



THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT

by Peter Travell

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a Pantomime

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With grateful thanks to Kim, Chloe and Ken for their support and suggestions.

Synopsis

Set roughly in the Victorian age.

Dame Hilda Owl has two sons Terry and Freddie. Terry is a schoolteacher and is engaged to Tabitha (Tabby) Kat. Freddie is a bad lot who stole the school children's dinner money and the church silver and ran away to escape gaol.

The village Squire has died and the new Squire, a Mr Fowl is coming to meet his tenants. Surprise, surprise, it is none other than Freddie Owl who is now rich. He is determined to exact revenge on his mother and brother for forcing him to run away or go to gaol. Also, he has reached a deal with a supermarket to build a superstore in the village but he needs to close the school and evict his mother from her cottage. He hires an estate manager Robin Outugo and his henchmen Snatch and Gabbit to help him achieve his aims.

Terry and Tabby elope to Bong Island to get married by Parson Turk ('ee lives on the hill). While they are on the island they meet Peppa Pigg and her sister Periwinkle who run Piggywigg's Emporium. They discover that Periwinkle was recently married to none other than Freddie Owl who stole her money and ran away. They sail back to the village to confront Freddie and his henchmen who then get arrested by the local village Constable, John Constable. Finally, John Constable summons up the courage to ask Dame Hilda Owl to marry him. Cue celebration.

CAST

Mrs Hilda Owl (HOWL)	(Dame M/F) - Washer Woman - Terry Owl and Freddie Owl's Mum
Mr Terry Owl (TOWL)	(M/F) - local schoolteacher – upright citizen, in love with Tabitha (Tabby) Kat
Ms Tabitha Kat (Tabby)	(F) - Terry's fiancée Lives with and looks after her father, eager to marry Terry as soon as may be.
Mr Thomas Kat (Tom)	(M) - Tabitha's Dad, works for the Squire as Gardener and Gatekeeper and lives in the Gatehouse, completely dependent on the Squire for his home and livelihood.
Squire Freddie Owl (FOWL)	(M) - Hilda's horrible son – bad lot, stole children's dinner money, and the church silver and ran away before he was caught. Married Periwinkle Pigg under a false name Freddie Fowl and stole her money. Has now returned to exact revenge upon his family for sending him away. Using the stolen money to buy the Squireship of his old village.
Robin / Robyn Outugo	(M/F) - Rent Collector & Eviction Specialist - pronounced 'Out U Go' by everyone other than Squire Owl.
Snatch & Grabbit	(M/F) - Henchmen. (Comedy duo) Snatch of greater intelligence but not much – Grabbit a bit thick.
John Constable	(M) - my father wanted me to be a painter – local Policeman called Constable Constable secretly in love with Hilda Owl
Patricia Pigg (Peppa)	(F) - proprietress of Piggywigg's Emporium on Bong Island – well dressed businesswoman
Periwinkle Pigg (Peri)	(F) - co-owner of Piggywigg's Emporium and abandoned wife of Freddie Owl – Steampunk, aggressive attitude, Freddie has stolen her money and she's out for revenge
Hoot Owl	(M/F) - Hilda's dog a Scottish Terrier (Och! Woof!)

Parson Turk

(M/F) – Parson of Bong Island – Parson Turk 'ee lives
on the hill – short sighted, bumbling, wobbly voice

Chorus of Villagers double up as Schoolchildren

Bertie Basset, Jimmy Riddle, John Thomas, Dick
Edwards, Sheila Mite, Theresa Green

ACT I

Scene I	Village
Scene II	FOT
Scene III	Inside Hilda's Cottage
Scene IV	FOT
Scene V	Inside Schoolhouse
Scene VI	FOT
Scene VII	Village
Scene VIII	Stormed Tossed Sea (Black Backdrop)

ACT II

Scene I	Village
Scene II	FOT & Inside Hilda's Cottage
Scene III	FOT
Scene IV	Bong Island
Scene V	FOT & Village
Scene VI	FOT (Audience Participation)
Scene VII	Village (Finale)

Act I – Scene 1 (Village Square) – on the backdrop is seen Hilda’s cottage USR next to the Schoolhouse)

