

DANIEL GRYPHUS: THE MUSICAL

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ACT II

SCENE 1

QHADI

- Amauta, why haven't we had a condor prince for 500 years?

AMAUTA

- Because for 500 years, no Andean condor has been able to meet all the requirements needed to become a prince.

SOME STUDENTS

- What requirements?

AMAUTA

- Let's see, the requirements to become a prince are: number one, the aspiring prince needs to have complete integrity. He has to be brave yet sensitive to the needs of others. Number two, he has to have a couple of required physical traits. For instance, he has to be at least four and a quarter feet tall.

(Murmuring is heard throughout the classroom)

YANAC

- But Amauta, the tallest of us is just under 4 feet tall.

FELICO

- That's such a lie. My dad's four feet three inches tall.

YANAC

- So's your waistline! Ha ha ha.

STUDENTS

- Ha ha ha!

AMAUTA

- On top of that, this condor must possess at least a 12 foot wingspan.

STUDENTS (murmuring)

- 12 feet!

NINAN

- Not even an albatross has that type of wingspan!

YANAC

(stands up, points to Chick - who is sitting in front of Yanac - and he shouts)

- Amauta, look no further. Here is the next Prince of the Andes: his majesty Chick Griffiths. Oh, I'm sorry, I meant to say Gryphus!

(He tries to take Chick's pillow, but Chick doesn't let go of it. The entire class laughs their heads off and begins to make fun of the albino condor while the teacher tries to quiet them down)

AMAUTA

- Quiet, everyone! That's enough! Yanac, you're not going to recess today!

(Red in the face, Chick gets out of his seat, turns around and punches Yanac, who falls to the ground. Chick then runs out of the classroom, never letting go of his little pillow. He makes a mad dash until he reaches the edge of a cliff. He walks to the right edge of the stage. The stage goes dark except for a light which shines on the white condor. A change of scenery takes place while this is happening. Once there, Chick says:)

CHICK

- I'm gonna show those dodos who's a true Andean condor!

(With his wing firmly pancaking the pillow to the side of his face, Chick jumps into the abyss, which is backstage. For a few seconds, the audience can hear the desperate flapping of his wings and his screams of horror as he free falls. Suddenly, a providential gust of wind whips up and whisks him to the top of a tree. Chick's cries for help can be heard amidst the blowing of the wind. Everything is partially dark except

the spotlight which is shining on the condor, who is now lying on top of his little pillow in the treetops.)

MUSIC CUE: 'Desolation' (background music)

(Chick sobs bitterly until he falls into a deep sleep)

(The stage goes completely dark)

END MUSIC CUE: 'Desolation'

ACT II

SCENE II

(Now it's dawn, and Chick, who is lying on his side on top of his pillow, wakes up. The sun is shining on his face and birds are singing all around him. Chick suddenly realizes that a 12 year old boy is standing on the ground below him. The boy is wearing jeans, a partially torn sleeveless shirt, and a Daniel Boone-type explorer's hat. The boy is aiming a slingshot at him)

MUSIC CUE: 'My Friend W'achi' (instrumental)

W'ACHI

- I got you now, you bird you. What are you doing on the roof of my treehouse? I'm gonna hit you right in the...Hey! What type of bird is this? No way, I can't believe it! A white baby condor!

(Chick begins to shudder in fear)

- Hmm, I've never seen a totally white condor before...it's probably an albino. Caramba! Just my luck, I find him now when my Warachicuy (*this is rite of passage for boys that is celebrated in some Andean villages*) is still a year and a half away. Maybe I'll hide him away until then.

(W'achi pauses for a moment when he sees how terrified the baby bird is)

- Hey, amigo, take it easy, don't be afraid, I'm not gonna hurt you. Relax, buddy...look, can't you see I'm not carrying a knife or an axe? I've only got my slingshot, but I use this to scare away dangerous predators, so no worries.

