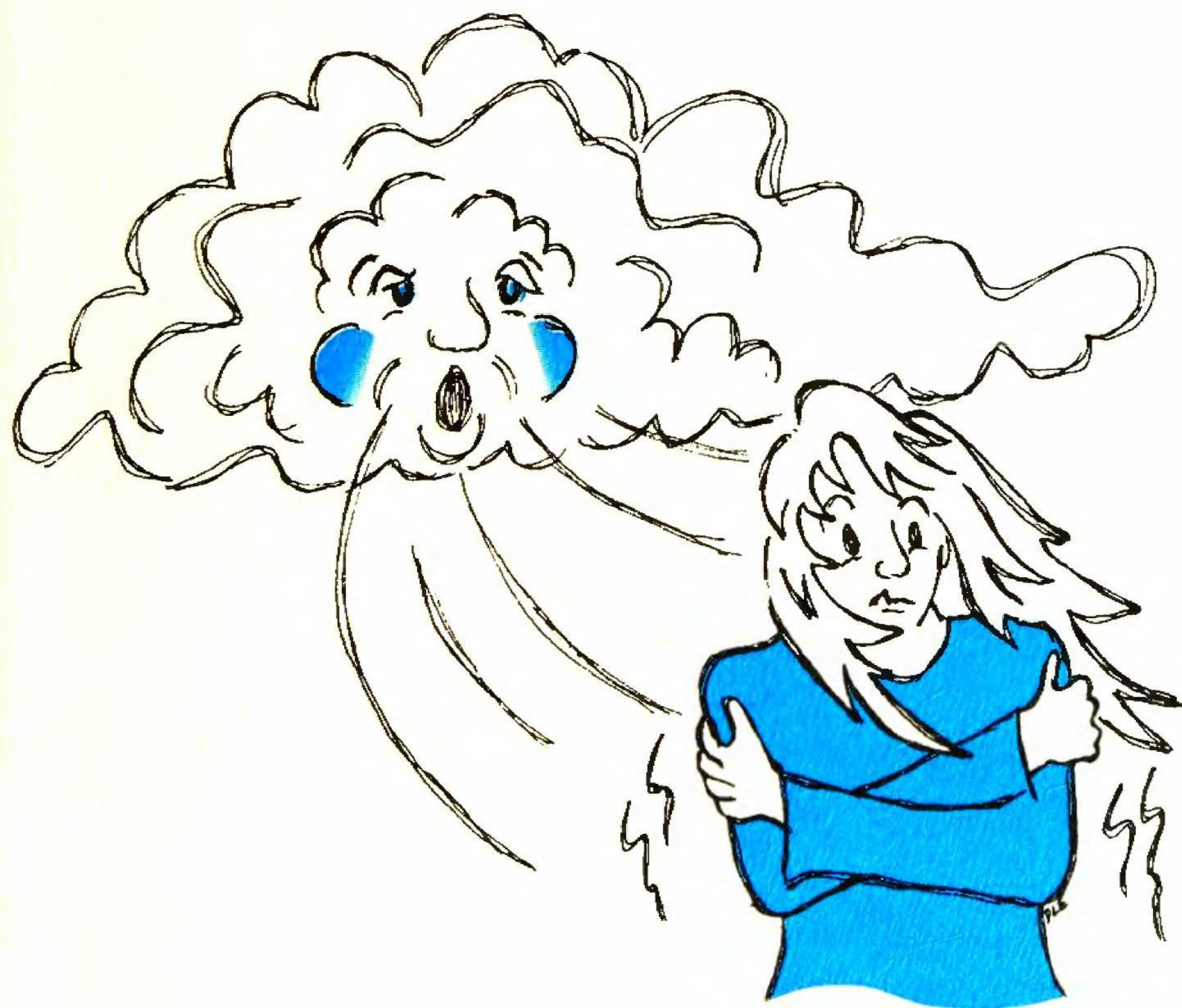


How April Went to Visit March

and Other
Ukrainian Folk Tales
Retold in English



Retold by **Danny Evanishen**

In this glossary:

[a] is pronounced as in far

[e] is pronounced as in get

[ee] is pronounced as in feet

[i] is pronounced as in sit

[o] is pronounced as between got and goat

[oo] is pronounced as in loose

[u] is pronounced as in purr

[y] is pronounced as in yes

[kh] is pronounced as in Scottish loch

[zh] is pronounced as in vision

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How April Went to Visit March

and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales
Retold in English

Retold by Danny Evanishen
Translations by John W Evanishen
and Angela Cleary
Illustrations by Deanna Evanishen

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For our Babas and Didos, who kept the stories alive for the children.

Foreword

This book is the third volume in this series. There will be more books as long as I have the stories to fill them. That should not be a problem; the Ukrainian culture is very rich in this way, and there are thousands of tales.

I enjoy collecting and publishing these stories, but they are sometimes hard to find. Many people know the stories, but for various reasons, don't write them down.

In this day and age, writing down the stories is becoming more and more important, as the people who know the stories either die or forget the stories. It is up to us, now, to save this very important part of our heritage.

As in the first two volumes of the series, *The Raspberry Hut* and *Zhabka*, some of the tales to be found in this book are old favorites, while others are less familiar.

If anyone has any more tales they would like to contribute to future volumes, they could be sent to me at this address:

Danny Evanishen
Box 1324
Summerland, BC
VOH 1Z0.

—Danny Evanishen, Publisher

Acknowledgments

This book, like the first two volumes in the series, is the result of a lot of work by a number of very helpful people.

Translations were done from Ukrainian by my father, John W Evanishen, and from German by Angela Cleary. Nataalka Evanishen, my mother, provided my very first folk tales and always has lots of encouragement for me. Deanna Evanishen, my niece, did the art work.

Thanks are always due to the libraries and archives across Canada that make their material available. A list of all the stories and their sources will eventually be published.

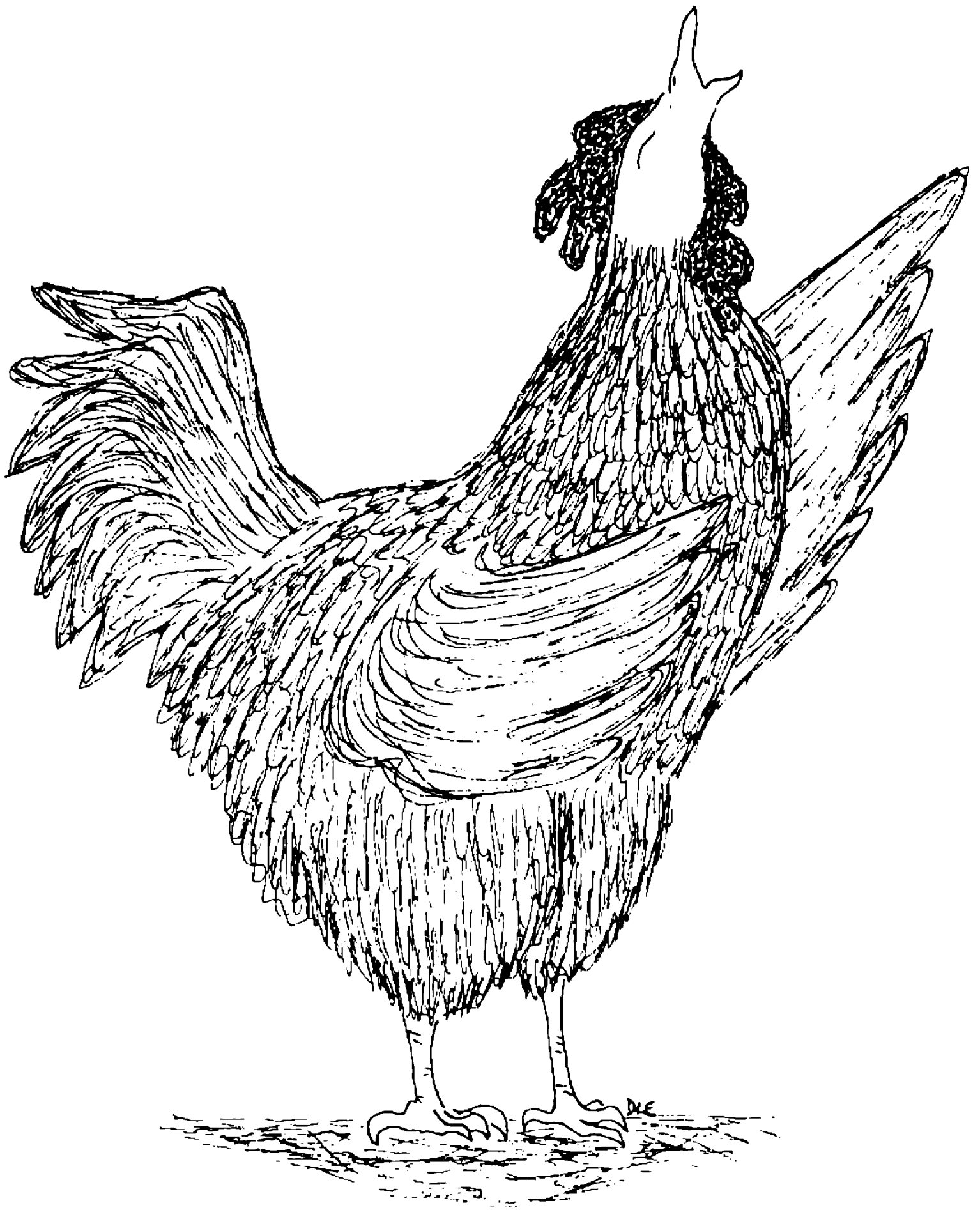
Thanks are due to Professor JB Rudnycky for material from his book *Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore in English Translation*, and to Dr Robert Klymasz for stories in his book *Folk Narrative Among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada*.

When the stories submitted by various people across the country are published, I will acknowledge their contributions.

Thank you to everyone who sent their stories in to me, thinking I would find them interesting. I definitely find them interesting.

Thank you also to Dorene Fehr, who did a lot of reading and advising on the project, and also took the photograph on the back cover.

— Danny Evanishen, Publisher



The Cat and the Rooster

Once upon a time, a Cat and a Rooster were very good friends. They lived together in their own little house. The Cat would play on his fiddle while the Rooster sang.

When the Cat was out hunting for food, the Rooster would stay home and take care of the house. The Cat always warned the Rooster: "While I am away, do not let anyone into the house, and you stay inside, yourself. Do not listen to anyone, no matter who it is."

"Very well," the Rooster would say. "I will do as you say." He would lock the door and stay inside until the Cat returned.

A Fox who lived nearby knew about this arrangement, and planned to lure the Rooster out of the house. One day when the Cat was away, the Fox went to the window and sang in her sweetest voice:

“Come, little Rooster, come to me.
Golden wheat have I for thee.”

The Rooster replied:

“You will not catch me like that.
‘Never, ever go out,’ said the Cat.”

The Fox saw that she could not get the Rooster out of the house that way so, one day, she poured some of her golden wheat on the ground under a window, and hid in a shrub.

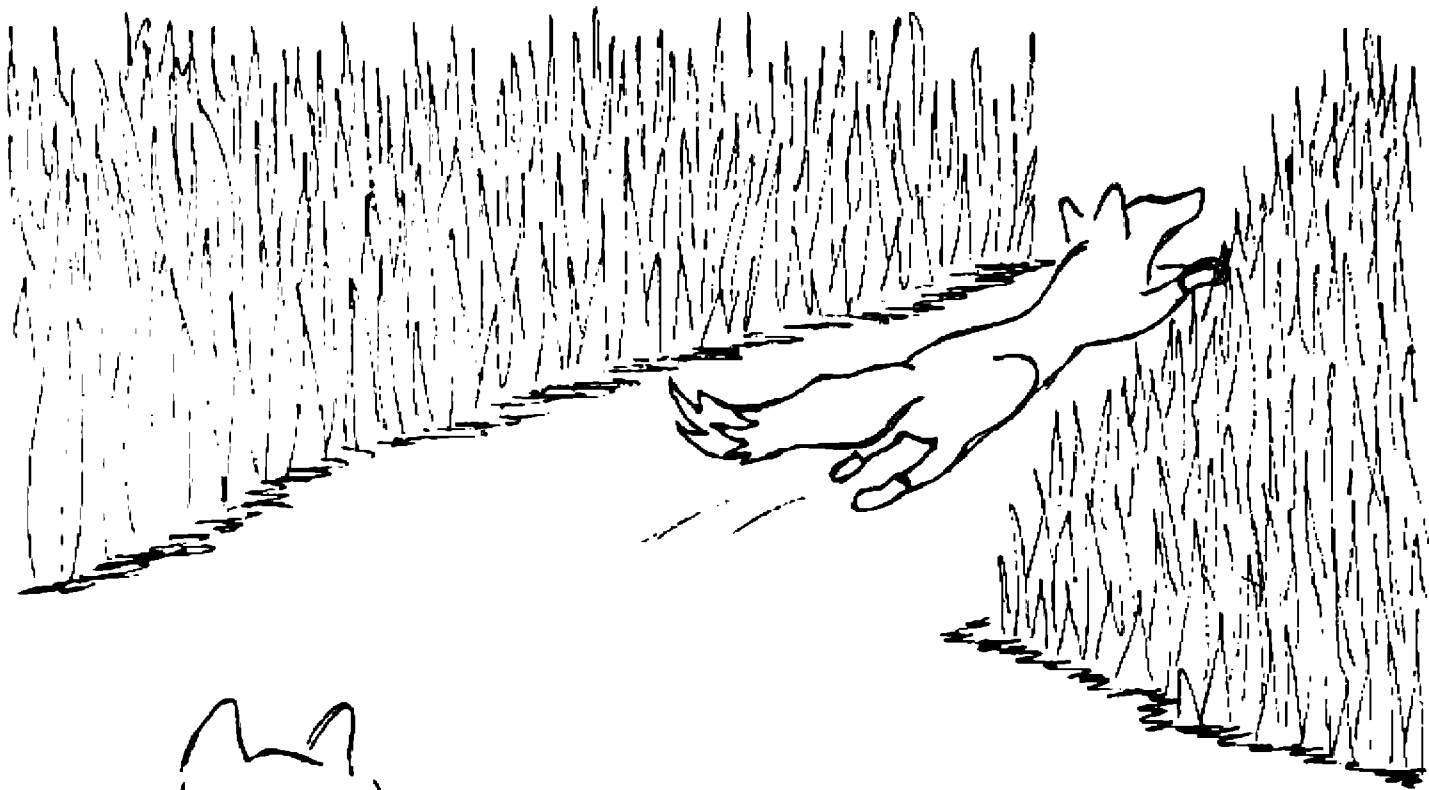
Later, while the Cat was away hunting, the Rooster looked outside and saw the wheat on the ground. “There is nobody around,” he said. “I will go and peck at some of that wheat. Nobody will see me and tell the Cat.”

As soon as the Rooster got outside, the Fox jumped on him and dragged him away. The frightened Rooster cried out:

“Help, my little brother Cat!
The Fox has got me on her back!”

The Cat was not very far away, and he heard the Rooster crying. He ran as fast as he could and caught up to the Fox, who was having trouble carrying the struggling Rooster.

The Fox saw the Cat coming; she dropped the screaming Rooster and ran away.



The Cat helped the Rooster home and again warned him never to let anyone into the house when he was not there.

The next day, the Cat went out hunting again. The Rooster locked the door and then peeked out the window, where he saw the golden wheat still on the ground.

“Look at all that delicious golden wheat just lying there!” thought the Rooster. “That Fox is nowhere around today; I can go and peck up some of that wheat in perfect safety.”

The Fox was right there, though, hiding by the house. As soon as the Rooster opened the door, the Fox grabbed him and ran away.

The poor Rooster again began crying:

“Help, my little brother Cat!

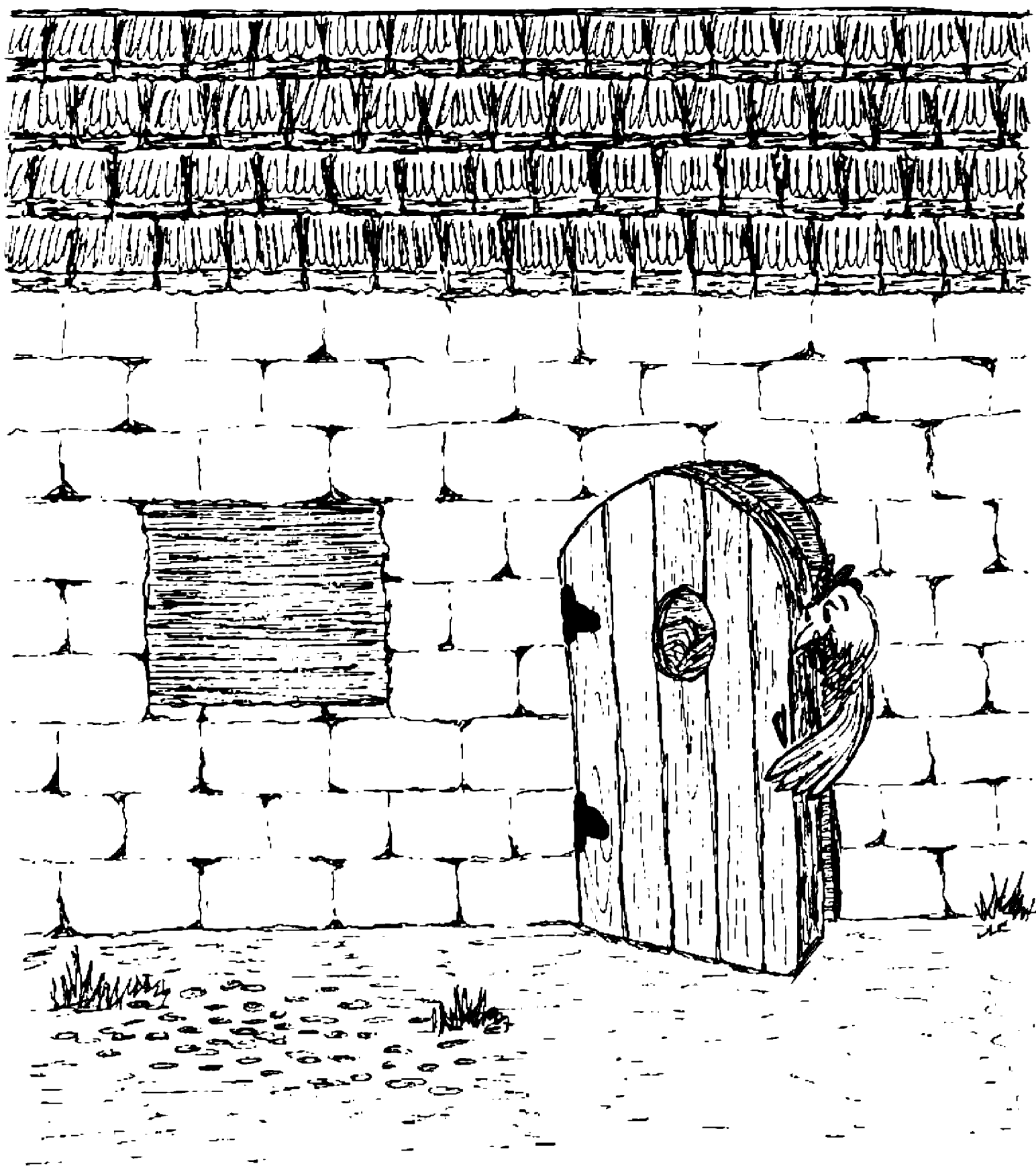
The Fox has got me on her back!”

The Cat heard the Rooster screaming, and he came running as fast as he could. He caught up to the Fox again and made her drop the Rooster. Then the two of them went home.

