

The Witches

Roald Dahl

Adapted by David Wood

First performed at the Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield in 1992 and then at the Duke of York's Theatre, London.

The Witches are holding their annual meeting at the Hotel Magnificent, Bournemouth, under the cover name of The Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The meeting is presided over by the GRAND HIGH WITCH, who having removed her wig and mask – revealing a wizened, horrible, rotting face – proceeds to lay out her plan to 'rub out' all the children of England within a year.

Published by Samuel French, London

You may tree-moot your wigs, and get some fresh air into your spotty scalps. *(The Witches reveal their bald heads)* Witches of Inkleand. Miserrable witches. Useless lazy witches. You are a heap of idle good-for-nothing vurns! . . . As I am eating my lunch, I am looking out of the window at the beach. And vot am I seeing? I am seeing a rrevolving sight, which is putting me off my food. Hundreds of rotten rrepulsive children. Playing on the sand. Vye have you not got rrid of them? Vye? . . . You will do better . . . My orders are that every single child in Inkleand shall be rrubbed out, squashed, sqvited, sqvittered and frittered before I come here again in vun year's time . . . Who said that? Who dares to argue with me? *(She points dramatically at Witch Two)* It vos you, vos it not? . . . Come here. *(She beckons. Witch Two, mesmerised, ascends the platform)*

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

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

(Starting at Witch Two, the GRAND HIGH WITCH gestures. Sparks fly. Smoke rises – Witch Two disappears) I hope nobody else is going to make me cross today. *(She finds the smouldering remnants of Witch Two's clothes and holds them up)* Fritzzled like a fritter. Cooked like a carrot. You will never see her again. Now vee can get down to business . . . I am having a plan. A gigantic plan! . . . You will buy sweetsshops . . . You will fill them high with luscious sweets and tasty chocs! . . . You will have a Great Gala Opening with free sweets and chocs for every child! . . . You will be filling every choc and every sweet with my latest and grrreatest magic formula. *(She produces a potion bottle)* Formula Eighty-Six Delayed Action Mouse-Maker! . . . To cause delayed action, rroast in the oven vun alarm-clock set to go off at nine o'clock in the morning . . . 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)*

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

The Porridge Trauma Incident

In the fable of Goldilocks a family of three bears live in a house in the woods, which they leave unlocked when they go out for a walk. Goldilocks enters the house and meddles with the bears' belongings, sampling their porridge (eating all of the baby's), sitting on their chairs (breaking the baby's), and then trying out their beds (falling asleep in the baby's). Goldilocks is still asleep in the baby's bed when the bears return home. They wake her up and scare her away.

The fable might have ended differently these days. Mother or Father BEAR is sitting on a deckchair on the upper deck of a cruise liner, talking to another passenger.

BEAR: So I said to her: "Listen, you can't come breaking into someone's house, eating their porridge, smashing up their furniture and squatting in their beds and expect to get away with it".

She didn't have much colour before, but she went very pale at that.

"Please don't call the police," she begged. Yes, she was begging. "Please just let me go home. I won't do anything like this again. Mummy and Daddy would be ever so cross if it got into the papers. They wouldn't be able to go to the golf club until it had all blown over and Mummy would have to put her bridge parties on hold. They wouldn't give me a police record would they?" She was really quaking now.

"They might, if we pressed charges," I said, as she began to understand.

"So, Daddy plays golf and Mummy plays bridge."

"Yes. And Mummy and I go riding and Daddy plays polo."

"And I expect you've got a big house and several four wheel drives..."

"And a convertible!"

"And a convertible and a gardener and a nanny."

She nodded.

"So what's a wealthy young lady like you doing stealing other people's porridge?" I asked her. "Doesn't your mother make you any?"

"No. She can't cook. I'm sorry, I was just hungry and it smelt so good."

She was beginning to cry now and to tell you the truth I was feeling a bit sorry for her, but I stuck to my guns. "Do you realise what this has done to my son, how traumatised Baby Bear is?" I said. "I'm thinking of calling my solicitor and getting him to sue for compensation for mental anguish to a small bear. It could take him years to recover. That was his favourite chair and he's scared to go upstairs now. How would you feel if you found someone sleeping in your bed? And he can't bring himself to eat porridge any more. Too many memories. The claim could run into millions. Your Dad would soon be selling his golf clubs and his convertible."

