

The Three Sillies (1983)

by Mary Glenfield

It may seem unusual to find a children's play, particularly an English folktale, printed in a collection that is not devoted on the whole to children's theatre. But the fact that *The Three Sillies* stage adaptation by actor and longtime Walterdale member Mary Glenfield appeared during the company's fruitful new play years in the early 1980s grants leave for such an opportunity. Glenfield's nimble activation of the story's ranging and outrageous quest narrative is aimed at very young audiences, but as with all lively children's theatre, the accompanying adults can expect the child within to find enjoyment too. The fact that a number of other published and frequently presented adaptations of the story have appeared since Glenfield's 1983 version is a testament to the tale's rich performative potential.

Anyone who has practised theatre in Edmonton during the past fifty years would find it hard to dispute that Mary Glenfield and her husband Frank may be counted as the soul of Edmonton's theatre community. Mary Ross Glenfield (née Baldock) was born in London, England, in 1921. She moved with her family three months later to Bangor-on-Dee in North Wales, where her father took up a position as rector at an Anglican church; her mother was a classical scholar. Glenfield attended boarding schools in Chester and then Denbigh in North Wales before World War II, when she moved to work in Bletchley, England, at the Government Code and Cypher School (known for cracking Germany's Enigma Code). After the war, Glenfield worked in London doing editorial work with the *Red Cross Review* and the magazine *Women's Own*, as well as acting with the Liberal Theatre Group, until 1951, when she travelled to Edmonton to visit an aunt. Within three months, Glenfield was cast in a production of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* produced by the Alberta Legislature's Civil Service Playhouse. Two years later she married Frank Glenfield, a staff member at the University of Alberta's Drama Division, while he was acting in a Studio Theatre production of Labiche's *The Italian Straw Hat*. After she had lived in the city for thirteen years, the

Edmonton Journal noted that as an actor Mary Glenfield was “well known to Edmonton theatre audiences” (“Fool’s Day”). While raising two adopted children with Frank and acting with a number of companies, including Walterdale and Bette Anderson’s Theatre for Children, Glenfield intermittently took undergraduate courses at the University of Alberta until she earned a BA in drama in 1992. Several years later she re-enrolled at the Drama Department, completing an MA in 2001 with her thesis “The Growth of Edmonton Theatre: From the Early 1920s to 1965,” which includes a chapter on children’s theatre. At Walterdale, Glenfield served not only as an actor, but also as board secretary, wardrobe mistress, and founding librarian. Today she continues to act, having appeared in well over fifty plays, including memorable performances in Walterdale’s *Hedda Gabler* (April 1964), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (February 1967), and *Hay Fever* (March–April 1972).

The Three Sillies, Glenfield’s only play, fits within Canada’s long tradition of producing children’s theatre.³⁹ She records in her thesis that in Edmonton, children’s theatre began in the early 1950s at city playgrounds (107) and that in 1954 Bette Anderson began the company Theatre for Children, which ran until 1969 (110).⁴⁰ In December 1973, Walterdale began to produce plays that would appropriately accommodate young actors under the name Young Walterdale. Offered outside of the regular season package, the shows were presented by young actors in the context of “on-the-job” training. These plays frequently received popular and critical praise and provided early stage time to a number of now well-recognized professional actors in Edmonton. They were presented as Young Walterdale productions until 1979, when the slot was repackaged first as the Walterdale Christmas Show and then, following the production of Glenfield’s play, as the Christmas Pantomime. This format, in turn, lasted until 1995, when Warren Graves’s adaptation *Beauty and the Beast* ran as the last children’s show. The spot has since been given over to more general (i.e., adult) shows, though in 2007 artistic director Randy Brososky directed Reakes’s *Simbad the Sailor* as a “classic pantomime in the true tradition” (Walterdale, *Walterdale Playhouse*).⁴¹

Among Walterdale’s two dozen children’s offerings, *The Three Sillies* stands out. Glenfield wrote the play and its accompanying songs specifically for the slot because Walterdale had had recent trouble finding an appropriate children’s show (the company presented the musical *The Fantasticks* in the December slot the year before). *The Three Sillies* was hailed in the *Walterdale Newsletter* as “a welcome return of the children’s production.”⁴² Moreover, with this play we see how Glenfield’s longstanding personal connection to a company whose reputation she helped to build is intertwined with her childhood exposure to English folktales. The play stages her memory of one tale; the process of creating it was Glenfield’s personal journey.

Three months after *The Three Sillies* closed, Walterdale president Vivien Bosley wrote a thank-you letter to Mary and to Frank, who had directed the play. Bosley’s letter highlighted the play’s marketability as a children’s show, with its “fairy-tale charm and cast of people and animals.” (The *Walterdale Newsletter* took a humorous tack: “It sounds like the only person missing in this production is a vet!”) Bosley’s encouragement to Mary in her letter to “go on to other playwriting ventures [because] it’s obviously something you have a talent for—not to mention the very catchy songs,” unfortunately, went unheeded.

Mary Glenfield's *The Three Sillies* is a light-hearted musical children's play adapted from the English folktale of the same name with humour and imagination. The play opens in an English farm courtyard with the simple confusions of preparing the evening meal, including the trouble of catching the chicken and bringing in the water. While standing outside, young Sally cries when she sees an axe, worried that it will fall on someone. The play takes an adventurous turn when young Peter tells Sally that before he can marry her, he must go on a journey to discover if there are any "sillies" sillier than she. Meanwhile, two thieves plot to follow Peter and steal his money. In Ireland, Peter finds an old woman who pulls her sheep up onto her grass roof to graze; in Scotland, he finds a man who tries to run and jump into his breeches to put them on; and in Wales, he finds three villagers fishing for the moon in a pond because it fell in the night before. Populating the play are sheep (staged as a cow in the premiere), dogs and cats (actors in costume or puppets, some of which speak and sing), and a chicken (a puppet on a wire). Glenfield specifies geography (England, Ireland, Wales) in her play, while the original folktale does not. The two thieves were added at Bette Anderson's suggestion are two robbers to raise the stakes for Peter. The language and characterizations in the world of the play are convincingly childlike. The musical score is printed in Appendix II.

