

BOOOOO HOOOOO

(Sniveller)

(tale-narrative, stories, tales and poems)

Gasham Isabayli

**Baku**  
**Shirvanneshr**  
**2018**

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**Baku-Shirvanneshr-2018**

158 pages

*The book included new works of Gasham Isabayli - the winner of the certificate of International Hans Christian Andersen prize, Laureate of the State prize "Gizil kelme" ("Gold word") and the nominant of International Astrid Lindgren prize.*

**ISBN – 978-9952-8146-2-0**

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Tales



Narratives

Boo... Hoo...  
(Sniveller)  
(tale-narrative)

Crying voice was heard in the bedroom:  
– Boo... Hoo...

It was Gunay – she did not want to go to the kindergarten. She wanted to go to bed as if she watched computer in the evening so much that her eyes became tired. But now:

– Boo... Hoo...

Some minutes later the voice was heard from the bathroom. Gunay did not want to wash her face and hands, she wanted to go to bed:

– Boo... Hoo...

And now the voice was heard from the kitchen:

– Boo... Hoo...

Her mother tried to give her breakfast. But she did not want to eat, she wanted to go to bed:

– Boo... Hoo...

But mother was feeding her. As she had a morsel in the mouth she started:

– Boo... Hoo...

As she had a little tea in her mouth she started:

– Boo... Hoo...

Not long after the voice became louder and was heard on the threshold:

– Boo... Hoo...ooo...

Gunay's mother was taking her to the kindergarten. And Gunay was crying:

– Boo... Hoo...

On the way to the kindergarten everybody stopped and looked at her. And she did not stop her crying:

– Boo... Hoo...

An old woman saw her and said:

– Oh, what's the matter with you, my dear? Maybe she was not satisfied with breakfast, that's why she is crying!

– Boo... Hoo...

A young woman saw her and sleeked her hair:

–Maybe our baby did not seem to eat, that's why she is crying!

– Boo... Hoo...

The fat man said:

–Wow... Maybe this girl is gluttonous as me. Maybe she wanted to eat everyone's portion, but she was not given. So she is crying to spite everybody!

– Boo... hoo...

While reaching the kindergarten Gunay started to cry more bitterly:

– Boo... hoo... Boo... hoo...

The children were doing morning exercise in the nearest schoolyard. As soon as they heard voice of crying they stopped. That was crying, not laughing. Crying has something pain. Crying is able to hurt man.

– Boo... hoo...

The schoolchildren assembled around the girl.

Narmin was the first who understood the reason of this crying. The first reason was laziness and the second was torment mother.

Suddenly Narmin started to laugh:

– Hah...hah.. hah...

Gunay immediately stopped crying:

– Boo...k...hoo...k...

Narmin continued laughing more loudly:

– HAH...HAH.. HAH...

And Gunay:

– Boo... o.. hoo... o...

Narmin stopped laughing and approached Gunay carefully. She started to look at her attentively. Seeing it Gunay tried to stop crying, but she couldn't:

– Boo... hoo...

Narmin was looking at her. She looked and looked, then suddenly turned to her schoolmates:

– Who knows the name of this girl?

– Boo... hoo...- Gunay was going on crying. Anar replied first:

– Her name is Gunay!

– No, you are wrong!

Vusala got angry:

– Oh, Nar-nar, you are so funny. And what is her name then?

– Ha...ha...ha... - Narmin clapped her hands.

– Boo... Hoo...

Gunay was still crying.

– Her name is... - Narmin kept silence and looked at the children.

– Tell! Tell!

It seemed that Gunay also wanted to say: “tell...tell...”:

– Boo... Hoo...This girl's name is Boo... Hoo...!

– What? – The children asked in chorus.

– Boo... Hoo...

Gunay kept calm immediately. But it was late. She had already become Boo... Hoo...

## 2. BOO... HOO...'S COMPLAINT

**I**n the early morning everybody was busy with his work besides Hoo...Boo... Granny used to call her as soon as she got into trouble:

– Where are you, childie?

– Yes, granny?

– Go and draw lambs from the garden, otherwise they will spoil vegetable beds.

At those moments Boo... Hoo... began to grumble:

- Oh Granny? Why don't you call Anar, he is elder than me?
- Oh, daughter, don't you know that Anar is pasturing sheep on the other end of the village?
- And what about Nazrin? She has hidden in order not to be seen.
- Be fair, daughter! Don't you know that she went to carry two buckets of water from the Kura<sup>1</sup> river?
- But what about Narmin? Why don't you say Narmin any word? Is she the daughter of Khan?
- Poor Narmin has been sorting out greenery for dovgha<sup>2</sup> since morning.
- Dovgha? Will you cook dovgha, dear Granny? When?
- When you drive lambs out of the garden.
- Look over there! Elnar is snoring there. Wake him up!
- What a merciless girl you are! Elnar hasn't grown up yet.
- I am also little, aren't I?! Boo... hoo...
- Well, don't cry, I shall do it myself!

Boo... Hoo... rubbed her tears and started to play with her doll.

After a while all the family used to gather at the table and have dinner. Then all members used to be busy on their works, except Granny and Boo... Hoo.... Granny used to call Boo... Hoo... when she needed something:

- My childie, go and help Nazrin to carry water buckets!
- Oh, Granny. Why don't you tell Anar to help her?
- My little one, haven't you seen that Anar took the sheep to the pasture?!
- And what about Narmin? Has she also gone to shepherd the sheep?!
- Then who is washing the plates on the top of the aryk?

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1 *The Kura river* – a long river in Azerbaijan

2 *Dovgha* – national meal of Azerbaijani people made of sour clotted milk and greenery

– Granny, how long is Elnar going to sleep?!  
– O my child, Elnar is a little one. Boo... Hoo....oo.  
– Never mind, I shall do it myself!  
– Boo... Hoo... rubbed her tears and started to play with her  
doll:Bye baby-Bye-Bye...

When she noticed that her doll was sleeping she started to  
sing lullaby for herself:

–Everybody commands me,  
Though I am a little one.  
It seems that I am alone,  
Without brother and sister.

Bye baby-Bye, my dear!  
Lambs will your victim, dear!

Take the cattle to pasture,  
Drive the sheep to the meadow  
Help your sister when she comes  
From the Kura with buckets.

Bye baby-Bye, my dear!  
Lambs will your victim, dear!

I frighten and scare away  
the birds from our garden.  
I pasture sheep in the field,  
And tend grazing cattle.

Bye baby-Bye, my dear!  
Lambs will your victim, dear!

My brother in the cradle  
Is nearly crying and saying:  
– *Come and rock my cradle,*  
– *Don't you see my crying!*



*Bye baby-Bye, my dear!  
Lambs will your victim, dear!*

*Everybody commands me,  
Though I am a little one.  
It seems that I am alone,  
Without brother and sister.  
Bye baby-Bye, my dear!  
Lambs will your victim, dear!*

Boo... Hoo...used to understand that she had a dream just when she woke up.

### 3. BOO... HOO... AND THE OWL

**S**omebody has said that The Owl is a bird of ruins. That was why Boo... Hoo... hated Owls. She threw stones at owl straight away as soon as she saw the bird in the tree. And The Owl immediately flew away. The poor bird was so frightened that did not fly to their garden during the whole week. But... the bird wanted to do it. So, what if it was a bird, it also had heart.

Everyone who has heart can miss somebody. The Owl missed looking at Boo... Hoo... while sitting in the tree of their garden. But Boo... Hoo...

One day...

A week passed from that day when The Owl took umbrage at Boo... Hoo... and left the garden. The bird had not seen even the other day. And this time Boo... Hoo...missed The Owl. It was not without reason. The teacher said that owls are useful birds. Why? These birds protect gardens and orchards from insects. That's why!

One more day passed and Boo... Hoo... was still missing The Owl. The other day The Owl came flying as soon as she went

out the yard. The Owl sat in the tree and stared at Boo... Hoo... And Boo... Hoo... was also looking at the bird. The Owl understood that there is no reason to be afraid of the girl. But the bird did not understand what happened. Sitting for a while in the tree blinking its big eyes the bird thought about it. At last it understood that everything that happened will do it good. Otherwise Boo... Hoo... threw stone at the bird.

– It might be friendship! – The Owl thought and flew down to the lower branch of the tree. Suddenly becoming courage the bird greeted Boo... Hoo...– Good morning, Boo... Hoo...!

It seemed that Boo... Hoo... was waiting for this greeting: – Good afternoon. Sleep tight, Owl! - she replied joyfully.

The Owl spread its wings cheerfully and flew away. So that became the bridge of friendship between Boo... Hoo... and The Owl. And that bridge was so strong that if The Owl did not greet Boo... Hoo... every morning, the little girl could not sleep. If she did not say: - “Good afternoon. Sleep tight, Owl!”

– She did not get calm.

But there are some things that they are unknown even to God. One day Boo... Hoo... overslept and The Owl waited for her having a blank look. Some minutes later the cat opened eyes and mewed. Boo... Hoo... did not wake up. The purple-comb cock of Granny Gilas suddenly jumped to the balcony:

– Cock-a-doodle-doo ...

Boo... Hoo... startled with this voice. She tried to open her eyelashes and rubbed her eyes. She rubbed and rubbed, at last opened one eye. She jumped out of the bed and ran to the yard.

– Good morning, Boo... Hoo...! – The Owl flew up flapping its wings.

–Have a good dream, Owl! – Boo... Hoo... held up her head and looked at the mulberry tree but did not see The Owl there.

The Owl was only just escaped becoming prey of hawk.

That day was not good for Boo... Hoo..., too...

– Lassie, go to the market. – Granny called her.

As soon as she heard the word “market, she fled. She knew she had to buy something. If you do shopping, it means that you will have to eat.

– What shall I buy, Granny?

– Half a kilogram of raisins, half a kilogram of cookies...

– Cookies are also half a kilogram?

– Yes... and half a kilogram of dates. Don't forget. May I repeat?

– It is so easy to remember, Granny! Half a kilogram of each.

– Boo... Hoo...ran to the market repeating Granny's words.

– Half a kilogram of raisins, half a kilogram of cookies..., no, a kilogram, no, a pound, a pound of dates... – entering the market she again repeated – raisons, cookies, dates... Half a kilogram... Half a kilogram... and she found herself near the salesman. – Uncle, Good morning half a kilogram.

The salesman was a wise man:

– What are you going to buy?

That day everything was wrong for Boo... Hoo... So, she went to bed very early. In the morning when the Sun rose and shined brightly she woke up quickly:

– My friend might be waiting for me. – She went to the balcony. There was a couple of sparrows on the low branch of the mulberry tree. – Oh, where is The Owl then?- She went to the back side of the house in a hurry. Having looked at the melon field she was horrified and banged on her knees. – Oh, Daddy! – Melon bushes had been tangled, tomato bushes had been squashed.

It seemed that yesterday the insects did not blow a chance as Boo... Hoo... woke up very late and The Owl was waiting for awakening her. Noticing that The Owl did not come in sight the insects squeezed themselves into the melon field and damaged the vegetables as soon as it was getting dark. And The Owl woke up at midnight, flew over the melon field, did not find any insect there and returned his nest hungrily.

So the friendship of two friends - Boo... Hoo... and The Owl came to an end.

#### 4. BOO... HOO...’S TEMPER

**B**oo... Hoo... had a strange temper. First, she never washed her hands and face.

– Why?

– Because my hand will become thinner! – She always said.

– She never combed her hair.

– Why?

– Because my hair will come out! - She always said.

– Lassie, you have a running nose like a tap, wipe it!

– Never mind! But my nose will lengthen! – She answered.

Boo... Hoo... had a bad manner to stock into mouth anything that comes to her hand.

– Why? Do birds and animals wash everything that they eat? They never have a headache at all.

– But they are wild.

– Do you want me to say the truth?

– Yes, do say!

– Everything has its taste and every taste has its own use.

And this taste used to have “a good benefit”. Sometimes Boo... Hoo... felt sick having sigh, sometimes she had a temperature and sometimes she had to sit on the chamber-pot for hours. It was the “same taste” that always brought new disaster – a stomach ache upon Boo... Hoo...

One day Boo... Hoo...found something and started to eat it with appetite as a rule. It was something tasty. Boo... Hoo... felt trembling and stab in her body. Boo... Hoo... had a bad temper of eating found things alone. She was afraid if somebody might possess her jointly. So Boo... Hoo... ate it and gobbled up a cookie either. She suddenly felt sleepy, she nearly could sleep sitting there. She hardly could go to bed.

## 5. BOO... HOO... IS WAKING UP

Long after Boo... Hoo...was woken up by a noise of cough:

– Wow... what’s the matter?

And she understood that was her own cough. She was coughing so badly... so badly as if she could suffocate with cough. She breathed heavily:

She was coughing continuously. At last her cough stopped. But her shoulders were still shuddering. Suddenly she felt shivering. Shivering became worse and worse as if her bones were whimpering. She raised her head, looked out of the window and startled with the view:

– Oh, my God! She hardly kept herself from shouting. –So many nice flowers in the autumn?! It seemed that somebody told her to “look around!” What is this hut? What is this bed? And where is its mattress and bed-sheet? How can I sleep here, I wonder! It is so strange!

Something hurt her side when she wanted to move. And she found out that it was not a bed but just a daybed. She dangled her legs from daybed and wanted to jump. But the daybed tipped over and she found herself under it.

– Mam-my-y... – she shouted.

There was no answer.

– Gran-n-y-y... - she again shouted.

There was no answer. She remained there lying face downwards for some time. She came to in a minute and leaning on her hand tried to stand up. But she struck her head against something. She lost consciousness and fell again. When she came to her senses she understood that she struck her head against the daybed. It was found that Boo... Hoo... herself stumbled and fell under the daybed. She got out of the daybed crawling. The girl remembered that she did not put on her clothes. She shoved her hand under pillow. She always kept her clothes under pillow when she went to sleep.If somebody asked her:

– Why do you do like this?

She answered:

– Somebody might not find her clothes while getting up. Why does she have to wear mine?

Well, when Boo... Hoo... got her flowery dress under her pillow she could scarcely trust her own eyes – her dress was as black as coal:

– Oh, boy! What a mess! Why does Granny put her dress here?

And she tried to find her shoes under the pillow (I have forgotten to tell that she always kept her shoes under pillow, too). But she found just slippers there. The slippers were so motley and multi-colored. – Wow! What matchless slippers they are! Khatira will broil with envy when she see them! – she said.

Boo... Hoo... put on the dress and slippers. She went to the door slowly and pulled the door open. As soon as the door opened fragrance of flowers spread through the room. Breathing deeply Boo... Hoo...seemed to wake up:

– O God! The trees had blossoms on the one branch and ripen fruit on the other branch. It might be the Paradise that my Granny had told me? But... – she coughed a little – I became old as my Granny...

Though everything was interesting Boo... Hoo... was bored with it. She neither wanted to smell flowers nor ate fruit. She was shivering and her teeth were gnashing with cold. She came back slowly, sat in the threshold and warmed herself under the sun. But even the sun could not warm her bones. She got on her feet taking a firm stand with her hands on the knees. She felt that she could not make a step. She looked around. Suddenly she saw something and took step forward joyfully. She saw something black in the grass. She picked it up and that was a black stick of burnt branch – a fire –brand. She walked leaning against the fire-brand. As soon as she reached the path she got off the point and fell to the ground. When she raised her head her eyes lighted with bright sunshine. She crept to the direction of light. The light was seen in the well. That was the reflection of the of sunburst on the water. Boo... Hoo... drew herself up a

little and drove charred log into the ground. She was going to wash her hands and face but suddenly she shouted:

– Oh, Mummy! – She closed her eyes and opened. – Is this me?! – Her hair was as white as cotton and the face was as wrinkled as bark.

Boo... Hoo... understood that she would lose mind if she goes on looking into the well. She looked back in order to grasp the charred log but it was not there. The charred log disappeared. She saw a green flowery tree in its place.

– Oh, dear Mummy!... What a wonder!... – The charred log turned into flowery tree! How beautiful fruit it has!

Boo... Hoo... picked a flower and smelt – There was a smell of burning. She picked fruit and bit. It also smelt burning. As soon as she finished eating her hands began to itch. She could not stop itching. After some minutes her hands swell out and blistered, then she got burn on the hands.

– It is better to leave this place immediately! – She went slowly away.

## 6. BOO... HOO...’S OLD AGE

**B**oo... Hoo... was still thinking about incident that happened with her. Possibly that was the magic well from her Granny’s fairy tales which reflected everybody the wrong way round. Possibly... Somebody called her. She made a halt and looked around. There was nobody there.

– Oh, God! I am speaking so loudly that it seems somebody calls me, – she started going.

She went and went, at last reached one village. There were many children in the yard. The children were on the run. They were laughing and catching each other as butterflies. Boo... Hoo... got angry:

–How willingly they are laughing! – She went away grumbling. She went so thoughtfully that she did not notice the way. The grassy way had already finished and she was walking on the stony way. Soon she found herself in a big city. There were not

skyscrapers in the city but just one-story houses looked very well. There was nobody seen in the city. It seemed nobody lived there. There were traffic lights but no means of transport there. And the ways were lower than the pavements. There were even boats along the street in a row.

She observed that the houses were built on the stony pillars higher than ground.

She met a group of people hurrying somewhere.

Boo... Hoo... followed them.

Soon they reached the square full of people. Someone was speaking angrily. As soon as people saw Boo... Hoo..., they made way for her. Boo... Hoo...went forward. The speaker was an old man with long beard and hair. As soon as he saw Boo... Hoo... he started to speak more loudly.

– Hangman, cut this witch’s head! No! No! Stop, it is too early for it. It is better to tie her to the tail of the mule and let she be dragged behind it. She seduced my lovely daughter. She married my daughter of royal blood – my angel to an ordinary shepherd. He is not worthy of my daughter! My lovely daughter was woken up by nightingales in the morning, but now my-my-my-yyy...

The people laughed all together. Boo... Hoo... hid in the crowd. The old man had already forgotten about her and was speaking to himself:

–What is the matter? Why has my head been relieved? – He touched his head with his hand. – Oh, how vexing! Where is my crown? Therefore the servants do not obey to me today. It turns out that my crown is guilty! Damn you, crown! How strong you are, my crown?! – Saying it the old man lost consciousness. Soon the people brought him round watering his head. – Don’t touch me! Let me go! Where are you taking me? I haven’t finished my work. I will order to throw you to rapid dogs, scoundrels! – Being silent for a while the old man again increased in fury. – Oh, mu crown, how strong you are?! Never mind, if I have not got a crown, I have an order! I must order to hang the thieves of my crown. No, it is better to plant them into the ground... – He again got silent. Then he remembered something and started shouting:



– Oh, I have forgotten at all. I had to order everybody to change their names as if their names are old-fashioned. How long are they going to live with old names? – Is it possible to live ten - fifteen, thirty - forty, sixty -seventy years with the same name? No! I have to change the people’s names in order they gain new strength. Later I will order to change their names once more. All of them must live under the tradition which I order them. Otherwise their actions are of no use! Old names and old traditions bring oldness to the kingdom. I am the lover of reorganization! May the oldness go damn! Hurrah!

The people burst out laughing in the square. The old man stopped for a while, then continued his speech:

– My courtiers, do you know that the dead-men disturb us? Do you know that they hinder our work with their names that they had left after them? We have to take vengeance for it. We have to pull them out of their graves and acquit evil for evil. Otherwise they will lead us to the gallows. They had been having a rest long enough in their graves. We were not aware of their desire to destroy the kingdom. Death killed them. Long live death! May the enemy of our kingdom – dead-men be perished! Hurrah!

Somebody said to his friend:

– Kingdom has so many problems, you see!

– Isn’t he Hashdap? - His friend asked.

– Yes, he is.

– How it happened that the new Shah inflicted a punishment on him? He should plant him into the ground!

– You said it! We are upset, too! As soon as the new Shah came to the throne he ordered not to leave the old Shah alone. The poor old Shah! He reigned so long that he lost his humaneness. Let him live among people in order to become a human being again.

– Dear brother, it is a year that Hashdap lives among us. But he has not become a human being yet. It seems that he will die as a Shah, poor man!

## 7. THE FOREST OF WOODEN PEOPLE

Boo... Hoo... understood that there is no use to stand there that was why she moved:

– It is better to go to my hut and sleep, - she tried to find the street through which she entered the city but could not find it. At last she said “Here goes!” and went along the street. She walked for a while and at last went out of the city. She appeared in the lap of nature. Her Granny always told about flowery gardens. But neither those fragrant flowers nor butterflies on them filled her heart with joy. It seemed that poor girl’s heart was covered with dust. Suddenly she heard a voice. She smiled:

– Oh, maybe I have become a chatter-box. I am speaking to myself, aren’t I?!

But she did not make five or six steps when the voice was heard again. She stopped. The voice was coming from the sky. She startled rising her head. There were people with moustache and beard sitting on the top of the tree. Boo... Hoo... could go neither forward nor back. She hardly could stand on her feet. So she leaned against the stick on her hand in order to stand well but could not. She unexpectedly fell down.

– Feel sorry for us, sister! – The people began to beg her.

Boo...Hoo... regained consciousness by the ballyhoo. She even had strength to speak to them:

– Oh people, why are you sitting on the top of the tree?

As soon as they heard this question they started weeping all together:

– What a strange question! Open your eyes and look at us. Don’t you see what a miserable condition we have?!

– Oh... yes, you are right. Who tied you to the top of this tree? – Boo...Hoo... asked them.

– We were not tied on the tree. Why are you afraid of us? Come nearer and touch us with your hand.

Boo...Hoo... came to the side of the way. She touched the trunk of one tree and pulled her hand back at once:

– Oh my God! But this is a body!  
– You are right, sister. – People shouted. - Above the waist we are people, but down the waist are wooden.

– Yes, indeed... – Boo...Hoo... took breath.