The Cat again made the Rooster promise not to let anyone into the house. The Rooster said that he had learned his lesson and promised to do what the Cat said.

Several uneventful days later, the Cat was out hunting again. He had been away all day, and the Rooster was getting very hungry.

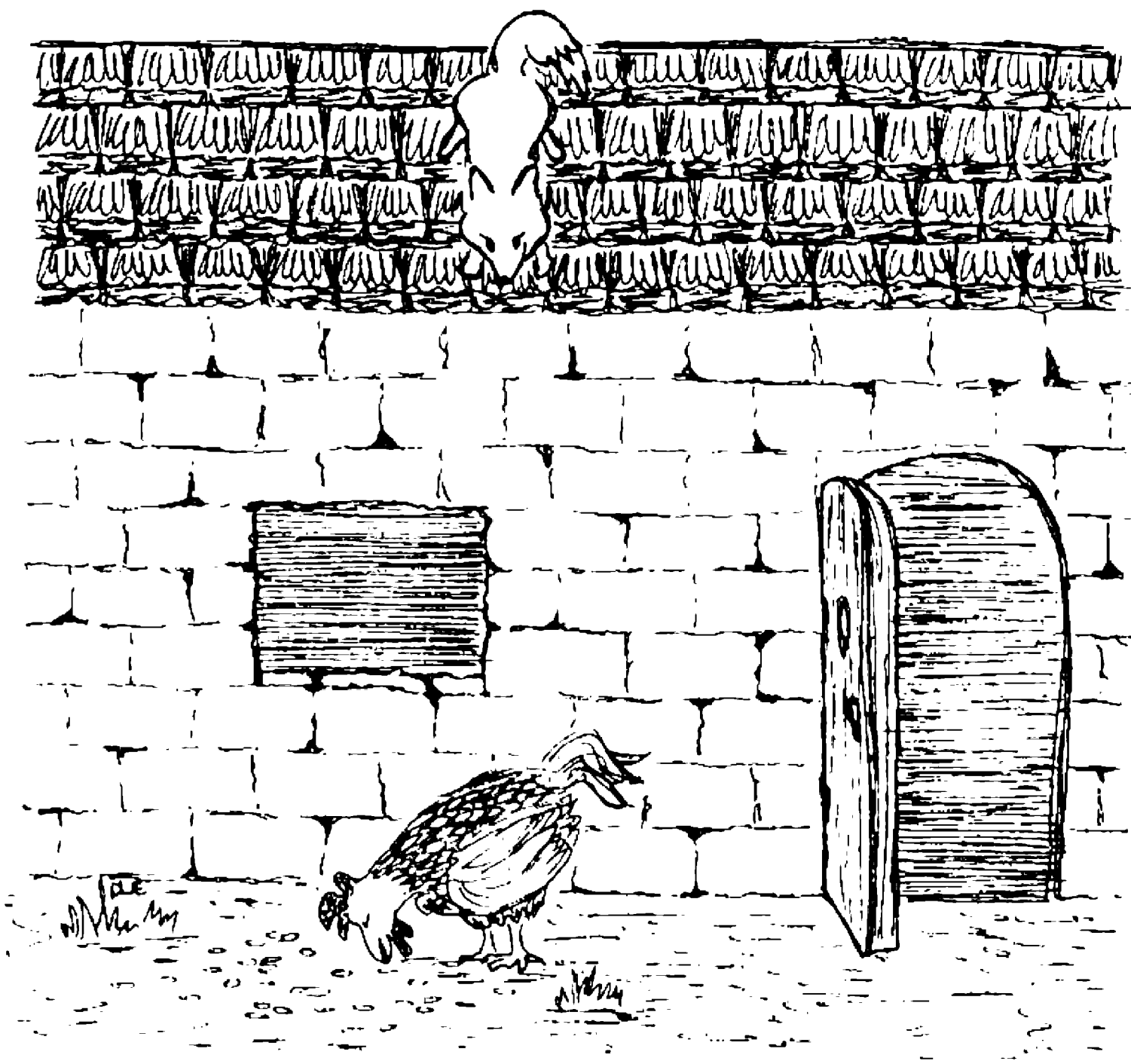
The Rooster looked out the window and saw the golden wheat still on the ground. He looked out of every window, but could not see the Fox. He opened the door a crack, and still could not see the Fox. He ran outside and then quickly back inside, and still there was no Fox.



Finally, the Rooster scampered around to the golden wheat, where he grabbed a mouthful and then ran back into the house. That golden wheat was so delicious!

“That bad Fox is not around today,” thought the Rooster, “and I am so hungry, and that golden wheat is so delicious. I will just go out and eat a little bit more.”

The Rooster went to the wheat and began pecking away at it. The Fox had been hiding on the roof of the house and, now that the Rooster was not running around so much, she jumped off the roof right onto the Rooster.



The Fox grabbed the Rooster, who began screaming again:

“Help, my little brother Cat!
The Fox has got me on her back!”

This time, the Cat was far away from home and, by the time he heard the commotion, it was too late. He ran and ran, but he could not catch up to the Fox. He went home and began to cry. After a while, he picked up his fiddle and went to the home of the Fox.

Mother Fox had four daughters and one son. She told her children to put water on the stove to boil so that, when she came back with some vegetables, they would cook the Rooster. “Be careful,” she said. “Do not let anyone in.”

When she had left, the Cat came to the window and began to play his fiddle. He sang:

“Hello, little Fox, come out and see
How well I play my fiddle for thee.”

The oldest daughter said to the others, “Stay here. I will go see who plays so nicely.”

As soon as she got outside, the Cat bopped her on the head and stuffed her into a sack. He played and sang some more, and the second daughter went out to see where her sister was. She also was bopped on the head

and put in the sack. In this manner, all four daughters were lured outside and wound up captured by the Cat.

The son waited for his sisters to return and, when they did not, he thought, "I had better go and chase them back in or Mother will be angry when she gets home." As soon as he got outside, the Cat bopped him on the head and stuffed him into the sack.

The Cat hung the sack on a dry willow branch and went into the house. He untied the Rooster and the two of them ate up all the food they could find in the house. They dumped the hot water onto the floor, broke all the dishes, and went home singing.

From that day on, the Rooster always did whatever the Cat told him to do.







The Gypsy and the Priest

“What sins have you to confess?” asked the priest of the gypsy.

“Once I stole a rope.”

“That is a mere trifle,” said the priest, with his mind on something else far away.

“It was not that much of a trifle, Father,” said the gypsy, wanting more consideration. “An ox was tied to one end of the rope.”

The priest was so caught up in his own thoughts that he did not even reply to this.

The gypsy was so angered by the attitude of the priest that he stole his pocket watch.

“What else have you stolen lately?” asked the priest, finally returning to the present. “Do not fear to tell me. Your words are safe with me. My tongue would be cut off if I were to tell anyone of your confessions.”

“Well, I did steal a pocket watch recently,” said the gypsy.

“You must return the watch to its rightful owner,” said the priest.

“Then I will give it to you at once, Father.”

“No, do not give it to me. I do not want it,” said the priest. “You must give it to the person from whom you stole it.”

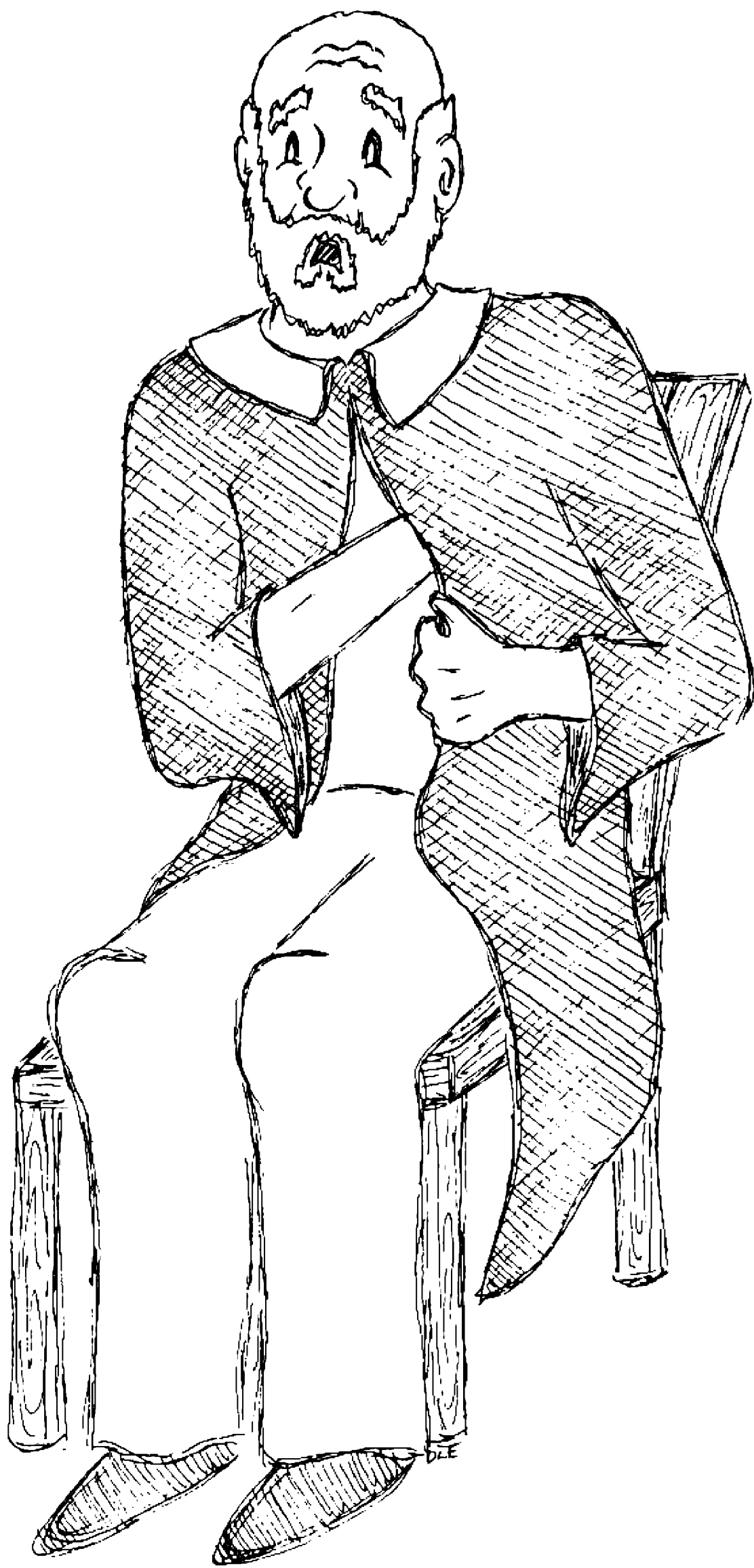
“The man has refused to take it back,” replied the gypsy.

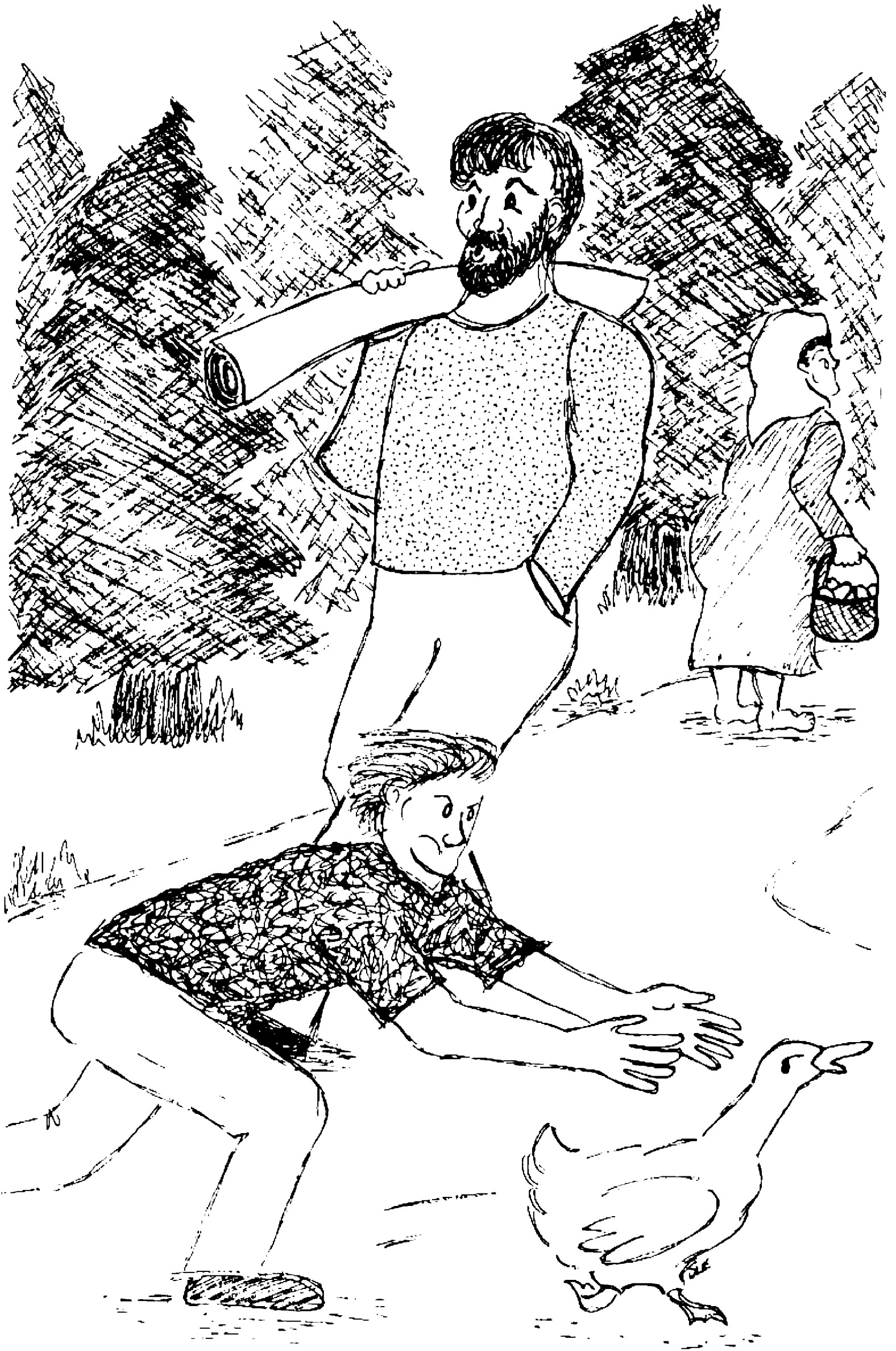
“In that case, I think you may keep it,” advised the priest. Suddenly, he had a sinking feeling. He reached for his watch and found that it was not there.

“Give me back my watch!” the priest yelled out angrily.

The gypsy said nothing. He just pointed to the mouth of the priest and made gestures as if he were cutting off his tongue.







He Was Not Fooled

A man took a roll of home-made cloth to sell in the city. He sold the cloth with no difficulty, but then he spent the money at the tavern, and returned home empty-handed.

When he got home, his wife asked, "You sold the cloth? How much did you get for it?"

"Wife," he said, "if you knew how many rolls of cloth were stolen in that market today! People could hardly save their rolls. Why, some were simply snatched out of the arms of their poor owners."

"Did they also manage to steal your roll?"

"They did not make a fool of me. I carried my own roll of cloth tightly clutched to me throughout the whole day."

"Then you sold it, did you not?"

"No, I did not sell it. But mind you, it was not stolen from me until after it got dark!"





The Heron, the Fish and the Crayfish

Once there was a Heron who lived by a pond. The Heron was well on in years, and he could not hunt for his food as well as he did when he was younger.

“I must find another way to get my food,” he thought. “My hunting skills are fading, and I often go hungry. I certainly do not want to starve to death.”

The Heron thought about his problem for some time, and then hit upon a wonderful solution. He perched in a tree near the shore and made an announcement to his neighbors.

“Fish of the Pond!” he called loudly. “Hear what I have to say! Today I was near where the Men live, and I heard them making plans to drain this pond for more farmland. We other creatures of this earth must stick together, so I

would like to help you. There is another very good pond over the hill; if I were not so old and weak I would offer to fly you over to it.”

The Fish were very frightened. They began to plead with the Heron.

“Please save us, Heron,” they begged. “We cannot live without water! Please take us over to the other pond.”

“I can but try,” said the happy Heron. “But I am old and fragile; I will take you one at a time, and I can make only a few trips a day.”

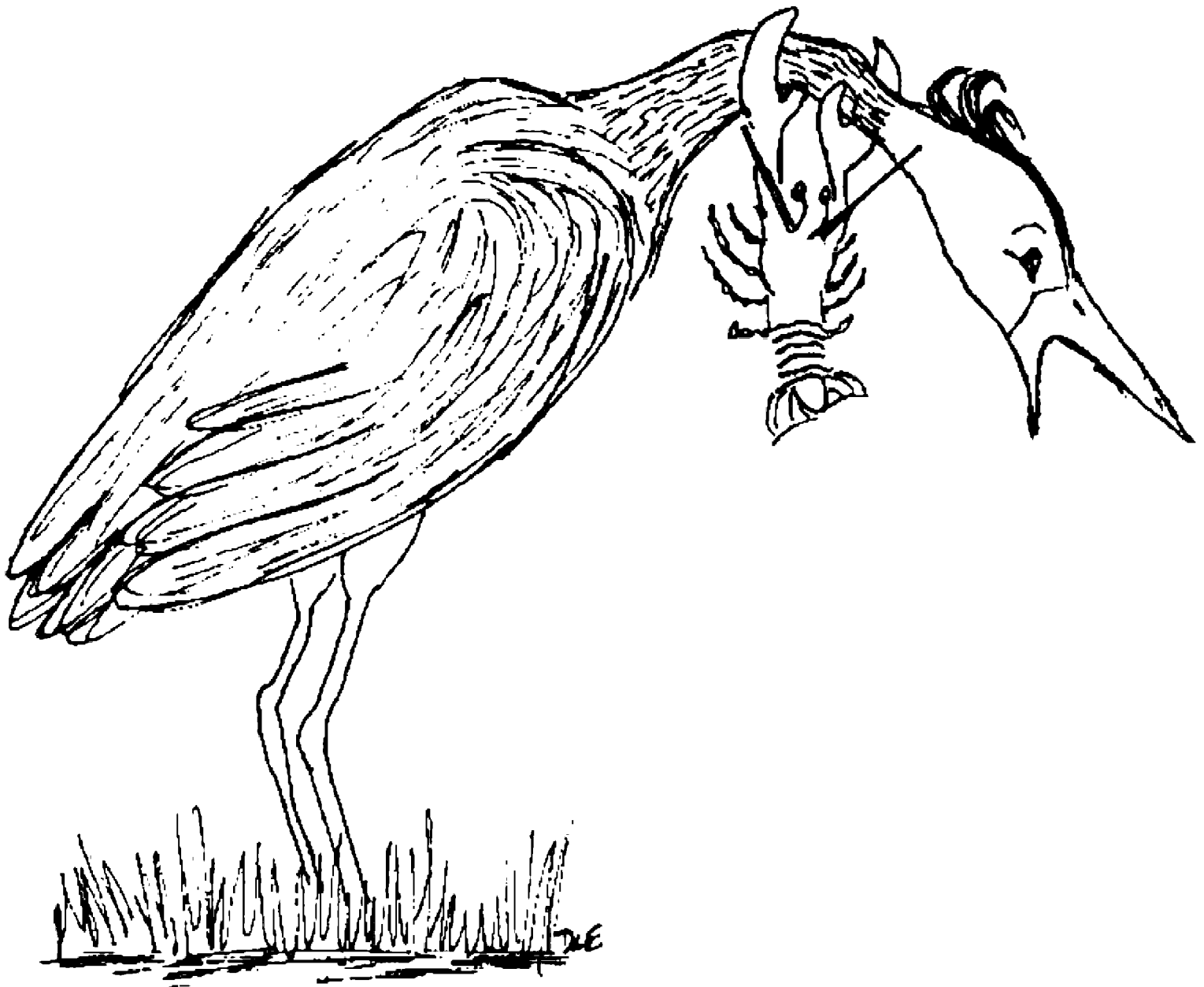
The Fish became excited, and they began to leap out of the water; each wanted to be the first to go. The Heron picked up a Fish and flew off. He glided over the hill to a field, where he landed and ate up the Fish. Then he returned to the pond for another one.

