



The Snow King



Gill Howell
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Oxford
Reading
Tree



What is the story about?

A poor man and his two daughters live in a wooden house close to the forest. Katya, the younger daughter works hard but Ivanka just daydreams of being rich. When it snows very heavily, Katya goes out to the forest to find firewood and meets the Snow King, who is disguised as a poor old man. When she gives him her firewood, he rewards her with good food, and a fur cloak and boots. Ivanka then sets out to find the Snow King, but when she meets the poor old man, she refuses to help him. The Snow King then turns her to ice.

Talk together

Look at the cover and read the title together. Ask, "What do you think will happen in the story?" Look through the book together, focusing on the illustrations to get an idea of what the story will be about.

Read the story

- Encourage your child to read the story aloud to you, and join in with the enjoyment.
- Praise your child when he/she notices something doesn't make sense while reading and corrects him/herself.
- On pages 14–15 ask, "Why did Katya give the old man the wood she had collected?"
- If your child misreads words, ask him/her to reread the sentence and check it makes sense, but don't let your child struggle for long or the sense of the story may be lost.
- At the end of the book, ask your child if he/she thinks Ivanka will learn her lesson.

The Snow King

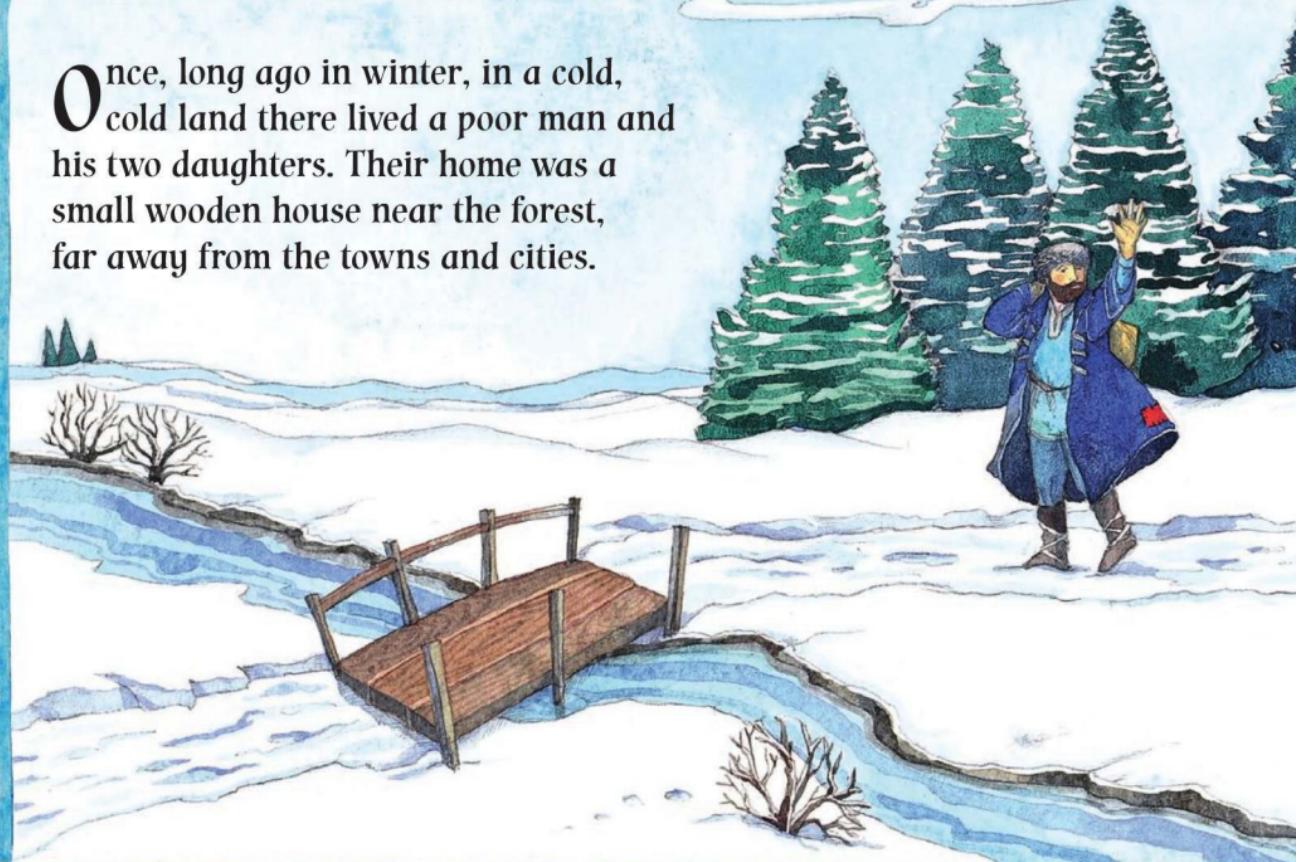


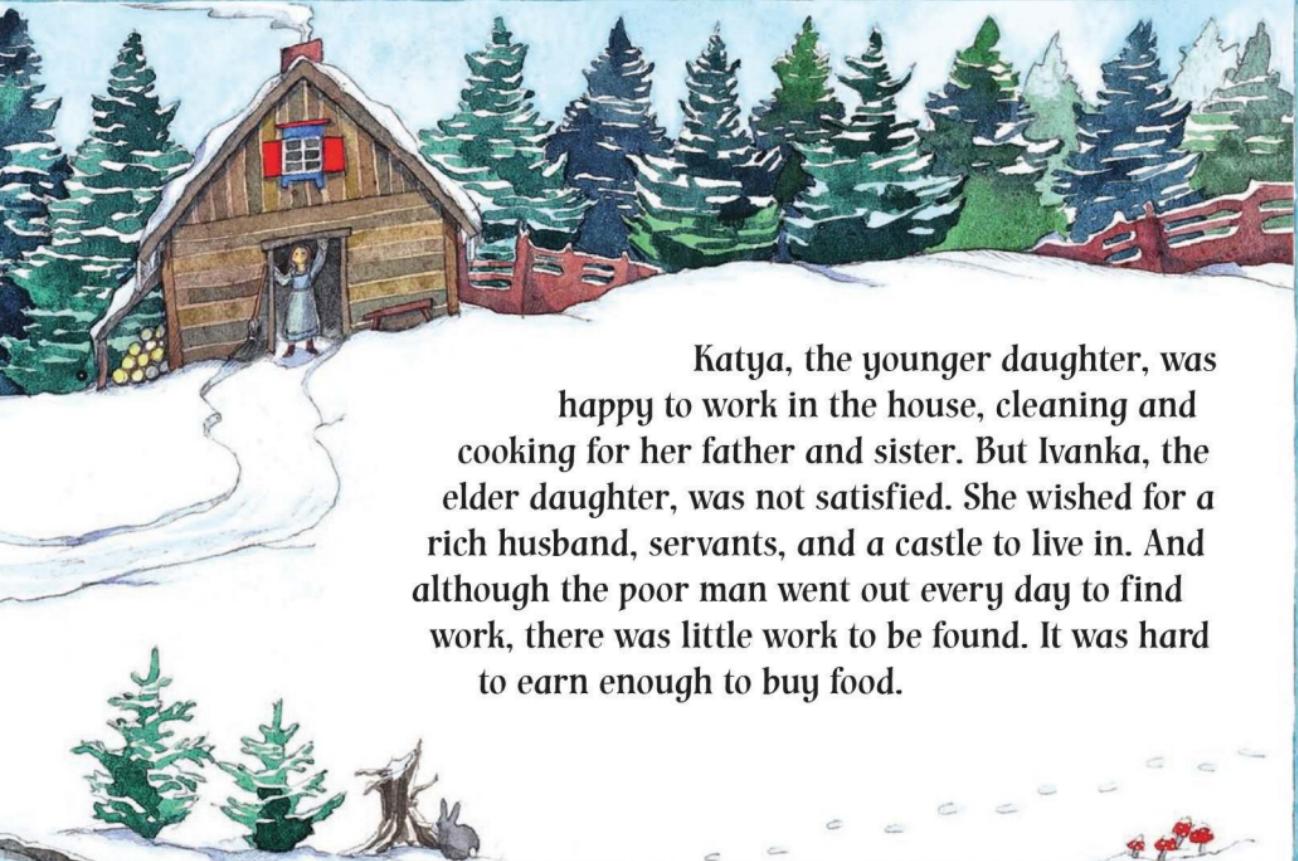
Story retold by Gill Howell

Pictures by Helen Cann

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Once, long ago in winter, in a cold, cold land there lived a poor man and his two daughters. Their home was a small wooden house near the forest, far away from the towns and cities.





Katya, the younger daughter, was happy to work in the house, cleaning and cooking for her father and sister. But Ivanka, the elder daughter, was not satisfied. She wished for a rich husband, servants, and a castle to live in. And although the poor man went out every day to find work, there was little work to be found. It was hard to earn enough to buy food.



Ivanka was a great beauty and her father longed to dress her in rich furs and beaded cloaks. But Ivanka's heart was as cold as ice. She sat by the fire, dreaming of riches. Katya, the younger daughter, did all the housework.



One day the snow fell and fell. It lay on the ground and on the roof, thick and heavy.

"Father," said Katya. "Won't you stay in today and keep warm?"

"And then what would we do for food?" cried Ivanka.

"Keep the fire burning until I return," called the poor man, as once more he went out to find work.



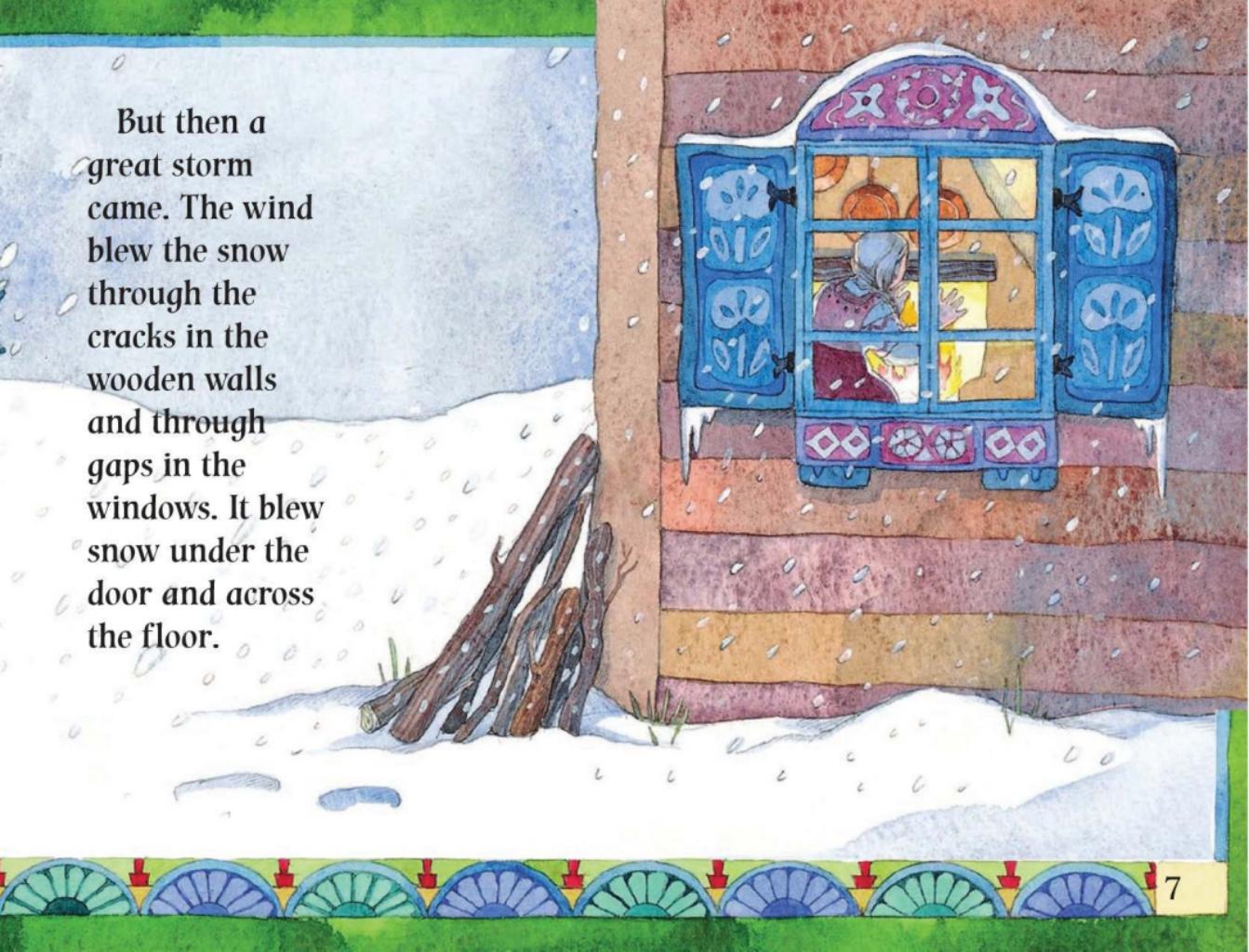
When their father had gone, Katya went out into the snow to collect wood, but Ivanka just sat by the fire.