The Three Sillies ran December 16–20, 1983, at Walterdale Playhouse (firehall) with the following cast and creative team:

SANDY	Robert Harle
SALLY SAUCER	Joan Robertson
MRS. SAUCER	Teresa Griffiths
MR. SAUCER	Dave Parker
COOK	Deirdre Swan
TOM	Steven Sparke
TOWNSFOLK AND CHILDREN	Josephine Stebbings, Tobrina Smith, Jane Glenfield, Jennie Wigmore, Robert Jahrig, Amanda Clarke, Alexandra Sydie, Eric Brown, Ron Otten
LITTLE BOY	Matt Booi
PETER	Ted Soutar
FIRST THIEF	Claudio Masciulli
SECOND THIEF	Godfrey Budd
IRISH WOMAN	Malka Lerner
COW (TWO HALVES)	Dennis Robinson, Dave Parker
INNKEEPER	James Kemshead
DOGS	Jane Glenfield, Ron Otten, Amanda Clarke
CATS	Jennie Wigmore, Robert Jahrig
MICE	Tobrina Smith, Josephine Stebbings, Mary Tymo, Alexandra Sydie
SCOTTISH MAN	Dennis Robinson
HARRY	Eric Brown
WELSH WOMAN	Deirdre Swan
DIRECTOR	Frank Glenfield
SET DESIGNER	Cheryl Krausher
CHOREOGRAPHER	Karen Anthony
MUSIC	Mary Glenfield
PIANO PLAYER	Rhuanedd Meilen
STAGE MANAGER	David Glenfield

The Three Sillies

by Mary Glenfield

Act One, Scene One

As a rough plan. A farm courtyard in the west of England—Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, what-have-you. A summer's evening—the sun still warm, but slanting gently through the trees, and the peculiar quietness of this time of day in England—a quiet expectancy.

Suddenly a dog starts barking from SL, and then bounds in after an amorous butterfly. The dog skids to a stop, looks around for the butterfly, which has disappeared, and suddenly sees the audience. He comes forward, DSC.

DOG Well, hello, children—glad to see you here. (*Softly*). Can you all hear me? (*Waits*). CAN YOU HERE ME NOW? — Okay, okay, that's good. My name's Sandy and my master's name is Peter Piper. He doesn't know I can speak—he thinks I can only bark; (*Barks laughingly*); but I can talk to you, and every now and then I'll come and tell you the next bit of the story. You see, this house is where Sally Saucer lives and tonight they're having a BIG party to announce her wedding day to my master, Peter Piper. She can NEVER make up her mind about anything, but I hope she has this time. (*Sees centre door opening*) Goodness, someone's coming—see you later—(*Bounds off, USL*).

BILLY (*Entering centre door, with a pink dress and a blue dress over her arm*) I just can't decide which dress is prettier, the blue or the pink. (*Turns*). Mother! — Mother!

MRS. SAUCER (*Looking out of window SL of entrance door*) Good heavens, child, what's the matter? I'm so busy.

SALLY Which dress shall I wear?

MRS. S. Sally, I do wish you'd make up your mind about SOMETHING. (*Calls inside*) Father! (*Calls outside*) Father! (*Window SR of entrance door opens suddenly*)

MR. S. (*Irritably*) I've lost my best tie. What's the matter?

MRS. S. Which dress should Sally wear tonight?

MR. S Oh, how should I know? It's HER party.

SALLY (*Looking at the sundial*) Oh goodness, look at the time!

MRS. S. And Cook still hasn't caught a chicken for supper. Everything's always so LATE in this house. (*Slams her window shut*)

SALLY (*Still dithering*) Now, which one WOULD be best...?

Suddenly there is a commotion and wild clucking noises, and in dash Cook and Tom, chasing a chicken. Chicken is on wire from left corner of house to DSL. Cook is large and red-faced, in voluminous skirts and apron. Tom has string round his trousers at the knee, a chopper in his hand, and is willing, but dumb. He must, however, inspire affection rather than derision.

CHICKEN Cluck, cluck, cluck etc.

Chicken stops. Tom and Cook creep up to it; it goes on again. Stops. Both creep up to it again. Tom raises chopper and—"cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck"—off chicken goes. Tom and Cook bump into each other and fall in a heap, Tom with chopper above his head, Cook with petticoats over hers.

COOK (*Disentangling herself*) Of all the clumsy, idiotic men! I nearly had that chicken by its tail. (*Tom hangs head*) What we SHOULD do is creep up to it BACKWARDS, so that it thinks we're walking AWAY from it—like this. (*She demonstrates*) Now you try.

Tom puts down his chopper, walks backwards and falls over the chopper, sending the chicken offstage in a fine scurry of cluckings.

COOK (*Vexed*) Oh— (*She flounces off*)

SALLY (*Who has been watching all this with amusement*) Hello, Tom.

TOM Hello, Sal.

SALLY Well, cheer up. She doesn't mean to upset you.

TOM But I'm so clumsy. I always fall over everything.

SALLY Never mind, Tom; if everyone had as big a heart as you've got, the world would be a happier place to live in.