(W'achi gestures for Chick to come down the tree, which Chick does)

- That's better. My name's W'achi, pretty soon I turn 13.

(W'achi waits a moment and then smiles)

- I must be crazy to be talking to a condor.

CHICK

- No, you're not.

W'ACHI

- Hey, you can talk!

CHICK

- Koi koi koi, kuroon kuroon kuroon. Zizzz.

W'ACHI

- I was told that condors can't talk and that they can barely make a few clucking and hissing sounds.

CHICK

- What do you think I'm doing?

W'ACHI

(W'achi has a puzzled look on his face as he turns his head and looks at the audience. Then he looks at Chick)

- If you aren't talking to me, how come I understand what you're saying?

CHICK

- Don't know. Maybe you speak Condorian?

W'ACHI

- No, I only speak Spanish and a little Quechuan. So what language are we talking to each other in?

(Chick shrugs his shoulders)

- What's your name?

CHICK

- I'm nameless.

W'ACHI

- I don't get it. Don't you have a name?

CHICK

- Not yet.

W'ACHI

- What are you doing with that pillow?

CHICK

- What pillow?

W'ACHI

- The one that's stuck to your face.

CHICK

- Oh, I dunno. It's always been there. I think I was born with it.

W'ACHI

- Well, you're alive thanks to that pillow of yours. My treehouse roof woulda broken all your bones. Anyway, what are you doing down here? Condors make their nests way up high in the cliffs, not down here in the trees.

CHICK

- What happened was I fell.

W'ACHI

- Well, you're lucky it was me who found you, because if an adult had found you...

CHICK

- Perhaps it would have been better that way. They could have put an end to my miserable life.

W'ACHI

- Whoa, just a sec. What in the world are you talking about? You can't be going around saying things like that!

CHICK

- I don't have any friends, everyone makes fun of me because of my color and because of how small I am. People say I'm a mixed breed bird, that I'm half Andean condor and half king vulture. My dad's totally ashamed of me. That's why I won't have a name until my Malku Kuntur (*rite of passage for young male Andean condors*) comes, which is still a whole year and a half away.
Currunde currunde currunde!

(He starts to cry)

W'ACHI

- So if you're nameless, what does everyone call you?

CHICK

- Everyone calls me Chick, but I hate that name!

W'ACHI

- Ha ha ha! That's funny!

CHICK

- Stop laughing!

WACHI

- Well, you still are a chick!

CHICK

- So are you, too!

W'ACHI

- Alright, alright. Don't get angry, amigo.

END MUSIC CUE: 'My Friend W'achi'

MUSIC CUE: 'I Wanna Be Black'

CHICK

I wanna be black

Not white but black

If I were black I would blend in the crowd

If I were black, I would make my dad proud

I wanna be black

Not white but black

If I were black, all my problems would fade

If I were black, life would be lemonade

W'ACHI

Let's color your feathers with black latex paint

All your friends are gonna faint

When they see you head to toe

Covered high and low with black paint!

CHICK

Forget it, the summer rain'll wash it all away

I'll be whiter than the snow

On a feathery winter's day

I have to say, "No way!"

W'ACHI

*Amigo, I'm clueless on which way to turn
I can't solve your problem
I am really quite concerned
I am really quite concerned*

CHICK

*I wanna be black
Not white but black
If I were black I would blend in the crowd
If I were black, I would make my dad proud*

*I wanna be black
Not white but black
If I were black, all my problems would fade
If I were black, life would be lemonade*

W'ACHI and CHICK

It's sad but it's true, there's nothing we can do

W'ACHI

He wants to be black

CHICK

Coy coy kuroonday

W'ACHI

He wants to be black

CHICK

Coy coy curoonday

W'ACHI

He wants to be black

CHICK

Coy coy curoonday

W'ACHI and CHICK

*Coy coy curoonday
Coy coy curoonday
Coy coy curoonday*

END MUSIC CUE: 'I Wanna Be Black'

