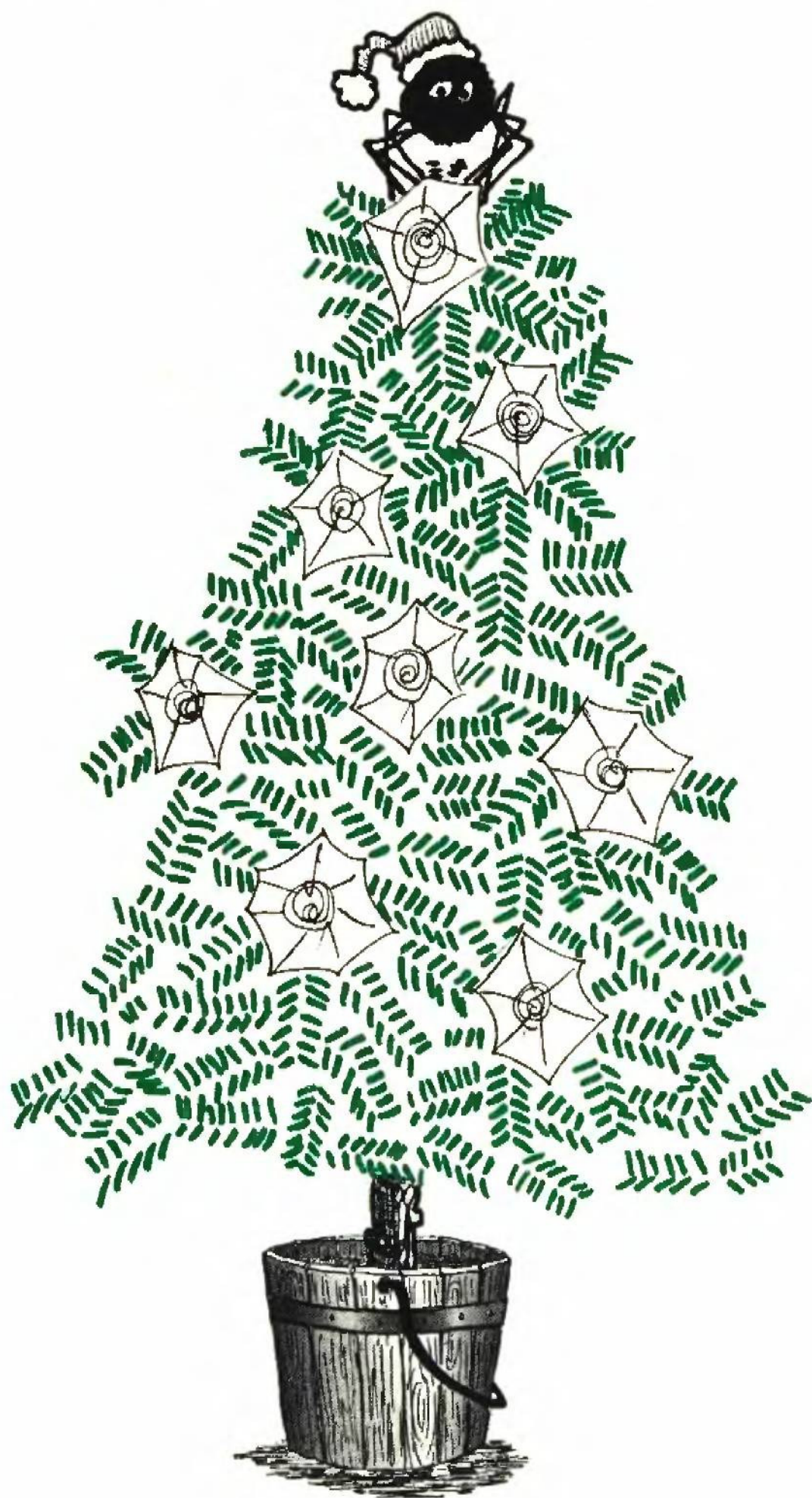


Yalynka

9

and Other
Ukrainian Folk Tales
Retold in English



Retold by **Danny Evanishen**

Pronunciation Guide & Glossary

bandura [ban-doó-ra] Ukrainian instrument,
similar to a lute

kurhan [kooor-hán] burial mound

mohyla [mo-hí-la] burial mound

paska [pás-ka] Easter bread

pich [peech] clay or brick oven or stove

starosta [sta-rós-ta] head of village

tuman [too-mán] mist, fog

yalynka [ya-lín-ka] Ukrainian Christmas tree

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

[y] is pronounced as in yes

[kh] is pronounced as in Scottish loch

[zh] is pronounced as in vision

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Yalynka

and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales
Retold in English

Retold by Danny Evanishen
Translations by J Zurowsky
Illustrations by Ralph Critchlow

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Dedicated to the children.

Foreword

This book is the ninth 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 get around to writing them down or recording them.

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 other volumes of the series, some of the tales to be found in this book are old favorites, while others are less familiar.

If anyone has stories they would like to contribute, please send them to me:

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Acknowledgments

This project was begun in about 1990 by my father, John W Evanishen, who collected most of the first folk tales I published. My mother, Nataalka Evanishen, gave me my introduction to folk tales when I was a child.

In this book, most of the translations from Ukrainian were done by J Zurowsky, and Ralph Critchlow did the illustrations.

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

The photograph on the back cover was taken by Lynne Phillips of Summerland, BC.

This book contains stories submitted by the following people: Sandra Fedoruk (*The Fly and the Millet*); Mary Shewchuk (*A Flake of Gold, Why Cats Hate Mice*); Norman Harris (*The Crab and the Crow, Gypsy Tuman, Two Brothers*); Ruth Classen and Joan Critchlow (*Yalynka*).

I would also like to thank Roman Yereniuk for providing me with a copy of P Kulish's 1847 book *Ukrainskaya Narodnia Predania*, which was translated by J Zurowsky.

— Danny Evanishen, Publisher



The Cossacks and Death

As two Cossacks walked along the steppe, they came to a tree and sat in the shade. One played the bandura while the other sang.

Looking off in the distance, one Cossack said, "Oh oh, brother, here comes trouble. I can see that Death approaches!"

"Well, what of it?" said the other.

"She will cut us down! Let us flee!"

"Eh, no, brother. It is not for Cossacks to run away! And this devilish heat is so bad that you cannot run very far anyway. We will sit here. Once a mother gave birth to us on this earth, and at some time we must also die!"

"If you say so, then let us sit and wait."

Death approached and said: "It is good that I met you wanderers. You have had time enough partying and eating, wearing silk and drinking mead and wine. Now I will sweep you

off this earth. With my scythe I shall surely cut off your heads!”

“Cut them off,” said one Cossack, “if that is your desire. But please allow me, benevolent lady, to smoke a pipe before death.”

“Certainly,” said Death. “Since you have been polite enough to call me a benevolent lady, then you may have your pipe.”

The Cossack lit his pipe. The tobacco was powerful and strong and, when the smoke from it arose, Death stepped back.

“What a terrible stench!” she cried. “How can you smoke that stuff?”

“I am fated to smoke it,” said the Cossack.

“It is a wonder that you have not already been killed by that tobacco,” said Death.

When the smoke and the stink cleared, Death again stepped near. “You have had your smoke,” she said. “Now I will take you.”

“Wait, benevolent lady, allow me one privilege as well,” said the other Cossack. “Please allow me to take some snuff before I leave this earth for always.”

“That is only fair,” said Death.

The Cossack pulled out his snuff. He sniffed it once, then twice, and sneezed loudly because the tobacco was so powerful. It had been prepared with pepper and spices and all kinds of other things to make it stronger.

“And are you going to tell me that this is good?” asked Death.

“It depends for whom,” said the Cossack.

“If it is as good as you say, then allow me to try it,” said Death.

“As you wish, benevolent lady.”

When Death sniffed the snuff and it bored into her nose, she sneezed mightily, choked, bent over double and dropped her scythe.

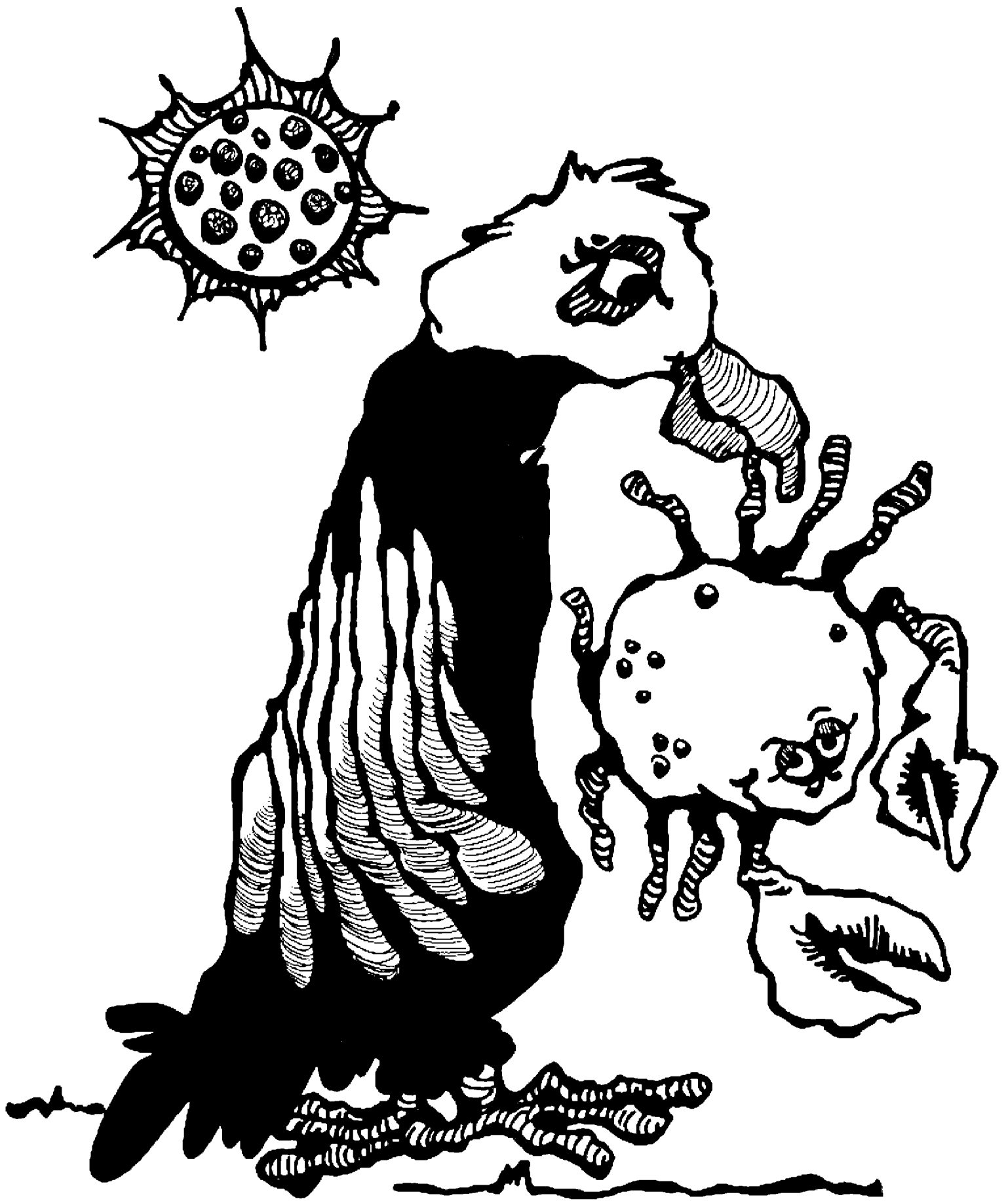
“That is terrible, terrible!” cried Death when she could speak again. “It is worse than that awful smoke. How can you use that stuff?”

The Cossack replied, “I must accept such pain all my days because it has been sent my way, God knows! I must suffer, for it is my unfortunate lot in life.”

“Ah!” said Death. “If that is the case, then I will not cut you down. It is not hard to die, but if you have to go on smoking and sniffing for another fifty years, I can think of no worse punishment for your sins!”

And in this manner the Cossacks freed themselves from an early death.





The Crab and the Crow

A Crow was flying around by the seashore, when he spotted a Crab. Flying down quickly, he grabbed the surprised Crab, who had not seen the Crow coming.

The Crow flew over the bay, intending to eat the Crab at his nest in the forest.

As they flew, the Crab said to the Crow, "Hey, Crow. I knew your father and I knew your mother. Wonderful people, they were."

The Crow was listening, but he said nothing. He just grunted.

"And your brothers and sisters; I know them all. Good people, they are."

Again, the Crow merely grunted.

