

NODA PANTOMIMES PRESENT

*Hansel
& Gretel*

BY
Ron Hall

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H A N S E L A N D G R E T E L

A pantomime in two acts by Ron Hall
based on the fairy tale by the
Brothers Grimm

Characters in order of appearance:-

The Forest Fairy, Good Fairy of the Black Forest
The Wicked Witch of the Wood, Arch Baddie
Miss Daisy Demeanour, Local School mistress
Stepmother to **Hansel** and Gretel, Another baddie
Willie, the Village Caretaker and well known twit
Heidi, Principal Girl, daughter of the Village Innkeeper
Martin, Principal Boy, Visitor to the Village
Hansel)
Gretel) Brother and Sister, still at school
Fred, the Robot, a piece of talking hardware, one scene
Father to Hansel and Gretel, A good man made evil only
Gorilla, non-speaking part, one scene only

Chorus of Villagers and Guests at Wedding

Senior Dancers as Villagers, Football team cheer leaders,
Harbingers of the morning, Witch's cats
and Guests at Wedding

Junior Dancers as School children, Birds of the Forest
and Woodland Animals

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Estimated length of show:- 2 hours 40 minutes. This allows for a short overture and fifteen minutes interval

Number of principal parts:- Female:- Five
Male:- Three
Either:- Two (Robot and Gorilla)
Children or small adults:- Two
 (Hansel and Gretel)

These figures assume that Martin is played by a girl and Miss Demeanour by a man.

Scene changing:- Alternate scenes have small number of players so that they can be played in front of running tabs, allowing time to change the main sets manually.

Use of Music:- It should be noted that songs are only suggested and do not form part of the script. Arrangements should be made with the Performing Rights Society for performance.



H A N S E L A N D G R E T E L

Act I

Prologue (In front of running tabs)

(The Forest Fairy enters stage right to suitable tinkling music)

Fairy:- Welcome dear mortals to our show,
Now here's a tale that you all know,
Of how two children lose their way,
Within the woods and have to stay,
Inside a house of gingerbread,
Where into danger they are led.
But do not fear or show alarm,
For I will keep them from all harm.
I am the Forest Fairy and,
Will banish evil with my wand.
Let woodland demons quake with fear,
Their plans will fail when I am near.

(The Wicked Witch of the Wood enters stage left to suitable discordant accompaniment)

Witch:- What a load of balderdash!
How you sprites can speak such trash,
When it's plain for all to see,
The forest glade is ruled by me,
The Wicked Witch of Woodland Wild,
And I'll make sure that every child,
Whose way is lost in my domain,
Will never see his friends again.

Fairy:- Don't you be too sure old crone,
For you will find your powers alone,
Are not enough to win the day.

Witch:- I don't believe a word you say.
That wand of yours is second best,
And will not even pass it's test.

Fairy:- (Producing test certificate)
Now here's the proof for you to see,
My wand has passed its M.O.T.
So let the story now begin,
And may the best magician win.
So curtain back and off we go.
We hope you all enjoy the show.

(The Fairy and the Witch exit to their respective sides as the tabs draw back on Scene 1)

Scene 1 - The Village of Munchin Koffdropp

(This is the centre of the village with the school on one side of the stage and Hansel and Gretel's house on the other. The house should have a practical door. On the backcloth are other buildings and behind these is the forest and hills. The chorus are on stage dressed as villagers)

Opening Chorus (Chorus)

Suggested numbers:- Take your girl (King's Rhapsody)
Oh what a beautiful morning
(Oklahoma)
Lusty month of May (Camelot)
Lonely Goatherd (The Sound of Music)

(Miss Demeanour, the village schoolmistress enters. She is carrying a hand bell, which she is ringing, and an attendance register)

Miss D:- Time for school! Time for school! Come along my little kiddie-winkies it's time for you to learn the three R's, reading, writing and reproduction. Last one into assembly's a cissie! (She notices audience) Hello, I didn't see you lot out there. This is our little village of Munchin Koffdropp set deep in the heart of the Black Forest and you're welcome to it, I mean you're welcome to it.

I'm Miss Daisy Demeanour, the village schoolmistress, so if any of you fellers out there fancy a Miss Demeanour (misdemeanour) just come round after school. It's years since I had a boyfriend.

Chorus:- Aw!

Miss D:- And now I'm passed my prime.

Chorus:- Aw!

Miss D:- I'm getting that desperate I even fancy - - - (well known politician or local man). Last week I went for a tramp in the woods, but he got away.

Chorus:- Aw!

Miss D:- I'm at my most passionate when I've had a couple of milk stouts in 'The Blacksmith's Arms'. Let's face it, at my age it's the only blacksmith's arms you'll see me in.

(Chorus begin to exit to bring on children (Junior Dancers)).

