

3.9 The Snow Queen: The Frozen One with Kalliope

Angourie [host]

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which this work was developed and is presented. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

[fade in: plucky theme music with violins, clarinet, piano, and twinkly triangle]

Angourie [host]

Hello and welcome back to The Community Library: a podcast, book club and discussion space. I'm your host, Angourie Rice –

Kalliope [guest]

And I'm Kalliope.

Angourie [host]

–And today we're going to be talking about everyone's favourite frosty, feisty sister duo: Elsa and Anna from *Frozen*.

[fade out: theme music]

[fade in: ominous orchestral fairy tale music]

Angourie [host]

Once upon a time, there were two sisters. The elder was more academic and introspective, while the younger was more adventurous and athletic. Though were different, they grew up together in harmony, and were practically joined at the hip. But one day, the elder sister had to make a big journey across the seas, and she had to make it alone. Her heart broke as she said goodbye to her little sister, but she knew that it had to be done to achieve her dreams. Though she enjoyed her adventures in a new strange land, and delighted in all the wonderful things she saw and people she met, it saddened her to think that she did not have her sister by her side to share it with. But journeys do not last forever, and soon enough it was time to return home. When she stepped off the plane onto local soil, her sister was there to welcome her. Her visit home was a brief one, however. The days passed all too quickly for the sisters' liking. And on the eldest sister's last day at home, she sat down with her younger sister, and watched their favourite movie about sisters: *Frozen*.

[fade out: fairy tale music]

Angourie [host]

Welcome to the fourth and final instalment in this series about fairy tales and Disney Princesses. Last week we *tackled* [it's a pun, get it?] Disney's first truly modern Princess with *The Little*

Mermaid. But this week, Ariel's ocean domain is flowing into a fjord and freezing over. Yes, my friends. It's time we talked about *Frozen*.

I cannot overestimate *Frozen's* success. It was the highest grossing film of 2013 and earned over \$1 billion worldwide. But just to put that into perspective, it beat out *Iron Man 3*, *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug* and *Fast & Furious 6* for that top spot of highest grossing film. Children all over the world were putting their hair into braids and belting out *Let It Go* – much to their parents' exasperation. It won best animated picture at the 2014 Academy Awards, and best original song for *Let It Go*. It was bigger than *The Little Mermaid*, bigger than *Cinderella* – bigger than *Snow White*, even. But – and you know exactly what question I'm gonna ask here – where did it all begin? We must go back in time to Denmark, in 1844, and once again visit our good friend Hans Christian Andersen.

After the success of his first fairy tale collection – in which *The Little Mermaid* first appeared – Hans Christian Andersen published *New Fairy Tales*, in 1844. In it appeared *Snedronningen*, or *The Snow Queen*, which follows the story of friends Gerda and Kai and their misadventures with the icy-hearted Snow Queen. Now, this is a pretty long fairy tale, so I've had to edit it a bit, but here's how it goes ...

[fade in: ominous orchestral fairy tale music]

Angourie [host]

Once upon a time, there was a wicked magician who created an extraordinary mirror. Everything good and beautiful, when reflected in it, shrank up to almost nothing, whilst those things that were ugly and useless were magnified, and made to appear ten times worse than before. It just so happened that this mirror was flown up high into the sky, where it shattered, and all those little pieces rained down to earth. It was thus that the mirror caused more harm than ever before – for unassuming people would get a splinter of the mirror's glass in their eye, which would cause them to see all the horrible things in life. Or, they might get a splinter in their heart, which would cause it to become as hard and cold as a lump of ice.

In a town lived a little girl called Gerda, and a little boy called Kai. Gerda's grandmother looked after them, and they played together all year long. One day, when they were playing outside in spring, Kai exclaimed: "Oh dear! What was that shooting pain in my heart? And now again, something has certainly got into my eye!" Gerda could not see anything in his eye, and Kai thought nothing of it. But alas! A little glass splinter had flown into his eye, and another into his heart. As the days wore on, Kai became meaner and meaner, but Gerda continued to play with him, for she loved him very much.

That winter, Kai went out on his sledge. While he was playing, he saw a very large handsome sledge go by. For a bit of fun, he tied his own sledge to it, and he was off! He was towed out of the town and into the snow. When they stopped, the Snow Queen got out of the driver's seat. Kai was cold as ice, but the Queen kissed him on the forehead and he forgot all about the cold, indeed he forgot all about Gerda and her grandmother and the little town. And he went gladly with the Snow Queen to her ice palace.

