

Take Me With You When You Go

Children's Readers' Theatre

By Alan Venable

Length: About 35 minutes. **Cast:** 10 or more

PARTS:

NARRATOR	SECOND AUNT
CHORUS	SECOND UNCLE
GRANNY	UNCLE BROKEN-HEART
BROTHER	APPLE TREE / PORCABELLA / MAMA
SISTER	CHERRY TREE / MUDWORTH/ PAPA
PEDDLER	PASSENGERS (4)
ELDEST AUNT	CAPTAIN
ELDEST UNCLE	



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NARRATOR. Once together and never apart, two children came into life.

BROTHER & SISTER. Waaah.

NARRATOR. But by the time they could suck their fingers, there was no one to care for them, except a grandmother on a mountain, out at the wild end of the world. She called them—

GRANNY. Sister and Brother Forgotten.

B&S. Waaah. (*Suck thumbs.*)

GRANNY. There, there, children.

NARRATOR. The granny was old and all she could do was hold the babies in her lap until they were ready to crawl. Then she let them loose.

CHORUS. (*Chicken.*) Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck....

NARRATOR. To crawl about the yard, finding eggs the hen had laid, and grabbing nanny goat by a leg to milk her into a pot.

CHORUS. (*Goat.*) Ble-e-e-e-e!

NARRATOR. And so they ate and grew and learned to stand and look up at the sky..

BROTHER. Sistew, a snowflake on my nose!

SISTER. Me, too!

B&S. Brrrrr.

GRANNY. Children, come in out of the cold and help me lie down for the night. That's right. Now lie down beside me and so I can cover us all with my shawl.

SISTER. Mmm.

GRANNY. Tonight you're going to learn to sing yourselves to sleep. Listen, Brother and Sister Forgotten. (*Sings.*)

Earth turn, breeze blow
Brave seeds, wind sow

B&S. (*Sing and yawn.*) Earth turn, breeze blow
Brave seeds, wind sow

GRANNY, B&S, and CHORUS. (*Sing.*) Take me with you
With you when you go

GRANNY and CHORUS. (*Sing.*) Take me with you (*GRANNY yawns.*)

CHORUS. (*Sing.*) With you when you go

NARRATOR. And so they slept. That night, a terrible blizzard set in.

CHORUS. (*Wind.*) Wsshhh, Wooo, Wsshh, Shssh, Wooo. (*Rooster.*) Coc-coc-a-dooo!

NARRATOR. At dawn, the mountain was deep in snow.

SISTER. Look out there. So white! Brother, let's go out. Granny?

BROTHER. Granny, your hand is cold.

GRANNY. Aye, children. I'm too old to get up and look after you now. You must go down to your eldest uncle's cabin and tell him how things are.

SISTER. An uncle?

GRANNY. My eldest son. Go, and send him back to fetch me.

B&S. All right.

GRANNY. Here, wrap yourselves in my old black shawl. And Sister, take this.

SISTER. So tiny and wrinkly!

BROTHER. What is it?

GRANNY. An apple. I've kept it for years. It's almost as old and shriveled as I. But nibble it along the way, to keep from starving. And remember our song?

B&S. Of course.

GRANNY. From now on, sing it whenever you're scared or sad or lost.

SISTER. But what *is* an apple?

GRANNY. Apples are fruit. They come from trees. Or used to.

SISTER. Like the trees in summer outside the gate?

GRANNY. Nay, but there used to be fruit trees out in the woods. Then my children vanished, and so did they. But the winter day is short. Go. The peddler's trail will take you down.

B&S. Yes, Granny.

SISTER. See you tonight.

GRANNY. Aye. Perhaps.

CHORUS. (*Wind.*) Wssh, wooo, wssh, wssh....

NARRATOR. Wrapped in Granny's old shawl, the children waded away through the snow.

CHORUS. (*Sing.*) Cold, cold, deep snow / Seeds sleep, ice grow
 Take me with you / With you when you go

CHORUS. (*Crows.*) Caw, caw! Caw, caw!

BROTHER. Those crows sound hungry.

SISTER. So am I.

PEDDLER. Help!

BROTHER. Did you hear something?

SISTER. Look. In that snowdrift. It looks like a pack.

PEDDLER. Help!

SISTER. And someone. Quick, dig him out.

BROTHER. It's the peddler who used to come by and beg for something to eat.

PEDDLER. Sister and Brother Forgotten!

SISTER. Peddler, how are you?

PEDDLER. Cold. And starving.

BROTHER. Just like us.

PEDDLER. Yes, but hungrier. How's dear old Granny who used to feed me?

SISTER. Too old. We're going to live with Eldest Uncle.

PEDDLER. Ah. His clearing's just down there. But his wife, she's mean as a crow.

SISTER. Here, eat this.

PEDDLER. What is it?

B&S. An apple.

PEDDLER. It is? I haven't tasted an apple in years. Hmmm, can't hurt to try. Mmm!
Now watch how deep I can spit the seed! (*Spits.*)

BROTHER. He's buried it under the snow.

PEDDLER. Well, thanks, Forgottens, and good luck.

B&S. Good luck. Good-bye.

CHORUS. (*Axe.*) Chop, chop, chop, chop!

NARRATOR. Near the clearing, Brother and Sister heard an axe in the woods. In front of the cabin, a woman in black stared down at a basket of laundry.

ELDEST AUNT. Caw! Those porcupines! They've eaten my laundry poles again. Now where do I stretch my rope to dry these long-johns?

BROTHER. Excuse me.

AUNT. Caw!

SISTER. Excuse us, Granny needs help. She wants Uncle to fetch her. She says we must all live with him.

AUNT. Who are you?

B&S. Sister and Brother Forgotten.