Katya cleaned the little house, and prepared the food for when their father came home, but Ivanka just sat by the fire.

All day she sat and dreamed, while Katya cleaned and washed and cooked.



But then a great storm came. The wind blew the snow through the cracks in the wooden walls and through gaps in the windows. It blew snow under the door and across the floor.

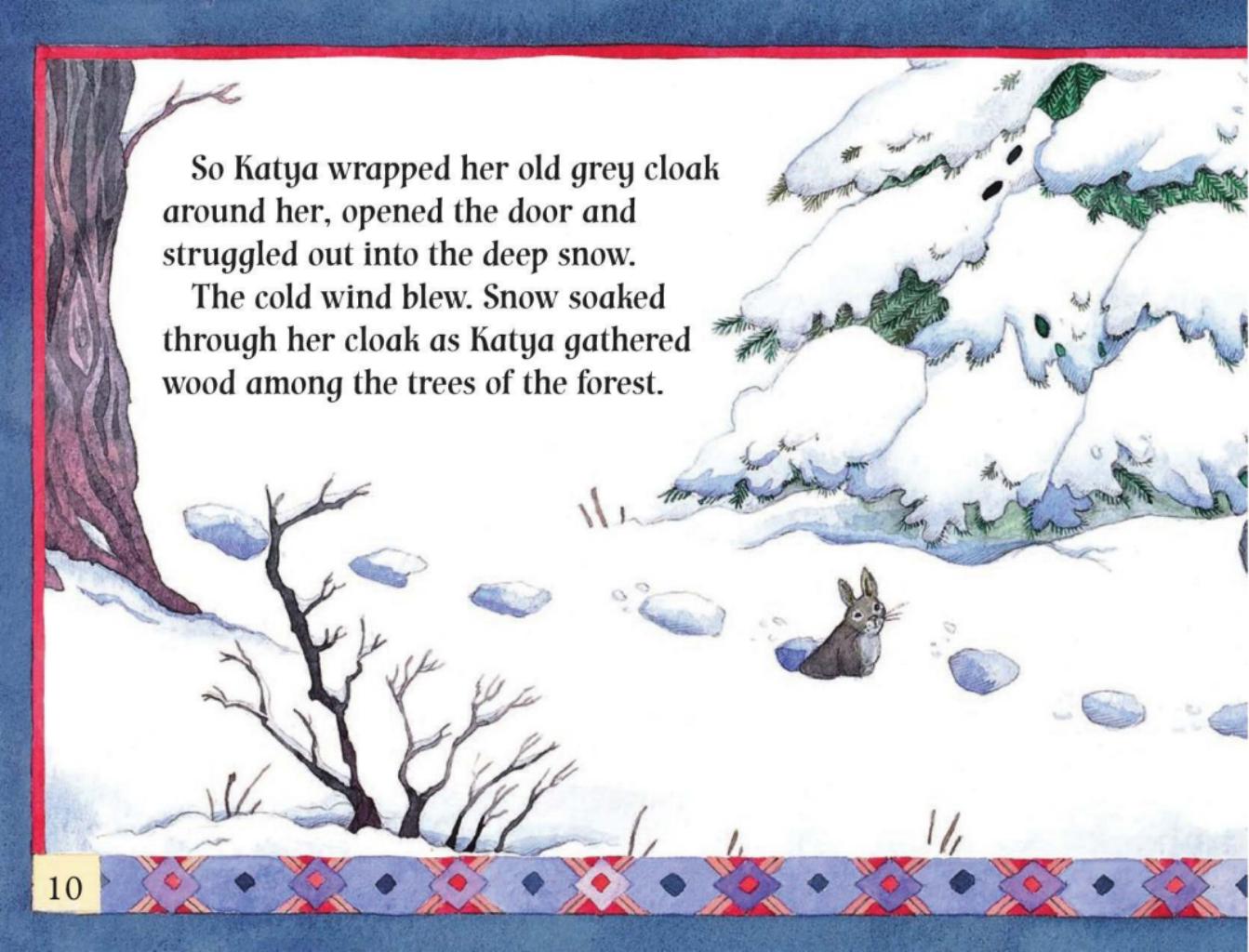


All day, as the snow settled around her, Ivanka sat dreaming by the fire. And then the wind blew ice and snow down the chimney. The fire spluttered and went out. The house quickly grew cold and dark.

At last Ivanka wrapped a warm shawl around her and left the cold fireside.

