, I don't want to be like Zack -

(ZACK enters with a cast on his arm.)

ZACK:

Somebody call my name?

DAD:

Ah there he is! My champion!

ZACK:

Oh, come on, Dad -

DAD:

Why wouldn't you want to be like Zack, Bernard? Look at this!

(DAD holds up ZACK's broken arm.)

DAD:

He broke his arm diving at full force into a brick wall to knock a house down! This kid thinks outside the box!

BERNARD:

I don't want to dive into a brick wall...

ZACK:

I just wanted to make the family proud.

DAD:

Well, you did, son. And you got a battle scar to prove it! Bernard, you could learn a thing or two from your brother.

BERNARD:

But I'm *nothing* like Zack!

ZACK:

Got that right. Nerd says what?

BERNARD:

What?

ZACK:

Ha! Nailed it.

BERNARD:

Well, look can't I just do something else for the family? I mean, I have asthma...

DAD:

No excuses, Bernard. Do your exercises. Make us proud.

(DAD exits.)

BERNARD:

Is he gone?

ZACK:

All clear.

BERNARD:

Good.

(He goes back to his book.)

ZACK:

Hey sorry about all that nerd stuff, I was just trying to save face in front of Dad. You understand, right kiddo?

BERNARD:

Oh, no it's cool. I get it.

ZACK:

Sweet, you rock.

(He starts to exit.)

BERNARD:

Hey, Zack, can I ask you a question?

ZACK:

What's up?

BERNARD:

What would you do if you were me?

ZACK:

Dude, I was you. I felt just like you do, but I just had to decide one day that my feelings didn't matter and do what was best for the family.

BERNARD:

But I just don't think what we're doing is right.

ZACK:

It doesn't matter what you think, sometimes you just have to ignore that feeling and pretend that it doesn't exist.

BERNARD:

But I don't know how many times I have to say it! I don't want to be a -

ZACK:

A Big Bad Wolf, I know.

BERNARD:

Well, I don't.

ZACK:

Come on, B. You know that Dad won't let up until you at least try.

BERNARD:

I know...

ZACK:

Look, I'll help you if I can, but I have to go to physical therapy and then strength training. I'm swamped.

BERNARD:

It isn't easy being Dad's favorite.

ZACK:

Just try, ok? And don't think of it as 'Big Bad', right? Think of it as honest -

BERNARD:

- hard working people just trying to live up to our ancestors glory.

ZACK:

Exactly. You got this!

BERNARD:

If you say so.

ZACK:

Peace out, little brother.

(He ruffles his hair and exits. Music plays.)

BERNARD:

*I wish they could see
There is no bad in me
I wish they could see there's something more*

*I wish they could see
That I am my own me
I don't want to be a villain in this story*

*I know it's supposed to be my legacy
But I don't wanna be
The Big Bad Wolf*

(PUPPETEERS enter and show mountains, oceans, and other beautiful vistas.)

*I wish that I could go explore the world
I wanna climb the highest mountains
And swim from shore to shore
I wanna go as far as I can go
Spreading joy and hope wherever I roam!*

(ZACK calls from offstage.)

ZACK:

Dude, are you singing?

BERNARD:

Uh...*no*! It was just some video on my phone. No big deal. Super funny though, you should totally check it out. I'll send you a link.

ZACK:

...Whatever.

(BERNARD sings quieter.)

BERNARD:

*Why can't they just see
That I've got hopes and dreams*

My dad and brother don't care that I'm complicated

*This so called legacy
It means nothing to me
It's just a story they keep telling over and over*

*I know it's who they say I was born to be
But I don't wanna be
The Big Bad Wolf*

(He sighs and goes back to his book.)

2: REHEARSAL BLUES PART 1

(The STAGE MANAGER enters.)

STAGE MANAGER:

Oh man, this is super sad, right? Well let's leave this here for a second so we can check in on some pigs. I bet you were wondering when we would get to the "pigs" part of the Three Little Pigs, huh? Well worry not, because that's happening. I take you now to the 3LP Theater Company.

(Enter a company of ACTORS with a bunch of elaborate, but extremely weird costumes, props, etc.)

ACTORS:

*We've been hard at work for months and months
And there have been a couple bumps
But theater magic happens when nobody's looking*

*The set is pointy, costumes baggy
The puppets are weird, the cues are lagging
But theater magic happens when nobody's looking*

*Everything will be ok
We open a week from today
We all just want to run away
But for 3LP we will stay -
'Cause theatre magic happens when nobody's looking!*

(The ACTORS exit. Enter SYLVIA and GERTRUDE. SYLVIA is showing GERTRUDE some plans.)

SYLVIA:

So if we build it like this then we won't have to worry about anything catching on the sides like last time.

GERTRUDE:

Are you sure?

SYLVIA:

Absolutely.