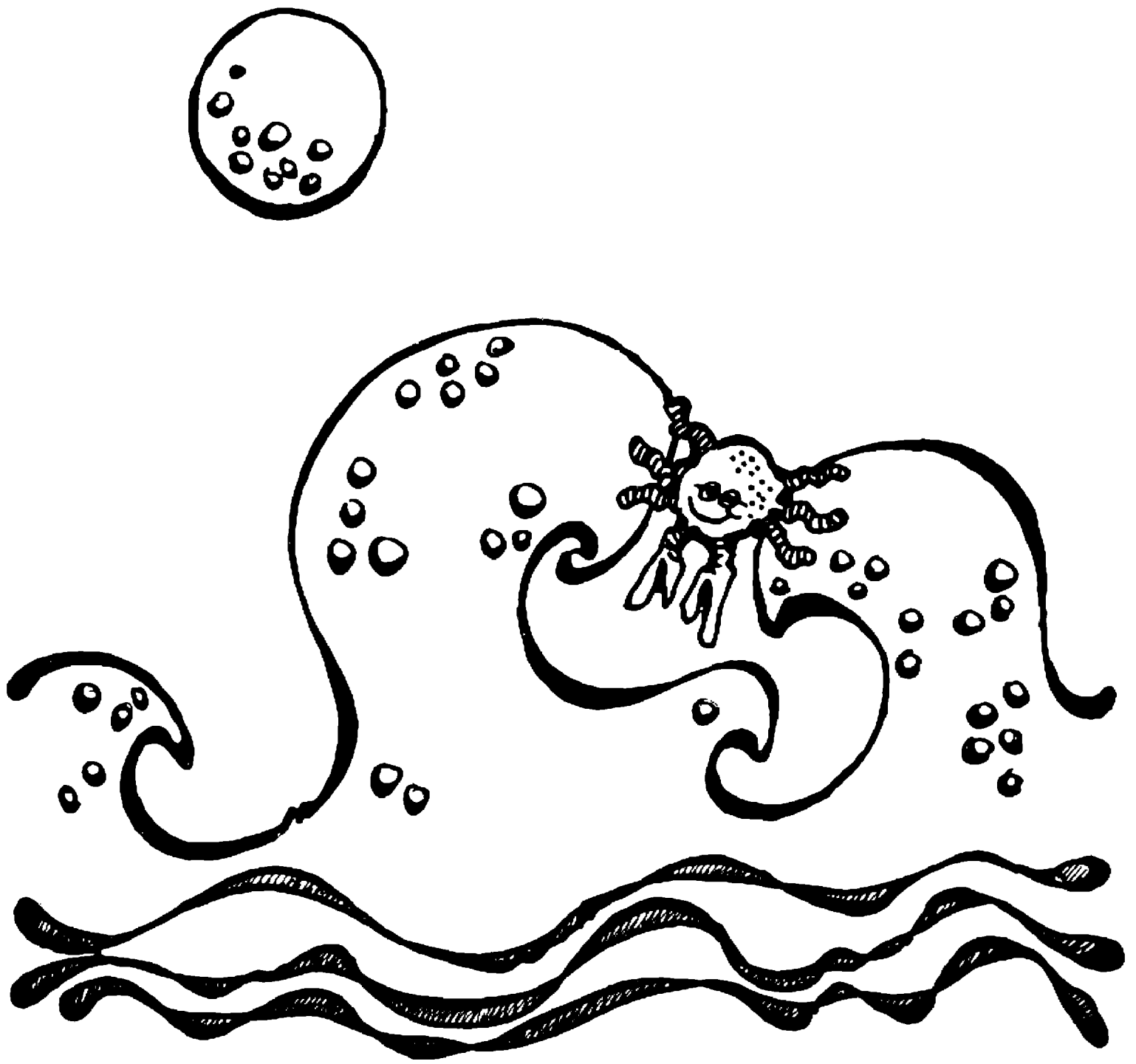
Pressing on, the Crab said, "Although they are good people, they are no equal to you!"

At this, the Crow opened his beak and let out a loud squawk of pride and vanity.

Of course, when the Crow opened his beak, the Crab fell back into the sea.

This is why when someone is fooled by praise or flattery, the people say that he “let the Crab out of his mouth,” and when they tell someone to be careful, they say, “Do not let the Crab out of your mouth.”







The Damsel and the Snake

A snake once fell in love with a young girl, and she with him. The snake took the girl to live in his palace, which was made of pure crystal, and which was built under the earth, beneath a large kurhan, or burial mound.

As was to be expected, the mother of the damsel grieved over the loss of her daughter. How was she not to worry?

When the time came, the damsel gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. As the babies lay in bed beside their mother, they looked as though they were made of wax, while she herself was as beautiful as a flower.

The damsel said, "God has given us children and, since they have been born as human beings, let them be baptized among their own people."

She got into a golden carriage with her children on her knees and drove off to the village to meet with the priest. Shortly after the carriage left, the mother of the damsel was stricken by a sudden fierce madness. She ran through the village yelling loudly about the strange births, grabbed a scythe and ran after the carriage.

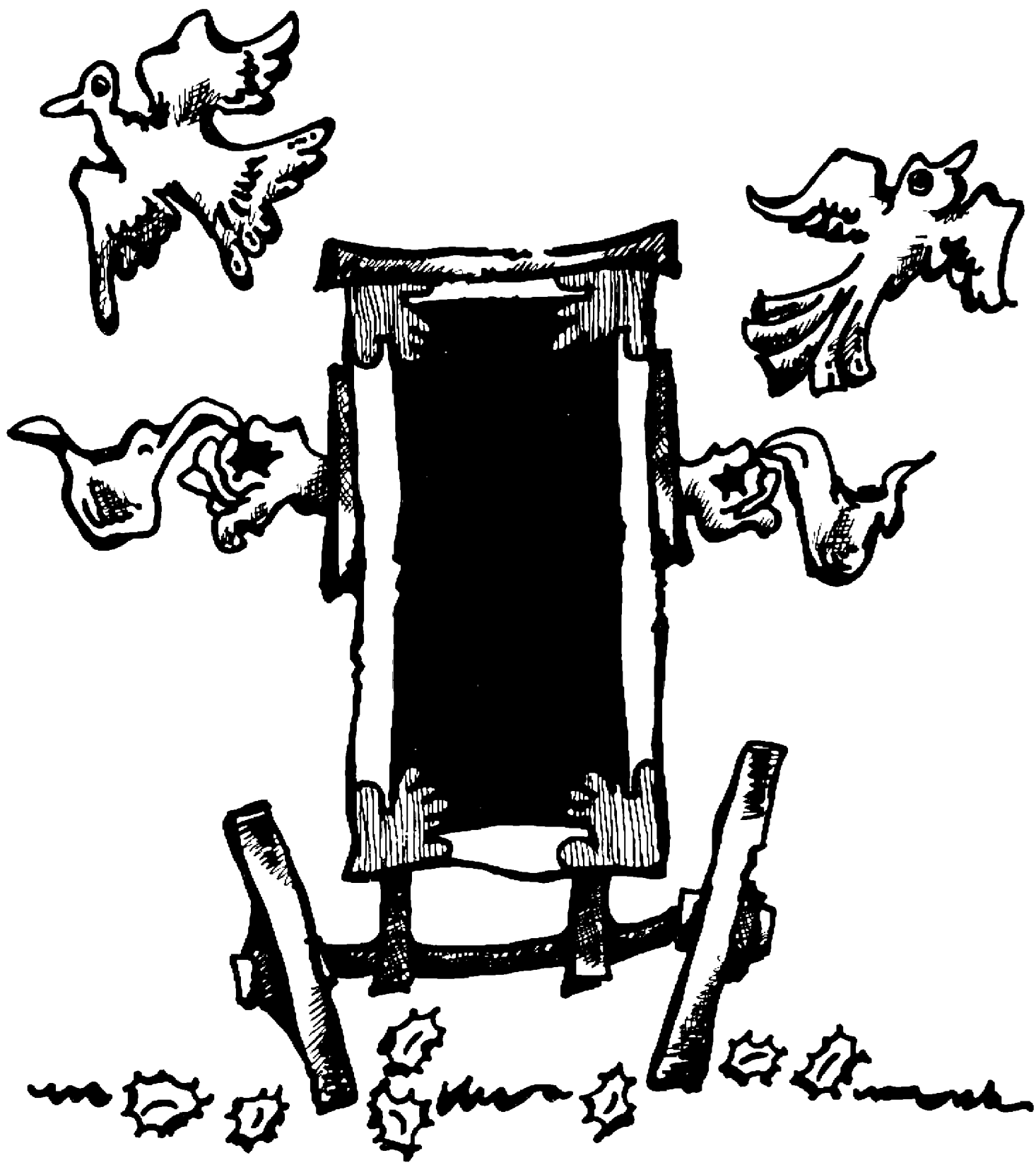
The damsel saw her mother running after them with the scythe, and said to her children, "Fly, my children, as birds throughout the world; you, my son, as a nightingale and you, my daughter, as a cuckoo."

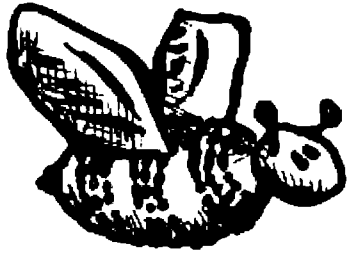
Out of the the right-hand window of the carriage flew a nightingale and a cuckoo out of the left.

The carriage and horses and the damsel disappeared, nobody knows where, and the old mother also disappeared.

Now, by the side of the road, only stinging nettles grow.







The Falcon and the Bee

A Falcon befriended a Bee and said, "We shall make a good team, as you can hear things a long way off and I can see things a long way off. Let us take this strand of hair and soar up into the sky."

And away they went.

"Fly with me, Bee!" said the Falcon, as he flew higher and higher, with the Bee following.

"Look below, Bee. Is the world not great?"

The Bee replied, "It is just like a great bowl in which an old woman kneads bread."

Flying much higher, the Falcon again said, "Look, Bee! Is not the world great?"

The Bee replied, "It is just as if a woman has taken the dough out of the mixing bowl and put a small building stone in its place."

"Fly lower then, Bee, and drop that hair you are carrying."

“Do you hear?” the Bee asked. “Listen to the roaring of the hair as it falls.”

“I do not hear it, although I can see where it falls,” responded the Falcon.

“Then fly closer to the earth,” said the Bee. “Put your ear closer and listen to the crash of that hair as it strikes the earth.”

“Oh, I see it, Bee, but I cannot hear it. Did you hear it strike?”

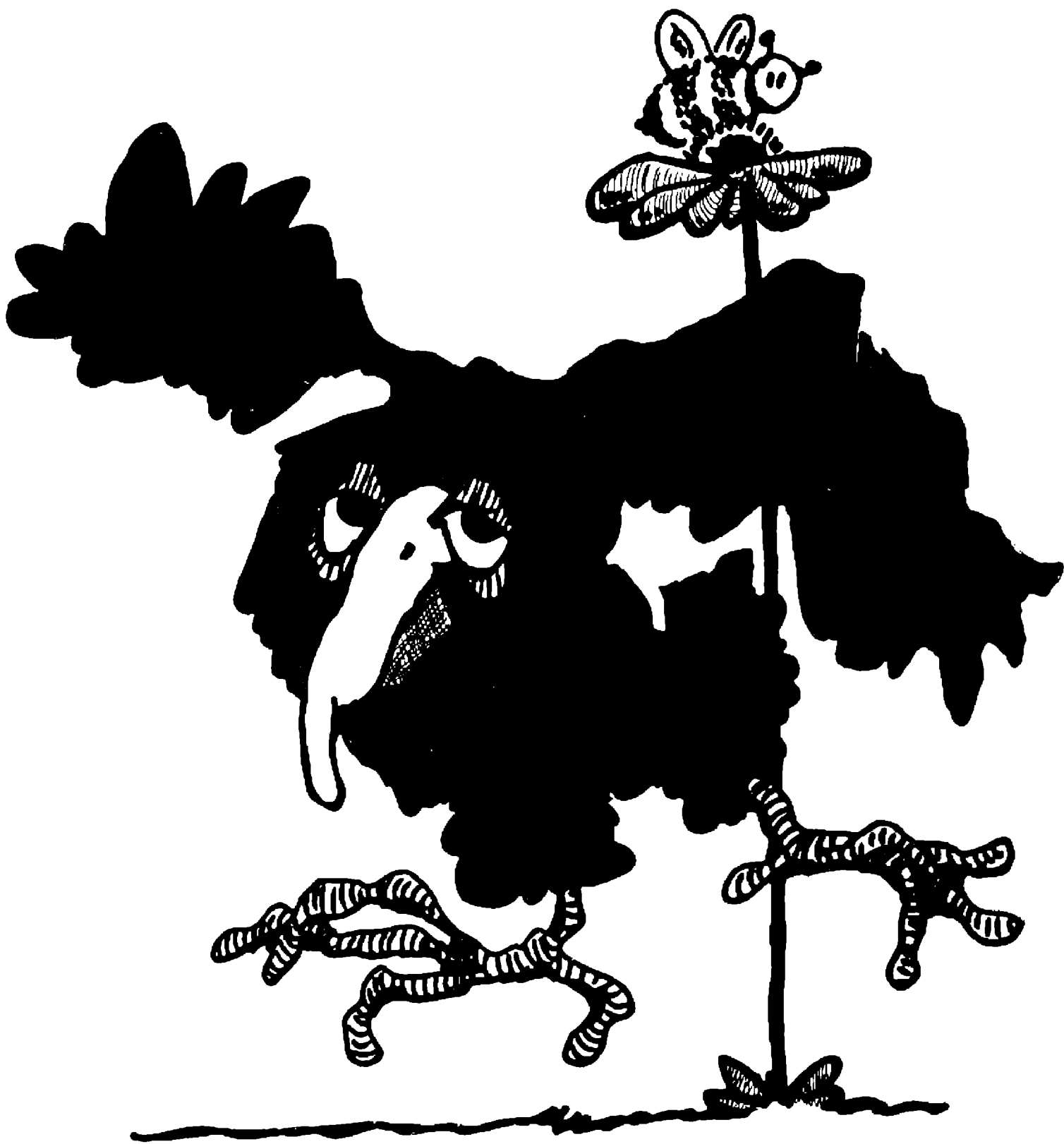
“I heard as it struck the ground and bounced back up into the air.”

“Remain here in this land then, Bee. Stay close to the earth and obtain sustenance for seven miles around while I fly much higher. I will hunt for seven miles around, and thus feed my children.”

The Bee then asked God to provide her with flowers from which to drink. God gave her all the flowers of the earth, saying, “Go into the world and from all the rivers, from all the shores, gather the nectar. Give it to people, and keep some for yourself!”

And so it was, and so it is.







A Flake of Gold

In a small village lived a very poor family. There were two sons who were old enough to be on their own but, although they worked very hard, they were unable to get ahead enough to move out and start their own families.

One morning the father said, "Times are getting harder than ever, and we do not have enough food for all of us. One of you boys will have to find work elsewhere, or you will never earn enough money to build your own house."

The older son offered to go and, taking a loaf of bread, he said goodbye and headed off down the road.

The young fellow stopped at every farm along the way, but nobody needed help. At the villages he came to, the result was the same. Nobody could afford to hire help, and he was simply unable to find work.