TOM Oh, Sal, you always make me feel better. (*Suddenly, shyly*) Here—I’ve got something for you. Guess which hand.

SALLY (*Dithering*) I can’t decide—BOTH. (*Tom holds out both hands with an enormous lollipop clutched between them*) OH! —A lollipop, how lovely, just like when we were children—I haven’t had one for ages.

TOM (*Sadly*) And soon you’ll be getting married to Peter Piper and going right away from us.

SALLY (*Who has been dreaming and not listening to a word*) My goodness! I’ve got to change my dress—I can hear people coming. (*She runs off through centre door, dropping lollipop as she goes.*)

TOM (*Picking it up*) You’ve dropped your— (*Resignedly*) —oh well. (*Picks up his chopper and takes it over to a large hook in the beam SR*) Might as well stay there for now. We’ll never catch that chicken.

He goes off through door SR as villagers come dancing in upper SL. Music of “Little Sally Saucer” has started up quite quietly in the distance with faint humming just before Sally goes off. It grows louder as villagers come in and then fade to background again before Little Girl speaks.

LITTLE GIRL Mummy, Mummy, when’s Sally going to get married?

MOTHER Well, we’re not sure, dear, but they’ll tell us tonight.

1ST NEIGHBOUR
We none of us know.

2ND NEIGHBOUR
I wonder if Sally knows.

3RD NEIGHBOUR
She can’t make her mind up.

All these remarks must be said very quickly one after the other.

ALL (*Hands up theatrically*)
Oh WHAT ... a silly girl! }

Then the song starts. One girl sings slowly “Little Sally Saucer,” then all girls join in for first verse. Boys sing second verse all together. Then everyone sings last verse.

ONE GIRL'S VOICE

(Deliberately, setting the tune)

Little Sally Saucer — *(Pause)*—

ALL GIRLS *(Regular speed)*

She's going to marry
Peter Piper soon in the springtime.
When a girl is certain, then she musn't tarry.
She must settle on some day soon.

ALL BOYS
She wasn't certain, pretty pretty little Sally;
Peter Piper knew he must win her.
He didn't waste time, didn't dilly-dally,
Kissed her under the yellow moon.

ALL TOGETHER
Little Sally Saucer, she's going to marry
Peter Piper soon in the springtime.
We don't know the date yet, rumours seem to vary,
All we know is it's some day soon.

*The music goes on and all do a country-dance, one circle round the pump
USR, the other circle round the sundial DSL.*

*A little boy has been standing on the steps leading to centre door, and as
everyone curtsies and bows at the end of the dance, he glances towards the
villagers' entrance, USL, and calls out:*

LITTLE BOY *(Shouting)* He's coming—the guest of honour's coming! *(Mr. and Mrs.
Saucer push each other out through the front door)*

MRS. S. Oh dear, we'll have to have cold meat, they haven't caught the chicken yet.

MR. S. Bother this collar. *(It flips open again as he does it up)*

*Mrs. Saucer fans herself vehemently and puts on an overbright smile;
Mr. Saucer stands with one end of his collar ludicrously in the air.*

LITTLE BOY *(Dramatically)* Here he is! Peter Piper!

*Peter Piper strides on with great assurance towards Mr. and Mrs. Saucer.
He MUST MAKE AN ENTRANCE! Sandy is at his heels and gives a little
bark towards the audience.*

MR. S. Hello, my boy, hello—bother this tie!

MRS. S. (*Twittering*) Peter—I have the feeling—I don't KNOW, but I THINK that SALLY'S MADE UP HER MIND about the wedding date!

EVERYONE (*Turning to each other, and speaking almost in chorus*) She's made up her mind, she's made up her mind! Oh, how wonderful, she's made up her mind!

PETER That's marvelous! If she really does know her own mind this time.

MR. S. Yes, well—humph—everyone's invited to supper, if it's—humph—ready, that is, my love?

MRS. S. (*Giving him a look*) I'm sure it is, now. But where's Sally?

TOM Well, the last time I saw her, she was going to change.

MRS. S. (*Rudely*) Who asked you?

EVERYONE Yes, who asked you?

TOM Well, I thought—

PETER Thanks, Tom, that's very good of you to tell us.

MR. AND MRS. SAUCER AND EVERYONE
Yes, that's very good of him to tell us.

Sally comes in through centre door and rushes over to Peter.

SALLY Have I kept you waiting?

PETER Of course not.

SALLY Well, go on in, everyone. The dining table's laden with things to eat.

All the villagers troop in behind Mr. and Mrs. Saucer. Peter and Sally and Sandy stay behind.

PETER Have you really made up your mind, Sally?

SALLY Yes, Peter, I really have; and I'm so happy. But I'm going to miss all my friends—the ducks and the chickens and the village folk, and Mother and Father.

PETER *(Pulling her laughingly by one hand)* Come on, for goodness' sake, else you'll change your mind again.

Little Boy appears at top of steps, centre door, with a large water jug.

SALLY Hello, what are YOU doing?

LITTLE BOY They've forgotten the water; I've come to get it.

SALLY Give me the jug. Go on in, both of you, I'll be there in a minute.

PETER Don't be long. *(To Sandy)* Stay there, old fella, and I'll bring you some food later on. *(Sandy wags his tail)*

Peter and Little Boy go in together. Sandy stays. Sally puts water jug under pump and leans on pump dreamily.

