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ORCHESTRA

Flute
Oboe
Bassoon
Harp
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello

Total – 8 Players.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LAURA

a simple country girl. Soprano

LIZZIE

her sister. Mezzo-soprano

FIRST MAID

Soprano

SECOND MAID

Mezzo-soprano

FIRST GOBLIN

Tenor

SECOND GOBLIN

Baritone

Dancers

COMPOSER'S NOTES

String staves - generally on the string with full vibrato.

Dynamics - primarily indicates effort level from performer for the performance venue acoustic, assuming a soloistic performer.

Scene 1 - A Cottage in a Glen

Opening scene - cry of goblins offering fruit - morning and evening

1.
MORNING and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries-
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,

Apricots, strawberries--
All ripe together
In summer weather--

Come buy, come buy;

Taste them and try:

Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye,
Come buy, come buy."

Evening scene - temptation for the shy, blushing maidens

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,

"**Lie close,**" Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:

First appearance of goblins - cat's face, rat's tail, snail, wombat ratel

**We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?"**

"Come buy,"

**"O! Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men."**

Lizzie covered up her eyes
Covered close lest they should look;

**"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds' weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
"No," "no, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."**

One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry-scurry.

Laura succumbs to temptation and buys fruit with a lock of her hair
--

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
"Come buy, come buy."

**I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather.**

*"You have much gold upon your head,"
"Buy from us with a golden curl."*

She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
She never tasted such before,
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore,
She sucked until her lips were sore;

Laura returns home to be met by Lizzie at the garden gate with talk of dead Jeanie

Lizzie met her at the gate

**Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.**

**Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers**

**She pined and pined away;
dwindled and grew gray;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:**

**You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons, icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
What peaches with a velvet nap
And sugar sweet their sap**

Night time - two sisters sleep together - two blossoms on one stem

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down, in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fallen snow,

Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Scene 2 - The Cottage - Morning

Laura's long slow decline, the sisters work together and grow different

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,

One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

Her tree of life drooped from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent 'til Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

When the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and gray;

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care,
Yet not to share.

She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:

*"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy."*

Beside the brook, along the glen
She heard the tramp of goblin men,

Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.

Lizzie watches Laura decline and finally makes up her mind to action

She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter-time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter-time.

Till Laura, dwindling,
Seemed knocking at Death's door:

Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse,
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath
At twilight, halted by the brook,
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Scene 3 - A High Glen in a Wild Forest

Return of Goblins - flying leaping running

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,
Hugged her and kissed her;
Squeezed and caressed her;

Lizzie offers to buy, gives penny and resists beating, she is covered in juice but does not eat

**Good folk, Give me much and many; --
I hold out my apron,
I give you my fee penny.**

*"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honor and eat with us
Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,*

*Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:*

**One waits at home for me
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee**

No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.

Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,

Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,

Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tear her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.

Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in;
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syruped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,

At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
Some vanished in the distance.

Scene 4 - The Cottage - night

Lizzie's flight home and Duet - kissing juices

"Laura,"
"Did you miss me ?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,

Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.

Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:

For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?

Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,

Undone in mine undoing,
And ruined in my ruin;
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"

Laura's trial by poison

She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast:
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands
And beat her breast.

Swift fire spread through her veins,
She gorged on bitterness without a name:

Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped water-spout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;

Lizzie's vigil through the night

Is it death or is it life ?
Life out of death.

Laura awoke as from a dream,

Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of gray,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.

Laura's awakening in health

But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of gray,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.

Postlude - Children listen to the tale

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat,
But poison in the blood;

"For there is no friend like a sister,