Opening Song & Dance – Villagers (On a Wonderful Day Like Today)

Villagers go off SR at end of dance

Constable: (walks to centre stage)

'Allo 'Allo 'Allo **(knees bend on each 'Allo, he is swinging his truncheon).**

Well it is a lovely day, the sun is shining the villagers are really happy and today is the day we meet our new Squire. Oh I'm sorry, let me introduce myself. I am John Constable. Yes I know! My father was a great art lover and wanted me to become a famous artist but I'm afraid my artistic skills extend only to regular visits to the White Hart **(or other local pub)**. So my dear old mum, God rest her soul took one look at my feet and you know what they say large feet, large **(a beat)** truncheon and decided that I'd best become a Policeman. So here I am Constable John Constable. People do get a bit confused sometimes but it's a nice job and a lovely village. There's one person in particular that's lovely and that's Mrs Hilda Owl who lives in that little cottage over there. I think she's lovely but I've never had the courage to tell her that I love her. **(Audience Ahh!)** Oh I feel worse than that! I know it's sad isn't it? A grown man like me but she's far too good for me. Maybe one day I'll be able to tell her how I feel about her but for now I'm just happy to see her everyday as I patrol the streets. Oh look out here she comes now.

Hilda Owl: (Bustles on to the stage from SR carrying a basket full of washing)

Hello Constable, lovely day.

Constable: (Constable goes all shy)

Yes Mrs Owl it is a lovely day and made all the better by your presence here. **(embarrassed he scuttles off)**

Must get on patrol.

(exit SR)

Hilda Owl:

Such a lovely little man, there was a time when I thought he and I might, well you know, but it didn't ever happen. Such a shame, I do like a man with a large truncheon. Anyway, my name is Hilda, Hilda Owl. I've lived here most of my life in my lovely little cottage. I take in washing and ironing to earn a crust and what a job that is. Oh it's no fun I can tell you my hands are red raw with all the washing and scrubbing I have to do **(Audience: Ahh!)** Oh no it's much worse than that come on bit of sympathy now. Oh the life of a washer-woman. You should see the state of some of their washing. I mean old Mrs Skiggins, well judging by the state of her underwear she ought to be called Skiddings. Look at this. **(throws knickers at proscenium arch where they stick to a hidden pin on the wall)** See I told you! Oh you've got to laugh haven't you? Well I hope you have or we're all in for a very dull evening.

I'm a widow, I used to be married, well I used to be a lot of things but you shouldn't believe all the stories, some of them aren't true.

School bell rings

Oh that's the school bell it must be lunch time. Now you'll get to meet my son Terry he's the Headmaster. Well in fact he's the only teacher but Headmaster sounds a much better title. He's a good boy and he's in love with Tabitha Kat who lives in the Gate House with her father Tom and we're all hoping that she and Terry will get married soon.

I do have another son but he was a really bad lot, he ran off several years ago and we haven't seen him since thank goodness. No, he really was a horrible boy! He'll have come to a bad end you mark my words.

Anyway, everybody is very excited to meet our new Squire who's due to come and meet his tenants this morning. Nobody has met him yet. The old Squire Justin Time, was a lovely man but died quite suddenly. One day he was fine the next he was gone. Strangely he died just after Mr Fowl, he's the new Squire, went to see him to persuade him to sell the estate. Apparently, Squire Time said he wouldn't sell and then he just up'd and died. Squire Fowl bought the estate from the heirs.

Terry comes on SR

Hilda Owl: Oh Terry there you are. I heard the lunchtime bell ring. I expect you're here to meet our new Squire.

Terry Owl: Hello Mum. Yes it's all quite exciting isn't it? I'm meeting Tabby here, she's coming with her Father Tom Kat. They're both quite eager to meet the new Squire. Well I suppose we all are as we all depend on the Squire's estate for our homes and livelihoods.

Mum, Tabby and I are going to ask Squire Fowl if he will allow us to convert the upstairs rooms in the school into a home for Tabby and myself. If he agrees we'll be able to get married and live there together.

