

Scene 1

(As **Intro Music** plays (**CD track 10**) the cast enters. The lights come up on a small staged area to one side of the main stage, revealing a bare and shabby kitchen – see staging suggestions/scenery. Hansel, Gretel and their father sit at a table, while their stepmother stands at the sink, arms folded and in a bad mood!)

Narrator ~ (reading from an old book) In a cottage, on the edge of a forest, lived a family. Although they were poor, each of them was good and honest. Actually, that's not strictly true! The father, his son Hansel, and his daughter Gretel were good and honest, but as for his wife, the children's stepmother.....

Stepmother ~ (to father) I can't have a fur coat? And to think I could have married Herbert Goldsworthy. His new wife can hardly walk under the weight of all her jewellery. But no, I've sacrificed my happiness to cook and clean for you lot!

Gretel ~ But you never do any cooking or cleaning! You make us do it all!

Father ~ My love, how can I buy you a fur coat? We don't even have enough money for food?

Hansel ~ (pointing to stepmother) And she eats what little food we do have!

Father ~ Hansel! Don't be disrespectful. Your mother is right, I've let you down. Unless our luck changes we could starve this Christmas!

Song 1 – The Happiest Time Of Year (CD track11, lyrics p18) (Family supported by whole cast)

(As the last bars of the song fade, the lights dim and Hansel and Gretel exit. Their father and stepmother sit and begin a heated discussion)

Narrator ~ As night fell, Hansel and Gretel took a blanket each and went to bed in the next room. But being so hungry they could not sleep, and lay awake, listening in horror, as their stepmother revealed a wicked plan!

Father ~ Abandon the children in the forest? But they'll never survive!

Stepmother ~ (aside) Of course! That's the idea!

Father ~ What was that, my love?

Stepmother ~ Err....I said 'Of course they'll survive, my dear!' They'll find food and shelter. (aside) But I don't fancy their chances against wolves and bears!

Father ~ What was that, my love?

Stepmother ~ Err....I said 'It's time we went upstairs!' You know, get some sleep for the long day ahead. Don't worry. Everything is going to be just fine.

Song 2 – What A Wicked Woman (CD track12, lyrics p19) (Stepmother supported by whole cast)

(As the last bars of the song fade, the two exit and the lights come down.)