



# The Bremen Town Musicians

By Claudia Haas

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**Pioneer**  
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# THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

		<u># of lines</u>
DONKEY .....	decidedly pessimistic about life so far	85
DIZZY THE DIRECTOR .....	harried; trying to pull it all together at the last minute	17
HOUND.....	enthusiastic complainer	81
CAT .....	growing old and tired; has a great capacity to be woeful	51
ROOSTER .....	a pretty smart bird	44
DINELLE .....	owner of Donkey; wizened, downtrodden poor person	15
SQUIRE SQUIRREL .....	know-it-all woodsy animal	58
HARPER.....	owner of Hound; outdoor enthusiast	17
FLINCH .....	delicate, vain bird	19
CLACKNEY .....	self-righteous owner of Cat	6
ROAMING .....	scurrying, busy owner of Rooster	7
BARONE .....	loves being a robber; not the brightest bulb	19
ARTFUL.....	demanding robber; brighter than the others, which is not saying much	20
CLOAK.....	whining robber; wants the easy way out; not particularly bright	21



## SETTING

TIME: Today.

PLACE: A stage in the process of being set up for a production.

There is a ladder or step stool, a sawhorse, some planks of wood, several burlap sacks seemingly full of sand or seed and other items lying around the stage randomly. There should also be a trunk full of ropes, scarves, hats, vests, etc.—anything that could become part of an improvised animal costume. You may use the suggestions in the script and production notes or feel free to construct a prop or set piece from any makeshift item, much as children do at play.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene One: A lonely road near a farm.

Scene Two: The robbers' house.

## THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

### Scene One

1 A few minutes before the show is about to start, DONKEY, HOUND, CAT, ROOSTER, SQUIRE, DINELLE and DIZZY ENTER from backstage in the midst of rehearsing, costume fittings, etc. They do not wear costumes, but rather everyday street clothes. They look at the AUDIENCE in  
5 surprise.

**DONKEY:** Dizzy! Look! What are they doing here?

**DIZZY:** I don't know—we have a week till opening. Let's ask them.  
(Moves DOWNSTAGE and addresses an AUDIENCE MEMBER in the first row.) Pardon me, but you wouldn't be an audience member,  
10 would you? We do this, of course, for an audience—but we were not expecting you. May I see your ticket? (Leans over front of STAGE and peers at AUDIENCE MEMBER'S hand as if it held a ticket.) Oh, my. It has today's date on it, doesn't it? (Returns to CENTER STAGE.) All right, cast—it seems we're going to do a show today!

15 **HOUND:** But... but... the costumes aren't here!

**CAT:** The set's not ready!

**ROOSTER:** And I'm not sure I know all my lines.

**DIZZY:** (Indicates AUDIENCE.) They have tickets for today. We can't let them down. (Addresses the AUDIENCE.) You are here for "The Bremen Town Musicians," correct? (Waits for response.) Then you  
20 shall see "The Bremen Town Musicians"! Just give us a moment. All right, cast—set the stage! We have a show to do!

**DONKEY:** But we need a tree!

**DIZZY:** Use a ladder! (DINELLE does so.)

25 **HOUND:** What about the robbers' home?

**DIZZY:** Find a box. A flat. You're all artists! Be creative! (ACTORS scramble for items.)

**CAT:** Oh, I wish I had my elegant tail and my soft, fuzzy ears.

**DIZZY:** Improvise, everyone!

30 **DINELLE:** The ladder's ready.

**CAT:** Our tree! (Addresses the AUDIENCE.) What do you think of our fine tree? I rather fancy it. Where shall we put it? (Moves it around.) Can you see if I put it here? What about over there? If I make it too close to you, it will block everything that goes behind it. Oh, dear, I  
35 am not a scene designer. I shall never figure it out.

**SQUIRE:** Back farther. Yes. I like that. Maybe more to the right. (CAT moves it RIGHT.) No. I don't like that at all. Try the left. (CAT moves

1     *it LEFT.)* Now everything is off-kilter. Try the center. (*CAT moves it CENTER.)* Oh! Now it blocks everything! The audience will never see! Upstage, please. Upstage! (*CAT is growing impatient but moves it UPSTAGE.)* That's too far away! The audience will never  
5     see anything.

