



A **Lion** in the **Meadow** and **Other Stories**

by **Margaret Mahy**

adapted for the stage by Tim Bray

STORY SUMMARY



"Mother, there is a big, roaring, yellow, whiskery lion in the meadow!" Weaving through Mahy's much loved stories *A Lion in the Meadow*, *Leaf Magic* and *The Witch in the Cherry Tree*, and her poems *Magic* and *The Reluctant Hero, or Footprints in the Snow*, we journey with a young boy on his spellbound adventures.

During this sensory relaxed performance, we have not changed the plot, characters, or story from our standard performances. Instead, we have done our best to adjust for sensory sensitivities and preferences while still staying true to the spirit of the play, and we provide as much information as possible so you can prepare in advance for the show you are attending. Everyone is unique in their requirements for enjoying the performance, and we have tried to accommodate a wide range of preferences and needs. Please keep in mind that you know your child best in deciding if this show will be suitable for them, and that during a live theatre performance unpredictable events and last-minute changes may occur.

Warning- Spoiler Alert! If you do not want to learn about details and surprises in the play, do not read any further.

There are nine scenes in the show, all based on Margaret Mahy books and poems.

- *Scene 1: **Magic**- Song*
- *Scene 2: **The Witch in the Cherry Tree***
- *Scene 3: **Rain**- Song*
- *Scene 4: **Cakes***
- *Scene 5: **A Lion in the Meadow***
- *Scene 6- **The Dragon***
- *Scene 7: **The Reluctant Hero, or Footprints in the Snow***
- *Scene 8: **Leaf Magic***
- *Scene 9: **Fish and Chips***
- *Finale: **Reprise of 'Magic'**- Song*

This story summary will give details about each scene and song

Scene 1: Magic - Song

Note: The sound will be turned down for the song, but it may still be too loud for some people. Headphones or earmuffs may be helpful.



The show begins with the song “Magic”, a Margaret Mahy poem which has been set to music and is sung by the musician and actors on the stage.

The musician enters the stage and walks to the green table, which represents David’s house. She picks up a small metal bowl and rubs a short wooden rod around the outside of the bowl. The bowl begins to hum, and the hum gets louder until the musician sits down at her instruments in the corner, and then the humming stops. We see a Lion enter the stage. The Lion prowls across the stage, giving one cheeky look out to the audience before leaving the stage. The musician picks up a guitar and begins singing “Magic”.

During the song, three people enter and slowly explore the meadow, tree, and leaf pile. They each find a fairy, a tiny, bright light that floats in the air by their hands, which they play with as they sing. As the song ends, they all return their fairies to where they found them, and two people leave the stage. David finishes the song alone on stage, tossing a leaf up into the air.

Scene 2: The Witch in the Cherry Tree



1/ At the end of the song, David tosses leaves up in the air until he smells the wonderful smell of cakes baking. David and his Mum mix up the cake batter together and pour it in to pans. The sound of an airplane is heard, and David and Mum watch it fly. In his imagination, David turns the plane into a Witch who appears flying on a broomstick. The broomstick is out of control, and the Witch swerves wildly across the stage with loud bangs and clangs till she staggers to a stop.

Note: The airplane sound and the Witch crashing may be too loud, so you might want to cover your ears.



2/ The Witch staggers on stage, smelling the cakes. She loves cakes, and she scurries up the cherry tree to plot how to get her hands on one. David tells his Mum about the greedy Witch, and prepares to defend the cakes. The Witch comes down the cherry tree and comes to the door, trying to trick David into thinking she's a great cake testing expert who wants to sample their cakes. She tries three times, but David won't let her inside.

Note: There are steps in the back of the tree let the Witch climb safely, only pretending to wobble through the branches.

Scene 3: Rain- Song

Note: The musician's guitar and chimes may be too loud during the song, so you might want to cover your ears.



The Witch sings a song to make it start raining. The song starts out spooky, and the lights get dim and blue. David and Mum drum on the stool and tap a wooden spoon on the back of the metal bowl. Blue lights waver like rain. After the song, the Witch realises she doesn't like standing in the rain. She summons an umbrella with a magic spell- but instead a pink tent wheels onto the stage. The Witch hides inside.



