

How To Cast This Show

Smallest cast: This play could be done with a total of 5 actors. With a small cast, the narrators become characters in the scenes as indicated. Everyone should have lots of costumes available.

Largest cast: Every role is played by a different actor. Different narrators may play the narrator roles in each fairy tale.

Casting Notes

Any of the roles may be played by any actor of any gender, race, or ethnicity. There are some moments, when actors switch roles, that it might be funnier if Dwarf 2 was played by a male-presenting person and Snow White was played by a female-presenting person, but in general there's no reason to be overly restrictive in casting. This is all make-believe here.

Author's Note

It has been nearly fifteen years since I wrote the original *Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon*. With over 3,000 productions worldwide, it's been my most popular show by a long ways. Returning to an old play is always a crapshoot—there's always the risk of ruining something. There are things I would change, better jokes, but sometimes removing the warts from something doesn't make it turn into a prince, it makes it turn into a less interesting frog.

I am not the playwright I was fifteen years ago. I hope I'm a better one, but the results will be in the execution, not in me merely wishing it to be so. The original *BGS* has a madcap, free-wheeling, almost dangerous energy to it. The play feels like it could run off the rails at any time, and only the efforts of a talented group of actors are keeping this unwieldy massive thing moving forward. That's probably part of the reason actors and audiences enjoy doing it so much: you never know what's going to happen next.

The last thing I want to do is make this play safe. But I'd like to make it safe for the actors to perform.

THE BROTHERS GRIMM SPECTACULATHON

(FULL-LENGTH VERSION)

by Don Zolidis

ACT ONE

(The stage can be anything, really.)

(NARRATOR 1 enters.)

NARRATOR 1. Hello and welcome to the Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon.

(NARRATOR 2 bursts onto the stage.)

NARRATOR 2. SUNDAY SUNDAY SUNDAY! It's EXTREME! See! Monster slaying action as the three-headed pig battles the wolf-robot in a bone-crushing cage match of death! They'll huff and they'll puff and they'll kick some iron! Aaaaaaaah!

(Short pause. NARRATOR 1 blinks.)

NARRATOR 1. What we are going to do here today—

NARRATOR 2. And then the battle you've been waiting for: Snow White vs. Sleeping Beauty in a mud-wrestling death match. Who's the toughest of them all?!

NARRATOR 1. Can you stop please?

NARRATOR 2. We've got unhinged princess action! Elsa and Rapunzel in a hair-pulling smackdown! Let go! Let IT GOOOOO!

NARRATOR 1. Okay, stop. We're not doing that.

(NARRATOR 2 ignites a Firestarter.)

NARRATOR 2. Flames! Flames!

NARRATOR 1. *[Actor's name]*. You're doing it again. What did we talk about?

NARRATOR 2. About not being awesome? Like you?

NARRATOR 1. You're weirding them out.

NARRATOR 2. Fine. But I want you to know that you are no longer extreme in my book. No longer extreme.

(He drinks a Red Bull.)

NARRATOR 1. This—is the Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon!

NARRATOR 2. That's right. And what we are about to do today is going to blow your mind. You will never be the same. Forget your marriage. Forget your children. If you haven't already.

NARRATOR 1. If you need to go to the bathroom, we'll wait. We don't want accidents.

(NARRATOR 2 points to someone in the audience.)

NARRATOR 2. You look a little touch-and-go miss. Are you sure? You okay? All right then.

(To the other NARRATOR:)

Keep an eye on that one.

NARRATOR 1. A little background to begin:

NARRATOR 2. The Brothers Grimm were brothers named Grimm. They are dead. But in the period before they died the Brothers Grimm wrote 209 fairy tales that we know today—

NARRATOR 1. They didn't write them.

NARRATOR 2. The Brothers Grimm did not write 209 fairy tales that we know today, they were frauds. We should dig up their bodies and spit on their corpses.

NARRATOR 1. No I'm just saying they were collectors of stories.

NARRATOR 2. Never mind that last part.

NARRATOR 1. And these stories have become extremely popular. We all know them today:

NARRATOR 2. Such stories as The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids—

NARRATOR 1. The Pack of Ragamuffins—

NARRATOR 2. And Straw, Coal, and Bean.

NARRATOR 1. I forgot about that one.

NARRATOR 2. Oh yeah. Straw, Coal, and Bean? Only the best fairy tale in the entire history of the world. I'm literally like crying buckets by the end of it. Changed my life. I can't even look at straw, coal, or beans anymore.

NARRATOR 1. What's it about?

NARRATOR 2. No idea.

NARRATOR 1. Those might not be household names, but quite a few of these stories have become immortalized in film and television—

NARRATOR 2. Of course they've all been changed by "the mouse"—

(He lifts a sign into view that says "Disney".)

