

**THE PEARL  
STORY BOOK**

***Books by***  
***Ada M. Skinner and Eleanor L. Skinner***

***The Emerald Story Book***  
***The Turquoise Story Book***  
***The Topaz Story Book***  
***The Pearl Story Book***

**THE  
PEARL STORY BOOK**

by

*Ada M. Skinner*

and

*Eleanor L. Skinner*

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS**

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## INTRODUCTION

“ONCE upon a time,” in the winter season suggests happy, young faces grouped about a blazing fire. A heavy snowstorm promises plenty of sport for tomorrow, but at present the cosiness indoors is very attractive, especially now that the evening story hour is at hand. And while the story-teller is slowly choosing his subjects he hears the children’s impatient whispers of “The Snow Man,” “Prince Winter,” “The Legend of Holly,” “The Animals’ Christmas Tree.”

Silence! The story-teller turns his eyes from the glowing fire to the faces of his eager audience. He is ready to begin.

Each season of the year opens a treasury of suggestion for stories. In the beauty and wonder of nature are excellent themes for tales which quicken children’s interest in the promise of joyous springtime, in the rich pageantry of ripening summer, in the blessings of generous autumn, and in the merry cheer of grim old winter.

*The Pearl Story Book* is the fourth volume in a series of nature books each of which emphasizes the interest and beauty characteristic of a particular season. The central theme of this volume is winter, “snow-wrapped and holly-decked.”



***WINTER STORIES AND LEGENDS***

## WINTER

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,  
From the snow five thousand summers old;  
On open wold and hill-top bleak  
It had gathered all the cold,  
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek.  
It carried a shiver everywhere  
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;  
The little brook heard it and built a roof  
'Neath which he could house him winter-proof;  
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams  
He groined his arches and matched his beams;  
Slender and clear were his crystal spars  
As the lashes of light that trim the stars:  
He sculptured every summer delight  
In his halls and chambers out of sight.

— *James Russell Lowell*

## THE ICE KING

ONCE upon a time there was an Indian village built on the bank of a wide river. During the spring, summer, and autumn the people were very happy. There was plenty of fuel and game in the deep woods; the river afforded excellent fish. But the Indians dreaded the months when the Ice King reigned.

One winter the weather was terribly cold and the people suffered severely. The Ice King called forth the keen wind from the northern sky, and piled the snowdrifts so high in the forests that it was most difficult to supply the wigwams with game. He covered the river with ice so thick that the Indians feared it would never melt.

“When will the Ice King leave us?” they asked each other. “We shall all perish if he continues his cruel reign.”

At last signs of spring encouraged the stricken people. The great snowdrifts in the forests disappeared and the ice on the river broke into large pieces. All of these floated downstream except one huge cake which lodged on the bank very near the village. And when the Indians saw that the spring sunshine did not melt this great mass of ice they were puzzled and anxious.

“It is the roof of the Ice King’s lodge,” they said. “We shall never enjoy warm weather while he dwells near us. Have we no brave who is willing to do battle with this winter tyrant?”

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At last, a courageous young hunter armed himself with a huge club and went forth to see if he could shatter the glittering frozen mass and rid the village of the giant who dwelt beneath it. With all his strength he struck the ice roof blow upon blow, crying out, "Begone, O cruel Ice King! Your time is past! Begone!"

Finally, there was a deafening noise like the crashing of forest trees when the lightning strikes, and the huge ice cake split into several pieces.

"Begone!" cried the young brave, as he struggled with each great lump of ice until he pushed it from the bank and tumbled it into the river below.

And when the mighty task was finished the white figure of the Ice King stood before the Indian brave.

"You have ruined my lodge," said the giant.

"The winter season is past," answered the brave. "Begone!"

"After several moons I shall return to stay," threatened the Ice King. Then he stalked away toward the North.

The people were very happy when they knew that the young brave had conquered the giant; but their joy was somewhat dampened when they heard about the threatened return of the Ice King.

"I shall prepare for his return and do battle with him again," declared the Indian conqueror.

This promise comforted the people somewhat, but still they thought of the coming winter with dread.