The lad kept walking until he was sure he had reached the end of the earth. He sat on a hill, ate the last of his bread and looked at the sea below. Completely discouraged, he sat down and began to cry.

An old man with a white beard came by and asked, "Why are you so sad, young man?"

"I cannot find work," replied the lad. "Without work, I can never earn enough money to help my family or start a family of my own."

"Go to the edge of the water," said the man. "On the shore you will find a large bird who will help you."

The lad went to the seashore, where he found a huge bird sitting on the sand. "An old man said that you might be able to help me make some money," said the lad.

"Indeed, I will help you," said the bird. "Blindfold yourself with your kerchief and sit on my back. I will do the rest."

The lad did as he was told and the bird rose into the air and flew across the ocean to an island, where they landed. The island was bare, except for rocks and sand.

Looking about, the lad saw that among the rocks there were precious jewels and flakes of gold. Looking at the bird, he said, "May I have some of these things?"

The bird said, "Yes. That is why I brought you to this place."



The lad put some jewels in his shirt pocket and some gold in his pants pocket, and the bird then asked, "Are you ready to go? Have you found enough?"

The lad picked up one more square gemstone and thought, "I will make a little hole in this stone and put a string in it, so that my mother can wear it."

To the bird the lad said, "Yes, I have enough now. Let us go."

Once more, the lad blindfolded himself and climbed onto the back of the bird. Away they flew, back across the water to the hill by the seashore.

Thanking the bird, the young fellow ran swiftly home. There, everyone was pleased with his success, and now he had enough money to begin his own family.

The younger son was quite anxious to do what his brother had done and, the next day, he ran off down the road with a loaf of bread under his arm. He did not stop at any of the farms along the road, nor at the villages.

He ran on and on until he reached the seashore, where he found the large bird. He asked the bird if he could help him to find some jewels and gold, and the bird told him to blindfold himself and climb on his back.

This was done and the bird rose into the air and soared across the sea to the island. He

landed and the boy jumped off and began stuffing his pockets with jewels and gold.

As he searched for the jewels, he kept finding more and more that were better than the first ones he had found. He tossed aside the ones that were not as perfect, but kept all of his pockets full. The more he searched, the better the jewels seemed to be.

He took the laces from his shoes and tied his pantlegs shut, then filled his pantlegs with gold and gems.

The bird, after some time, came to the boy and asked, "Are you ready to go?"

"Not quite," answered the boy. "I have not even seen the other side of the island yet." And off he ran.

Some time later, the bird found the boy and said, "We must go soon. The day is getting on, and I cannot fly well in the heat of the sun."

The boy asked for just a few minutes more and, finally, the bird told him that if they did not leave soon, they would never be able to get away from the island.

The boy blindfolded himself and climbed aboard, but he was too heavy and the bird could not rise into the air.

The boy took some of the smaller stones out of his pockets and threw them away, but he was still too heavy for the bird. The bird went to the sea and tried to cool off by flapping his

wings in the water, and the boy removed his clothes and wet them in the sea to cool off.

The boy sat on the bird, who tried to take off again, but still the boy was too heavy. He made the boy throw away stone after stone until, finally, he was able to rise slowly into the air. He flew with difficulty to the shore, where he landed, exhausted.

The boy slowly straggled his way home and, when he got there, he did not even go to the house. He just went right to the field and began working.

That evening, as he was washing up for supper, he found one single bit of gold under his fingernail. He left the flake of gold under his nail, just as a reminder of his greed.







The Fly and the Millet

Once there lived an old man and an old woman. They had a young son, and all were so poor that they often had trouble finding food. Times were so bad that finally they had only one grain of millet left to eat.

“Ivan, take the millet to the miller and have it ground into meal,” said the woman to her son.

Ivan went to the mill and had the millet ground into meal. The old woman cooked the millet and put it into a bowl to cool.

“Ivan, you guard the millet while your father and I have a rest,” said the old woman, as she sat down for a nap.

The father stretched out to nap on the bench, while the old woman sat in a chair.

Young Ivan took his guard job very seriously; he stood over the bowl with a large

stick, ready to take care of anybody who would dare to disturb their meal.

A hungry fly buzzed into the house and made straight for the bowl of millet.

As soon as Ivan saw the fly, he said to himself, "Just look at that fly! I will fix her for trying to spoil our millet!"

He sneaked up on the fly and swung the stick mightily. He missed the fly, but he did not miss the bowl of millet, which shattered and flew in pieces all over the room.

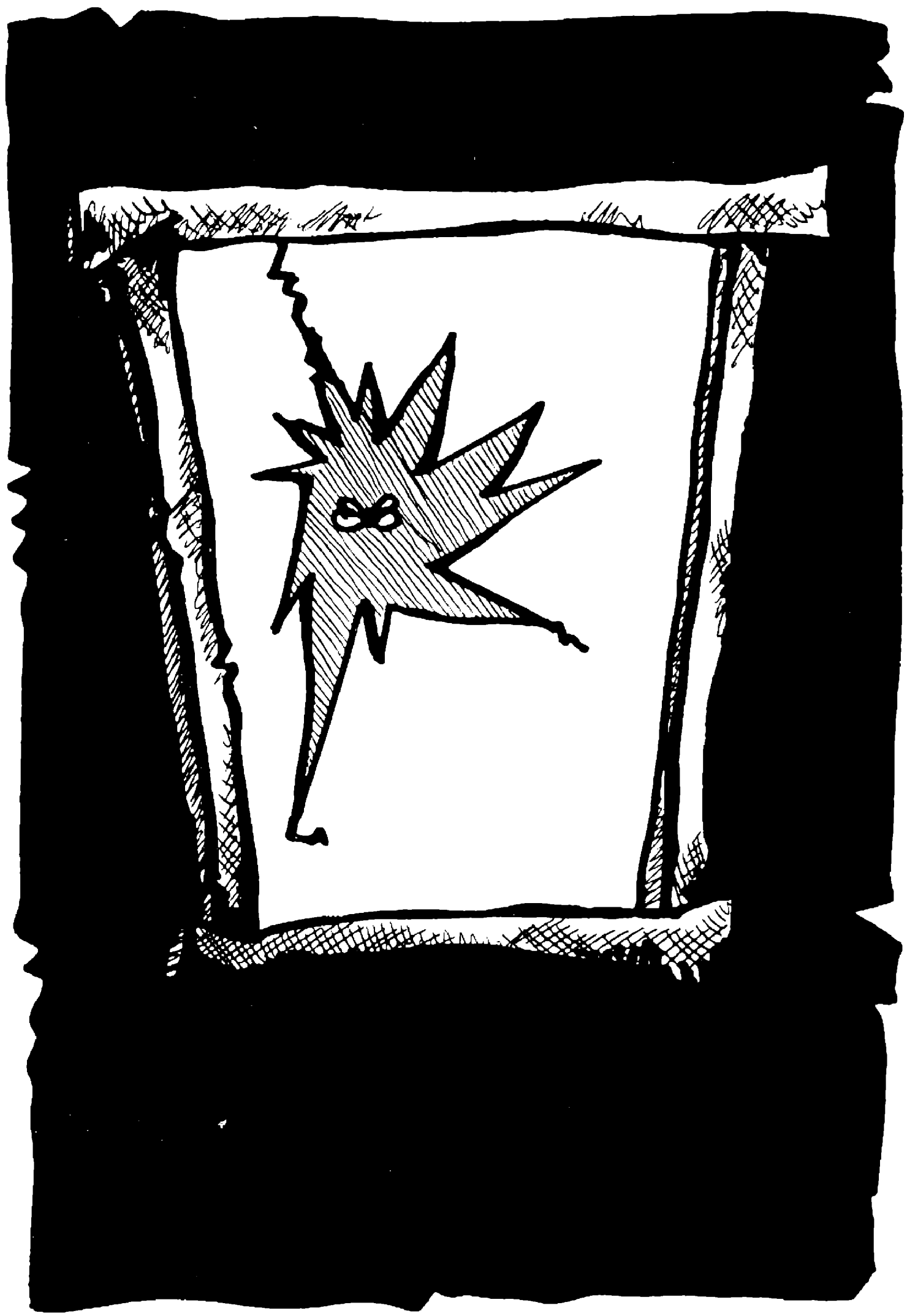
"I will get even with that fly," thought Ivan. Spying it in the air near the old woman, he again swung his stick. He missed the fly again, but he did not miss his mother. She fell to the floor, truly asleep, with a big bump on her head.

"Now look what you have done, you naughty fly," cried Ivan as he redoubled his efforts to catch her.

The fly sat on the forehead of the sleeping old man, and Ivan again swung his stick. Once more, he missed the fly. But he did not miss the innocent old man, who also fell into a deeper sleep with a big bump on his head.

Ivan chased the fly all over the house, breaking and upsetting everything. Finally, he threw his stick at the fly. He missed the fly, but he did not miss the window. The stick went through it, and the fly followed right after.







The Fox and the Crayfish

One day a Fox was running along beside a river when she spotted a Crayfish. She could not believe her eyes, for there was the Crayfish sharpening his claws on a stone.

“Good day to you, Crayfish,” said the Fox. “I see you are sharpening your claws. Are you going to cut the hay for the harvest?”

“Good health to you, Little Sister Fox,” said the Crayfish. “I use my claws the way you use your teeth, so I must keep them sharp.”

“Now I see why people make fun of you,” laughed the Fox. “How can you get around at all when you have your teeth on your feet?”

“You should not laugh at someone who might be able to get around better than you,” replied the offended Crayfish.

“Whatever do you mean?” asked the Fox. “Surely I can run much better than you can.”

“Oh, so?” said the Crayfish. “Then let us run a race. I will give you one step for a head start and even at that I shall beat you.”

“Agreed,” said the Fox. “Let us race to that tree by the forest. We shall see who is fastest.”

The Fox stood a step ahead of the Crayfish and readied herself for the signal. The Crayfish grabbed onto the tail of the Fox with one claw, tucked his legs under himself and yelled, “Go!”

The Fox shot forward in an instant and sped across the field. Arriving at the tree, she spun around to see how far behind she had left the Crayfish. The Crayfish, meanwhile, had been flung free when the Fox turned, and had landed in the tree. Imagine the surprise of the Fox when she heard the Crayfish behind her!

“You certainly took a long time to get here, Little Sister Fox,” said the Crayfish. “I even had time to climb this tree while I waited for you.”

The Fox turned around and stood there with her mouth open, staring at the Crayfish in the tree.

“Who would have believed it?” she said, and she never made fun of the Crayfish again.







Gypsy Tuman

One day a lord and his driver were riding along in a fine buggy pulled by a smart team of horses, when they chanced upon a gypsy and his two sons walking along the road.

The lord thought to himself, "How can it be that the gypsy does not seem to work, and yet lives well?"

Ordering the driver to stop, he said to the gypsy, "Good day to you. How is your wife? Are the children all well? Tell me, old friend, by what means do you make your living?"

The gypsy bowed down to his knees and thanked the lord for his inquiry. "Thank you for asking, Sir," said the gypsy. "We are all well. My wife is at home and my two sons and I are on a pilgrimage from Zastavna village to Lviv."

The gypsy continued, "You ask how we live. I will tell you. We have a gypsy tuman, a

mist, which feeds us all. Without it no gypsy would prosper. Worries we have none, as the tuman delivers all to us.”

“I would like to see this tuman,” said the lord. “What does it look like?”

The gypsy felt in all his pockets, then turned to one of his sons. “Hrytz, did you notice when the tuman was misplaced?”

“It must have been at the brook in the forest, when you knelt to drink, Father.”

“Run, then, Hrytz. Fetch it for the lord.”

Hrytz ran off to the forest and did not return. After waiting for quite some time, the lord grew impatient. “Where is he? How long must I wait?”

“Forgive my son, Your Honor,” said the gypsy. “He is young and may not be able to find the tuman.”

They waited a while longer, and the lord again asked, “How much longer are we going to wait here?”

“Forgive me, Your Honor. I have no idea what is taking so long. If you will permit, we can unhitch one of your horses and my son Roman will go to the forest to find the tuman.”

The lord told the driver to unhitch one of the horses, and Roman sped off. Roman also did not return.

After some time, the lord became angry. “If this glorious tuman does not arrive in two





minutes, I shall have the whole lot of you flogged for wasting my time!”

“Forgive me, Your Honor, for I do not know what is keeping my sons. They are just children, and are probably picking strawberries. Perhaps if I could borrow your other horse, I will find them in the forest and beat some sense into their heads. The lord must not be kept waiting to see the gypsy tuman.”

The lord yelled at his driver to unhitch the other horse, which he quickly did.

The gypsy leapt onto the horse, whirled around and, as he galloped off, he shouted to the startled lord, “Now one of you may pull the buggy while the other pushes!”

Suddenly the curtain fell from the eyes of the lord and he knew that his horses were lost. He realized that the tuman had delivered his horses into the hands of the gypsy.





The Hungry Wolf

An old man and woman lived in a hut with their young daughter, their young son, a dog and fifteen lambs.

The Hungry Wolf came along one day and began to sing:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman, a lad and a girl,
A dog and fifteen lambs.”

The old man was afraid of the Hungry Wolf, and he said to his son, “Boy, Boy! Give the Hungry Wolf a lamb!”

The boy gave the Hungry Wolf a lamb.

The Hungry Wolf ate the lamb in one mouthful and began to sing again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman, a lad and a girl,
A dog and fourteen lambs.”

The old man said, “Boy, Boy! Give the
Hungry Wolf another lamb!”

The boy gave the Wolf another lamb.

The Hungry Wolf ate the lamb in one
mouthful and began to sing again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman, a lad and a girl,
A dog and thirteen lambs.”

They gave him another lamb and he ate it,
continuing until he had eaten all the lambs.

Then the Hungry Wolf began to sing his
song once more:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman, a lad and a girl,
And a dog.”

The old man said, “Boy, Boy! Give the
Hungry Wolf the dog!”

The boy gave the Hungry Wolf the dog.