Hilda Owl: Oh yes I know old Squire Time was so good about supporting the School and the Church and looking after the tenants who live in the village. I do hope Squire Fowl will carry on in the same way, as I have been known to be a little behind with my rent from time to time especially when the White Hart **(or other local pub)** has a guest beer on tap. Oh I do like a nice pint of real ale.

Tabitha enters SR accompanied by her Father Tom Kat. Tabby rushes to Terry and they embrace.

Tabitha: Hello Terry. **(they cuddle up)** Hello Mrs Owl. Isn't it a lovely day? I'm so excited to meet the new Squire do you know when he's going to arrive?

Tom Kat: I told you Tabitha Squire Fowl should be here shortly. The message I got was to be here for the School Lunch bell. **(worried face)** I do hope he will want me to stay on as Gatekeeper and Gardener. **(to Hilda)** I have been quite worried you know. If I lose my job, I lose my house and that would mean that both Tabitha and I would have nowhere to live and no money. I don't think I've ever been so worried in my life.

Hilda: Now, now. Don't worry Mr Kat you've always done a marvellous job of looking after the estate I'm sure Squire Fowl will have heard what grand chap you are he'll be sure to keep you on.

Tom Kat: I do hope you're right Mrs Owl I do hope you're right.

Constable runs on from SR

Constable: Everybody listen, listen. Squire Fowl is just making his way along the Main Street and he'll be here in just a minute or two. Hurry now everyone line up to greet him. We should all try to make a good impression.

(Villagers all enter SR and arrange themselves in two lines SL & SR ready for a dance)

I only caught a glimpse of him but I'm sure that he looks familiar I just can't quite place him in my mind. ***(worried, thinking face)***.

Terry Owl: Now come along everyone we practised our welcome song so let's have a party and make the new Squire really welcome.

SONG – Celebration - Kool & The Gang

At the end of the song Squire F. Owl appears accompanied by Robin Outugo and they walk DC through the two lines of villagers. They end up at the front of the line where Hilda, Terry, Tabby, Tom and Constable are standing)

Hilda Owl: I can't believe it. You're the spitting image of my other son. I know you can't be him because he could never have got the money to buy the estate from Squire Justin Time, well not legally anyway.

Constable: I knew I recognised that face. You're not Squire Fowl you are Freddie Owl, Squire F. Owl. I can't believe you've come back here.

Squire Owl: ***(sneering and superior)*** So sorry to disappoint you Mother but I am indeed your long lost son. The son you loved so much that you drove him from your home all those years ago. And here is my dear brother Terry with his arm around the girl that was to be my wife. How are you Terry? I hope you are well Tabitha. No doubt we will be able to rekindle our relationship once I've settled in to my new home.

(Horror struck faces from Terry & Tabby. Mrs Owl looks dumbfounded and the villagers look at each other in confusion)

Tabitha: I never agreed to be your wife you monster.

Squire Owl: Really Tabby? I thought we had an agreement but even if we didn't we soon will, when you hear my plans for you and your father. However, let me introduce my new Estate Manager Robin Outugo (O-2-go), an unusual name let me say it how it's spelt Out U Go. He is a specialist in rent collection, arrears and evictions. No doubt you'll be seeing a lot of him in the next few weeks.

(to the villagers) Now, let me thank you all for that glorious welcome, never have I felt so much at home in my own village. Robin would you like to say a few words?

Robin Outugo: **(severe and nasty)** Thank you Squire Owl. I do have a few words for you all. From this point on under my stewardship there will be no laxity and no excuses. Rents will be paid on time or Out U Go!

CURTAINS

ACT I Scene II – FOT

Squire Owl and Outugo enter thru tabs SL

Squire Owl: Well I think that went very well. What a delight to see their faces when they recognised me. This is the culmination of years of ambition. **(to audience)** That means I've been planning this for some time. I saw you looking confused. Now Outugo you will help me in my plan to evict my dear Mother from her lovely little cottage. **(Boos from audience)** Oh shut up you plebs I'm having a wonderful time. I also want to make sure that my dear brother Terry doesn't get to marry his childhood sweetheart Tabitha Kat.

