

# **THE SNOW QUEEN**

**From the story by  
Hans Christian Andersen**

**Book and Lyrics  
by  
Stuart Paterson**

**Music  
by  
Savourna Stevenson**



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(THE SNOW QUEEN)

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## THE SNOW QUEEN

A Play in Two Acts  
For 14 Men and 9 Women, less with doubling\*

### CHARACTERS

BHIMA	KING GRIN
COBWEB SPIDER	ROBBER WOMAN
THE SNOW QUEEN	TWITCH
KAY	NIKO
GERDA	MUSCLES
GRANDMA	REDHEAD
SCRUFF	REINDEER
PECK	TOUGH BEAR
PRINCESS LENA	SOFT BEAR
PRINCE	4 ICE-GHOSTS

\*Possible doubling for a cast of nine:  
(5 men and 4 women)

GERDA  
THE SNOW QUEEN  
COBWEB SPIDER  
KAY/SCRUFF/TWITCH  
GRANDMA/PECK/ROBBER WOMAN/ICE GHOST  
PRINCE/NIKO/SOFT BEAR/ICE GHOST  
BHIMA/TOUGH BEAR/ICE GHOST  
PRINCESS LENA/REDHEAD/ICE GHOST  
KING GRIN/MUSCLES/REINDEER

Obviously other doublings are possible.

*THE SNOW QUEEN* was first performed at The Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, Scotland. Directed by Ian Woolridge, Music by Derek Watson, Design by Colin McNeil, Choreography/Movement by Sara Van Beers. With Andrea Miller, John McGlynn, Alexander West, Judith Sweeney, Jonathan Watson, Andy Gray, John Holbeck, Elaine Collins, Charles Nowosielski.

*THE SNOW QUEEN* was first performed, in its present form, at The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, Scotland. Directed by Hugh Hodgart, Music by Savourna Stevenson, Design by Gregory Smith, Assistant Director and Choreography/Movement by Jenny Ann Deeks. With Sidney Cole, Colin Gourlay, Victoria Hardcastle, Robert Carlyle, Susan Nisbet, Grace Glover, Simon Sharkey, Blythe Duff, John Stahl.

## ACT ONE

*SCENE: An evil place. An open crack in the earth out of which come ominous rumblings, a volcanic light and a mist of smoke. Enter BHIMA, an African magician. His magnificent cloak is stained by the dust of a long journey, his air of majesty tainted by fear and exhaustion. He circles the crack tentatively. A loud rumble and he backs quickly away, turns and discovers the AUDIENCE.*

**BHIMA.** We must not be frightened!

*(He raises his arms high.)*

Terror be gone, coldness be done,

Our hearts beat with the heat of a blood red sun.

*(The words fail to reassure him. He hugs himself against the fear and the cold.)*

But Bhima is frightened. His blood turns to ice. Bhima is lonely. O, yes, I am a magician, a Lord of the Sun, but good magic counts for nothing here, for this is an evil place. But I had to come. I have heard the whispers in the wind and the voices in the sky. They all say the same. The Snow Queen will come here to search out The Devil's Mirror. The mirror must not be broken! I will find out her plan and stop her. For all our sakes, I must stop her. *(A wind sighs.)* That icy wind—it is the breath of the Snow Queen! She's coming! I will hide—and listen. But remember—we must not be frightened. *(He hides.)*

*(Enter the SNOW QUEEN and her servant, COBWEB SPIDER.)*

SNOW QUEEN. I smell the hot blood of an intruder!  
Search, Cobweb—find!

COBWEB. At once, mistress. *(He searches.)* There's no one, mighty Snow Queen. No one at all. *(Discovers AUDIENCE, calmly.)* Except them. *(Starts.)* Children! O, no—I hate children!

SNOW QUEEN. Silence! We have no time for them. Tell me—have you found a child for me, a cruel child?

COBWEB. I found rascals by the dozen, monsters by the hundred, brats by the thousand, but the truly cruel child—I found not one.

SNOW QUEEN. Darkness and Ice! If I could find a child with a heart as cruel and cold as my own I could have my greatest wish.

COBWEB. And what is your greatest wish?

SNOW QUEEN. To make Winter last forever.

COBWEB. And all you need is a cruel child?

SNOW QUEEN. Give me a child with a heart of ice and you give me power over all the good magic in the world.

COBWEB. But there are none, Mistress.

SNOW QUEEN. Then I must use the evil mirror.

COBWEB. Of course—the mirror.

SNOW QUEEN. It is a wonderful thing—the most evil mirror in the world. Behold!

*(The mirror emerges from the crack in the earth. COBWEB dances with joy and excitement.)*

COBWEB. It has the power to make everything good and beautiful which it reflects look small and stupid. It can

make even the most beautiful countryside look like cooked cabbage.

SNOW QUEEN. I will smash the mirror, and send pieces of it flying around the world. If someone should get a speck of glass in his eye...

COBWEB. Then they will be blind to good and see only evil.

SNOW QUEEN. And if a child should get a splinter of glass in his heart...

COBWEB. Then his heart will become as cold as ice—and you can make Winter last forever!

SNOW QUEEN. I will have the child! Quickly—it must be smashed. I command it!

*(BHIMA comes out of hiding.)*

BHIMA. No! The mirror must not be broken. I forbid it.

COBWEB. The intruder!

SNOW QUEEN. So it is Bhima, Lord of the Sun, Africa's mighty magician—and he forbids it. Tell me, fool—how will you stop me?

BHIMA. The Sun gives me power. I will use its magic.

SNOW QUEEN. Let me see you try. *(She makes a simple, evil gesture. BHIMA is frozen by her power.)*

COBWEB. Let's have one of your sunny spells.

BHIMA. I can't move. Help me, magic.

SNOW QUEEN. You have no magic. Summer is ending. You grow weak, I grow strong. Winter is coming—forever.

BHIMA. I will be free!

SNOW QUEEN. Never! I will hide you where you will never be found. But first—the mirror—

BHIMA. It must not be broken!

SNOW QUEEN. Come winds and serve your Queen.

Sweep the World—make the heavens scream.

*(A loud wind gets up.)*

Come—smash the mirror! *(Her voice seems to grow, to take on the power of the wind.)* Smash it! Smash it! Smash it! *(The mirror is smashed. The SNOW QUEEN and BHIMA vanish. The wind continues to blow and swirl as it carries the specks and splinters of evil glass around the world.)*

COBWEB *(to AUDIENCE)*. It has begun. The pieces of glass are circling the world. Take care a splinter does not pierce your heart—or it will be turned to ice. And then I will search you out and lead the Snow Queen to you. O, yes, *(Points into AUDIENCE.)* it might be you, or you, or you, or with any luck it might be you! And Winter will last forever. Everything will change then. For a start I'll have you call me—sir. Fare thee well, or should I say, fare thee badly. *(Exits.)*

## SCENE TWO

SCENE: GRANDMA's rose garden. The sound of CHILDREN'S VOICES raised in excitement and anger. Enter KAY. His clothes are dirty and torn, his nose may even be bleeding. Clearly he has been in a fight, but he doesn't seem defeated.

