

FATHER CHRISTMAS AND THE SNOW QUEEN

A Children's Interactive Christmas Show

by

Alan Stuart Austin

Rewritten : 06-1-00

To Marney

Author's Notes

This play belongs to children. Its style is based on a tradition of English pantomime which goes back over two hundred years. In the modern theatre the relationship between the audience and the events on stage relies on an understanding that there is a wall between the actors and the audience. This "fourth wall," as it is called in theatre, is an invisible no man's land which protects the actors in their play world and the audience in their god like omnipotence. An audience member cannot shout out to warn Edgar of the duplicity of his half brother in King Lear, nor is the audience allowed to warn Duncan of Macbeth's approach. In *Father Christmas and the Snow Queen*, quite the opposite happens. The children in the audience literally hold the key to the action; their intervention and participation are crucial to the outcome and resolution of the play.

This is a story of children in an adult world, caught between a world of play and work, of innocence and responsibility of lies and truth where extremism and intolerance are destructive of the human spirit and where the world of the imagination counters the utilitarian view of life.

A.S.Austin 12th June 1999

Characters

Mother

Richard and Juliet's mother.

Father

Richard and Juliet's father.

(CONTINUED)

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Richard - son -aged 8	The son/can be played by an adult	
Juliet- daughter -aged 14	The daughter/can be played by an adult.	
Ragdoll -M/F	A doll -British. Doubles as a toy.	*
Flibberdigibet- M/F	The Snow Queen's Cat	
Modo - M/F	The Snow Queen's Wizard.	*
The Sign - M	Enigmatic figure who can double as Toy and Father Christmas.	
Miguel/Juanita	Widow Tremble's servant.	*
Widow Tremble	The Dame aka The Old Woman who lived in the Shoe	
The Widow's Children	Very young ones in Act 1. Older ones continue throughout.	
The Snow Queen	The villainess.	
Emperor - M	The Emperor of Toyland	
Empress - F	The Empress of Toyland	*

EXTRAS

Toys/Dancers/Soldiers etc....

Sexy Soldier - female

Pie Man 1

Pie Man 2

(CONTINUED)

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Pie Man 3

*

Cats

Children in the Snow Queen's Palace

Father Christmas

Before the curtain opens Orchestra plays a musical medley which includes Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Christmas is Coming, White Christmas and ends with Jingle Bells. Curtain opens in the middle of this song and as it fades into the background there is a tinkling sound of bells which is used throughout the play as a sound cue for magic events.

*

*

SCENE 1

*

The living room of a suburban house. Christmas tree stage left. Large ornate cupboard stage right. Window upstage centre. The rest of the set is in darkness. A Ragdoll is propped up against the cupboard. It is Christmas Eve. Enter Mother preparing to go out.

MOTHER

*

She shouts off-stage

*

Children! Juliet, Richard. I've got to take presents to your grandfather. Why he ever moved from England to America I don't know. It's British this and British that. God Save the bloody Queen. Both of you tidy up this room for tomorrow, the vacuum sweeper's in the cupboard and... finish decorating the tree and... then get to bed. I put some cookies and milk for you in the fridge. Don't forget to put some out for Santa Claus.

Enter Richard and Juliet

*

And put that silly Ragdoll back in your bedroom. I'm tired of looking at it. Byeoooo. Love you.

Exit

*

RICHARD

*

Oh please...mommy, I want to stay up. Pleeese...I want to see Father Christmas.

JULIET

Be quiet. Stop making such a fuss or Santa Claus will hear you and you won't get a single toy. Help me tidy up.

She pushes him towards the middle of the stage. He starts to cry.

And stop whining.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I want to call Santa Claus Father Christmas like our Grandfather from England does.

JULIET

Call him what you want, I don't care. Just help me clean up and then we can finish the tree. Look, here are our stockings. Where shall we hang them?

RICHARD

I want to hang mine on the tree.

JULIET

You don't hang stockings on Christmas trees, you hang them on fireplaces.

RICHARD

We haven't got a fireplace. How's Father Christmas going to give us presents if he doesn't have a chimney to come down?

JULIET

It's magic. It's all magic. Come on. I guess we'll have to hang them on the tree.

They hang them on the tree along with other decorations

RICHARD

I'm going to stay up and wait for him,

He goes to the back window and opens it.

JULIET

He won't come if you watch for him. You've got to be asleep.

RICHARD

How does he get around to everybody? I mean there must be millions and billions and trillions even zillions of children.

(CONTINUED)

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JULIET

He has elves as helpers and probably lots of Santas all dressed the same. Help me clean up.

RICHARD

All right. What do you think he's going to bring me?

JULIET

I don't know.

RICHARD

What would happen if someone captured Father Christmas?

JULIET

Don't be stupid. You can't capture Father Christmas.

RICHARD

I'd rescue him.

JULIET

You're so stupid. There's that's better. Sort of tidy. I'll go and get the cookies and milk.

Exit Juliet

RICHARD

Turns off the light

I'd rescue him with my sabre. Piow... piow... I'm going to stay up....

He yawns

There should be absolute quiet and then a faint jingle of bells similar to an eerie wind chime.

RAGDOLL

Uhh, Uhhh... here comes trouble.

RICHARD

(CONTINUED)

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Sleepily
What?

RAGDOLL
I said here comes trouble!

RICHARD
What did you say Juliet?

RAGDOLL
Uh Oh. They're heading this way!

RICHARD
What do you mean they're heading this way?

Re-enter Juliet with cookies

JULIET
Here...Who's heading ...?

RAGDOLL
Oh No! They're stopping outside this window. We're done for now!

JULIET
Who said that?

RICHARD
The doll, Raggedy Ann.

RAGDOLL
Who did you think it was, you stupid girl?

JULIET
But.... but...you can talk.

RAGDOLL
Well of course I can talk. Can't you?

JULIET
Yes... but I've never heard you before.

RAGDOLL

That's because you never listen. He who doesn't listen doesn't hear! Right? Now if you don't mind my saying, things look as if they are going to get a bit sticky round here. So if I were you, I would get down behind that tree and.....

Window flies open with a bang. Sound of a terrible wind and then the jingle of bells. The children hide. There's a flash of lightning. Enter Flibberdegibbet who rushes in through the window, exhausted, searches the whole room for a hidden trapdoor.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Of dear... I've got to find it... where is it? Where is it? If I don't find it, I'm finished...

Almost crying

Modo will kill me

Discovers the children.

Oh no! Not humans.....

Bares claws and hisses. Children scream and dive under the tree.

RAGDOLL

Stop that!

FLIBBERDIGGIBET

Who's that? Oh! It's you Rags. What are you doing?

RAGDOLL

There's no need to scare the children.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Why not? Children are cruel, aren't they?

RAGDOLL

These ones aren't.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well it won't hurt if I just frighten them a bit.

Moves towards the children

(CONTINUED)

RAGDOLL

Stop it... or I won't tell you the way out.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Turns suddenly

You know the way out?

RAGDOLL

Yes! And I know Modo is chasing you.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I thought I'd given him the slip.

Goes to the window.

RAGDOLL

He's right behind you and coming up fast.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well, tell me the way out you old piece of cloth.

RAGDOLL

No.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Why not?

RAGDOLL

You know why not. You work for HER!

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

No I don't. Not any more.

RAGDOLL

Is that why Modo's after you?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Coyly

It's a long story. Look, I haven't got time to explain. I stole something.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

If Modo finds me I'm a gonner and so is everyone else including Father Christmas. Now tell me the way out or I'll tear you to pieces.

RICHARD

No, no, no ..

Eerie wind chime

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Oh no, it's him. I'm finished.

Rushes to window and back

Look Rags, I'll do anything you say. Just tell me the way out.

RAGDOLL

Give the boy the key.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Shocked

How did you know about the key? I can't give that up. Not after what I've been through.

RAGDOLL

Give the boy the key or I won't tell you the way out of here.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I can't. Please.....

Voice through the loudspeakers

MODO

Where are you, you miserable scraggy old cat? When I get hold of you, I'm going to turn you into a fur hat .

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

(Terrified gives key to Richard)

Alright. Alright . Here's the key.

Now how do I get out?

(CONTINUED)

RAGDOLL

The cupboard. Get in the cupboard and knock three times.

FLIBBERDIGIBET

Oh..... of course the cupboard. Thank you C.S.Lewis....

Gets in the cupboard. There are three knocks, the cupboard makes strange noises and starts to glow. Dry ice emerges from the cracks. Noise of the Tardis from Dr Who.

RICHARD

Looking in the cupboard

She's gone. There's nobody there. I don't understand.....

RAGDOLL

Never mind. It doesn't matter. Quick Juliet. Close the door. Richard, hide the key. Get back into bed. Pretend you're asleep and hurry.

RICHARD

Where should I hide the key?

JULIET

Put it in your stocking. Hurry!

Richard hides it. There is a flash of light and a great puff of smoke. Enter Modo through the window. He straightens himself up. The audience is encouraged to hiss and boo Modo every time he comes on stage or says something unpleasant.

MODO

I'll be so glad when they get a decent public transport system in Arizona. Right! Where's that miserable cat? I can smell her.

He sniffs

She came this way. Now where is she?

Searches

More importantly, where's the KEY?

(CONTINUED)

Finds Ragdoll

Well, well, well, what have we got here? You look awful. Someone been using you for polishing the furniture? Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

He sees children

Ughhh... children ---

Retires in disgust

Horrible and small and creepy crawly. It's a good thing I brought my anti-children spray.

He produces a large spray can

Infanticide! Destroys pests, particularly children. Can't have horrible little children all over the place making things untidy...

Begins to spray with Infanticide

RAGDOLL

Don't do that Modo.

MODO

Oh we've got a voice have we?

RAGDOLL

I'll tell you what you want to know.

MODO

Of course you will. First of all. Did she come through here?

RAGDOLL

Who?

MODO

Don't play games or I'll get my scissors out. Flibberdigibbet. The Queen's favorite cat.

RAGDOLL

Yes, she came through... but she left.

MODO

How did she leave?

(CONTINUED)

RAGDOLL

Through the cupboard.

MODO

Oh, of course! Silly me. I'm surprised I didn't notice it. Such a nice big cupboard too.

Goes over to the cupboard

The Super Deluxe model if I'm not mistaken.

Opens the cupboard and sticks his head in.

Yoo Hoo.... I'm coming to get you.

Returns to Ragdoll

Now did she try to hide anything?

RAGDOLL

No.

MODO

You're sure?

RAGDOLL

Quite sure.

MODO

You're not lying are you?

Pulls out the large pair of scissors from the basket

If you start lying you know what will happen to you, don't you?

RAGDOLL

Yes.

MODO

Who made you?

RAGDOLL

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

MODO

Don't be silly. Let's have a look at your label.

Grapples at the back of Ragdoll. Then with great surprise.

Well! I'll be.! The big man himself! A Father Christmas Special.

Well, you'd better be telling the truth. Any toy that tells a lie, will soon disintegrate bye and bye. That's the spell.

Laughs at his own sense of humor

So she went through the cupboard and didn't leave anything. She didn't try to hide anything? Is that right?

Addresses all the children in the audience.

That cat didn't try to hide anything did she? Children?

The children in the audience all shout No.

You know what will happen if you're telling lies, don't you? The Snow Queen will get you. Yes. She'll take care of you two! Well?

To Juliet and Richard

RICHARD

No ...well...

Juliet nudges Richard

No. She just came in the window and went through the cupboard.

MODO

Are you sure?

JULIET

Yes... yes... we're sure - as sure as sure can be. He didn't leave anything behind, did he children?

She addresses the audience

Did he?

The children in the audience will hopefully lie.

