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Product Code Y603A

Hansel & Gretel's

GREAT ESCAPE

A Contemporary Tale with Classic Characters

by **Robert E. McCarthy**

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Hansel & Gretel's Great Escape

by Robert E. McCarthy

CHARACTERS

5F / 5M / 19-22 Either Gender

Roles may be doubled or tripled for smaller cast size or played by a cast of 8 for touring

HANSEL
GRETEL
MOM (offstage voice)
THE WITCH
THE BIG BAD WOLF
SUPER PIG
BAT PIG
EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG
JACK
GINGERBREAD MAN 1
GINGERBREAD MAN 2
RUMPLESTILTSKIN
THUMBELINA
PINOCCHIO
THE LITTLE MERMAID
CAPTAIN NEMO
SCHOOL BUS DRIVER
CHILDREN ON BUS
12-15 STAGEHANDS

NOTES ON STAGEHANDS:

Much of this play relies on the teamwork and coordination of stagehands during and in-between scenes. The stagehands are an integral part of the production and serve an important purpose throughout the play. It is suggested that the stagehands wear all black so as not to distract from other characters in the scenes. However, the director should feel free to costume or create specific characters for each stagehand in each scene. It is the playwright's intention that the director and production team feel free to be as creative as possible in utilizing the stagehands in the show.

PRODUCTION NOTE

The play takes place on a bare stage. Props are brought on and off the stage according to the different settings and action during the play.

SCENES

- SCENE 1: BEDTIME
- SCENE 2: INTO THE WOODS
- SCENE 3: SUPERHERO PIG FIGHT
- SCENE 4: THE WITCH AND WOLF REGROUP
- SCENE 5: JACK'S GIANT HOLE
- SCENE 6: UP, UP, AND AWAY!
- SCENE 7: THE GINGERBREAD CASTLE
- SCENE 8: TRAPPED!
- SCENE 9: THE BIG ESCAPE
- SCENE 10: SOARING WITH SWALLOW
- SCENE 11: SPLASH!
- SCENE 12: CAPTAIN NEMO'S NAUTILUS
- SCENE 13: BATTLE AT THE BUS STOP

TOTAL RUNNING TIME: APPROXIMATELY 60 MINUTES.

PROPS LIST AT END OF PLAY

Hansel & Gretel's Great Escape

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SCENE ONE: BEDTIME

Evening: HANSEL AND GRETEL's bedroom. There are two blankets on the stage representing their beds.

HANSEL and GRETEL sit on the stage. They are both dressed in casual and comfortable attire. GRETEL is texting on her cell phone. HANSEL is playing a video game, and we hear video game sounds from offstage, or on speaker. Also, there is a STAGEHAND on the opposite side of the stage, who is miming being the character HANSEL is controlling in his video game. The STAGEHAND is running and ducking and pretending to shoot a rifle, all in a very exaggerated and comic way.

HANSEL

C'mon, C'mon... Move it! Over there. No, that way! Up there. Get it! Yes. Yes! Oh, no. Watch out. Watch out! NOOO!!!

There is a loud beeping sound, and the STAGEHAND collapses on the stage.

HANSEL, *Continued*

What?! I have to start again? It took me all night to get to level 51. This game is ridiculous.

STAGEHAND gets back up, and HANSEL begins to play again; the STAGEHAND once again acting out the character in the game.

GRETEL

(Looking at phone)

You're ridiculous. Becca says, "OMG. Hansel, just start it again u loser."

HANSEL

Who asked her?

I did.

GRETEL

Well Gretel, you can text Becca back—

HANSEL

—I will.

GRETEL

—you can text her back that if she’s never played Alpha-Demon-Death-Squad 12, then maybe she should mind her own business.

HANSEL

I thought you beat that one last week?

GRETEL

That was Alpha-Demon-ZOMBIE-Squad 12. Who’s the loser now?

HANSEL

Whatever. Same stupid game. Becca says, “Lol, is Hansel the Dummy vaporized yet?”

GRETEL

Hi Becca, bye Becca.

HANSEL

I think she likes you.

GRETEL

Gross!

HANSEL

Or not. You know she’s probably just bummed because summer’s over, and we have to go back to school tomorrow.

GRETEL

Who isn’t? It’s the fifth grade! The worst one. That’s what everybody says. (*Back to video game*) Ugh! MISSED!!!

HANSEL

We hear the same loud beeping as before, and STAGEHAND collapses again. HANSEL’s video game character STAGEHAND is then quickly picked up and carried off the stage by TWO OTHER STAGEHANDS, as the scene continues.

HANSEL, *Continued*

But you know, we made it through the fourth grade. Maybe the fifth won't be that bad?

GRETEL

Lots of confidence from the kid that thought ten times ten was a "trick question" on his final quiz.

HANSEL

I went with my gut.

MOM, *Off*

Hansel! Gretel! Get ready for bed, please! You've got school tomorrow!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Yes, Mom!

MOM, *Off*

And that means no video games, Hansel.

HANSEL

Okay!

*HANSEL turns off the console, while
GRETEL is furiously texting on her
phone.*

GRETEL

Too bad, so sad.

MOM, *Off*

And no texting, Facebooking, Twittering, Googling, pic sharing, or Instagramming, Gretel.

HANSEL

(Sarcastically)

Oh, no!

GRETEL

Okay, Mom. Okay.

HANSEL

(To MOM offstage)

I think she's on Snapchat!

A short pause as GRETEL glares at him.

MOM, *Off*

I don't know what that is, but it's time for bed. Turn it off!

GRETEL

Ok, Mom! Geez. (To HANSEL) I guess we just have to go to bed.

HANSEL

Yeah, we'll see what tomorrow brings.

They lie down in their beds.

GRETEL

Goodnight, Hansel.

HANSEL

Goodnight, Gretel.

As they sleep, a STAGEHAND enters and holds up a large, empty window frame meant to represent the window in their bedroom. We then see the WOLF and WITCH creep onto the stage. The WITCH is dressed all in black with a large witch's hat. The hat has a gingerbread man glued to the front of it. She is also holding an old broom. The WOLF is dressed in beaten up clothes, has lots of fur, and a long tail. They are whispering as they speak, and constantly looking around to make sure they are not noticed.

WITCH

Did you set the trap?

WOLF

Oh yes, Your Majesty. It's all set.

WITCH

Good. And I'm sure we won't have any difficulties, will we?

WOLF

Oh no, Your Majesty.

WITCH

No, problems?

WOLF

Oh, no. No, no.

WITCH

(Grabbing his ear)
Not like last time!

WOLF

(Wincing in pain)
Ouch! No, Your Majesty! I promise, I promise!

WITCH

(Letting go and looking around)
Shhhh, you fool! Now you know how I love little boys and girls. Almost as much as my oven loves them. You had better not fail me.

WOLF

I won't, I promise.

WITCH

(Very nice all of a sudden)
Alright then. *(Tosses a dog treat into the middle of the stage)* Get to work, "boy." There's more wolf treats where that came from. Ha-ha-ha!

The WITCH laughs as she exits. Once she leaves, the WOLF creeps over to the treat and picks it up.

WOLF

This is a DOG treat! *(To AUDIENCE)* Do I look like a dog? I mean, do I? I'm a Wolf! I'm a wild animal. *(Tastes it)* Yuck! *(Throws it offstage in disgust)* One of these days...

The WOLF creeps over to the window frame, crouches in front of it, and knocks.

GRETEL

What's that?

HANSEL

What's what?

WOLF knocks again.

GRETEL

That, dummy.

HANSEL

Maybe it's your phone's new ringtone?

GRETEL

No, it's someone knocking on the window.

WOLF knocks very loudly.

HANSEL

What the— (*Getting up*) Okay. If this is you and Becca playing some practical joke—

HANSEL goes to the window and the WOLF springs up with a big smile on his face.

WOLF

Hello!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhh!

WOLF

(Climbing in through the window)

It's ok. It's ok. I'm a wolf.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhhhhh!!!

WOLF

But – er – I'm a FRIENDLY wolf! Look, I can dance.

WOLF dances in place.

GRETEL

Hansel?

WOLF

And sing! (*Singing*) "I'm a wolf, I'm a wolf, I'm the big, bad – er – nice, friendly wolf. I'm just here to dance, and sing, and not do anything bad." Really, I'm nice!

HANSEL

What are you doing here?

WOLF

(Exploring their room)

Oh, nothing. Just came by to say "hello." Word in the woods is that you have a really nice room. Not very big though.

HANSEL

Well, look. Thanks for... stopping by. But we really have to get some sleep. We're starting the fifth grade tomorrow and—

WOLF

The fifth grade? Did you say the FIFTH grade?!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Yes.

