

**Levels: Grade 5 (Middle)**

**Word Count: 2,128**

### Script Summary:

Lazy Emelya catches a magical pike that agrees to give him whatever he wishes, as long as Emelya frees him, in this retelling of a Russian folktale. Emelya wreaks havoc with his wishes because he is too lazy to work and gets in trouble with the tsar, whose daughter falls in love with Emelya. A series of wishes lead Emelya to a beach where he and the tsarina struggle to survive. The tsarina's frustration at Emelya's laziness leads him to wish to be hard-working, which turns the situation to their advantage.

### Objectives and Assessment

**Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- consistently read their lines with appropriate rate and accuracy
- consistently read their lines with appropriate expression, including pause, inflection, and intonation
- follow along silently and listen for spoken cues

### Using the Scripts:

- Each role is assigned a reading level according to the syntactic and semantic difficulty encountered. Feel free to divide roles further to include more readers in a group.
- Discuss vocabulary and encourage readers to practice their lines to promote fluent delivery of the script.
- Have readers highlight their lines on the scripts, and encourage them to follow along as everyone reads.

### Vocabulary:

**Story words:** astonished, commotion, complaints, diligently, dutiful, extremely, gratifying, misjudged, rampaging, responsibility, troublemakers, understandably

### Cast of Characters:

Grade 5 (Middle)		
Narrator 1	Pike	Officer
Narrator 2	Wife 1	Tsar (ZAR)
Emelya (EM-el-yah)	Wife 2	Marya (MAR-yah)

## Cast of Characters:

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Narrator 1	Pike	Officer
Narrator 2	Wife 1	Tsar (ZAR)
Emelya (EM-el-yah)	Wife 2	Marya (MAR-yah)

### Narrator 1:

Once upon a time in the wide, cold land of Russia, there lived three brothers. The first two brothers were hard working, **dutiful** men who were always working **diligently** at their jobs.

### Narrator 2:

But the third brother, Emelya, was as lazy as the day is long. All he did was sit on the warming-bench next to the stove, keeping himself warm and cozy during the long Russian winter. He wouldn't lift a finger to help his brothers' wives around the house—and there was plenty to do.

### Narrator 1:

The wives of the hard-working brothers always tried to get Emelya to pitch in and help out, but he would only do chores if they promised him presents from his brothers.

### Wife 1:

Emelya, would you please go fetch some water?

### Emelya:

Oh, I don't want to. It's **extremely** cold outside, and it's so warm by the fire.

### Wife 2:

Emelya, if you go get us some water, your brothers will bring you a beautiful new red caftan when they come home!

**Emelya:**

Oh, all right then.

**Narrator 2:**

Emelya climbs off the stove, puts on his boots and his shabby old caftan, which is a long winter cloak, and takes two pails and an axe to the river.

**Narrator 1:**

Emelya chops a hole in the ice with his axe, dips his buckets into the water, and is about to leave when he notices something moving in the current below. It is a big pike, swimming around the hole he's made in the ice. Emelya reaches into the water and snatches the pike.

**Emelya:**

Gotcha! Boy, that's a really nice pike. We'll have a fine fish stew tonight!

**Pike:**

Let me go, Emelya, and I'll do you a good turn someday.

**Emelya:**

Ha! How can a fish do me any good? It's the cooking pot for you.

**Pike:**

I have more powers than you can imagine, Emelya. I can give you anything you wish for—anything at all. Someone like yourself can surely see the good in that.

**Emelya:**

I can't imagine how a fish could possibly get me anything I want. But if you can prove it, I'll let you go.

**Pike:**

Just ask for what you want, and I'll give it to you. Say the words, "Pike, Pike, do what I like," and it shall be done at once. Try it and you will see.

**Emelya:**

I suppose I can give it a try. Pike, Pike, do what I like. Make my buckets full of water go home by themselves.

**Pike:**

It is done—see for yourself.

**Narrator 1:**

Without spilling even a drop, the full pails begin to march up the hill toward home. Emelya is delighted. He releases the pike back into the water and rushes home to warmth of his stove. It isn't long before he finds more uses for the pike's gift.

**Wife 2:**

Emelya, if all you're going to do is lie by the stove, then you should have time to go to the forest and chop some wood.

**Emelya:**

Oh, I don't really feel like it. It's too cold and windy outside. I prefer to stay by the fire.

**Wife 1:**

Please Emelya, if you do this one thing, your brothers will bring you a new red caftan.

