

ASF Study Materials for



adapted from Hans Christian Andersen
by Nancy Rominger

ASF

SNOW QUEEN

Characters

The Snow Queen

Hemming, *a hobgoblin who shape-shifts*

Gerda, *a young girl*

Kai, *her friend*

Gerda's Grandfather

Locals: Edvin, Angsar, the Baker, a Fisherman

Talking flowers: a Rose, a Marigold, a Tulip, a Sunflower

Trygve, *a raven*

Ragnvald, *a Prince*

Jarl, *his attendant*

Halvard, *a reindeer*

Varg, Ulf, Ingolf, *robbers*

Setting: Scandinavia

Time: when fairy tales occur

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Cover Image: P. J. Lynch
(1993)

Welcome to *The Snow Queen*

Fairy tales are timeless, and nowadays infinitely adaptable as they reappear in popular culture as new editions, plays, television shows, and films. Recently Hans Christian Andersen's 7-part tale "The Snow Queen" was the inspiration for Disney's *Frozen*, though that animated extravaganza ended up far more Disney than Andersen. At ASF we, too, are adapting the tale—this time to fit our intern cast of 6 actors and 2 actresses—and offering it some new connections.

Andersen was the 19th century's most beloved writer of literary fairy tales, and children of all ages have honed their sense of wonderment with "The Ugly Duckling," "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Princess and the Pea," "The Little Mermaid" (now also Disneyfied), and many more stories from Andersen's creative sensibility.

In "The Snow Queen" he calls for a flying sleigh, shards of mirror piercing the heart, talking reindeer—thank goodness for the power of theatrical imagination, closely akin to the creative imagination that originated "The Snow Queen" in 1844. Theatre for young audiences revels in imagination, and here at ASF we revel in those theatre productions. We've been insects, mice, enchanted pumpkins, pigs, everything from beasts, beauties, and bears to boys and girls—the most magical creatures of all.

So let's explore from roses in spring to the icy depths of winter and see what powers the human heart really has.



Gerda and Kai in the gutter amid the roses
by Arthur Rackham (1932)

**"In the whole realm of poetry
no domain is so boundless
as that of the fairy tale."**

—H. C. Andersen

Contents of Study Materials

The materials are adaptable to any grade level and include:

About the Andersen Tale:

- Biographical and historical context
- Literary discussion of folk/fairy tale tradition, its quest elements, and the spiritual/allegorical elements

About the ASF Adaptation:

- Structure and character issues
- Patterning in the play
- Design information

About Both Tale and Play:

- The Quest pattern with worksheet
- Discussion topics and prompts
- Activity prompts and pages adaptable to grade level for use in class, to give for home study, or with questions you can assign to groups.

SNOW QUEEN



Hans Christian Andersen is Denmark's best known author. He had little actual experience with children (the photo below is likely a p.r. shot) and preferred reading his works to adults, but the memories of his own destitute childhood and his own inner child worked powerfully on his imagination.



About Nancy Rominger

Since 2005 Nancy Rominger has been ASF's Associate Director and head of the Southern Writers' Project for new play development, directing a number of its premieres at ASF as well as many of ASF's recent children's theatre shows.

About Hans Christian Andersen

His birthday, April 2, is now International Children's Book Day. His name now graces one of the major international awards for author and illustrator in children's literature, the Andersen medal. Yet fame in children's literature was not Hans Christian Andersen's goal when he set out to gain renown as an artist, leaving an impoverished home at fourteen and heading alone to Copenhagen.

He was born into poverty in Odense, Denmark in 1805. His father, who died when the boy was 11, was a cobbler who read to his only child from *The Arabian Nights*; his mother was an uneducated washerwoman. For most of his childhood they lived in a small house shared with two other families; for a time he attended a school for poor children and was apprenticed to a weaver. He preferred to weave words.

Copenhagen and the Quest for Fame

In his mid-teens he moved himself to Copenhagen where knocked on the doors of important people, proclaiming himself an artist, and was briefly in the choir at the Royal Danish Theatre until his voice changed; he then focused on writing. The director of the theatre, Jonas Collin, helped Andersen get the classical education he had missed by sending the 17-year-old back to school—into a class with 11-year-olds. He called the five years of this education the "darkest" part of his life due to corporal punishment and being told not to write.

But he did write and a royal grant let him travel, a practice he followed all his life, seeking out famous people everywhere he went. His first fame came from his published account of that initial trip in 1835.

During 1835 Andersen also published a little-noticed set of nine literary fairy tales, *Eventyr* [fantastic tales], including "The Little Mermaid," "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Princess and the Pea,"

The famous Andersen sculpture in New York City's Central Park offers a child room to sit at his side or on his lap to

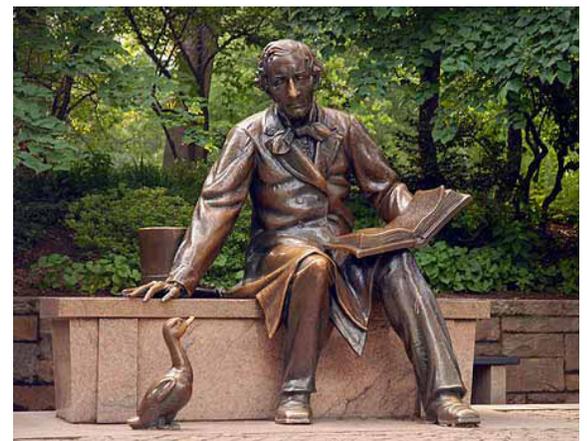
and "Thumbelina." Another set appeared in 1837. By 1845, four translations of his fairy tales spread through Europe, getting notice in England and Germany, and he wrote such tales the rest of his life.

He became famous in his time for his travel books, though he also wanted to be known as a playwright. Andersen never married, though he had several unrequited loves, including for Jenny Lind, the famous Swedish singer, and strong friendships.

His legacy outside Denmark is based exclusively on his vastly popular children's tales, many of which include deeply autobiographical elements, such as "The Ugly Duckling." From early in life Andersen insisted he would be famous (a swan), though his lower-class origin was a social liability for many years. His tales support the popular middle-class social ideas of his time: the purity and domesticity of women, the value of suffering and true love, and the importance of piety. At the same time they often satirize attitudes of his society.

His Importance as an Author

Andersen is considered the father of the modern literary fairy tale. He offers a distinctive voice for both narrator and story, less literary and more directly and colloquially spoken. He also animates objects with irony. Moreover, given their autobiographical basis, his tales do not offer uniformly happy endings.



SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale



In order to save his family, a poor father gives his daughter to the bear (actually an enchanted prince) in "East of the Sun, West of the Moon."



Gerda finds Kai
by Vladislav Erko

The Background of "The Snow Queen"

Andersen imagined this story, but its roots lie in one myth and one folk tale—the story of Cupid and Psyche (which is also related to "Beauty and the Beast") and the Nordic folktale "East of the Sun, West of the Moon." These stories share a focus on the female who breaks a taboo—she must not "see" her husband at night, but does once light a lamp, an act which exiles him—and she must then undergo long trials to prove her fidelity and win him back. In each case the husband has one form by day (in "East of the Sun" it's a huge bear), but becomes a handsome young man at night.