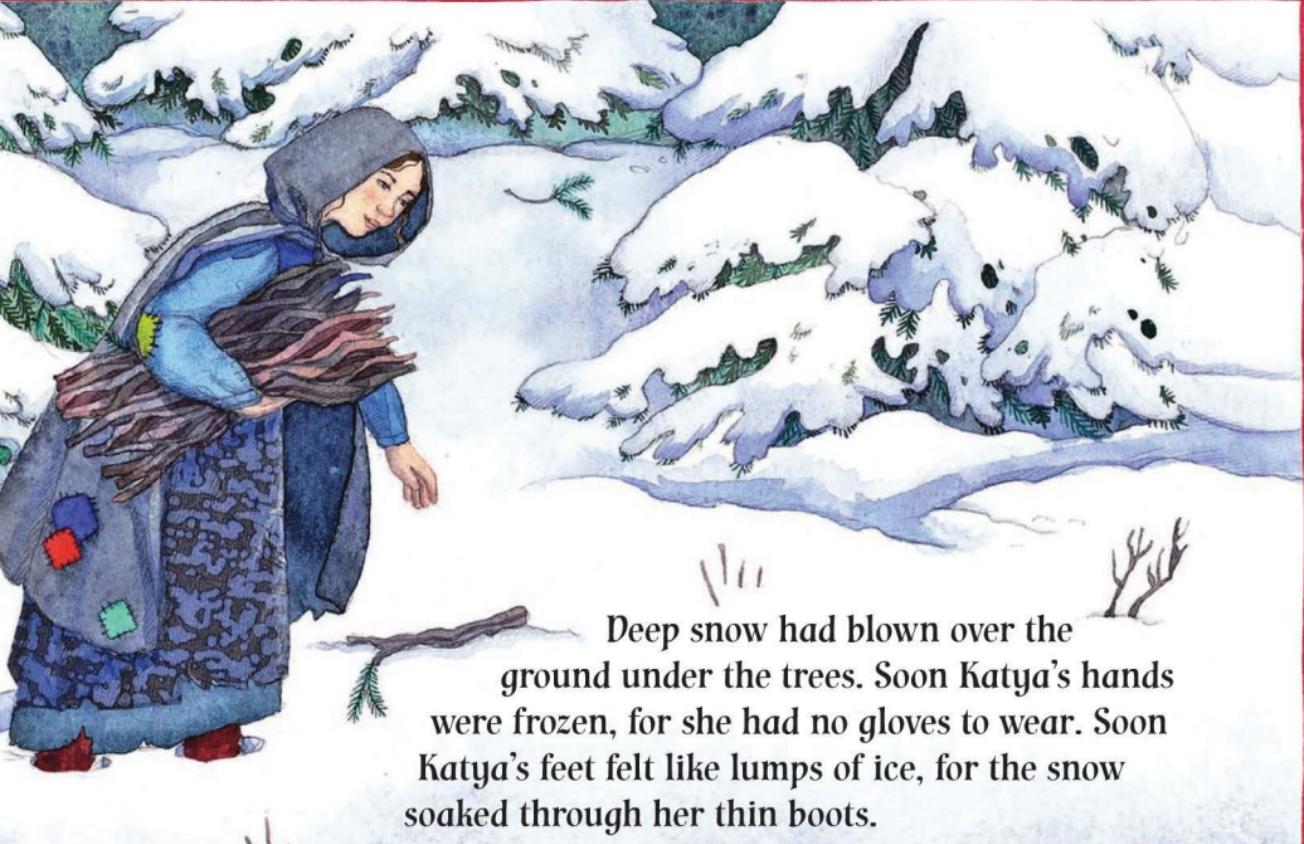
“Katya!” cried Ivanka. “Fetch more wood. Quickly! You must get the fire burning again, before Father returns.”





So Katya wrapped her old grey cloak around her, opened the door and struggled out into the deep snow.

The cold wind blew. Snow soaked through her cloak as Katya gathered wood among the trees of the forest.



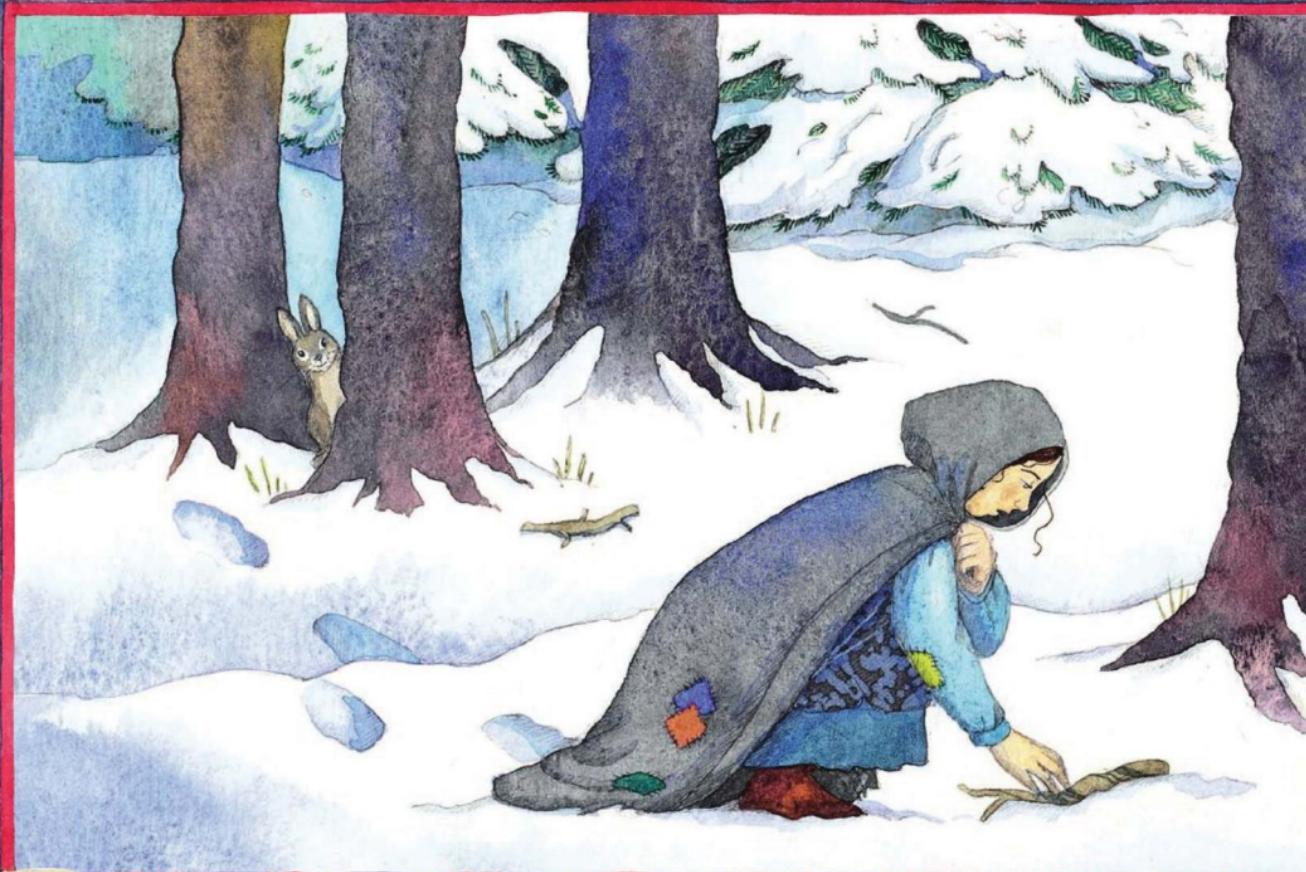
Deep snow had blown over the ground under the trees. Soon Katya's hands were frozen, for she had no gloves to wear. Soon Katya's feet felt like lumps of ice, for the snow soaked through her thin boots.

