

THE SNOW QUEEN

By Patricia Barry Rumble

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THE SNOW QUEEN

A One Act Fantasy Drama

Freely adapted from the Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tale

By Patricia Barry Rumble

SYNOPSIS: This scintillating tale shimmers in a dreamscape in the land of ice and snow. It is the story of two young friends, Gerda and Kai, whose friendship is torn apart when Kai's heart is pierced by a sliver of the Snow Queen's evil mirror. He follows the heartless Queen to her Ice Palace. There, Kai is doomed to spend eternity in a world devoid of human love and compassion. Only the enduring love of young Gerda can save him. But before she does, she must venture out into a world filled with adventure.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 female, 4 male, 1 either; gender flexible, doubling possible)

GERDA (f).....	(Pronounced GEHR-da.) A young girl about 12 years old. (170 lines)
KAI (m).....	(Pronounced Ki as in the word “kite”.) A young boy, Gerda's best friend, about 13 years old. (82 lines)
OMA (f)	Gerda's kindly grandmother, about 60 years old. (31 lines)
SNOW QUEEN (f).....	Exquisitely beautiful but the epitome of evil. (39 lines)
KANOOT (m).....	A seemingly simple-minded blue troll. Actually the Snow Queen's younger brother. (15 lines)
BUTTERFLY (f)	Lovely, graceful female or could be a large animated butterfly and not an actual person. (1 line)
FLORA (f)	A beautiful woman who knows magic. (30 lines)

- REDBIRD (m/f)..... A large redbird, male or female,
who is Flora's companion.
(6 lines)
- ZIGORNIE (f)..... A little gypsy robber girl, about
12 years old. (35 lines)
- UNCLE (m) Zigornie's Uncle. Voice only,
very gruff, played offstage.-
uncle's voice. (2 lines)
- REINDEER (m/f)..... (17 lines)
- FINNISH WOMAN (f)..... Ancient wise woman.
(25 lines)
- NORTH WIND (m) With a very deep voice. This
role is played offstage. (6 lines)

DURATION: 55 minutes

SETTING: Copenhagen, Denmark and many places to the north, in the time
of fairy tales.

PROPS

- ☐ A Small Roll
- ☐ A Wreath Of Fresh Roses
- ☐ A Wreath Of Dried Roses: the same wreath, as it would be months later, with dried out roses
- ☐ A Small Table With 2 Chairs
- ☐ Larger Chair
- ☐ Sketch Book With Pastels
- ☐ A Tray With Cookies And Cups Of Cocoa
- ☐ 2 Shiny Coins
- ☐ Snow Queen's Wand
- ☐ Sled
- ☐ Coat On A Rack
- ☐ Bouquet Of Flowers
- ☐ Small Basket Of Cherries
- ☐ Bonnet With Flowers Including Roses Painted On It
- ☐ Large Hair Comb
- ☐ Several Rose Bushes (if the children in the cast are not playing the roses.)
- ☐ Small Light-Weight Blanket
- ☐ A Small Tree Branch
- ☐ A Pair Of Mittens
- ☐ A Bag That Would Contain Several Loaves Of Bread
- ☐ A Small Campfire With Several Plates. **The campfire may have a flashlight and red colored cellophane which will illuminate when the flashlight is turned on.
- ☐ 2 Plates Of Fish
- ☐ Several Blocks of Ice: Easily Made With Clear Plastic

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE 1: Window gardens of GERDA and KAI'S houses and in the garden below, during the summer time

SCENE 2: Living room of OMA and GERDA'S house, winter

SCENE 3: Balcony of OMA'S house, several weeks later

SCENE 4: Living room of OMA'S house, several days later

SCENE 5: FLORA's magic garden, sometime later

SCENE 6: The SNOW QUEEN flying with KAI

SCENE 7: FLORA'S garden, sometime later

SCENE 8: A dark forest, later. The home of the LITTLE ROBBER GIRL

SCENE 9: Campfire site of old FINNISH WOMAN

SCENE 10: The Ice Palace of the SNOW QUEEN

SCENE 11: Back home in Copenhagen, GERDA and KAI'S house

PRODUCTION NOTES

MUSIC: The music that inspired this play is authentic Danish music. As the play opens we can hear the actual bells of Copenhagen. The music could inspire a dance; for example, the Rainbow Butterfly. The Rainbow Butterfly in Gerda's dream could dance to the haunting sound of the "Amelie Waltz" (Amelie Vals.). Let it be said that the use of Danish music would serve to enhance a production of THE SNOW QUEEN.