MODO

Have you got anything in those stockings on that tree?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

No. They're stockings for our presents...from Father Christmas.

MODO

Distracted he bursts out laughing

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Presents! Father Christmas won't be coming this year. He's been kidnapped little boy, by my mistress, the Snow Queen. From now on there will be no more Christmases, no more presents, no more Christmas trees, no more silly twinkly lights, no more Christmas Fruit Cakes ugh! No more silly Santas in the Stores.

Audience encouraged by Ragdoll to boo

Ecstatically

It'll be wonderful

RAGDOLL

Haven't you got a job to do?

MODO

Coming back to himself

Ah.... Yes.

Goes to the cupboard

Super Deluxe Cupboard. What's the command for those? Let's see...let's check my spell book.

Gets out Spell Book

Of course! Three knocks. Bye bye kiddies. Have a miserable Christmas. Hee.. hee.. hee.

Exits through cupboard . He knocks three times, there are weird noises. The cupboard glows. Tardis noise. Lights flash.

(CONTINUED)

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RICHARD

Runs to the cupboard opens it to find it empty. In amazement.
He's gone.

JULIET

He was mean and horrible.

RICHARD

What are we going to do?

JULIET

I don't know. Wait a minute. What about the key?

RICHARD

Goes over and fishes out the key from the stocking.
Here it is. Isn't it beautiful? I wonder what it opens. It must be something very special.

JULIET

Ragdoll. Tell us what to do.

(Silence)

Ragdoll! Why aren't you speaking? What the matter? Speak to me!

RAGDOLL

(weakly)

I told a lie. We're not allowed to tell lies. It's the way we were built. If we tell lies we just fall apart.

Pulls off and throws away her arm

I don't feel very well.

JULIET

What can we do to help?

RAGDOLL

Not much, I'm afraid. Father Christmas is the only one who can help me. You haven't got very long ... and what Modo said is true. The Snow Queen has kidnapped Father Christmas ... it doesn't look as if there will be any toys this Christmas....

(CONTINUED)

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RICHARD

Don't give up Ragdoll. We'll rescue Father Christmas, won't we Juliet?

JULIET

(Doubtfully)

Yes... we'll help. Tell us what to do.

RAGDOLL

You must go through the cupboard. Follow Modo and Flibberdegibbet. Go to the Emperor and Empress of Toyland. Tell the Emperor what happened. He will know what to do ... and take the key. But don't let anyone know you've got it ...

JULIET

O.K.... and don't worry Ragdoll. We'll get help..

RICHARD

Yes.. we'll rescue Father Christmas. I'll take my laser gun. The one I got last Christmas

He searches in a box.

JULIET

Ragdoll!

Ragdoll's other arm falls off

You're starting to fall apart. Quick Richard, hand me my sewing box

Richard fetches it.

RAGDOLL

(Faintly)

Get to the Emperor of Toyland the key three knocks...

RICHARD

Come on Juliet. We'll have to get going. If we don't get back soon, Ragdoll's will be nothing but.... rags.

JULIET

All right. I'm coming. Have you got the key?

(CONTINUED)

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RICHARD

Yes. I've hidden it. I'm not telling you where. It's private.

JULIET

Come on. Get into the cupboard.

RICHARD

This is exciting. I've never traveled by cupboard before.

JULIET

Go on. Knock. Three times!

There are three loud knocks. The children scream in surprise. The cupboard music is heard. Dry ice. Lights go down.

SCENE 2

Lights come up slowly on a painted backdrop.. The backdrop is like the outside of a well-travelled suitcase. It has graffiti on it as well as advertising e.g. Keep Arizona Clean- Have a shower! Please Do- Not! Wet Paint! I'm spick therefore I'm spam! Quasimodo... that name rings a Bell! Education Kills by Degrees! Remember the Golden Rule- those with the Gold Rule! Blow your mind- smoke Gunpowder. See the world- buy an Atlas! Queen Elizabeth Rules U.K....! Post No Bills etc... etc...(This may be academic if there's no backdrop.)

On one side of the stage over the trap or positioned so that characters can slip out of the cupboard unseen, is the cupboard identical to Scene 1. Centre stage perched somewhat precariously on a podium is an actor disguised as a large signpost. There is a large pole sticking out of his head which has pointers on it giving directions such as "Over There", "Here" "A Bit Further", "A Long Way Away" "Washington" "Mrs. Washington" "Tons of Washing"

SIGNPOST

(Cheerfully)

Hello everybody!

He keeps going until he gets a response from the whole audience.

Oh thank goodness there's somebody out there. I thought for a moment I was all on my own.

(He laughs)

Silly me. I do get tired though... standing here ... day after day... night after night. I wouldn't mind it so much if anyone ever came this way. The last time somebody read my sign was 1842. There were these two men called Lewis and Clark. They wanted to know where the Pacific was. I told them. Get on I17, go north to Flagstaff, turn left, left again at Paige, down the Grand Canyon, watch out for the fires, follow the Colorado across a couple of deserts and you're there. You can't miss it. It's blue. They never even said "Thank You". No manners. I know I'm not much of a sign. I'm afraid I've seen better days.

(He starts to get tearful)

He switches all the signs round so they point in different directions.

(CONTINUED)

What I need is a new paint job. I wish I could be a sign like on the top of South Mountain, flashing red lights, or one of those airport signs. I would like that. It's very difficult being a sign... you have to have a degree from ASU, the Advanced Signposts University. They refused to give me one. They said I didn't have a big enough body of work. I think my body is just fine....

Noises from the cupboard. He panics and the signs begin falling down and he has to put them back up but he gets them in the wrong order

Someone's coming oh dear me....

He tries to tidy his hair and gives himself a lick like a cat then takes a oil can which is hung round his waist and oils under his arms.

That's better.

Freezes

Flibberdigibbet emerges from the cupboard.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Made it! Wow! That was close. Too bad about the key. Oh well..
Now where am I?

Looks at the sign

What a nasty old signpost.

Signpost grimaces without Flibberdegibbet seeing

If I'm not mistaken MODO will be here soon so I had better go to the Emperor's Palace. He is the only one who can help Father Christmas.
Now Signpost... which way is the Emperor's Palace?

SIGNPOST

Points furiously in all directions

Over there, over there, over there and over there.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

(Amazed)

How can it be in all those directions?

(CONTINUED)

SIGNPOST

Because there are lots of Emperors, right? You never said WHICH Emperor's palace. If you want to get anywhere you have to be precise. Right?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

The Emperor of Toyland's Palace

SIGNPOST

You should have said so. It's that way.

He crosses his arms and points in both directions.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

How can it be in two directions?

SIGNPOST

That's the long way. That's the short way.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

All right. What's the shortest way to the Emperor of Toyland's Palace?

SIGNPOST

(Points definitely)

That way.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Thank you

Starts off, stops, frowns goes back and starts rubbing herself against the signpost.

You wouldn't er... do me a favor would you?

SIGNPOST

I get enough trouble from dogs. They've ruined all my trousers.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

No... I mean.. I'm being chased by Modo, the Snow Queen's wizard. He'll be here any moment now. You wouldn't send him in the wrong direction would you?

(CONTINUED)

SIGNPOST

(outraged)

Me? Tell a LIE? Send someone in the wrong direction? Who do you think I am? What's it worth?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well, all I've got is some of the Queen's magic dust, which I sort of borrowed. I was going to give it back.

SIGNPOST

Oh, magic dust. I could certainly do with a bit of magic dust. I could turn myself into a traffic light. Let's see it.

Flibberdegibbet produces a little bag.

(disappointed)

There's not much here, is there?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I had to use some of it to get the key and then to escape from the Queen.

SIGNPOST

There's not enough.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

It's all I've got.

SIGNPOST

Well I'll ask my friends.

To the audience

Children should I take the magic dust and send Modo in the wrong direction? Will you help me?

Hopefully the children will say Yes when Flibberdigibbet encourages them.

All right. I'll do it. Get going. Go on.

Shouts after him

I wouldn't do this for just anyone.

(With great excitement)

Oooooh magic dust.

(CONTINUED)

Runs his fingers through it then there's a noise from the cupboard.
Ohh... that'll be Modo

Hides the bag of powder. Enter Modo surrounded by dry ice.

MODO

(Looks around)

All Right! Where is he?

Goes down in the audience and begins searching.

Urggggggh the place is crawling with children.

Looks again.

There's some really big ones as well.

Gets his infanticide out and proceeds to spray. It is harmless water of course.

That'll sort them out! Can't have the place crawling with children.

Very unhealthy with all those germs.

Finally spots the Signpost.

What have we here? An ancient monument...? a bit of historical flotsam... something left over from the last Presidential election?

SIGNPOST

I AM A SIGN.

MODO

It talks as well. What is the world coming to? Well now, Mr Sign...Post ... I presume that is your name?

Affected politeness then grabs the signpost's throat viciously.

Where's the CAT?

SIGNPOST

(Choking)

She... she... she's gone!

MODO

(Tightening his grip)

I can see she's gone, you idiot. Where did she go? In which direction did her miserable carcass depart?

(CONTINUED)

SIGNPOST
(Choking and gurgling)

Points in the opposite direction to the direction taken by Flibberdigibbet

MODO
You're not lying are you?

SIGNPOST
(In a high voice)
Of course not. Signs never lie.

Signpost crosses his fingers and winks. Modo relaxes his grip

MODO
You'd better not be.

Addresses the audience
He's not telling lies is he? IS HE?

Audience should say no
And YOU had better not be lying because if you do the Snow Queen will turn you into cyberborgs and she'll send you to the Microsoft Mines.

Modo then goes in the opposite direction indicated by the Signpost and says to the audience.

This is the right way?

Audience shout for him to go the other way.

You mean it's this way. No it's not? It's this way?

This can go on for as long as the actor wants to go backwards and forwards. The audience finally gets Modo to go the wrong way.

There's a crack of thunder, flash of lightning, the wind blows. The cupboard creaks and groans. There are oos and aaahs from inside. A splash of water hits the sign. Splosh

SIGNPOST

(Shivering)

Dear me. What's that? I think it's going to rain.

Follow spot on cupboard, the stage darkens. The children emerge from the cupboard clutching each other. The dry ice swirls around them. They look about in amazement. Juliet is the braver. Richard hardly gets out past the cupboard door. There's another crack of thunder. Richard dives back into the cupboard.

RICHARD

Help! I want to go back home. I don't like it here. Mommy. Where are you?

He peers out.

Where are we?

JULIET

How would I know?

RICHARD

I want to go home? Where is it?

JULIET

I don't know.

RICHARD

Why do you go to school if you don't know anything? You're stupid. All girls are stupid.

JULIET

Stop being ridiculous. We said we would help Ragdoll by rescuing Father Christmas. You promised her.

Looks around

I think we are in a suitcase. There's funny writing on the wall and look.. there's a sign. It says "Over there" "Here" "Mrs. Washington"? What a silly sign. It isn't any help at all.

(CONTINUED)

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SIGNPOST

(Insulted)

What do you mean?

JULIET

You talk?

SIGNPOST

I'm not stupid. I'm an educated sign. I may be a bit decrepit but...

(Starts to cry)

My mother always said I was a lovely sign. She said I was a sign for sore eyes ... boo...hoo

JULIET

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. Really. You're a beautiful sign. You're probably the most beautiful sign in the world.

SIGNPOST

(Blows his nose loudly)

Honestly?

JULIET

Honestly.

SIGNPOST

The most beautifuliest.

JULIET

The most beautifuliest?

SIGNPOST

I love a double comparative.

(Coily)

Well, I know I'm rather good looking.

RICHARD

Can you help us?

SIGNPOST

It depends on where you want to go.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

We want to go back home.