WOLF

Well, that's the worst one.

HANSEL

That's what I heard.

GRETEL

Hansel...

WOLF

You don't even get desks in the fifth grade. You have to stand up in cages all day. Rotten, stinky cages!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Cages?

WOLF

And no food for lunch. You have to MAKE food for the teachers, and then watch them eat it...in your cages!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Watch them eat it?

WOLF

And instead of "RE-cess," you have "NO-cess."

HANSEL & GRETEL

What?

WOLF

It's where instead of getting a break to go out on the playground, you stay inside and do twice as much work!

GRETEL

In the cages?

WOLF

Yes!

HANSEL

I knew it.

WOLF

Oh, well. You'll get through it. Some kids do... Anyway, enjoy. I guess I'll just be going. Nice room.

The WOLF starts to exit through the window.

HANSEL

Wait. You have to help us.

GRETEL

Should we tell our parents?

WOLF

(Stopping; returning)

Oh, no. No, no, no. They'll never tell the parents what really goes on in the fifth grade, anyway. You're wasting your breath. There is one chance though.

HANSEL & GRETEL

What?

WOLF

Well, it's a longshot.

HANSEL

Tell us.

WOLF

You see...my master – er – partner, has magical powers. And maybe, just maybe, if we went to see her, she could magically skip you to the SIXTH grade, which is really fun, and cool, and all the kids are treated really well.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Let's do it!

WOLF

Shhhh... Okay, okay. Let's get a move on, but be quiet.

GRETEL

I'll get my cell phone. *(Grabs it)*

HANSEL

Of course. Never without your best friend.

WOLF, HANSEL and GRETEL continue talking as they exit through the window. STAGEHAND with window, picks up blankets and remaining props and exits.

SCENE TWO: INTO THE WOODS

HANSEL and GRETEL's back yard.

WOLF leads HANSEL and GRETEL about the stage.

GRETEL

At least my best friends aren't zombies and demons.

HANSEL

Those are enemies, dummy.

GRETEL

Like it matters. Why don't you get out more, Hansel? No one's gonna judge you for playing in the sandbox every once in a while.

HANSEL

Shhhhh!

GRETEL

You know you want to.

HANSEL

How far is it, Mr. Wolf?

GRETEL

Nothing to say about that?

WOLF

Oh, not far. You've got a nice backyard by the way. Here's the path! We'll be there in no time.

WOLF leads HANSEL and GRETEL on a path that zigzags around the entire stage and into the woods.

GRETEL

Into the woods? How far are we going?

WOLF

Not far. Not far.

GRETEL

You know, we're not really supposed to come all the way out here. Mom and Dad—

HANSEL

Forget what they say, Gretel. Do you want to be making lunch for all the teachers in a stinky cage for the next year? Come on.

WOLF

Those cages really stink.

GRETEL

But they say it's really easy to get lost out here.

HANSEL

He's showing us where to go. And he'll help us find the way back, right?

WOLF

Ha!...oh, I mean "Ha! Of course I will." Easy to get back. Come along now.

GRETEL

(Stopping; looking at her phone)

Oh geez, there's no signal out here. My GPS won't work.

HANSEL

Don't worry Gretel, we're not that far from home.

GRETEL pulls a handful of candy corn out of her pocket.

GRETEL

Oh, I know. We can drop these on the ground so we'll be able to find our way back.

HANSEL

You keep candy corn in your pockets?

GRETEL

Is it a crime?

WOLF

Will you two hurry up!?

Ok, just do it.

HANSEL

GRETEL drops candy corn pieces as they continue following the WOLF.

Faster, you two. Faster.

WOLF

They speed up. As they walk, THREE STAGEHANDS come onstage carrying leaves and branches. They crouch down together and form a bush on the stage.

Faster!

WOLF, *Continued*

Okay, we're right behind you.

HANSEL

Can we slow down?

GRETEL

We're almost there!

WOLF

Does your partner know we're coming?

HANSEL

Oh, sure. She's very excited to meet you. Oh, watch out for that spot, we'd better go around this way.

WOLF

The WOLF leads them straight into the bush. As HANSEL and GRETEL step into it, their hands and feet are grabbed by the stagehands.

Ahhh!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Haha! It worked! It worked! My master will pleased!

WOLF

I can't move.

HANSEL

GRETEL

Help! We're trapped! Help!

HANSEL

Ouch! Help! Let us go, Mr. Wolf!

WOLF

Fat chance! I put a lot of work into this.

HANSEL

Call 911.

GRETEL

There's no signal, dummy! *(To WOLF)* You won't hurt us, will you?

SCENE 3: SUPERHERO PIG FIGHT!

Deep in the woods; the scene continues.

The THREE LITTLE PIGS enter, walking along the path and picking up the candy corn pieces laid out by GRETEL. SUPER PIG is dressed in a superhero costume with a red cape. BAT PIG is dressed in a super hero costume resembling a bat. EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG wears a green costume and carries a green flashlight. They all have pig snouts, pig ears and pig tails. HANSEL and GRETEL struggle to free themselves as the scene continues.

WOLF

Well...why shouldn't I?

GRETEL

We're really handy. We can dust and clean for you every day.

WOLF

I like dust, and I live outside.

HANSEL

We could make you a house. Plenty of room out here for a yard, too.

WOLF

I don't want a house, too confining.

GRETEL

We could find you some friends. There are lots of cute puppies at the pet store.

WOLF

I'm a wolf, not a DOG! I think I've heard enough. Now, once I deliver you to my master, she's got a nice, hot oven that makes the tastiest little girls and boys I've ever had! That's a good enough treat for me!

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Hold it right there!

WOLF

What the—!?

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

“What-the-what”, Wolf?

SUPER PIG

(Stepping forward)
Super Pig!

SUPER PIG throws candy corn into the WOLF's face.

WOLF

Ouch!

BAT PIG

Bat Pig!

BAT PIG sneaks up behind the WOLF and trips him.

WOLF

Ugh!

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG runs over to the WOLF and shines his green flashlight into the WOLF's eyes.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

Emerald Flashlight Pig!

There is an awkward silence.

WOLF

Huh?

SUPER PIG

Retreat Emerald Flashlight Pig. Do not engage.

BAT PIG

Yeah, we got this.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

But you said I could—

SUPER PIG and BAT PIG

(Charging)

Ahhhhh!

SUPER PIG and BAT PIG grab the WOLF. They throw him back and forth between them as they speak. The WOLF is in a daze, stumbling and spinning around as he is tossed from one to the other. EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG attempts to help by dramatically shining his flashlight at the WOLF.

SUPER PIG

(Tossing WOLF)

Here you go, Bat Pig!

BAT PIG

Here wolfie-wolfie. Ah-ha! *(Tossing WOLF back)* Just another walk in the park, Super Pig.

SUPER PIG

Come on over. *(Catching WOLF)* Nice one.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

Over here! Over here!

BAT PIG

What's that? Do you hear something, Super Pig?

SUPER PIG

(Tossing WOLF) Oh yeah, I think it's the sound of being totally useless.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

(Pointing to flashlight)

If it were nighttime, this would really come in handy.

BAT PIG

It is nighttime! *(Tossing WOLF)* And the new world record for wolf-toss is...

WOLF

(Ducking SUPERPIG and escaping them both)

Now you see me, now you don't.

*SUPER PIG and BAT PIG chase the
WOLF around the stage.*

BAT PIG

Get back here!

SUPER PIG

Whatcha gonna do, Wolf?

WOLF

I'm gonna huff.

BAT PIG & SUPER PIG

Yeah?

WOLF

And I'm gonna puff!

BAT PIG & SUPER PIG

Yeah?!

WOLF

And I'm gonna...get the heck outta here!

WOLF runs offstage.

SUPER PIG

Wait!

BAT PIG

Get 'em!

*BAT PIG and SUPER PIG exit after the
WOLF. EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG
frees HANSEL and GRETEL from the
grip of the STAGEHANDS' bush as the*

scene continues. As they exit, the STAGEHANDS pick up all of the pieces of candy corn on the stage and exit.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

(Freeing them)

There you go, guys. Just gotta get this one, and that one, and you're all set.

HANSEL

Thank you!

GRETEL

Yes, thank you so much Emerald Flashlight Pig.

GRETEL hugs EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG.

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

Aww shucks. It's all in a day's work for me, I guess.

SUPER PIG, *Off*

Hey, I can't see anything! Where's the wolf?

BAT PIG, *Off*

It's so dark! Where's Flashlight?!

