

Characters

Narrator (M/F)	-	The Narrator
Hansel (M)	-	Gretel's brother
Gretel (F)	-	Hansel's Sister
Witch (M/F)	-	The Wicked Witch
Brian (M/F)	-	Witches Anonymous Inspector

Scene 1 – Hansel and Gretel’s house

(Narrator enters front of tabs, reading from a large book)

Narrator: This is a story about two children who lived in a small cottage in a peaceful valley. One called Gretel –

(Gretel enters speaking into her mobile phone)

Gretel: Oh, that sounds great! Where did you get it from?

Narrator: – and the other was called Hansel

Hansel: **(Carrying a book and jumping about all excited)** Gretel! Gretel!

Narrator: Gretel was a clever young girl but her brother Hansel wasn't so clever.

(She shushes Hansel and speaks into her phone)

Gretel: Oh, I'd love to come and see your new puppy, when – **(She looks at her phone)** Drat! The battery has run out!

Hansel: Gretel! Gretel!

Gretel: What is it Hansel?

Hansel: My new I-spy book has just arrived in the post!

Gretel: I-spy book? What's that?

Hansel: It's a book with pictures of things and you've got to go out and see if you can spot them in real life.

Gretel: Why don't you just look at the pictures in the book? Then you don't even need to leave the house.

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Hansel: Where's the fun in that? It's much more exciting trying to spot the things in the book. Look, this edition is the 'I-spy book of haunted forests!' We could go into the Black Forest and try it out!

Gretel: Hansel, we can't go in there, it's full of dangerous creatures.

Hansel: **(Opens the book)** Look, hobgoblins, pixies, witches -

Gretel: Hansel, we can't go in the forest. Remember what our Mother said?

Hansel: **(Confused)** No - oh, hang on I remember, she said – 'stop doing that it's disgusting'

Gretel: No, remember what she said after we went into that spooky castle? She told us not to go wandering off on our own, especially to spooky castles and haunted forests!

Hansel: You worry too much. The spooky castle was ok; apart from that vampire.

Gretel: –and the big bad wolf.

Hansel: Well yes, he was big, but he wasn't bad; he was just in a bit of a funny mood

Gretel: He tried to eat us.

Hansel: No he didn't.

Gretel: Well why did he sprinkle salt and pepper on us?

Hansel: Look, it won't be like last time. We'll be careful. We'll only go into the forest a little way, mark off a few of the pictures from the book and come home. Mother won't even know we're gone! Look, I'll go and get my coat and meet you by the back gate.

(Hansel leaves)

Gretel: **(To audience)** Do you think I should go into the haunted forest with Hansel without telling my mother? **(Audience say no)**. I agree but he won't take no for an answer, I'd better go with him to look after him otherwise he'll just go in there by himself; I won't be able to stop him. I'd better think of a plan to make sure we don't get lost.

(Gretel exits)

Narrator: And so Gretel reluctantly met Hansel by the back gate for their journey into the haunted forest.

(Tabs open to reveal a backdrop representing a haunted forest. Hansel and Gretel enter.)

Hansel: Right, I've got my book and my pen. Did you manage to sneak out without Mother seeing you?

Gretel: I did. You know I don't approve of this at all?

Hansel: Come on, it'll be fun! Where's your sense of adventure?

(Gretel shakes her head. Hansel sets off slowly downstage, looking around and checking his book frequently. Gretel follows behind, every now and then)

dipping her hand in her pocket and sprinkling something on the ground behind her. Each time Hansel looks back at Gretel to find out what she is doing, she looks around with an intrigued expression, feigning interest in her surroundings and looking innocent. Hansel finally works out that Gretel is doing something behind his back)

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Hansel: What are you up to Gretel?

Gretel: Look! A unicorn!

Hansel: **(Distracted)** Oh yes! Must tick it off! That's five things I've seen already! See, I told you this was going to be exciting.

Gretel: I think that's enough for one day Hansel. I think we should be getting back; Mother will be worried about us.

Hansel: Nah, she's just bought a box set of her favourite TV program. She'll be occupied for hours. Now, **(flicking through his book)** have you seen a Leprechaun yet?

Narrator: Hansel and Gretel walked deeper and deeper into the forest until Gretel was sure they'd gone far enough.

Gretel: Hansel, I think we should turn back. I think we're lost.

Hansel: Don't be silly, we're not lost.

Gretel: Well where are we then?

Hansel: I don't know do I?

Gretel: Well, do you know what it's called when you don't know where you are?

Hansel: No, what?

Gretel: It's called 'being lost'. We're lost Hansel!

Hansel: Oh, stop being a panicky-pants. We'll just go back the way we came and... **(Pauses and looks around)** which way did we come in again?

Gretel: Well it's a good job I've got more than one brain cell isn't it?