Scene 4: Cakes



1/ The Witch pops out of the tent shaking a tambourine and pretending to have a cake contest. David's Mum is fooled and brings a cake out to be judged. David knows the Witch is lying, and he snatches the cake away from the Witch at the last moment. There is chaos as the Witch tries to eat the cake, and in the end the Witch ends up with the cake plate in her mouth instead! David goes back into the house, and the Witch left outside. She is upset- she wants a cake!



2/ The Witch summons lighting and thunder with her tambourine. White lights on stage will flash while she points at the sky. The Witch goes back inside the tent, and David and his Mum bring fresh cakes out of the oven. David teases the Witch about the cakes, and Witch pops her head out to look.

The tent wheels away off stage, revealing the Witch. The Witch pretends to be feeling ill and lays her black cape and hat on the ground. She hides behind the cherry tree as David looks outside. David thinks the Witch has fainted on the ground from lack of cakes. He opens a bright pink umbrella and goes outside into the rain with a cake to revive the Witch.



3/ The Witch pops out from behind the tree- she's tricked David! The Witch and David have a fight over the cake using the umbrella. At the end of the fight, David ducks down behind the umbrella, sneaking back home with his cake, and the Witch is fooled. She's sad that she didn't get her cake and climbs up into the cherry tree to sulk.

Note: The fight with the umbrella is practiced every day, so the actors are completely safe.



4/ David's Mum brings the trays of newly baked cakes out from the oven. David's cakes are black and burned. David decides to give the Witch a burned cake. David tosses a cake to the Witch in the cherry tree. Witches love burned cakes, and she gobbles it up. The Witch thinks David is the best cook in the world! She does a magic spell and a medal appears on David's shirt.

The Witch does a dance with her broom and stops the rain.

Scene 5: A Lion in the Meadow



1/ While David admires his medal, the Witch sneaks back on stage and leaves a gift of a lion toy and a pair of binoculars on the table. David sees the toy, but the Witch disappears before he can see her. David puts on the binoculars and begins to explore across the stage with his lion toy, while Mum does some gardening.



2/ The humming of the singing bowl is heard, and a lion's tail pokes out from the side of the stage. Before David can get too close, the tail flicks and disappears. David tells his Mum what he saw, and she smiles, thinking David is pretending. As David begins to explore the whole stage, the Lion enters and follows behind David.



3/ David doesn't see the Lion at first, so the Lion stands up and follows David around the stage on two legs. Finally, David and the Lion sit down, and David spins in a circle until he finally sees the Lion through his binoculars. David slowly lowers his binoculars as the Lion wriggles in excitement. The Lion lets out a happy roar! This startles David, which startles the Lion, and they both run off, David yelling for Mum.



4/ Mum gives David a ball to play with. David bounces the ball off stage into the meadow- but the ball comes rolling back on stage. David begins to play with the offstage Lion, rolling and throwing the ball back and forth. Finally, David throws the ball, and it doesn't come back. The Lion pops out, roaring happily and running toward David on two legs before running off stage again. David is startled and yells for Mum again.

Scene 6: The Dragon



Note: The gong is loud, so we will demonstrate it and the orange light before the show.



1/ Mum tells David he is making up stories, so she tells him a story about a tiny dragon in a matchbox, which will grow into a big dragon and frighten the Lion away. David opens the matchbox, to find a magic leaf inside. He puts the leaf into the meadow, and a dragon begins to grow. The dragon is created by the musician drumming on a gong, and an orange light glowing from offstage.

3/ The Lion has an idea- he and David will play on the other side of the meadow, where there is no dragon. David and the Lion do cartwheels, play chase, climb up the cherry tree, and roar at each other. Exhausted, they fall to the floor and David strokes the Lion. Mum calls to David from offstage, and David and the Lion go into the house for some supper and story books. Mum brings David apples slices, which he shares with the Lion.



2/ The Lion runs on stage, and he and David both run into the house to hide from the dragon behind the table. David yells for Mum, and as she enters the dragon disappears. Mum comforts David, saying that there was no real dragon- it was just a story. Mum leaves, and the Lion reminds David that some stories are true, and some aren't.



4/ David asks Mum if the Lion can stay and be a house Lion. Mum agrees, and David and the Lion cheer! David tells Mum that the dragon is still in the meadow. The musician begins to play the gong, and the orange dragon light begins to glow from off stage. We see a shadow passing across the light, like a dragon wing flapping slowly. The Lion scurries off, and David looks at the dragon in delight before he follows the Lion off stage.