The Hungry Wolf gulped the dog down in one mouthful and began to sing his song yet once again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman, a lad and a girl.”

The old man said, “Boy, Boy! Give the Hungry Wolf the girl!”

The boy gave the Hungry Wolf the girl.

The Hungry Wolf ate the girl in one mouthful and began to sing again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman and a lad.”

The old man gave him the boy.

The Hungry Wolf ate the boy in one mouthful and began to sing again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Are living together, so cool in the shade,
An old man and woman.”

The old man gave the old woman to the Hungry Wolf.

The Hungry Wolf ate the old woman in one mouthful and began to sing again:

“In a little straw hut that somebody made
Is living alone, so cool in the shade,
An old man.”

The old man said, “Now the Hungry Wolf
wants to eat me!”

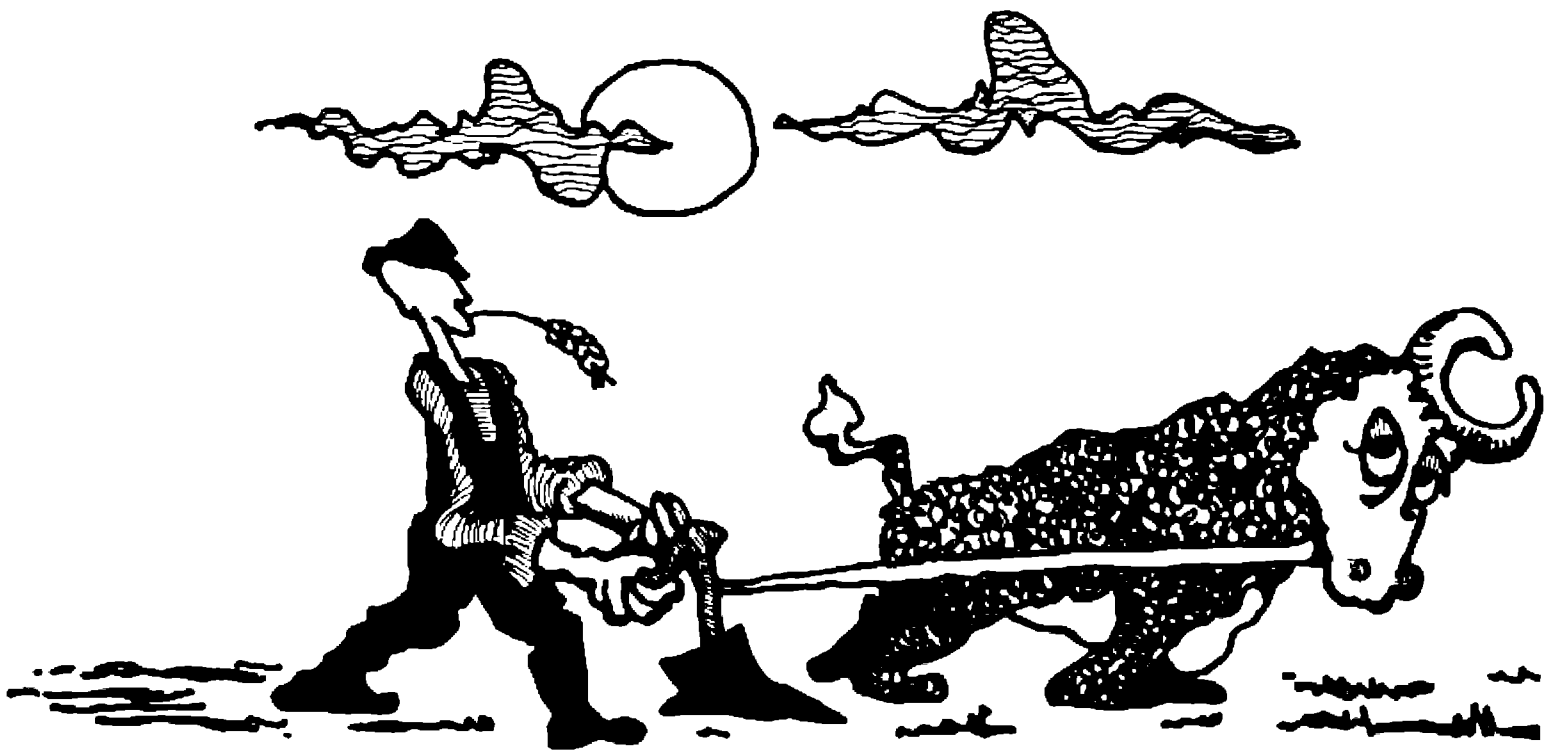
As frightened as he was, the old man took
his club and hit the Hungry Wolf over the head
so hard that he was split wide open.

Immediately, everybody jumped out — the
old woman, the young boy, the young girl, the
dog, and fifteen lambs.

And they lived happily together.







The Mohyla of Svyryd

Once, they say, there was a man named Svyryd. On Easter Sunday, instead of going to church as he ought to, he thought to himself, "People say that today is Easter Sunday, a Great Day. I shall see if it truly is a Great Day. Will I be able to plough a lot of land today?"

On that first Day of Light, he harnessed his oxen to the plough and, with his servants, went to the field. People were praying to God in church while Svyryd ploughed in the field, yelling to his oxen, "Hey, hey!"

The people left church with their blessed paskas and the church bells pealed, but Svyryd ploughed. The people had just begun to prepare their meal when from beneath the ground came a loud droning, like distant thunder.

A large hole opened in the field, and Svyryd, together with his oxen, disappeared



beneath the ground. On that spot a mohyla, or burial mound, appeared. Even to this day, it is called the Mohyla of Svyryd.

They say that even today, when you come to this mohyla and put your ear to the ground, you can hear someone in the distance driving oxen, yelling, "Hey, hey!"





The Peasant and the Devil

Once, long ago, there was a lord who was plagued by strange happenings in a marsh he owned. He was convinced that the swamp was inhabited by devils, and he was determined to be free of them.

One day he called one of his peasants to him and said, "I will grant you your freedom if you give me two handfuls of silver or else drive the devils out of my marsh."

The man thought to himself, "It is pretty difficult for me to get silver, but driving devils out may be possible."

To the lord he said, "I will try to remove the devils from the marsh."

He went to the blacksmith and asked him to make him a whip from some stout wire. The blacksmith made the whip and the man went with it to the swamp.

At the edge of the water, the man began to shape long low walls out of mud.

Soon a small devil came out of the lake and saw the man working away at the mud.

“What are you doing here?” the devil asked the workman.

The man replied, “I am thinking of building a monastery on the shore of this lake. See, I am laying out the foundations to see how it would look when it is finished.”

The devil said, “You will not build a monastery here, because we will strangle you.”

The devil then ran into the lake to brag to the chief of the devils about how he had sent a human away from their lake.

The chief devil listened to the small devil and thought to himself, “A monastery is about the worst thing we could have for a neighbor. We must be rid of this man.”

He called a large, strong devil to him and said, “Tell that man who is thinking of building a monastery that if he can defeat you, we will depart from here, but if you can defeat him, then he must leave the lake and not return.”

The big devil came out of the lake and said to the man, “Our leader said that whichever one of us will defeat the other in battle, then the loser shall leave the lake, never to return.”

The man said, “It would not be fair for me to fight such a puny thing as you! It is better

that you do battle with my grandfather, who is so old that he is all grown over with moss. He lies sleeping here in the forest.”

The devil and the man went to the forest and there beneath a bush slept a big mean bear. The man said to the devil, “This is my grandfather. Go fight with him. If you can defeat him, then come and fight with me.”

The devil approached the bear and kicked it with his hoof. “Get up. We are going to fight!”

The annoyed bear did not hesitate. He jumped up and grabbed the devil in his paws and began to bite and claw at him.

The devil barely broke free. He ran into the lake and told the chief devil, “I cannot defeat the man. I fought his grandfather and could not beat him, and his grandfather is so old that he is overgrown with moss. How am I to fight the man, who is much younger and stronger than his grandfather? I would not come out alive.”

The chief devil sent another devil, a hunchback, to the man. The hunchback came out and said to the man, “We must have a contest. He who whistles the loudest shall own the lake.”

The man replied, “Good. Let us hear you whistle first and then I shall try.”

The devil whistled so loudly that the leaves fell off the trees in the forest. Then, although he had been almost deafened, the man



said, "Now I will whistle. You had better cover your eyes with a rag because when I whistle, they will pop out."

The devil covered his eyes. The man whistled with the whip, striking the devil on his neck so hard that he rolled into the lake.

The devil reported to the chief devil, "He is too strong, and there is nothing we can do with him. When I whistled I did not affect him, but when he whistled, my eyes almost popped out."

A third devil was sent to deal with the man. This devil was smooth like a fattened boar and carried a club which weighed more than five people. The chief devil had given the club to him saying, "Watch that you do not lose this club, because if you do, then we are all lost."

The devil went to the man the next morning and said to him, "You and I must have a contest. Let us agree that whoever throws this club highest shall own the lake."

The man agreed, and the devil threw the club up in the air; in the evening it fell to the ground. The man picked up one end of the heavy club and looked up at the sky.

"What are you doing? Hurry up and throw the club!" said the devil.

The man said, "I am waiting for the clouds to cover the sky, because I will throw it so far into them that you will never get it back."

The frightened devil grabbed the club and ran back into the lake. He said to the chief devil, "He wanted to throw the club to Heaven but I would not let him."

The chief devil sent another devil to the man to ask him how much money he wanted to leave them alone.

The devil said to the man, "This lake is where we and our ancestors have lived forever. What must we give you so that you will not drive us from our home?"

The man said, "I do not want much. Just give me my straw hat full of silver coins."

The delighted devil said, "I will go and get the money immediately!"

"No," said the man. "Bring it to the threshing barn at midnight tonight."

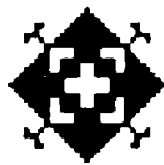
"Oh yes, I will bring it, but just leave us alone," said the devil.

The man went home and dug a big pit in the floor of the threshing barn. Then he covered the pit with boards and cut a hole in one board so that the straw hat just fitted in. Next he cut a hole in the bottom of the straw hat and placed it on the little hole.

That night at midnight, the devil brought a sack of silver, which he poured into the hat. Surprised, he saw that his sack was empty and the hat was not full. He ran back to the lake to get another sack of silver, poured it in, and the

hat still was not full. Finally, after several more trips, the hat was full.

The man took the money and gave two handfuls of silver to the lord, and that was how he bought himself out of serfdom.





The Prince and the Gypsy Woman

Once there was a prince who wished to marry, but he could not find a suitable bride. One day he met a gypsy woman who said, "Prince, I will tell you what you must do to find a bride. Go to the little river, where you will find a willow. In that willow tree there is a nest, and in that nest there are three eggs. Fetch them."

He climbed into the tree and found the eggs. As he walked, he thought to himself, "My dear God! My loving God! I wonder about carrying these eggs and I do not know why!"

As he was wandering about, he accidentally broke one of the eggs. A young lady came out of the egg, so beautiful that she could not be thought of or wished for, except in a fairy tale. "I need water to drink!" she cried.

The prince ran for water but he did not find any and the beautiful girl died. Sadly, the prince wandered on and said, "My dear God! My loving God! I wonder about carrying these eggs and I do not know why!"

As he walked he accidentally broke a second egg. A young lady emerged, and she was more beautiful than the first one. "I need water to drink!" she cried. The prince ran after water, but did not find any and the beautiful girl died.

Again, the prince said. as he walked, "My dear God! My loving God! I wonder about carrying this egg and I do not know why!"

As with the first two eggs, he accidentally broke the third. As before, a beautiful young lady emerged from the egg, and she was more beautiful than the first two had been. "I need water to drink!" she cried.

This time the prince was ready, and he quickly filled his hat with water from the little river. He gave her the water, which she drank.

The young lady then climbed into the willow tree by the river saying, "Fetch a carriage to carry me to your father."

The prince ran off to fetch the carriage, and the beautiful girl waited in the willow tree.

The gypsy woman happened by just then and said, "I shall look at my reflection in the water to see if I am beautiful."

Looking into the water, the gypsy woman saw her own face and also that of the girl in the tree above. Realizing that the girl was more beautiful than she was, the gypsy woman said, "Climb down here; I would like to speak to you."

The young girl climbed down, and the gypsy woman ripped off her clothes and drowned her in the river. She then put on the clothes the young lady had worn.

The prince returned with a carriage and took the gypsy woman, thinking she was the beautiful young girl. They were married and lived together at the palace.

One day the prince said, "Let us go to the river and catch some fish."

At the river they caught a fish with silver and gold scales. It also had silver and gold fins. The gypsy woman knew that this was the young lady she had drowned, and she said, "We must not eat this fish. We will die if we eat it." So saying, she threw the fish into the orchard.

At once the orchard began to grow. It grew a beautiful apple tree with silver leaves and golden leaves. Some apples were silver, and others were golden. Again the gypsy woman said, "We must not eat these apples. We will die from them." On her orders the orchard was chopped down.

In the court there was an old man who lived alone with his old wife, as they had no

children. The old man took some wood from the apple tree and made a comb from it.

Next day he went as usual with his wife to work in the fields. When they returned home, their house was swept, the pich was replastered, bread was baked, and the evening meal was all prepared. They were startled, and had no idea who had done all this for them.

This happened several days in a row and, one day, the old man stayed in the yard instead of going to work. He peeked in the window and saw what had been happening. Arising out of the comb, a beautiful young lady appeared. She began to clean the house. The old man came in, and she began to cry, "Release me, old man, please let me go!"

"You can live with us, child. You will be our own daughter."

