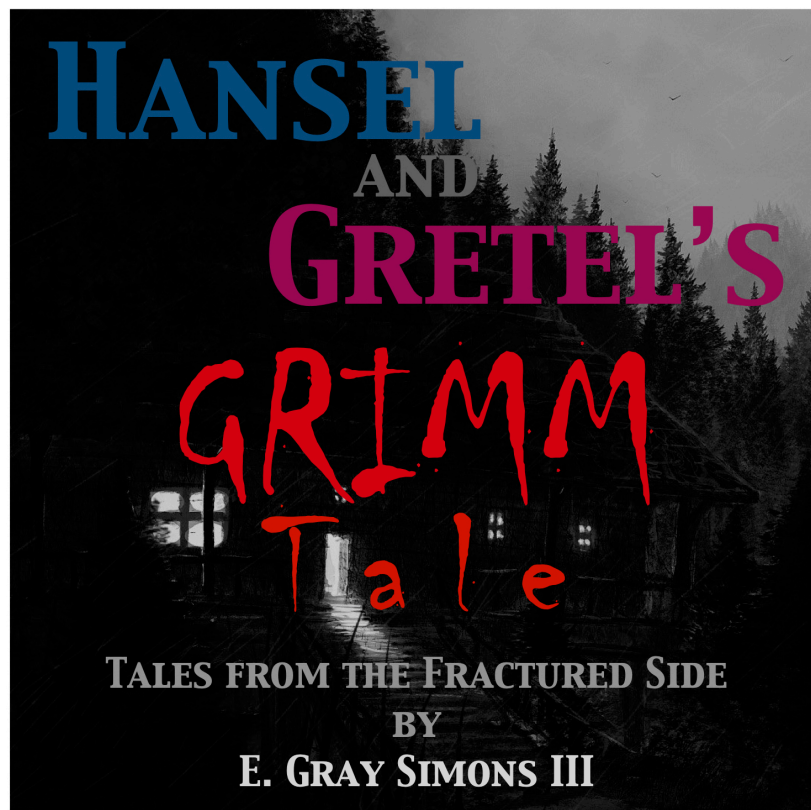


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Adapted from Grimm's Fairytales
by
E. Gray Simons III and Tara Franklin



Newport, Maine

© 2011 by E. Gray Simons III
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

HANSEL AND GRETEL'S GRIMM TALE

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

Script and music copies must be purchased from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 for each infringement, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING: THE LAW!

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT whether bought or rented, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made and license granted before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be bought and/or rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

"HANSEL AND GRETEL'S GRIMM TALE is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com"

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

CHARACTERS: 8f, 7m, 2 either)

HANSEL (m)

GRETEL (f)

FATHER (m)

KING (m)

MOTHER (f)

MILLER (m)

MILLER'S WIFE (f)

YOUTH (m)

OLD WOMAN (f)

ROBBER 1 (m or f)

ROBBER 2 (m or f)

WITCH (f)

PRINCESS (f)

QUEEN (f)

FERRYMAN (m)

MONSTER'S MOTHER (f)

MONSTER (m)

DOUBLING: 2f, 2m

ACTOR 1 — Hansel, Youth (m)

ACTOR 2 — Gretel, Robber 2, Princess, Miller, (f)

ACTOR 3 — Father, King, Robber 1, Monster, Ferryman (m)

ACTOR 4 — Mother, Miller's Wife, Old Woman, Witch, Queen, Monster's Mother (f)

(Removing the designated roles from the previous assignments to Actors 1-4)

OPTIONAL ACTOR 5 — Robber 1, Monster, Ferryman, Scene shifter, Dumb Show (m)

OPTIONAL ACTOR 6 — Robber 2, Old Woman, Monster's Mother, Scene shifter, Dumb Show (f)

Scenes:

SCENE 1 — HANSEL AND GRETEL'S HOUSE, EVENING

SCENE 1a — A RIVERSIDE, LATER THAT EVENING

SCENE 1b — THE OLD MILL, MORNING

SCENE 2 — HANSEL AND GRETEL'S HOUSE, THE NEXT MORNING

SCENE 3 — IN THE FOREST, SEVERAL HOURS LATER

SCENE 4 — A DIFFERENT PART OF THE FOREST, SOME TIME LATER

SCENE 5 — DEEPER IN THE WOODS, A SHORT TIME LATER

SCENE 5a — THE RIVERSIDE, NINETEEN YEARS LATER

SCENE 5b — THE OLD MILL, MINUTES LATER

SCENE 5c — INSIDE THE SMALL HOUSE, MOMENTS LATER

SCENE 6 — OUTSIDE THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE, A SHORT TIME LATER