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

I'll be right there! *(To HANSEL and GRETEL)* Gotta go guys, sorry.

HANSEL

But how do we get back?

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

(Pointing several different ways)

Um, that way, no there, no, that way, over there.

SUPER PIG & BAT PIG, *Off*

Emerald Flashlight Pig!

EMERALD FLASHLIGHT PIG

See ya! *(Exits)*

GRETEL

What are we going to do?

SCENE 4: THE WITCH AND WOLF REGROUP

HANSEL and GRETEL sit and think. The WITCH enters on the opposite end of the stage. She is accompanied by a STAGEHAND carrying a giant, magic ball.

WITCH

(Looking into the ball)

That's it. Take a break. You're so tired, just relax. Take some time to consider your options.

The WOLF enters panting and wheezing.

WOLF

Your Majesty I, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, I just—

WITCH

I know, I know. Capture two little children, helpless and alone in the forest, and bring them to me. Such a simple, little task for a mangy canine like you. And it still didn't get done, did it?

WOLF

It was only—

WITCH

“Only”?! Only that you don't think I should be ALLOWED, to make my favorite child soufflé this month?

WOLF

No, it's wonderful.

WITCH

Or perhaps you are critical of the texture of my kiddie jalapeno poppers?

WOLF

Oh no, they melt in my mouth. I'll do better next time.

WITCH

Next time?! What makes you think there will be a next time? *(Claps her hands loudly)*
Hahaha!

THREE STAGEHANDS enter holding up large drawings of monsters, and start circling and scaring the WOLF.

WITCH, *Continued*

Maybe instead, I'll have a wolf pizza for dinner?

WOLF

No!

WITCH

Or a nice wolf burger, with ketchup only!

WOLF

Ahh!

WITCH

Or wait, what about a lazy, no-brained, coyote-wanna-be, taco night?

WOLF

(Falling to his knees)

No, please. I'll do better, I promise. I promise.

WITCH

Yech! Too furry anyway.

The WITCH claps her hands again and the STAGEHANDS carrying the monsters exit. She stares again into the giant ball.

WITCH, *Continued*

Well, well, well... Wondering where to go from here, eh? Good luck with that cell phone—don't you know those batteries aren't built to last?

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, what happened?

HANSEL

What?

GRETEL

My phone just went dead all off a sudden.

HANSEL

Probably because we're way out here, dummy.

GRETEL

It had half the battery left.

HANSEL

You can plug it into a tree, maybe lightning will strike it.

GRETEL

(At phone)
C'mon. C'mon!

WOLF

Oh, that was great Your Majesty.

WITCH

Did I ask for your opinion?

WOLF

Oh no! Just admiring your work. Just admiring!

WITCH

Maybe... I could FREEZE them first, then defrost them, and then cook them in the oven?
(Conjuring magic) Let's see how they like the cold. Getting frosty out there...

HANSEL

(Shivering)
Brrrr... How did it get so cold all of a sudden?

GRETEL

(Shivering)
It is technically fall, you know. This happens.

HANSEL

What happens?

GRETEL

Cold happens.

HANSEL

Not like this. It's like someone flipped a switch.

GRETEL

It sure is freezing.

HANSEL

(Rubbing his arms)
Ugh!

WITCH

Oh, but wait. Frozen food is always stale no matter what. Wolf?

WOLF

Yes, Your Majesty!

WITCH
What's your favorite food?

WOLF
My what? Well, I just, I guess—

WITCH
What is it?

WOLF
Well, I just had some great fish sticks with tartar sauce and milk, and this great aged cheddar sauce—

WITCH
That's it!

WOLF
Do you want some?

WITCH
No idiot! Aged meat is the bestest. Let's send them down a hole for a good month or two. See how they turn out. Haha! Off we go, off we go...

*The WITCH, WOLF and STAGEHAND
carrying the magic ball exit.*

GRETEL
Hansel, the phone is on. It has a full battery!

HANSEL
I told you those things are finicky.

GRETEL
The GPS works, and it's leading us home!

HANSEL
Signal out here? Not likely.

*The GPS voice is heard from offstage,
and it is the WITCH's voice.*

GPS, *Off*
Destination, please.

GRETEL
Home.

Calculating... GPS

Doesn't it need an address? HANSEL

Shhhh! It's brand new. GRETEL

So? HANSEL

Go ahead ten feet, please. GPS

Okay. GRETEL

They move forward 10 steps.

Bear left, please. GPS

Okay. GRETEL

They bear left.

Full circle around the trees. GPS

That's right here. HANSEL

They walk in a full circle.

Look up, up, up, please. GPS

(Looking up)
Okay... HANSEL & GRETEL

Walk ahead three steps. GPS

GRETEL & HANSEL

(Walking)
One...Two...

HANSEL & GRETEL
Three.

GPS
And fall down! Hahaha!

SCENE 5: JACK'S GIANT HOLE

HANSEL and GRETEL fall into a deep hole. They put their hands up in the air and scream "AHHHHHH!" while wiggling their bodies to simulate falling. As they fall, the THREE STAGEHANDS come out and circle around them with the same cardboard monsters as in the last scene, scaring them as they fall. OTHER STAGEHANDS bring out three bales of hay and drop them on the stage. ALL STAGEHANDS exit. HANSEL and GRETEL "land" on the hay bales.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ugh! Ouch! That hurt.

HANSEL

Are you okay?

GRETEL

I think so.

HANSEL

(Looking up)
Wow. How far did we fall, Gretel?

GRETEL

(Looking up)
It's a long way up.

HANSEL

What are we gonna do?

JACK jumps onstage and frightens them. He is wearing rubber boots, work pants, a Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses. He speaks with an exaggerated, comical accent.

JACK

Frettin'?

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahh!

JACK

Don't you be frettin'. I've been down 'ere fer a long time lil' whippersnappers. A loooooong time!

HANSEL

Who are you?

JACK

Well flibberty gibbet, thanks fer askin'! I'm Jack! And it is nice to meet you. Welcome to my home, sweet...hole.

HANSEL

Thank you, I think.

GRETEL

It sure is cozy.

JACK

Well, thank ya!

A STAGEHAND comes out carrying a glass of lemonade with a paper umbrella in it, a rolled up beach blanket, and a straw hat. As JACK continues speaking, the stagehand gives JACK the drink, puts the straw hat on JACK's head, spreads the beach blanket out in front of a hay bale, and the exits.

JACK, *Continued*

Yep, this here is just about the most relaxin', chillaxin', serene, superb lil' getaway spot you will ever see. Not a soul to bother ya, maybe a little bird'll come on down and chirp a "howdy-doo." Sometimes I just go ahead and chirp on back. (*Laying down on blanket, and leaning against the hay bale*) Might not be the best spot to be workin' on the ole' sun tan, but you can always try. You can always try.

GRETEL

(Looking up)

Oh Hansel, how are we going to get out of here? It's so high up.

HANSEL

I know Gretel.

JACK

Well, don't be tellin' me yer thinkin' about leavin' already? Pull up a hay bale and stay a spell. Ya just got here!

HANSEL

We're sorry Jack, but we'll be in big trouble if we don't get home soon.

GRETEL

And our parents will be worried sick when they find out we're gone. They'll call the police!

HANSEL

Is there any way to climb up there?

JACK

(Sipping his lemonade; looking up)

Well...you could climb up to that spot, but then you'd slip on that thingy n' fall. Or you could climb up to that little spot right there, but then you'd lose yer footin' on that big thing and whack, ding, SPLAT! Really fall. Very painful. Hurt yerselves. Nope. No climbin' up there, that's for sure. No climbin'.

GRETEL

(Angrily)

Oh, no!

JACK

Now, now. I'm not that bad. It's just been awhile since I had a visitor, is all.

HANSEL

No, it's not you Jack. She's just worried we'll never get home.

JACK

(Standing and walking to them)

Oh, so you didn't WANT to come down here and see me?

HANSEL

Well, we didn't mean to.

JACK

You didn't MEAN to come and pay me a visit? Say "hi" to old Jack?

HANSEL

We just fell down the hole Jack, honest. Why do you live down here, anyway? Who put you here?

JACK

Who PUT me here?! I put me here! I love it here. It's just a little getaway I have from the waking world up there. Everything is just so crazy and busy. "Milk the cow, Jack. Go to town, Jack. Time for bed, Jack. Wake up, Jack. Milk the cow. Go to town." Down here I can play solitaire, meditate, have a nice quiet meal all by my lonesome. It really is a nice lil' spot, don't ya think?

GRETEL

But what about your family? Friends? Don't you miss them?

JACK

Well, Ma was a little tiffy with me this mornin'. Can't say I miss 'er yet today, though.

