

The Snow Queen
SCENE 4

NARRATOR:	<p>The Fourth Story. The prince and the princess.</p> <p>Gerda had to rest again; then a large crow, who had been sitting on the snow watching her for a while, hopped towards her, wagging his head.</p>
CROW:	<p>Caw! Caw! – Goo’ day! Goo’ day!</p>
NARRATOR:	<p>He couldn’t say it any better, but he had kind intentions towards the little girl and asked why she was out all alone in the wide world. Gerda told the crow the whole story of her life and asked if he hadn’t seen Kay.</p>
CROW:	<p>Maybe! Maybe!</p>
GERDA:	<p>What, do you really think so!</p>
NARRATOR:	<p>And she kissed the crow, almost squeezing him to death in the process.</p>
CROW:	<p>Carefully, carefully! I think it was, I think it could have been little Kay! But now he seems to have forgotten you for the sake of the princess!</p>
GERDA:	<p>Does he live with a princess?</p>
CROW:	<p>Yes, listen! But I have a hard time speaking your language. If you understand crow language, I can tell you more easily!</p>
GERDA:	<p>No, I have never learned it! But Grandmother can speak it. I wish I had learned!</p>
CROW:	<p>Never mind! I shall tell the story as well as I can, but it won’t be much good.</p> <p>In this kingdom lives a princess, who is so very wise that she has read all the newspapers in the world and forgotten them again. Not long ago she was sitting on her throne and started to hum an old song, with the refrain: “Why shouldn’t I get married!”. “There’s something in that,” said she, and she decided she would get married, but she wanted a man who knew how to give a good answer when you talked to him, who didn’t just stand around looking noble, for that is so boring.</p> <p>Believe me, every word I say is true. I have a tame fiancée who has the run of the castle, and she told me everything!</p>
NARRATOR:	<p>Of course, his fiancée was another crow, because birds of a feather flock together.</p>
CROW:	<p>It was published in the newspapers that any good-looking young man was free to come to the castle and the princess would choose the best conversationalist as her husband!</p> <p>Yes, yes! You can believe me, as sure as I am sitting here, the people flocked to the castle, pushing and hustling, but no one succeeded, neither on the first nor the second day. They could all speak well, when they were out in the street, but when they came in through the castle gate and saw the guards all in silver, and</p>

CROW (CONT.):	went up the stairs and saw the lackeys in gold and the great illuminated halls, they were struck dumb; and when they stood before the throne, where the princess sat, all they could do was repeat the last word she had said, and she didn't want to hear that again. There was a line of men from the city gate to the castle. I went and saw it myself!
GERDA:	But Kay, little Kay! When did he come? Was he one of the crowd?
CROW:	Give me time! We're just getting to him! It was the third day, when a small person, without horse or carriage, came marching up to the castle quite cheerfully; his eyes shone like yours, he had lovely long hair, but his clothes were poor!
GERDA:	That was Kay! Oh, then I've found him!
CROW:	He had a little knapsack on his back!
GERDA:	No, that was his sledge! He had it when he left!
CROW:	That may well be! I didn't look so closely! But this I know from my tame fiancée, that when he came through the castle gate and saw the bodyguards all in silver and up the stairs and saw the lackeys all in gold, he wasn't the least abashed, he nodded and said to them: "It must be boring to stand on the stairs, I'd rather go inside!" The great halls were all lit up; councillors and excellencies went about barefoot with gold dishes; it was enough to make anyone feel solemn! His boots creaked so terribly loudly, but he still wasn't afraid!
GERDA:	That must have been Kay! I know he had new boots, I heard them creak in grandmother's living room!
CROW:	Yes, creak they did! And he went right up to the princess, who was sitting on a pearl as big as a spinning-wheel; all the ladies-in-waiting with their maids and their maids' maids and all the cavalrymen with their servants and their servants' servants stood round about; and the closer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked.
GERDA:	It must have been horrible! But Kay still got the princess!
CROW:	If I hadn't been a crow, I would have taken her, even though I am engaged. He must have spoken as well as I speak when I speak crow language, so my tame fiancée tells me. He was cheerful and handsome; he wasn't there for the contest, but he'd just come to hear the princess' wisdom, and this he liked, and she liked him in turn!
GERDA:	Yes, that was surely Kay! He was so clever, he could do sums in his head with fractions! – Oh, won't you lead me to the castle!
CROW:	That's easily said but not so easily done! I will ask my tame fiancée's advice; for this I can tell you, a little girl like you will never be allowed to enter!
GERDA:	Yes, I will! When Kay hears I'm there, he'll come straight out and fetch me!

