

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE

Based on the novel by Joan Aiken.

Libretto and Music by John Mills

SCENE 1: ON WILLOUGHBY CHASE

(Wolves)

(Scene set as a wild, grim moorland. *WOLVES* enter and howl menacingly.)

Music starts for #01 The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase

WOLVES

OW-OOH!

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE. THE WOLVES ARE STARTING TO RACE!
 RUNNING SILENTLY, RUNNING SECRETLY. HEAR THEM HOWLING FOR YOU.
 RUNNING SILENTLY, RUNNING SECRETLY. HEAR US PANTING FOR YOU
 SEE OUR EYES UPON YOU. FEEL OUR BREATHE UPON YOU
 THE END IS COMING!

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE ARE SETTING THE PACE
 AND WE'RE HUNTING FOR YOU!

THE WOLVES ARE PROWLING. THE WOLVES ARE HOWLING.
 THE WOLVES ARE RUNNING AND WE'RE HUNTING FOR YOU!
 THE WOLVES ARE PROWLING. THE WOLVES ARE HOWLING.
 THE WOLVES ARE RUNNING AND WE'RE HUNTING FOR YOU!

PACK A

WOLVES ARE HOWLING

WOLVES ARE PROWLING

DON'T TRY RUNNING

SMELL OUR/THEIR BREATH ON YOU. FEEL THEIR CLAWS IN YOU.
 TASTE THE BLOOD IN OUR/THEIR MOUTH.
 TASTE THE BLOOD IN OUR/THEIR MOUTH.

PACK B

HEAR THEM HOWLING IN THE DISTANCE
 SEE THEM PROWLING IN THE DISTANCE
 COMING CLOSER, EVER CLOSER.
 COMING CLOSER. EVEN CLOSER.

DON'T TRY RUNNING 'COS THERE'S NO ESCAPE.
 FROM THEIR HUNGER, THERE IS NO ESCAPE.

WOLVES

OW-OOH!

PACK A

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE
 THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE
 THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE

PACK B

THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE
 THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE
 THE WOLVES OF WILLOUGHBY CHASE

WOLVES

THE WOLVES ARE READY TO RUMBLE! WE'RE/THEY'RE HUNTING FOR YOU!

(*WOLVES* howl, threaten audience and exit)

Scene Change Music – Extract from #01 The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase

**SCENE 2: WILLOUGHBY MANOR, SIR WILLOUGHBY'S STUDY
(Mr Gripe, Sir Willoughby & Lady Green)**

(Stage set as a gentleman's study. Wolf howls in the distance. SIR WILLOUGHBY enters with frail LADY GREEN and sits her down. MR GRIPE enters.)

MR GRIPE

Ah! Sir Willoughby, I hope you are well?

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Mr Gripe, I am well, but, as you can see, Lady Green is in need of recuperation.

MR GRIPE

Lady Green, I'm sorry to hear you are not in the best of health.

LADY GREEN

Thankyou, Mr Gripe. I'm sure a short vacation to the Canary Isles will be just the tonic I need.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Mr Gripe, we are soon to leave for Brighton to catch the ship and, as our lawyer and trusted friend, I need your help with arrangements while we're away.

MR GRIPE

Sir Willoughby, as it pleases you.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Please can you arrange for a governess to come and care for our daughter Bonnie, while we are away. We would like you to find someone, preferably a relation of ours, who will be able to look after our household as well as teaching our dear child.

LADY GREEN

And also to take care of our niece, Sylvia, who is travelling by train to be a companion for Bonnie. I hope Sylvia may bring some friendship to Bonnie whilst we're away.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Mr Gripe, please find someone, who will look after my estate and family as if it were their own.

MR GRIPE

Leave it to me, Sir Willoughby.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

You are a good man, Mr Gripe. I don't want Lady Green to worry about anything when she should be resting.

MR GRIPE

Lady Green, be assured I will find the ideal person for you. I hope you both will have a safe journey.

(MR GRIPE bows and exits)

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Mr Gripe's a good man, and I know he'll find someone suitable. Now, my dear, you need to think about what you want packed for the vacation. It will be quite some adventure. A coach ride to Brighton, then a week on board the Thesally before we arrive in the Canary Isles. It is likely to be several months before we arrive back home.

LADY GREEN

(Sadly) That feels like such a long time to be away.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

(Brightly) I'll get James and Pattern to meet you in the Dressing Room with luggage and hat boxes waiting to be filled!

