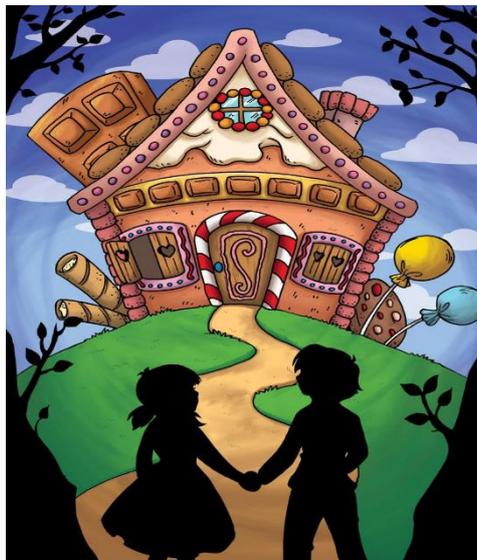


Spotlight Publications

Hansel & Gretel

A pantomime by

Ron Nicol



HANSEL AND GRETEL

written by
Ron Nicol

CAST (in order of appearance)

Fairy Sparkle

Fairy Twinkle

Fairy Twigg, a forest fairy or dryad

Hansel

Gretel, Hansel's sister

Malena, Hansel and Gretel's stepmother

Hans, Hansel and Gretel's father

Grizella, an ancient crone

Maggie, Grizella's pet magpie

Sparra, a sparrow

Burdie, a robin

Corbie, a crow

Whibley, a would-be criminal mastermind

Wobbly, Whibley's incompetent sidekick

The Big Bad Wolf

Wee Sheep

Wee Wolfie

Forest creatures, sinister shapes, birds etc.

Setting: everything takes place at the forest edge or in the forest itself, so "*Hansel and Gretel*" can be set on an open stage, or scenery can be as simple or as elaborate as desired.

Scenes: scene divisions are not indicated. Any changes should be done as part of the action to allow sequences to flow into each other.

Songs: songs may be included at appropriate points at the discretion of the Musical Director. Permission to perform musical numbers must be obtained from the holder of the rights to the music and lyrics.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published "Hansel and Gretel" in 1812. The story is thought to have originated during the Great Famine of 1315 to 1321, during which desperate parents abandoned their children to fend for themselves, elderly people starved themselves to death so that younger ones might live – and there were even rumours of cannibalism. Not really a suitable subject for pantomime you might think, but several fairy tales have unpleasant origins. Many different sources have been drawn upon to produce this family-friendly version.

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Spotlight pantomimes must be played as per the script, and without alterations, additions or cuts, except by written permission of the publisher. However minor changes such as the addition of local references and topical references or gags are permitted. Likewise, all musical numbers may be changed at the discretion of the producer.

Drama groups must obtain a full acting set of scripts (a minimum of one script per speaking part plus one for the director) before a performing licence can be issued. Alternatively, an electronic version is now available; full details are on the website.

The name of the author shall be stated on all publicity including posters and programmes. Programme credits shall state "script provided by Spotlight Publications".

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Hansel and Gretel was first produced by Glenrothes Theatre Company in the Rothes Halls, Glenrothes in December 2018. It was directed by Ron Nicol with the following cast:

Fairy Sparkle	Laura Thomson
Fairy Twinkle	Emma Wright
Fairy Twigg	Anna Gorniak
Hansel	Kacey Dryburgh
Gretel	Katie Elliot
Malena	Lee Bernard
Hans	Don Roth
Grizella	Audrey Stevenson
Maggie	Niamh Fraser-Collins
Sparra	Aileen Henderson
Burdie	Stephanie Childs
Corbie	Kurt McLeish
Whibley	Nikki Conn
Wobbley	Susan Collins
Wolf	Don Roth
Wee Sheep	Ashlyn Wilson
Wee Wolfie	Hayley Lessels
Forest Creatures, Birds	Kari Garrioch, Summer Jones, Hayley Lessells, Chloe McCluskey, Isla McDowell, Patryk Piekarz, Ashlyn Wilson

Act One

A pink spot is brought up DR and Fairy Sparkle enters into it

Sparkle Hello children. How lovely to see you. My name's Sparkle.

Fairy Twinkle enters R

Twinkle Wait a minute. What are you doing?

Sparkle I'm introducing the show.

Twinkle You can't be. I'm supposed to be doing it.

Sparkle Are you sure?

Twinkle Of course I'm sure. I'm a fairy.

Sparkle So am I.

Twinkle What'll we do, then? Who's going to do it?

Sparkle I'll fight you for it.

Twinkle Fairies don't fight.

Sparkle I do!

Sparkle pushes Twinkle, who pushes back. Twigg enters R

Twigg What's going on here?

Sparkle We're introducing the show.

Twinkle We've already started, so you can't stop us.

Twigg But I'm supposed to be doing the introduction.

Sparkle I'll fight you for it!