During the autumn the hunter built near the river

## *THE ICE KING*

a strong wigwam and stored therein abundant fuel and dried game. He filled many bags made of skin, with oil, which he procured from the animals he killed. Also, he was well supplied with fur rugs, blankets, and warm clothes.

At last the winter season came. The cold north wind blew unceasingly, the snow piled high around the wigwams; ice several feet thick covered the river.

“The Ice King has come,” said the Indians. “If he keeps his threat to stay among us we shall surely perish.”

One bitter cold day the young Indian who had prepared well for the severe weather sat in his wigwam near a blazing fire. Suddenly, a strong gust of wind tore aside the bear skin which protected the doorway and into the lodge stalked the Ice King. His freezing breath filled the place and dampened the fire. He took a seat opposite the Indian brave who said, “Welcome, Ice King.”

“I’ve come to stay,” answered the giant.

The Indian shivered with cold at the sudden change of temperature in his wigwam, but he rose and brought more logs to the fire. Also, he opened one of his bags of oil and poured the contents on the great pieces of wood. The flames soon caught the oil-soaked logs and a roaring fire crackled and blazed in the wigwam. More and more fuel the young brave piled on his fire until finally the frosty cold air was changed to summer heat.

The Ice King shifted his seat away from the glowing fire. Farther and farther away he pushed until he sat

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with his back against the wall of the wigwam. As he moved he seemed to grow smaller and weaker. The icy feathers of his headgear drooped about his forehead and great drops of sweat covered his face. But still the Indian brave piled fuel on the blazing fire.

“Spare me, O hunter,” cried the Ice King.

But to the words of the giant the young Indian was deaf. He opened another bag of oil and poured it on the logs.

“Have mercy, I beg you!” pleaded the Ice King. He rose and staggered toward the door.

“You have conquered me,” he said in a weak voice. “I will depart. Twice you have won a victory over me. I give up my hope of reigning continually among your people. My season shall last during three moons, only.”

He staggered out of the wigwam and stalked wearily away. Since that day the giant Ice King has not tried to reign throughout the year.

— *Indian Legend*

*retold by Eleanor L. Skinner*

## A SONG OF THE SNOW

Sing, Ho, a song of the winter dawn,  
When the air is still and the clouds are gone,  
And the snow lies deep on hill and lawn,  
    And the old clock ticks, “’Tis time! ’Tis time!”  
And the household rises with many a yawn  
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter dawn!  
    Sing, Ho!

Sing, Ho, a song of the winter sky  
When the last star closes its icy eye  
And deep in the road the snow-drifts lie,  
    And the old clock ticks, “’Tis late! ’Tis late!”  
And the flame on the hearth leaps red—leaps high  
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter sky!  
    Sing, Ho!

Sing, Ho, a song of the winter morn  
When the snow makes ghostly the wayside thorn,  
And hills of pearl are the shocks of corn,  
    And the old clock ticks, “Tick-tock; tick-tock;”  
And the goodman bustles about the barn  
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter morn!  
    Sing, Ho!

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Sing, Ho, a song of the winter day,  
When ermine capped are the stocks of hay,  
And the wood-smoke pillars the air with gray,  
    And the old clock ticks, "To work! To work!"  
And the goodwife sings as she churns away  
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter day!  
    Sing, Ho!

— *Madison Cawein*

# KING FROST AND KING WINTER

KING WINTER lives in a very strong palace near the cold North Pole; it is built of great blocks of thick ice, and all around it stand high, pointed icebergs, and cross, white bears keep guard at the gate. He has many little fairy servants to do his bidding and they are like their master, cross and spiteful, and seldom do any kind actions, so that few are found who love them. King Winter is rich and powerful, but he keeps all his wealth so tightly locked up that it does no one any good; and what is worse, he often tries to get the treasures of other persons, to add to the store in his money chests.