Back in the town, Gerda was worried about Kai. She hadn't seen him for days, and neither had anyone else. When spring came around, everyone but Gerda thought him dead. So she decided to go to the river and ask after him. She took her new red shoes, and threw them into the river as an offering, but the river did not tell her anything of Kai, and her shoes merely washed back up on the shore. She spotted a little boat nearby, and so she got into the boat, and threw her shoes deeper into the water. She succeeded, but the boat's tethering had come undone! And so Gerda floated down the river.

The boat stopped at the cottage of an old woman, who took her in and brushed her hair and gave her the most wonderful cherries to eat. Gerda soon forgot all about her quest to save Kai, until she saw rose bushes in the garden. She and Kai grew roses in their gardens in spring. She suddenly remembered, and she asked all the flowers in the garden if they had seen Kai. They each told her a different strange story, but none of them were about her friend. And so little Gerda escaped from the old woman's flower garden and went on her way.

She stopped for a rest, and a large raven came along and asked her if she was alone. Gerda said yes, and asked him if he had seen her friend. The raven said that yes, he had indeed seen a young man. He told a story of a princess who had recently chosen a young man as a prince. Gerda was certain that this boy was Kai, and asked the raven to take her to the prince and princess. The raven obliged, and, with the help of his betrothed female raven, they crept into the palace to the royal bedchamber.

But when Gerda looked upon the sleeping prince, she discovered it was not her beloved Kai. The prince and princess woke, she told them her story. They pitied her, and decided to help her on her journey by giving her a horse and carriage with footmen and coachmen.

So Gerda left the palace and went on her way. But in the depths of the forest, her carriage was set upon by robbers! They stabbed the coachmen and footmen and captured Gerda. At their hideout, Gerda herself was about to be killed by the robber's wife, when her daughter stopped her. She said she wanted Gerda as a playfellow, and so the little robber-maiden took Gerda to the robbers' castle. She showed her all of her pet pigeons and reindeer. Gerda was so frightened she could not sleep that night, and so she asked the pigeons if they had seen Kai. They had indeed! They told Gerda that he was with the Snow Queen.

Gerda told the robber-maiden she knew where her friend was, and so the robber-maiden helped her escape on the reindeer. Gerda's first stop was a little hut with a roof so low it was almost touching the ground. The old woman who lived there warmed and fed them, and told them to visit the wise Finland woman. On they went, and found the wise Finland woman in a little cottage that was so hot inside that she wore hardly any clothes. The wise woman told Gerda that Kai had a glass splinter in his heart and eye. When the reindeer asked the old woman to give Gerda the strength to defeat the Snow Queen, the old woman said: "Seest thou not how strong she is? Her power is greater than ours; it proceeds from her heart, from her being a loving and innocent child." The woman sent them on their way, and the reindeer brought Gerda to the icy gates of the Snow Queen's palace. He could not go in, and so Gerda had to go alone ...

Meanwhile, Kai was still in the vast, empty and icily cold palace. In the centre lay a frozen lake, which was broken into a thousand pieces that could be rearranged into shapes or words, like a

puzzle. It was in the middle of this lake that the Snow Queen often sat, and it was these icy puzzle pieces with which Kai played all day. The Snow Queen had told him that, when he arranged the ice pieces to spell “Eternity”, she would grant him his freedom. But Kai had never been able to do it.

As Gerda made her way through the empty palace, getting colder and colder with each step, she did not know that Kai was alone. The Snow Queen had left to bestow snow on the burning mountains Etna and Vesuvius. Gerda kept going, and at last she found him! Her dear Kai! She ran to him and gave him a big hug, but he was silent and motionless. This hurt Gerda deeply, and she cried. And as the hot tears were shed, they fell upon his breast, and reached his heart, and thawed the ice and dissolved the tiny splinter of glass within it. Kai then burst into tears himself, and wept until the glass splinter in his eye had floated away.

Even the puzzle pieces of ice were happy; they danced about merrily, and when they were tired and lay down, they formed the word “Eternity” of their own accord. Gerda and Kai left the palace hand in hand. The Snow Queen might now come home as soon as she liked, it did not matter, for Kai’s freedom stood written in bright ice.