LIGHTING: Great lighting will make the production come alive.

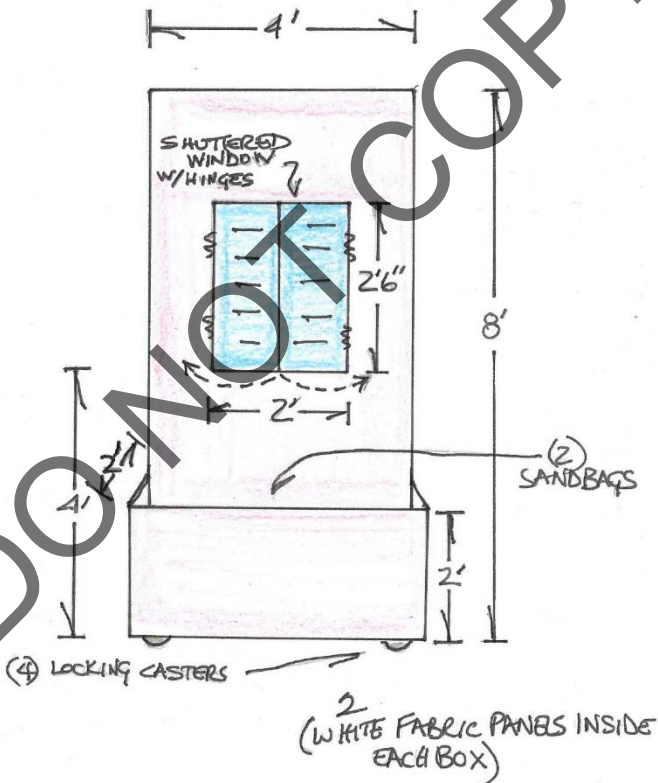
COSTUMES: Danish costumes from yesteryear. The Snow Queen should have a billowing, shimmering white gown which also represents "being in a cloud" when she is transporting Kai to the Ice Palace.

SET DESIGN: To save time in scene changes, it is easiest to have simple set pieces to indicate location. To make the flow of each scene seamless and fast, set pieces are necessary. We have included a set design by a professional director/set designer, this set design makes scene changes much easier. Concept for Set Design by David LaDuca.

Set Design by David LaDuca

FLAT 1 - SIDE A / FLAT 2 - SIDE A

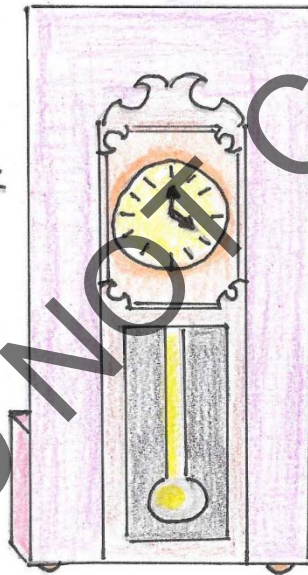
*MAKE (2) IDENTICAL FLATS, PAINTED
DIFFERENT COLORS (I.E. CORAL FOR GERDA,
YELLOW FOR RAY)



