THE SNOW QUEEN
Adapted by Rachel Teagle
from the story by Hans Christian Andersen

Serenbe Playhouse, Winter 2014
Production Draft

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CHARACTERS:

KAI, a logical child

GERDA, a loyal child

SNOW QUEEN, a creature made of winter. Beautiful and sharp.

INGEBORG, a troll
also KAJA, the robber girl

MALM, a troll
also BJORN, a talking reindeer

GRUNDTAL, a troll
also HAGATHA, an eccentric old Lapp woman

Originally commissioned by Serenbe Playhouse.

NOTE: Stage direction in italics indicates opportunities for storytelling through movement and choreography.

This script was written for a traveling production with 5 locations.

LOCATION 1
  PROLOGUE
  VIGNETTE 1: OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE
  VIGNETTE 2: GERDA'S HOUSE

LOCATION 2
  VIGNETTE 3: OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE
  VIGNETTE 4: THE WILDERNESS

LOCATION 3
  VIGNETTE 5: THE CAVE OF THE ROBBER GIRL
  VIGNETTE 6: THE WILDERNESS

LOCATION 4
  VIGNETTE 7: THE HUT OF THE LAPP WOMAN

LOCATION 5
  VIGNETTE 8: THE PALACE OF THE SNOW QUEEN
PROLOGUE:

WE HEAR THE COLD, ICY WIND.
THE STORY BEGINS, TOLD IN VOICE AND MOVEMENT.

VOICE
Once upon a time in a kingdom far to the north, there lived a king and queen who had no child. Hearing the sorrow of the queen, the winter wind took pity on them, and where the queen’s tears had fallen into the snow, she found a child made of winter - stark white and too cold to touch. The queen asked no questions. It was best not to ask questions with great magic like this. But still, the people whispered. The child was wild as an avalanche, and prickly as an icicle. It was strange to have a babe you could not hold in your arms, and they had to keep the castle cold and dark. Even the sun seemed to stop shining, and the kingdom fell into a long, dark winter.

But then, a miracle occurred. The queen found herself expecting and soon they had a warm pink child of flesh and blood. A child that was truly theirs. And finally the people rejoiced, for this was a miracle they could understand.

But what became of the ice white girl? Some say she ran away. Or she melted in the spring thaw. But those who are older and wiser speak of the trolls, the inhuman creatures who dwell in hidden places. They say they came up from the beneath the bridges and the bottoms of lakes, from out of their caves and down from the mountains, to claim the girl as one of their own, as they claim all forgotten things, to live in the darkness of the long winter nights.

But as the girl grew into a woman, she grew too cold and wild for even the trolls, and they turned her out into the wilderness for the wind and the snow to claim. And so she lives still, in the heart of a glacier, waiting for the first winter winds to blow down from the mountains and carry her through the towns of men, trailing the frost in her wake.

THE PROLOGUE MOVEMENT ENDS, AND THE TROLLS COME OUT.

GRUNDTAL
All right, that’s it. You can all go home now.

MALM
Yep, you came to see the Snow Queen, you saw her, and now you can leave.

INGEBORG
Unless that wasn't enough for you. Do you want more? I said, do you want more?
THEY GET AUDIENCE TO CHEER.

GRUNDTAL
Great, now you've done it. Now we have to tell them a story.

INGEBORG
Yeah, everyone knows that's the only way to get rid of an audience.

MALM
That's not the only way. You can always eat 'em.

GRUNDTAL
And they look so fresh and juicy tonight.

INGEBORG
Aw, come on guys, let's tell 'em a story. After all, we've got a good one.

MALM
We do?

INGEBORG
Oh yeah. It's got everything – adventure, sacrifice, love, and best of all Trolls!

GRUNDTAL
I do love a good troll story.

MALM
And all of you better pay attention, okay? You never know what's coming next.

GRUNDTAL
And if he's coming next, hold your nose.

MALM
What are you talking about, I love children!

INGEBORG
Yeah, to eat.

MALM
Exactly! So if you've got any extras, just let me know. All stragglers will be eaten.

GRUNDTAL
So stick with us, and follow where we lead.

INGEBORG
But for now, why don't we start the story?
THEY BEGIN THE TALE.

GRUNDTAL
When the leaves have ceased to fall
From spindly branches black

MALM
When breezes nip at fingertips
You know she's coming back

INGEBORG
Beware, beware the queen of snow
and never cross her path

GRUNDTAL
Her kiss can chill and even kill

MALM
And boundless is her wrath
So do not take her frozen hand

INGEBORG
Her touch so cold it burns

GRUNDTAL
Don't meet her eye, or off you'll fly

GRUNDTAL, MALM, & INGEBORG
And almost none return.

GRUNDTAL
At least, that's how it was.

MALM
Our story begins on a cold winter's day

INGEBORG
When Gerda and Kai had stepped out to play

THE TROLLS VANISH.

