

Mila Karsakova

*The story of how
an ant searched
for Mother Death
to become happy*



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Аннотация

A fable-a parable about an ant who, in search of his own happiness, went to Mother Death. The story peeks into our time and the spirit of an age, revealing the prophetic design that lies beneath the clamor of the outer world.

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Chapter 1

In a picturesque and fertile village lived an ant named Rimudalv. He was cheerful and handsome, and with his humor and artistic charm he won the hearts of his fellow villagers and the neighboring lands. He was especially beloved in the nearby big city, where he was often invited to perform, showered with the people's affection, benedictions, and riches. The fame of the ant Rimudalv grew.

Yet the ant often gazed at the sunset and dreamed of the leading role, to make everyone gasp at his performance and for his name to be known across distant lands.

One day, after a successful show, Rimudalv the ant sat alone on a hill at sunset, feeling a dull sadness. -Beautiful sun at sunset, yet it's leaving look to the other side, a tiny voice whispered behind him. He turned and saw a miniature ant before him, donning a towering hat, and he recognized in him the legendary KochivOrob, whose wisdom everyone has heard of, though few have seen.

— Why the sorrow, Rimudalv? Did something happen? — seated himself beside the pile of stones, asked KochivOrob.

— They say you're a sage, KochivOrob, though small, tell me yourself, — the ant muttered sulkily.

— And why not tell it? — KochivOrob smiled. — Fame is

what you crave. The ant turned his head toward KochivOrob, his tiny eyes beginning to gleam.

— Truly a seer! You understand me!

— I understand. But is you're not enough? Many even envy your success, for you are still young.

— Eh, what of it — the ant sighed — everything seems easy, I feel cramped, I don't taste happiness! — Rimudalv cried, striking the air with his paws, so that KochivOrob's hat was knocked askew.

— And what is happiness for you? — adjusting his hat, KochivOrob asked.

— Happiness?! — the ant blinked in surprise, springing from the ground. — Happiness is universal fame for my deeds, so that beyond seas, across mountains and oceans, my name is remembered for a long time! — spreading his legs wide, the ant proclaimed with pride.

— You can become famous for deeds, but depends on what deeds.

— What deeds? I know how to perform that's why I need a role! The leading one! The great! So that the whole world, for all time, remembers me!

— And will you manage it? A great role demands serious responsibility for someone your acting could become an example.

— I will manage! I'm bored, you see? I know I can do much! I will make myself famous and my land known!

— That's something to go to Mother Death for you can make a deal with her. She will grant any wish.

— Why Mother Death? It's scary to meet death! — Rimudalv crumpled.

— And when you meet her, you'll understand, — KochivOrob smiled and vanished. The ant brushed himself off, dismissing the old man's cruel joke, and returned home.

Homes awaited Rimudalv — kin and friends gathered to celebrate the success of his performance. Rimudalv drank kvass, listened to praises until his ears were full, and for a while the secret ache in his chest loosened its grip.

The next day, all resolve, the ant Rimudalv sent a petition to the distant theatre, asking to be taken into faithful service. Soon came the answer: they could not accept him at the world-famous stage — his pedigree was wrong, and the parts he had played were too small for the global boards.

Anger flared in the ant he raged and torn the letter to shreds. Then Rimudalv set out on the road to seek Death, to beg a wish of her and to find his happiness.

Chapter 2

He did not ask Kochivorob where to go, and chose to walk toward the sunset. If he failed to find Death, he told himself, he would reach the theatre at last — and there he would show them the full measure of his talent.

Long or short the journey proved — fields, forests, seas — he wandered, sparing neither strength nor heart. Along the way he met many ants all received him with honors and generous feasts. They begged him to stay and perform in their theatres, to bring joy to towns both great and small, offering folk adoration, honors, and the comforts of ant life. But with every step Rimudalv's hunger for worldwide fame only grew.

Days and nights blurred into one another until he lost the count. He paused to rest and ponder how to find Death and when to ask his wish. At last he decided that Death must come to him he would feign the brink of dying, and then speak with her. So he broke twigs and stacked them one upon another, building a small heap under which he could stand and — at the right moment — give a push with his leg so the weight would fall and crush him. The important thing, he thought, was to speak with Death before he was merely reduced to a flattened shell.

— Now then, now then — what is this audacious little ant, breaking twigs and hunting for an untimely death?

Before Rimudalv stood a lady of indeterminate age, the sort who did not belong to any ant-household: she wore unusually long whiskers for an ant, an outfit of bright yet mismatched fabrics, new boots, and a feathered hat. At the sight of her Rimudalv's heart began to tumble his legs wobbled and his feelers curled inward. -It must be Death, he thought, and, gathering the last of his courage, spoke in a small voice:

— I was looking for you.

— For me?! How intriguing, the stranger feigned surprise, as if she had never expected such an admission.

— Yes. I walked a long way, so I resorted to a trick.

— Breaking twigs?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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