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Dramatic Publishing

THE LITTLE TROLL WITHOUT A SOUL

Christmas drama by
HERMAN AMMANN

THE LITTLE TROLL WITHOUT A SOUL

The Little Troll Without a Soul is another exciting romp through Toyland in the inimitable manner of Herman Ammann, author of such favorites as *The Magic Well*, *A Canterbury Tale From the Wife of Bath* and *The Little Match Girl*. Ammann's plays delight children because of their fairyland characters and suspenseful action, and they titillate adults with their subtle glimpses of mankind's foibles. His characters are people you know. And things they do are the things you know you do—and shouldn't. That's why no writer of children's plays anywhere does a better job of entertaining the parents while charming the kiddies.

"Our children love the play [*The Little Troll Without a Soul*]. The plot is excellent and parts are handled easily by the children." (Marjorie Price, Chipman Elementary School, New Brunswick, Canada)

"Everyone, children and adults alike, are leaving the theatre smiling and ready to come back for more!" (Karen Letts, Ft. Bend Community Theater, Houston, Texas)

Drama. By Herman Ammann. *Cast: 3m., 7w., extras.* *The Little Troll Without a Soul* is a dramatic play perfect for the Christmas season. Trolls, according to Scandinavian folklore, are sprite-like creatures without souls. But the little troll in this play wants a soul. His chances of getting one seem nil, however, because he lives with a witch who lacks not only a soul, but a heart also. This heartless old witch dotes on ugliness. "Beauty fades, but ugly lives forever," she proclaims. Attempting to make the world as ugly as possible, she traps pretty young girls and turns them into ugly old rag dolls. When the play opens the witch is laying plans to trap Michele, a little girl that the troll has had his eyes on. She's something he'd like to find under his Christmas tree—but not as an ugly rag doll. The witch wants to trap Michele not only because the little girl is pretty but also because Michele's grandfather owns a magic rose, which she wants. *The Little Troll Without a Soul* is an easy play to stage for all groups. *Simple int. set. Costumes: doll and fairyland. Approximate running time: 30 to 40 minutes. Background music/SFX CD available. Code: LJ6.*

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The Little Troll Without a Soul



The Little Troll Without A Soul

A Children's Play in One Act

by

HERMAN AMMANN

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098



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HERMAN AMMANN

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THE LITTLE TROLL WITHOUT A SOUL

Cast

Witch

Troll

Michele

Good Fairy

Prince Peter the Perfect

Grandfather

DOLLS

Helta

Skelta

Dilly

Dally

Extra Dolls, *if desired*

Setting: The Witch's house, once upon a time

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Trolls, according to Scandinavian folklore, are sprite-like creatures without souls. But the Little Troll in this play wants a soul. His chances of getting one seem nil, however, because he lives with a Witch who lacks not only a soul—she doesn't have a heart either.

This heartless old Witch dotes on ugliness. "Beauty fades, but ugly lives for ever," she proclaims. Attempting to make the world as ugly as possible, she traps pretty young girls and turns them into ugly old ragdolls.

When the play opens the Witch is laying plans to trap Michele, a little girl that the Troll has had his eyes on. She's something he'd like to find under his Christmas tree—but not as an ugly ragdoll. The Witch wants to trap Michele not only because the little girl is pretty but also because Michele's grandfather owns a magic rose. The Witch wants the rose.

The play is another exciting romp through toyland in the inimitable manner of Herman Ammann, author of such favorites as "The Magic Well," "A Canterbury Tale From the Wife of Bath," and "The Little Match Girl." Ammann's plays delight little children because of their fairyland characters and suspenseful action, and they titillate adults with their subtle glimpses of mankind's foibles.



THE LITTLE TROLL WITHOUT A SOUL

[Curtain rise shows a sofa Stage Right, iron stove with kettle simmering Stage Center, a clothes chest at Up Right Center, a sewing machine at Stage Left, and a coat rack at Upstage Left. There is a door in the Left wall (or an opening in the curtains). Seated at the sewing machine is a WITCH dressed in black cape and pointed black hat. On the upstage wall are pictures of black cats; at the center of the wall is a picture of a full moon with silhouette of a witch riding a broom. Two RAGDOLLS are sprawled on the sofa and another lies on the floor below the sofa. The witch has a RAGDOLL lying on the floor beside her with one of its legs in her lap while she sews on its stocking. The WITCH is humming and singing, obviously enjoying her work.]

