

Characters

Loki (M)	-	A bear cub
Freya (F)	-	A young girl
Mum (F)	-	Freya's Mum
Anika (F)	-	Freya's friend
Mrs Halvor (F)	-	A woman who lives in the forest
Troll 1 (M/F)	-	A Troll
Troll 2 (M/F)	-	A Troll

Scene 1 - Outside

(Lights up. A few small piles of felted snowballs at the edges of the floor cloth, and a few sticks randomly placed. Freya's Mum is onstage to greet and seat the children as they arrive. She chats to them informally as she does so, encouraging them to talk to her. While she talks she gathers up the twigs from the ground. She talks about the cold, whether it's snowing outside, what they do to keep warm etc. She tells them how cold it is in Denmark where she lives and how her little hut is small and draughty. She explains how she has to collect wood for the fire every day and how her daughter Freya often helps her, but Freya is playing with her friends just now. She wishes Freya would play with the other children more often but Freya doesn't always like their games and sometimes the other children tease her. She explains that Freya's a bit scared of the snow and the wind that sometimes whistles through the trees and the cracks in their little hut and that she doesn't like the dark. She confides that actually Freya's a bit scared of almost everything. She asks if the children ever feel scared of the snow, or if there is anything else that they are a bit scared of. She is understanding, telling them that Freya feels like that too. When audience are all in and comfortable, Mum exits.)

Anika: (off-stage) Freya, Freya, fraidy fraidy Freya.!

(Freya runs in looking back over her shoulder. She is unhappy. She turns to see where she is going and suddenly notices the children in front of her. She stops running)

Freya: Oh! (She backs away from that part of the audience then turns and sees other children) OH!! Please don't put snow down my neck! Please! I don't like it.. (She huddles in self defence and then discovers they haven't moved) Oh, have you got snow in your hands? (To another part of audience) Have you? (Reassured) Phew. The other children all think it's funny, putting snow down my neck. Did you hear what they called me? Fraidy Freya. Even Anika joins in with them and she's meant to be my friend. I can't help being afraid. I just am. I don't like it when the snow falls. I'm afraid I won't find my way home. And I don't like the wind when it blows like that. Listen

(SFX. Wind, fading slowly during dialogue)

Freya: And I don't like being on my own when it gets dark although it's not so bad when the stars are out. (To audience) Do you like the dark?

(It snows, suggested by a glitter ball. Freya is scared)

Freya: It's starting to snow again. I want to go home. Which way is it? I can't see.

(Loki, looking as small as possible, enters from opposite end, also scared. Loki and Freya back towards each other looking in opposite directions, until the inevitable collision. Loki immediately hunches up face down on the ground, hides his head with his paws and starts to shiver while Freya runs back the way she came, hiding behind the nearest children. During the next dialogue, the snow stops.)

Freya: (To audience) What was that? What is it? A little bear? Is it scared? Of me?

(Freya approaches Loki very warily – she touches his shoulder gingerly, then runs round him. Loki looks in the direction Freya touched him, and doesn't see her. Freya touches Loki again on the other shoulder with the same result. Eventually they face each other and although wary, they are both intrigued.)

Freya: H – Hello!

Loki: H – Hello!

Freya: Wh – who are you?

Loki: Wh – who are you?

Freya: My name’s Freya. What’s yours?

Loki: What’s yours?

Freya: Freya. I told you.

Loki: I told you.

Freya: No you didn’t. Are you lost?

Loki: Lost

Freya: Oh you poor thing. Where’s your Mummy?

Loki: Mummy.

Freya: I’m not your Mummy, silly!

Loki: Silly

Freya: Hey! I’m not silly, silly!

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Loki: Silly, silly!

Freya: You’re copying me, aren’t you?

Loki: Aren’t you?

(Freya does a few movements which Loki copies)

Freya: You’re funny!

Loki: Funny!

Anika: **(Off-stage)** Freya! Fraidy Freya, where are you?

Freya: That’s Anika. I don’t want her to find me. I’d better go home. Goodbye, Bear!

(Freya exits, though still uncertain of the snow. Loki starts to follow, then realises Freya’s left him behind and sadly turns back.)

Loki: **(sadly)** Goodbye Bear

(Loki sits huddled and forlorn. SFX. gust of wind. Freya re-enters, running.)

Freya: If only the wind would stop blowing!

(Loki runs up to Freya, playful and expectant)

Freya: Oh! Are you still here, Bear?

Loki: Here!

Freya: Aren't you scared of the wind?

Loki: Wind? **(understanding)** Wind!

(Loki blows noisily with enjoyment)

Freya: Haven't you got a daddy or a mummy?

Loki: Mummy!

Freya: I can't be your mummy. I wish I could. But if she comes looking for you - she'll be a much bigger bear than you are. and she'll be fierce and she'll have sharp claws, and teeth, and she'll growl at me, and –

(SFX. snow falling off a branch)

Freya: *Oh!!*

(Freya instinctively hides against Loki).

Anika: **(offstage)** Freya! Freya where are you? I want you to play with me!

Freya: **(relieved)** It's just Anika – I must go home.

(Freya breaks away from Loki and begins to exit)

Loki: Home!

(Freya stops and thinks for a moment)

Freya: I suppose you could come home with me just for a while just till the wind stops. Would you like to?

(Freya holds out her hand to Loki. Loki copies)

Loki: Like to!