Set Design by David LaDuca

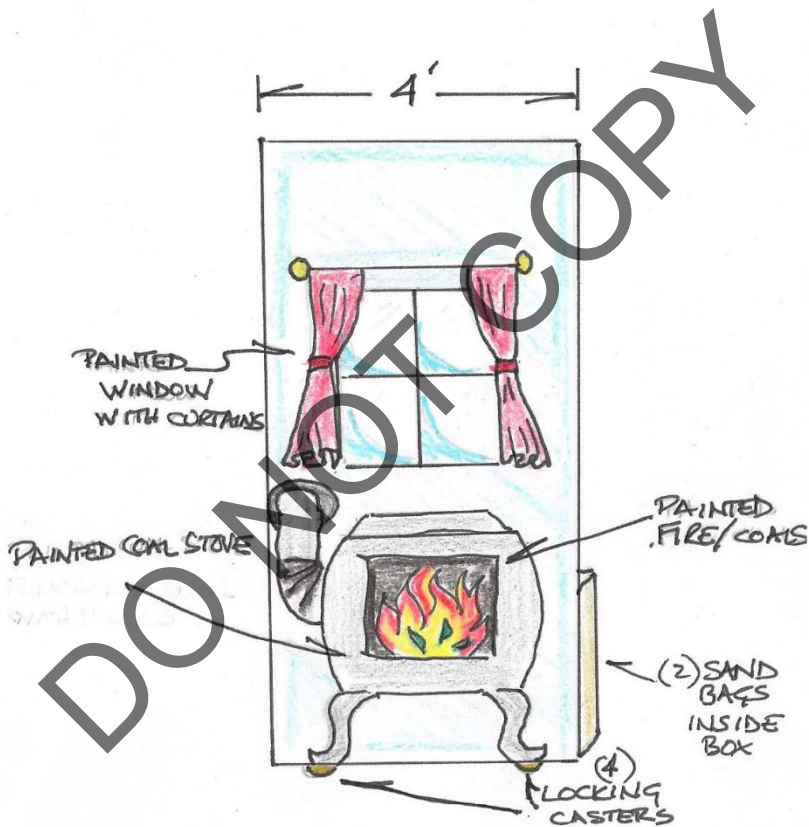
FLAT 1 - SIDE B (FLAT 1-REVERSE SIDE)

GRANDFATHER
CLOCK
(PAINTED)



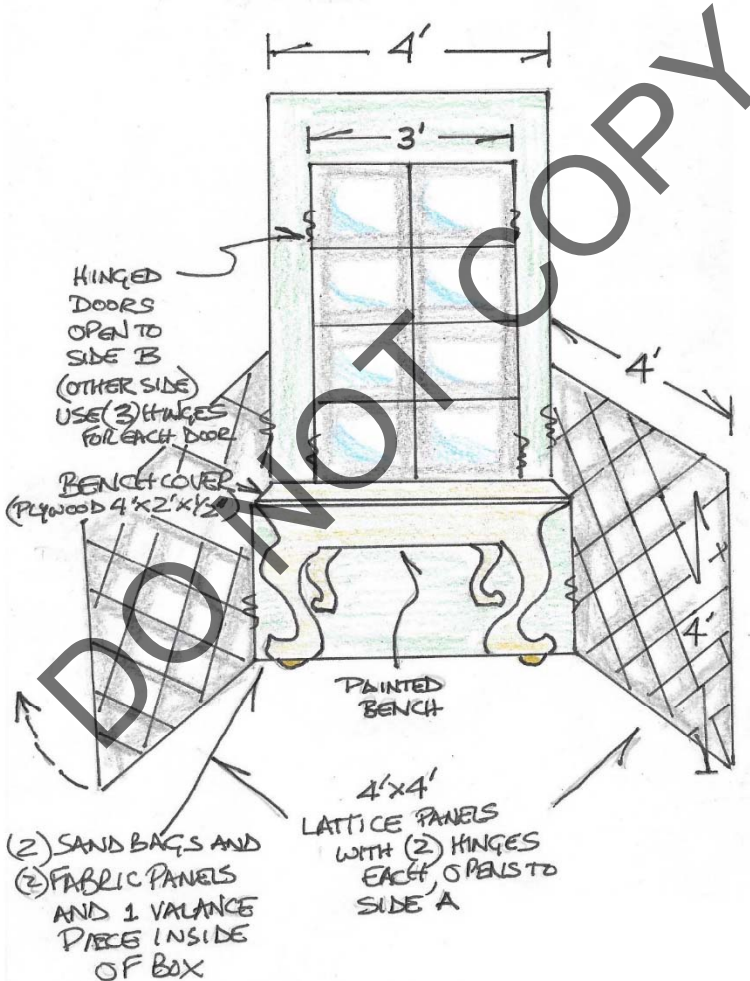
Set Design by David LaDuca

FLAT 2 - SIDE B (FLAT 2 - REVERSE SIDE)