The Heron fed himself this way for some time, and there was no sign of the Men. The Fish were so concerned with their own survival that they did not notice. One big old Crayfish, however, was more suspicious than the Fish.

“You must take me next,” said the Crayfish to the Heron. “I too need water to live.”

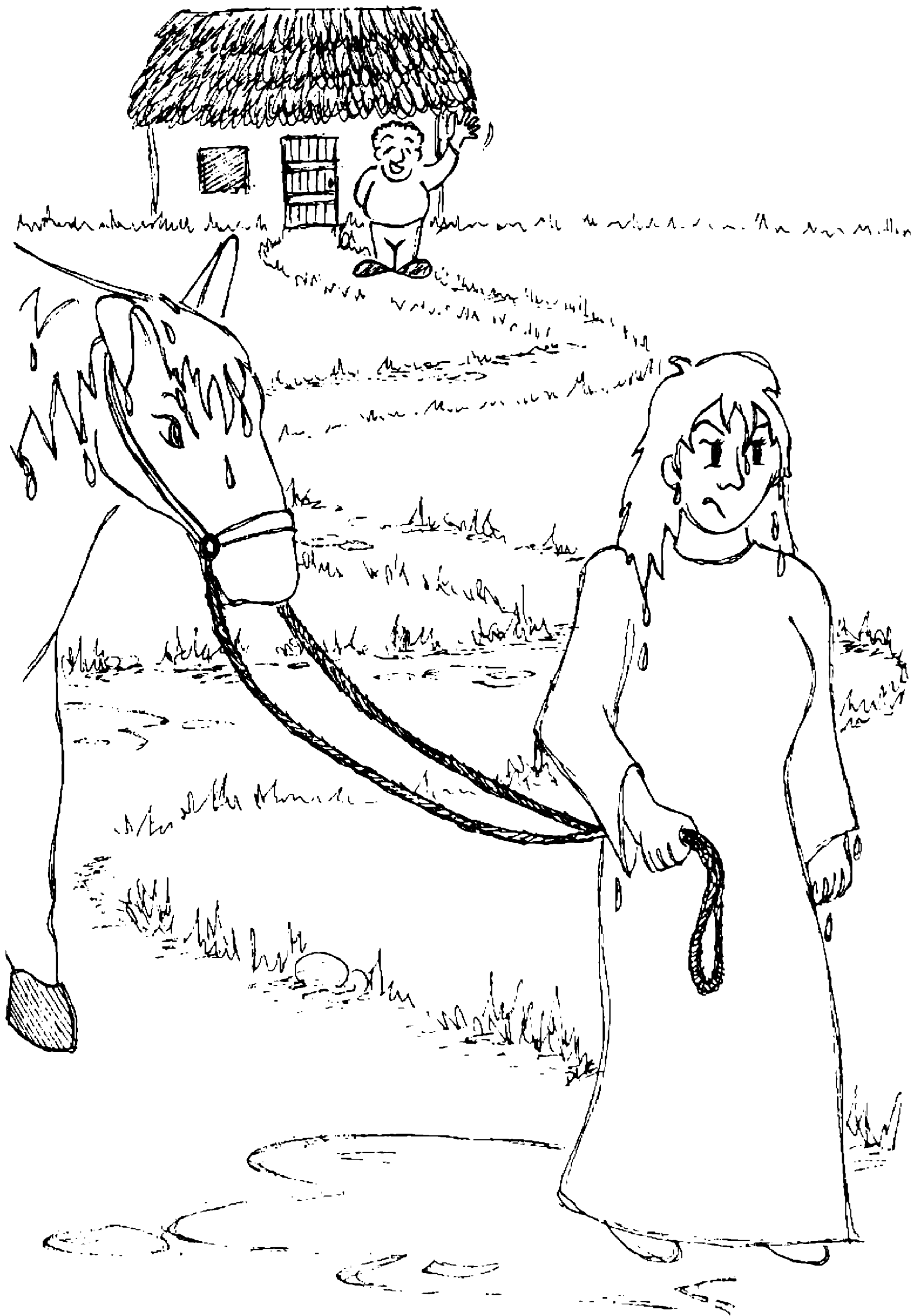
The Heron was pleased to think of a change in his diet, so he happily picked up the Crayfish and flapped over the hill with him. The Crayfish saw the bones strewn all over the field, and immediately knew what had been happening. As soon as the Heron landed, the

Crayfish grabbed his neck with his powerful claws and hung on until the Heron fell dead.



It took a long time for the Crayfish to crawl back to the pond but, when he finally got there, he told the Fish how they had been tricked by the clever Heron. The Fish realized how foolish they had been and, from that day on, they lived happily right there in the pond. They never again wished to travel anywhere.





How April Went to Visit March

A long time ago, March invited April to be his guest for lunch. April was very pleased about the invitation and, on the appointed day, she set off in her sleigh.

March, who was really a frivolous fellow, had not been at all serious when he made his invitation and, when he saw April coming to visit, he took measures to prevent her from arriving at his house.

He made the weather so warm that the snow melted, and the sleigh could hardly move on the bare ground. April took the sleigh home and started out again but, this time, she went with a wagon instead of a sleigh.

March now turned on the winter again. The North wind blew so hard and so cold that the rain froze solid as soon as it hit the road. It became so slippery that the wagon slid sideways and could not go forward. It was

impossible to travel, and the disappointed April had to turn home again.

Later, April met May and began to complain to her: "Whenever I try to visit March, there is no way I can get there, either with the wagon or the sleigh. When I take the wagon, it becomes so cold and the road so slippery that the wheels will not turn. If I take the sleigh, it becomes so warm that the snow disappears and I cannot make it either. How am I ever going to visit March for lunch?"

May knew all about March and his habits; she thought it was time somebody stood up to his foolishness and exposed him for the knave he really was. She said to April, "I will advise you how you can visit March. Take with you, all at once, a wagon, a sleigh and a boat; then you will be sure to reach him."

April took her advice and started out again. She travelled by sleigh, on which she put the wagon and a boat.

March blew in the warm air and melted the snow, so April put the sleigh and the boat on the wagon, and kept going.

March blew cold, and there was frost and snow; April put the wagon and the boat back on the sleigh.

When March melted the snow again, and the streams flooded, April put the sleigh and the wagon on the boat and travelled much

faster on the water. Finally, she arrived safely at the home of the shameless March.

March did not know quite how to react; he was very surprised, and asked April, "Who taught you how to reach me?"

April replied, "May showed me how I could work around your trickery."

March then cried, "You just wait, May; I will trim your wings too, one of these days!"

And that is why there often are March frosts in May because, even now, March is still very angry at May.





An Invitation to the Wedding

In a village, many years ago, there were two men who were great friends and partners. They made an agreement that if either of them were to get married, the other would be invited to the wedding, be he dead or alive.

It so happened that one man became ill and died. Shortly after the burial, the other man decided to get married. He would have liked to have had his old partner for his best man but, as it was, he chose a neighbor who was also a friend.

The two friends went all through the village and invited the people to the wedding. However, when it came time for them to go to the graveyard and invite the old partner, the best man made some excuses and did not go. He did not like graveyards, and he selfishly allowed his personal feelings to interfere with his duties as best man.

The groom went alone to the graveyard. There, he bowed to his old friend and partner, and invited him to the wedding, as is proper. He went home and continued his preparations for the wedding with a light heart.

The wedding was held a few days later, and there were many people there. Everyone was merry and, at the presentation ceremony, the table was covered with gifts for the couple.

Through the crowd, an old man with a cane made his way to the presentation table. He placed on the table a large sack which, when opened, was found to contain a goodly amount of silver. The table buckled under the weight of the generous gift. The old man bowed, then turned and limped his way through the crowd and down the road.

The best man saw all the silver and thought that he should marry, too. Surely this was a profitable time to do so. He asked the groom to be his best man when the time came.

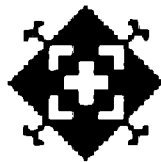
Some time later, the two began to make preparations for the next wedding. They went through the village and invited the people and made all the arrangements. Then the new groom said that they still had to invite the old partner to the wedding.

The two men went to the graveyard and approached the grave of the old partner. There, standing by the graveside, was the old man

with the cane. As the new groom bowed to the grave and began his invitation, the old man struck him with his cane.

“You did not fulfil your obligations as best man when it was your duty to do so,” said the old man. “Now, if you think you will get silver by these actions, you are wrong.”

The old man walked away and the other two men returned to the village. The wedding never came to pass.





The Lame Duckling

There once lived an old couple who sorrowed because they had no children.

One day, as they were in the forest looking for mushrooms, Baba spied a nest hidden in the reeds by a pond. "Look, Dido," she said. "A duckling is in this nest. It has been abandoned."

"Let us take her home to live with us," said Dido. "She can be our baby."

As she picked it up, Baba noticed that the duckling had a broken leg. They carried the little bird in its nest very carefully. At home, they lined the nest with the softest moss they could find, placed it near the warm stove, and then returned to the forest to pick mushrooms.

When they returned home, they found a big surprise awaiting them. The house had been cleaned, fresh bread had been baked, and a big pot of borsch had been prepared. They

ran and asked their neighbors who had done this, but the neighbors had seen nobody.

The old couple enjoyed their meal, passed a happy evening playing with the duckling and, next day, went hunting for mushrooms again. Coming home in the evening, they found a bowl of steaming varenyky on the table and new embroidery on a blouse that Baba had left.

Baba and Dido ran to the neighbors. "Who has been to our house?" they asked.

"We saw a young girl come from your house and carry water from the well. She was very pretty, but a bit lame in one leg. Is this young girl your niece?"

The old couple went home wondering, "Now, who on earth could that be?"

Baba whispered to Dido, "Tomorrow, let us say in a loud voice that we are going to pick mushrooms, then let us hide, and we can see who is doing all these things."

They did this, and hid themselves behind a shed. A young girl soon came out of their house with their water bucket. She was pretty, but lame in one leg. The couple went into the house while the girl was filling the bucket.

When they looked around, they found no duckling, but only feathers in her nest. They threw the nest into the fire and burned it.

When the girl came home, she saw Baba and Dido in the house, and headed straight for

the nest. When she saw that the nest was not there, she began to weep.

“Do not weep,” said Baba. “You can live with us and be our daughter. We will love you like our own child.”

“I would gladly have lived with you if you had not spied on me and taken away my nest. Now, I cannot stay with you. Give me a distaff and a spindle, and I must leave you.”

The old couple wept and begged her to stay there with them, but she refused. “I cannot live with people who do not trust their own good fortune,” she said.

They gave her a distaff and a spindle, which the girl took outside. She sat on the bench by the house and began to spin. A flock of ducks flew over the house and saw her there in the yard. They flew lower and sang:

“There she sits, our sister small
On a stool beside a wall.
Her distaff sings and her spindle rings;
Give her feathers to make some wings.”

The girl sang back to them:

“Forget me, friends, for here I stay.
When I was in my nest one day
I broke my leg and heard you say,
‘We leave her here and go away.’”

The ducks circled once more and then flew away. Soon, another flock of ducks came by and sang the same song:

“There she sits, our sister small
On a stool beside a wall.
Her distaff sings and her spindle rings;
Give her feathers to make some wings.”

The girl sang back to them:

“Forget me, friends, for here I stay.
When I was in my nest one day
I broke my leg and heard you say,
‘We leave her here and go away.’”

Later a third flock came by and sang:

“There she sits, our sister small
On a stool beside a wall.
Her distaff sings and her spindle rings;
Give her feathers to make some wings.”

The ducks flew low and dropped feathers to the girl. She whirled around in a cloud of plumage, became a duck, and flew off with the flock. Baba and Dido were once more all alone.







A Legend About Saint Peter

When Saint Peter died for his faith and went to Heaven he said: "O, Lord God, may I go down to the earth to say my farewell, as I died suddenly? I had no time at all to say goodbye."

God allowed Saint Peter to do this. "All right, go down, Peter, but be sure to come back to Heaven on time."

Saint Peter then returned to our world. He appeared at a party where wine was being consumed and people were dancing. While there, Saint Peter forgot to return in time. He was three weeks late when he finally returned.

"Well, Peter," said God, "why are you so late in returning to us?"

"O, my Lord God, the people live in great prosperity down there on earth. They drink and they dance, as they have had a good crop of grapes. They made much wine and now they are very busily drinking it."

“That is all right, Peter, but do they remember me?”

“No, my Lord God, nobody remembers You, except an old widow who lives, pestered by the people, in a battered little hut.”

God was angry, and he punished the people with a war. It was a terrible war. God said to Saint Peter: “Go again to the world and stay there for one month.”

Saint Peter thought to himself: “This is better. Now I will have more time.”

Saint Peter returned to our world during the war, amidst great bloodshed and weeping. He looked around, saw no safe place for himself, and returned immediately to Heaven.

“Peter, why have you come back so soon? Do the people remember me now?”

“My Lord God, even a tiny child puts its little hands together and prayerfully raises them up to You,” said Peter.

“When they had good crops they did not remember their God. They drank and danced, forgetting all else. Do you see, Peter, what results when that happens?”

“My Lord,” said Saint Peter, “now they are punished for their sins.”







The Leather Wallet

Petro and Anna had a pair of oxen, and their neighbors had a wagon. The two families used to take turns hitching up the oxen to the wagon. On a holiday, one couple would go shopping or visiting and, the next holiday, the other couple would do the same.

One day, Anna said to Petro: "We should sell our oxen and, with the money, buy a horse and wagon. Then we could go riding any time we wish. Our neighbor does not have to feed his wagon the way we have to feed our oxen, and he is getting the better of us."

Petro thought about it and thought about it and, finally, agreed with his wife. "I think that you are right, my dear," he said. "I will take the oxen to the village and sell them."

As Petro was leading the oxen along the road, he met a man on horseback. "Good day to you," he said.

“Good day to you, too,” answered the man on the horse. “Where are you taking the oxen?”

“I am taking them to the village. I want to sell them,” replied Petro.

“I have been looking for some oxen. I will trade you my horse for them.”

The trade was made, and Petro sat on the horse and rode on. Soon, he met a man leading a cow. “Good day to you,” he said.

“Good day to you, too,” said the man with the cow. “I have here a cow, and I need a horse. Would you like to trade?”

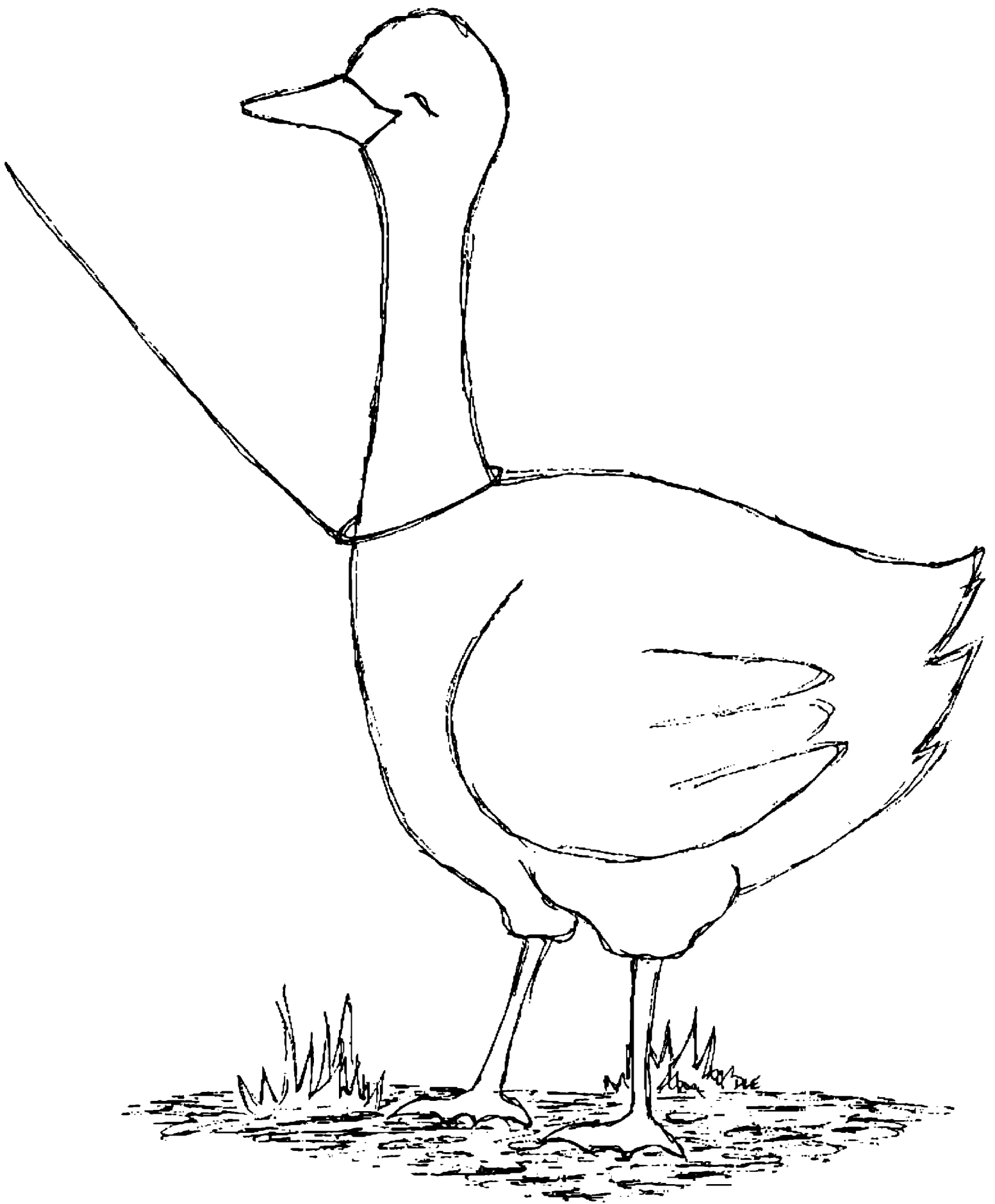
“I most certainly would. That is a fine-looking cow,” said Petro.

The trade was made, and the two went their separate ways. As he was leading the cow, Petro passed a field full of pigs. He stopped to talk to the swineherd, and traded his cow for a nice big pig. Later, he met a shepherd and traded his pig for a fat, woolly sheep.

Petro came to a river, where he met a man with a flock of geese. He stopped for water and, while talking to the man, traded his sheep for a lovely goose. He tied a string around the neck of the goose and went on his way.

Later, Petro met a woman who said, “That looks like a fine goose. I would like to trade my rooster for him.”

The trade was made, and Petro went on with his rooster. When he arrived at the village,



he met a man who said, "Would you like to trade your rooster for this fine leather wallet?"

"Yes; why not?" said Petro and did so.

It was now late, and Petro decided to take a shortcut home. This road took him to a river crossed by a ferry. Petro had no money, so he asked the ferryman, "Will you take me over? I will pay you with this leather wallet."