Freya: Come on then. Let's go home and find my mummy –

Loki: Mummy!

(Loki takes Freya's hand happily)

Freya: - she'll know what to do with you.

(Freya and Loki exit together, blowing loudly to each other like the wind. Lights fade)

Scene 2 – Inside Freya’s cottage

(A hatstand at one end with a couple of coats and scarves hanging on it. There is some knitting on a stool next to it, and a skein of wool ready to be made into a ball. Lights up to reveal Freya’s Mum sweeping the floor with a broom.)

Mum: I wonder where Freya’s got to. I thought she’d be home as soon as it started to snow.

(Mum hears Freya and Loki offstage)

Freya! I’m just sweeping the floor, can you take your boots off outside.

(Freya and Loki burst in, giggling. Mum is appalled to see Loki and threatens him with the broom. In a reverse of earlier scene, Loki hides behind Freya for security.)

Mum: Freya, I want you very quietly and slowly to walk over here and get behind me. I think it’s too small to attack us, but its mother might be close

Freya: But Mummy

Mum: Easy does it. Come on Freya. Try not to be afraid. I won’t let him hurt you

Freya: But Mummy

Loki: Mummy

(Mum takes her eyes off Loki to look at Freya. Loki thinks this is a game, and grabs the broom)

Mum: Hey.

(Mum tries to snatch back the broom – a bit of to and fro, then Loki gets it and plays with it.)

Mum: Freya, try to be brave. Open the door, and we’ll push him out. Shoo!

(Loki tosses broom to Freya who tosses it back. They laugh. Mum intercepts and catches it)

Mum: Shoo! We don’t want you here! Shoo!

(Loki stops playing. Begins to understand that this isn’t a game)

Loki: **(Puzzled)** Shoo.

(Freya jumps between Mum and Loki)

Freya: But Mummy you don’t understand. He’s my friend. He’s lost. He was all alone in the snow.

Mum: Freya, he’s a bear!

Loki: Bear

Freya: I know he is.

Mum: His mother will be looking for him.

Freya: I don't think he's got a mother. I want him to stay with us. Please Mummy, can he stay? Please Mummy?

Loki: Please Mummy?

Mum: I'm not your Mummy

Freya: He thinks everyone's his mummy. Don't you Bear? And he copies everything. Look!

(Freya and Loki play copycat. Mum eventually joins in and starts laughing.)

Mum: Well, I suppose he can stay for a little while. But if his mother turns up, then we must let him go. And I don't know what the neighbours are going to say he'd better be good

Loki: Good.

(Mum notices some snow (imaginary) on the floor and tries to sweep it out)

Mum: Look at all this snow! I told you to take your boots off

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(Loki picks up the knitting. Mum drops the broom. Loki drops the knitting as Mum and Freya try to retrieve it but keeps hold of the ball of wool which he unravels and twists around Freya and Mum.)

Freya: Bear! You're being very naughty!

Loki: Naughty

(Loki drops the ball. Mum picks it up and winds it back)

Mum: We shall have to call you Loki I think

Freya: Loki?

Loki: Loki?

Freya: Why?

Loki: Why?

Mum: Loki was a mischief maker in the stories of long ago. He got up to all kinds of trouble and tricks.

Loki: Trouble and tricks!

(Loki jumps between Mum and Freya again, takes the wool from Mum and tosses it in the air)

Mum: Exactly!

Freya: Come on Loki, we'll teach you to be good, so you can stay with us for ever. Let's go outside and play.

Mum: But Freya, it's snowing.

Freya: Oh yes (**considering**) I don't think I'll mind the snow if Loki's with me. I don't think I'll mind anything now I've got Loki.

Loki: Loki

(Freya exits, pulling Loki off after her. After a moment Loki shuffles back in, picks up the broom and offers it to Mum. As Mum tries to take it Loki teases her by pulling it back. Repeat, then finally Loki lets Mum take it. Mum shoos Loki off with it, laughing.)

Mum: **(To audience)** Do you think we've done the right thing – letting Loki stay here? I do hope you're right. But I'm not sure the neighbours will like it. People round here don't like bears very much. Oh look at my knitting!

(Mum exits with knitting. Lights fade)

Scene 3 – Outside the cottage.

(Lights up. Freya and Loki enter)

Freya: Come on Loki, let's play schools. You sit down over there and we'll all be your teachers. What shall we teach him first?

(Improvised play. Freya encourages suggestions from audience. Whatever they suggest Freya uses or she suggests her own ideas.)

Freya: To count? Good idea!

(Freya tries to teach Loki counting, which he always muddles. Other suggestions might be colours, or articles of clothing that the children are wearing, (including "button", useful for the end of the scene) or a nursery rhyme. It is all a game to Loki and it can get as silly as possible. During the fun, Anika enters unseen by Freya and Loki. She stands at one side, frowning and watches for a bit, interrupting when the time is right.)

Anika: What are you doing with that bear?

Freya: Hello Anika. Come and meet Loki. Anika, this is Loki. Loki, this is Anika.

Loki: Anika!

(Loki rushes to Anika and tries to give her a hug. Anika is very scared and hides by the audience.)

Freya: It's alright, Anika, he won't hurt you. He's my friend. Don't be scared.

Anika: I'm not scared. I just don't like bears, that's all. My Dad says they're dangerous.

Freya: But Loki's not dangerous. Look!

(Freya shakes Loki's hand to prove it.)