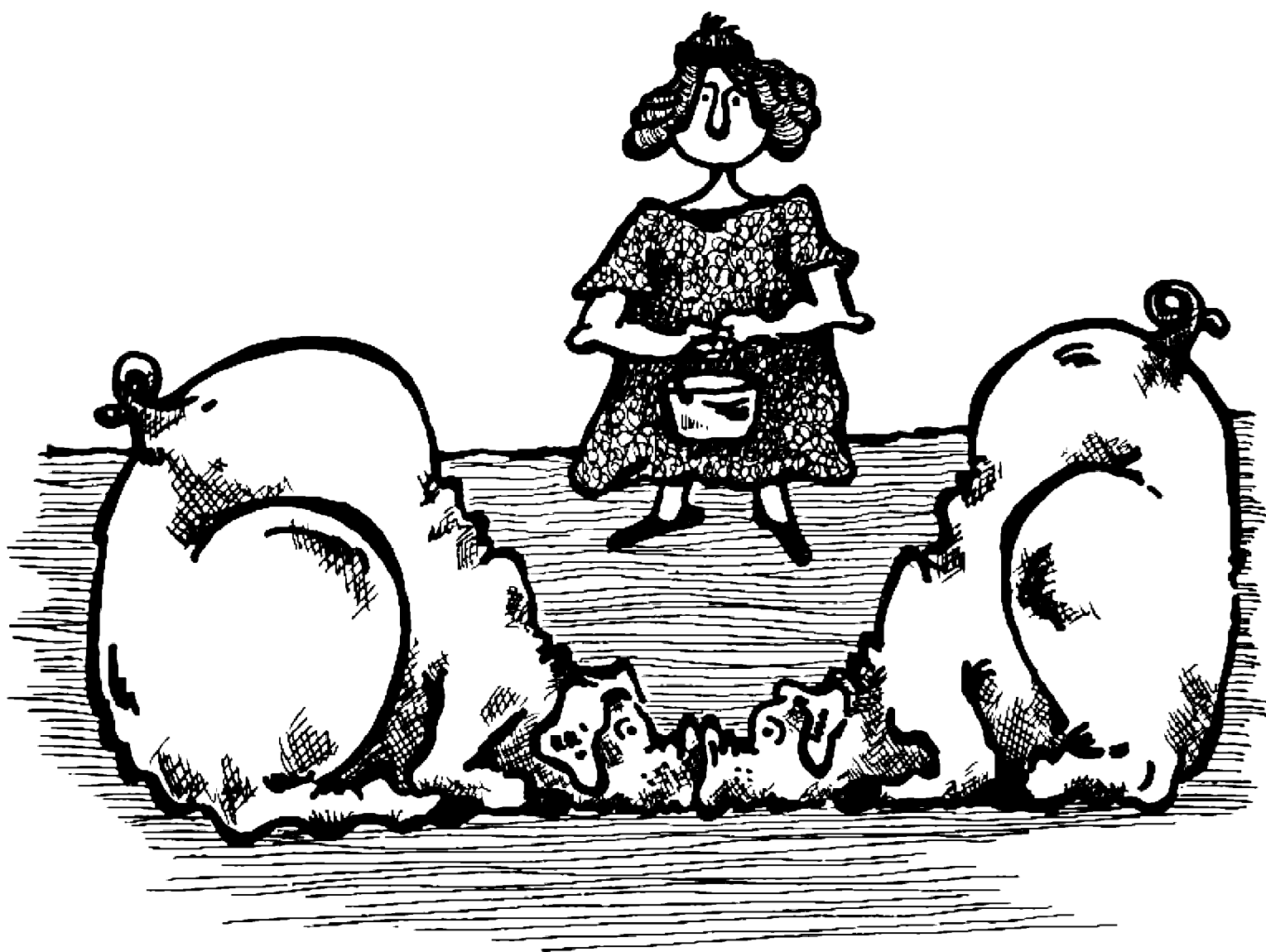
She agreed and they lived happily together. She never returned to the comb.

One day the prince saw the three of them together. He said, "You had no children, old man. Who is this living with you?"

"This, my prince, is not my daughter. I made a comb out of the gold and silver apple tree you chopped down, and this young lady emerged from it. She cleaned our house and cooked our meals, and so we decided to adopt her as our daughter."

The prince realized what had happened. "This is the girl who climbed the willow!" Turning to the gypsy woman, he said, "You drowned her and took her place. You tricked me, and for that you shall pay!"

He sent the gypsy woman to slop the pigs while he took the beautiful young lady to the palace. They lived happily together, ate bread together and, after eating, shared with the poor.





Provisions for the Other World

There once was a rich man who was a terrible miser. He never gave anybody anything, not even a crust of bread. He had everything he needed and he lived very well, with no thought for anything but his comfort.

One day the man began to think about what would happen when he died. Here on earth he had all he needed, like clothing, food and luxuries, but what would happen when he went to that other world? He decided that he would take some food there and then he would be well-supplied.

He ordered a whole wagon-load of bread to be baked and piled into his wagon. Hitching up his best horses, he drove off to take the bread to the other world.

Along the road, he passed many poor people and beggars. They ran after the wagon

crying, "Please, gentle master, leave us one loaf! Kind lord, give us some bread!" The man did not even look at the people.

He drove on and on, and there seemed to be no end to the road. He was never going to reach that other world! Finally, the wagon hit a bump and one loaf fell off into the mud. When he saw the loaf lying in the mud, he said to the nearest beggar, "Take it!"

The beggar took the dirty loaf from the mud and rejoiced.







The Repentant Cossack

Once there was a valiant Cossack who had served his country well. He had retired from service years ago, but still lived the good life, carousing with his friends most of the time.

As he grew older, however, the Cossack began to reflect on his life.

“I have had a long life and a good one,” he said. “But what does the future hold for me? I must die soon, and then what is to become of my soul? I must ask the priest what to do.”

The Cossack went to the priest and said, “Father, I feel Death approaching, and I would like to know what I can do to prepare my soul for what will surely follow my departure from this earth.”

The priest sat with the Cossack for a long time, going over the many, many sins that the Cossack had committed in his life. The priest

was astonished at how many sins the Cossack admitted to, thinking all the while that he must surely have forgotten to mention some of them.

“You must do penance,” said the priest finally. “As you are such a great sinner, you must do penance for one entire year. You must forsake all the pleasures of this earth and live humbly, praying to God for forgiveness.”

The Cossack thought this over and then replied, “But Father, I may not have a whole year left to me on this earth. Surely there must be some way to prepare myself that will not take such a long time.”

“I am afraid not,” said the priest. “Your multitude of sins will certainly need a long time to explain to God.”

“Father, as it happens, I am a very wealthy man. If I were to donate some of my wealth to the church, perhaps then I could be given some consideration,” said the Cossack.

“If that is the case, perhaps something can be done for you. I must consider your case overnight,” replied the priest.

In the morning, the Cossack returned to the priest, who said, “Your case is a bad one but, considering all things, if you were to use your wealth to prove to the church that you loved God, you may do a six-month penance.”

“But good Father, I may not have six months!” cried the Cossack, and he named a

generous sum of money he was willing to donate to the church.

“For that amount, I think we could reduce your penance to three months,” said the priest.

The two of them haggled on for some time. The amount to be donated increased as the time of penance decreased, until the Cossack had agreed to pay a huge sum of money, and his penance was reduced to one night of prayer in the church.

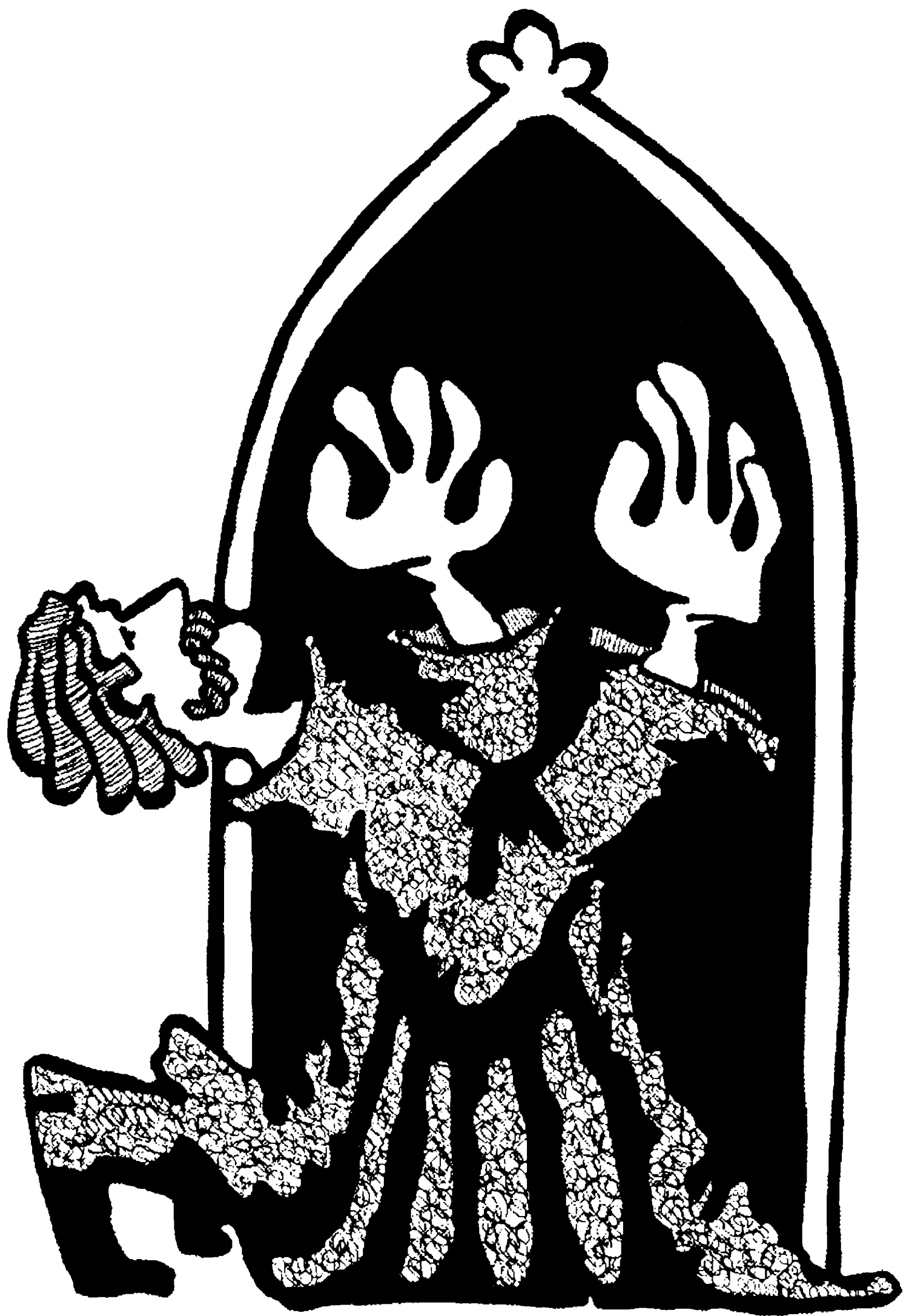
“Thank you for your indulgence, Father,” said the Cossack. I will bring the money today and do my penance tonight.”

The Devil, meanwhile, had been aware of the negotiations, and he was not pleased. He considered the Cossack to be his, and now that he was in danger of losing the Cossack, he took steps to keep him.

That night, after paying the priest, the Cossack entered the church and began to pray. Suddenly, the Devil attacked, trying to drive the Cossack from the church. Fire and brimstone filled the air outside, and there was a great roaring like that of a hurricane.

The Cossack was astounded by the uproar but, since he was a valiant Cossack, he stood his ground and continued to pray.

The noise and fire died down, and the sister of the Cossack entered the church. By this time, however, the Cossack was suspicious



of all that went on around him, and he reacted cautiously, afraid that this was another trick of the Devil.

“Come, brother,” said the woman. “Let us go and visit our mother.”

As his mother had been dead for many years, the Cossack did not say a word. He simply kept praying. The woman slammed the door on her way out and, soon, the wife of the Cossack appeared before him.

“Come, dear,” she said. “Let us go home. I would like to spend some time with you.”

The Cossack was again steadfast, fearing that this was another trick of the Devil.

Next to appear was the commander of the Cossack forces. “Come,” he commanded loudly. “We are preparing for battle, and we need you to fight with us.”

Although he loved nothing more dearly than a battle, the Cossack kept his head down and ignored his old commander.

Finally, the priest came to the Cossack and told him that he had done enough penance, and that he was now free to go. The Cossack was about to rise to his feet when he realized that the roosters had not yet proclaimed dawn, and he held his position.

The priest disappeared in a puff of smoke and a deathly quiet descended upon the church. The Cossack continued to pray, until

he heard the rooster crow to greet the dawn. He was about to rise to his feet and leave the church when he noticed that it was still dark outside. Realizing it was another devilish trick, he sank to his knees and continued to pray.

When the Devil saw that the Cossack was not going to be fooled, he again filled the air with fire and thunder and lightning. The church rocked with the mighty display of the power of the Devil and the graveyard cracked open, spilling caskets, gravestones and bodies all over the vicinity.

But it was to no avail. The Cossack stood his ground and continued praying until the true dawn appeared. Only at that point did he rise from his feet. He walked to the door of the church and opened it and instantly all was quiet. The noise had stopped, the fire and brimstone were gone, and the graveyard was whole again.

The weary Cossack made his way to the home of the priest, who performed the rituals that would absolve the Cossack of all his sins.

The Cossack returned to his home and lived out his life quietly, happy that his place in Heaven was now secure.







The Rooster and the Hen

An old couple had a Rooster and a Hen, who lived with them.

The two people died, and the Rooster and the Hen, without them, ate everything that they had, including a whole bag of beans.

The Rooster and the Hen sat on the bench and the Rooster began to crow, "Kukuriku!"

He ate a stone and choked.

The Hen cried and ran to the Lake to ask for some water.

The Hen called out, "Oh Lake, Lake! Give me some water!"

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

The Lake replied, “Go to the Ox and get me one of his horns.”