SALLY Yes, I SHALL miss everything. Even you, dear old pump; and you, dear house; *(Crossing to overhanging beam SR)* and you, old oak beams; *(Running her hand along underneath, but not looking)* and—*(Stops suddenly)*—why I've never noticed YOU. *(Looks and gasps)* Why, you're an axe! Suppose you fall! *(Sits down on bench DSR and talks, staring straight ahead)* Suppose Peter and I get married, and we had a little boy, and he came out one day to get water, and stood under that axe and it fell on him—what a terrible, terrible thing that would be! *(Starts to cry)*

Sandy goes across to her and nuzzles his head in her lap. She strokes him abstractedly. After a moment Mrs. Saucer comes in centre door.

MRS. S. Sally, everyone's wait—. Why, what's the matter?

SALLY Mother, look at that old axe stuck in the beam there. Suppose Peter and I get married, and we had a little boy, and he came out one day to get water, and stood under that axe and it fell on him—what a terrible, terrible thing that would be!

MRS. S. Oh, my goodness! *(Sits down with suddenness beside Sally)* Wouldn't that be awful. *(Starts to cry)*

Both of them are crying. After a moment Mr. Saucer fusses in centre door.

MR. S. Come along, come along! WOW, what's the matter?

MRS. S. *(Tearfully)* Just look at that old axe stuck in the beam there. Suppose Sally and Peter got married, and they had a little boy, and he came out one day to get water, and stood under that axe and it fell on him—what a terrible, terrible thing that would be!

MR. S. *(Sitting down on the bench beside the other two and getting out his pocket handkerchief)* Dear, dear, it doesn't bear thinking about. *(Sniffs and dabs his eyes)* Oh, deary dear— *(Blows his nose violently)*

All three are now crying together. After a moment Peter comes through the centre door with the villagers crowding behind him.

PETER *(Going across to Sally and taking her hands)* Well, Sally, what's the matter?

Sally gulps and shakes her head.

MR. S. *(In a choked voice)* You see that old axe up there, stuck in the beam? Suppose you and Sally get married, and you had a little boy, and he came out one day to get water, and stood under that axe and it fell on him—what a terrible, terrible thing that would be!

Mrs. Saucer and Sally have been crying softly and nodding at intervals through the speech. Sandy looks up at the axe and howls softly.

PETER *(Incredulous)* Is THAT all? *(Laughing)* You're the three silliest sillies I've ever seen! Didn't anyone think of taking the axe DOWN? *(He removes it from the hook)* There, now there's nothing to worry about.

SALLY Oh, but there is, Peter. I couldn't marry you now.

PETER What!

EVERYONE *(Gasps)* Oh!

PETER But we shan't be living here—we'll be in our own house.

SALLY How do you know the same thing won't happen where we're going to live?

EVERYONE *(Sighing)* Oh...!

PETER Sally, once and for all, will you make up your mind about the date.

SALLY *(Wailing)* I can't, Peter.

PETER (Firmly) Very well; I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to go on a long journey with Sandy, (*Pats dog—everyone gasps, Mr. and Mrs. Saucer sit up, Sally's mouth drops open*), and if I can find three sillier sillies than you, I'll come back and perhaps you'll have learned some sense by that time, Sally. (*He laughs and picks up the axe*) I think I'll just take this away so you won't frighten yourself again!

Peter strides off USL, with Sandy following. Sally bursts out crying, and goes indoors, being comforted by Mr. and Mrs. Saucer, while the villagers go off shaking their heads and murmuring quietly. Two men detach themselves from the rest of the villagers—one has beckoned to the other. These are the Two Thieves. They stay behind.

1ST THIEF (*After looking quickly round to see that no one is listening*) For a long journey like that, Peter Piper will need a lot of money, won't he?

2ND THIEF I'd thought of that, too; but how can we get a hold of it? We'd soon be caught at this time of day in the village with so many people about and everybody knowing us.

1ST THIEF We'll follow him a bit of the way on his travels, and when he's sleeping in some lonely spot, we'll relieve him of such a weight of gold!

Both Thieves laugh.

2ND THIEF He should be grateful to us! And WE'LL see a bit of the world at the same time! Come on—let's go after him.

Exeunt and CURTAIN.



Peter Piper (Ted Soutar) informs Sally Saucer (Joan Robertson) and her parents (Teresa Griffiths and Dave Parker) that he must find three sillies sillier than they are before he can marry her, as Sandy the dog (Robert Hale) and the townsfolk look on in Mary Glenfield's children's folktale adaptation The Three Sillies, Dec 1983. Photo: C.W. Hill Photography for Walterdale Theatre Associates.

Act Two, Scene One

As rough plan, a cottage in Ireland. Flowers in garden. Fence round the garden; a sheep inside fence among the flowers. Tuft of vivid green grass and several outsize shamrocks on thatched roof. Large chimney with a long rope dangling from the inside of it over the roof and down into the garden. An old woman comes out from the door of the cottage. She looks up at the chimney.

OLD WOMAN *(To herself)* There, tha' should do it. Th'only good grass for mi sheep is on the roof. *(Goes round stage left of house.)*

Peter and Sandy come on, DSR, looking tired.

PETER *(To Sandy)* Well, Sandy, old fella, we've arrived in Ireland and never seen another silly silly yet. Maybe I can get some water for us at this cottage.

Old Woman comes round the side of the house again, carrying a ladder.

PETER Here, grandam, let me help you with that. Where would you like me to put it?

OLD WOMAN Put it up by the side of this rope, agin the roof. Thank'ee, thank'ee, that'll do fine. Where are ye come from, young man?

PETER We've been traveling for many days, all the way from the south of England. Can you spare some water for me and my dog? We're both very thirsty.

OLD WOMAN Go and help yourself. The pump's in the backyard, and the pitcher's beside it.

