

ABOUT *THE SNOW QUEEN*

The Story:

Like many fairy tales, the story of *The Snow Queen* centers on the struggle between good and evil. Representing goodness in this case is a young girl named Gerda and her best friend, Kai. Gerda and Kai's friendship is tested when they confront the Snow Queen, a heartless enchantress with the power to control winter. The Snow Queen has a magical mirror, which reflects her image as perpetually youthful and lovely, but reflects anything else as ugly and terrible. The mirror breaks and two pieces become lodged in Kai's eye and heart. As a result, Kai is bewitched by the Snow Queen and leaves his best friend to travel to the Snow Queen's palace. Unwilling to give up on her friend, Gerda sets off on a journey to rescue Kai. Along the way, Gerda's faith and resolve are tested as she encounters fantastical creatures, battles witches, and trudges barefoot through the snow. Her kind heart convinces those she meets to help her make her way to Kai and confront the Snow Queen.

The Author:

The Snow Queen was originally written by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen in 1844. Andersen is most famous for writing *The Little Mermaid*, *The Ugly Duckling*, and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. He is often called the "father of the modern fairy tale." The characters for *Frozen* were also very loosely based on *The Snow Queen*. People say that Andersen was inspired to model the icy-hearted Snow Queen on an opera singer whom he loved, but who rejected him. Others say that when Andersen's father died (Andersen was 11 at the time), he was told that his father was taken away by the Snow Queen.

The Script:

This unpublished version of *The Snow Queen* was adapted by Tyler J. Monroe in 2011, during his second year in the Dramaturgy MFA program through Harvard University. The play premiered at the American Repertory Theatre in December 2011. Since then, it has been performed only a handful of times. Monroe's version of the story dispenses with the Fourth Wall and invites the audience to participate in Gerda's journey. The show begins in a magical attic where a group of children have gathered to hear a story. Throughout the play, ensemble members seek the help of the audience; asking questions, inviting responses, and even bringing some viewers on stage. As the story unfolds, sheets become blizzards, wagons become sleds, and the audience is transported along with the actors into Gerda's world.