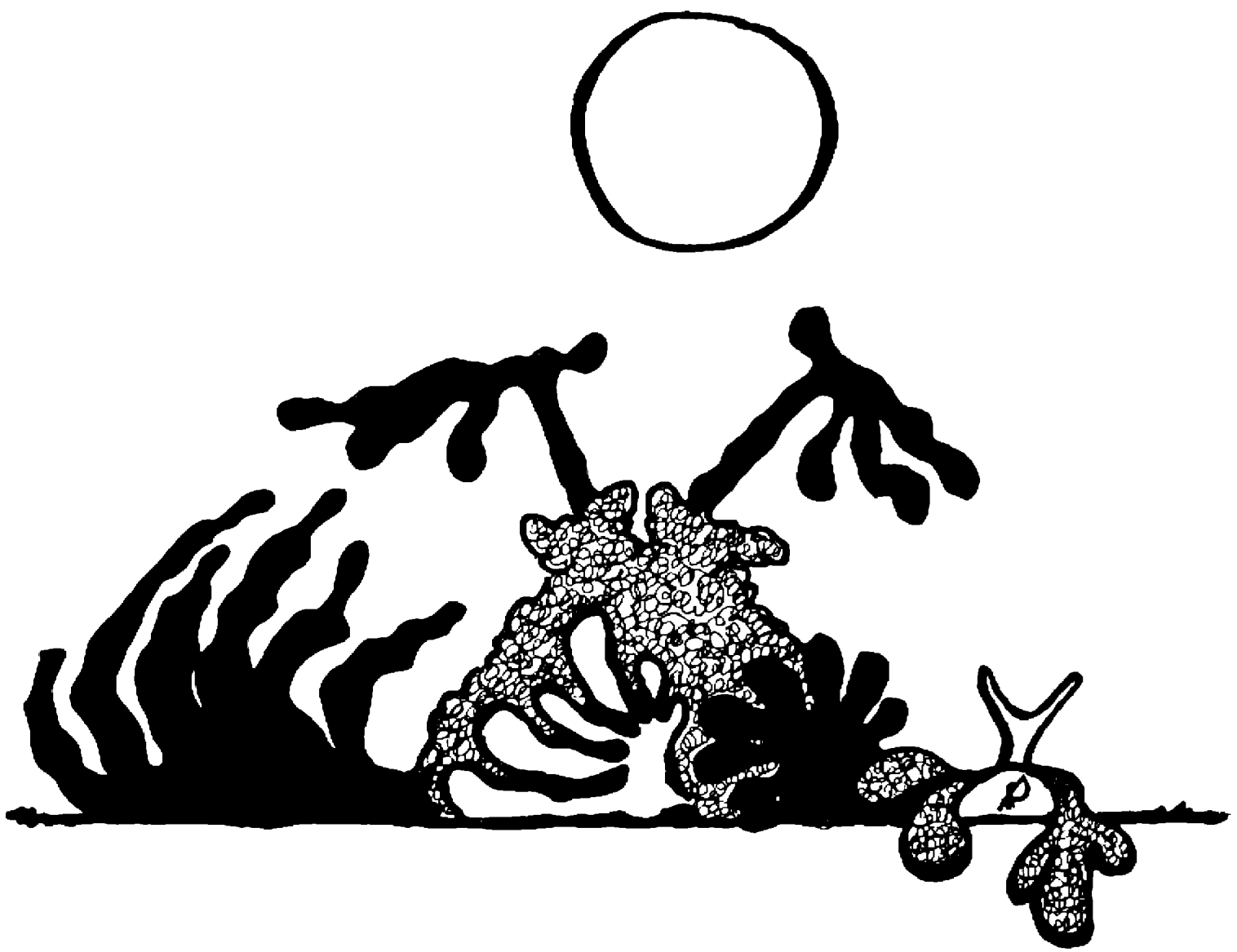
She went to the Ox, and said: “Oh, Ox, Ox!
Let me have a horn!”

“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.



If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

The Ox replied, “Go to the Pig and get a
needle from her!”

The Hen ran to the Pig and said, “Oh Pig,
oh Pig! Let me have a needle!”

“Why do you need a needle?”

“To give to the Ox.
The Ox will give me a horn.”

“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”





“Go to the Oak tree. Get me an acorn.”

The Hen ran to the Oak tree and said,
“Oak, oh Oak! I need an acorn!”

“Why do you need an acorn?”

“The acorn is for the Pig.
The Pig will give me a needle.”

“Why do you need a needle?”

“The needle is for the Ox.
The Ox will give me a horn.”

“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

“Go to the Young Lady,” said the Oak,
“and get me some thread.”

“Oh Miss! Let me have some thread!”

“Why do you need thread?”

“The thread is for the Oak.
The Oak will give me an acorn.”

“Why do you need an acorn?”

“The acorn is for the Pig.
The Pig will give me a needle.”

“Why do you need a needle?”

“The needle is for the Ox.
The Ox will give me a horn.”

“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me some water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,

But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

“Go to the Old Woman,” said the Young Lady. “Get me some butter.”

“Old Woman, let me have some butter.”

“Why do you need butter?”

“The butter is for the Young Lady.
She will give me some thread.”

“Why do you need some thread?”

“The thread is for the Oak.
The Oak will give me an acorn.”

“Why do you need an acorn?”

“The acorn is for the Pig.
The Pig will give me a needle.”

“Why do you need a needle?”

“The needle is for the Ox.
The Ox will give me a horn.”



“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me some water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,
And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

The Old Woman then said to the Hen, “Go to the Linden Tree. Get me some of her beautiful Linden flowers.”

The Hen ran to the Linden and said, “Linden, oh Linden. Let me have some flowers!”

“Why do you need my flowers?”

“The flowers are for the Old Woman.
She will give me some butter.”

“Why do you need butter?”

“The butter is for the Young Lady.
She will give me some thread.”

“Why do you need some thread?”

“The thread is for the Oak.
The Oak will give me an acorn.”

“Why do you need an acorn?”

“The acorn is for the Pig.
The Pig will give me a needle.”

“Why do you need a needle?”

“The needle is for the Ox.
The Ox will give me a horn.”

“Why do you need a horn?”

“The horn is for the Lake.
The Lake will give me some water.”

“Why do you need water?”

“The Rooster needs water
And plenty of care;
He is not breathing,
But gasping for air.
He just wiggles his tail,



And only lies there.
If we do not do something
It will not bode fair.”

The Linden gave the Hen some of her
Linden flowers.

The Old Woman traded the Hen some
butter for the flowers.

The Young Lady traded the Hen some
thread for the butter.

The Oak traded an acorn for the thread.

The Pig traded a needle for the acorn.

The Ox traded a horn for the needle.

The Lake traded water for the horn.

The Hen gave the Rooster water to drink
and he recovered.

They lived happily together, ate bread
together and, after eating, shared with the poor.







The Stepmother

Near a village, a man and a woman had a young daughter named Marusia. After a short illness, the wife died. The man later married a widow who had a daughter named Tania from her first marriage.

The family owned one cow, and the stepmother said to Marusia, "Drive the cow to pasture, and spin all of this hemp fiber into yarn so we can make cloth."

Marusia drove the cow and cried as they went down the road.

The cow asked Marusia, "Why are you crying, girl?"

"How am I not to cry?" she said. "I was given this big pile of coarse hemp fiber to spin, and it is hard to do."

"Do not worry, Marusia," said the cow to the crying girl. "Here is what you must do: put

the fiber in my right ear and pull finished yarn out of the left one.”

When they got to the pasture, Marusia did as the cow had suggested, and all of the hemp was transformed into fine spun yarn.

When it began to get dark, she drove the cow home and carried the yarn.

The next day, the stepmother said to her own daughter, “Tania, drive the cow to pasture, and spin all of this hemp fiber into yarn so we can make cloth.”

Tania drove the cow to the field and said, “Magpies, crows! Come to me and spin the coarse hemp fibers!”

The magpies and crows flocked in and seized all of the coarse hemp fiber, taking it to line their nests. In the evening, Tania drove the cow home.

When she got home her mother asked, “Where is the yarn from the hemp?”

“Oh, Mother,” cried Tania, “the magpies and the crows took it all.”

Next day the stepmother said to Marusia, “Drive the cow to pasture, and spin all of this hemp fiber into yarn so we can make cloth. Tomorrow, we shall slaughter the cow.”

Marusia drove the cow and cried as they went down the road.

The cow asked Marusia, “Why are you crying, girl?”



“How can I not cry? They want to slaughter you and they have given me twice as much coarse hemp fiber to spin.”

“Do not worry,” said the cow to the girl. “Just put the fiber in my right ear and pull the yarn out of the left one.”

When they got to the pasture, Marusia did as the cow had suggested, and all of the hemp was transformed into fine spun yarn.

The cow said, “Listen, Marusia. When they slaughter me, ask for my stomach. There you will find two apples. When you plant those apples, two fine apple trees shall grow.”

Marusia was sad to hear this, but did as she was told. When they slaughtered the cow, Marusia asked for the stomach. She went to the river and washed out the stomach, finding in it two apples, one golden, one silver.

Tania saw this and tried to take the apples. Marusia threw the apples into a patch of stinging nettles, where they were safe. When two trees grew in the bed of nettles, one had silver apples and the other, golden apples.

One day the prince was riding by. He saw the lovely apple trees and said, “Whoever will pick a gold apple and a silver apple for me will receive half my kingdom.”

Tania heard this and ran to the trees, intending to pick two apples for the prince. The trees asked to be watered, but Tania refused,



saying, "It will rain soon, and then you will have plenty of water." The apple trees then raised their branches out of her reach.

Marusia came by and brought a bucket of water from the well to water the tree. She picked two apples and gave them to the prince.

The prince fell in love as soon as he saw Marusia, and said to her, "I will take you with me as my bride."

The two of them lived happily together for some time and they had a child.

But the stepmother, who was really a witch, became angry at the good fortune of Marusia and turned her into a goat. She then put her daughter Tania in her place.

The child refused to nurse from Tania and cried constantly.

One day a servant, who knew the ways of witches, asked the prince, "Shall I take the child for a walk?"

"Please do," said the prince. "Perhaps we shall have some quiet here if you do."

The servant took the child to the forest, where he called:

"Marusia, Marusia, are you nigh?
Listen to your brave son cry.
Run to him with your swift feet,
For your son sorely needs to eat."



Marusia the goat heard the servant calling, and replied:

“Fly to your mother here, brave son,
Father knows not what is done.
His eyes are blinded by a spell,
So come and I shall feed you well.”

Marusia removed the goat skin and became human again. She nursed the child, weeping bitterly the whole time.

After she had fed the child, the servant took him back to the palace, where the boy slept quietly until dawn.

The next day the child cried constantly. The servant again asked the prince, “Shall I take the child for a walk?”

The prince consented to this, and the servant took the boy to the forest again, where he called:

“Marusia, Marusia, are you nigh?
Listen to your brave son cry.
Run to him with your swift feet,
For your son sorely needs to eat.”

The goat heard, and replied:

“Fly to your mother here, brave son,
Father knows not what is done.

His eyes are blinded by a spell,
So come and I shall feed you well.”

Marusia removed the goat skin and became human again. She nursed the child, weeping bitterly the whole time, saying, “My dearest child! I can see you only one more time because they are going to drive me far away. I shall not be able to hear the call.”

The servant and the child returned to the palace, where the boy slept until dawn.

Next day, the prince asked the servant, “Why is it that when you take the child for a walk he no longer cries?”

The servant said to the prince: “An evil spell has been cast upon your wife. She has been turned into a goat, and the daughter of the witch has been put in her place. When I take the boy for a walk, his real mother nurses him and he is happy again.”

The prince ordered the servant to take him to the goat. Picking up the boy, they went to the forest, where the servant called:

“Marusia, Marusia, are you nigh?
Listen to your brave son cry.
Run to him with your swift feet,
For your son sorely needs to eat.”

The goat heard, and replied:

“Fly to your mother here, brave son,
Father knows not what is done.
His eyes are blinded by a spell,
So come and I shall feed you well.”

Marusia removed the goat skin and resumed her human form. She nursed the child and said, “Now, my child, we will never be parted again!”

The prince threw the goat skin into a fire and, as the skin began to crackle in the flames, the witch sensed that her spell had been broken. She and her daughter ran away, never to be seen again.

The prince, Marusia, their son and the servant returned to the palace, where they lived happily together for many years.







Two Brothers

Once there were two brothers who lived with their wives in houses not too far from one another. The younger brother had four children, while the elder had no children at all.

The two brothers worked the fields together with their father and, when he passed on, they did not split up the land, as was usual. They carried on working together, but divided the harvest, as they say, "on even forks."

One year they planted a large crop of wheat, which grew well and ripened as it should. They seeded together, tended the field together, reaped and hauled the crop together and threshed it together. They then divided it evenly between the two of them.

That night the older brother could not sleep. "Did we divide the wheat evenly and fairly?" he thought. "My brother has many

children, and he needs more bread to feed his family. I will take him some of my portion, but I will do it so that he does not know, for he may refuse the offer.”

The older brother rose from his bed and added a bag of grain to the bin where his brother stored his wheat.

The younger brother, meanwhile, also could not sleep. He thought, “I wonder if the wheat was properly divided. My brother is older and has no children to help him; he must work much harder than I. He needs more bread to keep up his strength. I will sneak over to his bin and give him an extra bag of wheat.” After doing so, he returned to bed and slept well.

In the morning the two brothers went to their granaries and found that the wheat was at the same level as it had been when they first divided it.

