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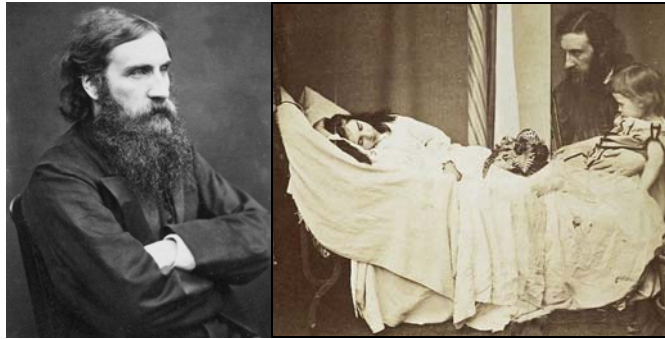
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P.O. Box 1401
Rapid City, SD 57709**

The Princess and the Goblins

CLASSIC. Adapted from the novel by George MacDonald. Lost in the forest, Princess Irene finds herself surrounded by goblins but is rescued by a young miner who knows how to drive goblins away – by reciting poetry and stomping on their feet! Poetry hurts the goblins’ ears, and since they can’t wear shoes, they aren’t too happy to have their feet stomped on. They also hate taxes, so much so, that when the King imposed a tax hike, the goblins went to live in subterranean caverns. The goblins have vowed to seek revenge on the King and annoy the aboveground people any way they can, especially the miners who are constantly digging tunnels, forcing them to relocate their homes. Anxious to take revenge on their human neighbors, the Goblin King hatches a plan to flood the miners’ mines and to kidnap Princess Irene and force her to marry his son, Prince Flint. An adorable play that is sure to delight your audience!

Performance Time: Approximately 60-75 minutes.



Left: George MacDonald circa 1860. An 1864 photograph taken by Lewis Carroll of MacDonald with his daughter Mary (left) and his son Ronald.

About the Story

Scottish author George MacDonald (1824-1905) is best known for his fantasy literature and poetry. MacDonald was born on a farm in Scotland, and in 1850, he was appointed pastor of the Trinity Congregational Church, where he preached the concept of God's universal love. He later taught at the University of London. MacDonald is best known for his fantasy novels *The Princess and the Goblin*, *Phantastes*, and *At the Back of the North Wind*. He wrote, "I write not for children, but for the child-like, whether they be five, or fifty, or seventy-five." MacDonald served as a mentor to Lewis Carroll and encouraged Carroll to submit *Alice in Wonderland* for publication. MacDonald also influenced many other notable authors like C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Characters

(7 M, 7 F, 9 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 5 M, 6 F, 9 flexible)

- PRINCESS IRENE:** A princess who doesn't know that goblins exist because the King has forbade everyone in the castle from telling her; female.
- GODMOTHER:** Irene's godmother, an old woman who lives in a tower and spins spider webs into thread; female.
- LOOTIE:** Irene's nanny; female.
- KING:** Irene's father who has ordered everyone in the castle to never say "goblin"; male.
- GUARD 1, 2:** Guards who protect the kingdom; flexible.
- CURDIE PETERSON:** Miner whose rhymes keep goblins away; saves Princess Irene from the goblins; male.
- MR. PETERSON:** Curdie's father; male.
- MRS. PETERSON:** Curdie's mother; female.
- GOBLIN KING:** Wants to capture Princess Irene and force her to marry his son; wears a crown; male.
- QUEEN:** Queen of the goblins and the Prince's stepmother who has forbidden all other goblins from wearing shoes; wears granite shoes and a crown; female.
- PRINCE FLINT:** His late mother was a human and his father is the Goblin King; has one toe on one foot and two toes on the other foot; wears a crown; male.
- COUNCILOR:** Councilor to the Goblin King; flexible.
- GOBLIN FATHER:** Annoyed that his family has to move to another location to avoid miners blasting a hole in his underground home; male.
- GOBLIN MOTHER:** Wishes she could wear shoes; female.
- GOBLIN SON:** Tired of moving; male.
- GOBLIN DAUGHTER:** Physically stronger than her brother; female.
- GLUMP:** Goblin who serves as Chief of Tunnels; flexible.
- GOBLIN 1-3:** Goblin citizens; flexible.

GOBLIN GUARD 1, 2: Goblins who guard the Goblin King;
flexible.

EXTRAS (Opt.): As King's Servants, Goblins, and Miners.

Options for Doubling

GOBLIN 1/MR. PETERSON (male)

GOBLIN 2/MRS. PETERSON (female)

GOBLIN 3/KING (male)

Setting

Mountainous kingdom where humans live aboveground and goblins live underground.

Sets

The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

Castle garden/Godmother's garden. There is a backdrop of trees and flowers. A bench is located under a tree. There is a castle wall with a hidden door that opens and is hidden with vines. The wall can be on wheels so that it can be quickly reversed to present the Godmother's garden wall. A bush large enough for Curdie to hide behind is present off to one side.

Underground caverns. A bare stage or a backdrop may be used.

Hall of the Goblin King. There are two thrones.