SCENE 6a — IN THE PALACE GARDEN, LATER THAT DAY

SCENE 6b — INSIDE THE PALACE, SOME TIME AFTER

SCENE 7 — THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE, THE NEXT MORNING

SCENE 8 — INSIDE THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE, A SOME TIME LATER

SCENE 9 — THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE, A WEEK LATER

SCENE 9a — THE EDGE OF A RIVER, LATER THE SAME DAY

SCENE 9b — THE CAVE OF THE MONSTER OF THE BLACK FOREST, MOMENTS LATER

SCENE 10 — SOMEWHERE IN THE WOODS, HOURS LATER

SCENE 10a — ON THE EDGE OF THE RIVER, A SHORT TIME LATER

SCENE 10b — OUTSIDE THE PALACE, THE NEXT MORNING

SCENE 10c — AT THE EDGE OF THE RIVER, SOME DAYS LATER

HANSEL and GRETEL'S GRIMM TALE (Adapted from the story by The Brothers Grimm) by E. Gray Simons III *TYA*. 8f, 7m, 2 either (2f, 2m or 3f, 3m with doubling) About 55 minutes. This lighthearted tale based on two Grimm's Fairy Tales (*Hansel and Gretel* and *The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs*). Young Hansel and Gretel are obsessed with stories. They and their parents take parts in the story, *The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs*. As they are separated from their parents in the woods one day, they meet the Witch of the wood, they have only their wits and the power of the tale to ensure they make it home and get a "happily ever after" ending. As the story progresses it presents parallels to Hansel & Gretel's own harrowing adventures. Through their play-acting, they discover a way to defeat the Witch. Hansel and Gretel are reunited with their parents and consider themselves the luckiest of all unlucky people. Part of the **TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE** Series. **Order #3179**

There is a separate **STUDY GUIDE** available that has been expertly prepared by **The Idaho Theatre for Youth**. It is free of charge. Contact the publisher for a copy.

Playwright **E. Gray Simons III** has worked for fourteen years as an Artist-in-Residence at BTF. In 2000, he became Artistic Director of BTF **PLAYS!** and has since written and directed more than a dozen original plays, among them *Aesop's Network*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Mystery Sideshow 2: Strange Waves*, and *Mystery Sideshow 3: Way Out West*.

Simons made his BTF directorial debut in 2000 with *The Wind in the Willows* and in 2001 he became director of the *Summer Performance Stories*, *The Odyssey*, *The Magic Flute*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Monkey*. Other directorial credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*(2009) on BTF's Main Stage, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Holiday Memories* in the Unicorn Theatre, *Robin Hood* at the Berkshire Museum, *The Who's Tommy* at Brandeis University with co-director Eric Hill, and *Big Love* at Brandeis University. His BTF acting credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Peter Pan*, *Moby Dick-Rehearsed*, and *Wilder, Wilder*.

Berkshire Theatre Festival's year-round education program, **BTF PLAYS!** serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of **BTF PLAYS!** is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region. Each year, more than 10,000 students in underserved rural and inner city schools throughout Berkshire Country are reached through in-school residency programs, vacation camps, and our touring production. Over the course of the summer, **BTF PLAYS!** hosts vacation camps for students from grades K-6, providing opportunities to learn about acting, improvisation, storytelling, and working behind the scenes in the theatre.

TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE is a series of plays by E. Gray Simons III that premiered at the Berkshire Theatre Festival (BTF) *TYA* Summer Touring program. This series contains: *Alice In Wonderland*, *Arabian Nights*, *Cinderella*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Hansel and Gretel's Grimm Tale*, *Just So Stories*, *The Magic Flute*, *Monkey*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Pinocchio*, *Robin Hood*, *The Wind in the Willows*.

HANSEL and GRETEL'S GRIMM TALE

SCENE 1

SETTING: HANSEL AND GRETEL'S HOUSE, EVENING.

(A large ornate wardrobe stands at center stage. On either side of the wardrobe stand two folding changing screens. HANSEL enters reading a book titled, "The Three Gold Hairs". He continues to read for some moments at center and then closes the book.)

HANSEL: Gretel, come in here!