*(Chick sobs bitterly. Silence falls on the stage
for a few seconds)*

MUSIC CUE: 'There Is Someone Who Loves You'

(W'achi begins to sing. He sits on a large rock at the edge of the river which flows by the tree. Chick sits on a nearby rock and listens to him)

W'ACHI

*Someone, someone there is someone who loves you
In silence and from afar
Though they laugh at your name
And it brings you such shame
There is someone who loves you*

*If you decide to forgive
Elevating your mind
Happiness you will find*

*Feel the fire burning in your heart
Take a look around you
Notice what love can do
Let your song be brand new*

*You are not fly-by-night
You're a vulture of light
One day you will fly*

*Spread your wings till you touch the sun
Sing in Condorian
Dream as big as you can
Leave resentment behind*

*You are South America's pride
From your comb to your wings
In the Andes, you're king*

*Someone, someone there is someone who loves you
In silence and from afar*

END MUSIC CUE: 'There is Someone Who Loves You'

ACT II

SCENE III

MUSICAL CUE: 'My Friend W'achi'

OFF STAGE NARRATOR

"W'achi decides not to tell anyone about his find. He keeps the little condor in his tree house, and every day he goes and feeds him."

W'ACHI

(He whistles to Chick, but Chick doesn't answer or even appear. So W'achi shouts:)

- Hey, little kuntur...!

CHICK (immediately appears at the tree house door with the pillow stuck to his ear)

- Who you callin' 'little'?

W'ACHI

- I just don't know what to call you. You already said you don't like people calling you Chick.

CHICK

- Just whistle.

W'ACHI

- Like I did before?

CHICK

- Yep, just like that.

W'ACHI

- I brought you some food.

WAWA

- I don't see any food.

W'ACHI

- Wait a sec...

(W'achi lunges two fingers into the back of his mouth and down his throat. This makes him gag over and over again)

CHICK

- Human, what the heck are you doing?

(W'achi has turned purple and his eyes are filled with tears because of all the physical exertion)

W'ACHI

- Just wait, dude, it's coming!

CHICK

- Who's coming?

W'ACHI

- Not who...what!

(He immediately sticks his fingers down his throat...after 2 or 3 more tries, he stops and tells the condor:)

W'ACHI

- It's not coming?

CHICK

- What's not coming?

W'ACHI

- The food I brought you!

CHICK

- You mean you brought me food inside your belly?

W'ACHI

- For sure! Where else would it be? Our teacher explained that baby birds eat regurgitated food. Today I ate a whole bunch of meat and I brought you some.

CHICK

- I AM able to eat fresh meat, you know.

W'ACHI

- Oh, really?

CHICK

- But rotten meat really hits the spot.

W'ACHI

- Don't be thinking I'm gonna eat rotten meat just for you!

CHICK

- Nah, just bring me some raw meat and I'll set it aside in a corner of the tree house until it rots a little.

W'ACHI

- No way! That'll stink up my whole house!

CHICK

- Your house already stinks. It has a human stink to it!

W'ACHI (begins to climb the rickety ladder which leads up to his treehouse)

- Now listen here, little kuntur...

CHICK

- Don't call me that!

W'ACHI

- So, what in the world do you want to be called?

CHICK

- I already told you. Just whistle.

W'ACHI

- I can whistle to you when you're far away, but I can't do it every time I want to talk to you.

CHICK

- In that case, I want you to come up with a name for me.

W'ACHI

- A name?

CHICK

- Yeah, give me a name. Name me after someone important.

W'ACHI

(Wachi's now climbed up the ladder and is at the treehouse. He straddles his legs around a large, robust tree limb which reaches out and over the river flowing underneath)

- My heroes are Daniel Boone and Indiana Jones. I wanna be just like them.

CHICK

- Daniel Boone?

W'ACHI (points to a coonskin hat)

- Yeah. See this hat?

