

L'ENFANT ET LES SORTILÈGES

Music by Maurice Ravel

Libretto by Colette (Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette)

Premiere: Monte Carlo Opera, March 21, 1925

Characters

The Child (mezzo-soprano)

The Mother/Cat (mezzo-soprano)

Father/Tom-Cat/Grandfather Clock (baritone)

Louis XV Chair/Bat (soprano)

Nightingale/Fire (soprano)

Dragonfly/Chinese Cup (mezzo-soprano)

Squirrel (mezzo-soprano)

Shepherdess/Owl (soprano)

Shepherd (mezzo-soprano)

Armchair/Tree (bass)

Little Old Man/Tree Frog/Teapot (tenor)

Princess (soprano)

A little boy is in his bedroom, misbehaving. When his mother berates him and leaves him alone with an austere lunch, the boy goes on a destructive rampage. He smashes dishes, destroys wallpaper, torments animals, breaks a grandfather clock, and rips up books. He then collapses exhausted into an armchair, which, along with other domestic items, comes to life and chides him for his bad behavior. The boy is astonished by the sorcery surrounding him.

Escaping to his beloved garden, he finds the animals there ready to take revenge on him for his violence towards them. But when the boy binds the paw of a wounded squirrel, the animals forgive him and lead him home to his mother.