**CAT:** Then do it yourself! I need to find a costume! (*Leaves the ladder UPSTAGE and searches for a costume in the trunk. Some rope may be a tail. Hair in pigtails could be ears or whatever else you can find. SQUIRE tries to move the ladder, but it is heavy, so it barely budges.*)

10 **SQUIRE:** That'll do, don't you think? Yes. I like it there. I think. Maybe. We shall see. (*Meanwhile, the ANIMALS find assorted ears and tails in the trunk. All costume items should be made with ropes, scarves, ribbons and other "found" items. DIZZY, possibly with help from OTHERS, is getting the stage set: a sign indicating "BREMEN TOWN 10 Miles" is placed in view of the AUDIENCE, filled burlap sacks are set CENTER STAGE, other items are cleared to the side. When every ANIMAL has some costume piece and the stage is set, CAT, HOUND, ROOSTER and DIZZY EXIT. To AUDIENCE.*) Greetings to you all! Thank you for coming to our woods! I am—well, you  
20     know what I am, correct? (*SQUIRE may give the AUDIENCE hints—"I collect acorns," "I usually have a big bushy tail," etc.—if they can't guess. The show can continue when the AUDIENCE is sure of who SQUIRE is.*) We start the story on the morning of an ordinary day. The sun was shining on the farm, and Dinelle was getting ready  
25     for the planting season. The farmer piled up sacks of seed on his loyal donkey. (*DINELLE keeps handing DONKEY sack upon sack of seed. DONKEY has some on his arms, in his teeth—however many can be piled up.*)

**DONKEY:** (*Through clenched teeth.*) This is getting ridiculous.

30 **DINELLE:** What's that you say?

**DONKEY:** I was just wondering if we should be doing this today. Looks like rain.

**DINELLE:** Nonsense! It's a grand day to plant! Not a cloud in the sky. Must make hay while the sun shines. Otherwise my arthritis kicks  
35     in, and the work will never be done!

**DONKEY:** No, I see a cloud forming—way yonder. Definitely rain. All the seeds will be washed away. No. I wouldn't plant today. Your bones will really ache.

40 **DINELLE:** My bones always ache. But I am surprised at you, Donkey! I think you are getting old. Why, just last year you carried twenty sacks and all my tools over acres of land. Now look at you. I can hold more than you can!



1 **DONKEY:** I hate to complain, but it's my back. I felt it crack when I woke up this morning. And I think another tooth is about to fall out. And I'm losing some hair—

**DINELLE:** I wonder if you are getting too old to serve me anymore. I

5 wonder if I shouldn't think of getting a younger donkey. One with more spring in her step.

**DONKEY:** (*Under her breath.*) So you can work her to death and make her old before her time?

**DINELLE:** Did you say something?

10 **DONKEY:** Not a thing, Dinelle. I am here to do your bidding. Born to serve. Born to serve!

**DINELLE:** Can't you carry any more?

**DONKEY:** I'm one donkey, not an entire mule train!

**DINELLE:** You'll never make it across the farm.

15 **DONKEY:** I know. I know.

**DINELLE:** You really have aged, haven't you?

**DONKEY:** That's what I keep trying to tell you.

**DINELLE:** Let me get my tools. We'll see how it goes. (*EXITS.*)

**DONKEY:** (*Puts a few bags down.*) I need a new job. Something in an

20 office maybe. I can no longer be a beast of burden. Maybe I can be a librarian. Or maybe I could cook. Forage for nuts and berries and make up some nice hot cereal for the cool mornings. (*To the AUDIENCE.*) What do you think? (*Banters with the AUDIENCE about possible jobs.*)

25 **DINELLE:** (*ENTERS with a mop and other "tools."*) All right. Let's go. Pick up the sacks!

**DONKEY:** A mop? You're bringing a mop to plant?

**DINELLE:** (*Aside.*) We're improvising, remember? (*Proclaims loudly to the AUDIENCE.*) What's that you say? You say our hoe looks different? Yes, our hoe looks different but it works, see? (*Uses the mop like a hoe.*) Off we go! (*DONKEY struggles to balance the sacks and tools.*) I said, off we go! (*DONKEY starts to limp.*) This is not good. I wonder, Donkey, if you are good for anything besides good old-fashioned donkey meat!

30 **DONKEY:** (*Drops everything.*) Donkey meat?!

**DINELLE:** It may be time to turn you into donkey-burgers.

**DONKEY:** (*With a gulp.*) Donkey-burgers?! (*Collapses.*)

**DINELLE:** Wait here. (*EXITS.*)

**DONKEY:** (*Quickly gets up. To AUDIENCE.*) Did you hear that? You did,

40 didn't you? Donkey-burgers?! Is that any way to treat a loyal and faithful worker? It isn't, is it? Help me! Do I hide? What do I do?