Freya: Go on Anika. shake hands with him.

(Freya tries to make Anika shake hands with Loki, but Anika is obviously afraid. Loki becomes mischievous, as he thinks it is another game. Freya laughs at him)

Anika: **(Sulky)** I don't like your bear, Freya. Come on, let's go to my house and play with my new dolls. They've got real hair and they've got different clothes to wear.

Freya: Last time I came you wouldn't let me play with anything. I just had to watch you

Anika: I did let you 'course I did. Only you didn't want to play with anything. All you wanted to do was read a boring old book.

Freya: I like books and anyway you took it away.

Anika: And you tore the cover.

Freya: I didn't mean to. It was because you grabbed it from me.

Anika: Well, anyway, this time we're going to play with my new dolls. Come on, Freya.

(Freya hesitates.)

Anika: Come on! You do want to play with me don't you?

Freya: I'll come if Loki can come too.

Anika: But I told you. I don't like bears. Anyway, my Dad will chase him away. You shouldn't play with him, he's dangerous. He tried to hurt me.

Freya: No he didn't. He was trying to hug you. He likes you. He likes everyone, don't you Loki?

Loki: Everyone

Freya: See? He's only a baby. A cub. He wants to make friends with you.

(Loki advances on Anika again, more gently. Anika is still afraid and hides behind Freya. Freya and Loki begin to play together. Anika watches, face like thunder. When Anika sees her opportunity she puts some snow down Freya's neck)

Anika: Have some snow, Freya. Fraidy, Fraidy, Freya!

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(The game stops abruptly.)

Anika: This is your last chance, Freya. You can come home and play with me now, or you can stay with your silly bear and I won't talk to you again. And I'll tell the others to keep putting snow down your neck.

(While Anika is speaking, Loki creeps up behind her and puts some snow down her neck, copying her purely in fun.)

Anika: OH! Go away you horrible bear. I don't like you. And I don't like you any more Freya. I won't let you play with my dolls now. And I'm going to tell my dad about your bear, and see what he will do. Goodbye Fraidy Freya!

(Anika exits)

Loki: Shoo?

(Freya, surprised, considers what has happened. Loki also realises that something unpleasant has happened. Loki goes to Freya and takes her hand in his paw. The lights begin to fade.)

Freya: Now you're the only friend I've got, Loki. You won't leave me will you? I don't ever want you to go.

(Pause. Freya looks up and around her as if it's rather eerie)

Freya: It's getting dark. I don't like the dark much. People say the trolls come out in the dark.

Loki: Trolls?

Freya: They're horrible creatures who pinch you and play tricks on you. That's what people say. Mummy says they don't live round here but Anika says her dad's seen them. Come on, let's go home.

(Freya pulls Loki, who is gazing up at the sky. Loki points at something in the sky.)

Loki: Button?

(Freya looks up, puzzled, then she understands Loki's referring to their earlier school game)

Freya: That's a star, Loki. A star!

Loki: Star!

(Loki points out other stars)

Loki: Star! Star! One, two, three, five

Freya: Are you counting the stars? There are too many to count, silly.

Loki: Silly two, silly four, silly one.

Freya: I can see at least a hundred.

Loki: Hundred, two, hundred five

Freya: A thousand

Loki: Thousand three, thousand one

Freya: A million

Loki: Million

Freya: Trillion

Loki: Trillion

(Freya and Loki exit slowly, giggling as they continue making up words)

Freya: Zillion

Loki: Squillion

(Freya returns alone, looks up at the sky for a moment, smiles happily, then re-exits as lights fade)

Scene 4 – Inside Freya’s cottage

(Lights up. Enter Mum with instrument (if played), Freya carrying a Christmas tree and Loki with some decorations. Mum and Freya begin to sing the following song to the tune of an old Scandinavian folk song (see appendix), Freya puts tree in the middle of stage area and begins to decorate it while Loki shows the stages of his growing matching the words of the song – from cub moving low to the ground, to stooped bear, to full grown bear standing upright.)

Mum/Freya: Spring has passed and Summer too
Loki’s grown as big as you!

(Loki compares himself with audience member)

Mum/Freya: Now that Winter’s getting near
Loki’s grown right up to here!

(Freya indicates Loki’s new height, up to her shoulder)

Mum/Freya: When the sleigh bells start to ring
Christmas songs we love to sing

Put the star upon the tree
Loki is as big as –

Mum: **(Spoken) Me!**

(Freya and Loki, now grown upright, continue to decorate the tree while Mum plays/sings the song again. They all admire the tree)

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Mum: That looks lovely! Well done both of you. Now, Loki, could you move it to the other room, and then go out to play. I’ve got some cooking to do!

(Loki and Freya exit, laughing, with the tree. Mum also exits as lights fade.)

Scene 5 – Inside Freya’s cottage, as before.

(Lights up)

Mum: **(Offstage)** Loki! Freya? *Loki!* Where are you?

(Mum enters bringing a lidded plate. She has a crumpled letter in her pocket)

Mum: Where are those two? Never here when you want them. Look at this. I made a big sausage pie this morning and look! **(Mum takes the lid off the dish and shows the audience)** Just a few crumbs. **(To audience)** You didn’t eat it did you? No. Can you guess who did? He’s growing so fast and everything I cook just disappears! Last week it was a big pudding. The week before it was some smoked fish. The week before that it was a whole pan full of soup. I don’t know what we’re going to eat for Christmas, we’ve got practically nothing left! And now I’ve had this letter.