(SIR WILLOUGHBY and LADY GREEN exit)

Scene Change Music – Extract from #01 The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase**SCENE 3: AUNT JANE'S LODGINGS, LONDON****(Aunt Jane & Sylvia)**

(Scene set as poor lodgings. AUNT JANE and SYLVIA are packing a shabby suitcase.)

AUNT JANE

Sylvia, dear, this letter from Sir Willoughby ...

SYLVIA

Yes, Aunt Jane.

AUNT JANE

... gives you the new start in life that you deserve.

SYLVIA

Yes, Aunt Jane.

AUNT JANE

It is such good news. You are to live with them at Willoughby Manor. With Sir Willoughby and Lady Green. *(With slight disapproval)* And with your Cousin Bonnie.

SYLVIA

Yes, Aunt Jane.

AUNT JANE

Now remember Sylvia, my dearest child, you must never speak to strangers. Always say 'please and thank you' as a mark of your good upbringing. Don't you be eating any of your lunch if there is anyone else in the carriage, for young ladies never eat in public.

SYLVIA

Of course not, Aunt Jane!

AUNT JANE

And my dearest Sylvia, do not look to your cousin Bonnie for good manners. I remember her as being rather boisterous and impulsive. With good fortune, perhaps some of your sensibilities might rub off on her.

SYLVIA

Perhaps.

AUNT JANE

And if anyone tries to speak to you on the train you must pull the communication cord and call for the Guard.

SYLVIA

Yes, Aunt Jane. I'm sure I'll be safe.

AUNT JANE

Oh, Sylvia, how I will miss you! *(Hug each other)* But I know that you'll have a grand time with your cousin Bonnie.

SYLVIA

Yes Aunt Jane. I'll miss you too. I'll come and visit whenever I can.

AUNT JANE

Don't forget to take Annabelle with you.

SYLVIA

Oh, yes! My precious Annabelle!

(SYLVIA collects and hugs her doll. Speaking to the doll)

Annabelle, you and I are going on an adventure. On a train! How exciting is that? Goodbye Aunt Jane, and do take care of yourself.

(SYLVIA exits with suitcase and her doll. AUNT JANE dabs tearful eyes and exits.)

Scene Change Music – Extract from #02 Another New Adventure

**SCENE 4: WILLOUGHBY MANOR, SIR WILLOUGHBY'S STUDY
(Pattern, Bonnie, Sir Willoughby & James)**

(BONNIE enters with PATTERN following close behind)

PATTERN

Oh, Miss Bonnie, slow down, please!

BONNIE

But I'm so very excited. Cousin Sylvia's coming to stay! Oh we shall have so much fun together!

PATTERN

Miss Bonnie, a little quieter, please. I remember your cousin as being rather quiet and sensitive, so watch you don't frighten her off with all your rushing about.

BONNIE

Oh yes, Pattern, I will, yes, but it's just too exciting for words. We'll play with all my dolls, and go riding and skating and

(SIR WILLOUGHBY enters holding letters. PATTERN curtsies and fusses over BONNIE)

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Good news, Bonnie. A letter from Sylvia's guardian, Aunt Jane. She has agreed that Sylvia should come and stay here as a companion for you.

BONNIE

Oh Father, thankyou. I just know we'll become great friends.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Indeed, and she's due to arrive by train later this evening.

BONNIE

Can I go and meet her at the station? I promise to be on my very best behaviour.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Yes, but you'll need to be a little more ... more ... gentle, if you're not to put her off when you first meet. *(BONNIE gives SIR WILLOUGHBY a hug)*

SIR WILLOUGHBY

And, I've another letter, just as important. Listen carefully, Bonnie, it's from Mr Gripe, my attorney. You'll remember that I asked Mr Gripe to find you a Governess to look after the estate and your learning?

BONNIE

(Suspiciously) Yes?

SIR WILLOUGHBY

Well, he's found you someone – a Miss Slighcarp – who will also be arriving sometime soon.

BONNIE

(Uncertainly) Oh ... yes ... thankyou Father.

SIR WILLOUGHBY

See you pay attention to what Miss Slighcarp says and do as you're told, minx! Now I must finish the important work of packing for our trip.

BONNIE

Father, I wish you and Mama weren't leaving ...

