

Александр Кожиев

Ossetian fairy tales in English



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Ossetian tales are a wonderful world where the history, culture and philosophy of the people are intertwined. They are an integral part of Ossetian spirituality and are passed on from generation to generation, retaining their relevance and significance. Ossetian fairy tales carry a deep philosophical meaning. They teach respect for elders, love for the motherland, the value of friendship and brotherhood. Each fairy tale is not just a story, but a life lesson that helps to shape the moral values and identity of the people. These tales are not just a literary heritage, they are a living source of wisdom that continues to influence Ossetian culture and art. Their importance cannot be overestimated, as they help preserve the uniqueness and identity of the Ossetian people.

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Reading rules

A brief table to read the Ossetian proper names and terms used in this book.

Alphabet

Oss. alph. letter

Correspondence in the English alphabet (or explanation)

Correspondence in the French alphabet (or explanation)

#####

A a

A a, like ar in far in English

A a

ǎ

Æ æ

Æ æ

is pronounced like the English accentless “a”, as in the words above, amount, aside. It retains this pronunciation even under accent. In contrast to the open clear “a” it can be pronounced as “a” “through the teeth”.

It is important to distinguish between a and æ:

dar – keep; dær – even, too

dum – say, say; dæm – you have

Æ æ

ǎ

Б б

B b

B b

б

В в

V v

V v

ف / ف

Г г

G g

like g in go

G g

ج بال مصير، أو گ بال لهجة العراقية

Гъ гъ

Gh gh

The gh sound is a phonatory correspondence of the deaf h. It is close to Tajik ғ, French r

Gh gh

Le son gh est une correspondance phonatoire du h sourd. Il est proche du tadjik ғ, du français r
غ

Д д

D d

D d

د

Дж дж

J j

J j

ج

Дз дз

Dz dz

Dz dz

دز

Е е

Ye ye (like in the word “Yes”)

Ye ye

ي

Ё ё

Yo yo

Yo yo

يو

Ж ж

Zh zh

like s in pleasure

Zh zh

ج مثل ج باللهجة المغربية

З з

Z z

Z z

ز

И и

I i (Y y)

I i (Y y)

ي

Й й

Y y

Y y

ئ

К к

K k

K k

ك

Къ къ

K' k'

to pronounce k', you should try to pronounce the sound k, but abruptly interrupt, as if firing the sound. In this case, the air is not released, as when pronouncing "k"

K' k'

pour prononcer "k", il faut essayer de prononcer le son k, mais l'interrompre brusquement, comme si l'on tirait sur le son. Dans ce cas, l'air n'est pas relâché, comme lors de la prononciation du "k"

كْ

Л л

L l (always a harsh sound)

L l (toujours un son dur)

ل (صوت قوي دائم)

М м

M m

M m

م

Н н

N n

N n

ن

О о

O o

O o

او

П п

P p

P p

پ

Пъ пъ

P' p'

when pronouncing p', the larynx closes for a while, and the explosion is carried out by the air supply that was in the supraglottic region

P' p'

lors de la prononciation de p', le larynx se ferme pendant un moment et l'explosion est réalisée par la réserve d'air qui se trouvait dans la région supraglottique

پْ

P p

R r

Like the solid sound r in Spanish, Italian, Russian

R r

Comme le son solide r en espagnol, italien, russe

ر

C c

S s

S s

س

T t

T t

T t

ت

Тъ ть

T' t'

during pronunciation, the larynx closes for a while, and the explosion is carried out by the air supply that was in the supraglottic region

T' t'

lors de la prononciation, le larynx se ferme pendant un certain temps et l'explosion est réalisée par la réserve d'air qui se trouvait dans la région supraglottique.

ظ

حرف ط متوتر

أثناء النطق تنغلق الحنجرة لفترة، ويتم الانفجار عن طريق إمداد الهواء الذي كان موجوداً في المنطقة فوق المزمارية

Y y

U u

Like oo in moon

A long vowel

The combination of wæ (ua) is an open syllable

U u

Comme dans le mot

Une voyelle longue

La combinaison wæ est une syllabe ouverte.

و

صوت "و" طويل

Ф ф

F f

F f

ف

X x

H h

Н н

ح

Хъ

Q q

for the pronunciation of q, one should try to pronounce h, but, also, by abruptly interrupting, without letting the air out, as when pronouncing q. (See earlier).

Q q

pour la prononciation de q, il faut essayer de prononcer h, mais aussi en interrompant brusquement, sans laisser sortir l'air, comme lorsqu'on prononce q. (Voir plus haut).

ق

Ц ц

C c

C c

تس

Цъ цъ

C' c'

when pronouncing the sound, the larynx closes for a while, and the explosion is carried out by the air supply that was in the supraglottic region

C' c'

lors de la prononciation du son, le larynx se ferme pendant un certain temps et l'explosion est réalisée par la réserve d'air qui se trouvait dans la région supraglottique.

ز

عند نطق الصوت ز أو تس، تنغلق الحنجرة لفترة، ويتم الانفجار عن طريق إمداد الهواء الذي كان في المنطقة فوق المزمارية مثل تس متوتر

Ч ч

Č č

Č č

تش \ چ

Чъ чъ

Č' č'

when pronouncing the sound, the larynx closes for a while, and the explosion is carried out by the air supply that was in the supraglottic region

Č' č'

lors de la prononciation du son, le larynx se ferme pendant un certain temps et l'explosion est réalisée par la réserve d'air qui se trouvait dans la région supraglottique.