Well this won't do - it's nearly nine o'clock and not a child to be seen. They can't all have the measles (or other prevalent childish complaint).

(She rings the bell again and the chorus re-enter with the children. They are all in high spirits and are laughing and chatting to each other)

Form a line. Form a line.

(The children form a neat line across the stage and quieten down. She opens the register)

Right children. Answer your names. (She reads from register) Andrew Sliversalts. (No reply. She looks again at page) Oh I am sorry; that's my shopping list. (She turns page over) Ah, there we are. (She reads) Maria.

1st Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Hermann.

2nd Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Gerda.

3rd Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Franz.

4th Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Anna.

5th Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Karl.

6th Child:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Hansel. (Silence) Where's Hansel? (Children shake their heads and shrug shoulders) Gretel. (Silence) Is Gretel missing as well?

Children:- Yes miss.

Miss D:- Both brother and sister missing. How strange! I wonder if they're poorly. I'll go and ask. Their house is just over there.

(She hands chorus her bell and register, goes over to house and knocks at the door) Their father's such a nice man and a widower too. Who knows, he may be looking for a new wife. (She smartens her hair) It's not like him to let the children miss school.

(The Stepmother opens the door. She has a hard, cruel face and speaks angrily?

Stepmother:- We - - - ll?

Miss D:- (Taken aback) Yes thanks. How are you?

Stepmother:- What do you want?

Miss D:- Who are you? You don't live here.

Stepmother:- Oh yes I do. I'm Hansel and Gretel's new stepmother.

Miss D:- Stepmother? Have you been married long?

Stepmother:- Mind your own business.

Miss D:- But it is my business. I'm Miss Demeanour, school teacher and spinster of this parish.

Stepmother:- Looking at you I'm not surprised! Go away you old pleasure boat. Your paint's starting to peel. (She laughs mockingly and slams the door in Miss D's face)

Miss D:- Did you hear that? Old pleasure boat! How rude! (To audience) Will you do something for me?

Audience:- (Hopefully) Yes.

Miss D:- I can't hear you. Will you?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- That's better. Now I'm going to knock at that door again and when that stepmother opens it I want you to boo and hiss. Will you do that?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- Have you all gone home? I said 'Will you do that?'

Audience:- Yes.

Audience:- Good! Here we go then. (She knocks at the door) Now don't forget.

(The Stepmother opens the door, audience boo and hiss and Stepmother waves her arms at them and hisses back)

Stepmother:- You again! If you don't stop knocking at my door I'll set the dogs on you.

Miss D:- Now listen hear my good woman.

Stepmother:- Don't call me your good woman. I'm not your good woman or anyone else's.

Miss D:- That's perfectly obvious. Now where are Hansel and Gretel?

Stepmother:- If you must know, they're inside scrubbing the floor.

Miss D:- Scrubbing the floor? They shouldn't be at home scrubbing the floor, they should be at school like the rest of the children.

Stepmother:- Who says?

Miss D:- I says, I mean I say.

Stepmother:- I'm their stepmother and I give the orders round here. Now get lost before I bring my shotgun.

Miss D:- I'll send the truant officer round.

Stepmother:- You can send the Mayor and Corporation round for all I care, it won't make any difference.

Miss D:- I'll put my foot in the door. (She appears to do this)

Stepmother:- See if I care. (She slams the door on Miss D's foot. Miss Demeanour shrieks with pain and limps away from the house)

Miss D:- Oh my foot! It's been crushed. In fact it's no longer a foot, it's only six inches. (She sits on stage, nursing foot and showing long passion-killer bloomers)

(Willie enters dressed as a first-aid man)

Willie:- Here I am, your local first-aid man, ready to assist in any emergency.

(As he walks he unrolls a bandage. As he reaches Miss Demeanour he trips on it and falls on top of her. All on stage laugh)

Miss D:- Aagh! Willie you great berk! I know I'm looking for a man to fall for me but this is ridiculous.

Willie:- I'm sorry Daisy, I was only trying to help.

Miss D:- Help? You're about as much use as a refrigerator in an eskimo's igloo.

(They are both now sitting side by side on stage)

Willie:- If you like I'll put your arm in a sling.

Miss D:- There's nothing wrong with my arm you great wally. I'll tell you what, I'll put your neck in a sling.

Willie:- There's nothing wrong with my neck.

Miss D:- No, not yet. (She grabs him by the throat and he fights her off)

Willie:- Ger' off, I'm only weak.

Miss D:- Yes, weak in the head. Now help me up.

Willie:- Alright, ups-a-daisy. Hey did you hear that? Ups-a-DAISY. That was a joke. (Helping her up)

Miss D:- Yes, very nearly. (To audience) This is Willie who is laughingly known as our village caretaker. Stupidity doesn't run in his family - - - it gallops. (She takes out gigantic pocket watch) Good gracious! Look at the time. 9.15 and the children still not in school. This won't do at all. (To children) Right/left turn. (One turns the wrong way. Miss D lifts her up and places her down the right way) Now children you will march into school after four - - - four.