The deal was made, and Petro walked aboard. On the ferry were some chumaks with their ox-carts filled with trading goods. On the ride across the river, they asked him who he was and what he was doing there. When they heard what he had done that day, they began to laugh at him and to tease him.

"Do you know what your wife will do to you when she hears what you did?" they asked.

"She will be happy that I have come home safe and sound," replied Petro.

At this, the chumaks laughed even harder. They were enjoying this poor fool of a man. "There is not one woman in the entire world who would do that!" they cried.

"But let us make a bet," the chumaks said. "If your wife agrees with what you have done, we will give you twelve loaded wagons, complete with oxen and whips."

Petro shrugged his shoulders and agreed, and the chumaks chose one of their number to go with Petro to his home. While Petro hid

around the corner of the house, the chumak went to the door and asked Anna, "Have you heard anything from your old man today?"

"No," she replied, "I have heard nothing of him since he left this morning. I hope no harm has befallen him."

"I will tell you what has befallen him, then. The first thing he did was this: he traded your two oxen for one horse."

"Good," said Anna. "A small wagon is easier to afford. We will manage quite well."

"But then he traded the horse for a cow."

"This will be much better," said Anna. "Now we will have milk."

"But then he traded the cow for a pig."

"That is not bad," she said. "We will have piglets and we can sell them."

"Then he traded the pig for a sheep."

"Good. We will have lambs to sell and wool to spin in the winter."

"But he traded the sheep for a goose."

"This is also good. We will have eggs to eat and to color for Easter and goose down for quilts and goslings to sell."

"Then he traded the goose for a rooster."

"Good. We have trouble waking up in the morning. The rooster will crow and waken us in time for work."

"But then the rooster was traded for a leather wallet."

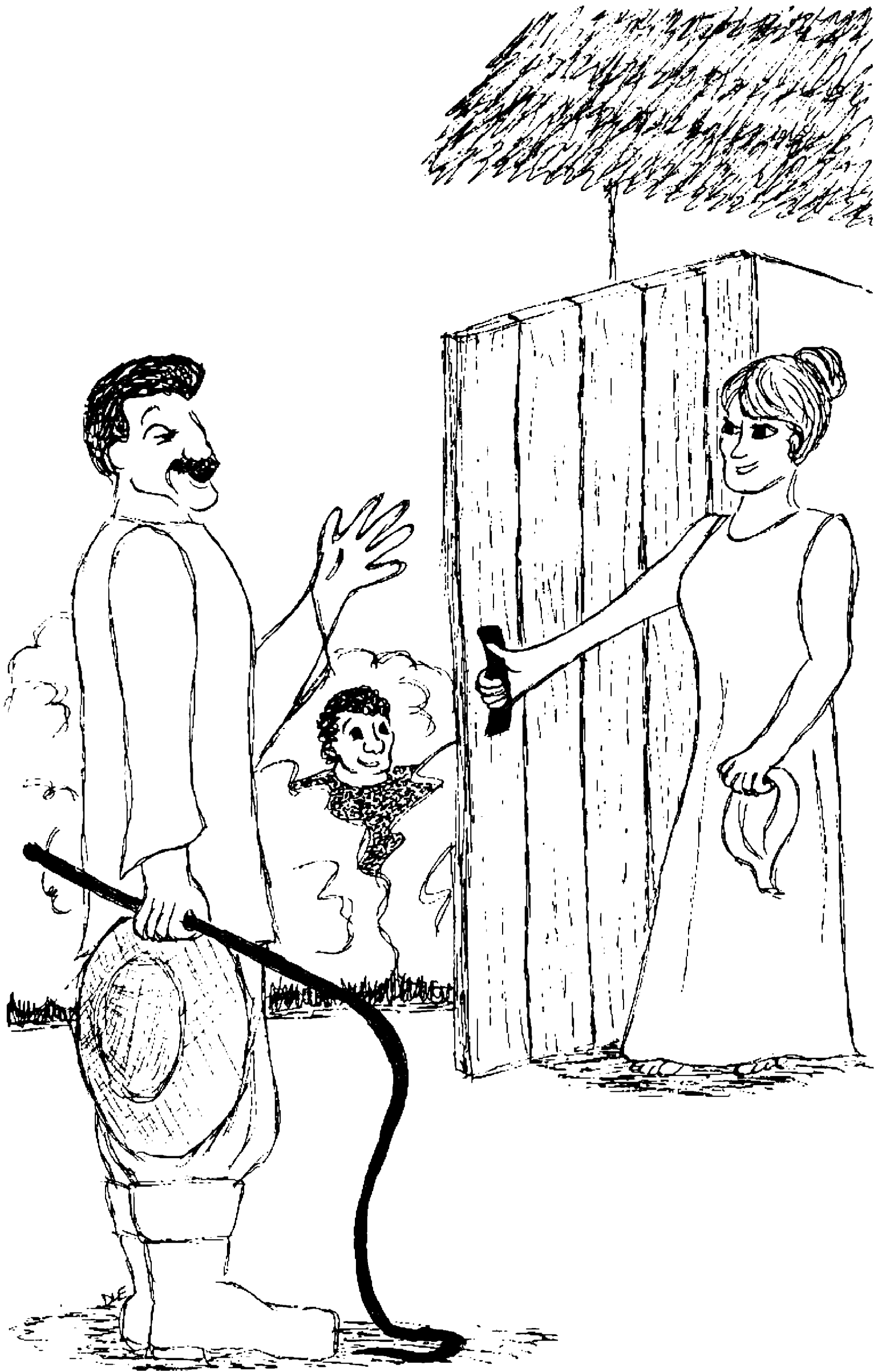
“This is good, too. If either of us earns any money we will have someplace to put it.”

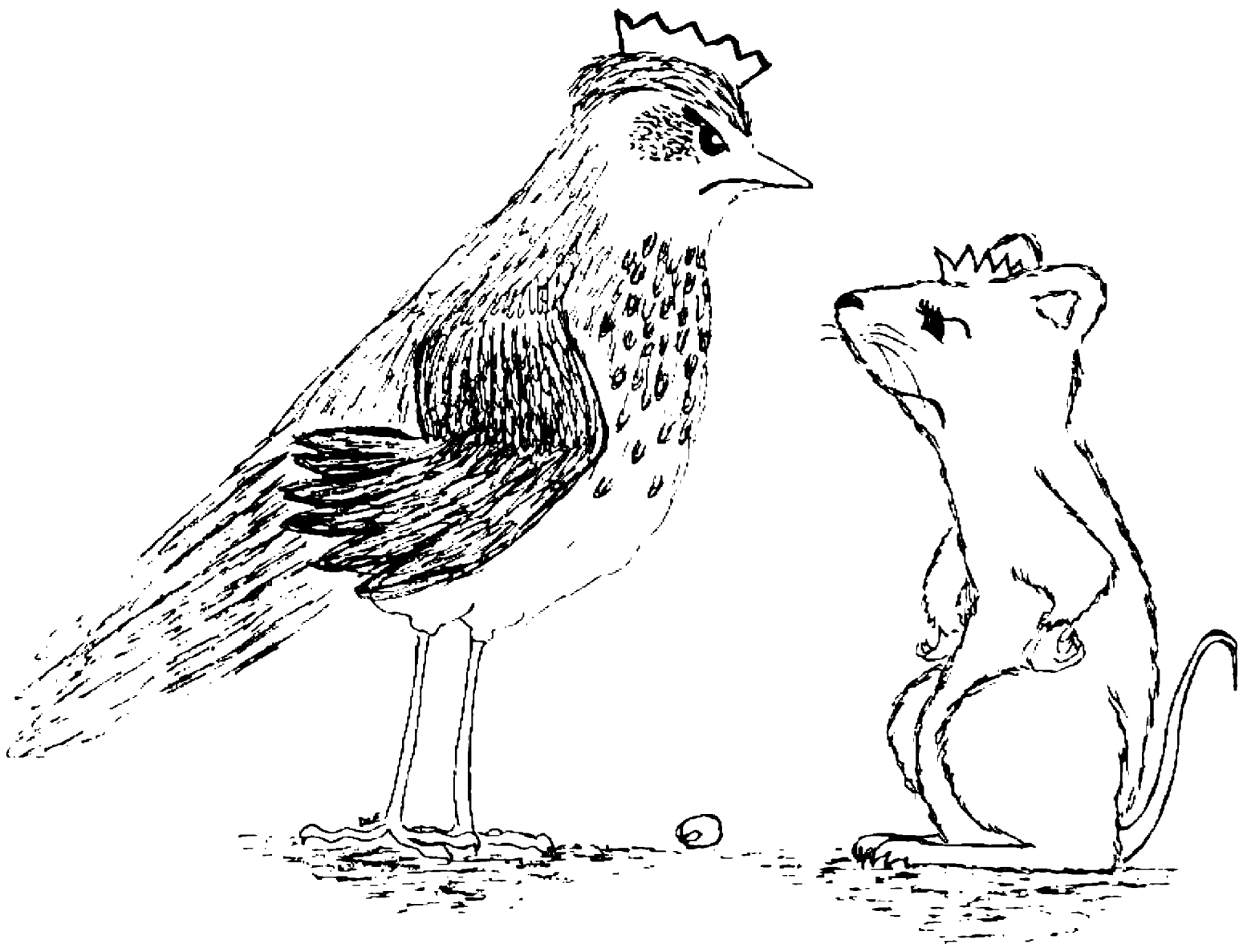
“But he does not have the wallet any more. He traded it for his ferry fare so he could get across the river.”

“What a husband!” said Anna. “He traded his last possession to come home to his wife. Even if he comes home with nothing, at least he will return to me alive and healthy.”

There was nothing to be done. The chumaks had to give Petro the twelve wagons.







The Magic Egg

A long time ago, the skylark was king and the mouse was queen. They owned a large field together, which they planted with wheat. When the wheat was harvested, they divided the grain. When the wheat had been divided, they found that there was one single seed left over.

“Let it be mine,” said the mouse.

“No,” said the skylark, “let it be mine.”

The two began to argue about the one seed. They both claimed it as their own and, as they were king and queen, there was no higher authority to whom they could go for a decision.

Finally, the mouse said, “I will bite the seed in two and we will share it.”

“That is a good idea,” said the skylark.

The mouse took the seed in her mouth but, instead of biting it in two, she ran away with it. This enraged the skylark, and he called the birds to declare war on the queen mouse.

The mouse, meanwhile, called all the animals to help her, and the war began. The forest was the battleground, and all the birds and all the beasts went there to join in the war.

Most of the animals were bigger and stronger than the birds, but they could not catch them. The birds flew away from the animals and dove at them, to peck their eyes.

The war went on for a whole day and, in the evening, they all rested. The queen mouse looked around her and noticed that the insects had not been in the fight. She said to them: "It is time for you to become involved. Tonight, while the birds are asleep, climb into the trees and chew off the wing-feathers of the birds."

Next day at dawn, the queen mouse woke everybody up. "Come on!" she shouted. "Come and fight!" The birds tried to fly but, without their wing-feathers, they only fell to the ground, where the animals tore them to pieces.

An eagle sat on a tree watching the battle, and he saw what was happening. He did not even try to fly; he just sat and watched.

A hunter came by and saw the eagle in the tree. The hunter took aim and was about to shoot, when the eagle spoke to him. "Please do not shoot me, hunter," he said. "When my feathers grow back I can be of help to you."

The hunter lowered his weapon and stared at the eagle. As the eagle was now silent,

he again aimed. The eagle spoke again, saying, "Do not shoot me, hunter. If you help me, you will see how useful I can be to you."

The hunter paused, but soon he aimed again and the eagle said, "You must believe me, brother. I can be of much help to you."

The hunter put away his weapon and climbed the tree to carry the eagle down. The eagle said, "Take me to your home and feed me with meat until my wings grow back again. Then I will be able to help you as I promised."

The man had two cows and a bull at home. He butchered one cow and fed the meat to the eagle for one whole year.

After the year had passed, the eagle said, "Let me out to try my wings. Let us see if they are strong enough to fly."

Outside, the eagle rose into the air. He flew in a low circle and returned. "My wings are not strong," he said. "I must have more meat."

The man butchered his other cow and fed the eagle for a second year. After the year had passed, the eagle tried his wings again. He flew above the trees but below the clouds, and was still not satisfied. "I am not strong yet. You must feed me the bull, too."

The man thought for a short while, and then agreed. After all, he had come this far, and he had already butchered both of his cows for the eagle. Losing the bull as well would not

make that much difference to his fortunes. Shrugging his shoulders, the man did as the eagle asked him to do.

After the third year, the eagle again tried his wings. This time, he flew strongly. He soared high into the sky above the clouds. He made great wide circles in the air and then returned to the man. "Thank you for feeding me," he said to the man. "My wings are finally strong enough. Now come and sit on my back."

"What is going to happen?" asked the surprised man.

"You need have no fear," said the eagle. "I will take care of you as you cared for me."

The eagle flew into the air with the man on his back. Just below the clouds, the eagle turned over on his back, and dropped the man. The man fell down, toward the earth and death. Before he hit the ground, however, the eagle swooped down and grabbed him. He landed and asked the man, "How did you feel?"

The man replied, "Like I was going to die!"

"That is how I felt the first time you aimed your weapon at me. Now, sit on me again."

The man did not feel like doing that, but he had to obey the eagle. They flew up into the clouds and, again, the eagle dropped the poor man. Down, down he fell. The eagle grabbed the man just before he hit the trees, and landed gently. "How did that feel?" he asked.



The man trembled so badly he could hardly speak. He said, "I thought my bones were going to be scattered over the earth."

"And that is how I felt the second time you aimed at me," said the eagle. "Now, you must sit on me once more."

The eagle flew into the sky with the man a third time. He rose high above the clouds and dropped the man. Down, down and down he fell. The eagle grabbed him just before he hit the hills. "How did that feel?" asked the eagle.

The shaking man whispered, "I felt as though I had already died."

The eagle said to the man: "That is exactly how I felt the third time you aimed at me. So now we are even; you know how I felt and I know how you felt. Sit on me once more, and I will take you to visit my uncle."

They flew until they finally reached the cliff where the uncle lived. "Go into the house," said the eagle. "When you are asked if you have seen me, say to my uncle that he must give you the magic egg. Then I will enter the house."

The man entered the house and was asked, "Do you come willingly or otherwise?"

He replied, "A good man always comes of his own free will."

"What have you heard of my nephew?" asked the uncle. "Three years ago he went to war, and we have heard nothing of him since."

“Give me the magic egg and I will bring him here in person,” said the man.

The uncle shook his head, “It would be better for us never to see him again than to give you the egg.”

The man left the house and told the eagle what had been said. The eagle said, “Let us fly on. I will take you to my brother.”

They flew and flew until they reached the home of the brother. The eagle gave the man the same instructions, and the man followed them. He was received in the same manner as before, and he did not get the magic egg.

The eagle took the man on his back again. “We will go to visit my father,” he said. They flew and flew and flew, until they finally arrived. The man entered the house and was asked, “Do you come willingly or otherwise?”

He replied, “A good man always comes of his own free will.”

“Have you heard anything of my son?” asked the father. “Three years ago he went to war, and we fear he may be dead.”

“I have seen your son,” said the man. “If you give me the magic egg, I will bring him to you in person.”

“Why do you want the magic egg?” asked the father eagle. “I will give you gold instead.”

“I do not want gold,” replied the man. “Just give me the egg.”



“Bring my son,” said the father. “I will give you the magic egg.”

The man brought the eagle in and was given the egg, along with some instructions: “Do not break the egg before you get home. When you do get home, build a strong fence around you. Only then break the egg.”

The man put the egg in his pocket and walked home. On the way, he became thirsty. He stopped at a well and leaned over to get a drink. As he did so, his pocket pressed against the edge of the well, and the egg was smashed.

Instantly, a large herd of cattle streamed out of the egg. They ran everywhere, and were soon scattered all over the countryside. The poor man hurried about yelling and shouting, but there were too many of them, and he could do nothing with the cattle.

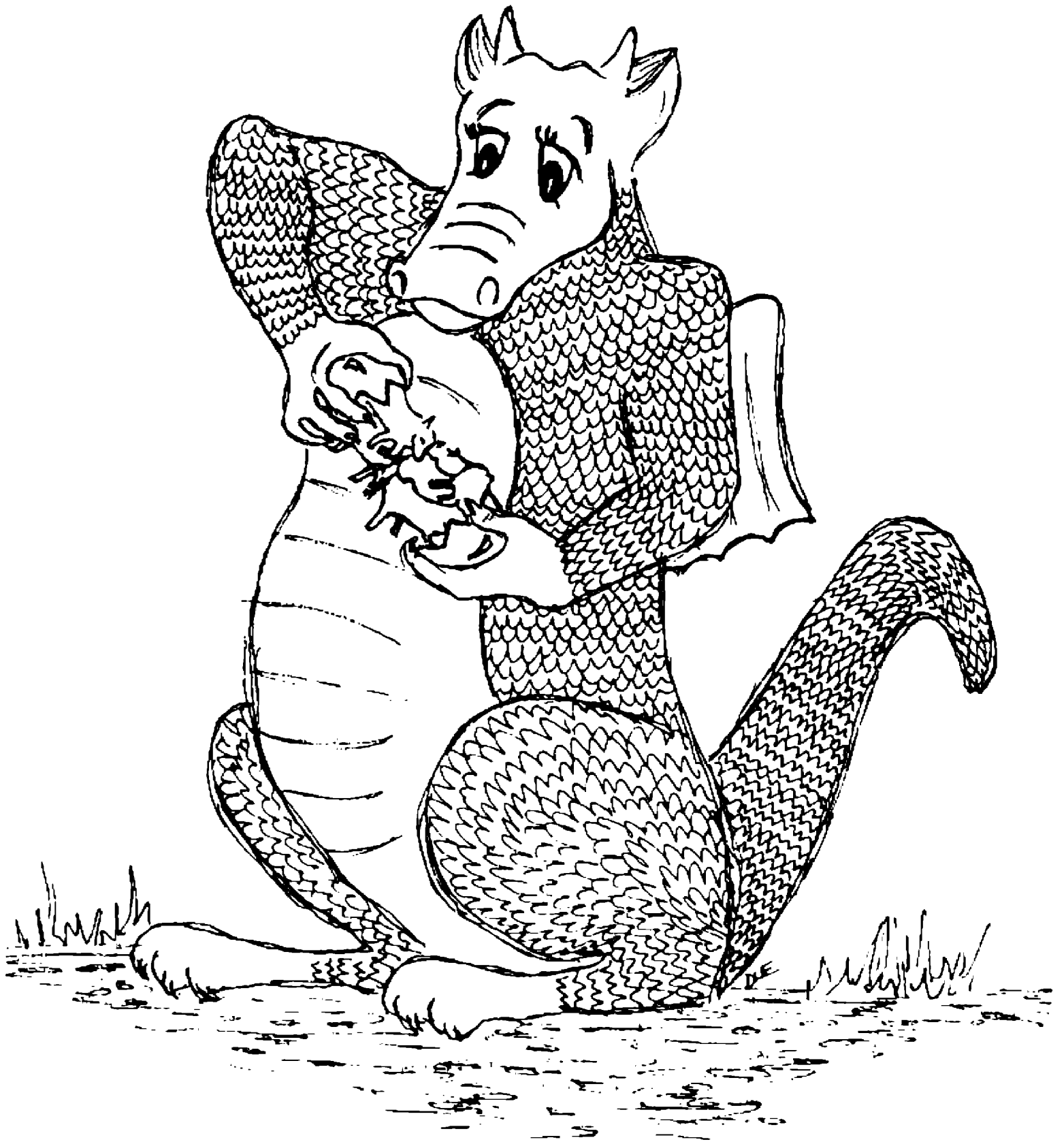
A dragon had seen all this activity, and was greatly amused at the antics of the poor man. “What will you give me if I drive all the cattle back into the egg for you?” she asked.