Like these, "The Snow Queen" starts and ends with Kai, but the bulk of the story is Gerda's long search to find him. In this tale they are children and close friends, not a married couple, so the folk tale's marital aspect of day/night never appears.



Talking animals abound in folk and fairy tales. In Andersen's tales, plants, animals, and objects often have a voice, at times in the cause of satire. Here, Eleanor Vere Boyle illustrates Gerda talking with the crow.

The Fairy-Tale Shape of Andersen's "The Snow Queen"

Andersen's tale combines seven short tales to form one larger tale. The five middle tales have the shape of a traditional fairy tale—the children deal with a larger, more adult, natural or psychic force (like Little Red Riding Hood with the wolf, or Snow White with the apple vendor/witch) and must learn to control it, escape it, or else be consumed by it. This is the Snow Queen story for Andersen, with the Snow Queen herself both a natural force of winter and an "icy" emotional/intellectual force that cuts Kai off from others while promising him "the whole world and a new pair of skates" if he succeeds in his intellectual/creative quest for "Eternity."

Andersen's Gerda believes in spring and summer, in the beauty of roses, not ice, and in friendship. She is the story's physical and spiritual quester, and she follows Kai into the ice to offer him a chance to return both physically and spiritually.

One difference between traditional fairy tales and Andersen's "The Snow Queen" is the time frame. Traditional tales usually focus on one maturational step, such as a totally dependent child's first steps toward independence ("Hansel and Gretel") or the maturing girl's need to realize the world may have predatory elements ("Little Red Riding Hood") or finding love and a worthy mate ("Cinderella"). Andersen's tale, however, starts with children and ends with adults, an entire developmental evolution that passes unmentioned on. At what point are Kai and Gerda adolescents? We cannot tell. For Andersen the focus is on childhood and its purity, and finally on the ability to hold that state—or the memory of that state—in one's adult heart.

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale
and the Play's Adaptation



Here Edmund Dulac portrays both the Snow Queen's icy allure and the hobgoblin's mischief. His hobgoblin delighting in his deceiving mirror combines the cloven-footed stereotype of malice with the schoolmaster element also present in the story, where the troll/hobgoblin runs a school (Andersen's satire on his own school experience).



The Two Narrative Arcs in Andersen's Tale...

The Snow Queen Arc in the Tale

Unlike traditional fairy tales, Andersen shapes his story with fairly specific Victorian cultural values, especially its piety. He also writes for both children and adults in a somewhat different way than do traditional fairy tales, which let the aptness of imagery hit home, such as when an older beauty's consuming jealousy of a lovely younger woman ends with her dancing to death in red hot iron shoes.

In traditional tales, mischief or curiosity often pays off by offering a chance to learn and grow. Andersen's tale keeps a tighter rein: we *must* be good, faithful children. In "The Snow Queen," at least, physical growth and maturational choice are not the focus.

His Snow Queen offers the lure of goddess-like beauty, magical powers, an intellectual quest that offers great rewards and a kind of cold, icy "eternity." Andersen certainly sought fame and perhaps knew the isolating, icy qualities of its pursuit. Children see Kai get stuck there, and the question of "is he happy" seems not to be addressed. In Andersen's tale, the boy may seem as trapped as he is talented. His friend Gerda makes the effort to end his isolation and offers him warmer human options, just as in her quest she finds help from others to be invaluable.

The Troll or Hobgoblin's Mirror Arc

Onto this folk spine of individual maturation, Andersen grafts a social/spiritual frame. The tale opens more allegorically evil vs. good with a troll or hobgoblin (a traditional Nordic folk figure) who creates a mirror that makes good appear misshapen and evil appear larger than it is, though people who look into the mirror think it reflects reality. When the mirror shatters, its shards affect many, even Kai.

The soul's need for faith to address life's challenges here is embodied in the child Gerda, whose purity and innocence are her strengths against both the mirror and the Snow Queen. Kai's captivity is

facilitated early on because he could not pray. At the end prayer serves Gerda as a force field against the icy realm's guards.

Two Strands in the Tale

The two strands offer two different plot elements. The Snow Queen element gives us the "ice" of a frozen heart and sensibility, and even a realm dedicated to such ice and its power. In fairy tales, growing up or maturation is the goal—ruling oneself wisely and learning love and responsibility. The spiritual allegory of the troll-made mirror shards works another way, for this is not an individual maturational issue of change, learning, growth. In Andersen's tale the goal is to stay a child in faith.



And the Arc of the Play

To unify and simplify the plot lines for a play, author Nancy Rominger combines and modifies these two plot lines. Now the hobgoblin works for the Snow Queen, and the mirror is a gift from Loki, an outside, unseen figure in the play. The hobgoblin's mischievous spirit embraces the mirror's effect as fun. Andersen's didactic use of faith shifts in the play to a consideration of varieties of "fun" and their consequences while the friendship theme remains intact. The Snow Queen's character is resolved and softened in the play for a mutual understanding. (The next page has detail.)

SNOW QUEEN

About ASF's Adaptation

"Never underestimate the smallest of things."

—ASF's *Snow Queen*

The Snow Queen cast,
ASF's 2017-18 interns: row
by row, Josh Cann, Katie
Fanning, Ithamar Francios;
Brian Ott, Woodrow Proctor,
Collin Purcell; Lara Treacy,
and Colin Wulff



How the ASF Script Adapts Andersen's Tale

The ASF adaptation of Andersen's "The Snow Queen" was written knowing the acting company who would perform it—ASF's 6 male and 2 female interns. A practical look at that cast and the tale immediately necessitates some shifts. The cast has more men than women; the tale has many more women than men. Perhaps some theatre magic could help, but it might be better if the script made the changes.

Plotting: Mischief, not Malice

In assessing the tale for the stage, its pieces need more focus and coherence. The tale presents two independently-acting antagonists, the hobgoblin and the Snow Queen, whose character arcs do not resolve, that is, nothing happens to either character at the end—no punishment, no resolution; they just continue. That might reflect reality, but it's a problem for the stage.

So in the script the hobgoblin now works for the Snow Queen, and the mirror is created by an external, offstage force trying to win the Snow Queen's attention, Loki (the Norse trickster god). And it's all in fun for the hobgoblin—how much "fun" to mess with people's perceptions, to take beauty and truth and twist them into ugliness.

On the stage the plot now resolves both definitely and positively. Where Andersen's tale ends with Kai and Gerda home, older, wiser, and spiritually clear, the play is less a spiritual quest and more about mischief gone wrong, about mistakes rather than malice, for everyone can finally say he or she was wrong and forgive. Everyone is good at heart. Andersen's tale is more conflicted on that score and has more explicit Victorian spiritual interests.

