

Hansel and Gretel

Originally written by Eleanor Boylan
Formatted for Readers Theater as a Read-Aloud Script
By Lois Walker
6 readers, 16 ½ script pages

READER 1: Gretel

READER 2: Hansel

READER 3: Mother

READER 4: Father

READER 5: Witch

READER 6: Snowball the Cat

This script is meant to be read aloud and has been blocked or staged as a Readers Theater piece, not as a traditional theater piece.

STAGE SET-UP:

Six stools in total are needed to perform this reading. Arrange four stationary stools in a line facing audience area. (Piano stools with swivel seats may be used, if desired). Leave enough space between stools to allow for movement in-between and around stools. Place two more stools on same level, but slightly off to the side of the four stools already in place. Place music stands in front of all stools to hold script binders. Lower stands to a level which allows audience to see readers faces and upper bodies. In the four stool arrangement, Hansel and Gretel will be assigned the middle two stools. Witch sits beside Hansel and Snowball the Cat sits beside Gretel. Mother and father will be assigned the remaining two stools.

READER FOCUS:

Readers are asked to read all lines front (toward the audience) and not to each other. (As a reader, it is sometimes helpful to look just above the heads of the audience members and address all lines there).

ACTION AND MOVEMENT:

All mimed action is also directed to the audience. Very little traditional theater blocking is used. After each character enters for the first time, each remains on stage throughout the entire reading and simply turns his or her back to the audience and sits when not in the immediate scene. Snowball the cat is the one exception to this rule. She is sometimes blocked to exit and enter in a more traditional manner.

DIRECTOR OPTIONS:

However, if you do not wish to read the script as described above, ask your readers to read-aloud while relating to and establishing eye contact with each other, and create simple mime and stage movements to enhance the dialogue. Simple props and costume pieces might also be added. Unless your readers are entering an adjudicated Readers Theater competition, no strict rules need apply!

ENTRANCES:

Hansel and Gretel enter from opposite sides of the reading area. Gretel mimes exhaustion as she reluctantly picks up firewood, then tosses it away. They both make their way to their assigned stool and music stand. Their reader scripts are already in place on the stands. Hansel goes directly to his spot and promptly mimes falling asleep over his script. When Gretel reaches her stool, she reads:

READER 1/Gretel: Oh, Hansel, I won't gather another bit of firewood till I have something to eat! I'm so hungry I could --

(Looks forward and mimes seeing Hansel asleep)

Hansel! You're supposed to be making more brooms. Now, you're sound asleep and only two brooms are done!

(Groggily awakes and raises head)

READER 2/Hansel: Huh? Oh, don't wake me up! I was dreaming about food...

READER 1/Gretel: You'll be dreaming about being punished, only it won't be a dream, when mother comes home.

READER 2/Hansel: Well, you're supposed to be out gathering firewood. She'll be mad at you too.

(With a sigh)

READER 1/Gretel: I know. I was so hungry I couldn't pick up another twig. Oh, Hansel, how did we ever get so poor?