



Masha and the Bear

A play in three acts by Sophie Masson

Based on 'Masha and the Bear' a Russian folktale retold and adapted by Sophie Masson, published in *Two Trickster Tales from Russia* (Christmas Press, 2013)

List of Characters:

Speaking parts:

Narrator

Masha, a village girl

Olga, one of her friends

Ivan, one of her friends.

Katya, Ivan's older sister

Viktor, Olga's older brother

Grandfather Kolya, Masha's grandfather

Grandmother Nadia, Masha's grandmother

Bear, who lives in the forest

Non-speaking parts

Other village kids(older ones)

Village people, to crowd around at end

Dogs are also heard at the beginning and end, but these can just be sound effects.

Settings:

Act 1: The village square; Masha's house; the forest

Act 2: The Bear's house, outside and inside

Act 3: The forest; the village square

Act One

Scene 1

The village square. Masha and her friends are sitting by the well, talking. In the distance Katya and Viktor and their friends can be seen.

Narrator: Once upon a time, a girl called Masha lived with her grand-parents in a little village near a deep dark forest. She had a happy life, except for one thing.

Masha: I wish we could go into the forest and pick berries and mushrooms!

Olga: But the forest is dangerous.

Ivan: Full of bears and wolves and all kinds of wild beasts! And we're too young. We have to wait till we're older.

Masha: You might be happy to wait. But I'm tired of it! Katya and Viktor and the others are going tomorrow to pick berries. I'm going to ask if I can come along too.

Ivan: They'll say no.

Olga: They won't let you.

Masha doesn't answer and marches over to Katya and Viktor.

Masha: Take me tomorrow.

Katya: What? Where?

Masha: To the forest.

Viktor: You know you can't.

Masha: Why not?

Viktor: Because it's not safe.

Masha: But you're going.

Katya: We're older and stronger than you.

Viktor: And wiser! *He laughs.*

Masha: I won't get in the way. I promise.

Viktor and Katya, together: No way! Scram, little girl. Go and play with your friends.

Scene 2:

Masha's house. Her grandmother is rolling out pastry for a pie, her grandfather is whistling a tune as he whittles a stick of wood. Masha is sitting at the table watching them.

Narrator: Masha wasn't one to give up easily. That night she spoke to her grandparents.

Masha: Grandmother Nadia, do you think I am slow and stupid?

Grandmother Nadia(surprised): No, my little dove, you are anything but that!

Masha: Grandfather Kolya, do you think I am weak and timid?

Grandfather Kolya(laughing): No, my little thrush, that is the last thing you are!

Masha: Well, if I am none of those things, then why can't I go to the forest with the big kids? Why can't I pick mushrooms and berries with them?

Grandmother Nadia: Masha, you know why. The forest is too dangerous.

Grandfather Kolya: And you are too young.

Masha: But I'm not! I'm ten years old now! Ten! That's five years older than our dogs Boris and Gleb. And they go into the forest all the time.

Grandmother Nadia(laughing): They have sharp teeth and sharp claws.

Grandfather Kolya: No wild beast would attack them.

Masha: I won't go near the wild beasts! I'll stay with the older kids. And I'll stay on the path.

Promise, promise!

Narrator: Masha could be very persuasive and in the end her grandparents said she could go, as long as she kept close to the others and did as she was told. Olga and Ivan were also allowed to go and so the three friends set off, with Katya and Viktor and the others, and lots of big baskets!

Scene 3:

The forest.

Katya: Remember, stay close together.

Viktor: And don't go straying off the path. We don't want to go looking for you.

Masha: You don't have to tell us, we know. Look, Olga, look Ivan, isn't that the best patch of berries, over there!

Olga: Bags I get the fattest ones!

Ivan: And I the juiciest ones!

Masha: And I the most!

Narrator: It was wonderful. There were fat juicy berries everywhere, the more they looked. Masha got so excited that pretty soon she forgot all about keeping up with the others. Further and further into the forest she went until her basket was full. Now she looked up and saw she was alone. There was no sign of her friends. No sign of the older kids. She was lost. The forest was quiet and dark. But Masha was brave. She set out to find her way home.

Act Two

Scene 1 : Outside the Bear's house

Narrator: Masha came to a clearing. And there was a log house.

Masha: (knocking on the door): Hello, is anyone there?

Masha(waits, then knocks again): Hello, can you hear me?

Masha(waits and tries once more)Hello, hello! Is anyone home? Home?

Narrator: Masha looked through the window of the house. It looked cosy and warm and she could smell such a nice smell coming from under the door! So this time she tried the door, and it opened!

Masha: I'm sure the owner won't mind if I go in for a little while. Just to rest my weary feet and put down my heavy basket. A house as nice as this must have a nice owner!

Scene 2: Inside the Bear's house

Narrator: So she went in. No-one was inside. But there was a porridge pot warming in the oven. So

Masha waited. Still no-one came. And she was hungry. She spooned porridge into a bowl, added honey from a big jar and berries from her basket. She sat down to eat. And then the owner of the house came back.

