

# WRINGER

Book and Lyrics by Rebekah Greer Melocik  
Music by Jacob Yandura

## Characters

PALMER LARUE

... A sensitive and friendless 10-yr-old boy.

DOROTHY

.... A whip-smart 9-yr-old girl, new to town.

BEANS

... A trouble-maker, 10 yrs old.

MUTTO

... Beans' sidekick, 10 yrs old.

MR. LARUE

... Palmer's father, a soldier, newly-returned home after several tours of duty.

*MRS. LARUE appears only on voicemail, and -- if not pre-recorded -- should be played by the actor playing DOROTHY.*

*NIPPER, the pigeon, is a puppet played by all the actors onstage at different points of the play.*

## Setting

Waymer, Pennsylvania: a small, rural town -- plenty of sidewalks, trees and open sky.

Present day.

**SCENE 1: THE PARK**

**(Music #1: THE APTLY-NAMED PIGEON HUNT)**

*(A school bell rings in the distance.*

*BEANS and MUTTO enter, and drop-kick their textbooks.)*

**BEANS**

GOODBYE SCHOOL,  
GOODBYE BOOKS,  
GOODBYE MULTIPLICATION CHARTS!

**MUTTO**

HELLO SUN,  
HELLO FUN,  
HELLO NINTENDO AND GO-KARTS!

**BEANS/MUTTO**

SUMMERTIME,  
OUR FAVORITE TIME,

**BEANS**

GIRLS TO TORTURE,

**MUTTO**

TREES TO CLIMB,

**BEANS**

HOUSES TO EGG,

**MUTTO**

ADVENTURES TO START,

**BEANS/MUTTO**

BUT THE VERY VERY VERY BEST PART

**BEANS**

IS THE PIGEON HUNT,  
THE ANNUAL PIGEON HUNT,  
WHERE GOOD FOLKS GATHER FROM MILES AROUND  
TO WATCH FIVE THOUSAND PIGEONS DROP TO THE GROUND.  
THE APTLY-NAMED PIGEON HUNT!

**MUTTO**

What does 'aptly-named' mean?

**BEANS**

Mutto, 'Apt' was on our vocab test last week. This is why you almost failed English.

**MUTTO**

I forget to study.

**BEANS**

Well, you can't forget to study anymore. Or you'll be held back. And we won't start Middle School together. And then everything will be ruined. So if you don't know what something means from now on, you gotta ask me and I'll tell you. Okay?

**MUTTO**

What does 'aptly-named' mean?

**BEANS**

It means the name fits perfect. Like me, I'm aptly named 'Beans.'

**MUTTO**

Because you love Beans!

**BEANS**

You bet I do. But not as much as I love...

PUSHING THROUGH THE CROWDS,  
EATING HOT-DOGS,

**MUTTO**

Hot-dogs!

**BEANS**

WAITING FOR THE HUNT TO BEGIN.

KEYING ALL THE OUT OF STATE CARS,  
BETTING CANDY BARS,

**MUTTO**

Almond joy!

**BEANS**

ON WHICH SHOOTER WILL WIN.

**MUTTO**

Hungry hungry hungry hungry!

**BEANS**

THE TOWN UNITES,  
THE CHILDREN CHEER

**BEANS/MUTTO**

TO SEE WHO'S GONNA SHOOT THE MOST PIGEONS THIS YEAR!

**MUTTO**

SPORTSMANSHIP!

**BEANS**

AND FIREARMS!

**BEANS/MUTTO**

ARE JUST A COUPLE OF THE MANY, MANY CHARMS  
OF

*(A wringer sign-up table is rolled onstage, manned by MR.  
LARUE in military uniform.)*

**BEANS/MUTTO (cont'd)**

THE PIGEON HUNT,

**MR. LARUE**

THE PIGEON HUNT,

**BEANS/MUTTO**

THE ANNUAL PIGEON HUNT.

**MR. LARUE**

OUR PROUD TRADITION!

**BEANS**

TO ENTER THE HUNT YOU MUST BE BOLD --

**MUTTO**

AND UNFORTUNATELY, MUST BE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD.