– We are wooden people.

– Were you born like this? – Boo...Hoo... asked.

– No. We also were born like you. Everything happened with us later. If you stand without moving on the earth you will understand us.

– My God! - Boo...Hoo... stood on her one leg, then on another one.

– Our earth is very strong. It grows everything- a grass, a tree, even a man.

– It means that you are planted into the ground, aren't you?

– Yes, we are.

– O my God!

– Are you coming from the town?

– Yes, I am

– Have you met the old man Hashdap there?

– Ye-es, Hashdap? An old mad man who was speaking to himself. The people were crowded around him.

As soon as Boo... Hoo...told about it the wooden people started to cry:

– What is the matter with you?

– He is our father.

– Your father?

– Yes, he is. He was the Shah of this land some time. We had happy life then. All is lost. – The wooden people made a fuss again.

Boo... Hoo... was at a loss.

– Our father loved us heartily. But he was ruthless towards the other people. This punishment – planting people into the ground was also his idea. Once he was angry at his vizier (courtier). He ordered to plant him into the ground up to his waist. After when our father calmed down he visited the vizier himself. But there was nobody there. The poor vizier cried and shouted all the

night and became tree which had sent out roots in the ground. And the guard who was sitting near the vizier died from heart attack. And he was helpless to do something for him... After this accident every time when our father got angry at somebody he ordered to plant people into the ground.

When he was dethroned he was set free but all members of our family were planted here into the ground.

Boo... Hoo... moved backwards in amazement.

– For God’s sake, don’t leave us here! – Hashdap’s children begged her.

Boo... Hoo... stopped:

– But don’t you die of starvation?

– Starvation? No! We have roots under the ground... The roots keep us alive... tell us about our father. What was he doing?

Boo... Hoo... told them what she had seen in the square.

– Poor father! Unfortunate Shah! Merciless people want to change the fifty-year Shah into a human being. What traitors they are! Don’t they know that it is impossible to change a Shah- from -birth into a human being?

Boo... Hoo... left the wooden people there crying and weeping.

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The number of wooden people was increasing towards the back of the forest. On the way all of them begged her to speak to them weeping and crying. One man was mumbling something and stroking his beard. The tip of his beard reached the ground. One lock of the beard was black. Boo... Hoo... noticed that it was the ant-row. She stopped and looked at the man. The old man was humming and stroking his beard:

*I am an optimist old man,*

*Happiness is my aim.*

*I have seen much disaster*

*In the world – mortal and frail.*

*The earth took away my son,  
My wife also passed away.  
I'm still mourning over her  
Every night and every day.*

*Grief is in need of grief,  
Gladness always needs joy.  
I am an old optimist man  
My heart says me: Enjoy!*

Boo... Hoo could not take her eyes from the old man.

– Oh, my God! How it comes to be so optimistic with so much grief?

Suddenly the old man stared at her with smiling eyes:

– Daughter, why are you looking at me with open mouth like fish? Maybe you have an eye on my beard.

Boo... Hoo was amazed:

– Oh, man, you are surrounded by grief and tears, but you...

The old man roared like a lightning:

– Hah-hah-hah... What do you mean? Should I cry?

– And what about your misfortune?

– Yes, I had misfortunes in my life, but I did not die, God forbid!

– And what about you being remained as a stone?

– I have lived, traveled and seen everything as a true man...

And now I live like the thinking and speaking tree.

– Aren't you fed up of this situation?

– Fed up? Look around. What do you see?

– Wooden statues!

– They were alive like me. As soon as they fed up they turned into wooden statues. They are the ones that were planted after me. But I am still alive. I am happy when I meet the Sun and the Moon, when I see flowers, speak to every wayfarer and learn much about everything from them. It seems the whole world is mine when the bird sings on my branch. What else should man need in this world?

Boo... Hoo was invigorated by the optimistic mood of the

old man. But how it happened that this man was such an optimist!? He should be despondent by his old age, the world should be nonsense in his eyes after all.

– How was it that such things happened with a wise man like you? - Boo... Hoo asked him.

– What do you mean?

– Such things... I mean that how did it happen that you were planted into the ground?

– Hundred years ago, when I was fifty years old there lived a Shah. He was so kind and soft – hearted that he used to take care of his subjects – ploughmen, hammersmiths and craftsmen. That was why everybody loved him.

One day Shah’s heralds gathered people to the square. The Shah issued a decree that all people were born equally and will die equally, too. And why should not we live equally? We have rich treasury, our land is abundant. Since now nobody will order and nobody will be ready for order. Everybody will live in prosperity.

So, everybody started to spend riches of the treasure house. Nobody obeyed the orders and courtiers. And the courtiers were not pleased with the situation. How was it that neither courtiers nor common people work had to work.

Soon the treasure house became empty, the country weakened. The people revolted against Shah and he was hanged for it. The new Shah was elected for the country. That Shah was also soft –hearted. One day Shah gathered people to the square and issued a decree that all people were born equally and will die equally, too. And why should not we live equally? Since now nobody will order and nobody will be ready for order. Everybody will work and earn his living.

The courtiers were not pleased with this order again. But there was no other way out. They also planted and gathered harvest as common people. Soon the treasure house was enriched and the people started to live their happy life. Job made people kind and friendly. The people became wealthy and their life prolonged. The men of fifty looked like fellows of twenty.

One day the Shah fell ill and died. A young man by the name

of Hashdap came to the throne. And he put an end to everything. The people who did not differ from each other before filled posts - one of them became a vizier, another- an advocate, the other -a slave...

The people departed from Shah. And Hashdap thought up new method of punishment – he started to plant people into the ground, including me. The others could not bear, but I could. You have nothing to be afraid of if you can stand. – The old man finished his story and started to hum again:

*I am an optimist old man,  
Happiness is my aim.  
I have seen much disaster  
In the world –mortal and frail.*

## 8. BOO... HOO... IS ASTONISHED

**B**oo... Hoo left the Alley slowly. It was getting cold in the sunset. Boo... Hoo met a hut on her way. Hardly she wanted to knock at the door...

– Come in. – Somebody said.

Boo... Hoo looked around but there was nobody there. She touched the door:

– Push the door, it will be opened.

Boo... Hoo entered the room in fright. Suddenly flow of water was heard at the top of the room:

– Go and wash your face and hands – the voice was heard.

Boo... Hoo never liked washing. But now she had to do it. She wet her hands and face a little, then made a step back.

– Wash yourself accurately. – She heard the voice again.

Boo... Hoo again approached the tap. She again wet her hands and made a step back. But there was no towel there.

– Mind and do what you are told. Do wash accurately...

There was no other way out. After washing very well the towel appeared. Suddenly a table and a chair appeared in the mid-

dle of the room. Boo... Hoo sat on the chair. A plate with the meal, a spoon, a fork and a knife also appeared on the table. Boo... Hoo was very hungry. As soon as she touched the meat the plate slipped on the table.

Boo... Hoo startled. A minute later the plate full of meal again appeared on the table. This time Boo... Hoo stretched her hand to the meal more quickly. And again the plate disappeared. The spoon and fork slipped from her hands.

Boo... Hoo startled as if she woke up from deep dream. She grabbed at the fork immediately. The plate appeared right away..

Boo... Hoo ate the meal and licked her lips. The tap started to purl...

Boo... Hoo was very tired so she decided to sleep. She was going to jump on the bed but she fell with a thud. The bed disappeared in a moment.

– Oh! –she stood up leaning on her hands and started moaning.

– Who will wash the dishes? – the voice was again heard.

– Boo... Hoo...understood that it was her punishment. So she wetted the plates a little and put them on the shelf. But... the plate did not come unstuck. She again put plates under the tap and again the plate did not come unstuck. Boo...Hoo... got angry and threw it on the floor. But the plate stuck on her fingers.

– Oh...oh... – My arm nearly dislocated. – saying it she began to massage her hand. The plate still remained stuck on her fingers.

– While you haven't washed the plates well you will not get rid of it.

Boo... Hoo... jumped out of her place, washed plates and cleaned the table. She was going to sleep but the bed disappeared.

Wow! I haven't taken off my clothes yet! – She took off her clothes and she hid them under the pillow with a quick thrust. When she pulled out her hand beneath the pillow the clothes stuck on her hand as plate. She quickly approached the hat – and – coat stand and hung her clothes accurately. Then went to bed and slept.



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Boo... Hoo... did not know how long she had been sleeping. But as she felt cold she wanted to cover herself with blanket. But the blanket disappeared. Suddenly the pillow slipped beneath her head.

– It is morning. It is time to get up! – The voice was heard.

– The Sun hasn't risen yet. What kind of morning it is?!- As soon as Boo... Hoo... began grumbling the bed threw her down and disappeared.

– Fie!!! – she got on her feet with difficulty. She put on her dress and wetted her hands and face. She was going to take the towel... – I will dry my face with my dress to spite you.

But her dress turned into a wood. She did not know what to do. She began to cry with anger.

– Boo... hoo... – she began to weep.

At that moment her weeping echoed from all sides:

– Boo...ooo... hoo...ooo...

The girl stood up, approached the tap and washed and dried accurately.

– Oh my God! How perfectly you are washing and the towel is so soft!

The table had been laid for breakfast. She hurried to take a seat but fell with a thud. She stood up and carefully pulled the chair and sat down.

What can I do in order not to be punished?

She had a substantial dinner, had her fill then went to the door. When she touched the door handle she exclaimed “Oh!” and made a step back. The tips of her fingers got bloody.

– Oh God, are there thorns on the door handle?

Boo...Hoo... was still rubbing her hand. The water in the tap was flowing. The girl understood her mistake.

She cleaned the room, washed dishes then returned to the door again. She tried to open the door, but could not.

– Oh, my God! What an awkward situation it is! It'd be better if I broke my legs when I came here. - She got angry and cried. Her voice echoed around again.

– Boo...ooo... hoo...ooo...

She calmed immediately.

– Oh voice! I have already washed dishes, haven't I? I have cleaned the room, haven't I? Would you like to make me a servant?

The voice replied angrily:

– I have given you dinner, haven't I? You have slept on my bed, haven't you? You have had breakfast here, haven't you? And who will pay for all this?

But I haven't got money!

– But you have got a tongue, haven't you?

– Must I give you my tongue?

– You can just thank me with your tongue!

Boo... Ho... got ashamed.

– Oh, I am sorry! I am guilty towards you! Thank you for breakfast and dinner, for the bed that I had slept on.

As soon as she told it the door opened wide:

– Have a good journey! - The voice blessed her...

## 9. BOO...HOO... COMES TO HER SENSES

**B**oo... Hoo... was on the way till the evening. She met a hut when it was getting dark. It looked like the hut that she stood last night. She approached the door and stood a little.

– What should I do? Should I enter? I will again find myself in an awkward situation then. Otherwise I will die with hunger and thirst –she thought a little. Then she opened the door and entered the hut. At that moment the water purred in the tap. She washed and dried and looked around. Suddenly she

saw somebody standing in front of her. As soon as she opened her mouth... – Oh, - she made a step back. At last she came forward. – It seemed that she had awoken. – Oh, I seemed to become younger. Even the wrinkles of my face are smoothed. And my face became clearer. – Boo...Hoo...had never been so glad like now. – How I want to dance! What if the voice punishes me?!

– Do dance!

Boo...Hoo... startled. She quickly came to her senses:

– Wow! This is the voice! I would like to sing a song, too!

– Do sing!

Boo...Hoo... sang her song:

Is it me, or not, I wonder!

Oh, God! I look much younger!

The wrinkles of my face smoothed out, God bless me!

The voices echoed:

– God bless you!

– God bless you!

It was impossible to stop Boo... Hoo... She opened her arms more widely, raised her voice and started singing more loudly:

I had been a little girl,

Then I became old woman.

O-old woman!

My face had turned pale,

Face turned pale!

I lived the half of life

The half of life!

The stars are sparkling

in my eyes

Sparkling in my eyes!

I am revitalizing now,

Revitalizing now!

There were mountains on my way

Mountains on the way

I lost all happiness and gay

All happiness and gay.  
I have even lost my life  
It seemed I have died!  
Stars are sparkling in my eyes,  
Are sparkling in my eyes!  
I am revitalizing now,  
Revitalizing now...

She sang and danced so much that she felt giddy and fell down and started to cry. But it was not bitter cry. While crying she felt happiness. She did not know how long she went on crying. But suddenly she found out that the water was flowing from the tap. She knew what it meant. She stood quickly up, washed and wiped her hands and face, then approached the table. As soon as she sat at the table the hot meal appeared on it. Boo... Hoo... ate with great appetite, then cleaned the table, washed dishes and put them on the shelf. But she could not stand any longer and wanted to look at herself in the mirror.

That night Boo... Hoo... fell asleep very late. She had strange dream about her grandmother, mother and father, Anar, Nazrin and Narmin, even their Spotty cock which crowed for a while:

– Cock-a-doodle-doo...!

Boo... Hoo... startled with the voice and woke up. She looked around. There was not any cock there. She felt upset. Suddenly the bed started to rock. Boo... Hoo... put on her dress and slippers quickly. Then she made the bed. She washed her hands and face and wiped hands on a towel. After having breakfast she went to the door and stopped:

– Thank you, dear hut for the bed that I slept on and breakfast that I had here!

– Have a good journey! – the hut replied.

Boo... Hoo... was pleased and smiled.

## 10. IN THE TOPSY-TURVY-LAND

**B**oo... Hoo... was going without stopping. She saw river and ravine here and there on her way. But she continued going. She reached the narrow path when it was getting dark. Not long after the path disappeared. But Boo... Hoo... was still going. Suddenly she reached the wide road which was a real godsend for her. There were big guideboards seen in both sides. Something was written on the guide-boards. Boo... Hoo... stood in front of the guide-board and looked at it attentively:

Emoclew ot ruo modgnik!

She tried to remember all words in foreign languages which she knew. But none of them matched well with those words. What does it mean? – she touched her forehead with her fingers in order to understand the meaning of the sentence. Dear friends, to think something is a very hard and mysterious thing. When you are in trouble you always begin to think and do know that everything will be all right.

Boo... Hoo...thought and though, at last she understood. She decided to read the words back to front as usual calligraphy in Arabic and Persian languages:

Welcome to Kingdom!

It seemed that she discovered a new land. She was going to fly as a bird with joy. But... her head was going round. She gripped hold of the guide-board quickly.

*Erehw si eth dnal ekil sruo,  
Lla sti sehcir era etinifni  
Erehw si eht hahs ekil sruo,  
Sih evol ot elpoep si taerg.*

*Tnasaep si a rehtorb ot mih.  
Tnasaep dlihc - ekil sih nwo  
Erehw si eht hahs ekil sruo,  
Sih eman seog dnuor eht htrae?!*

Boo... Hoo... interpreted the letters easily back to front:

*Where is the land like ours,  
All its riches are infinite.  
Where is the Shah like ours,  
His love to people is great.*

*Peasant is a brother to him,  
Peasant's child - like his own.  
Where is the Shah like ours,  
His name goes round the town?!*

Boo... Hoo... went for a while. The houses were seen in both sides. The farther she went, the higher were houses, while the area turned into big city. As soon as she entered the city she found herself in the revelry. Some people danced, some had fun and some felt tired. The hubbub made buzzing in her ears. Everybody had a piece of paper in his hand. Everyone brought the paper nearer, pronounced the words in syllables while they speaking to each other. Boo... Hoo... understood that they were speaking to each other by the help of papers. Suddenly a child with the flag in his hand came to the front. He also had a piece of paper in his hand:

– Gnol evil eht hahs gnivig su ytirepsorp!

A murmur buzzed through the crowd:

– Harruh! Harruh! Harruh!

The old Shah came to the front after the little boy. He brought the paper nearer and read:

– Yam Rotaerc evig lla nem sa doog!

– Harruh! Harruh! Harruh!

The revelry lasted till the sunset. Everything calmed as soon as it grew dark. The slogans and flags were thrown wherever possible and everyone left the square. The city became empty.

Boo... Hoo... was left alone in the square. She felt rumbling in the stomach. She had not drunk even water since morning. She understood that she had to go away. At last she reached the bazaar (traditional market). There were apples, pears, figs, grapes,

pomegranates, plums, mulberries, bananas.... in abundance there. But there were neither customers nor sellers. What could she do? She was in a hopeless situation and she had just one way out : – to think.

Boo... Hoo... closed her eyes and began to think. At last she guessed:

Oh! – she exclaimed joyfully. – As I have no money, I can barter. I must eat some fruit even if there is not any seller. If someone comes I shall tell him about my problem.- Boo... Hoo... took an apple “Gizil Ahmadi”<sup>3</sup>. Saying “Bismillah!”<sup>4</sup> she bit the apple. Her teeth clattered and chattered. The apple fell down and rolled for a while. Boo... Hoo...stared at the fruit open-mouthed. She came to in a minute. Whatever she touched everything was made of plastic.

Boo... Hoo... left the bazaar with rumbling stomach.

– If the fruits are artificial in this land then what kind of people live here?! It will be better to leave this city as soon as possible. – She left the city hanging down her head. After walking five or six hundred steps the road came to an end. – Oh! It seems that this city has never visited by guests as it doesn’t have any path even.

## 11. INCOMPARABLE DOCTOR

**B**oo... Hoo... heard strange voices along the road. Now here the wolves were howling, now there the jackals were yelling. Yelping of foxes was heard somewhere, either.

She did not know how long she walked but she noted the light not far from there. She quickened her steps gladly. Going continually she reached one yard. There was a hut in the middle of the yard.The light was coming from the hut. As soon as Boo...

3 “*Gizil Ahmadi*” – one of red apple sorts in Azerbaijan

4 *Bismillah* – for the sake of God (Moslem begins every act with this word)

Hoo... approached the door of the hut opened:

– Come in! – An old man invited her into the hut opening his hands widely.

– Come and wash.

Boo... Hoo... washed, dressed her hair and come back.

– Are you going to satiate after eating or eat after satiating?  
– the old man asked.

Boo... Hoo... stared at the man.

The old man asked strange question:

– What has the flower done to Sanavar, what has Sanavar done to flower?

Boo... Hoo... was taken aback and did not know how to answer him.

– Well..., dear kid, it seems that you are not aware of writing and reading. ..You haven't got friend with them yet. Never mind, this time I will explain you what it means. As the soul of ogre is inside the glass, the content of the tale "What has the flower done to Sanavar, what has Sanavar done to flower?" is in the expression "satiating eating or eat satiating". Can you tell me what I asked you first?

–What did you ask me? – Boo... Hoo... suddenly she remembered. – You asked me: "Are you going to satiate eating or eat satiating?"

– Well, I'd like to ask you if it is possible to speak after having supper or to have supper after speaking.

Boo... Hoo... was angry, so she answered:

– Neither this, nor that!

The old man laughed loudly clapping his hands:

– Hah-hah-hah...–you are speaking more incomprehensible than me! –He added: – Don't worry! My stomach is also holds the same views: let's have supper!

– "Bismillah!" – saying it the old man started eating.

Boo... Hoo... took fork and repeated "Bismillah!" in a whisper.

After supper Boo... Hoo... stood up. When she was going to clear the table the old man said: "Sit down!". A pair of hands



appeared on the table . Boo... Hoo... looked attentively and noted only five fingers . The girl looked at the old man in amazement.

– This is my servant. – The old man said.

– Your servant? – Boo... Hoo... was astonished. – Without body?

– There is no need to have body!

– Is it possible to have hands without body? – It was hard to believe .

–That is another matter! – The old man leaned on the chair.

– We shall speak about it later. Tell me who are you and where are you from?

Boo... Hoo... was still looking at the fingers in amazement . That was why she did not hear the question.

– I am speaking to you!

– What? Oh, sorry, grandfather, I did not notice. - It seemed that she was woken up from deep sleep.

– I ask you who are you and where are you from?

Boo... Hoo... told the old man everything that happened with her.

– I have heard about it in fairy-tales. But I know more or less about the last city where had you been before ours. Let me introduce you myself in order not to have secrets between us, – the old man began to speak about himself. – I am an old doctor. My patients that I had treated were much more than “killed ones”. Counting the number of my patients I realized that I was not a bad doctor. To be honest, the people themselves appreciated me highly . In short, they called me “Incomparable doctor”. I lived in the city Bayramlar (Holidays) of the land Aghillilar (Intelligents). We had a world-wise Shah. All the people nearly lived happily...

– One day our Shah fell ill. I quickly visited him. But I could not treat him. So he died. And... our happy days came to an end with his death...

– The new Shah erected fence around the palace from all sides and lived there as a silkworm. He began to give orders and inflict reprisals. His first order was to change the name of the land. He changed the name “Aghillilar” (Intelligents) into Dnal – yvrut- yspot (Topsy-turvy-land)

– Wait a little, Doctor, this name is familiar to me. -  
Boo... Hoo... interrupted the old man.

– Don't worry... our Shah ordered to call the city as  
Yadiloh. The Shah forbid us to speak our native language,  
either. As our country was changed into Dnal-yvrut-yspot  
(Topsy-turvy-land) then we also had to speak back to front.

Well, as the Shah ordered we had to obey him. Nobody  
could protest against him. Nobody had spare tongue to be  
cut off. There were much more people who kept silence be-  
cause of punishment than speaking ones. And the people  
who spoke did it through reading from paper.

Boo... Hoo... could not keep herself:

– *Erehw si eth dnal ekil sruo,*

*Lla sti sehcir era etinifni*

*Erehw si eht hahs ekil sruo,*

*Sih evol ot elpoep si taerg.*

– Well done! This verse is stuck your memory very well!  
Please, repeat the last lines again!

– *Erehw si eth dnal ekil sruo,*

*Lla sti sehcir era etinifni*

– You understand the meaning, don't you?