KAY *(shouting to unseen children)*. You can do what you like, but you won't ever scare me. I'm the boy the sea gave to the shore! I'm better than you all! *(The voices fade and die away. To AUDIENCE.)* I hate school. May-

be I'd like it better if I wasn't so clever. I always finish everything first and never make any mistakes. Then I get lonely waiting for everyone else to catch up, and when they do they hate me just because I've been cleverer than they. Sometimes I think I should make mistakes on purpose, just to be liked, but then I think, why should I—I'm the boy the sea gave to the shore!

*(Enter GRANDMA, pushing a wheelbarrow. She seems busy, perplexed.)*

KAY. Hullo, Grandma.

GRANDMA. Sssh, Kay.

KAY. They chased me home again, but I did what you told me to do. I stood up to them, I...

GRANDMA. I said—ssssh. I'm thinking.

KAY. Don't strain yourself.

GRANDMA. It's my garden. I'm busy. *(She exits.)*

KAY. Wait, Grandma...*(To AUDIENCE.)* That's not like her. She's really Gerda's Grandma, not mine, but she's looked after me for years and years, ever since she found me on the beach after the storm—so she may as well be my real Grandma.

*(Enter GERDA unseen by KAY.)*

KAY. Anyway, she likes me, and Gerda likes me.

GERDA *(angry)*. Who says?

KAY *(pleased to see her)*. Gerda.

GERDA. Every day it's the same. You get into a fight and I've got to help you.

KAY *(scornfully)*. Help? I'm the best fighter in the whole school.

GERDA. O, it looks like it.

KAY. What do you mean?

GERDA. If I hadn't stopped them you'd have been battered stupid.

KAY. No one asked you to take my side.

GERDA. No one else is daft enough.

KAY. I don't need help from anyone!

GERDA. Sometimes I wish you'd never come to live here!

KAY. You're like all the others. You hate me.

GERDA. Nobody hates you. It's just that...you ask for it.

That's what it is—you ask for it!

KAY. No! It's their fault—they're stupid.

GERDA. We can't all be geniuses like you.

KAY. That's true.

GERDA (to AUDIENCE). He used to be big-headed but now he's perfect.

KAY. I can't help it if I'm clever.

GERDA. And I suppose I can't help being stupid.

KAY. You're not stupid.

GERDA. Thanks very much. (She goes to exit.)

KAY. Don't go. Please, Gerda. (She stops. KAY continues, with difficulty.) I'm...sorry. I think you're very brave to take my side when everyone else is against me.

GERDA. Grandma would murder me if I didn't look after you—that's all.

KAY. No, it's true. You are brave, and kind.

GERDA. It doesn't matter.

KAY. I never feel lonely or scared, not with you beside me. I'm not scared of anything! (Immediately a loud rhythmic, clanking noise begins. KAY starts.) What's that noise? (The noise continues.)

GERDA. How should I know?

KAY. Well, it doesn't scare me.

GERDA. Who said anything about being scared?

KAY (tapping her shoulder). Gerda.

GERDA (starting). Don't do that. What?

KAY. It's getting louder so it must be getting closer.

GERDA. I can work that out for myself.

KAY. It's almost here. I can't look. (Hides his eyes against GERDA's shoulder. The noise gets louder.)

(Enter GRANDMA pushing her barrow, lost in thought, her foot stuck in a metal bucket.)

GERDA. O, it's only...

KAY. Has it gone yet?

GERDA. No.

KAY. What is it? Don't tell me. What is it?

GERDA. I've never seen anything so frightening. O, Kay—look!

KAY. I can't. I can't!

GERDA. It's coming this way. (GRANDMA begins to watch them and move towards them.) It's coming this way! It is, Kay, it is! O, no! (She laughs.)

GRANDMA. Are you being cheeky?

KAY (looking). O, it's you.

GERDA. Grandma, you have a bucket on your foot.

GRANDMA. Don't be stupid. Never heard such nonsense. (Looks down, jumps with fright.) Help—there's a bucket on my foot!

KAY. Don't worry, Grandma, help's here.

GRANDMA. I've been worrying so much I didn't even notice.

KAY. I'll get it. *(He takes hold of the bucket, lifts it along with GRANDMA's leg, and commences pulling.*

*GRANDMA is forced to follow him, hopping on one leg.)*

GRANDMA. What are you doing? You'll break my neck. Careful! Help!

KAY. Stay calm. I'll soon have it off.

GRANDMA. What—my leg? Help, Gerda, help!

GERDA *(stopping KAY)*. For someone who's supposed to be clever you can be totally stupid. You hold onto Grandma, I'll take her leg. *(They get into position).*

Right. One, two, three—heave! *(GRANDMA is stretched out. The bucket remains stuck.)* I wasn't ready.

KAY. I'll try the leg again. You hold the old bat.

GERDA. Right.

GRANDMA. Who's an old bat?

KAY. Don't panic. *(They take up their new positions and pull, but the bucket remains stuck.)*

GERDA *(to AUDIENCE)*. You can help if you want. I'll count to three and you shout—heave. One, two, three—

AUDIENCE. Heave. *(This time the bucket comes off and KAY falls backwards in a heap. When he stands, the bucket is over his head.)*

KAY. Where am I? Everything's gone dark.

GERDA. Look—Kay's gone all pale.

GRANDMA. He always did have a face like a bucket.

KAY. It's stuck. I can't see.

GERDA. Let me have a look.

KAY. I don't need help from anyone. *(He nears the edge of the stage. GERDA and GRANDMA rush, and just manage to stop him falling.)*

GERDA *(trying the bucket)*. He's right, it is stuck.

GRANDMA. There's only one thing for it. *(She takes a hammer from the wheelbarrow.)* Help's here. Brute force and ignorance—never fails.

KAY. What's going on?

GERDA. Grandma? *(GRANDMA hits the bucket with her hammer. Loud sound of a gong. KAY vibrates wildly.*

*GRANDMA takes the bucket off KAY's head, and hands it to GERDA. KAY continues to vibrate.)*

GRANDMA. You look a bit shaky. I'll get you a seat.

GERDA. And I'll put this somewhere safe. *(GERDA puts the bucket "somewhere safe." GRANDMA wheels the barrow into the back of KAY's knees. KAY collapses into the barrow.)*

GRANDMA *(dusting her hands)*. There. That's that sorted.

KAY. I'm glad you think so.

GERDA. Grandma—what is it you're so worried about?

GRANDMA. My garden. There's something wrong with my beautiful garden.

GERDA. It looks all right to me.

GRANDMA. You should look harder. My flowers are dying. It's as if something has told them that Summer is ending and Winter must come.

GERDA. What could have done that?

GRANDMA *(shivers)*. There's something in the air, can't you feel it? Those sudden blasts of icy wind, the way the animals are digging down deep into the earth. These all mean one thing— Winter is on the march.

KAY. I love Winter.

GERDA. But it's too early for Winter.

GRANDMA. I've never been wrong and I tell you all the signs are for snow, for the swarming of the white bees.



KAY (*to himself*). Wonderful, pure, white, deep snow. (*To GRANDMA.*) Do the white bees have a Queen-like real bees have a Queen? Does the snow have a Queen?

GRANDMA. Some say it has. She always flies right in the centre of the swarm, where the snowflakes are the thickest. But she never lies down to rest. No, when the wind dies she returns to the great black clouds.

KAY. Is she very beautiful?

GRANDMA. O, yes. She is lovelier than words can say.

GERDA. Where does she live?

GRANDMA. She lives at the most northerly point of the Earth, at the very top of the world.

GERDA. That's all right then.

