



# imaginary theatre company

2012–2013 SEASON

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by Kim Wylie

Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Shanara Gabrielle

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Music and Lyrics by Neal Richardson

Directed by Shanara Gabrielle

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Neal Richardson

**Set Designer**

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**Costume Designer**

Dorothy Marshall Englis

**Stage Manager**

Ashley Newman\*

**Director of Education**

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## The Company

Monique Hafen\* / Gretel

Alan Knoll\* / Uncle

Jerome Lowe\* / Hansel

Laurie McConnell\* / Mom



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\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

# Setting the Scene

It's modern day suburbia, and young Hansel and Gretel live with their mother and their Uncle Hansel. Because Mom has personal experience dealing with troublesome situations, she runs a Fairy Tale Crisis Hotline to help children lost in the woods.

However, the kids in the woods are not the only ones she worries about. Her son Hansel is energetic and impulsive, so he has an adventurous spirit, but it can get him in trouble sometimes. And Gretel, though she's very smart, lets her good sense get in the way of trying new things and exploring new places.

How can Mom help Hansel be less reckless and Gretel be brave? She starts thinking about how much she and her brother learned when they were trapped by a witch as kids...and then a light bulb goes on above her head (well not really, but you get the gist), and she gets a real bright idea. But will it work? Will Hansel and Gretel rise to the challenge, or will they get in danger they can't escape? Does everyone have a hero inside?



# who's who?

**Gretel:** A young girl who is very sensible and smart but tends to be afraid of the outside world and trying new things. She needs a lesson on bravery!

**Hansel:** Gretel's brash, thickheaded brother who could teach her a few things about bravery but needs a few lessons himself on being more cautious.

**Mom:** Hansel and Gretel's mom who had a scary adventure as a child but has benefited from it by gaining courage; she now uses her skills to help children in need.

**Uncle Hansel:** Mom's brother who had the same scary adventure as her but has become very silly, though he has more to offer than you would think!

**Witch:** A sneaky woman who tries to trap Hansel and Gretel, for a reason you might not expect.

**Birdbird:** Family friend and Hansel and Gretel's helper.

# what's the story?

Not your average fairy tale, this story takes place in the present time in a suburban house. Hansel walks into the room where his sister Gretel is reading. Carrying a fish bowl, Hansel notices the tadpole inside has sprouted legs. Hansel and his mother are thrilled because the tadpole can use his new legs for exploring and adventure. Gretel, however, isn't nearly as excited because she has a leg brace and walks with a limp. She is sad at first because she thinks about all the fun stuff the tadpole can do that she can't. But then Gretel says that if a tadpole can grow up to be a big frog with strong legs then she can too! She wishes to be brave and not so scared of everything.

Right after, the red light on the family's crisis phone starts blinking, which means a kid is lost in the woods. Mom answers the Fairy Tale Crisis Hotline and talks to a child who is trapped in many fairy tales, including *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Humpty Dumpty* and *The Three Little Pigs*. Luckily, Mom is able to send help so the child can be saved. After they hang up, Mom's brother, Uncle Hansel, goes on a rant about how kids always get lost in the woods and never learn. He tells Hansel and Gretel that back in his day, parents would throw children out of the house when there wasn't enough to eat. And birds would eat any trails of bread that were supposed to lead home. And if they found a gingerbread house? A witch would try to eat them! Hansel and Gretel are bored with the story about their Mom and Uncle, which they've heard a "megabajillion" times. Later Gretel talks with her mother about how she wishes she wasn't so scared all the time. Mom starts thinking about how she needed a witch to make her brave, and then gets an idea.

Mom sends Hansel and Gretel into the woods where they stumble on a familiar gingerbread house. Hansel, known for being reckless, starts eating the candy off the house. Gretel, always cautious, remembers the story of their Mom and Uncle, and begs Hansel to stop because of the witch. He tells Gretel, that, duh, the witch is gone because Mom and Uncle tricked her into an oven. Then all of sudden a witch appears! But she doesn't appear mean at all. In fact she's sobbing and seems to be scared of Hansel and Gretel. However, it's all one big trick, and despite Gretel's warning, Hansel is lured into a cage, and the witch locks him in. She then tells them she's going to fatten Hansel up and eventually eat him and force Gretel to clean, clean, clean!

