

The Snow Queen

SCENE 3

NARRATOR:	<p>The Third Story. The flower garden of the woman who knew magic.</p> <p>But how did little Gerda feel, when Kay didn't come any more? Where could he be?</p> <p>No one knew, no one could say. The boys only said that they had seen him tie his sledge to a grand big one, which drove out of the city gate. Nobody knew where he was, little Gerda cried so long and hard; then they said he was dead, he must have drowned in the river; oh, those were such long, dark winter days.</p> <p>Then came spring with its warm sunshine.</p>
GERDA:	Kay is dead and gone!
SUNSHINE:	I don't think so!
NARRATOR:	Said the sunshine.
GERDA:	He's dead and gone!
SWALLOWS:	I don't think so!
NARRATOR:	Replied the swallows, and eventually little Gerda didn't believe it either.
GERDA:	I'll put on my new red shoes, the one's Kay's never seen, and then I'll go down to the river and ask it!
NARRATOR:	It was early in the morning, she kissed old Grandmother, who was asleep, put on the red shoes and walked out through the gate to the river.
GERDA:	Is it true that you've taken my little playmate? I'll give you my red shoes, if you give me him back!
NARRATOR:	<p>And the waves seemed to nod strangely, so she took off her red shoes, her dearest possession, and threw them into the river, but they fell close to the shore, and the little waves washed them right back to her, as if the river didn't want to take them, since it didn't have little Kay; but now she thought she hadn't thrown them far enough, and she climbed into a boat which was lying in the reeds, walked to the end of it and threw the shoes, but the boat was not tied fast, and it started to drift away from the bank; she realised at once and tried to get away, but it was too late! The boat was more than a yard from the bank, and now it was gliding even faster.</p> <p>Then little Gerda became quite frightened and started to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they couldn't carry her to land, but they flew along the shore and sang, as if to comfort her:</p>
SPARROWS:	Here we are! Here we are!

NARRATOR:	<p>The boat drifted with the current, the red shoes were soon left floating behind; little Gerda sat quite still in her stockinged feet.</p> <p>The banks on either side were lovely, with flowers, trees, sheep and cows, but not a single person to be seen.</p>
GERDA:	Maybe the river is carrying me to little Kay.
NARRATOR:	<p>That thought put her in a better mood and she sat up and watched the beautiful green banks for many hours; then she came to a large cherry orchard, where there was a small house with strange red and blue windows.</p> <p>The river carried the boat close to the house and Gerda called out loudly.</p>
GERDA:	Halloooo!
NARRATOR:	An old, old woman came out of the house, leaning on a crook; she wore a large sun hat which was painted with the most beautiful flowers.
OLD WOMAN:	You poor little child! However did you get out onto the powerful river, driven so far into the wide world!
NARRATOR:	<p>And the old woman went right into the water, hooked her crook into the boat, pulled it ashore and lifted little Gerda out.</p> <p>And Gerda was happy to get onto dry land, but she was still a little afraid of the strange old woman.</p>
OLD WOMAN:	Come and tell me who you are, and how you came to be here!
NARRATOR:	And Gerda told her everything; and the old woman shook her head and said:
OLD WOMAN:	Hm! Hm!
NARRATOR:	<p>And when Gerda had told her everything and asked if she hadn't seen little Kay, the woman said that he hadn't yet come by, but he would come soon, she shouldn't be so sad but she should taste her cherries and look at her beautiful flowers, for each one could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand, they went into the little house and the old woman closed the door.</p> <p>The most beautiful cherries stood on the table, and Gerda ate as many as she wanted, for she was feeling braver now. And while she was eating, the old woman combed her golden hair with a gold comb, so that it curled around her lovely, rosebud face.</p>
OLD WOMAN:	I have really longed for such a sweet little girl. Now you shall see what a good time we two shall have!
NARRATOR:	And as she combed little Gerda's hair, Gerda forgot her playmate Kay more and more; for the old woman could do witchcraft, but she wasn't a wicked witch, she just did a little magic for her own pleasure, and now she wanted very much to keep little Gerda. So she went out into the garden, pointed her crook at all the

NARRATOR (CONT.):	<p>beautiful rose trees, and they sank into the black soil and you could not see where they had been. The old woman was afraid that when Gerda saw the roses, she would think of her own and then remember little Kay and run away.</p> <p>Then she took Gerda out into the flower garden. How lovely it was! Every flower you could think of, of every season, all blooming together; no picture book could be more varied or beautiful. Gerda played until the sun went down behind the tall cherry trees, then she got a lovely bed with red silk covers stuffed with blue violets, and she slept and dreamed there as sweetly as any queen on her wedding day.</p> <p>The next day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine – and so many days went by. Gerda got to know every flower, but as many as there were, she still thought that one was missing, but she didn't know which one. Then one day she was sitting looking at the old woman's sunhat with its painted flowers, and the most beautiful of them all was a rose. The old woman had forgotten the one on her hat, when she sent the others into the ground. But that's the way it is, when one doesn't think!</p>
GERDA:	What! Aren't there any roses here!
NARRATOR:	And she searched and searched, but there was none to be found; then she sat down and cried, but her hot tears fell just where a rose tree had sunk into the ground, and as the warm tears watered the earth, the tree suddenly shot up, in full bloom, and Gerda kissed the roses and thought of the lovely roses at home and of little Kay.
GERDA:	Oh, I've been wasting time here! I should find Kay! Oh, roses, don't you know where Kay is? Do you think he's dead and gone?
ROSES:	He's not dead! We were under the earth, where all the dead are, but Kay was not there!
GERDA:	Thank you!
NARRATOR:	And she went to the other flowers and asked:
GERDA:	Don't you know where little Kay is?
NARRATOR:	<p>But each flower stood in the sun, dreaming its own story, and none of them knew anything about Kay.</p> <p>What did the tiger lily say?</p>
TIGER LILY:	Do you hear the drum? Boom! Boom! Only two notes, always boom! Boom! Hear the women's lament! Hear the priests' chant! – In her long, red robe the Hindu wife stands on the funeral pyre, the flames engulfing her and her dead husband; but the Hindu woman is thinking of a living man here in the crowd, of him whose eyes burn hotter than the flames, him, whose fiery eyes scorch her heart more than the flames which will soon burn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart die in the flames of the pyre?