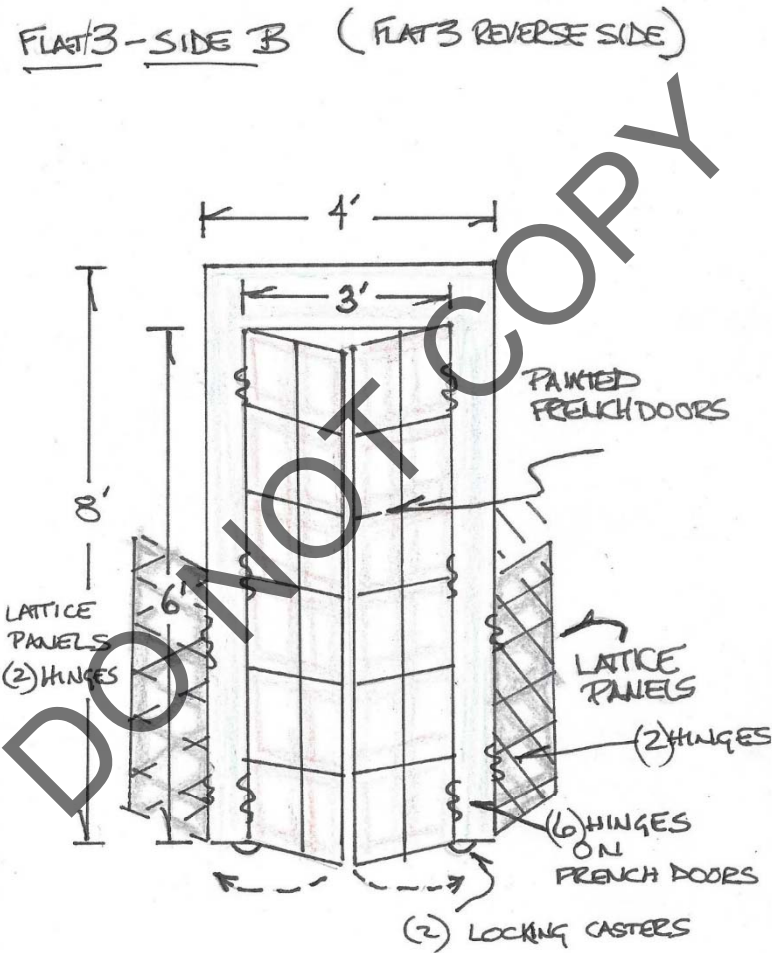


Set Design by David LaDuca

FLAT 3 - SIDE A - CONSTRUCTED AS FLATS 1 & 2
WITH DOORS INSTEAD OF WINDOWS
AND LATTICE FENCE



Set Design by David LaDuca



SCENE 1

AT RISE: *It is a summer morning in Copenhagen, Denmark. We see the window gardens of two young friends who are next-door neighbors. Each "window garden" represents the house of the two children and these "gardens" are movable pieces on casters. One window belongs to GERDA, the other to KAI. Their houses are typically European with steep roofs and a large window opening onto a balcony framed in flowers. We hear the song "WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN" playing and cast permitting, there could be a dance of little children as birds and butterflies. The music builds to a crescendo, then we hear the SOUND OF BELLS, that toll a new day. Both KAI'S and GERDA'S windows open simultaneously. KAI is thirteen years old; GERDA, twelve years old. Both are kind, loving children and full of life.*

GERDA: Good morning, Kai.

KAI: Good morning to you, Gerda. Isn't it a beautiful day?

GERDA: Oh, yes. *(Sees a butterfly.)* Look, Kai, a beautiful butterfly. With all the colors of the rainbow.

Instantly we hear the SOUND OF BIRDS SINGING.

KAI: Oh, listen. Hear the birds' morning song? Should I be a little bird and sing back?

GERDA: Yes, please.

KAI: *(Pretends to have wings and WHISTLES, imitating the same SOUND of the bird's song.)* Now you try.

GERDA: Well, all right, but you know what always happens. *(Tries to whistle but only make a sputtering sound.)*

KAI: *(Laughs.)* Gerda, you'd make a funny little bird. You sound more like a leaky pipe.

They both laugh.

GERDA: Wait, I do know one bird's song.

KAI: Which one?

GERDA: Caw, caw, caw.

KAI: (*Laughing.*) Hmm, that certainly isn't a very pretty song but it does belong to a bird. Well, at least you can talk to crows.

GERDA: (*Giggles, then ready to tease him back.*) Kai, have you eaten breakfast yet?