خ

عند نطق الصوت خ

أو تش، (تش متوتر)، تنغلق الحنجرة لفترة، ويتم الانفجار عن طريق إمداد الهواء الذي كان في المنطقة فوق المزمارية

Ш ш

Š š

Š š

ش

Щ щ

Shush shsh

Shsh shsh

ش

ش " في لكمة شرطة او شولة "

Ы ы

Y y / i

Y y / i

ي ب عد ص

Э э

E e

Like e in end

E e

Come

أي هـ

Ю ю

Yu yu

Yu yu

ي و

Я я

Ya ya

Ya ya

ي ا

About the author

Kozhiev Alexander Yurievich – is a postgraduate student of MEPhI, a teacher of Arabic at the Foreign Language Learning Center (FLLC) of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Graduated from:

– Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, during the studies mastered Arabic and French languages;

– National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, confirmed knowledge of Spanish;

– MGIMO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (double-degree Master's program with the Italian University of Cagliari), confirmed knowledge of Italian and German languages.

Educated in economics and politics, I still find myself looking back at Ossetian folk art. Ossetian fairy tales and tales have left the greatest imprint on me. These works should not be understood literally, but allegorically, because so much wisdom is hidden even where it seems to find little. All works of Ossetian literature are written in an allegorical way, and the reader has to guess it for him/herself.

I decided to write Ossetian fairy tales in English to better popularize Ossetian literature on a global scale. This will not only preserve cultural heritage, but also bring the wisdom of works of Ossetian folklore to a wider audience, opening new horizons for understanding and perception of

Ossetian culture. Subsequently, Ossetian tales will be translated into other foreign languages (Arabic, Persian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Swedish and Hungarian).

Kozhiev George Yurievič provided great help in collecting Ossetian fairy tales, recording them, as well as in editorial work, thanks to which we can enjoy the narration from the words of elderly people who talked about previously unwritten fairy tales.

Introduction

Ossetian tales are a wonderful world where the history, culture and philosophy of the people are intertwined. They are an integral part of Ossetian spirituality and are passed on from generation to generation, retaining their relevance and significance.

The Nart Saga is the crown jewel of Ossetian oral folk tradition. These epic poems recount the exploits of the Narts – heroic characters with supernatural powers. The Narts symbolize strength, wisdom and justice, and their stories inspire and teach.

Among the characters, *Soslan* (a fearless warrior known for his strength and skill), *Batraz* (a wise man and advisor whose words are always full of deep meaning) and *Satana* (a female warrior symbolizing a mother and protector) are particularly prominent.

Nart Saga will not appear in this edition, as it requires more detailed consideration. In this collection of Ossetian tales you will encounter the Ossetian worldview and stories that are useful for children and adults alike.

Ossetian fairy tales carry a deep philosophical meaning. They teach respect for elders, love for the motherland, the value of friendship and brotherhood. Each fairy tale is not just a story, but a life lesson that helps to shape the moral values and identity of the people.

These tales are not just a literary heritage, they are a living source of wisdom that continues to influence Ossetian culture and art. Their importance cannot be overestimated, as they help preserve the uniqueness and identity of the Ossetian people.

It is also important to note that Ossetian fairy tales are not only a national treasure, but also an important part of the world's cultural heritage. They take us back to an ancient era when wisdom was passed on through oral stories, and every word had weight.

The *international significance* of Ossetian fairy tales lies in their universality and timelessness. They touch upon themes that are relevant to people of all cultures:

- *The struggle between good and evil* – an eternal theme that never loses its relevance.
- *Strength of character and fortitude* – qualities that are valued in any society.
- *Respect for nature and ancestors* – a reminder that we must protect the world around us and remember our roots.

The hidden meaning of Ossetian tales suggests that wisdom has no boundaries. It penetrates through centuries and peoples, enriching the human experience. These tales teach us to appreciate the world we live in and the people we share it with.

Ossetian fairy tales are a symbol of how culture can be a bridge connecting different eras and peoples. They show that wisdom and knowledge are what make us truly human, and that they should be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Ossetian tales and fairy tales are rich in a variety of characters, each with a unique role and meaning. The main characters are *aldars* (wise elders or ancestors who often act as mentors and counselors. They symbolize a connection to the past and the transmission of knowledge), *animals* (in Ossetian tales, animals often have human traits and wisdom. They can be helpers of the heroes or even bearers of important messages), *wizards and sorcerers* (characters represent knowledge of secret sciences and magic. They can both help the heroes and become a source of trials), *warrior heroes* (brave and strong characters who protect their people and demonstrate valor and honor), *nymphs and nature spirits* (mystical beings who represent the forces of nature and can both help and hinder the heroes), *giants and monsters* (trials for the heroes, symbolizing the overcoming of difficulties and inner fears), and *ordinary people* (peasants, artisans, who represent everyday life and often become

unexpected heroes of fairy tales). Each character contributes to the development of the plot and the education of the listener or reader, as they help to convey the deep meaning embedded in the tales, making them a valuable source of knowledge and life lessons.

Ossetian tales and myths have much in common with Iranian, Indian and European traditions, reflecting common archetypes and motifs that are common to many cultures. Let us present just a few of these similarities:

Heroic figures: All these traditions have heroes who perform feats and protect their people, reminiscent of Rustam from the Iranian epic “Shahnameh” or bogatyr from Slavic mythology.