WITCH. Dum, dee, dee, dum, dum,
Oh, what fun!
I sew all day and fly all night
And if you'll gaze at the moon –
When the moon is bright
You'll see a Witch
In full flight!
I hex young lovers
And old ones too.
I don't like love –
And I don't like you! ! !
[Jabs finger at audience]
And you and you and you!
Dum, dee, dee, dum, dum.

[She continues looking at audience and drops doll's leg to the floor.] What are you staring at? Haven't you ever seen a

Witch before? *[Pause]* Well, I guess not. Most of you spend your time watching television. You should go outside and look at the moon. See my picture there *[points to picture on wall]*; it's my favorite. I was riding my best broom. The other pictures are of my cats. *[Pleased at the thought]* Always snarling and clawing. I wish they were here, but they are out killing song birds. They're *family*. All I have . . . except these dolls. *[Delighted]* Aren't they ugly? I like ugly things. Beauty fades but ugly lives forever. They were pretty when they came to me for party dresses but I turned them into ragdolls. *[Turns, points]* The one I was patching is Helta. The one on the floor is Skelta and those two sprawled on the sofa are Dilly and Dally.

[The door flies open and a little boy comes in sobbing and carrying a broken broom. He is a TROLL.]

TROLL. I fell down and broke my crown.

WITCH. You miserable clown! You didn't break your crown. You broke my broom. What happened?

TROLL. I fell off the roof. I was trying to fly like a seagull.

WITCH. You fool. You're no seagull. You're a TROLL!

TROLL. You keep saying that – what's wrong with being a troll?

WITCH. Didn't you know – a troll doesn't have a soul.

TROLL. What does it matter?

WITCH. It means you can never love anyone nor be loved. You have to have a soul for that! Anyway, even if you had one, it wouldn't do you any good. You are far too ugly. *[Picks up pieces of broom]* You are lucky this was an old broom. I ought to stick it through your ears and make a hat-rack out of you. Go sit on the sofa.

[TROLL goes to sofa, picks up dolls' legs and moves them about so he has room to sit. WITCH goes to kettle on stove and begins to stir contents. TROLL looks lovingly at one of the dolls and gently rubs one of her arms. After a bit he

bites her on the ear, looks at the audience, smiles. He puts an arm around her and kisses her on the cheek. WITCH turns, notices.]

WITCH. What do you think you're doing?

TROLL. *[Removes arm quickly]* I was just playing with one of the dolls.

WITCH. You weren't either. You were FOOLING AROUND!

TROLL. *[Gets up]* Mama, do you think I'll ever get a real live doll?

WITCH. Not in this house, you won't . . . and stop calling me Mama. I hate endearments. If you have all that energy, go out and catch a snake and a frog or two. My brew is too bland.

TROLL. *[Heads for door, then turns back]* Mama, is Michele coming by today?

WITCH. The little flowergirl from the Square?

TROLL. The pretty one.

WITCH. She won't be pretty long.

TROLL. *[Very sadly]* Please don't turn her into a ragdoll like the others.

WITCH. Get the snake and the frogs. Then you can play stickhorse . . . but no flying around. *[He tries to kiss her goodbye, but she wards him off and hits him on the seat with part of the broken broom. Aside]* If there's anything I hate, it's a troll trying to slobber over me. I mustn't let him play with those dolls any more. *[Pushes dolls on the sofa roughly to the floor; lies down on sofa and starts to snore. There is a knock at the door; she sits up.]* Who's there?

MICHELE. *[From outside]* It's Michele. I came to see about my dress.

WITCH. *[Very excited]* Just a moment, dear. I'll be right there. *[Hurriedly takes off pointed hat and black cape and hangs them on coatrack; pulls a white wig out of pocket and puts it and eyeglasses on. She looks like a sweet grayhaired*

old lady. During this transformation, she sings or ad-libs. When she is ready, she calls sweetly to the door.] Come in, dear.

MICHELE. [*Enters*] I hope you don't mind my coming early. I'm so excited about my new dress.

WITCH. I am just as excited as you are. I am most anxious to make you look like something else.

