

SOUND EFFECTS

It is suggested that the 'chorus' make all the sounds vocally, for example the accelerating car. Percussion instruments could be used as appropriate.

LIGHTING.

Nothing special is required, but it would be effective to be able to brighten 'Grandmother's room' and the 'Real Witches area'. Also, when the 'blue spit' is revealed, general blue lighting could enhance the moment.

REAL WITCHES

Curtain up.

The CAST assemble in a semicircle. As the action progresses, some of the ACTORS will step forward to play their parts, then step back again. GRANDMOTHER'S table and chair are to one side. Fanfare.

ALL: The Witches, by Roald Dahl.
[Fanfare]

The beginning of the story.

[Fanfare]

Real Witches.

ACTOR 1: Christmas holidays.

ACTOR 2: Winter sunshine.

ACTOR 3: Happy.

ACTOR 4: North of Oslo.

ACTOR 5: [Moving forward, kneeling and miming driving]
Papa driving.

[GROUP 1 start humming to suggest a car engine,
growing louder as the drama intensifies]

ACTOR 6: [Moving forward, kneeling beside 'Papa']
Mama beside him.

ACTOR 7: [*Moving forward, standing behind 'Mama' and 'Papa' Me in the back.*]

ACTOR 8: Icy road.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Icy road.

ACTOR 9: Skidding.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Skidding.

ACTOR 10: Sliding.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Sliding.

ACTOR 11: Out of control.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Out of control.

ACTOR 12: Off the road.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Off the road.

ACTOR 13: Tumbling.

GROUP 2: [*Echo*] Tumbling. [*The climax*] Into a rocky ravine.

[*Silence*]

[*ALL lower their heads, to suggest the car crash*]

ACTOR 7 (BOY): [*A horrified cry*] Mama! Papa! No!

[*He comes forward and runs into the arms of ACTOR 14 (GRANDMOTHER), who comes to meet him in front of her table and chair. ACTORS 5 and 6 return to the semicircle*]

GRANDMOTHER: [*Embracing BOY in her arms*] Sob your heart out, darling Boy. Grandmamma's here.

BOY: What are we going to do now?

GRANDMOTHER: You will stay here with me. And I will look after you.

BOY: Aren't I going back to England?

GRANDMOTHER: No. I could never do that. Heaven shall take my soul, but Norway shall keep my bones.

[*They continue hugging. GRANDMOTHER turns to the audience*]

As the days passed, time began to heal the hurt.

[*She leads BOY to her chair. She sits. He kneels at her feet*]

Each evening I told him stories of summer holidays when I was young. [*To BOY*] We used to row out in a boat and wave to the shrimp boats on their way home. They would stop and give us a handful of shrimps each, still warm from having just been cooked. We peeled them and gobbled them up. The head was the best part.

[*BOY looks interested*]

BOY: The head?

GRANDMOTHER: You squeeze it between your teeth and suck out the inside. [*She demonstrates with relish*]

ALL: [*Echo the sucking sound*]

GRANDMOTHER: It's marvellous.

BOY: [*Enjoying the horror*] Ugggggh! It's horrible!

GRANDMOTHER: [*Lighting a thin black cigar*] Horrible things can be exciting, Boy. Take ... witches.

BOY: Witches? With silly black hats and black cloaks, riding on broomsticks?

GRANDMOTHER: No. They're for fairy-tales. I'm talking of *real* witches.

BOY: *Real* witches?

ALL: *Real* witches?

GRANDMOTHER: *Real* witches.

ALL: *Real* witches.

GRANDMOTHER: *Real* witches dress in ordinary clothes and look very much like ordinary women. That's why they're so hard to catch.

BOY: But why should we want to catch them?

GRANDMOTHER: Because, my darling Boy, they are evil. They hate children. They get the same pleasure from squelching a child as you get from eating a plateful of strawberries and thick cream.

BOY: Squelching?

[ACTORS 15 and 16 mime GRANDMOTHER'S following speech, one playing a witch, the other her victim]

GRANDMOTHER: She chooses a victim, softly stalks it. Closer and closer, then ... phwisst! ... she swoops.

ALL (*except BOY*) *join in with GRANDMOTHER:*
[*Building to a climax*] Sparks fly. Flames leap. Oil boils. Rats howl. Skin shrivels ...

GRANDMOTHER: And the child disappears.

ALL: Squelched.

[ACTORS 15 and 16 return to the semicircle]

BOY: Disappears?
[*During the following speech, ACTOR 17 moves forward and mimes becoming a chicken. This should complement not swamp GRANDMOTHER'S speech!*]

GRANDMOTHER: Not always. Sometimes the child is transformed into something else. Like little Birgit Svenson who lived across the road from us. One day she started growing feathers all over her body. Within a month she had turned into a large white chicken. Her parents kept her for years in a pen in the garden. She even laid eggs.

BOY: What colour eggs?

GRANDMOTHER: Brown ones. Biggest eggs I've ever seen. Her mother made omelettes out of them. Delicious, they were.

[ACTOR 17 returns to the semicircle]

BOY: Are you being truthful, Grandmamma? Really and truly truthful? Not pulling my leg.

GRANDMOTHER: My darling Boy, you won't last long in this world if you don't know how to spot a witch when you see one.

BOY: Then tell me. Please!

ALL: Please! PLEASE!

[Slowly GRANDMOTHER takes a large book from the table and opens it to show BOY a picture. As she finds the page, ACTORS 18, 19 and 20 (REAL WITCHES) step forward, looking like ordinary women]

BOY: [Looking at the book] They don't look like witches.

GRANDMOTHER: Of course not. If witches looked like witches we could round them all up and put them in the meat-grinder. But look, there's a clue. They're wearing gloves.

