



## The Goblin's Market

### Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes

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#### CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

GOBLIN #1 / CHILD #1

GOBLIN #2 / CHILD #2

GOBLIN #3 / CHILD #3

SARAH

LIZZIE

*If there are performance notes, they can be found on the pages following the script*

## Scene 1 – Forest

**[Stage Set:** The stage is divided into two sets. At one end of the stage is a forest, and at the other end is the interior of a cottage. A backdrop can be painted to show both locations- a darkish cluster of trees on one side, and a cottage wall made of logs and a window with curtains on the other side. In the forest area there are a few free-standing trees (See **Performance Notes** for how to make trees) around a table, and at the very forefront of the stage there is a long, crumpled blue sheet to suggest a stream.]

[In the cottage area, place a small table, two chairs, a coat rack, and two beds. (See **Performance Notes** for suggestions for how to set up the stage and how to make beds). There is also a flower pot, which will be used in Scene 5.]

### **NARRATOR:**

Hello, everyone. This play, “The Goblin Market,” is based on a story written long ago by Christina Rossetti (pronounce: rose-ETT-ee) of England. It’s brought to you by *Stories to Grow by*. A lot of the play will sound like a poem. There’s a reason for that. This story IS a poem.

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

### **NARRATOR:**

Morning and evening,  
Maids heard the goblins cry...

[GOBLIN #1, GOBLIN #2, and GOBLIN #3 enter, carrying wicker baskets of brightly colored plastic fruit.]

### **GOBLIN #1:**

Come buy the fruit of our orchard.

### **GOBLIN #2:**

Come buy! Come buy!

### **GOBLIN #3:**

*(holds out fruit to display such as apples, lemons, or oranges)*

Apples and quinces,  
Lemons and oranges,

[LIZZIE and SARAH enter, carrying stoneware pitchers. They kneel at the “stream” and pretend to fill their pitchers with water.]

### **GOBLIN #1:**

*(holds out a carton of red berries and cherries)*

Plump unpecked cherries,  
Melons, raspberries

**GOBLIN #2:**

Fresh grapes in a cluster,  
Apples bright and red in luster

[GOBLINS add their fruit to the stand.]

**ALL GOBLINS:**

Come buy, come buy!

[SARAH stands and turns her head to listen to the GOBLINS.]

**GOBLIN #3:**

Taste them and try. Come buy.

**ALL GOBLINS:**

Come buy!

**SARAH:**

*(tugs on Lizzie's sleeve)* Lizzie, look! Don't those cherries look amazing? *(drifts towards fruit stand)*

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, stop! *(rushes after Sarah)*

**SARAH:**

*(hovers over the display of fruit)* Everything looks... *(inhales deeply)* and smells divine!

[LIZZIE keeps her eyes cast down, grabs SARAH's hand, and pulls her away from the stand.]

**LIZZIE:**

No, sister! Look away! *(turns her back to the goblins, squeezes her eyes tightly shut)*

**SARAH:**

*(yanks arm away)* It's just fruit, Lizzie. *(takes a piece of fruit and turns it around, gazing at it appreciatively)* Just. PERFECT. Fruit.

**LIZZIE:**

*(turns with her back against Sarah and facing the audience, searches for her sister with her free hand)* Sarah, this fruit is TOO perfect! Each one so round and bright. Real fruit from the earth, exposed to sun and rain, doesn't grow without a blemish. This is the work of dark magic! Sister, these are Goblin men!

**SARAH:**

Nonsense! We just don't get such fine (*holds up a piece of fruit and longingly gazes at it*) fruit at home. (*speaking in a dreamlike state*) How sweet even one bite must taste!

**GOBLIN #2:**

Sweet to the tongue and ripe to the eye. Come buy!

**ALL GOBLINS:**

Come buy!

**GOBLIN #3:**

Taste them and try!

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, think about it. The season just turned from winter to spring. How could fruit be ripe already? There's no doubt this is magic—evil magic!

**GOBLIN #1:**

(*offers Sarah a strawberry*) Taste them and try!

**LIZZIE:**

Don't listen, Sarah! (*outstretches her hand to Sarah*) Come on, we've finished filling our pitchers. Let's go home.

[LIZZIE begins to walk away, still averting her eyes.]

**SARAH:**

I'll be right behind you. (*dreamlike*) Maybe I'll stay just a minute ...

[LIZZIE exits while SARAH goes to the fruit stand. GOBLINS, each with fruit in hand, encircle her and dance around, holding a piece of fruit up to her face.]