MICHELE. Is it going to be blue or pink or red?

WITCH. It's going to have lots of colors. How would you like to have a dress like one of my dolls?

MICHELE. Well . . . [*looks at dolls*] that isn't exactly what I had in mind. The Prince has invited me to the Grand Ball. Each year he invites a commoner, and this year, I've been chosen! For one night I'll be a princess like Cinderella.

WITCH. I know all about that.

MICHELE. [*Walks over and looks at dolls closely*] Oh, I don't think I'd want to look like one of these. They're so . . . so . . .

WITCH. Ugly?

MICHELE. I don't like to use that word. [*Stoops beside one of the dolls*] You poor things. It must be terrible to be . . . but then you are only a doll.

WITCH. You don't believe in magic? Witchcraft?

MICHELE. Why no, I don't. I believe everything in the world should be beautiful.

WITCH. I think they are pretty . . . ugly. Really, as long as a person likes something, what difference does it make which word you use?

MICHELE. [*Looking closely at one of the dolls*] They seem so real. Almost alive. Except for their odd-looking faces, I have the queerest feeling I've played with them.

WITCH. [*Aside*] That's very possible. And you may do so again . . . very shortly.

MICHELE. [*Turns to Witch*] Did you say something?

WITCH. Just how badly do you want to go to the Ball?

MICHELE. It would be the thrill of my life. I'd do just anything. Well . . . almost.

WITCH. I want you to bring the rose bush to me. Before it blossoms.

MICHELE. Rose bush? I don't know anything about a rose bush.

WITCH. Of course you don't. But you do have a Grandfather that grows such things.

MICHELE. Yes, I have a Grandfather. He's the only relative I do have.

WITCH. Then you must bring his rose bush to me, and I'll see that you have the prettiest gown in town.

[The door bursts open and the TROLL enters.]

TROLL. Don't do it! I have been listening.

MICHELE. What are you doing here? Aren't you the boy I've seen in the Square?

WITCH. *[Threatening Troll]* He's supposed to be there now getting some . . . some . . . special ingredients for my brew . . . I mean stew.

TROLL. *[Pulls assorted rubber frogs, snakes, spiders from his pockets]* I got them. I got a bunch. *[Drops a handful in the kettle; it boils madly. He keeps trying to signal Michele to leave, but she doesn't understand.]*

WITCH. You didn't have to put them all in. Now I'll have to add another dipper of water.

MICHELE. *[Amazed]* What kind of stew are you making? *[Tastes stew]* THAT'S TERRIBLE!

WITCH. Oh, it's nothing. Just something for my cats.

MICHELE. *[To Troll]* So that's what you were trying to warn me about when you came in! *[TROLL shakes head "no" and again tries to warn her of the danger.]* I'm not afraid of snakes and things that hop and crawl . . . as long as I don't have to touch them.

WITCH. *[Making sure that Troll doesn't get near Michele]* He's always yelling and making a racket. He's just a Troll without a soul. Pay no attention to him. *[Threatening him with her broom]* And if he knows what's good for him, he'll settle down.

MICHELE. I think he's sort of cute, even though his ears are too big and his nose is too long. There's a very kind look in his eyes.

TROLL. [*Flattered at her interest, he forgets the danger in favor of a new worry.*] But you still think I'm ugly?

MICHELE. No one is ugly. Some people are just not as pretty as others.

WITCH. He comes from a cave in the far north. There's nothing but ice and snow there. He could never be a warm person. [*To the Troll*] Put some more wood on the fire! [*He does so.*]

MICHELE. That was an awful remark you made about him having no soul. What does that mean?

WITCH. It means he can't know love.

MICHELE. Well I don't know about that, but he is still my friend.

TROLL. [*Running to Michele*] Now I have a live doll for a friend.

WITCH. [*Stepping in to block him, she holds him with one hand while she urges Michele to the door with the other.*] Are you going to bring the rose bush?

MICHELE. I will have to ask Grandfather, but I can't promise for sure. If it is one of his favorites, he may not want to part with it.

WITCH. You don't have any choice, if you want a dress for the Ball. Run along and don't return without it.

MICHELE. [*Trying to look at the Troll, who is struggling to free himself*] I won't be long, little friend. I want to know more about trolls.

WITCH. Let's get this over with. A troll is a troll.