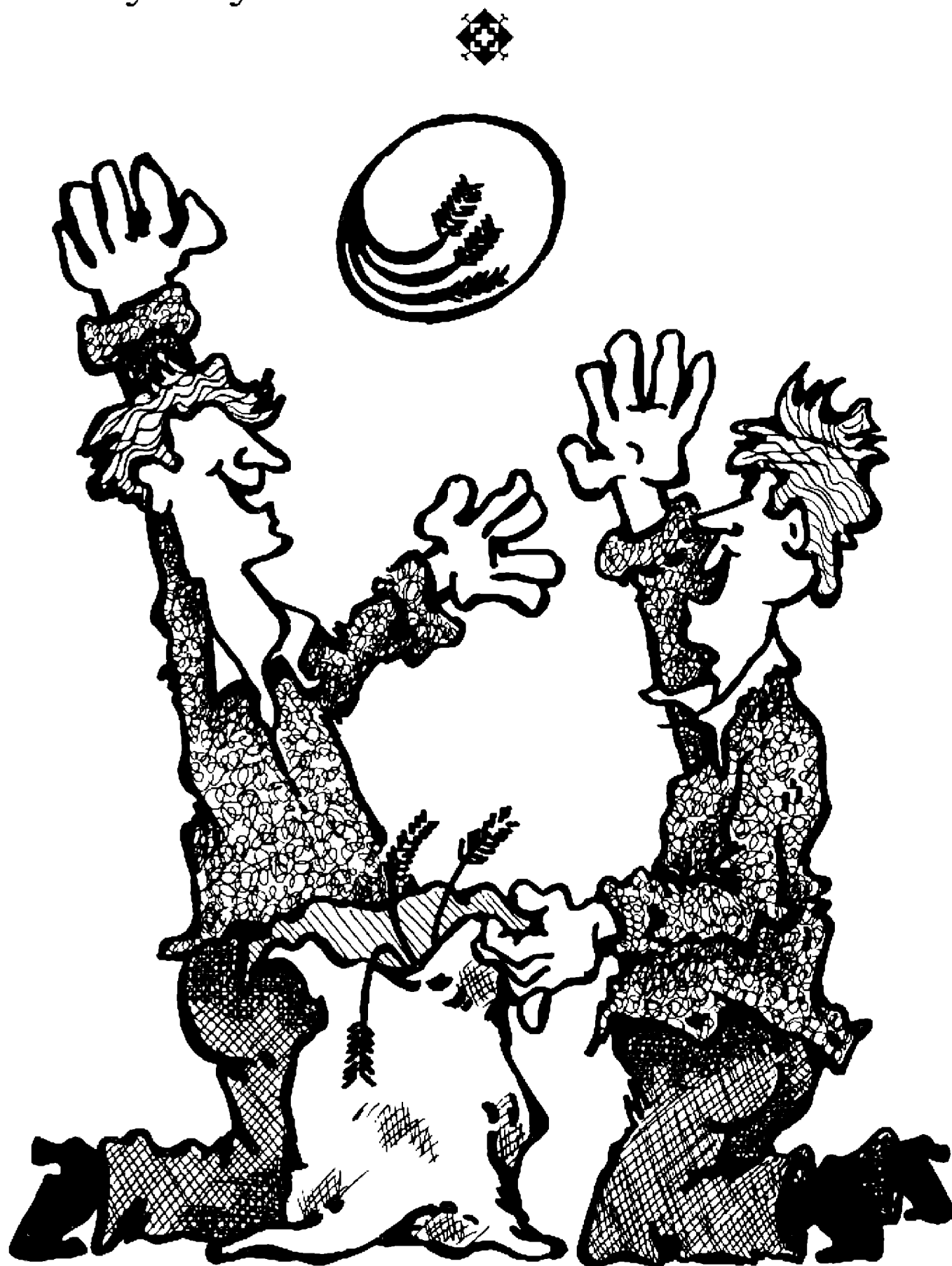
The two brothers were surprised by this, and each went to see how much grain the other had. Neither said anything to the other, thinking that perhaps they had been dreaming the whole thing.

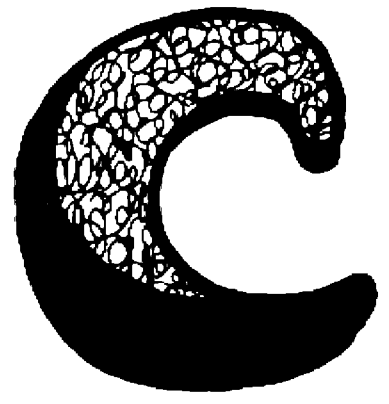
That night, each carried a sack of grain to the bin of his brother, and the next night and the next. They simply could not think how the grain always came to be evenly divided.

Finally, one night, they bumped into each other as they were exchanging grain. They

looked at each other and laughed. So that was what had been happening! Once things had been discussed, they returned to their beds and slept well.

All their lives, the two brothers lived in harmony, sharing and helping each other in a brotherly way.





Why Cats Hate Mice

There once was an old couple who lived in a house with a large pich in the kitchen. The old cat who lived with the people loved to sleep on the warm pich all day.

The old man put the cat outside at night, though, and that was hard on the cat in winter.

“This is not fair,” said the cat to himself. “I am doing nobody any harm, so why do they put me outside?”

The old cat called one of his children to him and said, “Go and see the Queen and ask if she will give me permission to stay in the house at night.”

After some time, the young cat returned with a piece of paper.

“The Queen was very nice; she wrote something on this piece of paper,” reported the young cat. “She said that it is a certificate which

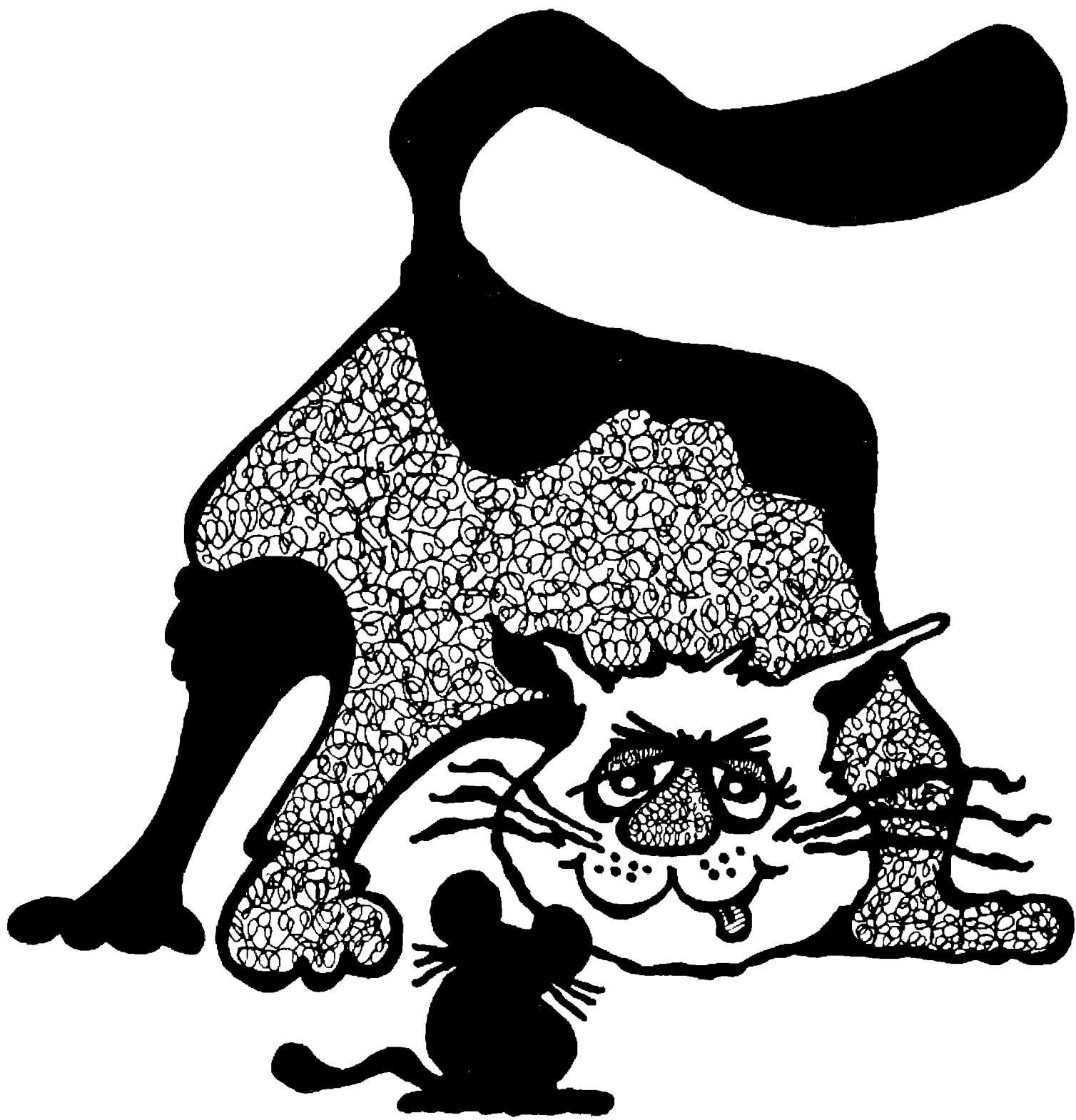
will allow you to stay in the house at night in the winter.”

The old cat thanked his daughter and hid the paper in a corner of the pich. That night, the old man threw the cat outside before he could get the paper. He could hardly wait for morning to come!

In the morning, when the cat was let in, he ran to the pich and found that the mice had shredded the paper into little teeny pieces.

“I will get even with those awful mice,” swore the cat. Ever since that day, cats chase mice, trying to get even with them.







The Wolf Who Wanted To Be Starosta

One day a Donkey was grazing in a meadow. His master had no sooner left him there than a big hungry Wolf appeared.

The Donkey thought to himself: "My master picked a fine time to leave me alone. Here comes a lean Wolf to eat me. I must make my brains work so that I can escape his jaws."

As the Wolf approached, the Donkey said: "Well, it is about time you got here. I have been waiting three days for you."

The surprised Wolf stopped in his tracks. "You were waiting for me? What for?" he asked.

The Donkey replied: "The village elders had a meeting to choose their new starosta, or leader, and there was great disagreement among them until someone suggested you for

the job. They were unanimous in their decision and they chose me to tell you the news.”

“It is lucky you found me,” said the Wolf. “I may not have come this way for many days.”

“Yes,” said the Donkey, “it is a lucky thing. Get on my back and I will carry you to the village where they are waiting for you.”

The Wolf climbed onto his back and they went to the village. When they arrived at the village the Donkey began to bray loudly.

“Why are you making so much noise?” asked the startled Wolf.

“I am calling all the villagers to come and greet their new starosta,” said the Donkey.

The villagers came to see what the noise was all about and, as soon as they saw the Wolf, they set upon him with sticks, boots and rocks. They beat the Wolf so badly that he could barely run away.

The Wolf dragged himself to a nearby field and spotted a haystack.

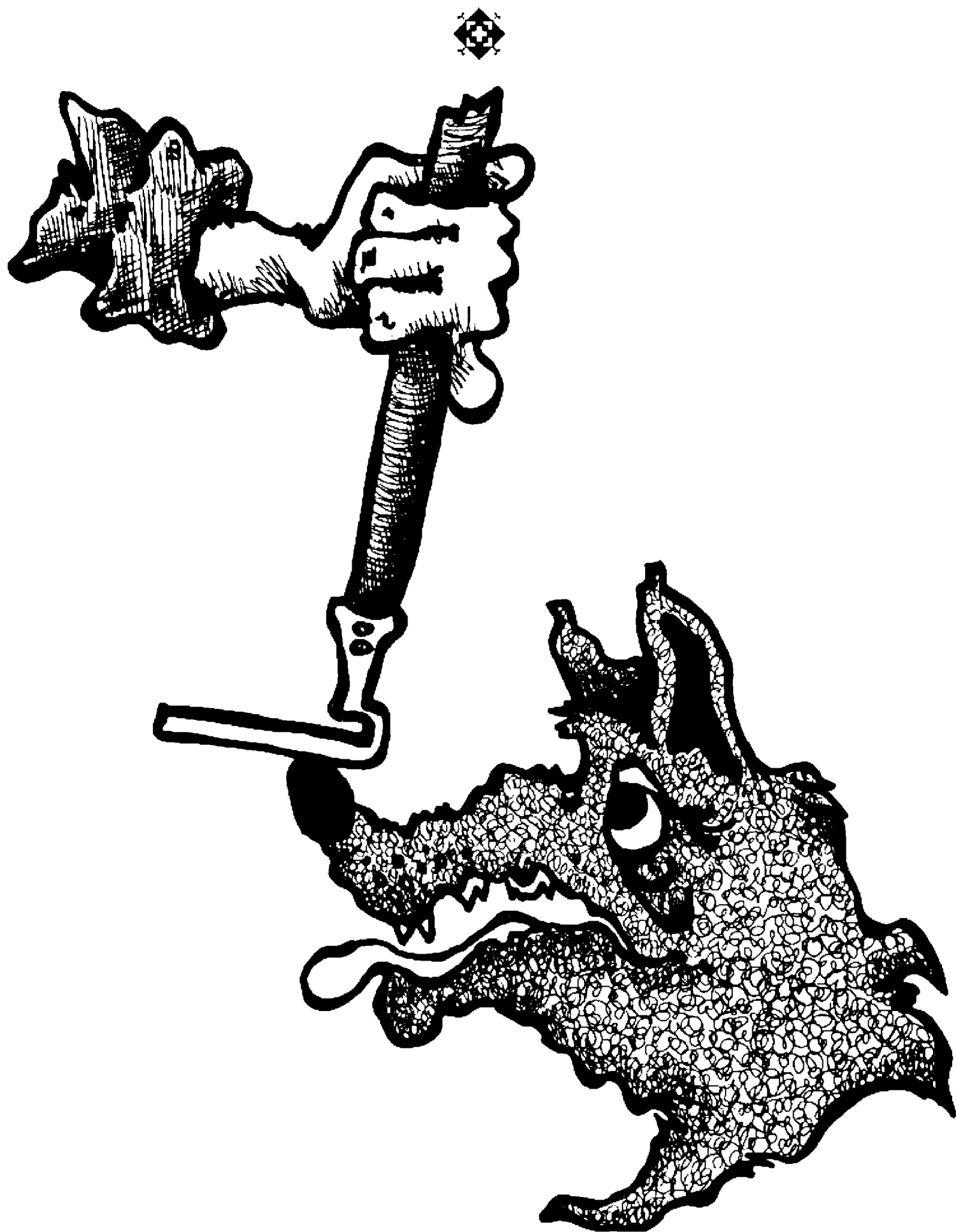
“If I could only crawl into that haystack and rest a while in peace, I should be able to recover,” said the Wolf.

