**The Witches’ Annual General Meeting**

NARRATOR:

Once a year the English Witches hold a meeting attended by the Grand High Witch of all the World.

*The NARRATOR throws a serviette over his arm and he becomes the HEAD WAITER.*

HEAD WAITER:

This way, ladies.

*THE WITCHES, noisily ad libbing greetings, arrange themselves facing the platform. As they talk, some scratch their necks with gloved hands. Eventually the HEAD WAITER claps 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.*

*Silence.*

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

You may rrree-moof your vigs!

*With sighs of relief, the WITCHES reveal their bald heads, placing their wigs in handbags or on the floor.*

Vitches of Inkland. Miserrrable vitches. Useless lazy vitches. You are a heap of idle good-for-nothing vurms! 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 rrreevolting sight: hundreds of rotten, rrreepulsive children. Playing on the sand. Vye haf you not got rrrid of them? Vye?

WITCH 1: [Standing and encouraging the others]

We will do better, your Grandness.

WITCHES:

We will do better.

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

My orders are that every single child in Inkland shall be rrrubbed out, sqvashed, sqvirted, sqvittered and frittered before I come here agam 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 points dramatically at WITCH 2.*

*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 wrrrong

Vill not be vith us very long!

WITCH 2:

Forgive me, your Grandness.

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.*

Aaaaaaaaaaah!

*WITCH 2 disappears*

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

I hope nobody else is going to make me cross today. Now vee can get down to business. Down vith children! Do them in!

WITCHES:

Boil their bones and fry their skin!

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them!

WITCHES:

Break them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

I am having a plan. A giganticus plan!

WITCHES:

She is having a plan. A giganticus plan!

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

You vill buy sveetshops.

WITCHES:

We will buy sweetshops.

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

You vill fill them high vith luscious sveets and tasty chocs!

WITCHES:

Luscious sweets and tasty chocs!

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

You vil have a Great Gala Opening vith free sveets 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 vill do no such thing. You brainless bogvumper! Poison them and you vill be caught in five minutes flat. No. Vee vitches are vurrrking only vith magic!

WITCHES: [Building]

Magic! Magic! Magic!

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

You vill be filling every choc and every sveet vith my latest and grrreatest magic formula.

*A sigh of admiration as she produces a potion bottle.*

Formula Eighty-Six Delayed Action Mouse-Maker! [Excited cheers and applause]

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…

Crrram them full of sticky eats,
Send them home still guzzling sveets,

And in the morning little fools
Go marching off to separate schools.

A girl feels sick and goes all pale.
She yells, 'Hey, look! I've grrrown a tail!'
A boy who's standing next to her
Screams, 'Help! I think I'm grrowing 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 trrrice,

There are no children! Only mice!
The teachers cry, 'Vot's going on?

Oh, vhere hafall the children gone?'
Then suddenly the mice they spot,
Fetch mousetrrraps strrrong and kill the lot!
They sveep the dead mice all away

And all us vitches shout:

ALL: [Standing]

Hooray!

*They rise to a big finish.*

Down vith children! Do them in!

Boil their bones and fry their skin!

Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them!

Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

*The WITCHES cheer wildly.*

*There is a knock on the door. The WITCHES react, turning away.*

BRUNO: [Outside the door]

Hey! Let me in!

*More knocks.*

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

Qvick, 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 demonstrrration. Earlier today I am a chocolate bar vith 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 grrreedy. The formula is for half-past three.

*She puts on her wig, handed to her by WITCH 1.*

Let him in.

*WITCH 1 takes the key and exits upstage to unlock the door. BRUNO enters and approaches. WITCH 1 follows him.*

*The GRAND HIGH WITCH, keeping her back towards him, comes downstage.*

[Soft and gentle] Darling little man. I haf your chocolate all rrready 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.*

*BRUNO appears to shrink behind the watching WITCHES.*

GRAND HIGH WITCH:

This smelly brrrat, this filthy scum

This horrid little louse

Vill very soon become

A lovely little MOUSE!

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