TROLL. [*Freeing himself and standing with dignity*] I am important, too. There are some of us in every country . . . only they call us by different names. If I lived in Bavaria I'd be an elf, and if I lived in Ireland, I'd be a leprechaun.

MICHELE. What's a leprechaun?

WITCH. *[Grabbing Troll again and trying to hide him behind her]* Leprechauns are ugly green creatures who live beneath the roots of trees. Very hard to find. Now scat and get that rose bush!

TROLL. *[Excitedly, trying to see Michele from behind Witch]* But if you're lucky enough to find one, he'd give you a pot of gold. Just like us trolls . . . *[sadly]* only I've never had a pot . . . much less one filled with gold.

MICHELE. You are just a wonderful little fellow. I just love you. *[Runs to him, kisses him on cheek]* Bye. *[Runs out door]*

TROLL. Mama, I've kissed those dolls a lot, but that's the first one that ever kissed me back. *[Rubbing cheek]* Sure is a difference. **MAMA!** You just have to get me a kissing doll! *[WITCH hits him with broom.]*

WITCH. You tried to give me away, didn't you! Next time I make a kettle of brew, you are going to be in it.

TROLL. *[Running from her]* I wish I was a leprechaun. She likes leprechauns the best.

WITCH. *[Chasing him around stage and swatting at him with the broom]* You miserable troll. Go to the store and get another broom. *[TROLL runs out door. She has an afterthought and yells after him.]* And don't let them catch you! *[Returning to Stage Center]* Now let's see, what did I want to do? Oh yes, I remember. **SWEET OLD LADIES MAKE ME SICK!**

[Takes black robe and hat from clothes tree, goes to chest, removes white wig and glasses, and returns them to chest, and puts pointed hat and cape back on. She crosses to dolls and snaps her fingers at them.]

WITCH. Wake up! On your feet! *[The DOLLS begin moving and rubbing their eyes and looking around in disbelief]* I've decided to bring you back to life so you can help me. When that girl comes back with the rose bush, you are to seize her so that I can destroy it. I'll burn the rose bush in the stove. **Fire destroys everything.**

HELTA. We're going to live again?

WITCH. It all depends. If you don't cooperate, I'll put you back under a spell . . . with just the snap of my fingers.

SKELTA. We'll do anything you say!

WITCH. I was just starting to take a nap when she came. Now I intend to finish it. *[Lies down on sofa]*

[DOLLS walk around the room on tiptoes. One smells the brew on the stove. DALLY goes over and looks closely at Witch.]

DILLY. Is she asleep?

DALLY. She seems to be.

HELTA. Let's run away.

SKELTA. It looks like our big chance. *[They start for the door, but WITCH rises.]*

WITCH. I heard that. You fools. Where would you go? You forget you are all ugly. Your parents, your friends . . . no one would recognize you. Do you think I am crazy? Think about it. As long as you're ugly you'll stay here. *[Laughs crazily]* This isn't any beauty parlor I'm running. *[DOLLS cry.]* Shut up, you crybabies! *[DOLLS cry louder in fear.]* I can't stand this noise – I'm going out for a while! *[Slams door as she exits]*

[WITCH goes behind the back wall of the set and crawls into the chest which has an opening in the back. When the DOLLS begin talking about killing the WITCH, she raises the lid, cups one ear, and eavesdrops. The DOLLS keep talking and don't see her, but the audience does. She appears two or three times and makes threatening gestures.]

DALLY. She's right. We're prisoners. We have no place to escape to!

DILLY. We're just walking, talking ugly dolls.

SKELTA. *[Opens door a bit and looks out]* Everyone sees the world with different eyes. When you are ugly – I mean unattractive – it's a cold cruel world. Just look at all those old gray buildings.

HELTA. Something will turn up.

DILLY. There's a dark cloud in every silver lining.

DALLY. That doesn't sound right.

SKELTA. She means all that glitters is not gold.

HELTA. *[Still looking out door]* Someone is coming down the street. Someone dressed in white!

SKELTA. *[Looking over her shoulder]* It's a Good Fairy, that's what it is. And she's coming right to this door!

GOOD FAIRY. *[Enters as DOLLS step back, somewhat frightened and awestruck]* Hello, Dolls . . . I mean girls. I heard about your plight and I've come to help.