A man was working nearby and, when he saw the Wolf, he hid around the haystack and watched the Wolf creep into the pile.

“Why did I listen to that Donkey?” the Wolf said. “My father was not a starosta and neither was my grandfather; how could I dream of being

one? What I deserve is another beating so I will learn to never be so foolish again.”

The man hiding behind the stack heard the Wolf. He raised his hoe and beat the Wolf with it, and the Wolf ran away, never to return.





Yalynka

In a small hut at the edge of a village, there once lived a man and a woman and their many children. They were as poor as could be, but they still lived together as a family.

Times were hard and food was unusually scarce, so they often went to bed hungry.

One year, as Christmas approached, the family prepared as best they could for the event. There was little food, but the mother was still able to provide a Christmas Eve supper.

The whole family had gone to the forest and found a pretty little tree that they set up as a yalynka, a Ukrainian Christmas tree. As they had no money for the traditional decorations, such as nuts covered with foil, paper chains, candles and special cookies, the younger children tied onto the tree a few scraps of cloth and ribbon they had saved all year.

Even though they were poor, they still had faith that things would turn out for the best, and the tree was a symbol of their faith.

That night, the parents lay in bed thinking about the happy Christmases they had known as children. They felt sorry that they could not afford to do more for their children.

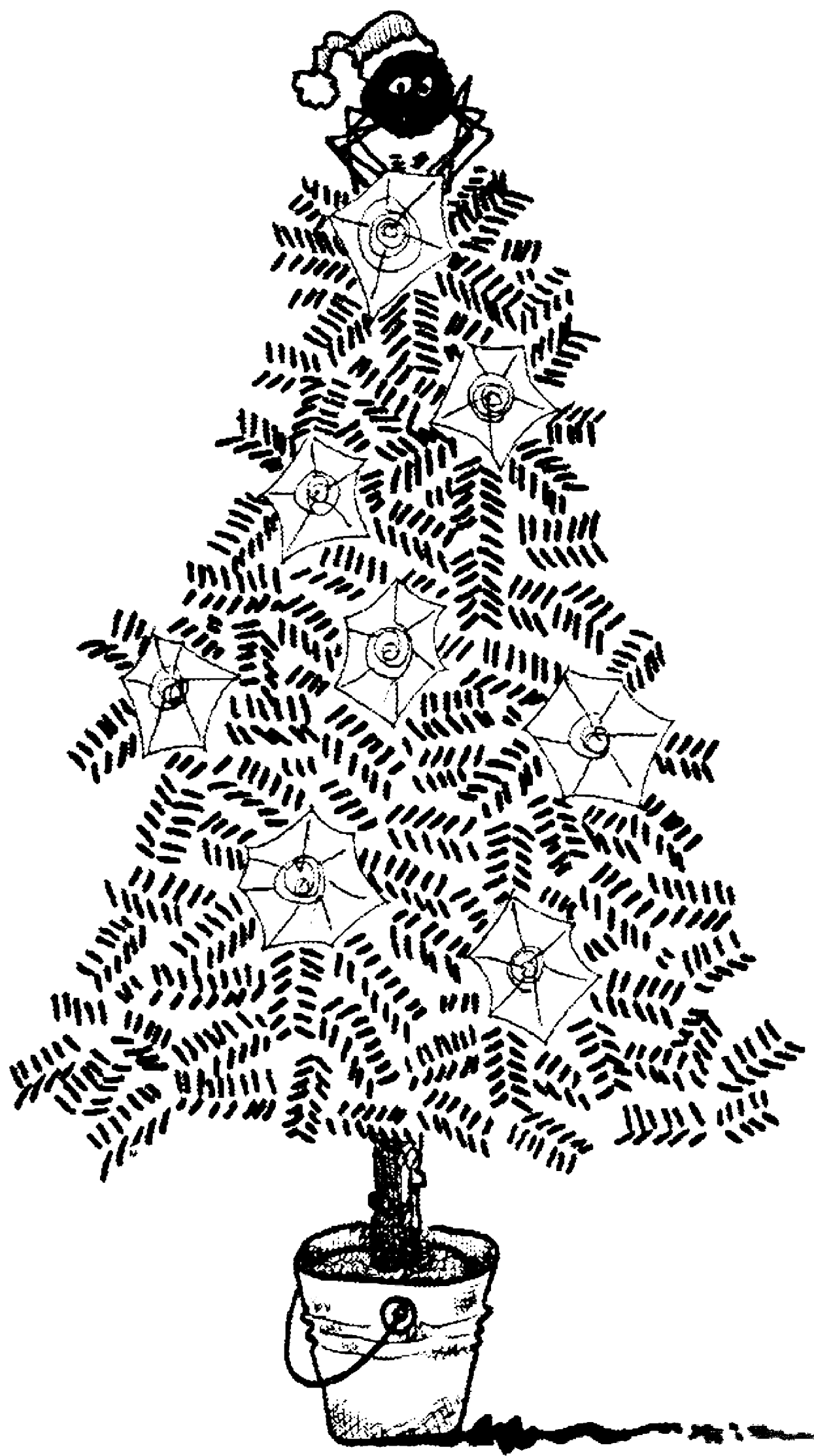
Living in the house was a small spider which the family had not even noticed. As nobody had ever threatened her and she felt perfectly safe in the house, she thought that she would do what she could to help the family celebrate Christmas.

The little spider set to work and spun a fine web all over the tree, finishing just as dawn broke. The bright sun streamed in through the window and lit up the web so that it shone like it was made of silver.

The children woke first, as children do on Christmas Day. Soon the house was filled with excited shouts of joy and wonder. The parents came to the tree and found that it had become the most beautiful thing they had ever seen.

From that day forth, people have respected spiders as creatures that God made, and they are left in peace wherever they may spin their webs.





Notes on the Tales

Page 11 The Cossacks and Death

The retelling of this story is adapted from versions found in several collections in both Ukrainian and English. The word “Cossack” is often spelled “Kozak,” but since “Cossack” has entered the English language with that spelling, I am using it rather than “Kozak.”

Death appears in folk tales from every land, probably because it is, after all, inescapable.

Page 15 The Crab and the Crow

This story, which is found in JB Rudnyckyj’s collection titled *Readings in Ukrainian Folklore*, was translated by Norman Harris of Endeavour, Saskatchewan.

The story is much like an Aesop’s fable, as are many of the shorter folk tales found in almost every culture.

Page 19 The Damsel and the Snake

This story is from P Kulish’s 1847 book *Ukrainskaya Narodnia Predania*, which was translated by J Zurowsky. Kulish was a prominent Ukrainian writer, historian, ethnographer and translator.

We are fortunate that he collected stories such as this, or they could have been lost forever. This story was collected by Kulish in Poltava province of Ukraine.

The “kurhan” or burial mound in the story used to be common in Ukraine. A burial mound is also known as a “mohyla.”

Page 23 The Falcon and the Bee

This is another of Kulish’s stories, from the Chyhyryn region of Ukraine. It is one of the explaining stories that tell us how certain things came to be in this world.

Page 27 A Flake of Gold

This is another wonderful story from Mary Shewchuk of Vegreville, Alberta. We can only hope that Mary remembers more stories, as they are priceless.

The story is a good lesson about greed; these lessons are common in folk tales.

Page 35 The Fly and the Millet

Sandra Fedoruk of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan spent her growing-up years close to her baba Maria Yakimchuk, and she heard many stories, most of which she still remembers.

Some of the stories are true, some are sad, some teach us a lesson and still others are just for fun, like this one is.

Page 39 The Fox and the Crayfish

With a theme similar to those found in many other folk tales, this story presents us with new characters in a familiar setting. It is the old tortoise and the hare idea, which still has something to teach us.

Page 43 Gypsy Tuman

Norman Harris gave me this story. He translated it from an old book called *Vesela Knezhochka*, which was printed in 1914.

Gypsies are common in folk tales of many lands, partly because they are believed to be so clever and able to get the better of those in authority. Certainly in this case, the gypsy is much more clever than the authority figure, the lord he fools.

Page 49 The Hungry Wolf

Another Kulish story, this one was found in the Borzny region of Ukraine.

This story is one of the repeating and building-the-rhythm type of stories that children find to

be so much fun. Of course, the Hungry Wolf gets his due in the end.

Page 55 The Mohyla of Svyryd

Kulish collected this story in Chernihiv province. It is quite rare, this telling being the only time I have run across it. A mohyla, or grave mound, used to be a fairly common sight in Ukraine.

Page 59 The Peasant and the Devil

This is another of the stories found in several collections. This particular retelling is based on a translation by J Zurowsky of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mr Zurowsky also translated "Kharkiv," which was published by Ethnic Enterprises in 1996. I am indeed pleased to have Mr Zurowsky's translations of many of the stories that appear in these books.

Page 67 The Prince and the Gypsy Woman

Kulish found this story in Martynovsk, Ukraine. He spent much time travelling and collecting the stories, and he did a fine job.

Magic eggs are fairly common in Ukrainian folk tales. They also figure in other forms of folklore, most notably as pysanky, or Ukrainian Easter eggs.

Page 73 Provisions for the Other World

This story comes from Robert Klymasz's fine work titled *Folk Narrative among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada*. Mr Klymasz spent a great deal of time collecting Ukrainian-Canadian folklore at a time when the people who knew these things were still alive and keeping the traditions alive as well.

Page 77 The Repentant Cossack

This tale was reconstructed from ideas gleaned from several sources. Often, people tell me parts of stories, hoping that I can provide the rest of it. In some cases, as more information comes along, I am able to do just that.

Page 85 The Rooster and the Hen

From Kulish's book, this story originated in the Borzny region of Ukraine. It is another of the repeating stories, which seems like it will never end. But it finally does, and everything works out well.

Page 101 The Stepmother

From Kulish's book, this story also originated in the Borzny region. I'm not sure why so many stepmothers in folklore are wicked, but it it could be that the child will always long for

its natural mother, and anyone who tries to take her place will not be able to do so.

Page 113 Two Brothers

Norman Harris translated this story from JB Rudnycky's collection, *Readings in Ukrainian Folklore*. Mr Harris has been collecting local and Canadian material concerning Ukrainians for many years, and I am pleased to be able to share some of his work with everyone.

Many stories about two brothers portray them as rivals or enemies, and it is refreshing to run across two brothers who can work together.

Page 117 Why Cats Hate Mice

Mary Shewchuk gave me this story. I have seen similar stories in other collections, but Mary's version is the only Ukrainian retelling of the story I have encountered.

Page 121 The Wolf Who Wanted to be Starosta

This story appears in several forms in collections from many lands. Sometimes it is a pig who rides the wolf into town, and sometimes it is a peasant. The result is always the same, though; the wolf gets beaten up because he is not too bright.

Page 125 Yalynka

A Yalynka is the Ukrainian version of a Christmas Tree. Such a tree is a fairly recent addition to Ukrainian tradition, having originated in the late 1800s. It did not take very long for stories about such a tree to appear, however.

This version is compiled from several versions found in other collections, including two stories which were sent to me by Ruth Classen of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, and one told to me by Joan Critchlow of Summerland, BC.

—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

[y] is pronounced as in yes

[kh] is pronounced as in Scottish loch

[zh] is pronounced as in vision

Pronunciation Guide & Glossary

bandura [ban-doó-ra] Ukrainian instrument,
similar to a lute

kurhan [koo-rhán] burial mound

mohyla [mo-hí-la] burial mound

paska [pás-ka] Easter bread

pich [pee-ch] clay or brick oven or stove

starosta [sta-rós-ta] head of village

tuman [too-mán] mist, fog

yalynka [ya-lín-ka] Ukrainian Christmas tree

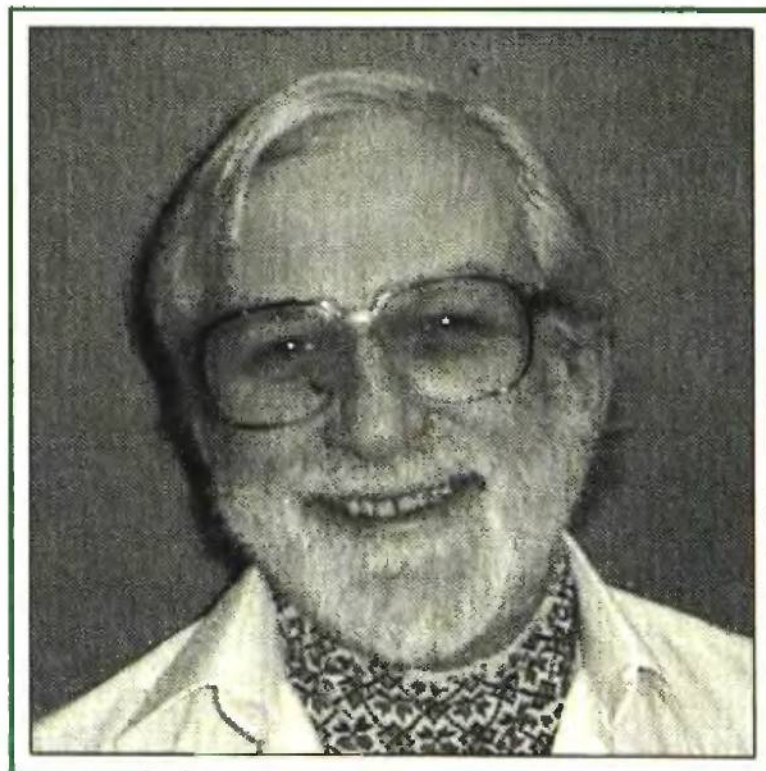
Yalynka

and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales Retold in English

This is the ninth book in a series which will contain all the Ukrainian folk tales available. There are thousands of such tales still to be collected and retold; this volume represents a tiny portion of the number.

Yalynka 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 another dimension to the enjoyment of the tales.

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