CROW:	Wait for me by that stone there!
NARRATOR:	And he waggled his head and flew off. The crow didn't return until it was dark.
CROW:	Caw! Caw! Greetings from my fiancée! And here is a little bit of bread she took from the kitchen for you. – It's impossible for you to enter the castle, your feet are bare; the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold won't allow it; but don't cry, we'll still get you in. My fiancée knows a little back staircase that leads to the bedroom, and she knows where to get the key!
NARRATOR:	And the crow led little Gerda into the castle garden, where the leaves were falling one by one, and to the back door, which was wedged open. Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and longing! It was as if she were going to do something wrong, but she only wanted to know if little Kay was there; yes, it must be him; he would be glad to see her, to hear how far she had travelled for his sake, to know how sad they had all been at home when he didn't return. Oh, it was fear and joy at once. Now they were on the stairs; in the middle of the floor stood the tame crow, turning her head about and looking at Gerda, who curtsied, as Grandmother had taught her.
TAME CROW:	My fiancé has told me so many nice things about you, my little miss. Your biography, as one might say, is very touching! – If you take the lamp, I will go ahead. We will go straight on, so as not to meet anyone!
GERDA:	I think someone's coming!
NARRATOR:	And there was a rushing sound behind her; it was like shadows on the wall, horses with fluttering manes and thin legs, huntsmen, lords and ladies on horseback.
TAME CROW:	They are only dreams! They are coming to take the thoughts of the noble lords off to the hunt, it's just as well, then it will be easier for you to get a look at them while they sleep. But I trust, when you achieve rank of honour and dignity, you will show a grateful heart!
CROW:	There's no need to say that!
NARRATOR:	Now they came into the first hall; the dreams were rushing by so fast that Gerda couldn't see the lords and ladies. Each hall was more splendid than the last, it was quite astounding, and now they were in the bedchamber. The ceiling in here resembled a large palm tree with leaves of costly glass and in the middle of the floor hanging from a thick gold stem were two beds in the shape of lilies: one was white, in it lay the princess; the other was red, and in that one Gerda went to look for little Kay; she bent one of the red petals aside and saw a brown neck. – Oh, that was Kay! – She shouted his name loudly, held the lamp out to him – the dreams rushed back into the room on horseback – he woke up and turned his head – it wasn't little Kay.

NARRATOR (CONT.):	The prince resembled him only about the neck, but he was young and handsome. And from the white lily-bed the princess looked out and asked what was happening. Then little Gerda started to cry and told her the whole story, and everything the crows had done for her.
PRINCESS:	You poor little thing!
NARRATOR:	Said the princess, and she praised the crows, and said she wasn't angry with them, but they shouldn't do it again. However, they should have a reward.
PRINCESS:	Do you want to fly free? Or do you want permanent positions as court crows, with all the kitchen scraps you can eat?
NARRATOR:	<p>And both crows curtsied and asked for permanent positions; for they were thinking of their old age.</p> <p>And the prince got out of his bed and let Gerda sleep in it, and more he could not do. She thought: "How good all people and animals are after all," and then she closed her eyes and slept a blessed sleep. All the dreams came flying back in, and now they looked like angels, and they drew a little sledge, and on it Kay was sitting and nodding; but it was all just a dream, and so it was gone again as soon as she woke up.</p> <p>The next day she was dressed from head to toe in silk and velvet; she was offered the opportunity to stay at the castle, but she asked for a little carriage with a horse and a pair of small boots, then she would go out into the wide world and find Kay.</p> <p>And she got both boots and a muff and when she went to leave, a new coach of pure gold was waiting at the door; the prince and the princess' coat of arms shone from it like a star; coachman, footman and postilions, for there were postilions, sat wearing gold crowns. The prince and the princess helped her into the carriage themselves and wished her all the best. The forest crow, who was now married, went with them for the first three miles; the other crow stood at the gate beating her wings, she did not come with them because she had a headache, having eaten too much as a result of her new position. Inside, the coach was lined with sugar pretzels and the seat was full of fruit and gingerbread.</p> <p>"Farewell! Farewell!" called the prince and the princess, and little Gerda wept, and the crow wept; the first mile went by like this; then the crow also said goodbye, and that was the hardest parting; he flew up into a tree and beat his black wings for as long as he could see the carriage, which shone like the bright sunshine.</p>