

# A RETELLING OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S THE SNOWDROP

Hans Christian Andersen was a 19th century Danish writer who is best known for his fairy tales, including "The Little Mermaid," "The Princess and the Pea," and "The Emperor's New Clothes."

In this dramatic retelling of Andersen's story "The Snowdrop," the fairytale's sunbeam and the flower are characters in a play.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the drama and then answer the questions on page 6.



The Snowdrop  
Act I  
Scene 1

It is winter-time. The air is cold and the wind is sharp, but within the closed doors it was warm and comfortable, and within the closed door lays THE FLOWER. She lays in the bulb under the snow-covered earth.

It is raining. The drops penetrate through the snowy covering down into the earth, and touch the flower-bulb, and talk of the bright world above. Suddenly, THE SUNBEAM pierces its way through the snow to the root, and within the root there is a stirring.

THE FLOWER  
Come in.

THE SUNBEAM  
I cannot. I am not strong enough to unlock the door!  
When the summer arrives I shall be strong!

THE FLOWER  
When will it be summer?

THE FLOWER (Continued)  
When will it be summer?

## Scene 2

## THE FLOWER

What a long time it takes! What a long time it takes!  
I feel a stirring and striving within me. I must stretch myself,  
I must unlock the door, I must get out,  
and must nod a good morning to the summer,  
and what a happy time that will be!

THE FLOWER stirs and stretches itself within the thin rind which the water had softened from without, and the snow and the earth had warmed, and THE SUNBEAM had knocked at.

THE FLOWER shoots forth under the snow with a greenish-white blossom on a green stalk, with narrow thick leaves, which seems to want to protect it.

The snow is cold, but was pierced by THE SUNBEAM, therefore it was easy to get through it, and now THE SUNBEAM comes with greater strength than before, as if there was more than one present.

## THE SUNBEAMS

Welcome, welcome!

The SUNBEAMS sing and sound every ray, and THE FLOWER lifts itself up over the snow into the brighter world.

The SUNBEAMS caress and kisses it, so that it opens altogether, white as snow, and ornamented with green stripes. It bends its head in joy and humility.

## THE SUNBEAMS (Continued)

Beautiful Flower! How graceful and delicate you are!  
You are the first, you are the only one!  
You are our love! You are the bell that rings out for summer,  
beautiful summer, over country and town.  
All the snow will melt,  
and the cold winds will be driven away.  
We shall rule, all will become green,  
and then you will have companions:  
syringas, laburnums, and roses.  
But, you are the first, so graceful and so delicate!

It seems as if the air is singing and sounding, as if the rays of light are piercing through the leaves and the stalks of THE FLOWER.

THE FLOWER stands, so delicate and so easily broken, and yet so strong in its young beauty.  
THE FLOWER stands there in its white dress with the green stripes, and made a summer."

## Scene 3

But there was a long time yet until THE SUMMER arrives. Clouds hide the sun, and bleak winds are blowing endlessly.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## WIND AND WEATHER

You have come too early. We still have the power,  
and you shall feel it, and give it up to us.

You should have stayed quietly at home  
and not have run out to make a display of yourself.

Your time is not come yet!

It is a cutting cold! Now the days do not have a single sunbeam. It was weather that might break THE FLOWER in two with cold, but THE FLOWER has more strength than she herself knows of.

She is strong in joy and in faith in the summer, which she is sure will come, which has been announced by her deep longing and confirmed by THE SUNBEAM.

THE FLOWER remains standing in confidence in the snow in her white garment, bending her head even while the snowflakes fall thick and heavy, and the icy winds sweep over her.

## WIND AND WEATHER (Continued)

You'll break, and fade, and fade!

What did you want out here?

Why did you let yourself be tempted?

The Sunbeam only made game of you.

Now you have what you deserve, you summer fool."

Standing low against the blistering cold wind, THE FLOWER moans –

## THE FLOWER

Summer fool!

Children walk by, jubilantly singing

## THE CHILDREN

O summer fool!

Yonder stands one – how beautiful, how beautiful!

The first one, the only one!

These words do THE FLOWER so much good, as they seem to her like warm sunbeams. In her joy THE FLOWER does not even feel when it is suddenly broken off.

THE FLOWER lays in a child's hand, and is kissed by a child's mouth, and carried into a warm room, and looked on by gentle eyes, and put into water.

How strengthening, how invigorating! THE FLOWER thinks she has suddenly come upon the summer.

Act II  
Scene 1

The daughter of the house, a beautiful little girl, was confirmed, and she had a friend who was confirmed, too. He is studying for an examination for an appointment to equip himself for earning a living.

THE DAUGHTER  
He shall be my summer fool.

THE DAUGHTER takes THE FLOWER and lays it in a piece of scented paper, on which verses are written, beginning with summer fool and ending with summer fool. Whispering to herself –

THE DAUGHTER(Continued)  
My friend, he shall be my snowdrop!

THE DAUGHTER teases him with the note about summer and the snowdrop. Yes, all this is in the verses, and the paper is folded up like a letter, and THE FLOWER is folded in the letter, too.

Scene 2

It is dark around THE FLOWER, dark as in those days when she lay hidden in the bulb. She goes forth on her journey, and lays in the post-bag, where she is pressed and crushed, which is not at all pleasant, but that will soon come to an end.

## Review and Reflect Questions

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the questions below based on the drama *The Snowdrop*. Write your answers in the space below, or on lined paper.

1. List the characters in the drama.
2. Define the word “post-bag” from Act II, Scene 1. What context clues and inferences help you determine the meaning?
3. Think about the words “the closed door,” from Act I, Scene 1. What does that term refer to given the context of the whole script?
4. Describe the Flower’s reaction to Wind and Weather.
5. How do the scenes come together to create the whole drama?
6. What is the meaning of the title *The Snowdrop*?
7. Given the story *The Snowdrop* was written in the 1800s, what might the word “confirmed” mean from Act II, Scene 1?
8. Imagine the drama continues. What could happen in Act II, Scene 2?