(He runs to the wardrobe, opens it and begins to pull out costumes.)

Gretel!

GRETEL: *(enters)* What is it?

(She notices clothes on the floor as HANSEL continues to pull out more.)

Hansel, what are you doing?

HANSEL: I've just read an amazing story and I want to put on a play about it.

GRETEL: A play?

HANSEL: You know, a story that we can act out for an audience.

GRETEL: What's the story about?

HANSEL: It's about a greedy King who sends a lucky young man on a perilous journey. You have to help me. I need actors.

GRETEL: Is it scary?

HANSEL: Yes.

GRETEL: I don't want to be scared.

HANSEL: But it'll be fun.

GRETEL: I don't know...

HANSEL: There's a beautiful Princess.

(He holds up a delicate crown.)

GRETEL: *(She takes the crown.)* Okay, I'll do it.

HANSEL: Excellent! I'm going to get more costumes. I'll be right back.

(HANSEL exits and GRETEL tries on the crown as FATHER enters.)

FATHER: Gretel, it's just about time for bed... What are you doing?

GRETEL: Oh, Father! Hansel and I are putting on a play.

FATHER: A play?

GRETEL: I'm going to be a beautiful princess!

FATHER: I see.

(HANSEL enters carrying more costumes pieces.)

HANSEL: Father! We are putting on a play.

FATHER: So I've heard. I hope it's a short one. It's just about time for the two of you to get to bed.

HANSEL: But we already have some costumes out. Can't we play a little?

FATHER: Well...

HANSEL and GRETEL: Please!

FATHER: All right.

HANSEL: Wonderful, you can be the King!

FATHER: Me?

HANSEL: Gretel, give father this crown...

(Gives Gretel a crown.)

and that cloak.

GRETEL: Come father, I'm the princess and you're the king... which means you're also my pretend father.

(She giggles and hands her father the crown and the father puts it on.)

FATHER: Well, since I'm the king,
(Strikes a kingly pose)
I demand to know what story we are presenting.

HANSEL: *(holds up his book.)* The Three Gold Hairs!

FATHER: Oh, yes... I remember that story. As I recall, I am playing a very greedy king.

HANSEL: Yes...
(HANSEL flips through the pages of the book.)
And you're traveling through your kingdom...

FATHER: But I am disguised as a peasant,
(FATHER puts on the old cloak.)
So no one knows that I am the King.

HANSEL: That's right...
(Continues reading.)
And you come to a village and learn of a child that has been born with a birthmark in the shape of a crown, which means he is destined to marry a King's daughter.

GRETEL: Is the King happy that the newborn baby will grow up and marry his daughter?

FATHER: No, the King is angry about the news because the child has been born into a poor family and he doesn't want a peasant married to his daughter.

HANSEL: So he gives the mother of the child a large bag of gold and tells her he will help the child find his proper destiny.

FATHER: Then the King takes the child of good fortune to the river to throw him in.

GRETEL: That's not very nice.

FATHER: Don't worry Gretel, it's only pretend.

HANSEL: We need to make a river... I know! Gretel give me a hand.

SCENE 1a

SETTING: A RIVERSIDE, LATER THAT EVENING.

(HANSEL brings on a flowing blue fabric and he and GRETEL become the river. As violin music plays, FATHER enters as King with the child in the basket.)

KING: What a foolish mother you have, giving you over to a stranger for a small amount of gold. What she doesn't know, is that I'm your ill-fated father in law, and your destiny will end here, at the river.

(Holds up the child)

From this unwelcome suitor have I saved my daughter!

(Gives the child to the river)

So much for good fortune.

(FATHER places the basket in the river fabric and then holds the basket from underneath the fabric and helps HANSEL and GRETEL move the basket around the stage as if it's being carried along by the river. After a few moments, Hansel and Gretel's MOTHER enters.)

MOTHER: What in the world is going on here?

GRETEL: Mother! We're making a play and Father has been helping us.

MOTHER: And getting you all wound up when you should be getting ready for bed.

FATHER: *(peeking out from under the river fabric)* They needed someone to play the king.

MOTHER: Well, it's time to end the show for the night. We all have to get up early.

HANSEL: It's not that late, Mother. Can we please just perform one more scene?

MOTHER: Hansel, I don't want to argue about this.

HANSEL: Please! We can't stop now.

MOTHER: Why?

GRETEL: The child of good fortune has just been thrown into the river by the king.

MOTHER: *(To Father)* Do you see what you've done?