KAI: No, not yet. Have you?

GERDA: Yes. Oma baked rolls today. And we had strawberry marmalade too.

KAI: Hmm. Your grandmother makes the most wonderful rolls.

GERDA: I know.

KAI: So, did you save me one?

GERDA: No.

KAI: What! You didn't!

GERDA: Of course, silly. Don't I always? Oma knows how much you love her rolls because when she bakes, she always says just as she's about to finish. (*Speaks as her grandmother.*) Hmm, did I forget something? Oh, I most certainly did. Here's one more roll to grow on ... and one for the little birds ... and one for the biggest little bird of all, Kai.

KAI: She doesn't say that.

GERDA: Oh, but she does.

KAI: Well, then. Caw, caw, caw.

GERDA: Here you are, Mr. Crow. One lovely roll.

GERDA hands him a roll, which he takes.

KAI: It smells wonderful. But I think I'll save it for later. (*Puts the roll in his pocket.*)

GERDA: Why? You always gobble down Oma's rolls.

KAI: Well, because, uh, well, Gerda, come down into the garden. I have a surprise for you.

GERDA: A surprise! What is it?

KAI: Can't tell you. Or it wouldn't be a surprise.

GERDA: Oh, Kai, I love surprises.

KAI: Well then, hurry.

Both exit the window boxes and come around so that they would be in the garden beneath the windows. KAI enters first. Behind his back, he hides a crown of roses with streamers of brightly colored ribbons hanging down. GERDA hurries in.

My, my, for one who's anxious to be surprised, you're very slow.

GERDA: What is it? Tell me, please.

KAI: Close your eyes and put out your hands.

GERDA closes her eyes and extends her hands. He places the crown of roses in her hands.

Happy birthday, Gerda!

GERDA: Oh, Kai, you remembered my birthday. It's beautiful! A crown of roses for my birthday. Did you make it yourself?

KAI: Well, I did have a little help from my mother. Put it on, let me see how you look.

GERDA: *(Puts on the rose crown.)* Well?

KAI: You look wonderful. Like the queen of summer. *(Bows to her.)*

GERDA: Really?

KAI: Yes.

GERDA: It is a lovely gift and I will treasure this crown always. Thank you. *(Suddenly her face clouds over and she seems sad.)*

KAI: Why Gerda, what's the matter? You look sad.

GERDA: I—I am sad.

KAI: But why?

GERDA: I just realized that in a few days summer will be over, then the roses will start to fade and the birds will fly away to warm lands and the weather will turn cold.

KAI: I thought you liked cold weather. You love to ice skate.

GERDA: Yes, that's true, but I love summer best and it will end soon.

KAI: Well, don't think of that now, silly. It's still warm. Let's be happy. Come on now, no more sad faces. Tag, you're it.

KAI tags GERDA and starts running. She runs after him, giggling. For a moment or two, he hides and she tries to find him. He pops up, then bolts as she chases him offstage. When the light starts to fade, the wind begins to blow. The children turn the window boxes around. On the side of one of the window boxes is drawn a grandfather clock; on the other box, a coal-burning stove. These will act as the set for the indoor scene in OMA'S house.

SCENE 2

AT RISE: Inside the living room of OMA's house. A cold winter day. Painted on the set are a grandfather clock, a window and a coal-burning stove. There is a large wooden chair which is close by two chairs and a small table. Center stage, a French door with small paned windows leads to the balcony outside. It is snowing. This is created with lighting to give the illusion of snow falling and this continues until the lights come up on the scene. We hear the wind blowing. The BELLS RING again, as KAI enters with GERDA.

GERDA: Oh, I can hardly wait. Cookies and hot cocoa, hmm. (*Calling offstage.*) Oma, when will the cookies be ready?

KAI: (*Calling to OMA.*) They smell wonderful.

OMA: (*Offstage.*) Oh, my, what impatient little cookie trolls you are. Just a few more minutes. We must let them cool.

KAI: I wish my mother could bake like your grandmother. Momma's cookies are always as hard as rocks. Now, don't tell her I told you. But even our little dog won't eat my mother's cookies. (*Giggling, GERDA sits down by the stove and picks up her sketch book. She is drawing a rose garden.*) Let me see what you're drawing.

GERDA: It's a magic garden. Filled with roses.