**Emelya:**

Oh, I suppose I'll do it for a new caftan.

**Narrator 2:**

Emelya thinks he might have a little fun with this chore. So he brings his axe out to the sled and prepares to go.

**Wife 2:**

Emelya, how are you going to move the sled without hitching up the horses?

**Emelya:**

Oh, don't you worry. Your wood will be chopped before you'll even miss me.

**Narrator 1:**

Emelya mutters under his breath.

**Emelya:**

Pike, Pike, do as I like! Send this sled into the forest!

**Narrator 2:**

The sled sets off as fast as a rocket. Emelya can barely hang on. As he roars through town hanging onto the sled, he knocks over wagons, runs over market stalls, and gives people quite a few bumps on the elbow. The townspeople are **understandably** quite upset.

**Emelya:**

Out of my way, slowpokes! I'm going to be done with my chores in time for tea!

**Narrator 1:**

Once he is in the forest, Emelya commands the axe to chop and stack the wood for him while he sits comfortably in the warm sled under his caftan. Then, he dashes back through town, making sure to knock over all the wagons, run over all the stalls, and bump all the elbows that he missed the first time through.

**Emelya:**

I told you I'd be back—watch out!

**Narrator 2:**

Of course, Emelya couldn't cause that much trouble and **commotion** without attracting the attention of the Tsar. After he heard the **complaints**, the lord of the land sent his officer to command Emelya to come to the palace and explain his actions.

**Officer:**

Sir, are you Emelya with the sled that drives itself?

**Emelya:**

I am.

**Officer:**

There have been a few reports that you caused quite a stir in the market the other day. The townspeople have asked that you pay for the knocked-over wagons, run-over stalls, and bumped elbows you caused.

**Emelya:**

Oh, I don't feel like going all the way to the Tsar's palace. And I certainly don't feel like paying for what I did. That would involve hard work and earning money. Maybe if the Tsar will give me a new red caftan when I get there, I'll come to his palace and try to work out a deal.

**Officer:**

Well. . . the Tsar normally doesn't offer gifts to **troublemakers** who demolish the market. But perhaps I can convince him of this one small thing.

**Emelya:**

Why don't you travel on ahead, and I'll catch up with you.

**Narrator 1:**

The officer leaves the house. After he's gone, Emelya whispers under his breath.

**Emelya:**

Pike, Pike, do as I like. Fly me to the Tsar's palace on my comfortable stove-seat.

**Narrator 2:**

And with that, the stove rips right off the wall, up through the roof of the house, and across the sky, carrying Emelya with it. He doesn't have to move an inch, and even in the cold Russian winter wind, he is as warm as toast.

**Emelya:**

This certainly is pleasant. I wish I'd thought of this when I went out to chop the wood.

**Narrator 1:**

The Tsar looks out his window and sees a man flying toward his palace on a stove.

**Tsar:**

What in the world is that?

**Officer:**

That's the man who disturbed the market—the one with the sled that drives itself.

**Narrator 1:**

The stove lands with a thud on the doorstep of the Tsar's palace, and Emelya hops off.

**Emelya:**

Good evening, your royal highness. I heard that you wanted to speak with me, and that you had a nice new caftan for me. I hope it's red.

**Tsar:**

Caftan? What are you talking about? I've been hearing many serious complaints about you knocking and running over and bumping things in the marketplace. You're going to have to pay for what you broke. Why on earth did you go **rampaging** through the market like that?

**Emelya:**

Well, why on earth did the market get in the way of my sled? I don't really feel like doing work to earn money to pay for the damage. And where's my red caftan?

**Tsar:**

You, sir, are a fool. You'll be sent to prison if you don't take **responsibility** for the damage you've done!

**Narrator 2:**

Just as Emelya is about to answer, he notices someone standing in the corner of the great hall. It is Marya, the Tsar's beautiful daughter and the princess of Russia.

**Emelya:**

Pike, pike, do as I like. Make the Tsar's daughter fall in love with me!

**Narrator 1:**

Instantly, Marya was in love with Emelya.

**Marya:**

Father, who is this wonderfully handsome man by the stove? I must marry him at once!

**Tsar:**

What? This is the man who blasted through the marketplace and caused all that damage, which he refuses to pay for. You won't marry this lazy trouble-maker!



**Marya:**

I don't care what you say—I will marry this man even if it means that I have to give up the whole kingdom.