CHICK

- Yeah, I like it.

W'ACHI

- It's a coonskin hat, just like the one Daniel Boone wore. My dad brought it back with him after a trip he took to the United States.

CHICK

- And who's Daniel Boone?

W'ACHI

- He was a very brave explorer.

CHICK

- So my name will be Daniel Boone.

W'ACHI

- Boone was his last name. Don't you have a last name?

CHICK

- Yes, I have one.

W'ACHI

- You're only missing a first name, then.

CHICK

- That's right. I'm gonna call myself Daniel, just like the brave explorer.

W'ACHI

- Great! And what's your last name?

CHICK

- Gryphus.

W'ACHI

- Griffiths?

CHICK

- No. Gryphus.

W'ACHI

- Gryphon?

CHICK

- No. GRY - PHUS.

W'ACHI

- There you go! Now you have a first AND a last name.
'Daniel Gryphus'.

CHICK

- What about you? What's your last name?

W'ACHI

- Whistler, but I like Boone more.

(Suddenly the condor grimaces and grabs his stomach)

CHICK

- Your last name's Whistler cause you're into whistling...hey W'achi, I'm starving.

W'ACHI

- I got my handy-dandy slingshot here. I can hunt down something for you, but you'd better learn how to fly pretty soon. That way you can get your own food and you won't need to depend on me.

CHICK

- And how do you expect me to learn how to fly without my parents here and without me going to flight school?

W'ACHI

- I'll teach you.

CHICK (teasing W'achi)

- You, you human cub? The only thing you know how to do is crawl around on the ground.

END MUSIC CUE: 'My Friend W'achi'

MUSIC CUE: 'Ohwashywashylashyyay'

W'ACHI

- I also know how to swim! Ohwashywashylashyyay!

(As he says this, W'achi jumps from the tree limb into the river underneath)

- C'mon, Daniel, it's your turn. Take the plunge!
Ohwashywashylashyyay!

(W'ashi invitingly shouts while in the water, which reaches up to his chest)

CHICK

- What does that mean?

W'ACHI

- Dunno exactly. I just know that it makes you stronger in times of trouble. My grandpa Teco taught it to me. It's from a forgotten language.

W'ACHI

*Ohwashywashylashyyay
Ohwashywashylashyyay
Ohwashywashylashyyay, yay, yay
Ohwashywashylashyyay*

*You must have the courage that you need
And you will always succeed
You must keep your head up and believe
Troubled waters will soon recede*

*Ohwashywashylashyyay
Ohwashywashylashyyay
Ohwashywashylashyyay, yay, yay
Ohwashywashylashyyay*

END MUSIC CUE: 'Ohwashywashylashyyay'

DANIEL

- I don't know how to swim.

W'ACHI

- That's even better. Then you'll try even harder. C'mon, jump! If you don't, I'll grab you and dunk you myself!

DANIEL

- Ohwashywashylashyyay!

(Daniel breathes deeply and placing the pillow on his beak, he jumps in. He desperately flaps his wings and tries to stay in the air, but instead he plunges straight down into the water. Splash! W'achi doesn't catch him. In fact, W'achi doesn't even try to catch him; instead, he swims away from the condor, who bobs to the surface a few seconds later. Daniel is terrified)

DANIEL

- W'achi, I'm drowning!

W'ACHI

- Let the pillow go and you're not going to drown. I have seen a lot of vultures swimming in the river.

DANIEL

- I am NOT a vulture, I'm an Andean con...gloop..gloop..

(Daniel can't finish the sentence. He sinks into the water and emerges seconds later)

- W'achi, help me!

W'ACHI

- I'm already doing it, amigo. Don't panic. Just let go of the pillow so that you can use both your wings to swim.

(W'achi says this with indifference. He crosses his arms; the water reaches up to his chest)

DANIEL

- I'm drooooooowing!