DILLY. But the Witch

GOOD FAIRY. Don't worry about the Witch. Good things are going to happen to you.

DALLY. Are you going to make us pretty again?

GOOD FAIRY. Pretty as a picture.

DILLY. I'm ready. I mean . . . we're all ready.

GOOD FAIRY. Not so fast. I've brought good news and bad news. I told you the good news first.

SKELTA. Skip the bad news. Who needs it?

GOOD FAIRY. Don't get nervous. It's nothing of great importance. Just a slight delay.

HELTA. Let's hear it. We've nothing to lose.

GOOD FAIRY. It's my wand. It's in the repair shop but the man said it would be ready by midnight.

HELTA. We can wait.

GOOD FAIRY. That's a brave girl. You wouldn't believe what I've had to go through. First he demanded my sales slip . . . then I had to produce the guarantee and it covered parts only . . . no labor. When I left he was rummaging all about the place looking for the repair manual. *[Starts out door]* If it isn't ready, I'm going to be a good and mad Good Fairy. *[Leaves]*

DALLY. *[Sits on sofa]* You know what I think? I don't think she's ever going to get that wand fixed.

DILLY. Then what are we going to do?

HELTA. We aren't going to help the Witch, that's for sure.

DILLY. But she said it would only take another snap of her fingers?

SKELTA. We could pretend.

HELTA. She's too smart for that. She'd see through it in a minute.

SKELTA. Maybe the Good Fairy will do like everyone else has to do.

DILLY. What's that?

SKELTA. Give up on trying to get her wand fixed and buy a new one.

HELTA. In the meantime the Witch makes us help her capture Michele.

SKELTA. I have an idea!

ALL. What is it?

SKELTA. We'll kill the Witch. *[The WITCH, who is peeking out of the chest at this moment, reacts.]* Then when the Good Fairy returns, she'll make us beautiful again.

DALLY. I've never killed a witch. How do you go about it?

DILLY. Neither have I, and I'll bet none of you have either.

SKELTA. I read where they used to pile up a lot of brush and burn them alive.

DILLY. What a horrible way to go.

DALLY. Worse still, we'd go too. We'd burn the house down.

SKELTA. The Chinese did that once. It was before people cooked their meat. *[She takes a breath in preparation for telling a long story.]*

HELTA. Come on now, Skelta, this isn't going to be one of your long stories is it?

SKELTA. But it's true. This fellow had a pig in his house and one day the house caught fire when no one was home. No one, that is, but the pig. When the family returned there was nothing left but the pig, cooked to the bone, and smelling absolutely delicious.

HELTA. Are you trying to tell us they ate the pig?

SKELTA. That's right, and for many years afterwards, whenever they got hungry for roast pork, they built a house, put a pig in it, and then burned the house down.

HELTA. *[Hits Skelta on the head]* Someone is going to build a house for you one of these days and forget you aren't a pig.

DILLY. I certainly haven't ever tasted any Witch. Ugh! I don't think I'd like her.

HELTA. We're just talking. We aren't going to do anything about our problem.

DILLY. What we need is a handsome young Prince to solve all our problems.

HELTA. *[Laughs]* That would be just perfect!

[The door flies open. A handsome PRINCE enters dressed in splendor and struts importantly about the room. The DOLLS stare at him in wide-eyed disbelief.]

PRINCE PETER PERFECT. Did I hear someone call my name? I trust you will forgive this intrusion but there is important work to be done. I had a dream last night and it was a revelation. Something horrible is going to happen here unless I take drastic measures. *[Seeing the astonished look on the DOLLS' faces]* Oh yes, I'm Prince Peter the Perfect. How lucky everyone is that I have intruded. *[Looks at Dolls closely for the first time]* What an odd looking group you are. You look like a bunch of dumb bunnies . . . I mean bum dummies.

HELTA. We aren't dummies. We are just low in spirits. We could never make the scene where beautiful people go.

PRINCE. *[Struts about]* Everyone can't be good looking and smart. It's your muscles I need. I shall need a great deal of help.

SKELTA. You mean you want to burn the house down.

PRINCE. *[Surprised]* Exactly. But how did you know?

SKELTA. So you can kill the Witch. You aren't too bright either.