**John, Raymond**(Peter, Willie)

**Scene 4**

*Two more "boys" appear through the trees. They are* JOHN *and, in cowboy hat and gun-belt,* RAYMOND.

**JOHN** What's up in thik tree, then?  
**WILLIE** How be, John. Hello, Raymond.  
**RAYMOND** *(grinning)* How b-be.

RAYMOND *is almost always grinning. But, alas, he also stutters.*

**PETER** We got us a squirrel, John.  
**JOHN** *(delighted)* Have ya? Honest?

**RAYMOND** *(excitedly)* Wh-Where? Where? *(He pulls out his lead pistol)*

**WILLIE** Him's *trapped* up there. Good—ennit! We have really got him!

**JOHN** *(peering up)* Ah, but how are you going to get him down? You bent going to get him down. Him'll never come down from there. You tell me how you are going to get him down.

*But* RAYMOND *has been working his face.*

**RAYMOND** P-P-Poor littool devil.

**PETER** *(to* JOHN) Throw stones, o' course. Knock him down. That'll do't.

**JOHN** *(sniffing)* Be better to climb up. You tell me how you are going to get him down.

**WILLIE** Don't keep on.

**PETER** *(jeering)* Who's going to climb up there! Break your neck. Aaaaaaa—crack! Just like that, loony!

**JOHN** Wallace Wilson ‘ood. Him ‘ood goo up there. Like a shot.

**RAYMOND** W-Why don't we l-l-lul-leave it al-lul-lone—? PETER Hark at him!

**JOHN and WILLIE** *(singing together)* WHEN THE MUM-MOON SHINES *(singing together)*

ON THE CUE… COWSHED...

RAYMOND's *smile wavers. They peer up into the tree again.*

**WILLIE** I reckon we ought to catch him alive. Put him on show. Be the start of a circus. No—it ood, though. Wouldn't it?

**JOHN** *(the sceptic)* How do we know him's still up there? You tell me that. I con't see nothing. Him ent up there.

**PETER** That's where him is, all right. Look! See!

PETER *aims with his forefinger and makes a gun noise. This, in turn, triggers off the other three. Whooping and yelling and letting off "gunfire" they hop and dance round and round the tree.*

**Scene 6**

**PETER, JOHN, WILLIE** *and* **RAYMOND** *immediately close up around the squirrel, frenziedly kicking at it with their large, hob-nailed, toe-scuffed boots. As they kill the squirrel they giggle and grunt and gasp with shocked awe and excitement. The violent activity stops, abruptly. They stand off a bit, looking at each other guiltily. The wind shifts and sighs in the big old oak.*

*A feeling of murder.*

**RAYMOND** *(eventually)* Is—is him d-dud-dead?

**PETER** Oy. 'Course him is. Deader than dead.

**JOHN** *(awed)* Him couldn't live through that.

*Pause.*

**RAYMOND** *(bleakly)* D-Dud-Dead.

**JOHN** *shifts from, foot to foot.*

**JOHN** They don't half sink their teeth in, mind. When they get the chance.

We *had* to do it. *(He swallow&* Didn't us?

**WILLIE** We bent going to cut his tail off, be us*?*

*They look at each other, uncertain.*

**PETER** Anybody got a knife?

**JOHN** Raymond have. A proper 'un.

**PETER** Have ya, Ray?

**RAYMOND** *(proudly)* 'S *army* knife. C-c-c— *(But it takes too long)*

**JOHN** Yeh?  
**PETER** Yeh!

*They are toe to toe, but each is unsure enough of the other not to be too eager to put it to the test. Pause.*

**JOHN** *(none too confident)* Yeh?

**PETER** Ah! Shut up! *(And he turns away)* WILLIE Wish I had a knife. My dad won't let me.

**RAYMOND** Oh, them be v-vuv-very useful.

**WILLIE** *(sighing)* I could do with me a good sharp knife. By God I could.

**PETER** Wos want for'n, Raymond old pal? I be good with a knife. *(He makes a throwing gesture)* Clunk!

**RAYMOND** N-Nothing.

**JOHN** Him daren't swap thik knife. All him d'do is clean it and sharpen it and clean it and sharpen it.

**WILLIE** Let's have a look, Ray. Come on.

**RAYMOND** No!

**JOHN** What's up?

**PETER** Why not?

RAYMOND *points to the dead squirrel.***RAYMOND** You'll c-cu-cut off his t-t-t...

*But instead of getting the word out he bursts into tears. They all look at the squirrel again. Pause.* WILLIE, *now, is also close to tears.*

**JOHN** I wish we—

**PETER** Ah, shut up.

**WILLIE** *(upset)* No—I wish we hadn't—you know...

**JOHN** And me.

**PETER** They be *savage,* bent 'urn?

**JOHN** I don't fancy cutting off his tail, though. It's all gristle and stuff, any road.

**WILLIE** *(sucking in his breath)* I bent touching him!

**PETER** *(disgusted)* Great babbies. I’ll twist it off, then.

**WILLIE** The blood won't half gush out, mind. All over you.

**JOHN** Like when our dog got knocked down.

**RAYMOND** P-Pup-Poor old R-Rover.

**WILLIE** Nice dog, wasn't he?

**JOHN** I'd rather get some jam jars, meself. 'Tent bad money a'ter all, is it?

Penny back on a two-pound jar.

**RAYMOND** Let's 1-lul-look for some. Eh?

**PETER** There ent none to be had. They've all been found, what there is. I've looked all over.

**WILLIE** Donald Duck got hold of some.  
**JOHN** *(interested)* Did he, Willie?

**WILLIE** Him had a whole sackful yesterday. I saw 'em. *(He giggles)* Donald oodn't show I what was in the bag till I said I'd kick his head in.

**JOHN** Little weed, ent he?

**PETER** A cry baby.

**JOHN** One punch and him'll give in. One punch that's all.

**PETER** *(flapping his arms)* Quack! Quack! Quack!

*They all laugh.*

**WILLIE** Him have got hold of a box of matches an' all. **PETER** *(very interested)* Have `a?

**JOHN** He goes through his mam's handbag.  
**PETER** No wonder her d'knock him about.  
**RAYMOND** P-Pup-Poor D-Donald.

**PETER** *(jeering)* Him do ask for it! He set light to their coal shed, didn't he!

**WILLIE** Only when his mam shut him up in it, though.

**JOHN** Our mam says her's a bit of a thing.

**PETER** How'smean?

**JOHN I** dunno. Something to do with the sheets.

**WILLIE** What?

**JOHN I** dunno. Our mam said them bed sheets could tell a pretty tale.

**WILLIE** Perhaps her do wet the bed. Eh?

*Sniggers all round.*

**PETER** Let's go and find him. Donald Duck. And have a bit o' fun.

**JOHN** Oy. And find out about them jam jars. Where do him get 'ern?

**PETER** Make him tell us.

**JOHN** Oy!

**PETER** *(gleefully)* Give him a Chinese burn.

**RAYMOND** That d-dud-do hurt, mind!

*They roar with laughter. But then, somehow, look at the dead squirrel and fall silent.*