GRETEL

But if you're trapped down here, how do you—

JACK

Trapped?! Ha! You gotta be kiddin'. I'm not trapped, this is just a nice way to spend an evening, silly. Trapped!? Ha! You know what you need? Some beans.

As they talk, A STAGEHAND takes JACK's lemonade, mimes giving him a handful of beans in return then exits.

HANSEL

Beans?

JACK

Beans.

HANSEL

We're not hungry, Jack. We wanna go home.

JACK hands HANSEL the beans.

JACK

These'll do ya every time.

GRETEL

Jack, we need to get up there.

JACK

Beans, give 'em a try.

HANSEL

Beans?

JACK

(Helping HANSEL bury the beans)

Beans. Beans. Beans...

As they bury the beans SEVERAL STAGEHANDS enter with the beanstalk. It has a wide base with room enough for HANSEL and GRETEL to stand on, and a long pole pointing up with vines and leaves either drawn on it, or attached to it. The STAGEHANDS start dancing in a circle around the beanstalk once they set it down.

GRETEL

Wow!

HANSEL

It's huge!

JACK

Grab on there, pardner. She grows fast, enjoy the ride.

HANSEL and GRETEL step onto the beanstalk and grab it.

HANSEL

Hold on, Gretel!

GRETEL

It's growing so fast.

JACK

Hold on now, don't be lettin' go!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Goodbye Jack! Thank you!

JACK quickly drifts offstage as he waves goodbye to HANSEL and GRETEL. MORE STAGEHANDS enter and remove the hay bales and beach blanket. The STAGEHANDS AROUND THE

BEANSTALK start dancing faster and faster.

JACK

Thanks for visiting! Good luck whippersnappers! (*Exits*)

SCENE 6: UP, UP AND AWAY!

GRETEL

Wow, this is amazing!

HANSEL

I know, we're halfway up already!

The WITCH quickly enters along with the giant, magic ball carried by A STAGEHAND.

WITCH

Well, well. Out of my lovely little trap, eh?

HANSEL

We'll be home in no time, Gretel.

GRETEL

I hope it slows down soon.

WITCH

(Conjuring a new spell)

Home?! But why would you want to go home, when you could go for a nice long ride? Haha! See you soon...

The WITCH and STAGEHAND exit. As they leave the, STAGEHANDS dancing around the beanstalk start to dance faster and faster around it.

GRETEL

We're out of the hole, Hansel. But it's still growing!

HANSEL

Don't get off, Gretel. It's too dangerous.

GRETEL

But we're getting so high.

It'll stop soon.

HANSEL

We are REALLY high.

GRETEL

I'm sure it'll stop very soon.

HANSEL

SEVERAL STAGEHANDS enter with large pictures of clouds and a full moon. They move slowly and expressively around the stage.

Wow! The moon is so bright, I can see the whole town.

HANSEL, *Continued*

I can see our house. Hansel, we're getting so high.

GRETEL

It HAS to stop soon!

HANSEL

I don't know about that. Hansel we're up in the clouds!

GRETEL

The DANCING BEANSTALK STAGEHANDS abruptly stop and freeze in place.

It stopped!

HANSEL

Hansel, I'm scared. We're way up in the clouds! What do we do?

GRETEL

(Sticking his foot out and touching the floor)
Gretel, I think I can stand on it.

HANSEL

Don't! It's a cloud, not a trampoline!

GRETEL

It feels solid.

HANSEL

GRETEL

Just stay on, we'll climb down the beanstalk.

HANSEL

Here goes nothing!

HANSEL jumps off the beanstalk.

GRETEL

(Covering her eyes)
Ahhh!

HANSEL

(Standing unsteadily)
Look! It's fine!

GRETEL

It's fine?

HANSEL

Yeah!

GRETEL

Well, I guess...

GRETEL steps off of the beanstalk. THE BEANSTALK STAGEHANDS pick it up and exit.

GRETEL, *Continued*

(Standing; unsteady)
It's hard to stand, though.

HANSEL

Use your arms. It's like standing on a giant marshmallow.

GRETEL

(Falling down)
It's so soft, like when we went shopping for Mom and Dad's new bed.

HANSEL

(Lying down)
I know. It's like a giant, mile long, mold to your body, foam mattress. So comfy.

GRETEL

Hansel, how do we get home? One minute we're being chased by a wolf, then some pig superheroes save us, and then we're riding a beanstalk up into the clouds. I don't care about the fifth grade, I miss Mom and Dad.

HANSEL

It's okay, Gretel.

GRETEL

(Crying)
I just wanna go home.

HANSEL

(Comforting her)
We will get home. I promise.

GRETEL

How?

HANSEL

Well... *(Stands; helps GRETEL to her feet)* We can stand and walk up here, right?

GRETEL

Right.

HANSEL

That means other people might be standing and walking up here too, right?

GRETEL

Right.

HANSEL

Other people might LIVE up here!

GRETEL

Right.

HANSEL

So, let's go find them, and see if they can help us get home!

GRETEL

Okay.

HANSEL and GRETEL hold hands and walk in a circle around the stage. As HANSEL and GRETEL walk around, they struggle to keep from falling over. As the

*scene continues, the CLOUD
STAGEHANDS occasionally drift by and
help them keep their balance.*

GRETEL, *Continued*

Wow, I can see the whole sky and all the stars.

HANSEL

I know, it's amazing.

GRETEL

Do you think you can walk on all those clouds?

HANSEL

I dunno, this one's really big. That's the main difference. You can't walk on the small ones.

GRETEL

Are you sure?

HANSEL

Yes. It has to do with the...density...of the...fluffiness...of this cloud, versus that cloud. And it's also because we're so low to the ground. Those other clouds are higher, so they're thinner.

GRETEL

Wow, you're so creative dear brother. I wish I could make up stuff like that, too.

HANSEL

Now wait a minute—

GRETEL

You should write stories.

*A STAGEHAND runs out with a drawing
of the Big Dipper and exits.*

GRETEL, *Continued*

What constellation is that?

HANSEL

That's the Big Dipper.

*Another STAGEHAND runs out with a
drawing of the Little Dipper and exits.*

GRETEL

Look, that's the Little Dipper.

HANSEL

Duh.

A STAGEHAND runs out with the constellation Scorpio and exits.

HANSEL, *Continued*

That one's Scorpio, like a scorpion.

Another STAGEHAND runs out with the constellation Orion and waits impatiently until HANSEL gets the name right.

HANSEL, *Continued*

And that's, that's...

As HANSEL stares at the Orion picture, OTHER STAGEHANDS rush out with a candy cane gate and hold it up.

HANSEL, *Continued*

It's, um—Orville, Oleron, Olidude...

GRETEL

Hansel, look!

HANSEL

No, I know what it is.

GRETEL

It's—

HANSEL

No, don't tell me!

GRETEL

Hansel just—

HANSEL

Orion! Yes! Orion!

The ORION STAGEHAND throws hands up in relief and exits.

GRETEL

Turn around!

GRETEL turns HANSEL around to see the gate.

GRETEL & HANSEL

It's a Gingerbread Castle!

SCENE 7: THE GINGERBREAD CASTLE

HANSEL and GRETEL run through the gate and into a Gingerbread Castle. The STAGEHANDS carry off the gate as HANSEL and GRETEL check out the castle. DIFFERENT STAGEHANDS run on and off with pieces of gingerbread. [Each stagehand has a unique way of presenting a piece of gingerbread to the children. One stagehand may bring a gingerbread man out on a fancy dinner tray, another may hook a gingerbread man to a fishing pole, another may strike a funny pose onstage, etc.] HANSEL and GRETEL constantly collect the pieces of gingerbread during the scene.

HANSEL

Wow, would you look at this place!

GRETEL

It's so huge, and there's candy everywhere!

HANSEL

I know, the whole place is delicious! Yum!

GRETEL

The walls look like they're—

HANSEL

Brownies! And the doorways are—

GRETEL

Banana bread! And the balcony is—

HANSEL

Triple layer chocolate cake!

GRETEL

(Holding up her gingerbread)

This is the best ever. It tastes like it's just out of the oven. I wonder how much there is?

HANSEL

Tons! And the icing's got extra sugar in it, or something. That's what I'm talkin' about.

GRETEL

I know, it's so creamy. Mmmmmmm!

HANSEL

I'm gonna eat until I'm sick. Wow!

A STAGEHAND runs out onstage barking like a dog, with a piece of gingerbread around his/her neck.

HANSEL, *Continued*

Even the dog has gingerbread!

GRETEL

Here puppy... C'mere!

