

## Connor and the Duck

Connor took his oboe out of the case. He changed the reed and got ready for orchestra practice. Today Mrs. Abed was going to tell them about their next performance piece. Connor knew it was going to be something special, because they were planning to perform it for the elementary school kids. Connor's sister was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She couldn't wait for him and his friends to come play.

Mrs. Abed announced that the new piece would be *Peter and the Wolf*. Connor remembered listening to that when *he* was in elementary school. Now he'd be playing it. Mrs. Abed shared some information about the piece. "It's a symphonic folktale," she said. "A story told through orchestral music. It was written by the Russian composer Prokofiev. The goal is to introduce students to individual instruments in the orchestra."

Connor wondered how the piece would teach about instruments. Mrs. Abed explained that each character in the story was played by a different instrument. For example, the cat was played by the clarinet and the grandfather was played by the bassoon. The kettle drums were the hunters. Connor played the oboe. He would be the duck.

By listening carefully to the music, Mrs. Abed explained, the younger kids would learn to recognize the sounds of each instrument. They could

follow the story through the music. Connor suddenly remembered something about the story. The duck is eaten by the wolf at the end! He wasn't sure how he felt about this. "Why is the oboe the duck?" he asked Mrs. Abed.

"Remember when you were first playing?" asked Mrs. Abed. "I bet you squeaked sometimes. Oboes can be smooth or shrill. Some people say they honk just like a duck." Connor felt a little bit insulted by this. But he was also a little bit relieved. If he squeaked it wouldn't matter so much.

But Connor didn't want to squeak if he could help it. He wanted to make his sister proud. So he took the music from Mrs. Abed and started to practice.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What part does the bassoon play in *Peter and the Wolf*?
  - a. The duck
  - b. The hunters
  - c. The cat
  - d. The grandfather
  
2. What is the definition of a symphonic tale?
  - a. A piece of orchestral music
  - b. A story told through orchestral music
  - c. A story told through pictures
  - d. An interpretive dance
  
3. What is Connor unsure about?
  - a. That the duck gets eaten by the wolf
  - b. That the oboe plays the duck
  - c. That the clarinet plays the cat
  - d. That it was written by a Russian composer
  
4. How do you think Connor's sister feels about Connor playing at her school?
  - a. Embarrassed
  - b. Surprised
  - c. Proud and excited
  - d. Nervous and upset

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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