GERTRUDE:

And you didn't get rid of the spikes?

SYLVIA:

You can't take them away without ruining the whole feel of the play -

GERTRUDE:

Because we're super lucky that the guy playing Peter Pan didn't sue us for workplace injury.

SYLVIA:

Trust me. These bumpers will bounce off anyone who is in a flying rig who gets too close. Like a gentle push.

GERTRUDE:

I still don't see why we need spikes on Venus...

(MILDRED enters holding a horrible looking puppet.)

MILDRED:

Guys, guys! I finished one of the puppets for the Lost Boys. What do you think?

SYLVIA:

Uh...

GERTRUDE:

It's, uh -

MILDRED:

Isn't it so cool and edgy?

SYLVIA:

Oh, it's something.

GERTRUDE:

Are those real feathers?

MILDRED:

Claudia let me use some of hers.

GERTRUDE:

Seriously? She just let you have some?

MILDRED:

I mean, they were feathers that she already molted, so it was no big thing.

GERTRUDE:

Ok...

SYLVIA:

Gertrude, I was showing you this -

GERTRUDE:

Right, right, sorry. Mildred, maybe sleep on this design and think of something a little less, um...abstract?

MILDRED:

But abstract was what I was going for...

GERTRUDE:

Well the audience might not get it -

MILDRED:

Just take a look at this. What do you see?

GERTRUDE:

A, um...a pile of trash?

MILDRED:

Exactly! Because the Lost Boys were discarded children!

GERTRUDE:

So you're saying the Lost Boys are like trash? Because that seems a bit extreme -

MILDRED:

No, no it's so much more complex than that. Look, this will encourage them to open their minds! To look beyond what they think the Lost Boys should look like! To look through their *emotions* -

SYLVIA:

That's it!

GERTRUDE:

Sylvia -

SYLVIA:

Just forget it! This play is going to fail!

GERTRUDE:

You don't mean that.

SYLVIA:

Yes I do! This production of *Peter Pan in Space* is already a disaster. Pan's understudy is getting fitted for her costume as we speak and she still doesn't know her lines, the set might put someone's eye out, and now the Lost Boy puppets look like Sesame Street rejects that have spent a month at the dump - I can't deal with it anymore!

MILDRED:

I *really* just think if we trusted our audiences a bit more -

SYLVIA:

Oh be quiet, Mildred!

MILDRED:

But if we just -

SYLVIA:

It looks like you put googly eyes on a pile of garbage! It's stupid and you're stupid and this whole concept is stupid!

GERTRUDE:

Sylvia, that's a bit harsh...

SYLVIA:

I don't care! The 3LP Theatre Company has to be held to a higher standard and I won't stand for anything less than perfection anymore! *I won't do it! I WON'T!*

(She storms off.)

MILDRED:

Wow.

GERTRUDE:

Yeah, that was a big one.

MILDRED:

Yeah...

GERTRUDE:

You know she's not really mad at *you*, right?

MILDRED:

Yeah, I guess...

GERTRUDE:

She's just stressed about the show; she'll calm down eventually.

MILDRED:

You think so?

GERTRUDE:

Sure! And if not I'll talk some sense into her like I always do.

MILDRED:

Ok. Hey, you like my design, right?

GERTRUDE:

Of course I do. It's very unique. Just like you.

MILDRED:

Is that a good thing?

GERTRUDE:

It's a great thing.

MILDRED:

Thanks, Gertrude. I'll go work on something Sylvia will like. Or at least not scream at. Something fluffy, maybe?

GERTRUDE:

Maybe just go a bit more straightforward for this one?

MILDRED:

(Sighs)

I'll try.

GERTRUDE:

Go get 'em, champ!

(MILDRED exits. GERTRUDE sighs.)

Never start a theater company with your siblings...

(GERTRUDE exits.)

3: THE RUNAWAY

(BERNARD enters carrying a big sack. He pulls out a map and examines it. The STAGE MANAGER comes out and narrates while he searches the map, obviously lost.)

STAGE MANAGER:

While the pigs of 3LP Theatre Company were each trying to fix the unfixable production, Bernard decided to run away from home rather than face his family's disappointment. But there was one problem: he seemed to be lost.

BERNARD:

Oh boy...

STAGE MANAGER:

For all the reading he did he never mastered the art of cartography.

BERNARD:

Oh gosh...

STAGE MANAGER:

That basically means he couldn't read a map.

BERNARD:

Oh man! What have I done?

STAGE MANAGER:

Little did he know that his whole fate was about to change.

(The STAGE MANAGER exits. SYLVIA enters with a sketchpad, writing furiously and muttering to herself. She practically runs into BERNARD.)

SYLVIA:

Ow, hey!

BERNARD:

What the - !?

SYLVIA:

Watch where you're going you -

(She notices he's a wolf and is immediately terrified.)

