

The Snow Queen

SCENE 7

NARRATOR:	<p>The Seventh Story. What happened in the Snow Queen's castle, and what happened next.</p> <p>The walls of the castle were made of driven snow and the windows and doors of biting winds; there were over a hundred halls, the largest stretched for many miles, all illuminated by the powerful northern lights, and they were so vast, so empty, so icy cold and glittering. Merriment never came here, not even so much as a little dance for the polar bears, or a coffee-morning for the young white lady foxes. In the middle of the empty, endless snow hall was a frozen lake; it was cracked into a thousand pieces, but each piece was so exactly like another that the whole thing looked like a work of art; and in the middle of it sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home, and then she said that she was sitting in the Mirror of Reason, and that it was unique and the best thing in the world.</p> <p>Little Kay was quite blue with cold, yes, almost black, but he didn't notice it, for she had kissed his cold shivers from him, and his heart was practically a lump of ice. He was pushing some sharp, flat pieces of ice about, in every possible direction, for he was trying to make a pattern out of them. Kay also made figures, the most complicated possible, it was the Ice Game of Reason; to his eyes the figures were quite remarkable and of the utmost importance; this was because of the grain of glass sitting in his eye! He made whole figures that formed written words, but he could never find the way to make the one word he wanted, the word 'Eternity', for the Snow Queen had said:</p>
SNOW QUEEN:	If you can make that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will give you a new pair of skates.
NARRATOR:	But he couldn't.
SNOW QUEEN:	Now I'm off to the warm countries! I want to look into the black pots!
NARRATOR:	She meant the volcanoes Etna and Vesuvius, as we call them.
SNOW QUEEN:	I must whiten them up a little! It's the right time for it, it will do the lemons and grapes good!
NARRATOR:	<p>And so the Snow Queen flew off, and Kay sat all alone in the many miles of the great empty ice hall, looking at the pieces of ice and thinking, thinking, until his brain groaned, and he sat so still and quiet, that one might have thought he had frozen to death.</p> <p>Then it was, that little Gerda entered the castle through the great gate made of biting winds; but she read an evening prayer, and the winds settled down, as if they were going to sleep, and she entered the vast, empty, cold halls – then she saw Kay, she recognised him, she ran to put her arms round his neck, she held him tight and cried:</p>
GERDA:	Kay! Sweet little Kay! Then I've found you!

NARRATOR:	But he sat quite still, stiff and cold; - then little Gerda wept hot tears, they fell on his chest, they penetrated his heart, they thawed the lump of ice and dissolved the little shard of glass in there; he looked at her and she sang the hymn:
GERDA:	(SINGS) In the valleys the roses grow For baby Jesus loves us so!
NARRATOR:	Then Kay burst into tears, so that the mirror splinter fell out of his eye, he recognised her and joyfully cried:
KAY:	Gerda! Sweet little Gerda! - Where have you been so long? And where have I been? How cold it is here! How empty and vast it is!
NARRATOR:	<p>And he held Gerda tight, and she laughed and wept for joy; they were so blessed, so happy, that even the pieces of ice danced around for joy and when they got tired and lay down, they formed the very letters that the Snow Queen had said he should shape, so that he would be his own master and she would give him the whole world and a new pair of skates.</p> <p>And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they bloomed; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like hers, she kissed his hands and feet, and he was strong and well. The Snow Queen was welcome to come home now: his letter of release stood written there in the brilliant pieces of ice.</p> <p>And they took each other's hands, and walked out of the great castle; they talked about Grandmother and the roses up on the roof; and wherever they went, the winds were quite still and the sun broke through; and when they reached the bush with the red berries, the reindeer stood there waiting; there was another young reindeer with him, her udders were full, and she gave the little ones her warm milk and kissed them on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finnish woman, who warmed them up in the hot room and gave them directions for the journey home, then to the Lapp woman, who had sewn them new clothes and made her sleigh ready for them.</p> <p>And the reindeer and the young reindeer went along with them, until they got to the border, where the first green was appearing, where they said farewell to the reindeer and the Lapp woman. And the first little birds began to chirp, there were green buds in the forest, and out of it there came, riding on a magnificent horse, a young girl with a bright red cap on her head and pistols at her side; it was the little robber girl, she was tired of staying at home and wanted to head north, or somewhere else, if that didn't please her. She recognised Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too.</p>
ROBBER GIRL:	You're a fine one to run about like that, Kay! I wonder if you deserve to have someone run to the end of the world for your sake!
NARRATOR:	But Gerda patted her cheek, and asked about the prince and princess.
ROBBER GIRL:	They are travelling in foreign lands!
GERDA:	And the crow?

ROBBER GIRL:	Oh, the crow is dead! His tame fiancée has become a widow and goes about with a bit of black wool around her leg; she mourns most pitifully but that's all nonsense! – But tell me how you did it, and how you found him!
NARRATOR:	And Gerda and Kay both told her.
ROBBER GIRL:	Oh snip-snap-snurre-basselurre!
NARRATOR:	And she took them both by the hand and promised that if she ever came through their city, she would come up to visit them, and then she rode out into the wide world, but Kay and Gerda went hand in hand, and as they walked, it turned into a lovely spring with flowers and greenery; the church bells were ringing, and now they recognised the high towers, the big city, it was the one they lived in, and they entered it and went to Grandmother's door, up the stairs, into the room, where everything stood in the same place as before, and the clock said, "Tick! Tock!" and its hands moved; but as they walked through the door, they noticed that they had become grown-ups. The roses in the gutter bloomed through the open windows and there stood their little chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat on them and held each other's hands, forgetting as if it had been a bad dream the cold, empty splendour of the Snow Queen. Grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine and read aloud from the Bible:
GRANDMOTHER:	Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven!
NARRATOR:	And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and they understood at once the old hymn:
GERDA:	(SINGS) In the valleys the roses grow...
KAY:	(SINGS) For baby Jesus loves us so!
NARRATOR:	There they both sat, grown-ups and yet children, children in their hearts, and it was summer, warm, blessed summer.