GRANDMA. But on Winter nights when we are asleep she flies silently through the streets and alleyways. Sometimes she stops to look through a window and when you get up in the morning the window is covered with flowers of frost for she has breathed on the glass.

GERDA. Just thinking of her gives me the shivers.

GRANDMA. That's because she's the Queen of snow and ice and all things cold and heartless.

KAY. That's a good story, but that's all it is—a story.

GERDA. Who says?

KAY. I say.

GERDA. And I suppose you're always right.

KAY. Correct.

GRANDMA. Watch it! Tell me, who are you?

KAY (*a happy, practised response*). The boy the sea gave to the shore!

GRANDMA (*amused, but with an edge*). That's right, and don't you ever forget it. That makes you very special. But who am I? Tell me that.

KAY (*less happy*). The woman who clatters my ears.

GRANDMA. And when do I clatter your ears?

KAY. When I get big-headed. (*She shapes to clatter his ears.*)

GRANDMA. Good! And don't forget that either.

KAY. But it was just a story, wasn't it?

GRANDMA. Something's frightened my garden, that much is true. I shouldn't be standing here talking. My poor garden. Gangway. (*She tips KAY out of the barrow and exits with it.*)

GERDA. I've never seen her look so worried.

(*Enter COBWEB SPIDER, unseen by KAY and GERDA.*)

KAY. Don't be frightened, Gerda. If the Snow Queen really came here I'd pick her up and put her right on top of the stove until she melted clean away.

COBWEB (*appalled*). You would what! The nerve! The cheek! To even let her name pass your lips. She could crush you with her little finger.

KAY (*walking round him*). What a funny little man.

COBWEB. Careful, brat! My web is spun. It waits for a fly.

KAY. Sorry I spoke.

GERDA. What do you want here?

COBWEB. I'm on important business for a very important lady. Let's just say I'm looking for someone.

GERDA. Who are you looking for?

COBWEB. I don't know yet.

KAY. You don't know who you're looking for? You must be stupid.

COBWEB. O, I hope it's you! I really hope it's you!

GERDA. What do you hope's him?

COBWEB. None of your business—brat!



GERDA. You really are very bad-tempered.

COBWEB. Why, thank you.

KAY. I'm going to tell her grandma on you.

COBWEB. Her grandma, not yours I see. She's not your sister?

KAY. No—she's not my sister.

COBWEB. So you're all on your own. How very interesting.

*(Enter GRANDMA.)*

GRANDMA. No. Kay may not be my real grandson but I love him just as much as Gerda who is my own.

COBWEB. Love! I hate love!

GERDA. And he may not be my brother and he might be big-headed some of the time, but I love him too.

COBWEB. More love! I'll be sick! So you would be sad if he was, eh, taken away?

GRANDMA. Taken away?

GERDA. Of course we'd be sad.

COBWEB. I'm so glad.

GRANDMA. But no one is going to take him away.

GERDA. That's right because I would stop them.

COBWEB. I'd like to see you try—brat!

KAY. Don't you talk to her like that—brat!

COBWEB *(to the heavens)*. O please, let it be him.

KAY. Now he's talking to himself. He is stupid.

COBWEB. You should walk in fear of me! My name will become a legend. Cobweb The Great, Cobweb The Conqueror, Cobweb The...*(He steps in the bucket. It sticks to his foot.)*

KAY. Ha-ha! Serves you right. You're just a clown, that's all you are—a horrible little clown. *(Pause—COBWEB glares at KAY, points with an outstretched arm.)*

COBWEB. We'll freeze you, boy! O, yes—we'll freeze you!

GRANDMA. Leave him, Kay. And you, Gerda. Quickly now. I don't like the look of him. *(Exits.)*

KAY. Nobody likes the look of him. Come on, Gerda.

GERDA. I'm coming. *(KAY exits. GERDA goes to exit, but stops.)* Come on then, I'll help you.

COBWEB. Don't come near me! I can't stand being touched by children. Snakes, spiders, jellyfish—anything but children! *(She pays no attention and takes hold of the bucket.)*

GERDA. It'll come off easy. *(She pulls it off, simply.)*

There, you see. I told you. *(GERDA exits.)*

COBWEB. Go away! Horrible brat—but it is the boy I want, the boy who laughed at me. *(To AUDIENCE.)* I must freeze his heart so that the Snow Queen will come and steal him away. I could try my magic. I wonder... *(He kneels and addresses the heavens.)* Hear me, Mistress, hear your faithful servant. *(A sigh of wind. The SNOW QUEEN'S VOICE mingles with the wind.)*

SNOW QUEEN VOICE. The Snow Queen has heard you.

COBWEB. O Mistress, give me power over the winds, let me point them at the boy.

SNOW QUEEN VOICE. It shall be so.

COBWEB. It shall be so, it shall be so! Let me see.

And employ your evil powers

To destroy these vile flowers.

*(The wind gets louder, flowers wither, the light becomes harsher, colder. COBWEB begins to dance with joy.)*

It's working, it's really working! Cobweb has power, he is a great magician. Nothing can stop him! *(He continues to dance.)*

(Enter KAY and GERDA at a run.)

KAY. What's happening? It's got so cold.

GERDA. The poor flowers. And look—a black cloud has blotted out the sun.

KAY. The wind is like a knife.

GERDA. Stay back, Kay. I don't like this.

KAY. It's him that's doing it, it's him!

COBWEB. Come Mistress, switch the sun down low  
And turn this world pure white with snow.

(It begins to snow.)

KAY (delighted). O, Gerda, look—it's snowing!

GERDA. This shouldn't be happening. It's too early.

KAY. But it's beautiful!

GERDA. Come away, Kay. I don't like any of this.

KAY. Don't tell me what to do. He can't do me any harm.

COBWEB. Come winds—serve your Queen!

GERDA. No!

COBWEB. And with his eye we'll make him scream! (A violent rush of wind, an icy burst of light. KAY is struck in the eye.)

KAY. My eye! There's something in my eye.

GERDA. Please, Kay—come away.

KAY. It hurts, it really hurts.

COBWEB. Now winds—the second part.

Strike him with a splinter through the heart!

(KAY is hurled backwards, clutching his chest.)

GERDA. Kay!

KAY. O, Gerda, my heart—help me.

GERDA. What have you done to him?

COBWEB. There is an evil splinter in his heart, but it won't hurt for long. His heart is turning to ice, isn't it my little snowman?

GERDA. Leave him alone.

KAY. No! You leave me alone. I hate you.

GERDA. Kay—you don't hate me.

KAY. I don't know...I'm sorry...

COBWEB. What are you sorry for?

KAY. You're right—I'm not sorry. Go away, Gerda.

Gerda! What an ugly, stupid name for an ugly, stupid girl.

GERDA (shouting off). Grandma! Come quickly!

KAY. Grandma! A weak and useless old woman, that's all she is.

COBWEB. Move it. I love it!

GERDA. But Kay, we love you.

KAY. You've never loved me and I...I've...I've never loved you!

COBWEB. Come Snow Queen—the boy is ready.

GERDA. The Snow Queen? Kay—look!

(Loud drums. Two huge, terrifying POLAR BEARS march through the auditorium.)

GERDA. Run Kay—run! She's coming!

(Enter the SNOW QUEEN.)

SNOW QUEEN. Leave him! The boy is mine. (To KAY.)  
Come, I will take you away with me. (GERDA exits at a run.)