Outugo: But I thought you said that she was your childhood sweetheart?

Squire Fowl: Oh! That was just a little fib to make them worry and make me laugh. However, I do intend to marry Tabby just to spite my brother. **(more boos from audience)** I shall make her marry me. **(Audience – Oh no you won't Oh yes I will. etc.)** Tabitha is the most beautiful girl in the village and as Squire I deserve to have her as my wife and I intend to make sure that happens.

Outugo: Well Squire Owl how are we going to achieve this? Do you have a plan?

Squire Owl: Indeed I do Robin, indeed I do. We, that is you, will make sure that my mother is evicted by the end of the month then I intend to have a quiet little chat with Tabitha's father Tom Kat who is currently the Gatekeeper and Gardener of my new estate. I shall point out to him that his job and his home depend upon his doing exactly as I say and I say that Tabitha will marry me or they'll both be put on the streets. I think he'll see reason don't you?

Outugo: Oh yes! A masterful plan Squire, masterful. Nothing like a bit of 'Fowl Play' eh Squire? But tell me why should you want to evict your mother and make your brother so unhappy?

Squire Owl: Oh that's simple. As a young man I got myself into a little trouble here in the village. I found myself in need of money rather urgently so I stole the children's dinner money from the school. Terry has always been far too trusting, I knew where he kept the key to the cash box, and then I pinched the silver candlesticks from the church and sold them to a passing tinker. My dear mother guessed it was me and she and Terry had it out with me one night and told me that I must confess and give myself up to that stupid Constable Constable.

Outugo: You mean that chap with the large truncheon?

Squire Owl: Yes that's him. Can you imagine me going to gaol? I had no choice, that very night I took myself off and I vowed to exact revenge on them both. I've made my fortune and now I mean to make sure they suffer.

Outugo: Well Squire I can see that you have good cause to revenge yourself on your family. You can count on me to assist you in any way I can as long as the rewards for completing the job are sufficient.

Squire Owl: Oh you have no idea of the richness of the rewards. There is a separate incentive to achieve my aims. I have struck a deal with LIDAL to build a supermarket here in the village. However, they need land on which to build and they tell me that the best possible site would be my mother's cottage and the schoolhouse. As Squire I will find an excuse to sack Terry and disband the school but my mother is a different proposition, she has a lifetime tenancy on the cottage so the only way to get her out is to force her out. This deal is worth millions of pounds to me. Have no doubt you will be well rewarded for your assistance.

Outugo: Good, good! I have a plan to get her to leave but I will need a couple of men to help me and I have two in mind who are nearby and available. Their names are Snatch and Grabbit two vicious villains who will do whatever it takes.

Squire Owl: Excellent get them here with all speed there is no time to lose. The deal with LIDAL must be done within the month. How do you intend to proceed?

Outugo: Snatch and Grabbit are such ruffians that I will get them to scare her so badly that she will flee her cottage and never wish to return. Leave it with me. These men are demons.

(they exit thru the curtains SL)

ACT I Scene III FOT & Inside Hilda's House

FOT

Snatch & Grabbit enter through the auditorium interacting and adlibs with the audience as they make their way to the stage. - SL

Snatch: Remember what Out U Go said Grabbit we've got to scare this old biddy so badly that she leaves the cottage and never comes back.

Grabbit: But how are we going to do that Snatch?

Snatch: He told me that she's very scared of things that go bump in the night. So, we are going to break into her cottage, pretend to be ghosts and scare her so much she'll run away and never come back.

Grabbit: Oh, right Snatch. So how are we going to do that then?

Snatch: Why do you think we've brought these white sheets with us Grabbit?

Grabbit: I thought you'd had an accident and it was time to change the bed linen Snatch.

Snatch: No! No! No! Give me strength! We're going to break in to Hilda's cottage then we're going to cover ourselves in these sheets. We'll make a noise to wake the old girl up, pretend to be ghosts and scare her silly.

Grabbit: I see, so we put these sheets over our heads?

Snatch: Yes that's right.

Grabbit: Shouldn't we wash them first?

Snatch: I told you I haven't had an accident.

Grabbit: Poo! They don't smell too rosy.