They chase after the DOG STAGEHAND who leads them to the side of the stage where GINGERBREAD MAN 1 and 2 appear. They are dressed in large, awkwardly moving cardboard costumes. They enter together and grab both HANSEL and GRETEL.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhh! Let us go!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Gotcha! Not so fast now, huh?

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

It's like goin' fishin'.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Yeah, except they ain't fish.

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

Anyway, Her Majesty is gonna have a good time with you two. Ha ha!

WITCH, *Off*

Oh, yesss!

The WITCH enters and approaches the children. She is wearing the same costume as before, except now she is also wearing a baking apron, and carries a rolling pin instead of her broom.

WITCH, *Entering*

And what do we have here, eh? Some little thieves?

HANSEL

Oh no! We're sorry ma'am, we just—

WITCH

Ma'am?! How about "Your Majesty"?

GRETEL

We just thought your house was so beautiful, Your Majesty.

WITCH

You mean my...CASTLE?!

HANSEL

Yes! Your beautiful castle.

WITCH

Oh really? It was just so beautiful that you had to run all over it, stomp your dirty little feet on it, and drop crumbs all over it, and...and...AND...EAT MY GINGERBREAD!?!?

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

They stuffed their little faces full of it, Your Majesty!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Yeah. We saw it all, Your Majesty. Look at all the stuff they took.

GRETEL

You can have it back.

HANSEL

We're so sorry, it just looked so delicious.

WITCH

Oh, it is, it is. And do you know what makes it so delicious?

HANSEL & GRETEL

No.

WITCH

It's my secret ingredient.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

(Excited)

Yeah!

WITCH

It makes the batter just thick enough,

WITCH, GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

But not too thick.

WITCH

And the icing just sweet enough,

WITCH, GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

But not too sweet.

GRETEL

I'm sure it's a wonderful recipe, Your Majesty.

WITCH

Well you know, if you're really nice, I'll let you help me with my cooking.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Yes, please!

WITCH

After all, I have to replace all the gingerbread you stole.

HANSEL

Anything, we'll do anything!

GRETEL

Yes, just please let us go!

WITCH

Oh, I'll let you go alright. Right into the oven! Little girls and boys make my gingerbread just right!

*WITCH, GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2
laugh hysterically.*

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahh!

WITCH

See you soon. Take them away! (*Exits*)

*The GINGERBREAD MEN drag
HANSEL and GRETEL across the stage.*

HANSEL & GRETEL

No! Help! Help!

SCENE 8: TRAPPED!

*STAGEHANDS bring out three hay bales
and place them on the side of the stage.
RUMPELSTILTSKIN and the WOLF are
hidden offstage beside them. The two
GINGERBREAD MEN dump HANSEL
and GRETEL onto the hay bales.*

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

Welcome to the Hotel Jail Cell. We really hope you enjoy your stay.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

(Locking a mimed door)

Yeah, sit tight in there. And no pay per view movies.

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

Yeah, and don't go ordering out for pizza, neither. Ha!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

(As they exit)

Ha, yeah. Pizza. Good one. Hey, do they deliver up here? Pizza. Yeah, pizza. Haha, pizza...

HANSEL

Hey, let us out of here!

GRETEL

Yeah, we didn't do anything wrong! (*Cries*)

HANSEL

What's wrong with you?

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, I'm scared. That Witch is so mean, and she's going to...EAT US!

The WOLF pops out from behind the hay bales. He has his arm in a sling, and a bandage around his head. He is very tired and worn out.

WOLF

Oh, she ain't gonna eat nothing!

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhh! Wolf! Keep away!

WOLF

Not to worry. Not to worry. I don't think I'll be stalking any little children today. (*Pointing to his injury*) Who knows, I may even be due for a career change.

GRETEL

But how did you get here? What happened to you?

WOLF

Well, let's just say the Witch and her gingerbread goons out there don't have much of a sense of humor. At least when it comes to failed missions to catch little children. And that pig beating didn't help either, I must say.

GRETEL

Is she going to eat you too?

WOLF

No, no! Now just listen. She just likes baking. She has all these recipes, who knows which one she's going to make next.

HANSEL

So she won't eat us?

WOLF

Oh, no. No, no, no. She'll just turn you into gingerbread after she COOKS you, but she won't EAT you.

GRETEL & HANSEL

What?!

WOLF

I told you she wouldn't eat you, she'll just cook you.

HANSEL

That's the same thing!

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, what are we gonna do? We have to get out of here!

WOLF

You're telling me.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2 return and open the door. They seize the WOLF and carry him out.

WOLF

(Struggling as carried out)

Now, come on fellas. Let's talk this one out. How about it?

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Time to "talk it out" with Her Majesty again, flea-bag.

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

We'll see what she has to say about it.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Yeah, I heard she's reconsidering coyote taco night.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

Hahaha!

WOLF

(To HANSEL & GRETEL)

Don't worry you two, they've been having some trouble with the oven lately, anyway. You got at least twenty minutes before it's pre-heated! Better than nothing, right? Too-da-loo!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Too-da-loo! Hahaha!

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

Yeah, lots of time.

The GINGERBREAD MEN exit with the WOLF.

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, they'll be back for us in no time. What can we do?

HANSEL

Gretel, I wish I knew. I wish I knew.

One of the hay bales topples over, revealing a figure crouched behind them. RUMPELSTILTSKIN appears wearing a bathrobe, nightcap and slippers and is continually blowing bubbles throughout the scene. RUMPELSTILTSKIN appears to have just woken from a nap.

RUMPELSTILTZKIN

WISHES?! What wishes?

GRETEL

Ahh!

HANSEL

Who are you?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Yawning)

Oh, wouldn't you like to know. *(Blows a bubble)* The seer of superbly-stupendous sights, the teller of triumphantly-terrific tales, the knower of... "knowledge?" ...And I grant wishes. That's all I really do. Just one though, you only get one. I grant wishes.

A pause as they stare at RUMPELSTILTSKIN.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN, *Continued*

What are you looking at? I-GRANT-WISHES!

GRETEL

Wishes?

HANSEL

I thought he/she said dishes.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

WISHES!

HANSEL

Ok, ok. Um...really? I think that's impossible.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

It's a talent, had it since I was a kid. I was playing with my toys in class one day, got in big trouble. Big trouble. Never paid any attention in school. So they sent me to the principal's office, and he said he was gonna call my Mom, and then he said he knew she'd blame the teacher, and the teacher would blame him, and then the school board would roast him like a chicken. So then he said he wished he WAS a chicken, so he could just run away and not have to deal with me, or my Mom, or the teachers. So I just said "your wish is granted" and KAZAAM! He turned into a chicken, right there in the principal's office. Right in front of me! That's a true story. *(Blows a bubble; pause)*

GRETEL

Wow.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Looking at the bubble)

Wow.

HANSEL

So why do you live here, in a prison cell, if you can grant wishes?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Menacingly)

HAY!

HANSEL & GRETEL

(Hugging each other in fear)

What???

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Laying on hay bales)

Hay. I like hay. Don't ask why, I couldn't tell ya, but the stuff is great. You can lay on it, chew on it, light a fire. Hay makes my day.

HANSEL

Can you send us back to our parent's house?

GRETEL

Yeah, we have our first day of the fifth grade tomorrow, and Mom and Dad will be worried sick about us.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

You got directions? Latitude? Longitude? Because if you don't have an exact GPS location, you'll have to WISH for an exact GPS location, and then there goes your wish, so you'd have to wish again, and you only get—

HANSEL, GRETEL & RUMPELSTILTSKIN

ONE WISH!!

HANSEL

What if we wish that we could open the door, and we could escape.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

You'll get caught. It's the creakiest door in the castle. Those gingerbread dummies will hear that door opening a mile away.

GRETEL

Well, what if we were able to fly?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Still gotta open the door.

HANSEL

What if we were gigantic so the Witch couldn't stop us?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

How do you get back to normal size afterwards?

GRETEL

Or if we could go back in time, and never go into the castle?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Then you'd never meet me, and never get out of the castle to begin with.

HANSEL

But if we went back in time, we'd never have been in the castle at all.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Yes, but you'd have to have met me FORWARD in time in the castle originally, otherwise you couldn't have gone BACK in time in the first place.

GRETEL

But we would BE back in time before we met you!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

But BEFORE that, you were ahead in time, and that's how you went back in time, to begin with!

HANSEL & GRETEL

(Pause)

Wow.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Blowing another bubble)

Wow. You know, you two really have a lot to learn. The fifth grade is just what you need. What if I just shrink you so you can sneak under the door?