Hansel: **(Confused)** I don't follow.

Gretel: Well, all the way here I've been dropping breadcrumbs; I knew we'd get lost so I've left a trail behind us we can follow and get back home!

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Hansel: **(Pointing off stage)** Oh, is that why that flock of crows has been following us? I thought they were just being creepy.

Gretel: What? **(Turns to look behind her)** Oh no, they've eaten all of the breadcrumbs I was leaving. We really *are* completely and utterly lost now. Why did I let you bring me into this horrible forest? We'll never find our way home now.

Hansel: You're such a stressy Jessie; there's a map on the back of my book here look. **(He shows Gretel the book)** We just go this way and then up there and **(looks around)** hmm; why do all these trees have to look the same?

(Hansel and Gretel study the book stage right talking inaudibly to each other. The witch enters stage left.)

Witch: I smell a familiar smell. I smell something to eat. Ah, what's that over there? It seems a couple of children have wandered into my forest and got lost! They'll both fit into my cooking pot nicely and it'll be children stew for tea! **(Pats her pockets)** Drat! I've left my butterfly net at home. I'll have to sneak up on them. **(To audience)** Quiet you lot!

(The audience might call out to try and warn Hansel and Gretel. Each time Hansel turns round to face the witch, she freezes. Hansel shrugs his shoulders, turns back and talks to Gretel once more. The witch sneaks up once more until Hansel turns to face her. She freezes again. This happens a few times until Hansel speaks.)

Hansel: Is it just me or is there a decidedly *witchy* feel about the place all of a sudden?

Gretel: Yes, I'm sensing a warty green-face vibe all of a sudden.

Hansel: Never mind. Before we try and find our way home, I'm just going to check off what we've seen so far.

(Hansel passes some items on the back drop, walking towards the witch as he does so)

Hansel: Blackthorn bush, check. **(He ticks the book)** Buttercups, check. **(He ticks the book once more.)**

(Hansel and Gretel reach the Witch who is still frozen in a 'sneaking up' pose)

Hansel: Wicked witch, check. **(He ticks the book)**

(Hansel and Gretel move on)

Hansel: Elm tree

Gretel: Hang on... what did you say?

Hansel: Elm tree?

Gretel: No before that

Hansel: Wicked witch?

Gretel: Right I thought so.

(They look at each other for a moment before they both yell out in a panic)

Hansel: Wicked witch!!

Gretel: Quick!

Hansel: What?

Gretel: I don't know!

Witch: **(Unfreezing from her pose)** Woah woah woah! Calm down dears, I'm not a wicked witch.

Hansel: Yes you are.

Witch: How do you know? Have you ever seen a witch before?

Hansel: There's a picture of one here in my book.

(Hansel holds the book up towards the audience next to the Witch's face. The witch copies the pose in the photograph so she looks exactly the same as her photo in the book)

Hansel: See?

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Witch: That looks nothing like me. **(Aside)** Look, I'm not proud of that photo, I was young and I needed the money **(To Hansel)** Look, my chin is much hairier and my nose has loads more warts than the woman in your book. It's not me. I'm not a wicked witch.

Gretel: Prove it.

Witch: Alright, I will. Come back to my cottage with me and I'll show you.

Hansel: It says here in my book that you eat children. Are you going to eat us if we come back to your cottage?

Witch: Eat you? Or course not - well, not straight away - I mean, I will give you lots and lots of sweets!

Hansel: Sweets? Well why didn't you say? Come on Gretel!

Gretel: I don't know about this Hansel. Mother always told us not to take sweets off strangers.

Hansel: Look, if I hadn't been reckless and wandered this deep into the haunted forest we never would have got lost and met this wicked witch and had the offer of lots and lots of sweets! **(To witch)** I'm starving!

Gretel: You only had dinner an hour ago.

Hansel: **(Stage whisper to Gretel)** Don't tell **(Indicates the witch)** her that!

Gretel: Hansel, I think we should go home. This woman looks an awful lot like the wicked witch in your book.

Witch: If you come back with me I will give you all the sweets you can eat. And wait until you see my house; it's made of... wait for it... **(Excitedly)** Gingerbread!!

Gretel: Yak! I hate ginger bread.

Hansel: **(To Gretel)** Shush! **(To Witch)** Yummy! That sounds good. What else?

Witch: Cola cubes and fizzy cola bottles!

Hansel: **(To Gretel)** Are you getting all this? All the cola cubes we can eat!

Gretel: You don't know who she is Hansel. She could be anyone. I don't trust her. We should go home.

Hansel: She has a gingerbread house.

Gretel: I hate gingerbread. It gives me heartburn.