Forest. There is a forest backdrop with a clump of flowers. There is a rock large enough for Lootie to sit on.

Castle exterior. Backdrop of a castle. There are large wooden gates that open.

Interior of the Petersons' home. There is a fireplace with a kettle hanging over the fire and a wooden table and chairs. There is a peg by the door where Curdie hangs his cap and a woodbin with a lid.

Synopsis of Scenes

- Scene 1:** Castle garden.
- Scene 2:** Underground caverns.
- Scene 3:** Castle garden.
- Scene 4:** Hall of the Goblin King.
- Scene 5:** Forest.
- Scene 6:** Outside the castle.
- Scene 7:** Interior of the Petersons' home.
- Scene 8:** Castle garden.
- Scene 9:** Hall of the Goblin King.
- Scene 10:** Godmother's garden.
- Scene 11:** Castle garden.
- Scene 12:** Outside the castle wall.
- Scene 13:** Interior of the Petersons' home.
- Scene 14:** Castle garden.
- Scene 15:** Interior of the Petersons' home.
- Scene 16:** Exterior of the castle.

Props

Spinning wheel	Ring, for Irene
Ball of twine	Tray with a teapot and
Steamer trunk	teacups
Bags or suitcases, for Goblin	Pickaxe
family members	Stone "slab" to cover hole
2 Thrones, for Goblin King and	Fake rocks
Queen	Ball of thread
Granite looking shoes, for Goblin	Bundle of wood
Queen	Sewing kit
Kettle	Wood bin with lid
Newspaper	Crown, for Goblin King,
Plate and utensils	Queen, and Prince.
Book	

Sound Effects

Loud smacking sound
Scurrying sound
Sound of falling rocks
Commotion
Sound of a door being unlatched and opened
Trumpet blast

*“Seeing is not believing;
it is only seeing.”*

—Godmother

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Castle garden. There are trees, flowers, and a bench. A suggestion of a wall surrounds the garden with vines growing over the wall.)

LOOTIE: (Offstage SL, counting.) Sixteen, 17, 18, 19, 20! Ready or not, here I come!

(Princess Irene runs on, giggling. She looks for a place to hide.)

PRINCESS IRENE: (Frantically looking around. To herself.) Where shall I hide? (The vines on the wall magically part, revealing a door. Irene turns, sees the door and is surprised.) I don't remember that door being there.

LOOTIE: (Offstage, calls.) Where are you, Princess?

(Irene heads for the door. Lights down. Lights up. When the lights come up, Irene is on the other side of the door in another garden. In the middle of the garden is Irene's Godmother, an old woman sitting at a spinning wheel spinning.)

GODMOTHER: (Without stopping to look up at Irene.) Come in, Irene. (Irene slowly approaches, and the door closes behind her.) Don't be afraid.

PRINCESS IRENE: I'm not afraid.

GODMOTHER: Good. (Pause.) Do you know who I am?

PRINCESS IRENE: No.

GODMOTHER: I am your godmother.

PRINCESS IRENE: (Doubtful.) Godmother? I am sure Lootie would have told me if I had a godmother.

GODMOTHER: She doesn't know.

PRINCESS IRENE: But how can that be?

GODMOTHER: Do not worry yourself about it, my child. It should be enough for you to know I am here.

PRINCESS IRENE: How long have you been here?

GODMOTHER: I came here the day you were christened.

PRINCESS IRENE: Where do you live?

(Godmother stops spinning.)

GODMOTHER: *(Points.)* Up there in that tower. I come down here and spin in my garden when the weather is nice.

PRINCESS IRENE: *(Looking around.)* It is a very beautiful garden. *(Pause.)* What are you spinning? It's not wool.

GODMOTHER: No.

PRINCESS IRENE: It is very beautiful, whatever it is.

GODMOTHER: It's spider webs.

PRINCESS IRENE: Spider webs?

GODMOTHER: Oh, not just ordinary spider webs, but a special kind. The birds bring it to me from over the great sea. There is only one forest where the spiders live that make this particular kind...the finest and strongest. *(Stops spinning. Picks up a ball of twine and holds it up.)* I'm spinning it for you.

PRINCESS IRENE: Oh, how lovely!

LOOTIE: *(Offstage, calls.)* Princess! Come out, come out, wherever you are!

PRINCESS IRENE: Lootie! I forgot about her! We were playing a game of hide-and-seek.

GODMOTHER: You had better return.

PRINCESS IRENE: Can I come back and visit you again?

GODMOTHER: If you wish.

PRINCESS IRENE: How surprised Lootie will be when I tell her about my godmother!

GODMOTHER: That she will!

(Door opens. Lights down. Lights up. Irene is back in her garden and the door has disappeared with the vines on the wall back in place. Lootie enters.)

LOOTIE: *(Calls.)* Where are you? I give up!

(Irene stands behind Lootie.)

PRINCESS IRENE: I'm right here.

LOOTIE: *(Startled.)* Oh! *(Turns.)* Why, where have you been, Princess? *(Hugs Irene.)* That wasn't very nice of you to hide so well that I couldn't find you! I began to be afraid—
(Stops herself.)