When the witch leaves, frightened Gretel asks Hansel what they should do. He recommends she run to Mom and Uncle to rescue them, but she's too scared to go by herself. Then she gets an idea. Once the witch comes back, Hansel and Gretel start throwing food at her. And then with the aid of family friend Birdbird, who has come to help, Gretel elbows the witch into the giant cupcake. Bluebird has managed to grab the keys and unlocks Hansel, and they all run home. Gretel begins to call herself Elbow Girl and brags about her newfound bravery to Mom. After Hansel and Gretel leave, we find out Birdbird was actually Uncle and the "witch" was really Mom who taught her kids a lesson about bravery and responsibility.

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

# read more about it

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, websites and movies.

Grimm, Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm. *Brothers Grimm: The Complete Fairy Tales*, Contemporary Publishing Company, 1998.

Aesop and Jack Zipes, (Editor). *Aesop's Fables*, Signet Classics, 1992.

Perrault, Charles and Sally Holmes. *The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*. Clarion Books, 1993.

Andersen, Hans Christian and Lily Owens. *The Complete Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales*. Gramercy, 1993.

Scieszka, Jon and Lane Smith. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. Viking Juvenile, 1992.

*Shrek*, 93 minutes, Dreamworks Video, 2001, DVD.

*Hookwinked*, 80 minutes, Weinstein Company, 2006, DVD.

[www.grimmfairytales.com](http://www.grimmfairytales.com)

## "Guess the Title " Answer Key (p. 11)

1. Cinderella
2. Rapunzel
3. Peter Pan
4. Snow White
5. Little Red Riding Hood
6. Beauty and the Beast
7. Pinocchio
8. The Princess and the Pea
9. Sleeping Beauty
10. The Three Bears
11. Alice in Wonderland
12. The Three Little Pigs
13. The Tortoise and the Hare
14. Jack and Jill
15. Hansel and Gretel

# words to the wise

**Tadpole:** A tiny baby frog or toad that has no arms or legs, only a round body, gills and a tail

**Nutritionist:** A person whose job is to teach people how to eat healthy

**Humble abode:** A small but snug and warm home

**Obtuse:** Being slow to understand something; simple-minded

**Intellect:** Knowledge or intelligence

**Valor:** Courage or bravery

**SWAT Team:** Short for "special weapons and tactics," this law enforcement team is called in during the most dangerous situations

**CPR:** Short for "cardiopulmonary resuscitation," this emergency procedure helps a person start breathing again

**Pop quiz:** A surprise test

**Chauffeured:** Being given a ride

# F2F



This play is called *Hansel and Gretel: The Next Generation*, but you've probably heard the original Hansel and Gretel story because it's a famous fairy tale. Think of other fairy tales that you know. What comes to mind? Perhaps *Cinderella*? Or maybe *Little Red Riding Hood*? What about *Rumpelstiltskin*? You've probably heard all these stories or at least know what they're about. But who wrote them? These tales are what many call folklore, traditional stories passed from generation to generation in a community. The details change producing many different versions, but the main plot usually stays the same. A long time ago, two brothers played a big role in how many of these stories, including *Hansel and Gretel*, became so popular. Named Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (often referred to today as the Brothers Grimm...no need for fancy nicknames!), these brothers were born in the late 18th century in Germany.

Sons of a lawyer, both Jakob and Wilhelm showed a love of stories from an early age. Jakob was the healthier of the two and loved research, language and grammar. Wilhelm was kind of sickly but really loved music and literature. The romantic movement in Germany inspired the Brothers, like many others, to focus more on culture, and the history of folk tales. They had a great passion for legends and published a collection of tales called *Kinder-und Hausmärchen (Tales of Children and the Home)*, in 1812. They got the tales by recording oral stories told to them by peasants and villagers, and Wilhelm used his talent to write them in a whimsical,

childlike manner. The book included such famous fables as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Rapunzel*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Hansel and Gretel* and the *Frog King*, among others. Featuring more than 200 stories, the collection made many fairy tales more popular by putting them in print and making them available to many more people.

Having been translated into more than 160 languages from English to Swahili, the Brothers' book has become a phenomenon of literary world culture. But at first, the collection only sold modestly in Germany and wasn't even necessarily meant for children as some of the details were very violent, especially the punishment of villains. In later editions, the Brothers softened the more gruesome details making them more suitable for children—while still keep their moral lessons—and increasing their popularity.

Later on in the 1830s, the brothers moved to the University of Göttingen, where they both worked as professors and librarians. Eventually, they moved back to Kassel where they spent most of their time creating a complete dictionary of the German language including the origin of every word. Obviously this was a hefty job (four pages alone were devoted to the letter A!), so it didn't get finished until 1960 almost 100 years after their deaths. The finished version is a great example of how thorough the Grimms were in their work—it has 16 large volumes!