BOY: Mama used to wear gloves.

GRANDMOTHER: Not in the summer, when it's hot. Not in the house. Witches do.

BOY: Why?

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GRANDMOTHER: Because they don't have fingernails.

[The REAL WITCHES, almost in choreographed slow motion, remove a glove]

They have thin, curvy claws, like a cat.

[The REAL WITCHES gesture threateningly with their claws]

BOY: Ugggh!

ALL: Ugggh!

GRANDMOTHER: Second clue. They wear wigs. Real witches are always bald.

[The REAL WITCHES remove their wigs, revealing bald heads]

Not a single hair grows on their heads.

BOY: Horrid.

GRANDMOTHER: Disgusting.

ALL: Disgusting.

[The REAL WITCHES begin to scratch their bald heads]

GRANDMOTHER: And the wigs give them nasty sores on the head. Wig-rash, it's called. And it doesn't half itch.

BOY: What else, Grandmamma?

GRANDMOTHER: Big nose-holes.

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[*The REAL WITCHES raise their heads and flare their nostrils*]

BOY: What for?

GRANDMOTHER: To sniff out the stink-waves of children.

BOY: I don't give out stink-waves, do I?

GRANDMOTHER: Not to me, you don't. To me you smell like raspberries and cream. But to a witch you smell – all children smell – like fresh dogs' droppings.

ALL: Fresh dogs' droppings.

BOY: Dogs' droppings? I don't believe it.

GRANDMOTHER: So, if you see a woman holding her nose as she passes you in the street, that woman could easily be a witch. Now, look at their feet.

BOY: Nothing special about them.

GRANDMOTHER: Wrong. They have no toes.

[*The REAL WITCHES each take off a shoe, revealing a stockingsed stub*]

BOY: Uggggh!

ALL: Uggggh!

GRANDMOTHER: And last but not least, witches have blue spit.

[*The REAL WITCHES smile for the first time, revealing a haze of blue teeth. They cackle menacingly*]

ALL: [*Echo the cackle*]

[*The REAL WITCHES return to the semicircle*]

GRANDMOTHER: [*Closing the book*]. So, my darling Boy, now you know.

ALL: Now you know. Now you know.

[*Curtain down*]

SETTING

An empty space.

PROPS

A small table and two chairs.

A small piece of green cheese and a sardine tail: these could be mimed.

Mrs Twit's walking stick: must be able to 'break' halfway down, perhaps one half plugs into the other half.

Two glasses of 'beer'.

Mrs Twit's glass eye: this could be a marble, hidden in her hand till she needs to 'remove' it.

An enormous mallet made of foam rubber.

SOUND EFFECTS

Percussion instruments as appropriate, especially drum rolls, musical 'pings' to accompany sudden ideas, and drumbeats for tension or to heighten the slapstick moments when the Twits hit each other or fall over.

LIGHTING

Nothing special is required, but it might be effective to brighten the lights when Mr and Mrs Twit make their first entrance.

MEET THE TWITS

Curtain up.

The CAST, all except MR and MRS TWIT, assemble in a semicircle. Drum roll.

ACTOR 1: They're shocking!

ACTOR 2: They're smelly!

ACTOR 3: They're silly!

ACTOR 4: They're stupefyingly stupid!

ACTOR 5: Get ready to meet . . .

ACTOR 6: The one and only . . .

ACTOR 7: Thank goodness!

ALL: The Twits!

[Fanfare]

[The semicircle splits to admit MR and MRS TWIT, who enter with show-biz flair. MRS TWIT carries a walking stick. They act out the words of the NARRATORS]

ACTOR 8: The best way to describe the Twits is . . .

ALL: Disgusting!

ACTOR 9: Mr Twit . . .

[MR TWIT steps forward]

... was a very hairy-faced man.

ACTOR 10: His thick, spiky hair stuck out straight like the bristles of a nailbrush.

ACTOR 11: The stuff even sprouted in revolting tufts out of his nostrils and ear-holes.

MR TWIT: My hairiness...

ACTOR 12: ... thought Mr Twit...

MR TWIT: ... makes me look terrifically wise and grand!

ACTORS 1, 2, 3 and 4: But in truth he was neither of these things.

ACTORS 5, 6, 7 and 8: Mr Twit was a twit.

ACTORS 9, 10, 11 and 12: He was born a twit.

MRS TWIT: [*Coming forward*] And now, at the age of sixty, he's a bigger twit than ever!

[MR TWIT looks angrily at MRS TWIT]

ACTOR 1: How often, you may ask, did Mr Twit wash this bristly, nailbrushy face of his?

ACTOR 2: The answer is...

ALL: Never!

MR TWIT: [*Proudly*] Not even on Sundays!

ACTOR 3: As a result there were always hundreds of bits of old breakfasts...

ACTOR 4: ... and lunches...

ACTOR 5: ... and suppers...

ACTOR 6: ... sticking to the hairs.
[MR TWIT licks eagerly round his face]

ACTOR 7: Specks of gravy!

ACTOR 8: Dried-up scrambled egg!

ACTOR 9: Spinach!

ACTOR 10: Tomato ketchup!

ACTOR 11: Fish fingers!

MR TWIT: [*With delight*] Minced chicken livers!

ACTOR 12: If you delved deeper still – hold your noses, ladies and gentlemen – you'd discover things that had been there for months and months.

[MR TWIT delves in his beard and finds...]

MR TWIT: A piece of maggoty green cheese! [*He eats it noisily*]

ACTOR 1: A mouldy old cornflake!

[MR TWIT finds it and eats it]

ACTOR 2: Or even...