“What can I give you?” panted the man.

“Give me what happened at your home while you were away,” said the dragon.

“Gladly,” said the man. What could have happened while he was away?

The dragon gathered up all the cattle, shut them up in the egg, and returned the egg to the man.



When the man got home, he learned that a son had been born to him while he was away. In vexation, he slapped his thighs. "Oh, my son!" he cried. "I have given you to the dragon!"

The man and his wife were very worried about the situation, but knew there was nothing they could do about it. The man had been tricked by the wily dragon. "We will somehow have to live with this," they said.

The man built a large, strong corral and went inside to break the egg open. The cattle streamed out and filled the corral and, in time, the man became wealthy.

The family lived happily together, and there was no sign of the dragon. In spite of this, none of them had ever forgotten the rash promise the father had made.

One day, when the son was grown, he said to his father, "Father, you promised me to the dragon, did you not?"

"Yes, my son, I did that."

"There is nothing to be done about that, then, but I am tired of wondering when the dragon will come. I will go to her."

The next day the son went to see the dragon, who welcomed him eagerly and set him to work at the first of three tasks.

"Here is a forest," said the dragon. "Clear the trees away, plow the soil, sow the field with wheat, harvest the wheat, grind it into flour,

and bake me a loaf of bread. The bread must be on my breakfast table tomorrow morning.”

The poor fellow did not know what to do. Sadly, he walked over to the pond and leaned against a tower of rock that stood there.

In the tower of rock lived the daughter of the dragon. She heard the youth crying and asked, “What is troubling you, young fellow?”

The youth told his story. “How should I not be troubled, when the dragon has set me such an impossible task?”

The daughter said, “If you take me for your wife, I will do whatever my mother has ordered you to do.”

There was nothing he could do, and the youth accepted her offer. “Go to sleep,” said the dragon. “In the morning, I will have a loaf of hot bread, which you can take to my mother.”

The young dragon went to the forest and gave a shrill whistle. The trees immediately disappeared, plows flew up and down the field, and wheat rained into the furrows. By dawn, everything had been done and the youth had the hot fresh bread in his hands.

He took the bread to the mother dragon and put it on her table. The dragon awoke when she smelled the bread. She saw the field covered with stubble and stooks of wheat.

“You have done well,” she said. “Now prepare yourself for the next chore.”

The dragon took the youth outside and told him: "Level this hill and dig a channel, so that the Dniipro River flows through. Build docks along the river for ships, and granaries for the wheat. Then sell the wheat. This must be done by the time I awake in the morning."

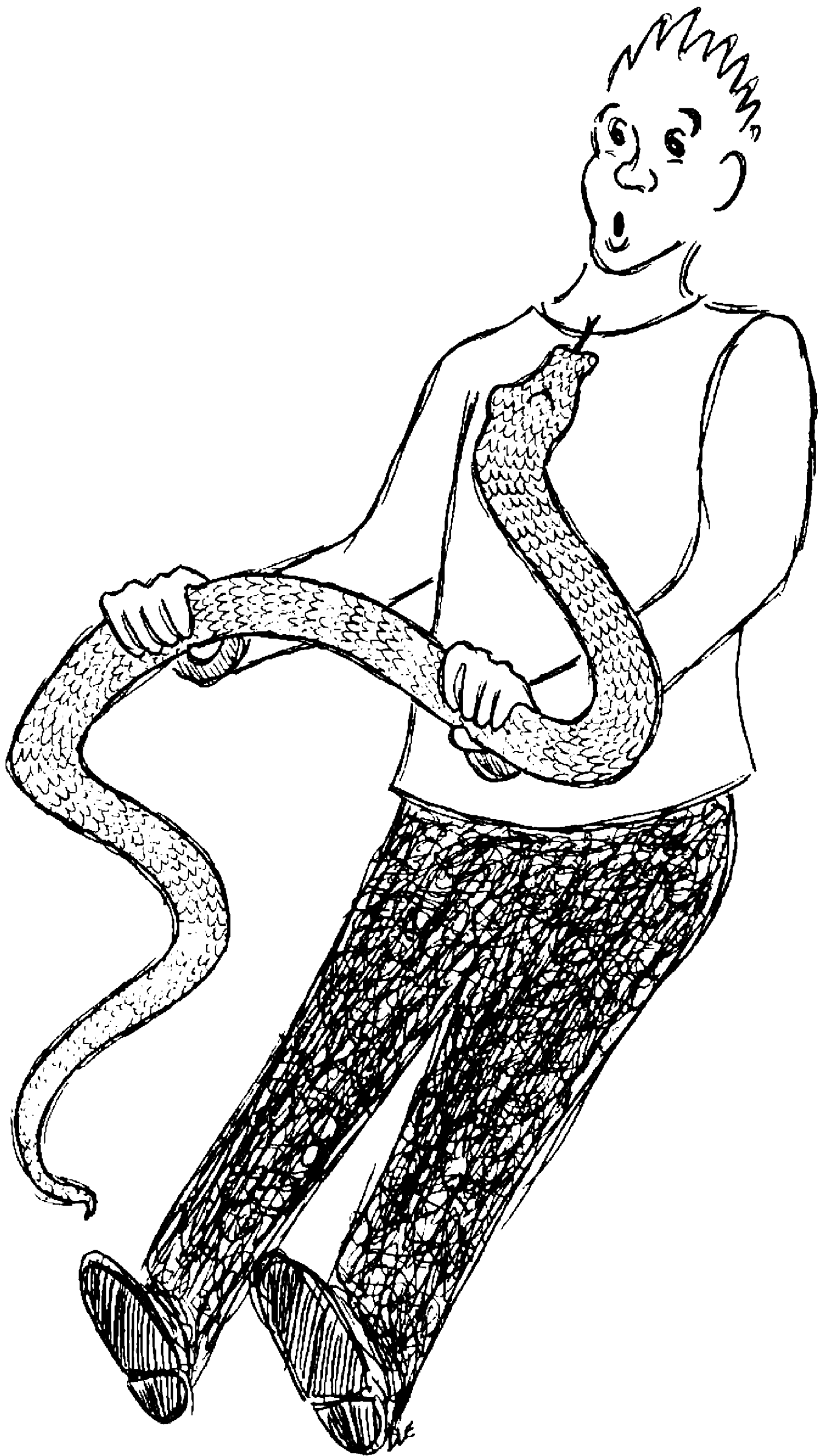
The youth returned to the tower and told the young dragon of his new task. "Go to sleep," she said. "I will take care of it."

The youth went to sleep and the dragon went to work. She went to the field and gave a shrill whistle. Immediately, there was activity everywhere. The hill sank and the river flowed through. Docks grew from the riverbank and granaries sprang from the ground.

In the morning, the young dragon awoke the youth, who went to the docks and took the money from the waiting grain merchants. The old dragon appeared, and she saw that all of her orders had been carried out.

"Very well done," she said. "Now, there is one more thing you must do for me. Tonight, you must find and capture the Golden Rabbit, and bring him to my home."

The youth again went to the tower and told the young dragon what he had to do. When she heard about the third task, she said: "This is not an easy task. I am not at all certain that we can catch the Golden Rabbit. But let us go to his cave and see what we can do."



They went to the cave and the dragon told the young man: "Stand here at the entrance and I will go in and chase him out. Make sure you grab whatever comes out of the cave."

The dragon entered the cave and began the chase. Suddenly, something came out of the cave. The youth grabbed it but, when he saw that it was a large snake, he dropped it, and the snake slithered back into the cave.

The dragon came out and asked, "Did anything come out of the cave?"

He said, "Yes, a snake came out. I was afraid that it would bite me, so I dropped it. It went back into the cave."

"Oh no!" cried the dragon. "That was the Golden Rabbit! Now I will have to go in again. This time, whatever comes out of the cave, you must capture it and hold onto it."

The dragon went back into the cave and began the chase again. She had not been in long when an old woman came out. "What are you looking for, my son?" she asked the youth.

"We seek the Golden Rabbit."

"There is no Golden Rabbit here," she said, and she walked away.

The dragon came out. "Did you catch the Golden Rabbit? What came out of the cave?"

"There is no Golden Rabbit here," said the youth. "An old woman came out of the cave and she told me so."

“Why did you not hold her? That was the Golden Rabbit himself! You have really put us in a bind. Our only hope now is for me to turn myself into a rabbit. When you take me to my mother, put me on a stool. Do not put me in her hands or she will recognize me. Then she would tear us both to pieces.”

The young dragon turned herself into a rabbit, and the young man placed her on a stool in front of the old dragon. “Here is your Golden Rabbit,” he said. “Now I am leaving.”

“Good,” said the mother dragon. “Go.”

As soon as the old dragon left the house, the rabbit changed into a girl, who ran after the young man. They both began to run as fast as they were able, but the old dragon spotted them and sent her husband after them.

The two could hear the big dragon rumbling after them. The girl said, “My father is coming after us! I will change myself into a field of ripe wheat and you into an old man. When he asks you if you saw anyone running by, tell him that you did, but it was a long time ago, when the field was being planted.”

When the father dragon arrived, he asked the old man, “Did you see a couple go by?”

“Yes, I did, but that was long ago, when this wheat was being planted.”

“This wheat is ripe enough to cut,” said the puzzled dragon. “But they left only

yesterday." He could not figure it out at all, so he went home, scratching his head.

"Did you catch them?" screamed his wife when the dragon got home.

"I saw only an old man, who told me that the only couple that had gone that way ran by when the wheat was just being planted. Since the wheat was ripe enough to be cut, I thought I could never catch them, so I came home."

"You fool!" yelled the wife. "You should have torn the old man and the wheat field to pieces! They were the very ones you were chasing. Now I had better chase after them myself. I have to do everything myself." And away she went in a cloud of fire and smoke.

They heard the mother dragon screaming after them and the girl said: "Now we may indeed be lost. My mother is coming after us herself. I will turn you into a river and myself into a perch. Perhaps she will be so angry that she will not notice us."

The dragon came to a stop at the river. "Oh ho!" she cried. "So you think to trick me, do you?" She turned herself into a big, mean pike and jumped into the river. She tried and tried to catch the swift little perch, but the perch turned her sharp little fins against the pike and escaped. The pike could not catch her.

At last, the pike stopped chasing the perch and began to drink up all the water in

the river. She drank and drank, and the water got lower and lower. She drank up so much water that finally she burst.

“Now we are free,” said the girl. “Go to your home and prepare for our wedding. Just remember, though, when you greet your family, do not kiss the youngest child of your uncle. If you do so, you will forget all about me. I will go to the village and hire myself out as a maid and, when everything is ready, come for me.”

The youth returned to his house and greeted his family joyfully. He thought, “How can I ever forget my wife-to-be and all she has done for me? But my family would think ill of me if I kissed all of them but one.” And he kissed every member of the family. As soon as he kissed the child, however, he forgot completely about the girl. It was as though she had never existed.

After some time had passed, the young man began to think about marriage. His family arranged a marriage with a village girl and the two became engaged.

One evening just before the wedding, all the village girls gathered for a traditional pre-wedding bread ceremony. The daughter of the dragon was among the girls because, of course, no one knew who she really was.

The girls all made their fancy breads, and the daughter of the dragon fashioned her

dough into a dove and a pigeon. She dropped her two birds on the floor and they became alive. They flew outside and landed on the ground in front of the bench where the youth was sitting. The daughter of the dragon followed the birds and stood and watched.

The dove said to the pigeon, "Have you forgotten how I cleared the forest for you and planted the wheat to make the hot bread for you to take to the dragon?"

The pigeon replied, "I do not know; I must have forgotten."

The youth looked at the two birds and listened very carefully.

"You also forgot how I dug up a hill and made the river flow? You forgot how the ships came and you sold them the wheat?"

"I forgot; yes, I forgot."

The youth looked up and saw the daughter of the dragon standing before him. He thought that she looked familiar.

"Have you also forgotten how we went to hunt the Golden Rabbit?"

"I forgot, I forgot."

The youth stared fixedly at the girl.

"Do you not remember my father chasing us? Do you not remember that I turned you into an old man and myself into a wheat field?"

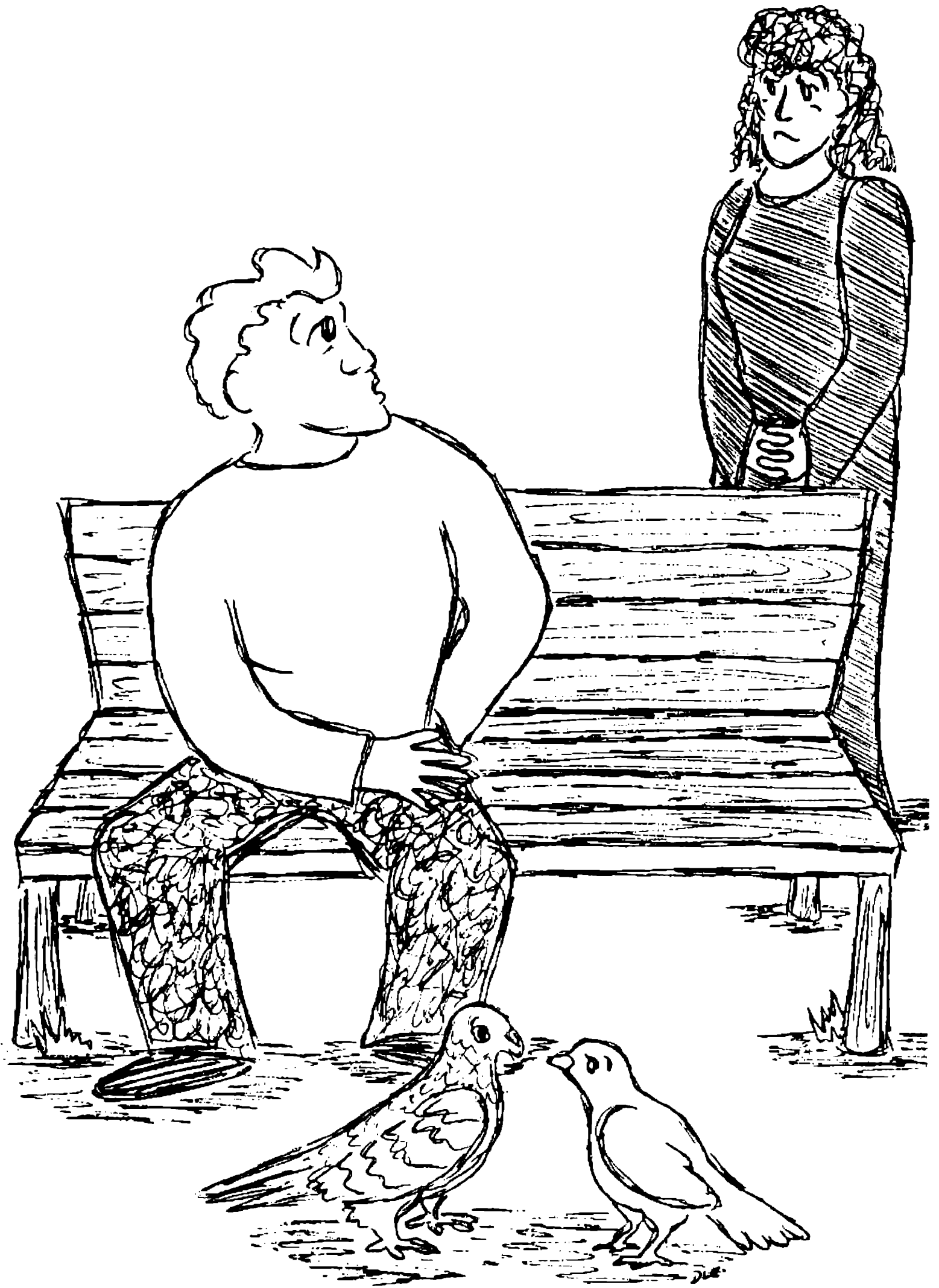
"I remember a field of wheat," said the pigeon, and the youth began to weep.

“Then remember also how you became a river and I a perch, and how my mother burst trying to kill us.”

“Yes, I remember!” cried the pigeon and the young man together. Finally, the pigeon had begun to remember everything, and so did the young man. He embraced the daughter of the dragon and they both wept.

The youth then explained to his intended bride that he was already spoken for, but had been bewitched and did not remember. The girl forgave him, and even danced at his wedding.







The Mitten

One warm and sunny winter day, Dido went for a walk in the forest with his dog. He was enjoying himself, and he did not notice when one of his mittens fell out of his pocket.

A mouse came scurrying along. She stopped, looked around, sniffed at the mitten, and climbed right inside.

“This will be my home,” she said. “It is so nice and warm.” She settled down with only her little pink nose peeking out.

Along the path slunk a weasel. The weasel saw the mitten with a bulge in it.

“Hello,” he said. “Who is in the mitten?”

“I am Moustache Mouse. Who are you?”

“My name is Wily Weasel. May I share your little house?”

“Yes, please come in,” said the mouse.

The two animals settled down in the warm and cosy mitten.

Soon, a rabbit came hopping down the path. He saw the mitten moving a little bit, and he stopped in surprise.

“Hello,” he said. “Who is in the mitten?”

“Moustache Mouse,” said the mouse.

“Wily Weasel,” said the weasel.

“And who are you?” said the two little animals together.

“I am Scooter Rabbit. Will you let me in?”

“Certainly. We have room for one more,” said the two inside, and then there were three.

A fox came trotting down the path. She stopped when she saw the bulging mitten.

“Hello,” she said. “Who is in the mitten?”

“Moustache Mouse,” said the mouse.

“Wily Weasel,” said the weasel.

“Scooter Rabbit,” said the rabbit.

“Who are you?” asked the animals inside.

“I am Little Sister Fox. May I please come in?” asked the fox politely.

“Oh, all right, come in,” said the animals. Now they were four.

A wolf came padding down the path. He stopped with surprise when he saw the mitten heaving around in the snow.

“Hello,” he said. “Who is in the mitten?”

“Moustache Mouse,” said the mouse.

“Wily Weasel,” said the weasel.

“Scooter Rabbit,” said the rabbit.

“Little Sister Fox,” said the fox.



“And who are you?” asked the animals.

“I am Brother Wolf. It is cold out here. Will you let me in, please?”

The animals sighed, but they all moved over. “All right”, they said. “Come in!” Now there were five animals in the mitten.

Soon, a wild boar came running down the path. He too stopped in surprise when he saw the mitten moving about in the snow. He walked up to the mitten and sniffed at it.

“Hello,” he said. “Who is in the mitten?”

“Moustache Mouse,” said the mouse.

“Wily Weasel,” said the weasel.

“Scooter Rabbit,” said the rabbit.

“Little Sister Fox,” said the fox.

“Brother Wolf,” said the wolf.

Then all the animals chorused together: “And who are you?”

“I am Big-Tooth Boar,” said the boar, with a snort. “It is cold out here, and it looks so cosy in the mitten. May I come inside?”

The mouse wiggled her little pink nose and grumbled: “Everybody who comes this way wants to live in the mitten with us. But how are we going to get you in? There is no room in here for you!”

“There is room if you all move over a little bit,” said the wild boar.

“Oh, all right, come in,” sighed the poor little mouse.

Now there were six animals in the mitten, and it was so tightly packed that no one could move or breathe.

But then, along came a bear. He walked right up to the mitten and sniffed at it.

“Hello,” he said. “Who is in the mitten?”

Everyone answered together:

“Moustache Mouse...