You...oh boy -

BERNARD:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to -

(She drops her notes, screams in his face, and runs around the stage.)

SYLVIA:
WOLF!!! WOLF!!! THERE'S A WOOWOOOLF!!!

BERNARD:
Wait! No, I'm not -

SYLVIA:
HEEEEEEEEEELP!!!!

(GERTRUDE and MILDRED run on.)

GERTRUDE:
What's going on?

MILDRED:
What happened?

BERNARD:
Hi, there I'm -

GERTRUDE and MILDRED:
WOOWOOOLF!!

(Now all three pigs are running around the stage in a frenzy yelling "WOLF!!" over and over again until BERNARD can get their attention.)

BERNARD:
HEY!!!

(The pigs freeze.)

Look, I'm not like the other - I'm not going to eat you, or blow your house down, or whatever, ok? I'm not like that.

GERTRUDE:
You're - you're not?

MILDRED:

Are you sure?

SYLVIA:

'Cause you know you're - well you're a -

BERNARD:

I know what I am, I'm just not like that. And the running around and screaming wasn't exactly encouraging my pacifist lifestyle. Honestly, how was that helpful?

SYLVIA:

Well, I saw you and I panicked. And then my sisters saw you and they panicked...

MILDRED:

Just a big old panic fest over here.

GERTRUDE:

We didn't mean to offend you, we're just not used to, well...this.

BERNARD:

I mean, I get it. Still kind of hurts though.

GERTRUDE:

Totally fair.

BERNARD:

I'm Bernard, by the way.

GERTRUDE:

Nice to meet you, Bernard. I'm Gertrude and these are my sisters, Mildred -

MILDRED:

Hi!

GERTRUDE:

And Sylvia.

SYLVIA:

Hello.

BERNARD:

Gertrude, Mildred, Sylvia. Nice to meet you all!

MILDRED:

We run the 3LP Theater Company, just up the road.

BERNARD:

A theater company?

GERTRUDE:

We were about to open our next production, *Peter Pan in Space* -

SYLVIA:

But there are some, uh...design flaws that we have to deal with before we go up.

MILDRED:

Minor flaws.

SYLVIA:

Says you...

GERTRUDE:

Oh please, don't start.

BERNARD:

(Picking up SYLVIA's notes.)

Is this your design?

SYLVIA:

Oh, no that's just -

BERNARD:

It's so cool!

SYLVIA:

Really?

BERNARD:

Yeah! I love the pointy bits on the sides. It's so edgy!

SYLVIA:

Wow, thank you!

MILDRED:

(Pulling out one of her weird garbage puppets.)

What do you think about these puppets?

BERNARD:

Oh wow! Are those supposed to be Lost Boys?

MILDRED:

Wha - ? Uh, yeah! How did you know?

BERNARD:

Well, it's supposed to be a metaphor for how they were discarded children, right? That's so deep...

MILDRED:

That's exactly right...

BERNARD:

(To GERTRUDE)

Let me guess, are you directing?

GERTRUDE:

Oh, I - yeah. Yeah, I am.

BERNARD:

Well I can't wait to see your work. Because your team is so amazing! I bet this show is going to be really good.

GERTRUDE:

Wow, thank you that's really kind, but sadly um - we're going to push the production.

BERNARD:

What do you mean?

GERTRUDE:

Well, there are a lot of things that need to be fixed and I don't think we'd be able to open in time.

BERNARD:

That's too bad. *Peter Pan in Space* sounds like it would be absolutely mind-blowing. Sadly I think I'll have to miss it.

SYLVIA:

What, why?

BERNARD:

Well I'm currently running away from home and I don't want my dad to catch up with me so I have to keep moving.

MILDRED:

Why did you run away?

BERNARD:

Oh, uh...it's embarrassing.

SYLVIA:

You can tell us!

MILDRED:

Yeah, we're super supportive.

GERTRUDE:

Most of the time...

SYLVIA:

But especially this time!

MILDRED:

Yeah, we're here for you.

BERNARD:

Well...ok, so my family is kind of in the “Big Bad Wolf” business and my dad and my brother keep pressuring me to be the next in line.

SYLVIA:

Oh boy...

GERTRUDE:

That sounds -

MILDRED:

Terrifying.

BERNARD:

Right! They don't think about how it affects people and I just don't want to be a part of it.

MILDRED:

So you ran away?

BERNARD:

Yup.

SYLVIA:

Good for you. Get out while you can.

GERTRUDE:

Sylvia!

SYLVIA:

What?

GERTRUDE:

Not helping.

(To BERNARD.)

You didn't want to talk to him about it?

BERNARD:

I tried so many times, but he won't listen. He just points out how amazing my brother, Zack is, and how I should be like Zack, and how Zack should be the next King of the universe -

SYLVIA:

Oh, we understand sibling rivalries.