**Tsar:**

If that is what you wish, then I suppose I must agree. Officer, go and prepare us a feast for the new prince.

**Narrator 2:**

But the Tsar has something up his sleeve. Just as the Officer leaves, the Tsar leans over and whispers in his ear. He has the officer prepare a wonderful feast, full of the richest foods and delicacies in the land. Emelya eats more than ten men while Marya gazes lovingly at him. And of course, after Emelya is full, he falls fast asleep near his warm stove.

**Narrator 1:**

The next thing Emelya knows, he is in a very small, dark space, his feet are wet, and he seems to be bobbing up and down in a rhythmic pattern. He can hear a young woman crying somewhere near him.

**Emelya:**

What's happened? Where's my warm stove? And where's my caftan?

**Marya:**

Oh, it's terrible. I insisted on marrying you, even if it meant giving up the kingdom, and my father said that I must do so! He's packed us in a barrel and sent us out on the sea, and now I will never be Tsarina.

**Emelya:**

Oh, I'll get us out of this mess. Pike, Pike, do as I like. Let the winds blow the barrel onto a warm and sandy shore.

**Narrator 2:**

In that moment, the winds pick up and toss the barrel on the sea until it comes to rest on a smooth, sunny beach.

**Marya:**

Oh, thank goodness we're back on land. But there's nothing here. . . Emelya, won't you help me build a little shelter?

**Emelya:**

Oh, I don't feel like it. Pike, Pike, do as I like! Build us a marvelous palace.

**Narrator 1:**

In the blink of an eye, a shining palace appears on the beach, with a pleasant, shady courtyard full of fragrant flowers and colorful songbirds.

**Marya:**

I know that I said that I loved you, but I must say that you are quite lazy. You rely on that fish to get you everything you want. Do you think you could try to change?

**Emelya:**

Oh, I don't feel like it. Pike, Pike, do as I like. Make me less lazy—and a bit more handsome, too!

**Narrator 2:**

All of a sudden, Emelya is catching fish, chopping wood, and preparing wonderful meals, all with a very handsome smile on his face.

**Marya:**

My, Emelya. Isn't there anything I can do to help? I've never seen anyone work so hard.

**Emelya:**

No, my dear, I can't think of a thing for you to do. I find all of this hard work very **gratifying** all of a sudden.

**Narrator 1:**

But it just so happened that it was getting a bit stuffy in Moscow, and the Tsar felt like taking a trip to his favorite beach. When he stumbled upon a palace where there had never been one before, he was quite **astonished**. He was even more astonished to see his own daughter gazing out the window.

**Tsar:**

Marya! How did you get here, and whose palace is this?

**Marya:**

Father! I thought I'd never see you again. This is my new palace. Come inside for dinner, and I'll show you everything.

**Narrator 2:**

The Tsar marvels at the beautiful palace, which is ten times as nice as his own, and he eats and drinks the wonderful dinner with Marya and Emelya. Of course, Emelya is a bit more handsome now, and the Tsar doesn't recognize him.

**Tsar:**

I simply can't stand it any longer—I must know who you are. You've built this wonderful palace since the last time I visited this beach, which wasn't *that* long ago. You've made us a splendid dinner without a cook or a butler in sight. And you've been a completely tireless host—telling stories, refilling my plate, even singing songs. Most of all, you've convinced my daughter that she wants to marry you, instead of that lazy troublemaker from the country.

**Emelya:**

Do you happen to remember that lazy troublemaker's name?

**Tsar:**

Well. . . let me think.

**Emelya:**

It wasn't Emelya, was it? And did he happen to arrive at your door riding a stove through the air?

**Tsar:**

How could you know that?

**Emelya:**

Your highness, I am Emelya, the man you put in a barrel and sent out to sea. This palace is mine, and I've got enough energy to run this whole country.

**Marya:**

Emelya has been hardworking, kind, and handsome ever since we landed on this beach.

**Tsar:**

I see that my daughter has found a worthy husband. I apologize, Emelya; I must have **misjudged** you.

**Narrator 1:**

With the Tsar's blessing, Emelya and Marya are married in the grandest wedding ever, which Emelya planned, and set up, and cooked for entirely by himself. He wished himself so much energy that he never has to rely on magic again, and yet he is happy and content.

**Narrator 2:**

Not long after, Emelya and Marya become Tsar and Tsarina. Emelya's tireless work earns him the love and respect of all the Russian people. And somewhere, deep under the ice of the river, a pike winks.