(The children march off to school. Chorus gradually exit)

Miss D:- (Taking back bell and register) Tata, see you later folks.
(She falls in behind children and exits leaving only Willie on stage)

Willie:- (Rolling up bandage) Oh dear, every time I try to help something goes wrong. The trouble is I can't think straight. Only last night I put the bread out and toasted the cat and this morning I put polish on my cornflakes and poured milk on my shoes. And I lead such a dull life. The most exciting thing I did yesterday was watch the dog moult.
(Heidi enters. She is a pretty young girl. She is carrying a shopping basket)

Heidi:- Good morning Willie. What a beautiful day!

Willie:- Is it? I hadn't noticed.

Heidi:- Oh dear, what's the matter?

Willie:- I always try so hard and yet everything I do goes wrong.

Heidi:- Never mind! I'm sure that if you try long enough and hard enough you will succeed in the end.

Willie:- There's only one thing I know that succeeds (sucks seeds).

Heidi:- What's that?

Willie:- A budgie with no teeth.

Heidi:- Pardon!

Willie:- A budgie with no teeth. It sucks seeds, sucks seeds. You see I can't even tell a joke properly.

Heidi:- Oh yes, very funny. (She chuckles to try and please him)

Willie:- You're only laughing to try and cheer me up. (He sobs)

Heidi:- I'm not.

Willie:- I know you mean well, but you don't have to you know. (He sobs more)

Heidi:- Oh but I do have to. Now dry those tears. There's a light at the end of the tunnel.

Willie:- With my luck the light at the end of the tunnel will be an oncoming train. (He blows his nose assisted by the orchestra)

Heidi:- I don't know! What can I do to make you happy?

Willie:- You can come to the pictures with me tonight. They're showing - - - (latest blockbuster movie).

Heidi:- Oh Willie, I'm sorry I can't. There's a meeting of - - (local ladies group)

Willie:- Another time perhaps.

Heidi:- Yes another time perhaps.

Willie:- Goodbye. See you later.
(He exits sadly taking his gear with him)

Heidi:- Goodbye and remember always look on the bright side.

(Heidi waves after Willie)

Heidi:- And now to do some shopping.

(She is about to exit when Martin enters. He is wearing shorts and carries a rucksack)

Martin:- Good morning.

Heidi:- Good morning.

Martin:- I'm looking for a place that serves breakfast. Can you recommend somewhere in your village?

Heidi:- Certainly sir. My parents own the village inn. The fare is simple but nutritious and definitely no additives.

Martin:- Wonderful! And where do I find this oasis of delight?

Heidi:- Down the road over there. (She points) Just say Heidi sent you.

Martin:- Heidi? Is that your name?

Heidi:- Yes I'm Heidi Steiner, youngest daughter of Herr and Frau Steiner of the Black Forest Hotel.

Martin:- I'm sure you make the most marvellous gateaus.

(They laugh)

Heidi:- Are you on holiday?

Martin:- Yes, two weeks hiking in your beautiful countryside.

Heidi:- The best way to see it.

Martin:- And the best way to meet people.

Heidi:- (Shyly) Yes.

Martin:- I'm Martin. (He offers his hand and they shake)

Heidi:- I'm afraid my hands are cold.

Martin:- (Still holding her hand) You know what they say - cold hands, warm heart.

Heidi:- (Taking hand away embarrassed) You embarrass me sir. (She turns away)

Martin:- Please don't turn away. I'm only going to be in your village a short time and I'd like to leave with memories of a smiling face.

Heidi:- (Turning back and smiling) Your wish is my command.

Martin:- But I hope to stay long enough to get to know you.

Duet (Martin and Heidi)

Suggested numbers:- Getting to know you (The King and I)
Mountain Greenery (The Girl Friend)
We've only just begun
I'll do anything (Oliver)

(During number Heidi puts down basket and picks it up at end of number)

Martin:- I see you're about to do some shopping.

Heidi:- Yes indeed. I must buy some flour and eggs or there'll be no gateaus.

Martin:- Let me carry your basket for you.

Heidi:- I thought you wanted breakfast. (She smiles)

Martin:- I do, but a few minutes won't make any difference.

Heidi:- (Handing him basket) Very well. I'll make sure you get the best breakfast the hotel can muster.

(They begin to exit)

Martin:- I'll look forward to it.

(They exit laughing. There can be heard a few notes of the duet followed by some harsher discords as the Stepmother opens the door and walks centre stage. She hisses at the audience who hopefully hiss back)

Stepmother:- Come along you two, there's firewood to collect from the forest.