– ... Where is the Shah like ours,

His love to people is great

– Outrageous lie! – Suddenly the Doctor shouted. Boo...  
Hoo... startled.

– Wow! How have I got angry?! Sorry, daughter, the praising  
of the Shah made me angry. Look, it is the height of impudence!  
To be the enemy of the nation and to make people praising him?!

– Incomparable doctor was plunged in a deep reverie. Then he  
said: – The Shah of country loved people, but he loved to punish  
them. I escaped from his torment and came here with my family.

– The doctor sighed deeply. – My wife could not stand the parting  
from her land and soon died. But I could stand, as you see I am  
alive. In fact, I am a staunch one. Staunchness is the second per-  
son inside the man, my daughter. Coming here I started to study  
myself. And I did it. So I became an extraordinary man. After this

I had created so many things. But ability of creation something belongs only God. As we know God is an extraordinary power. So, I am also God a little bit. You have seen my servants - they have been created of my wisdom. Now I am far from the false holidays and do not even remember eating or sleeping. I will never change the peaceful life to anything in the world. – Doctor looked at the clock. – Now it is your turn.

– My turn? What a turn? – Boo... Hoo... looked at the doctor in amazement.

– To go to sleep!

## 12. WHY DID BOO...HOO... WANT TO CROW

**B**oo... Hoo... opened eyes when the bed started to vibrate. She sat up on a bed:

– Wow... the floor is shaking! – She jumped out of the bed quickly.

– Hah... Hah... hah...

Boo... Hoo... turned to the direction of voice. That was Incomparable doctor:

– Oh, daughter, have you frightened?

– Oh, Doctor, is the floor shaking?

– Have you ever seen the bed kicking?

– The bed's kicking?

– I have taught everything to discipline here. Discipline is the one that has had its fill. Look, the bed could not stand your sleeping a little more. The plate will also slip down if you eat a little more.

– Doctor, the same happened with me, too. The bed threw me and the towel ran away from me because of my badly washing. Even the hut did not allow me to go because I did not thank it for hospitality. – Boo... Hoo... told the Doctor everything that had happened with her on the way.

– Well... It seems that I shall have to work much ...Bravo!

– “Bravo”?! For what, Doctor?!

– Bravo to people who are cleverer than me! Put on your clothes, let's go to the yard.

– Go to the yard and I will come after sweeping the floor.

– Don't worry, we have the sweeper, – saying it the Doctor approached the wall. He pushed the little button. At that moment the sound was heard under the bed. The broom appeared at once from under the bed.

Boo... Hoo...stepped back.

– Oh, Doctor.

– Don't be afraid. Let the bride sweep the floor.

The broom cleaned under the table and chairs and all corners of the room like a bride.

But in the yard...

Boo... Hoo... was astonished by the view that she saw in the yard. The garden was being spaded up, the wood was being cut by the axe, the bucket was splashing water on the gate and the basket was going somewhere.

A little lamb came near to Boo...Hoo... The lamb jumped and began to smell the girl. Boo...Hoo... took the lamb in her arms caressed it and sang a song:

*–O my naughty little lamb,  
Suck the milk of your mother  
If she kicks us by her horns  
Let us cry "Ba-a, ba-a!" together.*

The lamb opened her mouth:

– Cock-a-doodle-doo...!

– Wow! – Boo...Hoo... threw the lamb and ran away shouting.

The Doctor burst of laughter:

– Don't be afraid! The meat never eats meat!

– Why, Doctor? We also have meat on the body and why do we eat meat then?

– This meat eats grass.

– Oh, Doctor, don't let it come nearer to me! – She hid behind the Doctor.

As soon as Incomparable doctor shouted at the lamb it ran away to the hens.

Boo...Hoo... asked the Doctor in amazement:

– It is marvellous!

– Do you approve my head?

– Your head?

– To tell the truth, my ideas! For example, the transmutation of this lamb into a cock.

– You don't say so! How does it come to be?

– As soon as I taught the lamb crowing I send it to live among sheep. The sheep ran about from the lamb. The lamb ran after the sheep. At last the ram made a rush at the lamb. The ram butted the lamb and the lamb crowed. So I decided to let the lamb live in the hen-house.

–Doctor, why did you teach the lamb crowing?

– I have read in ancient books – if you change the tongue of animals then you can change them, too. And I began with a lamb. When I saw that the sheep did not let the lamb approach her I taught the hen clucking as a hen. She came nearer the lamb at once. In such way I taught the sheep and lambs crowing and clucking and the hens and chickens bleating. The sheep that were transmuted into hens joined to hens and the hens that were transmuted into sheep joined to sheep. Now I have one flock of both of them. Look at the other side of the fence.

–Wow... Actually the sheep and hens are grazing together.

–Wait for more! You do not know what my servants do? - Incomparable Doctor held the arm of Boo...Hoo...

Boo...Hoo... stopped when they came to be among the trees.

–Doctor, what are flying over there?

–That is the basket. It carries the harvest to the cellar. – The Doctor bent the branch of the apple-tree which was full of milk-white apples.

–To pick fruit from the tree is another pleasure!

Boo...Hoo...picked an apple. She hardly wanted to bite the apple she stopped.

–Where can I wash it?

–Turn to the right counting five steps. Making the sixth step she stopped. The girl cried: “Ouch!” and jumped out the side.

–I very nearly fell into the water! – She leaned and washed the apple, then approached the Doctor. – Please.

–I am not an infant in arms.

Boo... Hoo... bit an apple and looked at the Doctor in surprise:

–But this is milk?!

–Taste this one. – The Doctor gave her another yellow apple.

–Oh, my God! But this is bread – she said and ate up the apple.

The Doctor said in a joke:

–Well... I see you do not like these ones, too. Then come and pick such a pear.

Boo...Hoo... bit a pear and cried:

–A strawberry!

–Bon appétit! ...

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When they walked along the garden Boo...Hoo... looked at the top of the apple-tree and asked:

–Doctor, who hung the basket to the top of the tree?

–What do you see on the basket?

–A couple of hands.

–And these hands do it. They have been working and tired. Now they are having rest now.

–Having rest?

–Every job needs rest. If not, there is no point in both job and rest.

They came to the hut and sat at the table that had already been laid. The couple of hands brought two cups of milk, two eggs and two pieces of bread.

–Are you going to beat after eating or eat after beating? – Doctor looked at Boo...Hoo...

–Neither this nor that. – Boo...Hoo... took the cup. – Bis-

millah! – saying it she drank the milk. She looked at the Doctor amazingly:

–Hah-hah-hah... What? Are you going to say that it has a taste of egg?

–Ye-e-s...

– It was milked from the cackling sheep. I am going to give you roast meat of bleating hen in the afternoon. You will see that it has a taste of mutton.

– Suddenly Boo... Hoo...began to think without any reason. Doctor was busy in eating. Suddenly the cock crowed.

– Cock-a-doodle-doo...!

– What a traitor! Go and crow over there! – The Doctor saw Boo...Hoo... open mouthed. – Is that you? Would you like to become a cock?

– Oh, Doctor, don't turn me into a cock, for the sake of God!

– Why?

– It seems that I am going to crow: - Cock-a...

– Hah-hah-hah... What a funny girl you are!

– Oh, Doctor, give a promise!

– Why?

– Give a promise that you will not turn me into a cock.

– Oh, daughter! What are you talking about?

– Boo...hoo... You will turn me into the cock, I know. That is why you do not want to give promise. –Boo...Hoo... began to weep. – And she immediately shut her mouth with fingers: Oh, dear Mummy, I will crow now: Cock-a-doodle...

– No, you are crowing the wrong way. It must be like this: Cock-a-doodle-doo...! – The Doctor crowed a little bit.

Boo...Hoo... dried her eyes and laughed. But the Doctor either flapped with his arms or crow as a cock. At last he calmed and took a deep breath.

– How is it? Did you like it?

– Cock cannot equal you.

– But not like you. You are not able even to prattle but you say that you are going to crow.

### 13. ROADS, TAKE ME AWAY!

Boo... Hoo... did not wait neither dawn, nor crow of the cock. She did not wait for swinging of the bed and jumped out. The Doctor was busy at the table.

– Good morning, Doctor.

– Good morning, daughter. How have you slept? What did you dream about?

– I did not have a dream.

– Never mind. If you did not have a dream then you will see it here. Look at the mirror.

When Boo... Hoo... looked at the mirror and exclaimed: “Wow!”

– What is the matter? - Doctor asked.

– Doctor, this is not me!

– This is not me, too.

– I was quite another!

– This is quite you!

– Oh, my God! – Boo... Hoo... began to dance and sing:

*– Is this me, is this me,*

*Is this the same crying girl?*

*Is this cheerful magpie?*

*Is this naughty squirrel?*

*Let me dress my hair,*

*Let me plait my hair,*

*Roads, take me away now!*

*I'll see my home near.*

*My sweetly speaking tongue, please,*

*Greet the morning, sunshine!*

*My sparkling eyes, look ahead,*

*My foot, have a fine time!*

After dancing and singing Boo... Hoo... jumped and embraced the Doctor. – I want to go away!

– You must go willy-nilly, my daughter! –Doctor grew sorrowful.



Boo... Hoo... kissed the Doctor's beard. Incomparable Doctor caressed her hair:

– Take these two apples, keep them. These are apples of strength. I have only one apple tree in my garden and it has only two apples. And they fell to your lot. If you are hungry have just snap off a piece. Don't give anybody. Otherwise you will not reach home.

Boo... Hoo... took the apples and hid them in her bosom.

– Thank you, Doctor. God willing, I will reach home. I will often come to see you.

The Doctor became sad:

– Oh, my daughter. It is possible to come and leave here once. But it is impossible to return here anymore...

#### 14. GAZELLES, FISHES AND BOO... HOO...

**B**oo... Hoo... continued going. She was singing and dancing. While getting hungry and tired she bit the apple and gathered strength.

At last she reached the wood. There was a narrow path through the wood. She went along the wood path and it led her to the wide glade. There was a flock of grazing gazelles in the glade. As soon as the gazelles saw Boo... Hoo... they stopped grazing and stared at the girl. One gazelle-cub left the flock approached her. The cub smelt the air and stood by her side bending head... Boo... Hoo... stroked the gazelle's head. The gazelle bleated and moved. The whole flock followed the little gazelle. Boo... Hoo... also followed them.

The sun was setting down. It was getting dark slowly. When stars appeared in the sky mother gazelle bleated. The flock surrounded Boo... Hoo... Bending their heads they fell asleep. Boo... Hoo... also leaned to little gazelle's neck and closed her eyes.

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She opened eyes when she felt shaking. All gazelles were looking at her. The cub did not move in order not to frighten Boo... Hoo... The girl understood it and jumped out of her place.

Mother gazelle sprang out of the flock to the front. The flock started to go.

They reached to the bank of the river in the early afternoon. All gazelles approached Boo... Hoo..., touched her and stepped back. The little gazelle came and sat close to her. Then the cub bleated and holding up its head looked at the other bank of the river.

Boo... Hoo... looked at the same side. There was a boat with a man in it coming from the opposite bank. All gazelles lined up and left the place. Boo... Hoo... looked after them.

When she heard the purling of the water she saw the boat on the bank of the river.

– Can I sit in the boat, uncle? - Boo... Hoo... asked.

The man answered by nodding.

Boo... Hoo... stepped lightly into the boat. The boat moved slowly from the bank.

Boo... Hoo... looked at the man in surprise.

– It seems that the boat understands us, uncle!

The man showed the front of the boat.

– Wow! What a big fish!

– This fish is carrying the boat! – at last the man spoke to her.

Boo...Hoo... noticed that the head and body of the fish were tied with gold thread, the other end of which was tied to the front of the boat.

Boo...Hoo... was looking now at the man, now at the fish in amazement. The man said:

– I am the Shah of fishes!

– The Shah of fishes... on the land...?!

The man jumped to the water. The girl saw that the school of fish was approaching the boat. As soon as the Shah of fishes

stuck his neck out of the water and chirped the school of fish swam away lashing their tails. The Shah of fishes sank low in the water.

Boo...Hoo... was bug-eyed with surprise. Unexpectedly the water divided into two parts. One fish leaped out of the water and fell into the boat slowly. Boo...Hoo... saw that the man was sitting in his place. The boat rocked on the water slightly.

– We have reached. – The man said. – Though I am the Shah of fishes for thousands of years I have been a friend to the people who lost their way. Those gazelles are as well as me.

– What on earth? - Boo...Hoo... asked.

The man smiled:

– They are also fishes.

– What?!

– Every day a school of fishes get ashore. And I put a spell upon them turning into gazelles. Well... Our time is over as well as our way. This land is called “The land of quarrel”...

## 15. IN THE LAND OF QUARREL

**B**oo...Hoo... got stuck knee-deep in the ground as soon as she set foot on the shore. She turned the head backward and saw neither boat nor man there. She started to make steps sticking in the mud. She did not make five or six steps but got tired.

– It will be better if I have a rest. – She said and got stuck up to her waist. – Oh! - She tried to stand up resting against her hands. This time she stuck up to her elbows in the ground. – Well... maybe I shall have to stay here. How should this poor guy get stuck here? What? Poor guy? I was confused. I had to say “poor girl” instead of “poor guy”. One half of her body was inside the ground the other half is outside. Boo...Hoo... looked around having a rest. – Oh, my God! – Suddenly she exclaimed as she was bitten by snake. – How strange it is that one side of the river is a wood, the other side is a desert! – Thinking about it the head of Boo...

Hoo... became heavier. At that moment she heard something strange. She looked around quickly. There was nobody around. When the girl heard it again she laughed. –Hah-hah-hah... Oh, is this you, my stomach? Don't starve to death! Have you started rumbling again? Just a moment. I shall send you some slices of apple and do digest it well. She took the apple and bit. Chewing apple her mouth watered and she felt strength in arms and feet. She did not notice when she hid the apple and stood up. She found herself going slowly a long way inside the ground.

It was very difficult for her to go. At last she reached the hill. She hardly climbed over the hill and saw a little shack. She quickened her steps and knocked at the door as soon as she reached the shack. Nobody answered. This time she knocked strongly.

At last the door was opened. It was very dark inside. There was a couple of sparkle in the darkness. Boo...Hoo... looked attentively. There was a thin man in the middle of the room. The sparkling ones were his eyes. Even the stone had a sound but the man did not.

– How do you do, uncle! - Boo...Hoo... greeted him and made a step forward.

– How do yo-u-u do-o-o-o! – He had a weak voice. It seemed that the voice was coming from deep well. – Who a-a-re yo-u-u-u? – The voice became more weaker.

Boo...Hoo... did not know how to answer. – “Who am I?! Oh! Hmmm! I remembered!

–Wha-a-a-t? ...

–The dearest person!

– “The dearest person?” Whose? – The man asked.

– I am the guest! – Boo...Hoo... answered joyfully.

– The gu-e-e-est?! – The man looked at her in surprise. -  
What does the gu-e-e-est mean?!

Boo...Hoo... was at a loss. “Oh my God! What can I say him now? If he does not know what the guest means, then I shall have to stay outside all the night! I have to think a little”. Thinking for a while she again exclaimed “I remembered!” and

joyfully made a step forward. She was already in the threshold of the shack.

– The dearest person! – She made one more step. The man also made a step backward. – “The guest” is considered as the dearest person in our land!

– Just a moment! – saying it the man disappeared in the darkness.

Suddenly an old woman appeared in the darkness. She was coming slowly having leant against the walking-stick.

– Who are you, daughter?

– A guest! – Hardly Boo...Hoo... said it the old woman embraced her. The old woman began to weep saying it. At last she got calmed and took the girl by the hand into the room. They sat on the ground cross-legged.

– Granny, why is this land called as the land of Quarrel?

– My dear, in this land two grasses do not join in order to be a meadow. Two people are not reconciled with each other in order to be nation. Two words do not join with each other in order to be the truth. My speech is very difficult to be understandable, may I be your victim! – The old woman held tight the girl in her arms. – Kindness had left us for a long time. The population became bitter enemy. That was why this land was called “The land of Quarrel”.

A bitter quarrel broke out between the people, the trees, animals and even the ground. We became so miserable since envy appeared in this land. We have been suffered torments for hundred years. The man who met you is my son. Don't be offended with him, darling! He had never seen any quests in his life. So he knows nothing about them.

– And what happened with your land generally? The people are right saying that every fortune has misfortune at the end. We were also fortunate people. Our Shah was very just one. But he had no children. He had a wise vizier in his palace who had two handsome sons. Our ground was so productive that everything what we planted grew rapidly. Richness of our land was boundless.

One day we heard that vizier's sons disappeared. All people were in search of two boys but they were not found.

A week later our Shah fell ill. During a month he became emaciated and looked like a child.

Shah died forty days later after disappearing of vizier's sons. Misfortune never comes alone. The people buried Shah and marked the fortieth day of the boys' death. Something strange happened next morning. The Shah's corpse was abandoned near the grave and the grave was seemed not to be dug. The people called Mullah<sup>5</sup>, performed the ritual prays namaz<sup>6</sup> and buried the Shah again.

Another morning when day was breaking we went to the cemetery and again the body of the Shah lied face downwards. The earth of the grave was plain either.

We had no peace the whole week. In the seventh day of the Shah's death suddenly the sky darkened. The darkness gradually settled on the earth as a dragon.

The dogs were barking, horses were neighing and hen and chicken were cackling. We were looking for a place to hide. The huge shadow came down over the cemetery as a big hill. The weather immediately cleared. That was a huge bird.

The bird rose to the sky as quickly as it came. Somebody shouted:

– Take a look over there! The bird took away the Shah's corpse.

The group of horsemen mounted and started to follow the bird immediately.

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<sup>5</sup> *Mullah*- Moslem ecclesiastic

<sup>6</sup> *Namaz* – to perform the ritual prays of Islamic religion.

## 16. THE STORY OF THE HEAD

The bird was flying in the sky and the horsemen were setting off at a gallop on the earth. At last the horsemen reached the bank of the sea. The bird flew away and the horsemen followed it with their eyes.

– Look at the water, look at the water! – Somebody shouted.

– What in heaven’s name is it?! There is a natural soil road over the sea!

– Let’s hurry! – The leader ordered.

– The horsemen galloped after the bird. I cannot say how long they had galloped but their way crossed with the big part of the earth at last. The horsemen saw that it was an island in the air. And the island was tied with golden threads to the sea. The horsemen climbed up the island. It seemed that the bird was waiting for it and flying round stopped over the island. The bird went down tensing wings. The horsemen were frightened by this view. They quickly turn the heads of their horses back. But the road disappeared...

– The bird slowly came down and opened claws. The corpse of the Shah came crashing down under the feet of horsemen. The earth and sky shuddered at that moment. The dust fog rose high. The horsemen shouted with fear. Suddenly they saw that two old men were running towards them and shouting:

–Rescue us!

–We ourselves need help! – The horsemen answered sadly.

–Don’t be afraid! You will go back with the same way. But take us with you, too.

–But the way disappeared!

–We will show you the way!

As soon as the horsemen took two old men with themselves the way appeared over the sea. The island began to swing as a cradle. The horses began to neigh and the horsemen began to shout.

– Hurry up! – Two old men cried. - If we are late the island will swallow us!

The horsemen lashed horses. Instead of riding forward the horses were neighing, looking at the sky and dropping back. The island was swinging so hardly it seemed that it would destroy.

The old men bridled horses and carried them to the way. Then they jumped and sat on the croup.

When the horsemen reached the seashore there was a terrible roaring and clamor behind them. The horsemen looked back and saw that the island came off and pursued them.

– Gallop at full speed! - The old men cried.

The horsemen tried to gallop faster but the horses did not move as they fastened with nails.

The island had scarcely reached when started to revolve round. It became a big black cloud while whirling in the sky. It started to rain and the sea was full of water. When the clouds disappeared the sea started seething. After seething it calmed down. But after a minute it divided into two parts swelling out. Suddenly a big head appeared on the water.

– Oh, God! This is our Shah’s head! – The horsemen cried.

– Don’t be afraid, my boys! – The head spoke with closed eyes. – My children, I am paying a penalty.

– Brothers, gallop at full speed! – Two old men begged.

– Don’t go! - The head cried. - Don’t take these two men with you. They will bring you misfortune!

– A pack of lies! – Two old men cried. – You brought us misfortune!

– You are right! – The head answered. – I committed a sin causing to steal and lose you.

It turned out that these two old men were the vizier’s two sons that had been lost.

– Don’t you let us visit the last of our parents?! – Two old men cried and wept.

–No!- The head got angry.

– Why? – The horsemen asked the head. – What had they done wrong?

– This is my fault, not theirs. I was unjust causing to steal and lose them. And their hearts are full of vengeance. As soon as they reach Motherland they will threaten retaliation my relatives. And this revenge will bring you misfortune.



The horsemen hesitated; they did not know what to do. Should they leave two brothers there or... Two old brothers begged the horsemen:

– Everything happened with us. Don't leave us here, brothers. God will never absolve you!

The horsemen took the old men with them.

The head was still shouting:

– You are taking misfortune and disaster with you.

## 17. THE SONS OF THE VIZIER

Vizier became Shah after Shah's death. As soon as his sons returned he appointed the elder son as a Shah, the younger one as a vizier to the country. One morning we heard that the horsemen who had brought vizier's sons to the country, disappeared. The next evening the members of the old Shah's family were missing, either.

In such a way every day we heard news about mysterious disappearance. We got a terrible fright. We could not sleep even at homes quietly.