VIGNETTE 1: OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.

IT IS A COLD WINTER DAY. KAI, A YOUNG BOY, STROLLS CONFIDENTLY OUT ACROSS THE SNOW. GERDA, A YOUNG GIRL, IN IMPECCABLE NEW CLOTHES, TRAILS BEHIND.
GERDA
Kai, wait! You're going too fast.

KAI
You're going too slow. Don't you wanna build a snowman?

GERDA
No. And stop asking! I've feel like I've heard it a hundred million times.

KAI
Come on, it'll be fun.

GERDA
I don't even know why we're out here. It's so cold.

KAI
It's called winter, Gerda. Stop being such a baby. You've got your fancy new coat and fur muff.

GERDA
And I don't want to get them dirty out here in the slush. Come on, let's go back.

KAI
Wait, are you...scared?

GERDA
No...

KAI
You are! Don't tell me you believed your crazy old grandmother's stories about the Snow Queen.

HE USES HIS COAT AS A SCARY CLOAK
How she swoops through the night on the icy wind to suck the warm breath from your body and stop your heart cold—look out!

HE POINTS, GERDA TURNS AND THERE IS NOTHING THERE. KAI LAUGHS.

GERDA
(not amused)
Ha ha. Very funny, Kai.

KAI
You should have seen your face! Oh man, next you'll be telling me you still believe in trolls. No, you do?!

GERDA
I'm not saying I believe in them. I just don't make them angry just in case they are real. And I'm not alone on this. The whole village is the same way. Sure no one will admit that they
believe in trolls, but just the same, this rock has been here in the path for hundreds of years, and no one dares to move it. Why? Because everyone knows that this rock is a troll rock, and they will strike back at anyone that touches it. So, maybe it seems a little silly, but I’d rather be safe than sorry.

KAI
I'm not scared of a dumb rock and imaginary trolls.

GERDA
Oh yeah? Prove it. Move the rock.

KAI
What?

GERDA
Come on. Unless you're scared of a couple of little tiny trolls.

KAI
I'm not scared of anything.

HE CROSSES TO THE ROCK AND NERVOUSLY READIES HIMSELF TO MOVE IT. HE BENDS HIS KNEES, HE WIGGLES HIS FINGERS.

GERDA
Any day now.

KAI
I'm working on it, okay?

HE READIES HIMSELF AGAIN. GERDA SNEAKS AROUND BEHIND HIM. AS HE PUTS HIS HANDS ON THE ROCKS TO MOVE IT, GERDA LUNGES OUT TO SCARE HIM. HE SHRIEKS AND JUMPS INTO THE AIR. GERDA LAUGHS.

GERDA
You should have seen your face.

KAI
If I was your real brother, I'd beat you up right now.

GERDA
Real brother or not, I'd like to see you try. Now come on, let's go home before the trolls get you!

SHE RUNS OFF. KAI WAITS FOR A MOMENT EMBARRASSED. HE STUFFS HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS.

KAI
Stupid old trolls.

HE KICKS AT THE TROLL ROCK.
There. That'll teach you for being imaginary.

AFTER A MOMENT, THE ROCK MOVES. KAI STEPS BACK IN ALARM AS IT STARTS TO SHAKE WITH GREATER AND GREATER FORCE. THE GROUND STARTS TO SHAKE, STRANGE RUMBLINGS ARE HEARD. KAI TURNS TAIL AND RUNS OUT.

Gerda! Wait up!

HE'S GONE.

THE TROLLS EMERGE

INGEBORG
Where'd he go, where'd that little brat go? If I get my claws on him...

GRUNDTAL
You know what they say, you mess with the rock, you get the trolls!

MALM
Yes! Let's eat him!

THE OTHER TWO SHOOT HIM A LOOK

What?

GRUNDTAL
No, Malm.

MALM
Why not?

INGEBORG
You always want to eat them. Doesn't that seem like a bit much?

MALM
I just wanna eat him a little. Like a wing, or a drumstick.

GRUNDTAL
No, Malm. Besides, the little ones are quick and hard to catch.

MALM
Well, have you got a better idea, Grundtal? Or should we let the human go UNPUNISHED for moving our rock? What do you think the Queen would think about that, hmm?

GRUNDTAL
Hey, no one is saying weren't not going to punish him.

MALM
Then what's your brilliant plan?

INGEBORG
You mean MY brilliant plan.

SHE HOLDS UP A MIRROR, POSSIBLY AN EMPTY FRAME.
Check it out.

GRUNDTAL

It's a mirror.

INGEBORG

It's a Hobgoblin Mirror. It's magic.

MALM

Wait a minute, I've seen that mirror before. You swiped it from the Snow Queen's palace, didn't you?

INGEBORG

Maybe...

GRUNDTAL

Well what's it do?

