

Hansel and Gretel

Act II, Scene 1

[Gretel makes a flower garland while Hansel gathers berries.]

G: A man stands in the wood, but he never spoke.

Upon his back he wears a very purple cloak.

Say, who is this little man,
standing quiet as he can,
on his back a very purple cloak?

The man stands on one foot on the forest bed.

He wears a little black cap upon his head.
Say, who is this man, I beg,
standing lone upon one leg,
with a little black cap on his head?

H: Hoorah! See, I can pick berries like no other.

That will bring a smile to Hansel's mother.

G: My garland is almost finished.
See! A lovelier one will never be.

H: At such stuff a boy thumbs his nose.
Good enough for girls, I suppose.
Ah, Gretel, grand lady, that is good!
You look like the Queen of the Wood.

G: So, if I'm the Queen of the Wood,
then bring me flowers, as you should.

H: Queen of the Wood, with scepter and crown,
I give you my berries, but don't eat them down!

[The two start to eat the berries, when they hear a cuckoo's cry.]

H: Cuckoo. Cuckoo. Who are you?

G: Cuckoo. Cuckoo. How d'you do?

H: [Seeing that Gretel is eating all the berries...]

Aha! Save some for me! Give it here!
Let's, like the cuckoo, eat with zest,
when he is in another's nest.

Cuckoo. Eat some too.

G: Cuckoo. That will do.

H: You leave all your chicks alone,
and destroy your neighbor's home.

G: Stealing berries just for fun,
never share with anyone.
...Hansel, now look what you've done!

Oh, heavens, eaten every one, you glutton!

Look, now, just wait till we get back,
because Mother will give you a smack.

H: Now what? You should not be a tease.
You, Gretel, ate more than I, if you please.

G: Come, to find some more we must scramble.

H: What, there in the gloom of the bushes and bramble?

I can't see a thing. No berries here.
It's getting very dark, I fear.

G: Oh, Hansel, Hansel, what is to be done?
What now have we two foolish children begun?

We should not have stayed, there's no denying.

H: Hush! How the branches are sighing.
They say - do you know just what?
"Children, children," they ask, "Are you scared or not?"

...Gretel, I think we've lost our way.

G: Oh, no! Oh, Hansel, we've lost our way?

H: Why are you getting so upset?
I am a boy, and I don't fret.

G: Oh, Hansel, I think there's trouble ahead.
H: Ah, Gretel, come, don't be afraid.
G: What's shining, then, there in the gloomy dark?
H: It's just a birch tree with snow-white bark.
G: And there, what grins in that yonder pool?
H: Th-th-that's just a willow stump, not a ghoul.
G: What a strange face he makes at me - such leering eyes, oh, can't you see?
H: [To the phantom.]
I'll give you a beating. Now let us be!
G: There, see, that lantern, it comes ever near!
H: Will-o-the-wisp now hops there and here.
Gretel, my sister, please don't pout.
Wait, I'll give out a good, loud shout.
...Who's there?
Echos: "Who's there...who's there...who's there...there...there."

G: Is someone here?
Echos: "Is someone here...here...here."
G: You heard it too? A quiet "here."
Hansel, surely there's someone near.
I'm frightened! I wish we were home.
It seems so haunted in the woods alone.
H: Gretel, dear, hold me close, close to you,
I'll hold you too, protect you, too.
G: There in the fog are women beck'ning.
See, how they're waving and looking threat'ning?
They're floating so near.
I feel their touch here!
Father! Mother! Ah!
H: Look, there! An old man. Sister, see.
What kind of person can he be?
[A grey-haired man appears and throws sparkling dust at the children.]