One day when this selfish old king was walking through the woods he saw the leaves thickly covered with gold and precious stones, which had been spread upon them by King Frost, to make the trees more beautiful and give pleasure to all who saw them. But looking at them did not satisfy King Winter; he wanted to have the gold for his own, and he made up his mind to get it, somehow. Back he went to his palace to call his servants home to do this new work. As soon as he reached the gate, he blew a loud, shrill note on his horn and in a few minutes his odd little fairies came flying in at the windows and doors and stood before him quietly waiting their commands. The king ordered some to go out into the forest, at nightfall, armed with canes and clubs, and beat off all the gold and ruby leaves; and he

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told others to take strong bags, and gather up all the treasure, and bring it to him.

“If that silly King Frost does not think any more of gold and precious stones than to waste them on trees I shall teach him better,” said the old king.

The fairies promised to obey him, and as soon as night came, off they rushed to the forest, and a terrible noise they made, flying from one beautiful tree to another, banging and beating the leaves off. Branches were cracking and falling on all sides, and leaves were flying about, while the sound of shouting and laughing and screaming told all who heard it that the spiteful winter fairies were at some mischief. The other fairies followed, and gathered up the poor shattered leaves, cramming them into the great bags they had brought, and taking them to King Winter’s palace as fast as they were filled.

This work was kept up nearly all night and when morning came, the magic forest of many-colored leaves was changed into a dreary place. Bare trees stretched their long brown branches around and seemed to shiver in the cold wind and to sigh for the beautiful dress of shining leaves so rudely torn from them.

King Winter was very much pleased, as one great sack after another was tugged in by the fairies and when morning came he called his servants together and said, “You have all worked well, my fairies, and have saved much treasure from being wasted; I will now open these bags and show you the gold. Each of you shall have a share.”

## *KING FROST AND KING WINTER*

The king took up the sack nearest to him, their surprise, when out rushed a great heap of brown leaves, which flew all over the floor and half choked them with dust! When the king saw this he growled with rage and looked at the fairies with a dark frown on his face. They begged him to look at the next sack, but when he did so, it, too, was full of brown leaves, instead of gold and precious stones. This was too much for King Winter's patience. He tossed the bags one by one out of the palace window, and would have tossed the unlucky fairies after them, had not some of the bravest ones knelt down and asked for mercy, telling him they had obeyed his orders, and, if King Frost had taken back his treasure, they were not to blame.

This turned their master's anger against King Frost, and very angry and fierce he was. He gnashed his great teeth with rage and rushed up and down in his palace, until it shook again. At last he made up his mind to go out that night, break down King Frost's beautiful palace, and take away all his riches.

When night came, he started out with all his fairies. Some were armed with the clubs they had beaten off the leaves with, and others had lumps of ice to throw at their enemy; but the king had been so angry all day that he had not told them what to do; also, he had left their sharp spears locked up. He wrapped himself in his great white cloak of swan's down in order that he might look very grand, and so they went on their way.

King Frost lived on the other side of the wood, and he had heard all the noise made by the winter fairies in

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spoiling the trees and had seen the next morning the mischief they had done. It made him very sorry to find the beautiful leaves all knocked off and taken away, and he determined to punish King Winter by going to attack *his* palace that night. He spent the day making ready and dressing himself and his servants in shining coats of ice-armour and giving each one several spears and darts of ice tipped with sharp diamond points. They looked like brave little soldiers.

The two groups of fairies met in the midst of the great wood. After some words between the kings, their servants fell to blows and a great battle they had. The winter fairies fought with their clubs and threw lumps of ice at the frost fairies; but their clubs were weak from being used so roughly the night before and soon broke; and when their ice-balls were all thrown away they could find no more. But King Frost had armed his servants well, and they threw their icy darts among the winter fairies. The trees, too, seemed to fight on the Frost King's side. The bare twigs pulled their hair and the branches ripped their ice clothes wherever they could. So the winter fairies had the worst of it and at last started off at full speed and rushed through the woods, never stopping till they reached the palace, and shut themselves in—leaving their king, who was too proud to run, all alone with King Frost and his fairies. You may be sure they were not very merciful to him. They began to pull his cloak, calling out, "Give us your cloak to keep our trees warm. You stole their pretty leaves; you must give us your cloak."