GERTRUDE:

Absolutely we do.

MILDRED:

Do you two get along?

BERNARD:

I mean, I guess. But he's always just telling me to play along with whatever our dad says and picks on me in front of him to seem cool. But he's there for me when it's just us.

GERTRUDE:

That sounds complicated.

BERNARD:

Well I don't have to deal with it anymore anyway since I left.

(Suddenly SYLVIA gets an idea and starts furiously scribbling on her scratch pad.)

MILDRED:

That's so sad; you didn't even get to say goodbye?

BERNARD:

No, I -

GERTRUDE:

Sylvia, what are you doing? You're being so rude! I'm so sorry, Bernard -

BERNARD:

Oh, it's -

Plan!
SYLVIA:

What?
MILDRED:

Plan! Plan! I have a plan!
SYLVIA:

For what?
GERTRUDE:

Bernard! And us!
SYLVIA:

I'm confused...
MILDRED:

Me, too.
GERTRUDE:

It's a plan to help Bernard and 3LP!
SYLVIA:

Oh, it's really ok, I don't want -
BERNARD:

It's a play!
SYLVIA:

Come again?
GERTRUDE:

Bernard, you said your family was part of the "Big Bad Wolf" business?
SYLVIA:

I did...
BERNARD:

SYLVIA:

What if you did fulfil your legacy after all?

BERNARD:

Oh, I couldn't -

SYLVIA:

I mean what if you made them *think* that's what you were doing?

GERTRUDE:

Oh, you don't mean...

MILDRED:

I think she does!

BERNARD:

Sorry, I'm still lost.

SYLVIA:

We stage it!

(BERNARD stares at her blankly. GERTRUDE and MILDRED are thrilled.)

You invite your dad and brother and we can all help you convince them that it's actually happening while in reality it's a carefully rehearsed play and nobody gets hurt!
Hopefully!

BERNARD:

So like...we'd rehearse it? With a script and everything?

SYLVIA:

Uh huh!

BERNARD:

Oh...Oh! That's an amazing idea! Do you really think it could work?

SYLVIA:

Absolutely.

MILDRED:

I mean, we are professionals.

GERTRUDE:

It's what we do!

BERNARD:

Wow, I can't thank you enough! And I have always wanted to try acting. What do we do first?

MILDRED:

Oh, leave the technical stuff to us.

SYLVIA:

Tonight go home and pretend everything is natural. Tell your dad that in one week you will fulfill your legacy, but really you'll just be rehearsing with us.

BERNARD:

This is so amazing.

MILDRED:

Meet us back here tomorrow and we'll have a script ready.

GERTRUDE:

Now go! Get some sleep, you have a big day tomorrow.

BERNARD:

I will! And thank you all again!

ALL PIGS:

GO!

(He waves and runs away. The sisters all smile at each other and run off in the other direction to start planning.)

4: THE LIE

(The STAGE MANAGER enters.)

STAGE MANAGER:

And so a plan was afoot. Bernard rushed home to tell his dad and brother the big news.

(BERNARD runs in.)

BERNARD:

Dad! Zack! DAD! ZACK! I have news!!

(DAD and ZACK run on.)

ZACK:

What's going on?

DAD:

What is it, son?

BERNARD:

I'm going to do it.

ZACK:

You mean -

DAD:

You're telling me -

BERNARD:

That's right! I'm going to continue our family's legacy.

DAD:

You're serious?

BERNARD:

I'm going to blow down some pigs' houses.

DAD:

Ha ha! That's my boy!

ZACK:

Wow...what changed your mind?

BERNARD:

I went for a walk and was struck with sudden inspiration. Three times, actually.

ZACK:

What do you - ?

DAD:

Who cares how it happened? The point is that Bernard is finally going to fulfill his destiny! Do you know how many doors this is going to open up? You're going to make this family so proud, son. You're going to make *me* so proud.

(He gives BERNARD a rough pat on the back and exits.)

ZACK:

So. You're really going to - ?

BERNARD:

Yup. Dad will see what he's always wanted. Everybody wins.

ZACK:

Yeah, but you don't -

BERNARD:

Look, I can't talk now, I have to get up super early for, y'know, training. I should really hit the hay.

ZACK:

Do you want me to come help you? I can show you some of my favorite -

BERNARD:

That's ok, I've got it.

ZACK:

Oh. You sure? It's really no prob -

BERNARD:

Yup! Thanks anyway.

(And he is off to his room.)

ZACK:

Yeah, yeah no problem.

BERNARD (offstage):

'Night, Zack!

ZACK:

'Night Bernard.

(BERNARD exits. Music plays.)

