

Author: Stefan Rusafov

THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE WINTER WHIRLWINDS



It was a frosty white winter all around...

The people in the village have prepared everything needed for the coming Christmas celebration and couldn't wait to welcome Father Christmas in their homes.

But one morning, they woke up and found their houses buried under heavy snow up



to the roofs. It was very hard for them to open their front doors. So, they had to dig tunnels from house to house, to see how their neighbors were doing. Everyone was worried. They had to decide what to do with all this snow.

If it went on piling over the village, , Father Christmas would not be able to find his way to their homes and all children would be left without presents.

"Someone must find a way to reach the highest peak of the mountain." An old man suggested. "There, in his palace of ice lives Grandfather Frost, the sovereign of all winter elementals . Only he can make the snow and the frosty withdraw."

But no one was willing to go.

"Don't worry, friends", a little girl said "I will go!".

"Impossible!" the people said. "You are too little. And you don't even have a warm coat!", "No hat and scarf!", "No woolen mittens!". "You are too young and tender for such a long walk through the frosty mountains."

"I'm not afraid!" - The little girl said. - "My feet are strong and I'm as fast as a mountain goat!"

"But you'll freeze up there, with no shelter to rest in!"

"I will not." the girl said firmly. "I have a warm little heart, full of love for everyone. It will save me from the frost."

"Then, go, my child." an old man said. "I know your good heart and I trust it. If you're doing something for the good of others, it will never let you down."

All children one after the other started taking off their warmest clothes and handed them to her:

"Here, take my coat."

"My mittens are very warm!"

"Take my hat!"

"Take my scarf!"

"My woolen socks!"

"My boots!" ...|

Soon, the little girl was warmly dressed and ready to go. All the men from the village dug a long and broad tunnel up to the nearest hill, where the snow was much thinner, and easy to wade in.

Everyone went to see her off, warning her to take care, and wishing her the best of luck.



The little girl waved back at them: "Thank you all. I'll be back soon!"...

It was nearly dark, when she mounted the first hill...

Soon the moon lit the sky and the white snow around glowed, making everything around as visible as in daylight. The girl went on, never thinking about rest. She walked the whole day and night through, overcoming several high hills one after the other. She already could see the highest peak, where the Palace of Ice stood...

But then, the wicked winter whirlwinds noticed the little figure and started screaming wildly: "Who dares to trespass down there?", "Let's blow, let's toss her around until she forgets where she's heading for!"

And they started whirling around her fiercely.



The little girl only huddled into her warm coat, and went bravely on.

The whirlwinds were mad with anger. They blew and blew, and circled around her so furiously, that at the end they were so exhausted that started falling on the snow, unable to make another move.

"What a girl!" one of them said. "We are so exhausted, and she's not even tired..."

"We mustn't leave things like this! We cannot let her get away unpunished. Let's call our brothers the frightful Blizzards for help. They are much stronger than us."

So, the Whirlwinds started calling their brothers. The Blizzards heard them and rushed to see what's going on. When they learned what has happened, and saw the girl climbing the next slope, they roared and threw themselves after her. But the girl didn't give up once again. Soon the Blizzards became so tired, that they fell down one after the other, breathing heavily.



"That's-s-s -a -s-s-shame!" one of them hissed.

"It seems, she's untouchable for fury and malice. Let's try the other way round. "Let's call our sister, the Freezing Death. She's so polite and kind, that no one can ever suspect her of being as evil as she is.

So, the Blizzards called their wicked sister.

She came at once. Dressed in a sparkling lacy gown, she appeared to the girl with the face of a beautiful gentle woman, singing a sweet lullaby...

The girl slowed her pace and listened...

"What is this?" the girl thought. "Am I dreaming, or is this some good miracle?... I see the face of my dear mother, and I hear her voice! As sweet as in those blissful evenings, when she sang this lullaby to me ... She paused for a while...

"I can rest just for a while..." she said to herself. "I'm so near to the Palace. No more than an hour walking left... Let me just hear the song to the end and I'll be on my way again..."

The girl sat down. She was amazed how clearly she could hear her mother's voice and see her mother's face as she closed her eyes...

The Freezing Death grinned with delight and flew away to tell her brothers how well she managed to deceive the girl, whom she left freezing to death on the steep slope...

The little girl fell asleep, smiling happily. But the color of her face was changing as time passed. Her pink cheeks turned pale... She was slowly freezing...

It seemed there was no chance for her to be wakened up and saved.

Then, all of a sudden, something stirred from under the snow and a tiny mouse peeped through a hole. Her shiny black eyes fixed on the girl's stiffening figure.



"Someone's in trouble!" she squeaked and at the very moment a number of little holes opened in the snow, and hundreds of mice, and rabbits peeped out of their holes. Then little squirrels started plunging down from the near pine trees. They all ran to the girl, and started warming her feet and hands. Soon the girl was

covered all over with little animals, who went on warming her up with their soft furry bodies. They were extremely happy, to see her cheeks becoming pink again. The girl's lids flickered, and soon she opened her eyes...

She thanked her new friends for saving her life, and told them why she was here and where she was going.

"We are coming with you!" the animals cheered. "We also suffer very much from this never ending winter.



Soon, they reached the Ice Palace.

The girl knocked at the gate ...
But no one answered...

"What might have happened to Grandfather Frost?" they all wondered.

Several squirrels jumped on the pillars, then on the windowpanes, until they found a window, which was slightly opened. They smuggled in, and soon were able

to open the heavy gate from inside. The girl stepped in, followed by her friends. They passed a glittering ice corridor, which led them in a big crystal hall. There, on a sparkling throne of carved ice, Grandfather Frost was sitting with his eyes closed. He represented a majestic sight, dressed in silver embroidered clothes, with a gorgeous white mane formed by his long hair, bushy brows and splendidly curled beard.

The animals surrounded the throne, some of them climbing, or jumping in the old man's lap. A squirrel jumped right on his shoulder and dared to tickle his nose with its fluffy tail.

A mighty sneeze made all the icicles tremble. The animals froze with fear. But when Grandfather Frost opened his blue eyes and smiled, they forgot all about fear.

"Hello, Grandfather Frost", they sounded like a cheerful choir.

"Welcome, little ones!" he answered in a profound voice. "What unbelievable event has brought all of you here?"

The girl told him everything as it was.

"You mean, I have slept throughout all the winter?" Grandfather Frost asked astonished.

"It seems so." the girl said.

"I see... My mischievous servants, the winter elementals treated me with some special aromatic tea, which made me fall asleep. I guess, they decided to outsmart me and reign over the World forever. Thank you little ones for waking me up! Now, just stay here and watch. I'll restore the natural order and give everyone what he deserves.

Grandfather Frost blew his silver whistle. In less than an instant, all his subjects appeared trembling with horror in the big crystal hall. To all the evil elementals, who wanted to reign over the World forever, he gave a sip of that very tea they treated him with, and left them sleeping at the spot standing like statues for as long as his anger would pass away. He thanked his guests once again, and gave an icy lollypop to each of

them. Just at that time bells were heard and Father Christmas waved at the girl as he passed by. He invited her to join him in his sleigh, full of presents and they hurried to the village, where families and children were waiting for the little girl and of course for Father Christmas and his presents.

Everyone in the village cheered, meeting the brave little girl.

The Christmas festivities lasted for more than a week...