GERDA:	I don't understand that at all!
TIGER LILY:	It's my fairy tale!
NARRATOR:	What did the convolvulus say?
CONVOLVULUS:	High above the narrow mountain road hangs an old castle; thick ivy grows up around the old red walls, around the balcony, and there stands a lovely girl; she leans over the balustrade and looks down the road. No rose hangs fresher on its branches than she, no apple-blossom, when the wind carries it from the tree, is more delicate than she; how her splendid silk gown rustles. "But won't he come!"
GERDA:	Do you mean Kay?
CONVOLVULUS:	I'm only telling my fairy tale, my dream.
NARRATOR:	What did the little snowdrop say?
SNOWDROP:	Between the trees hangs a long board by two ropes, it is a swing; two pretty little girls, - their dresses are white as snow, long green ribbons flutter from their hats, - sit and swing; their brother, who is bigger than they are, stands behind them on the swing, with his arms round the rope to hold him, for in one hand he has a small bowl, in the other a clay pipe, he blows soap bubbles; the swing goes back and forth, and the bubbles fly with lovely, changing colours; the last one still clings to the pipe stem and trembles in the breeze; the swing goes to and fro. The little black dog, light as the bubbles, is standing up on its hind legs and wants to get onto the swing, it flies on; the dog falls, barks and is angry; they tease him, the bubbles burst, - a swinging board, a leaping foam picture is my song!
GERDA:	Your tale may be beautiful but you tell it so sadly, and don't mention Kay at all. What do the hyacinths say?
HYACINTH:	There were three beautiful sisters; one wore a red dress, the second a blue, the third was all in white; hand in hand they danced by the quiet lake in the clear moonlight. They were not elf girls, they were human children. The air smelt sweet, and the girls disappeared into the forest; the scent grew stronger; - three coffins, the beautiful girls lay down in them, and floated across the lake; the glow-worms flew around them, like little floating lights. Are the dancing girls sleeping, or are they dead? - The scent of flowers says they are corpses; the evening bells ring over the dead!
GERDA:	You're making me quite sad. Your scent is so strong; it makes me think of the dead girls! Ah, is little Kay really dead? The roses have been down in the ground, and they say he's not!
HYACINTH:	Ding, dong! We're not tolling for little Kay; we don't know him! We are only singing our song, the only song we know!
NARRATOR:	And Gerda went to the buttercup that shone through its glossy green leaves.

GERDA:	You bright little sun! Tell me, if you know, where I can find my playmate?
BUTTERCUP:	In a small courtyard, the sun shone so warmly on the first day of spring; the rays glanced along the neighbour's white wall, close by grew the first yellow flowers, shining gold in the warm sunbeams; the old grandmother was sitting outside on her chair, her granddaughter, the poor, pretty servant girl, came home from a short visit; she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, the gold of the heart, in that blessed kiss. Gold in the mouth, gold on the ground, gold up there in the morning! There, that's my little story!
GERDA:	My poor old grandmother! Yes, she longs for me, just as she did for little Kay! But I will be back home soon, and then I will bring Kay with me - there's no point asking the flowers, they only know their own songs, they can't tell me anything!
NARRATOR:	And she tied up her dress so she could run faster, but the narcissus tapped her leg as she jumped over it, and what did it say?
NARCISSUS:	I can see myself! I can see myself! Oh, oh, how sweet I smell! - Up in the little garret, half dressed, stands a little dancer, she stands on one leg, then on two, she kicks at the whole world, it's just an illusion. She pours water from the teapot over a piece of cloth - it is her corset; - cleanliness is a good thing! Her white dress hangs on the hook, it has also been washed in the teapot and dried on the roof; she puts it on, the saffron scarf around her neck, then the dress shines even whiter. Leg up! See where she balances on a stem! I can see myself! I can see myself!
GERDA:	I don't like that at all! It's nothing to do with me!
NARRATOR:	And she ran to end of the garden. The door was closed, but she wiggled the rusty latch until the door sprang open, and she ran in bare feet out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one came after her; in the end she couldn't run anymore and sat down on a big stone, and when she looked around, summer was over, it was late autumn, though you wouldn't have known it in the lovely garden.
GERDA:	How long I've been delayed! It is autumn already! I dare not rest!
NARRATOR:	Oh, how her little feet were sore and tired, and everything round her looked so cold and bleak; the long willow leaves were all yellow and dripping with mist, leaves fell one after the other, only the blackthorn bore sour fruits. Oh, how grey and heavy it was in the wide world.