

# A Golden Snowflake

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## \*Crystal Arrowood \*

Crunch! Crunch! The freshly fallen snowflakes crunched beneath my boots satisfyingly, as I trudged through the thick blanket of snow. The snowflakes danced above my head before gracefully spiraling to the earth, making me dizzy when I looked up. It was snowing, but it wasn't very cold. It was a warm winter day, and the sun shone through the clouds.

"Crystal, wait for me!" My 5-year old sister Ava called after me. I sighed, but slowed my pace. I was walking with Ava to school, or I was supposed to be, but Ava kept getting behind. She just had to jump in every snowbank. "Ava, we'd better hurry or we'll be late for school." I told her. Ava rushed to catch up with me. After dropping Ava off at school, I had to tramp through the snow a little longer to get to the high school.

I shivered and wrapped my scarf tighter around my chilled face, as the wind picked up. It was snowing pretty hard now. I wondered why there had been such a

drastic change in weather. My pale face and light blonde hair was covered in snowflakes. I decided I had better hurry up before I froze to death.

Suddenly, I saw a glimmer of gold falling steadily to the ground. Even though it was freezing out, I was very curious now. Stumbling in the snow, I stuck out my hand to catch the peculiar glint of gold. When I looked down at my black mitten, I saw a single golden snowflake in my hand. I stared in puzzlement at the small piece of gold in my palm. Oddly enough, I wasn't melting on my warm mitten "It must be actual gold!" I thought to myself excitedly, even though it was only a tiny piece of gold.

Then I remembered that I had school. So I put the snowflake in a ziplock bag from my lunch, and continued on my way to school. I had only walked about a meter, when I saw another golden snowflake floating down from the sky a little to my left. I quickly sprang over and caught it. "Where on earth are all of these golden snowflakes coming from," I wondered. I continued to catch the falling pieces of gold, oblivious to the fact that I was getting further and further away from my grade ten classroom.

When I had around twenty golden snowflakes, I finally looked around. Brushing my long hair out of my greyish blue eyes, I realized with distress that I had absolutely no idea where I was. It was still snowing, and the world was covered in white. Nearby was a towering mountain, at the base of which there was a large cave. No sign of civilization as far as I could see. "I can't have walked that far," I thought.

Feeling downhearted, I flopped down in the snow, blinking back tears. “Crystal Arrowood, you are sixteen years old, you are not about to cry,” I told myself. “You’ve gone and got yourself lost, now you have to solve your problem.” I mean, at least I had a bag of golden snowflakes, but they had just led me in the middle of nowhere, and I wasn’t even sure that they were real gold.

“I wish I had just gone to school,” I thought in frustration. Although I still wanted to find out why gold snowflakes were falling from the sky. That isn’t supposed to happen in nature. Why gold though? Was it magic? Seemed unlikely. Or was I just going insane? I wasn’t sure, but felt like everything had happened for a reason...

## \*Ryan Zack\*

“Ryan, stop that before King Frost sees!” Charlotte hissed at me. “Fine,” I snapped back “Stop me from trying to get us out of here after seven years.” Charlotte sighed, and picked up her tweezers again. “Whatever,” I mumbled, throwing another golden snowflake down the chute. The snowflake was actual crushed up gold-I had taken a chunk of King Frost’s gold that he left laying around. Even though we didn’t always see eye-to-eye, Charlotte was the only friend I had. Although that may be due to the fact that I had been stuck in Jack Frost’s ice castle on the top of an extremely high mountain for seven years.

Let me explain; Jack Frost or “King Frost” as we have to call him, decided he was tired of his job a while back. So he decided to kidnap a bunch of people to do his work for him: making snowflakes. Charlotte was kidnapped before me; she was taken away from her parents when she was only six. I was taken here when I was nine. I’m now sixteen, I haven’t seen my parents for seven years.

I remember the night I was taken away from my family: It was June 9th, 2012. A week after my ninth birthday. I had been lying in my bed on the verge of sleep, when I heard a crashing sound outside of my window. “How odd,” I remember thinking.

Then all of a sudden it became extremely cold in my bedroom. I became afraid then, thinking of all of the ghost stories I had ever read. I was thinking of running to get my parents, but told myself I was just being foolish. I was about to try to fall back asleep, when I heard the scraping noise of my window being pushed open. “Help! MOM, DAD!” I screamed thinking it was a murderer come to get me. Before my screams could be heard, an icy hand clamped over my mouth. I struggled but it was useless. The last thing I remember is every bone in my body going cold.

