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Snow White Symphony (Five Movements)

by Verena Cronberg

Mr. Lemuel Goldsmith recently remarked, via the *Hollywood Reporter*, that he was going to produce a version of "Snow White."

"Only," as Mr. Goldsmith was quoted as saying, "it's going to be a super-colossal epic. No fooling around with seven dwarfs. We're calling my production, 'One Hundred Dwarfs and Snow White'."

Mr. Goldsmith had ambitious plans. "Garbo to play snow White," he announced. "Robert Taylor, Dopey. Lionel Barrymore, the old witch. And sceneriasts . . ." he went on. ". . . Nothing but the best. I have already sent for Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber, Ernest Hemingway, one of the writers for the women's magazines, and Feodor Dostoevsky." (The joke here, of course, is that Dostoevsky, like Shakespeare, is dead.)

As he had promised, M. Goldsmith put these writers to work on different parts of the story, and their work has recently come into my hands. I am, I believe, fortunate to present, therefore, what I am sure are the unpublished works of these authors.

Edna Ferber—(General Introduction)

When he was a little boy he was always called by the ridiculous name of "Snow-Big." Of course, later on when he was kind he was usually addressed as "Your Majesty," but Snow White, going about her tapestry work at the castle, would sometimes pause and call, "How big is my boy — how big is my baby?" and he, in his long white beard, would stretch out his arms and say, "Snow-Big!"

Snow-Big. But was he really Snow-Big? Snow White sometimes wondered. When snow White had been a little girl he had lived in a large castle with her father. It had been a pleasant place

— run down, but with a glamor about its grey rooms that had been fascinating to a small girl with remarkable large, dreamy eyes that always seemed to be seeing something that other people couldn't see.

Something in those eyes had touched old Grumpy the first day he had driven her to the dwarf's home. They had been driving by the mind. Grumpy encouraging the horse with "Git 'long there . . . git 'long . . ." when Snow White had suddenly turned toward the old dwarf."

"Oh, Mr. Grumpy," she had said, [his] eyes shining, "Gold nuggets are **beautiful**, aren't they?"

Grumpy bit down on the stem of his pipe. "Peautiful!" he repeated. "Gold nuggets is peautiful!" He began guffawing.

"But they are," Snow White insisted. "All yellow and sparkling."

Grumpy could only repeat, "Gold nuggets is peautiful!"

But twenty years later, after all that had happened, Snow White still believe that gold nuggets were beautiful.

Ernest Hemingway (First Movement)

When I was climbing over the wall out of the garden I saw this girl. She was slight with dark hair and a very lovely mouth. I thought she was very beautiful.

Then I cam back into the garden and when I reached the ground I went over to her.

"Hello," I said.

She looked startled. "Hello," she said.

I said, "It's a fine day."

"Yes," she said. "It's a lovely day."

"But the nights are better," I said.

She didn't answer that, but turned away and started walking up the path toward the castle.

"Wait." I caught up with her and walked along beside her, shortening my steps to hers. I thought she was small and sweet.

“You’re sweet,” I told her.

She lifted her head and looked at me. I saw her skin was very white and I could smell her breath which was warm and sweet. “Please,” she said.

I put out my hand and touched her shoulder

“No.”

“Why not?” I whispered.

“Because . . .”

I went on pulling her toward me. I lowered my head and put my mouth down on hers. She didn’t pull away and after a while I said “I love you. I mean it. I love you.”

“Do you?” she said.

“Yes,” I said, because this time it was true. “You’re a fine girl.”

“Am I?” she said. “Tell me you love me again.”

“Darling” I said, “I love you.”

“That’s lovely, darling,” she said. “I’m so happy. I’m really awfully happy.”

We sat down on a bench under a tree and I kissed her again.

“Afeter a while it’ll be night,” I said to her. “The nights are the best.”

She didn’t say anything at first. Then she said, “It’ll be a lovely night.”

It was very lovely in the garden. There were some birds in the trees above us. I didn’t know what kind they were, but they made a twittering sound. Down at the end of the garden you could just see some grape vines. They were heavy with grapes. They had a very fine harvest that year.

Theodor Dreiser—(At the Dwarfs)

Snow White had by this time adjusted herself to life with the dwarfs. Every day was much like the one before, filled with cooking, housework, mending, and other duties. She was probably quite happy, although she did not think about it very much. Most of her thoughts were on the Prince and how he had looked and what he had said. She could not forget his lovely hands and his dark hair and his dark hungry eyes.

To understand her feeling toward the Prince, one must remember that the emotion she felt toward him was heightened by the fact that

she had only seen him once and that a great many disturbing things had happened since, making her thoughts return again and again to him.

“My,” she sometimes thought, “if I could just see him again! Wouldn’t I be happy, though. Wouldn’t I just. He’s so handsome, not like the dwarfs. Oh, they’re kind, of course,” she went on hurriedly, for she had been brought up to feel loyal toward her friends, “but he is so handsome and so slim —quite the best looking man I know, I guess.” Then her thoughts would go on to quite idle dreaming — to dreams of hot, impulsive youth, feeling for the first time the flash-ing, blinding, bleeding stab of love.