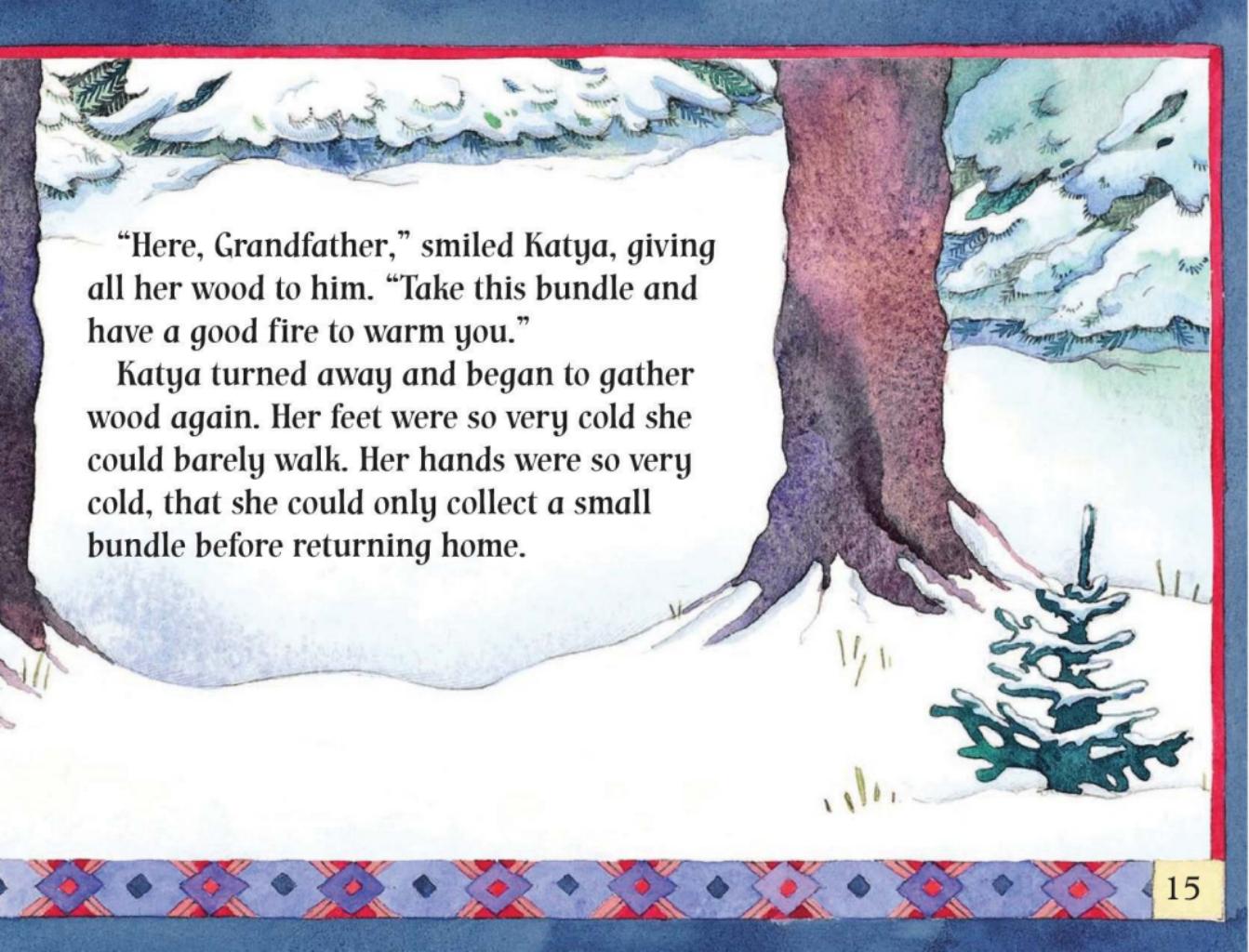


Suddenly, a strange old man in thin rags came up to her. His face was wrinkled, but his bright blue eyes were kind. Katya did not feel afraid.

"Child," he said, "will you spare a little wood, for I cannot bend to pick up my own?"

