



# Goblin Market: The Prince's Progress and other Poems (Poetry - Christina Rossetti)

*Christina Rossetti*

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**Goblin Market: The Prince's Progress and other Poems (Poetry - Christina Rossetti)** Christina Rossetti

*A Collection of Classic Poems by Christina Rossetti*

## **Goblin Market**

The Prince's Progress

And

Other poems

By Christina Rossetti

"Goblin Market" (composed in April 1859 and published in 1862) is a narrative poem by Christina Rossetti. In a letter to her publisher, Rossetti claimed that the poem, which is interpreted frequently as having features of remarkably sexual imagery, was not meant for children. However, in public Rossetti often stated that the poem was intended for children, and went on to write many children's poems. When the poem appeared in her first volume of poetry, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, it was illustrated by her brother, the Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

"Goblin Market" is about two close sisters, Laura and Lizzie, as well as the goblins to whom the title refers.

Although the sisters seem to be quite young, they live by themselves in a house, and are accustomed to draw water every evening from a stream. As the poem begins, twilight is falling, and as usual, the sisters hear the calls from the goblin merchants, who sell fruits in fantastic abundance, variety and savour. On this evening, Laura lingers at the stream after her sister has left for home, intrigued by the goblins' strange manner and appearance. Wanting fruit but having no money, the impulsive Laura offers a lock of her hair and "a tear more rare than pearl."

Laura gorges on the delicious fruit in a sort of bacchic frenzy, then once she is finished, after picking up one of the seeds, returns home in an ecstatic trance. Lizzie, waiting at home, and "full of wise upbraidings," reminds Laura about the cautionary tale of Jeanie, another girl who, having likewise partaken of the goblin beings' fruits, died just at the beginning of winter, after a long and horrible decline, and strangely no grass grows over her grave. Laura dismisses her sister's worries, and says she shall return to the goblins the next night and return with more fruits for herself and Lizzie.

Night has by then fallen, and the sisters go to sleep in their shared bed.

The next day, as Laura and Lizzie go about their work in the house, Laura dreamily longs for the coming evening's meeting with the goblins. But at the stream that evening, as she strains to hear the usual goblin chants and cries, Laura discovers to her horror that, although Lizzie still hears the goblins' voices, she no longer can.

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