**GOBLIN #1:**

(*offers Sarah an apple*) Come buy!

**GOBLIN #2:**

(*offers Sarah a bunch of grapes*) Come buy!

**GOBLIN #3:**

(*holds up a large fruit basket*) Taste them and try!

**SARAH:**

(*despondent*)

Good folk, I have no coin with which to deal,

To take and not pay would be as to steal.  
I have no copper inside my purse,  
No silver nor gold. Ah, such is my curse!

**GOBLIN #1:**

*(reaches out to Sarah's hair, wraps a golden curl around his finger.)* From your golden head we can make a deal.

**SARAH:**

We can?

**GOBLIN #1:**

Of course. Just pay us with one golden curl.

[GOBLIN #1 motions to GOBLIN #2. GOBLIN #2 pulls out a pair of scissors, and snaps it open and shut. (See **Performance Notes** for suggestion on how to create an over-sized scissor made of cardboard and foil.)]

**SARAH:**

*(to self)* What's one piece of hair for all of this delicious fruit? *(to GOBLINS)* You've got a deal.

[GOBLINS #2 and #3 approach Sarah. GOBLIN #3 holds up out a strand of golden hair and GOBLIN #2 pretends to snip it off. GOBLIN #3 hold it up, gleefully (See **Performance Notes** for suggestions on how to accomplish this).]

**GOBLIN #1:**

*(Goblins pile fruit in Sarah's basket)* The deal is done! Now eat all the fruit you want.

**SARAH:**

All I want? *(turns her back to audience and hungrily pretends to devour the fruit, overturning the basket)*. Mmmh! I've never tasted anything this magnificent in all my life!

[While she eats, GOBLINS dance about cackling with glee. GOBLINS pick up the leftovers and the basket, and skip away offstage, unnoticed by SARAH.]

[Still turned away, SARAH lifts her pitcher to her lips, "drinks" directly from the spout, pretends to finish it, and drops the empty pitcher carelessly. She wipes her mouth with her sleeve.]

[SARAH turns around and notices the goblins have gone.]

**SARAH:**

Good folk? Come back! *(looking around)* They took the rest of the fruit with them! Isn't there anything left?

[SARAH gets on her hands and knees and crawls frantically around the stage, searching for more fruit.]

**SARAH:**

There must be SOMETHING left behind. A lemon? A single grape?

[SARAH stops, seeing something on the ground. She pretends to pick it up, and holds it before her on the palm of her hand.]

**SARAH:**

*(as if talking to seed in her hand)* One tiny pomegranate seed is all.

[SARAH tucks the seed into her apron pocket, picks up her pitcher and hurries offstage.]

## Scene 2: Cottage

**[Stage Set:** This section of the stage is the interior of the cottage where LIZZIE and SARAH live. If there is a backdrop, it is painted to show a log wall with a window surrounded by curtains, and a fire burning in the fireplace with a pot hanging over the flame. In front of the fireplace is a small table, two chairs, and two beds. (**See Performance Notes** on how to suggest a bed without using an actual bed.) A coat rack holds one cape, two aprons, and a purse.]

[LIZZIE kneels on her bed, staring out the window, as if waiting for something. SARAH enters. LIZZIE gets up from the bed and rushes to her sister.]

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, there you are! What happened to you? I thought you were behind me, and then you were gone!

[SARAH hangs her cape on the coat rack.]

**SARAH:**

No need to worry, as you see. Not a speck of harm has come to me.

**LIZZIE:3**

I was afraid you went back to the Goblin Market for a taste of that horrible fruit.

**SARAH:**

What if I DID happen to stop back there for a few minutes?

**LIZZIE:**

*(distressed)* Sarah, how COULD you?

**SARAH:**

Oh, stop! It's no big deal.

**LIZZIE:**

Tell me true. Did you taste the Goblin's fruit?

**SARAH:**

Lizzie, it's not like you think. The fruit was amazing! Everything I thought it would be, and more!

**LIZZIE:**

*(takes Sarah's chin in her hands)* Your lips... they're bruised. And the skin around your mouth. What are those dry, cracked lines? Sarah, how much of that enchanted fruit did you have?

**SARAH:**

Hush, Lizzie, don't be cross. I wish I thought to bring some back for you, but the goblins will be

back tomorrow. I'll get more then. Plums, cherries, figs, icy-cold melons. You'll love it as much as I do!

**LIZZIE:**

*(exasperated)* I don't WANT any! Have the Goblins so bewitched you that you've forgotten what happened to poor Jeannie?

**SARAH:**

Jeannie?

