



## SCT's The Snow Queen Scene by Scene Summary

### SHOW SUMMARY

When her best friend Kay is taken by the Snow Queen to a world of numbing ice and snow, Gerda embarks on an unforgettable adventure across singing flowers, leaping reindeer and unbreakable riddles. Will Gerda's love and grief save her best friend Kay before he is trapped forever in the Snow Queen's palace? Join us in this courageous and whimsical tale of deep human connection and belonging.

Readied for its West Coast Premiere in collaboration with our local and regional partners Nordic Museum and Western Washington University comes a fresh new take on the same classic tale that inspired Disney's *Frozen*.

### SHOW SYNOPSIS

#### SCENE I: AT HOME

The play opens with Kay and Gerda atop their rooftops, crafting a song together. They are interrupted by a gentle and beautiful melody emanating from the roses, which Kay and Gerda believe may be the roses' own language, like Nana's ability to speak to the crows. Grandma calls from the kitchen window, urging them to come inside for dinner, but the children are eager to continue conversing with the roses.

Grandma explains that the language of roses is the most beautiful among flower languages, planted by Kay's mother who passed away before seeing them bloom. As they talk, a dazzling Snow Queen appears unseen, causing heavy snowfall. Grandma calls again for Kay and Gerda to come inside, promising stories about Kay's mother once indoors. However, Kay avoids discussing his mother as it stirs unwanted emotions.

Suddenly, Kay starts uttering seemingly random numbers. Upon closer examination, these numbers form a pattern, mirroring the falling snowflakes. Still unseen by the children, the Snow Queen approaches Kay and blows something into his eye. Kay opens his eyes to find the once-invisible Snow Queen before him. Eager to follow her, Kay rushes downstairs, determined to venture into the storm despite objections from Grandma and Gerda. Concerned, Grandma hurries outside to bring him back indoors.

#### SCENE II: THE RIDE

The play transitions to the town square, where the Snow Queen, now in a white sleigh, invites Kay to join her. She informs Kay that they are headed north, where it never stops snowing, and she promises him all the time he needs to watch the snow and decipher the code. Kay climbs into the sleigh and begins his journey north with the Snow Queen.

During the journey, the Snow Queen notices her new companion trembling. Kay explains that he is not trembling but shivering from the cold. Instead of offering more layers to warm Kay, she blows ice into Kay's chest, piercing his heart. The Snow Queen informs Kay that he will now never feel the cold again, and soon, he will feel nothing at all. With a final kiss on the forehead from the Snow Queen, Kay heads into the storm with this strange, beautiful woman.

### **SCENE III: GERDA AND GRANDMA AT HOME**

The play returns to Kay's home, where Grandma and Gerda return after weeks of searching for Kay. Frustrated with the search, Gerda decides to venture out on her own, determined to cross the river in search of her best friend, leaving Grandma behind.

### **SCENE IV: GERDA AT THE RIVER**

Gerda arrives at the frozen river, crying from the grief of her lost friend Kay, whom she believes has fallen into the icy river and drowned. The sun begins to rise, melting the ice, and the river bursts back into life. She asks the now flowing river to bring her Kay's body, only wanting to have her friend back. In answer, the river gurgles grow louder, but Gerda does not know the river's language. It roars again, and suddenly, the words become clear! Knowing where she needs to go, the river kindly provides Gerda with a boat to safely cross its waters and continue her search for Kay. As Gerda begins to climb into the boat, she is greeted by a cheerful Sparrow who decides to join her on her quest.

### **SCENE V: THE WOMAN IN THE GARDEN**

Floating down the river, Gerda nears a garden filled with flowers. Within this garden, there is a small red house, and from it emerges a Woman in a hat adorned in roses. She rushes to Gerda's boat and, using her cane, hooks it, fearing that Gerda is helpless and needs help. Though this is not the case, Gerda agrees to eat some berries offered by the Woman, who has now hidden her hat away from Gerda's sight. Gerda thoughtlessly continues eating berries as the Woman pushes for Gerda to stay with her. Suddenly very tired, Gerda sleeps among the roses in the garden while the Woman suspiciously turns and reenters her home.