KAI: You know you're a very good artist. Those roses look almost real.

GERDA: You really think I draw well?

KAI: Yes, very well. (*Turns to the window.*) Oh, I wish it would stop snowing so hard, so we could go ice skating or sledding.

GERDA: I don't like to sled.

KAI: That's because you're a girl.

GERDA: It is not! Girls can sled just as well as boys, but it's just that I prefer to ice skate. It's like dancing.

As KAI turns to look at GERDA, something at the window catches his eye. It is the SNOW QUEEN'S face. Instantly KAI whips around to have another look but the SNOW QUEEN disappears.

KAI: What was that? Did you see?

GERDA: What?

KAI: At the window just now. A face, a woman's face. She was all in white fur and glimmering like the ice.

GERDA: You're making that up.

KAI: No, really, I swear. I saw a face at the window. And she was so beautiful. So very beautiful.

GERDA: You can't see outside. The glass is frosted over. You're making that up, Kai.

KAI: No, I'm not--

His comment trails off as OMA enters, carrying a tray of hot cocoa and cookies. OMA is about sixty years old, the perfect grandmother, loving and caring, with a keen sense of humor.

OMA: All right, who's ready for my cocoa and cookies?

GERDA: Oh, I am.

KAI: And me.

OMA: You'll have to blow on the cocoa to cool it off. I'm afraid I heated it a little too long. I think my memory is slipping. Do you think I'm getting old?

KAI: You'll never be old, Oma. Because your heart is young.

OMA: Listen to you, Kai. What a little charmer you are. You're either running for mayor or you're after some cookies. Well, if it's cookies, help yourself. Don't be shy... Would you both like to see a little trick I know?

KAI: I would.

GERDA: Me, too.

OMA finds some coins in her pocket and holds them on the stove.

OMA: If we warm up these copper coins a little and press them on the glass, we can make a little peephole in the frosted glass and look out onto the world below. *(Removes the coins from stove and hands one each to GERDA and KAI.)* Here, each of you take a coin. Now press it against the glass.

GERDA: *(Pressing a coin against the imaginary window and looks out.)* Oh, look, it's still snowing.

OMA: You know what that means? The white bees are swarming.

KAI: White bees! Do they have a queen, too?

OMA: *(Nodding her head.)* Yes, and she always stays in the center of the swarm. On snowy days like this, the queen flies through the streets of the town and looks in at the windows. Perhaps you have seen the ice patterns she leaves behind.

KAI: Yes, I've seen them! And I've seen the queen.

GERDA: Oma, Kai is teasing again. He pretends to see a queen made of snow.

KAI: But I'm not teasing. I did see her. I did.

OMA: Was she so beautiful it took your breath away?

KAI: Yes, she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

OMA: Well. Oh, but you both haven't touched your cocoa and cookies. Come sit and finish your cocoa before it gets cold. Otherwise, I'll think you don't like what I've served you.

BOTH sit down and begin once again to eat and drink.

KAI: *(His mouth full of cookies.)* Hmm, Oma, the cocoa is delicious. And the cookies.

OMA: You know what Kai said about seeing a queen of the snow reminds me of a story. Do either one of you know the legend of the Snow Queen?

GERDA: Is there really a Snow Queen?

OMA: Some say there is.

KAI: Oh, please tell us about her.

OMA: All right then ... Come.

OMA motions for the children to sit and listen at her feet. As OMA begins to tell the story, the SNOW QUEEN appears on stage and freezes. She is dressed in a shimmering white and billowing cloudlike gown and carries an iridescent wand.

OMA: *(Continued.)* Once long long ago, there lived a beautiful queen in the land of Northern Lights that dance. So beautiful was she, that to look upon her face would actually--

KAI: Steal your breath away?

OMA: Yes. Her eyes shone like shimmering stars, yet neither peace nor joy was in those cold eyes. And her heart ...

GERDA: *(Quietly spoken.)* Her heart?

OMA: It was made of ice. The Snow Queen loved no one because she had a heart so cold. And she looked upon the world and found it too beautiful. She wanted people to see not beauty but ugliness.

GERDA: How awful.

OMA: For a long time, she searched for a way to make a beautiful world look ugly. Then, one day the answer came to her. And she summoned her wicked magician to create a mirror, an evil mirror that would make everything that was beautiful and good appear ugly and bad.