Peter and Sandy go round SL of house. Old Woman pulls end of rope to sheep and starts trying to fasten it round sheep's neck. This meets with a surprising show of resistance. The sheep kicks up its back legs, tugs away from Old Woman, goes round and round her in a circle, and finally after many admonitions from her—"Don't be so rough, me old dear"; "Wait now, wait" etc.—the rope gets fastened around sheep's neck. At the last the Old Woman bends to pick a flower, and the sheep butts her in the behind.

OLD WOMAN *(Crossly)* Ungrateful thing! This flower was to put on your neck—Shan't have it now. *(Sticking it in her own blouse.)*

During all this the Two Thieves have crept on, DSR, and have watched the Old Woman's antics with open-mouthed amazement. They nudge each other, and draw back, but still in sight of the audience, as Peter and Sandy come round the house again.

PETER Many thanks for the water, grandam. Are you taking your sheep to market?

OLD WOMAN No, that I'm not. It's me best companion in me old age. But it eats so much I've got no good grass left in me garden, and that sheep will start on me precious flowers if I don't get it some green stuff soon.

PETER What are you going to do about it, then?

OLD WOMAN D'ye see that big patch of green grass and shamrocks up on me roof?

Peter looks and nods.

OLD WOMAN I spent most of yesterday trying to push th'old sheep up the ladder to eat it, till we were both exhausted. Stupid creature fell off all the time; but I think I've got the answer today.

Peter looks amazed.

OLD WOMAN Th'other end of this rope is hanging down the chimney into me kitchen. When I get th'old sheep on to the ladder, I'll run inside to the kitchen and pull on the end of the rope until the creature's sitting on the roof, eating.

SANDY *(Coming forward and speaking to children)* This may be the first silly silly we've been looking for! Shush... *(Paw to mouth)*

PETER *(Aside)* I must see how this funny idea works!

OLD WOMAN *(Suspiciously)* What did ye say?

PETER I said I'd help you.

OLD WOMAN Oh, thank 'ee.

PETER I'll leave my moneybag here with you, Sandy, or it'll get in the way.

The Two Thieves look at each other, and pantomime pleasure and expectation. While Peter and the Old Woman get the sheep to the ladder, Sandy comes forward again and speaks to the children.

SANDY Can YOU think of an easier way to do it? Come on, you call it out to me while they're not looking. *(If he gets the right reply:)* That's right, just bring down a handful of grass and give it to the sheep. *(If no reply:)* Well, why not just bring down a handful of grass and give it to the sheep? I'll bet SHE'S never thought of that. I think she's going to turn out to be a silly silly, don't you?

While the sheep is being pushed up the ladder, the Two Thieves have been edging closer and closer to the moneybag. One had his hand almost over the fence when Sandy half-turns and lies across the moneybag. The Two Thieves run off quickly, gesticulating at each other. Meanwhile, the sheep has slipped back and is pushed up, back again etc., but is finally several rungs up the ladder.

OLD WOMAN *(To Peter:)* Now you hold her there. I'm going in to pull on the other end of the rope in the kitchen. When I call out "Push," you help push the old girl right up the ladder. *(She runs indoors)*

PETER *(Holding on to sheep with one hand, and slapping his thigh with the other)* I think I've found the first one!

OLD WOMAN *(Shouting from inside the house)* Push...

Struggling and bleating, the sheep is at last half sitting on the roof. Peter lets go and laughs again, while Sandy barks. Suddenly there is a startled "Baa-aa" from the sheep who falls off the roof, and the Old Woman pops out of the chimney.

OLD WOMAN Here—I'm stuck! Help, help!

PETER Hold on—I'm coming.

He climbs the ladder, pulls the Old Woman out of chimney, apparently with some effort, like drawing a cork.

OLD WOMAN I'll never get the grass for that blessed sheep.

PETER *(Standing on ground by this time)* Why don't you pick a handful on your way down, and give it to her on the ground?

OLD WOMAN *(Still on roof)* Well, by Heavens, I never thought of tha'.

The old woman sits on roof, looking after Peter in astonishment as he goes off.

PETER And that, Sandy, is certainly a silly silly if I ever saw one.

CURTAIN.

Act Two, Scene Two

As a rough plan, the market square in a Scottish town. Evening. The hills rising up sharply behind the town. The Innkeeper is brushing off his front steps with a broom. A young couple (boy in kilt, girl in country dress) saunter slowly across the square from SL, hand in hand. A child comes in, lower SR, bowling a hoop, and the mother rushes after, grabbing the child when it is half across the square.)

MOTHER Where have you been, Willie? It's long past your bedtime, you naughty boy. *(She drags him off again, protesting, SR.)*

The Two Thieves enter, upper SL looking around furtively.

1ST THIEF This has been a wasted journey so far, but once Peter Piper crossed into Scotland so late he would have to spend the night here.

2ND THIEF And here's the inn where he'd stay. Have we got any money left from the last traveler we *(Laughs)* borrowed some money from!

1ST THIEF Not much, but enough for supper and a night's lodging. *(Suddenly, listening.)* Quiet—do you hear a whistling?

2ND THIEF It's the tune Peter Piper always whistles. Let's hide and see what happens.

They cross stage quickly and hide behind the two market stalls.

The Innkeeper comes out on his front steps and begins sweeping off the dust with a broom. The whistling gets louder, and Peter and Sandy enter, upper SL.

PETER *(To Innkeeper)* What town is this we've arrived at?

INNKEEPER Ye're in the toon of Castlebrig.

PETER And are you the owner of this inn?

INNKEEPER Aye, that I am—and the best inn for miles around in this part of Scotland.

PETER I'd like a room for the night.

