

Wyrd Sisters by Terry Pratchett

October 2009

Directed by Jocelyn

Stage Manager - Gavin

Wyrd Sisters is based on the Discworld book by Terry Pratchett, and is a comic take on Shakespeare's Macbeth. 'It's all there – a wicked Duke and Duchess, the ghost of the murdered King, dim soldiers, strolling players, a land in peril. And who stands between the kingdom and destruction? Three witches. Granny Weatherwax (intolerant, self-opinionated, powerful); Nanny Ogg (down to earth and vulgar) and Magrat Garlick (naïve, fond of the occult and bunnies).'

The script is, at times potentially hilarious. Terry Pratchett uses words and characterisations to squeeze every bit of humour out of the text, and every word of the script has to be taken straight from the book.

There are actually about 35 parts in the play, although I am looking for 5 women and 8 men to play the main roles and about 6 people of either sex to play a number of minor roles each. However, the parts with less lines to say can still be showstoppers, from the Baldrick-like Sergeant to a camp Demon who appears out of the top of a water boiler and insists that people throw insults and curses at him / her.

The auditions will be on 19th and 21st May after Val's play. (If you would like to be in the play but will be away at the time, just give me some notice and I shall try to give you a fair hearing in advance.) For most of June to August the minor parts would only be needed on a Thursday and I shall make sure that I plan the other scenes so that people know when they need to be there. During September we shall need everyone around as much as possible. The performances will be 8th – 10th October.

My challenge (or one of them anyway!) will be to get the story across to people who have never read any Discworld books – they can be confusing at the best of times! It would help if most of the cast could read the book as well as the script as parts of it have had to be omitted, and it helps to understand the background, and how the characters relate to each other.

If you are still interested, please read on for a brief summary of the plot and a description of the main characters. Hope to see you all in May.

Jocelyn

Brief summary of the plot.

King Verence of Lancre is murdered by Duke Felmet who, with his wife the Duchess, now rules the kingdom. King Verence comes back as a ghost to try to save his infant son, who has been smuggled out of the castle and handed to three witches. The witches leave him (and his crown) with a party of strolling players who bring him up, although they are ignorant of who he really is.

The Duke and Duchess try to destroy the witches using torture and other means (all foul) with little success. However the resident fool (also called Verence after the late King) is cleverer than he looks and suggests they may be able to get the better of the witches using words. To complicate matters the Fool then falls in love with Magrat (the youngest witch).

The witches manage to engineer a happy ending that brings the infant king (who has meanwhile become an accomplished actor and orator) back to the Lancre throne.

The Duke employs a party of strolling players (no prizes for guessing which ones!) to act out a play portraying the world as he would like it to be (where he didn't commit the murder), but truth will out and all ends well, although a couple of sharp twists and turns at the end should keep the audience guessing to the last.

Main cast roles

FEMALE

Three witches:

Granny Weatherwax – Formidable senior witch of the coven. Hot tempered, competitive, selfish and likes to look the part. Complete technophobe when it comes to broomsticks.

‘Nanny’ Gytha Ogg – Oldest witch and family person – has 15 living children! She is slightly coarse and good-natured, has a cozy but haphazard approach to life but does like her home comforts.

Magrat Garlick – Youngest of the three and very naïve. Incurable romantic with a very open mind; she is into magic and the occult.

Duchess – The wicked queen and power behind the throne. Could either be played as an old battleaxe or a vampish character.

MALE

Fool – From a family of fools, he serves the current ruler of Lancre, whoever that may be. Not very happy as a fool, but philosophical about his situation. He falls in love with Magrat.

Duke – He is ruled by his wife and killed the king (Verence) on her instruction. He has now claimed the throne of Lancre. The Duke is of a nervous disposition and spends most of the play trying to convince himself and others that he didn’t commit the murder.

Tomjohn – Son of King Verence rescued as a baby and brought up with the Players. A natural leader and orator, he is the lead actor of Hwel’s plays.

Hwel – Welsh Will Shakespeare. Actually a dwarf in the book but not necessarily here. Father figure to Tomjohn.

King Verence – Dead king of Lancre. Appears as a ghost only visible to witches. Tries to get justice by letting everyone know that the Duke murdered him.