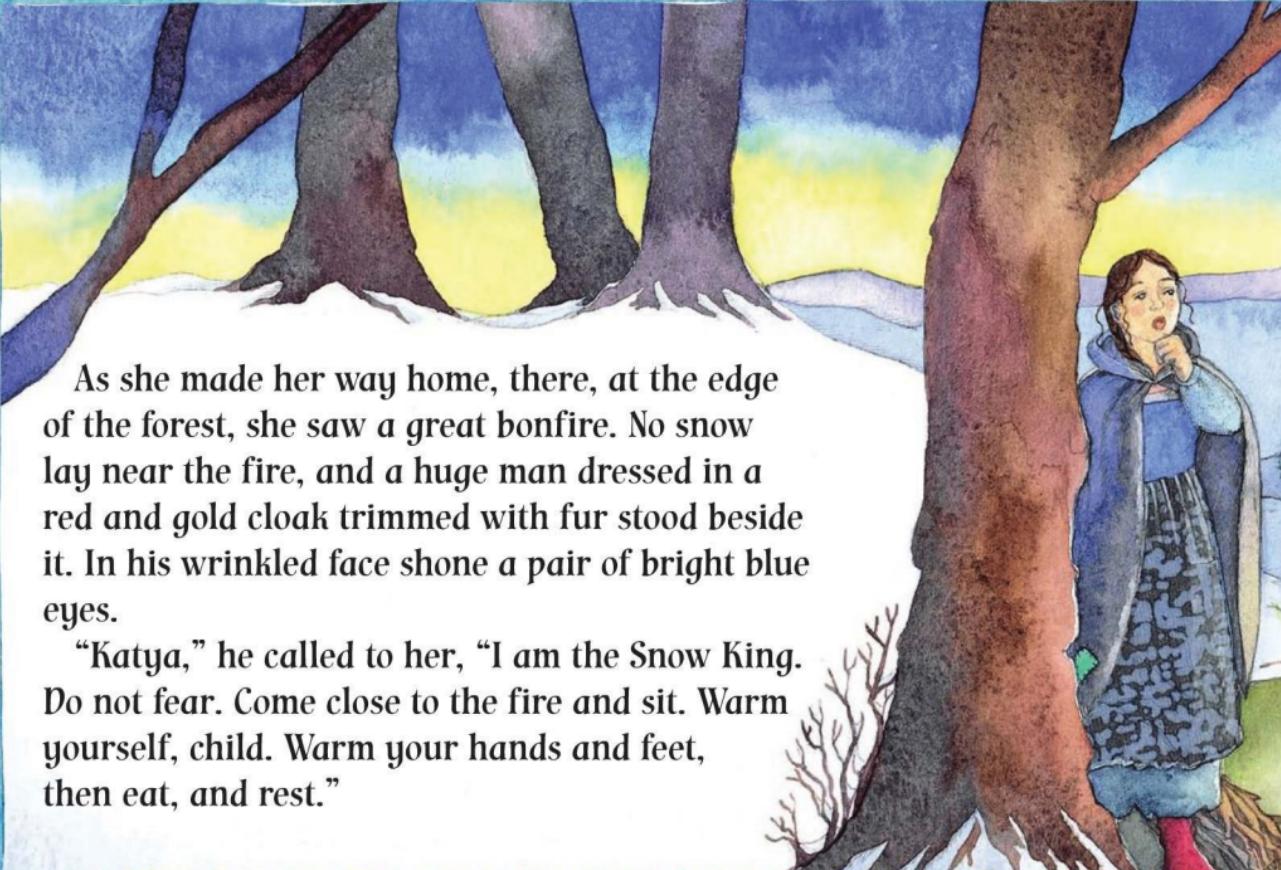






"Here, Grandfather," smiled Katya, giving all her wood to him. "Take this bundle and have a good fire to warm you."

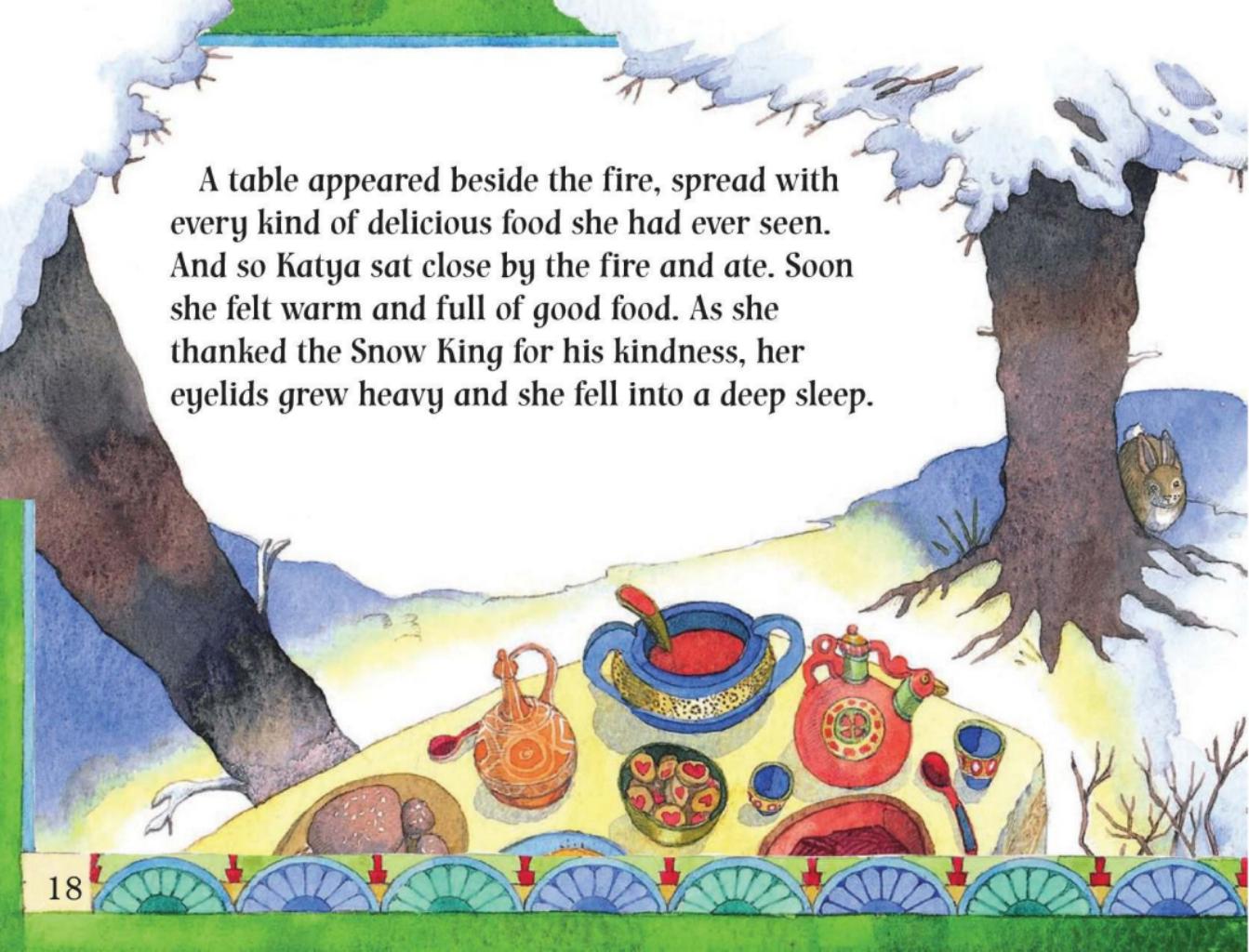
Katya turned away and began to gather wood again. Her feet were so very cold she could barely walk. Her hands were so very cold, that she could only collect a small bundle before returning home.



