

'THE WITCH' FROM *HANSEL AND GRETEL*

EXTRACT TAKEN FROM 'COLLECTED GRIMM TALES'.

ADAPTED BY CAROL ANN DUFFY AND DRAMATIZED BY TIM SUPPLE

The character of 'The Witch', like many of the characters in this adaptation, switches between her character and an in-text narrator of her actions. This transition should be smooth yet clear to an audience.

The Witch:

Then, suddenly, the door opened and an old, old woman, bent double on a crutch, came creeping out.

'Well, well, you sweet little things, how did you get here? Come in and stay with me. You'll come to no harm.'

She took the children by the hand and led them into the tempting house. Then she gave them a wonderful meal of creamy milk and mouth-watering pancakes with sugar and chocolate and apples and nuts. After Hansel and Gretel had eaten as much as they could, she made up two soft, comfy little beds with the best white linen, and Hansel and Gretel went to sleep.

But the old woman was only pretending to be kind, for she was really a cruel and evil witch who lay in wait for children and had only built her bread house with its cake roof to trap them. When a child fell into her power, she would kill it, cook it and eat it, and that was her favourite feasting-day. Witches have red eyes with which they can't see very far – but they have a powerful sense of smell, as good as an animal's, and they can smell anyone who comes near them. So as Hansel and Gretel had approached her little house in the woods, she'd cackled a spiteful laugh and said;

'Here's two for my belly who won't escape.'

She stands over the sleeping children.

'This will make a tasty morsel for me to swallow.'