On the other hand the two brothers -the Shah and the vizier were always at odds with each other. The people separated. The lands were partitioned. Neighbors fenced off their gardens. There were plenty of robbery and killing during their reign. It was impossible to find two friends in the whole land. People starved, even birds flew away and animals ran away from the country. We chiefly feed with weed and grass... It also did not last long. The bounties of nature also came to an end. The water lost, the trees dried and the ground became deserted. Everything and everyone were at odds. It was strange thing that we were disappointed in life but the death was disappointed in us. We even cannot die. – The old woman began to weep. – Boo... Hoo... was at loss. At last the old woman rubbed her tears away and said: People try to be reconciled with each other but their hearts nurse rancor against human being. They even forget the feeling of love. We have not

celebrated wedding parties, played with children and given our guests a warm welcome for hundred years. That was why the word “guest” is unfamiliar to my son.

– Don’t you know how long is this torment going to last?

–Boo... Hoo... asked.

– No, daughter, we do not know about it, but the ground knows.

– The ground?!

– Yes, dear. Our happiness depends on the ground. If the ground is happy we will be happy, too.

– How is it possible to make happy the ground?

– How shall I say, it has just one remedy but we do not have it.

– And what is it?

– The apple of strength.

– Wha-a-at? - Boo... Hoo... jumped joyfully.

The old woman looked at her in surprise.

– Apple of strength!

Boo... Hoo... was going to get apple of strength but stopped immediately remembering something.

– Granny, how does the apple of strength look like?

– I do not know, may I be your victim! By fair means or foul, this apple has seven colors. It is as heavy as a stone. I do not know anything else. – The old woman answered and added quickly: Yes, I remembered – it is also transparent. It is visible from both sides. And it shows everything in its initial view.

– What does it mean?

– It means if an old woman like me looks at the apple she will be able to see herself as in childhood and youth ages. If the dead man looks at it he will see himself alive.

Boo... Hoo... got the apple and brought near to old woman’s eyes.

– Please, Granny!

– What is this, dear?

– Look at yourself!

The old woman bent over to look at the apple and saying “Oh, Daddy!” she fainted. Boo... Hoo... seized woman’s hand

quickly. The old woman gave a groan and opened eyes.

– What is the matter with you, Granny?

– Bring nearer the apple, dear. – The old woman looked attentively at the apple. – Be happy, my darling. So it is! – She sighed deeply.

– Why are you sighing, Granny? Take and eat. I have one more apple.- Boo... Hoo... gave the old woman the apple.

– No, my daughter. My eating is not enough!

– This is another apple - Boo... Hoo... showed the half - snapped off apple.

– These two apples are enough for you!

– Why do you think so?

– Daughter, if you eat these apples you will never die!

– I will never die?! – Boo... Hoo... asked surprisingly.

– Two apples give a man immortality as Khidir Ilyas<sup>7</sup> who drank the water of life.

– Khidir Ilyas? – Boo... Hoo... jumped up and down joyfully.

*Khidir Nabi, Khidir Ilyas.*

*Flowers bloom, spring comes.*

– Yes, you are right.

– Have you ever seen Khidir Ilyas, Granny?

– No, dear, he is invisible.

– Will I be also invisible if I eat these apples?

– You will also be immortal! – The old woman said.

– Won't I see people like them?

– You will see them.

– Will I speak to them?

– No!

– I do not want to be immortal if I am not going to speak and laugh with the people.

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<sup>7</sup> *Khidir Ilyas (or Khidir Nabi)* – a legendary hero, protector of water, air and wind in traditional festivities. He is the prototype of Prophet Khizir.

## 18. THE APPLE OF STRENGTH

The old woman went and opened the patterned chest. She dawdled for a while, took something out of the chest and gave it  
Boo... Hoo...

– My daughter, this is my wedding dress, keep it. – She again looked into the chest and found a pair of slippers.

– And these are my wedding slippers. - She closed the lid of the chest. Boo... Hoo... and the old woman went out.

The old woman undressed and cleaned her body with the sand. She put on her wedding dress and slippers.

– Now I am a bride. My dear, go and call my son.

When Boo... Hoo... came back with the old woman's son they saw her sitting on her knees on the ground.

– Come here, my children, help me to dig a hole. - She started to dig the soil. They dug a big hole. The old woman put the apple of strength into the hole after kissing it thrice. She began to make blessing over:

*Take this apple as a gift!*

*Feed your soil, dear earth!*

The hole was closed. The old woman stood up and shook the hem of her dress. – My children, this will be the sacred night! We must not sleep this night. Let us keep watch over it till the apple of strength takes roots.

Three of them did not close their eyes till the Moonset. There were green tongues of flame appeared on the hole in the Moonset. The old woman fell on her knees and raised her hands to the sky: Thank you, God, You have not left us in the trouble... – Then she touched her eyes. Tears were trickling down her face. The old woman stanchd her tears with the edge of her dress and smiled. The tongues of flame had already risen higher. They were shining and illuminating all sides. After a while the flame turned into green shoots.

At noon the apple of strength had already become a high tree. During a week the tree blossomed and bore fruit.

The flowers bloomed, green grasses rose in the old woman's yard. A little bird came flying to the garden from somewhere. A flock of bees came flying, either. The news quickly spread through the city.

A lot of people came to see the old woman's garden. They had been waiting for a long time. But neither Shah nor his vizier came there.

They said that both Shah and his vizier disappeared a week ago. The old woman counted the days. The apple of strength had also shot out a week ago. The people set up a clamor and asked the old woman in a loud voice:

– How did it happen that your plant bore?

The old woman told them everything. The people raised Boo... Hoo... higher and carried her on their arms through the city. They left her near the old woman.

– Long live this girl! – The people cried.

O people! – The old woman said. - Everyone can take an apple and plant in his yard. But you must keep watch over it till the apple of strength takes roots.

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The earth strengthened in a week, water flowed and the earth came to life. The birds and insects flew to the gardens. People did not stop visiting the old woman. They came with groups and kissed the girl's hand to express their gratitude.

One morning the old vizier came to Boo... Hoo...

–My daughter, our land was left without control. I am very old. I have neither strength nor face to rule over the country. We wish you to be our Shah. Don't refuse but think about my offer...

Boo... Hoo... looked at the old woman and lowered head...

## 19. IN THE LAND OF ROBBERS

**B**oo... Hoo... kissed the old woman's face and left the house quietly. She came to the apple tree of strength and said:

–Good morning, apple tree. You have grown up from my apple. Give me my dept. – She picked one apple, said good-bye and went away.

We cannot say how long she had being gone but suddenly she found out that her mouth pressed against the river. She looked at the opposite bank of the river. Suddenly the river rose high and a huge fish appeared face –to-face with Boo... Hoo... pressing nose against the shore:

–Climb on my back!

Boo... Hoo... sat on fish's back throwing her leg over the fish.

The fish got the opposite bank of the river shaking with tail in the twinkling of an eye.

–Have a nice journey! –said the fish rocking on the water.

Boo... Hoo... jumped up to the bank in a minute.

–Thank you, fish! – saying it she turned back but did not see the fish there.

Boo... Hoo... went along the hill-side and reached the valley of the river. There was a big city in front of her. The gates of the city were opened wide. There was neither guard nor soldier near the gates. Sunlight fell on her eyes when Boo... Hoo... reached the gates. She raised her head. There was a golden board shining on the left of the fortress walls. There was such a watchword on it:

**Long live thieves!**

Boo... Hoo... was frightened. At last she recovered herself and began to think: “What a place is this? Why are the thieves so honorable here? What about me? What will they do if they know

that I am not a thief? Let me remember whether I have ever stolen anything?” – She began to relive what had she stolen formerly. – Yes-s, once I stole a hen’s egg and ate it. Can it be called a theft? Of course, it cannot. Hens do not lay eggs for themselves. – Wait a little! Once I found nabat<sup>8</sup> in my pocket. Of course, it could not get into my pocket itself! When my Granny was breaking sugar one of the pieces of candy hidden from granny’s view jumped under the table. It was impossible to notice it because there was nobody younger than me at home. As I was the little one at home nabat had to fall to my lot. I might tell them that such things are considered as a theft in our land. Will they believe me? What will be, will be... – She entered the city.

The street was empty and the shops were opened. There were neither sellers nor customers. Boo... Hoo... was going and looking at the right and left sides. Suddenly she saw a wall. She stopped. There was a big board on the wall with such a watchword on it:

**Do not close the doors of your houses  
if you are afraid of thieves!**

Boo... Hoo... curled her lips and thought:

Oh, God! People lock their doors of their houses in order not to give opportunity to thieves, but they say not to close the doors...

Boo... Hoo... turned to the left. There were many gold and silver shops along the road. There were not sellers in those shops, too. There were a few people but they also did not look out of the tail of their eyes at the jewel. At that moment a young man and maiden approached the shop. They looked through and chose a single ring. The young man took the money out of his pocket and put in the ring’s place.

Boo... Hoo... went for a while and reached a wide square. There was also a watchword with golden letters there:

8 *Nabat* – a lollipop

**Close the door of your house if you  
are not afraid of thieves!**

- Oh, God! What a strange thing it is! In one place they say: “Do not close the door of your house if you are afraid of thieves”, in the other place they say: “Close the door of your house if you are not afraid of thieves”. Whom should I believe? I do not know. She was going and grumbling. She met an old man on her way.

- What are you dissatisfied with, my daughter?

She was surprised and asked the old man knitting her brows together:

- What is the matter, uncle?

- You are grumbling, aren't you?

Boo... Hoo... understood that she was grumbling loudly.

- Nothing. I was speaking to myself.

- Who are you, my daughter?

- Who am I?... Oh, uncle, I am a thief...

- What are you? - The man startled.

- I am.... I... ammm... a thi..e...f.

- Are you a thief?

- Yees. I ammm...

- What do you mean by that, my daughter?

- That has been written on the wall.

- And what has been written on the wall?

- The watchword which has been written in the entrance of the city: “Long live thieves!”

- Hah... hah... hah...- the man began to laugh.

- Boo... hoo... Boo... hoo... ...- the girl began to weep.

- Why are you crying, daughter?

- Boo... hoo... Boo... hoo... ...- the girl went on weeping.

- Stop crying, my daughter. What is the matter with you?

- Oh uncle, they say that there are not better people than thieves here?

- Who says it?

- ...writings...

The man became serious:



– My daughter, this is another case! Stealing and theft have never been good actions.

Boo... Hoo... interrupted the old man:

Stop talking like that, uncle. Otherwise you will be hung!

The old man laughed and took the girl by the arm:

– My daughter, come with me and I shall explain you everything.

## 20. THE STORY OF AN OLD MAN

**T**wo houses were robbed in the same day, weren't they? - The just Shah shouted: - Where were you looking at, vizier? Don't you see these crimes? Keep my order in your mind: Since now for the account of each robbed house ... The vizier interrupted the Shah with fear:

– Your majesty! You wanted to say “instead”, not “account”.

– ...Instead of two robbed houses two thieves will be hanged upon a gibbet!...

The gallows were erected and two robbers were brought and the thick rope was put on their necks. As soon as the chair was taken off their feet they were hang in the air.

The day passed. In the morning vizier came to the Shah.

– What happens, vizier? There were two houses robbed to-night!

– Your Majesty! I have lost my head!

– ...for the account of each robbed house ...

– ...Instead of each house, your Majesty...

– ...two thieves will be hanged upon a gibbet!...

The gallows were erected...

- Since then robbery and theft spread widely. It happened that the Just Shah's clothes were also stolen from the palace. Just Shah was a very true man. That was why he remained without clothes for a week. The new clothes were sewed for him when he got salary from the treasury. The poor Shah had to be hungry that month. Because he was a true and just Shah... The Shah called his courtiers again:

– What do you think? Who could do it?

The courtiers had opportunity to run down the man whom they did not like. The gallowses were erected everywhere and executioner stumps were brought to the square immediately. Some people were hanged, some were cut off. When a thief was punished, ten honest people were punished with him. Who should have the Shah believed if not the courtiers?! He was Just Shah!

With the growth of punishment, theft and robbery also increased. When the thieves were killed in the country, the thieves of the neighboring country came and plundered cities and villages. At last the people revolted and deposed the Just Shah from the throne and enthroned the Robber Shah. As soon as the Robber Shah came to the throne he ordered to bring the Just Shah to the palace:

– I do not inflict the punishment on you. You are not guilty. You wanted to have truthfulness in the country. But you have the greatest fault that every person seemed you as a thief. Now go and live. You will see how the theft and robbery are going to be eradicated in the country!

That day the heralds spread the news far and wide in the villages and cities:

– People, thieves are miserable people. Do not close your doors and let thieves and robbers take anything they want. Though they are robbers they are not merciless. They will not touch the things you need. Don't be afraid of them. Leave your doors open!

The next morning the heralds were walking with other news:

– People, if you want not to be robbed, leave your doors open!..

The Robber Shah had the latest news about robbery.

– Your majesty, since you have come to the throne ten houses less than usual have been robbed today.

The next day the heralds had news:

– Your majesty, twenty houses less than yesterday have been robbed today.

The heralds again walked and shouted spreading news:

– People, if you are not afraid of robbery close your doors!  
In the morning the surroundings of the Shah brought news:  
– Your majesty, only one house was robbed today! And the door of the house was closed.

When Robber Shah got the news Just Shah was always near him. One day when the robbery was eradicated in the country at all Just Shah asked Robber Shah:

– Your majesty, what is the matter? What a secret is there in this affair?

Robber Shah asked, instead of reply:

– Say me, are you right or me?

– What can I say?!

– Don't be timid! Say me the truth as man to man!

– I think, I am true!

– Did you try to eradicate the robbery?

– Yes, I did.

– How did you do it?

– By means of punishment.

– That was your greatest mistake. You were an honest man but the robbery covered the country.

– But I did not want that at all.

– To be an honest Shah is not enough, brother! The country must be honest!

– What? – Just Shah asked. – If I knew it right from the start I made heralds spread news as you had done.

– No, Just Shah, it is impossible to set the country right by spreading news.

– But by means of what?

– By means of faith.

– By means of faith?

– Yes! You were a just Shah but you never believed in people.

Just Shah hung his head.

– Yes, my daughter, now Robber Shah is governing our country. The doors are opened, the hearts are assured. Everyone knows that his house will not be robbed. If someone robs the Shah

does not punish him. He just orders to lock the robber's house. As soon as the robber's house is locked it is immediately robbed by thieves. There are such thieves in the country that they can do it in the twinkling of an eye.

Boo... Hoo... and the old man had dinner and went out. After walking for a while they met a group of people. Boo... Hoo... asked:

– What is there, uncle?

–What do you mean by that, my daughter? Do you ask about people?

– Yes. Why did they gather there?

– Oh, daughter, I have forgotten to tell you that today is the tenth anniversary of prohibition of capital punishment in the country by Robber Shah. There is a competition in honor of this festivity.

– What a competition is it?

– A theft competition.

– A theft competition?! – Boo... Hoo... asked in amazement.

## 21. A THEFT COMPETITION

Chief justice announced:  
– We invite the Thief Tukbaz (Hair-fancier) to speak.

There was storm of applause in the crowd.

Tukbaz jumped to the stage. He went round on the stage and bowed down before the people. The storm of applause resounded in the crowd. Tukbaz held something to his assistant and again started to go round on the stage. Every time he went round and gave something to his assistant. At last he approached Chief justice. He turned back and said something to his assistant. The assistant gave him a mirror. He turned to Chief justice and said:

– Please, look at yourself!

When Chief justice looked at himself in the mirror he got angry:

– What is it? I can debar you from competition. Give me my eyelashes back!

Thief Tukbaz called his assistant:

– Plant his eyelashes to his eyes again!

He was worse than Thief Tukbaz. He planted Chief justice's eyelashes but instead of... Chief justice looked at the mirror again:

– Where is the half of my hair? Give me back my hair. Since now I debar Thief Tukbaz and his assistant from competition. That will be good lesson for them for razzing Chief justice!..

The people clapped their hands and laughed.

The mirror went round the meeting. Everyone who looked at the mirror started shouting. One of the people was crying:

– I had just seven eyelashes when I was ill with measles. And you have stolen five of them. How can I face with my fiancée? Give me my eyelashes back!...

– The Chief justice interfered again.

After a while the teeth grabbers came to the stage. Chief justice spoke closing his mouth with his hand:

– Let's listen to a well-known Thief Dishbaz (Tooth-fancier).

People started to ruff. But nobody cried "Hurrah!" for greeting the thief. All people closed their mouth with hands.

Thief Dishbaz were going round the stage. His assistant told funny stories. The thief was walking and looking at the people. Suddenly someone smiled in the hall. Thief Dishbaz gave something to his assistant. The assistant started to speak again. Someone cried:

– Oh, my gold tooth was stolen. I had a little gold and I used it for my teeth. Oh-oh-oh... Give me my teeth back! Give back!

Chief justice interfered:

-Give him back his teeth! It is impossible to steal all teeth from mouth. You act against the instructions of the competition.

The assistant approached to aggrieved person...

After Dishbaz other thieves appeared on the stage. They were Ayaggabibaz (Shoes-fancier) and Papagbaz (Cap-fancier). At the end of the competition the Thief Agilbaz (Mind-fancier) came to the stage. All people lost their head. Chief justice introduced him to the people kindly: The Thief Agilbaz who has no equal in the world. It is a miracle that he has visited you today as he spends all year in travelling the world. – Suddenly Chief justice – Let’s listen to the famous Thief Agilbaz.

Thief Agilbaz bowed before the people. People were afraid of looking at him. Who looked at his eyes he would lose his mind immediately. Agilbaz always stole minds from the eyes of people.

His assistant was speaking and demonstrating zeal on the stage. But nobody raised his head to look at him. Suddenly somebody jumped on the stage:

– Hah-hah-hah... You are stupid ones! Who are you afraid of? Look at me. I am not afraid of Agilbaz and now I am looking at his eyes. If he is so courageous let him steal my mind. God knows, that I will kill him. I will punish him without mercy!

Someone cried:

– What will you be afraid of, poor man! He has already stolen your mind and now you are boasting here.

At that moment two people jumped to the middle of the square and began to dance. They came nearer to the thief:

– Why are you boasting? If you are so brave steal our minds. Hah-hah-hah...

The square was buzzing. Nearly half of the people were on the stage. After a while Chief justice came to the stage and ordered loudly:

– The competition is over!

It seemed that the meeting had been waiting for those words. Buzzing was over. The people left the stage and ran away.

– Uncle, what does it mean? It seemed that everybody was waiting for Chief justice’s words.

– No, my daughter. It is not so. Thief Agilbaz made his magic disappear from his eyes at once when he understood that the competition was coming to an end. So the stolen minds of the people immediately returned their brains...

## 22. ON THE WAY HOME

**I**n the early morning Boo...Hoo... went away. She passed through valleys as winds, through hills as stream and left the land of Robbery at last. She was still keeping her head down. Suddenly she felt that someone was sneaking her eyes. When she raised her eyelashes she saw the Sun. The Sun was rising slowly. She collected her thoughts. She felt hunger and wanted to take an apple from her bosom. But the apple disappeared. She began to think. Then she said something as if she was speaking to someone:

– I might have given one of the apples of strength to an old woman. But what about the other one? It was impossible for me to lose it! – Suddenly she noticed her slippers and cried:

– Wow! Where are the flowers of my slippers?

She heard a weak voice near her foot. Boo... Hoo... looked attentively but saw nothing. When she heard the voice again the girl noticed that a little violet was shivering its neck and speaking to her.

– What are you saying to me, violet?

– Where are you coming from? – The violet asked.

– I am coming from the land of Robbery.

– Dear sister, look for the flowers and apple of strength in that land. Be thankful to God that you have your teeth in your mouth and your hair on your head.

Boo...Hoo... understood what's up. She wanted to thank the violet. But violet disappeared. Boo...Hoo... started going. She was going so willingly that forgot about her hunger. Grasses were becoming thicker and trees were seen here and there.

In the sunset she felt the fragrance of flowers. She stopped. She breathed deeply and looked around. Those places were very familiar to her. But...

She again started to go and saw a fence on her way. There was a little hut in the other side of the fence.

– Oh, yes. This is the hut where I woke up for the first time!

Boo...Hoo... ran and entered the hut. Everything was the same since she had left the hut. Even the ash of the hearth was still strewn about the hut.

Boo...Hoo... went out and brought a bunch of wormwood. She cleaned the room and gathered the ash of the hearth. Then she picked flowers, made bunches and put them in the corners of the hut. She looked at the clean hut:

– Lovely hut, now you are very nice! Look at yourself and enjoy! – She again went out and stared at the garden.

– The garden was also the same. There were blossoms and fruits on the branches. Even the charred log was in the same place. There was a burnt fruit and flowers on it.

– Suddenly the wind blew. Black clouds covered the sky. The weather changed. It thundered and hailed.

Boo...Hoo... entered the hut and closed the door. She lied on the bed and stared at the rain through the window. Her eyelashes closed slowly...

– Mummy! – She cried so loudly that she woke up to her own voice.

– Bismillah! Bismillah! What is the matter with you, dear? – Her grandmother put her hand on the girl's forehead.

– Granny, is that you? - Boo...Hoo... asked crying.

– Bismillah... May I be your victim! Of course, this is me – your Granny! What is the matter with you?

– Maybe I am having dream.

– It is not dream, my dear.

– Am I at home?

– Wow, of course, my dear. You are at home.

– Are you also at our home?

– Yes, of course. God bless you!

– I think, I have slept in the hut. – saying it Boo...Hoo... put her head on the pillow.

– You had a dream, may I be your victim! Let me bring you water...

In the third cockcrow when Granny covered her head with the dress Boo...Hoo... jumped from the bed.



– Good morning, Granny!

Granny looked at her in wide-eyed astonishment:

– My dear, why have you got up so early? May God prosper you!

– Wow, Granny, I always get up in the early morning!

Granny did not say any word else.

When Granny milked the buffalo and returned home she noticed Boo...Hoo... sweeping the yard with the turban on her head...

# Mr. Donkey Donkeyson (tale-narrative)

## 1. BZZZZ....

"**B**zzzz..... Bzzz.... Bzz..."