INGEBORG

It flips your reflection, so anything beautiful, like moi, becomes horrendously ugly, like you! See?

SHE HOLDS UP THE FRAME, AND THROUGH IT, CONTONTS HER FACE INTO SOMETHING HIDEOUS.

MALM

I don't see a difference.

GRUNDTAL

Why would anyone want a mirror that does that?

INGEBORG

I don't know. Maybe the Queen doesn't like what she sees in it.

MALM

Here, let me try.

HE HOLDS IT UP, HE MAKES A SMOLDERING, HANDSOME FACE.

I don't get it.

INGEBORG

Ah, that's because it makes everything ugly look beautiful. And honestly, you've never looked better.

THEY LAUGH.

GRUNDTAL

Me next! Oh, we can make so much trouble with this thing.
MALM
Hold on, it's not working yet.
    HE HOLDS IT UP, GETS HANDSOMER.
    HE HOLDS IT UP AGAIN, EVEN HANDSOMER.

INGEBORG
Looking good, Malm! Hahaha!

GRUNDTAL
Come on, let's get going.

INGEBORG
What's the rush?

GRUNDTAL
Can't you feel it? The first winter winds coming down from the mountain.
    THEY WAIT. THEY ALL SHIVER.

MALM
She's coming.

GRUNDTAL
And I don't want to be out here when she does. Come on.
    THEY SLINK OFF, CARRYING THE MIRROR.

VIGNETTE 2: GERDA'S HOUSE

GERDA AND KAI ARRIVE AT HOME. GERDA SITS BY THE FIREPLACE

GERDA
Ah, much better. I'm not leaving this spot until I thaw out.

KAI
Well, scoot over, I want a spot, too.

GERDA
Don't you have your own house to get back to?

KAI
Yes, but it doesn't have your grandmother's cookies in it.

GERDA
Not today. The kitchen froze over last night, and they're hard as rocks. You have to chip the cookies off the jar with a butter knife.
KAI

Really? Darn.

GERDA

It's awful. Maybe I'll take a nice long nap in front of the fire and when I wake up, it will be spring again. And we'll sit out on the porch by the rosebushes and drink lemonade in the sun.

KAI

But you'd miss all the snowball fights and sledding.

GERDA

I don't mind. Just wake me up when the roses bloom, okay?

KAI

What's so special about roses?

GERDA

My mother loved roses. She used to fill the house with them. Whenever I see roses, I always think about her. Wake me up when the sun comes out again.

SHE CURLS UP FOR A NAP. KAI LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.

KAI

Whatever you say. I'll just do twice as much sledding to make up for it.

GERDA

Works for me.

KAI

And when the spring comes, I'll cover your pillow in rose petals so it's the first thing you smell.

GERDA

That's sweet, Kai.

SHE TURNS OVER TO GO TO SLEEP

THE TROLLS SNEAK IN CARRYING THE MIRROR, GIGGLING

GRUNDTAL

All right, we're in.

INGEBORG

Let's put it in his mirror.

MALM

No, in the window.

INGEBORG

You're crazy. It's a magic mirror, what good will it do in a window?
MALM
But he's over there now, come on!

GRUNDTAL
Knock it off, trolls

MALM
Yeah, knock it off.

INGEBORG
No, you knock it off.

MALM
You!

THEY STRUGGLE OVER THE MIRROR, IT DROPS AND SHATTERS.
GERDA REACTS.

GERDA
What was that?

MALM
Oops.

INGEBORG
MALM!! You ruin everything

MALM
I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

KAI
What was what?

GRUNDTAL
Hold on a minute, guys... all the little pieces are still floating around. I think we can make this work.

HE LEANS OVER AND STARTS BLOWING THE FRAGMENTS TOWARD KAI

GERDA
I thought I heard something.

KAI
I didn't hear anything.

GRUNDTAL WITH A FINAL BREATH, BLOWS A SHARD OF MIRROR INTO KAI'S EYE.

OW! There's something in my eye!
Nice one!

Let me try!

She starts trying to move the unseen fragments toward Kai

Kai, are you all right?

Ingeborg causes a fragment to land in his heart

My heart! It hurts it—

Kai? Kai, what's going on? Are you hurt? What happened?

He turns to look at her, something has changed.

What happened is that I finally realized what a useless cow you are.

Whoa.

What?

You heard me. Or are you deaf as well as stupid?

Why are you talking to me like that?

(Imitating)

"Why are you talking to me like that?" Stop mooing at me, it makes me sick.

Stop it!

Ugh, don't you dare cry, it only makes you even uglier.

Kai!
KAI
I've got better things to do than watch a cow cry. I'm taking my sled out to the field to find someone worth my time. And I would take it easy on the cookies if I were you.
HE TAKES HIS SLED AND LEAVES THE HOUSE.

MALM
Now that is one powerful mirror.

INGEBORG
I'm telling you, the hobgoblins don't mess around. That was...not what I expected.