As she made her way home, there, at the edge of the forest, she saw a great bonfire. No snow lay near the fire, and a huge man dressed in a red and gold cloak trimmed with fur stood beside it. In his wrinkled face shone a pair of bright blue eyes.

“Katya,” he called to her, “I am the Snow King. Do not fear. Come close to the fire and sit. Warm yourself, child. Warm your hands and feet, then eat, and rest.”

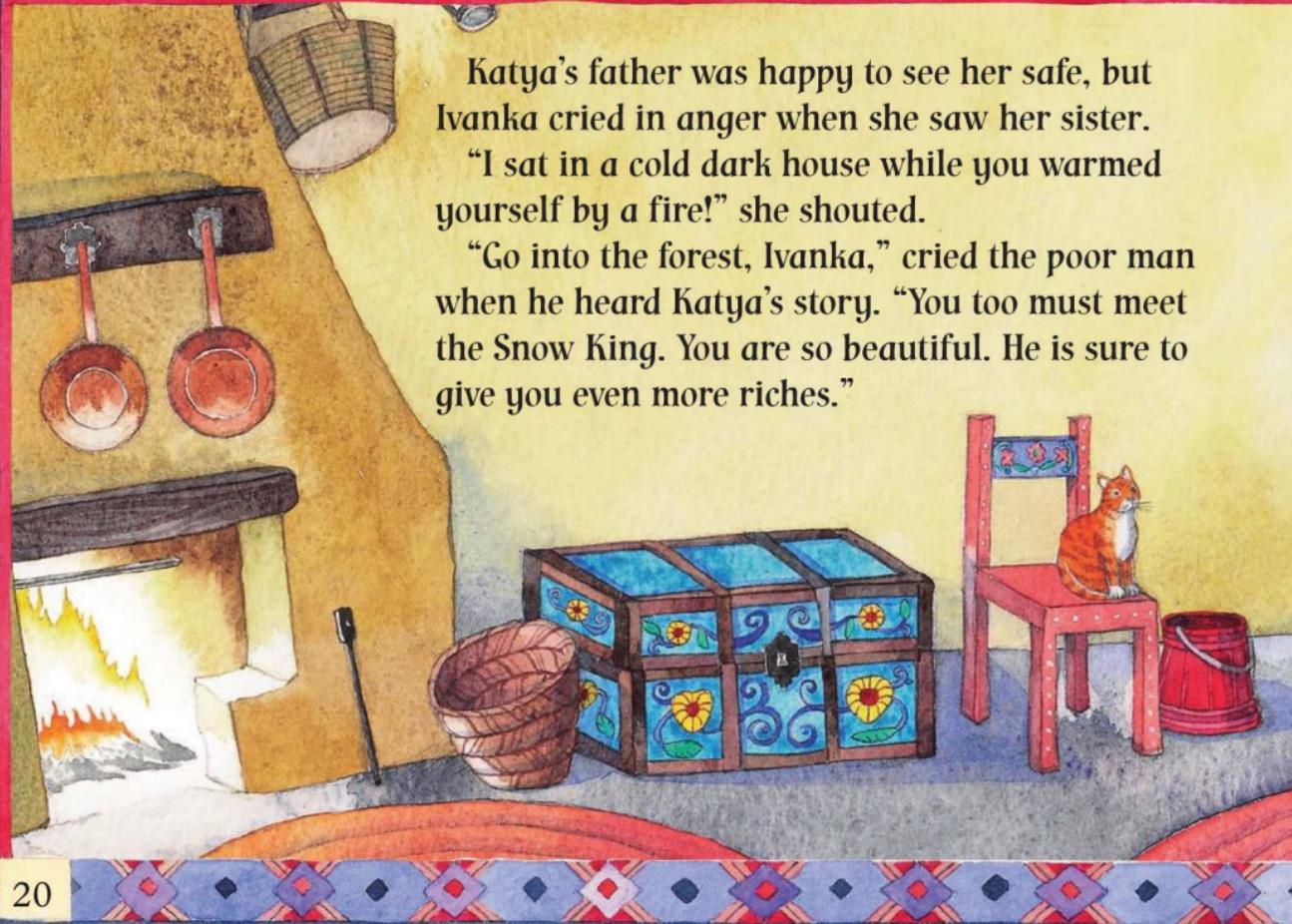




A table appeared beside the fire, spread with every kind of delicious food she had ever seen. And so Katya sat close by the fire and ate. Soon she felt warm and full of good food. As she thanked the Snow King for his kindness, her eyelids grew heavy and she fell into a deep sleep.

When she awoke it was dark. The fire and the Snow King were gone. But Katya was warmly dressed all in a red and gold fur cloak, and soft fur boots were on her feet. Straight away, Katya picked up her bundle of wood and ran through the snow to her father's house.





Katya's father was happy to see her safe, but Ivanka cried in anger when she saw her sister.

"I sat in a cold dark house while you warmed yourself by a fire!" she shouted.

"Go into the forest, Ivanka," cried the poor man when he heard Katya's story. "You too must meet the Snow King. You are so beautiful. He is sure to give you even more riches."

So Ivanka wrapped her old grey cloak around her and went out into the snow. She only gathered a little wood, and spent her time looking about for the Snow King.



Soon Ivanka met a poor old man in thin rags. His face was wrinkled but his eyes were blue and bright.