AUNT. Who? Husband!

UNCLE. (*Chopping stops. From nearby.*) Yes, my sweet?

AUNT. Your mother has let herself get too old. These Forgottens say to go and get her.

UNCLE. These children? So these are the ones who were left behind.

AUNT. Oh, just go!

UNCLE. You're right, before it's dark. Farewell until tonight.

B&S. Farewell.

AUNT. Now you think I'll feed you? What are you good for? I know! Stand apart and hold this rope between you. Arms high. Higher! Hold still while I pin this stuff on the line. Caw! Now stay like that. I'll be inside where it's warm. .

SISTER. But the clothes will only freeze.

AUNT. Caw! No squawking! Time for a hot cup of bitter root tea

CHORUS. (*Wind.*) Whsshh, wooo....

BROTHER. This line is heavy. She looks so cozy inside all wrapped in Granny's shawl.

SISTER. And drinking hot tea. And we're freezing.

B&S. Brrr.

SISTER. But did you hear what Eldest Uncle said?

BROTHER. What?

SISTER. He said someone left us behind. And it couldn't be Granny because we left her.

BROTHER. Well, maybe "Left Behinds" is better than being "Forgottens."

SISTER. Aye.

NARRATOR. Darkness fell.

SISTER. Look, a light coming out of the woods.

BROTHER. It's Uncle.

B&S. Brrrrrr.

UNCLE. What are you two doing out—? You're frozen! Here, give me that rope. Let's get you in.

SISTER. You have Granny's lantern.

UNCLE. Aye.

SISTER. Where is she?

UNCLE. Gone. I kissed her goodbye and planted her like an old seed in the ground.

B&S. Poor Granny!

AUNT. Caw! No squawking.

UNCLE. Come in where it's warm.

SISTER. Who else besides Granny ever held us when we cried?

AUNT. So you let them in, did you, husband. What a trick your mother played on you. Well, don't just stand there, you two. Lie down on the hearth and sleep!

NARRATOR. And so they lay down on the stones of the hearth. And days went by, and turned to years, but always it was winter. Each day at sunrise—

AUNT. Girl! Get up and fix me my bitter-root tea!

SISTER. Yes, Eldest Aunt.

AUNT. Now scrub the floor!

SISTER. Yes, Eldest Aunt.

UNCLE. Boy, rise and shine.

NARRATOR. Every day, Uncle and Brother went into the woods with an axe and a handsaw.

CHORUS. (*Axe.*) Chop, chop, chop.... (*Handsaw.*) Zhhhh, zhhhh,....

NARRATOR. There, they cut down barren trees and turned them into firewood.

AUNT. Girl, peel the rutabagas.

SISTER. Yes, Eldest Aunt.

AUNT. Faster!

SISTER. Yes, Eldest Aunt.

AUNT. Now take the peels to the shed.

SISTER. Yes!

CHORUS. (*Pigs.*) Grunt, grunt, snort, snort.... (*Piglets.*) Squee-weee, squee-weee....

NARRATOR. In the shed lived a family of pigs. By and by, the two piglets began to eat from Sister's hand.

SISTER. Oh, wonderful piglets. Muh, muh! Now kiss me back.

CHORUS. (*Piglets.*) Muh, muh! Squee-weee, squee-weee....

SISTER. Eldest Aunt, what should I call the piglets, in order to tell them apart?

AUNT. Call them bacon and lard!

SISTER. No, really!

AUNT. For all I care, you can call them Mudworth and Porcabella.

SISTER. Dear Mudworth, dear Porcabella!

CHORUS. (*Piglets.*) Squee-weee, squee-weee....

AUNT. Caw! Get back here. My tea is cold.

SISTER. Aye, Eldest Aunt.

NARRATOR. Around mid-day, Uncle and Brother would pause and eat a cold rutabaga for lunch.

BROTHER. Uncle, is firewood all that these trees could be?

UNCLE. *These* ones, aye. But we used to have fruit trees. And edible mushrooms that nourished the soil, and wild pigs to find the mushrooms. Back then, all your aunt thought of was the children we would have one day. But children never came.

AUNT. Caw! More tea.

SISTER. Aye, Eldest Aunt.

NARRATOR. One day—

CHORUS. (*Rain.*) Pit-pit-pit-pat, pat-pit-pat-pit,....

NARRATOR. The snow turned into rain. And something happened in the woods. As if all at once—

UNCLE. Look, an apple tree, with leaves. Spring's come again after all these years.

BROTHER. Should we cut it down?

UNCLE. Nay, let it grow. It might even bloom. My axe is getting slippery. Let's head back and get out of this rain.

BROTHER. Aye, Uncle.

APPLE TREE. (*Whispers.*) Brother, wait!

BROTHER. What? Who said that? Uncle's out of sight.

TREE. I, the apple tree. Take me with you when you go.

BROTHER. You? But Uncle said not to cut you down.

TREE. Then take a limb.

BROTHER. Really? You want me to saw off a branch?

TREE. Aye.

BROTHER. Very well.

CHORUS. (*Handsaw.*) Zhhhh, zhhhh,.... (*Heavier rain.*) Patta-patta-pat-pit,....

BROTHER. There, it's off.

TREE. Remember, take me with you when you go.

BROTHER. I should hide you for now, but where?

AUNT. Boy! There you are. I need you to dig me some more bitter root. Caw, what's that?

BROTHER. Nothing, Aunt.

AUNT. That's a fat piece of wood. Husband! Come out here and split this into laundry poles.

UNCLE. Coming.

BROTHER. Please, Eldest Aunt. The apple tree told me—

AUNT. Husband, split this log into poles.

BROTHER. Please, Eldest Aunt—

AUNT. Husband, give me that axe!