JULIET

No we don't.

SIGNPOST

Make up your mind.

JULIET

We've got to find Father Christmas.

SIGNPOST

My friend Father Christmas? He's an old pal; I gave him advice on becoming omnigeographical.

JULIET

Omnigeographical?

SIGNPOST

Yes. Being in more than one place at the same time. It's a very difficult skill to master.

JULIET

Well he's been captured and our friend Ragdoll... she told a lie and she's starting to fall apart and the cat came and she gave us....

(She is nudged by Richard)

Oh no! I can't tell you about that..

RICHARD

Ask him about the Emperor of Toyland.

JULIET

Yes! The Emperor. We must find the Emperor.

RICHARD

Please. Where can we find the Emperor of Toyland? This isn't Toyland is it?

(CONTINUED)

SIGNPOST

Of course not but it's on the way. Everywhere's somewhere on the way to somewhere else.

RICHARD

What?

SIGNPOST

Never mind. Why does everyone want to see the Emperor. No one ever speaks to him normally except the Empress and she never stops talking.

JULIET

Which way is it? How do we get there?

SIGNPOST

It's that way.

(He points)

But it's no good going now because it's getting dark. You wouldn't be able to see the road and get lost and if you were a lost child the Snow Queen would own you and that would be the end of you.

RICHARD

That sounds dreadful. I don't think I like the Snow Queen. Can we go home? I'm hungry.

JULIET

(grabs hold of Richard)

No !

(to the Signpost)

What do you think we should do?

SIGNPOST

It's only half past 82 at the moment so I suggest..

RICHARD

Half past 82?

SIGNPOST

Half past 82. That's what it says on my watch.

Brings out an ancient and ridiculous watch.

There! Half past 82. Just coming up to 126

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

That's crazy

SIGNPOST

No it's not. It's my watch. Isaac Newton gave it to me himself. Just before the apple bonked him on the head. Poor fellow was never the same.

RICHARD

Look.

(He presses a button on his watch and it lights up)

It's 8.30.

SIGNPOST

What a stupid watch. It hasn't got any hands. It's just got numbers and they stay the same.

RICHARD

It's a I Watch. I can get the television on this and e-mail.

SIGNPOST

Television? What's that? E-mail? I've heard of female. My watch goes up to 600 so it must be better than yours.

RICHARD

I bet yours doesn't have an alarm or light up or play games.

SIGNPOST

Light up! Play games? You mean if I had that I would have a little light and I could play games.

RICHARD

Of course. Look.

SIGNPOST

Oh my goodness. It's marvellous. It does light up. Show me the games. That's wonderful. Can I have it?

RICHARD

No. It was a Christmas present from my Dad.

SIGNPOST

Please. Look. I'll trade it for some magic dust. I've got some here.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Magic dust?

SIGNPOST

Yes, magic dust.

RICHARD

There's no such thing.

SIGNPOST

Of course there is. Your watch lights up and has females. I've got magic dust.

RICHARD

It's e-mails not females. Let me see the dust.

SIGNPOST

Only if we do a trade.

RICHARD

(He hesitates)

OK ... here's my watch.

They trade. The Signpost puts the watch on and admires it.

SIGNPOST

Just what I wanted. Something that lights up.

RICHARD

This doesn't seem very fun. What does it do?

SIGNPOST

All sorts of things.

RICHARD

Such as?

SIGNPOST

You use it. For magic. When you want magic things to happen.

RICHARD

I want my watch back!

(CONTINUED)

SIGNPOST

No! A trade's a trade.

JULIET

He's right Richard. Let him have it. The magic dust may come in useful. How long is it before it's light and we can go to the Palace? Ragdoll must be a mess by now.

SIGNPOST

Let me see. It's nine thirty so you have an hour to wait.

JULIET

We'd better get some sleep.

RICHARD

(miserable)

OK

JULIET

Wake us up when it's time to go.

SIGNPOST

I shall use the digital alarm. I haven't had this much fun for years.

RICHARD

(Sits up with a start)

What's going to happen to us?

JULIET

Oh go to sleep.

SIGNPOST

(Sings)

Go to sleep,
Go to sleep my little ones,
For now, as the darkness comes,
On this very special night,
You must hold each other tight,
Then you'll keep yourselves from harm
And the Snow Queen's wicked charms,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

So go to sleep,
Go to sleep my little ones.

Eerie sound effect. Lights fade. The Signpost reaches down and takes the magic powder from Richards's hand. He emerges from the sign dressed in a sparkling suit, white shirt, white bow tie. Mysterious Music. Sprinkles the magic dust over the sleeping children. Single spot.

Though the Snow Queen walks this night,
And the darkness hurt or bite,
Here this magic dust I throw
On these children here below.
Keep them safe and free from harm,
Protect them with your magic charm.
Guide and tell them where to go,
So that all will Christmas know.

He lays the magic powder back in Richard's hand. Looks at his watch. Nods and then exits. Darkness

CURTAIN

SCENE 3

Curtain opens to reveal a gigantic shoe, hopefully sponsored by Nike or some other shoe manufacturer. There is a sign on it that says “mi bota is su bota”. Spanish for my boot is your boot. There’s a door in it and lots of windows which actually open. Around it are bushes and trees and at the back a scrim painted like the roots of a tree. In one corner is a huge web. When the Snow Queen is lit up from behind the scrim, her face will appear like a large spider in the middle of the web. Enter Flibberdigibbet.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

(Exhausted)

I’m hungry. I’m exhausted ...and I’m lost.

(Sees shoe)

Wow. What’s that? It looks like a shoe. What’s it doing here?

Perhaps someone got the boot.

(Laughs weakly)

Oh dear, someone’s coming. I’ll have to hide.

(Dashes about)

If it’s the Snow Queen I’m finished. I’ll hide behind this bush.

Enter Widow Tremble, dressed in patchwork, vacuuming

WIDOW TREMBLE

Hello everybody. Widow Tremble’s here. I’m just vacuuming the grass. Keep it nice and clean. It’s so important in the desert to keep your lawn clean and green. That’s what my mother used to say. Well ... are you having a good time? You’re not?? Well. I would ask for your money back. You didn’t come here to be miserable, did you?

(Whisper confidentially to the audience)

I live here and it’s awful. The rent’s too high and the heat and the noise from that orchestra... squeak, squeak, groan, groan. Terrible! Anyway, I must get on with my cleaning. It’s about time my servant was starting work. We’ve got so many jobs to do every day. *

(she shouts)

Miguel! Miguel??

(to the children in the audience) *

Do you like my house? I love living in a shoe. It’s so down to earth. And it’s good for the children. You haven’t met my children have you? There’s so many of them. I can’t remember how many.

Anyway, Mr. Tremble, God bless his soul,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(She crosses herself)

was a wonderful man, wonderful! He died of exhaustion. I can't think why because he never had a job. He could always remember the names of the children though. I can't.

Enter MIGUEL

There you are Miguel. Just in time. We've guests today.

(Indicates audience)

Say hello to them.

MIGUEL

Buenos dias senores, senoras, señoritas y todos los ninos. Mi nombre es Miguel Juan Carlos Maria Rodriguez Gonzalez di Santiago o Miguel. Como se llama?

(Gets audience to respond to give their names in Spanish)

Bienvenidos a la Casa de la Bota. Welcome to the House of the Boot.

WIDOW TREMBLE

La Casa de la Bota - doesn't it sound wonderful? I'm learning Spanish too you know. Let me see..

(She takes out a large pencil and paper)

Here we are.

(Totally Anglicized pronunciation)

Comon see llama. What does that mean?

(she thinks)

I remember. Come and see the llama.

MIGUEL

No no .. por favor. Como se llama? What's your name?

WIDOW TREMBLE

I'm Widow Tremble.

MIGUEL

No. Como se llama?

WIDOW TREMBLE

No I don't want to see the llama today. I'm too busy!

(CONTINUED)

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MIGUEL

(Says something funny in Spanish about gringos)

Por favor los gringos son...!!!!!!

*

WIDOW TREMBLE

Go and get the children's food. That's a good boy.

(to the audience)

You all know who I am don't you? I'm the Old Woman, well more of a middle aged sprightly woman, who lives in a shoe, and I have so many children I never know what to do. So I give them some soup without any bread and spank them all soundly and send them to bed. Every day! It's so tiring, spanking all those children, in fact my arm gets so tired I've invested in a new machine. Do you want to see it? I'll show it to you. I got it from the Sears and Roebuck catalogue. Look.

*

*

*

She wheels on stage a large contraption a bit like an early seeder or an adapted bicycle. It has a seat with a console in front of it with lots of switches and levers and there's a belt coming from a motor which turns a large wheel with spokes. At the end of each spoke is a stuffed rubber glove.

I bet you don't know what it is. I'll tell you. It's a spanking machine. Yes. Spanking. It's the large family model. Fully computerized and automated. It's much better than that one they sold the American government. Isn't it clever? I'll show you how it works.

Sits down at the terminal.

You punch in the number of the child here, say child twenty one, select the right level of spank, say Level 3 on the Richter scale, press return and away it goes.

The machine starts going around at a a fantastic speed and there are horrible clanking noises. Miguel has been set up the table to feed the children.

*

Dear me! I pressed the wrong button. Miguel, Miguel quick, do something.

*

MIGUEL

Coming Senora.

*

Goes calmly over to the machine presses two buttons and it stops.

(CONTINUED)

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WIDOW TREMBLE

Oh dear, oh dear

Collapses in chair.

It's all this modern technology. It wears you out keeping up with it.

MIGUEL

You OK Senora?

*

WIDOW TREMBLE

Grass i arse Miguel

*

Get handkerchief out of a pocket in her knickers and blows her nose loudly.

It gave me quite a scare. I was all of a tremble. I was a trembly tremble. Anyway it's time to feed and spank the children. Is the soup ready?

MIGUEL

*

Goes to big dish

Si Senora. Soup is ready. Special high calorie one.

Look at packet

Lumpy Trump flavor? Aye! Aye! Aye!

Demonstrates gluey porridge. Tastes it and then gives a whole stream of Spanish which tells you exactly what he thinks of it and how you wouldn't feed it to your grandmother .

WIDOW TREMBLE

All right. I'll call the children. Children come and get it!

At this moment at least ten little trap doors in the shoe fall open with a clack and the children stick their heads out.

There you are. Come and get your soup without any bread and be spanked very soundly and then go to bed.

CHILDREN

(In unison)

No! No! No!

(CONTINUED)

WIDOW TREMBLE

Now do as you're told. They've got to do as they're told. Haven't they children?

Addresses the audience who hopefully scream no.

What do you mean, no! Stop being so naughty or I'll put you in my spanking machine. You're making Mommy cry.

(Gets pathetic and starts pulling out a handkerchief from her cleavage which just goes on and on)

I've had such a hard life. All these children to bring up. All the hard work. I never had a childhood. I never went out. Never went to the Prom. Nobody would take me. It was always, you better wash the dishes, do the laundry, clean the house. We were so poor. We never had any money... etc...

By this time everyone is crying on and off stage including Miguel

*

MIGUEL

*

Aye, Senora. Pobrecita. Vamanos ninos. Eat your soup. Esta bien. You will grow up big and strong like Miguel.

*

CHILD 1

But it's horrible. We hate it.

MIGUEL

*

No es importante.

(Confidentially)

Keep Senora happy, then later we all go to MacDonald's.

(Another opportunity for sponsorship).

CHILDREN

Hurray.

(Whisper to themselves)

We're going to MacDonalds. Pass it on.

MIGUEL

*

Hola. Who's first?

(CONTINUED)

Children get into a line but nobody wants to be first so they keep changing places until the littlest one is at the front.