The Lion awoke to the sound of flies in his ears. He angrily pulled his right paw out from under his head and slapped at his left cheek.

"Useless creatures! They don't even let us enjoy our sleep in the morning!"

Suddenly he snapped awake, as if someone had hit him. He slowly squinted his eyes open and peeked out from between his eyelashes.

Then he gasped. There were thousands of wide eyes staring straight into his face. He shot upright as if he had been bitten by a snake and stood on his hind legs. He saw... his own subjects of his kingdom. The fear in his eyes turned into rage. In his anger he pulled his body back and threw his head forward. He opened his mouth wide to scare those "useless creatures" who had disturbed his sweet sleep:

"Buzzz!"

The noise that came out of the King of the Forest's mouth wasn't even as loud as the buzzing of a mosquito. It didn't even make a hair tremble on any of his subjects, the wild animals who were waiting for his command. The Lion was embarrassed. He slouched his body, let his legs go limp and slowly laid down, fixing his eyes on one point in the distance. Finally when he recovered, he looked around. The fox caught his eye.

"Bushy Tail!" This time the King of the Forest's voice came out in a squeak, like a baby mouse.

“BZZZ...”

“Straight Ears!”

“BZZZ.. BZZZZ.”

“Crooked Paw!”

“BZZZZZZ...”

“Gentlemen, what is wrong with us?! Do we have sore throats? Did we all lose our voices?” the Lion asked, shaking his head.

All around him, everyone was buzzing.

“BZZZZ...”

“BZZZZ... BZZZZ....”

“BZZ... BZZ...”

“We don’t know!”

“We don’t know!”

“We don’t know,” everyone was saying.

Suddenly all the wild animals heard a loud sound of a donkey’s bray coming from the edge of the forest! “Hee-haw! Hee-haw!”

The Lion turned his blood-red eyes towards the Wolf, who was called Straight Ears. The Wolf got up from his place and left. Before long he came back with the Donkey. The Wolf held the Donkey’s ear with his teeth and kept hitting him with his tail to drive him forward as he brought the Donkey to see the King of the Forest.

## 2. “YOU’RE GLAD TO SEE ME, YOUR HIGHNESS”

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, welcome!” the Lion purred, coming close and licking the long-eared donkey’s neck.

The Donkey was very afraid. But then he realized that the Lion didn’t seem to be licking him hungrily, and he became completely confused. He thought to himself, “What did he say?! Welcome?! Praise the Lord—this is unbelievable. Lions used to kill my ancestors and bring them to places like this to eat them. But

this Lion is respecting me like an elder! He called me Mr. Donkey Donkeyson! And that coming from him—the very King of the Forest! And look at the way he is petting my neck! Strange things happen in life, I guess! Maybe... maybe they're trying to trick me. Maybe they're trying to make me happy at first and then they're going to skin me for supper. Yes, that's it. This trickster is a psychologist. He knows that if I'm afraid, my meat won't taste good; they won't be able to tell if they're eating meat or grass. In any case, I shouldn't just be silent; then the Lion will think I'm arrogant."

The Donkey tried to squeeze his throat tight so his voice would sound more delicate but he ended up yelling even louder:

"Hee-haw! Hee-haw! You're glad to see me, Your Highness, you're glad to see me!"

The Lion furrowed his eyebrows and beat the tip of his tail on the ground in anger, asking "What?!"

"You're glad to see me, Your Highness, you're glad to see me!"

"How do you know if I'm glad to see you or not, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?! Are you mocking us?"

"God forbid, Your Highness, God forbid! I'm a creature of faith. I never speak with bad intentions. It's just that I've been writing poems for a long time, and my tongue got tied. I meant to say 'I'm glad to see you!'"

"Sooo.... You say you're a poet?" - The Lion smiled.

The Donkey bowed his head, pawed at the ground modestly with his front hoof and looked up at the Lion.

"It might sound immodest to say so, Your Highness, but I have to admit that I am!"

"Have you published a book or anything?"

"I have not yet had that honor, Your Highness!"

"Why not?"

"The government used to publish books; they sold the books like straw and made good money on them too. They were fair to authors, and gave them small money for their books, like an honorarium. But now the times have changed; now you have to pay to get your own book published! Or else..."

The Lion quickly raised his right paw, gesturing for the Donkey to stop talking. Then he looked around and saw the wild animals standing stunned and silent in one corner.

“Bushy Tail!”

The Fox bounded over and bowed before the King of the Forest:

“Yes, Your Highness!”

“What was that you were talking about the other day?”

“About what, Your Highness? I don’t remember.”

“You were saying somewhere in the world they pay honorariums to authors?”

“Oh yes, Your Highness, you’re right!”

“Where was that?”

“In the country of Belarus. I read it on the internet with my own eyes. Whatever they publish, whether it’s good or bad, whether they make profit off it or not, they pay the author.”

The Lion lifted his left hand and waved the Fox away. Then returned to the Donkey:

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, what do you think about that? Does it sound good to you?”

“Your Highness, you mentioned Belarus. But going there is easier said than done. That’s a long way from here, over mountains and valleys. And in the middle there’s the Russian Army which has invaded the Crimea. It’s really messed up over there right now. No one knows what’s going on. God forbid, something might happen to me there. I might get hit by a stray bullet! Never mind dying... I might lose my reputation!”

“What do you mean, your reputation?”

“I mean my status as a poet, Your Highness.”

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, speaking of the Crimea, what are people saying about that? Who does the Crimea belong to?”

“Your Highness, do you mean the Crimea today, or historically?”

“Both.”

“If you really want to know the truth, historically the Crimea didn’t belong to Russia or to Ukraine. It belongs to the Tatars. Almost 600 years ago the Tatar people started living there. And

240 years ago the Russians took the Crimea away from Turkey. Today the global union considers the Crimea as unconditionally belonging to Ukraine.”

“But Bushy Tail here says that they held a referendum, and the people of the Crimea voted to become part of Russia.”

“Your Highness, first of all, the Tatars, who are the real owners of the Crimea, didn’t vote on becoming part of Russia. Second, we have four donkeys in our family, I mean my foals—five counting myself. Let’s say tomorrow seven bears come into my barn and say, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, pack up all your things and get out of here; this barn is ours. I would say, no, sirs, this barn is mine. They would say, prove it! I would say, my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all born here, lived here and died here. These are their graves. Now we live here.

“The bears would say, that’s not enough proof. We’re going to have a referendum and see what the people want. And who do they mean by “the people?” Themselves. So what do you think, Your Highness? If we have a referendum with 7 bears against 5 donkeys, who is going to win?”

“The 7 bears, of course.”

“Now you’ve got it! This is the same trick the Russians played to take the Crimea. I’d been surprised if the Russians don’t start slowly putting pressure on the populations of other countries and forcing them out! And even then, the ones who will end up getting hurt over it are common Russian people.”

The Lion nodded his head in agreement.

“Why don’t they understand this issue as well as you do?”

“Your Highness, do you think everyone has a good head on his shoulders?”

“Anyway, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, we’re on a tangent. What I wanted to say was that even if a poet is hungry and poor, he should at least have his own book!”

“A man is measured by his strength, Your Highness. And by strength -- we mean money! For example, our neighbor Wild Jackall; After becoming the mayor, he started having people write books and publish them under his name. He’s always talking

about how he got inspired and wrote such and such. He's always winning awards too. And he took on a very 'humble' nickname: Wild Halal Jackal! He shows off so much; he's always posing, as if he wasn't the one digging around the sheep barns! One day he gave me an autographed copy of his thousand-page book, Selected Works. It was hard-bound, on glossy paper, printed in a font with letters the size of horse teeth. You could stand back ten steps and read it. Your Highness, I was drooling over that book right down to the floor. I completely lost control of myself, I was so smitten.

Like the people say, you work all year like a donkey, you sweat, and you earn a few cents. I've saved up half a bale of hay while my babies go hungry. And even that won't amount to anything. They say the publisher owns a herd of buffalo. I'm going to go work in his fields for a couple of months for free, and give him the hay, and get him to print me a big book!"

"Why big? Readers don't know about you yet; can't you start small?"

"No, Your Highness, a poet's book has to be big!"

"Why is that?"

"For starters, they don't publish books for people read them anymore, because no one actually reads. Second, the bigger your book, the greater a poet people think you are."

"So you're going to spend all that money and even work extra to do this... will this be worth it for you in the end?"

"Yes, Your Highness, it will!"

"Is it a secret or can I ask what you'll get out of this?"

"It's not a secret to God, so why should I keep it secret from you? From now on, everyone will call me 'Poet Donkey Donkeyson.'"

"That sounds great!"

"Thank you very much, Your Highness, thank you very much! May all the donkeys be humble servants under your paw."

"You're a poet and an inspiration seeker... you probably know a lot then."

"Of course! Of course! May all your loved ones rest in peace. When we were just learning how to bray, my late grandfa-

ther would scold us, saying ‘Do you all want to turn into mules? You’re not going to be donkeys by braying like that! Bray smarter!’”

“What do you mean by ‘bray smarter?’”

“Your Highness, let’s take you for an example. God is our witness that you probably don’t bray willy-nilly.”

“Whaaaat? Since when do I bray?!” the Lion angrily raised his right paw and started to beat the tip of his tail against the ground.

“I’m sorry, Your Highness, I’m sorry! I forgot we’re not all donkeys. I meant to say roar, not bray! When you see your prey, you start seeing red, and you’re only interested in the strength of your voice; you don’t look at musical notes or anything.”

“What do you mean, musical notes?”

“For example, when we bray, we try to use our voice’s notes, accents, and even exclamations perfectly. Singers call that ‘musical ornamentation.’ I remember well how when we were foals and we would bray incorrectly, my grandfather would rear up and holler, ‘There’s no poet without a book, and no shepherd without a staff!’ He would leave bite marks all over our necks.”

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, humans have considered themselves the “supreme creations” for thousands of years, but you donkeys have been of invaluable service to them not only with your work, but also with your reputation, and even your breeding. There are many things that I won’t say—no, that I can’t say, because it would be shameful!”

“Thank you very much, Your Highness, thank you very much! May all donkeys be your humble servants under your paw! You’re putting me on a pedestal!” The Donkey looked around proudly. He wanted to bray a little, but then he saw the Lion’s terrible face and he faltered.

“There’s no household where they don’t mention you every blessed day. It’s no secret that you have played a big role in people’s upbringing, especially in families. There are thousands of educators, scientists, and academicians, but no one is as famous as you in human society.” The Lion was slowly inching toward



the Donkey, which made the Donkey nervous. The Lion passed him, took a drink of water from the well, and paced back towards him. “The fact is, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, the point of what I’m saying isn’t just pretty words.”

The Donkey froze. He wasn’t sure if the Lion was mocking him or speaking seriously. He dropped his ears low and looked at the King of the Forest in astonishment. Every now and then he let out tiny braying-type sounds:

“Hee... hee...”

The Lion repeated:

“The point of what I’m saying isn’t just pretty words, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson... then what is it?”

“It’s facts, Your Highness!”

“And what do facts require?”

The Donkey looked silently into the Lion’s face and brayed a little:

“Hee-haw...”

“What?!”

“Our intelligence will never be enough to understand the wise words of a lion, Your Highness!”

“Facts require explanation. Or else it’s not a fact; it’s a pretension. For example, let’s say a baby in a house is crying. His crying is so hard, you might think someone was cutting it into pieces. What educator has ever written an essay on ‘How to calm a crying baby?’ Don’t think too hard; you won’t come up with one. It’s no secret that most authors don’t know how to write books about real life. And Russian books... they’re all garbage. Those ‘hardworking’ authors wrote and wrote until sweat covered their foreheads and their fingers were calloused, copying down other people’s words like chickens with their heads cut off. Then they signed their own names on the top and compiled lovely books out of what they had plagiarized from here and there. The books are useless. But uneducated parents are another story... they make fun of their children with one sentence: ‘You donkey of a child, stop braying!’ As they say, stones should make noise... how does that saying go?”

“...Children shouldn’t.”

“Or when a boy is too wild... all it takes is for his father to shout, ‘Donkey! Aren’t you going to give us any peace and quiet?!’ Have you seen someone throw a stone into a pond of frogs?”

The Donkey nodded his head in agreement.

“They all go silent.”

“But what do you say about this: one fine day a housewife drops a dish and it breaks. Her husband sweeps the accident under the rug with his words: ‘A donkey won’t go back to the place where he made a mess!’ ...

Hearing these words, the Donkey was enraptured. “Your Highness, I swear by the spirit of my brother, Gray Donkey, who fell victim to the claw of a hungry wolf, you are one hundred percent correct!”

“It’s not hard to find examples. Let’s talk about law enforcement—police. When they trap a person in their net, they not only call him by your name, they even call up your forefathers from the grave to curse him! They create the impression that the person they’re judging isn’t a person at all, but rather an animal!”

The Donkey couldn’t restrain himself any longer. He bucked, kicked one leg, and began to bray:

“Hee-haw-haw!”

“What did you say?” asked the Lion in surprise.

“Forgive me, Your Highness; someone would have to have a heart of stone not to respond to this kind of praise! I’m just a donkey made of flesh and bone!”

“Don’t look down on yourself, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson; you don’t have to be so modest. You’re a poet, after all!”

The Donkey dug the ground with his right hoof. With his left eye he looked at the Lion and smiled. “Thank you, Your Highness. May all donkeys be ready to die under your paw!”

“There’s no need for thanks, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson! You work so closely with people that your character has rubbed off on them. Now tell me about people. What are their shortcomings?”

“Your Highness, if I list a thousand things, it won’t be enough to begin! Let’s start with how they treat us donkeys. They

make us work from morning to evening, then they set us out to pasture. They don't even put a blessed tuft of hay in front of us because we're tired from walking so far. They even expose their own faults with a proverb, saying 'so-and-so works like a donkey'! There you go. They make an example out of how hard we work, but they go along behind us and beat us with branches as soon as our feet slip even a little. They take us for granted as if they think we weren't sired by a father and born from a mother, as if we sprang from the ground like mushrooms!"

"Now tell me, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, how is the health of these most intelligent creatures? Do they get sick?"

"Oh, yes, Your Highness! They get so sick they are unable to get out of bed for months and years."

"I can't imagine!"

"It's true!"

"What do they do to deserve that?"

"It's their own fault."

"I don't understand."

"Your Highness, God made you meat eaters, and he made us plant eaters. But people eat both meat and plants, and whatever else they can get their hands on that's softer than a rock!"

"Ooooh boy! I guess people don't have manners about eating at all!"

"But the devil can take it. Let them eat what they will. But they take the beautiful things that God has given us and ruin them before they eat them!"

"How's that?"

"They cook everything!"

"Wow!! But what about all the vitamins and minerals in the food? You're telling me those poor people are just living on wood!"

"And you think they're decent, Your Highness? Even if we are starving or foaming at the mouth, we would never eat even a crumb of what the people eat."

"Why not?"

"It disgusts us!"

“Aaahhh... I understand. So you’re disgusted, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson!”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

“The food isn’t so disgusting. I know something more disgusting!”

“What’s that, Your Highness?”

“For example, what they call ‘sex!’”

“Sex?!” The Donkey furrowed his eyebrows in surprise. “I’m not sure I heard your wise words correctly, Your Highness.”

“What’s wrong with your ears then?!”

“You’ve been misinformed, Your Highness. I swear by the souls of my ancestors, we don’t have sex!”

“Why are you making this about yourself, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson? I’m talking about people, for heaven’s sake!”

“Ohhhh...” The Donkey smacked himself on the head with his front hoof. “By all means, please forgive me! Now let me say something and you listen, Your Highness! We animals have intercourse once a year, except for goats and sheep. But people have taken this issue to an extreme, and they call it sex. They even teach their children about it in school!”

“That’s crazy!”

“Cross my heart and hope to die!”

“That’s indecent!”

“God knows that our goal is to increase our population. Humans’ goal is immodesty!”

“What is immodesty?”

“It means to do something for pleasure!”

“But why do you say immodesty?”

The Donkey got angry:

“Your Highness, the most important mandate we have from the Almighty Creator is to be fruitful and multiply. In times past, they used to call that ‘intimate relations.’ But there’s not a single animal on the planet who would have intimate relations face to face! Even the monkeys which people proudly call their ancestors wouldn’t do something that stupid. But people... God forbid... and do you know how they do it? You’d think they have no God.

Even though God considers it a sin, during sex they start to have debates and discussions! That's why people in human society are born with two heads, four legs, conjoined, armless, mentally handicapped, with cleft palates... in a nutshell, they're born with a thousand different disabilities and those people become a burden to society, as God's punishment. So there you have it -- that's the pleasure that these intelligent creatures derive from sex. I don't know what else to call it besides immodesty!"

"Just between us, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, is sex pleasurable for people?"

"Thank you for asking such a great question! The gladness of our hearts that we feel just one time is more than what people feel all their lives combined." "God, what a pitiful species!"

"Your Highness, they're worse than 'pitiful.' They've become totally shameless!"

The Lion beat the tip of his tail on the ground and shook his head in consternation.

"Your Highness, now that we're on this topic, I have to tell you something. I know if they find out I've said it, they'll pile straw on my back, but I can't withhold this from you." "What?"

"People abuse us."

"What do you mean?"

"Your Highness, people are killing off our generation for their own good by the thousands, maybe even by the tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands or more."

"How?"

"Your Highness, we are a totally different species than horses, and we would never dream of having relations with a horse. But people get us aroused and throw us onto a mare. We have what she needs. Then the mare gives birth. Do you know what she bears?! The world's saddest creature: a mule! A mule isn't fully male or fully female. As they say, no one has ever become a grandparent by siring a mule. Our identity as donkeys is subjected to this evil. And may God not make them cry; that's not all the humans do to us..."

“Why are you blessing them? Why don’t you curse them by saying ‘May God make them cry?’”

“Don’t say that, Your Highness. If people are doing this much evil while they are in a normal state, just imagine what they would start to do if God cursed them!”

The Lion shook his head slowly.

“Sooo... what I was going to say... Your Highness, people have also begun... pimping.”

“What do you mean, pimping?”

“Your Highness, we haven’t seen things like this in the animal world. But people... there are some people who find girls for each other, make them become their wives, they fix them up with men... that’s what pimping means.”

“That’s strange!” The Lion furrowed his eyebrows.

“Speaking of strange, there’s something even worse, Your Highness. The worst is that people have even started to pull us into their evil pimping.”

“You mean they find husbands for you?!”

“No, no, Your Highness. They force us to have intercourse with girls and women.”

“What?”

“It’s true.”

“And you do it?”

“What else can we do? We don’t have any other option. One day a girl was floundering around. If the police hadn’t come in time, our baby beast-boy would have died.”

“Have any of them actually given birth to your offspring?”

“Your Highness, humans are the most clever beings in the world. Would they let that happen?”

“I’ve been paying attention to your speech, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, and noticing your knowledge. It’s amazing—you’re like a professor!”

“Thank you very much, Your Highness! Thank you very much. May all the donkeys be your humble servants!”

“But what about our problem?”

“What problem?”

“Have you ever seen people suffering from this problem we have?”

“May you never have any problems, Your Highness! What are you talking about?”

“You don’t see it?”

“What?!”

“You don’t see what has happened to us?”

“No. What?”

“Nothing?! You don’t see that we’ve all lost our voices, we’ve lost our identities? We don’t know how to fix this. We quit school after the elementary grades and started hunting. What can we say to Bushy Tail? He studied all the way through and got his master’s. If he hadn’t been so distracted by chickens, he would have been a PhD by now. And now he can’t remember how to yelp. Tell me now: when people lose their voices, what do they do about it?”

“Your Highness, don’t be fooled by how people talk about their science and their knowledge. It would take at least a thousand years for them to catch up to us.”

“I had no idea!”

“Yes! It’s true! What do people know about medicine?! Let’s take donkeys as an example! When we get sick, we die in 2 or 3 days and get on with business. But people... man, when God wants to take their souls, they steal them back. God sees the other side and comes back to earth!”

“You mean they resist God?”

“No, Your Highness. They can’t trump God. They just haven’t had enough of this world, so they take medicines by the handful to prolong their lives by five or ten days!”

“But what are we supposed to do, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson? We don’t have medicines.”

“It’s better not to, Your Highness.”

“What do you mean, it’s better not to have medicine?”

The Donkey suddenly reared up on two legs and brayed with joy:

“Hee- haw!”

“What did you say?”

“I figured it out!”

“What did you figure out?” the Lion asked, taking a step forward.

“Don’t you have a book of musical notes, Your Highness?”

“What are you talking about?”

“We don’t just bray willy-nilly. God gave us a certain way to do it. It’s a song; it’s music. And the key to music is notes. One time—forgive me for saying this—I acted like a donkey and chugged down half a bucket of ice-cold water from the refrigerator. In the morning when I got up, I realized I had a sore throat. I couldn’t speak at all for three whole days. And on the fourth day when I got my voice back, I wanted to bray for joy. But do you know what noise came out of my mouth? Buzzzzz.... Haha, can you imagine that? Hee-haw! Hee-haw!”

“Donkey Donkeyson, why are you laughing? Are you making fun of us?” the Lion asked angrily.

“No, no, Your Highness! God forbid! What are you saying? I swear I’m laughing at myself!” The Donkey started to tremble in fear.

“But you still have your voice today!”

“I’m taking about that time in my story, Your Highness!”

“How did you get your voice back?”

“I understood that I had forgotten how to bray. I ran to the barn. I took my sheet music from the haystack and started to practice. I practiced for one hour, two hours, three hours... finally I got my bray back. Hee haw... hee haw...”

“I don’t remember ever roaring with sheet music!”

“Your Highness, animals must have sheet music. On any given day, I bray at least five or six times. For one thing, it’s healthy. I’m clearing out my lungs. And for another thing, it’s practice. You’re different, Your Highness. You’re a meat eater. But we Donkeys are plant eaters so our memory isn’t very strong. We have to practice often. Hee haw!”