UNCLE. But wife, it's spring. Don't you remember?

AUNT. Spring? Caw! The piglets must be fat enough to eat by now. Never mind the laundry. Husband— (*Whispers.*) Husband, tomorrow, send the boy and girl off in the woods so that you and I can—I'd better start making a sauce.

UNCLE. But dear....

BROTHER. Sister!

SISTER. Here I am. What's wrong?

BROTHER. They're going to eat Porcabella and Mudworth!

SISTER. But they can't! Quick, to the shed.

CHORUS. (*Rain, thunder, wind.*) Patta-patta-patta-patta, wooo, thunder-thunder.....

SISTER. Mudworth, Porcabella!

CHORUS. (*Piglets.*) Squee, squee!

BROTHER. Out, quickly! Hurry!

SISTER. (*Kisses.*) Muh! Muh! Now go live in the woods!

CHORUS. (*Piglets fleeing.*) Squee, squee-wee!

UNCLE. There you are.

B&S. Uncle!

BROTHER. Please, Uncle, we heard Aunt say—

UNCLE. I knew you'd let them go. You're just like your mother, my poor little sister.

B&S. Your sister?

UNCLE. You must flee before your aunt finds out.

BROTHER. Where?

UNCLE. To your *second* uncle and aunt, at the sawmill down in the farms. That way! Follow the logging road. Wait. Here's something to take with you. It's hardly bigger than a raisin, but—

BROTHER. What is it?

UNCLE. A cherry. I've kept it since I was a boy. That's why it's all wrinkled and shrunk. It could keep you from starving. Take it.

BROTHER. Thank you, Uncle. Good-bye.

SISTER. Good-bye, Uncle.

UNCLE. Good-bye.

BROTHER. Sister, help me carry this limb.

CHORUS. (*Rain, thunder, wind.*) Pit-pat-pit-pat, wooo, rumble, rumble....

NARRATOR. Such rain was falling as never before. Poor Brother and Sister, walking all night long in mud that came up to their knees.

CHORUS. (*Walking through mud.*) Slup, slurp, slup, slup....

BROTHER. Sister, stop while I get a new grip.

SISTER. All right. The sky's getting lighter. It's almost dawn.

BROTHER. Funny, this knot in the log. It feels like an elbow.

SISTER. The one on my end feels like a knee.

BROTHER. I'm hungry.

SISTER. Eat the cherry Uncle gave us.

BROTHER. Nay, you.

SISTER. Nay, then what would *you* eat? Let's rest on this mud bank instead.

PEDDLER. Ow!

BROTHER. That's not a mudbank. It's a pack—and the peddler!

PEDDLER. Help.

SISTER. Help him up. Peddler!

PEDDLER. Forgottens!

BROTHER. Peddler, how did you get here?

PEDDLER. Got caught in a mudslide.

SISTER. We're glad you're only muddy.

PEDDLER. But I'm *not* only muddy. I'm starving!

BROTHER. Here, eat this.

PEDDLER. What is this?

B&S. A cherry.

PEDDLER. This raisin? Haven't seen cherries in years! (*Chews.*) Mmm. Now watch how hard I spit the pit. (*Spits.*)

SISTER. Right into the mud!

PEDDLER. Well, where headed now, Forgottens?

SISTER. Don't call us Forgottens anymore. We've turned into Left-Behinds.

BROTHER. And we're going to live with Second Uncle.

CHORUS. (*Steamsaw.*) Screeeee!

B&S. (*Cover their ears.*) Ow!

SISTER. What was that?

PEDDLER. That's the old buzzard's steam saw, down the road. Most likely, he won't even let you sit on his sawdust.

BROTHER. Well, we can't go back to Eldest Aunt.

PEDDLER. Too bad. She's a canary compared to him. Well, good-bye, dear Left-Behinds.

B&S. Good-bye.

NARRATOR. So Brother and Sister went down the road to a great pile of sawdust. Near that was , a shed with a steam-powered saw for cutting logs into lumber. A bald-headed man stood there, squirting oil into the gears.

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaaah....

SECOND AUNT. (*Sigh.*) Ah, me.

NARRATOR. And in a yard by the house, a roundish woman sat in a chair. At her feet, a horde of babies bumbled about.

AUNT. Girl, you're finally here!

SISTER. Me?

AUNT. My new nanny, aren't you? No?

SISTER. No.

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah!

AUNT. Hush, peapods. Oh, dear. Well, who *are* you two?

B&S. The Left-Behinds.

SISTER. Eldest Uncle sent us.

AUNT. I see. Tell me, girl, can you wrangle babies? Get down on your hands and knees and let me see you catch one.

SISTER. I'll try.

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah!

AUNT. Boy, you need to meet your uncle. And speak as loud as you can. He's been running that saw so long, his ears are no better than teacups. Husband!

UNCLE. Buzzaw! Every day, this needs more oil.

AUNT. Husband!!

UNCLE. What's that noise?

AUNT. . Husband!!! Come over here. These are the Left-Behinds.

UNCLE. Wet behinds?

AUNT. *Left-Behinds!* And they brought you this.

UNCLE. This piece of timber? Hmm! Don't get much this good these days.

AUNT. And the boy can help you at the mill! To saw that!

UNCLE. Eh?

BROTHER. Nay, Uncle, you see, that limb is very special....

UNCLE. Eh?

SISTER. Why is Uncle missing so many fingers?

AUNT. Oh, you know, saws. My goodness, almost dark.

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah.

AUNT. Time for beddy-bye! Inside with you, my little larvae. Shoo.

AUNT & SISTER. Shoo, shoo...

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah.... (*Fade.*)

UNCLE. Boy, don't fall in that pile of sawdust. Come over here to the saw.