GRUNDTAL
This is gonna be great. C'mon, let's go see the show.
MALM DASHES OUT, GRUNDTAL STARTS TO FOLLOW.
INGEBORG HANGS BEHIND, WATCHING GERDA.

GRUNDTAL
Ingeborg? What are you doing?

INGEBORG
THEY LEAVE.

VIGNETTE 3: OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Kai is out with his sled. He aggressively kicks and punches at things as he passes, taking pleasure in his ability to destroy. He is so occupied that he almost doesn’t notice the majestic, imposing figure of the Snow Queen. She is not pleased to see him. She tries to scare him, to intimidate him, but he is in awe of her. The uglier and scarier she is, the more beautiful she becomes to him. She begins to grow interested in him. She touches his face, and he shivers. She kisses his cheek, and he can no longer feel the cold. She sweeps him away with her as they fly off into the night.

TIME PASSES. IT IS NOW THE NEXT MORNING.

GERDA ENTERS, BUNDLED UP AGAINST THE COLD.

GERDA
Kai? Kai! Come on, this isn't funny anymore. You've had your little fit, now come back home. This isn't funny, all right? Grandmother's been up half the night, everyone's worried sick. You've got to—
SHE SEES HIS PROP, LEFT OUT IN THE SNOW.
Oh no. Kai? Kai! It's not safe to be out here all alone. Kai? Where are you?
SHE LOOKS AROUND HER, IT'S STRANGELY EMPTY.
What do I do?
I can't go on.
I must go on.
I have to find my friend.
SHE SPIES TRACKS IN THE SNOW, AND SETS OFF TO FOLLOW THEM.
GRUNDTAL RE-ENTERS TO NARRATE.

GRUNDTAL
Gerda stood alone before
Those tracks across the snow
She'd journey on from dusk til dawn
To where? She did not know.

_Gerda starts her journey. She goes over a mountain, through a forest, through strong wind, until she comes to the bank of a river._

GERDA
River, have you seen my friend Kai? Did he pass this way?
Please tell me he did not drown.

GRUNDTAL
The river seemed to answer her, in ways the river could
And made a little bridge of ice as strong as one of wood.

Hey, how come I never get a magic bridge, huh? Lousy no good rivers, making trolls walk around on their own feet.

HE GRUMBLIES AWAY AS GERDA CONTINUES HER JOURNEY
_She eventually comes ashore, tired and exhausted. On the bank, she finds KAJA, a rough looking girl, and her reindeer, Bjorn._

GERDA
What a relief, it's so good to see a friendly face.

KAJA
Oh yeah?

GERDA
Please, tell me, have you seen a boy pass by here? Dark hair, about my age?

KAJA
Maybe, me and Bjorn here, we've seen a lot of things. Ain't that right, Bjorn?

BJORN
Oh, we've seen things all right.
GERDA
Thank goodness, the river didn't steer me wrong.

KAJA
Say, that's a nice coat you got there.

BJORN
Looks expensive.

GERDA
Oh, it's new. And very warm, thank goodness.

KAJA
Yeah, I'll bet. You ain't from around here, are ya?

GERDA
No, not at all. I've never even been this far north. Can you tell me, where am I?

KAJA
Where are you?

SHE AND BJORN EXCHANGE A LOOK. SHE PULLS OUT A LONG KNIFE.
You're in big trouble, kid. That's where you are.

KAJA BRANDISHES THE KNIFE AND SHE AND THE BJORN LEAD GERDA AWAY.

VIGNETTE 4: THE WILDERNESS

THE SNOW QUEEN ENTERS, KAI TRAILS BEHIND. HE CANNOT GO ON ANY FURTHER, HE COLLAPSES.

SNOW QUEEN
What is wrong.

KAI
Nothing. I'm fine.

HE TRIES TO GET UP AND CANNOT.

SNOW QUEEN
I had forgotten how flesh can tire.

KAI
Aren't you, um, flesh?

THE SNOW QUEEN LAUGHS.
SNOW QUEEN
Hardly. Child, I am ice. I do not tire. The frost is relentless.
SHE CHECKS HER REFLECTION AND RECOILS. SHE NOTICES KAI STARING.
You're staring at me.

KAI
Sorry.

SNOW QUEEN
I hate it when people stare at me. Back at the palace they always stared. I could feel their eyes burning into me. But, when I'd turned, they would all look the other way. That was almost worse.
SHE TURNS AWAY. A BEAT.
You're still doing it.

KAI
I can't help it. I've never seen anyone like you.

THE SNOW QUEEN LOOKS AT HERSELF IN A MIRROR.

SNOW QUEEN
Neither have I.

KAI
I think you're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

SHE LOOKS TO KAI

SNOW QUEEN
Really?

KAI
Absolutely.

SNOW QUEEN
What a strange child you are.

KAI
Hasn't anyone ever told you that before?