PRINCESS IRENE: Afraid of what?

LOOTIE: Oh, nothing. Tell me, where were you hiding?

PRINCESS IRENE: In the other garden.

LOOTIE: What other garden?

PRINCESS IRENE: The one behind the door.

LOOTIE: What door?

PRINCESS IRENE: *(Turns.)* That— *(Sees that the door has disappeared. Confused.)* There was a door there.

LOOTIE: I've been here a long time, and I have never heard of any door or another garden.

PRINCESS IRENE: But it was right there. And there was a woman there sitting at a spinning wheel. She said she was my godmother.

LOOTIE: What godmother?

PRINCESS IRENE: She said you wouldn't know.

LOOTIE: Of course I don't know, or I wouldn't have asked, "What Godmother?"

PRINCESS IRENE: She said she's been here ever since I was christened.

LOOTIE: I know of no godmother. I was hired as your nurse the day you were christened.

PRINCESS IRENE: But she told me—

LOOTIE: What nonsense!

PRINCESS IRENE: You don't believe me, then!

LOOTIE: This is just one of your games of make-believe.

PRINCESS IRENE: No! It's quite true, I tell you! If I could find the door, I would show you! *(Goes along the wall looking for door.)*

LOOTIE: (*Puts her hand on Irene's forehead.*) You're a little feverish. You've been in the sun too long.

PRINCESS IRENE: But...I'm not feverish...there was a door, and there was a garden, and there was a woman who said she was my godmother!

LOOTIE: Oh, come along. It's your dinnertime, and I don't have any more time for nonsense.

(Lootie and Princess exit. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: *Underground caverns. A goblin family enters. They are carrying their household possessions and/or suitcases. The Son is carrying a large steamer trunk on his back.*)

GOBLIN SON: Hey, Pop! Can't we stop for a minute? This trunk is getting awful heavy and my feet are killing me!

GOBLIN FATHER: All right. We'll rest here for a few minutes.

(*Goblin Son puts down the trunk. The others put down their loads.*)

GOBLIN MOTHER: This is the fifth time in the last hundred years that we've had to move.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: It's not fair! I just got my room the way I wanted it!

GOBLIN SON: Yeah! They are not, by any means, at the thinnest place.

GOBLIN FATHER: I told you. A charge placed in the wrong place, and they could accidentally break through. How would you like to wake up and find a miner standing over you? Besides, there is no use waiting till the last minute.

GOBLIN MOTHER: Ever since they started digging, we haven't had a minute's peace. I wonder how they would like it if we tunneled into their homes and blasted holes in their walls! I wish the King would do something about it!

GOBLIN FATHER: We've tried our best to frighten the miners, but there are a few hearty ones who refuse to be frightened.

GOBLIN MOTHER: (*Rubbing feet.*) Oooooooh, my feet!

GOBLIN FATHER: (*Sighs.*) Yes, that's our only weak point. But our heads! The goblin's glory is his head! The fools aboveground have to wear helmets and things when they go fighting.

GOBLIN MOTHER: Sometimes I wish we could wear shoes.

GOBLIN FATHER: You know the Queen has forbidden all women from wearing shoes.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: Why is that?

GOBLIN FATHER: Mainly for distinction. The King's first wife wore shoes because she came from above.

GOBLIN SON: (*Horrified.*) You mean, the King married one of them? (*Points up.*)

GOBLIN FATHER: Yes.

GOBLIN MOTHER: Why should he marry an outlandish woman like that...one of our enemies, too. What was the attraction?

GOBLIN FATHER: (*Sighs.*) I suppose he fell in love with her.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: Eeew!

GOBLIN FATHER: That was the only silly thing I ever knew His Majesty guilty of.

GOBLIN MOTHER: (*Sighs.*) Well, I guess there is no accounting for taste.

GOBLIN FATHER: Anyway, she wore shoes, of course. She was used to wearing them. When she died, the present queen, not wanting to be "inferior to her," as she calls it, wears shoes also. It's just pride. That's the reason she has forbidden all goblin females from wearing shoes.

GOBLIN SON: How did the first queen die? Did they tease her to death?

GOBLIN FATHER: Oh, dear, no! The King worshiped her very footprints. (*Scoffs.*) Humans have such short life spans...100 years tops!

GOBLIN MOTHER: (*Examining her feet.*) What do you think of my feet?

GOBLIN FATHER: You have such lovely feet, my dear.

GOBLIN SON: But what made the first queen die?

GOBLIN FATHER: She died when the young prince was born.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: How silly of her! It must have been because she wore shoes.

GOBLIN SON: (*To Goblin Father.*) Why do they wear shoes up there?

GOBLIN FATHER: Well, I think it's because they have toes.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: Toes?! What are toes?!

GOBLIN MOTHER: *(To Father.)* It sounds perfectly horrible!
What are toes? A disease?

GOBLIN FATHER: No. The ends of their feet are split up into
five or six thin pieces.

GOBLIN DAUGHTER: *(Holding up one foot.)* Eeew!

[END OF FREEVIEW]