

The Snow Queen

SCENE 5

NARRATOR:	The Fifth Story. The Little Robber Girl. They drove through the dark forest, but the coach shone like a fire, right into some robbers' eyes:
ROBBERS:	It's gold! It's gold!
NARRATOR:	And they rushed forward, grabbed the horses, killed the little postilions, the coachman and the footmen and then they pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.
ROBBER WOMAN:	She's lovely and fat!
NARRATOR:	Said the old robber woman, who had a long bristly beard and eyebrows which hung over her eyes.
ROBBER WOMAN:	She's as good as a little fat lamb! How tasty she will be!
NARRATOR:	And then she pulled out her shining knife which glinted most horribly.
ROBBER WOMAN:	Ouch! You beastly brat!
NARRATOR:	For just at that moment her own little daughter, whom she carried on her back, had bitten her ear. She was as wild and grubby a little thing as you could wish to see. And so her mother missed her chance to kill Gerda.
ROBBER GIRL:	She shall play with me!
NARRATOR:	Said the little robber girl.
ROBBER GIRL:	She shall give me her muff, her beautiful dress and sleep with me in my bed! I want to go in the coach!
NARRATOR:	And she had to get her way, because she was so spoilt and stubborn. She and Gerda sat inside and they drove deeper into the forest. The little robber girl was as tall as Gerda but stronger, with broader shoulders and dark skin; her eyes were quite black, they looked almost sad. She took little Gerda by the waist and said:
ROBBER GIRL:	They won't kill you, as long as I don't get angry with you! You must be a princess?
GERDA:	No, I'm not.
NARRATOR:	And she told her everything she had gone through and how much she loved little Kay. The robber girl looked at her very seriously and nodded her head a little.
ROBBER GIRL:	They won't kill you, as long as I don't get angry with you! You must be a princess?

GERDA:	No, I'm not.
NARRATOR:	And she told her everything she had gone through and how much she loved little Kay. The robber girl looked at her very seriously and nodded her head a little.
ROBBER GIRL:	They shan't kill you, even if I do get angry with you, I shall do it myself!
NARRATOR:	And she dried Gerda's eyes and put both her hands in the beautiful muff, which was so soft and so warm. Now the coach stopped; they were in the middle of the courtyard of the robbers' castle; it was cracked from top to bottom, ravens and crows flew out of gaping holes, and huge bulldogs that looked as if they could devour a man jumped high in the air, but they did not bark, for it was forbidden. In the old, sooty great hall a great fire burned; the smoke drifted up to the ceiling and had to find its own way out; a great cauldron bubbled with soup and both hares and rabbits turned on a spit.
ROBBER GIRL:	You shall sleep here tonight with all my little animals!
NARRATOR:	They got something to eat and drink and then went into a corner where there was straw and blankets. Above them, on sticks and poles, sat about a hundred pigeons, who seemed to be sleeping, but they stirred a little, when the little girls came.
ROBBER GIRL:	They are all mine!
NARRATOR:	And she quickly grabbed one of the nearest ones, held it by the legs, shook it till it flapped its wings and shoved it in Gerda's face.
ROBBER GIRL:	Kiss it!
NARRATOR:	Then she pointed behind some bars in front of a hole high up in the wall.
ROBBER GIRL:	They are woodpigeons, those two! They fly away at once, if you haven't shut them up properly; and here is my old darling Bae!
NARRATOR:	And she pulled at the antlers of a reindeer, which was tied up by a shiny copper ring around his neck.
ROBBER GIRL:	We have to keep good hold of him too, or he would jump away from us. Every single evening, I tickle his neck with my sharp knife, for he's afraid of that!
NARRATOR:	And the little girl pulled a long knife out of a crack in the wall and let it glide over the reindeer's neck; the poor animal kicked out its legs and the robber girl laughed and pulled Gerda down into her bed.
GERDA:	Do you take your knife with you when you go to sleep?

ROBBER GIRL:	I always sleep with a knife! You never know what might happen! But tell me again, what you told me before about little Kay, and why you went out into the wide world.
NARRATOR:	And Gerda told her again from the beginning, and the woodpigeons cooed up in their cage, the other pigeons were asleep. The little robber girl put her arm round Gerda's neck, holding the knife in her other hand, and slept; but Gerda couldn't close her eyes at all, she didn't know if she was going to live or die. The robbers sat round the fire, singing and drinking, and the robber woman turned somersaults. Oh! That was a very horrid thing for the little girl to see. Then the woodpigeons said:
WOODPIGEON:	Coo, coo! We have seen little Kay. A white hen carried his sledge, he sat in the Snow Queen's carriage, they flew low over the forest as we lay in our nest; she blew on our young ones, and they all died except we two; coo! Coo!
GERDA:	What are you saying up there? Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?
WOODPIGEON:	She was probably going to Lapland, for it's always snow and ice there! Just ask the reindeer who is tethered beside you.
BAE:	There is ice and snow there, so blessed and good! There you can jump freely in the great shining valleys! The Snow Queen has a summer tent there, but her permanent castle is up by the North Pole, on the island called Spitsbergen!
GERDA:	Oh Kay, little Kay!
ROBBER GIRL:	Now you lie still! Or you'll get a knife to the stomach!
NARRATOR:	In the morning Gerda told her everything the woodpigeons had said, and the little robber girl nodded and looked quite serious.
ROBBER GIRL:	It was him! It was him! – Bae, do you know where Lapland is?
BAE:	Who should know that better than I! There I was born and bred, there I used to jump on the snowy plains!
ROBBER GIRL:	Listen, Gerda! You can see that all the men are gone, but mother is still here, and here she will stay, but by the end of the morning she will drink from that big bottle and take a little nap; then I will do something for you!
NARRATOR:	Then she jumped up out of bed, put her arms about her mother's neck, pulled her beard and said:
ROBBER GIRL:	My own sweet goat, good morning!
NARRATOR:	And her mother pinched her under her nose, so it turned red and blue, but it was all done out of love.

NARRATOR (CONT.):	When her mother had drunk from the bottle and gone for a little nap, the robber girl went to the reindeer:
ROBBER GIRL:	I really feel like tickling you over and over again with the sharp knife, because then you look so funny, but never mind that, I will untie your rope and help you outside, so that you can run to Lapland, but you must shake a leg and bring this little girl to the Snow Queen's castle, where her playmate is.
NARRATOR:	The reindeer jumped up for joy. The robber girl lifted little Gerda up onto him and had the foresight to tie her on tightly, and even gave her a little pillow to sit on.
ROBBER GIRL:	It's all the same to me, you can take your furry boots, for it's cold there, but I'm keeping the muff, it's much too nice! Still, you won't freeze. Here are my mother's big mittens, they'll reach right up to your elbows! - Now your hands look just like my ugly old mother's!
NARRATOR:	And Gerda cried for happiness.
ROBBER GIRL:	I don't like your fretting! You should look quite happy now! And here are two loaves of bread and a ham for you, so you won't starve.
NARRATOR:	They were tied to the back of the reindeer; the little robber girl opened the door, lured all the big dogs inside, and then she cut the tether with her knife and said to the reindeer:
ROBBER GIRL:	Run along! But look after the little girl!
NARRATOR:	And Gerda waved goodbye to the robber girl, and then the reindeer flew off through the great forest as fast as he could. The wolves howled, the ravens croaked. "Fut! Fut!" said the sky. It was as if the red streaks in it were sneezing.
BAE:	That's my old northern lights! See how they shine!
NARRATOR:	And then he ran on even further, by night and day; the loaves were eaten, the ham too, and then they were in Lapland.