

= The Snowman (fairy tale) =

" The Snowman " is a literary fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen about a snowman who falls in love with a stove . It was published by C.A. Reitzel in Copenhagen as Sneemanden on 2 March 1861 . Andersen biographer Jackie Wullschlager describes the tale as a lyrical and poignant complement to Andersen 's " The Fir @-@ Tree " of December 1844 .

Wullschlager believes " The Snowman " was the product in part of Andersen ? s " pining and discontent over " Harald Scharff , a handsome young dancer at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen . According to Wullschlager , the two men entered a relationship in the early 1860s that brought the poet " some kind of sexual fulfillment and a temporary end to loneliness . " It was the only homosexual affair during Andersen 's life that brought him happiness .

= = Plot = =

" The Snowman " begins with its eponymous hero standing in the garden of a manor house watching the sun set and the moon rise .. He is only a day old , and quite naive and inexperienced . His sole companion is a watchdog who warns him that the sun will make him run into the ditch . The dog senses a change in the weather , enters his kennel and goes to sleep .

At dawn , the land is covered in frosty whiteness when a young couple enter the garden to admire the scene and the Snowman . When they leave , the dog tells the Snowman the couple are sweethearts who will someday move into " the same kennel and share their bones " . He then recounts happier days when he slept under the stove in the housekeeper ? s room as a pampered pet . The Snowman can see the stove through a window in the house and believes it is female . He falls in love . The Snowman longs to be in the room with the stove , but the dog warns him he would melt .

All day the Snowman gazes upon the stove , and , at twilight , the stove glows . When the door of the room is opened , the flames leap out of the stove and glow upon the snowman 's face and chest . He is delighted . In the morning , the window is covered with frost and the Snowman cannot see the stove . He is stove @-@ sick and cannot enjoy the frosty weather . The dog warns the snowman of an imminent change in the weather . A thaw descends , and , one morning , the snowman collapses . The dog finds a stove poker used to build the snowman within his remains , and then understands why the snowman longed for the stove , " That 's what moved inside him ... Now he is over that , too ! " The girls in the house sing a springtime carol and the snowman is forgotten .

= = Background = =

Scholars have noted Andersen was attracted to both men and women during his middle years . Andersen biographer Jackie Wullschlager observes , " Andersen 's diaries leave no doubt that he was attracted to both sexes ; that at times he longed for a physical relationship with a woman and that other times he was involved in physical liaisons with men . " Andersen biographer Alison Prince comments , " It is obvious that Andersen struggled throughout his life with a painful sense of greatness and of being different from others . This was partly due to the suppressed homosexuality which set him apart in loneliness and forced him to take refuge in the safer and more conventional image of the talented and hypersensitive poet ... " Both believe " The Snowman " has its source and inspiration in Andersen 's relationship with a young male ballet dancer associated with the Royal Theater in Copenhagen .

= = Andersen and Harald Scharff = =

In 1857 in Paris , he made the acquaintance of fellow Dane Harald Scharff , a handsome and highly regarded young ballet dancer with Copenhagen 's Royal Theatre . Andersen was returning to Copenhagen via Paris following a visit to Charles Dickens in England , and Scharff was on holiday with his Copenhagen housemate , the actor Lauritz Eckardt . Andersen and Scharff toured Notre

Dame together . Three years passed before Andersen again met the pair quite by accident in Bavaria in July 1860 ; the three men enjoyed a week together in Munich and its environs . It is probable that Andersen fell in love with Scharff at this time . According to his diary , Andersen did not " feel at all well " when the two young men left Munich on 9 July 1860 for Salzburg .

Following the departure of Scharff and Eckardt for Salzburg , Andersen traveled to Switzerland but grew despondent and then depressed . In November , he returned to Copenhagen and spent Christmas at Basnæs , the estate of an aristocratic patron and friend on the coast of Zealand . His spirits lifted with the holiday festivities and " The Snowman ? was composed on New Year ? s Eve 1860 . It was published with several other new tales by Andersen two months later on 2 March 1861 in New Fairy Tales and Stories . Second Series . First Collection . 1861 @.@ by the Copenhagen publisher C. A. Reitzel .

Andersen 's relationship with Scharff continued to develop and early in 1862 the two entered a relationship that brought Andersen " joy , some kind of sexual fulfillment and a temporary end to loneliness . " Andersen referred to this time in his life as his " erotic period " , but he was not discreet in his conduct with Scharff and displayed his feelings much too openly . Onlookers regarded the relationship as improper and ridiculous . The affair came to an end late in 1863 as Scharff gradually withdrew to focus on his friendship with Eckardt who had married an actress . Andersen noted in his diary 13 November 1863 : " Scharff has not visited me in eight days ; with him it is over . " Andersen took the end of the affair calmly and the two former lovers thereafter met in overlapping social circles without bitterness . Andersen tried several times to lure Scharff into another intimate relationship but without success .

= = = Commentaries = = =

Andersen retained story ideas in his mind sometimes for years before coalescing with an event or mood in his life , and telling stories such as ? The Snowman ? was a compulsion with him . The tale has been described as poignant and lyrical , and as a self @-@ mocking autobiographical revelation in which Andersen expressed his conviction that love is a burning , unreciprocated pain , and that he would end his life partnerless and alone . The light @-@ hearted Snowman is a complement to Andersen ? s tragic Fir Tree and , in telling the tale , Andersen returns ? to his earlier , tragicomic mode of sketching the fleeting autobiography of an everyday object which seems to have caught his eye at random and yet whose life story has an uncanny appropriateness to its physical form . ?

Andersen referred to " The Snowman " as a simple fairy tale , but the story may be viewed as a metaphor for life . The Snowman remains frozen to the ground , questioning fate , existence , and all that he sees and experiences . In this respect , the Snowman shares a common bond with Hamlet ? both grope for what is hidden , for the real behind the surface . But there the similarities end . Scholars Jackie Wullschlager and Alision Prince argue that Andersen 's tales are expressions of his homosexuality , and Graham Robb author of Strangers : Homosexual Love in the 19th Century calls his work an " Aesop of 19th @-@ century homosexuality " . and many of his heroes the victims of an unpopular sexual preference . " The Snowman " is a tale about misguided love , about a snowman who falls in love with what he believes is a female stove , and is Andersen 's best argument for the price paid for falling in love with the wrong type ? with the stove representing the danger in this " wrong " relationship . Andersen spent a lifetime seeking validation by women and experienced only the pain of unreciprocated love . His diaries reveal Andersen resorted to masturbation as a sexual outlet , and one critic notes that " [Andersen] so fabulously struck out with the ladies that it seems he simply expanded his dating pool to men to hedge his bets . "

Andersen biographer Alison Prince believes the tale to be a parable representing the different kinds of love . When the Snowman asks the dog why a young man and woman stroll about the wintry garden hand @-@ in @-@ hand , the disillusioned old dog tells him the two are engaged and will soon be moving into " the same kennel together and sharing each other 's bones " . The Snowman has a different idea of love , being enamored of the stove . Prince considers the image of the poker found within the Snowman 's remains " a homoerotic image of such potency that a failure to spot it seems inconceivable . "