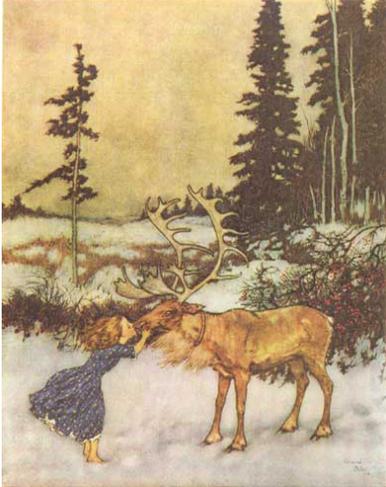
Casting and Character

To help this story and cast fit each other, several storyline changes occur:

- The hobgoblin—now part of Team Antagonist—gets a name, Hemming, and becomes a disguise artist with a bit of magic, using his shape-shifting to take on the voice of the river god or grab some duds and appear to be the old woman at the cottage, always in an effort to stymie Gerda's quest to find Kai.
- The crow or raven was already male, and the reindeer can be.
- The raven need not take Gerda to the princess's palace; the palace can come to Gerda in the form of the prince out hunting (an old fairy tale motif).
- The robber band can attack without a robber girl. Her pugilistic skill can now become Gerda's, who gets to show some slick action figure potential.
- Being surrounded by guys lets the "she's only a girl" issue emerge (as it might when she's not immediately as good at math), but Gerda shows what friendship of either gender can do. This girl doesn't stop.
- Meanwhile Kai's role remains kidnap victim, and the issue of his personal quest disappears. He is a "pattern" genius used to reassemble the mirror for the Snow Queen, an effort we have assumed has evil ends, but finally learn her desire was benign—to get all the pieces so she can put the mirror out of harm's way by burying it in ice.
- Mathematics takes on a larger role in the stage script, too, especially the Fibonacci number sequence that appears in nature as well as numbers, so there's real fun to be had playing with the link between math and roses.

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale



Edmund Dulac (1912)

Questions for Discussion

- How old are Gerda and Kai? At the end they are surprised to find they are adults, but when they play in the garret's gutter by the roses, how old are they? (How big is that gutter?) What are the implications of your answer for the action of the story?
- What is the time span of the story?

The Fairy Tale Quest in a Literary Fairy Tale and the Play

Folk fairy tales emerge from deep in humanity's narrative psyche. The oldest known version of the Cinderella story, for instance, comes from China about 850 CE, and they may have known yet older versions. Those maturational tales, aged through time and passed from people to people, have an instant recognition factor—we all grow up, or try to, and face similar challenges of dependence and independence, willfulness and finding love.

The literary fairy tale, for its part, has an address; it comes from a specific time and lives in a specific world, however its outlines seem to blend with the folk fairy tale. In the court of Louis XIV in 17th-century France, Madame D'Aulnoy and Charles Perrault gathered folk tales and turned them into wise and winking folk-like confections with an icing of contemporary satire and a didactic moral at the end. In folk fairy tales, the action is the moral—the prince and maiden marry or the wolf eats the young girl or the jealous stepmother is consumed; we don't need to spell it out.

The Quest

In his essay "The Quest Hero," W. H. Auden describes the elements of a typical Quest, traits common to many myths, legends, and folk and fairy tales:

- a precious Object or Person to be found (a goal)
- a long journey to find it
- a hero—not just anyone, but someone with the right qualities of breeding or character
- a Test or series of Tests that weed out the unworthy, revealing the hero
- Guardians of the Object to be overcome
- Helpers, human or animal

These traits describe most folk fairy tales, and while not every modern author may use mythic underpinning, many wise ones do, so analyzing these elements can highlight "heroic" aspects of a Victorian era fairy tale and many modern ones—Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, the Star Wars films.

Male Quests and Female Quests

The heroism in such tales seems to apply most readily to male protagonists. These heroes are often scorned in their youth, nicknamed "Dumpling," their abilities unseen. Yet they leave home, have adventures, display kindness and courage, and return at last, recognized as worthy—from Beowulf to Frodo.

The female quest appears to be less active, for most female protagonists stay home (even if not their own home) while the tests come to them—the witch in "Snow White," the spinning wheel in "Sleeping Beauty." So how can a girl be a hero? Getting out of the house is a major accomplishment for a girl in a fairy tale, since housework seems to be the norm. Of course, housework pays off for Gretel; she shoves the witch into the oven!

"Snow Queen" inverts this pattern—Kai has an internal quest, and Gerda travels across the North to find him.

Quest Elements in "The Snow Queen"

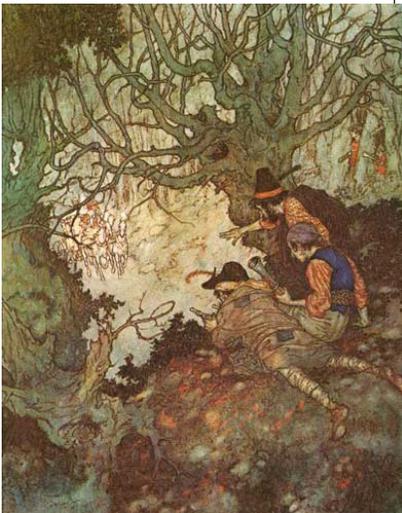
- Both young people leave home, but have different kinds of adventures.
- Kai's leaving is unintentional; he seeks a small thrill but then cannot get free; he ends up kidnapped and "captivated" in ice.
- Gerda has the quest to find him, if he's not dead—and she leaves home intentionally without permission or telling anyone. She has the long journey—by boat, foot, reindeer, foot again—but has no map, just snow, north, and helpers.
- The qualities of Gerda's character that matter most to Andersen are not just determination and friendship, though she seeks and gets help along the way, but increasingly her faith. In the key moments at the end of the tale, her innocence and prayers protect and defend her when she's beset. In the play Gerda is more forceful and piety is unmentioned. The problem is mischief and its consequences.

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale



Vulnerable Gerda meets the unexpected—above, a charmer who wants to keep her (Eleanor Vere Boyle, 1872) and, below, robbers who attack the prince's loaned carriage (Edmund Dulac, 1912)



Quest Elements in Andersen's Tale "The Snow Queen"

A precious Object or Person to be found (a goal):

Gerda wants to know if Kai is alive, and if so, to find him. Kai seeks ideas and fame.

A long journey to find it

- Kai has a long journey all in one day/night, leaving town and ending up in the palace of the Snow Queen, riding fast over ground and then above the snow storm.
- Gerda has a more arduous and solitary journey, but she finds more help along the way.

A hero—not just anyone, but someone with the right qualities of breeding or character

- Because Kai is pierced by two shards, his character is changed; is that in any way his doing?
- Gerda has the essential qualities—innocence and faith—as the Finnish woman relates near the end.

A Test or series of Tests that weed out the unworthy, revealing the hero

- Gerda is repeatedly tested by circumstance and people. This element overlaps with helpers in story.

Test #1: Gerda thinks Kai is dead but the spring, sun, and sparrows say no; she listens and doubts he's dead.

Test #2: She goes to the river, twice offering her new red shoes for Kai's return. The second time the boat she's in floats downstream; she cries out but no one hears.

Test #3: The old woman who pulls the boat ashore invites her to eat cherries and play in flower garden, meaning to keep Gerda by charming her (Gerda forgets Kai as her hair is combed) and thus tests Gerda's resolve. When Gerda realizes roses are gone from the garden, her tears re-sprout them and they tell her Kai is not dead; Gerda escapes and learns time has passed; it is now late autumn.

Test #4: The crow reports a possible sighting of Kai; they go into the palace, but the princess's new husband is not Kai. The royals ask Gerda to stay but she wants to keep searching.

Test #5: Robbers attack the carriage and kill the court retinue. The robber-girl saves Gerda's life, eventually giving her the reindeer to flee with.