HANSEL

But how do we get big again with only one wish?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Oh, well you're allowed two wishes, but only if you pass the test. No one ever has. A riddle so... RIDDLE-o-biddle-ous. A trial so... TRIAL-ipt-ial-ous. A puzzle so... "puzzling?"
(*Awkward pause*) A problem never solved even by a master's master's master's master. And you've only got twenty minutes before that oven is ready! Ha!

GRETEL

What is it? Tell us, what's the riddle?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(*Again, menacingly*)

What's – my – name?

Pause as HANSEL and GRETEL look at one another.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Rumpelstiltskin?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

What!? How did you know that? It's the weirdest name my parents could've given me!

HANSEL

There's a book about you.

GRETEL

Yeah, and a bunch of TV shows.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(*Angry; stomping on floor*)

What?! No!

HANSEL

Yeah, I've seen at least five TV shows where one of the characters is Rumpelstiltskin.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Wow! That's just... I don't know what to say.

The GINGERBREAD MEN approach.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1, *Off*

Did you know you have to push the bake button BEFORE the start button, to preheat the oven?

GINGERBREAD MAN 2, *Off*

You gotta be kidding.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Oh no, they're coming!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(Angrily throws his bubbles offstage)

I always thought I was an individual. Unique! That's what I thought!

HANSEL

Please, hurry. Can you shrink us? Please?!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Why didn't my parents just call me...Joe? Life could've been so different. But no, "Rumpelstiltskin." Great name. Thanks a lot.

GRETEL

Please, Rumpelstiltskin.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Oh. Oh yeah. Fine, whatever.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN stands on one of the hay bales, speaking dramatically.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN, *Continued*

HOCUS...POCUS!

HANSEL

That's it?

GRETEL

Nothing's happening!

HANSEL

Are those really the words?

SEVERAL STAGEHANDS enter. They remove the hay bales, lift up RUMPELSTILTSKIN to carry him off.

GRETEL

We're shrinking!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

That's it! Good luck with the mice little ones. Haha! *(Exits)*

SCENE 9: THE GREAT ESCAPE

Duck under the door, Gretel.

HANSEL

HANSEL and GRETEL run and duck.

Wow, we're so small.

GRETEL

Over this way.

HANSEL

There is a loud creaking sound of a door opening. [The voices and sounds for the rest of the scene either come from offstage or on speaker.]

GINGERBREAD MAN 1, *Off*
They're gone! Where did they go?!

GINGERBREAD MAN 2, *Off*
Her Majesty ain't gonna be happy about this. I'll look over here.

As HANSEL and GRETEL run to one side of the stage, a giant cardboard foot of one of the gingerbread men sticks out, and almost steps on GRETEL.

Ahh!

GRETEL

(*Grabbing her*)
Watch out!

HANSEL

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2, *Off*
Close the gates! Shut all the doors!

We hear sounds of a gate clanking down and doors shutting.

Run Gretel! This way, quick!

HANSEL

HANSEL and GRETEL run to the other side of the stage. A large cardboard cat's paw reaches out at them, and we hear a cat's hisses.

GRETEL & HANSEL

Ahh!

HANSEL

Hide under the chair!

HANSEL and GRETEL crouch down and hide. We hear the voices of the GINGEBREAD MEN: "Where are they? Look everywhere! Find them... etc.

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, what are we going to do?

HANSEL

Maybe the cat won't smell us over here.

We hear a cat meow.

GRETEL

Oh no, it sees us!

SCENE 10: SOARING WITH SWALLOW

THUMBELINA, *Off*

Hey you two, up here!

FOUR STAGEHANDS comprising the SWALLOW accompany THUMBELINA onstage. THUMBELINA is dressed in an old-style aviator's outfit, with a leather jacket and goggles. A stagehand holding up the SWALLOW's head is in front of her, with another stagehand behind her acting as the SWALLOW's tail. There are two other stagehands on either side of her acting as the SWALLOW's wings. The stagehands hold and creatively use several large, white paper cutouts meant to be SWALLOW's feathers.

Throughout the scene, THE STAGEHANDS and CHARACTERS work to simulate SWALLOW's movements and flying.

THUMBELINA

(Entering)
Jump on board and hold on tight!

HANSEL and GRETEL stand, run to the SWALLOW and grab on. As they do, we hear a cat attack them and miss.

THUMBELINA, *Continued*

Close one! Bye-bye, kitty.

WITCH, *Off*

Where are they?!

GINGERBREAD MAN 2, *Off*

They're up there!

WITCH, *Off*

They're getting away! Get back here!

THUMBELINA

We're outta here kids.

THUMBELINA flies off on SWALLOW with HANSEL and GRETEL.

The WITCH enters with her rolling pin, along with the GINGERBREAD MEN.

WITCH

(Entering)
What did you two do?!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

We're sorry! It was him.

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

No, it was him.

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

It was him!

WITCH

(Poking them with her rolling pin)

Why you no good, half-baked, stale—

GINGERBREAD MAN 1 & 2

Ouch! Your Majesty! Ouch! Stop! We're sorry!

The WITCH and the GINGERBREAD MEN continue to argue. As they exit, their voices fade away. SWALLOW REENTERS carrying THUMBELINA with HANSEL and GRETEL still holding on. HANSEL and GRETEL look down.

HANSEL

Wow, we made it!

GRETEL

We made it!

HANSEL

Thank you so much! *(Almost loses his grip; recovers)* Oops!

THUMBELINA

Watch it there H-Man. Woo-hoo!

GRETEL

Gosh, I can see the whole castle from up here. And the cloud we were on is so big.

THUMBELINA

It's a biggie, that's for sure.

GRETEL

Where are you taking us?

THUMBELINA

Where do you want to go? Up, down, all around? Swallow and I are at your disposal.

HANSEL

Anywhere but back there.

THUMBELINA

Well, anywhere it is. This is the fastest flying swallow east of Cloud Nine. Here we go! Yee-haw!

SWALLOW glides around the stage as the scene continues.

Hold on, Gretel.

HANSEL

I'm trying!

GRETEL

Hold on tight!

THUMBELINA

SWALLOW "flies" quickly from one side of the stage to the other.

Wowwww...

HANSEL & GRETEL

Takin' a right.

THUMBELINA

Wowwwwwwwwwww...

HANSEL & GRETEL

And flip-see-doo!

THUMBELINA

AHHHHHHHH!

HANSEL & GRETEL

SWALLOW stabilizes itself.

(Patting SWALLOW's head)
Good job, Swallow.

THUMBELINA

Coo, coo...

SWALLOW

She sounds like a pigeon.

HANSEL

(Angrily)
Coo, Coo!

SWALLOW

Oh, don't ever call her a pigeon. Oh, no. She's just the fastest, flippiest, zippiest, easiest to fly swallow you ever did see.

THUMBELINA

SWALLOW

(*Affectionately*)
Coo, coo...

GRETEL

But where are we going? I have no idea where we are.

THUMBELINA

Then I guess we're going *anywhere*. Wasn't that the plan?

HANSEL

We need to get home. We're starting school tomorrow.

THUMBELINA

School?

HANSEL

The fifth grade.

THUMBELINA

Oh, good for you two! That's the best one.

GRETEL

Really? Not what we heard.

HANSEL

But we'll be in so much trouble if our Mom finds out we're missing. And Dad'll call the cops!

THUMBELINA

Well, hold on then. I guess we gotta take you home.

GRETEL

Really?

HANSEL

Thank you!

THUMBELINA

So there's no time to visit Tarzan's Jungle?

HANSEL

Nope.

THUMBELINA

Or Cinderella and the Prince?

GRETEL

Nope.

THUMBELINA

No Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory either, I guess?

GRETEL

Nope, just home.

HANSEL

Is that close to here? Maybe we could—

GRETEL

Hansel!

HANSEL

Okay. Okay. Just home.

THUMBELINA

Alright. Well, it was fun meeting you, anyway. Swallow and I just don't meet many people in our travels. Lots of birds and squirrels and moles. Even the occasional monkey, but not many people. Where do you live?

HANSEL

(Looking down)

Somewhere...the town right down there. The sun is starting to come up; I think I can see it.

THUMBELINA

Oh no, we've come a long way. Those are ocean waves.

GRETEL

The ocean?! But that's miles away! How did we get so far?

THUMBELINA

Told ya—fastest Swallow you ever did see!

SEVERAL STAGEHANDS enter quickly, holding foreboding grey clouds. They create a windstorm by shaking them and making loud wind and thunder noises. SWALLOW begins to shake and becomes unsteady.

THUMBELINA

Uh oh, looks like we're in for some turbulence. Hold on you two!