(Mum takes the letter from her pocket to show the audience as Loki and Freya enter, giggling. Mum quickly returns the letter to her pocket. Loki is holding a piece of pie in one paw and has obviously just put something in his mouth with the other paw, but when he sees Mum he hides both paws behind his back. Both Loki and Freya look guilty)

Freya: Hello Mummy!

Loki: Hello Mummy!

Mum: Loki what have you got behind your back?

Loki: Behind my back?

Mum: Yes. And why have you got crumbs round your mouth?

(Loki begins to wipe his mouth with the paw holding the pie. Mum sees it before he quickly puts that paw behind his back and wipes the crumbs away from his mouth with his empty paw.)

Mum: Hold out your paws.

(Loki holds them out one by one, transferring the pie between paws behind his back as he does so)

Mum: Both of them together!

(Loki passes the pie to Freya, whose hands are also behind her back, before showing his paws to Mum.)

Mum: And you Freya.

(Loki takes the pie again, turns his back to Mum and stuffs the remaining pie in his mouth so they can both show their hands, but Loki can’t speak with his mouth full)

Mum: Oh Loki how could you? That pie was for all of us for Christmas!

(Loki stops chewing and looks crestfallen. He hiccups loudly, twice)

Freya: Sorry, Mummy. It’s just that Loki’s growing. He’s always hungry.

Mum: Freya, I need to talk to you.

Freya: What about? Christmas? We're going to have such fun this Christmas, aren't we! Loki and I have thought up some games to play, and of course we're going to help you much more, aren't we Loki? We can tidy everything and get enough logs for the fire. Loki's so strong now, and I don't mind the dark or the snow if he's with me. I don't mind anything at all! Oh Loki, it's going to be the best Christmas ever!

(Loki nods vigorously and hiccups)

Mum: Freya.. Please stop and listen now. We need to have a talk – just you and me.

(Loki stops, looks at Mum and Freya, puzzled. Hiccups again)

Freya: Loki, can you go and play outside? I won't be a minute. Start making a snowman like we did yesterday or a snow bear.

(Freya speaks aside to Loki and audience)

Freya: There are always secrets at Christmas time, aren't there, maybe this one is about your present!

(Freya hugs Loki and he exits, still hiccupping)

Freya: What is it Mummy? Is it about his present?

Mum: No Freya. It's about

Freya: I thought perhaps we could make him a cake – a big cake. a *huge* cake. And we could decorate it with stars – he loves stars, he's always gazing up at them. **(to audience)** What do you think? We'd have to hide it though.

(Mum takes the plate out and then gets the stool and the skein of wool. She sets the stool, sits and gives the skein to Freya to hold while she winds it into a ball during the following dialogue. Freya kneels on the floor in front of Mum)

Mum: Freya, I've had a letter.

Freya: Who from?

Mum: From Anika's father. It's about Loki. He's not happy about living next door to a bear. He's worried about Anika getting hurt.

Freya: But Anika doesn't like Loki. She won't go anywhere near him.

Mum: Loki's a big bear now, Freya. He doesn't always know his own strength. I sometimes worry too. Your games can be quite rough.

Freya: You don't have to worry about me, Mummy. Loki would never hurt me. And I can make sure he keeps away from Anika's house. We never go there anyway. So it's alright. Now what do you think about a cake? Will you help me make it? Have we got all the ingredients?

Mum: And that's another thing, Freya.

Freya: What?

Mum: Loki's appetite. He eats so much nowadays. I can't keep up

Freya: Yes he does, doesn't he! He's a greedy old thing. I didn't get any of that pudding he found the other day, he just -

(Freya begins to demonstrate how Loki wolfed it down, and then claps her hands over her mouth)

Oh! you weren't supposed to know about that

Mum: I'd already guessed. I expect he ate the smoked fish too? and the soup and now the pie.

Freya: He's just hungry. He's always hungry.

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Mum: And that's just my point. We haven't got enough to feed him anymore. We'll all be hungry in a day or two because there won't be anything left. Nothing for Christmas. Do you understand what I'm saying, Freya? I think the time has come. to let Loki go.

Freya: Go where?

Mum: Go back into the forest, to the North, where he came from. Where he belongs. Before Anika's father, before anything bad happens to him.

Freya: But Mummy. He doesn't want to go back to the forest. He'll just come back here to me.

Mum: There are lots of bears in the North. He'll be happy with them. They'll teach him to find his own food. Maybe he'll find his own mummy.

Freya: But I'm his mummy. He's always called me his mummy.

Mum: Now Freya, you know that's not real. He can't stay with us any longer and that's that. Some of our neighbours are travelling North tomorrow to make their Christmas visits. They have offered to take Loki with them.

Freya: But they can't. I won't let them. We'll run away.

Mum: And what will you do when it gets dark? Or snowy? Or you meet a troll? I'm sorry, Freya, but this is best for all of us. Now, go and enjoy your last day with Loki and I'll try to cook him something nice for tea.

Freya: I won't let anyone take Loki away from me. Not you or anyone. You said he could stay. you promised!

Mum: No, I never promised that. I said he could stay for a while. Try to understand, Freya, Loki's grown into a big bear now and you're still a little girl. He needs other bears.

(Freya runs out in tears. Mum watches her go, then takes out the letter again)

Mum: Oh dear. Poor Freya. I hate to see her unhappy. But what can I do?