**LIZZIE:**

You know this, Sarah! One moonlit night, the goblins lured her to their market to feast on their fruit. *(pause)* And every evening after that, she pined and pined for more.

**SARAH:**

*(dreamy)* More...

**LIZZIE:**

She couldn't do anything but search for the Goblin Market. She wasted away. Her hair turned gray. And she never found the goblins again.

**SARAH:**

She never found them?

**LIZZIE:**

*(shakes her head "no")* Never. And she wouldn't let any other food pass her lips. By the time the first snow fell, she was gone! Where Jeannie lies buried today, no grass will grow. Sarah, I don't want this to happen to you!

**SARAH:**

Don't worry, Lizzy! That will never happen.

**LIZZIE:**

How can you be sure?

**SARAH:**

Because I know how to pay for all the fruit I want. You see *(shakes head)*, I have plenty of golden curls I can trade with the Goblin men.

**LIZZIE:**

So you admit they're Goblins!



**SARAH:**

*(off-handedly)* Whatever, Lizzie. Let's stop arguing, okay? Let's just have supper and enjoy the evening.

**LIZZIE:**

Of course. Go wash up so you can help me set the table. I made your favorites for supper tonight – curried lamb and for dessert, cider cake.

**SARAH:**

*(grimaces in displeasure)* You know what? Actually, I'm not hungry after all. *(yawns)* In fact, I'm pretty tired. I think I'll go to bed instead.

**LIZZIE:**

But you just said we'd have our supper –

[SARAH climbs into bed.]

**SARAH:**

Good night.

[SARAH covers her head with a blanket.]

**LIZZIE:**

*(to the audience)* There is little good in this dark night. Well, I don't want to eat alone. I might as well go to bed, too.

[LIZZIE climbs into her bed.]

**LIZZIE:**

I just want to sleep this day away. *(covers her head with her blanket)*

### Scene 3 – Cottage, the next morning

[Stage set: as in Scene 2.]

[NARRATOR enters. From offstage, a rooster crows (See **Performance Notes** for sound effect ideas). As NARRATOR speaks the next few lines, LIZZIE and SARAH rise from bed and pantomime doing chores. SARAH is obviously distracted, thinking about the market.]

**NARRATOR:**

When the cock crowed the next morn,  
It wailed and moaned as if to warn,  
Then Sarah rose with sister Lizzie:  
One felt clear-headed, the other dizzy.  
Yet together they fetched the honey, milked the cows,  
Set the house to rights, and fed the fowls.

**SARAH:**

*(to Lizzie)* We've done so many chores! It must be twilight soon.

**LIZZIE:**

How can that be? The sun is high in the sky, and there's still much work to be done.

[LIZZIE and SARAH sit down and embroider.]

**NARRATOR:**

They churned the butter, sat and sewed.  
Whipped the cream, dug and hoed.  
All day Sarah gazed ahead, as in a dream.  
Till evening came and its red light gleamed.

[SARAH looks at the window. Jumps up from her chair, dropping her embroidery materials onto the floor. NARRATOR exits.]

**SARAH:**

*(excitedly)* The sun is setting! Soon the moon will rise! Lizzie, let's take our pitchers to the brook and fetch more water!

[SARAH picks up the pitcher.]

**LIZZIE:**

What's the hurry? We have enough water from yesterday.

[SARAH rushes offstage.]

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, wait for me!

[LIZZIE picks up SARAH's embroidery off the floor, places it on the table next to hers, takes the other pitcher, and follows her sister offstage.]

## Scene 4: Forest

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 1, but without the fruit stand.]

[LIZZIE and SARAH enter. They kneel at the brook, filling their pitchers. When they are done, LIZZIE turns to leave.]

**LIZZIE:**

Okay, we've filled the pitchers. Let's go home.

**SARAH:**

*(shakes head in disagreement, and looks around)* What are you talking about? It's still early. The dew hasn't fallen, and there's no chill in the air yet.

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, don't tell me you're hoping the Goblin men will come back!

**SARAH:**

*(looks about)* Maybe we're in the wrong spot.

**LIZZIE:**

We're exactly where we were yesterday. Sarah, it's getting dark. Let's go before—

[GOBLINS call from offstage.]

**GOBLIN #1:**

Come buy our fruits.

**GOBLIN #2:**

Come buy!

**GOBLINS, together:**

Come buy!

**LIZZIE:**

Oh no, they're coming!

**SARAH:**

What? What do you mean?

**LIZZIE:**

It's the Goblin men, don't you hear them?