The Lion swiftly raised his paw and the Donkey ducked his head back.

“That’s entirely enough! We didn’t bring you here to bray and keep rubbing it in!”

### 3. DONKEY DONKEYSON’S MUSIC LESSONS

**T**he Donkey gathered up his tail and sprinted away. He passed through the crowd of animals so quickly that he left them in a cloud of dust as he disappeared behind the trees.

“Straight Ears! It looks like that blockhead just left us!”

The Wolf bolted forward. Within a few minutes they Donkey appeared from the other direction with a huge book of music on his back. With his foals following behind, he came and stood before the Lion.

“Who are these, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?”

“They are my children, Your Highness.”

“What are they doing here?”

“I brought them along as my assistants, Your Highness!”

The Lion furrowed his eyebrows. “What kind of assistance are they going to give you?”

“They’re going to do background vocals.”

“Why on earth do we need background vocals?”

“They’re going to repeat what I sing to help you remember the notes better.”

“Are you going to teach us our own sounds?”

“No, Your Highness, I’m going to teach you my sound.”

“Why yours?”

“Because this is my sheet music for braying.”

“So you mean from now on we will all bray?”

“I guarantee it one hundred percent.”

“But what about our own identities?”

“Your Highness, today there’s no place for talking about identity. If you want your voices back, I will teach you to bray. Or

else you will all just keep on buzzing. My old noble master, may he rest in peace, used to say that a voice is invisible, but it's very powerful! God forbid, if your voices remain trapped inside your bodies, they might give you a heart attack or cancer."

The Lion looked around angrily. The Fox came forward and fell at his feet:

"Your Highness, it's better to bray than to die!"

"Do you all agree?"

"Bzzzz..."

"Bzzz.... Bzz..."

"Bz..." The animals were crying out from all around:

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

#### 4. DONKEY DONKEYSON SITS LIKE A NOBLEMAN

**T**he Donkey arranged his children and then approached the Lion:

"Your Highness, I'm going to need two stumps."

The Bear did a somersault and disappeared into the thick forest. A little while later he came back with one stump on his shoulder, kicking another one along the ground in front of him. The Donkey put the music on one of the stumps and got ready to sit down on the other one.

He lifted up his left leg to cross it over the top of his right leg, but he crashed down onto his forehead. He untangled his legs from his head and said "hmph." He quickly got up and brushed the dust off his hide, saying,

"I'm sorry..."

The animals whispered among themselves. The Lion smiled:

"Are you OK, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?"

"Your Highness, if I were hurt from one little tumble like that, they wouldn't call me a donkey!"

“Where did you learn how to sit cross-legged like a nobleman?”

“Like I said a minute ago, my master was a nobleman. He always used to sit like that.”

“Do you know the biggest secret of sitting like a nobleman, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?”

The Donkey blinked his eyes, looked at the Lion and mumbled, “No, Your Highness!”

“First you actually have to be a nobleman!”

The Donkey lifted his head happily.

“God willing, I will be one soon!”

“How?”

“I’ll change my last name!”

“What does changing your last name have to do with being a noble?”

“It’s connected, Your Highness! From now on I will be called ‘Donkey Nobledonkey!’”

“You can’t become a noble just by changing your name; you have to actually have nobility in your ancestry!”

“Who cares about our ancestry, Your Highness? The most important thing is for us to be noble ourselves.”

The Lion changed the subject. “Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, don’t you want to start your lesson?”

“Of course! At once!” The Donkey nervously flailed around, then he finally became still and began to warm up his voice. “Hee... hee... aah... hee-haw... hee-haw... hey... That’s good. Your Highness, please come closer.”

The Lion stepped forward.

“Thank you.” The Donkey bent his head down and squinted at the music. After a while he straightened up and looked at the Lion. “Please, sing ‘Hee.’”

“hiii...” the Lion squeaked.

“A little stronger...”

“Hee...”

“Not like that, imitate me: Hee...”

“He... he...”

“It’s not working, Your Highness. Surely you have more power than that!”

“I can’t do it any other way.”

“Please, get angry!”

“Why?!”

“Get angry so you’ll pull your throat tight and your voice will come out stronger.”

“I need a reason to get angry.”

“Your Highness, have you ever had a prey that got away?”

“Once I attacked a long-horned buffalo. Somehow I wasn’t being alert enough. Suddenly I found myself between the buffalo’s horns, in the air. He threw me to the ground and ran away.”

“Hee-haw!”

“What did you say?!”

“That’s great!”

“Why is that great?”

“Get angry, Your Highness! Get angry at the long-horned buffalo for running away from you! If you can’t be angry at the buffalo, then be angry at yourself for not being able to catch and eat him!”

The Lion got so angry that he shouted “Harrrr” instead of “Hee.” The Donkey nodded his head in approval and turned to his children:

“One, two, three...”

The foals, who had been waiting for his command, quickly stood up and sang:

“Hee... Hee... Hee... Hee... Haw... Haw... Haw... Haw...  
Hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw...”

I’m a donkey, yes, of course!

I will never be a horse!

I don’t gallop, trot or play;

I roll on the ground and bray!

Hee... Hee... Hee... Hee... Haw... Haw... Haw... Haw...  
Hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw...”

## 5. HEE...HAW...

**A**fter three days of practice all the animals had begun to bray. They were even doing it so loudly that the forest was filled with the sound of their braying. The Lion had a mountain-sized pile of fresh clover delivered to the Donkey's front door.

The Donkey was in a better state than he had ever been before. Every day from morning until evening he and his children ate hay, drank water, rolled around and brayed.

The nightingales were the first birds to get tired of all the loud braying in the forest, and they all flew away. Then the sparrows, starlings, thrushes and crows followed. There was not a single bird left in the forest. One day all the farm animals gathered and lined up in a long line around the edge of the forest like diamonds along a ring to find out what was going on there with all the braying noises. They sent in the magpie to spy and find out what was happening. The magpie came back quickly:

"I didn't even see a single donkey in there. The braying noises are coming from bears, wolves, and foxes! Even the King of the Forest, the Lion, is braying!"

A commotion rose up among the farm animals.

"What an insult! They should pay for this with blood. How on earth did these meat-eating animals start talking like one stupid plant eater?"

But the animals were too afraid to go into the forest. Instead, they went around its edges yelping, snuffling, howling, and bellowing. As the months went by, they gradually heard less braying sounds from the forest. Every now and then they would hear a yelp or a howl. And one day, they heard:

"Rooooooar! Roooooar!..." The Lion's roar shook the forest.

All the farm animals ran away in the blink of an eye

## 6. BAD IN RETURN FOR GOOD

“So-oo, gentlemen,” the Lion began to address the wild animals. “Now we all have our voices back. We’re back to our usual selves. Go on out and hunt as you did before.”

Then he stretched out on the ground and rested his head on his paw. He had just closed his eyes when he heard a loud sound in the forest:

“Hee-haw! Hee-haw!”

The Lion jumped up to his feet.

“Is that our teacher I hear?”

“Yes, it’s him, just as you said, Your Highness!” the fox yelped as he sprung up on his tail.

“Gentlemen, now that our voices have returned to normal, let’s invite our teacher for a celebration!”

The Wolf sprang forward. Before long he was back with the Donkey in front of him, leading him to the Lion.

“Welcome, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson!” the Lion smiled.

“You’re glad to see me, Your Highness, you’re glad to see me!”

“Weren’t you able to become a nobleman by now, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?”

“Your Highness, it turns out that everything depends on money. I paid two cartful from that clover mound you gave me, and they made me into a noble right away. Now I’ve become famous everywhere under the name Donkey Nobledonkey!”

“That’s wonderful! Congratulations!”

“Thank you very much, Your Highness, thank you very much! May all the donkeys be humble servants under your paw.”

“Nobledonkey, what is that you’re carrying?”

“Your Highness,” the Donkey said, handing a book to the Lion, “may God bless you! I gave three carts of clover to the publisher, which he needed to save his buffalo from starvation, and he published my book!”

“That’s great news!” The Lion took the book and began to

look at it carefully. “But what didn’t they write your name on the cover of the book?”

“They wrote it, Your Highness.”

“Where?”

“See the picture of me there? And the words coming out of my mouth?”

“Hee-haw?!”

“That’s right, Your Highness!”

“Why did they write ‘Hee-Haw?’, after you paid all that to get your name changed?”

“They were afraid, Your Highness! They were afraid to write my name!”

“Who was afraid? What were they afraid of? What’s scary about that?”

“The publisher was afraid, Your Highness!”

“The publisher?!”

“Yes, Your Highness! He said that it would be damaging for the government!”

“What do you mean? When they make you work day in and day out it’s not bad for the government, but when they write your name down it’s bad for them?!”

“We’re a small species, Your Highness! The power is in their hands!”

“Whose?”

“The publishers.”

“Whatever publisher can’t print the truth has no business being a publisher at all! Wouldn’t it be better for that person if he sold potatoes and onions in the market, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?”

“Your Highness, I forgot to tell you what the publisher said. He said that if he wrote my name, the higher-ups would skin him alive!”

“They’re still afraid of higher-ups?”

“Who is brave enough to disobey them, Your Highness?”

The Lion was deep in thought for a few minutes. Then he suddenly lifted the book up in the air and started to circle around the Donkey. The Donkey started to turn around and around to

keep facing him like a sunflower following the path of the sun. Then the King of the Forest stopped and threw the book to the ground. The Donkey dropped to his knees, stretched his stomach out along the ground and started crawling towards the book.

The Lion roared:

“ROOOOOOAAAARRRR!”

The Donkey, startled, fell onto his back and was left with his feet in the air. The Lion pulled his right paw into a fist and shook it in the Donkey’s face:

“Get up!”

The Donkey sprung to his feet. His whole body was shaking, and his head was heavy.

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, you know that we all became your peers for five whole months.”

“What do you mean, Your Highness?”

The Lion bellowed: “That’s just it! It was meaningless!”

“Cross my heart and hope to die, Your Highness, I can’t understand what you’re saying.”

“I mean we were braying!”

The Donkey dropped his gaze to the ground.

“I submit to the truth of what you’re saying, Your Highness.”

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, do you realize that for five months we haven’t tasted meat?!”

“I submit to the truth of what you’re saying, Your Highness.”

“Mr. Donkey Donkeyson, you have insulted us deeply!”

The Donkey started. The Lion picked up the book from the ground and started hitting the Donkey over the head with it.

“Why don’t you speak, Mr. Donkey Donkeyson?! Repetition is the mother of knowledge. Let me say it again: you have insulted us deeply!”

“I don’t remember what you’re talking about, Your Highness, I don’t remember!”

“Well, it won’t be too hard to remind you!” The Lion reared up on his hind legs and suddenly opened his mouth. “ROAR..... Tall Ears!”



In the blink of an eye the Wolf pounced and sunk his teeth into the Donkey's neck. He picked up the Donkey and thrashed him on the ground. The Wolf tore into his stomach, crushed his chest, and divided up his carcass. There was just barely enough meat for everyone to have a piece. As they ate, they slowly dropped their heads to the ground. Before long, the whole forest was asleep and snoring.

## 7. GOOD IN RETURN FOR BAD...

"Bzzzzz..... Bzzzzz.... Bzzz..."

The Lion awoke to the sound of flies in his ears. He angrily pulled his right paw out from under his head and slapped at his left cheek.

"Useless creatures! They don't even let us enjoy our sleep in the morning!"

Suddenly he snapped awake, as if someone had hit him. He slowly squinted his eyes open and peeked out from between his eyelashes.

Then he gasped. There were thousands of wide eyes staring straight into his face. He shot upright as if he had been bitten by a snake and stood on his hind legs. He saw... his own subjects of his kingdom. The fear in his eyes turned into rage. In his anger he pulled his body back and threw his head forward. He opened his mouth wide to scare those "useless creatures" who had disturbed his sweet sleep:

"Buzzz!"

The noise that came out of the King of the Forest's mouth wasn't even as loud as the buzzing of a mosquito. It didn't even make a hair tremble on any of his subjects, the wild animals who were waiting for his command. The Lion was embarrassed. He slouched his body, let his legs go limp and slowly laid down, fixing his eyes on one point in the distance. Finally when he recovered, he looked around. The fox caught his eye.

“Bushy Tail!” This time the King of the Forest’s voice came out in a squeak, like a baby mouse.

“Bzzz....”

“Straight Ears!”

“Bzzz.. Bzzzz.”

“Crooked Paw!”

“Bzzzzzzz....”

“Gentlemen, what is wrong with us?! Do we have sore throats? Did we all lose our voices?” the Lion asked, shaking his head.

All around him, everyone was buzzing.

“Bzzzz....”

“Bzzzz... Bzzzz....”

“Bzz... Bzz...”

“We don’t know!”

“We don’t know!”

“We don’t know,” everyone was saying.

“Bushy Tail!” the Lion bellowed, “What kind of hardship is this, that went away and then came back?”

“This isn’t just a hardship, Your Highness!”

“Well then, what is it?!”

“This is God’s punishment on us for acting unjustly!”

The Lion held his head in his hands and started to think. Suddenly the animals started to nudge one another and point. The King of the Forest had tears streaming down his cheeks.

“You know what’s under the earth and what’s on it... why didn’t you stop us from killing this innocent animal?”

*“Your Highness, did you really think that I would die?”*

“What should we do now?”

“Oh, you bloody-mouthed predators!” There was a sudden screeching noise from the sky. The wild animals were startled. When they looked up, they saw an owl sitting on a tree branch above them, staring at them with wide eyes as he flicked his eyelashes. “Was the Donkey’s meat tasty?!” he asked dryly.

“We hardly got to eat big enough morsels to taste it, Honorable Owl!”

“So ask your stomachs!”

“You wise creature who did not bow down before King Solomon, we have done a terrible thing. We don’t know what to do now to set it right.”

“There’s only one option for you. You have to collect the bones of the dead donkey and bury them on the highest peak of Black Hill so his spirit will rest in peace.”

“Bzz!!!”

“Bzzzz...”

“Bz...”

“What are you saying?” the Owl asked angrily.

“Will we get our voices back, Mr. Owl?” squeaked the Lion.

“Are you trying to negotiate with God?” asked the Owl.

“Heaven forbid! Heaven forbid!”

“If the spirit of the Donkey is at peace, then God will forgive you too.”

“Bzz...”

“Bzz... bzz...”

“Bzzzz...”

“What are you saying?” asked the Owl, becoming more furious.

“God willing! God willing! God willing!” The animals answered in unison.

The Owl flew away. The wild animals started to collect the Donkey’s bones from the ground, from under bushes and beside trees, crying as they worked. The Lion picked up a hip bone in his teeth and started moving forward. The other animals followed behind him, carrying the bones.

As the sun began to set, the animals climbed Black Hill and dug a grave. The Bear placed all the Donkey’s bones in the grave, tossed a handful of dirt over the top and stepped back. The wild animals buried the Donkey with tears in their eyes.

A little later the Bear brought a tombstone made of black granite. The picture of Donkey Donkeyson carved onto the stone was sparkling against the black background. Under the picture, one of the Donkey’s poems had been engraved:

I’m a donkey, yes, of course!

I will never be a horse!  
I don't gallop, trot or play;  
I roll on the ground and bray!  
Hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw...

They placed the tombstone and smoothed over the surface of the grave. The animals cried so much that they grew tired and they all fell asleep around the grave. They didn't open their eyes for five whole days. On the sixth day early at dawn, the Lion felt like someone said to him, "Get up!" He looked around and saw that bright green grass had grown over the grave. The Donkey's portrait was looking straight at him. He thought he saw the Donkey wink and widen the corners of his mouth into a smile.

The King of the Forest leaped up from his place and burst out with joy:

"ROOOAAARRR!"

All the wild animals joined in with their voices:

"AWOOOO!"

"YELP! YELP!"

"GROOOOWWL!"

TALES  
and  
Stories

## "Grandfather, good morning!"

**E**lnur didn't know how long he had been sleeping, when suddenly he heard Spotty Rooster making a noise. He jumped up from bed. He found his shirt somewhere under the bed, put it on, buttoned it hastily and ran into grandfather's room:

- Grandpa, grandpa! After a while the man moved:

- Yes, my sweet...

- Good morning, grandpa!

- Wwhatt?

- Good morning, grandpa!

- Morning, what kind of morning? Maybe you mean to say "good night?"

- You are joking, man, where is the night? It is morning, you are late for work. Get up, please, the roosters are crowing!

- Roosters crowing?

- Yes, yes!

- But my rooster is not crowing!

- Uh – huh, huh... Elnur clapped his hands, may I ask, please, whose rooster is Spotty?

- Spotty? It is granny's!

- You are serious, man?

- My rooster is inside, sonny!

- How can it be inside you, dear man? - May your rooster be stolen by a jackal if it is so! Then show me your rooster, please.

- It is invisible.

- And it doesn't crow?

- But it is not morning yet!

- You think I'm joking?

- Who says so, my son's son?  
- Then you don't believe that it is morning already?  
- It is because my body tells me, it is not time to get up yet.  
- My dear man, just open your eyes and your body will get up immediately.

- But the thing is that my eyes won't open!  
- So, open them and they will! Is it so difficult?  
- Very difficult, Elnur, very difficult!  
- In short, you don't want to get up and so you find somebody guilty!

- I am not guilty! It is the morning that is guilty. It is not morning yet. You remember I told you my rooster hadn't crowed yet? You think I am joking. Sonny, you I should know that everybody has a built-in rooster in himself. My rooster is my body and my eyes. After ninety years my body knows when it is morning and my eyes open at once. I am not on the side of the rooster bought in the market. They cannot make the body get up, the eyes open.

Elnur could murmur only:

- You say it is not yet morning, grandpa?  
- Go and sleep, light of my eyes! Sorry that my eyelashes won't open, then I could look at the stars and tell you the time. Good night, my father's son!

When Elnur said "good night", the grandfather was already snoring. When he was passing through the drawing room into the balcony he stared at the clock and whispered:

- Oh, my! It is only half past two!

# How the Garlic Banished Its Odour

## 1. MOTHER, SHAM-SHAM, GARLIC AND ODOUR...

**S**ham-Sham threw down his backpack and ran to his Mother when he entered the house. He jumped and kissed Mother's cheeks:

- How nice that I have you in my life, dear Mommy, otherwise I would have blushed with embarrassment today!

Mother looked at Sham-Sham in surprise.

- Ramiz's stomach started to rumble when the lesson started. And we started to giggle ... Teacher got angry: "Stop giggling!" Then such a sound came from Ramiz's stomach that even the teacher laughed. "Darling, why do you come to school hungry?" Poor Ramiz became as red as a radish. How good that you give me breakfast every morning, Mommy!

- Don't you say that I force you to eat?

- Don't embarrass me, Mommy! – Sham-Sham lowered his head, pawed the floor with his toe and looked at mother craftily.

- Eat up, you shy boy!

- Ha...ha...ha... Thank you!

- Dear Sham!

- Yes, dear Mommy!

- You are Mommy's dear!

Sham-Sham paired his feet and put his hand on his forehead like a soldier saluting.

- Azerbaijani soldier Sham-Sham is ready to serve you, Mister Commander!

- Wow, what a way to say thank you, dear Sham-Sham!

- Would you like me to turn into a genie for you?

- Don't be a genie, but be as nimble as one!

- You can try me!

Mother grinned.



- Do you have any doubt?  
- Then go to the pantry and bring some onions and potatoes,  
mommy's dear!

- You just spoiled everything, Mommy!

- Why?

- Going to the pantry is one of the few things that I hate in  
this life!

- Inshallah, I will never send you to the pantry after the  
birth of your little brother!

- You're so funny, mommy!

A little while later, Sham-Sham's voice was heard from the  
pantry:

- My dear potato, let's go!

My dear onion, let's go!

Let me call one of you "groom,"

Let me call one of you "bride," let's go...

Sham-Sham was suddenly startled:

- Whose voice is that? Maybe a thief?

Sounds of busy whisperings came from the storage. The whispers  
suddenly stopped when Sham-Sham stopped talking. He put the  
onions and potatoes into a colander and left the pantry.

- They haven't taken me this time, again! – Garlic started  
to talk angrily.

- Why are you so impatient? One day they will take you  
too. – Garlic's Odour replied calmly.

- When?

- Everything has its time!

- Oh, how nice, why don't the potato and onion have their  
time then? People come to take them several times a day! But  
Garlic always has to wait!..

- ...

- Why have you lost your voice?

- Oh, I don't know!

- Of course you don't!

- Why do you say that?

- Because it is all your fault!

- M-i-i-i-ne? Why mine?

- Don't you know why?

- Where should I know?
- Because you are bitter and you have a very awful odour!
- What can I do, if God created me like this?
- Why has God created you like Odour, not Perfume?
- That's none of your business!
- That's my business, because I don't agree with this act of God! Do you get it?
- Hey, Garlic, try to be smart!
- Don't teach me!
- "Me" is not just "me"! – Odour shouted. – "Me" is also "You."
- How does that work?
- It doesn't have any explanation! If I were not "Odour," then you wouldn't be "Garlic"!
- I don't want to accept that!
- That's not something you can change! The Creator created us like this!
- Was it really necessary to create me with you?
- It's up to you! Think of it however you want to!
- Why hasn't He given me the smell of a rose?
- Dear Garlic, together we can heal lots of diseases! Why are you so ungrateful?
- That ability means nothing, if people only remember us once a year!
- But they remember us, anyway!
- Do you know what?
- Of course not!
- I am fed up with you! Do you understand me?
- Fed up with me?
- Yes!
- Is that something new?
- New or old, doesn't matter! Go and find a new place for yourself!
- You cannot live without me!
- Why can't I?
- You would become wormy!

The Sun set, and Garlic and Odour's conversation ended.