1        *(Discusses the merits of hiding with the AUDIENCE. [NOTE: DONKEY could even try hiding in the AUDIENCE but finds that pieces of him can still be spotted.]*) Hey, maybe I should just run away. That's what I'll do. I must move to the city. I'll be safe there. Yes—do not tell—but I shall make a new life in the city! *(Runs OFF as DINELLE ENTERS.)*

5        **DINELLE:** Donkey? Oh, Donkey! *(To the AUDIENCE.)* Where'd she go? Come on, you can tell me. *(Once she cajoles the AUDIENCE into telling that DONKEY ran away to the city...)* Oh, the city is far away. It's not worth my energy to go after that old donkey. I need to go plant. Too bad. I rather fancied having a donkey-burger for dinner. Oh, well. Time to do the planting. *(Packs up all the sacks left behind.)* Whoa, this is heavy. I think I need a new donkey! *(EXITS.)*

10       **SQUIRE:** *(ENTERS. He may have a few acorns or peanuts. To AUDIENCE.)* Excuse me. You came unexpectedly, and—well—I missed breakfast. *(Nibbles on a nut. Refers to DONKEY'S situation.)* That was a close one, don't you think? Oh, the hardship of aging! *(SQUIRE adds some woodsy touches to the set—a branch for the tree, a bed of flowers under the tree, etc.)* That's better, don't you think? Gives a woodsier look to the area. Now, where was I? Oh, yes! At the same time Donkey ran away, there was an old hound— *(HOUND ENTERS.)* —complaining to his master.

20       **HARPER:** *(ENTERS, wearing an outdoorsy outfit.)* Good morning, Hound! Today we shall hike 10 miles! Might even scare us up a squirrel for dinner!

25       **SQUIRE:** Yikes! I'm out of here! *(EXITS fast.)*

**HARPER:** I think we'll start with a slow jog and then dash for a few miles. What do you think?

**HOUND:** *(Lies down.)* I need a nap! Breakfast tired me out!

30       **HARPER:** Got to have some exercise! Can't sit around by a fire all day!

**HOUND:** Oh, but I could. I really could.

**HARPER:** Need to get those muscles pumping. Let's warm up! *(Does stretching exercises.)*

**HOUND:** That looks silly.

35       **HARPER:** Come on! What are you waiting for?

**HOUND:** I'm waiting for you to open the door so I can go inside and lie down!

**HARPER:** Stretch those biceps! Get the blood running in the triceps!

**HOUND:** Do dogs even have triceps?

40       **HARPER:** Keep those muscles warm so glycogen isn't stored in the muscles!

- 1 **HOUND:** (To AUDIENCE.) Harper's been reading those exercise magazines again! (*Lies down.*)
- HARPER:** Come on, man's best friend, let's go for a romp!
- HOUND:** If you were really my best friend, you'd let me sleep.
- 5 **HARPER:** And after our morning run, we can play fetch and then go swimming!
- HOUND:** What is this, a triathlon? Running, fetching and swimming? Gee, what about doing a few miles on the bicycle?
- HARPER:** And after lunch, I'll do 20 miles on the bicycle.
- 10 **HOUND:** Be my guest!
- HARPER:** With you at my side!
- HOUND:** I don't think so.
- HARPER:** Okay, jumping jacks! Let's get the heart going! (*Does jumping jacks and HOUND makes a feeble attempt.*) Come on, Hound! One-
- 15 two! One-two! There you go! Stretch your knee out! Look right, look left! Now turn your toes out and stretch your neck! Lift up both your eyes to the sky! And turn, and turn, and shake out those pecs! (*HOUND collapses.*) Again!
- HOUND:** I'm done.
- 20 **HARPER:** Aren't you going to run with me?
- HOUND:** No.
- HARPER:** Aren't you going to stay by my side as my faithful companion?
- HOUND:** Only if you're standing still.
- 25 **HARPER:** Come on, Hound, I'm older than you and look at me!
- HOUND:** Do you have any idea how old I am in dog years?
- HARPER:** I don't know, Hound. I'm going to have to start looking for a replacement for you. You're not as jolly as you used to be. (*Jogs OFF.*)
- 30 **HOUND:** (To AUDIENCE.) Jolly? Not as jolly? I'm loyal, sweet—aren't I sweet? But jolly? That was not in my job description. I was supposed to sit by the fire and warm my mistress's toes and fetch her slippers. Nowhere did it ever say I must be jolly. And then what did she say? Replacement? I don't know if I like the sound of that.
- 35 (*Lies down as DONKEY runs ON.*) Oh no! Another exercise addict! (*DONKEY collapses, gasping for breath.*) Good morning! You might want to jog a little slower. I think you're out of shape.
- DONKEY:** I'm not out of shape! I'm old! Is anyone following me?
- HOUND:** No.
- 40 **DONKEY:** Whew. That was a close one. My mistress wants to turn me into donkey-burgers.