(Hansel and Gretel enter also through the door hand in hand and very nervously. They carry empty sacks.

Come along, I haven't got all day.

Hansel:- But we haven't had our breakfasts yet stepmother.

Stepmother:- Of course you haven't and you won't either until you've collected enough wood for the fire tonight.

Gretel:- But we've already scrubbed the floors until they shine and I'm so tired.

Stepmother:- Nonsense Gretel! A young healthy girl like you should be full of life.

Hansel:- Father didn't treat us like this before you married him.

Stepmother:- Your father's too soft, I'm always telling him so. And besides he's gone to work so there's no use your crying for him.

Gretel:- I'll tell him how badly you've treated us when he gets home.

Stepmother:- You do my lady and it will be the worst for you tomorrow once he's left for work again. (She grabs Gretel by the front of her dress)

Hansel:- You leave my sister alone, you great bully. (He tries to pull her away)

Stepmother:- (Pushing Hansel away so that he falls down) Don't interfere. I'm in charge in this house and don't you forget it.

Gretel:- (Going over to Hansel and sitting beside him) Oh Hansel, are you alright?

Hansel:- Yes Gretel, don't worry. (He hugs her)

Stepmother:- Now off you go into those woods and remember there'll be no breakfast until those sacks are full.

(She exits into house slamming the door behind her. Gretel begins to cry)

Hansel:- Don't cry Gretel, I'll look after you. (He puts his arm around her)

Gretel:- If only father knew what she was really like.

Hansel:- We daren't tell him because she'll only make things worse when he's away. Come on. The sooner we reach the woods the sooner we'll get breakfast. (He helps her up)

Gretel:- I dreamed last night that a beautiful lady came to the

side of my bed and told me to be brave. She said she wanted to help us and if we were in trouble we should say a little rhyme.

Hansel:- Can you remember the words?

Gretel:- Let me think. Yes, she said:-

Forest Fairy - - - hear my call,
Won't you help us - - - one and all?

Hansel:- Let's say it together.

Gretel:- Alright.

Both:- Forest Fairy, hear my call,
Won't you help us, one and all?

(Tinkling music is heard and the Forest Fairy enters)

Hansel:- Who are you?

Gretel:- It's the pretty lady from my dream.

Fairy:- I am the Forest Fairy. You called for my help and here I am.

Gretel:- It worked! It worked!

Fairy:- Now tell me, how can I assist you?

Hansel:- We are hungry but our stepmother won't give us breakfast until we have filled these sacks with firewood and it will take us hours.

Fairy:- No sooner said than done! Gretel, place your empty sack on your back and walk once around your house.

Gretel:- Will that help?

Fairy:- Try it and see.

(Gretel swings the sack over her shoulder and exits to wings in front of house)

Hansel:- What can I do?

Fairy:- You can keep your fingers crossed.

Hansel:- Like this? (He crosses his fingers and holds up his hand)

Fairy:- Yes, that's right. And I want all the boys and girls out there to do the same. (To audience) Come on everybody. Cross your fingers. (She demonstrates)

Hansel:- (Looking behind house flat) Are you there Gretel?

Gretel:- (Offstage) Yes Hansel, I'm here. (She enters from behind house flat carrying full sack)

Fairy:- There we are! What did I tell you. (To Hansel) Now it's your turn.

(Hansel swings the empty sack across his back and exits in front of house flat)

Gretel:- (Putting sack down and looking inside) How did you do it, Forest Fairy? My sack is full of firewood.

Fairy:- Just a little woodland magic! Now cross your fingers Gretel. (Gretel does this) and (To audience) everyone out there as well. (She looks behind house flat) Are you there Hansel?

Hansel:- (Offstage) Yes, I'm here. (He enters with full sack)

Fairy:- Now knock on your stepmother's door and she will give you breakfast. Goodbye my dears, good luck and don't forget the rhyme.

Hansel:- Goodbye Forest Fairy and thank you.

(Hansel and Gretel wave as Forest Fairy exits)

Gretel:- What a nice lady!

Hansel:- Come along Gretel. Let's knock at the door.

(They go across and knock at the house. They are still carrying their sacks. The stepmother answers)

Stepmother:- What, you two back already! Don't try and trick me. You haven't had time to fill your sacks with firewood. You've only been gone five minutes.

Hansel:- We have Stepmother. See for yourself. (They present their sacks and she looks into them)

Stepmother:- I don't believe it. They're both full. Well I suppose you've both got enough impudence to ask for breakfast now.

Hansel)
Gretel):- Yes please Stepmother.

Stepmother:- (Grudgingly) Very well. I don't go back on my word, but gruel only and make it quick, I haven't got all day.

Hansel)
Gretel):- Yes Stepmother.

