Anka in Springtime

On a chilly morning walk through the forest near her home, Anka spots a most welcome sight of the first little snowdrops of earliest spring. The sky is gray and a cold breeze whistles through the bare branches. The little snowdrops dance in the chilly air as if for them the sun has already woken from his winter slumber and is warming them to their very core.

A noise from above distracts her. "Tu-whit tu-whoo" it says. She looks all over and finally sees him, the wise old owl who often accompanies her on morning walks. But this morning his call sounds a little louder and a little more urgent than usual. Anka wonders what could be the matter. She sees a fox cross her path up ahead and the owl calls again. Grandmother had always told her that if she saw a fox, she would know to pay close attention to her surroundings because it usually means something curious is afoot.

Anka watches the owl. He flies from tree branch to tree branch away from her, deeper into the woods. She follows, soon coming upon a clearing. Snowdrops are everywhere! She hears the "Tu-whit tu-whoo" again and spots the owl atop a great iron gate at the far edge of the clearing. She had never seen this gate before. "Curious indeed" she says softly to herself as she walks, treading lightly, so as not to step on even one little snowdrop.

She approaches the gate, her heart beating faster with anticipation. Reaching out with her blue mittened hand to grab hold of the cold iron, she pulls. It doesn't budge. She tries the other side and it doesn't move either, not even an inch. Then another call "Tu-whit tu-whoo" guides her eye up to a little notice hanging just under where wise old owl is perched.

The notice says: "Give a gift from inside, something true, and I will abide".

"Hmm...a riddle" Anka thinks. She closes her eyes for a moment and knows just what to do. She takes a breath and sings a song of snowdrops and springtime inspired by the field of flowers and the smell of rain the breeze blows through her hair. The gate opens before her, and she is welcomed by a ray of sunshine landing on her face from inside. She looks around and sees the tiniest leaf buds on the trees, and the smallest translucent green shoots of new grass coming up everywhere. She sees daffodils, dandelions, tulips, grape hyacinth and more snowdrops than she could ever count. Wise old owl swoops down from the gate and over to a tall tree that is just barely beginning to bud. A swing hangs from the trees lowest branch. She takes off her mittens and hops on the swing, humming along with the bees buzzing all around and visiting each and every flower one by one. She knows where she is now.

She has entered the land of Spring.