CHORUS. (*Steamsaw.*) Ssssss.

UNCLE. See that steam? That's what turns the blade. Crack of dawn tomorrow, you come out and build a fire in the boiler. Can you do that?

BROTHER. Aye, Uncle.

UNCLE. Speak!

BROTHER. Aye, Uncle!

UNCLE. Tomorrow we'll make us a bushel of matchsticks. Now let's go in and eat.

BROTHER. But Uncle, this log... Uncle! He's gone. I've got to hide it. But where? The sawdust pile! (*Pushes.*) Uh! There you go.

AUNT. Boy?

BROTHER. Coming!

NARRATOR. Supper that night, with all those babies? You can imagine the mess.

CHORUS. (*Crying babies, gradually fading.*) Waaa, waaa, waaa....

AUNT. So! They're finally asleep.

SISTER. At last. (*Yawns.*)

AUNT. Poor girl, you're exhausted. Here's a blanket. Lie down and close your eyes.
(*Yawns.*) Bedtime, everyone.

BROTHER. (*Whispers.*) Sister, listen.

SISTER. (*Sleepily.*) What?

BROTHER. I hid the log in the sawdust pile. But what shall I tell Uncle?

SISTER. Say you lost it.

BROTHER. But I don't want to lie. Sister, wake up. Sister?

SISTER. (*Snores.*) Zzzzzzz.....

NARRATOR. Next morning....

CHORUS. (*Rooster.*) Coc-coc-a-dooo! (*Crying babies.*) Waaah!

BROTHER. Morning! Uncle's already out there. Uncle, I'm coming!

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah!

AUNT. Up, girl, up! It's diaper time!

UNCLE. So there you are.

BROTHER. Yes, Uncle.

UNCLE. Well? What did you do with it?

BROTHER. Well, Uncle, you see, I—I buried it.

UNCLE. You *burned* it?

BROTHER. Nay, I buried it in the—

UNCLE. You burned it up? You used good timber to stoke a fire?

BROTHER. If you say so.

UNCLE. Splinter-head!

BROTHER. Ow!

NARRATOR. Months went by, turned into years, and never another kind word for Brother.

UNCLE. Go on, get out, you good-for-nothing....

AUNT. Well, the children are finally down for their naps. Let's clean up the kitchen. Here,
rinse off this cleaver.

SISTER. Poor Brother.

AUNT. Aye, things were better years ago.

SISTER. How?

AUNT. Well, the farms around us weren't so poor. And the bees, they used to buzz
everywhere, blessing the flowers and making honey. My husband loved them. You see,
the orchards drew their life from soil made by ancient mushrooms, but now the trees

don't blossom, and bees can't feed. No cherries, no honey, no lumber. Here we are with nothing but—

CHORUS. (*Crying babies.*) Waaah! (*Stearmsaw.*) Sssssss. Screeeeee! (*Babies.*) Waaah!

AUNT. In place of that saw, we used to have a cider mill.

UNCLE. Where's that oil can? Boy? Where'd he go?

SISTER. If Brother goes on working like that, he'll be deaf as a diaper.

AUNT. And fingerless, too. Try not to think about it. Go for a walk, and sharpen that cleaver on a stone.

SISTER. All right. (*Hums.*) I love being outdoors. Maybe somewhere off in this field.... What's a tree doing out in this field? And right where the peddler spat the pit.

CHERRY TREE. Take me with you when you go.

SISTER. Excuse me? Was that you?

TREE. It was. Take a limb.

SISTER. But you're such a lovely tree. Still, Aunt gave me this cleaver. You mean it?

TREE. Yes.

SISTER. Very well.

AUNT. Girl!

SISTER. Coming, Aunt! Soon.

CHORUS. (*Cleaver.*) Chip, chip, chip, chip!

SISTER. There, it's off. I'd better hide you from Uncle for now. But there's nowhere to hide it in this field. I know, I'll sneak back and hide it in the sawdust pile.

UNCLE. So there you are, boy!

BROTHER. Ow, Uncle, stop twisting my ear.

UNCLE. Well, if you don't have the oil, who does?

BROTHER. Aunt was oiling the babies. Baby oil!

UNCLE. Baby oil?

BROTHER. Sister, what's that—?

SISTER. Brother!

UNCLE. What's this she has? Another hunk of wood. I'll take that!

SISTER. No, Uncle! Brother, help!

BROTHER. Uncle—

UNCLE. Now I'll turn on the saw.

CHORUS. (*Stearmsaw.*) Sssssss.....

BROTHER. But Uncle—

UNCLE. Out of my way, buzzaw!

BROTHER. (Very loud.) But the saw needs oil!!

UNCLE. Oil! I forgot. Wife!

AUNT. Aye?!!

UNCLE. Boy, don't touch this til I get back. Wife!

SISTER. Brother, what are you doing?

BROTHER. I'm digging the other log out of the sawdust. Quick, now you take that one and I'll take this. And run!

AUNT. Wait!

B&S. Aunt!

AUNT. You're leaving. Go. I understand. And I've hidden the oil can under the bed.

SISTER. Aunt, before we go, are we really just Left-Behinds?.

AUNT. Nay, your mother and father loved you more than life itself. How they lost you I don't know. But I'm certain you've always been missed.

B&S. Always-Missed?

AUNT. Your youngest uncle might know more.

BROTHER. *Another* uncle? Where?

AUNT. In town by the sea, but—

UNCLE. Wife?

AUNT. Go!

B&S. Good-bye.

AUNT. Good-bye.

NARRATOR. So Sister and Brother hurried away. And carried the logs all summer night, til the morning summer sun rose hot. And was hotter by afternoon.

BROTHER. Whew, I've got sunstroke.