However, for story lovers, the Brothers Grimm will always be fondly remembered for making sure famous tales are as beloved today as they were hundreds of years ago.

# Wickedly Good Witches

Evil witches are popular characters to have in stories. We've seen them in *Hansel and Gretel*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Little Mermaid* and many other stories. But it's important to know that not all witches are bad! Very many use their magical powers for good. Doubtful? Read on about these famous good witches!



Hermione Granger is a fellow Hogwarts student and friend of the famous Harry Potter in JK Rowling's wildly popular books. Although her outspoken nature and haughty attitude turns Harry and Ron off at first, a scary instance with a troll makes the three of them the best of friends. The cleverest witch of her year, Hermione proves herself to be an indispensable part of Harry's fight against Voldemort (oops! He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named). She often uses her sharp mind and encyclopedia-like wealth of knowledge to get her, Harry and Ron out of dangerous situations.

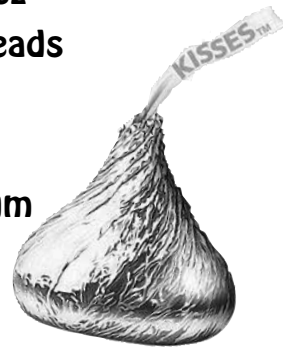
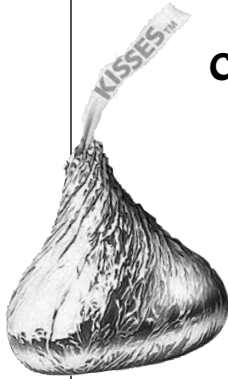
Glinda the Good Witch of the North helps Dorothy in the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Based on L. Frank Baum's famous book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the film's details are a bit different from the novel: in the movie, Glinda rules the North, but in the book, she rules the South; in the movie, Dorothy wears ruby slippers, but in the book, the slippers are silver. Glinda is beautiful in a sparkly pink gown with a matching crown and a magic star wand. She helps get rid of the Wicked Witch in the beginning of the movie and tells the secret of the ruby slippers to help get Dorothy home in the end.



Samantha Stephens was the main character in the popular 1960s television series *Bewitched*. Even though she's a witch, Samantha falls in love with a mortal man and tries to live the life of a suburban housewife. However, her magical family does not approve of her boring ambition and often involve themselves in Samantha's life causing a variety of hijinks. Samantha usually gets herself out of these sticky situations by performing magic of her own using her signature move of twitching her nose.

# The History of Candy

**“Gingerbread and tootsie pops and caramels and pez  
Candy corn and peppermints and licorice and lemonheads  
Gummi bears! The answer to my prayers  
Jujubes! You bring me to my knees  
Swedish fish and sugar daddies, dots and bubble gum  
GoodNPlenty, I’ll have twenty  
Yum, yum, yum, yum!”**



Let's be honest. Candy is really delicious. Who can blame Hansel for being so tempted? But past it's sugary goodness, have you ever wondered about the history of candy? Even a caveman would satisfy his occasional sweet tooth craving by eating honey from beehives. But aren't you glad you live now, when candy has evolved into so many different yummy confections?

Here's a timeline of candy historical facts to make you appreciate it even more, though beware; you don't want to be like Hansel and love it so much you're easily lured into a witch's house!

**ANCIENT TIMES:** Egyptians would combine fruits and nuts with honey to make candy.

**MIDDLE AGES:** Unfortunately, usually only the wealthy got to enjoy candy because sugar was so expensive at the time.

**1502:** Christopher Columbus returns home from the "Americas" with some chocolate, its bittersweet flavor fascinating his Spanish benefactors.

**1800s:** American colonists enjoyed boiled sugar candies that were referred to as "penny candy."

**1848:** American businessman John Curtis introduces the first brand of chewing gum (made from tree sap) called *The State of Maine Spruce Gum*.

**1868:** Richard Cadbury introduces the first Valentine's Day box of candy decorating the box with a picture of his daughter with her kitten.

**1876:** Swiss confectioner David Peter adds milk to chocolate in 1876 to create the first milk chocolate bar.

**1880s:** George Renninger of the Wunderlee Candy Company invents candy corn.

**1890:** Milton S. Hershey introduces the first Hershey milk chocolate bar; Hershey Kisses are invented 17 years later.

**1896:** New York confectioner Leo Hirshfield creates Tootsie Rolls, named for his daughter's nickname "Tootsie."

**1899:** The first cotton candy (once called "fairy floss") machine is patented.





1902: New England Confectionary Company (NECCO) introduces Conversation Hearts, the famous Valentine's Day candy featuring such messages as "Be Mine" and "Kiss Me."