When I woke up I was in an enormous castle made completely out of ice. I shivered, still a little cold, as I looked around. There were around twenty other people in the castle, all just as confused as I was.

“Everyone, bow down to your new king!” A loud, obnoxious voice said. Then a tall man with bizarre features appeared. He had snowflakes in his blonde hair and frost on the side of his pale face. He looked completely opposite of me: My eyes are bright green and I have dark hair. “I am your new ruler,” he announced, his icy-blue eyes sweeping over us. “My name is Jack Frost, but you will call me King Frost. And if I ask you to bow, you will do so.”

Everyone hurried to do as he asked. Then Jack Frost showed us how to make snowflakes. We would have to use tweezers to place the miniscule particles of ice, precisely, and would get no breaks. We were his slaves now. “Charlotte!” King Frost suddenly demanded.

“Y-yes?” A small girl around the same age as me replied. “Since you have been here awhile now, you can show every-one how the chutes work.” Charlotte demonstrated how you took a handful of finished snowflakes, and threw them gently down a long chute. Jack Frost explained how the chute magically transported the snowflakes inside of the clouds. “Now you can get to work,” Jack Frost told us.

“Hey, Frost man!” A brave young man that had been kidnapped with me yelled. Jack Frost raised his frozen eyebrows. “What makes you think that you can just force

us to be your slaves?" He asked. "What is your name?" Jack Frost asked in a dangerous voice.

"Randy-Randy Fritz." The man answered. "Well Randy, now I can show everyone exactly what happens when you challenge me." Jack Frost replied.

Jack Frost swiftly made his way over to the unfortunate Randy Fritz, as Randy cowered in fear. Jack Frost shot a blast of ice at Randy's feet. "Wh-what are you doing to me? HELP ME!" Randy shrieked as the ice steadily climbed up his body.

"DON'T JUST STAND THERE HELP ME!!!!" Randy was screaming now. Everyone in the room was watching intently, too shocked to move. The ice had reached his shoulders. I wanted to help Randy, but was too terrified. "YOU CAN'T DO THIS SAVE M-" However we never got to hear the rest of what Randy Fritz was saying, as his entire body was now encased in ice. "Well," Jack Frost looked at us brushing his hands off. "Would anybody else like to defy me?" The entire room was silent.

## **\*Crystal Arrowood\***

Whoosh! The wind howled around me, and the cold nipped at my face. It had started blizzarding so hard that I could scarcely see. "I'd better find some shelter," I

thought frantically. Then I remembered the cave in the mountain. Which I could still see the outline of. I began heading in that direction.

With my hands out in front of me, I slowly made my way through a world of snowflakes. I'm not sure how long I walked for; it could have been twenty minutes or two hours. You lose track of time when you're making your way through a blizzard. However, I eventually felt something hard scrape across my hand. Feeling my way to the entrance of the cave, I crawled inside.

Now I was out of the snow, but it was still freezing cold inside of the cave. Whoosh! The wind howled against the small entrance to the cave. Looking around myself, I realized that the cave was quite spacious. This cave was getting really creepy, the pitch blackness and the howling wind made me start to tremble.

Crack! Crunch! Bam! All of a sudden, I heard a series of noises behind me. I jumped in my skin. "Oh no! What if someone-or something is living in this cave?" I worried. I decided to try to go back to the entrance, but I realized I had a problem: I had no idea which direction the entrance was in. I was just starting to panic, when a light flickered on at the back of the cave. Curious I made my way to the back of the cave.

When I got closer, I could see that the light was coming out of a sort of elevator. Except the elevator appeared to be made out of ice. "Where would an ice elevator lead to?" I stared at the elevator deep in thought. "Well, I guess there's only one way to find out," I concluded stepping into the elevator.

## \*Ryan Zack\*

Ever since that day I had been a slave to Jack Frost. Charlotte and I had tried many schemes to escape once we were friends, but Jack Frost had always ended them. Later he started to threaten us till we were too scared to continue. Still, I was sixteen now, and had missed out on a lot life had to offer. I was becoming increasingly desperate to escape. So I came up with the plan of the golden snowflakes. Everyone here was too scared to try to escape, but maybe someone from the outside world would be daring enough to help us.

You must be wondering why the police hadn't found us yet. The only way to find the castle is to be led directly to it; it's usually overlooked. That is why I have been sending gold-colored snowflakes down the chute; in hope that someone will follow them to the castle. I place them in a particular order so that they lead to the castle.