As Gerda and Kai left the palace, they found the reindeer waiting for them, along with another reindeer friend. Together they journeyed back to the town. And when they arrived, they found all was exactly how they had left it. Only one thing had changed: they were no longer children, and were all grown up. The Snow Queen’s ice palace seemed to them only an unpleasant dream. There they sat, those two happy ones, grown-up and yet children – children at heart, while all around them glowed bright summer – warm, glorious summer.

[fade out: fairy tale music]

Angourie [host]

Thank you very much for joining me on the podcast today, Kalliope.

Kalliope [guest]

I live to serve.

Angourie [host]

I know you have a very busy schedule, so thank you for making time for me in your schedule of schooling and gymnastics and watching *The Babysitters Club* on Netflix. [laughing] So, I brought you on today because we’re sisters and we love *Frozen*, and part of the reason why we love *Frozen* is because it’s about sisters. So we both read *The Snow Queen* in preparation for this episode. Had you read *The Snow Queen* before?

Kalliope [guest]

Negative. Sir.

Angourie

Can you please elaborate?

Kalliope

Um, no, I didn't even know we had – I didn't know it was based off a fairy tale. I mean, I knew it ... did I? I don't know. I don't know what I know. [laughs]

Angourie

The copy that we read was in a book of Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales given to our grandmother when she was like, thirteen or fourteen? She came second in a competition, and that was her prize. And there's a sticker in the front saying awarded to our grandmother, so um we read a very old copy. So, what did you think when you read it?

Kalliope

It was weeeiiird. It was like, at first I thought it was translated weirdly. Or like, it was a much shorter version, like it was originally like, a novel. But then, like, I guess it was just old-fashioned story-telling. It was super fast-moving. Can I look at my notes?

Angourie

Yeah!

Kalliope

I took notes, everyone, are you proud?

Angourie

I'm proud of you.

Kalliope

I did really well. Okay, first thing: exclamation marks. At the start, there are three exclamation marks in a row. And like, I thought that was just when you're texting people. Like I didn't think that was, like, an old-fashioned thing. I need to read this to you. It has increasing exclamation marks. "Listen!" That's one exclamation mark. "We are beginning our story!" Another exclamation mark. "There was once a magician!" One exclamation mark. "A wicked magician!!" Two exclamation marks. "A most wicked magician!!!" Three exclamation marks! So, that was the first thing, I was like: okay, that sounds like not legit. But okay.

Angourie

Yeah, I think the writing style is interesting because Hans Christian Andersen was criticised for how flowery his language was, and how much he expanded on his story. Because a lot of the earlier fairy tales were quite sparse and didn't have as much descriptive language, whereas Hans Christian Andersen, like, really kind of got you into the world, lots of description, and it's the same with *The Little Mermaid*. Very kind of sensory, beautiful, rich world-building. And I guess he was a little flamboyant and liked to add extra –

Kalliope

I was like, shut up!

Angourie

–exclamation marks!

Kalliope

Next. My favourite part was the individual flowers telling stories. So like, each of them tell their littler story, and she's like: "That has nothing to do with anything." And then the reader's like, yeah, what the hell. And the flowers are like: "I just wanted to say my bit." But like, it was cute, I really liked it, it was really cute.

Angourie

Interesting that you mention that because we kind of see a story within a story. We have the bigger overarching story of Gerda trying to save Kai, and then as she goes on her journey, the fairy tale is split up into seven sections, each section is like its own little vignette of what she encounters and her story with these people. And then the people she meets tell them their story, and then within that little vignette we have multiple other stories when she talks to the flowers, and each of the flowers tells her a story. So I really like these layers and layers of story, also because the difference with this fairy tale, and the difference with a lot of Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales is that they were original. What I really like about *The Snow Queen* is that it kind of incorporates fairy tale tropes in its stories within stories. So it's kind of almost self-aware of the fairy tale genre, which I really like.

Kalliope

Thank you for that. Okay, next we're moving on to –

Angourie

[laughs] Savage!

Kalliope

[laughs] Um ...

Angourie

Do you have anything to say on that?

Kalliope

Yeah, I did at the start. It was cool.

Angourie

Yeah, but just, go back and forth, or – [laughs]

Kalliope

Banter!

Angourie

Banter!

Kalliope

Um, nope.

Angourie

Okay.

Kalliope

That was it. I liked it. But also it was weird. Okay, next was “playfellow”. I think we should bring that back.

Angourie

Wait, what’s “playfellow”?

Kalliope

She says, “Have you seen my playfellow?”

