

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE - THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE

Hansel and Gretel are in a large cage (made of chocolate bars and confectionery) in the witch's kitchen. There is no sign of the witch on the stage.

Hansel (*shaking the 'bars'*) These chocolate bars won't budge! That witch has got us trapped!

Gretel (*mocking Hansel in a silly voice*) 'Let's eat the gingerbread, Gretel. What could possibly go wrong Gretel?' My brother, Hansel, the idiot!

Hansel (*dismissive*) Oh please! You couldn't resist the fudge footpath!

Gretel We'd have never got lost in the first place if you'd listened to me!

Hansel Well, how was I to know that the birds would eat our breadcrumb trail?

Gretel (*sarcastic*) Birds eating bread - what a surprise!

Hansel Look, arguing isn't going to help us right now. We've been captured by an evil witch who has locked us up in a cage in her kitchen!

Gretel And she's been stoking that fire all day. Do you think she's going to (*gulp*) ... cook us?

Hansel Oh boy, I hope not! I mean, that would be so evil and twisted! Who on earth would write an ending as gruesome as that?

Gretel Well, the writers are pretty evil and twisted. Name one time that the villains haven't won at the end of the story. . .

Hansel (*thinking hard*) Welllllll, there was the time when ... (*shudders*) No, no, that ended in brutal death. Oh, oh! What about Snow White?

Gretel How have you forgotten about the poison apple?

Hansel Oh yeah ... Poor Snow. Such a pity. Oh! What about Rapunzel?

Gretel The girl with the long hair and split ends?

Hansel That's the one!

Gretel She's still up in that tower and the prince who tried to save her got blinded by thorns.

Hansel Ouch, yeah. That was a rough one ... Okay, so things aren't looking great for us. C'mon Gretel, you must have an idea to get us out of here! You're the more cleverer one after all.

Gretel Shh! She's coming!

Witch enters, humming to herself as she stirs a pot with a wooden spoon.

Witch It's nearly lunchtime, kiddies. Oh, don't look so glum Gretel! Soon your brother will be ready to roast, and you'll join him right after. Won't that be ... delicious?

Gretel You'll never get away with this!

Witch Oh sweetie, I always get away with it. The villains always win, remember.

Witch turns away to stoke the fire and prepare the pot.

Hansel (*whispers*) I don't want to be eaten. . .

Gretel As much as you drive me bonkers, I don't want you to be eaten either!

Sound of birdsong off-stage.

Hansel Well, at least we gave the birds a good meal before we got captured.

Gretel (*has an idea*) Hansel. That's it! You're a genius!

Hansel I thought you just said I was an idiot?

Gretel The birds! Let's tell the birds what is happening. They can go and find the writers and maybe persuade them to change our ending.

Hansel Ask the birds? Animals don't talk! Do you think we're in a fairy tale or something?

Gretel (*dumbfounded*) Look around you bro, we **are** in a fairy tale.

Hansel Good point. I dunno, sis. I'm not sure the writers will go for the 'good guys get a happily ever after' vibe. . .

Gretel It's worth a shot isn't it? Or we're both cooked – literally!

Hansel and Gretel look off-stage and whistle like birds. This attracts three of the birds who have enjoyed their snack of breadcrumbs.

Bird 1 Oh hey, it's you guys! Thanks for our lunch!

Bird 3 Although next time, I'd rather have sourdough.

Bird 2 Do you have any gluten free options?

Bird 1 Or maybe something seeded? We birds love seeds!

Gretel Birds, help us! We need a favour!

Gretel whispers to the birds, who react with 'oh no', 'oh my', 'golly gosh' etc as she whispers. Hansel keeps an eye on the witch.

The witch begins to turn back towards them.

Hansel (*whispers nervously*) She's coming!

Gretel Please hurry!

Bird 1 We'll do our best. Good luck!

Bird 2 Try not to look too delicious!

Bird 3 Maybe she's a vegetarian!

Birds fly off.

Witch Now then, time to marinate you, Hansel!