MR TWIT: [*Digging it out*] ... the slimy tail of a tinned sardine. [*He holds it aloft*]

[MRS TWIT grabs it and eats it with delight]

MRS TWIT: Mmmm. Tasty.

[MR TWIT scolds at her]

ACTOR 3: Mrs Twit was no better than her husband.

MR TWIT: You . . . you ugly old hag!

[MRS TWIT reacts furiously, making herself look even uglier than usual]

ACTOR 4: Ugly, yes.

ACTOR 5: But not born ugly.

ACTOR 6: When she was young, she had quite a pretty face.

[MRS TWIT smiles 'prettily']

ACTOR 7: But she had ugly thoughts every day . . .

ACTOR 8: . . . of every week . . .

ACTOR 9: . . . of every year.

ACTOR 10: And so her face got uglier . . .

MR TWIT: . . . and uglier . . .

ACTOR 11: . . . and uglier . . .

[MRS TWIT demonstrates]

MR TWIT: So ugly I can hardly bear to look at it!

[MRS TWIT scolds at MR TWIT. Then she hits him with her walking stick]

Ow! [He holds his arm up threateningly]

[Both freeze]

ACTOR 12: Mr and Mrs Twit were a very happy couple.

ACTOR 1: But seldom happy at the same time!

ACTOR 2: For what really made them happy was . . .

ALL: . . . playing nasty tricks on one another!

[A drum roll as ACTORS or STAGE MANAGERS position a small table and two chairs to one side of the acting area]

[MR TWIT unfreezes and tiptoes to MRS TWIT, putting his finger to his lips as if to tell the audience not to say anything. Unseen by MRS TWIT, he snaps off half of her walking stick. He hands it to an ACTOR or STAGE MANAGER, then takes, from another ACTOR or STAGE MANAGER, two glasses of beer. He sits at the table]

MR TWIT: [Warmly] A glass of beer, my dear?

[MRS TWIT unfreezes]

MRS TWIT: Mmmm. Lovely. [She goes to walk, using her stick, but it is so short she crashes to the floor]

[MR TWIT laughs]

Aaaah! [She struggles up, forced to stoop because of the short walking stick] What's happened?

[MR TWIT quickly removes his shoes, kneels down into them and shuffles towards her]

MR TWIT: You seem to be growing, my sweet.

MRS TWTIT: Growing?

MR TWTIT: [*Arriving and looking shorter than her*] Growing. Take a look at your stick, you old goat, and see how much you've grown in comparison.

MRS TWTIT: [*Looking at her stick in amazement*] Never!

MR TWTIT: You always said you wanted me to look up to you! Your wish has been granted.

MRS TWTIT: I don't want to grow!

MR TWTIT: No?

MRS TWTIT: No! Do something!

MR TWTIT: Do something? Anything?

MRS TWTIT: Anything! Stop me growing!

MR TWTIT: Of course, my pet.

[*MR TWTIT stands up, unseen by MRS TWTIT, and fetches an enormous joke mallet, which he brings crashing down on her head*]

MRS TWTIT: Aaah!

[*MR TWTIT laughs and, seen by MRS TWTIT, takes the bottom half of her walking stick from the ACTOR or STAGE MANAGER and replaces it*]

MR TWTIT: Just a little joke, my honey-bunny!

[*MRS TWTIT grovels in fury. Both go to sit at the table and drink their beer. MR TWTIT belches*]

ACTOR 3: Mrs Twit was determined to pay back Mr Twit.

[*Musical ping! Mrs TWTIT smiles*]

ACTOR 4: Suddenly she had an idea.

[*Mrs TWTIT checks that MR TWTIT is not looking*]

ACTOR 5: Into her beer she dropped . . .

[*Mrs TWTIT pretends to remove her eye, revealing the glass eye (marble) and closing her real eye*]

ACTOR 6: . . . her glass eye . . .

[*A rhythmic drumbeat for tension. MR TWTIT looks round with a hint of suspicion. Mrs TWTIT smiles innocently.*]

MR TWTIT drinks from his glass. Mrs TWTIT pretends to drink from hers. Then she pretends to notice something behind Mr Twit. He turns to follow her gaze. Quickly

Mrs TWTIT swaps the two glasses round. Mr Twit turns back, suspicious. Mrs TWTIT drinks from his glass, he drinks from hers]

MR TWTIT: What are you plotting?

MRS TWTIT: Me plotting? You're the rotter what plots. But I'm watching you. Oh, yes! [*Smugly she turns briefly away*]

[*MR TWTIT quickly swaps the glasses round. Mrs TWTIT turns back, suspicious. MR TWTIT drinks. Mrs TWTIT drinks, unsure of which glass she has. MR TWTIT suddenly starts to sneeze*]

MR TWIT: Ah, ah, ah . . . [*He looks for a hanky but can't find one*] . . . tishoo!

[*While MR TWIT holds up his beard, sneezes into it, then wipes his nose on his sleeve, MRS TWIT quickly sweeps round the glasses again. MR TWIT picks up his glass — in fact her glass — and starts to drink. The drumbeat builds*]

MRS TWIT: Oh, yes, I'm watching you like a wombat!

MR TWIT: [*Spraying her with beer as he talks*] Oh, do shut up, you old hag. [*He drains the glass and suddenly sees the glass eye at the bottom. The drumbeat stops. MR TWIT jumps with shock*] Aaaaaah!

[*MRS TWIT cackles with laughter*]

MRS TWIT: I told you I was watching you! I've got eyes everywhere, so you'd better be careful! [*She retrieves the glass eye from the glass and holds it towards MR TWIT meaningfully, then replaces it in her eye-socket*]

[*MR TWIT roars and chases MRS TWIT round and round as the ACTORS narrate*]

ACTOR 7: They're shocking!