## 2. "MOMMY, I COULDN'T FIND IT!..."

The next day, in the evening, Sham-Sham went to the pantry again:

- Dear Garlic, where are you?

I have come to take you, let's go!

My Mommy has cooked noodle soup.

Come and make it tasty, let's go!

Sham-Sham started to smell the air, ran to the wall, looked under the shelves, and felt inside the onion sack because the pantry was half-dark. He couldn't find Garlic anywhere, so he ran and left the pantry:

- Hey, Mommy!

Mother turned her head to Sham-Sham.

- I couldn't find it!

- What couldn't you find, dear?

- Do you remember why have you sent me to the pantry?

- Couldn't find Garlic?

- If I have come without it, it means I couldn't find it!

## 3. "EAT, ORPHAN..."

Garlic was so mean to Odour that it left. After Odour had gone, Garlic started to feel emptiness in its body. Its head became too heavy for its shoulders and it couldn't open its eyes; it was always sleepy. After a week, small black dots appeared on Garlic's body. One day, those spots shook, trembled and started to move. After a while, they turned into worms and covered Garlic's body, saying:

"Eat, Orphan, eat all you can,

Eat slowly, don't burst your belly!"

For two weeks, Odour had been going around knocking on

doors; wherever it went, everyone banished it. As it couldn't find a shelter anywhere, it sat and thought. It remembered the past and its eyes filled with tears:

- How I miss Garlic! The world is cruel; no one knows what will happen tomorrow! Let me go and see what has happened to Garlic!

Odour looked everywhere in the pantry. Finally, it saw Garlic's clothes near a box.

- Oh N-o-o-o-o! – It hugged the clothes and wept. – Why did I listen to you and go away, why? It was you who lost your mind, but what was I thinking?

The rays of the setting Sun lightened a dark corner of the pantry; a small, yellow part of the Garlic still remained under its clothes.

## The cloud

The Wind rose and started to pluck out the Sea... The Sea tried to calm down... but couldn't; it suddenly noticed that its breath was evaporating. Fog rose and took a shape of a bear-cub. The Wind drove it out.

The Cloud passed a long way over the blue waters. It became as black as coal when it reached the shore. On the other hand, it became so heavy that it was hard to breathe. When it opened its eyes, it found itself crawling on a boundless land.

- Ahh... Is it a desert? It doesn't have any water, grass, birds or insects... Isn't this poor desert dying of loneliness here?! Maybe...

The Black Cloud crawled till evening:

- The Sea couldn't wear me down, but the Desert has; my eyes are darkening. I will become completely blind if I wander one more day. What if... I rain down?! Why "what if"? The Black Cloud squeezed its eyes shut:

- Plink plonk... plink plonk... plink plonk...

It was turning white as it rained... It was plink plonking till morning...

- Wow... I feel so much better... I want to rain a bit more...

It started to rain slowly.

The seconds, minutes and hours passed... The Cloud suddenly noticed that its back was leaning on the ground and its eyes were looking to the sky.

- Ouch! Have I become a Lake? – The thought started to rattle around in its brain. – I hope my heart will not stop because of solitude! How nice was it when I was walking in the Sky, looking to the Earth and my peers were around me. But now... - It closed its eyes. It was suddenly startled by a sound. – Who are you?

- Who do you want me to be? It's me!

- Who are you?

- Croak...croak!

- Croak...croak? The Frog?

- You are right!
- What brought you here?
- I have come, because...
- Fancy meeting you here!
- Because you felt lonely!
- Thank you, dear Froggie!
- The Fish has also come with me!
- Thank you! I will not be lonely anymore!

The Lake was very tired. It didn't even notice when it fell asleep. Its ears were filled with the Frog's sound when the morning breeze touched its face:

- Croak...croak... croak...

It saw that the birds were standing on its arms. The coasts become green as it licked them, and the bees and insects surrounded it.

Sometimes shadows would falling across its face. They were grey clouds which were in a hurry. The Lake started to toss up its waves:

- Where are you going? Come to me! Heeey... Don't you want to be happy?!

# The story of a strange child and a strange dog

1

The dog jumped up to the balcony. It came near the window, tried to look into the room, but could not see anything. It jumped forward and went crashing full force on the window-frame. The glass of the window smashed to smithereens. Firstly the dog got into the room with its front legs, then shoved its head and at last hind legs through the window.

The dog did not see anything besides of some broken chairs, a part of shoes and old small mattress with shabby mattress-case. There were also torn wall papers in the room.

The dog took the part of the child shoes jumped to the yard. It sat under the shadow of a pomegranate tree and leaning its front paws on the ground started to chew the leather sole of the shoe.

It was for the first time that the dog felt hunger since its master left for Turkey with his family. The dog nearly forgot barking. Instead of barking the dog got the lost habit of its forefathers - howling.

2

Elgun got up indignantly in the settlement of Istanbul where people from Nakhchivan lived:

–Mom?!

–Yes, dear!

–Do you know what dreamt me?

–God help us! What dream did you have?

– I had a dream about our country house. My dog Toplan was gnawing my right foot.

– May Prophet Joseph gives his blessing to us! Maybe you have slept thinking about Toplan.

- Mom, why didn't you take Toplan with you?!
- Oh, my boy, it would be a burden to us. We hardly make both ends meet. We have just started to earn our living.
- How long are we going to stay here, Mom?!
- How long? We have already become inhabitants here.
- Didn't you say that we are on a visit to Istanbul?!
- We visited and welcomed. That was why we decided to stay here.
- And what about our village?!
- Dear son, your grandfather died here, - Mother got touched, - your grandmother also died here. Their graves are here. How can we leave them here and return to our village?!
- It means that we will stay here till the end of our life?
- May I be your victim, my dear, this is our fate! Why don't you like this place?!
- And what about our house in the village?!
- And what about the graves of your grandparents?!
- We shall take them with us and bury them in our village.
- What do you say, dear? They will be called as accursed ones.
- But I am homesick here! – Elgun looked at his mother with sad eyes.
- Have a patience, my dear, it will be all right!
- Mom, I shall return to our village as soon as I grow up!
- Oh... my dear, do you think that our village is still existing? So many people left the village after us! All of them have settled here.
- It means that nobody remained there, do they?
- There are some old people remained there whose children work in Russia. They have no way out of this situation. They live the end of their lives.
- We would also live in our village if my father worked in Russia and sent us money.
- Oh, my boy, Russia is Russia and Turkey is Turkey. After all, we know that we have the same language and religion here.



Thank God , we have no troubles anymore.

– Mom, why don't you say that we had a big yard, a lot of sheep, lambs and cow there? The birds were singing in our garden till the evening. The Arpa chay river was flowing near our garden - I used to have fishing there. But here we have a little house and narrow room. Even the sparrow does not fly to our garden.

– We will have the bigger garden than the old one as soon as your father has money.

– It would be better if we took Toplan with us!

Two days later Elgun's father went to Nakhchivan on business.

### 3

Elgun had just closed his eyes when he heard a voice:

– Whoof....

Elgun stood upright:

– Mom?!

– Yes, dear!

– Is it a dream or does it seem to me?

– Dream?!

– I have just heard Toplan's barking!

– Your dad did not let me awake you.

– Has dad come back?

–Yes, he has even brought you a guest...

Elgun threw the blanket and ran to the yard:

–Top-la-a-an! – He jumped and embraced the dog's neck.

My dear, dear friend... The tears running down the boy's eyes streamed on the dog's face. Mother sighed and entered the house.

Father said with trembling voice:

– Sonny, the dog got tired and hungry of long way, Let mother feed it.

– Are you hungry, Toplan? – the boy pressed the dog to his breast. – Momm...

Mother went out:

- Yes, my dear!
- Give me my chop!
- I am going to give the dog a meaty bone .
- No, give Toplan my portion!
- Oh, Elgun! – Father said:- I did not imagine that you are

so ....

Elgun put his arms round the dog’s neck and turned to his father:

- What is the matter, Daddy?
- Wow, guy, do you love the dog much more than me?
- Daddy, thank you very much! I had a tedious time without Toplan! Look, how it has grown thin! Poor dog, it missed us , too!
- When I entered our yard it ran away and squeezed under the balcony.

– Joking apart! It is long time that we had left the village.-  
Mother said.

– Having heard my voice It came near to me wagging his tale.

– And what about our house? Is it safe?!

– I could hardly sleep there a night. There were only ten or twelve yards with light in the village consisted of sixty houses. There were at least fifteen houses which had been reduced to ruins. Instead of nightingales there were owls howling at night in the village. I was horrified by the voice of foxes and jackals. It was a terrible night in the house! Our house also became old, there is less time to its end!

– Poor house! – Elgun said sadly.

Mother shook her head thoughtfully.

– Daddy, I shall return our village with Toplan when I grow up!

– God grant!

– I will take you , too!

– Inshallah<sup>9</sup>

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**9 Inshallah** – God grant! Or Please God!

## 4

– Toplan played with Elgun in the afternoons but after 10-15 days the dog became restless at nights. Sometimes It barked, sometimes howled.

Elgun’s mother became worried while hearing the dog’s howling:

– Oh man, you brought this dog here in vain!

– But you insisted in it!

– I remember my father. Poor man died of home-sickness. He used to complain why we brought him here and said that his house was cursing him: “Why had you built me if you were going to leave me? Nothing less than we were stone or wood but now...”

– Did he really said it?

– By God! He lived just six months here! My mother could not stay his death. Poor mother!

– You know that we could not earn our living in the villlage.

– The boy was bored and I could not stay. But when this dog howls at night my hair stands on end! God forbid, it can make harm to us. Take the dog away from home!

– But what about Elgun....?!

– He will cry some days and forget soon.

## 5

Elgun was anxious about the dog’s uneasiness. He did not know what to do. Suddenly he remembered something and ran to his father:

– Daddy, where is the photo of our cat that you took in the village?

– It is here – in the phone memory.

Elgun took his father’s phone, found the cat’s photo and put on the screen:

– Daddy, make one meter heigh copy of this photo tomorrow and bring to me.

– Why do you need it, dear?

– This is a secret, you will see.

Next evening when father returned from work he brought a large copy of the cat's photo.

– Thank you, dear dad! – Elgun was so happy that he embraced his father and kissed him.

## 6

Elgun got up early in the morning and went to the yard. He put the large copy of the cat's photo under the tree. Toplan ran to the tree and startled at the photo. Suddenly the dog bared its teeth and jumped up and down round the picture wagging its tail. Sometimes it touched the photo with paw and stepped back as if frightened.

– Come here, Toplan recognized the cat.

Mother went out of the house and seeing Toplan's frolicking she said:

– Wow... Elgun, don't let the dog scratch the picture!

– Don't worry! It is hardly going to kiss the cat!

– They did not get along together with each other in the village. Poor Toplan! Living in a strange land the poor dog became amicable to the cat!

Playing for a while Toplan sat down on the ground, put its head under the bottom part of the picture and closed eyes.

## 7

There was neither howling nor whining in the yard that night. In the early morning when Elgun went out he saw neither picture nor Toplan in the yard."Toppush! Toppush!" he cried and went round the yard, looked at the basement. He noticed the cat's photo on the ground and there were tooth marks seen on the upper part of the picture. He opened the door and went into the street. But he again returned the yard:

– Mommy! Oh, Mommy! – Mother was seen in the balcony.

- Toplan has disappeared!
- Did you look to the basement?
- I looked for it everywhere, even around the gate. Maybe you said father to take it away from home?
- My dear, I have no notion of it!
- But where is the dog then?!
- Father soon will be at home.

## 8

Elgun did not go to school that day. He had neither breakfast nor dinner. All day long he was drinking water and sitting on the gate. In the evening when his father returned home he met him in the gate:

- Daddy, haven't you seen Toplan?
- Has Toplan gone with me to the work?!
- I was looking for the dog everywhere, asked neighbors, but nobody saw the poor dog.
- Maybe it missed and went to Nakhchivan!
- Daddy, tell me the truth, have you taken it away?!
- Upon my uncle's life, I know nothing!
- But where is the dog then?!
- Let us ask Mother.
- She will say: – “I haven't seen the dog!”
- When Elgun and his father entered the yard mother was sitting near the cat's photo with folded arms. As soon as she saw them she stood up:
- Do you know that Toplan disappeared?!
- It has a dog-collar, our surname and address was written on it. Don't worry! We shall be informed if it is lost. – Father tried to calm Elgun.

Father took the receiver of the phone:

- Yes! Good evening! Listening for a while he said: - Dog's name? Its name is Toplan.
- Hurrah! Mom, the dog is found!
- Yes.- Father looked at Elgun with smiling eyes. – How

long?! – Three days. What? – Suddenly everything went dark before his eyes. – When? Yesterday? What do you say? Good-bye!  
– He switched off the phone.  
– What is the matter, Daddy?  
– Nothing!  
– Didn't they say that Toplan was found?!  
– Yesterday the poor dog was shot by the soldiers when it tried to cross the border of Nakhchivan.  
Elgun lost consciousness and fell down.

## God..Dog and Donkey

The Donkey had just woken up. She yawned and turned on her back; she kicked her hoof in the air and stood up. Putting her rear hoof back and front hoof forward, she raised her head. Suddenly her lower jaw detached from her upper jaw, her mouth opened as far as her ears, she exhaled all the breath left in her chest and started to yell:

- Hee-haw... hee-haw... hee-haw...

At that time, a Dog entered the garden. After seeing her smiling eyes, grinning teeth and wagging tail, the Donkey loved with the Dog with all her heart. It turned out that the Dog was also thinking about the Donkey. They approached each other and touched their noses. Donkey's mouth suddenly opened:

- Hee-haw...

But the Dog was ready for that. She shouted:

- Bow-wow...

They became friends at that moment. They were such good friends that they missed each other if they were apart for half an hour. Kindness has one bad feature: if there is too much of it, it will end with a fight.

One morning, the Dog and the Donkey were talking to each other behind a stack of hay; the Dog was sucking a bone left from yesterday, and the Donkey was either plucking the grass or chewing some clover. Suddenly, the Donkey raised her head from the ground and looked straight up. Then she looked at the Dog with smiling eyes and yelled:

- Hee-haw...

The Dog removed her mouth from the bone and stared at the Donkey in surprise:

- Bow-wow?

- Sister, dear sister!

- Yes, darling?!

- Have you heard the news?!

- What news?

The Donkey smiled happily:

- I will have a baby in a few months!
  - May God help you!
- The Donkey's eyes opened widely:
- Sister, dear sister, I will give birth myself!
  - I understood, and that's why I said 'May God help you'!
  - God?! Who is God?!
  - Don't you know?
  - How can I know, sissy, if I haven't read about him!
  - God – is the one who created us!
  - Me as well?
  - Yes!
  - You mean, my mom and dad?
  - Your mom and dad were also created by God!
  - You mean, my granny and granddad?
  - You think like a donkey! – The Dog angrily turned her back on the Donkey and started to dig.
  - Hee-haw...
  - Why are you yelling so loudly?! Be polite, please! You are making me deaf!
  - Please dig slowly, then! A stone almost hit my head!
  - I see that the doors of your head are closed! Maybe a stone can open them!
  - Hey, the stone could cut my head!
  - Where is justice, if the stone doesn't cut your stupid head?
  - Why stupid?
  - Because you don't know God!
  - Who is this God that you keep going on about?
  - God is the one who created the ground and the sky! I mean, everything!
  - I don't care about the sky, dear sissy! What I need is just the ground! Everything I need is here! My grass, water and a feed rack!
  - You are an atheist then!
  - What does that mean?
  - Please lower your voice!
  - You want me to shut up?



- Shutting up is better than talking like an atheist!
- You are croaking like the mullah<sup>10</sup> of our town!
- I'm not the one croaking, but you! Speak kindly, please!

What does the mullah of your town say?

- He says: "Hey, people, the Devil has misled you! You will die because of the world's wealth!"

- He is right!

- But he just sits around at funeral ceremonies eating too much of the people's dolma<sup>11</sup>!

- Should he die of hunger?

- He even takes a pot of it home with him!

- You are such a strange Donkey! Shouldn't he feed his children?

- So, you mean, dolma cannot be considered the wealth of this world?

- Hey, you have become a real Devil, with ears and a nose!

- Who is the Devil?

- God's enemy!

- Why are they enemies, then?

- What kind of question is that? Because the Devil doesn't get along with God!

- Dear sissy, that's the Devil's own business! That is not our business to interfere with him!

- Why shouldn't we interfere?

- Don't you accept democracy?

- There isn't any democracy in the case of God and the Devil! We should support God!

- Hey, Dog!

- Yes?!

- It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century now! The whole world is talking about democracy! But you... Don't make me angry, otherwise I will kick your mouth so that it will tear!

- What did I do to you?

- Then why does democracy exist?

<sup>10</sup> *mullah* – a Muslim clergyman

<sup>11</sup> *dolma* – a national dish of Azerbaijani people

- It exists for people!
- Then, doesn't God love democracy?
- Godless!
- What does Godless mean?
- It is someone who doesn't accept God!
- You should see him, in order to accept him! – The Donkey lowered her head and plucked a wisp of grass.
- God cannot be seen! – The Dog barked angrily.
- Then why does He exist?
- God exists for praying to him!
- What does “praying” mean?
- It means respecting, talking to and loving!
- I cannot love someone that I cannot see!

The Dog barked and left the garden. The Donkey slowly went to the feed rack, as if nothing had happened. The Sun set after a while.

\*\*\*

The Donkey had just gone to sleep when a shadow came across her face. She opened her right eye slowly, but couldn't see anything. She closed her eye again. She felt that the shadow was holding still. This time she opened both eyes. She still couldn't see anything. She started to think: “What if the thieves have come to steal my grass! I would die then! Oh!”

- Donkey?!
- Who are you!
- It's me!
- Don't you have a name?
- God!
- God?! – The Donkey jumped from her place. – The man that the Dog was talking about?
- I am not a man!
- Who are you then?
- God!
- Isn't God a man?
- God is the Creator!

- What do you want?
- Don't you recognize me?
- How can I recognize you if I have never seen you?!
- I am invisible!
- Invisible?!
- Yes!
- What do you want from me then?!
- I want you to know your God!
- Have you left everything and come just to say that?
- Isn't it enough? Don't you know your God?
- Who said that?
- Dog!
- I know my God!
- But Dog said that you are godless?!
- Dog was mistaken! I both know my God and also love  
him!
- Well done!
- Why "well done"?
- That's a nice thing to know and love your God!
- Mister God!
- Yes?!
- That God is not you!
- Who is he then?
- Humans!
- Humans?!
- Please, don't interrupt me! I should go to work early in the morning! So, let me sleep! Good night and sweet dreams!

# Apple

There was an apple on the top of the apple-tree. It imposed face to the Sun and the Moon when they appeared on the sky. That was why one of her cheeks was red, another was yellow. The birds flying in the sky and insects on the trees used to mock of the apple:

Look at her, She is left alone!

Look at her, She is left alone!

The apple that did not like to talk behind somebody's back always smiled. It meant that I was not offended with you whatever you say! Just she knew that she was not alone, she had a neighbour leaf which had joint stalk. She liked this leaf so much that she gave a nickname to it like her own name "Apple - leaf".

As soon as the sky was strewn with stars, two friends started to whisper with each other thinking ahead over the future till the morning. I cannot say anything about the apple-leaf, but the apple did not think about the past, she dreamed only for future. She was so cheerful that she could exaggerate even her little joy and it seemed her like a huge mountain. She often stood face to face with the wind, her cheeks were hailed down with storms and she was burnt by the Sun many times but she never cried. She had a good feature - to see kindness in everything. That was why she was happy and could always make herself happy.

As soon as the breeze started to blow she began to dance and sing her song:

Wow, I am swinging, I am swinging –

I am swinging on the twig!

Wow, I am swinging, I am swinging –

Future will be happy, I think!

Once when she was singing and making merry herself the stalk broke. She fell from her twig and found herself on the air.

When she found herself between the ground and the sky she was terrified and sighed:

- Ouch!- At that moment she fell down the ground.

She heard a voice under the stomach:

- Mind o-u-t... ! You have hurt us!

The apple looked up and down but did not see anybody and smiled:

- Maybe this is my fallen side offended with me and is gabbling.

This time she heard laughter :

- Tee hee...

- What is the matter? Who is making fun of me?

- Tee hee...

- Hey, who are you, do not laugh at me! – The Apple got angry.

- Oh, so terrible you are, tee..hee...!- That was the same voice.

- Why are you laughing at me, have I got horns?

- You have fallen on our heads. Do you even dare to ask?

- Ah! – The Apple became happy. – Is that you, weed?

- Where have you got this courage to ask who am I?

- I am sorry for troubling you. You know that I have not fallen of my own free will.

- Well do I know that you have become ripe. That 's why you have fallen from the tree.

- No-o-o... I haven't ripened yet. The breeze did it.

- Oh, dear apple. The fact is that you have fallen. I hope you are comfortable here.

- It is not " a good place"...

- What?

- It is the best one!

- God bless you, you have startled me very much!- The weed laughed.

- But on the top of the tree I was close to the Sun. It is a little colder here.

- Oh...- The weed opened arms and embraced the Apple.

- And what about now?

- Thank you , I have got warmer a little. But I am very sleepy now.

- You have changed your place, that's why. Have a nap, take a rest and you will feel better.

The Apple closed her eyes.

Seeing it The Apple-leaf shed a few tears:

- Poor me! I was left alone! Poor me! I was left alone!

These words were said in a whisper but excitedly. The Wind blowing on the sky heard these words and got down without thinking. It quickly plucked the Apple-leaf from the twig and threw it on the Apple.

- Oh... It is getting cool!- The Apple startled and opened her eyes. – What is this? Apple le - e -a-a -f ?!

- Hello!

- Hello! How have you gone down, Brer?