**ALL GOBLINS:**

*(from offstage, louder than before)*

Come buy, come buy!

**SARAH:**

I don't hear a thing!

[GOBLINS leap onto the stage. GOBLIN #1 and GOBLIN #2 each have a piece of fruit in hand. GOBLIN #3 holds a basket of fruit. GOBLINS skip in a figure 8, looping around SARAH and LIZZIE. GOBLIN #1 waves his hand in front of SARAH's face, and she doesn't react at all. As if she can't see him.]

**GOBLIN #1:**

*(to Lizzie)* Taste one and try!

[GOBLIN #2 pulls out SARAH's lock of hair and shakes it for LIZZIE to see. LIZZIE grabs SARAH by the hand and pulls her sister toward her.]

**LIZZIE:**

You goblins, stay away from us!

**SARAH:**

Goblins? They're here?

[GOBLINS circle the two sisters. Only Lizzie can see them.]

**LIZZIE:**

*(to Goblins)* Go... AWAY! Leave us alone!

**SARAH:**

*(confused)* I don't understand. You can see and hear them? *(pauses, then with despair)* and I... can't?

[LIZZIE pretends to push GOBLIN #3. *(remember, it's pretend – safety first!)* GOBLIN #3's fruit basket spills all over the floor *(GOBLIN #3 is in control of basket, and the spill is staged)*. GOBLINS scramble about gathering up the fruit.]

**LIZZIE:**

*(picks up pitcher, takes Sarah by her hand and begins to lead her off stage)* Come quick, let's go. I'll make us a pot of nice, warm chicken soup at home.

**SARAH:**

*(hysterical)* Soup!? Why would I want SOUP?! I want the Goblins' fruit. The FRUIT!

[LIZZIE puts her arms around SARAH's shoulders and guides her offstage. Offstage, SARAH puts on a gray wig.]

## Scene 5: Cottage

[Stage Set: Same as Scene 2.]

[LIZZIE and SARAH enter and lay down in bed, pretending to sleep. NARRATOR enters.]

**NARRATOR:**

Day after day, night after night,  
Sarah kept a longing watch, in fright  
Never again did she catch the goblins' cry:  
"Come buy our fruits; come buy, come buy"—  
Each night as the moon waxed large and bright  
Sarah's hair greyed more and lost its light.

[SARAH sits up suddenly. Her hair is now grey (See **Performance Notes** for how to make her hair gray).]

**SARAH:**

Maybe today?

[SARAH goes to the window and peers out. LIZZIE remains asleep.]

**SARAH:**

Nothing!

[SARAH collapses back onto the bed.]

**NARRATOR:**

She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn  
To swift decay and then to burn  
Until one day, as Sarah's spirits ebbed away,  
She remembered the kernel-seed that lay, waiting in her apron pocket.

[SARAH climbs out of bed, fishes the seed out of the pocket of her apron hanging on the coat rack.]

**SARAH:**

*(in a loud whisper to the seed)* Little pomegranate seed. Please grow. Don't fail me.

[SARAH places the seed in a flower pot, and sets the flower pot on a small table, then paces in circles around it.]

**NARRATOR:**

She dewed it with her tears, hoped for a root.

Watched and watched for a waxing shoot,  
But none emerged, despite wishes strong,  
No life, hope gone, after hours long

**SARAH:**

That was my last chance. Now there's no hope!

[SARAH, slowly, with sagging shoulders, sits down in the chair by the chimney.]

**NARRATOR:**

She sat down listless in the chimney-nook  
And would not eat. And would not look.

[LIZZIE gets out of bed. Sees SARAH sitting and staring ahead, and drapes a blanket from the bed over her.]

**LIZZIE:**

Please, Sarah. You must eat or drink something. You're wasting away! If you don't, you'll... (*cuts herself off, refusing to finish her own sentence. Speaks again with a brighter tone*) I'll make you anything you want. Mincemeat pie? How about chocolate custard!

[SARAH stares straight ahead, expressionless.]

**LIZZIE:**

No wait, listen. I'll make you some hot tea with honey. Lots of honey! (*kneels down beside Sarah*). Don't you give up, Sarah. Do you hear me? I won't let you!

**GOBLIN #1:**

(*from offstage*) Come buy fruit from our orchard!

**ALL GOBLINS:**

Come buy, come buy!

**LIZZIE:**

(*rushes to the window to see where the sound is coming from*) Don't you come near this house! Do you hear me? Stay away!

**ALL GOBLINS:**

(*from offstage*) Come buy, come buy!