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- Hansel:** She'll have chocolate.
- Witch:** Yes, I have chocolate, loads of it in fact.
- Gretel:** I'm on a diet.
- Hansel:** Gretel, can you stop thinking about your five-a-day vegan diet for one minute and get on board with the whole 'free sweets' thing we've got going on. What could possibly go wrong?
- Gretel:** I'm not going to be able to talk you out of this am I?
- Hansel:** Nope.
- Gretel:** You do know this is all going to end very badly don't you?
- Witch:** Come along then; my house is just over here.
- Gretel:** That's the trouble with you Hansel. You never see the bigger picture. You never plan ahead. She's only going to give you loads of sweets to fatten you up so she's got more of you to eat.
- Hansel:** **(Distracted)** Sorry, were you saying something?
- (They arrive stage left where part of the gingerbread house is visible, represented on the backdrop or scenery)**
- Witch:** Here we are. What did i tell you? Magnificent isn't it? **(Speaking in a weird spooky voice)** Higgle-dy-piggledy, wiggly worms, I call on the power of night and day - cast a spell to stop these children from ever running away!
- (SFX. flash of light and the sound of thunder.)**
- Witch:** Ha ha ha! Now to fatten you up so I can eat you! Ha ha ha!
- (The witch exits. Hansel glances over at Gretel gingerly)**
- Hansel:** You're going to say it aren't you
- Gretel:** **(Smugly)** I don't know what you mean
- Hansel:** Go on say it

Gretel: I don't need to

Hansel: You know you're bursting to say it.

Gretel: Yeah, you're right - I can't hold it in... **(Mockingly)** I told you so.

Hansel: **(Told off)** Feel better now?

Gretel: Well, first I got completely lost in a haunted forest, couple that little nugget of misfortune with the fact I'm going to get eaten by a wicked witch and that just about sums it up.

Hansel: So, not great then?

Gretel: Not really, no. well, admittedly it's not as bad as that day we had to have that pink custard for school dinner, but it's not far off.

(The witch enters with a checked napkin tied around her neck carrying a knife and fork and a bottle of tomato ketchup in one hand and a big bag of sweets in the other.)

Witch: **(To Hansel)** Right you, get munching on these jelly babies; and hurry up, I'm starving and I need you to be as fat as possible.

(The witch hands the bag of sweets to Hansel)

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Gretel: **(Patronisingly)** Excuse me.

Witch: What do you want?

Gretel: If you're so hungry, why don't you just eat the sweets?

Witch: I'm sick of sweets, eating them all day every day. I've got tonnes of them. I can't give them away! They've rotted all my teeth **(She bares her rotten teeth)** and you don't want to see what I'm like when I get a sugar rush! **(To Hansel)** Come on you, get munching!

Brian: **(Off stage)** Edna? Edna?

Witch: Uh oh... this isn't good.

(Brian enters carrying a notepad and pen. He is dressed in an official looking uniform. He is an inspector from the organisation 'witches anonymous' which could be printed on his hat or jacket)

Brian: Ah Edna, there you are. My name is Brian and I'm from 'Witches anonymous' to give you your monthly review. I can see things aren't going at all well?

Witch: I don't know what you mean?

Brian: Can you explain to me please why there are two frightened children in your garden, one with a large bag of sweets?

Witch: They wandered in; they're sweets salesmen and they're trying to get me to buy them - or something.

Brian: Quite; and can you explain why you're holding a knife and fork?

Witch: I was... **(Unconvincingly)** emptying the dishwasher.

Brian: – and the napkin around your neck?

Witch: I was... a bit chilly?

Gretel: Please save us Mr. Inspector man. She was trying to fatten us up so she could eat us!

(The witch grins as innocently as she can at Brian)

Brian: Is this true? Are you still a wicked witch?

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Witch: What, just because I'm a crazy old woman with green skin who lives in the woods by herself in a house made out of gingerbread, you automatically jump to the conclusion that I'm a witch. That's discrimination that is.

Brian: But, you *are* a wicked witch though, aren't you?

Witch: **(Conceding)** Yeah. It's a fair cop. I've been trying really hard to give up being a witch. It's really hard you know! I've only cackled four times in the last two weeks. I've had my black cat adopted, I only use my cauldron for making jelly baby stew and I've been gradually reducing the number of spells I cast a day. In fact, those magic patches you gave me have really helped. Every time I feel like casting a spell, I use the patches. I stick them over my eyes so I can't find my spell book.

Brian: I'm afraid you're going to have to come with me.

(Brian puts handcuffs on the witch)

Brian: Off we go then. Come on kids, I'll show you the way out of the forest. I hope you've learned something from all this?

Hansel: Yes sir. I learned never to take sweets off strangers.

Gretel: And we'll never go wandering off on our own again.

Narrator: And so the inspector led Hansel and Gretel back home where they lived happily ever after.

(Brian, the witch, Hansel and Gretel exit. Tabs close.)

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