SISTER. Me, too. What a hill we just came over. And there's the town down there. So many houses. And the sea beyond.

BROTHER. I'm starving.

SISTER. But which is their house?

BROTHER. Something's coming up from town. It looks like a walking haystack.

NARRATOR. But it was not a haystack. It was the peddler, bent low and hidden under a pack so big—it was the size of a house!

B&S. Peddler!

PEDDLER. Look out, I can't see where I'm going. Have I got to the top?

SISTER. Nay, it's a little higher.

PEDDLER. Higher? Oof! I've had it!

NARRATOR. With that, the peddler collapsed beneath his burden.

PEDDLER. Help.

BROTHER. Quick, let's haul him out from under.

B&S. Uh! uh!

PEDDLER. Ah! Oh, Left-Behinds, I spent every last penny down there in the shops to stock up one more time. Now I can't even climb the first hill. I give up.

SISTER. Not Left-Behinds anymore! We're Always-Missed. And don't talk about giving up. You'll make us feel like giving up, too.

BROTHER. Or maybe we can help him over the top. Sister, let's try and lift the pack.

B&S. Uh! Nnnh! Ooo!

PEDDLER. Look at them struggle, these Always-Missed. They have so little, yet every time we meet, they help me all they can.

BROTHER. And by the way, we're out of food.

PEDDLER. Well, so am I.

SISTER. And looking find our youngest uncle.

PEDDLER. Ah, the table-maker. The one who carves faces all over his tables. His shop's near the end of the market street. They call him Broken-Heart.

B&S. Broken-Heart?

PEDDLER. But you're right! Now! Help me squeeze in back under this pack. Uhhh. There. Now, altogether, lift on three. One,....

B&S and PEDDLE. Two, three!

PEDDLER. I'm up! Look out!

SISTER. He's tottering!

BROTHER. Stand back!

PEDDLER. Which way?

B&S. That way!

B&S and CHORUS. (*Sing.*) Take me with you / With you when you go

NARRATOR. So the peddler staggered up, while Brother and Sister picked up their logs and headed down. Evening gathered as they walked to the end of the market street.

BROTHER. I'm starving.

SISTER. Look, a window full of tables with faces on them. Let's try the door... It turns.

BROTHER. I smell food.

SISTER. (*Whispers.*) Let's peek. There's a man. He's cutting some wood.

B&S. Hello?

BROKEN-HEART. Go away. I'm busy.

SISTER. Uncle Broken-Heart?

BROKEN-HEART. Don't bother me.

BROTHER. Well, could we bother Youngest Aunt?

BROKEN-HEART. Youngest what? I have no wife!

BROTHER. Let's get out of here.

BROKEN-HEART. Be gone. Forgotten.

B&S. We're not Forgettens!

SISTER. But we're going! (*Sings.*)

Broke heart, stubbed toe / Mean, green, so-and-so!
Take me with you / With you when you—

BROKEN-HEART. (*Alarmed.*) What?

BROTHER. You heard us.

BROKEN-HEART. Wait. I used to know a song like that. Like "take me with you."

BROTHER. Mister, are you our uncle or not?

BROKEN-HEART. Well....

SISTER. Then tell us how we went missing.

BROKEN-HEART. Well, I—

BROTHER. Never mind. Come on, Sister. We'll eat somewhere else.

BROKEN-HEART. You're hungry? I was just about to eat.

SISTER. We don't care. We're leaving!

BROTHER. But Sister, smell. (*B&S smell.*)

SISTER. Ooooh. Well....

NARRATOR. So the children went in and had supper—dumplings and gravy, all they could eat.. But they kept the logs on their laps where Uncle couldn't snatch them away.

BROKEN-HEART. Full?

B&S. Aye!

BROKEN-HEART. Getting chilly tonight. Here, you can sleep in these quilts.

SISTER. For us? They're feathery. (*Yawns.*)

BROTHER. Uncle, what were you doing when we arrived?

BROKEN-HEART. I was whittling with a knife like this one. See, I keep them in my belt. Here's another for your sister. Be careful, they're sharp.

SISTER.. Do you carve your tables with these?

BROKEN-HEART. I do. These knives and a little experience. Would you like to try?

B&S. Aye.

BROKEN-HEART. And I used to carve puppets—marionettes.

B&S. Marionettes?

BROKEN-HEART. Wooden puppets on strings. Well, good-night.

B&S. Goodnight.

BROTHER. I'm not so sleepy now.

SISTER. He gave us knives but nothing to carve on.

APPLE & CHERRY TREES. (*Whisper.*) Carve us.

BROTHER. What was that?

SISTER. The limbs! Do you mean it?

APPLE & CHERRY TREES. (*Whisper.*) We do.

SISTER. Brother, feel this tip of a cherry toe.

BROTHER. And this apple knuckle here.

NARRATOR. So they began to carve from the limbs. Many nights went by. Not only did they carve a foot and a hand, but two *pairs* of feet and hands and legs and arms....

BROTHER. There, the second body is finally done. (*Yawns.*)

BROKEN-HEART. Knock, knock. May I come in?

SISTER. Aye, Uncle.

BROTHER. Come sit and see.

BROKEN-HEART. I see you've been carving marionettes.

BROTHER. All but the heads.

SISTER. We don't know enough about faces. Uncle, do you see faces in these last two blocks?

BROKEN-HEART. Yes.

BROTHER. What kind?

BROKEN-HEART. Sad ones. Parents maybe.

SISTER. Carve them for us.

BROKEN-HEART. I can't.

BROTHER. But you can.

BROKEN-HEART. Some faces are too hard to carve.

SISTER. Why?