[LIZZIE quickly walks to her purse hanging from the coat rack. She reaches inside and pulls out an over-sized silver coin, holding it up so the audience can see it. (**See Performance Notes** on how to create an over-sized silver coin that will be clear to the audience.) LIZZIE places the coin back in her purse, then kisses Sarah on the forehead.]



**LIZZIE:**

*(to Sarah)* I'll be back soon.

**SARAH:**

Take your time, it doesn't matter. Nothing does.

[LIZZIE runs off stage.]

## Scene 6: Forest

[**Stage Set:** Goblin Market is on stage, as in Scene 1. GOBLINS enter and stand behind the tables. When LIZZIE enters the stage, they rush at her with fruit in their hands.]

**GOBLIN #3:**

Look at our apples  
Russet and dun.

**GOBLIN #2:**

Bob at our cherries,  
Bite at our peaches,  
Out in the sun.

**GOBLIN #1:**

Plums on their twigs;  
We grew them and stew them,  
Pomegranates, figs.  
Lick them and chew them.

**LIZZIE:**

Good folk. Give me much and give me many. (*Pulls the coin out of her purse and tosses it to them. A goblin catches the coin and jumps with joy.*) I will take as much as I can carry.

**GOBLIN #3:**

(*snatches up the coin*)  
Nay, do not take and leave us behind,  
Honor us and EAT with us, dine.  
You mustn't leave without a taste  
Sit and relax, haste makes waste.

**GOBLIN #2:**

Such fruits as these  
No man can carry;  
Half their bloom would fly,  
Half their dew would dry,  
Half their flavor would pass one by.

**GOBLIN #1:**

Be our welcome guest, at the very least  
Sit with us, partake in our feast.

**LIZZIE:**

Thank you, but my sister is home waiting for me. I need to get back to her. I will not stay and eat. Just sell me your fruit, or give me back my silver penny.

**GOBLIN #3:**

*(snarls)* You are too proud for your own good, girl!

**GOBLIN #2:**

High and mighty!

**GOBLIN #1:**

Smarty-pants!

[GOBLINS pantomime physically taunting LIZZIE, pretending to pull her hair, kick her shins, clutch at her dress, stamp on her foot, claw at her arms. GOBLIN #1 and GOBLIN #2 grab LIZZIE's arms *(remember, this is all pretend)*, while GOBLIN #3 pretends to press a fruit against her lips. At the same time, LIZZIE spreads raspberry jam on her own face. (See **Performance Notes** for how to make this work).]

**GOBLIN #3:**

Taste and try!

[LIZZIE keeps her lips pressed shut and shakes her head resolutely NO!]

[GOBLIN #1 and GOBLIN #2, let go of LIZZIE's arms. GOBLIN #2 and GOBLIN #3 gather up all the fruit from their stands. GOBLIN #1 flings the silver coin back at LIZZIE toward her shoe. GOBLINS exit the stage. LIZZIE picks up the coin, holds it up high for a moment, smiling, and puts it in her purse. She exits.]

## Scene 7: Cottage

[**Stage Set:** Same as in Scene 2. SARAH sits in the chair with her head drooping down and a blanket wrapped around her. LIZZIE enters the stage and crouches down near her sister. SARAH's eyes are closed and her jaw hangs slack open. LIZZIE lifts SARAH's head.]

**LIZZIE:**

SARAH, wake up!

[SARAH is unresponsive.]

**LIZZIE:**

I've come back from the Goblin Market.

**SARAH:**

*(opens her eyes, speaks groggily)* The Goblin Market?

**LIZZIE:**

Yes, look at me.

[Still weak, SARAH leans in toward LIZZIE, examining her sister more closely.]

**SARAH:**

Lizzie, what's that on your face?

**LIZZIE:**

For your sake I've brought some back for you. Kiss my cheek, taste the juices. *(points to the fruit stain on her cheek)*

**SARAH:**

Lizzie, you didn't eat the Goblin fruit too, did you?

**LIZZIE:**

Not a speck of it, don't worry. Go on, go ahead.

[SARAH kisses LIZZIE on the cheek, then stands, still wrapped in a blanket. SARAH puts one hand over her mouth and the other over her throat, like she's choking, and runs offstage. Offstage, she removes the gray wig and pulls the blanket up around her head to hide her hair.]

**LIZZIE:**

*(calling after her)* Sarah! Sarah, are you OK? What is it? What's wrong?

[SARAH enters and staggers toward the bed.]

**SARAH:**

I've never tasted anything more dreadful in all my life.

