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## **Family Plays**

# THE PRINCE THE WOLF AND THE FIREBIRD

A PLAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by

JACKSON LACEY



# THE PRINCE THE WOLF AND THE FIREBIRD

Developed at London's Unicorn Theatre for Young People, this two-act play draws from one of the tales of Old Russia.

***Fairy tale. By Jackson Lacey. Cast: 7m., 4w., 6 either gender, plus extras.*** Golden apples are being stolen from the garden of the King of Kiev. He sets his three sons, Prince Dimitri, Prince Vasili, and Prince Ivan, on a quest to find the thief. Dangerous adventures and romance follow, but all is at risk but for a promise kept by the youngest, Prince Ivan—and the fantastic firebird. *Multiple scenes and special effects. Code: PF6.*

## Family Plays

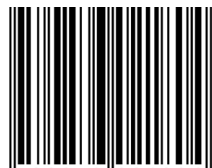
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The Prince the Wolf  
and the Firebird

***The Prince***  
***The Wolf and the Firebird***

*A Play for Young People*

By  
**JACKSON LACEY**

**Family Plays**  
311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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# *The Prince*

## *The Wolf and the Firebird*

### CAST

PRINCE DIMITRI, Eldest Prince of Kiev

PRICE VASIL, Second Prince of Kiev, known as "Pig"

PRINCE IVAN, Youngest Prince of Kiev

PRIEST

ANYA, Servant at the court of Kiev

KING VYSLAV ANDRONOVICH, King of Kiev

THE FIREBIRD

DIMITRI'S HORSE

VASIL'S HORSE

NEDDY, Ivan's mule

PRINCESS KATATIANA HENYANOVNA MIMOUSHKA B. D., A Damsel

THE GREY WOLF

QUEEN DOLMATYA

KING AFRON VLADIMIR SVYATOPOLK

HONEY-BUN, King Afron's fabulous horse

PRINCESS YELENA

KING BORIS

FOUR GUARDS

THE PRINCE, THE WOLF, AND THE FIREBIRD was first presented by the Unicorn Theatre for Young People, at the Arts Theatre in London, England, 16 December, 1968. Following is a copy of the programme:

21st Anniversary Production  
The Unicorn Theatre Company

Presents

## *The Prince, The Wolf and The Firebird*

*by Jackson Lacey*

### Characters in Order of Appearance

PRINCE DIMITRI, eldest Prince of Kiev.....	Edward Arthur
PRINCE VASIL, second Prince of Kiev.....	Peter Corey
PRINCE IVAN, youngest Prince of Kiev.....	Laurence Keane
THE PRIEST.....	Henry Manning
ANYA.....	Gabrielle Hamilton
KING VYSLAV ANDRONOVICH, King of Kiev.....	Peter Bourne
THE FIREBIRD.....	Ursula Jones
PRINCE DIMITRI'S HORSE.....	Ian Stokes
PRINCE VASIL'S HORSE.....	Marc Ashley
NEDDY.....	Norman Lawless
PRINCESS KATATIANA HENYANOVNA POUSHKA	
MIMOUSKA B. D.....	Matyelok Gibbs
THE GREY WOLF.....	Henry Manning
QUEEN DOLMATYA.....	Gabrielle Hamilton
KING AFRON VLADIMIR SVYATOPOLK.....	Clive Elliott
HONEY-BUN, King Afron's fabulous beast.....	David Hannigan
PRINCESS YELENA.....	Rosemary Blake
KING BORIS.....	David Troughton
GUARDS.....	Norman Lawless David Hannigan
	Marc Ashley Patrick Swanson
	Ian Stokes David Troughton

The Play Directed by Caryl Jenner

The Play Designed by Pamela Howard

This play has the support of the Arts Council of Great Britain, under its scheme for the promotion of new drama, and the management has been given a limited guarantee against loss in respect of this production.



# *The Prince The Wolf and the Firebird*

## SCENES

THE PLAY IS SET IN RUSSIA ABOUT THE YEAR 980

### Act 1.

Scene 1. A room in King Vyslav's palace in Kiev.  
A morning in winter.

Scene 2. The Palace Garden. Late that night.

Scene 3. On the way East. Early next morning.

Scene 4. The Steppes. Afternoon.

Scene 5. On the way South.

Scene 6. Queen Dolmatya's Garden.

Scene 7. On the way West.

Scene 8. King Afron's Stables.

Interval of 20 minutes

### Act 2.

Scene 1. Outside King Boris's Palace in the North.

Scene 2. Princess Yelena's bedroom.