INNKEEPER Och, it's a bad night ye've come. Market day tomorrow, and the toon's fu'. But if ye wouldn't mind sharing a room wi' another traveler...

PETER I'M so tired I wouldn't mind at all. But what about HIM?

INNKEEPER He isn't in at the moment, but when he comes—. Wait, here he is now—yo're in luck. I'll ask him.

Man enters upper SR.

INNKEEPER *(To Man:)* Would ya mind sharin' a room wi' this gentleman here for the night?

MAN *(To Peter:)* I'd be glad of his company. But I warn you, I have to get up very early in the morning, before anyone else is about, so as to have my breeches on in time.

PETER *(Looking perplexed)* I probably won't waken anyway. *(To Sandy)* You stay there the night, Sandy, by the front step.

Peter, Innkeeper, Man go inside. The Two Thieves creep out from behind the stalls.

1ST THIEF Now all we have to do when we get in is find out which room Peter's in and wait till everyone is asleep. *(He knocks on the inn door.)*

The Innkeeper bustles out.

1ST THIEF We'd like a room for the night, my man.

INNKEEPER Sorry, the whole town's full up, there's not a room to be had. *(He closes the door again.)*

2ND THIEF *(To 1st Thief:)* There you are again—you and your big ideas! We should have just lain in wait for him as he came into the town.

1ST THIEF And who is it who likes to act like a fine gentlemen and sleep in fine sheets every night, rather than save our money by sleeping in the hedgerows? (etc. etc. *They go off with mutual recriminations.*)

SANDY *(Coming forward to children and speaking as he comes)* I wonder what they were talking about ... I'll stay here, as Peter Piper said, but I'll keep one eye open, because sometimes, at midnight, all the other animals come to a market square like this to play. *(Slowly and dopily)* But—I—must—sleep—a—little—first. *(He lies down at the bottom of the stage.)*

The lights gradually fade and night takes over. Suddenly there is a little pit-pat of music and two furry faces look round the upstage corner of the inn. They disappear and there is a whispering. Then another pit-pat of music and two dogs come in on tiptoe, see Sandy and run out again. More whispering. Music again and in come three dogs and two cats. They stand around Sandy. The cats are very dressed up, one in big skirts, with a fan, the other with frilled wristlets, large feathered hat etc.—17th Century.

1ST DOG I've never seen HIM before.

2ND DOG He must be a stranger.

1ST CAT *(Ominously)* D'you think he's dangerous?

All the animals whisper together.

2ND CAT Let's scratch him and see.

3RD DOG Oh, cats! That's all you can think of—using your claws!

CATS *(Together)* P-ss-ss-ss!

Dogs retreat and whisk behind inn again. Then slowly they come out. The 1st Dog courageously comes further towards the cats.

1ST DOG *(Ingratiatingly)* You sing to him with your lovely voices, and see if he wakes up.

CATS *(Mollified)* All right.
Mee-ow — Mee-ow!
Mrwow-ow —Mrwow—ow!

SANDY *(Waking up suddenly)* My goodness—Cats!

2ND DOG *(Very hastily)* They're our FRIENDS. They were singing to you.

SANDY *(Still not quite sure)* Oh, I see. *(To cats:)* Thank you. *(He gets up, feeling more sure of himself and struts to CS.)* I know a song.

ALL *(Going eagerly towards him)* A new one?

SANDY Well, I think so. I'll sing it for you, and you can join in the chorus.

He begins to sing Sandy's Song.

Verse:

SANDY When it's very late at night and the people are asleep.
 Then the animals come out to play.
 And in every market square, or a patch of garden, there
 You can have them sing a roundelay.
 Though you may not know the tune, if you listen very hard
 It's not difficult to learn at all—
 As you hear them singing,
 Just beyond your bedroom wall.

Dogs' Chorus:

SANDY And doggies may not all sing quite in tune—

DOGS Woof, woof, woof, woof!

SANDY Sometimes they jump right to the moon—

DOGS Bow-ow, bow-ow!

SANDY Follow us, I'll show you how.
 Heels together, give a little bow;

Dogs all bow to cats and each other.

 And you can all start dancing now.

DOGS Bow Wow, Bow Wow!

Last four phrases of music alone are repeated, from "Follow me," while cats and dogs solemnly dance together round the village pump.

Cats' Chorus:

SANDY The cats have all come dressed for a ball—

Cats preen themselves.

CATS Purr, purr, purr, purr!

SANDY Their song sounds just like a caterwaul—

CATS Meeow, meeow!

SANDY But, if you should tell them so,
Then I think you really ought to know
They'd turn on you and start to go—

CATS P-ss, p-ss, p-ss, p-ss!

Dogs all retreat again behind market stalls. Then Sandy eases out apprehensively and stands DSR.

SANDY *(To Children)* I haven't quite finished my song. But *(With a look over his shoulder towards the cats)* I'm gong to sing it RIGHT HERE!

Verse:

SANDY But you'd better stay in bed when you hear their little song,
Don't go standing by the window-sill.
When the music comes again and you know the right refrain
You can join in—if you lie quite still.
For if you should take a peep when you're s'posed to be asleep.
Then they'll vanish from around your house.
So pretend you're simply
Singing like a little mouse—

SANDY *(Very quietly to children)* And how does a mouse sing? Wee-eek! So when I go like this *(Making a drawing-in posture with hands)* you sing “wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek” four times. See?

Mousies' and Children's Chorus:

SANDY The mousies come as close as they dare—

ALL Wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek!

SANDY They're so small, you don't know if they're there—

ALL Wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek!

SANDY S'pose they join in singing too?