Now this was a magic cloak and had been given to

## *KING FROST AND KING WINTER*

King Winter by the Queen of the fairies, so when he felt them pulling at it, he wrapped it tightly about him, and began to run. After him flew the frost fairies, pulling and plucking at his great white cloak, snatching out a bit here and a bit there and laughing and shouting while King Winter howled and roared and rushed along, not knowing where he went. On they flew up and down the wood in and out among the trees,—their way marked by the scattered bits of white down from King Winter's cloak. When day began King Winter found himself near his own palace. He dashed his tattered cloak to the ground and rushed through the gate, shaking his fist at King Frost.

He and his fairies took the cloak. As they went home through the woods they hung beautiful wreaths of white down on all the trees and also trimmed the branches with their broken spears and darts, which shone like silver in the sunlight, and made the woods look as bright almost, as before it had been robbed of its golden and ruby leaves. Even the ground was covered with shining darts and white feathers. Every one thought it very beautiful, and no one could tell how it happened.

— *Adapted from Margaret T. Canby*

## THE SNOWSTORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, and river, and the heaven,  
And veils the farmhouse at the garden's end,  
The sled and traveler stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, inclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come, see the north wind's masonry.  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore  
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swanlike form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,  
Mauger the farmer's sighs; and at the gate  
A tapering turret overtops the work.

*THE SNOWSTORM*

And when his hours are numbered, and the world  
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art  
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone—  
Built in an age, the mad wind's night work,  
The frolic architecture of the snow.

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## THE FIRST WINTER

THERE was a time when the days were always of the same length, and it was always summer. The red men lived continually in the smile of the Great Spirit and were happy. But there arose a chief who was so powerful that he at last declared himself mightier than the Great Spirit, and taught his brothers to go forth to the plain and mock him. They would call upon the Great Spirit to come and fight with them or would challenge him to take away the crop of growing corn or drive the game from the woods. They would say he was an unkind father to keep himself and their dead brothers in the Happy Hunting Grounds, where the red men could hunt forever without weariness.

They laughed at their old men who had feared for so many moons to reproach the Great Spirit for his unfair treatment of the Indians who were compelled to hunt and fish for game for their wives and children, while their own women had to plant the corn and harvest it.

“In the Happy Hunting Grounds,” they said, “the Great Spirit feeds our brothers and their wives and does not let any foes or dangers come upon them, but here he lets us go hungry many times. If he is as great as you have said, why does he not take care of his children here?”

Then the Great Spirit told them he would turn his smiling face away from them, so that they should have

## *THE FIRST WINTER*

no more light and warmth and they must build fires in the forest if they would see.

But the red men laughed and taunted him, telling him that he had followed one trail so long that he could not get out of it, but would have to come every day and give them light and heat as usual. Then they would dance and make faces at him and taunt him with his helplessness.

In a few days the quick eyes of some of the red men saw in the morning the face of the Great Spirit appear where it was not wont to appear, but they were silent, fearing the jibes of their brothers. Finally, duller eyes noticed the change, and alarm and consternation spread among the people. Each day brought less and less of the Great Spirit's smile and his countenance was often hidden by dark clouds, while terrible storms beat upon the frightened faces turned in appeal toward the heavens. The strong braves and warriors became as women; the old men covered their heads with skins and starved in the forests; while the women in their lodges crooned the low, mournful wail of the death song. Frosts and snows came upon an unsheltered and stricken race, and many of them perished.

Then the Great Spirit, who had almost removed his face from the sight of men, had pity and told them he would come back. Day after day the few that remained alive watched with joy the return of the sun. They sang in praise of the approaching summer and once more hailed with thankfulness the first blades of growing corn as it burst from the ground. The Great Spirit told

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his children that every year, as a punishment for the insults they had given their Father, they should feel for a season the might of the power they had mocked; and they murmured not, but bowed their heads in meekness.

— *Iroquois Legend*

*retold by W. W. Canfield*

## SNOW SONG

Over valley, over hill,  
Hark, the shepherd piping shrill,  
Driving all the white flock forth,  
From the far folds of the north.