Well, to cut a long story short, we didn't have to get a solicitor. And we're really enjoying this cruise. All round the Greek islands we've been. I could get used to a life of luxury.

by Eleanor McLeod

outh. The young lad next to me
eyes were closed, why wasn't he
mbling up the fence, reaching for
have. But I couldn't even raise my
great. The next thing I know I'm
saddle-line, like a spectator feeling
re were people lying on the floor
families searching for loved ones.
I frozen to the spot? I should be
nothing I could do. Why wasn't
only a man ran towards me, he
to the person that lay at my feet.
not sank, there before me was my
! It was difficult to process. The
waking up in the local infirmary
won at me with tears in her eyes.
I my dad was gone, compression
e was caught in the crush while
later that the football fan, whose
my life. My anonymous guardian
anges of that day. But my biggest
feel guilty for not being someone
lay. I feel guilty that I was lucky,
feel looking for me, I feel guilty
y deep-down, the guilt shouldn't
me, I was just an excited football
pressed the world turning grey.

HAUNTING

Suitability: Teen/Young Adult

Character: Hannah

Hannah is a ghost who thinks she is watching her own funeral.

Only the good die young, isn't that what they say? Well every cloud I suppose. It's strange standing here, or should I say floating here, which might I add is not all it's cracked up to be. Yep, floating here, watching you all attend my funeral. I have to say I'm surprised, I mean a few of you I fully intended to come back and haunt, but maybe not quite so soon? Look at all those sad faces. Wait, is that Jerry Brunsworth? It is! My God (*Looking up to the heavens*), no offence, but what in heaven's name is he doing here? I haven't seen him for five whole years; he's not even a Facebook friend! God Jerry, sorry, but really, Jerry put that hanky away you faker! Most of you I expected to see, but I'm not quite sure why cousin Michael hasn't made it, probably at one of those posh fashion shoots he does in Milan! You would think he would clear his diary for this; you only die once, at least as far as I know. Well Michael darling you are the first on my to-haunt-to-do list! Hang on a minute, who asked Rosie McGib to read a tribute to me? Just because we went to nursery together and big school and got drunk a couple of times at college doesn't make us best friends. Speaking of best friends, where is Jules? She wouldn't miss this, let me see, she would surely be on the front row with my family – nope, not there – she wouldn't,

would she? How could she? She's not here! Right, now I'm offended, straight to the top of my to-haunt list!

Hello, who's that? Jules? Is that you? I can hear you. Wait a minute, you can see me? Why aren't you sat down there balling your eyes out? Oh I see, this is your funeral. But I thought you'd survived the accident? I saw you on the operating table, you came around, I saw you. You followed the light? Oh that's, erm, great I think — well for me it is — you know, someone to haunt with. But really Jules I've got to ask... Rosie McGib?

NO STARS ON THIS JACK!

Suitability: Teen/Young Adult

Character: Jenny

Jenny is a tour guide and holiday rep. She has not yet been awarded any stars because she isn't very good at her job.

I'd like to welcome you all to holiday rep and tour guide, Jenny. So here we start our journey to a luxury four-star hotel, yes, and as much food and drink as you look out of the window to lovely architecture; those hills in the country. There are no those constructions, I can tell nice to meet you Mr Thompson question, can I tell you what consult my notes, erm well M in my script... Oh look at that on... Look at those stunning to get those flip flops and Nike Anyway, I digress. Over to you *(Fumbling through her notes)* Welcome to the ancient Greeks, Mr Thompson. Hmm is it an amphitheatre? *(notes)*, still looking, can't find it we've turned a corner, so over

prisoner here with me. I'm sorry, Michael. I'm a terrible person. I hate myself. But I'm a coward. I couldn't tell you the truth. I couldn't be alone. I was scared. I'm so sorry. I understand if you want to leave. You should leave.

by Kristen Dabrowski

Boarding School

ACTING ANTHOLOGY

ROSE has been in hiding since she became badly disfigured in a fire. Her hiding place has been discovered, and she confesses her crimes to Maura, the visitor, in the presence of her brother Michael. Maura asks if she can return the next day.

ROSE: Give me a break. You're going to go back to your friends and either forget all about us or tell a story about the hideous freak you met tonight. You don't know me. If you did, you'd never think we'd be friends. I don't have friends – except my brother. He thinks he has to be my friend.