FATHER: I'm a wicked King.

MOTHER: Oh, okay... one scene and then straight to bed.

HANSEL: Excellent! Who wants to play the Miller?

GRETEL: Me!

HANSEL: Are you sure? The Miller's a boy.

GRETEL: I can play a boy.

HANSEL: Good. Who will play your wife?

GRETEL: Can Mother be in the scene with me?

(ALL turn to Mother.)

MOTHER: Oh, all right.

(GRETEL and her MOTHER put on costumes.)

HANSEL: Gretel, you enter over there like you're walking down to the river to fetch some water and then you see the basket.

SCENE 1b

SETTING: THE OLD MILL, MORNING.

(GRETEL carries a water pail and moves towards Hansel as they become the River.)

MILLER: A miller's work is never done. The waterwheel on the river spins the grindstone and our lives go on in the same way every day.

(He notices the basket)

Wait! What's this? A basket floating down the river. What could be in it, I wonder. Maybe something someone doesn't want. Let's see...

(He picks up the basket from the river, sets it down on the ground and looks inside)

Oh! It's a baby boy! A living infant!

(The MILLER'S WIFE enters.)

MILLER'S WIFE: What's keeping you so long? Are you down here daydreaming again? I need that

water to clean the pans.

MILLER: Wife! Dear, wife! Come see what I have found floating on the river.

MILLER'S WIFE: (*Peers into the basket*) A precious child!

MILLER: Who do you think he belongs to?

MILLER'S WIFE: Well, I have no idea, but whoever it was, they certainly were selfish. Here we are with no children of our own, and there are people just throwing their extra ones away.

MILLER: This is a gift to us. We shall raise this child as our son.

MILLER'S WIFE: The poor dear has probably been floating for days.

(She takes baby, which is simply a rolled up blanket, from the basket)
We finally have the child we always hoped for.

MOTHER: Okay, time for bed.

(MOTHER unrolls the blanket with a snap, takes off her costume and begins to clean up.)

HANSEL: Can't we just play a little more?

MOTHER: I said one scene.

HANSEL: But that was so short –

MOTHER: One scene –

HANSEL: And we have to see what happens to the child of good fortune.

MOTHER: You are about to become the child of “misfortune” if you don't go to bed. We have to go into the forest tomorrow. It's going to be a long day.

GRETEL: I don't like the forest. It's scary.

FATHER: Don't worry, Gretel. It will be fine.

MOTHER: We all need to help your father collect firewood.

HANSEL: I can't stand collecting wood.

MOTHER: If we don't help your father collect firewood, he will have nothing to sell and we will have no money to buy food and we will starve. If you can stand to eat you will have to collect wood. Now go to bed.

FATHER: Come along, Hansel, Gretel. To bed... sweet dreams, my children. Goodnight.

HANSEL and GRETEL: Goodnight.

(HANSEL and GRETEL exit.)

FATHER: My dear, that was more fun than I've seen them have in quite a while. Must you be so hard on them?

MOTHER: Life is hard. I'm just trying to prepare them for the difficult path ahead.

FATHER: But they're children and they hardly ever have a chance to enjoy life.

MOTHER: Do you think I'm enjoying myself? Every day is a struggle and we have nothing.

FATHER: We have each other.

MOTHER: What good is that when we're all slowly starving?

(HANSEL suddenly appears around the wardrobe and stops when he sees his parents arguing.)
How are Hansel and Gretel going to enjoy childhood when they have nothing to eat?

FATHER: What is it, Hansel?

HANSEL: I forgot my book.

FATHER: You can get it tomorrow. Off to bed.

(HANSEL exits and after a moment he and GRETEL peek over the top of the wardrobe to listen to the rest of their parent's argument.)
My dear, I'll be going into the village after we collect wood and I'll speak to the Miller again. He may need an assistant.

MOTHER: You've spoken to the Miller before and nothing has come of it.

FATHER: Maybe it will be different this time. At least I'm trying...

MOTHER: Trying? Tomorrow we will wander into the woods with our last pieces of bread. We have no hope for ourselves, much less for Hansel and Gretel.

FATHER: I'm doing everything I can to provide for you and the children.

MOTHER: Well, it's not enough.

FATHER: So what should we do? Save ourselves and leave our children in the forest?

MOTHER: Yes, that's a perfectly sensible solution.

FATHER: I'm serious. If you're so sure we won't make it then why don't we get rid of them and then we'll at least have a chance.