Of course it doesn't help that the castle is at the top of an immensely tall mountain, but it is the only plan I could think of that Jack Frost won't notice too easily.

“Ryan, what are you thinking about?” Charlotte inquired, and I snapped out of my trance. “Oh, just life I guess...” I replied.

“Ryan haven’t you given up any hope that we will ever leave this castle yet?” Charlotte asked me. She has been pretty indifferent to the world lately: I think that she has given up hope. “No because Charlotte, you may have accepted this as your fate but I haven’t!” I told her stubbornly. Charlotte shrugged, “Whatever you say.”

I was so frustrated with Charlotte lately. I mean, she’s my best friend in the world, but it gets annoying when she tells me to just accept my fate. However, Charlotte and I had been arguing more and more lately, and sometimes I just wanted to pull her long auburn hair off of her stubborn head. That was something we both had in common: we were both as stubborn as mules.

King Frost was making his rounds, checking that everyone was doing their job. “Get back to work!” He yelled at Charlotte and I. Charlotte glared at me. “ Why is everything MY fault?” I whispered in a not-so-nice tone of voice.

“I’m not blaming you, I just think that you should stop dreaming. We’re not going to get out of here okay? We’re NEVER going to see our parents again, and you should have learned that by now. Gosh, you still act like a nine-year old.” Charlotte lectured me.

Well that hurt. “I don’t know why you have to be right about everything. I just can’t live with your negativity any longer. And I would appreciate it if you quit taking your anger out on me.” I replied.

Then I turned my back on her and went back to work, ignoring the fact that Charlotte was blinking back tears. We ignored each other for the rest of the day. I know that it sounds childish, but I just couldn’t take any more of her negativity. Plus we were both too stubborn to apologize, and I wasn’t going to apologize first when she started it.

When Jack Frost told us we could quit for the day, I headed to my small room without a word to Charlotte. I was sitting on my bed fuming, when I heard the elevator come to a stop outside of my room. “That’s odd, Jack Frost never uses that elevator anymore, because it rattles too much.” I thought.

## \*Crystal Arrowood\*

“AHHHHHH!” I screamed as the elevator threw me around. I felt like the elevator was going to break any minute! Just when I thought for sure I was going to go crashing down the mountain, the elevator came to a stop with a sudden lurch. I stood

up wobbling on my feet, and stepped out of the elevator into an empty hallway. I had only taken a couple of uneven steps when I slipped and fell.

“Why is the floor so slippery?” I asked out loud. With further investigation I came to the realization that this place, like the elevator was made of ice. Creak! There was the sound of a door opening behind me.

“What are you doing?” A voice asked. I turned to see a boy, around the same age as me, with dark brown hair and green eyes.

I just stared at him. What was I supposed to say? That I had followed a trail of golden snowflakes here? “Where am I?” Was the first question I thought to ask. “Wait-are you from outside of the castle?” The boy asked. I nodded, and told him that I was supposed to be in school. The boy looked wistful. “School... Um, you’d better come with me before King Frost finds out you’re here.”

**\*Ryan Zack\***

Crystal nodded, taking in everything I had said. I had basically just told her my whole life story in an hour. Although we had gotten to talking about a number of things.

Crystal was such a nice girl. I'm a good judge of character, and I felt like I could trust her.

"Well I asked how are we going to get you-and others out of here?" That's the question I've been asking myself everyday for the past seven years, I felt like telling her, but instead I just shrugged. "I've tried numerous plans, but the only success I've had is bringing you here."

"Hmmm, so what are Jack Frost's weaknesses?" Crystal asked suddenly. I told her that he had none that I could think of. We thought of different plans for the next two including; gathering an army, throwing him out the window of the tallest tower, or tricking him into leaving. However, we found crucial flaws in each plan.

It was late at night now, and we had both been silent for the past few minutes. "What if-what if Charlotte was right: maybe I am never going to get out of here. You should just leave while you still can." I told Crystal.

"Don't worry Ryan; we'll find a way to get you out of here, I'm sure of it! Also...who's Charlotte?" Crystal asked me.

# \*Crystal Arrowood\*

Just then a girl with long auburn hair and a scowl on her face, chose that moment to walk in the room. “Ryan, who is this?” The girl asked.

“Charlotte this is my new friend Crystal, Crystal-Charlotte,” Ryan introduced us. We shook hands, and I got the feeling that Charlotte and I were already friends. Ryan explained how I had found the castle, and that we were trying to think of an escape plan.