Wise elders: Characters like Aldars in Ossetian tales are similar to the sages and mentors of other cultures, such as Vasishtha in Indian epics or Merlin in English legends.

Mystical creatures: Nymphs and nature spirits resemble characters from Greek mythology and European fairy tales, as well as apsaras from Indian mythology.

Villains and monsters: The giants and monsters that appear in Ossetian tales have analogs in the myths of the Cyclopes, the demon Rakshasas and various European dragons and trolls.

These similarities point to common human themes and universal stories that resonate across cultures despite geographic and language barriers. Characters and plots reflect universal values, fears, hopes and dreams that are part of the human experience around the world.

Let's quickly familiarize ourselves with our fairy tales!

How a mouse got married

Once upon a time, there was a mouse. It occurred to him to get married. He was very proud, so all mouse girls seemed unworthy to him. He was looking for the daughter of someone stronger than him.

So he went to the Moon, about whom it was said that there was no one stronger than him in the world.

– “Moon!”, – he said to him. “I am looking for the daughter of the strongest man in the world. They say in our land that there is no one stronger than you, and I would like to be related to you.”

– “Yes”, – the Moon answered to him. “I am strong beyond words, and there is no place or nook on earth where my light does not penetrate when I walk across the sky at night. But when the Sun rises in the morning, my light gradually dims and finally disappears. Only in the evening, when the Sun goes down and its light ceases to shine on the earth, does my power return to me and I illuminate the vast earth again. No, mouse, the Sun will be stronger than me: go to him!”

So the mouse went to the Sun.

– “Sun”, – she said to him. “I am looking for the daughter of the strongest man in the world to marry. And there is a rumor that you are the strongest in the world. Will you give your daughter for me?”

– “It is true that I am strong and powerful”, – replied the Sun. “And when I rise in the morning, the darkness of the night dissipates without a trace. The stars and the Moon himself do not dare to shine in my presence, their light on earth fades before my light, and they cannot be seen at that time from the earth. But there is someone stronger than me. It is the cloud that obscures my light, that shuts out the earth from me. So go to the cloud.”

So, the mouse went to the cloud and made his proposal. The cloud thought about it and said:

– “It was truly said by the Sun: his light is strong, and the stars and the Moon pale before him, but it cannot shine on the earth when I cover the sky with a great carpet, and it cannot be seen then. But neither can I resist the wind. When it blows, it tears me to shreds and scatters me across the sky... No, the wind is stronger than me!”

So the mouse went to the wind. But even the wind did not recognize himself as the strongest.

– “It is true”, – he said. “I'm strong and I can destroy a cloud with a single blow. But there's someone stronger than me. There are bulls in the field: even if there are only a couple of them, I can't

do anything to them. Calmly, peacefully they walk down the lane as if they don't feel me. They'll be stronger than me.”

The mouse turned to the bulls. The bulls told her:

– “We are strong, but sometimes the plow can overpower us when it gets caught on something in the ground. And even when the master harnesses four more pairs to us, even then we can't do anything. The plow is stronger than us.”

The mouse went to the plow. The plow said to her:

– “It is true that I am strong, and I cut the damp earth without any difficulty. But there is one root that often stops me, and I cannot cut it. Go therefore, mouse, to him, he is much stronger than I.”

The mouse had to turn to the root.

– “Yes, I am strong”, – replied the root. “And the plow cannot cut me another time. But a mouse, even the smallest one, can chew me up very easily. So the mice are stronger than me.”

– “Aha!” – exclaimed the mouse. “So, there's no one stronger than us, mice!”

So he married a simple mouse.

The goat and the hare

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman. They had a daughter. They had only one goat out of their livestock.

One day the old man left home and instructed his daughter to take the goat to the steppe and graze her to its fullest.

The girl drove the goat to the steppe, grazed her and then brought her home. In the evening the old man asked the goat how she had been grazing. The goat answered that it was bad. Then the old man sent his daughter away from home.

The next day the old man gave his wife the task of grazing the goat. She drove the goat, grazed her and brought her home in the evening. The old man asked the goat how she had been grazed. She said that the old woman had grazed her in a bad manner too. The old man chased his wife out of the house.

On the third day the old man changed his clothes and sent the goat to graze. He grazed her well, and the goat ate enough grass. In the evening he brought the goat home, dressed in his old clothes and asked the goat how the old man had grazed him. The goat said about the old man that he had grazed her in a bad manner too and she had not had enough grass.

So, the old man tied the goat with ropes and went out to sharpen his knife to slaughter her. While he was sharpening the knife, the goat broke the ropes and ran into the forest. In the forest the goat went into the hare's house and climbed on the stove. In the evening the hare came home, saw the goat and was afraid to enter the house. He sat down at the threshold and began to cry.

A bear passed by and asked him:

– “Why are you crying?”

The hare told him about his grief and the bear sat down beside him. A wolf appeared and asked the hare:

– “What happened to you, why are you crying?”

The hare told him about his grief. The wolf sympathized and sat down beside him – he could not help in any other way. The fox came, and the hare told her about his grief too. Finally, the rooster came and asked the hare:

– “What happened to you, what are you crying about?”

When the hare told him about his grief, he stood at the door and shouted three times at the top of his voice:

– cock-a-doodle-do!

The goat was frightened and flew off the stove, her legs broke, and she gave up her life.

The hare and his friends had a great feast. They ate the goat's fatty meat, leaving her legs and horns for the old woman.