Sparkle puts up her fists. Twigg waves her wand. Sparkle freezes. After a few moments, Twigg waves her wand. Sparkle un-freezes

Twigg Do you still want to fight me?

Sparkle No. That was too scary.

Twinkle What did you do to her? What's that twig thing?

Twigg This isn't a 'twig thing'. It's a rowan twig. It's been made into a very special kind of wand which has absolute power over wands made out of any other wood. It means I'm in charge, so you two can just go away.

Twinkle/Sparkle Awww.

Twinkle and Sparkle sadly exit R

Twigg Sorry about that, ladies, gentlemen and children. I'm afraid it wasn't too fairy-like. They asked me to introduce the show, of course, because I've much more experience than those two. I've been doing this sort of thing for ages, you see. My name's Twigg, and I'm a dryad. A forest fairy. So this story's just right for me because everything takes place in a forest. Now, let's begin. Once upon a time there were two children, Hansel and Gretel...

Twigg waves her wand. General stage lighting is brought up and Hansel and Gretel are revealed playing a game – perhaps throwing a ball to each other

They lived on the edge of a forest and trees grew all around their tiny cottage. Their father was a woodcutter. He went into the forest every day to cut down trees and gather firewood. Hansel and Gretel were very happy – except for one thing. Their stepmother Malena – and here she comes!

Twigg waves her wand. The pink spot fades as she exits R

Malena *(off)* Hansel! Gretel! Where are you?

Hansel Here, Stepmother! Outside.

Malena enters L

Malena What are you doing out here?

Hansel Playing.

Malena You shouldn't be playing! You should be inside helping me around the house! Where's that useless father of yours?

Hansel He isn't useless!

Malena Don't contradict me, boy! Where is he?

Gretel He's chopping firewood.

Malena Good. At least somebody's working instead of playing. It's time for bed. Off with you.

Hansel Do we have to?

Malena Don't question me, boy! Go to bed! You too, Gretel! Bed!

Gretel Yes, Stepmother.

Hansel and Gretel start to exit USL

Malena Aren't you going to wish me goodnight?

Hansel No.

Gretel (*quickly*) Goodnight, Stepmother.

Malena Hansel! I won't ask you again!

Hansel (*grumpily*) Goodnight, Stepmother.

Hansel and Gretel move L, but remain in the shadows US

Malena Hans! Hans! Where are you? Hans!

Hans enters R carrying a bundle of firewood

Hans Here, Malena.

Malena Where have you been?

Hans Making up bundles of firewood, though I don't know why I bother. I can't sell any. Nobody needs firewood in this weather.

Malena You'll have to work harder, Hans.

Hans I'm doing all I can. It's been such a mild winter and now it's summer people only need logs for cooking. They don't have anything to cook anyway. The last harvest was a disaster. There's famine everywhere.

Malena You don't need to tell me that, Hans. We've hardly anything to eat.

Hans There's plenty of families like ours, with too many mouths and not enough food.

Malena Then there's only one answer. We must get rid of them.

Hans Get rid of them? Who?

Malena Those little brats. Hansel and Gretel.

Hans Don't call them brats!

Malena Brutes, then!

Hans Malena! They're hardly brutes! They're children.

Malena People often abandon their children in times of hardship and famine. You know that very well. Why should we be any different? We'll take them into the forest and leave them where the trees are thickest. Miles from home. So far away that they'll never find their way back! Maybe somebody will find them and give them a home.

Hans I can't take my children into the forest and leave them there alone. Nobody lives in the forest except wild animals - and Hansel and Gretel's home is here.

Malena Then we're all going to starve.

Hans I'd rather starve than harm my poor children. They depend on us.

Malena Enough of that! I've made up my mind. You must choose between us, Hans. The children - or me. Think about it - or it will be too late! Now come inside!

Malena exits L, followed by Hans. Hansel and Gretel come forward

Gretel Oh, Hansel. What are we going to do? They're going to take us into the forest and lose us!

Hansel Father wouldn't do that. You heard what he said.

Gretel It doesn't matter what Father says! He always does what stepmother tells him.

Hansel I know. I keep hoping he'll stand up to her. Never mind, we'll manage somehow. I'll think of a plan, little sister. Go to bed and sleep.

Gretel I'll never be able to sleep again! I'll be dreaming of witches and wolves and the horrible things that live in the forest!

Hansel Just as well you won't be able to sleep, then. You can't dream if you're lying awake.

Gretel You know what I mean.

Hansel Of course I do. Try to sleep anyway - and don't keep me awake.

Gretel How do I keep you awake?

Hansel You snore!

Gretel I don't snore!

Hansel You do! Like a pig! Goodnight, little pig! Oink! Oink!

Hansel exits L

Gretel Botheration! Why do brothers always have to have the last word!

Gretel exits L. The light fades and the pink spot DR is brought up as Sparkle and Twinkle enter R

Twinkle Now, children...