The scene shifts, and it is now the next morning. As promised, the Woman is ready with a bounty of fresh greens for Gerda to eat. It only feels like it has been one night, but the Woman lets Gerda know that she has been napping for days! But as the flowers sing to her once more, Gerda drifts off into another slumber.

A new day comes, and the Woman comes forth with more food for Gerda to eat, and Gerda cannot help but notice, the more she eats, the hungrier she becomes. According to the Woman, it has now been weeks that Gerda has been within her garden, and now clearly frustrated pushes for Gerda to come stay in her home. Gerda refuses. The flowers sing once more, carrying Gerda to sleep, but this time their words become clearer. Something is off.

Gerda awakens the next day to find the Woman without food, but rather wearing a shawl and her rose-adorned hat once more. Noticing these roses, Gerda is pulled from her confusion and confronts the Woman about the roses on her hat. She knows the Woman has been hiding the roses from her in the hopes of Gerda forgetting Kay altogether. The Woman shrieks; it was only for Gerda's safety, but the flowers sing otherwise. "You must leave, you must go – If you stay,

you'll never grow," they sing, and Gerda, heeding their warning, bolts out of the garden, not looking back.

## **SCENE VI: MEETING CAW**

The play follows Gerda as she runs, until eventually, she tires. Now, in a clearing of a beautiful forest, Gerda finds herself completely alone and lost. Suddenly, a large black crow lands in front of her. After some lengthy banter on what Kay's name is, Gerda and Caw, the crow, decide that speaking in crow will alleviate their confusion. This does the trick, and Caw chooses to help Gerda in her search for Kay. He wishes to take her to his sweetheart, who knows a lot about human stuff and should be a great help for Gerda. However, Gerda is unable to fly! To solve this issue, Caw decides to call for his sweetheart, whom he knows will answer.

## **SCENE VII: THE STORY OF THE PRINCESS**

On cue, Sweetheart Crow arrives and lands next to Caw. Gerda immediately begins describing Kay's appearance to Sweetheart Crow. At the mention of his fluffy red coat, Sweetheart Crow remembers Kay. The scene transitions into a story told by Sweetheart Crow, detailing a princess in a castle. Outside of this castle, there is a spying crow looking for castle snacks. This crow is Sweetheart Crow. The princess was always entertained by reading countless books, but one day she ran out of books to read. With no more books to read, the Princess looked to marriage, hoping it would quell her boredom. Sadly, this was not the case, until a peasant boy wearing a red coat walked into her court. Intrigued, the Princess took to liking this boy and proposed marriage to him. To her surprise, the boy refused, not wanting to marry someone he had just met. The Princess was curious about this boy, who only returned her curiosity with his very own. Together they talked, growing more in love with each word, until weariness overcame them both and they fell into a slumber. Gerda knows this must be Kay and asks the crows to help her get to him. They both agree, and with the guidance of Sweetheart Crow, the three of them depart.

## **SCENE VIII: AT THE CASTLE**

Caw, Sweetheart Crow, and Gerda all arrive at the moat of the castle. Following the direction from Sweetheart Crow, Gerda jumps into the moat, quickly swims across, crawls through a tiny hole, and climbs up to the castle window. Now in the chambers of the Princess, who is peacefully asleep with the Peasant Boy next to her, Gerda goes to wake the boy. To everyone's shock, the boy is not Kay. The Princess awakes in a rage, ready to throw Gerda into the dungeons and bake the crows in pie; however, upon hearing of Gerda's far travel, the Princess softens. In a moment highlighting two of the show's themes, Gerda speaks on her adventure, and the lengths people will go for the people they love. The Princess is moved and listens to Gerda's plea. As it turns out, the Snow Queen in her reading has come across the tales of the Snow Queen and lets Gerda know that the only way Kay was able to see her was through enchanted ice piercing his eye, and it is likely that she has also pierced Kay's heart as well. With a pierced heart, Kay will no longer feel anything. No love, no pain, no cold. Nothing. The Princess knows only this, and cannot tell the trio how to fix Kay, as she does not know herself. But the Princess is inspired by Gerda and her adventure, and provides her with all the supplies she can for Gerda's journey north. As a bonus, the crows are deemed Court Crows, and now have full access to the castle's kitchen. Gerda, with the companionship of Caw, gather their supplies and head north in search of their friend.