KAY (mesmerised). Will the bears take us?

SNOW QUEEN (gently). Do you like the bears?

KAY. They're lovely.

SNOW QUEEN. Then they shall pull our sledge some of the way, but then we shall fly through the air. The

moon shall be our light. We will fly above the world and look down on oceans, forests and lakes. When we reach the wastes the bears will run below us on the ice. In the morning you will fall asleep at my feet. But you're shivering.

KAY. I'm so cold.

SNOW QUEEN. Come—creep in under my bearskin coat. *(He complies.)* There's my little boy. *(She kisses him.)* Are you still cold? No, I didn't think so. Sssh, now. Soon you won't feel anything at all. *(She wraps her cloak around him.)* I have him! Winter will last forever! To my sledge. Now bears—forward! To the North. Forward! *(Exit BEARS, SNOW QUEEN and KAY.)*

*(Enter GERDA and GRANDMA at a run.)*

GERDA. Come back! Please come back!

COBWEB. Too late. He has gone where no one can ever find him.

GERDA. I won't believe that. I'll find him, you'll see.

COBWEB. Never! *(To AUDIENCE.)* Fare thee badly! Ha! *(Exits.)*

GERDA. Come on, Grandma—we've got to go after him.

GRANDMA. No Gerda, that was the Snow Queen. Kay is lost forever.

GERDA. Then I'll go on my own—into the Wild Forest.

GRANDMA. Please, Gerda. Losing Kay is bad enough, but I couldn't bear to lose you too.

GERDA. I'm sorry, Grandma—I'm going after him. I have to.

GRANDMA. No, Gerda—please. *(Gerda exits in pursuit.)* Come back! I would go with her but I'm too old and tired to keep up. But we must not be frightened!

Gerda's strong—I've made sure of that, and the creatures in the forest are bound to look after her. *(To AUDIENCE.)* And you! You're young and you're strong—you can keep up with her. If you see her will you try and look after her for me?

AUDIENCE. Yes.

GRANDMA. Even though the Snow Queen is very cruel?

AUDIENCE. Yes.

GRANDMA. You're very brave. Thank you. *(Exits.)*

### SCENE THREE

SCENE: *The Wild Forest. Enter SCRUFF, a young raven.*

SCRUFF *(shouting off)*. Come on, Auntie Peck—hurry up. *(To AUDIENCE.)* She's a daft old divot! I'd fly off and leave her here in the Wild Forest only she's got the food. She used to be a nice ordinary old bird until she started working for the Princess. You should hear her now—*(Posh voice.)* "I'll have you know I am the official news-gatherer to Her Royal Highness the Princess Lena." Honestly—she's turned into a right pain in the beak. She needs taken down a peg or two. I wonder. Listen—will you do me a favour?

AUDIENCE. Yes.

SCRUFF. I hardly heard that. Come on—will you do me a favour?

AUDIENCE. Yes.

SCRUFF. Thanks. This is what I want you to do. When my Auntie jumps out in front of you and shouts—"Hullo everybody"—I want you to shout back—"Shut

your beak." Remember that now—"Shut your beak." Ssssh. I think I hear her now. Let's see if you can get it right first time.

(Enter AUNTIE PECK, carrying a bag of food.)

PECK. Hullo everybody.

AUDIENCE. Shut your beak.

PECK. Too kind, too kind...hang on, that's not right, in fact that's extremely rude! I'll just have to try again.  
(Exits.)

SCRUFF. You were brilliant. Let's do it even louder this time.

(Enter PECK.)

PECK. Hullo, everybody.

AUDIENCE. Shut your beak.

PECK. Scruff—did you hear that?

SCRUFF. I didn't hear anything, Auntie Peck.

PECK. Hullo, everybody.

AUDIENCE. Shut your beak.

SCRUFF. I didn't hear that either.

PECK. I'll murder you, birdbrain! (To AUDIENCE.) And as for you—your manners leave a great deal to be desired. I'll have you know I am the official news-gatherer to Her Royal Highness, the Princess Lena.

SCRUFF. Come on, Auntie—make with the food.

PECK (still to AUDIENCE). Without me she would be nothing!

SCRUFF. O, belt up, you daft old crow. I want my lunch.

PECK. C-C-C-C...

SCRUFF. What's the matter, Auntie? Must have got a worm stuck.

PECK. C-C-C-C...(SCRUFF slaps her on the back.) —C-Crow! Don't you dare use language like that in front of me. Never forget—we are ravens and ravens are vastly superior to c-crows.

SCRUFF. I can't wait any longer. (He snatches the bag of food.)

PECK. Give me that back!

SCRUFF. But I'm starving, Auntie Peck. In fact, I'm ravenous. Do you get it?—ravenous.

PECK. We are not amused. Give me the royal leftovers!

SCRUFF. Have you gone raven mad? You'd eat the lot. Raven mad! I'm brilliant.

PECK. We are not impressed.

SCRUFF. No—you're a raven loony. A raven loony! I never knew I was so funny.

PECK. Give me the royal leftovers! I won't say it again.

SCRUFF. O, go on, say it again. Or I'll fly off with the food.

PECK. Give me the royal leftovers.

SCRUFF. Say "please."

PECK (controlled, but murderous). Please.

SCRUFF. No chance. I wonder what's in the bag. (He peeks in.) O, joy—bacon and tea bags.

PECK. Dear nephew, we shouldn't fight. We've always been close after all.

SCRUFF. Have we?

PECK (edging closer). Of course we have, dearest Scruff. You've always been my favourite. (Grabs him by the throat and shakes him.) I said—give me the royal leftovers, or I'll break your beak! (SCRUFF hands over the royal leftovers.)

SCRUFF. Okay, okay—don't get in a flap.

PECK (*rummaging through bag*). Let's see what else is here.

SCRUFF. That doesn't matter. Auntie Peck—we're ravens.

PECK. That's true, and there's one thing you can always say about ravens.

SCRUFF. Ravens

PECK. Will

SCRUFF. Eat

PECK. Anything.

SCRUFF. Right—let's get stuck in. (*They attack the food bag, battering and tearing at it with their beaks. A VOICE is heard offstage.*)

VOICE. Is there anyone there? Hullo.

PECK. Someone's coming! Someone's coming here!

SCRUFF. What'll we do?

PECK. Quick—hide. It might be news, something to tell the Princess! Hurry, birdbrain. Hurry! (*They hide. SCRUFF sneaks out to reach a piece of stray food. PECK smacks his beak and hauls him back into hiding.*)

(*Enter GERDA.*)

GERDA. O—I was sure there was someone here. I heard voices. I'm sure I did. But there's no one here, so why is it I feel I'm being watched? (*She walks past their hiding place. PECK and SCRUFF come out of hiding; tight against GERDA's back and walking in unison with her. GERDA does not notice.*) I haven't seen anyone for weeks and weeks. This forest is so huge and lonely, maybe I'll never see anyone ever again. (*She stops; as do PECK and SCRUFF. They lean their beaks on her*

*shoulders.*) The hair on the back of my neck's gone all tickly, just like someone's breathing on it. (*She starts to walk, stops, starts again. Then stops quickly and turns around, catching them out.*) Got you!

SCRUFF and PECK (*in unison, flapping their wings*).  
Kroork!