Snatch: ***(getting angry)*** Will you just put it over your head.

Grabbit: ***(with the sheet over his head)*** But I can't see where I'm going.

Snatch: It'll be dark in there Grabbit we'll just have to feel our way. Now take that thing off and let's get going. We're going round the back of the cottage to break in through a window.

They exit through curtains SL.

**CURTAINS OPEN to reveal the inside of Hilda's house, which is in darkness
(soft light)**

Snatch and Grabbit enter SL tiptoeing to centre stage – all conversation in a stage whisper

Snatch: Right we're in. Now we'll put the sheets over our heads. ***(They do so)***

Grabbit: I can't see a thing Snatch.

(arms out in front he blunders around trying to find Snatch - somehow he manages to put his feet into 2 metal buckets and with a tremendous noise clumps across the stage and falls over. Snatch nearly jumps out of his skin and calls out in a loud whisper.)

Snatch: Did you hear that Grabbit? What was that noise? There's someone here. It must be the old dame, see if you can grab her.

(Grabbit is lying on the floor trying to disentangle himself from the buckets and the sheet. Snatch with arms outstretched walks towards the noise and kicks one of the buckets.)

Snatch: Aha! Ooooooh! ***(he reaches down and grabs one of Grabbit's legs)***
Gotcha! Quick Grabbit, grab it! ***(Grabbit thrashes around shouting)***

Grabbit: Oh help me Snatch she's got me!

(Grabbit reaches out and knocks Snatch's legs from under him, they both end up on the floor facing the audience with the sheets still over their heads. Snatch pulls the sheet over his head and reaches out and does the same on Grabbit)

Snatch: You complete idiot, what do you think you're doing?

Grabbit: She got me Snatch she got me!

Snatch: She didn't get you, you fool. What are you doing rolling around on the floor?

Grabbit: That old woman must have set a trap for me Snatch, these buckets were just lying in wait, they attacked my feet when I wasn't looking.

Snatch: Wasn't looking! You're such an idiot. Now stop making so much noise. Come on get up and put the sheet back over your head and stand over there. When the old girl comes in start waving your arms around to give her the willies.

Grabbit: Aren't we just supposed to scare her?

Snatch: That's what it means you twit, scare her! I'll do the same from over here. Quiet now I think I can hear her coming.

They both stand upstage with the sheets over their heads. Hilda comes in from SR with her dog Hoot Owl. The dog runs around the stage sniffing everything and barking softly.

Hoot: Och! Ruff! Och! Ruff! ***(sniffs the sheets and holds his nose)***

Hilda Owl: Oh what on earth is going on? We heard a noise. We did didn't we Hoot? ***(to the audience)*** Oh hello again. Let me introduce my little puppy dog. Everybody, this is Hoot Owl my little Scottish Terrier. ***(Hoot takes a bow)***. He's a very good guard dog - although I did have to wake him up when I heard that racket but he can be quite fierce. ***(Grabbit's legs begin to shake)***. Now Hoot what was that noise let's see what we can find.

(to audience) Did you see anything? You did? Well what was it? ***(audience respond 'It was a ghost' or something like that)*** A what? ***(audience response)*** I can't hear you ***(audience response)*** A ghost, two ghosts! It can't be, I don't believe in ghosts and neither does Hoot, do you Hoot? ***(Hoot hides behind Hilda)*** Stop that now come on let's see if we can find these ghosts. ***(to audience)*** where are they? ***(behind you)*** Where? ***(behind you, etc.)***

(Pink Panther music)

Hilda turns round on the spot, Hoot keeps behind her as she turns. Snatch and Grabbit remain still. Hilda ends facing the audience. Music stops.

There's nothing there.

Snatch and Grabbit start waving their arms in the air - audience shout

Where? Behind me? There's nothing there. OK, OK. I know Hoot has a wonderful sense of smell I'll get him to find these ghosts. Now Hoot go and find these ghosts. **(Hoot shakes his head)** What do you mean No! **(in a Glaswegian accent)** Now listen here you Scottish Mongrel, if you dina get yer fat sel' back there and find they ghosts there'll be no breakfast, no supper and no walkies tomorrer. Now get! **(Hoot hangs his head and appeals to the audience)** Get on ye mutt these posh Sassenachs will no help ye.