Charlotte cleared her throat. “ I came to apologize for the fight we had earlier today. I’m just so sick of this place! So if you don’t mind, I could help you formulate a new plan. With all three of us together we must be able to come up with something.” Ryan told her that she was forgiven.

After awhile Charlotte thought of something: Jack Frost’s fatal flaw must be heat. Ryan and I nodded in agreement. “That would be why this castle is so cold!” Ryan concluded “I’m always freezing in here, and the thermostat is below zero which is melting point!”

“Wow you two are pretty smart for kids who never went to school!” I told them. They both stared at me. Then Charlotte laughed, “ You thought that we were never taught anything?” Charlotte asked. I nodded, unsure now. “Well Marina, one of the adults teaches us after our work is done for the day.”

“Oh, that makes sense then.” I replied, laughing with her.

## \*Ryan Zack\*

It was around 10:00pm, when Crystal thought of starting a huge fire to melt Jack Frost. “We can use the matches I have in my coat pocket, I haven’t used them before this, because I was afraid they would blow out in the wind.” She informed us. It was brilliant. We would start a fire in the middle of the castle, and when Jack Frost came to see what was the matter we would quickly close the door, trapping him inside the room. Crystal would hide behind the door, and Charlotte and I would make a loud noise so that Jack Frost would come running. For kindling we could use the drawings of snowflake designs.

Crystal, Charlotte and I crept into the designing studio, and snatched all of the papers. All three of us carried an enormous pile. Since we needed more for kindling than just paper, Crystal sacrificed her coat. Next, we headed to the kitchen to gather a

stack of glassware that we could break all at once to alert Jack Frost. Our plan was rapidly coming together.

After we had finished gathering all of our supplies, we all gathered in the chute room, which was the biggest room in the castle. Thunk! We dropped the papers into an enormous pile. “I guess we’re ready for the noise now, huh?” Charlotte asked me. I nodded.

CRASH! The plates clattered to the ground and shattered against the ice, the noise echoing through the castle. Crystal ducked behind the door, as two guards came running. Charlotte and I quickly hid behind a table piled with unfinished snowflakes. Oh no! We had forgotten that Jack Frost had assigned his most faithful snowflake makers to be his personal guards. Of course Jack Frost wouldn’t come and see what the noise was himself: he was too lazy to do anything for himself. What were we going to do now? The two guards looked curiously at the pile of broken glass.

THUMP! THUMP! My heart hammered in my chest, as the two guards approached the place where Charlotte and I were hidden. Fortunately they walked right past us. I was so relieved that they hadn’t seen us, that I didn’t even notice that they were heading in Crystal’s direction till I heard one say “Let’s check behind the door.”

**\*Crystal Arrowood\***

“What am I going to do, what am I going to do, what am I going to do?” I thought in panic. We were so busted. If only I had an invisibility cloak. I crouched down, but obviously the guards still noticed me. “What might you be doing down here at one o’clock in the morning?” The young brunette woman inquired. Although she didn’t ask it angrily, more like she was genuinely curious.

“I-I was just..” I hesitated.

“Trying to somehow escape?” The other guard, a tall man asked. I decided to trust them, after all they had already guessed my true motives. So I nodded. The woman told me that they too had been trying to escape for years. Slowly, I saw Charlotte and Ryan step out from behind the table. “These are my friends.” I told Stephanie and Leo. (Those were the guards names.)

“Do you mind if we help you?” Leo asked. We all agreed that they would be a huge help. So Stephanie and Leo volunteered to get Jack Frost down. Ryan, Charlotte and I all waited anxiously while they were gone. “I really hope our plan works.” Charlotte said, “I am so sick of this castle!” Ryan agreed.

Finally, we heard footsteps, so we all quickly took our places. I dashed behind the door, while Ryan and Charlotte lit the fire, then joined me behind the big folding doors. “We heard a disturbance in that room!” Stephanie was telling Jack Frost. “We think that you should go and check it out.”

“Why?” Jack Frost asked suspiciously. Leo and Stephanie started acting all scared and told Jack Frost that they were too creeped out to go back in there. It was really funny. They told him it was a really creepy noise, and since he was so powerful, he should be the one to find the source of the noise. Jack Frost rolled his eyes, but obligingly strutted inside the room.

When he was two steps into the room, Ryan helped me push the doors closed. It was silent for a minute, but then we heard Jack Frost start to scream. He shrieked and cried and begged us to let him out. It was horrible to listen too. I glanced at Ryan, who looked regretful as well. “Would we really be any better than Jack Frost if we just murdered him?” Ryan asked me.