GERDA. Birds! Is that all? I set off ages ago to find my friend, Kay, and all I find are birds. Still, at least I won't feel so lonely. (*She sits down.*) I'm exhausted. (*PECK and SCRUFF sit down beside her, "all ears."*) Soon after I'd followed the Snow Queen, she'd stolen Kay away, you see, I got lost in all the trees and couldn't find my way home. Then this horrible old witch captured me and kept me prisoner in her barge. We sailed for miles down the river until, one dark night, her boat went over a high waterfall. (*PECK and SCRUFF look sea-sick.*) I escaped and reached the shore but I don't think she was so lucky. So then I walked on and on, always North, because I've heard that's where the Snow Queen lives. I've asked everyone I've met if they'd seen Kay. O, some of them were kind and gave me food but nobody had seen him. Then I came to this forest and here I am—lost and lonely. (*PECK and SCRUFF rest their beaks on her shoulders.*) Thanks for listening, you're nice birds. I just wish you could speak, then you might be able to help me. (*She embraces them.*)

PECK. Ah well.

SCRUFF. You win some, you lose some.

GERDA. I suppose you're right. Wait a minute—you spoke!

SCRUFF and PECK (*in unison*). Kroork!

GERDA. No, I must be imagining things. Just a pair of silly crows.

PECK. C-C-C-C...(SCRUFF slaps her back.) Why thank you, Scruff, I nearly needed a plumber there.

SCRUFF (to GERDA). Actually, we're ravens.

GERDA. I'm very sorry, but you did speak, didn't you?

SCRUFF. But, of course. Ravens are extremely intelligent birds. Well, some of us are.

PECK. Out of my way. I'll deal with this! (She pushes SCRUFF aside. To GERDA.) I'll have you know I am the official news gatherer...(SCRUFF grabs PECK'S beak and holds it shut.)

SCRUFF. One of these days I'm going to glue her beak shut. She wants to take you to see Princess Lena. She's her boss. (He lets go of PECK'S beak.)

PECK. A stranger is news around here. The Princess loves news. So come to the castle. (Tugs GERDA'S arm.) Come with me.

GERDA. You're very kind—but I can't. I've got to keep on looking for Kay. He's my best friend.

PECK. Pity, pity. There hasn't been a stranger here since I found the boy in the forest.

GERDA (urgently). Boy—what boy?

SCRUFF. The boy who married Princess Lena.

GERDA. What's his name? Tell me.

PECK. O, he hasn't been given a name yet. We just call him Prince.

SCRUFF. But you should have seen him. Even though he had poor clothes like you, he walked right up to the castle and talked as if he'd been born there. O, no—he wasn't scared.

GERDA. That sounds like Kay. He must have escaped from the Snow Queen. What did he look like?

PECK. He had shining eyes like yours and wore a pair of red boots.

GERDA. Kay had red boots. Tell me more—please.

SCRUFF. Well, the Princess chose the boy as her husband as soon as she saw how clever he was.

GERDA. Clever!

SCRUFF. He can even do fractions in his head.

GERDA. It is Kay. I've got to see him. Take me to the castle—please.

PECK. My pleasure.

SCRUFF. Hey—what about me?

PECK (slaps his beak). You stay here and look for news.

(PECK exits with GERDA.)

SCRUFF. Greedy old crow! News! Fat chance. This place is about as exciting as a cold fish supper. What am I saying—a cold fish supper is exciting. Never mind. What I mean is that nothing, but nothing, ever happens around here. (A sigh of wind. The light dims.) Well, wait a minute and buckle my beak—it's gone and gone all scary and that's the coldest wind I've ever felt. And wait another minute—someone's coming! I'd better hide, but ssssh, don't tell where I am. (He hides.)

(Enter COBWEB SPIDER.)

COBWEB. The girl—I've got to stop the girl. (To AUDIENCE.) My Mistress has promised to make me a Prince in her Empire of Ice—but only if I stop Gerda. And you will help me, won't you?

AUDIENCE. No.

COBWEB. O, yes you will.

AUDIENCE. O, no we won't.

COBWEB. O, yes you will.

AUDIENCE. O, no, we won't.

COBWEB. Suit yourselves—brats! You see, Cobweb knows where she's gone. (*Points in the correct direction.*) That way—to the Castle of King Grin. The King is evil and greedy so he's bound to help me catch the girl. Ha! She has played into my web. (*He crosses the stage, laughing evilly.*) You'll see—I'll stop her. Cobweb is invincible. Cobweb is a great hunter.

(*SCRUFF comes out of hiding, tight against COBWEB's back and walking in unison with him.*)

COBWEB. Don't you dare laugh at me! Nothing escapes Cobweb. This spider always catches the fly! (*He exits, SCRUFF stuck fast to his back.*)

#### SCENE FOUR

SCENE: *The castle of KING GRIN. Enter PECK, on tiptoe.*

PECK. Psst—you can come out, Gerda. There's no one here.

(*Enter GERDA.*)

GERDA. I'm sure we're being followed. (*Shivers.*) I've seen shadows on the wall, lights that move and dance.

PECK. Those are dreams, nothing but dreams. You'll get a better look at them when you're asleep in your bed.

GERDA. I don't like this castle.

PECK (*listening*). Ssssh!

GERDA (*a whisper*). I miss my Grandma. I'm scared.

PECK (*a whisper*). Nonsense. There's nothing to be scared of.

GERDA. Then why are we whispering?

PECK (*still a whisper*). Are we? (*Normal voice.*) O—I suppose we are. Krork!—Ssssh.

GERDA. I wish you'd tell me who we're hiding from.

PECK. It's King Grin. The Princess's father. He's very cruel and he hates strangers.

GERDA. What does he do to them?

PECK. Well...(*She slides her hand across her throat.*)

GERDA. I wish I hadn't asked.

PECK. We'll be all right if we find the Princess first.

GERDA. It's Kay I want. Think how proud he'll be when he hears how far I've come just to find him. I've got to find him.

PECK. He's always with the Princess, so—her first. Come on. (*They go to exit. A loud cackling laugh is heard from offstage.*) O, no— it's him, it's the King!

GERDA. But he's laughing!

PECK. Don't be fooled—that's when he's at his worst. Quickly—hide! (*GERDA and PECK hide.*)

(*Enter KING GRIN and COBWEB.*)

KING GRIN. Any friend of the Snow Queen is a friend of mine.

COBWEB. So you will help me catch the girl?

KING GRIN. It'll be a pleasure. But there is of course the matter of...

COBWEB. Riches.

KING GRIN. Exactly—riches.



COBWEB. Your greed does you credit. My Mistress always rewards her servants.

KING GRIN. Imagine—being paid to be cruel. Heaven on earth, a dream come true! (*Sniffs the air.*) Yeugh! What's that smell?

COBWEB. What smell?

KING GRIN. Are you sure you haven't, eh, you know...?

COBWEB. Of course I haven't. Don't be ridiculous.

KING GRIN. Are you sure?

COBWEB. Of course I'm sure!

KING GRIN. It's getting worse.

COBWEB. Phew! You can say that again.

KING GRIN. It's getting worse.

COBWEB. O! Wait—I'd recognise that smell anywhere. (*Rounds on AUDIENCE.*) Children!

KING GRIN. Where?

COBWEB (*pointing*). There!

KING GRIN. I don't believe it! What are they doing in my castle?

COBWEB. They get everywhere.