## **SCENE IX: CAW AND GERDA ON THE MOVE**

Gerda and Caw head off from the castle and find themselves within a large forest. After some searching, day turns to night, and Gerda reluctantly decides it is fine to rest. While he may be happy to rest, Caw feels unsettled in this creepy forest they find themselves in. Unbeknownst to them, three figures lurk in the shadows around them, ready to pounce.

## SCENE X: LUMI AND HER FAMILY

From the shadows, three individuals leap upon Gerda and Caw. They are Lumi, her mother, and her two cousins. The four strangers approach menacingly towards Gerda and Caw, ready to make them their meals, until Lumi bites their mother in protest. Lumi would like to eat Gerda, as Lumi found her first. Before she can become a meal, Gerda, prompted by Lumi and the strangers, removes her winter adventure supplies and hands them over to the strangers. Gerda and Caw are terrified, but for Lumi, they have found themselves a new playmate in Gerda; however, all of Lumi's games center around playing with knives. But Gerda can't entertain this conversation for much longer as Lumi's Mother approaches. Lumi once again steps in front of her mother, shielding Gerda from any incoming harm. Overhearing Gerda's search for the Snow Queen, Lumi's Mother discloses what she knows of the Snow Queen. Here, Gerda learns the Snow Queen lives on a plateau beyond twin mountains, and can only be found if she wishes to be found. The Snow Queen is tiny, perhaps only the size of a snowflake, or is a shapeshifter; no one can say for certain, but what they do know is that she does not hold people prisoner but rather can only keep people who choose to stay with her. Oh, and the Snow Queen poops ice, though this too could be untrue. Nevertheless, the laughter, stomps, and claps transition into a full song and dance with Gerda joining. The dancing and singing finish, and all except Gerda and Lumi fall sleep.

Gerda and Lumi formally greet one another, and Lumi bestows upon Gerda a new nickname: Gerdy. Together they walk over to Lumi's sleeping area where Ba, Lumi's reindeer, and some wood pigeons sit in a cage. They walk over to Ba, and Lumi plays with him. However, Lumi's version of playing consists of scratching Ba's neck with a knife, much to the horror of Gerda who urgently yells at Lumi to stop. She tells Lumi that being nice to animals can be more fun than being cruel. With envy, Lumi looks to Gerda, knowing that Gerda must be a good friend to Kay, something that Lumi knows they do not truly have. They look over to the wood pigeons locked in the cage, and Lumi explains that she has not set them free because they help her to fall asleep. With all the compassion a friend can give, Gerda teaches Lumi her way of calming down: saying the alphabet but taking deep breaths between each letter. In this moment of kindness, Gerda shares the story of how Kay got his name. It was the last letter his mother breathed before he was born, and before she died. Still unable to sleep, Lumi is taught to spell out something nice, again breathing after each letter. Letter after letter, breath after breath, Lumi starts to spell F.R.I.E.N; but before they can finish the word, Lumi falls asleep. Stroking Lumi's hair as she sleeps in her lap, Gerda finishes the word.

From their cage, the wood pigeons begin to sing. "We have seen your friend," they say, telling Gerda Kay was seen riding in a sleigh with a woman all in white heading north, where it is always snow and ice. She rushes to her feet, primed to rescue Kay. Yet there is a problem; Lumi will not let their new playmate go so easily. Even so, Gerda must go to Kay, as a friend must help when it is important. Lumi understands this and lets Gerda go, knowing that while it is hard to stay with her family and let her new playmate go, it is the right thing to do.

