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The Snow Queen

By James Andrew Hall

PLAYS LILTING TUNE

Mother, look - a boy.

- Come on, Gerda - it's far too cold.

- But he looks so unhappy.

Well, here -

give him this.

It looks so soft, the snow -

- as if it should be warm.

- Colder than a devil's kiss,

your grandfather used to say.

And every bit as deadly.

In to bed with you, Gerda.

It's late.

That poor boy out there - won't you let him come in, just for tonight?

Enough, enough.

Go to sleep.

BIRDSONG:

A boy and a girl

An ordinary world

Of secret dreams and make-believe

A friendship made strong

Through laughter and song

And stories of great palaces And queens

Just Gerda

And Kay

Happy day by day

Lost in pleasures

Innocent and true

Ah-ah-ah-ah

Ah-ah-ah-ah...

What friends they've become, those two. I've never seen Gerda so happy.

Such appetites! That boy will eat me out of house and home!

It was good of you to take him in.

He's a different lad with some meat on his bones.

Like a million bees swarming.

There should be a queen bee, then.

Hmm, there is.

She's called the Snow Queen.

She'll be flying about, where the swarm's busiest.

I've seen her.

No, you haven't!

I have.

She's beautiful -

all in white fur and jewels.

You'll see when she comes again. I'll open the window and let her in.

Then I shall just put her on the stove and she'll melt.

You wait.

You'll see.

WIND HOWLS:

The Snow Queen

Imagine birds in flight

Wrapped in the darkest night.

Aagh! There's something in my eye!

What are you doing?

It's freezing in here.

- Kay?

- Leave me alone!

- Kay?

- Go away, you stupid girl!

Let me sleep, can't you?

- Ride it, Kay.

- Go boy, go!

What happened? Where's Kay?

What have you done?!

He's gone.

Toward the river.

KAY!

KAY!

- SHE SOBS

- Kay...

BIRDSONG:

Do not stand

At my grave and weep

I am not there

I do not sleep

I am a thousand winds that blow

I am the diamond in some snow

I am the sunlight on ripened grain

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush

of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry.

I am not there.

I did not die.

I am

A thousand winds that blow

I am the diamond

In some snow

I am the sunlight

On ripened grain

I am

The gentle autumn rain.

Pins and needles...

Pins and needles.

Gracious, child...

What are you doing here all alone in this gloomy place?

- Thinking of Kay.

- Kay?

You see! It's so long since he went away, you can't even remember him!

So much fuss and bother.

Who knows what happened to that rascal.

But they found my old sled in the river this morning.

I expect he just threw it away when he left, my dear.

Too heavy to steal.

- Do you think so?

- Well, of course.

A typical thing for a naughty, ungrateful boy to do.

CLOCK TICKS:

TICKING STOPS:

How I wish the river could speak.

I can speak.

- What's the matter with you?

- My friend is dead.

- The river took him.

- Not this river. I live here. I see everything.

Then where is he?

- Where did he go?

- Who knows? Try downstream.

Wait!

What do you mean?

Follow the river.

Go north.

Cruel winter, relentless and cold

Left Gerda alone

Kay's story untold

North said the birds
And the spring sunshine
Kay is not dead
It is not yet his time
She dried her eyes
And implored the river
If precious care it could deliver
Its silent reply
It carried her far
To an enchanted garden
Under a distant star. #
There you are, my dear!
Sit down! Sit down.
Pins and needles -
never fails. Always tells me when company's coming.
Pins and needles all day long!
Do sit down, my dear.
Now, then - you must tell me who you are
and how you come to be here.
My name is Gerda.
I'm searching for my friend.
I think he might have passed this way.
Do you? Well, my dear,
I haven't seen him yet,
but I'm sure he'll be here soon.
You must stay a while and keep me company until he arrives.
No!
Silly!
No knife to cut the cake!
Oh!

SHE LAUGHS:

Little girl!
- Where are you?
- Here we are.
All around you.
- Have you seen my friend? Has Kay been here?
- Let the soft wind blow.
Let the quiet rain fall.
Let the sunlight glow.
We grow sweet and tall.

