



2003

Hansel and Gretel

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McCallum, Phyllis. *Hansel and Gretel*. Pioneer Drama Services, 1971. Contact publisher regarding price. 19 pp.

Reviewer: Mindy Nelsen

Reading Level: Preschool; Primary;

Rating: Shortcomings;

Genre: Fairy Tales; Plays; Occult Plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Fairy tales--Hansel and Gretel--Juvenile drama; Family--Juvenile drama;

Magic--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Evil doesn't win in the end.

Production Requirements: Multiple props, extensive set, but could be pantomimed.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 15-20 min

Characters: 8

Cast: 2 M / 6 F

Time Period: Long ago.

This play follows the basic story of Hansel and Gretel. The wicked stepmother tries to get rid of the two children by giving them to the wicked witch to bake in her special oven so that the wicked witch may add them to her gingerbread house. The additions of significance are the good witch who is banished to live in a nearby tree until her powers are restored. With her powers restored, the good witch is able to help save Hansel and Gretel and the children's real mother, who had been turned into a bird, but is able to warn her children of harm.

Though a few lines are humorous and there is a strong foundation for the relationship and chemistry that exists between Hansel and Gretel, the majority of the characters are static and lack purpose. The play is far too inter-tangled with "magic petticoats" and new characters that it fails to develop the actual fairy tale, assuming that the story is widely known and the plot need not be explained. The action comes in disorganized spurts and far too soon. The play could be simplified by pantomiming the numerous desired props (like a plate of dead rats, a gingerbread house with moving parts, two quick costume changes, and a giant moving tree) but otherwise is complicated and time consuming for such a short production. The dialogue is predictable and the attempted theme is reached in the end but without the process to get to that point. If simplified, this production could well emphasize the importance of family togetherness.