- 1 **HOUND:** That's not good.  
**DONKEY:** Tell me about it!  
**HOUND:** My mistress wants a new jolly dog. Who knows what they'll do with me?
- 5 **DONKEY:** So, are you just going to take it lying down?  
**HOUND:** Yes.  
**DONKEY:** You can't do that!  
**HOUND:** Why not? Lying down is all I wanted to do in the first place.  
**DONKEY:** You can come with me. I'm heading into the city—Bremen
- 10 Town. I'm going to live out my days there.  
**HOUND:** What sort of life can we have in the city? I don't fancy begging for scraps on every street corner.  
**DONKEY:** We can do something else—make ourselves useful—and not be a burden on society.
- 15 **HOUND:** I don't know how to do that.  
**DONKEY:** Neither do I. *(To the AUDIENCE.)* Anyone have ideas? *(Ad-libs about occupations with the AUDIENCE. If they do not come up with any musical ideas, DONKEY or HOUND can introduce the notion.)* My mother used to sing me to sleep!
- 20 **HOUND:** So did mine!  
**DONKEY:** We used to listen to the fiddle being played in the house.  
**HOUND:** Oh! I love the fiddle! A penny whistle's nice, also.  
**DONKEY:** Yes, a most agreeable sound. You know...  
**HOUND:** Are you thinking what I'm thinking?
- 25 **DONKEY:** That it would be wonderful to be a musician?  
**HOUND:** Yes!  
**DONKEY:** It would be grand!  
**HOUND:** Yes!  
**DONKEY:** We would spread cheer wherever we go!
- 30 **HOUND:** Yes! Why, I would almost be... jolly!  
**DONKEY:** Yes! Jolly good, Hound! Standing ovations! Encores!  
**HOUND:** Food!  
**DONKEY:** Only... I don't play.  
**HOUND:** Neither do I.
- 35 **DONKEY:** We could take lessons.  
**HOUND:** We could.  
**DONKEY:** And practice and practice!  
**HOUND:** We could do that! We're not too old to practice.



- 1 **DONKEY:** Are we on our way to Bremen Town?  
**HOUND:** We are! We certainly are!  
**DONKEY/HOUND:** (*To the tune of “London Bridge is Falling Down,” they sing a ditty.*) We’re on our way to Bremen Town,  
5 Bremen Town, Bremen Town.  
We’re on our way to Bremen Town  
To be musicians.
- DONKEY:** (*Sings.*) I can’t play an instrument—  
**HOUND:** (*Sings.*) Nor can I, nor can I—
- 10 **DONKEY:** (*Sings.*) But I can work and study hard—  
**HOUND:** (*Sings.*) Learn some new tricks!  
**DONKEY:** Hey! That’s pretty good!  
**HOUND:** I know! We’re not too bad!  
**DONKEY:** You know what we need?
- 15 **HOUND:** An instrument?  
**DONKEY:** Percussion. We need a beat.  
**HOUND:** How do we do that?  
**DONKEY:** We’ll get them to help us. (*To the AUDIENCE.*) If we tell you when to stomp, will you join in?
- 20 **HOUND:** Stomp?! I want to clap!  
**DONKEY:** Why don’t we work together? I’ll stomp and you’ll clap.  
**HOUND:** Can we have them help us?  
**DONKEY:** But of course! (*To the AUDIENCE.*) All right—it’s like this.  
We are going to sing: “We’re on our way to Bremen Town, Bremen  
25 Town, Bremen Town”—and after every Bremen Town, you stomp—  
like this. (*Stomps.*) Shall we practice? All right.
- DONKEY/HOUND:** (*Slowly sing the ditty again with the “stomps.”*)  
We’re on our way to Bremen Town, (*Stomp.*)  
Bremen Town, (*Stomp.*) Bremen Town. (*Stomp.*)  
30 We’re on our way to Bremen Town (*Stomp.*)  
To be musicians! (*Stomp-stomp.*)
- HOUND:** I like the two stomps at the end.  
**DONKEY:** So do I.
- HOUND:** Now, in the second verse, we will clap. And we’ll make it really  
35 fancy—a double-time clap. I’ll show you!  
We can’t play an instrument, (*Clap-clap.*)  
Instrument, (*Clap-clap.*) instrument. (*Clap-clap.*)  
But we can work and study hard, (*Clap-clap.*)  
Learn some new tricks! (*Clap.*)
- 40 **DONKEY:** Ohh! Tricky! Just one clap at the end.