—to feed their enormous octopus-like animation empire which sucks the life out of existence and crushes your soul in a death-grip of happy happy songs and talking objects. I can't even speak their name aloud because they're for a way to sue me right now.

(He swings a lightsaber.)

You'll never take me alive, Imagineers!

NARRATOR 1. You know they own Star Wars too.

NARRATOR 2. *(Dropping lightsaber:)* Ah! They're everywhere!

NARRATOR 1. O-kay. What we are going to do for you right now is return these fairy tales to their original glory. We have assembled the greatest troupe of actors the world has even seen and—

(ACTOR enters, scratching themselves.)

ACTOR. I thought there was supposed to be catering back here?

NARRATOR 2. There's like a beef thing somewhere.

ACTOR. Where?

NARRATOR 2. I don't know—in the back somewhere.

ACTOR. Is there anything to drink?

NARRATOR 2. No.

(ACTOR exits, annoyed.)

NARRATOR 1. These actors are so insanely talented that—

ACTOR. *(Offstage:)* I don't see it!

NARRATOR 2. Do you see the radiator?

ACTOR. *(Offstage:)* No! Oh wait! No.

NARRATOR 2. There's probably someone sitting on it. Move them.

ACTOR. *(Offstage:)* Oh here it is.

ANOTHER ACTOR. *(Offstage:)* Hey!

NARRATOR 1. Anyway, in the short time we have, our crack team of actors is going to perform all 209 fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm.

NARRATOR 2. That's like three stories per minute.

NARRATOR 1. Or a different number if you know math. And we're going to keep the original endings intact!

NARRATOR 2. Blood! Violence! Death! People being cut open with scissors!

NARRATOR 1. And to make things more difficult, we're going to perform them as originally intended, which is . . .

NARRATOR 2. That it's all one giant super mega-juicy story.

NARRATOR 1. Are you ready?!

NARRATOR 2. I'm so excited I'm going to throw up. Does anyone have a hat? Nope? Excuse me then.

(NARRATOR 2 exits. NARRATOR 1 stretches and does warm-ups. Perhaps a few wind sprints.)

NARRATOR 1. Well I don't know when he'll be back—

(We hear sounds of him vomiting offstage.)

So . . . Once upon a time . . .

(GIRL enters.)

There was a girl who was raised by wolves and whose mother died in childbirth and she was abandoned by her father who could spin straw into a gold and made a deal with a series of elves if they would help him make shoes. There was also a talking fox in there somewhere.

NARRATOR 2. *(Returning)* And she was beautiful—

NARRATOR 1. Because no one cares about ugly people.

NARRATOR 2. Whoa.

NARRATOR 1. Point me to an ugly Disney princess.

NARRATOR 2. Snow White.

NARRATOR 1. Literally the fairest of them all.

NARRATOR 2. Not my thing, sorry. She's got that whiny voice.

NARRATOR 1. Anyway, there was a girl.

NARRATOR 2. And she was poor.

GIRL. Oh I am poor.

NARRATOR 2. Dirt poor.

NARRATOR 1. She couldn't even afford dirt.

(DIRT MERCHANT enters.)

DIRT MERCHANT. Dirt for sale! Dirt for sale! Hey, you! Get off the merchandise!

(He exits.)

GIRL. *(Crying:)* I shall flood the ground with my tears!

(DIRT MERCHANT returns.)

DIRT MERCHANT. You're getting it wet! Stop it!

(He exits.)

GIRL. If only I could live in a boot or make some deals with elves or find a talking fox.

(An ENCHANTRESS [played by NARRATOR 1] enters.)

ENCHANTRESS. Excuse me—but I couldn't help overhearing your tale of misery and woe. Tell you what—I will grant you your heart's desire if you give me one small thing.

GIRL. That sounds like a great bargain. I won't even ask what the small thing is because I'm so trusting!

ENCHANTRESS. Excellent. *(She makes a magical signal.)* I vanish.

(She does not actually appear to vanish. ENCHANTRESS looks around and covers GIRL's eyes.)

ENCHANTRESS. I vanish again.

(She quickly hides behind something.)

GIRL. What a nice lady.

(THE DEVIL [played by NARRATOR 2] enters.)

THE DEVIL. Hey there hot stuff. Oh wait, that's me. Ha ha ha ha!

GIRL. Are you a prince?

THE DEVIL. Of darkness.

(He laughs at his own joke.)

Oh that's clever! Now, I happened to overhear your tale of misery and woe and I'm here to help.

GIRL. Well actually I just—

THE DEVIL. *(Handing her a contract:)* Just sign this one small contract and you shall conceive a daughter so beautiful she will be selected to be in a game show with 22 other attractive women competing for the love of—

GIRL. Done.