Angourie

[laughs]

Kalliope

“Here’s my playfellow!” And it’s all throughout. It’s like: “I hope you find your playfellow.” It’s beautiful. I’m sick of “friend”, I don’t want “friend” anymore. I want “playfellow.”

Angourie

[laughing] I didn’t notice that, but I’m so glad you picked up on it! “Playfellow” is so cute!

Kalliope

Okay, next ... Okay, this whole section with the raven was so weird. The raven comes and speaks to her, and she’s like: “Oh, hi,” and he’s like “Oh, damn, you don’t speak raven language? I guess I’ll say it in English –

Angourie

No, it’s not even “raven language”, it’s “ravenish”.

Kalliope

“Ravenish”. And then, he’s like: “Oh, even if you spoke magpie, that would even be good, but you don’t.” And it was just so, like out of place –

Angourie

No, and then, she’s like – and then she’s like: “Oh, my grandmother speaks magpie, I wish I had to listened to her.”

Kalliope

Yes! What was that about? Was that just like, Hans Christian Andersen was like: “Damn, I wish I’d learnt the language my grandma told me to.” Like, it was just so odd and I was like, what was that about? And then, they like, get rewarded for helping her, and they’re like: “Okay, you can choose out of two gifts. You can be, like, free of this wood and go travelling, or you can stay in the court and get free food.” And then there’s this part: “... and chose the appointment at court, for they thoughts of old age and said it would be so comfortable to be well-provided for in their declining years.” They need to go on an adventure, and the female raven is like: “She did not go with them, on account of a headache she had felt ever since she had received her appointment, a consequence of eating too much.”

Angourie

[laughs] I frequently get headaches from eating too much.

Kalliope

But it is just so odd, how it's like: "Um, so this raven went, but like, this one didn't cos she ate too much and she had a headache." Like, it's things like that that I read, and [was] like, that is so ... weird.

Angourie

I think, like, going back to the idea of this being a mishmash of fairy tales and fairy tales within fairy tales, I think he's kind of chucked in all of these, like, fairy tale tropes. Like, the raven that helps her along the way, and ravens kind of have a reputation for being a little bit sly, and kind of more attached to the villains, but the raven actually helps her. But the characters of the animals who help her along the way – they're not like these good, wholesome creatures who, like, have no interesting character dynamics or arcs or lives. Each character in here is a little bit weird and odd, and multi-faceted, which I think is really cool and interesting. Kind of building on from this, we have lots of little side characters. Weird we're talking about the side characters before the main characters, but they really make up the story, and they make this story interesting and unique. And one of the side characters that I wanted to talk about that I thought you would be really interested in is the robber-maiden. Because she actually reminded me of one of your favourite books of all time, which is *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

Kalliope

Yeah, except evil! She was so – again, like it was just so odd how they included her. And like the little things she did, like she had a little reindeer that, every morning she'd run a blade across its neck just to like, scare it, and be like: "I love how your face looks when I do that." Like, she was scary! I did like, like you were saying, like all those side characters make up this like sort of layered fairy tale which is really cool and I like that. It's a lot less direct than more modern stories, like – like Disney is all very, like, this is the story, this is what happens, and this is the end. And you can tell it really quickly, whereas these fairy tales are just so layered and weird and odd. Um, which is nice, but ... I guess what made it different was, like, making the world, as well. Like, each individual character felt like they were from a completely different world. At the beginning there was no, sort of, laying out of how the world works and how magical it is or how not magical it is. [A] bit all over the place!

Angourie

Yes, I agree, I think it's a bit all over the place, but I think that's what makes it a true hero's journey. And so if we ... if we, you know, move into talking about the main themes and the main trajectory of this story is that she's on a quest. And it feels like *Lord of the Rings* or *The Hobbit*, where they go – especially *Hobbit* – where they go on a quest, and they go on a quest trekking through these lands, and they meet weird people and they learn things on their journey, and they eventually reach that end goal.

Kalliope

But I didn't think she did learn anything. I think that was the weird part for me, is that she'd stop over at these places, and it'd just like ... She was there for a bit, and then she left, you know? Like, the Lapland woman and the weird naked woman in the hot room.

Angourie

The weird naked woman in the hot room was pivotal!

Kalliope

Oh, yeah, that was the whole thing, yeah yeah yeah –

Angourie

That was pivotal because she said, like, the reindeer –

Kalliope

But it didn't seem pivotal.