Doesn't really matter if they do,
The mousies sound the same as you— (*Pointing to children*)

ALL Wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek, wee-eek!

Again a small dance, then suddenly comes a thud.

3RD DOG Listen! — I can hear someone coming.



The mice (Tobrina Smith, Josephine Stebbings, Mary Tymo and Alexandra Sydie) show the cats (Jennie Wigmore and Robert Jahrig) and dogs (Jane Glenfield, Rob Otten and Amanda Clarke) with Sandy (Robert Hale, second from left) what they've got, December 1983. Photo: C.W. Hill Photography for Walterdale Theatre Associates.

All animals whisk away and Sandy lies down beside steps. The set is gradually lightening. The Man opens the inn door. He has on a long nightshirt and tasseled nightcap. His breeches are over his arm. He goes across to the pump and hangs his breeches on it, the top of them gaping open. Sandy stands and watches in amazement, but flops down again just in time as the Man turns and comes back to steps. The Man takes a running jump at his breeches—falls down. Comes back again. Takes another running jump at them and goes right past them. Takes breeches off pump and is going over to hang them on one of the stalls when Peter comes out of the inn door.

PETER Hello, I heard you go downstairs and thought I'd come out myself to get a breath of fresh morning air.

MAN (*Completely preoccupied, and hanging his breeches on stall*) Could you get back a moment, please, so I can get a good run at them? (*Waves Peter back with his hand.*)

PETER Just a moment—what are you trying to do?

MAN Oh, it's terrible! I always take about an hour to jump into my breeches, and this morning, as it's market-day, I've got to be earlier than ever.

A cock crows somewhere.

MAN There, you see, it's dawn already. The farmers' wives will soon be getting up their stalls. I MUST be ready by then.

He goes right back to the inn steps and runs hard across the stage again towards his breeches. He gets one leg in and falls down again.

MAN Oh dear, dear, dear—

PETER *(Who has been slapping his sides with laughter)* Here, let me show you. Now, hold your breeches in your two hands—so; lower them; put your left foot in and pull the breeches leg over it; and now your right foot in and pull the whole thing up. See how easy?

MAN *(Clasping Peter's hands)* Thank you, thank you. I shall never forget your kindness. I must tell my wife when I get home. *(Goes off through inn door repeating "Hold breeches in both hands, lower them" etc.)*

PETER *(Too exhausted to laugh anymore)* Well, that certainly was another silly silly, if ever I saw one. And after breakfast, Sandy, old fella, we'll go looking for the last one. *(They both go in to the inn.)*

Meanwhile two farmwomen with laden baskets have come in chatting quietly and are decorating the two stalls as the CURTAIN falls.



The second silly (Dennis Robinson as Scottish Man) explains his plan to put on his breeches two legs at a time as Peter Piper (Ted Soutar) and Sandy the dog (Robert Hale) look on in December 1983. Cheryl Krausher's whimsical set captured the play's spirit well. Photo: C.W. Hill Photography for Walterdale Theatre Associates.

Act Three, Scene One

As rough plan, country edge of a Welsh village. A big pond SR and off. Villagers raking in it, if it can be arranged. Great excitement among the villagers.

1ST VILLAGER

Have you got her?

2ND VILLAGER

Harry feels something heavy.

1ST VILLAGER

Well, pull them, man, for goodness' sake. We'll lend a hand.

All behind each other like tug-of-war.

HARRY

One, two, three, heave.

2ND VILLAGER

Is it moving?

Peter and Sandy enter SR. Peter stands there looking amazed.

PETER

What are you trying to get out of the pond?

All the villagers stop dragging the pond and speak to each other, puffing.

1ST VILLAGER

The 'owd green moon.

PETER

The moon!

2ND VILLAGER

She fell in last night. My husband saw her, right after midnight, lyin' there in the pond, calm as you please.

HARRY

Something bright's comin' up on the end of my fishin' rod.

1ST VILLAGER

Careful!

2ND VILLAGER

Don't lose it...

3RD VILLAGER

Have you still got it?

HARRY

Here—it—comes. (*Something bright flashes across the line, there—*)

2ND VILLAGER

Oh, it's only a silly old kettle—that makes five so far, not to mention other sorts of pots and pans.

3RD VILLAGER

(*To Peter:*) It's never any wonder to me WHAT comes out. Our ponds here in Wales are often very deep.

1ST VILLAGER

Some years back, Roberts the dairyman drove his horse and cart in, and we've never come across them yet.

2ND VILLAGER

(*Impressively*) There's people heard horses' hoofs here some dark nights, and Roberts' voice, clear as you please. (*Lowering her voice, and glancing round hurriedly before she speaks.*) They say the witches got him!

PETER

(*Laughing*) Well, why do you want the moon out again?

HARRY

To see by at night, you silly man.

PETER

Don't you worry, she'll come sailing in the sky as right as rain in just a short while.

VILLAGERS

(*In rapid succession*)

Listen to such nonsense.

He's talking daft.

What about Roberts' horse and cart, then?

All go back to dragging the pond.

PETER

What a lot of silly sillies!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Gwynfor, I've found me old teeth!

Suddenly Sandy, SL, starts howling quietly, and then louder, and the moon sails into view upper SL.

1ST VILLAGER

Look at the moon...!

All stop dragging and look up. They are terrified, and lean with their bodies, saying—

VILLAGERS How did she get up there?

Ooo-oooh—look at her ride!

Ooo-oooh see the witches riding on her tail!

Moon disappears upwards SR, and, at the same moment, is reflected clearly in the pond.

2ND VILLAGER

She's in the pond again!

VILLAGERS *(All converging on Peter)*

He's got her bewitched!

Chase him out...