Children. Hold su noses.

WIDOW TREMBLE

That's right. Have your soup and then it's time for spanking. What good boys and girls.

As they receive their spoonful from Miguel, they compete to see who can make the most horrible face.. This is a cast competition.

*

They are enjoying it. What lovely children. Oh look, we've got a bit left there. Nobody wants seconds? What a shame. Children are far too spoiled these days. Would you like some?

(Goes to the audience and ad libs)

Time for spanking. Get in line..

CHILD 2

(comes forward)

We don't want to be spanked any more.

WIDOW TREMBLE

What do you mean you don't want to be spanked? You've got to be spanked. It says so in the nursery rhyme. There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, she had so many children, (that's you) she didn't know what to do, so she gave them some soup without any bread, (we've done that) and spanked them all soundly and sent them to bed. Sounds fair to me.

CHILD 3

But we don't like the soup and...

CHILD 4

And we're tired of being spanked.

CHILD 5

We want to be in a different nursery rhyme.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Too bad. You're in this one and you're just going to have to put up with it. Now stand in line.

(CONTINUED)

The children get into a line and keep switching places so that the smallest is at the front of the line and the largest at the rear. One child goes around to the back of the machine, gets on the seat and starts to reprogram the computer.

No, no no! You're not allowed to touch that - it's advanced technology. Now.

Sits at the terminal

What's your number?

To the smallest child.

CHILD 6

I'm number six.

WIDOW TREMBLE

O.K. number six

Keys in the number

Get in position. Now I press return.

Child stands trembling with hands over face waiting for the machine to begin spanking. Widow looks around. Nothing happens. She reprograms it but it still doesn't work.

Dear me! Something's not working.

Goes over to child.

Move out of the way. Something must be stuck.

Gets into position. Child creeps up to the computer, quickly programs it and is starts working furiously spanking the Widow.

Oh! OH! OH! Help me. Quick Miguel. Help me!

Children start cheering and running about and prevent the Widow from escaping. One gets the bowl of soup. General pandemonium. They feed the gruel into the open mouth of the Widow.

Help! Help! You naughty children! Gulp! Oh! Oh! Miguel. Stop the machine.

(CONTINUED)

MIGUEL

Lo siento mucho Senora per no entiendo la machina. I haven't finished my degree in computer studies at ASU. Too busy. Too many pretty senioritas. Too much soccer.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Oh! Oh! Help!

Suddenly there's a great flash and crack of thunder. The lights dim. There's the sound of wind. Lights come up on the Snow Queen behind a scrim. It looks as if her face is coming out of the centre of the web. She is dressed magnificently in sequins and a great crown of icicles. As she spreads her arms, the folds of her costume glitters and spreads like wings. The jewels reflect the light in a hundred directions.

SNOW QUEEN

Do I hear the sound of... children?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Oh No! It's the Snow Queen.

SNOW QUEEN

I can hear children laughing. That is not allowed. Children are not permitted to laugh, smile or enjoy themselves. That is the law and I will have it obeyed.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Quick children. Hide. Miguel. Help the children. If the Snow Queen finds them she will drag them off to her palace and make them slaves.

Children hide but with bits of them sticking out. Child 1 stands at the front of the stage with her hands over her face.

SNOW QUEEN

I sense foreign children. Humans. I will not allow humans in the kingdom. Yes! A boy and a girl. They're sleeping. Modo! Where are you? You wretched slave! He must find those children and deal with them. As for the rest of you, let it be known that Christmas has been cancelled. Father Christmas is my permanent guest and he is not interested in Christmas any more.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

In fact, there will be no more Christmas, no more stockings, no more Christmas trees, no more decorations, no more horrible twinkly garden lights. There will be work... do you hear? There will be homework, classwork, hard work, road work, dirty work, needle work and house work. Only work will be allowed.

Fade

CHILD 1

She's horrible. I hate work.

CHILD 2

So do I. It's so boring.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Well, everyone has to work children, but you also have to have some fun and enjoy yourself.

CHILD 3

What about those human children? What will happen to them?

WIDOW TREMBLE

If the Snow Queen gets them, well.....

CHILD 1

Is it true there isn't going to be a Christmas?

WIDOW TREMBLE

I'm afraid so.

All the children start crying.

Oh dear. Miguel. Can't you suggest something to calm them?

MIGUEL

Por favor Senora. Tengo solo tengo sentido comun. I only have common sense.

WIDOW TREMBLE

What does your common sense tell you?

(CONTINUED)

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MIGUEL

Sentido comun dice.... No Feliz Navidad, no Papa Noel. Por Que?
The Snow Queen must have kidnapped Father Christmas. Liberar el
Papa Noel y tenemos Christmas. Ole!

WIDOW TREMBLE

But what about those children? Those humans?

MIGUEL

Humans. Ellos son estupidos. Always fighting, killing, arguing,
perhaps human children come here because they get no toys for
Christmas.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Isn't he brilliant?

All the children cheer.

CHILDREN

What can we do to help. What do you think we should do?

MIGUEL

Miguel no es estúpido. I smart because I stay out of trouble. Live
peaceful life, siesta in afternoon, good food, go see movies, chase
pretty girls...

WIDOW TREMBLE

That's enough of that. What do you think we should do?

MIGUEL

Ah.....

CHILDREN

Yes....?

MIGUEL

No.....

Starts thinking again.

Si!

CHILDREN

Si?....

(CONTINUED)

MIGUEL

No.

CHILDREN

Oh.

Disappointedly.

MIGUEL

Got it!

CHILDREN

Yes?

MIGUEL

Go find ninos first... See if they good or bad humans. Then go see mi amigo, the Emperor of Toyland.

CHILDREN

Hurray!

WIDOW TREMBLE

All right! We'll rescue the children.

All go round in circles.

Hold it! Where do we find them? Do you know where they are Miguel?

MIGUEL

No se, Senora.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Children do you know where to find them?

CHILDREN

No.

WIDOW TREMBLE

You are useless. I bet the children out there can help us.

She points to the audience.

Can you help us children?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Do you know of anyone who could tell us where the two children are? Who? Flibberde who? Who's got a funny name like that? All right, where is she then? Behind that bush?

Everyone searches but nobody can find her A child is encouraged to come up from the audience to show them where Flibberdegibbet is hiding.

Goodness me! What have we here? It's a pussy. Here, pussy, pussy.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Don't pussy, pussy me!

WIDOW TREMBLE

Come here. They say that you know where the children are? Is that right?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well....

WIDOW TREMBLE

Come on. Do you know where the children are?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well I do but

WIDOW TREMBLE

But what?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

It's difficult to explain. I'm trying to find the Emperor's Palace and well... I'm lost.

WIDOW TREMBLE

What has that got to do with it?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I'll tell you where the children are, if you'll tell me the way to the palace.

WIDOW TREMBLE

That's easy. You just follow that road.

(CONTINUED)

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well, it's not so easy if you want the human children. You must go to the cupboard at the end of the world.

WIDOW TREMBLE

The cupboard at the end of the world?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Yes!

WIDOW TREMBLE

Where's that?

MIGUEL

Senora, no es una problema. GPS no esta bien porque you ever know where you will end up pero... tengo Phoenix Street Guide. We will find this Cupboard.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Good. We'd better hurry children. Goodbye Flibberdegibbet.

The children all hide again.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Goodbye.

WIDOW TREMBLE

What's the matter children?

CHILD 1

We're frightened.

WIDOW TREMBLE

You mustn't be frightened. I'll tell you what. We'll sing our special song to give you courage. Would you like to sing it too? Come on then.

Words and music come down attached from fly bar

SONG

(CONTINUED)

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We're as brave as a lion.
We're strong as a horse.
We'll climb the highest mountains
And we'll shout with all our force.

And sometimes we can whisper
Like a little tiny mouse
That creeps into a daffodil
Or hides about the house.

Refrain

But when it comes to courage
Though we're trembling in our shoe
Our hearts are brave as lions
We will never say boo hoo

Refrain

So if the Snow Queen gets us
As very probably she might
We'll never give in easily
We'll fight and fight and fight.

Refrain

Exeunt. Miguel leading the way trying to follow the street guide.

END OF SCENE 3

SCENE 4

Same as Scene 3 e. Enter Miguel with street guide tip toeing. He turns the guide upside down and around in circles as he flicks through searching for the right street.

MIGUEL

Turn to 156. See page 42. Continued on pages 224. Cupboard is at end of the universe. Huh? The White house? Does not make sense.

He loses his temper and makes a joke in Spanish about trying to follow the guide

Children. We're lost. The cupboard at the end of the world! Can you help? Do you know where it is?

The children shout but Miguel always goes in the wrong direction.

Over here? No it's not here. Over there? No! Nothing.

Finally backs into cupboard, freezes, feels it with his hands, turns to it. In Spanish

By the blessed soul of my departed grandmother Donna Miguel de Sanchez de etc ..etc..... donde esta los ninos? Senora, Senora donde esta! I found the cupboard! Aye, aye, aye. First find cupboard, now find children...

Enter Widow with exhausted children

WIDOW TREMBLE

I'm exhaustified, transmogrified, homogenized and pasteurized. I'll have to have one of my pink pills for pale people. I got them from my mother. They're specially flavored with the cocoa leaf. You can't buy these any more and they're wonderful for aches and pains. Oh Miguel.... You've found them. What a clever boy you are. Oh yes! Look! Human children! Aren't they beautiful? They must be good. They're waking up.

All the children try to hide behind the Widow and under her skirts.

Hello ... Hello

RICHARD

Oh! We've been asleep. Juliet wake up!

(CONTINUED)

JULIET

What.....

MIGUEL

Buenos dias ninos.

JULIET

Hello.... Who are you?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Let me introduce myself. I'm Widow Tremble and I live in a shoe with my children. Say hello children.

She looks around but can't see the children.

Children. Come and say hello.

Children emerge slowly

JULIET

Hello children. I'm Juliet, this is Richard, my brother.

WIDOW TREMBLE

This is Miguel.

MIGUEL

Miguel Juan Carlos Rodriguez Gonzalez di Santiago etc..

JULIET&RICHARD

Hello Miguel

WIDOW TREMBLE

We're here to make sure you don't fall into the hands of the Snow Queen.

RICHARD

We were just about to go home because....

JULIET

No we weren't. We came to help rescue Father Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

WIDOW TREMBLE

You know about that? The Snow Queen said he was a permanent guest. But I think she was lying.

MIGUEL

Es verdad. The Snow Queen kidnap Father Christmas.

JULIET

That is what Ragdoll told us. Ragdoll is one of my toys and she said that we should go to the Emperor of Toyland to get his help. If we don't she will fall apart and there will be no toys for Christmas and it will be horrible and there won't be any presents for anybody..and... oh...oh !

Starts crying at which point everyone else begins crying which becomes infectious. The Widow gets her handkerchief out of her knickers and it just keeps coming and passes it on to Miguel as she blows her nose ferociously. All the children bring out their large spotted handkerchiefs . Everyone cries.

WIDOW TREMBLE

That's enough. This is terrible. I love Christmas. I don't know if the Emperor can help us. He's very old and nobody can understand a word he says, except the Empress.

Recovering

I have an idea - let's all go back to my shoe.

LOUD EXPLOSION. *Lights dim. Enter Modo*

MODO

Stay where you are, you horrible little children.

Children flee in all directions even into the audience.

Stay where you are or I'll turn you all into lizards.

Children freeze.

Well, well, well, well. What have we got here?

To Widow

You're a rather large child aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

She smiles winsomely and pouts her lips

In fact you don't look like a child at all. As for all these others
uggggghhhh.. It's a pity I've run out of infanticide otherwise I'd spray
them all.