GRETEL

I can't!

HANSEL

Hold on, Gretel!

THUMBELINA

This is a bad one, do your best Swallow!

SWALLOW

(Struggling)

Coo, coo...

THUMBELINA

Bear into the wind!

SWALLOW turns quickly and HANSEL and GRETEL lose their grip. They simulate falling again, by waving their arms up in the air and wiggling around the stage. SWALLOW and THUMBELINA fly toward their exit.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhhhh!

THUMBELINA

Don't worry kids! Feet first! Just land feet first!

SWALLOW

Coo! Coo! Coooooo!

SCENE 11: SPLASH!

The SWALLOW and THUMBELINA exit and the thunderstorm STAGEHANDS run circles around the two children as they scream and fall. When HANSEL and GRETEL hit the water, they fall abruptly on the floor. The STAGEHANDS exit. The children then stand and mime swimming to the surface, where they start treading water in place. Several STAGEHANDS then enter, and creatively use movement and "wave" props, to simulate a blue ocean during the entire scene.

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, we made it. We're alive! What do we do now?

HANSEL

Keep swimming, Gretel. I'll think of something. And hey, I think we're back to regular size!

GRETEL

What good will that do us now?

HANSEL

Just keep swimming.

GRETEL

I'm trying.

PINOCCHIO and THE LITTLE MERMAID enter holding onto a long, wooden plank. PINOCCHIO is dressed in a puppet's outfit, and has a longer than usual nose. THE LITTLE MERMAID is dressed in a shiny, pretty outfit, and has a fishtail covering up her legs. They float over to HANSEL and GRETEL.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Hey, there they are!

PINOCCHIO

Over here you guys!

HANSEL

Swim Gretel!

HANSEL and GRETEL swim toward PINOCCHIO and THE LITTLE MERMAID. They grab onto the plank. All the characters continue to drift side to side, and bob up and down during the scene to simulate floating in the ocean.

PINOCCHIO

Welcome aboard. I'm Pinocchio.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Nice to meet you.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

And I'm the "Little" Mermaid, but I'm growing.

PINOCCHIO

Her friends call her the shrimp mermaid.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Ha-ha-ha! (*Flicks water in PINOCCHIO's face*) There goes my funny hubby-to-be again.
(*To HANSEL*) It's very nice to meet you. What's your name?

HANSEL

(*Staring into THE LITTLE MERMAID's eyes*)

Hi...

GRETEL

(*Elbowing HANSEL*)

Hansel.

HANSEL

Oh, I mean..."hi"?

GRETEL

That's better.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

So what happened? We just saw you fall out of the sky. You're so lucky you landed in the ocean.

PINOCCHIO

I guess you are—we've been out here for days. My foot's starting to rot.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

It's been wonderful. So much swimming and diving and floating. He can float all day if he wants to.

PINOCCHIO

One of the advantages of being made out of wood, I guess.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

You have so many advantages.

PINOCCHIO

Yeah. Yeah.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Don't you just love the ocean? So full of life and mystery. Just floating around we've seen ten dolphins.

PINOCCHIO

Three sharks.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Five sea turtles.

PINOCCHIO

One octopus.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Twelve of the cutest goldfish.

PINOCCHIO

Five electric eels.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

And a whale.

PINOCCHIO

Tell me about it!

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh, Pinocchio was so brave. That great big whale just shot him out of his blowhole and I saved him!

PINOCCHIO

(Avoiding her gaze)

That was very nice, very nice. I'm sure Geppetto will give you some fancy fish food or something when we get to land.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

But why do we need land? We have everything we need right here! Just you and me.

*As THE LITTLE MERMAID hugs
PINOCCHIO, PINOCCHIO breaks away
and starts swimming around the stage.*

PINOCCHIO

Break time.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh Pinocchi, do you need me to save you again?

PINOCCHIO

No, that's ok. I'm doing just fine. Wood floats, remember? I'm just fine.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

But you might float away?

PINOCCHIO

And that's a problem, because?

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh Pinocchi, what about the wedding? (*To HANSEL and GRETEL*) We're getting married under the sea.

PINOCCHIO

Um... I actually think that that might NOT be happening!

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh don't be silly! I've got it all planned out.

PINOCCHIO

I KNOW you do.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Well, don't say it like that. I've put a lot of thought into this!

PINOCCHIO

I KNOW you have.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Days and days.

PINOCCHIO

One week, four days, ten hours, and twenty-two minutes to be exact. Well, I'm sure that we'll be hitting land soon. My father will be very happy to see me.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

(Whispering to HANSEL and GRETEL)

He won't be that happy if he just threw him out, like I heard.

PINOCCHIO

What was that?

PINOCCHIO starts swimming back toward them.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh nothing, I was just wondering if I should put clamshells or oyster shells in my wedding veil. Or little, white, snail shells.

PINOCCHIO

My father loves me. I'm his favorite puppet. He would never throw me out.

PINOCCHIO grabs hold of the plank.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

It was probably the nose.

PINOCCHIO

Oh, here we go.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Even when he's telling the truth it sticks out. Look at it.

GRETEL

It's a cute nose.

PINOCCHIO

Cute? It's just a nose. Regular nose. What's the big deal?

HANSEL

Did your father really throw you out because of your nose?

PINOCCHIO

He didn't throw me out at all. I went away to join the circus, made friends with a cricket, and then I went to a magical island, and then I got swallowed by a whale, it spewed me out, and then I met her. *(Pause)*

HANSEL

The nose story sounds a little more believable.

PINOCCHIO

It's just a nose!

THE LITTLE MERMAID

You should see it when it grows, it gets this big!

THE LITTLE MERMAID spreads her arms so far apart she falls off of the plank and starts to swim away.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Hahaha! Tell a lie, do it! Make it grow. See how big it gets!

PINOCCHIO

Well if you hate my nose so much, why do you want to marry me?

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Somebody has to! Haha!

PINOCCHIO

Arg!

PINOCCHIO lets go of the plank and swims after THE LITTLE MERMAID.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

But I thought you wanted to go home?

PINOCCHIO

Oh, now YOU'RE bailing on our marriage?

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Oh, what marriage is that?

PINOCCHIO

I changed my mind. And look, if I were lying my nose would be growing, right?

THE LITTLE MERMAID

(Avoiding him)

I guess. Puppets are so confusing. *(Exits)*

PINOCCHIO

(To HANSEL and GRETEL)

Later dudes! *(Calling out to THE LITTLE MERMAID)* Look, I'm sorry I called you the shrimp mermaid. It was insensitive. Wait up! *(Exits)*

HANSEL

Gretel, can you see land anywhere?

GRETEL

I can't, but it's so foggy. We couldn't have flown that far, it was just a bird.

HANSEL

Oh, Gretel. How can we get back now?

SCENE 12: CAPTAIN NEMO'S NAUTILUS

Enter CAPTAIN NEMO. He is dressed in a dark sailor's outfit with a captain's hat. In front of him is a STAGEHAND holding a nautical ship's wheel. They both steer themselves around the stage while making loud, exaggerated machine

noises. They then move toward HANSEL and GRETEL, who cannot see them yet.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Holding here. (*Stops; speaks into a mimed intercom*) All hands ready. Rising to the surface. Almost there... Almost there... Blow the hatch!

There is a loud “spew!” sound of the hatch blowing open.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Ahhhh!

CAPTAIN NEMO

Ahoy there!

HANSEL

Wow! A submarine.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Nautilus actually...but “submarine,” I like the sound of that. What are you two doing out here?

GRETEL

Who are you?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Nemo’s the name, Captain Nemo. Perhaps you’ve heard of my many exploits?

HANSEL

Um, not exactly.

CAPTAIN NEMO

But... the great battle with the giant squid? Attacking enemy ships that think I’m a monster from the deeps? Surely you’ve read *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*? It’s the best book in the fifth grade.

GRETEL

But we’re supposed to start the fifth grade today.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Today!?

HANSEL

We’ve got to get home! We’ve been chased by a witch that wants to eat us—

GRETEL

—and captured by a couple of gingerbread bullies—

HANSEL

—and we'll be in so much trouble if we miss our first day, and our parents—

CAPTAIN NEMO

Well, you need to get back. Come aboard children, you will certainly not be achieving any headway utilizing your current flotation device.

Pause as HANSEL looks at GRETEL.

HANSEL

What?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Your rotten board is less useful than a seagull with its wings clipped. Get in.

They climb into the Nautilus. As they enter it, the OCEAN-WAVE STAGEHANDS take the plank from them and exit with it.

CAPTAIN NEMO, *Continued*

(Into mimed intercom)

All hands, prepare for immediate descent! *(To HANSEL and GRETEL)* Hold on.

