



Gerda's Tale

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Retold Fairy Tales

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I remember that summer's day – the day Kai changed. The boy next door suddenly ran and jumped on the roses in our shared roof top garden. His shoes turned red from the petal stain.

It was as if he was in a trance, under a spell.

Then, one day the next winter when he was playing, he hitched his sled to a magical glittering white sleigh driven by a woman dressed from head to toe in white fur. Snowflakes glistened like diamonds on her cape. I imagined she must be the Snow Queen I had heard people whisper about.

Later that day when he didn't return home, I asked everyone if they had seen Kai. I searched everywhere – the riverbank, the beautiful rose gardens, the city and the hills. But I couldn't find him anywhere. How could he leave me like this, without saying goodbye?

As I walked towards the snowy mountains a crow flew down in front of me.

"Go to the palace," he cawed.

I ran to the princess's palace, but Kai wasn't there. As I ran deeper into the steep mountains a dove flew down in front of me.

"Go to the palace," she cooed.

"But I did!" I cried.

"The Snow Queen's palace," she cooed.

"I don't know how to get there," I cried.

A reindeer nuzzled up beside me.

“Climb on my back. I’ll take you,” he moomed.

As we travelled further and further north, the icy chill grew colder and colder. The inky black sky grew darker and darker. When we arrived at the palace gates, they were blocked by a drift of sparkling snowflakes.

“Blow!” the reindeer moomed.

We inhaled then puffed out hot breath into the night air with a whoosh. The snowflakes melted away like a silver river. We ran in through the tall frosted gates and found Kai sitting on a frozen lake working out a puzzle made from ice splinters. The Snow Queen was perched on her glittering icy throne at the edge of the lake. I ran over to Kai and hugged him. My kisses melted his frozen body. The reindeer licked Kai’s face. I began to cry with joy. Kai began to cry too. As he wept a splinter of ice fell away from his eye. A rosy colour returned to his pale cheeks and he smiled again like the old Kai.

We danced together until we fell down on the ice, tired. Meanwhile the ice splinters in the puzzle had rearranged themselves in a pattern on the lake. It spelt, “ETERNITY”.

“Gerda! We have to get away!” Kai grabbed my hand. We jumped on the reindeer’s back and galloped away from the Snow Queen just before the palace gates closed. We didn’t stop until we reached home. Home – where the sun was shining and it was summer again. Home – where the roses bloomed on our tiny palace rooftop garden. Home – where our hearts had always been together and always would be together, forever.

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