“What about all of the terrible things that he has done to you. You and hundreds of others?” I asked Ryan. But when I looked at Ryan’s face I could see that I was fighting a losing battle. Charlotte glared at us “Don’t even think about it!” She whispered furiously, but just then Jack Frost moaned “I’m melting! This is the end of me! Help..” Charlotte sighed, but allowed us to open the doors.

**\*Ryan Zack\***

I don't know what brought me to have pity on the man that had held me hostage all my life, but I just hoped it wouldn't cost me my freedom. However, when Jack Frost came out he looked..well sick almost and not so menacing at all. The tips of his fingers were melted, and the ends of his hair was singed. The side of his face that had been frozen was dripping water onto the ground. There was silence for a minute, except for the sizzling of the fire as the melted ice from the castle put it out. Then Jack Frost broke the silence, by clearing his throat. "Thank you." He said in a hoarse voice. "I've been so cruel to all of you but you still chose to save me. I'm sorry that I have been so horrible to all of you." A crowd was beginning to gather now, either from the sound of screaming or the brief heat.

"I just loathe making snowflakes." Jack Frost was addressing the whole room now. "If you don't like making snowflakes, do you think I do? I was in the same situation as all of you. For thirty years I made snowflakes, until my mother died, and I was all alone. The death of my mother made me cold hearted; if you don't mind my pun, and cruel. Also by then I was so sick of making snowflakes, that I decided to get someone to do it for me. I see now that that was wrong. I'm sorry."

I was touched by Jack Frost's apology. "So now you can all go home, and I'll continue making snowflakes all alone. Forever." Jack Frost finished. Everyone cheered, and ran to freedom. For some reason though, Charlotte, Crystal and I lingered. I mean, think about it: It must take Jack Frost a week to make a snowstorm,

while with one hundred or so people it took less than an hour. I glanced at Crystal, while we heard Jack Frost snuffle. We all stared at Jack Frost, feeling sorry for him.

Then Charlotte had an idea. “Um Mr. Frost? You’re magic right? So why don’t you just create an army of snowmen or something to make the snowflakes?” Jack Frost considered it. “I’m not sure if I’m powerful enough.” He told us. Nevertheless he decided to try. Apparently, Jack Frost didn’t know the extent of his own powers, because he successfully created fifty live snowmen. “Now what?” He asked

“Now you come with us into the real world. Then you get to do whatever you want.” I replied. So Crystal, Charlotte, Jack Frost and I started walking back. In spite of everyone’s happiness though, I was starting to feel really sad. When Crystal asked me what was wrong, I told her that I had no idea where on earth my parents were. Who knows? They could have moved five times since I was kidnapped. “What did you say your last name was?” Crystal asked me.

“I didn’t say.” I replied. “It’s Zack.” Crystal’s eyes widened in recognition.

## **\*Crystal Arrowood\***

As soon as Ryan told me his last name, I remembered that we had some neighbors that lived a couple blocks away from us named Jane and Ernie Zack. “Of course! Why didn’t I think of it before? They have a son that has been missing for

seven years!” I said excitedly. Ryan looked relieved and happy. “That would be my parents.”

I felt bad for Ryan; it must be so hard to not really even know your parents. Although, when I expressed my sympathy for Ryan he told me that he wasn't so sad that all of this had happened. “Good things have come out of this too.” Ryan told me. “Like what?” I asked. “Like meeting you and Charlotte.”

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## \*Epilogue\*

Crystal parents had been sick with worry the past couple of days, and were relieved to have her safe at home. As for Ryan's parents, while they were overjoyed to see their son again for the first time in seven years. Of course it took some, ok A LOT of explaining where Ryan had been, but Ryan's parents believed him. Or at least they believed him after Crystal showed them the bag of golden snowflakes.

Mr. and Mrs Arowood became good friends with Zacks, and had them over for dinner every Tuesday. It was during one of these dinners when Crystal remembered Charlotte. “Did she ever find her parents?” Crystal asked. “Charlotte found her parents at her old address too” Ryan assured Crystal.

The next day, Ryan and Crystal met up with Charlotte and went to a new ice-cream store called Frost. The owner of the shop looked very familiar. “Could that be Jack Frost?” The three friends wondered. They were almost certain. Especially when the store owner winked at them...

So in the end Charlotte, Crystal, Ryan, and even Jack Frost each found happiness. All because of one girl, and a golden snowflake.