[SARAH collapses onto the bed. LIZZIE rushes to her side, shakes her sister by the shoulders.]

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah? SARAH! (*touches Sarah's forehead*) Oh no, it didn't work!

**SARAH:**

(*hoarsely*) Water...

**LIZZIE:**

(*lifting her head*) Sarah? Wait, what did you say?

**SARAH:**

Thirsty. Please, some water?

**LIZZIE:**

Yes, yes. Of course!

[LIZZIE jumps up. Pretends to pour water from one of the stoneware pitchers into a cup. She carries it back to her sister, holding the cup to SARAH's lips. SARAH grabs the cup and pretends to drink it all.]

**SARAH:**

(*lying back down*) More please.

[LIZZIE gets up and pours another cup of water. As she walks back, SARAH sits up again. Her hair has returned to a golden blonde (**See Performance Notes** for how to accomplish this effect).]

**LIZZIE:**

Sarah, your hair!

**SARAH:**

Oh, my! (*lifting her ear towards the window*) Do you hear them?

**LIZZIE:**

No, Sarah. There are no Goblins calling.

**SARAH:**

(*laughs*) Who said anything about Goblins? I'm talking about the birds outside our window. Listen...

[Birds tweet from offstage.]

**LIZZIE:**

It's beautiful.

[LIZZIE hands SARAH the cup. SARAH takes a small sip.]

**SARAH:**

I'm hungry.

**LIZZIE:**

*(laughs)* What can I make you?

**SARAH:**

*(smiles)* I thought you said something about chocolate custard?

[LIZZIE and SARAH laugh together, and exit. Offstage, the sisters quickly don aprons and bonnets to get ready for the next scene. Offstage, an actor hands LIZZIE a baby doll, wrapped in a blanket.]

## Scene 8 – Years later

[**Stage set:** This scene takes place in a general, nondescript place, but for staging purposes the characters can step to the very front of the stage to indicate the action is happening in an area that's not exactly the interior of the cottage.]

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

**NARRATOR:**

Days, weeks, months, years went by  
And afterwards, when both were wives

[LIZZIE and SARAH re-enter, along with CHILD #1, CHILD #2, and CHILD #3. LIZZIE and SARAH are wearing the aprons and bonnets to indicate they are now adults. LIZZIE holds the baby doll.]

[CHILDREN #1-#3 skip around the stage.]

**NARRATOR:**

With children of their own  
Sarah would call the little ones  
From their games and chores and runs

[SARAH motions to the three CHILDREN to come to her, and they sit in a semi-circle in front of her.]

**NARRATOR:**

And tell them how her sister stood  
In deadly peril to do her good.

**SARAH:**

*(to Children)* For there is no friend like a sister

**LIZZIE:**

*(to the Children)* In calm or stormy weather

**SARAH:**

*(to Lizzie)* To cheer one on the tedious way,  
*(to audience)* Or fetch one back if one goes astray.

**NARRATOR:**

You've heard of J. K. Rowling, who wrote Harry Potter? Her novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* is based on Christina Rossetti's poetry. But Christina's most famous story is "The Goblin Market."  
So our tale is told, and you must know  
A true sister never lets you go.



## Performance Notes for Goblin Market

### THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

- 1.** Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
- 2.** Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
- 3.** Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



### COSTUMES

- NARRATOR— Simple, nice clothes.
- GOBLINS— Oversized hooded sweatshirts (dark colors, no logos) with rope or cord loosely tied around their waists; brown pants or leggings and flat black shoes. Face-paint make-up is optional (Green for skin tone, black and red for around lips and eyes).





- LIZZIE— A long pastel-colored dress or blouse and long skirt, and a cape, or a shawl that ties or buttons in the front.
- SARAH— A long pastel-colored dress or blouse and long skirt, and a cape, or a shawl that ties or buttons in the front. She also has a plain white apron that ties around her waist like those that were worn during Victorian times.

SARAH's hair color is blonde, but if the actress playing her isn't blonde she can wear a blonde wig with curls OR you can change the line "golden curl" to whatever color hair the actress has.

A clip-on lock of hair is worn during Scene 1 only, for GOBLINS to "snip off".

When SARAH exits at the end of Scene 4 she puts on a gray wig. She wears this wig until Scene 7. When she runs offstage in the middle of Scene 7, she takes off the gray wig, and if she had a blonde wig on before, she puts it back on. She puts the blanket up around her head so that only her face is showing.