(She holds the door open for them. They go in taking the sacks with them. Stepmother slams door behind her. The school bell can be heard ringing and the school children (Junior Dancers) come out of school laughing and chatting. It is playtime)

Dance (Junior Dancers)

Suggested numbers:- Top of the world
The sun has got his hat on
(Me and My Girl)
Up-tempo pop number

(As the dance finishes Miss Demeanour enters ringing bell)

Miss D:- Playtime's over. Back in line children.

(The children groan but do as they are told)

Has anyone seen Hansel and Gretel yet?

(The children all shake their heads)

(To audience) Have you seen Hansel and Gretel?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- You'll have to speak up, my hearing aid's gone on the blink. Have you seen Hansel and Gretel?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- You have? Where did they go?

Audience:- (Hopefully) In the house.

Miss D:- Where did you say?

Audience:- In the house.

Miss D:- (Going over to house door) In here?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- This is a job for the truant officer. (Calling offstage) Willie, put on your truant officer's gear and come out at once. (To audience) It needs a man to sort out a woman like that - but never mind, Willie will have to do.

(Willie enters wearing peak cap with 'Truant Officer' on it. He is carrying a brief case)

Willie:- You called?

Miss D:- Good gracious! It's - - - (well known politician or military type) Now come here mein Liebling. (To audience) That's German you know. It means 'my dear'. I just threw that in to add a little authenticity to the show. (To Willie) You see that house over there?

Willie:- Yes yes.

Miss D:- Do you know who lives there?

Willie:- Yes yes.

Miss D:- Well I want you to knock at the door and demand to speak to the Stepmother.

Willie:- No no.

(He starts to walk away but she pulls him back)

Miss D:- Don't tell me you're scared.

Willie:- Alright, I won't tell you I'm scared - - - but I am.

(The chorus begin to enter inquisitively)

Miss D:- I'll be right behind you and if she knocks you down, I'll - - - I'll - - - pick you up again.

Willie:- Thanks a million.

Miss D:- Come along, don't be a cowardly custard.

(She pulls him back towards house door)

Willie:- Why do I always get all the rotten jobs?

Miss D:- Because you're so clever, so diplomatic, so - - -

Willie:- Gullible.

Miss D:- Yes, so gullible. No, I mean so g - g - good-looking. Other people may say that you're not fit to shovel horse manure, but I don't agree with them. I think you are.

Willie:- How kind!

Miss D:- Now knock on the door like a good lad.

Willie:- Can't it wait until tomorrow?

Miss D:- Certainly not. (Pointing into sky) Oh look, there's a nightingale.

Willie:- (Looking up) Where?

(Whilst he's busy gazing into the sky she knocks at the door and then runs away and hides behind children on her knees. The Stepmother opens the door, audience hisses and she hisses back)

Stepmother:- (To Willie venomously) And what do you want?

Willie:- (Frightened out of his wits he holds up his case) Can I - - er - - sell you any clothes pegs?

Stepmother:- You're not a gypsy! That school teacher sent you, didn't she?

Willie:- (In falsetto) Yes.

Stepmother:- And you're looking for Hansel and Gretel, aren't you?

Willie:- (In falsetto) Yes.

Stepmother:- Well you can't have them.

Miss D:- (Popping up from behind children) Tell her you'll cut off their family allowance.

Willie:- (In falsetto) I'll cut off your family allowance.

Stepmother:- So what?

Miss D:- (Popping up again) Tell her you'll cut off their national assistance.

Willie:- (In falsetto) I'll cut off your national assistance.

Stepmother:- See if I care!

Miss D:- (Popping up and staying up) Tell her that - - - (local TV hire firm) will take back her telly.

Willie:- (Still in falsetto) - - - - will take back your telly.

Stepmother:- Curses on you! You win this time. (Turning into house) Hansel and Gretel, come here at once, it's time to go to school.

(Hansel and Gretel come to the door)

Go and join the other children.

(They do this and everyone cheers)

But don't think you've heard the last of me. I'll get my revenge. (She hisses at everyone and slams the door)

Miss D:- (Coming forward) We did it! We did it! (Going to Hansel and Gretel) Are you alright you two?

Hansel)
Gretel):- Yes thank you Miss Demeanour.

Miss D:- I'm so pleased. In fact I'm so happy I think we'll have a song before we go back to school. Do you all agree?

All:- Yes.

Miss D:- Good! Then away we go. Everybody join in.

Song (Miss Demeanour, Willie, Hansel, Gretel, Children and Chorus)

Suggested numbers:- It's a lovely day today
(Call me Madam)

I wanna be happy (No no Nanette)
Strike up the band (Strike up
the Band)

(Tabs draw as those on stage form a picture)

Scene 2 - A Road in the Village (Front cloth or tabs)

(Forest Fairy enters stage right)

Fairy:- First round I think belongs to me,
Now I'm the children's guide.