W'ACHI

- If you don't let go of your pillow, you WILL drown. Listen to me, just trust me on this one. Let the pillow go. It was useful when it cushioned your fall from the cliff and stopped you from getting killed. But you don't need it anymore. Let it go, get rid of it or you'll drown. Spread your wings as far out as you can and you'll be able to float.

(Daniel finally lets his pillow go and watches it float downstream. He then follows Wachi's

instructions.)

- See how you're floating?

DANIEL

- I wanna get out of here!

W'ACHI

- Move your wings butterfly style.

DANIEL

- What?

W'ACHI

- Move them like this. Watch me.

(W'achi begins to show him the arm movement. Daniel imitates him, but after three tries, he tires. He stops moving his arms and lets himself float.)

- Take a rest, but don't stop stretching out your wings or you'll sink into the water.

(Daniel begins to move his wings butterfly style and is able to reach the shore by himself.)

- Bravo, my butterfly! You have just mastered the art of swimming!

DANIEL

- I need to learn how to fly, not how to swim. After all, I'm an..

(W'achi rolls his eyes and finishes the sentence at the same time as his very upset friend)

DANIEL and W'ACHI (finishing the sentence together)

- Andean condor!

W'ACHI

- Yeah yeah, I know the story. But look, if you want to be the best at what you do, you'd better learn how to swim. You never know when you're gonna need it.

DANIEL

- And what makes you think I want to be the best at what I do?

W'ACHI

- So you don't want to be the best? Why, then, did you plunge into the depths of the canyon from a cliff almost ten thousand feet high? Weren't you trying to prove something?

DANIEL

- I fell. I didn't jump.

W'ACHI

- I don't believe you for a minute. You don't know how many times I've come across chicks who died because they jumped out of their nests before they were ready to fly.

DANIEL

- I'm not just another chick. I'm a...

W'ACHI

- Vulture in a tuxedo.

(Daniel silently looks at W'achi. After a few seconds, he finally responds)

DANIEL

- Well, if you want to look at it like that...

W'ACHI

- Daniel, c'mon, man up and admit it. It will do you good if you face the truth. That's the only way you're going to get rid of what my grandpa Teco calls "hang-ups disguised in glory".

DANIEL

- I am a...

W'ACHI

- Vulture in a white tuxedo. Come on, Danny, you can do it.

DANIEL

- What do you know?

W'ACHI

- Look at yourself. You feel bad because you don't measure up. You feel bad because your feathers aren't black like a 'true' Andean condor. Do you want to live the rest of your life not forgiving yourself for not being like everyone else?

DANIEL

- It's just that I am already an Andean condor, and that's all I want to be.

W'ACHI

- But you're not like the others, and that bums you out.

DANIEL

- Hey, W'achi, enough of your help already. I don't need it.

W'ACHI

- If you don't take yourself so seriously and accept who you really are - a vulture in a white tux - you'll stop being so hard on yourself. But if you continue to take things so seriously, you'll be unhappy the rest of your days.

DANIEL

- What can a human pipsqueak like you know?

W'ACHI

- My grandpa Teco says human history is filled with vultures wearing tuxedos.

DANIEL (muttering)

- Ok, ok...so I'm a vulture in a tux.

W'ACHI (as if reminding Daniel)

- In a white tux.

DANIEL

- In a white tux. That's right, in a white tux. Ha ha ha!

(The two friends begin to laugh)

STAGE RIGHT

(lights turn on)

THEO

- Is it true that condors are vultures?

AUNT MERY

- Condors are members of the vulture family.

THEO

- And what do they mean by 'vulture in a tuxedo'?

NANO

- It means that Daniel is a show-off.

AUNT MERY

- The expression is referring to people who feel inferior and, because of this, these people act like they're better than others based on meaningless things like the amount of money they have or the color of their skin or the clothes they wear or their nationality.

CHEMAN

- Or the color of their feathers.

(Stage right lights turn off)