MOTHER: Yes, of course. You're right! Tomorrow we will leave our children in the forest to die! I'm all for it!

FATHER: Great!

MOTHER: Fine! Goodnight!

(MOTHER exits.)

FATHER: Goodnight!

(After a moment, FATHER exits. HANSEL and GRETAL who are still peering over the wardrobe, look at each other and exit.)

SCENE 2

SETTING: HANSEL AND GRETAL'S HOUSE, THE NEXT MORNING.

(MOTHER enters and finishes cleaning. She finds Hansel's book and smiles as FATHER enters.)

FATHER: Good morning.

MOTHER: Morning.

FATHER: *(notices the book in her hand.)* Are you worried about what's going to happen to the child of good fortune?

MOTHER: I'm just worried about what's going to happen to us... I'm sorry I was so discouraging last night. I know you are doing everything you can to keep us all happy.

FATHER: Happy and healthy...

(THEY embrace.)

Don't worry, I have a feeling there's some good fortune coming soon for us. I don't think we'll be forced to leave our children in the forest.

MOTHER: I was hoping you'd say that. Are they up yet?

FATHER: I'll go and wake them.

(FATHER exits as MOTHER continues to clean. Soon after HANSEL and GRETEL enter. HANSEL wears a cloth bag with a shoulder strap.)

MOTHER: Good morning. Are you ready for our trip into the forest?

HANSEL: Yes.

MOTHER: Good. I'm going to pack for our trip and then we'll be off. Oh, here's your book.

(She hands the book to Hansel.)

We have a lot to do today, but maybe we can perform the next scene when we get back. I'm curious to find out what comes next for the cast away child.

HANSEL: Yeah.

(MOTHER exits.)

GRETEL: Hansel, do you really think they're going to leave us in the forest?

HANSEL: You heard what they said last night.

GRETEL: What should we do?

HANSEL: Don't worry, I have a plan.

(FATHER enters carrying an axe.)

FATHER: Hey, are you two, ready for today's adventure?

(Notices the children look unhappy.)

Now don't look so down. At least we'll all be together.

GRETEL: You won't leave us, will you?

FATHER: Leave you?

GRETEL: In the forest...

FATHER: Well, there may be just a little time for you and Hansel to be on your own collecting smaller scraps of wood, while your mother and I chop the bigger pieces.

(MOTHER enters.)

MOTHER: Is everyone ready?

FATHER: I think we're all set.

MOTHER: Good. Here's your breakfast.

(She hands them each a piece of bread.)

I know it's not much, but I have another piece for each of you for lunch.

FATHER: We'll manage, right children.

(HANSEL and GRETEL nod feebly.)

After this trip, I think things will be different.

HANSEL: How do you know?

FATHER: I don't know... I just feel like our fortunes will be changing for the better.

MOTHER: Well, then we better get started.

(ALL exit as the set shifts to the forest.)

SCENE 3

SETTING: *IN THE FOREST, SEVERAL HOURS LATER.*

(The changing screens are moved to represent the forest. MOTHER and FATHER enter followed by HANSEL and GRETEL.)

FATHER: All right children, I want you to stay in this clearing and collect scraps of wood until you fill up your bags.

HANSEL: Where are you going?

FATHER: You're mother and I will be working in that grove of trees over there.

GRETEL: I don't want you to leave.

FATHER: Don't worry Gretel. Hansel, will look after you.

MOTHER: You'll be fine on your own, dear. Just make sure you keep busy and you'll forget all about your fears.

HANSEL: We'll be okay on our own.

FATHER: That's right, just listen to your big brother and everything will be fine.

MOTHER: And don't wander away; you don't want to get lost.

(MOTHER and FATHER exit and HANSEL starts looking around on the ground.)

HANSEL: Don't be afraid, Gretel.

GRETEL: I can't help it.

HANSEL: Come over here.

GRETEL: What are you looking for?

HANSEL: I've dropped little pieces of my bread on the ground since we've started walking this morning.

GRETEL: Why?

HANSEL: So we have a trail to follow out of the forest. Once we find our way out we can run away and find a new place to live.

GRETEL: But I want to live with mother and father.

HANSEL: Gretel, you heard what they said... they don't want us. You don't want to die in the woods do you?

GRETEL: No.

HANSEL: Then this is our only choice. Come on, the trail leads this way.

(THEY exit.)