Blow, wind, blow,  
Weird melodies you play,  
Following your flocks that go  
Across the world today.

Hither, thither, up and down,  
Every highway of the town,  
Huddling close the white flocks all  
Gather at the shepherd's call.

Blow, wind, blow,  
Upon your pipes of joy,  
All your sheep the flakes of snow  
And you their shepherd boy.

— *Frank Dempster Sherman*

## THE SNOW MAIDEN

ONCE upon a time there lived a peasant named Ivan and his wife, Marie. They were very sad because they had no children. One cold winter day the peasant and his wife sat near a window in their cottage and watched the village children playing in the snow. The little ones were busily at work making a beautiful snow maiden.

Ivan turned to his wife and said, "What a good time the children are having. See, they are making a beautiful snow maiden. Come, let us go into the garden and amuse ourselves in the same way. We will make a pretty little snow image."

They went into the garden which lay back of their cottage.

"My husband," said Marie, "we have no children, what do you say to our making for ourselves a child of snow?"

"A very good idea!" said the husband. And he at once began to mold the form of a little body, with tiny feet and hands. His wife made a small head and set it upon the shoulders of the snow image.

A man who passed by the garden stopped for a moment and looked at the peasants who were so strangely occupied. After a moment's silence he said to them, "May God help you."

"Thank you," said Ivan.

## *THE SNOW MAIDEN*

“God’s blessing, indeed, is always good,” nodded Marie.

“What are you making?” asked the stranger.

Ivan looked up and said, “We are making a little snow maiden.” Then he went on with his work, forming the nose, chin, and eyes.

In a few moments the snow child was finished, and Ivan looked at her in great admiration. Suddenly, he noticed that the mouth and eyes opened, the cheeks and lips took on a rosy hue, and in a few moments the astonished peasant saw standing before him a living child.

“Who are you?” he asked, filled with wonder at seeing a little girl instead of a snow image.

“I am Snow White, your little daughter,” said the child. Then she threw her arms lovingly around the man and his wife, who both began to cry for joy.

The delighted parents took Snow White into the cottage, and before long the news ran through the village that a little daughter had come to live with Ivan and Marie.

Of course the village children came to play with Snow White. She was such a charming little girl, with a very white skin, eyes as blue as the sky, and lovely golden hair. To be sure, her cheeks were not so rosy as those of her companions, but she was so bright and gentle that everyone loved her very much indeed.

The winter passed very quickly and Snow White

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grew so fast that by the time the trees were veiled in the green buds of spring she was as tall as a girl of twelve or thirteen years.

During the winter months the snow maiden had been very joyous and happy, but when the mild, warm days of spring came she seemed sad and low-spirited. Her mother, Marie, noticed the change and said to her, "My dear little girl, why are you sad? Tell me, are you ill?"

"No, mother, dear, I am not ill," said Snow White. But she no longer seemed to enjoy playing out of doors with the other children; she stayed very quietly in the cottage.

One lovely spring day the village children came to the cottage and called out, "Come, Snow White! Come! We are going into the woods to gather wild flowers. Come with us."

"Yes, do go, my dear!" said mother Marie. "Go with your little friends and gather spring flowers. I'm sure you'll enjoy the outing."

Away went the happy children to the woods. They gathered the lovely wild flowers and made them into bouquets and coronets, and when the afternoon sun began to sink in the western sky they built a big bonfire. Gayly they sang little songs, merrily dancing around the bright, crackling blaze.

"Let each one dance alone," called out one of the little girls.

"Snow White, watch us for a little while, and then you, too, will know how to dance alone."

## THE SNOW MAIDEN

Away whirled the happy little children, dancing freely round and round the bonfire. In a little while Snow White joined them.

When the gay little people were out of breath and the dancing grew slower and slower, some one called out, "Where is Snow White?"

"Snow White, where are you?" shouted the other children, but nowhere could they find their little companion.

They ran home and told Ivan and Marie that Snow White had disappeared while dancing round the bonfire. The villagers made a thorough search for the little maiden, but they never found her, for while she was dancing around the bonfire she had slowly changed into a little white vapour and had flown away toward the sky, where she changed into a delicate snowflake.