Sees Miguel hiding behind his hands, his knees knocking.

Where did you crawl out from? Why are you dressed like a foreigner?

MIGUEL

So sorry Senor me no want to be turned into gecko... Me simple
peasant boy. Don't know nothing. Just watch movies, sleep, play
soccer, chase girls...no brain.

MODO

Enough you idiot...

Searches

What's that smell? ...Human I think. I can't quite make it out ...
Yes ... Definitely human...

*Richard comes out of the cupboard where he has been hiding and while
Modo's back is turned he hides under Widow Tremble's dress. Miguel hides
in the cupboard to listen.*

It's coming from somewhere over ...

*Starts to sniff Widow Tremble from about knee high. She thinks she is going to
be kissed. Modo temporarily distracted.*

Urrrggghhhh It's over here.

*Juliet comes out of hiding and is seen. Modo comes up behind her in her new
hiding place and grabs her.*

Got you ...you horrible human child.

JULIET

Help!

*Pandemonium follows with everyone dashing in all directions. Miguel stays
hidden in the cupboard. There's a struggle between Modo on one hand and
Widow Tremble connected to all the children on the other side with Juliet in
the middle.*

(CONTINUED)

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MODO

If you don't stop it, I'll put you all under a spell.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Let her go, you silly old fool!

MODO

I'll teach you to call me a silly old fool, you ancient bag of sawdust. I know just to do with you.

Gets out spell book.

Nursery Rhyme Suspension Spells. Here it is.

Hocus pocus Firey Feet
Eyes that in the middle meet
Turn all things not skin or bone
Into solid lumps of stone.

Except for Juliet, they all freeze.

Hah, hah, hah. Now I've got you.

To Juliet

The Snow Queen is going to take care of you. I can't imagine what she'll do to you but it'll be something horrible. Oh how wonderful! Heh... Heh...

He drags her off. Miguel emerges very cautiously from the cupboard which has protected him.

MIGUEL

Aye Caramba. Que pasa? All turned to stone. Even la senora.

He knocks her. There is a hollow knocking sound

No good. What can I do? Got to do something. Children what shall we do? Cannot stop big Modo magic... Need the magic dust. No tengo magic dust ... Too expensive.

Addresses audience.

You got magic dust?

Audience hopefully remembers if they have been paying attention that Richard has some in his pocket and direct him to it. Miguel takes the dust.

(CONTINUED)

Little boy. Clever place to hide. Modo has gone. Now I got Magic dust. Top quality. Very expensive...

Sprinkles dust over Widow Tremble and the children who slowly come back to life.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Oh dear. Thank goodness for that dust. I thought I was going to stay hard forever. Well done Miguel. And well done children. Richard, there you are. Modo has taken your sister. We'll have to see the Emperor of Toyland to get her back. Come on children. Are we going to rescue Juliet?

CHILDREN

Yes!

WIDOW TREMBLE

Are we brave?

CHILDREN

Yes..... Well sort of. Can we sing a song.

WIDOW TREMBLE

All right. But you have to stamp your feet. Are you ready?

CHILDREN

We're ready.

WIDOW TREMBLE

I may be an old woman who lives in a shoe
But I know all my children
And I've taught them what to do.

CHILDREN

We'll go and see the Emperor
We'll formulate a plan
We'll fight the powers of Modo
'Cos he's a wicked man.

WIDOW TREMBLE

So put your best foot forward

(CONTINUED)

Put your courage to the test
We'll march at once to Toyland
We'll all give all our best.

CHILDREN

Juliet's in peril
And the Queen is cold and cruel
But we'll give our lives and happiness
So that she will never rule.

They march off like a little army going to war. All except the littlest who comes to the centre of the stage, sucking his/her thumb and holding a comforter.

LITTLIEST CHILD

Can I come? Wait for me. Wait for me.

Richard comes back and takes his/her hand.

RICHARD

Come on..

They exit.

END OF SCENE 4

INTERVAL

SCENE 5

The Court of the Emperor of Toyland

Thrones, large dice, jack in the box, Barbie doll, Ken doll, boxes of toys, fairies, goblins, three blind mice, toy soldiers, strong man with polystyrene barbells, large pieces of Lego, enormous playing cards, thimbles.

Dance of the Toys - possibly use Tchaikovsky 4 minutes

Enter the Emperor to huge fanfare. He eventually sits on the throne which has a whoopee cushion on it . Large noise destroying regal presence.

EMPEROR

Who said that?

SEXY SOLDIER

No one your majesty.

EMPEROR

I didn't know no one was here today. Bring no one before me immediately. I will not have raspberries in my court; it's a rude sound. I will allow strawberries, elderberries and gooseberries but I repeat NO raspberries!

SEXY SOLDIER

No... I meant... No one ... No body, not anyone.

EMPEROR

Do you mean it was all of them? How terrible. I'll have them all destroyed, put down or ... up ...or whatever. It doesn't matter. Tell them.... Tell them ... To self destruct. Now enough of that, what's on the agenda for today?

SEXY SOLDIER

Sir Your majesty I've.....

EMPEROR

Mum..You're a very nice soldier aren't you? Are you on the agenda?

(CONTINUED)

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SEXY SOLDIER

Yes your majesty.

EMPEROR

Come and sit over here. Aren't you lovely. It's terrible being an Emperor you know. You never have any fun. Now, who made you?

Looks at label on shirt

Oh, you're this year's special. I wonder what that toymaker was thinking of when he made you. It certainly wasn't the Russians. Are you from Croatia?

SEXY SOLDIER

(simpering)

Ahhh.... I would just like to say what a wonderful person I think you

Enter The Empress

EMPRESS

Alright. Where is he? Who left the top off the toothpaste? Madam will you kindly unhand my husband. This is not the White House. Thank you. You left me to clean the kitchen again and I had to make the bed. I'm sick and tired of telling you. I've been to college and I have a degree. I am not just a pretty face.

EMPEROR

Yes dear, you're wonderful ... Very highly educated. It must be a great disappointment being married to me. We were just going over the agenda.... Carry on dear...

SEXY SOLDIER

Well Ummm..

She wiggles her hips and simpers. Suddenly there's a loud bang. The top comes off the Jack-in-a-Box, cloud of smoke and the sound of a spring (booinnng)

JACK-IN-A-BOX

My spring's gone again. I've gone all floppy.

(CONTINUED)

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EMPEROR

Oh no! We can't have people going floppy on us. Give him a new spring. Next!

SEXY SOLDIER

(She starts giggly uncontrollably)

He... Hehe....

EMPRESS

Get on with it you silly girl.

SEXY SOLDIER

We've captured Flibberdegibbet

Great gasp of amazement.

EMPEROR

Flibberdegibbet? The Snow Queen's favorite cat?

SEXY SOLDIER

Yes.

EMPEROR

How did you do that?

SEXY SOLDIER

Well...

Embarrassed

She well she...

EMPRESS

Get on with it you silly...

EMPEROR

Alright dear. Don't get upset. She's doing her best.

SEXY SOLDIER

Well she knocked on the door. So I thought we'd better let her in.

EMPEROR

Well where is she?

(CONTINUED)

SEXY SOLDIER

She's out there. She says she wants to talk to you. She says she's got news about Father Christmas.

Buzz of excitement

EMPEROR

Well don't just stand there. Bring her in.

Sexy soldier bows, simpers, giggles, apologizes and exits

EMPRESS

No wonder we're in such a terrible mess, recruiting soldiers like that.

EMPEROR

Your highness, if every army was made up of soldiers like that, there would never be a need for war.

Re-enter soldier with Flibberdegibbet

Right Ms. Flibberde... whatever your name is..

EMPRESS

Gibbet

EMPEROR

Gibbet. Now why have you come to our little kingdom of Toyland? What on earth would your mistress want with us?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I am not here to represent my mistress. I have escaped from the Snow Queen and I seek your protection. I am also here to bring you terrible news. Father Christmas has been kidnapped and is imprisoned in the Well of Silence .

EMPEROR

Father Christmas? Imprisoned by the Snow Queen.... But this is terrible... That means there won't be any presents. If there are no presents, there are no toys... and if there are no toys there will be no Christmas and it would mean the end of Toyland. You would all be fired.

(CONTINUED)

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

She locked him in the Well of Silence from which there is no escape ...ever.

EMPEROR

Not the Well of Silence! That's worse than working for the Arizona Republic.

EMPRESS

This is all very interesting but how do we know you're telling the truth and this isn't just fake news?

EMPEROR

Yes. Speak up young Flibberdethingamey. Why should we believe you? You belong to the Snow Queen.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well you see.... It's a very long story. When I first went to live with the Snow Queen, she was very nice to me. I didn't have to work hard and I had lots of food. Actually life was very pleasant but then last year she cut our allowances, took away our treats and the food wasn't so good and Modo, her wizard, started bossing everyone around and we all had to increase productivity or we got beat up. Everyone was miserable.

ALL

(Pityingly)

Ahhhhhhh!

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I didn't like what was happening to Father Christmas and I grew tired of being told what to do, so with the help of the Queen's magic dust I stole the key which holds a lot of power but I'm afraid I don't have the key...

EMPEROR

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well I was being chased by Modo and he was hot on my heels so I had to give it to someone for safekeeping... I suppose that it's lost now. Unless the key is found Father Christmas will never be free.

EMPRESS

You're not much of a pussy are you? You come along with your cock and bull story and expect us to be sympathetic. I say we stuff her.

EMPEROR

No, no, no. We don't stuff pussies anymore. Taxidermy is out of fashion. She may be telling the truth. Are you telling the truth?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Cross my claws and hope to die. I'm telling the truth.

EMPEROR

I don't know. What do the rest of you think? Can we trust this pussy?

ALL CHARACTERS ON STAGE

No, never. Don't believe a word of it. They tell lies.

EMPEROR

There you are. No one believes you.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

But I'm telling the truth. Ask them.

Indicates the audience

EMPEROR

What? Ask them? Oh yes. Them. Alright. I'll ask them. But there's an awful lot of them. Alright. Is Flibberdewhathisdoodle telling the truth?

(Audience hopefully will say Yes.)

Yes? You mean she's telling the truth? Are you sure? Well I suppose we'll have to believe you. Alright Flobberdegobbit we believe you but how are we going to.....

(CONTINUED)

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Enter Widow Tremble followed by Richard, Miguel and some of the children.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Falls prostrate

Your majesty, your majesty, the most dreadful, dire, disastrous happenings have come upon us.

EMPRESS

Not more disasters. Next thing you know Governor Ducey is going to start an ice cream chain here in Phoenix.

WIDOW TREMBLE

It's far worse than that. Father Christmas has been captured by the Snow Queen.

EMPRESS

We know that.

WIDOW TREMBLE

And Modo ,the Queen's Wizard, has stolen this young human's sister.

EMPEROR

A human? Stolen? Goodness me! What's a human doing here?

RICHARD

Excuse me your majesty. We were only trying to help Father Christmas.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

That's him. He's got it!

EMPEROR

What do you mean?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

He was the one I gave the key to when I was being chased by Modo.

EMPEROR

Have you got the key?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Yes, but I was told by Ragdoll never to ...

EMPEROR

Never mind that now. Show us the key.

Richard produces the key.

ALL

Ohhhhhhooooooooo

EMPEROR

Here, give me the key.

Takes the key from Richard then drops it as if it's red hot. Jumps up and down blowing on his fingers.

Ow! Ow! That hurts. What did you do that for, you horrible human?

RICHARD

But I didn't do anything.

EMPRESS

Oh stop making such a fuss. Here, I'll pick it up.

Picks it up and then treats it like a hot chestnut and dances around with burnt fingers.