“Wily Weasel...

“Scooter Rabbit...

“Little Sister Fox...

“Brother Wolf...

“Big-Tooth Boar...

“...and who are you?”

“I am Rumble Bear. There are many of you keeping warm in the mitten; there must be a place for me.”

“But where can we possibly put you?” cried the mouse. “It is so full in here that the mitten is bursting!”

“I will get in somehow,” said the bear in a very firm voice.

The other animals were too timid to object, and the bear wriggled his way in.

There were now seven animals all packed tightly into the mitten.

When he got home, Dido discovered that he had lost one of his mittens.

“Oy, oy, oy,” said Dido crossly. “That was a good mitten with many winters left in it.” He

put on his coat and boots, called his dog, and went back along the path to find the mitten.

The dog, with his sharp nose, found the mitten first. He noticed that it had a very strange, mixed-up animal smell.

The dog walked up to the mitten, poked his nose inside, and gave one loud bark:

“Woof!”

Out tumbled
Moustache Mouse,
Wily Weasel,
Scooter Rabbit,
Little Sister Fox,
Brother Wolf,
Big-Tooth Boar
and
Rumble Bear

and they all ran away as fast as their legs could carry them.

Dido picked up his mitten, patted his dog and went home. He never knew how many animals had shared the mitten to keep warm.







The Peasant Priest

In a village lived an old man with his wife, and they were as poor as toads. He was too old to work any more and she was not well, and they had no children to care for them. They were living from hand to mouth, and seldom knew where their next meal would come from, or even if there would be one.

The old man and his wife lived near the church, which had been standing empty for a long time. For years, there had been no priest, and the people of the village had no one to baptize them, marry them, or bury them.

“We need food, and the village needs a priest. What if I became priest?” the old man said to his wife one day. “You could be deacon, and the two of us could live well. Let us call a meeting and see if the people will allow it.”

They called a meeting and asked the people if they would accept him as their priest.

Everyone agreed to try it, since they had been too long with no service of any kind.

When the next Sunday arrived, the new priest combed his beard, put on a long black smock, and went to church. A host of people was already gathered at the church, as word had spread rapidly. Everyone had come to see what the new priest would be like.

Once he saw the enormous crowd in church, the old man became a little bit nervous. He did not want to appear a fool. With his Bible under his arm, he went to the altar and cried, "People! You have heard the hymns and the scriptures and the sermons before, have you not?"

"Yes, Father, we have heard," chorused the congregation, in one voice.

"And do you remember well the lessons you learned from them?"

"Yes, Father, we remember."

"Well, if you have heard them before, and if you remember the lessons, you will not need to hear them again," the priest said. "Go home, my children, and God bless you!"

As they left the church, the people buzzed like bees in their discussion of the new priest. Everyone was very pleased with him. "There is a real priest for you!" they said. "He is not like those old ones, forever chanting and yelling and repeating the same thing over and over.

With this priest, there is no wasting of our time. We can go home for dinner at once!"

The village could hardly wait for the next service. As word spread, it seemed as if the entire country would be at church on Sunday. This time, the new priest was prepared to put on more of a show, and everybody knew it.

On Sunday, the church was full to the door. The priest, remembering the services he had been to in the past, filled his kadylo with charcoal and incense, and swung it about by its chain, as he had seen other priests do.

"My children," he cried, "I want you watch what I do, and follow!" Then he began what he recollected of the old services. He began to chant and to swing the kadylo from side to side, and the people followed. They chanted and waved their arms from side to side.

Unfortunately, as he swung the kadylo, it struck the wall, and a burning bit of charcoal fell out and landed in his boot. Immediately, he fell on his back and shook his legs in the air, trying to shake out the embers.

As soon as he landed on his back, all the people were on the floor, imitating the priest. They were waving their legs in the air and yelling, just as he was. The priest was not thinking about the congregation, however; he was in too much pain to think of anything but his burning foot.



Just then, a passing nobleman found that his watch had stopped, and he wanted to know the time of day. He sent his coach driver to the church to inquire. The driver came up to the church door, where he found an old baba lying on her back, waving her thin little legs in the air. The driver bent over and asked the old woman if she could tell him what time it was.

Unable to catch her breath, she gasped, "It is like this, Sir; the kicking has just ended and the rolling has just begun."

The driver heard the noise inside the church, and he opened the door. He was amazed to see the entire congregation rolling on the floor, kicking their legs in the air and yelling lustily. He quickly closed the door and hurried back to report to the nobleman.

"Well, driver, what have you found?"

"Your Honor," was the reply, "I think it best if you look for yourself."

The curious nobleman stepped from his coach, heard the yelling and, at the entrance to the church, saw the old woman squirming about on the ground.

"Excuse me, Baba," he said politely, "can you please tell me the time?"

"It is like this, Sir," she panted, "the kicking is over and the rolling has begun."

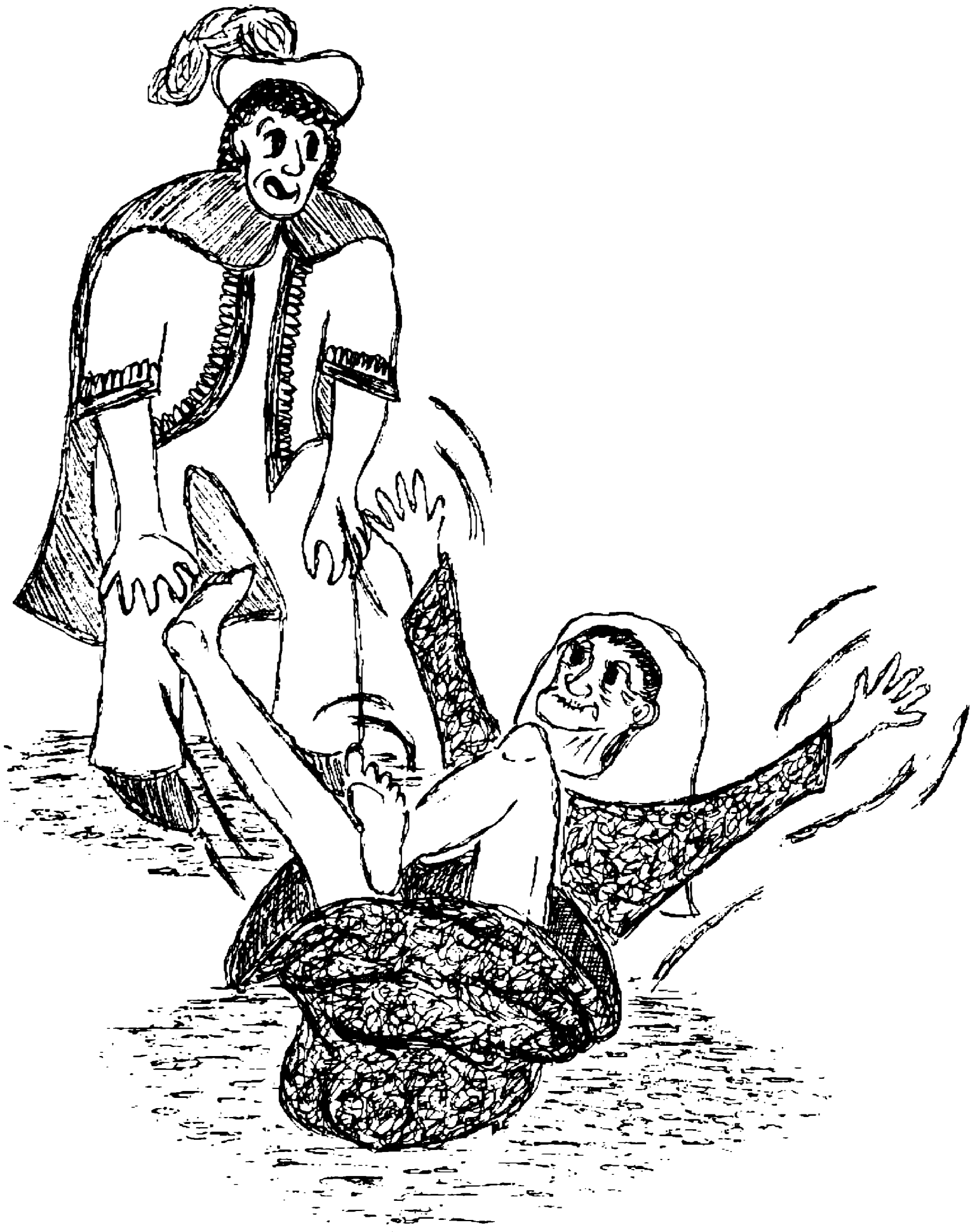
The puzzled nobleman then opened the door and was astounded to find the entire

congregation rolling around on the floor, waving their legs in the air and yelling.

“Amazing!” exclaimed the nobleman. “This priest must indeed be wonderful, to fill his flock with such religious excitement!”

The impressed nobleman put fifty gold coins in the collection box, returned to his coach with the driver, and continued his journey. He had forgotten all about the time.







The Poor Boy and the Tsarevna

Once there was a little house in a grove, in which lived a woman and her son. They had no fields, as the house was surrounded by a thick forest. They could not grow their own wheat, so they had to buy their bread.

One day, the mother said to her son, "Here is some money. Go and buy some bread."

The boy put the money in his pocket and left. On the road, he met a man with a dog. "Good day to you, sir," he said.

"Good day to you, too, young fellow."

"That is a nice dog," said the boy.

"Yes, but I am poor and I can no longer afford to keep her, so I am going to take her to the river and drown her."

"Oh no, do not do that," begged the boy. "Sell her to me. How much will you take?"

“Whatever you will give,” said the man.

The boy gave the man what little money he had, and took the dog home. His mother asked him, “Where is the bread?”

“I did not buy any bread, Mother.”

“What did you do, then?”

“I met a man who was going to drown his dog, so I bought her from him.”

The mother gave him a little more money and again sent him off to buy the bread. This time, he met a man with a cat. “Where are you taking the cat?” asked the boy.

“This cat can no longer stay in my house. He upsets everything and gets into all the food. I am going to drown him in the river.”

“Oh, do not drown him,” said the boy. “Please sell the cat to me.”

“Very well,” said the man. “And I am not going to haggle about the price. I will take whatever you will give me.”

The boy bought the cat and went home. “Where is the bread?” asked his mother again.

“I did not buy any, Mother.”

“Why did you not buy the bread?”

“I felt sorry for this cat because his owner was going to drown him, and I bought him.”

“I will give you some more money, but be sure to buy only bread. We are not wealthy and, if we do not have some bread to eat, we will surely starve.”

On his way again, the boy came upon a man beating a snake. "Do not kill that poor snake," said the boy. "I will buy her from you."

The man took the money and went on his way. The grateful snake turned to the boy and said, "Thank you for saving my life. In my den is a ring. Take it and, when you need anything, toss it from one hand to the other. Servants will appear, who will carry out your every order."

The boy thanked the snake and ran home. As he neared the house, he tossed the ring as instructed. Instantly, a host of servants appeared. "Bring bread," ordered the boy.

The servants turned and sped off, then came running from every direction with trays and trays of hot, fresh bread. The boy went into the house and told his mother, "We will not have to leave the house to buy bread any more. Come out and see what we have here. A snake gave me this ring, with which I can order servants to do whatever I wish."

"Why did the snake give you the ring, my son?" asked his mother.

"I saved her life. A man was beating her and I bought her from him."

From that day on, the little family knew no wants. Whatever the boy or his mother wanted for themselves or for the dog and cat, the boy tossed the ring and the servants brought it.

As he grew older, the young man began to think about marriage. He said; "I should like to marry the Tsarevna. Mother, will you please go to the palace and arrange it for me?"

The mother went to the palace, sought an audience with the Tsarevna, and explained why she had come. The Tsarevna said, "If your son can make a pair of shoes that will fit my feet exactly, I will marry him."

When the mother told her son what the Tsarevna had asked for, he said, "I will do it."

That evening, the lad tossed the ring and told the servants: "I must have a pair of shoes sewn with gold thread and lined with silver. The shoes must fit the Tsarevna exactly."

In the morning, the shoes were ready. The mother took them to the Tsarevna, who tried them. To her surprise, they were a perfect fit. She said to the mother: "Very well. I have promised to marry your son, and I shall. Tell him to make me a wedding dress. The dress must be neither too long nor too short, neither too loose nor too tight. It must fit me exactly."

The mother went home and told her son what the Tsarevna had said. "Good," he said. "In the morning, everything will be ready."

The lad tossed the ring and told the servants what was required. Next morning, he gave the dress to his mother and told her to take it to the Tsarevna. The dress was

magnificent; it made everything glow and sparkle as though the sun had just risen.

The mother took the dress to the Tsarevna, who was more than pleased with it. She put it on and stood before a mirror. When she saw herself glowing with sunlight, she jumped with glee.

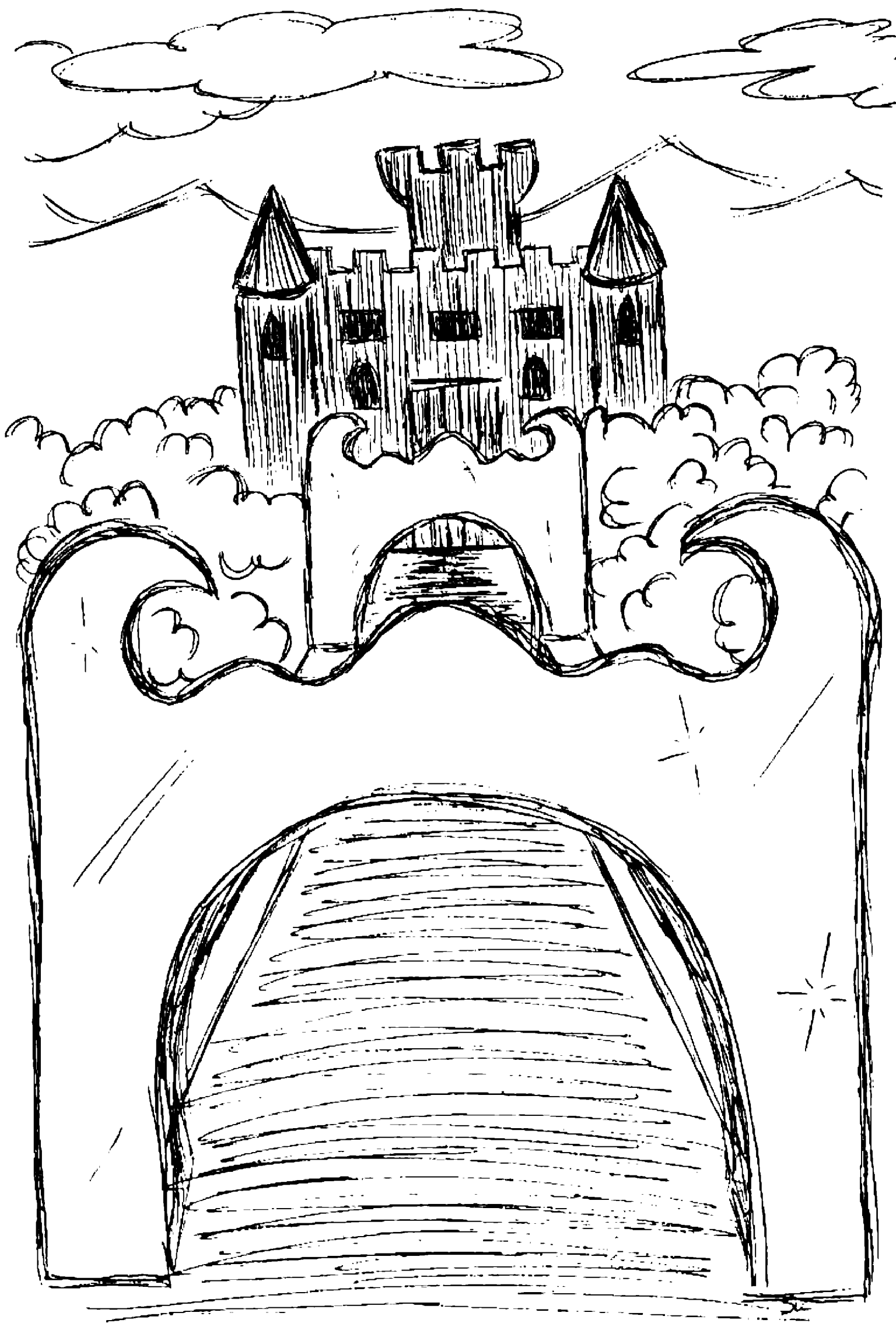
“This is indeed a dress worthy of a Tsarevna,” she said. “Now tell your son to build a silver and gold bridge from the palace to the church. When it is ready, we will be married.”

The mother went home and told her son what the Tsarevna wanted. “Good,” he said, as he tossed the ring. “It will be done by morning.”

He told the servants to build the bridge and to plant trees along the way with ripe fruit to eat when they were coming from church.

In the morning, the mother returned to the Tsarevna and told her that everything had been done. “I have seen the bridge,” said the Tsarevna. “It is beautiful. Tell your son we will be married tomorrow.”

The mother told this to the son, who had a palace built for himself and his bride. Next day, he went to the church, where he and the Tsarevna were married. They had a large wedding feast and went to his palace to begin their life together. His mother came to live in a cottage on the grounds, and the dog and the cat moved into the palace with their master.



One day, the Tsarevna said to her husband, "Tell me how you made the shoes for me. You did not come to measure my feet, but the shoes were a perfect fit. And how did you build such a beautiful bridge overnight?"

"I have a ring," he said to her, and he told her the story. "It was the servants of the ring who did all these wonderful things. They also built this palace in which we are living."

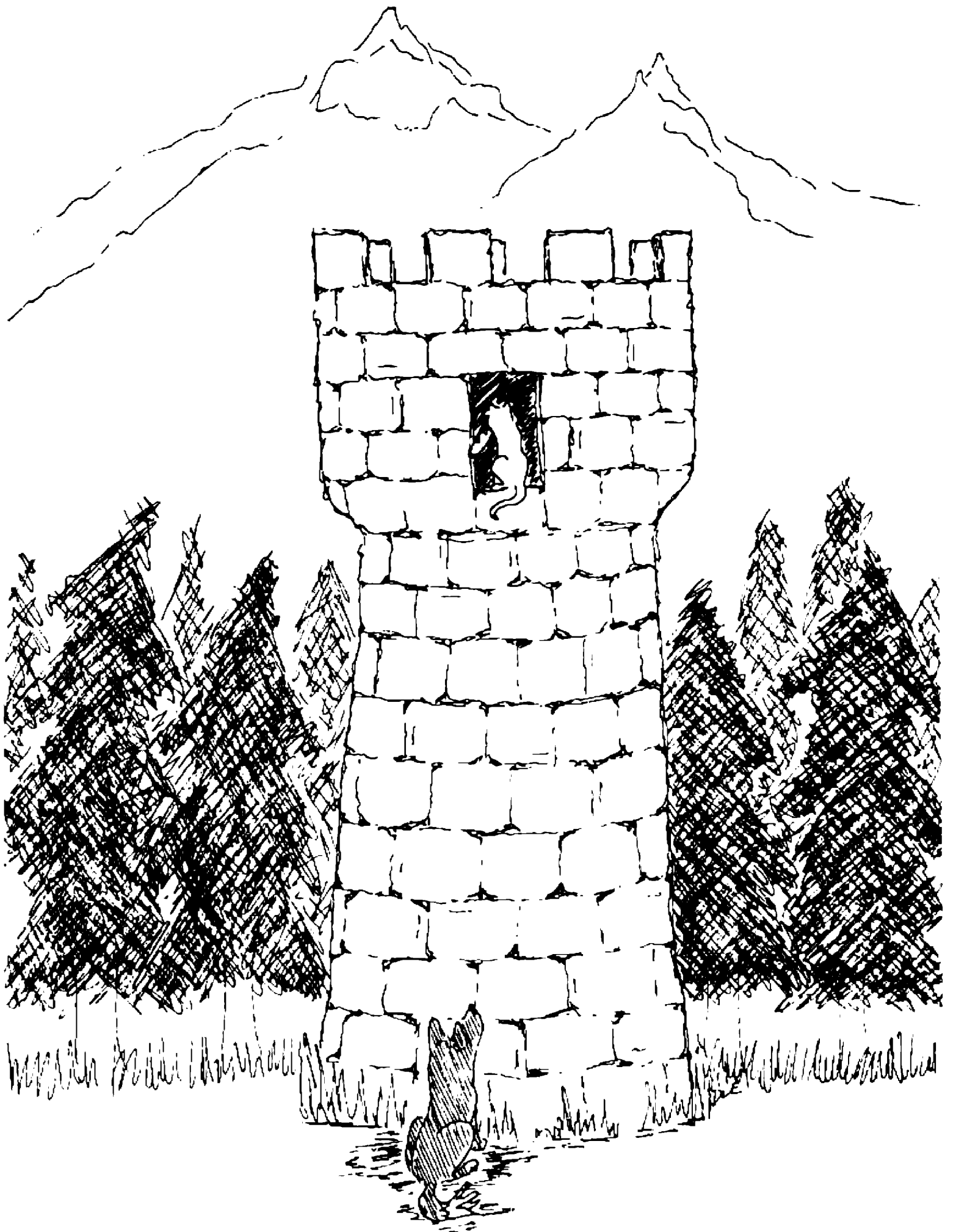
That night, the Tsarevna stole the ring from the finger of her sleeping husband. She tossed it from hand to hand, and ordered the servants to provide her with horses and a carriage to take her back to her own palace.

