

# THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE

Based on the novel by Joan Aiken.  
Libretto and Music by John Mills

## 1) What is ‘*The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase*’ All About?

Exploring the themes of friendship, treachery, sadness and triumph, ‘*The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase*’ is an roller-coaster adventure for all the family. Involving howling wolves, adventurous train journeys, an evil governess and .... all the ingredients required for an engaging tale full of twists and turns. Set in a time long ago when wolves roamed the lands freely, it is centred around the lives of two girls, Bonnie and Sylvia who, with the help of a goose-herder named Simon, bring justice to an endeavour full of conspiracy and danger. The engaging songs help propel the story forwards with memorable tunes and words. ‘*The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase*’ is an crowd-pleasing entertainment for the whole family to enjoy.

## 2) Characters

There are 15 named characters:

Bonnie Green	A tempestuous heroine. Aged 11.
Sylvia Green	Bonnie’s cousin – an orphan, polite and sensitive. 11 years old.
Mr Grimshaw	Miss Slighcarp’s accomplice and forger.
Miss Slighcarp	Bonnie’s evil governess. Thin as a rake!
Mr Gripe	Sir Willoughby’s attorney from London.
Mrs Brisket	School principal and monster, friend of Miss Slighcarp. Fat as a pumpkin!
Aunt Jane	Sir Willoughby’s ailing sister and Sylvia’s guardian.
Sir Willoughby	Bonnie’s wealthy father, owner of Willoughby Chase.
Lady Green	Bonnie’s frail mother.
Pattern	Bonnie’s bustling maid. Fussy with plenty of curtsies.
James	The Willoughby’s handyman.
Dr Morne	The forgetful local doctor.
Simon	A farmer’s son and goose-herder.
Constable Cardigan	Policeman. A-ha!
Train Guard	

Company of wolves, train passengers, orphans, geese, farmers and animals for Smithfield Market.

N.B. These roles could be increased by the creative use of puppets.

N.B. Currently written as a musical in one act, it is possible to create an interval at the end of Scene 10 after the cliffhanger of the children being sent to boarding school and the news of Bonnie’s parents’ demise..

### 3) Synopsis

*The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase* is set in the past when the last Wolves roamed wild in remote parts of England. A young girl, Sylvia Green, travels to Willoughby Manor, the grand home of her spirited cousin Bonnie Green. The song *Another New Adventure* describes the anticipation of something new, and the danger of wolves. Sylvia is befriended by the sinister Mr Grimshaw, who feigns illness and is taken to Willoughby Manor to recover. Little do Sylvia and Bonnie realise this is part of an elaborate plot to swindle them out of their rightful inheritance.

Bonnie's mother is unwell and needs to recuperate in the Canary islands, so Bonnie and Sylvia are left in the charge of Miss Slighcarp, their newly-arrived guardian. She is very unpleasant towards them but they look after each other and sing *Another Friend Like You*. Bonnie and Sylvia go skating onto the Chase and become frightened by the wolves. They take cover with Simon who lives alone with his geese. He shoots at the wolves who flee and the girls to get home safely. They see Miss Slighcarp and Mr Grimshaw tampering with Sir Willoughby's papers.

Miss Slighcarp locks Bonnie in a cupboard and dismisses most of the staff. Miss Slighcarp is plotting with Grimshaw to forge Bonnie's father's will naming her as the sole beneficiary of the Willoughby Manor estate. News arrives that Bonnie's parents have perished at sea in a storm and Miss Slighcarp sends them to a boarding school run by Mrs Brisket, a long-standing friend.

Both Miss Slighcarp and Mrs Brisket are triumphant in their joint quest of making life miserable for all the orphans and sing *A Nip Of The Strap*. Bonnie and Sylvia are badly treated and hear of the other orphans' dreams and memories in *A Sunny Sunday Afternoon*. The girls make plans to escape.

To their rescue comes Simon who is *'Dancin' To Smithfield Market*. The girls join him on the way to market being careful to avoid any wolves. At Brighton they see Mr Grimshaw who is trapped into confessing his part in forging the will. Plans are made to deal with Miss Slighcarp back at Willoughby Manor.

Upon their return to the Manor they discover that Miss Slighcarp and Mrs Brisket have turned Willoughby Manor into a school. Bonnie and Sylvia return to Miss Slighcarp's and are about to be punished again when Bonnie's mother and father return. After hearing Bonnie and Sylvia's story, Slighcarp and Brisket are locked in the strongroom. Somehow Miss Slighcarp and Mrs Brisket escape, and rush off into the dark night towards The Chase. They soon get tired and very lost and ... come to a savage ending by being torn apart by *'The Wolves of Willoughby Chase.'*

### 4) Music

MP3 backing tracks are available, both with and without guide vocals. A PVG arrangement for 4-piece acoustic band is available. A compilation of extracts from *'The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase'* can be found on our website at <https://stuffandnonsensethemusical.com>

## 5) Scenes and Musical Numbers

Scene 1	On Willoughby Chase		
	<b>#01 The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase</b>	<b>1'52"</b>	
	<i>Wolves</i>		
Scene 2	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
Scene 3	Aunt Jane's Lodgings, London		
Scene 4	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
Scene 5	Brighton Station Platform		
	<b>#02 Another New Adventure</b>	<b>2'25"</b>	
	<i>Sylvia, Mr Grimshaw, Train Guard and Passengers</i>		
	<b>#03 Another New Adventure – Reprise</b>	<b>0'53"</b>	
Scene 6	Willoughby Manor, Bonnie's Bedroom		
	<b>#04 Another Friend Like You</b>	<b>2'19"</b>	
	<i>Sylvia and Bonnie</i>		
Scene 7	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
	<b>#05 We're The Wolves!</b>	<b>0'30"</b>	
Scene 8	On Willoughby Chase		
Scene 9	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
Scene 10	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
Scene 11	Mrs Brisket's Boarding School		
	<b>#06 A Nip Of The Strap</b>	<b>2'36"</b>	
	<i>Miss Slighcarp, Mrs Brisket, Bonnie, Sylvia &amp; Orphans</i>		
Scene 12	Mrs Brisket's Boarding School, Dormitory		
	<b>#07 Like A Sunny Sunday Afternoon</b>	<b>3'19"</b>	
	<i>Bonnie, Sylvia and Orphans</i>		
Scene 13	Willoughby Manor Main Gates		
Scene 14	Mrs Brisket's Boarding School, Dormitory		
Scene 15	Smithfield Market		
	<b>#08 Dancin' To Smithfield Market</b>	<b>3'07"</b>	
	<i>Simon, Farmers and Animals</i>		
Scene 16	A-La 'Keystone Kops'		
Scene 17	Willoughby Manor, Sir Willoughby's Study		
	<b>#09 Another Friend Like You – Reprise</b>	<b>1'04"</b>	
	<i>Bonnie and Sylvia</i>		
Scene 18	On Willoughby Chase		
	<b>#10 The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase – Reprise</b>	<b>0'31"</b>	
	<i>Wolves</i>		