

The Snow Queen

SCENE 2

NARRATOR:	<p>The Second Story. A little boy and a little girl.</p> <p>In the big city, where there are so many houses and people that there is not enough room for everyone to have a garden and where most of them have to be happy with plants in pots, there were two poor children who had a garden somewhat larger than a flowerpot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other just as much as if they were. Their parents lived right next door to each other in two little garrets. Where the roofs of the two houses met and the rain gutter ran between were two small windows, so you only had to step across the gutter to get from one window to the other.</p> <p>Their parents had a large wooden box outside each window in which they grew herbs for the kitchen, and in each box was also a thriving little rose tree.</p> <p>They decided to put the boxes across the gutter, so they almost reached from one house to the other and looked just like two walls of flowers.</p> <p>Since the boxes were quite tall and the children knew that they shouldn't climb about on them, they were often allowed to take their little stools out under the roses, where they played together very happily.</p> <p>In winter that pleasure was over. The windows were quite often frozen over, but then they heated copper coins on the stove and pressed them to the frozen window to make nice, round little peepholes, and through each window there peeped a nice round eye, it was the little boy and the little girl. He was called Kay and she was called Gerda. In summer they could join each other in one leap, in winter they had to run down and up so many stairs and outside was snow.</p>
GRANDMOTHER:	The white bees are swarming.
NARRATOR:	Said the old grandmother.
KAY:	Do they have a queen too?
NARRATOR:	Asked the little boy, for he knew that real bees have one.
GRANDMOTHER:	Yes, they do! She flies right in the middle of the swarm. She is the biggest of them all, and she never stays quietly on the ground but flies back up again into the black cloud. On many winter nights she flies through the city streets and looks through the windows, and then they freeze over in a strange way, as if covered with flowers.

KAY:	Yes, I've seen that!
GERDA:	I've seen it too!
NARRATOR:	And then they knew that it was true.
GERDA:	Can the Snow Queen come in here?
NARRATOR:	That's Gerda, the little girl.
KAY:	Just let her come! I'll put her on the hot stove, and then she'll melt!
NARRATOR:	<p>But Grandmother smoothed his hair and told them other stories.</p> <p>In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he climbed onto the chair by the window and looked out through the peephole; a few snowflakes were falling outside and one of them, the biggest one, fell on the edge of the window box and stayed there; the snowflake grew bigger and bigger, until it turned into the figure of a woman, clad in the finest white gauze made of millions of star-shaped snowflakes. She was so beautiful but made of ice, dazzling, flashing ice, yet she was alive; her eyes stared like two bright stars, but there was no rest or peace in them. She nodded to the window and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was startled and jumped down from the chair, and then it seemed that a large bird flew past the window.</p> <p>The next day there was a clear frost – and then spring came, the sun shone, the green was peeping out, the swallows were building nests, the windows were opened and once again the children were sitting in their little garden high up in the gutter above the houses.</p> <p>The roses bloomed especially wonderfully that summer; the little girl had learned a hymn, in which roses were mentioned, so that it reminded her of her own; and she sang it for the little boy, and he sang it with her:</p>
GERDA:	(SINGS) In the valleys the roses grow...
KAY:	(SINGS) For baby Jesus loves us so!
NARRATOR:	<p>And they held each other's hands and kissed the roses in the bright sunshine. What lovely summer days they were, how lovely it was to be out under the fresh rose trees that seemed to be always in bloom.</p> <p>One day, Kay and Gerda were sitting looking at a picture book with animals and birds, and it was then – the bells in the church tower had just struck five –</p>