## PROPS

### Scene 1

- Three wicker baskets of fruit to be carried by GOBLINS. Fruit can be real, plastic or cardboard. Fruit should be a colorful mix and should include strawberries, apples, and a bunch of grapes.
- Note: There needs to be at least one apple and one strawberry for GOBLIN #1 to offer SARAH, and at least one bunch of grapes for GOBLIN #2 to offer SARAH.
- Two non-breakable pitchers, one each for LIZZIE and SARAH. These should be made of plastic, to avoid breakage, but can be painted or spray-painted a reddish-orange or tan to resemble a ceramic pitcher.
- A carton of berries for GOBLIN #1.
- A pair of scissors for GOBLIN #2.
- A golden curl- this can be a piece of yellow yarn, which GOBLIN #3 keeps in their pocket, until it's time to "snip" it off. GOBLIN #3 can hold one



end of the yarn against SARAH's head, and hold the other end outstretched, so that audience can see it. GOBLIN #2 opens and closes the scissors close to SARAH'S head, and GOBLIN #3 pull yarn away, holding it up to show audience.

## Scene 2

- Two bowls, stacked on table, and two spoons for LIZZIE to start putting out for dinner.

## Scene 3

- Embroidery materials-
- Same pitchers used in Scene 1 for LIZZIE and SARAH.

## Scene 4

- Same pitchers used in Scene 1 for LIZZIE and SARAH.
- A piece of fruit each for GOBLIN #1 and GOBLIN #2. These can be plastic fruits or real, or made from cardboard.
- A wicker basket of fruit for GOBLIN #3. Can be one of the baskets from Scene 1. There should be a few pieces of loose fruit to spill onto the floor. When LIZZIE pushes him, GOBLIN #3 can turn and drop the basket close to the floor.
- A pair of scissors for GOBLIN #2. – a pair of scissors.
- Snipped lock of blonde hair for GOBLIN #2.

## Scene 5

- Flower pot for SARAH to plant seed in. Note: The seed she pulls out of her coat pocket is imaginary, as before.
- Coin purse for LIZZIE. This can be hanging on a coat rack or on the back of a chair.
- Large silver coin. This can be a circle cut from cardboard and painted or spray-painted silver, or covered in foil.

## Scene 6

- Coin purse and silver coin for LIZZIE.
- A very small plastic container with raspberry jam inside for LIZZIE to smear on her cheek.
- Fruit for GOBLINS.

## Scene 7

- A blanket for SARAH to be wrapped up in.



- Pitcher of water for LIZZIE to pour from. This can be one of the pitchers they filled in Scene 4.
- A cup for LIZZIE to serve to SARAH.
- Optional: Bird sound effect to be played from off-stage. You can find bird call sound effects for free on the Internet, and specifically Youtube. Birds with the prettiest calls include nightingale, wren, robin or search “Dawn Chorus” for multiple British birds singing together at dawn.  
Note: If there is no bird sound effect, you can have people offstage whistle like birds.

## Scene 8

- A baby doll wrapped in a blanket.



## SETS

The stage is divided into two sets. At one end of the stage is a forest, and at the other end is the interior of a cottage. If you want to make a backdrop it can be painted to show both locations- a darkish cluster of trees with a stream running through it on one side, and a cottage wall made of logs and a window with curtains on the other side.

See diagram at end of set notes for an example of how you might set up the stage.

**Scene 1** – Forest/Goblin Market. There are various trees scattered around surrounding a fruit stand, which is set back a little. There is also a stream down close to the front of the stage. The stream is represented by a blue cloth.

Fruit stand can be a dark colored table, covered in baskets of fruit. This fruit can be glued down on the baskets, or can be large cardboard cutouts of various piles of fruit. As long as the audience can see lots of colors, you can use anything to represent the fruit on the table.

To make transitions easier, when GOBLINS close up their fruits stand, they can simply cover everything with a black cloth. Another option is to put a dark colored table cloth on the table, and GOBLINS can take fruit off and place it under the table. When they set up the stand again, they either remove the cloth that’s covering it, or bring fruit out from under the table.



Trees can be made from cardboard. Cut basic tree-shapes out of cardboard and cutting leaves from construction paper. Glue leaves to tree branches. Tie or tape trees to stools, chairs, or milk crates, so that they can be free-standing.

**Scene 2** — Cottage of LIZZIE and SARAH. A coat rack holds an apron, and a purse. This is also where LIZZIE and SARAH hang their capes. There is a simple kitchen table with two chairs, with stacked dishes- two bowls, two plates- and basic silverware.