ACTOR 8: They're smelly!

ACTOR 9: They're silly!

ACTOR 10: They're stupefyingly stupid!

ACTOR 11: The one and only . . .

ACTOR 12: Thank goodness!

ALL: THE TWITS!

[*MR and MRS TWIT take a bow, still fighting*]

[*Curtain down*]

George blows it up

Put it on my chair!

George does so

Ready? (*She sits down*)

A long, loud, rude noise

(*Coyly*) Ooh! Pardon me! (*She roars with laughter*)

George joins in

You lucky boy, George. I envy you living on a farm. Let's see some animals!

Mum enters carrying a chicken and Dad carrying the piglets

Grunts and clucks

Darling Mary, darling Killy. Such a sweet name. Killy! And little piggywiggies and a chickychick! How sweet! (*She strokes them*)
Leave them here. They can run around and play!

Mum (smiling) But they're not housetrained.

Grandma Who cares? What's a little piggy poo and chicky wee among friends?

All laugh

How wonderful to be here. With my beautiful family!

All pose round Grandma. There is a flash as though a photo is being taken. Then the scene swiftly clears

Mum and Dad exit with the animals

The lighting returns to normal

George closes Grandma's curtain, then comes outside

George If only ... but I don't think Grandma knows how to be nice and kind. She enjoys making us feel uncomfortable.

Grandma rings her bell. George sighs, then opens the curtain and goes in to her

Yes, Grandma?

Grandma You know what's the matter with you, George?

George What, Grandma?

Grandma You're growing too fast. Boys who grow too fast become stupid and lazy.

George But I can't help it if I'm growing fast.

Grandma Of course you can. Growing's a nasty, childish habit.

George But we have to grow, Grandma. If we didn't grow, we'd never be grown-ups.

Grandma Rubbish, boy, rubbish. Look at me. Am I growing? Certainly not.

George But you did once.

Grandma Only very little. I gave up growing when I was extremely small.

George But how do I stop myself growing?

Grandma Stop eating chocolate. Eat cabbage instead.

George Cabbage? I don't like cabbage.

Grandma It's not what you like or don't like. It's what's good for you that counts. From now on you must eat cabbage three times a day. Mountains of cabbage! And if it's got caterpillars in it, so much the better!

George Urghh!

Grandma Caterpillars give you brains. Slugs too.

George Not slugs! I couldn't eat slugs.

Grandma Whenever I see a live slug on a piece of lettuce, I gobble it up quick before it crawls away. Delicious. (*She smacks her lips*)
Delicious. Worms and slugs and beetley bugs. You don't know what's good for you.

George You're joking, Grandma.

Grandma I never joke, George, never! Beetles are best of all. They go crunch. (*She gnashes her teeth*) Mmmm!

George Urghh! Stop it, Grandma! (*He edges away*)

Grandma You're trying to get away from me, aren't you? Come back!

George keeps going. He closes Grandma's curtain and arrives outside

George (to the Audience) She's a horrid old hag. And she says funny things. Not funny ha ha, funny peculiar. Funny extremely peculiar. Weird. Maybe ... she couldn't be ... a witch. Could she? She's got a witchy kind of smell ...

Suddenly there is a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder. The lighting changes to a spooky moonlit night. Eerie music

Grandma (*calling seductively*) George! Come back, George.

George, as though in a trance, cannot help but go back. He opens the curtain

Come closer. Come closer. and I will tell you secrets. (*She beckons him nearer*) You mustn't be frightened. Come to Grandma! Secrets. (*A throaty whisper, leaning forward*) Some of us have magic powers that can twist the creatures of this earth into wondrous shapes ...

Another flash of lightning and clap of thunder. Spooky lighting on Grandma

Some of us have fire on our tongues and sparks in our bellies and wizardry in the tips of our fingers ...

Another flash of lightning and clap of thunder

Some of us know secrets that would make your hair stand straight up on end and your eyes pop out of their sockets ... We know how to make your nails drop off and teeth grow out of your fingers. We know how to have you wake up in the morning with a long tail coming out from behind you. Come here, and I'll show you!

George No, Grandma! Stop!

Grandma We know secrets, my dear, about dark places where dark things live and squirm and slither ...

George tears himself away

If doesn't matter how far you run, you won't ever get away ... (*She cackles*)

Another flash of lightning and clap of thunder. George runs, panting, outside

Suddenly the lighting returns to normal. Grandma settles to sleep

George (*rattled*) I hate her! I hate her! She's really scary. If only I could be like Billy ... (*he shows the book*) ... waving his wand and

making the blue monster disappear! If only I could frighten her like she frightens me! If only ...

Horror-film music and lighting

George creeps back in to Grandma's room without Grandma seeing. He hides behind her chair. Using props hidden behind the chair, he starts, in his imagination, to spook Grandma. First, his head emerges slowly over the chair wearing a ghost mask. He taps Grandma on the shoulder, then stares at her as she wakes up and turns her head

Grandma Aaaaaah!

George retreats, then, still wearing the ghost mask, lifts a balloon over Grandma's head. He bursts it with a bang

Aaaaaah!

Next, George brings out a snake. It writhes slimily. Then he dangles it in front of Grandma, making it slide down her neck and on to her bosom

(*Feeling it and finding it*) Aaaaaah! (*She struggles with the snake until it nearly strangles her*)

George pulls the snake away. From behind the chair, he removes the ghost mask. He brings round a silver sabre with a domed lid

George (*spooky voice*) Your supper, Grandma.