(Mum picks up the stool and wool and exits. Lights fade a little. Pause. Freya creeps back in, wiping her eyes. She creeps to the hatstand, takes a coat, which she puts on, and two scarves and quietly runs out again, calling out in a whisper)

Freya: Loki! Loki!

(Lights fade)

Scene 6 Outside

(Lights up. SFX. wind. Snow (glitterball). Loki and Freya enter and walk round the space, behind and in front of the blocks of audience: they are running away. At first Freya is leading, then Loki runs ahead as she tires. As they journey, lights fade to suggest spooky forest. Troll noises, made by other actor offstage, are heard. Loki and Freya exit behind a screen. Pause. Loki re-enters, crosses to far side of space and sniffs the air. Freya enters a little behind him, very tired. Loki bounces back to her.)

Freya: It's no good Loki. I'm so tired and cold, I don't think I can go any further. I don't even know which way we're going. Do you know?

Loki: **(points in direction he was looking)** North! Star!

Freya: North that's where Mummy said they were going to take you. That's why we ran away so they couldn't take you to the North. Let's go another way.

(She points in another direction and begins to walk that way. Loki is hesitating. Freya goes back and takes his paw.)

Freya: Come on Loki. I want to go this way

Loki: **(pulling her the other way)** This way.

Freya: But Loki. why do you want to go North?

Loki: Home

Freya: Home? But we ran away from home, it can't be that way. We can't go home, Loki, because of Anika's Dad. Because they'll take you away from me.

Loki: Home. North. North home.

(Loki holds out his paw to Freya who takes it slowly and thoughtfully).

Freya: Is that where you came from? Is that where you want to go? Oh Loki I don't think I can walk all the way to the North. If only we could find somewhere to stop for the night.

(Troll makes a loud burping noise offstage. Freya stops in her tracks)

Freya: What was that?

(Freya and Loki listen. Nothing. They set off again, there is another noise. This happens a couple of times)

Freya: Is there someone there? It's so dark I can't see anything **(to audience)** Can you? What do you think it might be? Trolls? I've never actually seen a real troll. Have you?

(Improvised dialogue with audience. What are trolls like? What colour hair? What are their faces like? Etc. Loki tries to mime according to the description)

Freya: Are they very scary? Are you scared of trolls, Loki?

(After a moment of uncertainty, Loki makes a gesture of defiance/bravery)

Freya: Then we don't have to be either. Loki will look after us, won't you Loki?

(Enter Mrs Hallvor at speed, looking over her shoulder. She bumps into Loki. Loki immediately tries to hide behind Freya. Mrs Hallvor, realising she's bumped into a bear, uses Freya as a shield too. Freya, after initial fear, realises Mrs Hallvor is human.)

Freya: It's alright Loki. It's not a troll. I don't think. Excuse me, but you're not a troll are you?

Mrs H: 'Course not! Excuse me, but that's not a bear is it?

Freya: It's alright. It's just Loki.

Mrs H: But, a bear?!

Freya: Well, yes, he is a bear, but.

Mrs H: There's a big bear standing just there and you're worried about trolls?!

Loki: **(Copying the mime he did before from the children's descriptions)** Trolls!

Mrs H: **(To audience)** Which is worse do you think? Trolls or bears. I'm just running away from trolls and now I've bumped into a bear. Must be my lucky day.

Loki: **(puzzled)** Loki day.?

Freya: No silly. *Lucky* day. She thinks she's lucky bumping into you! Like I was!

Mrs H: That wasn't quite what I meant. Bear or no bear, you won't think you're so lucky if the trolls catch you. It's Christmas Eve you know!

Freya: Why so it is, Christmas Eve! I'd forgotten!

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Mrs H: Forg – forgot.!! How could you forget it's Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve? The trolls? Haven't you put your feast ready?

Freya: Feast? What feast?

Mrs H: The Christmas Eve feast of course. For the trolls! They'll be here any minute! I've left mine all ready back in my cottage there. You know, sizzling sausages, piping hot pies, roast turkey, roast parsnips, roast beef and roast chicken, then mussels and Brussels and cabbage and cauli, mashed potato, boiled potato, three potato four, dried fish, fried fish fingers and peas, cold pots and hotpots with mustard and custard and mince pies and jellies and chocolate and cheese. Then for afters -

Freya: Wait a minute, you're giving all this food to the trolls? Why?

Mrs H: Because it's Christmas Eve! Because every year the trolls come for their Christmas feast and I have to leave it ready for them and then clear off! Because if I didn't, if I didn't.

(Mrs Hallvor looks terrified)

Freya: What?

Loki: What?

Mrs H: You're not from round here are you? Otherwise you'd know all about the trolls on Christmas Eve.

Freya: What are trolls like?

Mrs H: All different. And all horrible. Some are tall and skinny; some are short and squashy. Some have knobbly knees and some have knobbly noses; some have long beards and some have long ears; some have smelly feet and some have smelly bottoms but all of them – *all* of them, mind – have huge hairy horns. And if they find you they poke you and pinch you till you're black and blue. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to make myself scarce. And if you've got any sense you'll do the same, bear or no bear!

Freya: But.. we've got nowhere to go. Please, couldn't we stay the night at your cottage? We'd keep out of the way. And couldn't you spare any of that food for Loki and me, we've been walking all day long and we're so tired and hungry, just a little, please?