KING GRIN. Let me at them! (*To AUDIENCE.*) I hate children! Monsters, that's what you are—brats and monsters, the lot of you! Don't you dare talk back to me. I am your elder and better! Wait till I get my hands on you. (*He rolls up his sleeves and climbs down into the auditorium.*) Disgusting, smelly, cheeky, loathsome brats! I'll throw you in my dungeon. I'll feed you to my dogs, I'll...

COBWEB. Leave them. They're not worth the trouble.

KING GRIN. I'm sorry, Mr. Spider—I'm going to teach them some respect. Nothing you can say will stop me. (*Moves menacingly towards AUDIENCE.*)

COBWEB. Money.

KING GRIN. Once my mind is made up...what did you say?

COBWEB. Money, King Grin—money. Or if you like—gold, riches, wealth. (*KING GRIN moves back onto the stage, in an ecstasy of greed.*) Silver doubloons, treasure, precious stones, diamonds...(*COBWEB reaches into his pocket and produces an enormous, sparkling diamond.*) This diamond in return for the girl!

KING GRIN. Let me hold it, let me touch it, let me stroke it. Now, now! I must have it now! Give, give, give, give. Stamp foot! Stamp foot! (*He stamps his foot down hard on COBWEB's foot. COBWEB throws the diamond in the air and grabs at his sore foot. KING GRIN catches the diamond.*) At last, my beauty. At last. Now let me look at you. (*He laughs greedily and examines the diamond.*)

COBWEB (*confidentially, to AUDIENCE*). Any idiot can tell it's a fake.

KING GRIN (*knowledgeably*). Mmmm—well this is obviously real.

COBWEB. So you like it then?

KING GRIN. Like it! I'm in love. (*COBWEB snatches back the diamond. KING GRIN screams in horror.*) No! Nooo! Give back, give back. Mine, all mine. Mine's now, all mine's!

COBWEB. First you must help me stop the girl.

KING GRIN. Anything. I'll do anything. Are you sure she's in my castle?

COBWEB. I followed her here. She was with a stupid-looking crow.

PECK (*from hiding*). C-C-C-C-C

COBWEB. What was that?

KING GRIN. That's just the bird—that's them!

(GERDA and PECK come out of hiding and exit at a run.)

COBWEB. After them!

KING GRIN. Hurry!

COBWEB. You hurry!

KING GRIN. You hurry!

COBWEB. You hurry first!

KING GRIN. You hurry first!

COBWEB. O, hurry up and hurry!

KING GRIN. I'm hurrying. I'm hurrying! (They exit at a run, after some confusion.)

(Enter SCRUFF, following them.)

SCRUFF. Sssh—Krook—sssh. (He exits in pursuit.)

(Enter PRINCE wearing his red boots, his back to AUDIENCE. He runs quickly across the stage.)

PRINCE. I'll hide, Princess—you seek. (Exits.)

(Enter PRINCESS LENA, spoilt, huffy, luxuriously dressed.)

LENA (shouting off). But I wanted to hide! O, never mind. You can't hide from me, Prince, I know every inch of this castle.

(Enter PECK and GERDA, unseen by LENA.)

LENA (still shouting off). I'll count to a hundred and then I'll find you, just you wait. (She covers her face with her hands.) One, two; three, four, five...

PECK. Look, it's the Princess! Pssst—Your Majesty.

LENA. Don't interrupt—I'm counting: Seventy-five, seventy-six, seventy-seven...

GERDA. That was quick.

PECK. She cheats at everything. Pssst—Your Majesty.

LENA (looking up). O, what is it?

PECK. Look—I've brought you news.

LENA. So you have, Peck—well done. O, I do love news.

PECK. I don't suppose there's any royal leftovers.

LENA. Shut your beak! Now, let me look at my news.

GERDA. Please. I've got to find my...

LENA (interrupting). You must be cold wearing such poor clothes. What's your name?

GERDA. It's...

LENA. You are cold, aren't you?

GERDA. I'm...

LENA. I knew it. I'll get you a coat like mine. Lovely, isn't it? I've got hundreds. Why are you here? I suppose you must be lost. Are you lost?

GERDA. I'm...

PECK. She's...

LENA. And you must be hungry. (PECK nods.) Not you, you idiot. (To GERDA.) We must get you some food. O, don't thank me—I love giving to the poor. Come to the kitchen. What did you say your name was?

GERDA. I didn't, but it's Gerda, and really I'm not hungry.

LENA. But you must...

PECK. She's looking for her friend.

GERDA. That's right. He's here in the castle.

LENA. But...

PECK. She's sure it's the boy you married.

GERDA. I've got to find him. I've got to.

LENA. Honestly—I can't get a word in edgeways!

GERDA. Tell me where he is—please.

LENA. Well...I don't know. We're playing hide and seek.

GERDA. Then which way did he go?

LENA. You won't try and take him away from me will you?

GERDA. I only want to see that he's safe.

LENA. Do you promise?

GERDA. Yes. I promise.

LENA. He went that way.

GERDA. O, thank you. *(Exits, at a run.)*

PECK. Krork!

LENA. Wait! You'll get lost on your own. Come on, Peck—we've got to help her. *(They exit in pursuit.)*

*(Enter COBWEB and KING GRIN.)*

COBWEB. After them!

KING GRIN. After them! *(They collide.)*

COBWEB. I am after them!

KING GRIN. So am I!

COBWEB. Then hurry! *(They exit, after some confusion. SCRUFF follows them, stops for a very quick breather, and exits in pursuit.)*

*(Enter GERDA, tentative, scared, excited.)*

GERDA. The corridors in this castle go on for miles and miles. *(Wiping suddenly at her head.)* And there are cobwebs everywhere. I think I'm lost again. Kay, Kay—if you can hear me, please show yourself. Wait till

you hear how far I've come to find you. Please, Kay, don't hide from me any more.

*(PRINCE leaps out of hiding holding a mask over his face.)*

PRINCE *(loud, like a boo)*. Here!

GERDA *(starting)*. You frightened me. It is Kay isn't it? Tell me it is. *(No response.)* Then show your face—please.

PRINCE. Who are you?

GERDA. Come on, Kay—you do so know me. You must...*(PRINCE removes the mask. It is not KAY. GERDA is hurt, hangs her head).* O.

PRINCE. Don't be so sad. I didn't mean to frighten you.

GERDA. It's not your fault.

*(Enter PECK and LENA who carries a beautiful coat.)*

PECK. Is it him, is it him?

LENA. I'm dying to know. Is it, is it?

PECK. Tell us. Tell us. *(GERDA is too near tears to speak. She merely shakes her head.)* I'm sorry, Gerda.

LENA *(holding out coat)*. I've brought you this. Here, put it on. You'll feel better. *(She drapes the coat over GERDA's shoulders.)* You certainly look better.

PRINCE. Who is it I'm not, and why's she crying?

GERDA. I thought you were...*(GERDA begins to cry. PECK helps her out.)*

PECK *(to PRINCE)*. She thought you might be her friend Kay. *(With disgust.)* But you're not!

PRINCE. I can't help that. Keep your feathers on. (To GERDA.) Listen, Gerda—I may not be Kay, but I'll be your friend if you like. We'll all be your friends.

LENA. That's right.

PECK. So don't cry, Gerda.

PRINCE. Stay here with us.

LENA. Yes, stay! You can share our toys and clothes. They're all beautiful. Say you'll stay.

GERDA. I don't know.