Ow! Ow! Ouch!

WIDOW TREMBLE

Here your majesty. Let me pick it up. Ow!

Throws the key up in the air and it falls near Richard who picks it up. There's a gasp of amazement from everyone on stage.

EMPEROR

That's incredible.

EMPRESS

No, not incredible. Now I remember.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

It was foretold in the great book of life in a poem written by my father, the great Merlin, that in times of great trouble when the Cardinals were in danger of winning the Super Bowl and there was a democratic Governor in Arizona there would come a hero to deliver us.

EMPEROR

Get the mice over here. Quick.

Three blind mice are brought to the front.

All right mice. You know about these things. Why does the key burn.

They whisper in his ear

It was made by the dwarves a million years ago ; it has great power and it can only be held by those who also have power. But he's a bit small isn't he? He must deliver us from the scourge of the Snow Queen.

The mice scurry off into the audience holding each others hands and squeaking.

Well that seems to have sorted that out. It's up to you young man.

RICHARD

Me?

EMPEROR

Certainly. You're the only one who can hold the great key. Only you can help your sister. Only you can free Father Christmas. You must go to the Snow Queen's Palace.

RICHARD

But I'm only little. Won't someone help me?

The toys all go limp. The Emperor and the Court go stiff. Only the children, Widow Tremble, Miguel and Flibberdegibbet can move.

But what's happened?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Dear me. They've all gone hard. This one's fallen apart. This must be Modo again.

(CONTINUED)

Takes head off toy.

RICHARD

But why weren't we turned to stone?

MIGUEL

They're all toys. They were made by Father Christmas. It must be a toy spell.

WIDOW TREMBLE

That's right. We're not toys, we're from a nursery rhyme so you would have to use a nursery rhyme spell.

MIGUEL

Caramba. What are we going to do? Let's all go to Mexico.

WIDOW TREMBLE

This must be the Snow Queen's idea. Now that she has Father Christmas out of the way, she's having Modo cast spells over Toyland.

RICHARD

What can we do?

FLIBBERDIGIBET

We have to free Father Christmas. We must unlock the Well of Silence around which the Snow Queen has built her palace. I'll guide you. I know the way.

MIGUEL

No, no... Hey. This is getting dangerous. Time for Miguel to go home. Tiempo para mi comida. Adios.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Be quiet. We're all hungry. We've had nothing to eat all day except soup. Children are you hungry?

CHILDREN

Yes! We're starving. Miguel promised to take us to McDonalds.

WIDOW TREMBLE

McDonalds?

(CONTINUED)

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MIGUEL

Uh.... O.K. I saw a pie shop just as we came into Toyland. I'll take you there.

FLIBBERDIGIBET

Let's go. We'll need full stomachs. It's a long dangerous journey to the Snow Queen's Palace through the Forest of Night.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Come on Richard. We'll go to the Pie Shop and then brave the Forest of Night. Sing everybody.

I'm as brave as a lion,

I'm as strong as a horse etc.

Don't worry Emperor. You won't stay hard for ever. We'll be back to help you. Say goodbye children.

Exeunt all leaving the toys

Suddenly there's a great flash and explosion and the Snow Queen appears in a follow spot front of tabs.

SNOW QUEEN

How far do they think they'll get? Those stupid nursery rhyme characters and that human. Soon I'll be even more powerful and I'll change them all into something horrible, slaves that only I can control. The longer Father Christmas stays in the Well of Silence, the weaker his power and the greater mine. Soon Toyland will exist no more. There will be no playing. Everyone will work. There will be no more holidays, no more filthy imagination, no more dirty stories, no more painting, no more computer games, no more I phones, no more jokes. There will be work, just work, night and day, day and night and all for me. And once I have sorted out them and their little plan... I'll sort you humans out as well. By the time I'm finished with you, you'll know the true meaning of WORK.

Flash and she disappears .

(CONTINUED)

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END OF SCENE 5

(CONT'D) (cont'd)

SCENE 6

The Pie Shop. It's a small shop (another opportunity for sponsorship such as Pizza Hut) with a series of shelves on which there are lots of different pies, simple paper trays covered in different colored cream. There are different bowls of different colored filling. There are lots of signs. Pot Pies, Pot Pies (Special), Mince Pies, Chili Pies, Hot Pies, Sweetie Pies, Spy Pies, Guy Pies, Thigh Pies, Fettucine Pie, Pork Pies, Sticky Pies, Fly Pies, Alibi Pie, Taco Pie.

Pieman 1 is mixing a big bowl of mixture. He is dressed in outsized chef's gear.

PIEMAN 1

(he sings)

A pie a day will help you work, rest and play. If pie ruled the world. I did it pie way.

(he giggles to himself)

Enter Pieman 2 with a large tray heaped with more pies.

PIEMAN 2

Another 300 pies for the Phoenician.

Checks order book.

That's six thousand pies this week.

PIEMAN 1

Great. If it goes on like this we can retire to Sun City.

They laugh hilariously.

Enter Widow Tremble, Miguel and children.

MIGUEL

Look, it's a good pie shop. Taco Pies, Chili Pies...

WIDOW TREMBLE

Well done Miguel. Come on children. Make a nice line and be sure to be very, very polite. We don't want anybody to think that we're from a rude nursery rhyme. And what do we always say?

(CONTINUED)

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CHILDREN

We always say please and thank you.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Good.

(To the Píeman)

Excuse me young man..

PIEMAN 1

(rudely and annoyed by the interruption)

Huh?

WIDOW TREMBLE

My dear boy, that's not the way to talk to a customer.

PIEMAN 1

What da ya want, huh?

WIDOW TREMBLE

I said that's not the way to talk to a customer, especially a lady.

PIEMAN 1

Do ya wanna pie or don't ya wanna pie huh?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Yes, we would like some pies but I would also like you to address me politely. Not, "Do ya wanna pie?" But "Excuse me madam can I be of service?"

PIEMAN 1

'I'm not offerin' service... I'm offerin' pies... See the notice? If you got the money, I got the pie. Huh?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Yes, I've got the money.

PIEMAN 1

Then give me da money. An I give you da pie, huh?

WIDOW TREMBLE

I wish you would stop saying 'huh' all the time.

(CONTINUED)

PIEMAN 1

Look babe. We're working on special orders. We can't waste time.
Move it.

He addresses Miguel

Hey yous. What kinda pie you want?

WIDOW TREMBLE

Excuse me young man, I am not in the habit of being addressed in
this rude manner. I am a Widow and I demand an apology.

PIEMAN 1

Taps partner on the shoulder.

Hey, we got a weirdo . One minute she says she wants a pie, the next
she don't. Look.ma'am. This is my shop. Don't cause any trouble or
I'll call the cops.

WIDOW TREMBLE

It's not don't it's does not and don't you dare threaten me. All I
asked for was a little courtesy.

PIEMAN 2

*Comes round the side of the counter. He is holding large pie with lots of
filling in it.*

Listen lady. We're very busy people. Our pies is known the world
over.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Our pies ARE known. Not IS known.

PIEMAN 2

You're upsetting my friend so be a good dame and get outta here.

*One of the children gets behind him without being seen and crouches down so
that if he steps backwards he will fall over.*

O.K.?

WIDOW TREMBLE

I've never been so insulted in my life. If Mr Tremble were alive..

(CONTINUED)

She prods Pieman 2. He steps backwards, falls over and the pie hits him in the face. She starts laughing

There, you see, if you had been polite, this would never have happened.

PIEMAN 1

Hey, what have yous done to my friend? And what have you done to my pie?

MIGUEL

(intervening)

Por favor, la senora did not do anything. The senor he came forward with the pie... Like this...She say she never been so insulted in her life...

He picks up a pie

Then he trips like this..

He mimicks the scene, but trips and puts the ie in Pieman 1's face.

OOps! Un accidente...

Children start laughing. The two pie men look at each other. One picks up a pie. Miguel starts laughing uncontrollable.

So funny.. Pie man go oops, straight in the face. Hah, hah, hah

Just as be bends over with laughter , Pieman 1 tries to throw a pie in his face and instead hits the Widow full frontal.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Scraping off the mixture.

How dare you? I've never been so insulted in my life. I come into your shop ready to buy lots of pies and all I get is a pie up the snozola.

Goes to pies, picks one, goes over to Pieman 1, takes off his hat, puts the pie inside it, puts it back on his head and then Miguel tangs it down and creases up with laughter.

There, that'll teach you to be more polite.

(CONTINUED)

The two piemen look at each other. Miguel stands there laughing. The pie men both put pies down his trousers and his shirt and then pat him down. Miguel's joy turns to grief. The pie men shake each other by the hand. Miguel goes to the counter and brings back a big bowl of filling. He indicates to the audience. Should he or shouldn't he? Plays with the audience. The pie men are still laughing and duck just as Miguel throws the bowl which goes all over Widow Tremble. Pie men laugh even harder. Widow gets an enormous cream filler bag which is full of filling. She squirts the contents down the trousers of the pie man and squeezes. The two pie men go to their table and put two pie shells out and fill them; they invite Miguel and the widow to take a look and as they bend over push them in. This is the cue for all the children to get pies and chase each other. Finally Miguel gets a large pail of what looks like filling but when he misses the pie man a shower of paper is hurled over the audience.

Exit through audience, music, curtain.

END OF SCENE 6

SCENE 7

Minimal backdrop, dark, mysterious music, luminously painted trees and bushes, weird musical sounds, drips, large painted mushrooms, blue backdrop, skeletons appear from nowhere, disappear. There's a cry of an owl. Suddenly there's a flash of light and smoke and Modo appears.

MODO

Well, that's a bit more like it. What a pleasant place. Should be able to find something here to control these humans. Let's see. Using mobile phone while driving spell... No that's no good. Bubble bubble toil and trouble. It's been stolen out of my book! Who could have done that? Nothing else there. I know, skeleton spells. Yes that's a good one. Here we go.

Briar patch and lizard tongues
Fetch me the bones of skeletons
Make them jump to my command
And only perform as I demand.
Boil or scab or cut or sore
Chase them round the forest floor
Bring them to me, use your might
You skeletons that haunt the Night.

During the spell the skeletons appear and come under the power of Modo.
Excellent. Do your work.

Exit

THE DANCE OF THE SKELETONS

The skeletons hide

(CONTINUED)

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Richard appears on stage, frightened and alone....

RICHARD

Widow Tremble? Where are you? Help! I'm frightened. It's so dark I can't see anything. The key's so heavy I can hardly carry it. Where's Juliet? I wish we'd never come. It's so cold and dark. What am I going to do?

There's the hoot on an owl.

What was that? This key feels like lead.

He takes it out of his pocket.

I think it's trying to tell me something. What should I do?

Another hoot of an owl. A skeleton appears from behind a tree, points to the key, beckons to another skeleton who appears and then is directed off as if to find someone. Richard looks around and the skeleton disappears.

What if I hide the key until I've found the others? Then we can come back together to get it. But where can I hide it?

Looks in vain for a hiding place. Addresses the audience in the front row.

Will you hold it for me? You won't let anyone take it, will you? You can keep it for me, if I ask you and it won't burn your fingers. Be careful. If the key gets into the hands of the Snow Queen, we'll never have Christmas, never.

Gives it to one of the young ones in the audience.

Keep it safe and I'll be back.

There's the hoot of an owl and a cry.

Widow Tremble? Where are you?

Skeleton emerges and follows Richard off stage

Enter Widow Tremble and Miguel walking backwards from different sides of the stage. They finally meet in the middle. They both scream and Miguel jumps into the widow's arms.