Their stepmother can do no harm,
When I am by their side.

(The Wicked Witch of the Wood enters stage left)

Witch:- Not so fast my pretty one,
We've only just begun.
Pride always comes before a fall,
I've yet to have my fun.
Their stepmother may be a swine,
But you've seen nothing yet.
When I have cast my powers on her,
She'll be as black as jet.

(The Witch exits cackling)

Fairy:- So she intends to get some help,
Then I may do the same.
A little added interest,
Will help improve the game.

(Fairy exits stage right and Martin and Heidi enter stage left)

Martin:- That was the best breakfast I ever tasted.

Heidi:- I'm pleased you enjoyed it.

Martin:- I enjoyed it so much that I've decided to stay overnight
at your charming hotel.

Heidi:- (Breaking away) Then I must go and prepare a room for
you.

Martin:- (Following her) Please don't go. There's another more
important reason I've decided to stay. (He places his
hand on her shoulder)

Heidi:- Oh?

Martin:- You must have realised by now that it isn't just the
food and the scenery that attracts me to your village
Heidi.

Heidi:- How do you mean?

Martin:- Surely you must know that you're the real reason for my
wanting to stay.

Heidi:- (Moving away) I don't know what to say.

Martin:- Just say that you could care for me a little.

Heidi:- (Turning in to him) Yes Martin, I believe I could.

Martin:- (Excited) You could?

(Heidi nods)

(Taking her hands in his) You've made me the happiest
man alive.

(The Forest Fairy enters stage right)

Fairy:- Congratulations my dears. I'm always pleased to see the
results of my friend Cupid's work.

Martin:- Who are you?

Fairy:- I am the Forest Fairy and look after all those who live
in the Black Forest area of Germany.

Heidi:- But how can we help you?

Fairy:- I believe you know Hansel and Gretel who live in the
village.

Heidi:- Yes, their father has recently married again.

Fairy:- And that's just the problem.

Heidi:- How do you mean?

Fairy:- Their new stepmother hates the children and may do them harm.

Martin:- But how can we be of assistance?

Fairy:- Call at the house early each morning to make sure the children are ready for school, because that is the time of day when the powers of evil are at their greatest.

Martin:- Well Heidi, it looks as though I'll be spending the rest of my holiday at your hotel.

Heidi:- You know what they say about an ill wind.

Fairy:- Then you will do it?

Martin:- Of course we will, won't we Heidi?

Heidi:- Yes, of course.

Fairy:- Marvellous! I knew as soon as I saw you that I'd chosen the right couple. Remember that no problem is too great to overcome. All you need are hope and determination and you're sure to win through in the end.

Song (Fairy, Heidi and Martin)

Suggested numbers:- Climb ev'ry mountain (The Sound of Music)

Star of Hope

Look for the silver lining

Keep your sunny side up

Tomorrow (Annie)

(It is suggested that the Fairy sings the first chorus alone and Martin and Heidi join in for the reprise. At the end of the number they exit as tabs draw back on Scene 3)

Scene 3 - The Village Schoolroom

(The chorus are on stage dressed as cleaners with dusters, mops, etc and parents with the Junior Dancers as their children)

Song and Dance (Chorus and Junior Dancers)

Suggested numbers:- Teach me tonight

An apple for the teacher

A you're adorable

Rythm of life (Sweet Charity)

(Miss Demeanour enters in mortar board and gown. She carries cane. Music continues softly in background)

Miss D:- What is all this commotion? This is a classroom, not - - - (local disco or club). It's nine o'clock and time for lessons. Bring on the desks and clear the room for action.

(The chorus bring on a high desk for Miss Demeanour and backless benches for the children. The chorus exit, the children sit down and the music stops. She counts them)

Oh no, two short again. And I don't need three guesses to find out who they are.

(To audience) You know who's missing don't you?

Audience:- Yes.

Miss D:- Who is it then?

Audience:- Hansel and Gretel.

Miss D:- I didn't hear you. Who did you say?

Audience:- Hansel and Gretel.

Miss D:- That's right - Hansel and Gretel. I bet that wicked stepmother has made them stay at home again to do the cleaning. It's disgraceful! It shouldn't be allowed! I'll have to send Willie round again. (Calling) Willie, Willie, where are you?

(Martin enters and bows to her)

You're not Willie, but I'll tell you what, you're a vast improvement on him. Do you fancy a job young man? I have a little vacant position.

Martin:- No, I'm afraid you don't understand.

Miss D:- Oh dear, that's what they all say.

Martin:- I've brought you're missing pupils. (Calling off) Heidi, bring on Hansel and Gretel.

(Heidi enters holding Hansel's and Gretel's hands)

Miss D:- Oh, I am glad to see you two. (She hugs them) Are you both alright?