Test #6: When attacked by snow-flakes near the Snow Queen's palace, Gerda is alone, but she prays and angels defend her.

Test #7: Kai does not respond to her, but she embraces him and cries; her tears wash out the shard in his heart, and her kisses restore his health.

Guardians of the Object to be overcome
Since the Snow Queen leaves the castle before Gerda arrives, there is no direct confrontation; Gerda faces only the snow-flake guards—and the effect of the shards in Kai.

Helpers, human or animal [or botanical and talking]

Gerda's:

- sun, sparrows (Kai's not dead)
 - river (won't take shoes)
 - roses (news that Kai's not dead)
 - crows (have seen a poor boy)
 - princess and prince (transport/carriage)
 - robber-girl (transport/reindeer)
 - wood-pigeons (tell her Kai's with the Snow Queen—give Gerda a clear destination)
 - reindeer (knows the route)
 - Lapp woman (helps with route)
 - Finn woman (recognizes Gerda's spiritual power)
 - angel guards (as if answer to prayer)
- Kai** has no helpers but Gerda and seeks none.

SNOW QUEEN

The Other Quest

Underneath the more familiar aspects of the story, the play includes a counter-movement—the issue of what the Snow Queen is really doing. The play began with the mirror in her possession, and Hemming broke it while using it at her behest. She has been systematically reassembling the pieces ever since, surely to no good. That's where the play surprises us, because her quest is to undo the damage as much as she can, and with Kai's help, she ultimately does.



The Snow Queen and Kai by P. J. Lynch

Quest Elements in the Play

A precious Object or Person to be found (a goal):

Kai is tasked to re-assemble the pattern of the shattered mirror (or is made to do it) and Gerda wants to find her friend Kai.

Why re-assembling the mirror is important ("precious") to the Snow Queen is only explained at the end; until then we operate as the characters do on our assumptions and suspicions about her and the actions.

A long journey to find it

Kai and Gerda cover the same amount of time and space on the journey, but Kai travels quickly and his time is spent with his task in the North, while Gerda travels more slowly and her time is on the journey. Each quest takes time and a physical journey (and an internal/emotional journey).

A hero—not just anyone, but someone with the right qualities of breeding or character

Gerda's friendship for Kai drives her quest. Kai's gift for seeing patterns makes him the one able to re-assemble the mirror.

A Test or series of Tests that weed out the unworthy, revealing the hero

Every one of Hemming's efforts to stall Gerda is such a test. Gerda's varied abilities to overcome these challenges display her worthiness in the quest.

Test #1: Hemming pretends to be the voice of the river and rejects Gerda's offer of shoes, telling her to go home. She falls into the river, setting up the next test.

Test #2: Coming ashore at an old woman's cottage, Gerda does not realize the old woman is again Hemming in disguise. His magic does forestall here here for a time.

Guardians of the Object to be overcome

Both the Snow Queen and Hemming seem to act antagonistically and need to be overcome as they separate Kai and fend others off.

The Snow Queen specifically tasks Hemming with delaying or preventing Gerda's quest to find Kai, but Gerda does not realize it is shape-shifted Hemming causing the problems and so she cannot address him directly until the end, though she does overcome the created obstacles on her quest.

Helpers, human or animal [or botanical and talking]

Gerda's:

- grandfather (stories, warnings)
- locals: search for Kai
- rose (news that Kai's not dead, petals) and other flowers (advice)
- raven (promises to help her as thanks for her generosity and he keeps that promise at palace)
- prince and his retinue (give her cloak, boots, advice)
- reindeer (warns her from danger, knows where to go)
but in this incident Gerda really helps herself by outsmarting them
- robber leader (lets her go with reindeer)

Kai apparently has no helpers but Gerda (except perhaps the Snow Queen in hindsight) and seeks none.

SNOW QUEEN

For both tale and play



H. J. Ford (1897)



A. W. Bayes (1889)

Quest Elements Worksheet for "The Snow Queen"

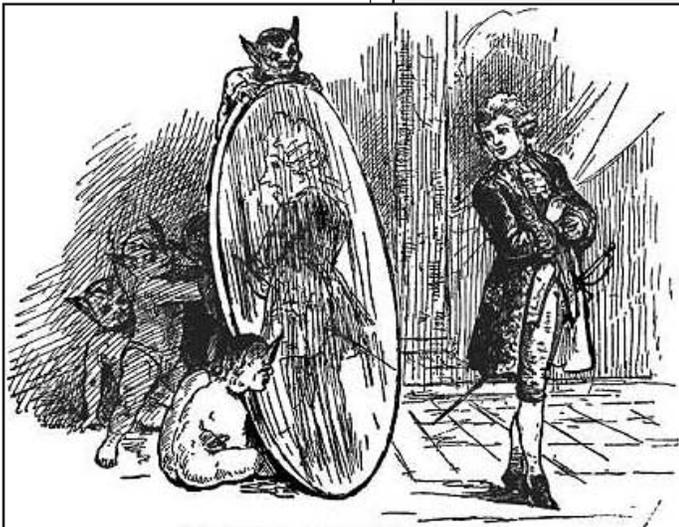
1. What is the goal of the action in "The Snow Queen"? What needs to be done?
2. Is there a journey? What kind of journey? Who takes it? Why? What kind of person is s/he? What does the journey show us about him/her?
3. Is the person tested? How? By what?
4. Does the person get any help? What kind of help?
 - Who/what gives the person useful physical help (such as food, shelter, warm clothing)?
 - Who/what gives the person useful information or emotional support and/or advice about meeting challenges? What kind?
5. Does anyone/anything hinder the success of the journey? Who or what? How? Why?
6. What kind of journey are you on? What tests you on your journey? What gets in the way? How do you overcome that? Who helps you?

SNOW QUEEN

For Andersen's Fairy Tale
and the Play

Activities

Depending on your grade level, the questions on this page may open up to art or writing projects or responses (what does your hobgoblin mirror reflection look like when you're "ugly" to someone? even a Photoshop distortion), class discussion, or charts to create and consider, then revisit after the play.



A. W. Bayes shows the troll mirror's effect (1889)

Working with Quest Element Ideas in Class

The Mirror and Its Shards

The hobgoblin or troll's mirror opens up to issues regarding bullying, verbal abuse/name-calling, and kindness vs. unkindness.

Distorted "Vision"

How can our own emotions, like the hobgoblin's mirror, "reflect" a twisted view of other people or events? Can anger or loneliness or fear or sadness change how we see or respond to someone else or a situation? For instance:

- What do you tell yourself when you're not immediately chosen for a group or team? Can everyone be chosen first? Does it "mean" something, or is it just the process of dividing into groups, like numbering off or everyone wearing the same color?
- What do you call someone when you're angry? Is that a factual name or an emotional label in the moment? Do you care what effect such names have on the other person? Do you like to be called names? Does name-calling heal or solve a situation or make it worse? What other choices do you have?

• How can a "view" of others or a situation change your view of yourself and what's going on? Can assumptions enhance or limit your response? How can you get an accurate view? Like the mirror, what are our sources of distortion? (Are they inside us? outside?)

Enhancing Mirrors

The hobgoblin's mirror does not give an accurate view; it distorts to ugliness every time. Could there be other kinds of mirrors? Could there be a mirror that makes things appear just as they are or that finds the good? the potential? a positive word? What would such a mirror show? What words or ideas could it offer us?