1 **HOUND:** So it's the opposite of yours! (*You may practice again if you wish or just go through it with the AUDIENCE. DONKEY and HOUND can split the AUDIENCE.*)

**DONKEY/HOUND:** All right! All together now!

5 (*Sing.*) We're on our way to Bremen Town, (*Stomp.*)  
Bremen Town, (*Stomp.*) Bremen Town. (*Stomp.*)  
We're on our way to Bremen Town (*Stomp.*)  
To be musicians! (*Stomp-stomp.*)  
We can't play an instrument, (*Clap-clap.*)  
10 Instrument, (*Clap-clap.*) instrument. (*Clap-clap.*)  
But we can work and study hard, (*Clap-clap.*)  
Learn some new tricks! (*Clap.*)

**DONKEY:** Not bad, Hound!

**HOUND:** And our friends—weren't they good?

15 **DONKEY:** (*To the AUDIENCE.*) You should all be musicians. (*With a new spring in their steps, DONKEY and HOUND check out the Bremen Town sign and EXIT.*)

**SQUIRE:** (*ENTERS, wearing an additional costume piece—a vest, country hat or bushier tail.*) Do you like this? It gives me a certain  
20 air of nobility, don't you think?

**FLINCH:** (*ENTERS. He has one feather attached.*) When are you going to bring me on?

**SQUIRE:** I beg your pardon?

**FLINCH:** How long must I wait in the wings?

25 **SQUIRE:** You're not in this show.

**FLINCH:** Of course I'm in this show! I'm in every show! (*To AUDIENCE.*)  
Who would you rather spend time with? An acorn-chewing squirrel  
or a bird with magnificent feathers—

**SQUIRE:** You only have one feather!

30 **FLINCH:** I'm working on it, okay? (*To the AUDIENCE.*) Imagine if you will—a feather here... and three there... and a whole mess of them back here! My colors are exquisite—ecru, pink flamingo, sunshine yellow, blueberry blue—

**SQUIRE:** They didn't come to listen to a costume report—

35 **FLINCH:** I know that! If my costume had been ready, I would be able to show it to them. But you can imagine, can't you?

**SQUIRE:** Flinch! Get off the stage! You are not in "The Bremen Town Musicians"!

40 **FLINCH:** Don't be ridiculous! It's in my contract. Flinch is in every show!

**SQUIRE:** Take it up with the director.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROPERTIES

#### ONSTAGE, Scene One:

Ladder, step stool, sawhorse, planks of wood, filled burlap sacks

Trunk of assorted scarves, ribbons, rope, vests, etc.

Sign indicating Bremen Town 10 miles away [the 10 needs to be easily changed to reflect a 5 later in the play]

#### BROUGHT ON, Scene One:

Mop, possible other tools (DINELLE)

Acorns, peanuts, a branch or flower bed for woodsy touches (SQUIRE)

Bulging sacks (CLOAK, BARONE, ARTFUL)

Plank painted with a 5 to change Bremen Town sign, optional cardboard sun (DIZZY)

Table, food, tableware, ladders (DIZZY, FLINCH CLOAK, BARONE)

#### ONSTAGE, Scene Two:

Table set with food and drink, three chairs, three settings

Candle and matches

### ABOUT THE PROPS

The fun in the play is the use of “found” objects—so none of this is set in stone. Ladders, step stools and wooden boxes can all be used for trees. For Scene Two, you will need a table with food and drink, a candle and three chairs. There could be a signpost pointing to various areas in your town, to New York, to China—whatever is your whim. It could also point to Bremen Town, or that can come on at the end of Scene One.

### FLEXIBLE CASTING

Either male or female actors can play most of the characters with just minor changes to the dialogue. In the original production, all roles were played female, which is why many parts are written with feminine references. Feel free to change these to fit your cast!

## We hope you've enjoyed this script sample.

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