Horatio and the Handbag

Original Script by Rob Smith

Introduction

Sergei Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf was commissioned to "cultivate musical tastes in children from the first years of school" and it has been doing that very successfully all over the world since 1936. However here in the Territory, there is something of a disconnect. The setting for 'Peter and the Wolf', and Prokofiev's childhood is the rolling green meadows and birch forests of what is now Eastern Ukraine.

It is hard to imagine a place more foreign to a kid growing up in Mataranka, Manangrida or Malak, than early 1900's Eastern Europe - so while doffing our caps respectfully to old Sergei, we decided there needed to be a bit of a tweak to the tale to give it some Territory relevance.

So picture if you will a 10 acre block just outside Humpty Doo, the back portion of which is a paperbark swamp.
A cosy dongha comprising 2 converted shipping containers joined with a corrugated iron awning is surrounded by sprawling African Mahoganies.
The block is littered with tray back Landcruisers in various states of mechanical disarray.

The resident? Grandad – a crotchety old Humpty-Doo-an with a passion for pinging feral cats and making hats out of them, and his grandson Horatio – a regulation Territorian , Humpty-Doo-an, lad.

So there we go - The scene is RE-set, for Horatio and the Handbag.

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(***Horatio and the Handbag Master, Start)***

Each character in this Territory tale has a musical theme played by a different instrument.

The Azure Kingfisher is represented by the Flute

(*The flute plays*)

The Magpie Goose's theme is played by the Oboe

(*The oboe plays*)

The Feral Cat is represented by the Clarinet

(*The clarinet plays)*

Grandad is played by the Bassoon

(*The bassoon plays)*

The villain of the piece – our friend the Handbag, a big Saltwater Crocodile – is heralded by the French horns.

(*French horns play)*

A pack of bush bashing, quad bike riding pig hunters,

firing their rifles, are the timpani and big bass drum.

(Timpani and bass drum plays)

And finally – our hero – Horatio of Humpty Doo is represented by the strings.

(Strings play)

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Now are you mob all sitting comfortably? Then let us begin.

Early one sunny sticky build up morning, Horatio opened the gate and walked down the back towards the paper bark swamp.

(Horatio's theme- strings)

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Give her some mud to wallow in and she was happy as a pig in ... well … she was happy as a Goose in goop!

(Magpie Goose theme- oboe)

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Seeing the Goose, the Kingfisher flew down and settled on a branch – careful to ensure he was well out of splashing range.

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"What kind of bird are you? Covered in mud and with that cacophonous call – you’re a disgrace to all Bird-dom!”

"Get lost!” the goose replied, and with that, dove her head into the boggy muck.

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They Squarked and Skworked back and forth,
“needle nosed pipsqueak!”,

“Lumbering pile of poultry! ”

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While this was going on - a big, battle-battered feral cat came slinking out of the long grass.

(Feral cat theme- clarinet)

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itself outta the lilies at ya?

(Grandad's theme- bassoon)

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She flapped and honked and flailed as she scrambled over the swampy ground.

But the huge Croc gained on her - closer … closer … right behind her ..

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But the Kingfisher was lightning fast and no matter how hard he tried, the furious, frustrated Handbag never looked like laying a lip on him.

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They whooped and hollered and fired rifle rounds randomly in the air.

(Pig hunter's theme- timpani and bass drum)

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"Don't shoot!" Horatio shouted triumphantly from the tree. "Me and me legendary mate the bird got it all under control."

"What about you mob just give us a hand gettin' the brute to Crocodylus?"

And so, you can imagine …the triumphant procession down the Arnhem Highway:

Horatio at the head – proudly, if somewhat illegally driving Grandad's favourite Land cruiser.

Just behind him, the piggers, riding line abreast

… with the tightly trussed Handbag straddling the trays of all four Quads.

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Bringing up the tail -– Grandad – who muttered to himself

"Who would've thought, eh?"

Above them flew the Kingfisher chirping cockily.

“Horatio and I are dead set legends! Have a look at the size of that Handbag we hobbled!”

Now, if you listen very carefully, you might even hear the goose honking forlornly inside the Handbag, because the greedy guts had actually swallowed her…alive!

But personally - I find that a bit hard to believe … Because everybody knows - ***nothing*** survives getting chomped by a 15 foot snapping Handbag!