Grandma holds the sabre. George removes the lid. Rats squeak and squirm and bob

Grandma (*terrified*) Rats! Aaaaaah!

George quickly removes the sabre and replaces it behind the chair. Grandma continues to react frightened. George runs back outside. Grandma calms and goes back to sleep

The music fades and the lighting returns to normal. George closes Grandma's curtain

George If only ... but I haven't got a snake and if I could find some rats I probably couldn't catch them. No, I'll just have to think of a way to

'Human Bean' dolls: a selection of soft-toy dolls for the giants to 'eat'. They should be lying upstage ready to be discovered.

SOUND EFFECTS

None is necessary, but percussion or exciting music could be used for the sinister giant episodes.

LIGHTING

No special lighting is required, but it would be effective to distinguish between the cave area and the giants' area. The cave should seem cosy in contrast to the sinister atmosphere of Giant Country, which could perhaps be red or green. When the giants advance to find 'human beans', a flashing light or 'strobe' effect would be exciting.

SOPHIE IN GIANT COUNTRY

Curtain up.

Before the play proper begins, SOPHIE shows the audience the SOPHIE DOLL.

SOPHIE: This is Sophie, an orphan. One night, from her dormitory window, she sees . . . a giant!

[Enter the BFG. He snatches the SOPHIE DOLL and carries it to the cave]

He snatches her and, terrified, she finds herself carried off to a strange country unknown to human beings.

[SOPHIE goes to the cave and kneels at the table as the BFG puts the SOPHIE DOLL down.

SOPHIE takes the SOPHIE DOLL and manipulates it like a puppet, while providing SOPHIE'S voice]

BFG: *[Standing over the SOPHIE DOLL]* Ha! What has us got here?

[He looks carefully at the SOPHIE DOLL. At first he should not appear very friendly]

SOPHIE: *[Nervously]* Where am I?

BFG: This is my cave.

SOPHIE: Why did you snatch me and bring me here?

BFG: Because you *saw* me. If anyone is ever *seeing* a giant, he or she must be taken away hipswitch.

SOPHIE: Why?

BFG: Human beans is not *believing* in giants, is they? Human beans is not *thinking* giants exist.

SOPHIE: I do.

BFG: Ah, but that is because you has *seen* me. If I hadn't snitched you, you would be scuddling around yodelling the news on the telly-telly bunkum box that you were actually *seeing* a giant, and then a great giant-hunt, a mighty giant look-see, would be starting up all over the world, and human beans would be trying to catch me and put me in the zoo with all those squiggling hippodumpings and croca-downdillies.

SOPHIE: So what's going to happen to me now?

BFG: You will just have to be staying here with me for the rest of your life.

SOPHIE: Oh no!

BFG: Oh yes! Now, I is hungry!

SOPHIE: [*Gasping*] Please don't eat me!

BFG: [*Believing with laughter*] Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling canny-bull! No!

SOPHIE: Oh, good.

BFG: Yes, you is lucky. If one of the other giants is snitching you, they is crunching you up for sure. In one scrumdiddlyumptious mouthful. Bones crackety-crackety-cracking. Gobble, gobble, gone!

SOPHIE: Other giants? You mean there are more of you?

BFG: Of course! This is Giant Country! [*He picks up the SOPHIE DOLL*] Be peeping out over there, little girl, and be seeing a brain-boggingsome sight.

[*He carries the doll to the cave entrance.*

SOPHIE follows. They peep out at the other side, where the other GIANTS appear, lumbering about, looking menacing and hungry, grunting and occasionally threatening one another. They make themselves identifiable as the BFG men-tions them]

SOPHIE: Gosh!

BFG: Is you believing your goggles?

SOPHIE: What on earth are they doing?

BFG: Nothing. They is just moocheing and footcheing around and waiting for the night to come. Then they will be galloping off to places where human beans is living to find chiddlers to guzzle for their suppers.

SOPHIE: Where?

BFG: All over the world.

BONECRUNCHER: I is fancying a gallop to Turkey to guzzle some tasty Turkish chiddlers.

[*The other GIANTS rumble their approval*]

BFG: That's the Bonecruncher. He is thinking Turkish chiddlers is juiciest chiddlers. They is tasting of . . .

SOPHIE: Turkey?

BFG: No! Turkish delight!

SOPHIE: Of course.

[*The BONECRUNCHER bumps into the FLESHLUMPEATER, who roars threateningly, making the BONECRUNCHER cover*]

Who's that big, ferce one?

BFG: That's the Fleshlump eater.

FLESHLUMPEATER: I is fancying getting my chompers round a handful of chiddlers from Wellington!

SOPHIE: Where's Wellington?

BFG: Your head is full of squashed flies. Wellington is in New Zealand.

SOPHIE: What do children in Wellington taste of?

BFG: Boots, of course.

SOPHIE: But boots taste horrid.

BFG: Rubbsquash! Boots taste bootiful!

SOPHIE: Ha ha.

BLOODBOTTLER: I could be murdering some chiddlers from England!

[*The other GIANTS roar their approval*]

SOPHIE: England?

BFG: That's the Bloodbotler. He is thinking the English chiddlers is tasting ever so wonderfully of crodscollop.

SOPHIE: I'm not sure I know what that means.

BFG: Meanings is not important. I cannot be

right all the time. Quite often I is left instead of right.

[A row breaks out among the GIANTS. They grunt and push, arguing about where to go]

Let's go back. You will be coming to an ucky-mucky end if any of them should ever be getting his goggles upon you. You would be swallowed up like a piece of frumpkin pie, all in one dollop.

[They return inside the cave]

There. You is safe in here.