(CONTINUED)

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WIDOW TREMBLE

Stop it you silly boy. We just got lost. It's so confusing. So many different paths. Come on children. Come to mommy.

The children appear one by one.

And where's the pussy, Flibbertething..

Enter Flibberdegibbet

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I'm here... but I don't like it. Where's Richard? There's something wrong. I think we're being watched.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Being watched! How dreadful! Dear me! Children,

(to audience)

Will you tell us if we're being watched by anyone? You will? Oh thank you. It is a bit frightening here. If someone's after us, just give us a yell. Will you do that? Good. Just shout out "There!" "There!"

Skeleton emerges and all the children in the audience start shouting, there! There.

That's right. Very good. You certainly caught on quickly.

Skeleton emerges. Audience shouts, "There!" There!" Widow starts to leave in the opposite direction. Audience cries gather to a crescendo.

What? There really is something there? Over there?

Skeleton disappears.

No, no, no. There's nothing there. You only shout when you see something horrible. Otherwise it's like crying wolf.

Skeleton emerges on the other side. Audience shouts.

What over there? Over there? Well come on, we'll go and have a look.

Skeleton disappears. Widow Tremble looks.

No, there's nothing there. You must be imagining things.

Usually the children get so desperate they will get out of their seats and try to come to the Widow to explain.

(CONTINUED)

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There was a skeleton. I don't believe you. You've got too much imagination. You don't believe in skeletons do you?

A skeleton comes up behind Miguel who turns and jumps into the air and flees pursued by same. Skeletons come and scare the children off stage.

Flibberdegibbet is the last to flee.

We don't believe in skeletons. If there were really skeletons we would run away, wouldn't we Miguel. Miguel?

As she turns round two skeletons come after her. She screams and flees round the stage pursued by them.

Help! Murder? Help!

Exit

Enter Modo attended by two cats in different costumes to the one worn by Flibberdegibbet.

MODO

What was all that noise? I hope that spell works and those skeletons are doing the job. We must find that boy. He has the key to the well. Do you understand? Wait a minute. I hear someone coming. Quick hide.

Enter Richard

RICHARD

Widow Tremble? Children, Miguel? Where are you? Where are they?

Audience try to warn him but too late.

MODO

Get him.

The two cats chase and seize Richard.

RICHARD

Get off me! Get off me! Leave me alone. Where's my sister?

(CONTINUED)

MODO

Don't worry about your sister. The Snow Queen has dealt with her.
Now what I want to know from you is where's the key?

RICHARD

What key?

MODO

Don't fool around with me. You know what key!

RICHARD

I don't know about any key. Besides if I did I wouldn't tell you
You're mean and nasty.

Kicks out and struggles.

MODO

So you want to play games do you? Search him.

Cats start tickling him.

RICHARD

Stop tickling me. I haven't got the key. It was lost.

CAT 1

There's no sign of a key.

MODO

That's impossible. Search him again.

CAT 2

He doesn't have it.

MODO

He must have given it to that fat old lady with all the children. We'll
have to find her and her horrible children.

RICHARD

I told you I didn't have it. Leave me alone!

MODO

Take him to the Snow Queen's Palace. She'll take care of him. Then
come back to help me find the fat one.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

We must find that key or the Snow Queen will have us all exterminated. I'll find out if the skeletons have flushed them out.

Exit

CATS

Yes Sir.

Music to cover scene change.

END OF SCENE 7

SCENE 8

The overall effect is of cold and blue. Large icicles hang down from the ceiling. Blocks of ice surround the trap stage left to simulate the Well of Silence from which smoke comes. Large wooden cages holding ragged children up stage right. Their shadows across cyclorama. Gallows like wooden structure up right. Figure of the Snow Queen, swathed in her silver robes, silver, heavy with makeup, icicles for fingernails sits on her raised throne centre stage. Some children sit in rows doing zombie-like repetitive tasks a bit like a production line on a sweat shop. Centre left of Snow Queen is a sort of sundial block with a large hole for a key.

CAT DANCE - Music up tempo .Blue laser light and smoke.

At the end of the dance the cats should be in a position of humility in front of the Queen.

Enter Juliet, her clothes now gray, torn and tarnished, her face grey, her hair dishevelled.

SNOW QUEEN

You girl. Fetch me a drink.

JULIET

(meekly)

Yes your majesty.

A column of children dressed in rags and behaving like automatons go from one side of the stage to the other. Some of the children look up.

SNOW QUEEN

You...You are not allowed to look at my countenance. You, get on with your work. You are not allowed to stop. If you work hard enough and pass all my tests, you will be allowed one hour's rest. But I shall make sure that most of you fail. Failure is good for you. It teaches you how stupid you are and how clever I am. Back to it!

SNOW QUEEN WORK SONG

(CONTINUED)

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Children resume work.

Enter cat who crosses to Queen and whispers in her ear.

SNOW QUEEN

Bring him in.

Enter Juliet with a jeweled chalice which smokes from the dry ice. The Queen drinks with relish.

Well, you are a pretty little thing. But don't worry, a few year's work in this place and you will look as miserable, thin and pale as the rest of them.

Enter cats with Richard.

RICHARD

Let me go! Let me go! Let me go! Juliet! Juliet! It's me. Richard. Juliet!

SNOW QUEEN

She can't hear you.

RICHARD

What have you done to my sister. Juliet. What have they done to you?

Juliet walks off stage.

I'll tell my mom and dad about you.

SNOW QUEEN

Be quiet you horrible little boy. You will soon be like her but first, where's that key?

RICHARD

I won't tell you. I hate you. I'll never, never tell you.

(CONTINUED)

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SNOW QUEEN

Tell me where the key is or you'll never see home again.

RICHARD

No! Never! I'll die first.

Enter Modo.

SNOW QUEEN

What is it, Modo?

MODO

(Obsequiously)

Good afternoon my lady. So nice to see you again. I've already searched him and I'm afraid he doesn't have the key. He must have given it to one of his friends.

SNOW QUEEN

You mean there are more?

MODO

I'm afraid so. Nursery Rhyme people. There's a rather fat lady and lots of children. Urrrrrrgh. I managed to use one of my very complicated spells to have them rounded up by a few friends and guided here without their knowing. They should be here any moment.

SNOW QUEEN

Well done Modo.

MODO

(coily)

Thank you, my lady. I always try to be of service. Perhaps I could suggest using this rather horrible little boy as the bait to lure them into your web. It's important for us to find out where the key is.

SNOW QUEEN

Excellent idea. But first, silence him. We don't want him warning them. Cats stop his mouth.

Cats come forward. One puts tape /gag across Richard's mouth.

(CONTINUED)

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Wait here for his friends, hide somewhere and listen to what they have to say. Find out where the key is and then report back to me. I will be in my chamber. Have you got that?

CATS

Yes, your majesty.

SNOW QUEEN

Fail me in this and I will send you to the animal hospital for the final solution.

CAT 1

We will obey you.

SNOW QUEEN

Come Modo. You have done good work. Soon Father Christmas will be locked in the Well of Silence for good and there will be a New Age, full of ice and cold and snow where only those who are prepared to work will survive. We shall banish such words as play and toys and leisure from the vocabulary. No one will ever know these things existed.

MODO

What a wonderful imagination you have.

SNOW QUEEN

Don't mention that word to me!

MODO

No, of course not your majesty. How silly of me.

Hits himself on the head after each item

There will be no play, no toys, no leisure, no IMAGINATION, just work!

SNOW QUEEN

Wonderful! And you will be by my side. Come. I want to show you the new ice jacuzzi in my bedroom.

Exeunt Snow Queen and Modo

(CONTINUED)

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CAT 1

Attention cats! You know what you have to do. As soon as you hear about the key seize the intruders. Now hide.

Cats hide. Enter Widow Tremble, Miguel and children. They are in a terrible state.

WIDOW TREMBLE

We finally got away from those horrible skeletons. You were right children. I've never been so frightened. What? Cats? Where? Hidden? We'd better be very careful. Look at those icicles. And those poor, poor children. Look Miguel.

MIGUEL

Aye, dios mio, I want to go home. Look at my knees. They won't stop shaking. Pobrecitos!

WIDOW TREMBLE

The children say there are cats hidden. Perhaps they are friends of Flibberdegibbet. Where is she anyway?

MIGUEL

I don't know. She disappeared. Children have you seen Flibberdegibbet? El gato?

CHILDREN

No.

CHILD 1

I saw her just now but she ran away.

MIGUEL

Senora, senora. Come ! Come! It's the boy, Richard.

WIDOW TREMBLE

So it is. I thought we'd lost him. And he's all tied up. Quick help him Miguel.

Richard tries to warn them

Let's get this off of you.

RICHARD

Watch out. The Cats. They're after the key.

(CONTINUED)

CAT 1

Forward cats. Take them prisoner.

Chase music. Cats rush in among the children and subdue them, all except for Richard who climbs up the scaffold.

Sound effect of mighty hissing. Suddenly Flibberdegibbet bounds onto the stage and stands on top of the well. The other cats hiss back and look ready to attack.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Stop! Stop what you are doing.

CAT 1

What are you doing here Flibberdegibbet?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I have come to free you and to help my friends.

CAT 1

There's one of you and lots of us!

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

You know I am stronger than any you.

CAT 1

Oh yea? Let's see then. Cats! Surround her. Our mistress will reward us well for her capture.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Richard, quick... where is the magic powder?

CAT 1

Give yourself up Flibberdegibbet.

RICHARD

Here. I've got it.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Quickly. Throw it over the children in the cages.

Cats make a desperate effort to stop Richard throwing the magic powder over the children. The effect should be dramatic. There's a sound effect.

(CONTINUED)

From being tired and listless suddenly they shake their heads, look around and come alive. They free the other children. The cats stop in their tracks. They are outnumbered. Chase music and cats chased all over theatre.

ELDEST CHILD

We don't know who you are. But we thank you for our delivery from the cruel power of the Snow Queen. We will always be grateful to you.

FLIBBERDIGIBET

All is not over yet. I imagine the Queen and Modo will be returning very soon. Their magic is still great. They could put a spell on all of us very easily.

RICHARD

Look! There's Juliet.

Juliet walks zombie like across the stage. Richard sprinkles her with magic powder.

JULIET

Oh what a nightmare. Richard, Widow Tremble, children.

She hugs them.

FLIBBERDIGIBET

We must find the source of the Snow Queen's power. Juliet, have you noticed anything she always keeps near her? A belt or special shoes, red ones?

JULIET

Let me think. She always changes her jewelry - she has so much of it. She's got thousands of pairs of shoes. She never carries a purse. Wait a minute. She always wears her crown even when she sleeps.

FLIBBERDIGIBET

That's it. Her power must be in the crown. How can we get it from her before she can turn us into frogs or statues?

(CONTINUED)

MIGUEL

I know. We all pretend to have been captured and when the bruja comes back I will jump up and take the crown. Ole!

JULIET

Better still. I'll pretend I am under her spell. She always wants a drink of some sort and when I bring it to her, I'll come up behind her and snatch the crown off her head.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Excellent.

RICHARD

But she'll suspect something is wrong if she doesn't see her cats.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

True. Fellow cats, in the name of liberty, I call on you to join us. Once I was of your persuasion. I worked for the Queen. I believed that to follow her power was the way to a better life. But what is life without freedom, without friendship, without happiness, without treats? I have learned these things. There is a better life than this. Will you join us?

CAT 1

Well, I must admit that ever since you left, the Queen has been getting worse. She's cut our rations twice and forced us to perform in one of the most boring musicals ever written while she took all the profits.

CATS

(Chorus of protests)

Yes. She took the profits. God it was so boring. Macavity the mystery cat. Boring, boring, boring. And...she makes us clean our own boxes.

