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# First Impressions of Peter

## SCENE ONE

Peter first enters the play from a higher level than Willie, immediately this enforces his idea of power and stature by physically being above Willie. He has a dramatic entrance which shows that he thinks himself an important person.

We also see during this entrance that Willie's response to Peter is to be 'a little wary.' Therefore, the actor playing this role needs to use physical movements to show that he is an intimidating seven year old, even before he has spoken.

When he first speaks, he does not answer Willie's greeting, instead he questions him about how good his own entrance was. This shows a complete lack of consideration towards others. Throughout the conversation, he then continues to ignore Willie's contributions. An actor playing this role must use movements to help convey the fact that he ignores people and is very self absorbed.

Peter then tries to appear expert and knowledgeable of parachute jumping, trying to teach Willie the rules. His tone needs to suggest his own self importance and he should appear to be boasting when talking about his Uncle Arnold. He is a boastful character and continues using the boastful tone throughout scene one, when talking about how well he can throw and how many parachutes his Uncle will probably bring him home.

Peter is a violent character and his first act of violence could be shown through the movement of throwing the stone. The important verb to concentrate upon, when considering his movements is Potter's use of the verb 'hurl.' This suggests a power or violence and it should be easy to understand why Willie was initially wary of him.

Peter likes being in complete control and does not like to lose control. When Willie does not immediately move away from Peter's actions when Peter is 'travelling over Willie' in order to get a piece of his apple, Peter reacts instantly, showing his threatening side to the character. He can not stand the idea of Willie defying him and so when Willie defiantly bites the apple, Peter reacts instantly, in a violent and physical fashion. He seems to enjoy the violence and exerting power over those weaker than him and his tone of voice could suggest happiness when he is holding Willie on the ground.

When Peter speaks, it seems that he often says things to deliberately offend Willie, Peter should use a taunting tone when saying lines such as 'your dad is a loony' or 'your dad isn't doing anything good for nothing at all.'

We are also told, through the stage directions, that Peter is not as bright as Willie and when Willie cleverly starts to get his own revenge about the dirty apple stories, the audience should be able to see Peter's power and command faltering, this could be shown through his voice when he starts to become alarmed by Willie's tales of dirty apples in Germany.

The only person that Peter seems unable to exert his violence and authority over is the infamous Wallace Wilson. Although we will never meet this boy, the audience will constantly hear stories about his achievements. Peter should seem a little in awe of Wilson and a little jealous of his stature. His vocal expression should reveal this.

## SCENE TWO

In the second scene we also see Peter's admiration of Wallace Wilson and again his vocal tone should reflect his idolisation of a boy who can urinate on a gorse bush. However, when Willie refers to the fact that Wilson punched Peter, Peter's demeanour should immediately change and show annoyance and embarrassment.

Despite being so violent towards Willie, it seems that he wants to continue playing with Willie and when Willie mentions leaving, Peter clearly wants him to stay and instead of using violence he tries to offer him a look at his Dandy. Therefore, his vocals and movements must show that even though he is intimidating, he does want Willie to play with him.

How can you use movements to help convey this higher stature and self importance? Think about the speed of his movements.

What physical movements or gestures should Peter use that would make Willie wary of this character?

What physical movements could help to convey how self-absorbed this boy is? Could any vocal ideas help to convey this, for example, could you stress the pronoun 'I' each time he uses it?

How will you use vocals to show his sadistic side, that he enjoys hurting people?

Should Peter's movements and vocals change each time Wallace Wilson is referred to?

# Character Analysis of Willie

**CHARACTER INTERACTIONS**  
 How would you describe his interactions with Peter? Does he always act in the same way with Peter?

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISATION**  
 According to the stage directions, how should this character move? What do these movements reveal about his character?

**CHARACTER MOTIVATION**  
 Willie brings in the theme of violence at the start of the play, and is used to show how the adult world of war and violence is impacting upon the children's world of play. Can you find an example of this?

**CHARACTER INTERACTIONS**  
 Why do you think Willie and Peter are friends? Do they like each other?

**VOCAL CHARACTERISATION**  
 How should an actor playing this character use vocals to suggest his weariness of Peter?

# sample

**CHARACTER INTERACTIONS**  
 Do you think Potter wants to present this character as more intelligent than Peter? If so, how would this be conveyed to an audience?

**VOCAL CHARACTERISATION**  
 How should the actor react, in terms of their vocals, when Peter makes reference to Willie's father? Is Willie an emotional character?

**CHARACTER INTERACTIONS**  
 How does Willie react to Peter's violence? Does he ever retaliate?

**CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS**  
 Why does Willie always make reference to Wallace Wilson?