(Michael denies this. Rose addresses Michael.)

Please. No one knows me. No one knows the real me. I don't deserve to be alive. Maybe I should finally tell you the whole truth. Then you can go off and be happy with your girlfriend here forever and finally leave me alone.

(Pause.)

I did it. I set the fire. It was all my fault. The girls in the room, my roommates, I hated them. They were cruel to me. All the time. So I wanted to die. And I wanted them to die with me. But they died, and I didn't. I heard them scream, and there was a moment when I wanted to take it all back, but I couldn't. I couldn't move. I was trapped. So I had to keep listening, and now I have to live with it. I'm a monster on the outside now, too. I deserve to be alone, uncared for. I deserve to be tortured. I deserve all of it. I'm a terrible person. I'm not even a person. I wish I were dead. I wish I never existed. You should just go, both of you, and leave me here. Or maybe I should go. Go somewhere to die.

(Pause.)

Now you know the real me, Michael. I've kept you trapped in this tomb with me all this time, and you never knew. You never did anything to me but be nice. And I made you a

LITTLE WOMEN

by Louisa May Alcott

(adapted by Shaun McKenna)

THE NOVEL IS PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN BOOKS

JO MARCH lives with her sisters and mother in poor circumstances. It is America in the 1860s and her father is away fighting in the Civil War. News reaches the family that Mr March has been wounded and is to be brought home. The family are trying to scrape money together to make this possible. JO has just sold her long hair to raise money to care for her father. The family are shocked – decent girls at this time always had long hair. Here, JO explains what she has done. She minds a great deal more about the loss of her hair than she is prepared to show.

JO: I hadn't the least idea of selling my hair at first, but as I went along I kept thinking what I could do, and feeling as if I'd like to dive into some of the rich stores and help myself. In a barber's window I saw tails of hair with the prices marked; and one black tail, not so thick as mine, was forty dollars. It came over me all of a sudden that I had one thing to make money out of, and without stopping to think, I walked in, asked if they bought hair and what they would give for mine. The barber was a little man who looked as if he lived merely to oil his hair. He stared rather, at first, as if he wasn't used to having girls bounce into his shop and ask him to buy their hair. He said he didn't care about mine, it wasn't the fashionable colour, and he never paid much for it in the first place; the work he put into it made it dear, and so on. It was getting late and I was afraid, if it wasn't done right away, that I shouldn't have it done at all, and you know when I

start to do a thing I hate to give it up: so I begged him to take it, and told him exactly why I was in such a hurry. It was silly, I dare say, but it changed his mind, for I got rather excited and told the story in my topsy turvy way, and his wife heard and said, so kindly, "Take it, Thomas, and oblige the young lady. I'd do as much for our Jimmy any day if I had a spire of hair worth selling." Jimmy was their son, who is in the army too. I took a last look at my hair while the man got his things, and that was the end of it. I never snivel over trifles like that. I will confess, though, I felt strange when I saw the dear old hair laid out on the table and felt only the short, rough ends on my head. It felt almost as if I'd an arm or leg off. The woman saw me look at it and picked out a long lock for me to keep. I'll give it to you, Marnie, just to remember past glories by; for a crop is so comfortable I don't think I shall ever have a mane again.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

The **WICKED QUEEN** is an intriguing character in the story of *Snow White*. She hates any opposition to her belief that she is the most beautiful woman in the world and will do anything, however cruel, to achieve this ambition. Her hatred of the lovely Snow White has become an obsession and she has unsuccessfully tried several ways to have her murdered. In this scene, the story has been placed in a contemporary context and the Wicked Queen has decided to enter a 'Miss World' beauty contest. She is speaking to the audience – but alternates between presenting her case as a contestant and reliving certain events in her life.

WICKED QUEEN: *(Entering with a dramatic flourish)* Well hello everybody, I'm here! I don't think you need to look any further for your Miss World. Why not save all the expense of a lavish show and just crown me now. Why am I so sure? Who are you, dear, and what do you know about beautiful women? Don't answer that, we haven't got time to waste. Well you see, I have a magic mirror, and it is able to see all the women in the world, and then report back to me who is the most beautiful. Every time I have asked it, well, apart from a little hiccup a while ago, every time it has told me that I am the most beautiful. What was the little hiccup? Oh some poor girl who was very lovely, but alas, *(she takes out her handkerchief)*, she had a most unfortunate accident. *(She pretends to weep)* I'm sorry, it does so upset me when I think of her. I have such a tender heart you see. I want peace and love for everyone all over the world. That is my sincere wish. What talents do I have? Well, I'm a very accomplished actress. Why, sometimes, to amuse my friends, I dress up as an old witch and they tell me I'm really convincing. *(She throws her scarf over her head and becomes the witch)* Have I got anything that you would like to buy, my dear? What about this pretty necklace? Yes, of course you can try it on. Because it's poisoned, you stupid little girl! *(Coming out of character)* Oh, sorry, I got a bit carried away there.

