

DANNY, THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

Inspired by the book by Roald Dahl

Script and Music by JOHN MILLS

Script Consultancy from ADAM ELMS

1) What is *'Danny, The Champion Of The World'* All About?

A musical in 2 Acts, *'Danny, The Champion Of The World'* is mostly about the special bond between a Father and Son. And it's about the 'Haves' and 'Have-nots'. Oh, and it's about getting the better of someone who deserves to be taken down a peg or two! Based on the much-loved book by Roald Dahl, it covers many themes including love, fear, loss, friendship and justice. Its engaging songs and comical scenes with Dopey Pheasants and Snooty Toffs provide a memorable and engaging theatrical experience for the whole family.

2) Characters

There are eighteen named characters:

The Good Guys

DANNY	The nine-year-old champion of our story
DAD	Danny's father. Very Sparky.
DOC SPENCER	Local doctor and pheasant-lover.
CHARLIE KINCH	Taxi driver
MRS CLIPSTONE	Reverend's wife.
SERGEANT SAMWAYS	Local policeman. Very partial to pheasant and accentuating 'h' at the start of words.

The Bad Guys

VICTOR HAZELL	Beer-brewer and wealthy landowner. The biggest snob in the world.
RABBETTS	Head gamekeeper. West Country accent. Deliberately mispronounces Mr Hazell's name as Mr Razell.
SNOOTY TOFFS	Charicatures of the wealthy and dim
SIR HENRY HETHERINGTON	H-wah!
BARON BORIS BOTCHER	Harrumph!
LORD TIMOTHY THISTLETHWAITE	P-waffle!
DARKNESS	Sings but no speaking. Creating the fear of night!

Pheasants

CHIEF	Wing-Commander pheasant with a military demeanour and very loud voice. Wears 'Biggles' headgear and goggles.
CHUCKLES	A hard-of-hearing pheasant who finds everything very funny, carries out the opposite movement to the others.

STOMPEY
JEREMY

Wellyboot-wearing pheasant, Accident-prone.
An emotional and creative pheasant. Wears a tutu and flouncy additions.

Supported by Company with various roles including gamekeepers, policemen, pheasants, singing cows, Nightlife and Snooty Toffs.

3) Performance with 5 Actors

With some quick changes and use of dolls or Pheasant-puppets, it is possible to put on a performance of *'Danny the Champion Of The World'* with 5 performers taking the following roles:

Performer 1: Chief; Dad

Performer 2: Chuckles; Victor Hazell; Mrs Clipstone

Performer 3: Stompey; Sir Henry Hetherington; Sargeant Samways; Darkness

Performer 4: Jeremy; Danny; Baron Boris Botcher;

Performer 5: Rabbetts; Doc Spencer; Lord Timothy Thistlethwaite; Charlie Kinch

4) Music

MP3 music tracks are available, both with and without guide vocals. A PVG score arrangement for 4-piece acoustic band is available. A compilation of extracts from *'Danny, The Champion Of The World'* can be found at the website <https://earwormmusicals.uk>

5) Synopsis

Focused around the build up and aftermath of a pheasant shoot, we first meet the pheasants at dusk undertaking Reconnaissance-Training. They sing *'First Into Action!'* to express their excitement, or otherwise, about what lies ahead. They are blissfully unaware of the fate that lies in wait.

Danny, the nine-year-old champion of our story enters and tells of his love for motor engines and helping his wonderful Dad. He sings *'The Sparkiest Dad In The Town!'*

One night Danny wakes to find himself alone in their gypsy caravan. He calls out for Dad but there is no reply. Danny sits on the caravan steps in the dark as is determined not to be frightened despite Darkness and Nightlife singing *'Afraid Of The Dark!'* to trying to scare him. Dad has gone poaching and manages to avoid Rabbetts, the gamekeeper, who is busy guarding the pheasants in Victor Hazell's woods.

Dad returns to share his secret of being a poacher with Danny. He promises to tell Danny if he goes poaching again, and then reveals the secrets of poaching pheasants including the methods of *'The Sticky Hat'* and *'The Horse-Hair-Stopper.'*

There is an unpleasant scene at Dad's filling station when Victor Hazell threatens Danny. Dad refuses to serve Victor Hazell, becomes very angry and sets his sights on poaching again.

Dad says he'll be back by ten, but when Danny wakes up at two in the morning he realises something bad must have happened to Dad. Danny drives the Baby Austin car to Hazell's Wood to search for Dad. He finds him down a big pit – a man-trap- with a broken ankle. Danny manages to pull Dad out of the pit, back into the car and safely home.

Danny is left to look after the filling station and sets about polishing the Baby Austin. He is visited by Sergeant Samways and then Doc Spencer who brings a pie from Mrs Clipstone. Danny is missing Dad a lot and is delighted when he hears him returning on crutches. Rushing to give him a hug, he then asks Dad about Mum. Dad sings 'Simply Perfect' and Danny joins in.