Scene 3. Outside King Afron's Palace.

Scene 4. King Afron's Palace.

Scene 5. On the way North.

Scene 6. King Vyslav's throne room.

Wherever "screen" is mentioned flying in or out, the scene is intended to be projected onto the screen by slides.

*The Prince, The Wolf, and the Firebird is set in Russia in the late tenth century, about the year 980. At that time Russia was not the large united country she is today, but was split into a series of little states, each with its own royal family, and its princes disputing one another's right to the throne. Kiev was such a state.*

*Since there is very little material available on tenth century Russia, the producer of this play is advised to use the simplest of basic sets, and costumes of coarse fabrics printed with primitive patterns, trimmed with fur or leather thonging. There are many reproductions of Firebirds, and in all cases the face is human. For this reason the faces of the Firebird and the Wolf should be kept free of feather and fur.*

*This play demands and achieves the individual imaginative and emotional participation of its audiences—the only form of participation which creates a true theatre experience that endures long after the performance is over. What lasts within each member of an audience, in its own particular way, becomes part of the inner growth of that human being.*

—Caryl Jenner  
London  
May, 1972

ACT ONE  
SCENE ONE

*(King Vyslav's Palace. Morning in Winter. Dimitri is seated at the table, sharpening a knife on a stone. Ivan is on the floor, with pots of paint and inks, doing scroll work. The Priest is at the window reading. Dimitri cuts himself some bread. Vasili or Pig enters and plonks himself down at the table—he takes Dimitri's slice of bread and thrusts it in his mouth. Dimitri shrugs and cuts himself another hunk).*

DIMITRI. Any luck?

FIG *(Disparagingly)*. Daaah.

*(Dimitri pours himself a drink. Pig takes it. Dimitri pours himself another).*

DIMITRI. See anything suspicious?

FIG. Nope.

IVAN *(Who has made a mistake)*. Ohoo!

DIMITRI *(Sweetly)*. Did you speak, little brother?

IVAN *(Abstractedly)*. No—

*(He makes another mistake).*

—tt — oh! Shh.

DIMITRI. That's what I love about Ivan, don't you, Vasili? He takes such an interest in the affairs of the country.

*(Pig stares blankly and realizes it's a joke—he tries his version of a laugh).*

I mean is there another Prince in the whole of Russia who'd lie about painting pictures round some old blah . . .

PRIEST *(Reproving)*. Prince Dimitri.

DIMITRI. Yes, Priest. As I was saying—round some old blah while everybody else . . .

PRIEST. Prince Dimitri, I must object.

DIMITRI. Do. *(Calling)*. Anya! Anya! Bring me some more bread.

PRIEST. Prince Ivan is not painting pictures round some old blah, he is decorating a piece of Holy Scripture.

IVAN *(Surprised)*. Is that what it is?

PRIEST. Of course it is—what else could it be?

IVAN. Well how was I to know, it's not written in Russian.

PRIEST. You've got quite far enough in your Greek lessons to be able to understand it.

*(Anya enters carrying more bread).*

ANYA. Did you say bread?

DIMITRI. What do you think I said?

ANYA. Ah-Ah! Temper. Do you need any more wine?

DIMITRI. No—there's lots here.

ANYA. Good. *(Going)*. Call if you need anything else and try to finish this meal before it's time for the next.

PIG *(Who has wandered over—still eating)*. What's that? A bear?

IVAN. No, a cloud.

PIG. Better if it was a bear, then that old man sitting on top could be a hunter who's just killed it.

IVAN. Yes, that's quite a good idea, Vasili. Look—if you put in an eye . . .

PRIEST *(Rushing over)*. It's not a good idea at all—it's nothing to do with the story—oh, what a mess! Really, Prince Vasili, I suggest you go to bed, you've been up all night and you must be extremely tired.

PIG. I'm having my breakfast.

PRIEST. Well then have it and stop interfering with your brother's painting.

DIMITRI. I think he should interfere. Why is Ivan allowed to lie about painting while Vasili and I risk life and limb doing as Father commands and trying to find out who's stealing . . .

*(There is an enraged howl from the garden below. Pig stops eating).*

That'll be Father.

*(Another sobbing shout).*

Dear me, he sounds as though something's gone wrong with him.

KING VYSLAV *(Off)*. Gone! Gone!

*(King Vyslav sweeps in. He wears splendid robes but they're all hitched up with something very akin to a gardening apron. He is crowned and carries a small bunch of Christmas roses and some primitive scissors. As he enters everyone rises).*

*(Terribly upset)*. Gone!