The jinn king and the poor man

Once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman. They lived in poverty. The old man went hunting, and if the hunt was successful, they were fed, but if the hunt was unsuccessful, they sat in their poor shack hungry.

One day the old man hunted all day and met no one. And his wife hoped that he would bring something and they would eat.

The old man was tired and thirsty. He saw a lake and went to it to drink water. But when he reached the water, someone grabbed him by his beard and started pulling towards him.

The old man began to beg:

– “I am an old man, let me go, don't pull me towards you!”

But the one who was pulling him replied:

– “I will turn you into a young man, if only you can be useful!”

And dragged the old man after him. Out of the lake a door opened into the sea. They passed these doors and went on. From the sea a door to the land opened, and they went on land.

The Jinn King lived there. He greeted the old man with joy and said to him:

– Hello, guest! The stakes of my wattle are missing one head, and I will stake your head unless you fulfill my demand. If you do, I will give you my daughter.

The poor man looked around, and when he saw the human heads on the stakes of the wattle, his heart fell: “And my head will be cut off!” he thought.

The Jinn King gave three tasks and promised to marry his daughter to the one who would fulfill all three of them. Pointing to a field lined with stacks of wheat, he gave the poor man the first task:

– Put the wheat grain in the barns before morning, but make sure that the stacks are not moved.

The poor man thought about it and became sad:

– “He makes me do the impossible! He'll have my head on the stake of the wattle!”

And he was no longer an old man: the one who pulled his beard made him a young man, and when the daughter of the Jinn King saw him, she liked him. She saw that he was sitting sad, and asked:

– “What's wrong with you? Why are you sitting sad?”

– “What makes me sad?” he answered. “Your father has given me a task that is utterly impossible to accomplish. I will fail, and my head will be cut off.”

– “Don't let it make you sad,” said the daughter of the Jinn King. “We shall accomplish everything! In the evening I will call all the mice I have, and they will pour all the wheat grain into the barns.”

In the evening, the daughter of the Jinn King calls the mice with a shout:

– “Mice, wherever you are, come here and pour into the barns until morning all the grains that are in the haystacks, so that not a single grain is lost and that the haystacks are not moved from their places.”

All the mice gathered, which only existed in the world, and did not leave a single grain in the haystacks, poured them into the barns, and the haystacks were not even moved.

The Jinn King got up in the morning and asked the young man:

– “Well, did you do anything?” And the king's daughter warned him:

– Your father will ask you naggingly, but don't be afraid, do your work, and let it be what pleases God.

The Jinn King, without saying anything, gave him a second task:

– “A church must appear in my courtyard overnight, but it must be made of wax and nothing else.”

The young man, poor man, became anxious and thought, “God has cursed me.” He sits sad again, and the king's daughter said to him:

– “Don't despair, it's easy to do. Today I will gather all the bees I have, and by morning the church will be ready.”

She called out to the bees and said to them:

– “Build a church of pure wax overnight!”

The evening came. The bees began to work so hard that by morning the church was ready.

In the morning, the Jinn King got up, went outside, looked around the courtyard and saw the church of pure wax.

And the king's daughter warned the young man in advance:

– “Don't wait for the third task, it's impossible, and I can't help you. We must both run away from here!”

The young man got into the boat with the girl, and they started to flee; the Jinn King found out about it when they were already far away, and sent a large chase after them.

Meanwhile, the fugitives came to the shore of the lake, and the daughter of the Jinn King, who had a magic gift, made it so that they turned into a pair of ducks, a male and a female, they began to frolic in the lake.

The chase also went to the shore of the lake – there was no one. They searched everywhere, but found nothing, and they paid no attention to the ducks.

The chase turned back to the Jinn King. He asked them:

– “Well, what did you come back with? Didn't you catch up with them?”

– “We didn't see anything anywhere!” – They answered. “We only noticed two ducks, a male and a female, in one lake.”

The Jinn King was saddened:

– “I forgot to warn you, so you did not recognize them. It was them. Chase them down, catch them and bring them here.”

And the daughter of the Jinn King had a gift of prophecy. She said to the young man:

– “Father has recognized us! There is a new chase after us, let's run!”

They ran, looking back, and saw a chase behind them in the distance. The girl said to the young man:

– “We can't run any farther. I will make a church appear here; one of us will become a priest and the other a deacon, and we will not be recognized.”

A church appeared and they became a deacon and a priest.

The members of the chase saw the church and thought that the fugitives might hide there. But seeing only the priest and deacon there, who were performing divine service, they were ashamed to interrupt them and turned back on their way. And on the way back they looked everywhere for the fugitives, but found them nowhere; so they returned home.

The Jinn King asked:

– “Well, have you found them?”

And they answered again:

– “We did not meet even local people on the way. Only in one place a priest and a deacon were performing divine service in a church, and we did not see anyone else.”

The Jinn King said:

– “It was them, but you did not recognize them. Now you won't be able to find them anymore! My daughter failed to recognize herself! She was a rascal and she ran away like a rascal! There's nothing we can do about her now, let's leave them.”

The daughter of the Jinn King recognized that the chase had turned back, and said to her husband:

– “Now let's go without fear!”

They came to his house. The old woman had already died, but her house under a thatched roof stood as before.

– “Here is our house for you!” – said the young man to his wife. “This is how poor I have lived!”

And his wife replied:

– “Property is a matter of time. Don't worry about that.”

She made a request to God:

– “Let there be tall houses on this spot before morning!”