[They freeze during the following action]

CHILDCHEWER: 'Tis the witchy hour!
[The others grunt their agreement and all begin a kind of war-dance. Suddenly they all stop]

MEATDRIPPER: 'Tis time for supper!
[All excitedly agree and lumber round again. They suddenly stop]

GIZZARDGULLPER: Human beans . . .

BONECRUNCHER: Turkish chiddlers . . .

FLESHLUMPEATER: Wellington chiddlers . . .

BLOODBOTTLER: English chiddlers . . .

ALL: Here we come!
[Roaring excitedly, the GIANTS run towards

the audience, pounding along on the spot. Eventually, after at least twenty paces, they stop and menacingly look about them, hungrily sniffing. Suddenly, with a whoop, they find some dolls, swoop on them, pick them up, throw them to each other, roaring in hungry anticipation. Suddenly they all hold the dolls aloft]

Human beans! Human chiddlers!

[They savagely mime eating the dolls, as though stuffing their mouths, tearing off limbs, chewing and chomping. Having gorged themselves, they happily sink to the floor and, as though in a drunken stupor, start snoring. Then their snores fade as the action returns to the cave]

SOPHIE: I think eating children is horrible.

BFG: I has told you. I is not eating chiddlers. Not I! I is a freaky giant! I is a nice and jumbly giant! I is the BFG.

SOPHIE: The BFG?

BFG: The Big Friendly Giant! What is your name?

SOPHIE: My name is Sophie.

BFG: How is you doing, Sophie? *[He gently shakes hands with the SOPHIE DOLL]* Is you

quite snugly in your nightie, Sophie? You isn't fridgy cold?

SOPHIE: I'm fine.

BFG: I cannot help thinking about your poor mother and father. By now they must be jipping and skumping all over the house shouting, 'Hallo, hallo, where is Sophie gone?'

SOPHIE: I don't have a mother and father. They died when I was a baby.

BFG: You is a norphan?

SOPHIE: Yes.

[*The BFG carefully takes the SOPHIE DOLL from SOPHIE and holds it up to his eye level*]

BFG: Oh you poor little scrumplet. You is making me sad.

SOPHIE: Don't be sad. No one at the orphanage will be worrying much about me.

BFG: Was you happy there?

SOPHIE: I hated it. Mrs Clonkers locked me in the cellar once.

BFG: Why?

SOPHIE: For not folding up my clothes.

BFG: The rotten old rotasper!

SOPHIE: It was horrid. There were rats down there.

BFG: The filthy old fazzwiggler! You is making me sadder than ever. [*He sobs, hands the SOPHIE DOLL back to SOPHIE, and sits on the stool*]

SOPHIE: Don't cry, BFG. Please.

[*The BFG recovers a little*]

Listen, BFG, we can't just sit here and do nothing.

BFG: What is you meaning?

SOPHIE: We can't let any more children be eaten. We've got to stop those brutes.

BFG: Us? Redunculus and umpossible.

SOPHIE: [*Building to a climax*] Nonsense! It's up to us! We've got to save the children of the world.

[*Curtain down*]

THE WITCHES' ANNUAL MEETING

NARRATOR: After Boy's parents are killed in a car crash he goes to live with his Grandmother. She tells him about witches. Real witches who look like ordinary women, but are bald and wear wigs, and who wear gloves to cover their claws. They hate children. To witches, children smell of fresh dogs' droppings. Each year the English Witches hold a meeting attended by the Grand High Witch of all the World. Grandmother suddenly falls ill, very ill. To help her get better, Boy takes her on holiday to Bournemouth, to the Hotel Magnificent.

[Curtain up]

One afternoon, Boy explores and finds a colossal room called the Ballroom . . .

[BOY enters, carrying a box with holes in the lid. He passes through the rows of chairs, then sits on one]

. . . the perfect place to play with his pet white mice, William and Mary.

[BOY opens the box and starts to play with the mice]

[Suddenly the HEAD WAITER enters. The lights could brighten. BOY reacts alarmed]

HEAD WAITER: This way, ladies.

[BOY hides behind table A as a troupe of ladies (WITCHES) enter]

WITCHES: [*Noisily ad-libbing greetings*]

Oh hello, Beatrice. What an adorable dress! . . .

Agatha, how lovely to see you . . .

Have you had a good journey?

Come and sit next to me, Millie dear . . .

I haven't seen you since the last meeting . . .

[*Etc., etc.*]

[*They arrange themselves, seated facing the platform.*

As they talk, some scratch their necks with gloved hands]

[*Eventually the HEAD WAITER calls for attention*]

HEAD WAITER: Ladies of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, pray welcome your President.

[*Enthusiastic applause. The GRAND HIGH WITCH enters in style. She mounts the platform. The HEAD WAITER exits*]

[*WITCH 1, bowing to the GRAND HIGH WITCH, briefly exits, then returns holding up the door key, to show she has locked the door*]

[*Silence. Slowly the GRAND HIGH WITCH removes her wig and then her mask, revealing a wizened, horrible rotting face. WITCH 1 receives the wig and the mask on a cushion, then returns to her seat. The other WITCHES watch in awe*]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You may tree-moof your vigs, and get some fresh air into your spotty scalps. [*With signs of relief, the WITCHES reveal their bald*

heads, placing their wigs in handbags or on the floor. Some scratch their heads]

Vitches of Inkland. Miserrable vitches. Useless lazy vitches. You are a heap of idle good-for-nothing vurns!

[*A murmur of concern among the WITCHES*]

As I am eating my lunch, I am looking out of the vindow at the beach. And vot am I seeing? I am seeing a treevolting sight, which is putting me off my food. Hundreds of rotten treeepulsive children. Playing on the sand. Vye haf you not got trrid of them? Vye?