**MR. LARUE**

BUT FOR THE YOUNGER MEN,  
WHO HAVE JUST TURNED TEN,  
YOU COULD BE A WRINGER!

**BEANS/MUTTO**

A WRINGER! A WRINGER!  
THIS YEAR WE GET TO BE WRINGERS!!

**MR. LARUE**

IT'S MY FATHERLY DUTY TO PASS THIS KNOWLEDGE  
TO THE SONS OF OUR TOWN,  
THIS WONDERFUL TRADITION  
THAT MY FATHER ALSO PASSED DOWN.  
IF THE PIGEON FALLS, BUT IS NOT QUITE DEAD,  
A WRINGER PUTS IT OUT OF ITS MISERY INSTEAD.  
TAKE THE BIRD BY THE NECK,  
GIVE IT ONE HARD TWIST --  
AN IMPORTANT REMINDER  
THAT WITHOUT DEATH,  
LIFE CANNOT EXIST!

AT  
THE PIGEON HUNT,

**MR. LARUE/BEANS/MUTTO**

THE ANNUAL PIGEON HUNT.  
THE EVENT WHICH OUR COMMUNITY WAS BUILT UPON,

**MR. LARUE**

ALL ABOUT FAMILY VALUES,

**MUTTO**

AND A GRAVITRON!

**MR. LARUE/BEANS/MUTTO**

THE ANNUAL APTLY-NAMED WAYMER TOWNSHIP  
PIGEON HUNT!

*(BEANS and MUTTO run to the sign-up desk.)*

**MUTTO**

Reporting for Wringer duty, Sir yes Sir!

**MR. LARUE**

At ease, soldier.

**BEANS**

We heard you on the radio, Captain.

**MUTTO**

Were you really wounded in action?

**MR. LARUE**

Sure. Got some shrapnel in my knee.

**BEANS/MUTTO**

Cooooool.

**MR. LARUE**

Let's get you boys signed up. Where's your third?

**BEANS**

You see, Mr. LaRue, our third was Benny Farquar, but he got sent to that wilderness therapy camp in Colorado,

**MUTTO**

For hopeless cases.

**BEANS**

We'll have a third by the time of the Hunt.

**MR. LARUE**

Now Carl --

**MUTTO**

He's called Beans now. Because he likes Beans. It's apt.

**MR. LARUE**

You know the rules. You need three people to make a wringer team: one to wring, one to bag and one to watch the field for gunfire. I can't let you sign up without a third.

**MUTTO**

It's not our fault Benny has a behavioral disorder!

**MR. LARUE**

Tell you what, guys -- my boy Palmer's over by the lake and I know for a fact he doesn't have a wringer team yet.

*(MUTTO pulls BEANS aside.)*

**MUTTO**

Palmer is *not* fun.

**BEANS**

Everyone else already picked their wringer teams.

**MUTTO**

Why did Benny's mom leave that staple gun out?

**MR. LARUE**

(calling out)

And if Palmer's on your team, I can give you some early wringer training, like my dad did for me and my friends.

**BEANS/MUTTO**

Cooooooool!

**BEANS**

To the lake!

*(BEANS and MUTTO run off to find PALMER.)*

*TRANS: The Lake. PALMER stands over a bug.)*

**(Music #2: A MOST AGREEABLE BIRD)**

**PALMER**

I'm gonna squash you, bug! Squash you so flat you'll never crawl again. I mean it. I'll do it. I'll --

*(PALMER gently moves the bug from the ground to a leaf.)*

**PALMER (cont'd)**

Stay off the sidewalk, will ya? You could get hurt.

SUMMER SUCKS,  
EV'RY SUNBEAM MAKES ME SICK,  
EV'RY WHIFF OF GREEN GRASS MAKES ME WANNA HURL.  
TELL YOU WHY -  
EV'RY SUMMER I'M REMINDED  
I'M A WUSS, A WIMP, ABOUT AS MANLY AS A LITTLE GIRL.  
I'M NOT EVEN INTERESTED IN HUNTING,  
NOT THE TEENIEST SMIDGEON,  
I CAN'T EVEN SQUASH A BUG,  
HOW COULD I EVER KILL A PIGEON...?

