

The Snow Queen

SCENE 6

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| NARRATOR: | <p>Sixth Story. The Lapp Woman and the Finnish Woman.</p> <p>They stopped at a little house; it looked quite pitiful; the roof went down to the ground and the door was so low that the family had to crawl on their stomachs to get in or out. There was no one at home except an old Lapp woman, who was frying fish over an oil-lamp; the reindeer told her Gerda's whole story, but first his own, for it seemed much more important, and Gerda was so overcome by cold that she could not speak.</p> |
| LAPP WOMAN: | <p>Oh, you poor things! Then you have far to run! You must go over a hundred miles into the Finnmark, for it's there that the Snow Queen is on holiday, burning blue fireworks every evening. I shall write a few words on a dried stockfish, I don't have any paper, take it to the Finnish woman who lives up there for me, she can give you more information than I can!</p> |
| NARRATOR: | <p>And when Gerda had warmed up and had something to eat and drink, the Lapp woman wrote a few words on a dried stockfish, asked Gerda to take good care of it, tied her to the reindeer again and off he leapt. "Fut! Fut!" said the sky, all night the most beautiful blue northern lights blazed; - and then they came to the Finnmark and knocked on the chimney of the Finnish woman, for she didn't even have a door.</p> <p>It was so hot inside that the Finnish woman went about almost naked; she was small and rather grubby; she loosened little Gerda's clothes at once, and took off her mittens and boots, put a piece of ice on the reindeer's head, and read what was written on the stockfish; she read it three times, and then she knew it by heart and put the fish in the cooking pot, because it could be eaten, and she never wasted anything.</p> <p>Then the reindeer first told his story, then little Gerda's, and the Finnish woman's wise eyes twinkled, but she said nothing.</p> |
| BAE: | <p>You are so wise, I know you can tie all the winds of the world together with a length of thread; if a sailor loosens the first knot he gets a fair wind, if he loosens the second, it blows a stiff breeze, and if he loosens the third and the fourth, there is such a storm that the trees in the forest fall down. Won't you give the little girl a drink that will give her the strength of twelve men, so she can overpower the Snow Queen?</p> |
| FINNISH WOMAN: | <p>(SARCASTIC) The strength of twelve men, yes, that would be a good idea!</p> |
| NARRATOR: | <p>And then she went to a shelf, brought out a large rolled-up skin and unrolled it; there were strange letters written on it, and the Finnish woman read them until the sweat dripped down her forehead.</p> <p>But the reindeer again begged her to help little Gerda, and Gerda looked at her with beseeching eyes full of tears, so that the Finnish woman's eyes began to twinkle again and she pulled the reindeer into a corner, where she whispered to him while she put a fresh piece of ice on his head:</p> |

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| FINNISH WOMAN: | Little Kay is indeed with the Snow Queen and everything there suits him perfectly and he thinks it is the best place in the world, but that is because he has got a shard of glass in his heart and a little grain of glass in his eye; they have to come out first, or he will never be human again, and the Snow Queen will keep her power over him! |
| BAE: | But can't you give little Gerda something to give her power over all those things? |
| FINNISH WOMAN: | <p>I can't give her more power than she already has! Don't you see how great it is? Don't you see how men and animals must serve her, how on her bare feet she has come so far in the world. She mustn't know of her power from us, it sits in her heart, there it sits, she is a sweet, innocent child. If she herself can't reach the Snow Queen and get the glass out of little Kay, we cannot help her!</p> <p>Two miles from here begin the gardens of the Snow Queen, you can carry the little girl there; put her down by the big bush that stands with red berries in the snow, don't stop to gossip but hurry back here!</p> |
| NARRATOR: | And then the Finnish woman lifted little Gerda onto the reindeer, and he ran as fast as he could. |
| GERDA: | Oh, I didn't get my boots! I didn't get my mittens! |
| NARRATOR: | <p>But the reindeer didn't dare stop, he ran on until they came to the big bush with the red berries; there he put Gerda down, kissed her on the mouth, and big, shining tears ran down the animal's cheeks, and he ran back as fast as he could. There stood poor Gerda without shoes, without gloves, in the middle of the freezing cold Finnmark.</p> <p>She ran on as hard as she could; then came a whole regiment of snowflakes, they didn't fall from the sky, but ran straight along the ground, and the nearer they came, the bigger they got; they were even bigger and more terrible than the ones Gerda had seen through the magnifying glass, they were alive, they were the Snow Queen's advance guard; they had the strangest shapes; some looked like big ugly hedgehogs, others like whole knots of snakes sticking out their heads, and others like fat little bears with bristly fur, all shining white, all of them were living snowflakes.</p> <p>Then little Gerda said her Our Father, and the cold was so strong that she could see her own breath; it became thicker and thicker and it formed small bright angels that grew bigger and bigger, as soon as they touched the ground; they all had helmets on their heads and spears and shields in their hands; more and more of them grew, and when Gerda had finished her prayer, there was a whole legion around her; they thrust their spears at the horrible snowflakes and they shattered into hundreds of pieces, and little Gerda went on quite confidently and joyfully. The angels rubbed her feet and hands, so she felt the cold less, and she went straight on to the Snow Queen's castle.</p> <p>But now we must first see how Kay is doing. Of course, he wasn't thinking of little Gerda at all and he had no idea that she was standing outside the castle.</p> |