She further ordered the servants: "This palace is to become a tall, round prison tower with only enough room for my husband to stand or lie down. Move the tower far across the sea, and do it all before he awakens."

The Tsarevna returned to her own palace, while the palace she had just left became a prison tower and moved across the sea.

When the young man awoke, he found his wife and his ring gone. He also found that he was now locked up in a tower. He could see only one little window high up and, feeling around, he could find no doors. There were no people to answer his call.

The only companions the young man had were the dog and cat, who had been sleeping



under his bed. It was they who saved his life by feeding him. He managed to squeeze the cat and dog out of the little window, and they went hunting for food for him. The dog would steal food from a neighboring farm, and the cat would jump to the window and drop it inside.

One day, the dog and the cat found a large sack of bread. "Our master will have food for many days," said the dog to the cat. "Let us go back across the sea and find the ring."

The two plunged into the sea and began to swim. They swam and they swam and they swam and, finally, they came to the other shore. They rested their weary wet bones in the sun and, when they had dried out and found something to eat, the cat said: "Let us go to the palace and see what we can see. We will have to be very quick about stealing the ring, and run away very fast so they cannot catch us."

They left the sea and ran through a large forest before they arrived at the palace walls. "Wait here at the edge of the forest," said the dog. "I will go in and find a way to get the ring."

The dog hid near the main gate and listened to the guards talking. The officer was telling the guards to be very careful in case some enemies of the Tsarevna tried to get in. "Do not worry, Captain," said the guards. "No bird will be able to fly over and no mouse will be able to sneak past us."

The dog returned to the cat and said: "I watched the guards for some time, and they are very diligent. Not a bird can fly over and not a mouse can sneak in."

The cat replied: "Let me go and see what I can see. You wait here."

The cat walked all around the high walls several times and, finally, found one spot where he thought he could get over with the help of a nearby tree. He climbed high up into the tree and made a mighty leap. He landed right at the edge of the wall and just managed to pull himself in with his claws.

The cat found the terrace where the Tsarevna was sitting, and he began to run around and play on the lawn below. He made such a ruckus that the Tsarevna looked down and began laughing at his antics. She ordered a footman to fetch the cat.

The cat sat purring on her lap for a while, then began snooping around. He followed her around all day and watched where she hid the ring. That night, when the palace was asleep, he snatched the ring, jumped from the wall to the tree, and ran back to the dog.

The two ran with all their might and jumped into the sea. They swam and they swam and they swam. They were just reaching the other shore when the dog asked the cat, "Have you still got the ring?"

The cat had the ring in his mouth; he could not answer. The dog asked again, "Do you still have the ring?"

When the cat still did not reply, the dog got angry, and yelled, "Do you have the ring?"

The cat got angry at the dog and yelled back, "Yes, I have it in my mouth!" Of course, when he opened his mouth, the ring plopped into the sea. "Now look what you made me do!"

When they reached shore, the cat leaped at the dog and snarled: "You horrible dog! It was you who made me lose the ring! Why were you pestering me with your silly questions? Now you go out into the sea and find that ring!"

The dog went into the sea and swam around and dived to the bottom, but it was no use. She simply could not find the ring. She went back and started growling at the cat: "You are the one who dropped the ring. Why could you not have shown it to me or just grunted or something? You did not have to open your mouth to holler at me. I cannot find the ring, and I do not know what we can do now."

The two started to quarrel, but soon got tired and lay down to rest. Discussing their problem more sensibly, they agreed that it would be wise to ask a creature of the sea how to find the ring.

The cat and the dog went up and down the beach talking to the gulls and the crabs

and whoever else they could find. Everybody was afraid of them and no one would help them. They caught a frog and told it, "If you do not help us find our ring, we will eat you."

The frog said, "I know where your ring is. I will get it for you." The frog jumped into the sea and disappeared. So it went with everybody the dog and cat approached. Either they ran away or they lied and escaped.

Finally, the cat cornered a little frog that was hopping along the beach. "Do you know where our ring is in the sea? Speak fast, if you want to be alive tomorrow," the cat said.

"No," said the little frog, "I am sorry, but I know nothing about it. Perhaps my mother knows." He called his mother, who poked her head out of the sea. "Mother, these two are looking for a ring in the sea, and I fear they will eat me unless they find it."

The mother frog crawled out of the sea. She was as big as a bucket. "I know where there is a ring," she said. "I heard two little fish talking about it. Do not harm my child; I will go and get it for you."

"Good," said the cat and the dog. "We will wait here with your child until you come back with the ring."

The frog dived into the sea and, after some time had passed, she crawled out of the water with the ring in her mouth.



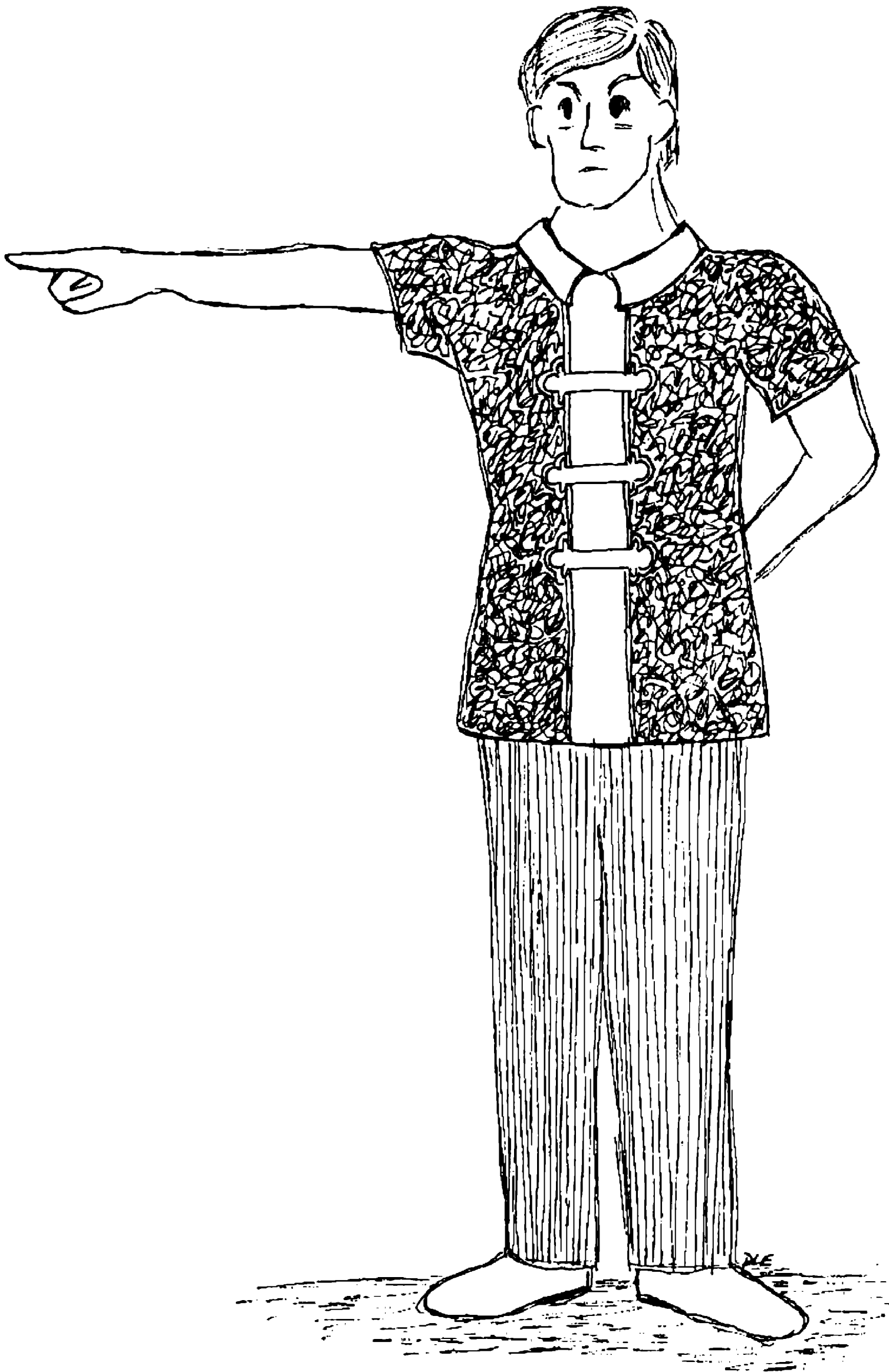
The cat and dog gratefully took the ring, thanked the frog, and ran off to the tower.

When they got back to their master, they found him very hungry. He had had nothing to eat for two days, and he looked gaunt and haggard. When the cat gave him the ring, he immediately tossed it from hand to hand, and the servants appeared.

He commanded them: "This tower must return to its original site and become a palace, as it was before." Instantly, it all came to pass.

When things were settled, the young man banished the Tsarevna and took over the country. He lived in his palace with his mother and the dog and cat and ruled his people well and with great compassion.







The Shrewish Wife

There once was an unfortunate man who had a wife who made every single day of his life miserable. She was fine to begin with but, right after they were married, she showed him what she was really like. She was always, always nagging at him. Of all the contrary women on this earth, she was the worst. She never let up for a moment.

Whenever the man dared to suggest anything at all, she always snapped back at him: "And a lot you know about it, too, you fool!" Then she would do just the opposite of what he had said.

If he thought she was getting sick and should take a pill, she would yell, "Nonsense! I do not need any pills!" and the next day she would be sick in bed.

If he remarked that she looked well, she would holler, "A lot you know about it! I feel

miserable!" Then she would take a whole handful of pills and really get sick.

Sometimes, he would meekly suggest, "I think you should not do any washing of clothes today. It looks like rain." Without even looking outside, she would mutter, "Oh, is that so?" Then she would do the washing, and end up by hanging the clothes on the line in the rain.

One day, the man and his shrewish wife were in the field, picking green raspberries. They were picking them green because, that morning, the man, without thinking, had said the raspberries would be ripe next week; to which his wife had replied, "A lot you know about it! We will pick them today!"

As they were picking the green berries, the man noticed that his wife was getting close to a spot where there was a deep hole in the ground. It was a deep, dark pit in the middle of the berry patch, with only a narrow opening at the top. The opening was hidden by the raspberry bushes, and the man had not even known the pit was there until one time when he almost fell into it.

Seeing his wife getting close to the middle of the berry patch, he called out, "Stop! There is a big hole just in front of you!"

"Nonsense!" she yelled back at him, and kept going until — *plop!* — down she fell into the deep, dark pit.



The man ran to the edge and looked down. He could see nothing but darkness, and he heard nothing but the wind.

He stood by the pit for a short time, feeling neither sad nor happy. Then he shrugged his shoulders and went home.

The next few days were the most peaceful he had ever known in his life. Then, one evening, he was awakened from a snooze by a quiet little knock at the door. He opened the door, and there stood a sorry little devil. Usually, devils are frightening to behold, but this one was not so much frightening as frightened. His horns sagged, and his tail twitched incessantly.

“Well now, what do *you* want here?” the man asked him.

“That woman who fell into the pit a few days ago — is that your wife?”

Inside himself, the man was glad that his wife was alive but, being cautious after so many years with such a woman, he did not let the devil know he was glad. “Yes,” he said, “it is my wife. What of it?”

“From the moment she landed among us,” said the little devil, “she has been making everybody miserable. She finds fault with everything we do. All she does is nag, nag, nag. We cannot stand it any more. For the love of Satan, take her back!”

“Why should I do that?” asked the man. “She made my life hell on earth; now let her make your life earth in hell.”

The devil was desperate. “Please!” he begged. “We have already had more than anyone can take! We will give you anything if you will get her out of there!”

“Will you give me a full bag of gold?”

“I will give you a full bag of gold.”

“With no cheating and no tricks?”

“No cheating and no tricks, I promise.”

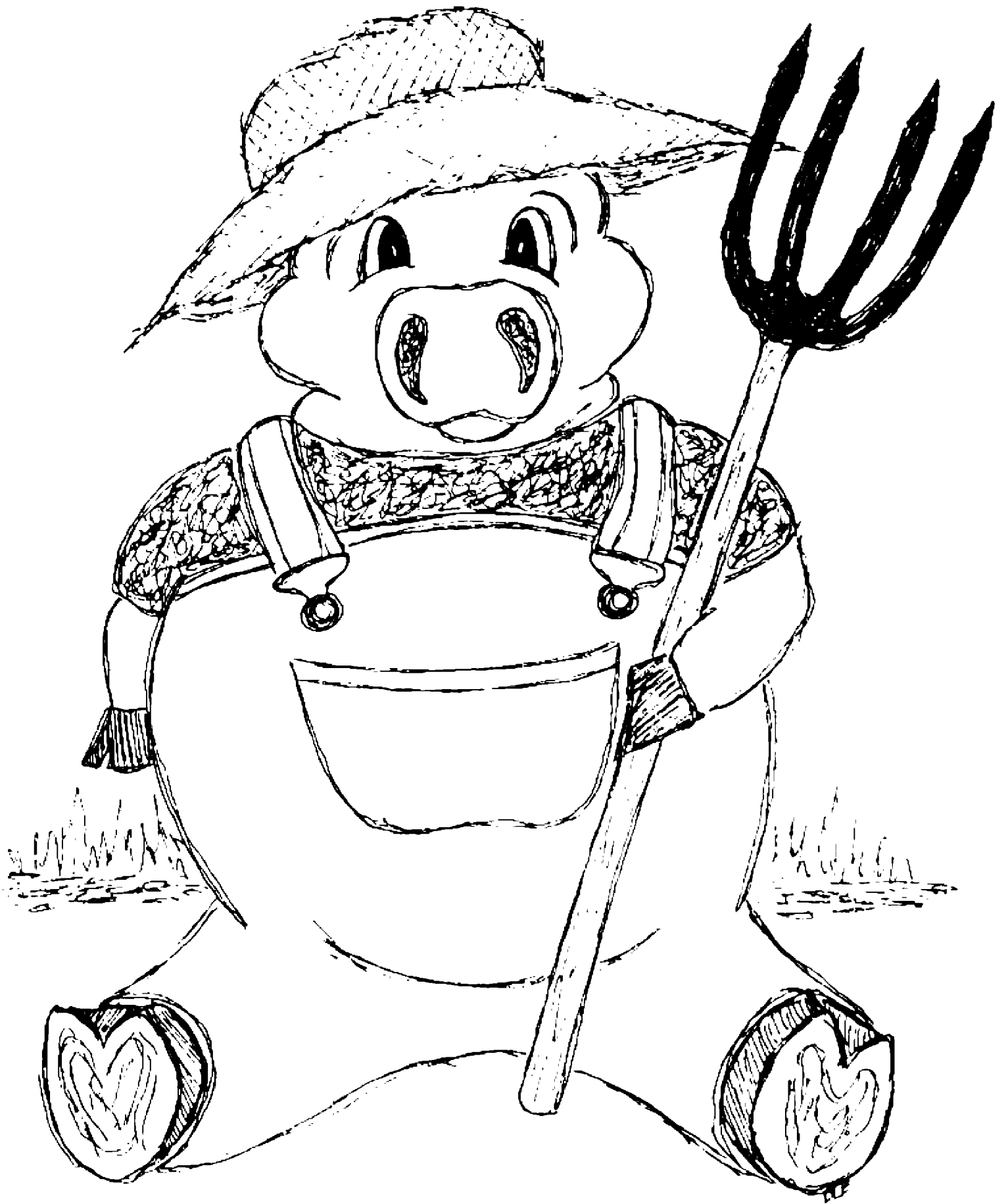
“In that case,” the man said to the devil, “I will think about it.”

As he spoke, who should he see coming up to the house but his wife! The devil saw her too and, with a squeak, he turned and ran.

Next morning, the man found a full bag of gold on the porch, and he smiled to himself. However, for the rest of his life, he wondered why the devil had left him the gold. After all, he had done nothing to get his wife out of the pit; she had managed, all by herself, to climb up a long tree root.

As it happens, the devil had a very good reason. He was afraid that if he did not give the man the gold, the man would send his wife down to get it.





A Silly Pig

Once there was a proud, conceited farmer who used to scold his farmhand, always saying to him, "You are a silly pig!"

In time, the farmhand got tired of this treatment, and he said to the farmer, "What if I called you a silly pig? What would you do?"

