

# The Witch's Grandchild

## A Fairy Play in Three Scenes

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**T**HIS play will require two stage-settings:—the first, a simple cottage interior, the second a woodland scene.

The costumes are as follows:

MARGERY, upon first entrance, wears cloak and hood. She carries a basket on her arm. Later, she wears any pretty simple, rather old-fashioned, dress.

MOTHER WOTHERWOP, black gown, apron, and large cap, framing her face. In woodland scene, a tall, pointed hat, such as worn by traditional witch is added to this costume.

HANS wears brown jerkin, baggy breeches and round cap.

THE FAIRIES, the usual fairy costumes.

THE PRINCE, dark green doublet, riding boots and breeches, cap with plume.

SCENE 1.—Mother Wotherwop's Cottage. Late afternoon.

MOTHER W.—Margery! Margery! Where's the baggage now?

She has been gone all afternoon. I vow She'll smart for this. And there's so much to do, Water to carry and the wood to hew, And herbs to gather for my potions too.

Margery!  
HANS (enters)—Why, Mother, what a noise you're making.

Where's Margery?  
MOTHER W.—The hussy needs a shaking.

I sent her to the town three hours ago And bade her hurry back.

HANS.—Well, this I know, I want my supper quickly.

MOTHER W.—Want, I fear, Must be your master until Margery's here.

There's nothing in the house. (Goes to window and looks out.)

HANS.—Where can she be? You give the girl far too much liberty.

I'll alter things when I am master here;

She'll learn to mind my orders, never fear.

MOTHER W.—You have not wed her yet!

HANS.—Well, I don't care; There's other girls. But, Mother, tell me where

She came from, and why I must wed her, do.

MOTHER W.—Because I tell you. That's enough for you.

She's my dear daughter's child.

HANS.—Don't talk such stuff. You've kept the secret from me long enough.

Tell me, or I won't marry her.

MOTHER W.—Well, then, Think for a time. Do you remember when

Our present King banished his brother?

HANS.—Yes, But what has that to do with—?

MOTHER W.—Can't you guess? That brother had a daughter, oaf, and she—

I was her nurse—was—

HANS.—Mother! Not Margery!

MOTHER W.—Yes, Margery, if but the truth were known, Is the true Princess, heiress to the throne.

Known it shall be when you have wed her, and Her husband will be King of all the land.

HANS.—And I'm to be her husband? Oh, how grand! I'll eat the very best of food, and wear

Satins and silks and jewels rich and rare, And never work again.

MOTHER W.—Hush! Here's Margery. (Door opens and Margery enters.)

(To Margery) What do you mean by not obeying me? I bade you hurry back and not delay,

And you have been all afternoon away. Here's poor Hans waiting for his supper. Set

The table quickly. See that the tea is set.

MARGERY (Moves about, setting table)—I'm sorry, grandam. Yes, I'm late, I know,

And yet I'm out of breath, I hurried so.

HANS.—What kept you then?

MARGERY.—The windows all were full Of O such lovely things, and coming home

The woods were starred with flowers. I gathered some.

MOTHER W.—Flowers, indeed! I think the girl's a fool!

MARGERY.—And while I picked the Prince came riding by, (O grandmother, he is so beautiful!)

He stopped and spoke to me and asked if I Would give him one.

HANS (putting his arm round her).—So the Prince spoke to you, My little sweetheart?

MARGERY (Pulling away and striking him).—Leave me alone, Hans, do.

I'm not your sweetheart, and will never be.

HANS (Holds hand to cheek).—You little cat! You'll pay for that, you'll see!

MOTHER W.—How dare you, hussy?

MARGERY.—Don't let him touch me, then; For, if he does, I'll strike him once again.

MOTHER W.—You should be proud that you are honored so,

A beggar such as you.

MARGERY.—Well, this I know, I would not wed him, were he made of gold.

MOTHER W.—You would not, girl? You'll do just as you're told.

(Margery is about to speak.)

No words now. Do you mean to stand all day? Bustle and get these things all cleared away,

You've idled long enough. Then, disappear! I've work to do and do not want you here. (Exit Mother W.)

HANS.—Scratch, would you, little cat? Some day you'll be Sorry for this when you have married me.

MOTHER W. (Puts in her head).—Here, Hans, a minute. I've a word for you.



Queen—"Whom have we here? Say, mortal, what you be!"

HANS.—I'm coming, Mother. (Exit.)

MARGERY.—Oh, dear, what shall I do? Wed Hans, indeed! Well, that I can't and won't.

Yet grandam will be angry if I don't And beat me. If she does, I'll run away.

They say that in the wood the fairies stay, I'll go to them for help this very night.

(Clears table as she talks.)

There now, all's clear, and I have finished quite.

(Sits down.)

How fine the prince looked! What blue eyes he had! Oh, how I wish—(Jumps up) Margery, are you mad?

