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Arina Laurel

**THE TALE OF THE
SNOW GLOBE**

Arina Laurel
The Tale of the Snow Globe

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Аннотация

Welcome to Snezhnogorsk, where snow has a soul and miracles hide in every snowdrift. In this tiny northern town, winter never truly ends — but it never grows cold. Chimneys puff crystal rings into the sky, the old lamplighter lights oil lamps that glow like buried stars, and the moon paints the snow in shades of pearl and violet. Here lives Masha, a girl with honey-coloured eyes and a heart as warm as a stove.

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Chapter 1

In a distant northern land, where pines press their crowns against the low milky sky and rivers stay ice-bound until well into April, a tiny town lay hidden. It did not appear on any large map, but the locals called it Snezhnogorsk — for the snow there did not simply fall, but seemed to live its own life. It settled on the cobblestones in weightless lace, hung from eaves in fringed icicles, and by night, under the moon, shimmered in every shade of blue, violet and pearl.

In winter, the town turned into a true fairy-tale residence: chimneys puffed out little rings of smoke that froze in the air and remained until morning like crystal spheres; the lamplighter,

Uncle Yefim, lit the old oil lamps every week, and their flames glowed back from the snowdrifts, giving the illusion that warm light burned beneath the earth as well. Children built snowmen with carrot noses, old folks drank raspberry tea and told tall tales, and in the evenings, the strum of a guitar or ringing laughter drifted from the windows — winter life here was cosy and unhurried.

At the very heart of Snezhnogorsk, on a quiet street named after some forgotten poet, stood a house with carved shutters. In it lived a family: father, mother, older brother Misha, and a little girl named Masha. But more often than anyone else in the house, you would meet Grandmother Anna — a woman with a silver braid down to her waist and eyes that saw more than ordinary eyes. Grandmother knew every forest path, could charm water, and read the weather from the clouds. She was the keeper of old legends, and it was from her that Masha inherited her love of secrets and her belief in miracles.

Masha was born on the shortest day of the year, so Grandmother often said that light and darkness were mixed in her, like a candle that burns even on the darkest night. The girl grew up lively and curious: by the age of three, she already knew the names of all the birds that came to the feeder; by five, she had learned to read syllable by syllable; and by seven, she had embroidered an entire winter landscape on a linen towel all by

herself. Her chestnut curls were always loose, with only two crimson ribbons — a gift from Grandmother — to tame the unruly strands. Masha's eyes were the colour of honey — warm and shining, and every snowfall was reflected in them.

But what set Masha apart most of all was her heart. It was like a little stove: she could not pass by a frozen sparrow, could not leave a crying toddler without comfort, and always shared her breakfast with the stray cat that had taken up residence under the porch. The townsfolk knew her as “the girl with the warm hands,” because even in the bitterest cold her palms stayed hot — Grandmother said it was because kindness warms from the inside.

Chapter 2

On the day of the winter solstice, when the sun rises for just a few hours and time itself seems to slow its pace, Grandmother called Masha into her little light-filled room. There, on an old oak table covered with a lace cloth, stood an object the girl had never seen before. It was a snow globe — but not the kind they sold at fairground stalls. Inside the crystal sphere, instead of the usual little house or Christmas tree, hundreds of tiny stars forged from pure silver swirled in a dance. They moved not at random, but as if obeying an invisible conductor: now gathering into a spiral, now scattering like a fan, now forming constellations known only

to Grandmother herself.

When Masha took the globe in her red mittens, it trembled and began to glow softly — a golden, honeyed light that spread across the room like a miniature sunset. Warm patches of light danced on the walls, and patterns like birch branches appeared on the ceiling.

“This globe,” Grandmother began, her voice soft yet as clear as the first ice — “came to me from my grandmother, and to her from her great-grandmother. They say it was made by a master glass-blower who was a friend of Father Frost himself. He breathed his own breath and a particle of the winter sun into the glass, and the stars inside are his dreams of summer. The globe holds wonders, but not everyone can see them. Only those who carry true faith within them can awaken its power.”

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