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The Snow Queen

Hans Christian Andersen

Once upon a time there was an evil troll who made a very nasty mirror. In this mirror you could only see all ugly and bad things. Even beautiful things looked very ugly in this mirror. One day the troll took this mirror high up into the sky, but there it broke into countless pieces, which spread all over the world. Anyone who accidentally got a splinter in his eye could only see the bad things. If you got a shard of the mirror in your heart, your heart turned into ice. How terrible! But the evil troll loved it.

At this time, a boy and a girl lived in a big city. They lived in two houses opposite each other and played together every day. They especially loved looking at the beautiful rose bushes together. Kay and Gerda also loved listening to their grandmothers' stories. One day Kay's grandmother told them about the Snow Queen. She flies between all the snowflakes and makes everything freeze beautifully. The children listened breathlessly to the story.



One day Kay and Gerda were sitting outside when Kay suddenly felt something pierce his eye and heart. They don't know it, but these are splinters from the magic mirror. From that moment on Kay doesn't like anything anymore and is mean to everyone. He destroys the roses and says that snowflakes are prettier than flowers. Then he takes his sledge to the big square in town. Here he sees a beautiful big white sled. He ties his little sled to it and disappears out of town.



Kay soon regretted his decision. It got colder and colder and soon he could not see his hand in front of his face because of the dense snow. But every time he tried to free his little sled, the person sitting on the big sled nodded at Kay and he stayed put. After a long time, they suddenly stop. "Come and sit warmly next to me, boy," said a woman's voice. And when Kay came closer, he saw that it was the Snow Queen. He sat down next to her and she gave him a kiss on his forehead. That was colder than anything Kay had ever felt, but immediately he felt the cold no longer. He had also immediately forgotten Gerda, his grandmother and his life in the city.



Meanwhile, Gerda was terribly sad. Where had Kay gone? Nobody could tell her. Gerda cried every day for months. Until spring came and she decided to look for Kay. First, she went to the river, but here she did not find Kay. Then she came to an old lady with a beautiful flower garden. The woman wanted to keep Gerda and bewitched her, but after a while Gerda managed to escape. Meanwhile, it had become autumn again. Oh, how long Kay had been gone...



Some time later, when it was already winter, Gerda met a crow. He told her that he might have seen Kay in the castle. He knew a tame crow in the palace who could help her get in. Gerda sneaks into the bedroom of the prince and princess and for a moment she thinks she has found Kay again. But then the prince turns his head and she sees that it is not her friend at all. The prince and princess wake up and Gerda tells her story. They take pity on her and give her beautiful clothes and a small carriage with which she can continue her search.

For a long time, Gerda rode around the world in her carriage. One day, she is attacked by a robber woman and her little daughter. The daughter decides she wants to take Gerda home and she does. In the robbers' den there are a couple of pigeons. One of them says: "I have seen little Kay. He is with the Snow Queen." "I know where the Snow Queen lives," says the reindeer that is also in the den. The robber girl wants to help Gerda and gives her the reindeer. 'You two go to Lapland and rescue Kay.'

Gerda and the reindeer have to travel a long way. On the way, they see the wondrous Northern Lights in the sky. At one point, they come to a small house.

Here lives a Lapland woman, who is willing to help Gerda. She writes a message on a stick and sends it to a Finnish woman. They arrive there after a long time. The Finnish woman can do magic, but says that Gerda doesn't need anything extra to save Kay. Then she tells them where they can find the snow palace of the Snow Queen.

Meanwhile, Kay is trapped in the castle of the Snow Queen. Only if he can make the word 'Eternity' out of large blocks of ice will he be free. But no matter how hard he tries, he never succeeds. Then suddenly he sees Gerda running towards him. He doesn't recognize her, but she flies around his neck and starts crying. Her warm tears make his frozen heart thaw and the shard of glass disappear. Then Kay starts to cry too, and the shard washes out of his eye. Together they quickly put the ice cubes away and go home.



It is a long way home and on the way they get help from everyone who had helped Gerda before. Eventually Gerda and Kay arrive back in town together. When they walk in the door of the house, they notice that they have become grownups. But in their hearts, they are still the same two little children.



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