ALL:

We say your friend lives, and we know best.

Little girl, come closer.
Listen to me...
Kay lies in a palace, but is no longer free.

SHE HISSES:

Your rose...
that rose...she told me...
Did she, indeed?
Well, you'll get no sense out of that one.
Too vain to see beyond her own pretty petals.
But she seemed so certain.
Oh, flowers! What do they know?
Come, now - sit down with me again.
- You're hurting me!
- Run, Gerda! Run!
Agh! Agh!
Get off me!
You wicked, wicked...! Agh!
AAAAGH!
She ran through the maze
Like a horrible dream
In the realm of the Snow Queen... #
Ow!
- I see a palace.
- A palace?
- It's grand enough to be a palace.
- The flowers were right.
Follow me. Hurry up! It's getting dark.

BOTH:

By order of his Majesty, only those invited to the betrothal may pass.
What is your business?
I'm looking for my friend, Kay.
I think he's in the palace.
A young boy did come this way -
before the spring.
He is to marry the King's only daughter.
Pass, friend of royalty.
But make haste. Court is assembled.
The feast begins.
A ragged boy with raven hair
sits by a princess in a castle fair.
Let this be Kay
The heart is wild

She begs her friend to find this child
Off with the girl through the galloping road
To the distant bustling Believe this now
Girl on high as the truth unfolds
Stupid boy, does he stand before a prince?
But the princess
Golden and fair
The prince and the princess
Starlight in their hair.
The prince and the princess
Ah-ah-ah-ah.

Kay!

The fugitive is Gerda's joy
He is not Kay, but another boy
Through wretched tears she tells her tale
How the Snow Queen must not prevail.

And in her eyes, they see the fire
that only true love can inspire.

And the flowers, they spoke to me.

They know everything.

And the old lady, she was so scary.

She frightened me.

- And our banquet was ruined for this!

- Ssh, ssh, ssh!

But I have to find my friend.

He's been taken to a palace somewhere to the north.

There is only one palace north of here.

- The Snow Queen?

- Queen indeed!

Oh, I do hope not, Gerda. How vexing for you.

I'm told she sits on a throne made of ice.

Not even a cushion! Imagine that!

Queen! Ha!

In royal circles, we refer to that person as the Winter Witch.

If what you've told us is true,

then your friend Kay went with her quite willingly.

She must have bewitched him.

She cast a spell...and he changed.

He was suddenly unkind and cruel.

I sense a darker truth at work here.

What can he mean?

No matter. Tonight, you shall be our guest, Gerda.

Tomorrow, I shall see that you have the proper clothes for your journey.

A silk gown and my finest fur cape.

Come here, child.

You should see this.

What you are about to see is the Legend Of The Looking Glass.

This terrible mirror was created by a wicked magician many years ago, so wicked, some say, he might have been the Devil himself.

In this mirror, the beautiful appeared ugly, and the ugly appeared ten times worse than before.

The magician was so pleased with his invention, he ordered his imps to carry it around the world, so everyone would know what mankind was really like.

The mirror fell to earth and broke into a million billion pieces.

Then it caused far greater unhappiness, which pleased the magician even more.

Some of those fragments were made into spectacles.

And those who looked through them saw only bad things.

But how does the story end?

It has never ended.

It never will.

Come along!

Some of those pieces of mirror,

as tiny as grains of sand,

are still floating in the air, blown around the world.

If a fragment should fly into your eye,

you'll see only the worst of everything.

Your heart will become like a lump of ice.

That, my dear, is what I think may have happened to your friend, a boy with a heart already as cold as ice.

What a gift that would be for your wretched Snow Queen.

But Papa, is there nothing to be done for Gerda?

If your friend has a splinter of that glass in his heart, the Winter Witch will always have power over him.

But, my child, you have a power far greater than hers.

A commoner with power over royalty?

That's preposterous.

That power comes from your heart, Gerda.

It comes from being a loving and innocent child.

No power vested in me is greater than that.

- I don't understand.

- You will, my dear, you will.