After Lumi leaves to retrieve Caw, Gerda goes to Ba, who whispers for her to come near. As it turns out, Ba is from the ice plains on the other side of the Great Northern Lake, somewhere the

Snow Queen must have taken Kay. As a trade, Gerda allows Lumi to keep her scarf in exchange for Lumi to free Ba, who will carry Gerda and Caw northward. With a final 'I love you, Gerda,' Ba, and Caw rush away from Lumi and their family.

### **SCENE XI: BA, CAW, AND GERDA ON THE MOVE**

Hastily, the trio gallop at full speed—well, except Caw, who struggles to keep up with Ba's pace. Eventually, they stop, much to the chagrin of Ba, who desires to continue to run after all this time being tied with Lumi and their family. Weirdly, the group has not made it to their location, which according to Ba's calculations, is a place they should have reached long ago. Whelp, Ba ran in the wrong direction! Thankfully, Caw has some amazing eyesight and, with enough height, can see which direction the Great Northern Lake is. With this new, clear, correct course, Ba, Caw, and Gerda finally head in the direction they want to go.

When they arrive at the lake, Ba slides to a halt. Yes, the lake is frozen over with ice, but is the ice thick enough for them to cross? That said, Ba takes off over the lake; but wait, Caw is stuck frozen to the ground! Try as they might, both Gerda and Caw cannot get him free of the ice. Not to worry, Ba comes to the rescue and breathes hot air onto Caw's legs, freeing him from the ground's icy grip. Outrunning the cracking ice, all three adventurers land on the other side of the frozen lake. There is nothing but icy, pristine silence that surrounds them. They need to head towards mountains, and once again, Caw soars into the sky to lead them in the right direction. As they approach the mountains, it gets icier and windier, eventually becoming too much to endure. Caw is pushed back by the wind and crashes into a snowbank. The three of them have no choice but to push forward, however much the storm pushes them around. Yet even fueled by determination and love, Caw must stay back in the warm embrace of Ba, or risk freezing over dead.

Soon, even Gerda begins to doubt herself and finds herself overcome with the feeling. When all seems hopeless, the swirling storm around speaks to her. Kay is near, and while she may be burdened by her fear, Gerda knows she is strong. Exhibiting one of the play's central themes, Gerda overcomes her fears and, with the power of love, marches on into the snowy abyss, alone.

### **SCENE XII: FINDING KAY**

The storm is violent, harsh, icy, and cold. Deep is the snow, and empty is the landscape, yet Gerda trudges on. Gerda yells for her friend, but the storm is relentless. Breathing through the alphabet, she searches, all while the Snow Queen watches. With a gentle blow, ice pierces Gerda's eye, and for the first time, Gerda can see her—the Snow Queen. To shield Gerda from the cold, she attempts to blow into Gerda's heart. Gerda rushes away, rejecting the Snow Queen's offer. Closing her eyes, she centers herself. Gerda opens her eyes, and there he is; her friend. Kay lies crumpled in the snow, unresponsive. Her friend is here, in her arms, but it is too late. Kay is gone, and the only company Gerda has are her own tears.

Her tears flow. They wash away the ice in her eye and cascade into Kay's chest. With all the love grief brings, Gerda's tears melt away the ice that has taken her friend away from her. He jolts back to life, but strangely does not want to leave. Kay never cared to be taken by the Snow Queen. He wanted to feel nothing. At this moment, the play shows its audience the core message. Being strong is about feeling. It is about facing your fears, and while painful, confronting your emotions, but more importantly, allowing yourself the grace to feel those emotions. It is by feeling where you find the strength that lives within your heart.