SNOW QUEEN
No one has said much of anything to me before. They are usually too frightened.

KAI
That sounds lonely
SNOW QUEEN
Lonely? I am the biting wind of a winter night. The chill across your bare skin, the frost on the lashes of your eyes. I am the smoke of your breath on a crisp sharp day. I do not know lonely.
SHE BRUSHES HIS CHEEK.

KAI
Then why did you take me with you?

SNOW QUEEN
You do not have to come with me. If you are too delicate for the journey...

KAI
I'm not delicate.

SNOW QUEEN
Sumer-child, of course you are. The bright sun makes the leaves grow green and your skin grow gold, and the world is full of chaos and life. It's...exciting, I suppose. For some.

KAI
Not me. I'm all about winter. I can't wait for that first snow.

SNOW QUEEN
And why is that?

KAI
Because it changes everything. The world goes from this brown, muddy place into clean, crisp lines of white.

SNOW QUEEN
Everything is finally in order.

KAI
It's perfect. It's cold, precise and perfect.
You know I never saw it that way before. How pretty it can be when everything's...um

SNOW QUEEN
When everything's dead?

KAI
Yeah. When everything’s dead.

HE RUBS HIS EYE, AND SPOTS A FLOWER GROWING THROUGH THE SNOW.
Hey, look at that.

SNOW QUEEN
What is it?
I didn't know flowers bloomed this deep in the winter.

Oh. Some do. Not many. That is Hellebore, the winter rose.

The winter rose?

KAI RUBS HIS HEART.

It's a stubborn little weed.

I bet Gerda would like that, she loves roses.

Gerda?

She lives next door. She's kind and generous and...

HE RUBS HIS HEART

Just awful. Always trying to be so nice to everyone. I bet she'd like this. I mean, it's bright and colorful and so ugly

HE RUBS HIS EYE.

But she likes that kind of thing. I guess. Maybe I should bring some back to her.

HE FEELS A PIERCING PAIN AND TAKES A DEEP GASPING BREATH

It's getting so late. And no one knows where I am. I shouldn't have run off like this. Do you think they're worried about me?

Shhh. Don't think about that now.

SHE KISSES HIM THE FOREHEAD. HIS MEMORIES FREEZE.

Don't think about that ever again.

Think about what?

Perfect.

You must only think about the glistening spires of the palace of ice, of the frosted stairways and long glacial halls, of the walls that shine like diamonds in the low winter sun.

It sounds beautiful.
SNOW QUEEN
Come with me there. It has been so long since I have had a companion. And they never seem to last long.

KAI
I will follow you where ever you lead, my queen. I know nothing else.

SNOW QUEEN
Good. Then come. 
SHE LEADS HIM AWAY.

VIGNETTE 5: THE CAVE OF THE ROBBER GIRL

GRUNDTAL
And so young Gerda found herself inside the robber's cave. With every passing footstep it grew harder to be brave.

KAJA LEADS GERDA INTO HER CAVE.

KAJA
Here we go, home sweet home. That's the sleeping corner, and that's the breakfast nook, and here's where I keep the cool stuff that we steal from other people.

GERDA
What are you doing?

KAJA
You're right! Where are my manners. I'm Kaja, this is Bjorn

BJORN
Hello.

KAJA
And this
SHE INDICATES THE KNIFE
is Mr. Tickles. Wanna know why I call him that?

BJORN
Oh not this again.

SHE WIGGLES THE KNIFE AT BJORN

KAJA
Tickle tickle.tickles....
Kaja, wait...

Tickle tickle tickle.

SHE TICKLES HIM WITH THE KNIFE.

Heehee, stop it!

Tickle tickle tickle!

Hahaha I give up! Hahaha!

Pretty good, right? What do you think?

I think you should let me go.

What, out there? It's dangerous. There are robbers everywhere.

Yes, I've noticed.

I mean, what were you thinking coming out here in those fancy clothes with your new boots and your little mitten tube.

It's a muff.

That can't be right. Look, everything about you screams “Rob me!” What are doing all the way out here?

I'm looking for my friend Kai. He wandered off from the village and I need to bring him home.

That's a long way to go for a friend.
BJORN
Yeah, Kaja'd never do that for me.

KAJA
No, never in a million years.

GERDA
I guess I'm not like that. I can't just leave him out there in the cold. He needs me. I have to bring him back.

KAJA
I don't know how to tell you this, but it's too late.

GERDA
What?

KAJA
If you were going to find him, you'd have found him by now.

BJORN
It's getting colder and colder. Even the robbers stay in their caves this time of year. Well, most of 'em.

GERDA
But I made it this far. I can't turn back now.

KAJA
No, of course not, no one's asking you to go back. Instead, maybe you could stay here with us.

GERDA
Stay here?

BJORN
Yeah, you could join our little crew. Kaja's the muscle, you could be the brains, and I'll be the getaway car, it's perfect.