Masha: (jumping up): Oh!

Bear: (roaring) How dare you steal my.. (he stops, sniffs the air. Then he snatches the porridge bowl from the table and gobbles it all down. He licks the bowl and licks his lips. Meanwhile Masha waits, petrified)

Bear: Hmm, hmm, delicious! (he stares at Masha) Little girl, you will stay and cook for me!

Masha: But, sir, mister Bear, please I can't..

Bear: Do as I say, little girl, or I will crack your skull like an egg!

Narrator: Masha was brave, but she knew the Bear was strong and fierce and one blow from his paws and she'd be dead. There was nothing she could do but stay. Every day, she cooked and cooked, berry porridge, mushroom pancakes, honey cakes, fish pies.

Bear (sitting at table, banging on it with his spoon): More, more! Where's my breakfast, my lunch, my dinner, my snacks? A bear could die of hunger with a slowcoach like you around!

Masha: I'm sorry, sir, I'm trying my best! (she lays a plate down, and another and another)

Bear(stuffing himself): It's not good enough, you have to try harder! Where are there only two fish pies, I told you I wanted three! And what have you done with the honey pot? This porridge is not sweet enough!

Masha: I'm sorry, sir, but you finished all the honey yesterday. We have to get more. I could go to the village..

Bear(banging on table): No, you will not! You will stay here and cook and I will go and fetch honey myself. Do I have to do all the work around here? What do I have a servant for?

Narrator: And so it went on, for days and days and days. The bear ate and ate, leaving only crumbs for Masha, so she got thinner and lighter while he grew fatter and ruder. She kept her spirits up by whistling her grandfather's tunes, while she tried to think of a way to escape.

And then one day she had an idea.

Scene 3: Inside the Bear's house

Masha: Please, mister Bear, we need supplies. I've baked extra pies. Let me take some to the village today, and I can exchange them for what we need.

Bear: Do you think I am stupid? You will only try to escape. No, I will take those pies myself!

Masha: Very well, mister Bear, just as you wish.

(she gets the pies and puts them in a very big basket)

Masha: Please keep the basket closed or the pies will get cold and no-one will want to buy them.

And don't stop on the way or you won't get there before dark.

Bear: (crossly) Yes, yes, now give me that basket!

Masha: Shall I open the door for you?

Bear: No way! I'll do it, I know your tricks, you'll run away.

Narrator: While his back was turned, quick as a flash, Masha dived into the basket and hid under the pies. Because she was so light, the bear didn't notice the basket was heavier. And because he was so rude, he lumbered off without looking behind him.

Act 3:

Scene 1: The forest

Narrator: Through the forest trudged the Bear, till he began to feel tired and hungry.

Bear: The basket I'll open, Masha won't know,

And I won't tell her, anyhow.

A pie I'll eat, and rest my feet,

For I want a treat!

Masha: (from inside the basket): You I can see,

You promised me,

No pie to eat,

No rest of feet!

Bear: (startled) Ho! That girl must have hawk-eyes to see so far!

Narrator: So he did not open the basket but plodded on, till he grew tired and hungry again.

Bear: The basket I'll open, Masha won't know,

And I won't tell her, anyhow.

A pie I'll eat and rest my feet,

For I deserve a treat!

Masha: You I can see,

You promised to me,

No pie to eat,

No rest of feet!

Bear: Jumping jellied salmon! The girl has eagle-eyes, to see me from so far away!

Narrator: So he did not open the basket but went on and on.

Scene 2: The village square. Olga and Ivan are playing there, and some other village people are also around. They all run away when they see the Bear, but Olga and Ivan peek around a corner to look at the Bear. He takes no notice but stands in the square with the basket.

Bear: (bellowing) Pies for sale, tasty pies for sale! Home-made by my own fair paws!

Olga: (whispering) Who ever heard of pies made by a bear!

Bear: (roaring) Come and buy, come and buy, or I will blow your houses down!

Ivan(whispering): Eh? I think he's got the wrong story!

Narrator: Just then Masha whistled a special tune she knew and all the village dogs, including Boris and Gleb, came running and barking. The bear dropped the basket and fled for his life. And he never came back.

Olga: (creeping towards the basket) I thought I heard that basket whistle!

Ivan (following her): A kettle whistles but never a basket full of pies!

Masha(jumping out of basket, covered in crumbs): A pie can talk and sing and whistle, haven't you heard?

Olga: Oh, Masha, you're safe!

Ivan: We're so glad to see you! Even if you look very crummy..

Masha and Olga groan, together.

Just then Masha's grandparents come running into the square, followed by all the other village people. Her grandparents hug Masha.

Grandmother Nadia: Oh my dear, my little dove, we thought you were lost for ever!

Grandfather Kolya: We were so sad, my little thrush, we missed you so!

Masha: Well, I'm back and I'm fine, and I have such a story to tell you!

Narrator: And as everyone crowded around, she told them what had happened. When they heard how she'd tricked the bear, they laughed and laughed and called all the village to hear. And to this day, when you go there, people still tell the story of Masha and the bear.