*There was a time when I was the strong one
When I was on top
They looked at me like I was a champion
That couldn't be stopped*

*Now my baby brother's growing up
And going off on his own
Who's there for me when I am alone?*

*I was always ready for the test
I thought I couldn't fail
They said that I could be the best
That I'd surely prevail*

*Now my baby brother's growing up
And going off on his own
Who's there for me when I am alone?*

BERNARD (offstage):

Zack, can you turn your music down?

ZACK:

Oh! Yeah. Sure, buddy. Sorry.

BERNARD (offstage):

Whatever.

(ZACK sings quieter.)

ZACK:

Who's there for me when I am alone?

(The Wolf household fades into night.)

5: REHEARSAL BLUES PART 2

(The theater's rehearsal space: GERTRUDE, BERNARD, and three ACTORS playing the three PIGS stand on stage with scripts.)

GERTRUDE:

From the top!

BERNARD:

(Not acting very well.)

Little pig, little pig let me in!

PIG 1:

Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!

(PIG 1 stops the scene.)

Ok, I have a question.

GERTRUDE:

Ok hold, everyone! What's up?

PIG 1:

I have an issue with this dialogue.

GERTRUDE:

Ok.

PIG 1:

Well, it's just - this isn't how people talk.

PIG 2:

Yeah, I mean 'chinny-chin-chin' sounds weird. Why not just say like... "oh no you won't!" You know?

PIG 3:

I appreciate the stylized nature of the piece, but I don't think that's what we're going for, is it? Correct me if I'm wrong.

GERTRUDE:

Do you all feel this way?

(They all nod. She turns to BERNARD.)

BERNARD:

Well, I think -

PIG 1:

Absolutely.

PIG 2:

For sure.

PIG 3:

No doubt.

(GERTRUDE sighs.)

GERTRUDE:

Fine, we'll do some rewrites. Everybody take five! I need a seltzer.

(She exits. The PIG actors go offstage and BERNARD doesn't notice.)

BERNARD:

This is pretty neat, huh? I mean, I've never acted before. Do y'all do this all time, or - ?

(He finally notices they are gone.)

Ok. I'll just be over here...

(BERNARD goes off to the opposite side of the stage and starts studying his script. MILDRED enters with a weird pile of stuff that is the vague shape of a wolf.)

BERNARD:

Oh, hi Mildred!

MILDRED:

Hey! How's rehearsal going?

BERNARD:

It's ok. I'm not sure if I'm doing a very good job -

MILDRED:

I'm sure you're great!

BERNARD:

Well we'll see. What do you have there?

MILDRED:

Oh! I started the body for the you-puppet!

BERNARD:

The - ?

MILDRED:

For the end! When you get down the chimney?

BERNARD:

(Flipping through the script.)

Oh, I didn't know there was - yeah, right, right of course at the end. You know, I had some concerns about that part actually -

MILDRED:

Well, I've got some hot gluing to do - have fun!

BERNARD:

But I -

(She exits. BERNARD sighs. SYLVIA enters furiously scribbling on her scratch pad.)

BERNARD:

Hey, Sylvia! How's the - ?

SYLVIA:

No time to talk! We have three structures to build and I need to make sure these dimensions are correct.

BERNARD:

But I -

SYLVIA:

Don't worry about it, I've got it handled. I just talked to Gertrude about her new idea and it's going to be *epic*!

(She exits.)

BERNARD:

Wait, what does that mean, her new - ? Aaand she's gone...

(BERNARD sighs and goes back to his script, making a ton of notes. GERTRUDE returns with a lot of energy.)

GERTRUDE:

All right, everyone we're back, gather around.

(The PIGS reenter.)

Are we all here? Fantastic. OK! So I had a very productive five minutes and I have a great new idea for this play. I'm thinking we throw this script out entirely and just go with our instincts.

(A dramatic pause. BERNARD slowly raises his hand to ask a question.)

That's right! We're starting from scratch. All of our cues are going to come from Bernard and his experiences.

(The PIG actors excitedly whisper to each other. BERNARD shakes his raised hand.)

Yes, Bernard?

BERNARD:

So, sorry I just want to clarify - do you want *me* to lead this?

GERTRUDE:

Well, I'll be supervising, but yes. This is *your* story after all.

BERNARD:

Oh don't know if I -

GERTRUDE:

Sure you can! Look, I know it's scary, but we're all in this together. We are going to make the most believable story and make your dad think you're a true hero.

BERNARD:

No pressure...

GERTRUDE:

Don't worry! We all believe in you. Don't we?

(Everyone voices their agreement and encouragement.)

Then let's get to work!

(Ominous music begins to play and a spotlight appears on BERNARD.)

BERNARD:

Oh boy...

6: FOUND OUT

(BERNARD is alone in the woods looking over his lines. He is highlighting way too many things on the page. Suddenly ZACK appears and sneaks up behind BERNARD.)

ZACK:

Hey, buddy -

BERNARD:

OH NO!!

(He flings his papers in the air.)