GERDA
I'm not a thief.

KAJA
Well not yet. But, you made it all the way out here. Clearly you're tougher than you look, even with your little mitten tube. It's sweet that you've got all this hope, really it is, but some day you've got to wake up and look at the real world. Ask Bjorn, have you seen any living humans out there wandering in the snow

BJORN
No, not for ages. Not since that one boy who was wandering around behind you know who.
You know who?

Wait, what boy?

The lady with the ice and the hair and the..., you know

HE LOOKS AROUND AND WHISPERS

The Snow Queen

The Snow Queen, what are you talking about?

I've seen her, she's terrifying.

What boy?

She's just a story, you're such a baby.

WHAT BOY!?

THEY TURN TO HER.

You said you saw a boy. Where?

Further north, by the mountains.

When?

Uh, not too long ago, I guess.

GERDA STARTS TO LEAVE.

Wait, where do you think you're going?

Get out of my way.

KAJA PULLS OUT HER KNIFE AGAIN.
KAJA

No one's going anywhere.

GERDA

It's going to take more than that to stop me, and you know it, so get out of my way.

KAJA FALTERS, SHE LOOKS TO BJORN, WHO SHAKES HIS HEAD. SHE STEPS ASIDE.

KAJA

Wow. You're braver than you look. I wish I was.

GERDA STARTS TO LEAVE

Wait! I can't let you go out there by yourself. You'll just get lost and freeze to death, and we'll have to steal your stuff off your corpse, and no one wants that. I don't even if this so-called Snow Queen is real.

GERDA

Then how would you help me?

KAJA

Well, I don't know if she's real. But my grandmother would. She lives up in Lappland, she's old enough to know everything. If anyone can lead you to the Snow Queen, it's her. Here. I'll write her a note.

SHE FINDS A DRIED CODFISH AND BEGINS TO WRITE ON IT.

GERDA

What is that?

KAJA

It's a codfish.

GERDA

They don't have paper up in Lappland?

KAJA

Nope. Just codfish. Here. Give her this, and she'll do whatever she can.

GERDA

Really?

KAJA

Yeah, it says to treat you like family. Bjorn can take you.

BJORN

What? I don't want to see your grandmother, isn't she kind of a witch?
KAJA

Everyone's kind of a witch when they get to be that old.

BJORN

But, she scares me.

KAJA

Everything scares you.

BJORN

I won't do it.

KAJA

Yes, he will.

BJORN

Yeah, I will.

GERDA

Thank you. Thank you so much.

SHE THROWS HER ARMS AROUND HER.

KAJA

What are you doing? What is she doing?

BJORN

I think it's called a hug.

KAJA

Oh. So that's what those are.

GERDA

And here, I want you to have this.

SHE HANDS HER MUFF TO KAJA

KAJA

What? Really? No, I can't take this.

BJORN

Yes, she can.

KAJA

Yeah, I can.

SHE TAKES IT

Be safe out there, okay? Not all outlaws are as fine a folk as me and Bjorn here.
GERDA EMBRACES HER AND SHE AND BJORN EXIT. KAJA ALONE, PUTS ON THE MUFF AND ADMires IT.

KAJA
Huh, would you look at that. Fancy.

VIGNETTE 6: THE WILDERNESS

The Snow Queen, alone. She dances a furious, difficult, chaotic dance. It is full of rage and sorrow, of things that have shattered. As it grows to a climax, she tamps it all back down inside of herself, and strides off, completely composed.

VIGNETTE 7: THE HUT OF THE LAPP WOMAN

MALM
Gerda and the reindeer traveled far and further still. The wind grew sharp, the night grew cold, as winters often will. Just when they had gave up hope and knew that they were lost, a simple hut appeared to them, made out of sticks and moss.

BJORN
Here we are. Ooh... HE SHIVERS.

GERDA
Are you all right?

BJORN
Even reindeer don't like being this far north. I can't feel my hooves.

HAGATHA
Ha! You call this cold? HAGATHA, THE OLD LAPP WOMAN HAS ENTERED, DRESSED ECCENTRICALLY. I call this beach weather! I was just about to grab my flip flops and play some volleyball when I saw you two ragamuffins skulking around out here. No get out of here and stop bothering an old woman.

GERDA
Wait, we need to speak to you. We have to find the Snow Queen.

HAGATHA
..what? Why on earth would you want to see her?

GERDA
She has taken my friend Kai.
And she's gonna go rescue him.

I'm sorry, I think my ears must have frozen shut out here. Did you say that you were going to try and rescue your friend from the Snow Queen?

Yes.

Well, enjoy your sudden death, goodbye.

Hey!

Pity about your friend

You can't do that.

Your granddaughter sent you this.

A codfish? Really? You know she never writes. It's her whole generation, no one can be bothered to take the time to sit and write out a codfish anymore. Let me see that. 