SCENE 4

SETTING: A DIFFERENT PART OF THE FOREST, SOME TIME LATER.

(The screens are moved to represent a different part of the forest. HANSEL and GRETEL enter looking at the ground.)

GRETEL: Hansel, this doesn't look like the way we came.

HANSEL: I know.

GRETEL: Where are the bread crumbs?

HANSEL: They're gone. I thought I saw them a minute ago, but now I can't find them.

GRETEL: Maybe something ate them?

HANSEL: Like what?

GRETEL: Something hungry?

(THEY hear a noise like a bird call.)

HANSEL: Did you hear that?

GRETEL: What was it?

HANSEL: Something...

GRETEL: Hungry?

(Suddenly several huge blackbirds appear and fly at them. THEY scream and run about wildly. After a chaotic chase, the birds chase them off stage.)

SCENE 5

SETTING: DEEPER IN THE WOODS, A SHORT TIME LATER.

(The screens change again. HANSEL and GRETEL enter, panting and scared.)

HANSEL: Gretel are you okay?

GRETEL: Yes.

HANSEL: Those were the biggest blackbirds I have ever seen! They must have eaten our trail of bread crumbs.

GRETEL: It almost ate us!

HANSEL: We're safe now.

GRETEL: But where are we?

HANSEL: I don't know.

GRETEL: We're lost, aren't we?

HANSEL: We just need to find something familiar.

GRETEL: But we can't, we're lost!

(GRETEL starts to cry.)

HANSEL: Here, sit down Gretel. We should rest for a minute.

GRETEL: And we don't have anything to eat!

HANSEL: Calm down. Let me see if I have any bread left.
(He looks through his bag and pulls out his book.)
All I have is my book about the Child of Good Fortune.

GRETEL: "The Three Gold Hairs"?

HANSEL: Yes.

GRETEL: Could you read it to me?

HANSEL: Umm... sure and we could think about how we might act it out.

GRETEL: Even without costumes and things?

HANSEL: As I read, we can imagine what happens.

GRETEL: Okay.

HANSEL: Let's see...

(He flips through the book.)

The King had thrown the Child of good fortune into the river...

GRETEL: And the miller and his wife found the baby and kept it.

HANSEL: Yes, then the story picks up nineteen years later and the king is traveling through the same country...

SCENE 5a

SETTING: THE RIVERSIDE, NINETEEN YEARS LATER

(The KING enters)

KING: Strange... I haven't been in this part of my kingdom in nineteen years and nothing has changed.

HANSEL: As the king passed through the countryside, he noticed an approaching storm.

(Thunder sounds)

KING: That thunder sounds ominous. I must find shelter for the night. I just hate getting my clothes wet.

HANSEL: He travelled a bit further and when he came to the river he noticed an old mill.

KING: Oh, a light coming from the mill. I am the King and these peasants must offer me accommodations.

HANSEL: So the King walked up the path to the mill in hopes of finding a place stay for the night.

(The KING exits and is followed by HANSEL and GRETEL. The forest is changed to the Miller's house.)

SCENE 5b

SETTING: THE OLD MILL, MINUTES LATER.

(The MILLER'S WIFE enters and sets a chair, she exits and returns with a tankard. The MILLER enters with a wash tub and hands it to his wife and she gives him the tankard. As she exits, he sits.)

KING: *(From offstage.)* Hello? Hello? Is anyone home?

(KING enters.)

MILLER: Can I help you?

KING: I am the King and I need a place to stay for the night.

MILLER: Please come in, your majesty. There is a storm approaching and I would hate to see your beautiful robe get ruined by the rain.

KING: Quite right.

MILLER: Well, this is a great honor! What brings your highness, to these parts?

KING: I'm just passing through on my way to judge an archery contest. I haven't set foot in this region of my kingdom in nineteen years.

YOUTH: *(enters with a broom.)* Father, I... Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize we had company.

MILLER: This is the King. He was passing through our village and stopped here because of the storm.

YOUTH: I am pleased to meet you, Your Majesty.

KING: Of course.

YOUTH: Father, I've just finished sweeping the mill. Would it be alright if I practiced my violin for a bit?

MILLER: Well, if the King doesn't mind, I think a little music would be nice.

KING: Splendid.

YOUTH: Thank you.

(YOUTH exits.)

KING: Your son seems to take after you.

MILLER: Actually, he's not my real son. He's a foundling.

(Violin music is heard.)