— *Russian Legend*

*translated from the French  
by Eleanor L. Skinner*

## THE FROST KING

Oho! have you seen the Frost King,  
    A-marching up the hill?  
His hoary face is stern and pale,  
    His touch is icy chill.  
He sends the birdlings to the South,  
    He bids the brooks be still;  
Yet not in wrath or cruelty  
    He marches up the hill.

He will often rest at noontime,  
    To see the sunbeams play;  
And flash his spears of icicles,  
    Or let them melt away.  
He'll toss the snowflakes in the air,  
    Nor let them go nor stay;  
Then hold his breath while swift they fall,  
    That coasting boys may play.

He'll touch the brooks and rivers wide,  
    That skating crowds may shout;  
He'll make the people far and near  
    Remember he's about.  
He'll send his nimble, frosty Jack—  
    Without a shade of doubt—  
To do all kinds of merry pranks,  
    And call the children out;

*THE FROST KING*

He'll sit upon the whitened fields,  
    And reach his icy hand  
O'er houses where the sudden cold  
    Folks cannot understand.  
The very moon, that ventures forth  
    From clouds so soft and grand,  
Will stare to see the stiffened look  
    That settles o'er the land.

And so the Frost King o'er the hills,  
    And o'er the startled plain,  
Will come and go from year to year  
    Till Earth grows young again—  
Till Time himself shall cease to be,  
    Till gone are hill and plain:  
Whenever Winter comes to stay,  
    The hoary King shall reign.

— *Mary Mapes Dodge*

## KING WINTER'S HARVEST

KING WINTER sat upon his iceberg throne, and waving his scepter, a huge icicle, called for all the Snow Fairies and Frost Fairies to draw near, as he wished to see them.

“Tell me, Snow Fairies,” said King Winter, “what have you been doing of late; have you made anybody happy by your work?”

“Oh, yes,” they all said at once, “we had the jolliest time last night putting white dresses on the trees, white spreads over the grasses, white caps on all the fence posts, and making things look so strange that when the children came out in the morning they just shouted and laughed, and soon threw so much snow over each other that they were dressed in white, too, and seemed Snow Fairies like ourselves. They, too, wanted to make curious canes, castles, and other things with the snow as we had done. Sleds were brought out and when the sleighbells commenced their music it seemed that everybody was made glad by our work.”

“Well done,” said King Winter, “now away to your work again.”

In a twinkling the Snow Fairies were up in a purple cloud-boat throwing a shower of snowflake kisses down to King Winter to thank him for giving them work to do.

“Now, Frost Fairies,” said King Winter, turning to a glittering band who wore some of his own jewels, “what have you done to make anybody glad?”

## *KING WINTER'S HARVEST*

“We have made pictures upon the windows and hung your jewels upon the trees for the people to look at, and covered the skating ponds,” said Jack Frost, the leader.

“That is good,” said King Winter. “You and the Snow Fairies seem to be making the world glad now, but pretty soon we must leave the work, and the good sunbeams will put our things away; they will hide the snowballs, and crack the skating ponds so that the ice may float downstream. Now I would like to make something that will keep long after we are gone away. Queen Summer is gone but her harvest of hay and grain is in the barns. Queen Autumn is gone but her harvest of apples and potatoes is in the cellars; now I want to leave a harvest, too.”

“But the sunbeams are away most of the time now,” said Jack Frost. “Can anything grow without them?”

“My harvest will grow best without them,” said King Winter, “and I’ll just hang up a thick cloud curtain and ask them to play upon the other side while my harvest grows. Mr. North Wind will help, and if all you Frost Fairies do your liveliest work my harvest will soon be ready.”

North Wind soon came with bags of cold air which he scattered hither and thither, while the Frost Fairies carried it into every track and corner, wondering all the while what the harvest would be. But after two days’ work they found out; for horses were hitched to sleds and men started for the lakes and rivers, saying, “The ice has frozen so thick that it is a fine time to fill the

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ice-houses.” Saws and poles were carried along, and soon huge blocks of ice were finding places upon the sleds ready for a ride to some ice-house where they would be packed so securely in sawdust that King Winter’s harvest would keep through the very hottest weather.