And in the morning they woke up and saw tall houses. And the daughter of the Jinn King said again:

– “Let these houses be filled with gold ornaments as needed! Let there be garments for my husband of costly fabrics to dress himself from head to toe! And let the best of women's garments appear for myself, with two shifts!” And she also asked: “God, let there be a table the whole length of our house, filled with abundant food and drink!”

The husband and wife sat down at the table, partook of their food, and had heartfelt conversations with each other about their love. And they would not admire each other. Then she said again:

– “Let a guard stand at our doors, that we may be rid of idle visitors.”

So they made a life and live to this day.

As you have not seen them, so may you see no other misfortune, no other disease, and may God grant us a safe deliverance from this place.

The poor man and the rich khan

In ancient times, a certain man called his son to him and gave him three instructions: never take orphans into your home, but support them outside your family; never lend money to someone richer than you; never reveal your innermost thoughts to your wife.

When he gave these instructions to his son, he asked him to fulfill these instructions sacredly, not to violate them in any way, for violating them would put the son in a difficult situation.

Soon the father died, and the son wanted to experience in his life the truth of his father's instructions. He took orphans into his house to bring them up. Then he lent money to khan, who was richer than him. He kept the orphans well and did not abuse them in anything.

When the agreed term passed, he asked the khan to pay his debt. The khan got angry, ordered his servants to beat him and threatened him:

– “What money are you talking about? If you remind me of your debt one more time, a great misfortune will befall your head!”

In retaliation, the angry poor man stole a herd of khan's horses and put his tamga on them. But he was not satisfied with that. Thinking that this revenge was not enough for the khan, he decided to kidnap his son from him as well. For he did so: he kidnapped his only son from the khan and sent him to school to study.

The Khan began to search for his son and horses. His search was in vain, and then he turned to a sorceress for help and advice:

– “I can't find my son and the horses that were stolen from me!” – he said to her. “Such a case has never happened! Help me!”

The sorceress said to him:

– “Do not look for them in vain, and do not demand them from anyone except the one from whom you borrowed the money and have not repaid.”

The khan had to be sure of this, so he asked the sorceress to find out from the poor man's wife whether her husband had really stolen his son and horses.

The sorceress came to the poor man's wife's house and, as if sympathizing with her, said:

– “Thy husband has suffered innocently, he asked for payment of the debt, and the rich khan ordered him to be beaten.”

The wife of the poor man said to the sorceress in reply:

– “I know nothing about it, my husband has told me nothing.”

– “What kind of a wife are you in such a case, if your husband does not tell you about his affairs!” – said the sorceress to her.

So she left this time without knowing anything. In the evening the poor man's wife told her husband about the visit of the sorceress. He answered her only this way:

– “To whom what he has got, that is what belongs to him.”

The next day the sorceress came again to the poor man's wife and asked:

– “Well, again you have learned nothing?”

– “He told me only this,” she replied: “Whoever gets what, let it be good for him!”

The rejoiced sorceress hurriedly came to the khan and said to him:

– “Did I not tell you that the horses and your son are with the one from whom you borrowed money and did not pay!”

Then the khan calls the poor man to him and asked him:

– “Do you have my son and horses?”

– “I have them!” – answered the poor man.

– “In that case I cede my khanate to you, you should be the khan, not me.”

Meanwhile, the orphans, whom the poor man had taken into his family and had never wronged, turned against him, looking for an opportunity to kill him. And the poor man said:

– “How right my father was! I was convinced by my own experience of the truth of his instructions.”

The Wolf and the Seven Goats of Gazza

Once upon a time there was a poor man. His name was Gazza. He had only seven goats, nothing else was in his household. The first goat had one belly, the second had two bellies, the third three bellies, the fourth – four, the fifth – five, the sixth – six and the seventh had seven bellies.

Only around noon did the poor man let all seven goats go to graze.

One day, when they were grazing, the one-bellied goat said to the two-bellied one:

– “I've had enough, my belly is full. If you are full, let's go home.”

And the one-bellied goat replied:

– “My belly is still empty, wait for me.”

– “No, I'm going home”, – said the one-bellied goat. She was walking along the road, and a wolf meets her.

– “Whose are you?” – he asked.

– “I'm the goat of Gazza”, – she replied.

– “And what is that on your head and what is it for?” – The wolf points to her horns.

– “These are the tips for Gazza's pitchfork, in case he needs them.”

– “And what's that dangling between your legs? The wolf points to her udders.”

And that's a soft udder full of milk for my baby goat.

The wolf grabbed the goat and ate it. Then he went further along the road, stretched out there and watched, looking around.

The two-bellied goat has filled both its bellies, is satiated and turns to the three-bellied goat:

– “Let's go home!”

– “Wait a little”, – answered the one. “My belly is still empty.”

– “I will not wait for you”, – replied the two-bellied goat. “I'm going home.”

She went along the road and came across a wolf who was guarding the place.

– “Whose goat are you?” – asked the wolf.

– “I'm Gazza's goat”, – she replied.

– “What's that on your head?”

– “Gazza's pitchfork tips.”

- “And what's that dangling between your legs?”
- “It's a soft udder full of milk for my goat.”
- “I must eat her too!” – rejoiced the wolf. He jumped up to the goat, grabbed it and ate it. Meanwhile, the three-bellied goat has had enough and said to the four-bellied one:
- “Let's go home!”
- “Wait a little”, – replied the three-bellied goat. “My belly is not quite full yet.”
- “Well, then stay in good health”, – said the three-bellied goat. “And I'm leaving.”