Nineteen years ago, we found him in a basket floating on the river. It was probably around the same time you last passed through our village. Had you seen it, you might have stopped the people who threw him in.

MILLER'S WIFE: *(enters)* Dear, could you help me dump the water out of my washtub?

MILLER: Excuse me for a moment, Your Highness.

KING: By all means.

(The MILLER exits with MILLER'S WIFE)

How could this have happened? When I threw that boy into the river, it should have been the end of him! Now he's nineteen years old, the age at which the midwife foretold his marriage to my daughter. I must put a stop to his good luck. I know!

(He takes out a pen and a piece of paper and speaks the words aloud as he writes.)

"My dear Queen, as soon as the youth who brings this letter arrives, have him put to death. I shall expect to find him dead and buried when I return. Love and kisses, the King."

MILLER: *(enters)* Pardon the interruption, my King.

KING: Quite all right... I have just written a very important letter to my wife and I need it delivered at once. If your son would be so kind as to do me this favor, I will give him two gold pieces for his trouble.

MILLER: It would be an honor.

(Calls off stage)

Son!

YOUTH: *(enters)* Yes, father?

MILLER: The King has an urgent message for the Queen, which must reach her immediately.

KING: Here you are my fine, young man.

(Hands the Youth the letter.)

And here are two pieces of gold as payment.

(Hands the Youth two gold pieces.)

YOUTH: Thank you. Shall I return the instant I deliver the note?

KING: No. The Queen may have other plans for you upon your arrival.

YOUTH: I won't fail you, Sire.

KING: You should reach the palace by tomorrow. Good luck.

(YOUTH exits.)

MILLER: Thank you for thinking of my son for this errand, Your Highness.

KING: I pride myself on helping out the less fortunate. Now, if you'll just show me to my room.

MILLER: Right this way.

(THEY exit and the MILLER'S WIFE re-sets the woods. HANSEL enters with his book. He is soon followed by GRETEL.)

HANSEL: *(reading)* So the Youth of Good Fortune set out on his errand for the King, not knowing he was being sent to his doom. As the Youth had not travelled far from home in his life, he soon lost his way in the forest.

GRETEL: Hey, just like us.

HANSEL: *(reading)* He also noticed that the sky was growing dark and that he should find a place to stay for the night.

GRETEL: It's starting to get dark where we are, too.

HANSEL: It's not too dark to read. Let's see what happens next.

GRETEL: Okay.

HANSEL: *(reads)* The Youth soon came upon a small brightly lit cottage and decided to ask if he could stay the night for he had grown quite weary. He went to the house and knocked at the door. There was no answer so he decided to open the door and see if anyone was home. There he found an old woman

asleep in a chair.

(HANSEL and GRETEL change the set and exit.)

SCENE 5c

SETTING: INSIDE THE SMALL HOUSE, MOMENTS LATER.

(The set shifts to inside the cottage. An OLD WOMAN enters and falls asleep in a chair with a book in her lap. The YOUTH knocks from offstage, then enters)

YOUTH: Hello? Is anyone here?

OLD WOMAN: *(Wakes up)* Who are you and what do you want?

YOUTH: Excuse me. I am a miller's son, and I have been sent by the King to deliver an important message to the Queen. I have lost my way and should like very much to spend the night here.

OLD WOMAN: You poor, young man, you have entered a den of robbers. If they find you here, they will surely kill you.

YOUTH: I have been traveling all day in service of the king, and I am so tired I cannot go a step further. I implore you...

OLD WOMAN: If you must.

(She points to a spot on the floor and throws a pillow down.)

YOUTH: Thank you.

(As the YOUTH lies down and falls asleep, the OLD WOMAN falls asleep and two ROBBERS enter happily with their bags of gold.)

ROBBER 1: *(Notices Youth)* Who's this?

ROBBER 2: What's he doing here?

ROBBERS: *(Yelling at Old Woman)* Hey!

OLD WOMAN: *(wakes up)* He is an innocent youth who has lost himself in the wood. He is carrying a

letter to the Queen, which the King has sent. He was exhausted so I let him stay.

ROBBER 1: A letter to the Queen!

ROBBER 2: From the King!

ROBBER 1: We'll see about this letter.
(Searches Youth's pockets and finds letter.)
Here it is!

ROBBER 2: Let's find out what the King has to say.

ROBBER 1: I don't know how to read.

ROBBER 2: Neither do I.

(ROBBERS look to the Old Woman.)

