

DUCKS VS SQUIRRELS: BATTLE FOR THE PARK

by

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Published by
Pollyanna Select Plays
Austin TX

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Ducks vs Squirrels: The Battle for the Park was first produced by Pollyanna Theatre Company in Austin TX at the Long Center for the Performing Arts' Rollins Studio Theatre in July 2011. The cast & crew were as follows:

<u>RED:</u>	David Meissner
<u>MAJOR LEE NUTS:</u>	Michael Dalmon
<u>OLD GREY:</u>	Joni McClain
<u>CHUNK:</u>	Julie Linnard
<u>TEAL:</u>	Michelle Keffer
<u>ADMIRAL PEKIN DUCK:</u>	Julie Linnard
<u>MALLARD:</u>	Aaron Alexander
<u>LOONEY:</u>	Patricia Robinson
<u>DIRECTOR:</u>	Judy Matetzschk-Campbell
<u>STAGE MANAGER:</u>	Andrew Perry
<u>SCENIC DESIGNER:</u>	Ia Ensterä
<u>COSTUME DESIGNER:</u>	Ia Ensterä
<u>LIGHTING DESIGNER:</u>	Don Day
<u>SOUND DESIGNER:</u>	Tizoc Trevino

Cast of Characters

- RED: A young male squirrel who is eager to please the elder squirrels but is very open to new possibilities and wants to explore the world.
- MAJOR LEE NUTS: An older and very nutty flying squirrel who is very militaristic and stubborn in beliefs. May be played by either a male or female.
- OLD GREY: A silly but wise old squirrel who is always reminiscing about the old days. May be played by either a male or female.
- CHUNK: A fat young squirrel who is somewhat fearful but becomes very willing when food is involved. May be played by either a male or female and role may be doubled with Admiral Pekin Duck.*
- TEAL: A smart young female duck who questions the way things are and isn't afraid to try new experiences.
- ADMIRAL PEKIN DUCK: A daffy old duck who is very militaristic and stubborn in beliefs. May be played by either a male or female and role may be doubled with Chunk.*
- MALLARD: A soldierly young male duck who blindly follows orders and is always ready to jump into action but often misdirects his efforts.
- LOONEY: A silly young duck who is always having fun no matter what. May be played by either a male or female.

*Production may be done with seven or eight actors.

Technical Notes:

A road crosses the stage, separating Duck territory and Squirrel territory. On one side of the road is a tree with raised levels to allow for Squirrels to climb in the branches. This elevated area may extend over the neutral Center Stage and road between two territories. On the opposite side of the road is a grassy area that extends to the riverbank where a small, shallow bit of water is visible. Next to the water is some tall grass and brush in which nuts have been hidden.

Occasionally a car passes through the park along the road. The car may be non-literal and created with sound and lighting. Near-roadkill moments may be done in slow motion if desired.

Scene

A park along a riverbank

Time

The present, a morning in late winter/early spring

SETTING:

It is a late winter/early spring morning in a park along a riverbank. Immediately visible is a large tree with multiple levels of climbable branches, a shallow area of water with small bushes and plants, and a road cutting between them.

AT RISE:

OLD GREY is re-telling an old "war" story to RED, who is busy grooming himself. CHUNK is off to one side slowly nibbling on a small nut and dozing. This story has been told many times, but RED always humors OLD GREY.

OLD GREY

...and that was the time we discovered the Hickory Tree! It was the best summer in all my five years, I tell 'ya. Hee! That glorious tree made us rich squirrels. Those beautiful, hard-shelled, delights were spillin' out of our nests so badly we had to bury them all around the base of the tree! We even had to bury some in secret spots along the river, and I hate water! Hee!

RED

Wow, Old Grey! It sure sounds amazing.

CHUNK

Sounds delicious to me!

OLD GREY

Chunk, you'da been in paradise! But it weren't all food and games, I tell ya'! Having food means having responsibility!

RED

Eep. Here we go again.

OLD GREY

We had to constantly be on guard against thieves.

RED
(mocking)

Oh, the terror of it!

OLD GREY (Cont.)
Oh, the terror of it!

CHUNK

Ha!

OLD GREY

You mock me, young kit, but the threat was real, I tell ya'!

(with great pride)

I, myself, had been personally assigned by Captain Twiggy to single-pawedly transfer our secret stockpiles to the hollow by the waterfront. It was there that "They" attacked. I remember it like it were yesterday. My arms were full of our precious produce when three of the beasts flew down out of nowhere, quacking so loudly-

RED

(again mocking)

I can still hear it in my nightmares!

OLD GREY (Cont.)

I can still hear it in my nightmares!

OLD GREY (Cont.)