*(He falls over Ivan who is in the process of rising. The Priest and Dimitri pick him up. Pig eats).*

PRIEST. King Vyslav, let me help you.

DIMITRI. Clumsy, Ivan!

IVAN. Are you alright, Father?

VYSLAV. The roses! The roses!

*(Pushing them off).*

Oh, never mind me, are the roses alright?

PRIEST *(Handing roses)*. Quite unharmed, King Vyslav.

VYSLAV *(Grumpily)*. It's a miracle.

PRIEST *(Laughing delicately)*. Well not quite a miracle, sire. Let me explain, miracles are my department, you know . . .

VYSLAV. Do you perform them?

PRIEST *(Shocked)*. No, sire.

VYSLAV. Then how can you explain them? Ivan, either stand up or lie down when I come into a room, don't do both at once

*(Suddenly roaring with rage).*

or there is bound to be an accident!

IVAN. I'm sorry, Father.

VYSLAV. Winter roses can't stand accidents, Ivan.

PRIEST. Christmas roses, sire, and talking of Christmas may we go into the matter . . .

VYSLAV. Who's talking about Christmas?

PRIEST. Me, sire. The Cathedral . . .

VYSLAV. We haven't got a cathedral.

PRIEST. No, sire. That's the point.

VYSLAV *(Roaring again)*. Vasili! Where's Vasili?

DIMITRI. He's here, Father.

VYSLAV. Where? Ah!—Vasili. Now Vasili—

*(Pig continues eating but does glance at him with a stare).*

Did you watch the tree all night?

*(Pig mumbles with his mouth full).*

Stop eating when I'm talking to you!

PIG *(Honestly puzzled)*. Why?

VYSLAV. Because no one can understand you.

FIG. But if you're doing the talking they don't have to understand me, do they?

*(He laughs).*

VYSLAV. Ahhh!

*(He leaps into the air with fury).*

FIG *(Quickly)*. Yes, I did watch the tree all night, Father.

VYSLAV. You didn't fall asleep?

FIG. No.

VYSLAV. Not once? You're sure?

FIG. Quite sure.

VYSLAV. You didn't see anything? Nobody came into the garden?

FIG. Nothing—nobody, Father.

VYSLAV. Then how do you account for the fact that another golden apple has been stolen?

FIG. Has it?

*(To Dimitri).*

I didn't notice.

VYSLAV *(Sitting on the throne)*. He didn't notice.

DIMITRI. Tt, tt.

VYSLAV. What are you tutting about, Dimitri? You watched the whole of the night before and you 'didn't notice' another apple had gone either.

DIMITRI. Sorry, Father.

VYSLAV. Sorry! Six gone now, where's it going to end?

*(They all stare at him).*

Oh, I shall go mad—I know I shall.

*(Looks at them and emphasizes).*

I said I shall go mad.

*(Raging).*

Do something can't you? What's the point of having the place packed with Princes if they can't do a little thing like guard a tree of golden apples?

PRIEST. It's a curious thing . . .

VYSLAV *(Pointing rudely at the Priest)*. What is that?

DIMITRI. Manners, Father, that's the Priest.

VYSLAV. Oh is it—Staying long are you?

PRIEST. I've been here for two years, sire.

VYSLAV. Have you? Well—how's everything—

*(Searching for the name).*

um—God and so on . . . ?

PRIEST. Quite well, I hope, for your majesty's sake.

VYSLAV. Good—good. Well what have you got to say?

*(The Priest draws breath to answer but Vyslav continues).*

Something helpful, I hope. I mean this can't go on, apart from the fact that the garden—the most beautiful garden in the world—is being ruined—

*(He remembers the roses and sticks them into the breakfast wine).*

—the Kingdom will become . . .

DIMITRI. That's the wine, Father.

VYSLAV *(To the Priest)*. Fetch me some water.

*(The Priest exits).*

The Kingdom will become a laughing stock. The guards have failed. Two of my sons have failed—the court's talking—saying we can't manage. This family possesses the only tree with golden apples in the world, as far as we know, and if we can't look after them . . . why—the Kingdom was founded because of the tree. So whatever you're going to say, it had better be to the point . . . well?

DIMITRI. He's gone, Father.

VYSLAV. Why? *(Furious)*. Why? How dare he go when I'm talking to him.

DIMITRI. You sent him away.

VYSLAV. Did I? Oh—I am going mad. I know the whole business has driven me mad.

*(Babyishly).*

The apples are mine. People shouldn't be allowed to take them away from me.