GERDA: Oh!

KAI: But what about things that were already ugly?

OMA: Ah, well, in this mirror, ugly things would look twisted and gnarled and horrible -- like in a nightmare.

The lights dim on the scene as GERDA, KAI and OMA freeze, and a spot picks up the SNOW QUEEN who instantly activates. Her BLUE TROLL assistant enters. This is KANOOT (actually a young teenage boy.) He carries an imaginary mirror on his shoulder. KANOOT is a comic figure with a chronic nasal drip.

SNOW QUEEN: *(To KANOOT.)* Kanoot, be careful with that mirror. My magician worked very hard to create the evil mirror and I don't want you breaking it. Now, gently, gently, set it down. *(He sets down the imaginary mirror.)* There. Well, don't just stand there, gaze upon your ugly self in the magic mirror. I have a little surprise in store for you.

KANOOT snuffles a lot, then glances at his reflection in the mirror and screams in horror.

SNOW QUEEN: *(Laughing.)* What's the matter, my little blue troll?

KANOOT: But that can't be me. I'm not a giant with big furry feet and a face with a thousand mountains.

SNOW QUEEN: Oh, but you are, at least when you look in the mirror, for you see, the mirror lies to you ... and oh, how wonderfully well it lies. Now, stand aside. *(The QUEEN takes his place in front of the mirror, gazing into it.)* Tell me what you see.

KANOOT: But--but you look just the same. Why do you look just the same, Snow Queen?

SNOW QUEEN: It is my mirror. I had it made especially for me. Do you think I'd want a magic mirror that makes me look ugly?

KANOOT: *(Thinking this over.)* Uh, well, uh--

SNOW QUEEN: Of course not, you fool.

KANOOT: *(To himself but in the same manner as the QUEEN.)* Of course not, you fool.

SNOW QUEEN: Kanoot, you really try my patience. Oh, you are such a loathsome, vile, disgusting little creature. And so stupid.

KANOOT: And so stupid.

SNOW QUEEN: Stop repeating what I say, you blue baboon. Oh, if you weren't my brother, I would have frozen you years ago. *(Sighs.)* Now, pick up the mirror and be careful with it.

KANOOT starts to snuffle, his nose itches. He wants desperately to scratch it and he is about to sneeze. The SNOW QUEEN gasps and tries to grab him.

SNOW QUEEN: Don't you sneeze. Don't you dare sneeze.

It is the SNOW QUEEN who actually breaks the mirror -- as it breaks the sound is magical.

KANOOT: The mirror...it's BROKEN.

SNOW QUEEN: Look what you've done.

KANOOT: Me! But, Snow Queen, you did--

SNOW QUEEN: What!

KANOOT: I mean, oh, please don't hurt me.

SNOW QUEEN: This is all your fault. Prepare to die.

The QUEEN is about to zap him with her wand when the lights go dim and there is a light display to create the illusion of pieces of the mirror floating in the air.

SNOW QUEEN: *(Continued.)* Look. What's this? Millions of little tiny pieces of the evil mirror floating in the air. But, of course, ha, ha, ha. You did well, my little blue fiend.

KANOOT: You did well, my little blue fiend.

SNOW QUEEN: Why, this is wonderful, even better than before. Just imagine. If a sliver of mirror enters a person's eye, nothing in the world will ever look the same. But far worse if a person's heart is pierced by a sliver of the mirror, his heart will be frozen into ice. Perfect, oh, yes, perfect. Before, the evil could only be in one place at one time, now the tiny slivers will be everywhere all at once. Yes, yes. Perfect.

She laughs. KANOOT watches her, then follows suit laughing, a little uneasy at first, then overdoes it. She gives him a withering look. The scene changes back to OMA telling the story. GERDA, KAI and OMA unfreeze as the SNOW QUEEN and KANOOT disappear offstage.

OMA: And so, if you know of someone who used to be kind and loving, but that person suddenly turns mean and cruel, it is undoubtedly the work of the Snow Queen.

GERDA: You mean a sliver from her broken mirror has pierced that person's heart?

OMA: Yes.

GERDA: Oh, Oma, can this be true?

OMA: Well, I don't know, but that's how the story goes. *(OMA begins to clean up, removing the tray of cups and plates.)* Would anyone like more cocoa?