KAY:	Ouch! That hit me in the heart! And now there's something in my eye!
NARRATOR:	The little girl put her arm round his neck; he blinked his eyes; no, there was nothing to be seen.
KAY:	I think it's gone!
NARRATOR:	But it wasn't gone. It was one of those grains of glass that sprang from the mirror, the troll mirror, we remember it, that horrible glass, that made everything great and good which was reflected in it become small and hideous but everything evil and wrong was magnified. Poor Kay had also got a splinter right in his heart. Soon it would turn into a lump of ice. It no longer hurt, but it was there.
KAY:	Why are you crying? It makes you look ugly! There's nothing wrong with me! Ugh! That rose has been chewed by a worm! And look, it's all crooked! These roses are all ugly!
NARRATOR:	And he kicked them hard, and broke off two of the roses.
GERDA:	Kay, what are you doing!
NARRATOR:	And when he saw her fright, he tore off another rose and ran in through his window, away from dear little Gerda. When she brought him the picture book, he said it was for babies, and when Grandmother told stories, he always interrupted with a "but" – if he could, he would go behind her back and imitate her; he was so accurate that everyone laughed at him. Soon he could imitate the walk and talk of everyone in the whole street. Everything that was strange or unattractive about them, Kay could mimic so well, that people said:
TOWNSPERSON:	He's definitely got a good head on his shoulders, that boy!
NARRATOR:	But it was the glass that was stuck in his eye, the glass in his heart, that was the reason he teased even little Gerda, who loved him with all her soul. His games were now quite different than before, they were so clever. One winter's day, when the snowflakes were falling, he brought a large magnifying glass, held out his blue coat, and let the snowflakes fall on it.
KAY:	Now look in the glass, Gerda!
NARRATOR:	And each snowflake seemed much larger, like a splendid flower or a ten-pointed star; it was lovely to see.

KAY:	Look how well-designed they are! They are much more interesting than real flowers! And they don't have a single mistake, they are quite flawless, until they start to melt!
NARRATOR:	A little later Kay came with big gloves and his sledge on his back, and shouted right into Gerda's ear:
KAY:	(SHOUTS) I'm allowed to play in the big square with the other boys!
NARRATOR:	<p>There in the square the most adventurous boys would tie their sledges to the farmers' wagons and ride a good distance. It was such fun. While they were playing, a great big sleigh arrived; it was painted all in white, and inside sat someone wrapped in a fluffy white fur and a white fur hat; Kay managed to tie his little sledge to the back of the big sleigh, and now he rode along with it. Faster and faster they went into the next street; the driver turned his head and nodded so kindly to Kay, it was as if they knew each other; every time Kay wanted to untie his little sledge, the driver nodded again, and so Kay stayed where he was; they drove straight out of the city gate. Then the snow began to tumble down but they kept going, then Kay quickly let go of the rope, to free himself from the big sleigh, but it didn't help, his little sledge stayed attached, and they rode like the wind.</p> <p>He cried out loudly, but no one heard him, and the snow flew down and the sleigh flew on; every now and then it made such a leap, as if it were crossing ditches and fences. He was quite frightened, he wanted to say his prayers, but he could only remember his times tables.</p>
KAY:	<p>Heeeeeelp!</p> <p>(RECITES TIMES TABLES)</p>
NARRATOR:	The snowflakes got bigger and bigger, until they looked like big, white hens; all of a sudden they jumped aside, the big sleigh stopped and the driver stood up, the fur and hat were made of snow; it was a lady, tall, straight and shining white; it was the Snow Queen.
SNOW QUEEN:	We've made good progress! But it's freezing! Crawl into my bear fur!
NARRATOR:	And she put him in the sleigh with her, with the fur round him, it felt like sinking into a snowdrift.
SNOW QUEEN:	Are you still cold?
NARRATOR:	And she kissed him on the forehead. Ugh! It was colder than ice, it went straight to his heart, which was already half a lump

NARRATOR (CONT.):	of ice; it was as if he were going to die; - but only for a moment, then he felt quite well; he no longer noticed the cold around him.
KAY:	My sledge! Don't forget my sledge!
NARRATOR:	And they tied it to one of the white hens, which flew behind them with the sledge on its back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay once more, and then he forgot little Gerda and Grandmother and everyone at home.
SNOW QUEEN:	No more kisses for you now! Or else I would kiss you to death!
NARRATOR:	<p>Kay looked at her, she was so beautiful, he could not imagine a wiser, more beautiful face. Now she didn't look like ice, as she had before when she beckoned from outside his window; to his eyes she was perfect, he was not at all afraid, he told her he could do sums in his head, even with fractions, that he knew the areas in square miles of all the countries and "how many inhabitants", and she smiled the whole time; then he thought what he knew wasn't enough, and he looked up into the big sky, as they flew high up on the black clouds in the roaring storm.</p> <p>They flew over forests and lakes, over seas and lands; beneath them the cold wind blew, the wolves howled, the snow sparkled, over them flew the black cawing crows, but above them the moon shone so big and clear, and Kay gazed at it throughout the long, long winter's night; during the day he slept at the Snow Queen's feet.</p>