
The Snow Maiden
The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller
A Suspense Thriller

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Cover artwork by Mitchell Nelson

“The winds of grace are always The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller blowing, but it is you who must raise your sails.”

Rabindranath The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller Tagore (1861-1941)

“Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”

Luke 5:4

Chapter 1

Winter Visions

Amidst the swirling snow and bustling crowd in the town square, a blonde young girl with a cherubic face pulled her wagon along as she moved forward with the determination of a treasure seeker who had just spotted a pearl of great price.

“Slow down, child!” her grandmother called to her, hurrying along the street as she attempted to keep pace with the girl.

“Yes, Gram.” Chloe stopped long enough for her grandmother to catch up with her, then continued forward at a more moderate pace.

“Good girl.” Few children would have obeyed so quickly, the grandmother reflected. The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller I’m actually glad to see that she can walk so fast. Perhaps she is not as ill as the doctors think that she is.

They stopped a few yards from the stage that was in front of St. Faustina Church.

It was almost sunset on New The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller Year’s Day as five The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller young women competing for the title of Snow Maiden stood on the stage. They were the five finalists out of twenty contestants.

“Such beautiful young ladies. Which contestant do you want to win?” her grandmother asked her in a conspiratorial whisper.

“That one!” Chloe replied without hesitation, pointing at a 22-year-old blonde named Sarah Hamilton.

“I can see why you want her to win,” the grandmother said with a chuckle. “She looks like an older version of yourself.”

“No, that’s not why. I want her to win because she needs to win. And she will win because it is necessary.”

“Are you having another of your visions, dear?”

“No, Gram. I sometimes just know things.”

Her grandmother nodded. She had no doubt who was going to win the pageant.

However, none of the five nervous young women on the stage shared that certainty. While they awaited the judges’ decision, they spoke quietly amongst themselves.

“I am The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller freezing to death out here,” Sarah said, hugging herself and bouncing up and down to try to generate some warmth. “What is taking the judges so long?”

Kara, a 22-year-old brunette, laughed. “Today isn’t so cold. You’ve been away at college in California for four years. You have become used to that warm weather out there.”

Sarah had been Kara’s best friend since the two met during their freshman year in high school. They had both been The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller cheerleaders and had both played on the tennis team.

However, they had ended up going to different colleges because Sarah wanted to attend a university in California that was not of interest to Kara. Kara wanted to major in communication disorders; Sarah’s university did not offer that degree, so for their college studies, Sarah headed west while Kara headed east.

However, despite being on different coasts with a vast country between them, the two young women were able to maintain their friendship. They called or e-mailed each other almost every day. During Christmas and summer vacations, when they returned to visit their families, the two young women spent a lot of time together.

“I miss California and its nice warm weather. This is ridiculous.”

“That’s not a very good attitude for a Snow Maiden!” Tiffany said with a laugh.

“Well, this Snow Maiden is turning into ice,” Sarah said.

“I think that you are saved,” Holly said. “Here comes Mrs. Bentley with the decision.”

Theodora Bentley had arisen from her chair at the judges’ table and walked over to the nearby microphone at the podium.

She cleared her throat, then spoke to the crowd. “Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank all of you for coming to our festival today. It has been a wonderful day. Our festival will conclude with The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller the fireworks display that will begin in about a half-hour. As usual, St. Faustina parish has been our great host. I want to thank Father Kinsella and Father Dorsey for all their help.”

The crowd applauded the two priests who stood on the steps of the church, which was directly behind the platform.

When the applause ended, Theodora continued, “As you can all see, we have five beautiful and talented finalists, so we had a difficult time reaching a decision. In truth, The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller all of you are winners because the four runners-up will participate with the Snow Maiden at many events through the year.” She ceremoniously raised an envelope, tore it open, and removed a slip of paper. “This year’s Snow Maiden is Sarah Hamilton.”

The crowd applauded as the four other contestants congratulated the winner.

“Thank you very much!” she said to the women as they hugged her. “I truly am surprised to win. For the last four years, I have only been back home here in this town during my The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller vacations from school. I thought that would work against me.”

“I’ve only been a part-time resident here The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller the past couple of years myself,” Tiffany said as she gave her a hug.

Theodora placed the silver tiara on Sarah’s head. “We certainly have a beautiful Snow Maiden this year. I wish that I had naturally blonde hair like yours.”

“Oh, I give my hair a bit of help to stay this blonde,” Sarah The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller admitted with a smile.

Theodora laughed. “Now don’t any of The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller you girls go running away. Chicago and Milwaukee and Madison television stations are sending reporters to do stories for their evening news. However, they have been delayed getting here by the heavy snow on the roads. They will be The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller here before the fireworks display.”

The five ladies agreed to wait for the television reporters; they all planned to stay to watch the fireworks display anyway.

The parents and a couple of friends of the newly-crowned Snow Maiden gathered around her and engaged in enthusiastic conversation for several minutes.

“I need to go inside somewhere and warm up so that I’m not an icicle when the television The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller cameras get here,” Sarah said, looking around for a sanctuary from the cold. “The church is open. I can get warm in there.”

“Well, I’m glad that something can get you back into the church,” her mother said with a long-suffering expression.

“Mother, let’s not have that discussion again -- especially not now.”

“We’ll meet you in the church The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller in a few minutes,” her father said. “That newspaper reporter who interviewed you and the other contestants this afternoon is waiting to interview us over by the pavilion. He wants the perspective of the proud The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller parents.”

“That’s great. He has a good sense of humor. You’ll enjoy talking to him.”

“Let’s hope that he writes a good story about you,” her mother waved as they walked away.

Chapter 2

Act of Contrition

Sarah went up the front steps of the church, pulled open one of the heavy doors, and went into the vestibule where she had intended to wait. However, she was surprised to see that all of the lights were on in the church, and there were a few persons in the pews.

Curious she went through the doorway into the church, ignoring the holy water font at The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller the entrance. She The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller walked over to the The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller side wall and began to admire the beautiful stained glass windows depicting the mysteries of the rosary. I think that this is the first time that I have looked at these closely, Sarah The Snow Maiden: A Suspense Thriller reflected as she gazed at a window showing a Nativity scene.

“Ah good, I wasn’t sure whether anyone would come to confession this evening,” Father Kinsella said as he walked up to her.

“What?” Her attention had been so focused on the windows that she had not seen the priest approaching her. “Oh, hello, Father.” She tried to recall his name. “Confession?”

Sarah suddenly realized that she was standing directly next to one of the two confessionals in the church. She noticed that two crosses were illuminated outside the other confessional,

indicating that both a priest and penitent were inside.

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