Hansel:- Yes, we're fine, aren't we Gretel?

Gretel:- We are now.

Heidi:- Martin and I called at their house to make sure their stepmother allowed them to come to school.

Miss D:- But what did she say?

Martin:- She wasn't very pleased but when we threatened her with a visit from - - - (local MP) she soon saw sense.

Miss D:- Well thank you Mr. - - er - - -

Martin:- Just call me Martin.

Miss D:- I'll call you - - - anytime.

Heidi:- (Laughing) Come along Martin. Let's leave Daisy to get on with her lessons.

Martin:- Very well. Goodbye Miss Demeanour.

Miss D:- Goodbye - - - Martin.

(Miss Demeanour gives Martin a saucy little wave as he exits with Heidi)

Right, take your seats you two (To Hansel and Gretel who sit down) and if you're sitting comfortably I'll begin. Wait a minute, I've forgotten something. (Calling off) Willie, Willie, come here. It's time for your lesson.

(Willie enters. He is dressed as a schoolboy)

Willie:- Do I have to?

Miss D:- Yes you have to. Last year you came bottom of the class and I'm not surprised. The only thing you wrote on your examination paper was your name and you even spelt that wrong.

Willie:- I'm a late developer.

Miss D:- That's not what Gladys Bloggs said when I caught you both behind the bike sheds the other day. Now sit down next to Hansel and Gretel and we'll have some general knowledge questions.

Willie:- But I don't know any generals.

Miss D:- Sit down.

Willie:- (Adopting a schoolboy attitude) Yes miss. (He sits)

Miss D:- (Going to desk and taking out text book) Question 1 - Where did King John sign the Magna Carta?

Willie:- (Holding up his hand) Please miss, I know the answer to that.

Miss D:- Alright Willie, where did King John sign the Magna Carta?

Willie:- At the bottom.

Miss D:- Stupid boy!

(Hansel puts his hand up)

Yes Hansel.

Hansel:- Runymede miss.

Miss D:- Very good. Now Question 2 - What did Marco Polo discover?

Willie:- (Putting his hand up) Please miss, I know the answer to that.

Miss D:- Alright Willie, what did Marco Polo discover?

Willie:- The mint with the hole.

Miss D:- Any more answers like that and you'll stand in the corner...

(Gretel puts her hand up)

Yes Gretel.

Gretel:- China miss.

Miss D:- Excellent Gretel. Now Question 3 - Who first planted horse chestnut trees in England?

Willie:- (Putting his hand up) Please miss, William the Conker.

Miss D:- That does it! Stand in the corner.

All the Children:- Aw!

Hansel:- Please miss, give him one more chance.

Miss D:- (To audience) Should I? (Audience response) Alright, but it's more than you deserve. Now Question 4 - Who built a boat for all the animals when it rained for forty days and forty nights?

(There is silence)

Come along, somebody must know who built a boat for all the animals.

(Willie slowly raises his hand)

I dread to ask this Willie, but what's the answer?

Willie:- Joan of Arc?

(Without saying a word Miss Demeanour points to the corner. Willie gets up sadly and walks to the corner)

Miss D:- Gretel, bring the dunce's cap.

Children:- Aw!

(Gretel exits)

Miss D:- I will not have such behaviour in my classroom. This is not Grange Hill.

(Gretel returns with the dunce's cap)

Place the cap on Willie's head please Gretel.

(She does this and the cap is so large that it comes right down over his eyes. He wanders about the stage feeling with his hands and eventually exits)

What a wally! Now as a little break from lessons we are going to have a display by the school football team cheer leaders. Come on girls. Show us what you can do?.

(The Senior Dancers run on. They are wearing tee shirts suitably inscribed, short tennis skirts and trainers. They are carrying banners, etc)

Dance (Senior Dancers)

Suggested numbers:- Match of the Day Theme
Keep young and beautiful
YMCA
Up-tempo pop number

(During the dance Miss Demeanour exits and returns with a remote control unit as used for TV. After applause the Dancers exit to music. Willie re-enters. He is still wearing the dunce's cap but there are two holes cut in the front so he can see through)

Miss D:- Good heavens! It's the Klu Klux Klan!

Willie:- I couldn't see what was going on.

Miss D:- That's probably as well with those girls dancing. You would have needed a cold shower. Anyway enough of this nonsense, playtime's over and it's time for the boys and girls to share the same curriculum.

Willie:- Isn't it about time we had some separate ones built.

Miss D:- (To audience) What can you do with him? Every Monday morning I tell him to wait round the back with the rubbish but the dustmen never take him away. (To class) Now today I have a surprise for you all. The - - - (Local Education Committee) have let me borrow their computerised robot. It is the latest development in electronics and is known as the Flexible Robot Educational Demonstrator or FRED for short. Here in my hand I have the remote control unit so let's bring him in shall we?