Angourie

I think why it's so interesting is that, similar to how I felt with *The Hobbit*, it didn't have a beginning, middle and end, but it's actually about the journey. And ... it's not how fast you'll get there, it's not what's waiting on the other side, it's the climb. Iconic song. Here's a theory I would like to put forth, is that it's an allegory for growing up, and it's an allegory for, you know, going through puberty I guess, and going through changes in your life as a child. Because when we begin the journey, Gerda and Kai are children, and they have this childlike wonder and quality about them, but suddenly Kai gets struck by this little shard of mirror in his heart and his eye and he turns sour and bitter and sees the world in this horrible way. And what it takes to overcome that is love and compassion, and having someone care about him, and having someone go on this incredible journey to save him and bring him back into the light. By the end – that was my favourite moment of the whole story, was that at the end they go home and they realise they're not children anymore. But what's important is that they're children at heart. They're all grown up but they still have that beautiful, childlike friendship and love.

Kalliope

What about their poor grandma, though? She's been put through the ringer by these kids! They leave, and that's it, without saying goodbye, it's just like: peace out, see ya. And then they get back and they're adults, so how many years is that? That's a long time. And the grandma's just there, still sitting there, being like: "Ah."

Angourie

Yes. [laughs] Do you have anything to say on the, like, whole theme of the book? Or the – or what do you think the theme is?

Kalliope

Yeah, same as you, like, growing up. Like, it was – it was a bit *Narnia*. Can we talk about, um, the similarities?

Angourie

So. *Frozen*. Yes.

[fade in and out: ominous orchestral music sound bite to indicate a break]

Angourie

Disney has a long and complicated history with *The Snow Queen*. In late 1937, before the premiere of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney considered producing a live action animated biographical film of Hans Christian Andersen. In 1940, Disney approached producer Samuel Goldwyn with the proposal to shoot the live-action sequences at Goldwyn's studio, and then Disney would animate Andersen's fairy tales. In this developmental phase, Disney's studio began writing adaptations of some of Andersen's most famous tales, including *The Little Mermaid* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. But they apparently ran into some difficulty adapting *The Snow Queen* for modern audiences. But then the US entered World War II in 1941, and Disney's focus shifted to producing wartime propaganda for the US government. Development on the Hans Christian Andersen biopic was halted.

In 1952, Goldwyn produced his own live-action biopic titled *Hans Christian Andersen*, but instead of the tales being animated, they were told in song and ballet live-action. And, as we know, after the failure of Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* in 1959, *The Snow Queen*, *The Little Mermaid* and other fairy tale retellings were shelved.

Fast forward to 1989, and following the success of *The Little Mermaid*, Disney entered its "Renaissance Era". Yes, this is a real thing. It has a Wikipedia page. Disney took all those fairy tales off the shelf and began developing them again, including *The Snow Queen*. But from the 1990s through to the late 2000s, Disney struggled to pin down a solid team for the project. In 2008, they had finally put together a production team, and they began working under the title *Anna and the Snow Queen*. Though they were struggling to make the story work and were in developmental hell, in 2011 Disney announced a release date and a new title: *Frozen*.

In early 2012, song-writers Kristen Andersen-Lopez and Robert Lopez joined the project. They were a key addition to the team that made *Frozen* such a success. As I mentioned before, Disney was struggling with the story, in particular the character of the Snow Queen. In earlier drafts, Elsa had been written as the villain. But through composing the song *Let It Go*, Kristen Andersen-Lopez and Robert Lopez explored the possibility of making Elsa a more sympathetic character. And suddenly Elsa became not the villain, but merely a misunderstood girl who is frightened by her own power. This significant change subverted the fairy tale trope of the unmarried female outcast villain, and suddenly gave us a film about sisterhood and female friendships. *Frozen* became a Disney Princess and Queen movie, with not only one female role-model, but two.

Frozen was released in theatres on the 27th of November 2013, and it reached unprecedented levels of success. I remember the Halloween of 2014, I went to a Halloween parade, and there was an Elsa everywhere I looked. People of all genders and ages had donned blonde braided wigs and sparkly blue dresses. Everyone had *Frozen* fever.

[fade in and out: ominous orchestral music sound bite to indicate a break]

Angourie

So, do you remember the first time we went to see *Frozen*?

