

## Hansel and Gretel - The Prelude

(Hansel and Gretel are lying on the ground)

Gretel (whispering): Hansel! Are you awake?

Hansel (speaking normally): Yes, I -

Gretel: Shhhh!!!

Hansel (whispering): Sorry. What's up?

Gretel: They'll be waking up, soon.

Hansel: Who?

Gretel: Father and Stepmother, of course.

Hansel: Oh. They're really going to leave us here, aren't they?

Gretel: I think so. Wait! I hear something from their tent.

(Hansel and Gretel are silent for a moment. Then they sit up and look around.)

Hansel: They really did it. They snuck away without so much as a word. Why, those -

Gretel: Don't worry. We have a plan.

Hansel: I've still got some bread in my pocket, but we left most of it on the trail.

Gretel: So we could find our way back.

(Standing.)

Gretel: Which way did you say our first breadcrumbs were?

Hansel: They're just right over - (looks) over - (looks somewhere else) - Well, they should be just right - (spots something). Oh no. Shoo! (Rushes over to something.)

Gretel: What is it?

Hansel: A squirrel. Eating our latest breadcrumb. But that's all right. There should be another one - No! Shoo! (Runs a little further down.)

Gretel: What is it?

Hansel: Another squirrel. Gretel, you're not going to like this...

Gretel: WHAT?!

Hansel: I think the squirrels - and chipmunks - and badgers - and all the rest of them, have eaten up our trail home!

Gretel: Oh NO. What on earth are we going to do?

Hansel: (Sits on the ground.) I don't know, Gretel.

Gretel: Oh, this is rotten! Oh, those rotten...that horrible woman...convincing Father to leave us behind...well, I'd like to show *her* behind...

Hansel: Wait! I smell cookies baking.

Gretel: (Smells the air): It's coming from over there!

Both children: Oooh!

Gretel: A fence - made entirely of gum drops!

Hansel: And a path, made all of lollipops!

Gretel: And bushes, of lady fingers, glazed donuts...

Hansel: And chocolate covered pretzel trees!

Gretel: And...and...

(Both children gape)

Both children: The house.

Hansel: Gingerbread.

Gretel: And icing!

(Both children look at each other.)

Gretel (hesitant): Mother never let us eat sweets.

Hansel (hesitant): She always said they would rot our teeth and make us sick.

Gretel: But it's been so long since she died..

Hansel: And father's new wife can hardly bake a biscuit..

Gretel: And it's been so long since we've had something to eat..

Both children: (Hesitate, then look at each other) Let's go!