(She presses button on unit and Fred enters mechanically. He is a man or girl in a silver boxlike suit with built-up head. If possible a hand operated battery should work lights and electronic sounds built into the suit)

Fred:- I am Fred, the Flexible Robot Educational Demonstrator. I am programmed to answer all your questions.

Miss D:- There we are! What did I tell you? (To Fred) Now what is the theorem of Pythagoras?

- Fred:- Pythagoras states that in any right angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the two adjacent sides.
- Miss D:- (Smiling proudly) Wonderful! Let's try something else. Who was Charles Dickens?
- Fred:- Charles Dickens was a famous Vitorian author who lived from 1812 to 1870. He wrote stories, novels and miscellaneous prose. Among his most famous works are Great Expectations, A Christmas Carol and Oliver Twist.
- Willie:- (Disparagingly to Hansel and Gretel) What a clever clogs!
- Fred:- Clogs are made in Holland from wood and leather. They are worn on the feet and are cheaper than shoes.
- Willie:- (Also disparagingly) Cor!
- Fred:- Core is the inner part of an apple after the edible outer part has been removed. It contains the pips which can be planted to grow new apple trees.
- Willie:- What a pain in the neck!
- Fred:- A pain in the neck is often caused by standing in a draught of cold air though it can be brought about by rheumatics or other muscular problems.
- Miss D:- (Smirking) Doesn't he make you feel ashamed Willie? He's so clever and you're so thick. (Patting Fred) You really are a treasure.
- Fred:- Treasure usually consists of gold, silver and precious stones. It is often buried in the ground to avoid detection. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a famous book called 'Treasure Island' which tells the story of treasure buried by pirates.
- (Willie and the class laugh)
- Miss D:- (Also trying to laugh it off) There you are! You learn something every day.
- Fred:- A day is made up of twenty four hours, each of which has sixty minutes. There are 365 days in each year except for leap year when there are 366.
- Miss D:- (Laughing nervously and becoming embarrassed) You see, his knowledge is all embracing.
- Fred:- Embracing means the placing of one's arms around another person. It is a movement often undertaken by lovers. I will demonstrate.
- (He puts his arms round Miss Demeanour, who tries to escape but cannot. Class laugh)
- Miss D:- Let go of me. Let go of me.
- (Robot remains with his arms around her)
- Willie:- Press another button.
- (Miss Demeanour manages to press another button on the control panel. Fred's lights go on and off and electronic noises can be heard but he still holds on)
- Miss D:- It's not working! (To Fred) Let me go you metal monstrosity or I'll hit you in the kisser.
- Fred:- Kisser is someone who presses his lips to those of another person to show his affection. I will demonstrate.

(Fred tries to kiss Miss Demeanour)

Miss D:- Help! I'm being got at by an overgrown sardine tin.
Willie, come and get him off me.

Willie:- But I thought you liked to be surrounded by knowledge.

Miss D:- If you get him off me I'll never ask you to stand in the corner again.

Willie:- Alright, come on kids, let's see what we can do.

(Willie and the children try to pull them apart but without success)

He's too strong for us. Press another button.

Miss D:- I'll try. (She manages to press another button on control panel. Fred releases Miss Demeanour and grabs Willie)

Willie:- It's got me now. Press another button quick.

(Miss Demeanour presses another button)

Fred:- (Pre-recorded) I am Fred, the Flexible Robot Educational Demonstrator. I am programmed to answer all your questions. I am Fred, the Flexible Robot Educational Demonstrator. I am programmed to answer all your questions. I am Fred - - (The voice continues getting faster and more high pitched. Lights flash)

Willie:- Press another button.

Miss D:- Very well.

(She presses another button. Fred walks off mechanically still embracing Willie who is dragged off with him. The voice continues as they exit. Miss Demeanour and class look offstage in the direction Fred and Willie have gone. After five seconds there is a loud explosion, voice stops and smoke pours onto stage)

Miss D:- Oh no! Willie are you alright?

(Willie staggers back onto stage. His jacket is in shreds, his dunce's cap is bent, his face is black and he is generally dishevelled)

Willie:- (In a daze) Where am I?

Miss D:- Are you still in one piece?

Willie:- I think so, which is more than can be said for the robot.

Miss D:- Oh no! What will - - - (Education Authority) say?

Hansel:- Never mind Miss Demeanour! We didn't want a rotten old robot anyway.

Gretel:- No, we're quite happy with you. You may not be as brainy but you're much nicer, isn't she everybody?

All the class:- Yes!

Song (Hansel, Gretel, Willie, Miss Demeanour and Children)

Suggested numbers:- You're the tops

Doin' what comes naturally (Annie get your gun)

Happiness

(They form a picture as song finishes and tabs close)