“Then the ice-men can play that they are we,” said a Frost Fairy, “scattering cold all about to make people glad.”

# OLD KING WINTER

Old King Winter's on his throne  
In robes of ermine white;  
The crown of jewels on his head  
Now glitters bright with light.

The little flakes of snow and hail,  
And tiny pearls of sleet,  
Are with the wild winds dancing  
All round his magic feet.

His beard is white, his cheeks are red,  
His heart is filled with cheer;  
His season's best some people say;  
The *best* of all the year.

— *Anna E. Skinner*

## SHELTERING WINGS

It was intensely cold. Heavy sleds creaked as they scraped over the jeweled sounding board of dry, unyielding snow; the signs above shop doors shrieked and groaned as they swung helplessly to and fro; and the clear, keen air seemed frozen into sharp little crystalline needles that stabbed every living thing that must be out in it. The streets were almost forsaken in mid-afternoon. Business men hurried from shelter to shelter; every dog remained at home; not a bird was to be seen or heard. The sparrows had been forced to hide themselves in crevices and holes; the doves found protected corners and huddled together as best they could; many birds were frozen to death.

A dozen or more doves were gathered close under the cornice of the piazza of a certain house, trying with little success to keep warm. Some small sparrows, disturbed and driven from the cozy place they had chosen, saw the doves and came flying across the piazza.

“Dear doves,” chirped the sparrows, “won’t you let us nestle near you? Your bodies look so large and warm.”

“But your coats are frosted with cold. We cannot let you come near us, for we are almost frozen now,” murmured the doves sadly.

“But we are perishing.”

“So are we.”

## *SHELTERING WINGS*

“It looks so warm near your broad wings, gentle doves. Oh, let us come! We are so little, and so very, very cold!”

“Come,” cooed a dove at last, and a trembling little sparrow fluttered close and nestled under the broad white wing.

“Come,” cooed another dove, and another little sparrow found comfort.

“Come! Come!” echoed another warm-hearted bird, and another, until at last more than half the doves were sheltering small, shivering sparrows beneath their own half-frozen wings.

“My sisters, you are very foolish,” said the other doves. “You mean well, but why do you risk your own beautiful lives to give life to worthless sparrows?”

“Ah! they were so small, and so very, very cold,” murmured the doves. “Many of us will perish this cruel night; while we have life let us share its meager warmth with those in bitter need.”

Colder and colder grew the day. The sun went down behind the clouds suffused with soft and radiant beauty, but more fiercely and relentlessly swept the wind around the house where the doves and sparrows waited for death.

An hour after sunset a man came up to the house and strode across the piazza. As the door of the house closed heavily behind him, a little child watching from the window saw something jarred from the cornice fall heavily to the piazza floor.

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“Oh, papa,” she cried in surprise, “a poor frozen dove has fallen on our porch!”

When he stepped out to pick up the fallen dove the father saw the others under the cornice. They were no longer able to move or to utter a cry, so he brought them in and placed them in a room where they might slowly revive. Soon more than half of the doves could coo gratefully, and raise their stiffened wings. Then out from beneath the wing of each revived dove fluttered a living sparrow.

“Look, papa!” cried the child. “Each dove that has come to life was holding a poor little sparrow close to her heart.”

They gently raised the wings of the doves that could not be revived. Not one had a sparrow beneath it.

Colder and fiercer swept the wind without, cutting and more piercing grew the frozen, crystalline needles of air, but each dove that had sheltered a frost-coated sparrow beneath her own shivering wings lived to rejoice in the glowing gladsome sunshine of the days to come.

— *Harriet Louise Jerome*

## SNOWFLAKES

Out of the Bosom of the Air,  
    Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,  
Over the woodlands brown and bare,  
    Over the harvest-fields forsaken,  
    Silent, and soft, and slow,  
    Descends the snow.

— *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*