It was all a flurry of feathers and nuts. All I could do was scamper frantically back to the tree in a panic. All those poor defenseless nuts rolled into the river, never to be seen again...

(OLD GREY sobs. During this story, CHUNK has dozed off with food in his mouth.)

RED

Old Grey I've heard this story so many times, but it still doesn't make any sense. If it was such a big tree, wouldn't there have been enough nuts for the Ducks to get some of their own without stealing? Why did the Ducks attack?

OLD GREY

Why do Ducks do anything they do? 'Cause they're weird, that's why! Birds in general can't be trusted, and Ducks are the biggest, most untrustable birds I ever seen. How could anyone possibly put their faith in a species of quitters? Takin' off in the winter just 'cause it gets a little cold? Downright flighty! Fur over feathers, I tell ya'! Hee! And don't even get me started on the egg thing! Disgustin'...

RED

So, just because someone is weird, we should hate them?

OLD GREY

I tell you this, young Red. Those foul, winged things will do you harm at the first opportunity. Take my word on that and pray to the Great Pecan that you never have to find out for yourself.

RED

Aw, come on Old Grey! The Major doesn't even allow us to gather nuts beyond the second branch down. We've got about as much chance of running into a Duck as--

MAJOR LEE NUTS

(from offstage, like a
drill sergeant)

ATTENTION!! FALL IN!!

RED

Eep!

CHUNK

Oh!

OLD GREY

Hee!

(The yell from offstage startles all three Squirrels into a panicked squeaking whirlwind. OLD GREY straightens up suddenly where he stands into a locked soldier pose straining his back in the process--over the course of the following scene he slowly droops back to his bent, old position. RED leaps to his feet and scampers frantically, ultimately ending at attention next to OLD GREY. CHUNK, who had fallen asleep, is suddenly awake, spits food out of his mouth, and scampers similarly to RED, ending at attention in line with the

other two. MAJOR LEE NUTS enters just as the lineup is complete. He is carrying a device in his paws.)

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Now, listen up, mammals! Today is gonna be a special day for you two young kits. This seasoned veteran here has filled your walnut brains with too many bushy tales of what fares beyond the bottom of the tree trunk. You are now two weeks old and it is time to begin your field training. Today is the day you're gonna learn things first paw!

CHUNK

Oh no!

RED

Oh yeah?!

OLD GREY

Sir! I barely told these youngsters anything! They don't know nuttin' about the outside world! Are you sure it's-

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Are you questioning my authority, Sergeant Grey? Need I remind you that I am Major Lee Nuts, Commander of the Flying Squirrels! I've dropped more acorns on the enemy than you've eaten in your whole life!

OLD GREY

But, sir! I tell ya' it's too soon. Just let me tell them about the time I-

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Quiet, Sergeant! You may be a year older than me, but I am still your superior officer and you will respect my decisions. Is that clear?

OLD GREY

(sounding a bit more pained)

Sir! Yes, sir! Hee!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Now, you two pups are going to experience what it really means to be a soldier in Today's Squirrel Army! I'm sending you, Red, and... uh...

(The MAJOR points to CHUNK.)

CHUNK

Chunk.

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Chunk, here, out on a very special mission. A secret mission. A real nut job! First, you two are gonna cross the "Road of Squealing Danger"!

RED

(getting more excited)

Sir! Yes, Sir!

CHUNK

(getting more nervous)

Oh no! Oh no!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Then, you two are gonna travel all the way to the river!

RED

Sir! Yes, Sir!

CHUNK

Oh no! Oh no!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Now, the river, as you know, is deep within enemy territory! Once there, you'll have to follow the scent to the payload!

RED

Sir! Yes, Sir!

CHUNK

Oh no! Oh... wait... scent?

MAJOR LEE NUTS

That's right, my chipper young cousin! You kits are gonna fetch this week's supply of nuts from the secret storage bunker!

RED

Sir! Yes, Sir!

CHUNK

Oh boy! Oh boy! We get to fetch food?!?

OLD GREY

Sir! I must protest. It's far too risky to send these kits into Duck land. I tell ya'-

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Sergeant Grey!

OLD GREY

Hee!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Are you suggesting I send you in their place?

OLD GREY

Er... no... I... uh... that is... my back.... knees aren't like they used to be... and, um... Hee!... See, I had this splinter in my paw this morning, and... uh... those late winter breezes are bad for the lungs, I tell ya...

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Then it's settled. You two young cubs are gonna make me proud. I know it.

RED

Sir! Yes, Sir!

(to CHUNK)

Wow, a real nut job!