BROKEN-HEART. Ah. Now I must tell you a story. You see, long ago, out at the end of the world, four children grew up on a mountain. You've already met my brothers.

B&S. Yes we have.

BROKEN-HEART. There was a sister, too, the youngest. She and—I can't go on.

B&S. Go on.

BROKEN-HEART. Once together and never apart. Each summer we filled our caps with apples, cherries, honey. Each fall we followed the pigs for mushrooms. We were always happy until, one spring, she wanted to leave. I said, "Let's go together." So we came here and I learned to make tables.

SISTER. What did *she* do?

BROKEN-HEART. She sang, for my marionettes to dance. But to make her living, she became a cobbler.

SISTER. What music did she like to sing?

BROKEN-HEART. A song called "Take Me With You." Aye, your song. But then she....

SISTER. What? Uncle, please!

BROKEN-HEART. She fell. In love.

BROTHER. Was that bad?

BROKEN-HEART. It was, because I hated the man she fell in love with.

BROTHER. Was he mean?

BROKEN-HEART. No, he was simply a penniless dancer who brought in some worn-out shoes to mend. They fell in love, and after that she only sang for him.

SISTER. Poor you.

BROKEN-HEART. And they got married and wanted to take a voyage.

SISTER. And you'd be lonely.

BROKEN-HEART. Aye. And then babies arrived.

SISTER. Oh, no.

BROKEN-HEART. Which makes traveling hard. Still, her husband was determined. You see, he'd heard of an island where people loved to watch animals dance, and paid good money to see them. Especially pigs.

B&S. Pigs

BROKEN-HEART. So they bought a pair of piglets and planned to teach them during the voyage.

BROTHER. I didn't know pigs could dance.

SISTER. Uncle, when you said babies, did you mean...?

BROKEN-HEART. Who else? So my sister loved *three* other people better than me that evening I helped them down to board the ship, the babies wrapped asleep in a quilt like this one. The piglets were also asleep, in a sack. The ship was called *The Wild Hope*.

B&S. *The Wild Hope!*

BROKEN-HEART. "All ashore that's going ashore!" cried the first mate. Time to say good-bye and get off. I said, "Sister, give me the piglets! I need someone to love me." I begged her husband, "Let me take them! Teach seagulls instead!" Of course, they gave in and handed me the sack. "Farewell!" we said, and I ran down the gangway.

BROTHER. You took the piglets?

BROKEN-HEART. Nay. A moment before, when your parents weren't looking, I'd switched you around.

SISTER. Us?

BROKEN-HEART. I switched sleeping babies with sleeping pigs. It was piglets I left in the quilt, and took you in the sack. And waved as the ship headed out.

SISTER. Us? You stole us?

BROKEN-HEART. I was jealous. I know, not a very good reason.

SISTER. A very *bad* one!

BROKEN-HEART. And no one knew until that night when the pigs woke up on the ship. Squee-wee! Later, I wrote to your parents overseas—claiming when I'd got off the ship that the sack was full of rutabagas. I said someone else must have kidnapped you when none of us was looking. Well, I never heard from them again. But I found out all about babies. I mean how much work they are.

SISTER. And smelly sometimes!

BROKEN-HEART. And all the crying! So I took you and left you with Granny.

BROTHER. Dear Granny!

SISTER. What did our parents look like?

BROKEN-HEART. Well, I'm not great with words. I'm not sure how to say.

B&S. Wicked Uncle!

BROKEN-HEART. Well, I—

BROTHER. You deserve your broken heart! Get off our quilt!

BROKEN-HEART. Yes, of course.

SISTER. Get out!

BROKEN-HEART. You're right. I'm going. Goodnight.

CHORUS. (*Sing.*) Take me with you / Take me with you
 Take me with you / With you when you go

NARRATOR. Somehow the long night passed. At dawn, when Brother and Sister opened their eyes....

BROTHER. It's strange, but I want to forgive him.

SISTER. Me, too. He loved his sister like you and me.

BROTHER. Let's see if he's up.

SISTER. Our carvings are gone. Uncle?

BROTHER. Uncle!

SISTER. Well, he's not in the kitchen, but the tablecloth is missing.

BROTHER. Let's look in the woodshop.

SISTER. Look, those little bodies with strings and sticks. They look like—

B&S. Marionettes!

SISTER. He carved the heads and strung all the pieces.

BROTHER. And made them clothes. I like the little man.

SISTER. I love the woman.

BROTHER. Okay, Mr. Man, stand up. Now bow. Make her wave.

SISTER. "Oh, I can sing, Tra-la, tra-la."

BROTHER. "Watch me wiggle my two wooden legs."

SISTER. What shall we call them?

BROTHER. What names do we like? Hmm. (*Thinks.*) Mudworth!

SISTER. (at the same time.) Porcabella! "Good day, Mudworth."

BROTHER. "Good day, Porcabella."

MUDWORTH. (*Speaking for himself.*) Did you sleep well, my dear?

BROTHER. It's almost like he speaks by himself.

SISTER. And so does she.

PORCABELLA. Yes, I slept very well, except I seem to forget something.

MUDWORTH. Me too.

SISTER. Remember being trees?

MUDWORTH & PORCABELLA. We were trees?

BROTHER. We carved you. I suppose we were thinking of our parents. They're missing.

MUDWORTH. We could be your parents. Just pull our strings. Any rules we should know?

BROTHER. Just one.

PORCABELLA. What's that one?

B&S. Take me with you with you when you go.

BROTHER. Porcabella, sing.

PORCABELLA. Me? Oh, dear. (*Clears her throat.*) Ahem.

SISTER. And Mudworth, dance.

MUDWORTH. Me? I'd love to. How's this?

PORCABELLA. (*Sings.*) Earth turn, breeze blow / Brave seeds, wind sow....