No room for him in this village!

All chase Peter and Sandy with brooms, pitchforks, rakes etc., Sandy barking as he goes. As the villagers nearly reach the side of the stage, on whirl the Two Thieves who appear amazed to see Peter and Sandy rushing past them. The villagers stop dead in their tracks for a moment.

WOMAN'S VOICE

And here's two more strangers come to bring us bad luck!

MAN'S VOICE Out with them, too...

The Villagers fall on the surprised Thieves, belabouring them, and to the sound of their howls, the CURTAIN falls.

Act Three, Scene Two

Same as Act One. Enter Two Thieves looking around.

2ND THIEF Well, thanks to your idea we've been half round the world and come right

back to where we started without getting hold of Peter Piper's money.

There won't be much of it left by now.

1ST THIEF You needn't have come if you didn't want to. And, anyway, Peter's got a lot of money left. It's still worth stealing, if we can do it carefully.

2ND THIEF Quiet! Do you hear that tune again? It may be Peter. Let's hide and see.

They hide. Sandy runs in. He rushes from one familiar thing to another, and is just about to bark joyously when Peter enters and looks quickly around.

PETER Now, Sandy, don't make a noise. It's early in the morning and nobody's awake yet. We'll just lie down here and get a little rest. I'll use my moneybag for a pillow—it's still quite full.

He sits down and then stretches out under the tree. Sandy is nearly asleep already. Peter wraps himself in his cloak and is also soon asleep. The Two Thieves come out quietly from their hiding-place. One nudges the other and points to the moneybag under Peter's head. 1st Thief quietly goes over to try and pry moneybag loose. 2nd Thief goes over to Sandy. Peter stirs and Sandy wakes up. 2nd Thief throws sack over Sandy's head, but the dog is too quick for him and, barking, shakes it off and goes for the man's legs. Meanwhile, Peter has woken up and is fighting with the 1st Thief. Barking. Shouts of "After him, Sandy"; "I'll teach you to steal money from travelers." Howls from Thieves. Finally both thieves are overpowered and tied together wrists and ankles—i.e. 1st Thief's left wrist to 2nd Thief's right wrist, ditto ankles—with the string dropped by 2nd Thief, who was going to use it to tie sack over Sandy's head. Sandy stands guard over them as they sit on ground. All the village has now woken up, except the Saucer family. Villagers come crowding in from upper SL.

1ST WOMAN Why, it's Peter Piper back again! (*Looks at men on ground*) And that's my son, Jim. What's he been doing?

2ND WOMAN (*Thrusting forward*) And my son, Arthur, tied to him!

PETER They were trying to steal my money, but Sandy woke up and stopped their little game.

The two Thieves are struggling to their feet.

1ST WOMAN I THOUGHT you were up to no good, Jim Hopkins, when you went off so sudden—to seek your fortune, YOU said.

2ND WOMAN You just wait till I get you home, Arthur Green. You'll not know what's hit you!

They go off, still yelling behind the Two Thieves who are hopping along awkwardly, three-legged, to the laughter of the crowd. Tom and Cook have appeared from door lower SR. Mr. and Mrs. Saucer have come out on the steps and are looking sleepily bewildered.

MRS. S. There's a terrible noise going on.

MR. S. (*Vaguely*) I can't see anything without my glasses.

SALLY (*Bursting through between them*) It's Peter back again! (*She rushes up to him and holds his hands*) Oh, Peter, I'm so glad to see you!

PETER I'M glad to see YOU, Sally; and I'm back for good. And you know a funny thing? After looking all over for three sillier sillies than you I've found out something else.

SALLY What?



Peter Piper (Ted Soutar) ties together the Two Thieves (Claudio Masciulli and Godfrey Budd) as Sandy the dog (Robert Hale) barks encouragement, December 1983. Glenfield and Bette Anderson, founder of Edmonton's Theatre for Children, conceived of the addition of the Two Thieves to the children's folktale to heighten the story's suspense. Photo: C.W. Hill Photography for Walterdale Theatre Associates.

PETER

He begins Peter's song.

I thought that the silliest sillies were you,
But on looking around me, I found
That in spite of the odd little things that you do,
There were sillier sillies around.
So just listen while I sing
Of a most amazing thing

(Singing)

We all seem silly to someone
No matter how clever we are;
If all of us
had to be brainy
We just wouldn't get very
far.
If we had to
be sensible all of the while
and never give people the chance of a smile
We all seem silly to someone
No matter how clever we are.

We all do silly things sometimes,
And nobody minds if we do
The silliest things to others
Are things that seem clever to you.
If you find someone silly in things that they do,
They're probably thinking the same about you
We all do silly things sometimes,
And nobody minds, and nobody minds,
And nobody minds if we do!

All the villagers clap.

SALLY

And I've found out something, too, Peter. But first, tell me—do you still want me to marry you?

PETER

Well, of course, Sally.

SALLY

Then I'll tell you—*(Raising her voice and speaking loudly to everyone)*
Peter Piper and I invite you all to our wedding next Saturday—and this arrangement is definite!

Everybody laughs and they begin to sing "Little Sally Saucer."

ALL

Little Sally Saucer, she's going to marry
Peter Piper, now that it's springtime.
Now that she is certain, she will never tarry,
She has made up her mind for good!

All dance again as the CURTAIN falls.

But Sandy gets in front of the curtain and says to the children:

SANDY

And don't you ever, ever, tell Peter and Sally that I can talk!

He runs, barking, offstage.



Sandy the dog (Robert Hale) hams it up during the production photo shoot, December 1983. Photo: C.W. Hill Photography for Waltherdale Theatre Associates.