

The Musicians of Bremen (Excerpt)

Adapted by David Farmer

Based on a story from the Brothers Grimm

Taken from 'Playful Plays Volume One' (CreateSpace, 2014)

Estimated running time: 15 minutes

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CAST: 9 (M/F)

DONKEY	Would-be rock star
DOG	Drummer, keen on cheese and pickle sandwiches
CAT	Likes to think she can sing
ROOSTER	Loves to rap
FIDDLESTICKS	Robber
TRICKSY	Robber
SNITCH	Robber
MUGGINS	Robber
FARMER/TREE	Can be played by the same actor

Director's Notes

This play gives the cast and director opportunities to have fun with the characters, action sequences and songs.

You will need: Half-masks to cover the eyes and nose for the animal characters, or you might like to experiment with face make-up and colourful costumes.

Director's Tip

Developing Characters

There are two main groups of characters - the animals and the robbers. Remember the animals are quite old so think about how to use your voices and bodies to show that. All the characters can be played by boys or girls, so you may sometimes need to change "he" to "she" or the other way round.

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DONKEY enters slowly carrying a sack of corn on his back. The following can be sung to the tune of 'Clementine'.

DONKEY: I'm a donkey
In the farmyard
And I used to be the best.
But I'm old now
And I'm wonky
And it's time to have a rest.

DONKEY puts down his sack and sits on it.

FARMER: *(Offstage.)* Donkey! Have you finished that job yet?

DONKEY: I'd better carry this sack in,
Or I'll get a whacking!

DONKEY tries to carry the sack but stumbles. He looks at audience for sympathy. Brays.

Ee-aw, ee-aw, ee-aw.

FARMER enters.

FARMER: Come on you lazy good-for-nothing donkey!

DONKEY struggles with the sack and then drops it on the ground.

DONKEY: Ee-aw. Ee-aw.

FARMER: I'm fed up with you! I'm going home for a cup of tea. By the time I come back, I expect you to have moved all fifty sacks of corn. Or else...

FARMER makes a throat cutting sign and exits. DONKEY looks at audience and gulps loudly.

DONKEY: What am I to do? I've been carrying sacks of corn my whole life. I can't help it if I'm old. I'm doing my best! And now he says...

DONKEY holds his throat and gulps.

DONKEY: At my age I should be munching away in a field of delicious

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green grass, not working like a slave. When I was young I used to dream of being a rock star. That's it! I'll run away to Bremen Town, to busk in the streets.

Goodbye Farmer and goodbye corn!

DONKEY kicks the sack of corn off stage and goes off in the opposite direction. DOG runs on and pants. He looks behind him.

DOG: That's far enough. Hopefully, my nasty master won't bother looking for me now.

(Listens.) Oops! Too late, I think I can hear him coming.

DOG pretends to be a tree, but he is still panting. DONKEY enters. DOG holds his breath. DONKEY walks past the tree then looks at it in a puzzled way. Eventually DOG has to start breathing again. He stops pretending to be a tree.

DONKEY: Why were you pretending to be a tree? And why are you out of breath?

DOG: *(Panting.)* I've been running all morning - running away from my nasty master. I thought you were him. He says I'm too old to hunt any more.

DONKEY: And are you?

DOG: Well, I think I'm losing my sense of smell. Last time he sent me off to collect a duck, I came back with a cheese and pickle sandwich.

DONKEY: Well at least it was something to eat.

DOG: *(Whispers.)* He said he was going to...

DOG makes throat-cutting sign. Both animals gulp.

DONKEY: My master is just as bad. He wants to do the same to me. So I'm going to Bremen Town to become a busker. In fact, I'm looking for animals to join my band. You don't know any drummers, do you?

DOG: Well, actually...

MUSIC: A drum solo. DOG mimes playing the drums.

DONKEY: Hey, that's not bad. Why don't you come with me? You know what they say? Two's company!

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*The four ANIMALS exit. Enter the four ROBBERS. They sit down on chairs on one side of the stage (they can bring these on if necessary).*

- FIDDLE: Right, Tricky, let's go over the plan one more time shall we?
- TRICKSY: (*Pointing to MUGGINS.*) Muggins, you are going to be up on the roof keeping an eye out in case anybody comes along.
- SNITCH: The three of us – Fiddlesticks, Tricky and me – will be inside the house looking for jewellery and other valuables.
- MUGGINS: Come on Snitch, that's not fair! What if it's raining?
- TRICKSY: Take an umbrella. (*She laughs.*)
- MUGGINS: I always have to be the one that waits outside.
- FIDDLE: That's because *we* know exactly what we're looking for.
- MUGGINS: I'm just saying, I think somebody else should have a turn sometimes.
- SNITCH: Never mind that, Muggins, let's have something to eat. I don't like to rob on an empty stomach.

*They mime eating and drinking a hearty meal. TREE enters on the opposite side.*

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Playful Plays (Volume One)

The Musicians of Bremen is taken from *Playful Plays (Volume One)*. This lively collection of short plays for children and young people is supported by inspirational drama games designed to bring creativity and fun to the rehearsal room. The stories are based on traditional folk-tales from countries including China, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Turkey and Scandinavia.

The plays can easily be performed by groups of children and young people on their own, or under the direction of an adult. They feature performance techniques such as mime, mask, freeze frames, audience participation, live music and song.

The author draws on his experience in the professional theatre world to provide helpful advice for the young director and actor including warm-ups, tips on line-learning and ideas for character development, as well as games to develop acting skills such as concentration, focus and working as an ensemble.

David Farmer is a freelance drama consultant, theatre director and author of several best-selling books on drama. His plays have been performed at theatres in London and throughout the UK as well as in schools and festivals across Europe and North America.

Also by David Farmer

101 Drama Games and Activities
101 More Drama Games and Activities
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I hope you enjoyed this excerpt and are ready to try out some more!

- The complete script of *'The Musicians of Bremen'* can be downloaded from www.dramaresource.com/musicians-of-bremen-script
- Full details of *'Playful Plays Volume 1'* can be found at www.dramaresource.com/playful-plays-volume-1
- Copies of the book may be purchased from Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.com
- The Resource Page including colouring sheets and suggestions for music to use in your productions can be found at www.dramaresource.com/playfulplays

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