HANSEL & GRETEL

Yes, sir.

HANSEL and GRETEL mime grabbing onto handles on the inside of the Nautilus. CAPTAIN NEMO pushes many pretend buttons, and pulls several pretend levers as they descend.

CAPTAIN NEMO

All steady. Twenty meters...fifty meters...one hundred meters...

As the Nautilus descends, SEVERAL STAGEHANDS come out and float around the stage with drawings of fish, sharks and other underwater creatures.

GRETEL

Wow, look at this thing go.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Amazing creation, I must say. 200 meters...

GRETEL

How deep can it go?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Well, as deep as it gets. The ocean, that is. 400 meters...

HANSEL

This is amazing, so much better than Water City.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Water City?

HANSEL

Oh, it's just a theme park.

GRETEL

Hansel, look! It's a jelly fish.

HANSEL

Ew! Look, a shark!

GRETEL

Ahh! They can't get us, can they?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Oh, no. We are well protected. Now I have to ask you children, what is going on? How did you end up in the middle of the ocean, instead of going to school? Do you not WANT to start the fifth grade?

HANSEL

We are a little nervous.

GRETEL

We hear it's very scary, but we really need to get home and—

CAPTAIN NEMO

Oh how I remember the fifth grade. It's where I learned everything. My teacher was... Mr. Johnson. He was a great teacher, taught me everything I needed to know.

GRETEL

Even how to build this sub-Naughty-less?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Nau-til-us. Well, not exactly. But you see, in the fifth grade I learned all of the basic concepts that allowed me to understand everything else later on.

HANSEL

Well, I sure wish I knew how to build this.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Oh, the fifth grade. I learned addition, subtraction, division—

HANSEL

And multiplication. I know that.

CAPTAIN NEMO

All in the same problem? And what about fractions? Surely you know something about fractions?

HANSEL

Not really.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Not YET. And Science.

GRETEL

Ewww. Science.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Joules and Newtons and Mass and Volume. The Theory of Relativity!

HANSEL

That's sounds hard.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Not that hard. And the book list! Oh, that was the best! Swiss Family Robinson, James and the Giant Peach, Anne of Green Gables, and 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, of course.

GRETEL

And Harry Potter?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Haven't heard of him. Late addition, maybe. And all the basics of geography. Longitude, Latitude, and other directions like... where are we going?

HANSEL

Well...land.

CAPTAIN NEMO

North America? Asia? Europe?

HANSEL

Just land! Where we live.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Oh, that's right. No time for lessons today. That happens in the fifth grade. Which is today!
Haha.

GRETEL

Mr. Nemo, sir, is there a cell phone charger on your Naughty-less boat?

HANSEL

It's a submarine, Gretel. Not the Verizon store.

CAPTAIN NEMO

NAUTILUS!

GRETEL

But without the GPS, I have no idea where we are.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Here, use a compass.

*CAPTAIN NEMO hands GRETEL a
compass.*

GRETEL

But this doesn't draw a circle.

CAPTAIN NEMO

No, a compass! A compass. North, East, South, West. Compass! You'll learn all about it in the fifth grade!

HANSEL

But how do we know where we are?

CAPTAIN NEMO

Well, we've been heading south-east for the last ten minutes, the board you were on was floating slowly north for about five minutes, and the cloud you were on was drifting south-west, so we need to head ... north!

GRETEL

The needle says south.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Well, hang on kids. *(Into intercom)* Right full rudder! Here we go!

*They all lean to one side as CAPTAIN
NEMO spins the wheel.*

CAPTAIN NEMO, *Continued*

Now let's make up for lost time. Full speed ahead!

CAPTAIN NEMO pulls levers and pushes buttons. They all have trouble keeping their balance as the boat speeds up.

CAPTAIN NEMO, *Continued*

Hold on. Hold on!

After almost falling over backwards, they all lurch forward and then freeze in place.

CAPTAIN NEMO, *Continued*

ALL STOP! And here we are children. Right at Sea level. Blow the hatch!

There is a loud "spew!" sound.

CAPTAIN NEMO, *Continued*

Go on, jump out. Just a short swim to the shore. Your town is right down the road.

HANSEL and GRETEL crawl out of the Nautilus.

HANSEL

Thank you, Captain!

GRETEL

Yes, we really appreciate the ride on your Nau-til-us, sir.

CAPTAIN NEMO

No problem. (*Commands*) Submerge!

The STAGEHAND with the wheel and CAPTAIN NEMO exit together, making loud machine noises again as they leave. HANSEL and GRETEL mime swimming and quickly shake the water off their clothes when they reach the shore.

GRETEL

Oh Hansel, the town is right over there, we might make it home in time for the school bus!

HANSEL

Let's go, Gretel!

*HANSEL and GRETEL start running
about the stage*

GRETEL
Do you know what time it is?

HANSEL
No idea.

GRETEL
Do you think that wolf was telling the truth about the fifth grade?

HANSEL
I don't think so.

GRETEL
I wonder who my teacher will be?

HANSEL
Who cares.

GRETEL
I really hope we get recess, can you imagine if we really had no recess?

HANSEL
We're almost to the bus stop, Gretel. Faster!

GRETEL
Oh, I think I can see it!

SCENE 13: BATTLE AT THE BUS STOP

*Enter the WITCH and the two
GINGERBREAD MEN. They spring
onstage together, and HANSEL and
GRETEL suddenly stop in fear. The
WOLF limps onstage after them. He is
even more beaten and bruised than
before, and he now hobbles with a
crutch. The WITCH has her broom, and
is no longer wearing an apron.*

WITCH
Ah-ha! Stop right there! Nice to see you again, don't move a muscle. This time my oven will be nice and hot! Hahaha!

GINGERBREAD MAN 1

Don't move!

GINGERBREAD MAN 2

Yeah, wouldn't wanna send you out to sea again.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

Continue to next page for Props List

PROPS LIST

GENERAL NOTES ON PROPS:

Some props are necessary to the action – candy corn, Gretel’s cell phone, etc. – but some can be mimed at the discretion of the director. Props are indicated in the script. In regards to props, it is suggested that whenever possible they be very large and hand drawn, made of cardboard or large pieces of paper. The props are a key part of keeping the show artistically engaging and offer an opportunity for the cast and crew to create artwork to be part of the show. Hand drawn artwork also helps give the show a surreal or dream-like quality throughout. Some props are significantly large and will need to be constructed. However, depending on production values, they could be mimed or implied by the actors.

SCENE 1:

Two blankets
Gretel's cell phone
Video game controller and machine
Large, empty window frame
Witch's broom
Dog treat

SCENE 2:

Candy corn
Leaves and branches for stagehand’s bush

SCENE 3:

Green flashlight

SCENE 4:

Large silver or white ball
Four large drawings of scary monsters

SCENE 5:

Three hay bales
Lemonade with paper umbrella
Straw hat
Beach blanket
Beanstalk (Larger prop)

SCENE 6:

Four large drawings of clouds
One large drawing of a full moon
Big Dipper drawing
Little Dipper drawing
Scorpio drawing
Orion drawing
Candy cane gate (Larger prop)

SCENE 7:

Eight to twelve gingerbread men – some edible – and various improvised stagehand props
Rolling pin

SCENE 8:

Wolf's sling, bandage and crutch
Bubble soap

SCENE 9:

Giant cardboard foot
Giant cardboard cat's claw

SCENE 10:

Swallow's feathers
Swallow's head
Swallow's tail
Grey clouds

SCENE 11:

Blue waves
Wooden plank

SCENE 12:

Nautical wheel
Shark drawing
Jellyfish drawing
Other drawings of underwater creatures
Compass

SCENE 13:

School bus (Larger prop)

NOTES REGARDING LARGER PROPS:

The beanstalk in Scene 5 will require a small wooden platform for Hansel and Gretel to stand on, and a pole attached to it. The pole could then be decorated with leaves and vines, or these leaves and vines could be drawn on paper and taped to the beanstalk. If this is too difficult to create, it could easily be mimed by Hansel, Gretel, and the dancing “beanstalk stagehands.”

The candy cane gate at the end of Scene 6 could be constructed by creating two large, doorway-sized, candy canes out of construction paper and cardboard.

The school bus in Scene 13 should be between 8 and 12 feet long, and several feet high. It could be made out of cardboard or wood, or a combination. It is carried on and off stage by the Bus Driver and the children in it. It could be gripped from behind handles in the back. If this is too difficult to create for the production, it could be implied by pretending the children and bus driver are on a bus, or they may remain offstage so that we only hear their voices.