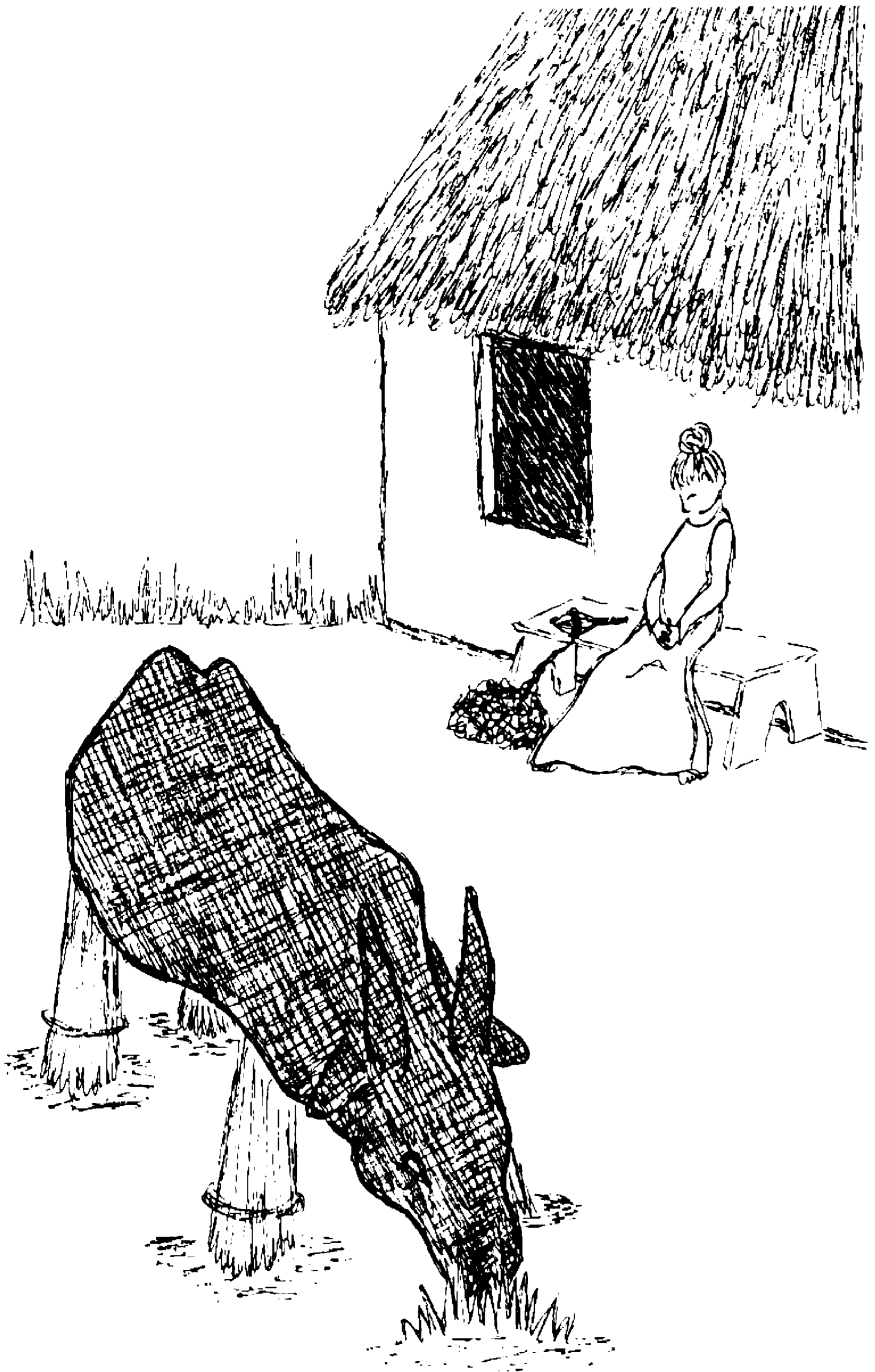
"Of course, I would beat you up!"

"If I only thought you were a silly pig, without saying so, what would you do then?"

"In that case, you would be free to do whatever you like," said the farmer.

"Well then, right now, I am thinking that you are a silly pig!"





The Straw Ox

Once there lived a man and a woman who were very poor. The man worked at a tar factory and the woman stayed home spinning hemp. They had nothing; all they earned went for food to keep them alive.

One day, the woman asked her husband to make her a straw ox covered with tar. The husband was surprised by this, and said, "Why do you want such a thing? What good would it be to you?"

"Just never you mind," she said. "I know what I want it for."

Shaking his head, the man made his wife a straw ox and covered it with tar.

Next morning, the woman took her spindle and a bundle of hemp, and led the straw ox out to pasture. She placed the straw ox in the grass in front of her, sat down, and began to spin her hemp.

As she worked her hemp, the woman sang over and over to her ox:

“Little straw ox,
All covered with tar;
Graze on the grass,
And you will go far.”

The woman kept spinning and singing her song until she fell asleep. A bear ran out of the dark forest and approached the ox. “Who are you?” asked the bear. “Answer me.”

“I am a straw ox,
All covered with tar.
I graze on the grass
And I will go far.”

The bear said, “Well, if that is so, give me some tar to repair a tear in my hide.”

The ox said nothing; he kept eating grass. The bear got angry and attacked the ox, trying to tear off a chunk of tar. He bit and tore, but his teeth got stuck in the tar, and he could not get free. He pulled and jerked and, finally, dragged the straw ox off across the field.

When the woman awoke, there was no sign of her ox. “Where is my ox? Oh, woe is me! I should not have fallen asleep. Maybe he went home; I will go and see.”

On the way home, she saw the bear dragging the ox across the field. She ran and told her husband, "Come quick! Our ox has caught a bear. Grab it before it gets away!"

The man caught up with the bear and, pulling it free, threw it into the cellar.

Next morning before sunrise, the woman took her hemp and, once more, led the ox to pasture. As before, she sat down and spun her hemp, the whole while singing:

"Little straw ox,
All covered with tar;
Graze on the grass,
And you will go far."

Once more, she fell asleep, and a big grey wolf came to talk to the ox.

"Who are you?" asked the wolf.

"I am a straw ox,
All covered with tar.
I graze on the grass
And I will go far."

The wolf said, "If that is so, give me some tar to repair a rip some dogs made in my hide."

The ox said, "Very well, take some."

The wolf tried to tear some tar off with his teeth, but his teeth became stuck. He tugged

and pulled, trying to get free and, when he stopped to rest, they found that they had both travelled some distance across the field.

When the woman awoke, she again found that her ox was gone. On her way home, she saw the wolf tugging at the ox. She ran home and told her husband: "Come quick! Our ox has now caught us a wolf."

The man ran out, caught the wolf, pulled it off the tar, and threw it into the cellar.

Next day, the same thing happened all over again except, this time, it was a young fox that came up to speak to the ox.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am a straw ox,
All covered with tar.
I graze on the grass
And I will go far."

"May I have some tar to fix a hole in my pelt? Some dogs have made a pretty mess of it."

"Take what you need," said the ox.

The fox bit into the tar, but got herself stuck. The woman awoke and saw the fox stuck to the ox. She led the ox home, and her husband threw the fox into the cellar.

Next morning, a weasel also became stuck and was thrown into the cellar with the other three animals.



Later, the man began to sharpen his knife on his grindstone. The bear heard the noise and asked, "What are you doing, Vuiko?"

"I am sharpening my knife. I am going to skin you and make a fur coat for the winter."

"Do not do that, Vuiko. If you set me free, I will bring you more honey than you have ever seen in your life."

"Very well. That much honey will keep me warm in winter. See that you keep your promise." So saying, the man set the bear free.

The wolf woke up and heard the knife being sharpened. "What are you doing there, Vuiko?" he asked.

"I am sharpening my knife. I am going to skin you and make fur hats for the winter."

"Do not do that, Vuiko. If you set me free, I will bring you a whole flock of sheep."

"Wool makes a warm hat, too," said the man as he let the wolf go. "See that you keep your promise."

The fox then spoke up. "Tell me, Vuiko, what your plans are for me."

"Your pelt is very nice," said the man. "It will make a very good collar for my jacket."

"My pelt is torn," said the fox. "If you free me, I will bring you flocks of geese and hens."

"That sounds like a good deal," said the man, as he let the fox go. "See that you keep your promise."

“As for you, weasel, your fur is warm and soft, and I need new gloves for the winter,” said the man to the one remaining animal.

“Do not kill me, Vuiko,” said the weasel. “I can bring you pretty ribbons and jewelry.”

“Very well, you are free. See that you keep your promise.”

The man put away his grindstone and knife, and he and his wife went to bed. Early next morning, before daylight, they were awakened by a loud scratching at the door. They opened the door and found the bear standing there with a hive full of honey. He put the honey down and ran off into the forest.

They had just gone back to bed when again they heard a scratching at the door. They looked outside and saw that the wolf had filled their yard with sheep. The wolf also turned and ran off into the forest.

Shortly after that, they heard a great uproar of cackling hens and squawking geese. The fox had driven several flocks into their yard. Shortly after, the weasel brought them a bag of ribbons and jewels.

The man and his wife were well pleased with their good fortune. They sold some of the honey, most of the sheep, the eggs from the poultry, and some of the jewels.

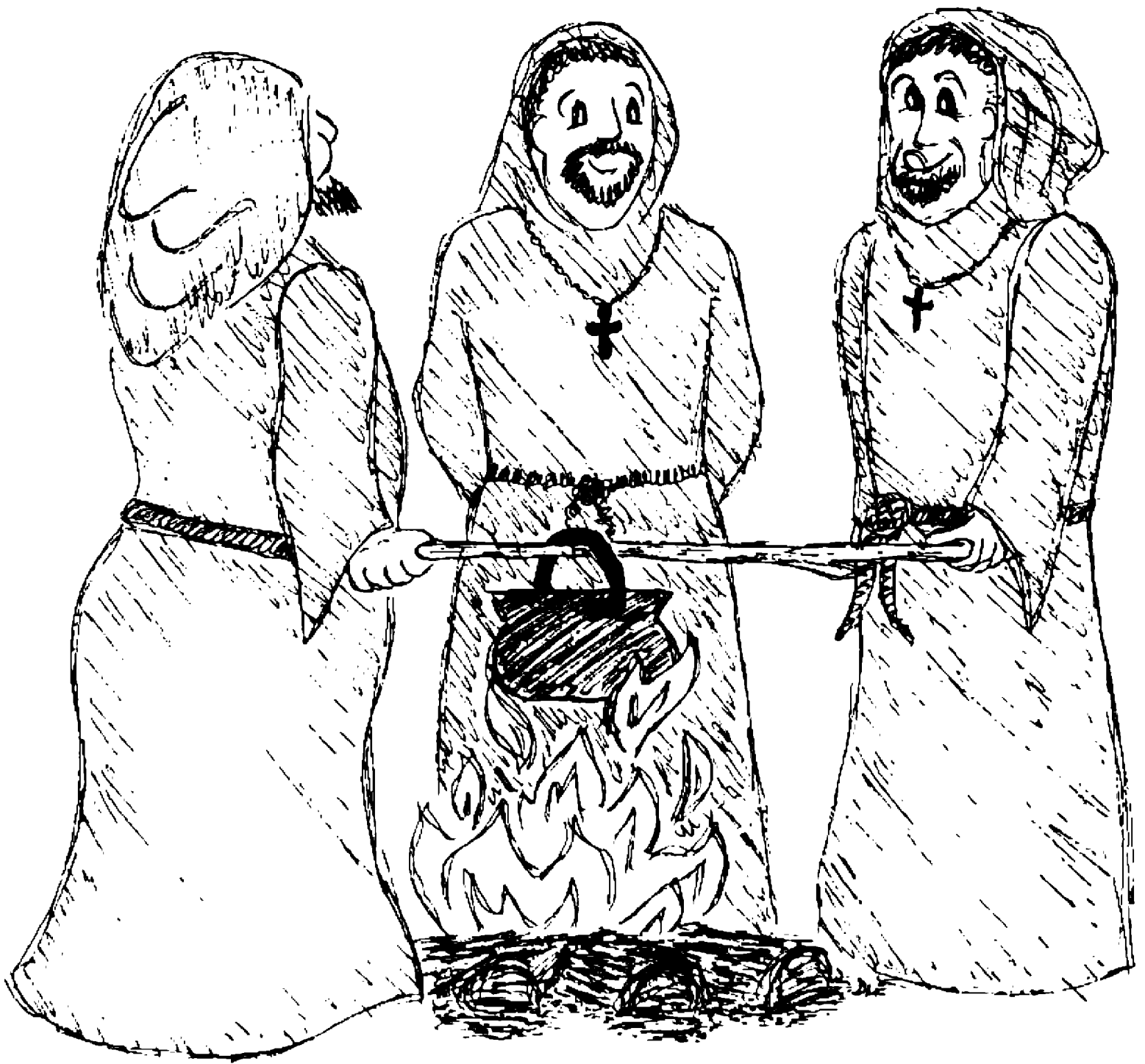
With the money from the sale of these goods, they bought a team of real oxen and

some wagons, and the man became a chumak, transporting goods all over the country, and trading. The woman no longer needed to spin hemp, but she did anyway, so that she would not become bored.

Since they were now wealthy, the man and the woman did not need the straw ox any more. They retired him to the yard, where he stayed until he was melted by the sun.







Three Monks

Three monks on a pilgrimage had become lost. All they had left to eat were some bits of bread, some salt and some holy water. Searching for food, they found a goose egg.

They built a fire and cooked the egg. The oldest monk said: "This egg will not give much nourishment if divided up. Whoever says the cleverest thing to the egg should have it all."

The youngest monk was first; he thought a moment and said: "Egg, I am baptizing you with holy water."

The second monk thought and said: "Egg, I am putting on you some salt of wisdom."

The oldest monk quickly declared: "Egg, you are already blessed and salted; now enter the edifice of eternity." So saying, he picked up the egg and ate it.



Notes on the Tales

In the acknowledgments at the beginning of this book, mention was made of the work of Professor JB Rudnycky and Dr Robert Klymasz. The work these people did is of great interest and importance, not only to my project, but also to all Canadians. They have preserved a unique part of our heritage that was in great danger of being lost forever.

Their books are:

-*Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore in English Translation* by JB Rudnycky, published in Winnipeg in 1960 by UFAS.

-*Folk Narrative Among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada* by Robert B Klymasz, published in Ottawa in 1973 by The National Museum of Man.

There are many books written by other authors which contain folk tales similar to some of those found in my collection. A list of the sources of my stories and a list of books of similar stories will be published eventually.

Notes on the Tales in This Volume

Page 11 The Cat and the Rooster

This story is found in many collections. My father translated this version from a Ukrainian book. Again, we learn a lesson or two from the story: follow the advice of those who know more than you do.

Page 21 The Gypsy and the Priest

This story is found in both Professor Rudnycky's and Dr Klymasz's books. It seems to be a story that many people liked to tell. Often, there are other humorous additions, like the bit about the stealing of the rope, which does not appear in all versions of the story.

Page 25 He Was Not Fooled

Some folk tales are more like jokes than like stories. This is an example of one that comes from Professor Rudnycky's book. Many tales recount episodes from everyday life, and some are told so often that they become folk tales.

Page 27 The Heron, the Fish and the Crayfish

This is another of the animal tales in which the characters display human characteristics. The

heron is just taking advantage of his ability to fool others. Unfortunately, he meets one who cannot be so easily fooled.

Page 31 How April Went to Visit March

There are many tales in which the seasons or the months of the year or other such things act like humans. March is a tricky fellow, but there are others who can see through his antics.

Page 35 An Invitation to the Wedding

There are proper ways of doing certain things that occur at important points in a person's life. Here we see that, since the best man did not fulfill his obligations, he is punished. There is also a moral: one should not be too greedy. This tale comes from Dr Klymasz's book. I have not seen it elsewhere.

Page 39 The Lame Duckling

This story was translated from a Ukrainian book, by my father, and also from a German book, by Angela Cleary. Similar tellings of the tale also occur in various English-language books containing Ukrainian folk tales.

Page 45 A Legend About Saint Peter

From Professor Rudnycky's book. There are many tales about God and Jesus and the

disciples. Most of the stories teach a lesson that has to do with honoring God. If you live right, you will have a good life.

Page 49 The Leather Wallet

Translated from a Ukrainian collection by my father. Some stories seem to be isolated to their originating country, and others travel very well; this story appears in many different cultures. Hans Christian Andersen had a version of the story, and so did many other story-tellers.

Page 57 The Magic Egg

This is a fairly complicated tale, telling several stories at once. For example, the war of the birds and the animals is not resolved; it is used only to introduce the character of the eagle, who is used to obtain the egg. Through the egg we meet the dragon, and through the dragon's daughter we get to the story of the dove and pigeon. The end result of all the action is the happiness of our hero and his wife-to-be.

Page 79 The Mitten

This story is a favorite; it appears in many collections, and in various illustrated books. This retelling is put together from several versions, including my father's translation. Stories such as this are a delight for everyone, both to read and to visualize.

Page 87 The Peasant Priest

This kind of story appears in many cultures, from the European countries to ancient India. The peasant is clever enough to perform as a priest; however, he does have to contend with some rather unforeseen circumstances. His actions are well-intentioned, and he comes out of his difficulties quite well when the nobleman misinterprets what he sees in the church.

Page 95 The Poor Boy and the Tsarevna

This is another of the many stories that are often erroneously labeled as Russian. The collectors of the stories usually just followed the Russian line, which states that Ukraine is nothing more than Russia's 'little brother.'

This story is usually called "The Magic Ring," but this version, from the Ukrainian book which my father translated, uses the above title. All the tales are similar, but some use a mouse to tickle the Tsarevna's nose so that she sneezes out the ring, which she keeps in her mouth at night.

Page 111 The Shrewish Wife

There are many stories in which devils appear. Some of the devils are fearsome beasts, and others are just silly little twits, with every imaginable shade in between. This devil is just

plain scared, and the husband is able to take advantage of him.

Page 117 A Silly Pig

From Professor Rudnycky's book, this is another simple little tale that verges on being merely a joke or an anecdote.

Page 119 The Straw Ox

Variously named "The Straw Bullock" or "Strawcalf Tarbelly" or some such, this is another popular story. This version is from the Ukrainian collection translated by my father.

Page 129 Three Monks

From Professor Rudnycky's book, this is another of the many tales that concern religious figures. Here, however, religious matters are not central to the action. What does matter here is more the oldest monk's wit.

— Danny Evanishen, Publisher



In this glossary:

[a] is pronounced as in far

[e] is pronounced as in get

[ee] is pronounced as in feet

[i] is pronounced as in sit

[o] is pronounced as between got and goat

[oo] is pronounced as in loose

[u] is pronounced as in purr

[y] is pronounced as in yes

[kh] is pronounced as in Scottish loch

[zh] is pronounced as in vision

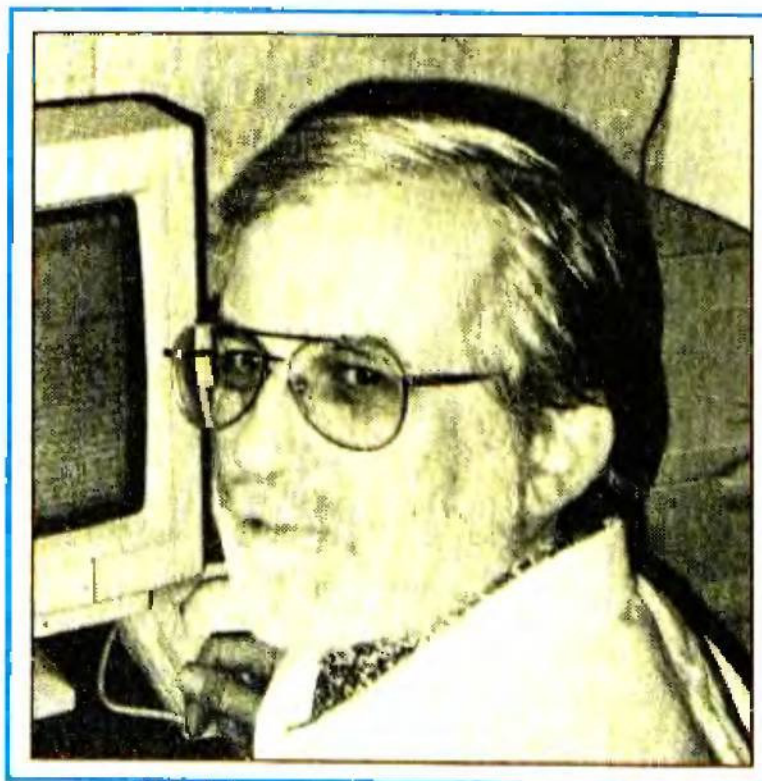
How April Went to Visit March and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales Retold in English

This is the third volume in a series which will eventually publish all the Ukrainian folk tales in the publisher's collection. There are thousands of such tales still to be collected and retold; this volume represents only a tiny portion of that number.

How April Went to Visit March

contains some old favorites and some tales that are less well-known. All are retold in a lively and entertaining manner that is sure to please both young and old. The delightful illustrations add much to the enjoyment of the tales.

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