LENA. You can have anything you want.

GERDA. Really, anything?

PRINCE. Cheer up, Gerda. Look at it this way. Things can't get any worse,

*(Enter SCRUFF, out of breath. He tries to give a warning, but can't get the words out. Enter COBWEB.)*

COBWEB. Ah—ha!

GERDA. You!

COBWEB. Me!

PRINCE. Who's me? I mean—who's he?

GERDA. He helped the Snow Queen steal Kay away.

COBWEB. And now I've got you.

PECK. Run, Gerda!

LENA and PRINCE *(in unison)*. Run!

*(GERDA runs—but only into the arms of KING GRIN.)*

KING GRIN. I've got her! I'm rich, I'm rich.

SCRUFF. Leave her alone.

PRINCE. She hasn't done anything wrong.

COBWEB. That's her problem.

KING GRIN. To the dungeon with the girl.

PECK. You can't do that.

KING GRIN. To the dungeon with the bird.

PECK. Me and my big beak.

SCRUFF. Leave her alone! *(SCRUFF attacks KING GRIN with his beak. KING GRIN is forced to let GERDA go.)*

PECK, PRINCE and LENA *(in unison)*. Run, Gerda—run!

COBWEB. Stop her! *(GERDA starts to run. She clearly has a chance to escape, but she stops, hangs her head. Silence.)*

PECK. Gerda?

GERDA. I can't run any more. I'll never find Kay and I'll never find my way home.

KING GRIN. To the dungeon with...*(COBWEB kicks him, shuts him up.)*

COBWEB *(to GERDA)*. So, you give up then?

GERDA. Yes, I give up.

COBWEB *(thrilled)*. Well, well—what a pity.

LENA. Then you will stay with us?

GERDA. I've nowhere else to go. I'd like that very much, thank you. *(LENA, PRINCE and the BIRDS shout and clap for joy.)*

PRINCE. You won't be sorry.

LENA. I'll dress you, then we'll show you all our toys.

PRINCE. Come on, Gerda. *(LENA, PRINCE and BIRDS press around GERDA, lead her out.)*

KING GRIN. You've let her escape! My diamond!

COBWEB. Here, fool. *(Throws KING GRIN the diamond.)* Sadness and toys—the deepest dungeon of all.

KING GRIN *(slobbering over diamond)*. Ha—ha, of course...eh?

COBWEB. She has lost her courage and can never escape. She has given up and she is helpless against me. I will fetch my Mistress, the Snow Queen. She will come here

and freeze the girl to death. (Exit COBWEB and KING GRIN.)

## SCENE FIVE

SCENE: *The playroom in the castle, full of beautiful toys of all shapes and sizes—dolls, a trapeze, stuffed bears, rocking horses, etc. Enter GERDA, PRINCE and LENA. GERDA is beautifully dressed by LENA, but she carries a plain bag.*

PRINCE (*excited*). Did you see it, did you see it?  
LENA. I saw it. A huge white bird flying around the highest tower. It was beautiful.

PRINCE. Did you see it, Gerda?

LENA. She didn't even look.

GERDA. I'm sorry. I really...

PRINCE. She won't smile.

LENA. She's fed up.

GERDA. No...

PRINCE. She doesn't like our toys.

GERDA. It's not...

LENA. She's wearing my best clothes and she's fed up!

GERDA. No, it's not...

LENA (*stamping her foot*). Well—what is it then? Give her everything and she walks around with her face tripping her!

GERDA. The toys and clothes are lovely, and you're very kind.

LENA. Huh!

GERDA. It's just that I miss my grandma very much, and I miss Kay too.

PRINCE. We're not good enough for her!

GERDA. I didn't mean that.

LENA. She's no fun! Come on, Prince—leave her.

GERDA. Don't go. Please don't leave me. (Exit PRINCE and LENA.) I can't help feeling sad. O—now I'm all on my own.

(Enter SCRUFF and PECK.)

SCRUFF and PECK (*in unison*). Krok!

GERDA. Peck! And Scruff!

SCRUFF. Did you remember, Gerda?

PECK. Did you?

GERDA. Of course I remembered. I promised, didn't I? (*Holds out bag.*) Here.

SCRUFF. Royal leftovers! (*He snatches bag.*)

PECK. Thank you, Gerda.

SCRUFF. No one else ever remembers us.

PECK. Right, Scruff—let's get beaked in! (*Both peer into bag.*)

SCRUFF. O, joy—custard and cauliflower!

PECK. Carrots and chocolate sauce!

SCRUFF. Ice cream and cabbage! (*They guzzle all the food in the bag. GERDA is searching through the toys.*)

PECK. What are you looking for, Gerda?

SCRUFF. Those are the old toys. No one every plays with them.

GERDA. Sssh. I can hear something. Listen. (*The sound of a faint voice.*)

VOICE. Help me. Set me free.

SCRUFF. It's coming from over there.

GERDA. I'll go and look.

PECK (*covering her eyes*). Never go and look! No one should ever go and look!

SCRUFF. O, shut your beak.

GERDA. I wonder what's behind here.

*(She pulls at an ancient velvet hanging. It falls to reveal a larger than life-size Russian doll. GERDA and the BIRDS start back with fear—the doll is decorated with a life-size painting of the SNOW QUEEN.)*

PECK. Come away, Gerda.

GERDA. I thought it was really her.

SCRUFF. She scares me.

VOICE. Set me free, set me free.

PECK. Listen.

GERDA. These dolls open up, I know they do. *(She heaves at the doll, but can't open it.)* Help me open it.

VOICE. Help me.

PECK *(making to exit)*. I'll go for help. *(SCRUFF grabs her.)*

SCRUFF. Doesn't she make you proud? Come on, Auntie Peck! *(They help GERDA pull the doll open, only to reveal the identical doll inside.)*

PECK. I've done my bit. I'm for my nest.

VOICE. Help me.

GERDA. Listen—it might be Kay. Come on! *(They pull the doll open, revealing the next doll.)* The next one—hurry!

PECK *(backing away)*. Not me, Gerda. Not me.

GERDA. Come on then, Scruff.

SCRUFF *(backing away)*. I'm sorry, Gerda—I'm too scared. You'll have to do it yourself.

*(Music. GERDA opens the dolls up, pulling with all her strength, until finally, she releases BHIMA. GERDA hangs her head, sad that it is not KAY.)*

BHIMA. I'm free! I'm free! I'd given up all hope. Thank you, little girl. Thank you.

PECK *(pushing to the front)*. Of course it was all my idea. And just exactly who are you?

BHIMA. My name is Bhima, Lord of the Sun. I am a magician.

PECK. And I'm Peck. I am a raven. This is Gerda. She's ...A magician!

SCRUFF. Show us some magic then!

BHIMA. I'm sorry—ever since the Snow Queen locked me up I've used all my magic just to stay alive.

PECK. Huh!

GERDA. The Snow Queen! Then maybe you know where Kay is.

BHIMA. Who's Kay?

GERDA. My friend. Well he was—then he got something in his eye and a splinter in his heart and The Snow Queen came and stole him away.

BHIMA. The evil mirror! Then her plan has worked.

GERDA. What plan?

BHIMA. Her plan to make Winter last forever. With Kay she has the power to freeze the world.

GERDA. You're a magician—you should have stopped her.

BHIMA. I tried with all my might, but I wasn't strong enough.