There is a fireplace, which can be made out of a cardboard box. Paint the box gray, or use sponges to resemble bricks. In the middle of one of the sides, paint a large black rectangle, and inside the rectangle, paint logs and flame.

There are two beds, which can be placed very close to each other if needed for spacing. Beds can be represented with sturdy benches, each covered in a blanket and with a pillow. On top of the first blanket, place another blanket or sheet. SARAH and LIZZIE lay on top of the first blanket, and use the second blanket to pull over themselves.

You can also make beds with sturdy chairs and some type of ottomans. Each bed is a sturdy chair with an ottoman, or something to act as an ottoman. You can use a short bench, or milk crates, or small stools.

Cover the two chairs and their ottomans with a blankets.

Place a pillows against the back of each chair. On top of the first sheet or blanket, place another blanket, any color.

SARAH and LIZZIE will sit in the chair, with legs stretched out onto the ottoman, laying on top of the first blanket, and using the second blanket to pull over themselves.

**Scene 3** — Cottage of LIZZIE and SARAH, same as Scene 2

**Scene 4** — Forest/Goblin Market, same as Scene 1, but there is no fruit on the tables.

**Scene 5** — Cottage of LIZZIE and SARAH, same as Scene 2 & 3.

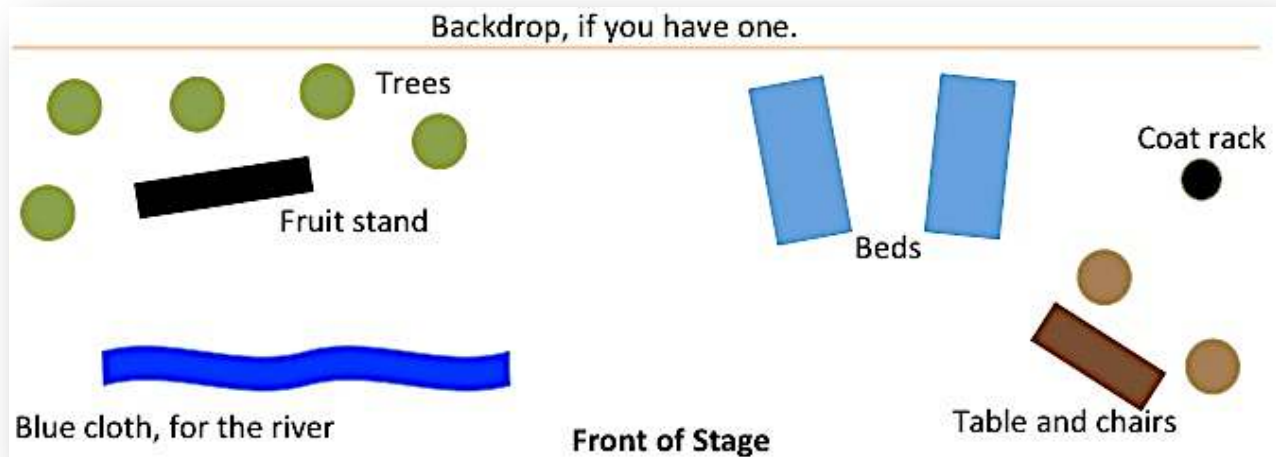
**Scene 6**— Forest/Goblin Market, same as Scene 1.

**Scene 7**— Cottage of LIZZIE and SARAH, same as Scene 2, 3 & 5.

**Scene 8**— Nondescript location. Action happens at the front of the stage, in front of all the set pieces.



## Example of how to set up the stage:



## ADDITIONAL STAGING NOTES

- Cutting a lock of SARAH's hair – Regardless of whether the actress who plays SARAH is blonde or wears a blonde wig, a clip-on lock of blonde hair is also worn by SARAH. The clip-on should always be worn in the same place so GOBLIN #3 can find it when he stretches out a blonde curl in SCENE 2. GOBLIN #2 pretends to cut it off but really GOBLIN #3 pulls the clip-on off and holds it up.  
Note: If the actress ends up not being blonde, the clip of hair should match whatever her hair color is.
- Physical Fighting – While the script may call for the GOBLINS to physically taunt LIZZIE in SCENE 5, players should be careful not to actually hurt the actress playing Lizzie. Many of the actions can be pantomimed.
- Fruit smudge on LIZZIE's cheek – LIZZIE has a concealed very small plastic container (i. e. travel size pill case or something that would hold lip balm) with no more than a teaspoon of raspberry jam inside. LIZZIE smudges the jam onto her cheek, while GOBLIN #3 pretends to press a strawberry against her cheek.