Loki: Please?

Mrs H: On any other day, I'd be glad to help. Make yourselves comfortable, I'd say. Help yourselves. Sausages with custard? No problem. Apple pie with gravy? It's yours. Roast beef with ice cream? As much as you want. But *not today!!!* Today it's all for the Trolls. and have you got any idea what they would do to me if I let you eat even so much as a crumb of their pastry, or drink just a sip of their cherryade? Well first they'd.

(Mrs Hallvor makes appropriate gestures at each thought)

Mrs H: Then most likely they'd – and then of course they'd – just don't ask!

Freya: **(Piling on the pathos)** Come on then Loki. No food or shelter for us. We'll just have to keep trudging on through the wind and snow

Loki: Wind and snow.

Freya: We'll probably turn into lumps of ice

Loki: Lumps of ice.

Freya: With nowhere to go to keep warm.

Loki: Keep warm.

Freya: And nothing to put in our tummies

Loki: Tummies.

Freya: Lucky trolls. They've got somewhere to go. But not us.

Loki: Not us.

(During this exchange, Mrs Hallvor has been looking increasingly uncomfortable)

Mrs H: Oh *alright!* You can stay in the cottage *as long as* you keep hidden

Loki: Hidden

(Loki hides his face with his paws)

Mrs H: And you don't eat *anything!*

Loki: **(hopeful)** Eat anything..?

Mrs H: *Don't* eat anything! Until the trolls have gone.

Freya: We won't! And thank you so much, Mrs, erm?

Mrs H: Hallvor.

Freya: And I'm Freya, and this is my friend Loki.

Mrs H: Your friend eh? You must be a very brave little girl to make friends with a bear. **(A sudden thought strikes Mrs Hallvor)** Does your mother know you're here?

(Freya thinks a moment, then shrugs)

Mrs H: Well go on then Freya and Loki. Before I change my mind. And *be careful!*

Freya: We will! Thank you!

(Loki hoists Freya onto his back and they exit.)

Mrs H: Oh dear oh dear. I don't think this is a good idea. What if the trolls find them? They'll poke them and pinch them . and what about my cottage? they'll smash it and bash it till there's nothing left. I'd better call them back..

(Mrs Hallvor turns to follow Freya and Loki, but freezes in fear as she hears a noise off.)

Mrs H: Oh!

Troll: **(Offstage)** Mrs Hallvor! Mrs Hallvor!

Mrs H: I'm here!

Troll: **(Offstage)** Is our feast ready, Mrs Hallvor?

Mrs H: Oh yes!

Troll: **(Offstage)** Good! Are there sausages?

Mrs H: Oh yes! Stacks of sausages!

Troll: **(Offstage)** And are there mince pies?

Mrs H: Oh yes! Masses of mince pies!

Troll: **(Offstage)** And are there puddings?

Mrs H: Oh yes! Piles of puddings, just how you like them!

Troll: **(Offstage)** Good! Off you go then Mrs Hallvor.

(Mrs H. begins to exit)

Oh Mrs Hallvor!

Mrs H: Y – yes?

Troll: **(Offstage)** BOO!!

(Troll shrieks with laughter. Mrs H. exits, running. Lights fade out)

Scene 7 - Inside Mrs Hallvor's cottage

(Lights up. Loki enters with a blanket which he puts down at the side of the playing area, and a large rolled-up mat with all sorts of (felled) food attached to it, which he unrolls, drooling as he does so. Enter Freya)

Freya: Oh, it's lovely and warm here. I'm so tired, I can hardly keep my eyes open

(Freya sees Loki about to eat something)

Freya: No, Loki! We promised, remember? I'm going to find the bedroom – you find somewhere to curl up where they won't see you. **(To audience)** Will you make sure he doesn't eat anything? Just tell him *no* if he tries!

(Freya exits yawning. Loki looks for somewhere to sleep, but his attention is inevitably drawn to the food. He is in a quandary, reaching out his paw then snatching it back. At last he takes something. Freya re-enters as she hears the children call out. Loki is caught red-handed.)

Freya: Loki, Oh Loki! Put it back.

(Loki tries to put it back exactly where it was with comic business. Freya's initial laughter turns to tears. Loki is concerned)

Freya: I'm alright Loki, it's just, I've never been away from my Mummy before. I wish she was here. It's Christmas day tomorrow, and there'll be no presents. No tree. No Mummy

(Loki gives Freya a big hug. He gently lifts her up and carries her offstage, humming a lullaby. Pause. Loki re-enters and puts his paw to his lips.)

Loki: Freya asleep!

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(Loki turns his attention once more to the food, but the children stop him. Loki quietens the children before trying to take something else. Repeat but as the children quieten again, Loki hears a noise offstage - trolls. Loki freezes. He looks around for somewhere to hide, sees the blanket and hides underneath, completely covered. There is a loud sniffing, slurping sort of noise offstage, with noises of greedy pleasure. Trolls speak the 1st section of dialogue offstage)

Troll 1: Mmmmmm, I can smell – sausages!

Troll 2: Oh, oh, yummy yummy! What else?

Troll 1: I can smell. roast turkey!

Troll 2: Oh, oh, ooooh! What else?

Troll 1: I can smell strawberries and cream!

Troll 2: Oh yes oh yes oh yes! What else?

Troll 1: I can smell – mmmmm – I can smell (surprised) children!