Sparkle Hold on! It's my turn to start. I come before you in the alphabet. S comes before T.

Twigg enters R

Twigg It doesn't matter about the alphabet. I'm before both of you.

Sparkle Why?

Twigg Because I'm older.

Sparkle (*aside*) You look it!

Twigg What did you say?

Twinkle She said "you shook it." She means your wand.

Twigg Good. That's what I thought she said.

Sparkle (*aside*) And you look like a witch.

Twigg What was that?

Twinkle She said "you gave it a twitch". Your wand, she means.

Twigg Are you two trying to be cheeky?

Sparkle Yes. We're doing it well, aren't we.

Twigg I'm warning you! Remember what happened last time?

She raises her wand. Twinkle and Sparkle back away

Twinkle/Sparkle Awww.

Twinkle and Sparkle sadly exit R

Twigg I do wish those two wouldn't keep getting in the way. By the way, I hope you'll ignore those comments about me being older than they are. I'm only a year or two older. Well, maybe a bit older than that. Now, it's morning again. You might think it's been a very short night, but we have to get on with the story and can't afford to waste time. Look out – here comes Malena!

Twigg waves her wand and exits R as the pink spot fades. Lighting is brought up C as Malena enters L, goes to C, scowls at the audience and then smiles sweetly

Malena Hello, children. We've already met, and I'm sure you're amazed how beautiful I am - but I ought to warn you that although I'm beautiful on the outside, I'm completely different inside – because I don't like children! Well, I don't like Hansel and Gretel. Children should climb trees and tear their clothes. Splash in the mud and get filthy. Play loud games and disturb the neighbours. Throw stones and break windows. If I had children like that we wouldn't be in the state we're in now because I'd send them out to steal food! Steal money! But their father would refuse to let them steal anything – and the little brats wouldn't do it anyway. Little goody goodies. I've made up my mind. It's time to get rid of them! Hansel! Gretel! Where are you?

General lighting is restored as Gretel enters R

Gretel I'm here, Stepmother.

Malena What are you doing out here? Lazing about as usual?

Gretel Well, after I made my bed, tidied my clothes, cleaned the stove and swept the floors, I just came outside to feed the birds.

Malena Feeding birds! When we don't have enough for ourselves!

Gretel: It was only a few bread crumbs.

Malena: What a waste! We should catch some of those birds and eat them.

Gretel We can't do that! They don't do any harm – and they sing beautifully.

Malena Nonsense! Where's that idle brother of yours? Still in bed, I suppose!

Gretel He's outside too, Stepmother. He's been taking out the rubbish.

Malena Go and find him! I've got enough to do without checking on the whereabouts of that good-for-nothing boy. Hurry up, girl!

Malena exits L as Hansel enters R

Gretel What have you been doing? Stepmother's in an awful rage.

Hansel I told you I'd think of a plan. Look. I've taken some shiny white pebbles from the path. See. They're like pieces of silver.

Gretel What are they for?

Hansel I've filled the pockets of my coat. You should do the same.

Gretel Why?

Hansel You'll see. Ssssh! Here she comes!

Hansel hastily puts the pebbles in his pocket as Malena enters L

Malena There you are, boy. What have you been doing?

Hansel Nothing.

Malena gives Gretel a crust of bread

Malena Here's some bread. What do you say?

Gretel Thank you, Stepmother.

Gretel nibbles the crust of bread

Malena Don't eat it now!

Gretel I'm hungry! We didn't have any breakfast!

Malena You should've got up earlier. That's the only food you'll get today. If you eat it now, you'll get no more later - and if you feed it to the birds you can just go hungry! Here's some bread for you, Hansel. Put it in your pocket.

Hansel My pocket's full.

Malena Full? Full of what?

Gretel (*quickly*) You don't want to know, Stepmother! There's all kinds of rubbish in his pocket. He had a frog in there once. I'll put the bread in my apron pocket.

She takes the bread and puts it in her apron pocket. Hans enters L

Hans Good morning, children.

Hansel Good morning, Father.

Gretel Good morning, Father. What's wrong? You look so sad.

Malena There's nothing wrong. He's just being his usual miserable self! Take that pathetic look off your face, Hans, we've work to do. Fetch your axe and let's go!

Hansel & Gretel

A fresh treatment of the Brothers Grimm story written in the author's inimitable style, with new characters (many of them female) and plotting. The action takes place in or at the edge of the forest, and can be set on an open stage; scenery can be as simple or as elaborate as desired.

Plot Summary

Malena tries to lose Hansel and Gretel in the forest, despite the protests of their father Hans, but her first attempt fails. She tries again, engaging incompetent duo Whibley and Wobbley to dispose of the children. Wicked witch Grizella captures them and puts Hansel in a cage. Gretel manages to trick Grizella, and she and Hans escape. Thanks to the help of the friendly forest birds the children eventually return home.

Running time—approximately two hours, depending on musical numbers