Scene 7: The Reluctant Hero, or Footsteps in the Snow - Song



1/ Mum enters with a box of toys and a basket that says "Donations". One by one, she puts David's old toys into the basket. David enters with socks and shoes in hand, and puts a stool in the middle of the stage. He grabs his lion toy back out of the donation basket, and returns it to the box as the song begins.



2/ Mum and the musician sing the actions of the song. First, David tries to put on his socks, to find that his feet have grown too big for them to fit. He borrows a pair from his mum, and tries to put on his shoes. Those don't fit, so he tries a pair of boots- they are still too small! He tosses the boots away.



3/ Last, David tries on a pair of skis, but no matter what he tries, they don't fit. Finally, David decides to go barefoot, and he walks off stage with the donations basket.

Note: During the song, David throws his shoes and boots behind him onto the stage. The boots will make a loud thump when they hit the stage. David also moves around like he might fall off the stool, but he's pretending- he's not going to fall. If the singing is too loud, you can cover your ears.

Scene 8: Leaf Magic



1/ David carries a stick house decorated with leaves and flowers onto the stage, and sits down. While Mum does some gardening, David plays with the glowing fairies inside the stick house. Then he puts the stick house on the green table and goes outside to play. David climbs the cherry tree and tosses leaves. Then he stomps and hops around the stage, crunching leaves nosily.



2/ He runs around the stage, wishing he had a dog. He plays with a stick like it's a magic wand and pretends to make the dog appear. David plays with the imaginary dog, playing fetch and tug of war with the stick. David finishes playing with the pretend dog and tosses handfuls of leaves into the air.

Note: As David tosses leaves, the audience doors will be closed to block the light from the foyer.

3/ David tosses three bunches of leaves. When the third bunch is fluttering to the ground, one leaf hangs magically in the air. David looks around, and the leaf flutters to the ground. David gathers another bundle of leaves and throws them up, and again one leaf hangs in the air. David looks around again. He sees the leaf in the air before it flutters to the ground. David sneaks up on the leaf, reaching out to touch it. With a small noise created by the musician, the leaf flies up into the air.



4/ David tries to catch it, but the leaf is too quick. The leaf floats down again. David stomps his foot, and the leaf jumps. He stomps again, the leaf jumping along. The leaf rises into the air, and begins to dance, and the musician plays energetic music. David dances wildly with the leaf for a while, until the leaf quietly floats to the ground. David keeps dancing for a while, and then realises the leaf is gone. He looks around for his leaf, but can't find it. He picks up his stick and goes home to Mum. Mum sees the leaf fluttering about the stage, and David tells Mum not to let it inside.

Scene 9: Fish and Chips



1/ In the morning David goes outside to play. He searches for the magic leaf, walking carefully and climbing up in the cherry tree, searching. The leaf pops up while David is in the tree, but David doesn't see it. Finally David sees the leaf, and he tries to shoo it away. The leaf dodges away and doesn't leave. David decides to go and see Fish and Chips for help. The leaf follows David as he marches around the stage. He calls for Fish and Chips, who arrives dragging a heavy sea chest. He and David sit on the sea chest, looking at the ocean.



2/ Fish and Chips tells David he will help him catch the leaf. They begin to push the sea chest toward the leaf, pretending to be asleep every time the leaf sees them moving. The leaf is clever, but eventually Fish and Chips manages to catch the leaf. He barks at David to open the box! They quickly trap the leaf in the sea chest.

Note: Once the leaf is trapped, the audience doors will be opened.



3/ Fish and Chips take the chest off stage and returns with a bottle. David whistles a sea shanty into the bottle for Fish and Chips to keep, and Fish and Chips leaves. After a while, David realises he misses his leaf. He calls for Fish and Chips, and asks for his leaf back. Fish and Chips returns with the chest. He tells David that with magic, sometimes things change. He opens the sea chest.



Note: The dog is on a leash, and will not come into the audience.

4/ Inside the sea chest is a real dog! David is so excited. He thanks Fish and Chips, and plays with the dog on stage. David and the dog leave, and the musician plays a jazzy version of "Magic", the opening song. Fish and Chips, Mum, Lion, and David and the dog come on stage to sing, and take a bow. They leave the stage dancing.