Troll 2: Oh, oh oh, delicious, oh, Children??!!

Both: Eeeuuugghh!

(Both Trolls enter, sniffing towards the children. They don't see the feast)

Troll 1: Nasty children. too much bone.

Troll 2: Too much gristle.

Troll 1: Too chewy.

Troll 2: Too stringy.

Troll 1: Can't eat children.

Troll 2: No way!

Troll 1: Ooooh – there's grown-ups too

(Trolls contemplate eating grown-ups)

Both: Naaaaaah!

Troll 2: Let's poke 'em instead!

Troll 1: Pinch 'em! Make 'em squirm.

Troll 2: Let's scare 'em

Troll 1: **(To audience)** BOO!

Troll 2: **(To audience)** BOO!!

Troll 1: **(To audience)** BOO!!!

Troll 2: **(To audience)** BOO!!!!

Both: **(To each other)** BOO!!!!!

(Trolls jump back, scared – and notice the feast)

Troll 1: Ohhhhhh!

Troll 2: OHHHHHH!

Troll 1: Beef burgers

Troll 2: Cheese burgers.

Troll 1: Chip burgers.

Troll 2: Nut burgers.

Troll 1: Roast chicken.

Troll 2: Mince pies.

Troll 1: Sausages.

Troll 2: And cake!

Troll 1: Cake with strawberries.

Troll 2: Cake with more berries.

Troll 1: Cakes with apples.

Troll 2: Cakes with pears.

Troll 1: Smoked fish.

Troll 2: Dried fish.

Troll 1: Pickled fish.

Troll 2: Chocolate fish.

Troll 1: Chocolate fish??

Troll 2: Mmmmm, with ketchup and cream!

Troll 1: **(To audience)** I bet you'd like some, wouldn't you? All that lovely food..

Troll 2: Would you? Would you like some? Mmmm?

Troll 1: Well you can't!

Troll 2: No way!

Troll 1: Because

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Troll 2: Because

Troll 1: Because you're not

Troll 2: You're not

Troll 1: Trolls!

Troll 2: **(Gleeful)** You're not trolls! Tee hee! We are! We're trolls!

Troll 1: We're the nastiest

Troll 2: Scariest

Troll 1: Ugliest

Troll 2: Greediest

Troll 1: Most horrible trolls in the world.

Troll 2: And you're not. (**Sudden doubt**) Are you?

Troll 1: Course they're not. Look at them.

Troll 2: Sniff them

Troll 1: Show us your eyes

Troll 2: Show us your ears

Troll 1: Show us your noses.

Troll 2: Show us your beards.

Troll 1: Show us your bellies

Troll 2: Show us your bottoms.

Troll 1: Show us your horns.

Troll 2: They haven't got any!

Troll 1: What, no horns? None at all?

Troll 2: Hoorah!

Troll 1: Hooray!

Troll 2: They're not trolls!

Troll 1: Not one of them.

Troll 2: So that means

Both: They can't have any food!

Troll 2: But we can

Troll 1: Oh yes we can. and we can have it right

Both: *Now!!*

(With a lot of slurping noises, the Trolls fall on the feast with great glee. They behave as badly as possible, smearing, splatting, throwing the food etc. They periodically pretend to offer something to audience and withdraw it. Suddenly Troll 2 finds herself next to the hidden Loki.)

Troll 2: Ohh!

Troll 1: What? What??

Troll 2: (**sniffing around Loki**) Pussy cat!

Troll 1: Pussy cat!?

Troll 2: Pussy cat!

(Troll 2 gets an idea, runs to feast and grabs a “sausage” and a fork from the mat, puts the sausage on the fork and takes it back to Loki. Troll 1 is watching in delight)

Troll 2: Here you are, pussy cat. Have a sausage!

(She pokes and prods Loki’s shape with the fork intending to tease him. Pause. Very slowly Loki reveals one paw, then another. A leg, then another etc. Troll 2 backs off as Loki emerges and stands to his full height)

Troll 2: **(backing off)** Nnnnice pussy cat.

Troll 1: **(backing off)** We won’t hurt you.

Troll 2: Y – you can keep the sausage

(Loki advances on Trolls. There is a chase. Trolls panic and rush about bumping into each other, hiding in audience etc. before finally running off in their terror.)

Loki: Shoo! Shoo Trolls! **(to audience)** Trolls gone?

(Loki relives the fun with the audience, miming the Trolls’ panic. Just as he begins to notice the food again, he hears something and listens. Freya is crying softly offstage.)

Loki: Freya’s sad. Freya’s hungry.

(Loki rolls up the food mat and tiptoes off to give it to Freya. Lights fade)

Scene 8 - Outside Mrs Hallvor's cottage

(Lights up. Enter Mrs Hallvor, warily, holding a troll boot or other bit of identifiable troll clothing. She shows it to audience, puzzled).

Mrs H: Someone must have been in a hurry, to drop this. It's very rum, but it looks like **(sniffs)** and smells like

(Mrs Hallvor looks at the boot closely and holds it up again, addressing the audience)

Mrs H: Is this yours? Do you know who dropped it? The Trolls?! Ssshhh! But they're in the cottage eating all the food aren't they? **(Improvised dialogue between Mrs Hallvor and the audience about what happened inside the cottage with the Trolls.)** Well bless my boots and bonnet. Who would have thought it! What silly trolls. Fancy being scared of Loki!
(Mrs Hallvor laughs loudly. Loki enters behind her and touches her shoulder)

Mrs H: OHH! Loki! You gave me a jump! Did you really send those trolls packing you clever bear! Where's Freya?