PECK. Pathetic!

GERDA. I wasn't strong enough either. I was going to find Kay, then the Snow Queen's servant caught me and I just gave up.

BHIMA. But why should she try so hard to stop you? I wonder. Unless she fears you, unless she fears you have the power to break her spell! That must be it!

GERDA. I don't understand.

BHIMA. Listen! Once you leave the castle you must go North—forever North. You must pass through the Winter Forest before you come to the ice. That is Lapland where the Snow Queen burns blue light every evening—its sparks are The Northern Lights. You must cross the ice until you reach the village of Spitzbergen. From there it is only a short journey to the Snow Queen's Ice Palace at the very top of the world.

GERDA. Is that where Kay is—at the top of the world?

BHIMA. Yes.

GERDA (*frightened and strong*). Then that's where I must go.

BHIMA. Yes—you must.

(*Enter LENA and PRINCE.*)

LENA. You say first.

PRINCE. You say first.

LENA (*to GERDA*). We're sorry, Gerda.

PRINCE. That's right. We're sorry.

LENA. We only want to help you.

GERDA. Then help me escape from the castle.

LENA. But we want to keep you.

PRINCE (*seeing BHIMA*). Who's he?

GERDA. He was a prisoner here too, but now he's free!

He has told me where Kay is. That's why I must go.

PRINCE. Then we will help you—but we must hurry before she gets here.

BHIMA. She?

LENA. Didn't we tell you? The Snow Queen—she's here in the castle. (*The VOICE of the SNOW QUEEN is heard.*)

SNOW QUEEN (*off*). The girl! Take me to the girl!

PECK and SCRUFF (*in unison, terrified*). Krok!

BHIMA. This way, Gerda! Everyone—run!

(*The sound of a wind. GERDA, BHIMA and SCRUFF go one way, LENA, PRINCE and PECK go another. The SNOW QUEEN enters centre—like some terrifying and beautiful bird of prey. She is followed by COBWEB and KING GRIN.*)

SNOW QUEEN. Bring the girl to me! I will freeze her to death!

COBWEB. She's here, I'm sure of it.

SNOW QUEEN. Hurry! I will have her soul.

KING GRIN. I don't understand—she's gone. (*The SNOW QUEEN sees the open doll.*)

SNOW QUEEN. The African! He is free. You have let The Sun back into the world.

COBWEB and KING GRIN (*in unison*). It's all his fault!

SNOW QUEEN. I will turn you both to ice. (*KING GRIN sobs.*)

COBWEB. Please, Mistress—no.

SNOW QUEEN. Then find them—hurry!

COBWEB. At once. (*Exits with KING GRIN.*)

SNOW QUEEN. She cannot go free! My power is too strong. No one ever escapes from the Snow Queen! (*Exits.*)



## SCENE SIX

SCENE: *The castle. Enter BHIMA, GERDA and SCRUFF, at a run.*

SCRUFF. Krork—they're right behind us.

BHIMA (to GERDA). We've got to get you out of the castle.

GERDA. But how?

SCRUFF (pointing). Here they come!

BHIMA. I'll slow them. You go on. Run.

GERDA. But...

BHIMA. Run! (GERDA and SCRUFF exit separately.)

(Enter COBWEB and KING GRIN.)

BHIMA (calling after SCRUFF). I'm coming, Gerda. I'm right behind you. (Exits, the opposite way from GERDA.)

KING GRIN. There—that way!

COBWEB. I don't trust him. You go that way. I'll go this way. (Exit, COBWEB and KING GRIN.)

(Enter PRINCE, LENA AND PECK.)

PRINCE. We've got to find Gerda.

LENA. Come on, then. Hurry.

PECK (breathless). I couldn't run another step.

(Enter SCRUFF at a run.)

SCRUFF. Hurry, Auntie Peck. He's right behind me. (Exit SCRUFF.)

(Enter KING GRIN.)

KING GRIN. Come here, you stupid crow!

PECK. C-C-C-C...O, there's no time for that. (He exits followed by KING GRIN.)

(Enter GERDA through the auditorium, followed by COBWEB. The SNOW QUEEN appears on high—remote, magisterial.)

SNOW QUEEN. Faster, faster! Catch her, catch her! (GERDA and COBWEB reach the stage. It looks as if COBWEB will catch her.)

COBWEB. I'm going to get you.

GERDA. O, no you won't.

COBWEB. O, yes I will.

AUDIENCE. O, no you won't. (GERDA exits.)

COBWEB. O, yes I...!!!

SNOW QUEEN. After her, fool! After her! (COBWEB exits after GERDA. The SNOW QUEEN vanishes.)

(Enter SCRUFF.)

SCRUFF (to AUDIENCE). I think I'm safe here.

(Enter KING GRIN.)

KING GRIN. Got you! (He grabs SCRUFF.) Tell me where the girl is.

SCRUFF. I don't know.

KING GRIN. Tell me, or I'll pluck all your feathers out—one by one! (He plucks out a feather. SCRUFF screams)

*and faints.*) Stupid bird—he's fainted. *(Exit KING GRIN. SCRUFF gets to his feet.)*

SCRUFF. Fainted—my beak. He really fell for that one.

*(Enter the SNOW QUEEN.)*

SNOW QUEEN. The girl will be mine. *(SCRUFF faints for real.)* Like the boy—she will be mine forever. *(Exit the SNOW QUEEN.)*

*(PECK enters and falls over SCRUFF. BHIMA enters and falls over PECK. SCRUFF comes round.)*

PECK. Idiot—what are you doing?

SCRUFF. I must have fainted.

PECK. You lucky thing.

BHIMA. We must find Gerda before she does.

SCRUFF. But which way?

*(Enter PRINCE and LENA.)*

PRINCE. Quickly—this way.

LENA. We've got an idea. *(Exit PRINCE, LENA, SCRUFF, PECK and BHIMA.)*

*(Enter GERDA. She exits at a run. COBWEB and KING GRIN back cautiously onto the stage from separate directions. They collide centre stage, jump with fright and rotate back to back. They build up enough courage to discover their identities and scream with fright. GERDA enters. They scream with excitement.)*

GERDA. O, no!

COBWEB and KING GRIN *(entangled, in unison)*. It's her, it's her!

*(Enter BHIMA.)*

BHIMA. This way, Gerda! We've got an idea. *(Exit GERDA and BHIMA. COBWEB and KING GRIN try to disentangle themselves from each other.)*

*(Enter the SNOW QUEEN. They scream with fright.)*

SNOW QUEEN. After them! *(Exit COBWEB and KING GRIN.)* Enough of this! I will use my magic. My magic can see everything. My magic can see everywhere! *(Exit the SNOW QUEEN.)*

*(Enter BHIMA and GERDA.)*

BHIMA. Try and rest, Gerda. I think we're safe here. *(The SNOW QUEEN's VOICE comes from all around.)*

SNOW QUEEN VOICE. Nowhere is safe. I can see you, little girl.

BHIMA. That's her voice. But how? I can't see anything.

SNOW QUEEN VOICE. But I can see you.

BHIMA. I can't fight a voice. Where are you?

SNOW QUEEN VOICE. I am all around you. *(They go to exit.)* Don't go that way, I'm waiting for you there. *(They try another exit.)* Or that way. I'm waiting there, too.

BHIMA. Show yourself. *(An icy light begins to glow.)* Look, Gerda! There!