CHUNK

Oh boy! We get to get food!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Now, it's time to head out, soldiers! Remember your training-

CHUNK

Training, right!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

-and your drills and you'll be just fine. Look both ways before you cross the street-

CHUNK

Both ways, right!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

And make sure you use the buddy system-

CHUNK

Buddy system, right!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

A true friend may save your life someday!

(handing RED the device he
was carrying)

Here, take this. It's a special device developed by our top Squirrel scientists. It's a scratch-and-sniff Nut Positioning System, or NPS. Just use it and your keen noses to get to the river once you're in the field and bring us home the marmot-load of sweet, nutty goodness.

RED

Sir! Yes, Sir!

CHUNK

Sir! Yes, Sir!

MAJOR LEE NUTS

DISMISSED!!

(RED and CHUNK break ranks
and head towards descending
the tree.)

OLD GREY

Sir, you know I'd go with them if it wasn't for these feeble old bones of mine! I tell ya', I'll never forgive either of us if anything happens to those young pups.

MAJOR LEE NUTS

Now, don't let your paws sweat so much, Old Grey! Sure as my teeth here are still growing strong, everything will turn out just fine! Just you wait and see.

(OLD GREY and MAJOR LEE
NUTS exit as RED and CHUNK
begin climbing down the
tree.)

RED

Wow, oh, wow, what an honor! I can't believe the Major is trusting us to do this! He even gave us this super special secret device.

CHUNK

Oh boy! What kind of nuts do you think we'll find when we get there, Red?

RED

I don't know, Chunk. Let's just focus on finding them first and then getting home.

CHUNK

Focus, right!

RED

When we're back safe with armloads of food, we'll prove to everyone what awesome foragers we are. Maybe we'll be given the Walnut Cross, or even the Birch Star!

CHUNK

But, Red, do you think we'll run into any of... you know... the enemy?

RED

Eep. How should I know? I mean, we are heading into enemy territory. But I don't think the Major would send us if he thought it was too dangerous. I heard that the Ducks don't usually return to the park until later in the spring. I wonder where they go during the winter. I bet it's somewhere warm!

CHUNK

Oh, I like it when it's warm.

(RED and CHUNK reach the road that runs through the stage near the base of the tree.)

RED

Come on, buddy. We're at the road. Let's do this quickly, but carefully. Remember what the Major made us drill last week on the big branch?

(CHUNK nods his head yes and then immediately and sadly shakes it no.)

Sure you do! If one of those big, squealing car thingies comes, the best thing to do is zigzag around a lot to confuse it.

CHUNK

Zigzag, right!

(They practice zigzag a bit
and feel more confident.)

RED

Alright, let's go!

(They carefully look both
ways and then try to
quickly tip-toe across the
road. As soon as they are
in the path, a car -by
means of lights and sound-
approaches.)

CAR!!!!

CHUNK

Oh no! Oh no!

(RED and CHUNK burst into a
panic. They zigzag in the
road while yelling in an
attempt to confuse the car
before safely making it to
the other side.)

RED

Eep! That was a close one, but I bet we sure freaked that
thing out, eh, Chunk?

CHUNK

Oh, my! Oh, my! I've never been so scared in my entire
life! I don't think I want to do this anymore.

RED

Come on, be a buck, Chunk! We need to make the Major proud.
We've already successfully crossed the "Road of Squealing
Danger". Now, let's just activate the NPS and we'll be on
our way to glory!

CHUNK

I'd rather just have the nuts. Fear makes me hungry.

RED

Ok, let's see if I can figure this thing out. I think we just scratch this panel here and then-

(The NPS sprays a puff of mist/smoke into the air.)

There we go! And now I guess we just follow the scent...

(Both sniff at the air. RED is relatively unfazed and begins to sniff around to follow the scent. CHUNK is immediately and visibly entranced, as if the scent has overtaken his brain. He slowly starts a zombie-like walk which curves around and speeds up towards the river at the far side of the stage.)

CHUNK

...Training..... Both ways..... Buddy system..... Nuts!

(CHUNK suddenly is busy digging and unearthing nuts from the secret storage hole.)

RED

Wow, Chunk, you've hit pay dirt! This Nut Positioning thingy is awesome! Between it and your nose, we'll never be hungry again! Look at all these delicious nuts!

CHUNK

Oh, Red! I've never seen so many tasty treats in one place! It's just like one of those vending machine thingies Old Grey told us about. It just keeps giving us food!

(a beat- with a tear in his eye)

This must be what heaven is like!

RED

Come on, Stealth-Nose. Let's gather these up and head home. We're gonna be the heroes of the tree, today!

CHUNK

Hooray, us!

CHUNK (Cont.)

(in a sing-song voice)

We got food today-ay! We got food today-ay! We will be the hee-roes! And I will stuff my face!