Sometimes she thought of being out in the forest and suddenly meeting him. they would be all alone in the dark forest then and perhaps he would try to kiss her. But that would be wrong — evil — seduction. That was what she had been taught as a child. But even so the thought of his kissing her made her forget all that for a moment and released in her such a flood of desires as she had not known she possessed. So when her thoughts ran this way she would put a stop to them and try to think of something else — of supper, or the mending. “Goodness,” she would tell herself, “how I do go on.” But even so she could not forget about her dream, which caused such a division in her thoughts — bet ween what she had learned as right and what her naturally impulsive, warm-hearted nature desired.

Feodor Dostoevski—(Poisoning Scene)

Hearing a knock at the Dutch door Sonia ran to it, throwing open the upper-half. She stopped, a little disconcerted and surprised, at the sight of the old woman who was standing there.

“Ach — Sonia Snowovna! Fancy, it is you!” exclaimed the old woman. Sonia Whitezelkof looked at her strangely. “How did you know it was I . . . but I have never seen you before, though you remind me of someone I once knew a long time ago perhaps . . . when I look at you there is something in my mind . . . one might say . . .” The girl passed a hand over her face and look at the old woman strangely.

“Well, well - -” the other said impatiently “Let us say . . . I knew who you were. Now, come! Let me in - - !”

Sonia looked at her strangely. "Just so," she murmured. "But they told me . . . the little men . . . but do they know? . . . it is perhaps that I want to suffer . . . yes, lacerations." She gazed dreamily at the old woman and then with a curious motion reached out and opened the lower part of the door. "Come in," she said aloud. Then she went on strangely. "Perhaps you can tell me how I may . . . but no!" she went on, turning her face away, "I must suffer because I want to suffer . . . to suffer," she repeated fiercely. "See . . . this is what I mean," and she put the first finger of her right hand in her mouth and started biting it, her eyes watching the old woman strangely. "Lacerations," she repeated.

Suddenly Sonia Snowovna Whitezelkof took her hand from her mouth and dropped to a chair. Her face was like a child's, the mouth soft and half open, the eyes large and wondering. "I have been . . ." she said, ". . . it seems as though I was dreaming . . ." She smiled like a child at the other woman. "What do you wish to show me?" she asked.

Then the old woman picked up the basket and reaching in, brought out an apple.

"It is the most beautiful apple . . . I am giving it to you," she said. "Do you understand, Sonia Snowovna . . . I am giving it to you."

Sonia put out her hand and said simply, "Give it to me, old woman."

The old woman drew back. "Wait! Sonia Whitezelkof! I will give you this apple but you must understand . . . it will kill you, Sonia Snowovna!"

The girl look at her startled. "No, no . . . I don't want to die . . ." and she clasped and unclasped her hands, gazing at the old woman as at a made woman. "I do not want to die now . . . be-cause if I did . . ." she lowered her head and her voice became a strangled whisper, "I can no longer suffer."

The old woman looked at her, smiling strangely. "But Sonia Snowovna, you cannot refused the apple . . . you cannot refuse . . ." And she held out the fruit to the girl, fixing her strange eyes on her.

"Eat it, Sonia Whitezelkof. Eat, little Sonivitch," she crooned softly. "Eat."

The girl took the apple from the old woman as one hypnotized, raised it to her lips, sunk her teeth into the tight skin, and with a cry, sank to the floor. "Lacerations," she murmured once.

"The old woman gazed at her strangely, then she too fell to the floor, and bending her head, kissed the girl's feet.

"I do not kiss your feet, Sonia Snowovna," she said, "I kiss the feet of suffering humanity."

Any Writer for a Woman's Magazine—(Reunion)

She waited for him in the castle, at her old home — which was all so changed, now that the queen was gone. Her dark hair framed her small face, her dark eyes were shadowed by ridiculously long lashes, while about them her brows were two little dark wings.

He drove up to the castle in his old car. Just his old car. "Well, my lady," he said, "Will you marry me today?"

"I always thought," she said gravely, "that I'd marry a Prince on a white horse. But I guess I was wrong."

"Oh, I'm not a prince," he retorted gayly, "but I'm a prince of a fellow."

"Are you?" she asked in a voice of magic. Suddenly she was somehow in his arms. Then he kissed her. And she knew that this was the answer. This was what she had been waiting for. This was what life, a long time ago, had seemed to be promising her.

It is cheering to read in this morning's *Hollywood Reporter* that Mr. Goldsmith has abandoned his plans for an early production of "One Hundred Dwarfs and Snow White." It seems that all the dwarfs in Hollywood are being used for a circus picture, and besides Mr. Goldsmith has decided to film "Gone With the Wind" — in modern dress, he explained, "Like Orson Welles."

Meanwhile, the Messers. Dresier, Hemingway and Dostoievsky, Miss Ferber and the Magazine Writer have all gone home with a big check and, as they express it, a large piece of experience.

-Verena Cronburg