ZACK:

Calm down, buddy, it's just me!

BERNARD:

Zack! Oh boy, you (scared me) - what are you doing here?

ZACK:

Well, I was just coming to see if you'd change your mind about letting me help you train.

BERNARD:

Oh...oh wow...

ZACK:

I know! Look, I know this isn't easy -

(BERNARD is making a feeble and awkward attempt to hide his script.)

- and I know what a big deal this decision was for you -

(BERNARD keeps losing pages. It's just so hard to watch.)

Do, uh...you need help there?

BERNARD:

What!? No, I got it!

ZACK:

It's ok, I got it -

(ZACK grabs a few pages from the ground.)

BERNARD:

No, Zack, really - !

ZACK:

Oh, is this your training regimen?

BERNARD:

Uhhh - something like that? So if you could just -

(He swipes at it, but ZACK moves away.)

ZACK:

It's really good to have it all written down, you know, you want to make sure you're hitting all the necessary target areas. Now let's see what you're doing. Maybe we have some overlap!

(He starts to read. BERNARD looks like he's about to pass out.)

BERNARD:

Zack don't!

ZACK:

"Little pig, little pig, let me in..." Oh, is this, like a mantra?

(BERNARD can't speak. He just does a weird, flailing motion.)

"The puppet then goes down the chimney..." Wait, what is this?

(BERNARD is frozen. This is the moment he was dreading. He takes a deep breath. It's over. Time to confess.)

BERNARD:

It's...my script.

ZACK:

Script? What do you mean? Oh! Like you want to make sure you say something cool in the moment so you - ?

BERNARD:

No, no. I - I'm staging it.

(ZACK isn't getting it.)

It's a play, Zack. I'm in a play to - to fool Dad. I'm going to make it look like I actually did it, but really I'm just a part of a very carefully staged sham.

(Long pause as ZACK takes this in.)

ZACK:

So you - you're not really doing it?

(BERNARD shakes his head.)

And you created this elaborate way of convincing Dad that you *did* do it?

(BERNARD nods.)

And you - you didn't tell me about it?

BERNARD:

How could I tell you? It's impossible to talk to you, Zack!

ZACK:

What? We talk all the time!

BERNARD:

Not about the real stuff though. Just about how I should, like, smush down my feelings and pretend that I am fine with being a part of a legacy that, honestly, is pretty problematic!

ZACK:

...

BERNARD:

All that talk of our family's "glory" and "legacy"... Like, like, like, just because it's in our history doesn't mean we need to, I dunno, *do it*.

(ZACK isn't sure what to say.)

BERNARD:

Look, I know you worked really hard to -

(He indicates ZACK's cast.)

I just can't do it. And if I have to put on a play to make it through this then I will. So.

(A pause as this all sinks in.)

ZACK:

I, um...I'm sorry.

BERNARD:

Sorry, what now?

ZACK:

I'm sorry. I - yeah, I should've been there for you. Like, really there.

BERNARD:

Oh, I - yeah, thanks for saying that.

ZACK:

And I know you can't think much of me for, y'know...

BERNARD:

What? No I - I know you were just doing what you thought was right. It's just...I'm not that strong.

ZACK:

Are you kidding me? You did all of this! You created this -

(Reading from the script.)

"Have it your way!" That's a great line, bro! You are your own kind of strong.

BERNARD:

Wow, I - I don't know what to say.

ZACK:

You don't have to say anything, little bro. Look, if this is what you want to do, I support you one hundred and eighty-five percent. I just wish there was a way I could help.

BERNARD:

Yeah, I...

(He gets an idea!)

You know, I think there might be.

(ZACK looks confused, but BERNARD is very excited. He whispers a plan in his ear; ZACK looks intrigued, but unsure. BERNARD laughs and beckons ZACK to follow him offstage.)

7: THE BIG SHOW

(Colorful lights flash all around and chaos fills the stage. Tech week has begun! ACTORS rush in and out carrying costumes, props, and set pieces. The STAGE MANAGER stands center.)

STAGE MANAGER:

It's my time to shine!

(The STAGE MANAGER joins the chaos.)

All right, people! It's Tech Week and you know what that means: we have exactly three days to get this show up, running, and super convincing, so I need everybody to stay on your toes and please, for the sake of my sanity read the notes you are given!

(Music plays. While the song happens BERNARD paces with his script while people measure him for costumes, show him plans, and move him around like he's a puppet.)

ACTORS:

*We've been hard at work for three whole days
And we have made a brand new play
'Cause theater magic happens when nobody's looking*

*We threw the last play to the dust
Made a whole new story just for us
'Cause theater magic happens when nobody's looking*

*Everything will be ok
We open a day from today
We'll show our friend Bernard the way
And make this an amazing play
'Cause theatre magic happens when nobody's looking!*

(The stage clears. The STAGE MANAGER comes out with a grand flourish.)