- Can our emotions offer such a mirror from the inside? How do image and attitude affect our view?
- Can giving someone else a chance or realizing there may be other factors involved help us respond more positively or openly?

Shards in the Eye/Shards in the Heart

The broken mirror is the problem, because its many shards now affect many people, but we get to see its effect on one person in particular—Kai. He changes; he rejects Gerda; he becomes solitary; he gets "kidnapped" by his personal abilities and interests. (Sounds like our addiction to devices, doesn't it? So social they take us out of the "society" we're in, our family and friends who are right there.)

Kai has a shard in his eye, which affects his perception of the world and himself, and a shard in his heart, which affects his response, or actually prevents him from responding—he is being frozen. The combination is dangerous because he doesn't see clearly *and* he doesn't care.

- What can affect the way we see our world and others around us? Stereotypes? Too narrow a view (not seeing the whole situation or person)? What others say rather than what we see? How can we deal with this shard in the eye?
- Why does our heart freeze? Why do we not care what happens to others or how they feel? Is caring only about oneself really "caring"?

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale

"The summer days were so lovely, and it was heavenly to be out among the fresh rose-bushes, which never seemed to stop blooming."

—"The Snow Queen"



H. J. Ford (1897) shows Kai coming under the Snow Queen's "protection," her cloak.

Kai's Basic Imagery in Andersen's Tale

• The seasons—

Spring and summer are associated with being outdoors amid the roses and other plants in the flowerbox.

The hymn Gerda sings early on and throughout the tale carefully links the image of the rose with spiritual forces (although the translation from Danish can vary the nature of the relationship). *Winter takes the children away from their access to rooftop's nature in pots, keeping them indoors looking out icy windows or playing in the snowy streets. "Icy windows" (literal or eyes) change one's view.*

• Stories in spring gutter versus tales and sleds in winter—

The shift from rooftop summer blooms to winter separates Gerda and Kai. They grow up together, strongly bonded, until a series of linked changes occur—the grandmother's image of the snow flakes as "white bees" with a snow "queen," an image without a story, which leads to Kai's "seeing" the Snow Queen out the window, then the shards falling into his eye and heart, and his sledding with the boys without Gerda.

Note that the children usually make a clear view hole on the icy window in order to see each other. After hearing the tale, however, Kai looks out and sees a huge snowflake transform into the Snow Queen who beckons him.

This sighting can be external and/or internal: she sees and beckons him because he is looking out, or he imagines/creates her having heard the image. Does she seek him or does he seek her—or does it just "happen"? Likewise, do the shards just "happen" to fall into Kai's eye and heart, or is he somehow available for that to happen? It doesn't happen to Gerda, who is right there, too.

When he hears of the Snow Queen, Kai assumes he can control her, melt her with heat from the stove. But he can't. The Snow Queen is beautiful and "captivating," as in both entrancing and ensnaring. Kai's pursuit of "play" and then of "beauty," taking refuge "under its cloak" for warmth that actually proves more cold prompts issues about human wants and also art, one of Andersen's favorite topics.

• Hooking onto another sleigh—

No sooner does the sledding occur than we learn the "boldest" boys, not content with the speed of their own sleds, like to hook them onto passing wagons in the square and "hitch" a faster ride for a bit.

Young Kai decides to try this himself, so when a large sleigh goes around the square he hooks his sled onto it and rides along even after it leaves the square, even out the town gates, because the unidentified driver in a white fur coat kept nodding at him. When he tries to unhitch his sled he cannot, and they go faster and faster. The driver is, of course, the Snow Queen.

Consider the basic action of hooking your sled onto another vehicle, one you know nothing about, neither its driver nor its destination. You have made a choice to hook on for fun, but fun may not be its ultimate intent. Talking to strangers, trying things the older kids do, thinking something is fun or magical may, as it does for Kai, make you forget some basic things you might want to remember.

The Snow Queen takes Kai to her world, and her "kisses" are not affection but charms to make Kai forget and not care about his former attachments to home and friend. She isolates him in a new set of values, icy ones.

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale

"The Snow Queen kissed little Kay again, and by this time he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home."

—"The Snow Queen"



Kai on the Snow Queen's palace floor, the Mirror of Reason, in coat and cap as barefooted, shirt-sleeved Gerda finally finds him (H. J. Ford, 1897)

Kai's Basic Imagery in Andersen's Tale/ 2

• The power of kisses

The Snow Queen's kisses make Kai feel as if he is going to die (under conditions that suggest freezing to death) and then he forgets home. With one more kiss, she says, she would "kiss [him] to death."

The association with the Snow Queen limits some of the the "life" in Kai; it separates him from the blooming world of spring and summer for a permanent world of ice and cold.

Gerda's kisses at the end restore what was forgotten in Kai. She releases the spell.

• Snow Queen's palace/lake as Mirror of Reason

Once with the Snow Queen, the story shifts away from Kai until the end when Gerda is near. His experiences are told separately and only when the crisis arises. He is "frozen" in the palace, promised "all the world and a new pair of skates" if he can only spell "eternity." That lure of something beyond the present—and the fact that it has to be the word, not the thing—keeps him questing in the ice shards to find the pattern that can "spell" his reward.

In the Snow Queen's palace, the icy, scholastic distortion of Reason (linked to the hobgoblin's twisted joy), a "snow bee" indeed, combines with Kai's response to beauty, to art and metaphor. The offered rewards compel him, but he has not yet figured out how to "spell" the eternity that is success in this world of ice and his own now-distorted vision.

The opposition of "cold" Reason, which does not partake of the spiritual elements that are Gerda's power, is sharp at the end of the story, where her faith protects her and saves him, melting the "ice" inside and helping him remember home and friendship. When she arrives, he does not recognize her as she does him; only when the shards are wept out of him by her tears and his own can he recall something else, real people, real emotion, not imagined.

The Women in Kai's World

- The grandmother at home, Gerda, and the Snow Queen
Here we get a crone/wise old woman, a child, and the mature, gorgeous woman of desire and threat, though for Kai the threat seems hard to see.
The grandmother—and parents, for that matter—have a very small caretaking role in the story: they put the children in the roofline gutter to play. Grandmother offers Kai the key image, the metaphor of "white bees" for snow, but she does not tell a full instructive fairy tale with quest and consequences. While she describes the Snow Queen as a natural force, a snow storm, Andersen takes the image further. Kai is not just a little boy in the snow; he is a person now seeking a kind of thrill and cold fame—if only he can spell it right.
The Snow Queen has the more threatening (into the snow and cold) and protective (crawl under my bear fur—fur without the bear) presence. Separation from others, dedication to her, and forgetfulness comprise her allure and power. Gerda, by contrast, offers loving friendship and the natural world of spring awaiting and also a "rosy" outlook, roses linking to faith.