Loki: Asleep. Freya's sad.

Mrs H: Sad? Why is she sad?

Loki: Mummy.

Mrs H: She wants her Mummy does she? Where is her Mummy?

(Loki points vaguely in direction he and Freya came)

Mrs H: Home. South

Mrs H: Does her Mummy know where she is?

(Loki looks embarrassed then shakes his head)

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Mrs H: Loki? Where are you two going?

Loki: Home

Mrs H: But you just said

Loki: **(Pointing in opposite direction)** Home North .Loki home

(During the next speech, Freya enters and listens. The other two don't see her. Loki responds to Mrs Hallvor's questions by nodding or shaking his head)

Mrs H: Oh I see. Your home is in the North. But Freya lives in the South – with her Mummy? Did you live there too, Loki? Did Freya's Mummy say you had to go home? And Freya didn't want you to go? So you've run away? And now you're taking her to your home? But Loki, Freya can't live in the North, even with you to take care of her. She doesn't belong there. It's cold and stormy. The wind is bitter

and the snow swirls. It's fine for bears with their thick coats: big brave bears like you who can frighten away trolls. But Freya's a little girl. She needs to be warm and safe at home with her Mummy.

(Freya runs to Loki and hugs him)

Freya: Oh Loki, she's right, isn't she. I have to go back to where I belong, and you have to go on to the North where you belong. We can't stay together for ever, like I thought we could. We have to say goodbye.

Loki: Say goodbye.

Freya: But you'll always be my best friend.

Loki: Best friend

Freya: Best in the whole world. And I won't be scared of the snow or the wind any more, and I won't be scared of the dark because I will just look up at the sky and see the stars

Loki: Stars. one, two, five, hundred

Freya: Thousand.

Loki: Million

Freya: A million stars. and I'll think of you!

Mrs H: Look! There's the Great Bear!

(Lighting effect – stars in rough shape of Great Bear constellation projected onto wall/ceiling)

Freya: Great Bear?

Mrs H: See those stars there? They make a pattern – look: nose, ears, paws People call that the Constellation of the Great Bear.

Freya: That's you, Loki. Up in the stars. The Great Bear of the North. You see? I'll never ever forget you because you'll be up there in the sky every night!

Loki: Great Bear of the North, Loki!

(Freya and Loki gaze upwards, arms round each other, pointing at the stars and softly counting.)

Mrs H: Come Freya. Let me take you South again, home to your mummy. And Loki - off to the North with you to find the other bears. Perhaps we'll all meet again one day.

Loki: Goodbye Freya.

Freya: Goodbye Loki.

(Reluctantly Loki starts off one way and Freya goes towards Mrs Halvor the other way. They all start to exit, Loki and Freya looking over their shoulders at each other and waving sadly. Suddenly Mrs H stops)

Mrs H: Oh! Oh!! Of course!

(Loki and Freya stop and look at her)

Freya: What is it?

Loki: What is it?

Mrs H: I've had an idea . a brilliant idea! The best idea I've ever had! Why don't you both come back here next Christmas Eve and spend Christmas in my cottage. half way between the North and the South! You can bring your Mummy, Freya and I can make a special feast just for us, instead of for the trolls. you know - sizzling sausages, piping hot pies

(Mrs Hallvor holds out her hands. Freya and Loki join her, and they all three dance round together)

Freya: Roast turkey, roast parsnips

Loki: Roast beef and roast chicken.

All: Mince pies and jellies and chocolate and cheese!

Freya: Will you come, Loki?

(Loki nods and pats his tummy)

Freya: You won't forget me before then, will you?

(Loki unwinds and holds out the scarf he is wearing to Freya. Freya takes hers off too and goes to take Loki's – Loki teases Freya with it so it turns into a game moment. They laugh as they swap the scarves)

Freya: Till next year then. Don't get too much bigger! Goodbye, Loki. Happy Christmas

Loki: Goodbye, Freya. Happy Christmas!

(Loki and Freya rub noses and hug each other)

Mrs H: **(to audience)** And a Happy Christmas to all of you. See you next year! Goodbye!

Freya: **(Together)** Goodbye! Goodbye everyone! Happy Christmas!

Loki: **(Together)** Goodbye! Goodbye everyone! Happy Christmas!

(Freya and Loki exit in different directions, leaving Mrs Hallvor)

Troll: **(offstage)** Mrs Hallvor! Mrs Hallvor!

Mrs H: I'm here

Troll: Is your pussy cat still there?

Mrs H: Oh, yes, he's still here

Troll: Will your pussy cat be there next Christmas?

Mrs H: Oh yes, he'll be here. And he'll be twice as big as he was this Christmas. And twice as fierce. And he'll be bringing all his friends, all twice as big as they were this Christmas. Will you be coming to see?

Troll: (nervously) Errrr No. We'll go somewhere else next Christmas and we won't be back!

Mrs H: Alright then. Goodbye trolls!

Troll: Goodbye Mrs Hallvor.

Mrs H: Oh, and trolls?

(Mrs Hallvor quickly enlists the audience's help)

Troll: Yes? Yes?

Mrs H (encouraging audience) BOO!

(Sound of trolls running away in panic. Lights off.)