Now you must rest. You still have a long way to go.

I'm pleased to put a royal carriage at your disposal.

My men will see you safely through the forest to the border.

Your Majesty, how can I ever thank you enough?

So Gerda left

Resolved and brave
In a golden carriage her friend to save. #
Be careful. This is a dangerous place.
Deep in the forest
Shadows stirred
With every footstep
Seen and heard
The robbers struck
Greedy for gold
Sly and cruel
Hearts were cold
Old robber wife
Raised her knife
Then the robber maiden
Saved Gerda's life
She'll play with me
Spoiled child
She was lonely
Dirty and wild
Then rest In the castle in the darkest blue
And the prisoner sat on the rock of ancients true
With a dagger. #
Make it work!
If you let me go.
I said, "Make it work!"
No!
We'll play a game, you and me.
I'll be the princess, you can wear the rags.
But I'm not a princess.
I'm just a girl like you.
Let me go, please.
I must find my friend before it's too late.
What friend?
You have a friend?
His name is Kay. Another...
..thief has taken him.
- He's in great danger.
- Did you play together?
Did you catch rabbits and steal apples and climb trees? Tell me!
Have you never had a friend?
I'll be your friend forever, if you let me go.
If I let you go, I'll never see you again.
You will, I promise. One day, I'll come for you with Kay.
And we'll climb trees and steal apples, just like real friends do.

A promise between friends is never broken.
You!
Get up!
You promise?
Leave that brat!
Bring more wine!
Wait for the fire to die. Take him.
He'll lead you to the northern lights.
What are you doing over there?
Find the old woman's hut. He knows where.
After the story of bravery
The robber maiden set Gerda free
Into the night, they set forth
To find her palace in the north. #
The Lapland woman and the Finland woman
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The Lapland woman and the Finland woman.
The Lapland woman and the Finland woman.
The reindeer brought me here. I need to find Kay.
She took him!
He's in her palace.
I must...
Thank you.
For helping me.
Ha ha ha ha ha!
Don't you fuss, my dear.
You know, don't you?
Know what?
How to get there.
And where might that be, my dear?
To the Snow Queen.
Not exactly, no.
I'll carry on, even if you don't show me the way.
I'll get there, no matter what.
Kay is...
He's in trouble.

- I have to...
- Stop, stop!
I can only get you closer.
I don't have the power to go all the way.
You need the help of the Laplander. She will get you in.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Sit down, child. Sit down.
And listen carefully.
From here, you must go north and across the Great River.
The whales live here and the river is deadly.
So be very careful.
Then you must pass through the tunnel of sound. Ssh!
If you survive the tunnel, you then have to climb.
If you survive all that, my child,
you will arrive at the Land of the Midnight Sun,
home of the Laplander.
It's so cold, we must be nearly there.
Are we close to the Snow Queen's palace?
You have a great distance to travel.
I have something to speed you on your way.
This potion is very powerful.
It will take you to the Snow Queen herself.
You must be very careful.
She can tie all the winds of the world together.
Or create tempests that can destroy whole forests.
Or bring cold
that feels like angels stroking your hands and feet
until you freeze to death.
Drink!

CAWS:

What is it?
We're not alone.
She knows you are near.
These are her guardians. We must defeat them.
In the palace
Of the Snow Queen
Vast empty halls stand cold
Serene
All is frozen
By her splendour
Great silver lake
Kay's last surrender.

My child, you have a power far greater than hers.
That power comes from your heart, Gerda.

- ECHOES:

- Your heart, Gerda.
The Queen survives
Due south she flew
As near to Kay
Sweet Gerda drew
Fall her tears
For this lonely child
Destroyed... #
Wake up, Kay.
Gerda?
Where have you been all this time?
Where have I been?
What is this place?
How cold it is.
Hurry, Gerda. We must be quick. The palace is about to collapse.
Death was cheated
Kay was saved
The Snow Queen defeated. #
CLOCK CHIMES ONCE

CLOCK TICKS:

Oh, Gerda.
Oh, Kay.
Oh, my precious children.
I thought I'd lost you.