SNOW QUEEN

Illustrations of Kai's Experience in Andersen's Tale

About Andersen's Fairy Tale



The Snow Queen first appears to Kai (Edmund Dulac, 1912)

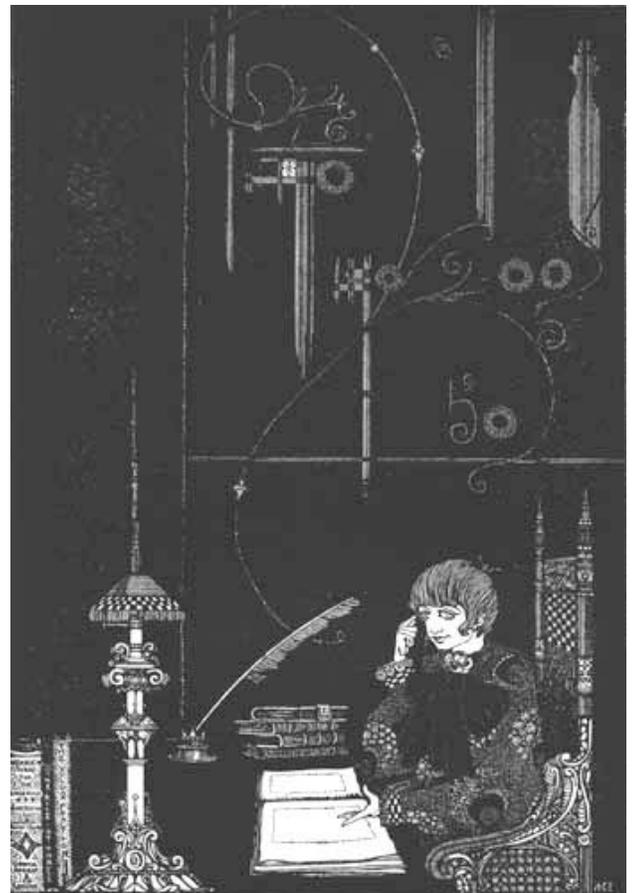


Snow Queen about to put Kai in her sled (A. W. Bayes, 1889)



Arthur Rackham (1932) shows Kai's frustration at not being able to configure the word that would give him his freedom (Eternity).

Harry Clarke (1916) shows Kai in his numerical reasoning at the Snow Queen's palace. How many numbers can you find in the shapes shown? (The book on the left is Andersen's Tales.)



SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale

Gerda's Basic Imagery in Andersen's Tale

• The seasons—

Like Kai, Gerda revels in spring and summer, but when winter comes she remains unchanged—no internal ice or shards. She faces the cold on her long quest, and with less and less protective clothing, but succeeds. Cold does not affect her spirit.

• Offering her red shoes—

"The Snow Queen" appeared in 1845, the same year as "The Red Shoes," in which a girl wants red shoes and is cursed to dance in them until she begs to have her feet cut off (very Grimm-like). The red shoes in this story hold less lure and danger; Gerda is willing to swap them for Kai; her priorities are straight.

Shoes in fairy-tale lore are the link with the earth and nature, this world. Gerda gives up her shoes and is barefooted at least twice in the story—in the boat and walking into the Snow Queen's estate. (Likewise, she has no hat; she is open to both worlds, earth and sky.) Kai is more important than things or self-protection.

• The boat and the stream—

Gerda happens into an unmoored boat while trying to offer the river her shoes for Kai and floats downstream; no one is visible on the banks for her to call until she reaches the old woman's house. Noticeably, in only Rackham's illustration does the boat have oars, sitting unnoticed. Gerda goes with the river; she does not, or cannot, steer.

Gerda's involvement with transport is unintentional, where Kai hooks his sled to a sledge on purpose. Like Kai, she ends up somewhere she does not expect and faces consequences; they both "follow the current," take the direction set externally.

• The old woman's garden—

Like the Snow Queen, the old woman, a casual sorcerer, wants to keep a child. She has her eat cherries (food is usually a signal of entrapment in myth and folk tales), offers her the garden, and combs her hair (another potential spell). Gerda for a time forgets her purpose, but she knows something is missing. Remembering the rose is the key to her recovery, escape, and renewed quest after listening to the flowers.

We might hear an echo of "Hansel and Gretel" here, but there is no threat of being devoured, just of being distracted or "charmed" by the environs. Another echo may be Andersen's earlier "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," since two statue soldiers stand at the door of the cottage. When Gerda sees the rose on the old woman's hat and realizes what's missing, we are reminded of the import of roses and the value of Gerda's tears, which sprout new roses in the garden. Then she talks with the flowers and learns Kai is not dead.

Her enjoyment of nature is good but not her purpose here. All the flowers tell her predominantly female folk tales—of being sacrificed, being left or not rescued, of bubbles bursting, beauty dying, nature's golden sunshine, and the delusion of a dancing girl (like "Red Shoes" again). Gerda pursues her own purpose and once outside realizes time has passed—summer is now late autumn, and the world appears bleak, not a garden. Perhaps this large time gap links to the growing up "jump" in the story, since Gerda and Kai are no longer children at the end.



Arthur Rackham, one of the few illustrators to offer Gerda unused oars in the boat (1932)

SNOW QUEEN

About Andersen's Fairy Tale

"I am not so small or without skills as you might think."

—ASF's Snow Queen

Gerda's Basic Imagery in Andersen's Tale/ 2

• The crows, the princess, and the prince

Gerda now asks after Kai at every meeting. The crow knows a poor young man has appeared at court and married the princess; Gerda thinks it might be Kai.

The crow tells her the nearby princess wanted a worthy love, and no wooer could talk to her but only repeat her words. Then a poor young man appeared and said he came to learn from her; he's the one! There is also a dream-state allusion as Gerda is led in. She peers at the sleeping prince, who awakes but is not Kai, though he and the princess help Gerda, who asks for a small cart and receives a gold carriage.

Kai's plot line is straightforward compared to Gerda's; hers meets a number of side tales as she proceeds. The crow's tale is a fairy tale within a fairy tale—and could be the happy ending, but the young man she finds isn't Kai. This moment is one of the closest to the source stories, waking the male (though not her husband).

This tale then takes its own course. Gerda had acted on what facts she could muster and on hope, but was wrong, and as is typical of this part of the tale, she receives aid when she tells her story. (While the crow's young man is not Kai, the statement, "he's forgotten you," proves true for Kai.)

• The robbers

Traveling in a conveyance, especially a gold coach, is asking for it in this tale, and rather than an old sorceress, the requisite robbers appear immediately. They kill the servants and plan to devour Gerda until the robber-girl intervenes. She keeps birds and a reindeer, mostly as a show of power (she binds them, and her knife is a constant threat), but for Gerda they are useful informants and helpers who tell Gerda Kai is with the Snow Queen, a second fact toward finding him.

Carnage, actual and threatened, fills this section, but no one mourns the loss, though Gerda keeps a wary eye on the girl's knife. Here where we might expect the worst—the girl's mother certainly threatens it—we find another young girl. And hearing Gerda's story, the robber-girl decides to help, freeing the reindeer for more practical transport and provisioning Gerda.

• The Lapp and Finn Women

The reindeer chooses good rest stops—who can resist a character who writes a letter on a dried fish! Or another who reads and then eats that fish! Funny but pointed, too; the women support Gerda and feed and clothe her.

The Finn is wise enough to know when no help is needed; she identifies Gerda as already powerful; not surprisingly, therefore, the crisis moment is upon us.

Just 102 more miles through a Scandinavian winter! That is not the challenge, and the women keep Gerda focused. The Finn is not called a sorceress, but clearly she has wisdom and power—and knows when not to use it. Leaving the quester alone to finish the quest can be vital.