CAT 1

Cats. Do we join Flibberdegibbet?

CATS

Yes!

(CONTINUED)

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Good. As you were. Quickly. Pretend you've captured us. Children back in the cages, you back to your work. Look miserable. Get ready - I can smell them coming.

Enter Snow Queen and Modo

SNOW QUEEN

(Cheerfully)

That's excellent. I am going to give you all an extra portion of rotten fish tonight. I see you've got them all nicely trussed up. And there's that fat one you were talking about. How disgusting!

MODO

Horrible. I can't think of what ghastly nursery rhyme she came from. Probably the cow with a crumpled horn. And look at those horrible children. All rosy cheeked and healthy looking. A few week's working with you Cynthia and they'll be looking like the rest of them. I hope you don't mind me calling you Cynthia.

SNOW QUEEN

Oh Moddy, what a joker you are. But first of all the key. I must have the key to the Well of Silence. Unless I have it there is a danger that Father Christmas will be released and his power will diminish mine.

(To Richard)

Where is it? Do I have to cause you pain? Do you want to spend the rest of your days in a retirement home in Agua Prieta?

MIGUEL

(Makes sign of the cross.)

Madre de dios!

RICHARD

I'll tell you where the key is. But first I must have a drink. I can't ...talk.

SNOW QUEEN

At last. I thought you would see reason. Girl. Where is that girl? Go and get a drink for the boy. And you can fetch me and Modo one too. We are celebrating. Get me my special engraved Don Perignon.

(CONTINUED)

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JULIET

Yes your majesty.

Exits

SNOW QUEEN

I always get what I want you know. It just takes a bit of Super Woman strength.

MODO

And you have it, my dear. No one would dare stand up to you. If they did they'd soon put their foot in it.

SNOW QUEEN

Foot in it? Oh yes.

(she laughs)

Oh I must remember to stop laughing. It's so unladylike.

Juliet re-enters with tray of drinks

JULIET

(Gives drink to Richard)

Here.

MODO

Girl. You should learn that your superiors come first.

Juliet turns gives them their drinks and moves behind the Snow Queen. Every time Juliet gets in position to take the crown, the Queen moves around inspecting the Widow's children.

SNOW QUEEN

Look at this one. He must be a foreigner. Let's send him back where he came from. Some of these children are hardly worth keeping. Let's have a look at your teeth. Are you following me girl?

JULIET

Only to do your bidding.

SNOW QUEEN

Very well. I like that.

(CONTINUED)

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Juliet finally gets herself in position, seizes the crown. There's an explosion. Flibberdegibbet jumps up on the well.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

NOW! Get them.

There's a chase. Modo tries to get his spell book out but a child seizes it.

SNOW QUEEN

My crown. Give me back my crown. Modo. Do something. They've taken my crown.

MODO

This child is biting my leg. Get off. That hurts. Ouch.

They are hurled to the ground. The smallest children sit on them.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well done everyone. Three cheers for Richard and Juliet.

MIGUEL

And Miguel.

They all cheer.

CHILDREN

SONG : We're brave as a lion etc.

Last verse.

But the Snow Queen didn't get us
Though we believed she might
We never gave in easily
It was a well fought fight.

Hurray.

SNOW QUEEN

You'll never get away with this. I will rebuild my power and I will have my revenge.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

No you won't. We will free Father Christmas from the Well of Silence and he will take care of you.

MODO

But I had you searched. The key isn't here.

RICHARD

Oh yes it is and it's been here all the time.

Goes to the child in audience with the key and leads him/her up on stage.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Put the key in and turn it.

The plinth should begin to flash. There's a rushing sound and then the sound of a great wheel beginning to turn. More flashing and smoke from the Well of Silence and Father Christmas emerges to the cheers of all the children.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Well done children. I thought I was going to be down there forever. There would have been no Christmas without all of you!

JULIET

(Still holding the Crown)

Father Christmas. We were able to help because Ragdoll told us how to find you but she told a lie to protect the key and she's falling to pieces.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

My old friend Ragdoll. Falling to pieces is she? That will never do!
HO! HO!

Breaks off

Goodness me. Look at the time.

Looks at his watch.

RICHARD

That's my watch.

(CONTINUED)

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FATHER CHRISTMAS

Is it? Well, you'd better have it back. It's getting very late. I shall have to be on my way. Sorry. Got to rush. Rudolph, Blitzer. Time to practise our omnigeographical skills

*Father Christmas is on a harness and he is carried upwards.
See you all. Goodbye all.*

ALL

Goodbye

WIDOW TREMBLE

What a nice man. He reminds me so much of my late husband. Well children we had better be getting home. It's time to put up your stockings.

RICHARD

But what are we going to do with them?

Indicates Snow Queen and Modo

MIGUEL

Common sense says put them down the well and throw away the key.

WIDOW TREMBLE

What a good idea.

SNOW QUEEN

You wouldn't dare do that to me.

JULIET

Oh no? Well, let's ask all the children out there. See what they think. Children, you have to decide. Do we forgive her or do we put her down the well.

Snow Queen is placed on the trap over the well and goes down when the key is turned unless the audience decides to forgive her which is pretty unlikely.

SNOW QUEEN

You wait till I get out of here. I'll turn you all into lizards and I'll make you work until your fingers are worn down.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

There! She won't bother anybody and Flibberdegibbet, you take the key. It doesn't seem to want to go with me. It's beginning to feel heavy again.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Thank you. We won't keep her there forever. Just until she repents. Now, What shall we do with Modo?

MODO

Please don't send me down there with her. I was only doing my job. I was never really very nasty. I never hurt anybody. I had a horrible childhood. I had to go to a special school for gifted children. I got thrown out and my parents were divorced and the Snow Queen was the only one who would give me a job. I've made millions of dollars in real estate but I'll give it all away. I'll help children. I'll buy them playgrounds and send them on vacation I'll do anything but please...don't send me down there.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

All right. If you promise to devote all your talents to making people happy we'll forgive you. Do we forgive him?

ALL

Yes!

WIDOW TREMBLE

Well I don't. He frightened my children. He turned me into stone, which was very uncomfortable and... he said I was fat.

JULIET

Go on Widow Tremble forgive him.

MODO

Oh please, please Widow Tremble. Please forgive me. I'll never frighten you again nor the children. I'll be like a father to them. And, really you are not that fat...

WIDOW TREMBLE

Father eh? Are you married?

(CONTINUED)

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MODO

Never had the time. Too busy making money and casting spells. You don't happen to have a spare room.

WIDOW TREMBLE

My husband's old workshop just happens to be available. Are you good at making soup?

MODO

LOVE IT! Um...I'm sure I can learn.

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

Well Richard and Juliet. It's time for you to go home.

JULIET

What shall I do with the crown?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

I think we should give save it for the Empress.

JULIET

What a good idea.

RICHARD

How do we get back?

FLIBBERDIGIBBET

The same way you came.

There a strange noise and the cupboard appears out of nowhere.

RICHARD

Wow. It came from nowhere. Let's go. I'm so tired I could sleep for a week.

Fanfare of trumpet. Enter the Emperor, Empress, Son of Merlin, rest of Toys.

(CONTINUED)

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EMPEROR

Thank you. Thank you. On behalf of the whole of Toyland, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for saving Father Christmas and ridding us of The Snow Queen. Without you there would have been no more toys and children would have spent all their days working, never knowing the delights of childhood, the fun, imagination and pleasure of being young. In recognition of your achievements, I hereby invest you with the official Order of the Sock, I'm afraid we've run out of garters. For you and Juliet and you, Flibberdegibbet.

EMPRESS

Thank you children. And may I present you each with a sample of the latest magic dust.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Handkerchief in her hand

Oh dear I think I'm going to cry. Children get out your handkerchiefs.

Embraces the children.

We're going to miss you.

Crying

I am so happy for you.

Crying

I have never been so happy in my life. As a small present I want you to have some of my latest batch of special soup candy. They're made out of the soup I give to the children. The children always have to carry a supply.

JULIET

Thank you Widow Tremble. We've got lots of presents but what about the children out there? They saved the key. They believed Flibberdegibbet. Without them the Snow Queen's plans might have succeeded.

WIDOW TREMBLE

You are right. Children. Have you got some spare candies?

(CONTINUED)

CHILDREN

Yes.

WIDOW TREMBLE

Well let the children have some.

Children go out into the audience and distribute candies

CHILD 1

Thank goodness. I thought we were going to have to eat them.

JULIET&RICHARD

Goodbye children. Goodbye everyone.

ALL

Goodbye.

Richard closes the door. There's a pause and then he sticks his head out.

RICHARD

How do you work this thing.

ALL

Knock three times.

RICHARD

Of course. Bye.

There's a sound effect. The cupboard shakes, rolls, lights up. Lights go down

END OF SCENE 8

SCENE 9

Same as Scene One. There is the sound of bells jingling. Three knocks. Richard and Juliet emerge from the cupboard.

RICHARD

I'm so tired.

JULIET

We have to go to bed. What's the time?

RICHARD

It's 7 o'clock.

JULIET

7 o'clock? That means it's Christmas Day.

Wow. Father Christmas must have been quick. Look at our stockings. They're full.

MOTHER

(offstage)

Children? Richard, Juliet? Are you awake?

RICHARD & JULIET

Yes mom.

Enter Mother

MOTHER

Merry Christmas. My goodness you look as if you haven't slept all night.

RICHARD

Well, actually we did have a bit of an adventure.

MOTHER

Now I don't want any of your fantastic stories. You've got far too much imagination.

(CONTINUED)

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JULIET

I don't think anyone will believe us.

RICHARD

Fishes in his pocket.

But I still have the magic dust.

JULIET

Ragdoll!

RICHARD

I'd forgotten all about her.

MOTHER

What are you talking about?

JULIET

Quick the powder. What a state she'll be in.

RICHARD

No. Look! She's as good as new. She's smiling.

MOTHER

I don't know what you're talking about. I think you've gone mad.

JULIET

Thank goodness.

MOTHER

I have a surprise for you.

Exit

JULIET

Ragdoll, Ragdoll. Are you alright? Speak to me!

RAGDOLL

Well of course I'm all right. I may be just rags to you but I have my pride. I never speak in front of grown ups because they never believe you.

(CONTINUED)

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JULIET

Thank goodness.

RICHARD

We told everyone in Toyland about you and we freed Father Christmas. I wish they could be here with us now.

RAGDOLL

But they are here.

RICHARD

What do you mean they are here?

RAGDOLL

They are all about you. Close your eyes and think about them very hard.

RICHARD

O.K.

Sound of bells jingling.

RAGDOLL

Who do you want?

RICHARD

Flib the Cat

As Richard and Juliet go through the names of the characters they appear from all the corners of the theatre. They take their bows and gather on stage and when they are all assembled, the two children open their eyes.

RICHARD & JULIET

You're real. You're here.

Enter the mother dressed as the Snow Queen. The cast scatters and hides.

MOTHER

It's my fancy dress costume. I'm going as the Snow Queen. Don't you like it?

RICHARD & JULIET

No... It's It's.... Fantastic.

(CONTINUED)

Cast creeps back.

JULIET

Mother. Can't you see anybody.

MOTHER

Just you two. I've got another surprise for you.

Enter Father Christmas.

JULIET

She can't see them. Sprinkle her with the dust.

Richard sprinkles the dust over her.

MOTHER

Stop that, you'll get it all over my nice costume. Goodness me.
What are you all doing? So many of you. Goodness gracious.

RICHARD & JULIET

The trouble with you Mom is that you've got no imagination.

ALL

Merry Christmas

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas Everyone.

ALL

They all sing to the audience.

SONG : WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

THE END