STAGE MANAGER:

Members of the 3LP Theater Company: it's opening night!

(BERNARD comes on with a paper bag and is breathing deeply into it.)

Hey, buddy are you all right?

BERNARD:

(Talking into the bag.)

Oh, me? I'm great. I'm fine. Everything is awesome.

(He is not doing great or fine or awesome.)

STAGE MANAGER:

Are you sure? You seem a bit, uh...*nervous*.

BERNARD:

Ok, ok I am nervous. I have a horrible feeling that this is going to be a disaster!

STAGE MANAGER:

What makes you say that?

BERNARD:

I don't know, I just...this all feels wrong.

STAGE MANAGER:

If it feels wrong then why are you doing it?

BERNARD:

What? I mean - no, not wrong, just weird.

STAGE MANAGER:

Ok, how is it weird then?

BERNARD:

I don't know, I can't explain it. It's probably just nerves anyway. I mean it is my first time acting.

STAGE MANAGER:

Would you like some advice?

BERNARD:

Oh gosh, yes please.

STAGE MANAGER:

Take three deep breaths.

BERNARD:

That's it?

STAGE MANAGER:

Yup. Take three deep breaths and it will clear your head. Then you'll know what to do.

BERNARD:

Three deep breaths. Ok, I'll try it.

(The STAGE MANAGER pats him on the shoulder and exits. SYLVIA, GERTRUDE, and MILDRED enter.)

SYLVIA:

Hey, there you are!

MILDRED:

It's the big night, are you ready?

BERNARD:

Oh! Oh, sure. Yeah. Totally.

GERTRUDE:

It's ok to be nervous.

SYLVIA:

Totally! No matter what, we have everything under control.

MILDRED:

And everything looks great! You're going to be amazing.

GERTRUDE:

Absolutely. We're so excited for you.

SYLVIA:

And us.

(GERTRUDE gives her a look.)

SYLVIA (contd.):

What? If we pull this off this is a huge deal for our company! *Huge!* Probably the biggest we've ever -

GERTRUDE:

Not. Helping.

(BERNARD starts breathing into the bag again.)

SYLVIA:

Ah, right. Sorry.

MILDRED:

Don't worry, Bernard. We're here for you.

GERTRUDE:

Now go take your place! It's almost time.

(He nods his head and exits, still breathing into the bag.)

SYLVIA:

Oh boy.

MILDRED:

He'll be ok, won't he?

GERTRUDE:

Let's hope so.

(They all give each other a nervous look and exit. From the aisle DAD and ZACK enter and look for places to sit. Someone hands them each a program.)

ZACK:

Wow, there are a lot of people here...

DAD:

He must have been getting the word out!

ZACK:

Apparently. Are those programs - ?

DAD:

You know, I never like to admit this, but I was a late bloomer, too. I don't know why I was so worried about Bernard, it should have been obvious! He's just like me!

ZACK:

But I thought I was just like -

DAD:

Ssh! It's starting!

(The lights go out and come up on BERNARD center stage. He is terrified and can't hide it. From offstage GERTRUDE whispers his line.)

GERTRUDE:

“Good evening -”

BERNARD:

GOOD EVENING EVERYONE! Uh...the time has come for me to fulfill my destiny. Here on this stage -

GERTRUDE:

Field!

BERNARD:

Oh, right! Uh...here on this *field* I intend to do just that. Look! In the distance!

(The shadow screen lights up and three houses appear. Music plays. In this section BERNARD finally begins to hit his stride.)

See these three unknowing pigs, asleep and content in their peaceful lives! See the power of the wolf in the shadows as I turn their world upside down! Stay in your seats, for I must be able to take them by surprise!

(He disappears behind the screen. Several ensemble members planted in the audience murmur about how amazing BERNARD is.)

DAD:

He’s certainly committed to the theatricality of this, isn’t he?

ZACK:

Yeah, heh, theatricality...

(BERNARD’s shadow appears behind the screen. We hear him knock on a door.)

BERNARD:

Excuse me, I am a poor and hungry traveller. Might I come in and warm myself on your hearth for the night?

FIG 1:

Are you kidding? You’re a wolf! I wouldn’t let you in if you paid me!

BERNARD:

Have it your way then.

(He takes three big breaths and blows the house away. DAD cheers. We see the shadow of a pig run to the next house. BERNARD knocks on the second door.)

BERNARD:

Excuse me, I am a poor and hungry traveller. Might I come in and warm myself on your hearth for the night?

PIG 2:

Yeah right! My neighbor just told me about your game. There's no way I'm letting you in!

BERNARD:

Have it your way, then!

(He takes another three big breaths and blows the house away. DAD cheers again, even louder. The shadows of two pigs run to the third and final house. BERNARD knocks on the door.)