She went leisurely along the road. The wolf, already satiated, lay there and listened in order to catch anyone else who would show up. He raised his head and saw a goat walking along the road.

- “There is another goat”, – said the wolf to himself. “Today was a good day with God's help.” The three-bellied goat came closer, and the wolf asked her:
 - “Whose goat are you?”
 - “I'm Gazza's goat”, – she replied.
 - “And what is that on your head?” – he asked her.
 - “And these are the tips for Gazza's pitchforks,” she answered just like the other goats.
 - “And what is that dangling between your legs?”
 - “And this is for my baby goat with a soft udder full of milk.”
- The wolf seized the goat, and he pulled it up and said to himself:
- “I'm lucky today! And this goat tastes good.”

The three goats made the wolf completely bloated. Then he began to roll on the ground, and he felt better.

Meanwhile, the four-bellied goat has had enough and turns to the five-bellied goat:

- “Let's go home, five-bellied goat, our friends are probably resting at home.”
- The five-bellied goat replied:
- “My one belly is not yet full, wait for me, and then we'll go home together.”
 - “No, I'm going away”, – replied the four-bellied goat.

She went down the road, and the well-fed wolf was sleeping there. When he heard the footsteps, he woke up and raised his head, saw the goat and rejoiced.

- “God has given me a goat again”, – he said to himself. “She came to me by herself!”
- “Whose goat are you?” – asked the wolf.
- “I'm Gazza's goat.”
- “What's that on your head?”
- “Those are Gazza's pitchfork tips.”
- “What's that dangling between your legs?” – he asked her.
- “And that's a soft udder full of milk for my goat.”

The wolf pounced on the goat, grabbed her and ate her. Meanwhile, the five-bellied goat has had enough and turns to the six-bellied one:

- “Let's go home! It's time for us to go back!”
- “Wait for me a little, my belly is not quite full yet”, – asked the six-bellied one.
- “No”, – replied the six-bellied one, “I'm leaving, I won't wait for you.”

She went home along the familiar road. And the well-fed wolf is already waiting to see if anyone else is coming, and thinks:

“If there is no one else, I will leave here.”

The wolf sees a five-bellied goat coming.

– “God has given another one”, – said the wolf to himself. “I'll wait for that goat too. I am fed, but how can I refuse eating it? I'd rather have a stomachache than let that goat live!”

- “Whose goat are you?” – asked the wolf, when the five-bellied goat is close to him.
- “I am Gazza's goat.”
- “And what kind of man is Gazza?”

– “Gazza is a modest man, a hard worker”, – replied the goat.

The wolf was afraid that Gazza might come out of the village and kill him. He looked around and asked the goat:

– “What is that on your head?”

– “Those are Gazza's pitchfork tips.”

– “And what is that dangling between your legs?”

– “Those are round stones used to kill wolves.”

– “I'll show you now how to kill wolves!” – said the wolf. He jumped on a five-bellied goat and ate it.

The six-bellied goat felt that it has had enough and speaks to the seven-bellied goat:

– “It's getting dark, it's time for us to go home. If I leave, you'll be alone here.”

– “Wait a bit!” – asked the seven-bellied goat. “Now I'll fill my seventh belly and then we'll go together.”

The six-bellied goat replied:

– “I'll walk slowly, you'll catch up with me on the way.”

She walked slowly along the road, and the seven-bellied goat got carried away and stayed in the pasture.

The six-bellied goat reached the wolf. The wolf saw that goat and thought about it:

– “I'll pull it up, of course, but I've had enough of it. All right”, – he said to himself. “I'll eat a little, and let the rest be for tomorrow.”

It was already getting dark. The wolf killed the goat, ate as much as he could, and put the rest for tomorrow. He stretched out on the road and thought like this:

– “From such satiety it will be difficult for me to go home, I will rest here, and then I will go.”

Meanwhile, a seven-bellied goat appeared on the road.

– “Another goat”, – said the wolf. “And how should I deal with it? Well, I'll hold her up, or she will run away, and tomorrow morning I'll eat her together with the rest of the other goat.”

The seven-bellied goat came to the wolf.

– “Whose goat are you?” he asked.

– “I am Gazza's goat.”

– “And what kind of man is Gazza?”

– “Gazza is a hunter who beats wolves.”

– “And what's that on your head?” – asked the wolf.

– “And these are iron sticks used to kill wolves.”

– “What is that dangling between your legs?” asked the wolf.

– “These are round stones used to kill wolves”, – replied the goat.

– “Ah”, said the wolf to himself. “Things are not going well!”

He decided to run away, left the goat alive, forcibly went to the roadside and, heavy with satiety, stretched there. The seven-bellied goat saw the scraps on the road and said:

– “Ah, that's what the wolf has done! He ate all my friends! Only at dusk, the seven-bellied goat reached home.”

Gazza asked her:

– “Why did you come home so late? Where are your friends?”

The goat answered to him:

– “My friends were torn and eaten by a wolf, I was the only one who escaped.”

– “Tell me, where, on what road did all this happen?”, – asked Gazza.

The goat told him where the wolf was.

Gazza grabbed his gun and hurried on his way.

But the wolf was lying there, unable to get up, just looking up from below, watching. Gazza can't see him yet because the wolf is stretched out on the roadside.

When he reached the place, the goat had mentioned, Gazza looked around. He was sure that the wolf was somewhere near him.