[*No response*]

You will do better.

WITCH 1: [*Standing and encouraging the others*] We will, your Grandness.

WITCHES: We will do better.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: My orders are that every single child in Inkland shall be rubbed out, squashed, squitted, squittered and fittered before I come here again in vun year's time.

[*The WITCHES gasp*]

WITCH 2: All of them? We can't possibly wipe out all of them.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Who said that? Who dares to argue vith me? [*She looks around. The WITCHES*

cover. She points dramatically at WITCH 2] It vos you, vos it not?

[WITCH 2 stands, gasping in fright]

WITCH 2: I didn't mean it, your Grandness.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Come here.

[*She beckons. WITCH 2, mesmerized, starts to ascend the platform*]

WITCH 2: I didn't mean to argue, your Grandness. I was just talking to myself. I swear it.

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

A vitch who dares to say I'm wrong
Vill not be vith us very long!

WITCH 2: Forgive me, your Grandness.

[*She arrives upstage, near the entrance*]

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

A stupid vitch who answers back
Must burn until her bones are black!

WITCH 2: No! No! Spare me!

[*Staring at WITCH 2, the GRAND HIGH WITCH gestures. Sparks fly. Smoke rises. Red light hits*]

WITCH 2 as she writhes]

Aaaaaaaahh!

[WITCH 2 disappears]

[*The WITCHES utter an awestruck sigh. BOY, visible to the audience but not to the WITCHES, reacts too*]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: I hope nobody else is going to make me cross today.

[WITCH 1 tentatively goes upstage and finds the smouldering remnants of WITCH 2's clothes. She holds them up. The WITCHES sigh]

Fritzled like a fritter. Cooked like a carrot. You vill never see her again. Now vee can get down to business.

[*The following sequence should be rhythmic and grow in intensity*]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Down with children! Do them in!

WITCHES: Boil their bones and fry their skin!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Bish them, squish them, bash them, mash them!

WITCHES: Break them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: I am having a plan. A gigantic plan!

WITCHES: She is having a plan. A gigantic plan!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You vill buy sweetshops.

WITCHES: We will buy sweetshops.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You vill fill them high with luscious sweets and tasty chocs!

WITCHES: Luscious sweets and tasty chocs!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You will have a Great Gala Opening with free sweets and chocs for every child!

WITCHES: Free sweets and chocs for every child!
[WITCH 1 stands, carried away with enthusiasm]

WITCH 1: I will *poison* the sweets and *poison* the chocs and wipe out the children like weasels.
[Silence]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You will do no such thing. You brainless bogvumper! Poison them and you will be caught in five minutes flat. No. Vee viches are vurrking only with magic!

WITCHES: [Building] Magic! Magic! Magic!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You will be filling every choc and every sweet with my latest and grrtreatest magic formula.

[A sigh of admiration as she produces a potion bottle]

Formula Eighty-Six Delayed Action Mouse-Maker!

[Excited cheers and applause]

Take down the recipe.

[WITCH 1 reveals a board or scroll with the ingredients written on it]

You will notice some unusual ingredients: a grrruntle's egg; the claw of a crrrab-crrruncher; the beak of a blabbersnitch; the snout of a grrtrobble-

sqvrt and the tongue of a catsprtringer. Mix them with forty-five mouse's tails fried in hair-oil till they are crrrisp.

WITCH 1: What do we do with the mice who have had their tails chopped off, your Grandness?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You simmer them in frog-juice for vun hour. Then you add two secret ingredients. The wrrrong end of a telescope boiled soft . . .

WITCH 1: What's that for, O Brainy One?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: To make a child very small you look at him through the wrrrong end of a telescope, do you not?

WITCH 1: [To the others] She's a wonder. Who else would have thought of that?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: And finally, to cause the delayed action, prrtoast in the oven vun alarm clock set to go off at nine o'clock in the morning.

WITCH 1: A stroke of genius! [She discards the ingredients list]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Inject vun droplet of the formula in each sweet or choc, open your shop, and as the children pour in on their way home from school . . .

[She chants the following rhyme]

Crtram them full of sticky cats,
Send them home still guzzling sweets,
And in the morning little fools
Go marching off to separate schools.

[WITCH 1 bangs a gong nine times]

A girl feels sick and goes all pale.
She yells, 'Hey, look! I've grrrown a tall!'
A boy who's standing next to her
Screams, 'Help! I think I'm grrrowing fur!'
Another shouts, 'Vee look like frrreaks!
There's viskers growing on our cheeks!'
A boy who vos extremely tall
Cries out, 'Vot's wrong? I'm grrrowing small!'
Four tiny legs begin to sprrrout
From everybody rrround about.
And all at vunce, all in a trrice,
There are no children! Only mice!
The teachers cry, 'Vot's going on?
Oh, vhere haf all the children gone?'
Then suddenly the mice they spot,
Fetch mousetrapps strrong and kill the lot!
They sweep the dead mice all away
And all us vitches shout

ALL: [Standing] Hooray!

[They rise to a big finish]

Down with children! Do them in!
Boil their bones and fry their skin!
Bish them, squish them, bash them, mash them!

Brreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!
[The WITCHES cheer wildly. They sit again as
the GRAND HIGH WITCH acknowledges their
appreciation]

[Suddenly WITCH 1 leaps up and points to the back of
the platform]

WITCH 1: Look! Look! Mice!

[Two white mice are progressing from one side to the
other. They stop nervously, looking about]

BOY: [Seeing them from behind the table] Oh no! William
and Mary!

WITCH 1: Our leader has done it to show us! The
Brainy One has turned two children into mice!

[The GRAND HIGH WITCH has seen the mice. The
other WITCHES start to applaud]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Quiet!