Kalliope

Barely ... it was in the cinemas. I remember enjoying it, but I don't think I was like, wow, *Frozen*! It was like, I think both of us were a little like, oh, we're so cool, you know? Like, Disney, what? I was ten, I was so old. No, I was nine. So it was kinda like, oh yeah, Disney. But yeah, I don't really remember it.

Angourie

I was twelve and in my first year of high school, and I was a bit like, I'm like, too cool for Disney Princess movies now. Um, and this was also before I had Spotify or my own kind of way of listening to music. I kind of wasn't able to, like, listen to the soundtrack on repeat like I did for the subsequent movies. But I remember – I remember really enjoying it, and my obsession with it kind of came in a bit later when I re-watched it.

The film that we see in *Frozen* is quite different to the Hans Christian Andersen tale. But there are some similarities, and the first being in Hans Christian Andersen's tale it's about two friends who feel like brother and sister, and in *Frozen* it's about two sisters. So, do you want to talk about that?

Kalliope

The theme of, like, love was still very much there. Like, the siblings they were, like, as close as siblings, so it was kind of like that worked well transitioning into the movie from "playfellows" to siblings. They really include the thing where the powers get more – in *Frozen*, when Elsa's powers get stronger, and she gets, like, moody and is locked off from Anna, and she – Anna's kind of like: "Ay, that's mean." But she still really loves her, and that's the same with Kai and Gerda, cos Kai gets the, like, ice heart, and ice eye. It's a mirror. It's like the mirror –

Angourie

But the mirror in his heart turns his heart to ice.

Kalliope

Yeah, and he's really, like, bitter and sad, but Gerda is still like, still hangs out with him even though, like, he's mean to her, and it's still like: "I still love you!" And I was like: "We are never getting back together." [laughs] That's very similar, that dynamic. One still loves the other while the other is like, bitter and cold and isn't talking to them or whatever.

Angourie

I think what I love about *Frozen* is that it adds kind of another level to it. In *The Snow Queen*, the thing that makes Kai mean and awful and sad and scary is something that has happened to him. It's this evil mirror that has struck his heart and there's nothing he can do about it. But what I love about *Frozen* is that it's really Elsa's internal struggle. And if we look at her powers as an equivalent of the mirror, her powers aren't inherently villainous, and they're not inherently bad or evil. The thing that ostracises her and makes her the villain in the story – or makes her need to be saved by Anna – is society's view of her. I really like that added element cos I think it makes it more complex in that the thing that needs to be resolved at the end of *Frozen* isn't just the winter needs to be dissolved and Anna's heart needs to unfreeze, but bigger than that, it needs to be a change in the community of Arendelle to accept Elsa and her powers.

Kalliope

There's – it's weird because with Elsa, her powers aren't inherently evil and she's not evil and she's not mean, but she fears herself, and it's like – that's the idea, like you said. Whereas with Kai, he is

mean, and he's the worst, and – but like, no one cares? Like, there's no thing about how: "Wow, he's so mean." Oh, I guess there's the thing about the village, but people laugh at him because he's like, doing impressions of people. The person who he's doing an impression of is sad, but the other people are all laughing, so I guess it's not really, like – he's not supposedly evil. And nothing really comes from him having ice in his heart.

Angourie

The other different and interesting thing is that Elsa in *Frozen* is kind of simultaneously the character of Kai and also the character of the Snow Queen. We didn't really talk about the Snow Queen before, but she's kind of this non-villain.

Kalliope

She's not even a character!

Angourie

She's not even a character, and she's not really a villain. I mean, she takes Kai away, and she makes him forget about his past life, but these two separate things that culminate to Kai's disappearance, and I guess the climax of the story is that he gets the shard of mirror in his heart and eye, and he's taken by the Snow Queen. And these things actually don't have anything in common with each other. In *Frozen*, these things are enmeshed together and Elsa is the Snow Queen, and Kai, and also Anna is kind of Kai because she gets struck in the heart with ice.

Kalliope

Hot take: Elsa is Kai and her powers are the Snow Queen.

Angourie

Ooh!

Kalliope

Ooh! No she didn't! Really? Really just said that?

Angourie

I love that, I love that.

Kalliope

Wow.

Angourie

So originally, when *Frozen* was in development, Elsa was going to be the villain, you know the villain of the story was the Snow Queen. But I really love how they made her a sympathetic character and it really becomes this heart-breaking story of, you know, going to the ends of the earth to save someone you love.