When he saw Gazza approaching him, the wolf tried to run, but he could not run fast, weighed down with exhaustion. Meanwhile, Gazza noticed him and started to catch up with him. It is hard to catch up with a satiated wolf! Gazza quickly caught up with him, shot him with his rifle and killed him.

Gazza returned home. He was left with one saved seven-bellied goat. He began to live happily ever after and has lived until today.

A deer, a bear and two hedgehogs

Once upon a time there were two hedgehogs. They lived in the forest in a hollow tree.

One day a woodcutter went to the forest and cut down the hollow tree. He brought it home and cut it into big pieces to make it easier to stoke. The woodcutter's wife took some logs and heated the stove with them. She wanted to cook a meal for her hungry husband.

The hedgehogs felt the heat and prayed to God:

– “O God, save us, and we shall give you thanks with ahsarfambalams from the lungs of the deer and honey on the chest of the bear!”

A stench came from the hedgehogs.

– “What stinking wood is this!” – said the mistress and threw the wood out of the stove.

The hedgehogs were afraid to run away during the day, so they hid, and at night they got out of the village. By morning they were already in the steppe and there they agreed that one of them would settle on one mound, and the second – on another, which was far away from the first.

So they did. Each lurked on his own mound. Meanwhile, a deer approached the first hedgehog. The hedgehog talked to him and offered him a wager:

– “Let us race against each other”, – he said. “On this condition: whoever of us reaches the next mound first can slaughter and eat the one who has fallen behind.”

And he pointed out to the deer the mound on which the second hedgehog was sitting.

The deer thought to himself: “How can that hedgehog outrun me?” And so he agreed.

And they lined up and said: “Let's run!” and they started running. The deer rushed forward with all his might, and the hedgehog ducked into the hedgerow and hid there.

When the deer reached the mound, the hedgehog said to him:

– “Where did you disappear? I am already waiting for you!”

The deer was very surprised:

– “Let's run again!” asked he the hedgehog.

– “All right”, – said the hedgehog. “Let's run back to our mound!”

The deer started to run, and the second hedgehog also snuck into the bush and hid. The deer ran as fast as he could, but when he reached the mound, he was surprised to see the hedgehog there.

– “Why are you so late”, – the hedgehog said to him, “I've been here for a long time!”

So the deer lost the bet, and the hedgehogs slaughtered him. They hid the carcass of the deer and went to the forest to look for honey. They found honey in a high hollow tree, took out the honeycomb and sat down in the tree.

Meanwhile, a bear was passing by the area. When he saw the hedgehogs, they had already been eating the honey.

– “Give me some honey too!” – asked the bear.

And they answered him:

– “Get it yourself!”

– “Show me where the honey is!” – said the bear to them.

– “There, you see, in the tree, the bees are flying there.” The bear climbed up the tree, took out some honeycomb and asked the hedgehogs:

– “How do I get them down?”

– “Lie down on your back and put the honeycomb on your chest, so you can bring them down to the ground.”

The bear obeyed the hedgehogs' advice. He lay down on his back, flew down from the top of the tree and crashed to his death.

The hedgehogs slaughtered the bear; they also brought the carcass of a deer. They made ahsarfambals from the deer's lungs, piled the honey on the bear's chest and prayed to the God:

– “O God, we thank Thee! You saved us, and we fulfill our word to you: we give thanks with honey on the bear's chest and ahsarfambals made of reindeer lungs!”

Widow's son

Once upon a time there lived a sorceress and Verahan the beautiful, the daughter of an aldar, a recluse of the tower. She was an unusually slender girl. Word about her spread throughout the world. The aldar did not give her away to anyone, though many people were trying to marry her. He kept her in a tower, and the tower was such that no one could find its doors without destroying its top.

One day the aldar announced:

– “I will only marry my daughter to the man who can destroy her tower.”

And the tower was unusually tall. The aldar gave a deadline of two days:

– “Whoever can destroy the tower will be my son-in-law”, – he said. “Let everyone try his prowess!”

The suitors began to flock from all sides. There were suitors from the Nart people. The sorceress's son showed up too. Everyone wanted to destroy the tower of the aldar daughter, but none of the suitors could think of a way.

The sorceress's son began to go around the people, hoping to find a good man among them. He entered a small house and found a widow with a boy lying in a cradle in front of her.

– “Do you have no one else?” – asked the sorceress's son.

– “There is no one else besides this child and myself”, – the widow answered him.

Then the boy in the cradle tore his bandages and turned to the son of the sorceress:

– “I am ready to fulfill your wishes!”

(And this boy was pointed out to her son by his mother, the sorceress: “There is such a young man born there, check him up!”) The son of the sorceress rejoiced and said to the boy:

– “May God give you years of life! You are the one I need, you will be useful to me.”

The boy made himself dressed and said;

– “I'm going out of the house!”

The sorceress's son took him, and they appeared before the assembled people. And on the way, the sorceress's son made a deal with the boy:

– “We shall do this in such a way: I will load a cannon with you and shoot you at the top of the tower. Maybe you'll be able to destroy it. There is no other means.”

– “All right!” – said the boy. “That's a good idea! I agree; if I get to the top of the tower and hold on there, I will proceed to destroy it with my heels; but if I fall off-anything is possible-then you be sagacious and don't let me touch the ground, or it will be my death.”

And he also added:

– “When you carry me, do not put me to the ground until you have carried me across the seven rivers.”