[She approaches the mice, who stop moving]

These mice are nothing to do with me. These mice
are *pet* mice, quite obviously belonging to some
rrrepellent little child in this hotel.

[She chases the mice, stamping her feet]

[The mice scurry away and disappear]

WITCH 1: [Menacingly] A child! A filthy child. We'll
sniff him out.

[The WITCHES start sniffing and some move
ominously towards the table. BOY stiffens]

[Then, in the nick of time, there is a knock on the door. The WITCHES react, turning away from the table]

BRUNO: [Outside the door] Hey! Let me in!
[More knocks]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Quick, vitches. Vigs on!
[The WITCHES hurry to make themselves respectable]

BRUNO: [Outside the door] Hurry up! Twenty-five past three you said.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches. Vatch this demonstration. Earlier today I am giving a chocolate bar with formula added to a smelly boy.

BRUNO: [Outside the door] Where's them chocolate bars you promised? I'm here to collect! Dish 'em out!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Not only smelly but greedy. The formula is timed for half past three.

[She puts on her wig, handed to her by WITCH I, but not her face-mask]

Let him in.

[WITCH I takes the key and exits upstage to unlock the door]

[BRUNO enters and approaches. WITCH I follows him in]

[The GRAND HIGH WITCH, keeping her back towards him, comes downstage, off the platform]

[Soft and gentle] Darling little man. I haf your

chocolate all ready for you. Do come and say hello to all these lovely ladies.

[BRUNO descends the platform, eyed eagerly by the WITCHES]

BRUNO: OK, where's my chocolate? Six bars you said.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: [Checking her watch] Thirty seconds to go.

BRUNO: What?

[He receives no reply. He approaches the GRAND HIGH WITCH]

What the heck's going on?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Twenty seconds!

BRUNO: [Getting suspicious] Gimme the chocolate and let me out of here.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Fifteen seconds!

BRUNO: [Looking at the WITCHES] Will one of you crazy punks kindly tell me what all this is about?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Ten seconds!

[She turns her face to BRUNO, who reacts with a terrified scream]

WITCHES: [Surrounding BRUNO menacingly, but also in delighted anticipation] Nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . zero!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vee haf ignition.

[An alarm clock rings loudly as BRUNO is forced on to table B, surrounded by the excited WITCHES. He stiffens as the WITCHES focus their eyes on him]

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

This smelly brrrat, this filthy scum

This horrid little louse

Vill very soon become

A lovely little MOUSE!

[A flash. An eerie sound effect. BRUNO's head darts about like a mouse; his hands, like paws, brush imaginary whiskers. Then he appears to shrink behind the watching WITCHES]

[He disappears from view. The WITCHES back away from the table. BRUNO has gone. In his place on the table-top is a mouse]

WITCHES: [Applauding] Bravo! She's done it! It works!

It's fantastic! [Etc., etc.]

[The GRAND HIGH WITCH shoos the mouse, swiping it aside with the back of her hand. It appears to make a hurried exit through the WITCHES, who react]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches, I will meet you all for dinner at eight. Before dinner, any ancient vuns who can no longer climb high trees in search of grrrundles' eggs for the formula may come to my rroom. I have prrrepared for you [She shows the potion bottle] a bottle each, containing a limited qvanity. Five hundred doses.

WITCHES: [Led by WITCH I] Thank you, thank you, your Grandness. How thoughtful.

HIGH WITCH: Room Four-Five-Four. Any gves-tions?

WITCH I: One, O Brainy One. What happens if one of the chocolates we are giving away in our shops gets eaten by a grown-up?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: That's just too bad for the grown-up. This meeting is over.

[The WITCHES start to go]

[Behind table A BOY relaxes, relieved. He stretches and rubs his aching knees]

[Suddenly . . .]

WITCH I: [Shouting] Wait! Hold everything.

[She flares her nostrils, sniffing eagerly. Her face turns towards table A. The WITCHES freeze and listen]

[WITCH I follows the scent]

Dogs' droppings. I've got a whiff of fresh dogs' droppings.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vot rubbish is this? There are no children in this rroom!

WITCH I: It's getting stronger. Can't the rest of you smell it? Dogs' droppings.

[ALL the WITCHES are sniffing now]

WITCHES: Dogs' droppings! Yes! Yes! Dogs' droppings! Dogs' droppings! Pool Poo-oo-oo-oo-oo!

THE WITCHES: PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

[They head towards table A. BOY is terrified]

[WITCH 1 looks behind the table]

WITCH 1: [With a shriek] Boy! Boy! Boy! Boy!

[Pandemonium as a chase ensues. BOY runs through the WITCHES, desperate to escape. He runs anywhere and everywhere. The WITCHES chase him. He yells]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: [From the platform] Grrrab it! Stop it yelling! Catch it, you idiots!

[BOY is surrounded. Helpless, he submits. He is lifted up on to the table]

Spying little vuurn! You stinking little carbuncle. You haf observed the most secret things. Now you must take your medicine!

BOY: Help! Help! Grandmamam!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Open his mouth!

[The WITCHES do so. Dramatically the GRAND HIGH WITCH opens the potion bottle and raises it aloft]

Five hundred doses! So strrrrong vee see INSTANTANEOUS ACTION!

[She pours the potion into BOY's mouth. BOY starts jerking his head. The WITCHES surround him]

[Strange distorted alarm bells ring. Perhaps the lights pulsate]

[Then, as the effects stop, the WITCHES step aside]

THE WITCHES' ANNUAL MEETING

[On the table there is no sign of BOY. Just a trembling mouse. The WITCHES point and cackle, louder and louder]

[Curtain down]