Facing winter without boots or mittens shows Gerda needs no external "protection" at this point; it's all internal. She has the perseverance and tears she needs.



Gerda rides northward
(Honor C. Appleton, 1922)

SNOW QUEEN

Illustrations of Gerda's Experience in Andersen's Tale

About Andersen's Fairy Tale



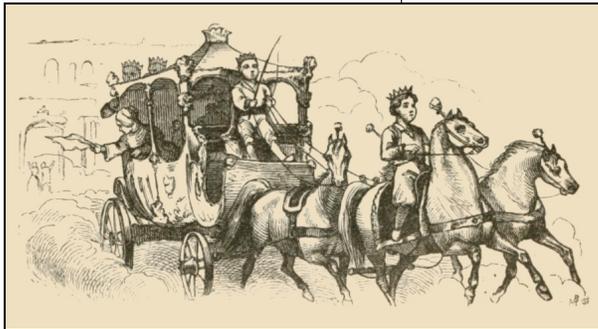
Vilhelm Pedersen, the original illustrator (1845), above and below. Note: As usual, Gerda is shown in a boat with no oars. (Pedersen images from a gallery on Katrinahaney.com)



Edmund Dulac (1912)



Arthur Rackham (1932)



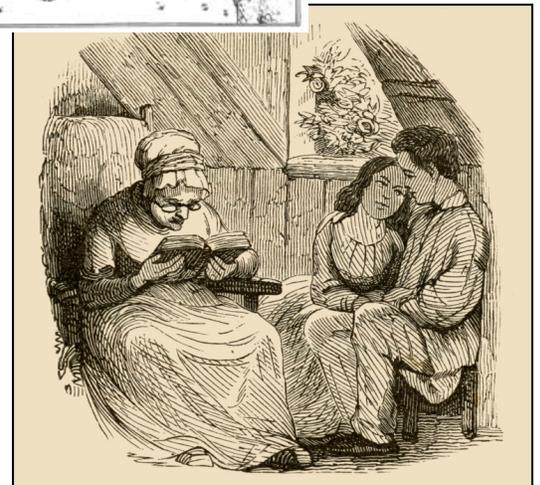
H. J. Ford (1897)



Arthur Rackham (1932)



Above and right, Vilhelm Pedersen (1845) from a gallery on Katrinahaney.com



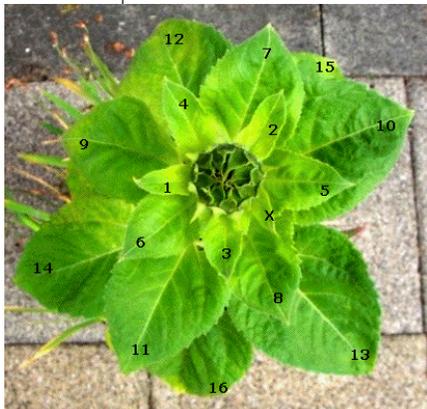
SNOW QUEEN

"It's beautiful and all around us! ... Nature loves patterns and this sequence."

—ASF's Kai, seeing patterns without a shard in his eye



A pine cone packs bracts in the densest, most efficient pattern, the golden spiral—just as a cabbage or a rose packs its leaves or petals (and the number of pine cone bracts in each spiral arm is one of the Fibonacci numbers). Many plants use this Spiral pattern to offer leaves maximum sun exposure on the stalk, as the numbered leaves on the illustration at right demonstrates.



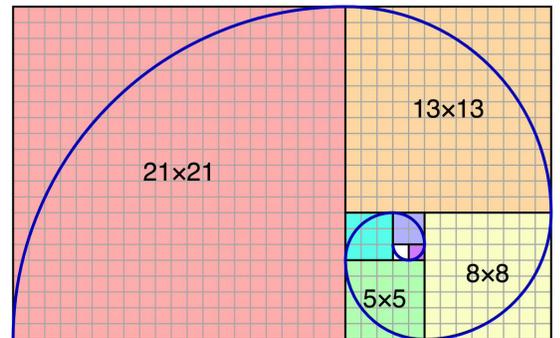
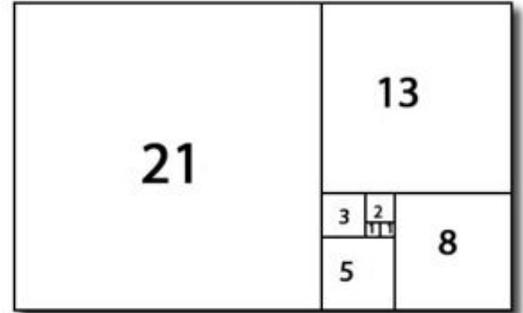
Number Patterns! Fibonacci in the Play

Recognizing patterns from numbers, nature, data, feelings, what upsets your stomach, or strange things that happen is a vital skill, but as Kai realizes, it can be particularly fun with numbers.

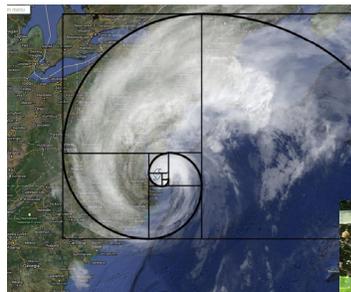
One man who would have agreed with Kai was Leonardo of Pisa (c. 1175-c. 1240), known as Fibonacci. In traveling to Africa with his merchant father, he learned the Hindu-Arabic number system, which was hundreds of years old in Asia, and in 1202 wrote a work explaining its value for Europe, which was still using Roman numerals (instead of 2018, our new year would have been MMXVIII). He showed that using the digits 0-9 and place value had business applications in figuring interest, money-changing, bookkeeping, number conversions, and banking. He also looked at a particular number sequence.

The sequence named for him is the one Kai recognizes in the play: **1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144 ...** created by adding each new digit to the one before it to get the next one. The relationship between each number to the next soon falls into an almost constant ratio, known as *the golden ratio*: 1.618, or *phi* (Φ). The *golden spiral* thus created is not only mathematical but shows up everywhere in nature because it is the most efficient means of packing seeds or petals or bracts in a small space or of spiraling branches so each gets maximum sunlight.

• Web search "Fibonacci in nature worksheets"



A quarter curve inside the Fibonacci squares makes the golden spiral, the ratio of size increase approaching 1.618, the golden ratio or phi (Φ) also found in nature.



Does Hurricane Irene display the Golden Spiral? right, a nautilus and a succulent plant



SNOW QUEEN

"The thing more powerful than the strongest magic.... The love of a true friend."

—*ASF's Snow Queen*

Details from the Tale Not in the Script

- growing up with roses in the gutters
- *Grandmother* is now *Grandfather*
- the journey behind the sleigh from Kai's point of view; his personal quest for freedom in ice
- the boat on the river
- the castle and waking up the royal couple
- the robber girl
- learning Kai's whereabouts from pigeons in the robber camp [now it's from the rose in the old woman's garden much earlier]
- the Lapp and Finn women
- snowflake battle outside the Ice Palace; Gerda entering alone
- the Lake of Reason and return home

More Patterning in the Play

• "The smallest of things"

The play's refrain, "do not underestimate the smallest of things," begins in reference to the millions of broken mirror shards—each the size of a grain of sand—that fill the world, influencing one's natural perspective for the worse. Their size is in inverse proportion to their effect and its duration. Thus the problem with small things sets up the challenge that will itself be addressed by other small things—small humans and animals.