They loaded a cannon with the boy and shot him at the top of the tower. The boy got there, began to strike his heel from one side or the other and thus destroyed the tower. And the sorceress's son was watching him from below, making sure that he did not fall from there. Then the tower began to shake and the boy fell from it. The sorceress's son put up his hem, caught the boy and began to carry him across the rivers. When the sorceress's son carried him across the second river, Sirdon,

the evil man, learned that if the boy was put on the ground, he would die and the girl would not go to the sorceress's son.

So Sirdon decided to deceive him. To prevent the sorceress's son from recognizing him, Sirdon changed his clothes and took on a different appearance.

The sorceress's son had already carried the boy across the second river and across the third. Then Sirdon was ahead of him and said:

– “Good man, where else are you carrying him? He is already dead, and the tower has already been destroyed, and the girl is passing by you into someone else's hands.”

But the sorceress's son did not believe him and carried the boy further. He carried him across another river – the fourth. He kept on his way, carrying the boy who had fallen from the tower.

Meanwhile, Sirdon again took on a different appearance and once again outpaced the sorceress's son:

– “Drop the dead man!” – he said to him. “You'll miss the girl!”

The sorceress's son was doubtful: perhaps it was true. But still he did not leave the boy.

When the sorceress's son was carrying the boy across the sixth river, Sirdon, taking on a different appearance, again overtook him and said:

– “What a madman you are, good man! You keep carrying a dead man! The girl will obviously go to one of the Nart people, and you will be left with nothing!”

This time the sorceress's son believed Sirdon and said to himself:

– “Indeed, if it came to that, where am I carrying this dead man? And I'm also losing a girl!”

He put the dead man on the ground and turned back to the tower.

Then the sorceress's son guessed:

– “It's all Sirdon's fault! And I have ruined the boy and achieved nothing!”

He came back, stood over the dead man and thought: “What else should I do? Take him to his mother? But what shall I tell her?”

Suddenly he remembered:

– “We have a felt whip, let me try it out! He came back and told his mother what had happened.”

– “I've come back for the felt whip”, – he said to his mother. “Will she be able to help the boy or not?”

His mother said to him:

– “You must try it, take it with you!”

The sorceress's son took the felt whip with him and hurried back to the place where he had left the dead man. He arrived there, struck the dead man several times with the felt whip and said:

– “May God turn you into what you were before!”

The boy raised himself up and said:

– “Oof, oof, how long I slept!”

The sorceress's son told him how it was, what had happened to him. The boy said to the sorceress's son:

– “If so, carry me across two more rivers, otherwise my case will be bad.”

The sorceress's son took the boy and carried him across two more rivers.

In the meantime, Sirdon tells the Narts:

– “I made him put the boy on the ground, and now, if it pleases the God, the girl will be ours.”

The Narts rejoiced and were happy.

Then the son of the sorceress appeared with the boy and asked the Narts:

– “What makes you happy, Narts? What are you happy about?”

– “What makes us happy? – replied the Narts. “Now we shall have Verahan!”

– “Well, all right”, – said the sorceress's son. “Let's see who is the bravest among us.”

The evening came and the aldar again informed the people:

– “Whoever still wants to try his luck, let him come tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.”

The sorceress's son took the boy not to the place where he was born, but to his home. He told his mother not to worry, her boy would sleep at his place tonight. He left food for the widow to eat and returned home.

After feeding the boy, he began to admonish him:

– “We must think about what we must do tomorrow. We shall load you into the cannon again and shoot you so that you will hit the top of the tower.”

On the second day, when the people were again gathered at the tower, the son of the sorceress brought the boy there and said to him:

– “Don't spare your strength! If we do not succeed this time, it will be more difficult.”

– “Do not doubt me”, – he replied. “Make sure that I get to the top of the tower, and then it will be what God wants.”

The people gathered in great numbers watched the son of the sorceress and the boy; the Narts were afraid that the girl would fall to them.

The sorceress's son loaded a cannon with the boy and fired. The boy found himself on the tower and started throwing it in all directions. People marveled at him, and the aldar himself marveled.

He destroyed the tower as he had to, as it had been agreed. The aldar stood up, took his daughter by the hand, led her out and said:

– “Today I recognize my son-in-law.” And the sorceress's son said:

– “She can't be given away as a boy; after all, everything has been done thanks to me!”

– “I recognize no one but this boy!” – replied the aldar. “My son-in-law is the one who destroyed the tower! Gather on such a day that I may meet my son-in-law!”

The appointed day came. The aldar prepared many kosarts, set tables, and the people sat down to feast. The sorceress's son also sat at the table, but he had not brought the boy with him.

The aldar handed his daughter a glass and said:

– “My daughter herself knows her soulmate. Whoever she hands the glass to will be her husband.”

The aldar's daughter went out with the glass, went around, looked at everyone, but did not hand the glass to anyone, turned back and sadly went to her room. She paid no attention to the son of the sorceress, who was sitting at the table, she did not even look at him.

The aldar gave an order:

– “Gather tomorrow everyone, adults and non-adults, worthy and unworthy – all without distinction!”

Again he set the tables. They gathered all the people they could. And the boy dressed himself in the clothes of a beggar and came to the feast; he tied a ring on his finger with a rag, saying that he had cut his hand.

People sat down at the tables. The girl took out a ladle of beer – a glass of honor – and began to walk around the tables, looking at people intently. But her gaze stopped on no one.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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