BERNARD:

I know you're all in there, so there's no point in lying. Open the door.

PIG 3:

Are you serious!? No way!

BERNARD:

Let. Me. In.

ALL PIGS:

NO WAY!!

BERNARD:

HAVE IT YOUR WAY!!

(Again he takes three deep breaths and blows, but this time the house doesn't blow down. The PIGS laugh.)

What's happening!?

PIG 1:

Stupid wolf!

PIG 2:

There is no way you can blow this house down!

PIG 3:

This house is made of brick!

ALL PIGS:

You can't blow down brick!

BERNARD:

No...I guess I can't.

DAD:

Oh, come on Bernard, think! You can't just give -

(But BERNARD is already climbing up the side of the house.)

Oh! OH! Look at him go!!

ZACK:

No, no wait, Bernard - !

DAD:

GO BERNARD, GO!!

ZACK:

It's not safe! Turn back!! BERNARD!!

(He disappears down the chimney. We hear a splash, a yowl, and three PIGS laughing. The music stops. The ensemble breaks into wild applause.)

ZACK:

BERNARD!! NO!! BERNARD!!

DAD:

Wait...what happened? Did he get them?

(ZACK starts crying.)

No...NO!

(He howls.)

I shouldn't have pushed him! I shouldn't have tried to make him do all of this, he was such a special boy, he -

(ZACK starts laughing.)

Are you laughing!? What is wrong with you!?

ZACK:

Dad, look.

(He does. BERNARD is standing on stage.)

DAD:

What - ?

BERNARD:

Hey, dad.

DAD:

What's going on!? I thought you - did you know about this?

ZACK:

It took me a while to get it out of him, but yeah.

DAD:

Why would you do this?

BERNARD:

Because you wouldn't listen to me.

DAD:

How did you - ?

BERNARD:

Dad, Zack I'd like for you to meet the founders of the 3LP Theater Company. Gertrude, Mildred, and Sylvia. They helped me stage this.

GERTRUDE:

Hello.

MILDRED:

Hi, there!

SYLVIA:

Pleased to meet you, please don't eat us.

GERTRUDE:

Sylvia.

SYLVIA:

Sorry...

DAD:

So this was...a play?

BERNARD:

Yeah. It turns out I really like theatre.

(DAD is speechless.)

Look, I'm not like you, but that doesn't mean I turned out wrong. I want you to be proud of me, but I want to be happy. And you really need to ease up on Zack, too.

ZACK:

Hey, I got it, little bro.

(To DAD.)

I guess...I found out that sometimes, y'know, I just need someone to listen to me, too. That's all.

BERNARD:

So? What do you say?

DAD:

I - well, this is a lot to take in and I'm not really sure I understand all of it, but...if this makes you happy, Bernard...you know, I used to like to write stories when I was younger.

ZACK & BERNARD:

You did!?

DAD:

My dad was really hard on me, always pushing and pushing for me to be stronger and fiercer, to live up to our legacy. All I wanted to do was make him proud.

BERNARD:

So you gave up what made you happy?

DAD:

I don't want to do that to you, Bernard. Or you, Zack. I'm so sorry. I know we still have some work to do, but -

ZACK:

It's ok, Dad.

BERNARD:

Yeah. Thanks, Dad.

(They all hug.)

And these three! I can't thank you enough for all you did for me.

GERTRUDE:

Oh, we were so happy to help!

SYLVIA:

This was amazing for us, too.

MILDRED:

You helped us, too, Bernard! You got us to actually *listen* to each other! That in and of itself is a miracle. I think it's safe to say you are welcome back to 3LP any time you want. Isn't he?

GERTRUDE & SYLVIA:

Absolutely! Without a doubt!

(They all join the hug. The STAGE MANAGER enters and clears their throat.)

STAGE MANAGER:

Um, not to interrupt this beautiful moment, but we have a finale to do.

SYLVIA:

Oh gosh!

MILDRED:

How could we forget!?

GERTRUDE:

To your places!

BERNARD:

Dad, can I - ?

DAD:

Go for it.

BERNARD:

Come on, Zack!

ZACK:

Me?

BERNARD:

Duh! Get up here!

(Everyone gathers on stage for the curtain call.)

ALL:

*So many hours of time and of patience
So many tears, joy, and strife
This is the thing that we still love to do
This is a part of our life*

*So many times we just wanted to quit
But the joy would still come shining through
We make up stories that touch people's hearts
And we do it all for all of you*

*Everything will be ok
'Cause we performed a play today
We hope you all enjoyed your stay
You know what we're about to say...Say it with us!
Theatre magic happens when nobody's looking!*

(Blackout! Raucous applause! From the dark we hear the voice of the Stage Manager.)

STAGE MANAGER:

All right, that's it! It's over. Thank you! Go home! GOODBYE!

(The end!)