The Snow Queen

by Hans Christian Andersen

Adapted for the stage by Will Ledesma

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STORY OF THE PLAY

This story is a challenge full of treasures for the unpacking. Kay and Gerda are the best of friends until a piece of an enchanted mirror finds its way into Kay's eye, causing him to see the world in a cold-hearted way. Soon taken by the Snow Queen, Kay forgets his happy life. Gerda must go on her own journey to find him, and along the way she meets a lonely old woman, a helpful crow and his sweetheart, a robber girl with her reindeer, and a mysterious man who has been with her all along. Overjoyed to find Kay in the Snow Queen's palace, Gerda must help Kay find hope again by solving a puzzle before they can escape. Many fantastical elements become a part of the storytelling ensemble, giving the audience a surprise at every turn! About 75 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

February 23rd, 2016, at A.D. Players in Houston, TX. Directed by Michelle Ritter and stage managed by Trisha Wise. The cast included Megan Jackson, Lex Laas, Linford Herschberger, Jenna Malisheski, Craig Griffin and Amanda Carlson.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast 6 – 21: 3 m, 8 w, 10 flex, plus extras, doubling and tripling possible)

STORYTELLER (flex): Engaging narrator of the story. The lines can also be assigned to actors in the ensemble.
HOBGOBLIN (flex): Leader of the goblins.
GERDA: The heroine of our tale.
KAY: Gerda's best friend who is taken by the Snow Queen.
CHILD 1 (flex): Horrid, mean-spirited child.
CHILD 2 (flex): Horrid, mean-spirited child.
CHILD 3 (flex): A child.
GRANDMOTHER: Gerda's grandmother.
SNOW QUEEN: A woman dressed entirely in white. She is fair and beautiful.
OLD WOMAN: A lonely old woman.
CROW
CROW'S SWEETHEART
PRINCE
PRINCESS
COACHMAN (flex)
ROBBER 1 (flex)
ROBBER 2 (flex)
ROBBER WOMAN: Larger and ugly, leader of the robbers.
ROBBER GIRL: Her daughter wears a scarlet cap.
REINDEER (flex): Prisoner of the robbers.
MAN (flex): Gerda's protector. May also be a woman.
EXTRAS: Other goblins, children, robbers, townspeople, animals and snowflakes.

Doubling

Actor 1 *can play Kay, Prince, Robber 2, Reindeer.*
Actor 2 *can play Storyteller, Child 3, Robber 1, Man.*
Actor 3 *can play Grandmother, Old Woman, Crow's Sweetheart, Coachman.*
Actor 4 *can play Hobgoblin, Child 1, Crow, Robber Woman.*
Actor 5 *can play Child 2, Snow Queen, Princess, Robber Girl.*
Actor 6 *plays Gerda.*

SETTING

The idea here is one of simplicity, ensemble, and creativity. To keep the piece moving at its most effective momentum, there are few fully-staged settings. The dialogue and narration are written in such a way that, if all goes well, they flow naturally in and out of one another. There are some moments noted in the script when the storyteller or other characters are transitioning in and out of scenes while there is narration or dialogue occurring. Often the narration is describing an action that would be difficult to fully realize on-stage (Gerda crossing the pond, for instance, or rushing away on a river). These events ought to be shown on stage, but cleverly and creatively, allowing the majority of the storytelling to fall upon the actors and the imagination.

There are many fantastical elements—a sleigh ride, an ice palace, talking animals, flight, killer snowflakes. Think outside the box, and let the elements of movement and spectacle become a part of the storytelling ensemble. Give the audience a surprise at every turn!

* Additional production notes are at the end of the script.

The Snow Queen

(AT RISE: A single STORYTELLER takes the stage.)

STORYTELLER: Greetings, honored guests! Welcome to the theatre, where you can forget all about reality and its troubles for a brief time, for they have no place in our dealings today. Here, Imagination is king! So choose whom you would like to be: king or queen, princess or prince, knights, cowboys, astronauts, monsters—but nice monsters, please—you decide! For while we are all here together, anything is possible.

(Enter GERDA and KAY.)

STORYTELLER: *(Cont'd.)* Our story today is called "The Snow Queen," and it is about two children: this girl, here, and this boy, over here. The girl's name is Gerda and the boy...

(Another ACTOR hurries onstage and whispers in the STORYTELLER'S ear.)

STORYTELLER: *(Cont'd.)* What's that? Oh…oh yes, you're right.

(ACTOR exits.)

STORYTELLER: *(Cont'd.)* Apologies, friends. I'm jumping ahead. I'm sorry, children, we are not ready for you quite yet.

(GERDA and KAY exit.)

STORYTELLER: *(Cont'd.)* Before we get to those two, we have a bit of unpleasant business to deal with. It's a short, but important, part of our story.

STORYTELLER: *(Cont'd.)* If you are sitting near a grown-up, they may need you to take their hand and to tell them, "It's all right. It's only a play." Now: Once, hundreds of years ago in a faraway land, there lived a wicked hobgoblin!

(The HOBGOBLIN and assorted other GOBLINS leap on the stage. They act out the following narration as a SFX: driving, tribal-sounding drumbeat plays underneath. The whole sequence has more of a feel of a dance than a scene.)

HOBGOBLIN: I am bored!
STORYTELLER: The hobgoblin cried one day.
HOBGOBLIN: I shall create a magical mirror, and it shall magnify all that is unpleasant and imperfect and distort all that is lovely and good, that any man or woman who gazes upon my mirror will see only my twisted view of the world around them!

(GOBLINS bring the enchanted mirror on the stage, showing it to EXTRAS who pass by onstage. As each extra looks in the mirror, he/she suddenly look around with disgust and hurry off as the Goblins laugh wickedly.)

STORYTELLER: The hobgoblin traveled around the world, forcing people to look within the wicked looking glass he had created, and everything happened exactly as he'd said. It was a miserable time.
HOBGOBLIN: Come, I shall take my magical mirror to the gate of Heaven itself, and we shall see what mischief I shall cause then!

(GOBLINS and HOBGOBLIN take the mirror and "fly" toward Heaven. For a few practical suggestions see back of script.)

STORYTELLER: Thus the goblins took the mirror and flew toward the heavens. But the higher they went, the heavier the mirror became, and it began to shake and grow heavy, until finally it burst!

End of Freeview

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