What? You the witch's grand-daughter, and he, Prince of the land—a nice thing that would be.

MOTHER W. (calls outside).—Margery.

MARGERY.—There's grandmother. I'm coming—yes. I wonder if he saw my nice new dress. (Exit.)

SCENE 2.—The same room. 10 o'clock at night. Enter MOTHER W. and HANS.

HANS.—Is Margery asleep?

MOTHER W.—I looked at her As I came down; her eyelids did not stir.

She is too young to lie awake at night.

HANS.—Then let's begin and call each gnome and sprite And goblin here to join our revelry,

And tell us if the girl shall wed with me.

MOTHER W.—First we must light the fire and speak the spell That gives us mastery.

HANS.—Oh, very well. (Kindles fire and puts pot on.) There, that is done.

MOTHER W.—Then draw the curtains tight.

HANS (Doing so).—Will that do? See, I've shut out all the light.

MOTHER W.—Now then join hands and dance around the brim,

While in the pot the magic broth doth swim. HANS and MOTHER W. (Dancing and singing.)

Head of lizard, eye of owl, Hair of wolves that nightly prowls,

Wing of bat, and murderer's hand; By their power we you command,

Gnome and goblin, djinn and sprite, Bear us company to-night.

As they sing, GOBLINS steal in and join the dance, which grows quicker, until HANS and MOTHER W. stop, out of breath.

GOBLIN 1.—From the caverns where we dwell You have called us.

GOBLIN 2.—By your spell We are bound your will to obey.

GOBLIN 3.—What our task is, Mother, say.

GOBLIN 1.—Would you that the past we show, Or the future would you know?

GOBLIN 2.—For, believe me, we can tell Past or future wise and well.

HANS (to Mother W.).—Well, they none of them would take Prizes for their beauty's sake.

MOTHER W.—Hush, my son, and pray take care! Should you anger them, beware!

They can pinch you black and blue. (To Gobblins).—Thanks, good friends, I give to you.

GOBLIN 3. (To his fellows).—Hear the churl's unmannered speech!

GOBLIN 1. Him a lesson we will teach Ere we leave.

MOTHER W.—My son, you see, Fain would wed Maid Margery.

Tell us what the end will be.

GOBLIN 4.—Does the maid not love him, then, That he needs must seek our aid?

MOTHER W.—She is obstinate, and when He declared his love, she said

She would sooner die than wed.

GOBLIN 1.—Brothers, draw a circle round; In the centre, Hans be found.

Dance around him, weave our spell, Weave it strongly, weave it well.

(Gobblins dance and sing.)

All the powers of ill befriend us, Harken to our song and send us

Strength to work our spell aright, Help to do our task to-night.

Teach the maid to turn her eyes Upon Hans in loving wise;

For to-night he asks that he Soon may wed Maid Margery.

GOBLIN 2. (Gives bottle to Hans).—If to wed the maid you think, Mix this potion with her drink.

GOBLIN 3.—But forget not there are powers With a magic more than ours.

GOBLIN 1.—Should they choose to take her part We are helpless.

MOTHER W.—By my art She of them shall never hear.

HANS.—We will watch her, never fear! Gobblins dance wildly and exit, shouting:

GOBLIN 1.—The dawn, the dawn! GOBLIN 2.—We must begone.

GOBLIN 3.—The morning star has shown her ray. GOBLIN 4.—Back to our caverns we must haste,

The morning light is coming fast.

GOBLIN 1.—No longer here we must delay.

HANS (Yawning).—Well, they have gone. Now what have we to do?

MOTHER W.—We'll to our beds, and sleep an hour or two. (Exit MOTHER W. and HANS. Curtain.)

SCENE 3.—A moonlit glade in the forest. Midnight. Fairies dancing.

CLOVERSEED.—Now are the rude blasts of the winter o'er,

And vagrant Spring comes dancing down the lane.

QUINCEBLOSSOM.—The grass is springing fresh and green once more.

MARYBUD.—And all the flowers are peeping out again.

MAYFLY.—Soon shall our Queen be here.

QUINCEBLOSSOM.—Before her feet The daffodils shall make a carpet sweet.

MARYBUD.—Swiftly the dawn draws near. The eastern sky

Is reddening now, though still the moon rides high.

CLOVERSEED.—Hush! There's a robin's song.

MARYBUD.—And here comes Bee. (Bee bustles in, looking very important.)

You're only just in time, old Industry. Come, stay awhile and join our revelry.

BEE.—I have no time to waste in pranks like these; Out of my way, you fairies.

QUINCEBLOSSOM (angrily).—Pranks, if you please! We'll tell the flowers to hide their honey-dew

And not to give a single drop to you.

BEE.—Oh, go and chatter to the butterfly! I have no use for fairies. No, not I. (Bustles out.)

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