

ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES



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BY
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

INTRODUCTION BY
LAURA FRAZEE

ILLUSTRATED BY
FREDERICK RICHARDSON



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The Feathers Closed Over Them Closely

—The Marsh King's Daughter

INTRODUCTION

To the Boys and Girls Who Read These Stories

ALL over the world, in cities and villages and quiet country places, there live boys and girls, men and women, who work and play in the ordinary ways so familiar to us. Fathers and mothers are caring for their children, farmers are raising grain and cattle, merchants are selling their wares, children are helping and playing and going to school.

To them, as to you in your neighborhood, all this may seem humdrum; and to each other and to you these people at home and abroad may appear commonplace enough. But that is because most of us cannot see all there is to be seen, or we see things twisted out of shape. We think a bell is only a bell, that a fairy must have spangled wings, and that every giant carries a club.

Then, once in a very long time, a seer is born into the world to open our eyes and straighten our ideas. He lives first as a child with the children about him, playing and learning with them. As a man he works in the fields, at the forge, or behind the counter. But to him, the people among whom he lives are not ordinary or uninteresting. As they chat with him and as they go about their own affairs, he is able to look into

their very souls and he counts them great or little according to the honesty of their thoughts and the kindness of their feelings. Then this seer becomes storyteller, and we, reading his tales, begin to see as he saw and to judge as he judged.

Such a seer and storyteller was Hans Christian Andersen. He knew that only an unhappy fortune, like the Snow Queen's magic, could have made Kay's heart cold and his little friend strange to him. He shows us that a real princess is really nothing more than a real girl, and that Jack the Dullard may catch her fancy if only he has a ready tongue. Even five peas in one pod turn out to be no more alike than five boys in one town, and a broken bottle neck may be able to comfort itself with the memory of wonderful adventures.

Yes, Hans Andersen's stories make us feel as if we were living next door to him in his beloved Denmark with the king and the swineherd, the mermaid and the stork for neighbors. And, wonderful to tell, there is not one of them so ordinary and not one of them so high and mighty as to be uninteresting! It makes one rub his eyes with the surprise of a discovery: maybe it is that way in your neighborhood, and in yours, and in mine!

—*Laura Frazee*

Assistant Superintendent of Schools,
Baltimore, Md.



She Swam with the Prince and Laid Him on the Sand



“What a Hail Storm,” She Said



"Oh, This is Wonderful!" Cried the Prince

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THE SNOW QUEEN

IN a large city lived a little boy named Kay and a little girl named Gerda. They played together in the summer time in the fields, and when the snow began to fly they got their sleds and went skimming down the hills. One day Kay took his sled down to the public square and was playing with the other boys when he noticed a large sleigh, painted all in white, and in it sat a figure muffled up in shaggy white fur, with a cap on.

The sleigh drove ten times round the square, and Kay fastened his sled to it. It drove faster and faster, and then turned into one of the streets that ran out of the square. The snow began to fall thick, and Kay thought he had better start back for home. He tried to unfasten his sled, but he found he could not get loose.

On they flew as fast as the wind, clean off the ground, and over the hedges. At last the big sleigh stopped, and the person driving it stood up, and Kay now saw that it was a lady, tall and slim, and dazzlingly white.

"I am the Snow Queen," she said. "Don't you want to come and see what a beautiful place I live in?" The little boy felt so cold he could make no answer. So she came and lifted him out of his sled and put him beside her and tucked the big fur robe around him. Then off they went again.

It was a long, dreary winter for Gerda, who missed

her little playmate. One day in the spring, when she was out in the woods, an old woman came to her and said, "My child, come and you will see the most beautiful garden in the world."

Gerda was fond of flowers, and she followed the old woman, who led her through some winding paths and at last brought her to the garden. Oh, how sweet and beautiful! There were all kinds of flowers of every season of the year, and Gerda played here many days in the warm sunshine.

Before she knew it, winter had come again. One day there came a raven, hopping over the snow. "Caw! Caw!" said the raven. "If you knew what I know you would be happy."

"Why, what do you know?" asked Gerda.

"I know where Kay is," said the raven. And now Gerda's heart was all a-flutter. "Oh, is he still alive? And will you tell me how I can find him?"

"Yes," said the raven, "as soon as I have spoken with the robber girl." Gerda did not know what the raven meant by the "robber girl." But very soon she was to know. For in a few days, back came the raven perched on the shoulder of a strong-looking girl.

"I am the robber girl," she said. "I live here in the woods, and the men-folk go out and take the treasures of rich men, but we are kind to poor folk. The raven has told me about your little friend Kay, and I have come to take you to him."

So away went Gerda with the robber girl, who led



F.R.

Then the reindeer, with Gerda on its back, bounded away.

her to where a reindeer was standing. She lifted Gerda on to its back, put cushions and robes around her, and then said, "Now go, reindeer, away to the Snow Queen's kingdom where this little girl's playmate is. Take good care of her."

Then the reindeer, with Gerda on its back, bounded away, over the hedges and fields, faster and faster. Away up in frozen Lapland the door of a little hut built right in the snow opened and an old woman came out to give them food and drink. Then away they went again.

At last the reindeer stopped. "We are just outside the Snow Queen's palace," it said. "I cannot go in. But you may enter. Go straight on over the ice and you will see your playmate. You will find him cold, for he has become one of the Snow Queen's family, and they are all frozen to the heart. If you sing a hymn or weep hard enough you may break the spell. I will wait here, but do not linger, for I must hurry back."

Gerda felt as if she were almost frozen herself, and when she looked all about her there was nothing but great icebergs, and away in the distance something that looked like a palace of diamonds. But she went on, and on and on, and coming close to the great palace, which she now saw was an ice palace, she caught sight of Kay, standing all alone.

She ran over the ice to him as fast as she could, and put her arms around him. "Kay! Dear little Kay!" she cried. "I have found you at last!"

But he stood quite still, stiff and cold, and little Gerda cried bitter, burning tears. But she thought she saw a flush begin to come into his frozen cheeks, and then, remembering what the reindeer had said, she began to sing:

"The rose blooms, but its glory past,
Christmas then comes so fast."

And, like magic, new life came into the cold body of Kay, and when he saw his little playmate he cried out in delight, "Gerda! Is it really you, little Gerda? Where have you been all this time? And where——"

But Gerda did not stop to answer his questions. "We must hurry," she said. "The reindeer will think we aren't coming."

She caught his arm and quickly led him out of the Snow Queen's domain. In a few moments they were on the back of the reindeer, hurrying back over the fields of snow and ice. Nor did the reindeer stop till it reached the city where Gerda and Kay lived.

Kay and Gerda are married now and have children of their own. And of all the stories which the children love to hear, they like best the one about the Snow Queen.

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers who were brothers, for they had all been made from the same old tin spoon. They were very grand in their new red and blue uniforms, as they shouldered their guns and looked straight before them.

The first thing the soldiers ever heard were the words, "Tin Soldiers!" shouted by a little boy, who clapped his hands with delight when the lid was taken off the box in which they lived.

It was the little boy's birthday, and the soldiers had been given to him for a birthday present. The little boy took the soldiers out of the box, and stood them on the table. They were exactly alike, except one, who had only one leg. He was the last one to be made, and there had not been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly on one leg as the others did on two.

There were many other playthings on the table where the soldiers stood; but the most attractive one was a pretty little paper castle. The windows were very tiny, but still one could look through them and see the inside of the rooms. In front of the castle stood little trees around a piece of looking-glass, which looked like a lake of clear water. Beautiful little wax swans were swimming about the lake and were reflected on its glassy surface.