SIR WILLOUGHBY

I'm sure you'll get used to it very quickly, what with Sylvia arriving soon and having a new governess. So much to look forward to.

*(Ruffles **BONNIE**'s hair, **SIR WILLOUGHBY** exits)*

PATTERN

Miss Bonnie, we've so much to get ready before Sylvia arrives. I'll get the bedding sorted.

BONNIE

I'll tidy away my dolls. And Dolphus needs her mane brushing out.

PATTERN

(Laughing) You treat that rocking horse of yours too well!

JAMES

(Enters excitedly)

Exciting news, Miss Bonnie. Your cousin Sylvia's train is due in at the station any moment now. Sir Willoughby's asked me to prepare the landau to collect her.

BONNIE

Father said I could come too! Pattern, please fetch my coat, James, lead on.

*(**PATTERN**, **JAMES** and **BONNIE** exit)*

Scene Change Music – Extract from #02 Another New Adventure

SCENE 5: BRIGHTON STATION PLATFORM **(Train Guard, Sylvia, Mr Grimshaw, Passengers, Bonnie & James)**

*(Wolf howls in the distance. The **TRAIN GUARD** enters with a rifle under his arm. **PASSENGERS** enter milling noisily around the station platform, then take places in the carriage. **SYLVIA** enters anxiously. **MR GRIMSHAW** enters confidently with heavy luggage.)*

TRAIN GUARD

All aboard the 7.00 for Willoughby Station. Hurry along there, please. It's a wild night with a vicious wind gathering over The Chase. *(To **SYLVIA**)* Can I help you Miss?

(Looks at her ticket and points her towards the carriage)

SYLVIA

Thankyou.

TRAIN GUARD

Happy to help, Miss.

(Louder Wolf howls)

Music starts for #02 Another New Adventure

Close all the doors. Put luggage securely on the racks. Don't pull the communication cord unless there's an emergency! Keep the windows shut to keep out any wild Wolves which hide up at The Chase! I can hear them approaching fast.

(Fires a warning rifle shot. Blows whistle, and steps into the carriage)

Watch out for the wolves!

PASSENGERS

ANOTHER NEW ADVENTURE ON THE TRAIN!
OVER SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAINS, FROZEN PLAINS.

SYLVIA

WONDER WHAT LIES BEFORE US? WHAT ADVENTURES WILL BEFALL US?

PASSENGERS

AS WE TRAVEL ONWARDS ON THE TRAIN!

PASSENGERS (2 PARTS)

ANOTHER NEW ADVENTURE ON THE TRAIN!
IN OUR RATTLING CARRIAGES, FEEL THEM STRAIN.

MR GRIMSHAW + PASSENGERS

WONDER WHAT LIES BEFORE US? WHAT ADVENTURES WILL BEFALL US?

PASSENGERS

AS WE TRAVEL ONWARDS ON THE TRAIN!
WATCH OUT FOR THE WOLVES HIGH ABOVE ON THE CHASE! Watch out!
SEE THE WOLVES HOW THEY RACE AT A PACE!

PASSENGERS

THERE'S SNOW ON THE LINE, THERE'S ICE ON THE TRACK!
WITH WOLVES UP AHEAD, HAD WE BETTER GO BACK?

TRAIN GUARD

MORE WOOD ON THE FIRE! THE LANTERN'S BLOWN OUT!

PASSENGERS

THROW WOOD ON THE FIRE AND WE'LL OUTFIGHT THE WOLVES JUST LIKE THAT!
THERE'S SNOW ON THE LINE, THERE'S ICE ON THE TRACK!

SYLVIA

WITH WOLVES UP AHEAD, HAD WE BETTER GO BACK?

PASSENGERS

I'M SCARED OF THE WOLVES AS THEY HOWL IN THE DARK,
I'M SCARED THAT THE WOLVES WILL TEAR ME APART JUST LIKE THAT.

PASSENGERS (2 PARTS)

ANOTHER NEW ADVENTURE ON THE TRAIN!
(THERE'S SNOW ON THE LINE, THERE'S ICE ON THE TRACK)
OVER SNOW-CLAD MOUNTAINS, FROZEN PLAINS.
(WITH WOLVES UP AHEAD HAD WE BETTER GO BACK!)

SYLVIA + MR GRIMSHAW

WONDER WHAT LIES BEFORE US? WHAT ADVENTURES WILL BEFALL US?

PASSENGERS