IVAN. It's happened before.

FIG. How d'you know?

IVAN. The Priest told me—I think that's what he was going to say. It happened about a hundred years ago according to the records.

VYSLAV. Records? Have we records?

IVAN. A few.

VYSLAV. Have we? What happened? Did they catch the thief?

IVAN. No.

VYSLAV. I shall go mad!

IVAN. Seven apples were taken and then . . .

VYSLAV (*Shrieking*). Seven! I can't afford to lose seven. It'll be years before another seven grow. I shall be dead before another seven grow. The last one appeared the day you were born Ivan, do you remember?

FIG. 'Course he doesn't.

VYSLAV. Ugh! Be quiet. That's—how old are you, Ivan?

IVAN. Seventeen, Father.

VYSLAV. Seventeen years ago then, and if one grows every seventeen years it will take seven apples—what's seven seventeens?

IVAN. Um—seven sevens are forty . . .

VYSLAV (*Suddenly*). Seventeen!

IVAN. Shh. No, not seventeen—seven sevens are . . .

VYSLAV. Shh yourself. I mean you're seventeen.

IVAN. My head will burst if you talk while I am doing it, Father. Forty-nine and seven tens are . . .

VYSLAV. You're not a baby any more.

IVAN. Seventy. No, of course I'm not.

VYSLAV. Quite old enough.

IVAN. Seventy and forty-nine are . . .

(*He mutters to himself*).

VYSLAV. Prince Ivan of Kiev. I, King Vyslav Andronovich, your Father, Lord and Sovereign, command you to guard the golden apple tree tonight—all night until dawn—to catch and take the thief and to bring him before me alive or dead—whichever is easiest. If you succeed . . .

IVAN. A hundred and nineteen. Oh no, Father, I don't think that's a very good idea.

VYSLAV. I didn't ask you if you thought it was a good idea.

IVAN. But, Father, if Dimitri and Pig . . .

FIG (*Menacingly*). Pig?

IVAN. Oh, you know everyone calls you Pig. If they've failed . . .



FIG (*Pounding table*). Why?

IVAN. Why what?

FIG (*Pounding more*). Why does everyone call me Pig?

IVAN (*Considering it for the first time*). I've no idea. Perhaps it's because you're rather like one.

*(This is not intended to be rude, it is a scholarly assessment of the facts).*

If they've failed . . .

*(Pig gives a nasty snarl and grabs the bread knife).*

VYSLAV (*Alarmed and gleeful—hopping onto the table and gathering up his robes*). Whoops! There's going to be a fight!

DIMITRI (*Leaping aside*). I back Pig—I mean Vasili.

IVAN (*Getting out of Pig's way*). I'm unarmed.

FIG. Find something.

VYSLAV. Get him Pig—sorry—Vasili! Don't you dare hurt him badly though, he's on guard tonight.

IVAN. You know I hate fighting.

*(Ivan grabs the Holy Scriptures from the table behind him. Pig lunges with the knife and Ivan, using the Holy Scriptures as a bull-fighter would, baffles him).*

VYSLAV (*Surprised*). Well done, Ivan!

FIG (*Lunging again and baffled again*). Fight properly!

IVAN. I'm sorry, but this is the best I can do.

*(Pig lunges again but Ivan hurdles the table so Pig's knife pinions the roses).*

VYSLAV. Well done! Oh, my roses! You evil, hateful, heartless Pig. Get away from my poor defenseless roses.

FIG. I didn't mean . . .

VYSLAV (*Beside himself*). Ugh! Ugh!

*(Flapping at Pig).*

Get away. Get away. Get away, Pig! You're a Pig!

*(Cradling his roses).*

Oh where's that man with the water?

IVAN. If I could go on, Father, I'm trying to say that as the other two have failed—I'm bound to fail as well, you can see for yourself that fighting and catching people is not the sort of thing I'm good at.

DIMITRI. What are you good at, Ivan?

IVAN. Well, I . . . well—nothing really. So you see, Father, I'm bound to fail then you'll only bust another gut.

VYSLAV. Bust a gut!

IVAN. I mean . . .

VYSLAV. Prince Ivan.

IVAN. Sire.

VYSLAV. I command you to guard the golden apple tree tonight.

IVAN. Yes.

VYSLAV. If you succeed, I shall give you the same reward as I promised your brothers. Half my Kingdom now and the rest on my death.

IVAN (*Bitterly*). Oh, thanks very much.