Dad wants to could find a way to teach Victor Hazell a lesson by poaching all the pheasants just before the 'Great Shooting Party' at Hazell's Wood. Danny comes up with the brilliant idea of using Dad's sleeping tablets to drug the pheasants so there will be none for the shoot. He calls it 'The Sleeping Beauty' and a plan takes shape.

Meanwhile Victor Hazell is hosting 'The Greatest Party In The Land' for all the Snooty Toffs around, raising expectations of a great shoot the following day. Dad and Danny go to the woods and spread the drugged raisins around for the pheasants who eat them with vigour, then fly up into the trees to roost. Dad and Danny wait in the woods till it is dark and then collect all the drugged pheasants that have fallen out of the branches. Dad has arranged for Charlie Kinch – the taxi driver – to help deliver the birds to the vicar's wife, Mrs Clipstone.

The morning of the Shoot sees Victor Hazell with the Snooty Toffs standing ready for the pheasants. Rabbetts makes a cacophony of sound but no pheasants appear. Victor Hazell is apopleptic and demands there's a search of the local area.

At the same time, Mrs Clipstone is pushing a pram full of the sleeping pheasants and is very alarmed when they start to wake and flap around! The pheasants reprise their song as 'Dopey Pheasants' to illustrate the moment. Just then, Victor Hazell arrives to see all his pheasants at the filling station. He is extremely angry.

So, too arrives Sergeant Samways on his bicycle, and sets about sorting out the disagreement. His solution is to shoo the birds back on to Hazell's land, but in so doing the birds scratch and defecate all over Hazell's shiny Rolls Royce. Hazell jumps into the car and drives off, at which point the pheasants fly off and 'poop' on Victor Hazell's head! Yuk! Danny discovers a few pheasants still at the bottom of the pram. They had obviously been very greedy for the raisins and eaten too many. There's no waking them so they are happily shared out after the final song 'Danny, The Champion Of The World'.

And after that ... well, what Danny had been trying to express all the time was that every child deserves a Dad who is SPARKY!

6) Scenes and Musical Numbers

ACT 1

- Scene 1 Hazell's Wood: 'Pheasants And Rabbits'
 #01 First Into Action 2'33"
 Chief, Stompey, Chuckles and Jeremy (Pheasants)
- Scene 2 The Filling Station Forecourt: 'A Fine Mechanic'
 #02 The Sparkiest Dad In The Town! 1'54"
 Danny
- Scene 3 Hazell's Wood: 'Hup, Two, Three, Four!'
- Scene 4 Inside The Gypsy Caravan: 'Dad's Deepest Secret'
 #03 Afraid Of The Dark 1'56"
 Danny, Darkness & Creatures
- Scene 5 Hazell's Wood: 'Hazell's Shopping List'
- Scene 6 The Filling Station Forecourt: 'Dirty Fingermarks'
- Scene 7 In The Sotlight: 'Party Invitations'
- Scene 8 Inside The Gypsy Caravan: 'Back By Ten-Thirty'
- Scene 9 Inside The Gypsy Caravan: 'Ten Minutes Past Two!'
 #04 Afraid Of The Dark – Short Reprise 0'47"
- Scene 10 Hazell's Wood: 'Useless Copper'
- Scene 11 The Filling Station Forecourt: 'Simply Perfect'
 #05 Simply Perfect 2'53"
 Dad & Danny
- Scene 12 Inside The Gypsy Caravan: 'The Sleeping Beauty'

ACT 2

- Scene 1 Hazell's Great Hall: 'The Greatest Party In The Land'
 #06 Greatest Party In The Land! 2'18"
 Victor Hazell & Toffs
- Scene 2 Hazell's Wood: 'Flying Raisins'
- Scene 3 Hazell's Great Hall: 'Worse For Wear!'
- Scene 4 Hazell's Wood: 'Bagfuls Of Pheasants'
- Scene 5 Hazell's Wood: 'Find My Pheasants!'
- Scene 6 The Filling Station Forecourt; 'Champion Danny!'
 #07 Dopey Pheasants 1'05"
 Chief, Chuckles, Stompey and Jeremy (Pheasants)
 #08 Danny, The Champion Of The World! 2'25"
 Company

7) Notes For The Director

Have fun! You've got Dopey Pheasants, Snooty Toffs, scary Darkness and Creatures of the Night, a villainous Victor Hazell, delightful central characters of Dad and Danny, a supportive community of villagers, and fun and silliness spread liberally between the danger and threat.

Many characters in the original story are male, but this script allows for many more opportunities for blurring traditional roles. For example, the Dopey Pheasants are my creation and could all be female. As could Doc Spencer. And Sergeant Samways. Oh, and Charlie Kinch. And so on ... I think Dad and Danny should remain male to keep it close to Dahl's original, and to retain the special relationship between a Father and Son who have lost someone very special.

A brief mention about the use of puppets, particularly in relation to the pheasants. A performance of *'Danny, The Champion Of The World'* with five performers is possible but challenging with plenty of costume changes, but it might be easier (and more theatrical) using puppets.

Above all, let your whole team have the most enjoyable and heart-warming time with the show. I've loved creating this script and songs from the wonderful story. I'd love to see what you can do to bring it to life!