(Pink Panther music)

(Hoot puts his nose to the ground and shuffles around the stage. He becomes interested in Grabbit's legs and decides to relieve himself in the usual doggy fashion. Grabbit starts shaking his leg. Hoot comes back to Hilda. Both face audience. Music Stops.

Well Hoot did you find anything?

(Hoot shakes his head. Snatch and Grabbit start waving the arms about and making a noise)

Oooh! Hear that? There is something there. Follow me Hoot.

(Pink Panther music)

(Hilda moves SL with Hoot behind here. As she moves left Snatch and Grabbit move left as well so they complete a circuit of the stage).

There's nothing there!

Snatch & Grabbit waving and dancing- audience going wild with behind you as Hilda is saying there's nothing there Snatch & Grabbit move to either side of Hilda and Hoot.

I tell you there's nothing there!

Hilda and Hoot turn to SL and SR as Snatch & Grabbit reach them waving their arms and oohing. When Hilda and Hoot turn out both S&G scream and run off SL. Hilda and Hoot turn back to each other scream and woof wave their arms in the air and run off SR.

Music Stops

CURTAINS

ACT I Scene IV FOT

Constable comes on through the curtains SR

Constable: Oh Hello again! I was on my nightly patrol and I thought I heard a funny noise it sounded quite loud there was banging and howling and then I saw my lovely Hilda running down the street faster than I've ever seen her run before. I tried to catch up with her but I couldn't and she was carrying that Scottish dog of hers. Something must have put the willies up her! I came back to the village to see that everything was alright. Is everything alright? Did you hear something? There were what? Ghosts! Who? Snitch and Flabbit? Who's that a fat boy with a big nose? I've never heard of them. Where did they go? Where? I'll try to find them and when I do I'll.. I'll .. I'm not sure what I should do. What do you think? Oh no! I couldn't do that. Who let you in? No, no! I shall question them closely but first I've got to catch them. **(pause)** Before I do that have you seen my little red rose over here.

(he walks to stage right in front of proscenium arch where there is a red rose bush in a plant pot)

Have you seen my bush? It's lovely isn't it? Well strictly speaking it's not mine it's Hilda Owl's bush but I like to keep it neatly trimmed so it looks nice. She never bothers with it but it looks so lovely and smells of Hilda, a mixture of horse and cabbage that I find so alluring. I come here to talk to the rose and tell her I love her 'cos I haven't got the courage to tell Hilda to her face. I know it's a bit sad isn't it **(audience sad sound)** Oh it's sadder than that.

But I love my job. We Policemen are well respected.

SONG: If You Want to Know The Time Ask a P'liceman

Now will you keep your eyes on my bush? I said will you keep your eyes on my bush! **(Audience response)** Good because I don't want anyone plucking my bush. I hear there are lots of bush pluckers in the village and some of them go too far! So if anyone comes near it I want you to shout Constable Constable as loudly as you can. Can you do that? Good then I think we should try it don't you? I said shall we try it? **(Audience respond)** Right I shall pretend to be someone else and when I come near the rose you shout Constable Constable as loudly as you can.

(he walks to SL and then back again towards the bush. When he gets near the bush Stage Manager holds out a sign saying Constable Constable – audience respond)

Did you say something? Didn't you see me near the bush? Didn't you see the sign the Stage Manager held up? Well I could barely hear you. What if I was out on patrol swinging my truncheon? Anything could happen. No you have to be louder than that. We'll try again and this time give it some wellie. ***(sequence is repeated and audience respond very loudly)***

Oh well done I should hear that even if I'm in the next county, well done.

I do hope that one day I'll be confident enough to tell Hilda properly how I feel but until then what's a Constable to do? I regard it as a public duty to keep her bush trimmed and looking pretty. Now I think you've kept me long enough chatting on I have ghosts to catch. Wish me luck.

Ghostbusters music as Constable leaves the stage and goes through the auditorium at a trot waving his truncheon in the air.