

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 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 tiny cottage, outside the city walls, on the edge of a large forest, lived a poor family. Although they owned few possessions and had very little to eat, they were good, honest folk, each and every one. Actually, that's not strictly true! The father, his son Hansel, and his daughter Gretel were good, honest folk, but as for his wife, the children's stepmother.....

Stepmother ~ *(to father)* Ooooh! You useless lump! What do you mean you can't afford to buy me a fur coat? My mother warned me you would never amount to anything! 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 have to take pity on you and your two brats, fool that I am, and sacrifice my own happiness to cook and clean in this hovel!

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

Stepmother ~ You watch your lip, or I'll wash your mouth out with the dish cloth!

Hansel ~ *(aside to Gretel)* Don't worry, she doesn't even know where it's kept!

Father ~ My love, I walk miles every day looking for work on the farms in the countryside, but no-one is hiring. What can I do? How can I buy you a fur coat when we don't even have enough money for food?

Gretel ~ Father tries his best, Mother. And Hansel and I spend long hours, when we should be at school, searching the hedgerows for berries and roots.

Hansel ~ While you just sit with your feet up, eating what little food we have left!

Stepmother ~ How dare you! You know I suffer with my back. The doctor has given me strict instructions not to overdo it.

Father ~ Hansel! Don't be disrespectful. Your mother is right, I've let you down. Unless our luck changes we may starve! Oh what will become of us?

Song 1 – A Sorry Situation *(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 on the poor family, Hansel and Gretel took a threadbare blanket each and went to bed in the next room. But being so cold and hungry they could not sleep. Instead, they lay awake, huddled together, and listened in horror as their stepmother revealed to their father a wicked and dastardly plan!

Father ~ But my love, surely there's another way!

Stepmother ~ Just use your loaf, you oaf! Too many mouths to feed and not enough food! What else do you suggest?

Father ~ But to take them deep into the forest and just.....just.....abandon them? 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're clever children. They'll find food and shelter, and then, when we're back on our feet again, we'll go and find them and bring them home. *(aside)* That's if they've not been eaten by wolves and bears.

Father ~ What was that, my love?

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

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.)

.....continued.....