And besides, what's so bad about pigeons?

I SAW A PIGEON ON A TRIP TO THE BIG CITY,  
PURPLE SHINY FEATHERS OVER FLUFFY WHITE DOWN.

I TOOK ONE LOOK AT THIS BIRD AND THOUGHT IT'S SUCH A PITY,  
WE DON'T HAVE PRETTY BIRDS LIKE THIS IN MY TOWN.

HE WALKED THE CROSSWALK JUST LIKE THE HUMANS DID,  
HIS EYES WERE ORANGE AND SO ALERT, AS IF TO SAY  
"I LIKE YOU TOO AND IF YOU COULD BE A CITY KID.  
I'D SHARE THIS CROSSWALK WITH YOU GLADLY EVERY DAY."

HE WALKED BESIDE ME,  
NODDING HIS HEAD.  
LIKE HE COULD HEAR EVERY WORD,  
AGREED WITH EVERYTHING I SAID,  
AND IT'S ABSURD TO THINK  
ANYONE ANYWHERE  
WOULD WANT HIM DEAD!  
A MOST AGREEABLE BIRD...

*(BEANS and MUTTO run in out of breath.)*

Palmer, **BEANS**

Don't hit me! **PALMER**

We're not gonna hit you. **BEANS**  
*(BEANS and MUTTO exchange "he's so lame" looks)*  
How'd you like to be on our wringer team?

Me? **PALMER**

Is there anyone else named Palmer here?  
What kind of a name is Palmer anyway? **BEANS**

A family name. **PALMER**

Family *lame* is more like it. **MUTTO**

If you're going to be our third, some changes will have to be made. Like the name. It's gotta go. **BEANS**



**PALMER**

Uh, I kind of need that --

**BEANS**

From now on, you'll be... Snots.

**PALMER**

Snots?

**MUTTO**

Snots. I like it. It's easy to say. And it rhymes with lots of things -- shots, robots, tater tots!

**PALMER**

I thought Benny Farquar was your third.

**MUTTO**

Benny's not around anymore.

**BEANS**

Which means I'm in charge.

**PALMER**

You guys don't want me on your Wringer team. There's gotta be somebody else --

**MUTTO**

There's nobody else.

**BEANS**

Think of it this way, Snots: if you're with us, then you have our protection.

**PALMER**

Who do I need protecting from?

**BEANS**

From us -- if you're not with us. So what is it, *Snots*, yes or no?

**PALMER**

What happens if I say no?

**BEANS**

What happens if he says no, Mutto?

**MUTTO**

We could tie him to that tree over there 'til he pees his pants.

**BEANS**

Hope you haven't been hydrating today. You in, *Snots*?

**PALMER**

(what choice does he have?)

Yes. I'll be on your wringer team.

**BEANS**

(to PALMER)

Lead the way.

**(Music #2A: THE APTLY-NAMED PIGEON HUNT - REPRISE)**

*(All three boys march back to the desk where MR. LARUE hands them a pen. BEANS and MUTTO sign up to be wringers.)*

**BEANS/MUTTO/MR. LARUE**

THE PIGEON HUNT,

**PALMER**

THE PIGEON HUNT,

**BEANS/MUTTO/MR. LARUE**

THE ANNUAL PIGEON HUNT.

**PALMER**

WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?

**BEANS/MUTTO/MR. LARUE**

WHERE GOOD FOLKS GATHER FROM MILES AROUND  
TO WATCH FIVE THOUSAND PIGEONS DROP TO THE GROUND,  
THE ANNUAL APTLY-NAMED,  
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND,  
FUN-FOR-THE-FAMILY,

**PALMER**

A MOST AGREEABLE BIRD!

**BEANS/MUTTO/MR. LARUE**

WAYMER TOWNSHIP PIGEON HUNT!

*(PALMER signs his name.)*

**MR. LARUE**

All right, soldiers, you're all set. I'll see you at home, Palmer, and the rest of you on the field.