GERDA: No thank you.

OMA: What about you, Kai?

KAI: *(Snapping out of his dreamlike state.)* Me, oh, no, thank you.

OMA: Then, I'll just take the tray back to the kitchen.

KAI: Here, let me help you.

OMA: No, dear, you two play. You're only young once. Enjoy yourselves. You can help in the kitchen later if you like.

KAI: I'd be proud to help.

GERDA finds the crown of roses that she saved. It is brown with age.

GERDA: *(Holding the crown.)* Oh, look, Kai, the crown of roses you made for me. Remember. The roses were so beautiful. I do wish summer would hurry and come again.

KAI: You know, Gerda, my mother always gets angry at me if I wish time would fly. She says if time passed as fast as I wished it away, I'd be an old man by now.

Suddenly KAI sees the SNOW QUEEN again at the pane of glass on the balcony door. His face registers his surprise.

GERDA: What do you see?

KAI: *(Rushing toward window.)* She's there. I saw her. *(To SNOW QUEEN who disappears.)* Wait, don't go!

GERDA: What're you doing?

He throws open the door and runs outside on the balcony. We hear the WIND HOWLING.

GERDA: *(Continued.)* Kai, it's freezing. Come back in and close the door. *(Suddenly, KAI is back, clutching his heart and his eye.)* Please, Kai, close the door before we all freeze. *(He does not, so GERDA closes the door.)* What's the matter with you? *(Then seeing him in pain, rushes over to him.)* Kai, something's wrong! What is it?

KAI: My heart. Something pierced my heart. *(He breathes hard.)* And something sharp -- in my eye. It hurts so badly.

GERDA: Oh, stop your teasing. You're playing.

KAI: No, really, I'm not. Oh, it hurts. *(He moans.)*

GERDA: *(Gasping.)* You really aren't playing. Let me see. Kai, look up. *(Checks his eye.)* I don't see anything.

He is undergoing a metamorphosis and does not answer.

GERDA: *(Continued.)* Please tell me what happened.

KAI: *(After a long moment, he is suddenly angry.)* What are you talking about? *(He pushes her away.)*

GERDA: But Kai.

KAI: Leave me alone.

GERDA: But you just told me you were hurt.

KAI: No, I didn't. What's the matter with you, you silly little girl? I'm fine.

GERDA: But you just said you were hurt.

KAI: I didn't. Gerda, you're always imagining things. And it's just like a girl to be so silly and stupid.

GERDA: What a horrible thing to say! I was only trying to help you. *(Starts to cry.)*

KAI: Now, why are you crying? Don't you know you look ugly when you cry. Oh, I don't feel like being around a stupid, ugly thing like you. I'm going home.

GERDA: Why are you being so mean to me?

KAI: *(Heading for the door.)* Grow up, Gerda.

GERDA: Wait, Kai. You can't leave now. You promised to help Oma. You said--

KAI: You do it. I don't feel like being around your old grandmother. *(Then, taking the role of OMA, mocking her age.)* "Come here, children, and I'll tell you a stupid story and make you drink chocolate goo and eat terrible cookies."

GERDA: Don't mock my grandmother. I thought you were my friend. Don't you remember when you made me this crown of roses and said we would always be friends. Remember?

KAI takes the crown from her.

KAI: *(Looking at the crown.)* This thing's ugly, all dead and crumbly. I don't know why you keep a dead thing like this around. Get rid of it. Throw it in the fire. *(He moves to throw in the stove.)*

GERDA: No, don't. *(GERDA grabs the crown back from him.)* Why are you acting like this? Why? *(She looks at him and starts to cry again.)*

KAI: Oh, stop crying. I told you how ugly you look. This is all too boring.
(*He starts to leave.*) I want the snow. Where I'll be away from you.
(*He exits.*)

OMA enters, drying her hands on her apron.

OMA: Where's Kai? (*Sees GERDA crying.*) Why, Gerda, my precious child, what's the matter?

GERDA rushes to OMA'S arms.

GERDA: Oma. Oh, Oma, something's wrong with Kai. His heart has turned to ice.

OMA: There now, child, don't be foolish. "The Snow Queen" was only a story.

GERDA: No, it wasn't. It's true.

OMA looks puzzled as GERDA continues to cry.

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