OLD WOMAN: Oh, here.
(She takes the note, reads for a moment and then gasps.)
He is to be killed!

ROBBER 1: Killed?

ROBBER 2: Killed?

OLD WOMAN: Killed!

ROBBERS: What for?

OLD WOMAN: Because the King says so.

ROBBER 1: That's not a good reason!

ROBBER 2: How unfortunate!

ROBBER 1: We must help this poor youth.

ROBBER 2: We'll change the letter. Write this down...

ROBBER 1: I don't know how write.

ROBBER 2: Neither do I.

(They turn to the Old Woman)

OLD WOMAN: Oh, here.

(She takes a pen and paper out of her book)

What should it say?

(ROBBERS huddle around the Old Woman, whispering ideas to her. The OLD WOMAN finishes and the ROBBERS gently put the new note into the Youth's pocket.)

ROBBER 1: He's so cute lying there.

ROBBER 2: I hope he makes it to the palace.

OLD WOMAN: Leave him alone and go to bed. We need to get an early start tomorrow, robbing from the rich...

ROBBERS: And keeping for ourselves!

(The ROBBERS laugh and exit. The YOUTH stands and stretches as if he has just woken up. He hands the pillow back to the old woman and exits. The set is then transformed back to the woods and HANSEL and GRETEL re-enter with the book.)

HANSEL: *(reads)* The Youth of Good Fortune awoke the next morning and after receiving directions to the palace from the old woman, he set out to deliver the letter to the Queen...

(He stops reading and looks up at the sky.)

I'm sorry Gretel, it's getting too dark to read...

(He notices GRETEL looking off stage.)

What is it?

GRETEL: I see a light coming from over there.

HANSEL: *(jumps up.)* Really?

GRETEL: Do you think it's a house?

HANSEL: It could be. We should go and have a look.

GRETEL: They might have food. I've never felt so hungry.

HANSEL: Yeah and they might be able to give us directions out of the woods. Come on, stay close to me.

(THEY exit and the wardrobe is transformed to a colorful gingerbread house.)

SCENE 6

SETTING: *OUTSIDE THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE, A SHORT TIME LATER.*

(HANSEL and GRETEL enter looking at the house.)

GRETEL: Look, Hansel... it is a house!

HANSEL: I wonder if anyone is home. Maybe we should...

(HANSEL stops and sniffs the air.)

GRETEL: We should what?

HANSEL: Do you smell that?

GRETEL: *(sniffs)* Smells like cookies. Someone must be inside baking.

(HANSEL moves closer to the house)

HANSEL: No... I think it's the house

(He pulls off a part of the house and tastes it.)

It is! Taste it!

GRETEL: *(she tastes a piece of the house.)* Oh, my goodness! It's wonderful.

HANSEL: The house is made of gingerbread!

GRETEL: And the roof is made of cake!

HANSEL: And the windows are made of...

HANSEL and GRETEL: Candy!

(Hansel and Gretel do a brief dance of joy.)

WITCH: *(From Off stage)* Hello...

HANSEL: Quick, hide!

(Hansel and Gretel hide behind trees as the Witch appears, looking out the window.)

WITCH: Is someone there?

(After a moment)

Nibble, nibble like a mouse... who's been nibbling at my house? If I catch you, you will see, that nibbling can't be done for free.

(Looks around briefly.)

Come out, come out, wherever you are... I suppose it was the wind.

(As the WITCH exits, HANSEL and GRETEL come out of hiding.)

HANSEL: I don't think she was very happy about us eating her house.

GRETEL: I suppose it would have been more polite of us to ask permission first.

HANSEL: But you heard her, nibbling is not free and we don't have any money.

GRETEL: What should we do?

HANSEL: Let's sleep out here until morning. When it's light, we can nibble a bit more from the house and then try to find our way out of the forest in the daylight.

GRETEL: Are we just going to sleep on the ground?

HANSEL: We don't have any choice. Here...

(He pulls out his book.)

I think there's enough light from the house to see the book. We can see what happens to the Child of Good Fortune before we go to sleep.

GRETEL: Oh, yeah. He just got directions to the palace and he was on his way to deliver the note...

HANSEL: Which the robbers had changed.

GRETEL: I wonder what it says.

HANSEL: Let's find out...

(Reading.)

When the Youth of Good Fortune finally arrived at the palace, the Queen was in the royal garden playing badminton...

(The set is changed to the palace garden.)

20 MORE PAGES TO THE END