1912: Life Savers, named for their resemblance to life preservers, are introduced in their original peppermint flavor.

1920: The Baby Ruth, named for President Grover Cleveland's daughter (not the famous baseball player) is introduced.

1926: Milk Duds are created. They were originally meant to be perfectly round, but when that didn't work, they were referred to as "duds."

1930: Mars Incorporated invents the Snickers bar named after the Mars family horse.

1941: Plain M&Ms are introduced and known for their six different colors; peanut M&Ms are introduced 13 years later.

1958: Candy necklaces are created.

1973: Hershey opens the first candy-related theme park in Hershey, Pennsylvania, called Hershey's Chocolate World.

1995: Mars decides to get rid of the tan colored M&M and replace it with a color that the public gets to vote for. Blue was the winner beating out purple and pink.



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As you can see, candy is not only fun to eat but has a really fun history! Have you ever thought about inventing your own candy? Here are some questions to ask yourself to get started.

What would you call it? As you can tell from the timeline, some of the most famous candies were named after girls and even a horse! Would you name the candy after something or someone in your life?

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What would the candy look like? Would it be in the shape of a heart or an animal? To get inspired, think of uniquely shaped candies like a Hershey Kiss or candies with the name printed on them like a Crunch bar or M&Ms.

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Most importantly: what ingredients would go into your candy treat? Here's a list of options: chocolate, nuts, fruits, mint, nougat, cookie, caramel, sugar crystals, gum...the list can be as long as your imagination!

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# Write Your Own *Next Generation Fairy Tale*



This play is fun because it focuses on the “next generation.” Gretel, of the famous Hansel and Gretel, has a son and daughter who must learn from their mother’s childhood adventure. Have you ever thought about the next generation of other fairy tale characters?

Choose your favorite fairy tale and write your own next generation story on a separate piece of paper. Answer the questions below to help you develop your tale!

What’s one of your favorite fairy tales? Why did you like it so much?

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What did the main character learn in the story?  
How do you think it affected the type of grown-up they became?

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What lessons do you think the fairy tale character taught to their children? Do you think Little Red Riding Hood’s children know not to talk to strangers? What about the kids of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*? What do you think they’ve learned? What kind of kids do you think they are? Shy? Outgoing? Brave?

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# Guess the Title

The phone at the Fairy Tale Crisis Hotline has been ringing off the hook today! It seems several children have gotten lost in different fairy tales. From the descriptions the children gave hotline workers, can you tell which tale each child is stuck in?

1 . A pretty lady is running down the stairs with only one shoe, and her carriage just turned into a pumpkin.

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2 . A girl with very long hair is trapped inside a very tall tower.

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3 . A young boy is flying around with a little fairy, and they're sword fighting a pirate.

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4 . Several little bearded men are trying to wake up a beautiful girl who's just eaten a poison apple.

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5 . A wolf has dressed himself as an old lady and is waiting to catch a girl in a red cape.

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6 . A girl is trapped in an enchanted castle with a monster and dancing plates.

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7 . A little wooden puppet's nose keeps growing longer and longer.

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8 . Even though she's sleeping on dozens of mattresses, a princess keeps complaining that there's a lump in her bed.

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9 . A young lady just pricked her finger and fell asleep, and now no one can wake her up.

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10 . A little girl with long blonde ringlets is stealing food and other things from a little house in the woods.

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11 . A white rabbit just jumped into a hole in the ground, and a little girl jumped in after him and disappeared.

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12 . A mean wolf keeps blowing down little houses made of different materials.

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13 . A little turtle is about to cross the finish line in a race against a much faster animal.

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14 . Two children are going up a steep hill after water, but one takes a terrible fall and hurts himself badly.

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15 . A mean witch in a house made of food has locked a boy in a cage and is going to eat him.

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# Create Your Own SUPERHERO



Gretel transforms from an overly cautious, scared girl into...Elbow Girl! It's not your typical superhero name, but because she elbows the witch into a cupcake, she feels like she's found a hidden power. Do you think you have what it takes to be a superhero? Now's your chance to put your dream into words! Answer the questions below to create your own superhero!

What would your name be?

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Who would you fight and who would you defend?

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What are three special powers you would have?

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Draw your own costume below. Include your favorite colors and think about what you need to do your special powers. Do you have to be anonymous like Batman? Should you wear a mask? Let your creativity be your guide!