Kay accepts this and allows himself the space to feel everything he wished to never feel. He sobs and hugs his friend. His tears wash away the ice, and by association, the Snow Queen from his eye. The two friends look at one another, and together they stand to go back home

### SCENE XIII: THE JOURNEY HOME

Gerda, with Kay in tow, reunite with Ba and Caw. The group moves from the mountain, across the icy plains, and across the lake where they came. Suddenly, they are surrounded by wood pigeons, the same ones Lumi had in a cage. Lumi had set them free! In the distance, Caw spots animals who look suspiciously like Ba. It's Ba's herd! Unsurprisingly, Ba rushes to his herd, saying goodbye to his new friends and promising to visit them on his herd's next migration.

Their journey back leads them to the Princess' castle once more, where Sweetheart Crow and the Princess greet them from atop a balcony. Inspired by Gerda's story, the Princess embarks on her own adventure; writing a book based upon Gerda's quest. Reunited with his Sweetheart, Caw stays with her with assurance to stay from Gerda.

The scene shifts back to the Woman's Garden where Kay and Gerda walk. Despite her best offers, the Woman is unable to keep Kay or Gerda in her garden. Not this time. Across the river they go, saying hello to the Sparrow once more. Soon they will be back home.

### SCENE XIV: ARRIVAL HOME

Gerda and Kay arrive back at Kay's house where Grandma awaits. With joy and surprise, Grandma sprints to hug her little boy, but Kay is no longer a boy, and Gerda is no longer a girl. They are both older now, but still the same. Kay assures his grandma he felt no harm, but only emptiness, something he never wants to feel again. He steps back, looks to his grandma, and asks a question he has avoided for too long: Kay asks for his grandmother to tell him about his mother.

Gerda steps back, looking at this moment she worked so hard to make happen. She walks to the window, climbs out onto the roof to look out at everything: the roses, her house, the sky. With one last breath, the play ends.

## THEMATIC BREAKDOWN

### THEMES

#### | ADVENTURE

- Adventure is not just exploring new worlds, but it can also be discovering new things about ourselves. Gerda in **SCT'S The Snow Queen** goes on a big adventure to save her friend. Her adventure shows us how we can be brave to stand for what's right. However, we also can go on personal adventures. Kay in **SCT'S The Snow Queen** goes on a journey to learn about his feelings and how to find the courage to deal with them. Both journeys are important because they teach us that whether we are helping others or learning about ourselves, every adventure helps us learn and become stronger.

#### | CONFIDENCE

- Being confident can be hard at times, especially when we are scared. In **SCT'S The Snow Queen** Gerda finds that the parts of her that make her different are what make her strong. She teaches us what makes us different, do not make us



weak, but strong and one-of-a-kind. When we learn this, then we can take on the world.

### | FRIENDSHIP

- Friends can be kind and always cheering you on. It can also be someone who pushes you to be a better version of yourself. Friendship comes by making a safe space for others and helping them when they need it. As seen in **SCT'S The Snow Queen** friendship looks different for everyone but is always important and worth fighting for.

### | LOVE

- We are all able to give and receive love. Who we love, and how we show our love is always our own choice. In **SCT'S The Snow Queen** Gerda shows us how love brings us together and gives us the strength to handle even the scariest of challenges. She teaches us that sometimes going above and beyond for love is always a good choice.

### | GRIEF

- In **SCT'S The Snow Queen** Kay loses his mother, and he becomes very sad and chooses to stay with the Snow Queen because she helps him feel nothing. Kay's journey shows us how dealing with our sadness can be tough but helps us heal and find happiness. Like Kay, talking about hard things that make us sad can bring back warmth to our lives.

## | SCT'S ENCORE DISCUSSIONS

### CAREGIVER QUESTIONS

1. Gerda makes a lot of friends along the way on her adventure. Share a story about a friend that you are happy to have in your life and why.
2. Gerda and Kay experience a different problem. In what ways are their problems similar, and different?
  - a. DEEPER – Can an adventure be more than just a physical journey, or can an adventure be an emotional journey as well? Explain how this showed up in the play?
3. In the play, the character Snow Queen numbs Kay's emotions. Why is it a good thing to allow yourself to feel emotions? How do you express your emotions when feeling sad or happy?