

SCENE ONE: HANSEL AND GRETEL'S HOUSE

Hansel and Gretel are nervously awaiting the arrival of their new Stepmother.

Hansel: What do you think our new Stepmother will be like, Gretel?

Gretel: *(Nervously)* I don't know.

Hansel: I think she'll be very pretty and very good at making lovely things to eat.

Gretel: It would be good to have proper food again, wouldn't it Hansel? Father, bless him, is not a very good cook, but he does his best doesn't he?

Hansel: Yes. Maybe we'll be able to have pasta and pizzas and gorgeous chicken dishes and loads of lovely puddings.

Gretel: Oh yeah! Apple pie would be great wouldn't it?

Hansel: Ye e ah! With thick custard. Yum.

Gretel: I'd prefer ice cream with mine.
I know it would be good to have all those things Hansel, but what I really want is someone who is kind, friendly and loving like Father is, even if they're not a very good cook.

Hansel: Mmmm! Maybe she'll be all those things. Fingers crossed! Eh?

Voices are heard off stage

Gretel: Here they come now.

They straighten their hair and clothes to look smart and cross their fingers.

Enter Father and Stepmother

Father: Come on dear! They won't bite you.

S Mother: Are you sure?

Father: Of course not, darling. They're well brought up children. Trust me!

S Mother: Oh! All right then.
(Aside) Kids, I hate them. Yuk!

Father: Children! Let me introduce you to your new Stepmother.

Hansel: *(To Gretel)* She's very pretty.

Father: I hope you will find her, how I have found her - kind, friendly and very loving.

S Mother: *(Aside)* Mmm! Acting has always been my strong suit.

Hansel: *(To Gretel)* Hey! That's just what you wanted, isn't it? How great!

S Mother: Hello children. *(She smiles broadly at them for her husband to see then looks at the audience as if she's about to chuck up.)*

Both: Hello!

Father: This is Hansel, my fine young son, whom I am very proud of.

They shake hands.

Hansel: *(Embarrassed)* Please to meet you.

She secretly wipes her hands clean

S Mother: Why! You look the image of your Father.
(Aside) Only uglier *(laughs hysterically)*
(Turns and smiles falsely at Gretel.)
Why, my dear! You must be the lovely Gretel, your Father speaks so highly of.
What a pretty little face. *(She pinches her cheek)*

Gretel: Ouch!

Father: Are you all right Gretel?

Gretel: Yes Father.

She looks to Hansel for sympathy but he doesn't understand why she's upset.

S Mother: *(Aside mimicking Gretel)* Yes Father!

Father: Now children. Give your new Stepmother a little kiss on her cheek. I am sure she would appreciate that. She's been very nervous about meeting you, as I am sure you have too.

Hansel happily kisses her. She wipes the kiss off disgustedly. Gretel is not so sure but does it to please her Father.

Father: There you are. Aren't they wonderful children, darling?

S Mother: *(Lying and smiling madly)* Why, yes they are, darling.

SONG: CHILDREN – AREN'T THEY WONDERFUL?

Children aren't they wonderful?
We've all been one ourselves so we should know.
Children aren't they wonderful?
They pop out small and grow and grow and grow

Adorable innocent faces,
Skin that is so soft to touch,
And those sweet, squeaky little voices,
Big eyes we all love so much.

Chorus
W on der ful
W on der ful
Wonderful repeat

Children aren't they wonderful?
We've all been one ourselves so we should know
Children aren't they wonderful?
They pop out small and grow and grow and grow

Snuggerly buggerly babies
Toddlers and tantrums and toys
School years and all of that homework
Teenager angst, spots and joys

Chorus
W on der ful
W on der ful
Wonderful repeat

Father: I am so happy! I have a lovely wife and two wonderful children.
What a lucky man I am.
Now, children, as a special treat tomorrow your new lovely Stepmother
has offered to take you on a picnic.

Hansel: Lovely! I love picnics. We haven't been on one for ages.

Father: No Hansel, it's true. That's because I've just about managed to put
bread on our table. We have been so poor.

Stepmother consoles him.

Now our fortunes have really changed. My new wood chopping
business is doing so well and, with my lovely wife to assist, we should
be able to do lots of wonderful things together.

S Mother: (Aside) Now that's something to look forward to.

(*To Father*) But darling! What a pity you won't be able to come with us on the picnic.

Father: Oh! I...

S Mother: No darling, don't apologise, I understand. You need to get chopping that wood.
(*Aside*) So you can make lots of lovely money for me. Ha ha ha!
I'll be just fine with the children.

Father: Oh thank you darling.
You see children: I told you she was kind.

Gretel: But Father I thought we would all be going together.

Father: Your Stepmother is right. I should get on with the wood chopping. There's so much to do and I am sure you will have a wonderful time getting to know one another.
Your new Stepmother is a wonderful cook. I know!
I've sampled her lovely food.

Hansel: Great! (*He smiles at Gretel*) Told you!
Great Father! I will do my very best to get to know our new Stepmother, who I can see is kind, friendly and very loving.

S Mother: (*Aside*) Idiot!

Father: And you, my lovely Gretel, will you do your best too?

Gretel: (*Reluctantly*) For you Father, yes!

Stepmother pulls faces at Gretel.

Father: Great! Then I think we're going to get on like a house on fire.

S Mother: (*Aside, smiling madly*) Not if I have anything to do with it. Ha ha ha!

SCENE TWO: HANSEL AND GRETEL'S BEDROOM

Hansel: What's the matter with you Gretel? You weren't very nice to our new Stepmother.

Gretel: She pinched my cheek, Hansel and it hurt.

Hansel: No! You must be imagining it. I never saw her do that.

Gretel: She did.
What kind of person would do that to a child? She may be pretty but I don't believe she is kind, friendly and loving.

Hansel: If she did, then I'm sure she didn't mean to hurt you.

Gretel: I don't like her.
Poor Father! Anyone can see he's madly in love with her and she's horrible.

Hansel: Oh Gretel! I am sure she's fine.

Gretel: He can't see what a horrible person she is.

Hansel: Stop it, Gretel!

Gretel: No!
Why! I wouldn't be surprised if she only married him for his money.

Hansel: You are being unkind.
I like her and if she wasn't a nice person, why would she be offering to take us on a picnic tomorrow?

Gretel: I don't know!
I don't want to go without Father.

Hansel: Spoil sport. Don't mess it up for us Gretel. Father said we need to get to know her. Let's give her a chance. Please?

Gretel: No!

Hansel: Please Gretel! I'll let you ride my new bike.

Gretel: (*Thinking about this*)

Hansel: And you can keep my red scarf you love so much that's got the teddies on it.

Gretel: (*Reluctantly*) Oh all right. A picnic does sound like it could be fun.

Hansel: Who knows? Anyway she is a good cook. I bet the food will be delicious. My mouth's watering already.

Gretel: Oh yes, that would be good.
(*Praying*) Please let me have got it wrong.
I really would love to eat some lovely cakes.