SISTER. Stop. We should try to find uncle.

BROTHER. Aye, but where?

PORCABELLA. Down at the dock?

SISTER. Yes! Like our parents, he might be taking a ship.

MUDWORTH. Come, no time to waste. And as your new parents, we'll go ahead and keep you out of trouble. And please let us do the talking. Watch out, son! Keep my feet on the ground.

BROTHER. I'm trying.

PORCABELLA. Daughter, don't walk so close behind.

SISTER. But I need to, to work your sticks.

NARRATOR. So the four set off that fall afternoon, down the market street through town to the pier where the steamships docked to lower their gangways and let passengers on and off.

CHORUS. (*Seagulls and pelicans.*) Ke-ray, ke-rah... Ka, ka, ka.....

NARRATOR. Seagulls and pelicans flew overhead. Ships blew their horns.

CHORUS. (*Ship's horn.*) Bay-oooo!

PASSENGER 1. There she is, The Royal Adventure! What a crowd at the gangway!

PASSENGERS. (*Variously.*) She's so huge. Hey, watch out with that suitcase. Look at the smoke coming out of her chimneys.

CAPTAIN. Ladies and gentlemen, please form a tidy, quiet line.

PASSENGER 2. How long are you going to make us wait?

CAPTAIN. As long as I, the captain, please.

PASSENGER 3. The gangway's down. Let us on.

PASSENGERS. (*Variously.*) Yes. She's right. Let us on.

CAPTAIN. Folks, you're lucky. Some puppets have arrived to keep you entertained.

PASSENGERS. Puppets? There they are. Look how funny they walk. (*Laughter.*)

MUDWORTH. People, we are looking for Uncle Broken-Heart.

PASSENGERS. Uncle who? (*Laugh.*) Make the lady puppet tell a joke.

PORCABELLA. I beg your pardon.

MUDWORTH. See here—

PASSENGER 4. Girl, give me those sticks. I want to try that.

PORCABELLA. Excuse me!

SISTER. No, please.

PASSENGER 1. Me, too. Boy, give me that man.

MUDWORTH. Wait!

BROTHER. Wait!

PASSENGER 2. Hey, It's my turn.

PASSENGERS. (*Variously.*) Hey, it's my turn. No, mine. I'm next. Let me! You don't know how.

CHORUS. (*Ship's horn.*) Bay-oooo!

PASSENGER 1. Look, down the pier. Another ship's arrived. I'm trying to read her name on the bow. Looks like *The Wild... Wild....*

B&S. *Hope!*

PASSENGER 4. Her gangway's going down alongside that other crowd of people. Hey why can't our ship unload as fast?

BROTHER. Please, give back our parents. Please!

SISTER. Brother! Quick while we're free, let's run and see if Uncle's in *that* other crowd.

BROTHER. Okay.

SISTER. Run.

CAPTAIN. Ladies and gentleman, all aboard *The Royal Adventure*.

PASSENGERS. (*Variously.*) Finally! Hey, don't shove! Me? Yeah, you! Move!

MUDWORTH. Brother!

PORCABELLA. Sister! They're taking us aboard!

CAPTAIN. Come on, hurry up, keep moving!

MUDWORTH & PORCABELLA. Help!

CHORUS. (*Seagulls and pelicans.*) Ka, ka,..... Ke-ray....

NARRATOR. Soon, Brother and Sister came hurrying back.

BROTHER. Mudworth?

SISTER. Porcabella? Where did they go?

BROTHER. That ship heading out, they're waving from the rail!

SISTER. It's all *our* fault for rushing off.

BROTHER. Anyway, they weren't real—I guess. (*B&S sigh.*) Now what?

CHORUS. (*Seagulls and pelicans.*) Kee-ra, kee-ra, keeeee....

BROTHER. Sister, we can't just sit here for hours, watching the gulls.

SISTER. Why not? Grown-ups are such a mystery. I still can't understand why Uncle Broken-Heart wouldn't carve the faces at first.

BROTHER. Maybe it made him remember his sister. Maybe he felt guilty.

SISTER. And Granny's gone and Broken-Heart, and all our other uncles and aunts. And we still we have no idea what our parents even looked like. I'm tired.

BROTHER. Me too. I didn't sleep very well last night. (*Yawns.*)

SISTER. Me, neither. (*Yawns. B&S sleep.*)

CHORUS. (*Seagulls, flying away.*) Ke-ray, ke-ray, keee....keee....

PAPA. Finally off that *Wild Hope!* I can't believe they made us get off last.

MAMA. It feels so good to be back on land. Stop. You know, (*Cries.*) part of me wants to stay right by the dock, the last place we ever saw our children. It's all so sad. Even if we ever crossed paths again, they'd be so old we'd never even know them. (*Sobs.*)

PAPA. I know. (*Cries.*) Well, as your mother used to say, whenever we're sad or afraid or lost....

PAPA & MAMA. (*Sing.*) Earth turn, breeze blow

BROTHER. Sister?

PAPA & MAMA. (*Sing.*) Brave seeds, wind sow

BROTHER. Sister!

SISTER. I hear!

PAPA & MAMA. (*Sing.*) Take me with you

B&S. (*Sing.*) With you when you go

MAMA. What was that?

PAPA. An echo?

MAMA. Like someone else was singing. (*Sings.*) Take me—

B&S. (*Sing.*) With you.

MAMA. Those children over there—

BROTHER. That lady, it's—Porcabella?

B&S. Mudworth?

PAPA & MAMA. Who?

SISTER. Brother, don't you see? When Uncle carved those faces, he was showing us—
Mama!

BROTHER. Papa!

MAMA. It's them! Oh!

B&S. Mama!