Gerda hands her the codfish.

Oh Kaja, what a sweet girl she is, don't you think?

Um, sure. So will you help me?

I can try. This creature they call the Snow Queen, she's powerful. What's more she's cold as ice through and through. There's no getting through to her, child. She's cold and sharp and dead inside. If she has your friend, you're in trouble.

Now let me see ...

See what?
HAGATHA
Him, of course! You've been carrying him in your heart, haven't you? I'll take a look at him there.

SHE WAVES HER HANDS AND HUMS LIKE A RADIO TUNING.
You're a long way from home, your feet are so sore and cold, and you would love to eat that patch of moss on that birch tree, and your antlers have grown rather itchy.

BJORN
Oh, sorry, that's what's in my heart.

HAGATHA
Ah. Let me adjust my tuning.

SHE DOES, WAVING HER HANDS AGAIN.
I see innocence, and a fierce streak of loyalty, sorrow, fear, and ah! There he is. Handsome young man, isn't he? Hmm. But cold. He's grown so very cold.

GERDA
What happened? Is he alive?

HAGATHA
Yes, for now. The Snow Queen's magic is powerful, and she is freezing his humanity, turning him into a thing as cold and hard as she is. But that's not the only magic here. No, there is something in his eye, and in his heart. Something ugly and very powerful. If you cannot take them out, he will never see the coldness of the Snow Queen as anything but beautiful, and he will be lost for good.

BJORN
So what do we do? Are you gonna work some kind of crazy potion and give Gerda magical powers so she can defeat the Snow Queen?

HAGATHA
Hmm, no.

BJORN
Some kind of enchanted sword or magic wand or something?

HAGATHA
A magic blonde? I don't what good that would do. Although I do hear that they have more fun.

GERDA
What?

HAGATHA
And gentlemen do tend to prefer them. You know that's not such a bad idea. Maybe we could use a magic blonde. Ooh! And she could sing!

SHE STARTS TO SING A FEW NOTES TO A FAMILIAR SONG.
BJORN
No, no no. Not blonde, wand. Are you going to give her a weapon to fight the Snow Queen?

HAGATHA
Oh, I see now. Frozen ears, you know. And nope, I'm not going to give you anything.

GERDA
You're not?

BJORN
What?! What do you mean you're not going to give her anything?

HAGATHA
Of course not. She already has everything she needs inside of her.

GERDA
What? But I don't have anything. I'm not a warrior, I'm not strong or fierce, I'm really just a frightened little girl.

HAGATHA
Nonsense. Look at how far you've come. You're smart, and you never give up.

GERDA
But will that be enough to defeat the Snow Queen?

HAGATHA
She's strong, all right, but you have something that she doesn't. Kindness, and vulnerability.

BJORN
Vulnerability? That's the last thing she needs.

HAGATHA
Look, you frostbitten fleabag, who's the wise old woman here? Hmm? Gerda, trust me, you are ready. You just have to trust your heart. It's gotten you this far. Now all you need is a way to get to that palace. And that, I can get you.

SHE WAVES HER HANDS AND CHANTS CREATING A MAGICAL PORTAL TO THE PALACE OF THE SNOW QUEEN
Tada! This portal can take you right to her palace. But, it will not be unguarded. Be careful, be brave. And bring your friend home.

GERDA EMBRACES HAGATHA.

GERDA
Here, take this, for your ears.

SHE GIVES HAGATHA HER SCARF

HAGATHA
Well, would you look at that. Fancy.

BJORN

Let me come with you.

HAGATHA

Oh no, this is something she must do alone. Besides, if you think you are cold now...

GERDA

It's all right, Bjorn. Thank you, for everything.

SHE KISSES HIM ON THE FOREHEAD. HE IS VISIBLY MOVED.

I can do this. I have to.

SHE LOOKS BACK ONE LAST TIME AND PRESSSES ON.

HAGATHA

(to audience)

Well, what are you waiting for? Don't you want to see how this thingy ends? Go, go!

AUDIENCE TRAVELS THROUGH THE PORTAL. PERHAPS THEY ENCOUNTER GUARDIAN CREATURES MADE OF SNOW, BUT CONTINUE ON.

VIGNETTE 8: THE PALACE OF THE SNOW QUEEN

THE PALACE IS COLD AND GLACIAL, MADE OF MIRRORS AND GLASS AND ICE.

_The Snow Queen teaches Kai a new logic game involving a puzzle made of ice. It is cold and logical and completely captivating. She leaves him, once he is fully engaged. He has almost frozen solid._

Gerda enters.

GERDA

Kai!