VYSLAV (*Starting to go*). Now if I were you, I'd get in a little sword practice—I mean this thief may be a hundred years old but he's obviously pretty nippy on his pins—and, come to think of it, I'd have a chat with that new-fangled Priest man too—you never know it might even be a ghost.

(*He exits*).

IVAN. A ghost!

(*Hurrying after Vyslav*).

But, Father, ghosts are nothing to do with Princes. Father!

(*He exits*).

FIG (*Lugubriously imitating*). But, Father . . .

DIMITRI. Pig.

FIG. Ghosts are nothing to do with Princes.

DIMITRI (*Sharply*). Pig!

FIG. Don't call me Pig.

DIMITRI. I'm sorry. Prince Vasili, the mightiest slayer of roses in all the Russias.

FIG. Don't call me anything—just say what you want to say and shut up.

DIMITRI. All right, I will. There's only one thing I want more than the whole of the Kingdom when Father dies.

FIG. You want something more than that?

DIMITRI. Yes, and I think you do too.

FIG. I can't think of anything. What is it?

DIMITRI. It's that Ivan should not get it.

FIG (*Surprised*). Don't you like Ivan?

DIMITRI. Why? Do you?

FIG. Never thought about it.

DIMITRI. Well, think about it now—it's important.

FIG (*Cutting more bread*). Um.

DIMITRI. Well?

FIG (*Pushing the bread into his mouth*). I hate him.

DIMITRI. Me too.

FIG (*Warningly*). Father likes him.

DIMITRI. Yes, so we must be careful. This is my plan.

*(Priest enters with water for roses. They don't notice him).*

When Father left me guarding his beastly tree, he gave me a silver pitcher of wine to stop me freezing to death.

FIG. Me too.

DIMITRI. Good. He'll do the same for Ivan. Now I suggest we visit Ivan to wish him luck and when the opportunity arises we slip a little something or other into his wine that will make him sleep safe and sound all through the night. Then he can't succeed.

FIG. You are clever, Dimitri.

DIMITRI. I know, Fig.

FIG (*Slowly*). Would that 'something or other' to make him sleep be the same sort of 'something or other' you put into my wine last night, Dimitri, to make me sleep?

DIMITRI. The very same 'something or other', Fig, that you put into mine the night before. To make me sleep.

*(They laugh—delighted with each other's cleverness. The Priest exits. Lights start to fade. During the following dialogue they shift the furniture around and away).*

It's quite simple, whichever of us gets the chance

FIG. Slips it in.

DIMITRI. He hasn't a hope.

FIG. Poor Ivan. No Kingdom.

DIMITRI. No Kingdom for poor little Ivan.

FIG. The baby.

*(Lights down. Set flies out. Lights up on the golden apple tree in the snow-covered garden).*

VYSLAV *(Enters—giving excited, but low-voiced instructions. He carries a lantern and a pitcher of wine. Ivan follows slowly at a distance)*. If you'll take my advice, Ivan, you'll lie low here—close to the tree so you merge in with the trunk in the dark—then as he lifts his hand to pick an apple—zoink—you run him through—he won't stand a—are you listening, Ivan?

IVAN. Yes, Father.

VYSLAV. Well come along then, get into position.

*(Ivan slowly advances).*

What's the matter with you boy? You can hardly put one foot in front of the other. You're not tired already, are you?

IVAN. No, Father—it's just that I've got so many clothes on.

VYSLAV. Clothes? Why? Clothes? Why?

IVAN. To keep warm, of course, it's freezing out here. I thought if I'm going to die trying to catch a thief—at least I could die warm.

VYSLAV. But at this rate you don't stand a chance of catching a crippled tortoise—let alone a thief or a ghost.

IVAN. I'd rather we didn't mention ghosts, Father. I haven't bargained for them.

VYSLAV *(Poking at him)*. But what have you got on, Ivan? There's layer upon layer of you.

IVAN. All my summer things underneath and all my winter things on top. Actually I'm feeling a bit hot.

VYSLAV *(Starting to rage)*. In all my born days . . .

IVAN. Shh, Father, don't make a noise—you might frighten him off.

VYSLAV. Oh—oh, yes, of course. Well good luck, Ivan—you'll need it, my—er—blessing and all that. I was going to give you this wine to help you keep out the cold. I don't suppose you'll need it now.

IVAN. I think I'll keep it, Father, it might make me a little happier.

*(He takes the wine).*

VYSLAV. Alright—good luck.

*(Starts going).*

Don't get drunk. Oh, here are your brothers—probably come to give you their advice—and a fat lot of good that'll do you.

*(He exits).*

*(Pig and Dimitri enter).*