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Good though, aren't I? My figure is superb. My skin is as soft as satin and I never seem to age. I could go on being Miss World for years. And I have a very powerful effect on men. They do anything I say. See that one in the audience there, that handsome huntsman who is shaking in his boots. You would do anything I asked, wouldn't you? *Wouldn't you!* There, you see. Of course he does work for me, so he couldn't really disagree. So what are you waiting for? Do you want me as Miss World or not? I look wonderful in a swimsuit, I have enough money to pay off any of the other pathetic little candidates, and I could make life very difficult for all of you. What's that? My mirror! Who has brought that here? How dare you? It says what? It's a fake! It's a fraud! *(She takes off her shoe and throws it at the mirror)* That's what I think of you, you stupid mirror. Now where's that huntsman gone? Come here. You've got some very serious questions to answer. Where are you?

by Eleanor McLeod

Beowulf

This is a story
Beowulf, the
of terror. In
Geats, men
by chance, I
sleeping dra

SLAVE: I did
from his ma
But it just go
Run, it said,
me, like a fe
kept on runn
for the wast
Waves cras
and round, /
rock, just bi
low passag
glimmering
The light ca
vast cavern
It lay there l
Its scales sh
light of the r
to be sleep
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energy pack
My fingertip
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Under Hypnosis

BRENDA is a teenage girl whose mother has taken her to a hypnotist's show. In this scene, she becomes hypnotised and reveals more than she realises.

BRENDA: This is not where I want to be. Mum had a spare ticket to see this hypnotist and literally dragged me along with her. She loves his show on telly, she gets really excited about it. I'm not interested. I prefer *The X-Factor*, but when she said she'd buy me a new pair of boots, if I agreed to go with her, how could I refuse? So, here I am, ready to watch some idiots under hypnosis perform their monkey tricks.

If I snuggle down lower in my seat, no one is going to take any notice of me and I'll be able to doze off until it's all over. Now what's happening? (*Listens to a message over the loudspeaker*) Apparently a spotlight will fall on someone in the audience, who will then be the subject of tonight's show. Oh, please don't let that light fall on me. I promise I'll help more at home; I'll work harder in school – anything, only don't let... Too late. How embarrassing. Everyone in the world seems to be looking at me. (*She walks on to the stage and sits down*)

My name is Brenda and I live in Harlow. I'm here tonight with my Mum – under protest, I might add. I've never been hypnotised before and, to tell you the truth, I'm a bit nervous. Yes, I'm comfortable, thank you.

(*She is immediately hypnotised and changes her manner and accent*) Don't patronise me, I've told you countless times, I was nowhere near Tottenham on Saturday night. My boyfriend Sam asked me to go with him to the movies but I'd seen the film and wasn't keen to see it again, so we stayed at his place and watched a DVD. His parents were away for the weekend, so we had the place to ourselves. No, we didn't go to the High Street and we were not in

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the crowd that set fire to buildings and looted properties. What can I do to make you understand that we were at home during that time? CCTV? What do you mean? Well, it wasn't us. You have made a mistake. Teenagers all look the same. Besides you can't distinguish who's who when they're wearing hoodies. A picture? What picture? There must be a mistake. (*She looks at a picture*) That's not me – I don't even like those shoes. It isn't me. It isn't.

(*Returning to her previous state*) Have you started yet? You mean I've been hypnotised. Funny, I don't remember a thing. I hope it went well. I don't really believe in all this. It's just entertainment, isn't it?

by Jacqueline Stoker

It is the
friend,
young le
missed,
taken on
and to r
their wa
before le
Chiswic

BECKY
Amelia?
back to t
set eyes
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footman
hate her
had only
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l'Empere
you shoul
be wicke
not! Oh –
the driver