Kalliope

Another similarity was the crying and the freezing, but in the fairy tale Kai froze because of the Snow Queen, and then Gerda cries and he comes back to life. Whereas in the movie it's the other way around because Anna was like, struck. So she's the one that freezes.

Angourie

But in both tales, the thing that unfreezes the heart is true love. Aww! What I like about *The Snow Queen* is that it's a lot less direct than that. It's not like: "Oh my gosh, I have to get to Kai and I know what will save him." She doesn't know that, all she knows is that she needs to find her playfellow again and make sure that he's okay. And that's what the naked woman in the hot room says – [laughs] – She says she doesn't need a special magic potion to make her strong, her strength comes from within. Her kindness and her love of Kai will eventually save him, and that's what I love about *The Snow Queen*. Whereas with Disney, I mean what they did, and they do this in a lot of their films, is that they turned into, you know: "Only, like, an act of true love!" Like, that's such a –

Kalliope

It was just a task –

Angourie

–tired trope.

Kalliope

Like: "This is what's gonna happen."

Angourie

It was a task, yeah. And the other thing is that I think Disney, you know, tried to subvert the idea of the true love's kiss, as well, in the end, by making the act of true love not a kiss, but an act of sisterly bond. Which is nice.

Kalliope

Yeah, I liked that.

Hans. That was cool, that character completely does not exist at all in the fairy tale, and he's the villain. That was, like, one of my favourite parts, that they did a[n] unexpected villain.

Angourie

I think the interesting thing about having Hans as the villain, you know, cos looking at lots of different fairy tales for this project is that often the villain is a spinster woman who is frequently a witch. The thing I love about *Frozen* is that, yes, he's a sneaky villain and he sneaks up on you, but also, you know, previously our villains have been outcasts in society because they've been women who have defied the norm or the status quo. The thing about Hans is that he –

Kalliope

He is the norm –

Angourie

–he is the norm! That's the true villain, you know, the villain isn't these ostracised women like we see in *The Little Mermaid* with Ursula and the Evil Queen in *Snow White*, what could have been with Elsa. But rather the real villain is society!

Kalliope

Ooh!

Angourie

Ooh! Hot take. And I just love how in this, that the villain is a white man who wants power, um, because I think that is very realistic.

Kalliope

Um, they had that in the Snow Queen a bit, they had the first person she comes across, the witch, but that doesn't use her powers evilly and just wants to keep her there, cos like she wants a daughter. And I think if they were gonna be more faithful to the original story, they could have easily used that as a villain if they didn't want to use the Snow Queen as the villain. Like, they could have had that woman just like, wanna take her, and I don't know. It was super weird, cos like that was in the original story, kind of taking what is usually the villain and making them not the villain. It was like the witch from *Hansel and Gretel*, but like, the nice one.

Angourie

What's your favourite song?

Kalliope

Love Is an Open Door? Yeah, I'm gonna stick with that. Oh, you know what, I actually really like the Trolls' song. Like, unpopular opinion, the Trolls' song is great. I like, I love the Trolls' song.

Angourie

I think the opening song, *Frozen Heart*, doesn't get enough love –

Kalliope

Oh my god I take it back. Yeah, that one's really good.

Angourie and Kalliope

[singing] Beware the frozen heart!

Angourie

I mean, we all love *Let It Go*. Like, I just, I love *Let It Go* so much. It's so good. But at the same time, we love *Love Is an Open Door* cos we sing that duet and it's pretty brilliant, if I do say so myself. Okay, what's your favourite song from *Frozen II*, then?

Kalliope

Lost in the Woods. Hands down, that's not even a question. The 80s – but it needs the music video as well. The 80s music video effects and the multiple backup singers, like, the fadeaway to him, like, looking around. That is so good. But also I love the ... like, um, [singing] "there's an ocean... there's a river..."

Angourie

Oh! [singing] "Dern dern dern dern ... meets the sea! There's a river!" What's it called?

Kalliope

"...full of memory! Dive down deep into her..."

Angourie

What is it called?

Kalliope

Um, it's called ... "What is Lost is Found" or something like that?

Angourie

All Is Found! Oh my god, I love *All Is Found*.

[fade in and out: break music]

Angourie

At the end of every episode about fairy tales, I try and come to a conclusion of what we can take from both the film and the original fairy tale. What's an important takeaway, do you think?

Kalliope

Listen to your grandmother and learn the languages that she speaks, because later in life, when a magpie or a raven tries to talk to you, they're just not gonna be as, you know, easy to understand if you only speak English. Or German. Or ... Swiss?