The next reference comes from the smallest creature in the script, the raven (not the smallest of birds, of course),

Ingolf, the gentleman now turned robber, says, once Gerda grabs his knife and threatens him, "Never has one so small bested me. Much less so quickly." Moreover, when she returns his knife, he keeps his word to let her and the reindeer go.

Look for the positive power of other small things in the play.

How might you can make a positive difference in your surroundings?

• Gerda recognizing patterns

At first Kai helps Gerda see the numerical pattern in her homework, but once she's attuned to looking, she is proactive about discovering patterns that help her on her journey, such as:

Flowers: Gerda notices the bare spot in the flower garden, realizes the flowers' names are alphabetical—but there is no "R" flower, no *rose*: "Patterns and roses...." The reminder of the rose instantly breaks Hemming's spell on her and restores her quest to find Kai.

Layout of Snow Queen's castle: Gerda realizes it is a maze and so must have a pattern.

What patterns are in your world? What is the layout of your home or your school? Is there a reason for the pattern?

Are there patterns in our lives, in our responses to situations or people?
Where do these patterns come from?
Can patterns change?



W. Heath Robinson shows a young Gerda amid the flowers



W. Heath Robinson's illustration of a more grown up Gerda (no coat, no shoes—unaffected by "ice"?) at last finding a small boy, Kai (also in summer clothes), "frozen" in the dark waste

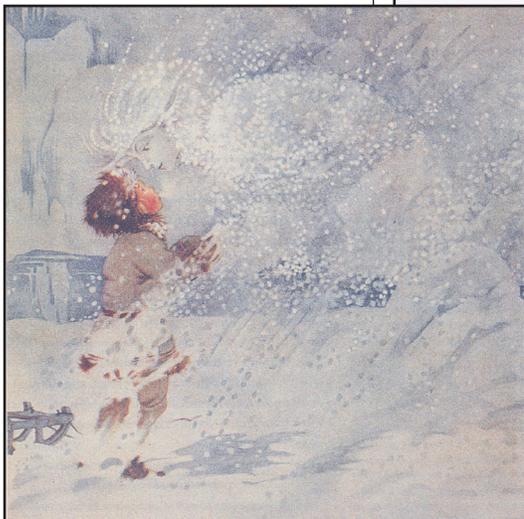
SNOW QUEEN



The Snow Queen
by Tomislav Tomic

"It never entered my mind that my 'fun' could hurt someone."

—ASF's Snow Queen



Honor C. Appleton (1922)

Activities about Mischief—When "Fun" Is Not Funny

Mischief and what's funny is in the eye of the beholder in our world. On television, on media platforms, and in everyday life we are increasingly taught to laugh at someone else as if it's OK to have a shard of ice in our eyes or hearts. Hemming and the Snow Queen think making everyone and everything ugly is "great fun... the best fun you will ever have. Glorious fun." But of course that is a hobgoblin speaking. Or is it?

Is "Just for Fun" A Good Excuse?

- The play looks closely at the line between fun and hurtful, things that are called play but aren't, and attitudes that excuse bad behavior in the name of jest—"can't you take a joke?"

Who defines if it's funny or a joke? The one who does or says it, or the one on the receiving end who may not find it funny, who may, in fact, feel hurt? At best, it is a shared or communal responsibility; each must consider the other's view.

PRE-SHOW / DISCUSS laughter and hurt. Discuss with the class what's funny and what's not funny when it's on television or a video and the difference when it's real or happens to each of them. Having a chart about emotions could prompt a writing project. What to think about before starting some hobgoblin-style mischief and how to respond if you find yourself on the receiving end could also help.

DISCUSS why we laugh at other people. Is that like having a shard of the magic mirror inside us—is it freezing our hearts?

Do we like being laughed at? Having unkind things said to us? Does scornful laughter treat others as equals and friends?

- So at the end of the play when we may well consider the Snow Queen and Hemming to be at worst evil or at best careless and nasty, we, like Gerda, have to process the changed circumstances. When is saying "I'm sorry" enough?

When is it believable and meaningful? Does it change what happened? Perhaps since Gerda has found Kai and he's recovered from the mirror shards, she can afford to be kind. Perhaps we worry that these two "jokesters" are still on the loose and still love mischief—what's to prevent them from doing it again? Are they really changed? How can we know?

POST-SHOW / ASK the class whether they would forgive the Snow Queen and Hemming—why or why not—and what forgiveness means, how they judge what deserves to be forgiven. If you used an emotion chart in the pre-show discussion, refer to it again here.

- The play finally asks us how much faith we have in each other, even if someone behaves like a Snow Queen or a hobgoblin. Can these people change or learn better? Can these people behave differently?

At the same time we need to ask ourselves if we have ever done something we've been sorry for or might not have done if we'd known how badly it might hurt someone else. Did we learn better? Have we *done* better since then? Were we forgiven?

DISCUSS the meaning of saying "I'm sorry" and of accepting an apology. What does it mean for each person? Are those just empty words or should they be a recognition and a promise? What does a real apology feel like to ask for and to receive?

SNOW QUEEN

Design Elements for ASF's "Snow Queen"

Oh, you're going to enjoy your trip to Scandinavia for the *Snow Queen*! You'll walk into the Octagon and the set will surround you on every wall—castle, forest, houses, snowflakes. Set designer Rob Wolin is your travel agent par excellence, offering you the full experience of the play's locales.

Costume designer Pamela Scofield completes the Scandinavian quest with her Nordic designs for the characters, all inspired by Scandinavian folk costumes.

The hobgoblin, reindeer, and raven will be in leggings and sweaters with headpieces to detail their identity—you can't miss those huge horns on Halvard, the reindeer. Hemming will shape shift with costume pieces, sometimes right before your eyes, as a skilled shapeshifter does. Color, texture, and detail are all drawn from Andersen's own Nordic culture.



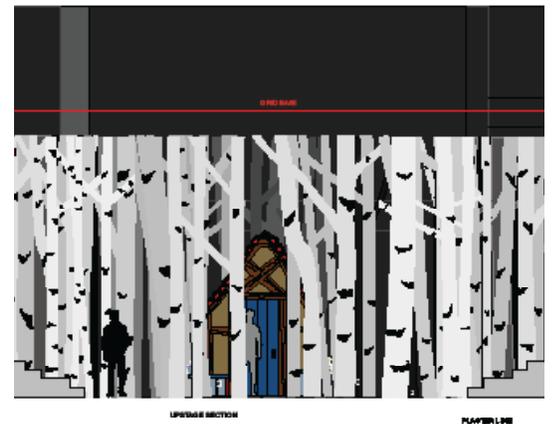
Scofield's sketches for Kai and Gerda



Costume designer Pamela Scofield's sketches for the Snow Queen and Hemming the hobgoblin. The notes on the designs give details to the Costume Shop.



Below, half of the wraparound set for the Snow Queen in the Octagon, showing the design for the back walls (left half) and house left walls (right half). At right, the design for the upstage forest (on sliders) with one of the houses behind it.



SNOW QUEEN



Photo: Alamy

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