(As RED & CHUNK gather the nuts from the hole, they do not see TEAL, MALLARD, and LOONEY enter talking. TEAL is carrying a basket full of bread and bits of plants.)

TEAL

Ugh. Mallard, will you please stop primping? You're leaving down feathers everywhere and it's driving me daffy.

MALLARD

Humph! A soldier duck must always look his best!

TEAL

I swear, all you boys do is preen your feathers. How pretty can you get? Even Looney knows a shinier bill won't lure more worms.

LOONEY

Yay! I like worms!

(LOONEY heads toward the shore only to silently discover RED and CHUNK gathering nuts. TEAL & MALLARD do not pay attention to LOONEY or the Squirrels.)

MALLARD

I may not be able to catch worms as well as you, Teal, but the Humans in the park sure throw me a lot more breadcrumbs. And I can fly in formation better than you any day! Ha-ha.

TEAL

Ugh. Why do you drakes always have to be like that? There is more to life than looking good, Mallard. Just because we hens have plumage of duller color it doesn't mean that we're any less... well, beautiful.

LOONEY

You are beautiful, Teal!

TEAL

Thank you, Looney.

MALLARD

You must be yolking! Nothing can beat the glorious glow of my green head and bold sable brown chest! And just look at the luster of my wing's blue stripes! It's royal enough to make any hen squawk.

LOONEY

You're beautiful, too, Mallard!

MALLARD

Thanks, Looney. Ha ha!

TEAL

I swear you get worse with every duckling feather you lose. Someday, you'll be just as ruffled as the Admiral-

MALLARD

Teal, don't you dare squawk about the Admiral-

TEAL

Ever since we got back from the coast he's been quackers with having all-things-Duck in a row. This supposedly vital mission we're on to collect food from along the riverfront is a yolk. I know winter has made the grass and bugs a bit scarce, but it's not like the Squirrels are going to come down here and steal our-

(Suddenly a nut rolls away from RED & CHUNK, exciting LOONEY)

LOONEY

NUTS!

(Everyone stops in their tracks and looks at each other. A panicked, frantic mock-battle ensues. Nuts, breadcrumbs, and feathers fly. RED even tries at a

point to spray the NPS as a
weapon.)

TEAL & MALLARD
SQUIRRELS!

RED & CHUNK
DUCKS!

RED (Cont.)
EEP! Quick, Chunk! We've got to get out of here!

CHUNK
(desperately gathering nuts)
Oh, my! Oh, my!

MALLARD
Ha ha!

RED & CHUNK
AHHHHH!

MALLARD
AHHHHH!

LOONEY
WEEEE!!!!!

MALLARD
Protect the river!

TEAL
What does that mean?

RED & CHUNK
AHHHHH!

MALLARD
AHHHHH!

RED
Ditch the nuts!

CHUNK
Anything but the nuts!

TEAL
What is going on?

LOONEY

WEEEE!!!!!!

MALLARD

Feel the wrath of my feathers! Ha-ha!

RED & CHUNK

AHHHHH!

MALLARD

AHHHHH!

CHUNK

Buddy System!

TEAL

Wait! What are we fighting about?

RED

No choice! Go, go, go!

LOONEY

WEEEE!!!!!!

(In the end, both RED and CHUNK flee with a small armful of nuts each. CHUNK escapes first, runs across the street and disappears up the tree. LOONEY, who is having too much fun, and MALLARD, who is acting way too ferocious, are still flapping wildly and do not notice that RED & CHUNK have escaped. RED makes it to the street and trips, dropping the few nuts he had. He stops to scramble for them just as the headlights of a car appear.)

TEAL

CAR!!!

(RED freezes in his tracks, looking into the lights. He

is paralyzed with fear.
 MALLARD and LOONEY, in
 their excitement, panic at
 the yelled warning and run
 offstage. As the car
 approaches quickly, TEAL is
 the only one able to act.
 She swiftly leaps in to
 push RED out of the street,
 saving his life as the car
 passes. Afterwards, all is
 quiet. TEAL & RED lie on
 the tree side of the
 street, out of breath.)

TEAL

(after a moment)

Ugh. Are you okay?

RED

Eep. I guess so. But I think I crushed my nuts.

TEAL

(picks up a nut)

Well, this one seems okay. I know it's only one, but it's
 better than none. You can keep it. I don't like them, but I
 hear your kind goes crazy for them.

RED

You aren't going to throw that at me, are you?

TEAL

Why would I do that?

RED

Well, you are a duck

TEAL

Yeah, I noticed

RED

(slowly takes nut from TEAL)

Um, thanks. Uh... Eep. I have to go now.

(beat)

Bye.