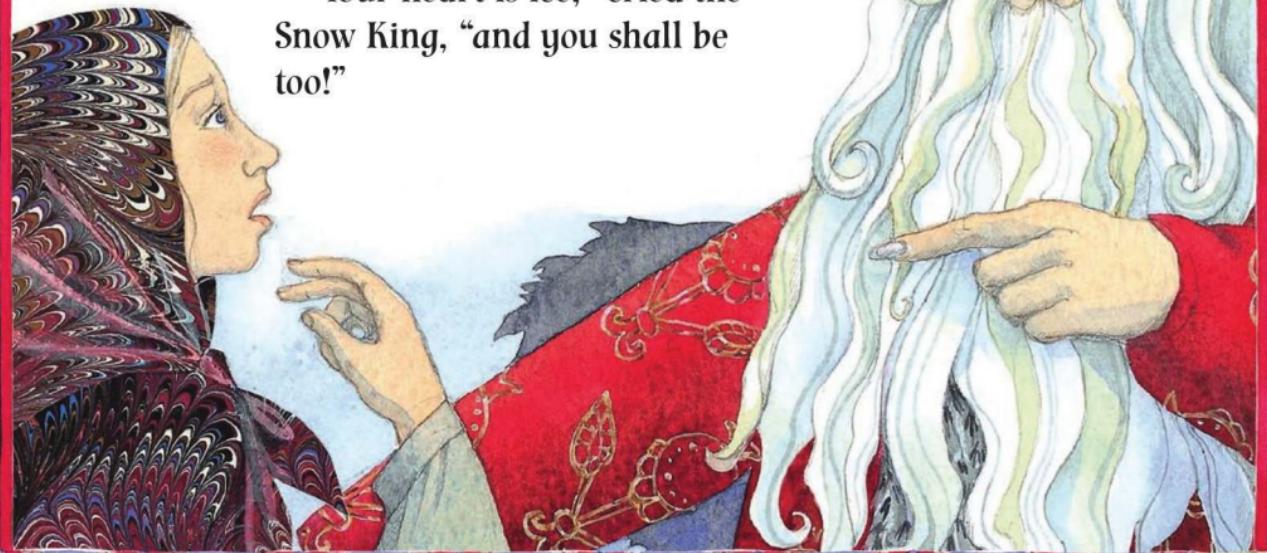
"Child," he said, "will you spare a little wood for I cannot bend to pick up my own."

"Be gone!" she shouted.
"I am waiting for the Snow King, not an old beggar!"



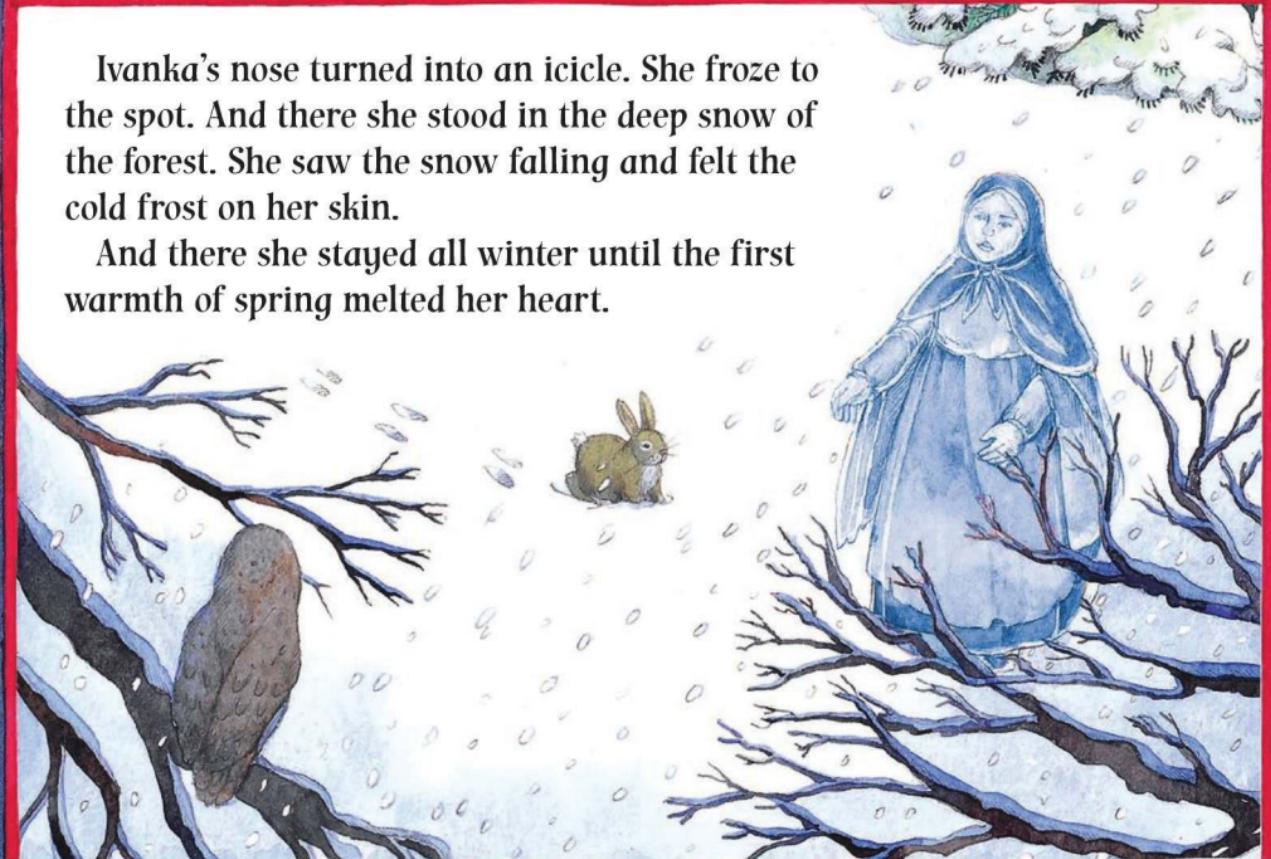
Suddenly the old man threw off his rags and there stood the Snow King, dressed in a red and gold fur cloak. His bright blue eyes flashed in anger.

"Your heart is ice," cried the Snow King, "and you shall be too!"



Ivanka's nose turned into an icicle. She froze to the spot. And there she stood in the deep snow of the forest. She saw the snow falling and felt the cold frost on her skin.

And there she stayed all winter until the first warmth of spring melted her heart.



Play a game

As cold as...

This game will help your child learn to use descriptive vocabulary, which will help his/her story-writing skills.

- Turn to page 4, and find the sentence 'But Ivanka's heart was as cold as ice'.
- Together, think of other adjectives and make up phrases that add description to the words, for example as hot as a desert, as black as night.

Other ideas

- Look through the story and ask your child to retell it in his/her own words using the illustrations.
- Be 'word detectives' and look for all the colour words in the story. Encourage your child to draw his/her own picture of the Snow King, and label the colours.

Story retold by Gill Howell

Pictures by Helen Cann

The Snow King

Kind Katya and lazy Ivanka meet the Snow King.

This story practises these words:

but by came her his home house little man more must
not old out so their then there were when your



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