PAPA. Those big kids are ours? They must be!

MAMA. Muh, muh! Oh, let me kiss you. Muh!

PAPA. My children! Muh, muh!

BROTHER. Granny taught us your song!

SISTER. And Uncle Broken-Heart helped us find you!

MAMA. (*Angry.*) Uncle? You mean my wicked brother?

PAPA. We know all about him now. Oh, yes, we figured it out.

BROTHER. Then why didn't you come right back?

MAMA. We tried, but it took us ten years to get off the ship.

PAPA. We got off at its very first stop, but there we had to wait until it came back on its
homeward voyage.

MAMA. And then we couldn't pay for tickets.

PAPA. We tried to sneak on board.

MAMA. And were caught. The captain was going to send us to prison.

PAPA. Or else we had to scrub the decks.

MAMA & PAPA. For twenty years.

B&S. Twenty years!

MAMA. But after ten years a strange thing happened. A peddler I had known as a child—
he'd finally struck it rich and was taking an ocean voyage. He paid our way off the ship.

BROTHER. The peddler?

B&S. Rich?

MAMA. Aye, he went out peddling one last time and—

PAPA. Well, at first it looked like the entire countryside was covered with a snow, but then—

MAMA. It turned out to be covered with blooming trees—

PAPA. Two trees, you see—an apple and cherry—had each lost a limb, then suddenly burst into bloom and fruit. And then—

MAMA. From somewhere a sad old crow—like that one up there among the seagulls—

CHORUS. (*Distant seagulls.*) Kee-ra, kee-ra....

ELDEST AUNT. Caw!

PAPA. And a sad old buzzard—like that one up there.

SECOND UNCLE. Buzzaw!

MAMA. Adopted those trees, and scattered their seeds both far and yon. And everywhere, new trees sprang up, and bloomed and fruited. And the bees came back with honey, and the mushrooms grew again, and wild pigs....and people had money again.

PAPA. Or so the peddler said.

SISTER. Where are your piglets?

MAMA. We set them free.

BROTHER. Did the peddler see Eldest Aunt?

MAMA. No.

ELDEST AUNT. Caw!

PAPA. Nor Second Uncle. It seems they vanished into the sky.

SECOND UNCLE. Buzzaw!

B&S. Hmmm.

MAMA. Just wait 'til I catch my brother!

BROKEN-HEART. Here I am, Sister.

MAMA. You!

BROKEN-HEART. I came down here thinking I might sail away. I've been watching all this time.

B&S. Uncle Broken-Heart!

BROTHER. Mama, he helped us find you.

BROKEN-HEART. I tried. But I know that can never make up for what I did. And I know you can never forgive me.

MAMA. (*Pause.*) Oh, brother! (*Kisses.*) Muh! Muh! Muh!

BROKEN-HEART. My wonderful sister!

SISTER. Mama, we thought you were angry at him.

MAMA. I was, I am, I mean—

PAPA. Brother-in-law, you must do something to set things right, after all the pain you've caused.

BROKEN-HEART. I know. Take my house.

MAMA & PAPA. Your house!

BROKEN-HEART. Sister, brother-in-law, I beg your forgiveness.

MAMA & PAPA. Well....

B&S. Mama, Papa, please....

MAMA & PAPA. Well, of course. Muh!

BROKEN-HEART. Now, back to *your* house!

SISTER. Nay. Back to Granny's.

BROTHER. Aye, and Uncle, you come, too.

MAMA & PAPA. Aye!

MAMA. Come, brother. Come help us rebuild. Then return to your own home in town.
Find a partner of your own, and see what the future will bring.

BROKEN-HEART. I shall.

MAMA. So let's be off.

BROTHER. Mother, before we go, do you and Father ever feel a little, you know, wooden?

PAPA. Do we! After scrubbing so many decks, some days I'm stiff as a board!

BROTHER. I thought so.

SISTER. And do you ever feel like, someone is pulling your strings?

PAPA. Now that you mention it.

NARRATOR. Once more together, never apart!

ALL. (*Sing.*) Earth turn, breeze blow / Brave seeds, wind sow
 Take me with you / Take me with you
 Take me with you / With you when you go.

(*END.*)

NOTES

PERMISSION TO PERFORM OR COPY: Classes are free to perform this reading. As a courtesy, let us know about it by writing to avenable@sbcglobal.net or publisher@OneMonkeyBooks.com. Photocopies may be made but not sold. Please let us know if you pass on the script to another school. Theatres must obtain permission to perform. Write to avenable@sbcglobal.net or publisher@OneMonkeyBooks.com.

A staged version is also available.

READING SEPARATE SCENES: Although the script is not divided into scenes, five main scenes (and three peddler interludes) can easily be taken from the play for separate reading:

1. Growing up and leaving Granny. The peddler in the snowdrift.
2. Eldest Uncle and Aunt. The peddler in the mud bank.
3. Second Aunt and Uncle. The peddler with the too-big pack.
4. Uncle Broken-Heart.
5. Reunion at the dock

CHANGES IN THE ADAPTATION: To shorten performance time, changes were made in adapting the book for readers' theatre. Mainly, the braided girl, orphan woman, and corn boy do not appear in the reading; there is no scene for the chapter about the ship and no final scene en route back to the mountain. The readers' theatre version ends with B&S going to the dock and there re-uniting with their parents.

MUSIC:

Take Me With You

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song "Take Me With You". The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes: Earth, Breeze, Brave, seeds, and Wind. The second staff is also in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: Take, me, With, you, With, you, when, you, go.

Earth turn, Breeze blow, Brave seeds Wind sow.

Take me, With you, With you when you go.

Hear and get alternate tunes, chords, piano arrangement at OneMonkeyBooks.com.