_She runs to him to throw her arms around him, but he won't let her. She tries to make him go back with her, he refuses. She touches his face, he's cold as ice. He's growing colder and colder. Terrified and crying, she gives him her coat, and kisses him on the cheek. He does not respond._

_Her tears fall down his face. Gerda starts to freeze, but her tears have started to thaw Kai. He weeps, too and the shard of glass melts from his eye. The two embrace._

_She Snow Queen enters._

SNOW QUEEN

Did you finish your puzzle, child?

What? What is going on here?
KAI LOOKS UP AND SEES THE SNOW QUEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHOUT THE MIRROR IN HIS EYE. HE IS HORRIFIED.
Child, why are you looking at me like that? Please, don't look at me like that. What happened?

GERDA
(shivering)
I've c-c-come to g-get my f-f-fr....
SHE CAN'T FINISH HER SENTENCE, SHE IS SHIVERING SO HARD.
THE SNOW QUEEN LAUGHS.

SNOW QUEEN
Don't tell me you want to go with her? Look at her, she can't stand it out here, she's not strong enough. Not like you, Kai.
Look what happens when you let your guard down, when your defenses melt away. Isn't it better to stay frozen solid?

KAI
I...I don't know.

SNOW QUEEN
You hesitate because there are parts of you that are still weak and soft and warm. I can fix that. I can fix you. Then you can stay with me here, forever.
SHE MOVES TO HIM.
Let me take your last bit of warmth away from you.
SHE LEANS IN FOR A KISS.
HE PULLS AWAY.

KAI
No. I'm sorry, no. I don't want to be like that. I don't to be like you.
HE WRAPS HIS ARM AROUND GERDA. THEY STAND.
I want to go home.

The Snow Queen gets sad, then angry. She starts to work up a big spell. She casts it and misses, Gerda and Kai dodge. She casts another, growing more upset. She's near tears. Gerda notices her pain, and before she can cast a third spell, she reaches out and touches her hand. The Snow Queen is surprised and confused by the gesture.
After a moment, Gerda reaches out and embraces her.

Slowly, just a little, the Snow Queen's heart begins to thaw.

SNOW QUEEN
Oh!

She melts into the embrace.
The Snow Queen is overwhelmed by emotions, it becomes a dance.
SNOW QUEEN
There's something strange inside me. In my head and in my heart. It's upsetting, it's exhilarating. It's confusing. What is this?

GERDA
I think it's feelings.

*The Snow Queen is overcome by another wave of emotions.*

SNOW QUEEN
Is this what you feel all the time?
You all must be so brave.

*Kai and Gerda join in on the dance of emotions, supporting each other in turn. It resolves joyfully.*

GERDA
We should get home, I'm sure grandmother's worried about us.

SNOW QUEEN
I can take you. I can fly there in no time at all.

KAI
You know, all this time, you've never told me your name.

SNOW QUEEN
I have not used it in so long.
They called me Lucia. The patron saint of light. Because when the nights grew long and the days were short, they said I brought light into their life.

GERDA
Maybe it's not to late to bring it again.

*SHE LOOKS AT GERDA, CURIOUSLY, THEN THEY BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY HOME.*

*THE TROLLS REAPPEAR.*

GRUNDTAL
I guess it all worked out, huh?

MALM
I guess. If you like happy endings.
You know what, I think I might.

Don't tell me you've gone soft.

Hey, you're the one who was sobbing into your sleeve.

That was...dust. In my eye. It's very dusty around here, you know. HE SNIFFLES. I think it's dusty again.

You know, I love telling this story. It makes me feel all warm and fuzzy.

Trolls are always warm and fuzzy.

Yeah, on the outside, I mean on the inside.

Oh, come here you guys! THEY ALL EMBRACE.

Come on, we'd better wrap this thing up before we get too mushy.

And so the Snow Queen's icy guard had just begun to melt

And even stony hearted trolls Felt things they'd never felt.

She flew them both back to the town And bid them kind goodbyes

And told them when they missed their friend To simply watch the skies.

THE SNOW QUEEN HAS BROUGHT KAI & GERDA HOME. THEY EMBRACE.
GERDA
When will we see you again?

SNOW QUEEN
Next year at the first frost.

GERDA
Good. We'll be waiting.

SHE SMILES AND LEAVES THEM.

MALM
And so, you children young and old, our tale is near its close

INGEBORG
But when the days grow short and cold
Look for that winter rose.

GRUNDTAL
The Snow Queen passes through your town
On crisp and frosty nights

MALM
But do not fear if she draws near

INGEBORG
She brings with her delight.

GERDA
She'll blow a kiss of frosted flowers upon your windowpane.

FROST PATTERNS APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE SPACE.

KAI
Then she takes flight into the night

GERDA
'Til winter comes again.

THE SNOW QUEEN CATCHES HER REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR. SHE PAUSES FOR A MOMENT, TAKING IT ALL IN AND FINALLY SMILES. SHE STARTS TO GLOW, AND BECOMES ENGULFED BY LIGHT. SHE GLOWS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL AS A STAR, THEN VANISHES.