Angourie

Danish.

Kalliope

Danish. [laughs] Eek!

Angourie

Yikes.

Kalliope

Just like, love, you know? I just love love. I don't know, what was the question? What's the takeaway?

Angourie

Yeah, what's the takeaway, why do you think – just in fairy tales in general, why do people keep going back to *Snow White* and *Cinderella*? Why do we keep retelling them?

Kalliope

I think just cos they're easy and they're old, and it's like this is a story that was originally told to pass down generations to teach stories, and for people to relate to, and be like, either: "Yeah, that's so true, I need to follow that in my life," or "Yeah, that's happened to me," or "Damn, I wish that would happen to me." Humans are still human, and like, those stories speak to us because, you know, everyone wants to be a princess, or everyone has a friend that is mean sometimes. You know, people have siblings and sisters, and I think they just – they're just relevant. And they're easy to tell cos they're short.

Angourie

I think my takeaway from *Frozen* is ... You know, I think I love it so much because I have a sister, obviously, and because –

Kalliope

Stop it!

Angourie

–I do think that sister relationship – and even, you know, just bringing it back to the original story where they're not siblings but playfellows – just caring about someone in your life and going through so much to protect them and bring them back. That's kind of what I love about, um, the original fairy tale, and I think something that everyone goes through, is that you know, your friend might go through a rough patch, and be really mean and awful and like, say terrible things –

Kalliope

And then we cancel them.

Angourie

[laughs] And then we cancel them! And then, you know, true friends or friends who have that fighting spirit, will seek to understand and to overcome those barriers, and forgive and show them love, and kindness, and understanding, and that's really important.

[fade in: plucky theme music with violins, clarinet, piano, and twinkly triangle]

Angourie

Thank you very much for listening to this episode! The final instalment in my discussion on fairy tales and Disney Princesses is coming out tomorrow! I'll talk a bit about my final thesis on the project and what I discovered and learnt along the way. Thank you very much for hanging out with me, Kalliope, and for chatting about *Frozen*.

[stop: theme music]

Kalliope

I have so many people to thank! Really quickly, all my friends and family.

Angourie

People aren't gonna know you're joking.

Kalliope

Alright bye, thanks for having me. Peace out ...

Angourie

Oh my god, you sound like I held you hostage.

Kalliope

What do I say?

Angourie

Just say: “Thanks for having me, I had a good time,” if you did. If you didn’t, just don’t say that, just say: “Thanks for having me.”

Kalliope

I had so much fun here today and follow The Community Library. And I can shout out whoever I want, except you’ll just cut it out –

Angourie

No, you can – what do you want to plug? You can plug anything.

Kalliope

Ooh, can I plug things? I really have nothing to plug. I made a comment one time on a YouTube video that like, got a lot of likes, so like, go like that if you can find it. [laughs]

Angourie

What was it on?

Kalliope

I’m not telling.

Angourie

[laughs] Okay, can – I just need a clean: “Thank you for having me.”

[resume: theme music]

Kalliope

Kay, thank you for having me, I had lots of fun, bye!

Angourie

Make sure you guys are staying safe, washing your hands thoroughly for twenty seconds, staying home if possible, and hopefully reading lots of good books! Maybe, if you loved this episode, let me know, and maybe I’ll bring Kalliope back.

Kalliope

Hell yeah!

Angourie

Talk to you tomorrow, bye!

[fade out: theme music]

Angourie

Are we related? I didn’t – hang on...

Kalliope

Probably not.

Angourie

Probs not. We sound so different.

Kalliope

Can you even tell the difference between our voices?

Angourie

He is the status quo –

Kalliope

[singing] “No, no, no!”

Angourie

[singing] “Stick to the status quo!”

Angourie and Kalliope

[singing] “If you wanna stay cool, follow one simple rule, don’t mess with the flow, no, no! Stick to the status quo!”

Angourie

Um –

Kalliope

“I like to bake!”

Angourie and Kalliope

[singing, very loudly] “NO!”

Angourie

She says: “The sky’s awake –

Angourie and Kalliope

“So I’m awake, so we have to play!”

Kalliope

“The noise in this bus is –

Angourie and Kalliope

“ASTRONOMICAL”

Angourie

Shut up! Hey –

Kalliope

That's not a very kind way to speak to your sister!

Angourie

I'll cut it out, they'll never know.