

Dear Diary,

I can't quite believe that I am still here and able to write this. There have been so many moments over these last couple of days when I thought that I wouldn't make it this far. First it was my encounter with the pack of hungry wolves. As I held tight to the ice lacquered branches of the pine tree I thought that if the wolves didn't eat me then I would surely fall into a sleep from which I would never awake. Then I got lost in the wilderness in the black of night. If it weren't for the snowy owl leading me to safety then I would definitely have frozen out there all alone. Next, because of a single, small pine tree I was saved from falling into a great chasm the size of several houses. I have been very lucky! Then finally, the events of today make it all quite unbelievable.

As I was walking through the powdery blankets of snow, I was sure that I heard music. The sound of a fiddle far off in the distance was accompanied by a faint glow in the sky beyond the pines. I could hear music, then voices and the laughter of children. I had never felt as alone as I did at that moment. I carried on walking towards the warm light and as I walked the music and the laughter grew louder still. Today, I saw children. Real, live children, dressed in summer clothes and with flowers in their hair.

These children invited me to dance with them. They whirled me away, like a many coloured serpent, through pools of lamplight on the snow. I skipped through the streets, through doorways and into houses with tables, chairs and big tiled stoves like the one back in the kitchen at home. When we had danced through the streets we approached the great fire and formed a circle in the firelight. Round and round we whirled. Each time the fiddlers changed their tune a child was pushed into the centre of the circle to dance while everyone looked on. I thought that I would be nervous when my turn came but I wasn't. I was excited!

The boy beside me grinned, winked at me and spun me around into the centre of the circle. I still can't quite believe what happened next. The warmth that had filled me moments before was suddenly gone. It was unimaginably cold. The wind whipped around me, blowing an icy powder into my eyes as I fell to the ground.