- I missed you so much after you had left me. Suddenly I noticed you sleeping without blanket. I thought that you would get cold and started crying. It turned out that The Wind heard my crying. So plucked me from the twig and covered you.

- How do you like this new place?

- It is very stuffy here . There is not a breath of air.

- You have changed your place, that's why. Have a nap,take a rest and you will feel better.

\*\*\*

Every morning The Apple-leaf asked after The Apple's health:

- How are you, Dear Apple?

- I am getting yellow, darling! – The Apple answered cheerfully. \_ And you?

- I am getting pale and pale! – The Apple-leaf answered sadly.

The Apple became more tasty and aromatic. But The Apple –leaf had turned pale.

One day Sham - Sham walked in the garden with his Grandfather. Suddenly he took his Grandfather's hand and stood in front of him:

- Hände hoch!

The Grandfather raised his hands quickly.

- Ha...! Ha...! Ha...! – You are frightened, aren't you, grandpa?!

- Why not? I fought in the war and it seemed that enemy soldier is near me with the gun in his hand.

- Close your eyes!

- Would you like to play hide -and -seek with me?  
- I cannot say anything to you now, this is a secret! Close your eyes!

- I have closed.

- Don't look!

- All right!

Sham - Sham picked The Apple up to his Grandfather's face:

- Grandpa...

- Yes, darling!

- Open your eyes!

- Wow! – The Grandfather made a step back . – What is this?

- A [ei]...P[pi]...P[pi]...L[el]...E[e]...

- It looks like the apples of fairy tales!

- Take, Grandpa, eat and become younger.

- What a pleasant fragrance has this apple! – The Grandfather smelt The Apple and raised it above. - Look at this apple! Its redness is from the Sun, the yellowness from the Moon. But all the rest are from the earth.

When Sham – Sham and his Grandfather took the apple and went The Apple asked them pitifully:

- But me?

As The Grandson and The Grandfather were talking they could not hear poor Apple's voice.

- But me? – The Apple-leaf cried bitterly.

The hoarse voice was heard somewhere near:

- Come to me, I can meet you with open arms!

The Apple-leaf became happy:

- Who are you?

- Who am I? – I am your Mother!

- And what about The Apple-tree?

- I am her Mother, too!

- The Earth?!

# The Goat's tale of freedom

1

The She - goat shook her head so angrily that her ears lapped and her beard trembled as a broom:

- I cannot stay here any more! That's not fair! – The She-goat left pasture with her Kid behind.

When she reached the end of the village the dog stopped her way:

- Where are you going , goat? Why do you leave us?- the dog stanchd his tears with his tail-end .

- I go to the place where my legs take me.

- Why legs?

- Goats are in such a bad situation today that our legs are cleverer than our heads.

- Oh, Goat, don't follow legs, otherwise you will be a hunt of wild animals.

- It is better to be a hunt than to live here. I will get rid of this place once and for all.

- And what about your Kid?

- What Kid?

- Your last-born child that follows you everywhere.You lived splendidly, but the poor Kid is very little!

The Goat bleated and licked The Kid. The Kid started to suck her mother on bended knees. The Goatkicked and The Kid jumped aside:

- How long are you going to suck?

- Oh, Goat! Be a dear, do not go away!- The dog said.

- Don't hinder me!

- Why?

- I am angry!

- Wow! With whom?

- I am angry with the owner.



- You can not get angry with your owner!
- Why not?
- Because he is cleverer than us!
- Do you mean that we are crazy?
- We are not crazy, we are not clever either.
- Show proof!
- If we were clever we should have lived independently.
- Aren't we free?
- You must have home in order to live freely at first. Then you must have food.

- Does it mean independence?

- Yes? It does!

The Dog opened his mouth and stucked out his tongue:

- But what is this?

- The piece of meat!

The Dog looked around in astonishment:

- What do you say?

- Oh, Dog, this piece of meat is a tongue when it has opportunity to say something. "Something" is not a word yet. The first circumstance of "Freedom" is ability to say your words of heart. – The Goat spoke as a public figure.

- And what do you want?

- I want to eat grass, the next day – barley feed, the third day – lucerne. Can you eat meat every day?

- I only gnaw a bone.

- But if we have freedom we will not depend on anybody!

That's why I am going to seek freedom for myself!

- Do go if you have decided. But do not be sure of your legs, otherwise they will make you a hunt of wild animals.

But The Goat did not hear The Dog's words. She left that place carrying her kid behind her.

## 2

Half an hour later The Goat and her kid met The Cow on their way:

- Hello, darling!
- Hello, dear!
- Where are you going with your kid?
- I am going to seek freedom for myself.

The Cow goggled at her in surprise as she heard this word for the first time .Suddenly she came to senses:

- Have you got another child?
- What do you mean?
- Isn't "Freedom" the name of your kid?

The Goat shook her head and ears so angrily, that her beard trembled:

- Oh, Cow, you are so stupid!
- Why?
- Don't you know what is "Freedom"?
- No-o-o...

The Goat looked at her Kid:

Let's go, my kid!

The Cow followed the Goat with her eyes for a while and bellowed:

- Well.. the Goat is very sly, maybe she discovered a new pasture.

## 3

When they reached the forest they met the Camel:

- Oh, hello, big-beard!
- Oh, hello, thick-lipped!
- The cattle is returning from the pasture to the village now.

But where are you going?

- Iam going to seek my freedom.

The Camel roared and looked at The Goat steadily:

- What do you say? – The Camel didn't hear her answer and turned ear to The Goat.

The Goat got angry:

- I am going to seek my freedom. Have you heard me now?

The Camel rose his head and roared with laughter

- Do you find it funny?

- Which village are you coming from?

- From Uncovered village.

- Wow...

- What's the matter?

- You are seeking freedom in a long way of.

- Why?

- Freedom is in your own village.

- If so, why is everyone looking for it?

- No one is looking for it beside you.

- Why are you so sure ?

- I see, you are fed up with living!

The Goat offended:

- You or me?

- You are, of course!- The Camel roared with laughter...

- Don't laugh, say, what do you mean!

- You know that I am travelling for months and see a lot of villages, cities and people. I have seen so many victims for freedom.

The Goat looked askance at The Camel :

- What do you mean with these words?

- Oh, this is not really your field, Goat!

- You have grown old and become foolish, dear Camel!

The Camel laughed loudly:

- Ha...Ha... Ha... Go away.. You will remember my words when your throat meets knife.

#### 4

The Goat and her kid reached the big market in the sunset.

- Mom, I am thirsty!- The Kid bleated.

The Goat jumped and entered the market:

- Good evening, Miss, can I get some water?

- Carbonated or non-carbonated?

- We do not need carbonated water. We always feed on grass. We are in need of pure water!

- Oh, Goat, this is the gas-cut-water- the water filled with gas.

- Dear Miss, the water itself contains gas. Pure water does not need gassing. Oh, I remember. Upon me long-beard, once I drank such water and I had a lever-ake for a week. Please, give us half bucket water, for god's sake.

- Have you got money?

- Money? What is it?

- Sorry, This is not charitable society, but market!

- I know it.

The Kid again rested his head against his Mother. The Goat got angry:

- Step aside!- then looked at the saleswoman:- We are very thirsty! Feel sorry for us!

Suddenly the store manager came in:

- Hello, Goat!

- Hello!

- How can I help you?

- Miss does not give us water.

- Why?

- She asks for money.

- Oh, dear Goat! Do you know what is free of charge nowadays?

- No, I do not know!

- The air is free of charge as yet. I heard that the air will also be payable soon.

- It means that the poor people will be exhausted!

- Don't draw me into politics, I have to grow up my children.

You want to drink water, do it and go away.

- We have drunk water and eaten grass free of charge until now!

- Where?

- In the farm of our master.

- It was possible that time. Your master could give you grass and water gratuitously. But we need money now.

- Look here? I haven't got money, but my bosom is full of milk! Milk me and give me water instead of it.

- That's a good idea! – the manager looked at the shop assistant gladly. – Daughter, wash the bucket and bring here, please.

The Goat astraddled her trailing legs. The manager put the bucket on the ground, sat on a big wooden box and started to milk her joining his thumb and forefinger.

When half of the bucket was filled with the milk The Goat kicked twice.

- What's the matter, Goat? You will spill the milk! My teats hurt! Leave some milk for my kid.

- Don't worry! - The manager stood up and called the shop-girl. – Daughter, take the milk and give it to my wife to boil. Fill the bucket from aryk (channel) with water and bring it for The Goat and her kid.

The Goat shook her head and lapped her ears so angrily that her beard trembled as a broom.

- Why from aryk (channel)?

- What else did you expect? – The manager asked.

- You have to give us water from market! We did not agree such way!

- First of all, we did not agree what kind of water I shall give you, secondly, you cannot drink carbonated water! And we do not have non-carbonated one in the shop.

- Never mind! I am compelled to conform to circumstances. The shop girl returned with the bucket full of water-mother and her kid drank their fill.

- Do you have any grass to eat?- The Goat asked The manager.

- This is a grocery store! We have product just for people.

- And what shall we do then?

- I can find grass for you. But do you have anything else to sell?

The Goat shook her head and lapped her ears after a moment's reflection.

- I have good wool, if you like, do flatter it!

- Let me call my neighbor.

Not long after the neighbor came sheared The Goat and went away. Then he brought armful of hay for The Goat and her Kid. After satiation they again went to the grocery.

- The cheese is familiar to me. – The Goat protruded her beard.

- You are right, it is made of goat milk.

- How much is it?

- 20 manat for kilogram.

- And how much is barley?

- We do not sell barley.

- I am just interested in its price.

- 30 kopeck for kilogram.

- And how much is the knot of clover?

- Haven't you come from village?

- Yes, I have.

- Don't you know that clover is sold in the village.

- My master had haystacks, but there was no price on them.

- One haystack is 3 manat now.

- And how much is the goat milk?

- 6 manat for litre. How much milk do you give in a day?

- 3 litre.

- Woww... You are like a fluid river!

- I am a pure-bred goat. My strain is from Europe.

- People go to Europe nowadays, why have you come here?

Poor you, We live in the East!

- At first my ancestry was brought from Sweden to Turkey and after reproduction it was sold. We are famous Sanan goats!

- Why have you left the village?

- We were forced.

- Why?

- I am looking for my freedom.

The manager was surprised.

- What?

- I am looking for my freedom.

- Is that so?

- What do you mean?
- Why are you looking for freedom?
- Why?
- Because you are European, freedom is in your blood. But be careful! Don't let them cut your beard.
- Who is in need of my beard?
- Sometimes the beard is useful for defaming somebody.

Dear Goat, we live in the East. Be careful, there are so many methods of punishment here!

The Goat shook her head.

- As a secret, why do you need freedom?
- Why do I need? Look, my master earns 18 manats just from my milk every day, but he does not spend 2 manats for me. Besides it I give birth to two kids in every six months. Do you know, what a hard thing a birth?! This is not a cesarean operation when surgeons operate on mother and get a child. Neither mother nor child understand the process of birth. That's why children cannot live without medicine. At every trifle they have to go to the hospital. How children can understand the meaning of the life if they did not feel the first difficulty of birth? When they grow and have no luck they commit suicide. While giving birth to kid our shout rises even to God. But you – the people usually abstain from giving birth after three times childbirth. But we do it till the old age. Once I said to my master: “I work very hard for you, please take care of me. If not, let me go and look for my freedom.” He laughed and called me “Freedom lover”. And I was offended with it. I took my kid and left the pasture.

- The manager smoothed The Goat's head down:
- You did the right thing!
- What do you mean?
- Your freedom is here.
- Is that true?
- Trust me! Upon my white beard!
- Let's go then!
- Let me ring up for the car.

The Goat started to sing and dance:

-Oh, Freedom! Freedom!  
Welcome to you!  
Embrace green field,  
Embrace meadow!  
Make me cheerful!  
Make me joyful!  
Oh, Freedom! Freedom!  
Welcome to you!

Not long after a big lorry came . The doors of the lorry were opened and two young men got out.

- Let me introduce you The Freedom –lover Goat!- The manager of the store said seriously.

Young men smiled amazingly.

The manager sold The Goat and The Kid them and put the money in his pocket.

- Now, Goat, these two young men will be your new master from this day.

- Master?! – The Goat could not finish her word. The fellows tied her and her kid, threw them to the body of the lorry.

## 5

Two months The Goat and The Kid were not taken to the pasture and to the garden. But they were given a lot of barley and chaff. Sometimes a terrible thought struck The Goat: “Maybe our new master feeds us for cutting” .

The Goat and her Kid fattened day by day, but could not see and missed daylight. At last The Kid said:

- Dear Mom, is this the same freedom that you looked for?

The Goat was obliged to answer:

- Yes, darling!

- What a bad thing the freedom is!

The Goat was obliged to affirm it:

- Yes, darling!

- One morning their new master entered with a man.

- Which one will be the first? – The new master asked.



- If we cut The Kid his mother will hear his terrible shout and her meat will lose its taste

- How you want.

The butcher snatched The Goat . The Kid jumped on them:

- Mom, don't leave me alone! Where are you going?

- Dear son? The Camel was right, but I didn't believe him.

I am a victim of the Freedom!

- But you said that we found our Freedom!

- I lied you, dear son, forgive me, darling!

- But... – The Kid could not say anything more. They pushed him and closed the door.

They led The Goat to the green grass. The new master pressed her legs. The butcher controlled the knife with his finger . He pulled The Goat's head to the back and started to examine her neck. Suddenly, when he was ready for cutting the door of the garden opened.

- Hey, man , stop! Don't do that!- The manager of the store ran to the garden quickly together with a man.

- This man is the real master of The Goat!- The manager showed the man standing near him.

- But what about my money? – the new master asked the manager.

- At first, say me where is The Kid?- The real master of The Goat asked.

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Some minutes later The Goat and The Kid were sitting on the body of the lorry and looking at the road.

- I will kiss The Camel's lips as soon as I find him. – The Goat said thoughtfully.

- Why, mother?

- He was right saying that the Freedom is in our own village. But will we find it or not, this is the question of the time! – Then she began to sing her song:

-Oh, Freedom! Freedom!  
Welcome to you!  
Embrace green field,  
Embrace meadow!  
Make me cheerful!  
Make me joyful!  
Oh, Freedom! Freedom!  
Welcome to you!

# The Deadly Fight of The Grey Chickens and Black Cat, The Famous Thief

## 1. MOTHER HEN AND HER CHICKS

**M**other Hen hatched 11 chicks. 4 of them inherited her snow white feathers, 5 of them inherited her dark black eyes and the remaining two inherited her ash gray feet. As long as they were small, they would stand by their mother, eat, drink, and follow her around. When they were five steps away from their mother, she started tousling her feathers and knocking the ground with her beak:

- Cluck-cluck... where in the world are you again?
- Cheep-cheep... Mommy, we are not around the world, but under the bush!
- What in the world are you doing there again?!
- Mommy, what world are you talking about? We can't see it.
- Oh you silly creatures, what are you rummaging over there for, I mean!
- We are looking for a vermin!
- Which "chicken" are you looking for?
- Oh, mommy, it seems you are getting old, because you don't hear what we say. We said "vermin," not "chicken." – And they started to hit each other's beaks.
- Come here immediately!

The chickens promptly ran and hugged the Mother Hen.

The chickens were growing up hour by hour. As they were growing older, they were becoming naughtier. But naughtiness is not as bad as you think. As the famous Fighting Rooster said: "If you are not a naughty chicken, then you will be a lazy hen!"

Let me talk a little bit about their naughtiness. Two chick-

ens of the Mother Hen were naughtier than the other nine siblings. They always went too far and had become very strong-willed. They went away laughing and wandered to great distances, leaving their mother, sisters and brothers at home. They were looking for grain and water... they even followed butterflies and reached the insects' homes sometimes. The Mother Hen became very angry when she couldn't find them and hit the ground with her beak:

–Cluck, cluck, cluck...

Some time later, the footsteps of the two chickens were heard from the garden:

–Cheep-cheep-cheep...

–Oh goodness, where have they gone?! – the other nine chickens hugged their mother.

The Mother Hen started to cackle:

–Cluck, cluck, cluck... Come to me, immediately!

–Cheep-cheep-cheep... Oooh, mom, why don't you let us breathe freely?

–Can't your sisters breathe freely with me, as well?

–No, because you don't let them!

–Heeey, what are you saying? Have I stolen your breath, my babies?

–Yees, that is why we are arguing here!

–Then what were your lungs breathing till now? Wasn't it air?

–It would be better if it were poison, instead!

–Ohhh, why do I have such angry children?

–Mommy, you immediately call us to sit by your side when we enter the hen-house and don't let us see what is happening in the world. You directly push us inside the hen-house with your wings. That's enough! We want to live independently!

–Grow up to my age, then live as freely as you want!

–Grow up to your age? Are you kidding us?

–Why should I kid you?

–Look, mom, do we have legs? Yes, we do! Do we have wings? Yes, we do! And we also have sharp beaks. What else do we need for independence?!

–Stop chirping “Independence! Independence!” What do you know about independence?

–Don’t take us under your protection, don’t call us to you, don’t feed and scold us! That is independence!

–Your beaks have not hardened yet, so you must be fed. You are not wise yet, so you should be scolded and your feet are not strong yet, so you should sit by my side. Have you seen yourselves in the mirror?!

–Why should we? What do you mean by that?

–Look how little you are!

–As little as a chicken?!

–My dear, small chickens, if only you knew how many strong enemies you have!

–Who are these “strong” enemies?!

–The first of them is – rain!

–Rain?! But we have a shelter – the hen house!

–The second one is – wind!

– Wind?! But we have the wall, to protect ourselves behind it.

– The third is – the sun!

– The sun?! But we have the shade of the trees.

– The fourth one iiiis... Do you know what the fourth is?

– Whaaat?!

– Cold!

– Cold?! But we have our mother’s wings!

– Ohhh, my sweeties! Why are you sitting there? Come, I will cuddle you with my wings!

– But it is not cold yet!

– My darlings, you have one more strong enemy. I didn’t mention him, because I didn’t want to scare you!

– Who is he?

– Who?! Black Cat, the Famous Thief!

– The Black Cat?! – The chickens started to boast. – This stupid Black Cat cannot do anything to us. Otherwise, we will jump and peck out his eyes!

– Don’t jump into his mouth instead!

– Into his mouth?! Cheep-cheep-cheep... We will not, we will not! Cheep-cheep-cheep... You are such a coward, mother! You are such a coward, mother! – The chickens' voices gradually faded away as they ran to the edge of the garden.

The Mother Hen started to look around and call them back, but she didn't hear any sound in response except the echo of her own voice.

## 2. FACE TO FACE WITH BLACK CAT THE THIEF

**M**other Hen waited till the sun went down.

– God forbid, if the Fox smells us, she would eat us alive, my darlings! Let's go back! – They ran to the hen-house and closed the door firmly. – Turn on the TV; let's see what's happening in the world. – As the Mother Hen and chickens finished watching a movie, the screen suddenly went black.

– Darling, look out the window and see-- do the roosters have electricity?

The black chicken ran to the window.

– Cheep-cheep-cheep... Yes, mom, they do have light.

The TV screen lit up again and showed an announcer:

– Attention! Attention! This evening, at half past eight, on the coast of the Kur River, in Khalsa garden, a pair of grey chickens, who lost their mother, came across Black Cat the Thief...

The Mother Hen started to beat her head with her wings.

– Oh, my poor chickens! Oh, my poor darlings!

– Oh, mom, stop screaming. Let's listen to what the announcer says! – The chickens started to chirp.

– The Black Cat – the announcer continued, - is clenching his teeth in order to eat the chickens... Dear spectators, see for yourselves this moment, which was recorded by our cameraman who happened to be passing by:

The Black Cat put his right foot ahead and left paw on his waist. He started to play with his moustache:

– Ye-e-e-s... Mister yellow-beaks! Have my words offended you?!

– Which words?!

– That I have called you “yellow-beaks”?!

– Open your eyes and look at us attentively, we are not yellow-beaks, but grey chickens! And we are not “misters” for you!

– O-o-k! I’m not arguing then; let it be! I see you are very quick-tempered!

– We don’t have any idea about being quick-tempered...

– That’s a good feature...

– We don’t care whether it’s good or bad, take it for yourself!

– Meow...meow...meow...- The Black Cat ran back and started to laugh out loud.

– Why are you laughing so hard?!

– You are soo funny, mister grey chickens!

– Haven’t we warned you not to call us “mister”?

– You are such a sweet dodgers that, even if I try to be angry at you and eat you alive, I cannot do it!

– And you think we are afraid of you?!

– Meow...meow...meow...

– Why are you snickering again? Go on your way! What have you given to us that you cannot get it back?! – The chickens started to chirp together.

– I haven’t given you anything! Buuuut... My appetite tells me that I can get something from you!

– What language are you speaking? What do you mean by “appetite” and “getting”?!

– “Appetite” and “getting” mean that I don’t have to hurt you... come quietly and climb into my mouth; let me put each of you into my cheeks, chew you and see how nice you taste!

– Be careful when you chew us-- we are fluffy. We might get stuck in your throat.

– A-ha-aaa! What do my poor ears hear?

– Don’t call them poor, because they hear quite well!

– You are such brave misters!

– Haven’t we warned you not to call us “misters”?

– Ok, fine, fine! You are grey chickens who are not afraid of me!

– We aren't even afraid of our mother! You are just a coward for us, we aren't afraid of you!

– Hasn't your mother told you about me?!

– Don't be a chatterbox. Tell us who you are then!

– Meow...meow...meow... I like your courage, but I'm afraid, you will faint, if I tell you my name.

– Look at him! I think he's afraid of us!

– I am afraid for your lives, poor nestlings!

– That's none of your business!

– The, let me say, I aaaam...

– Don't bother us! Just say what you want to say!

– Meow...meow...meow... - The cat started to laugh out loud again.

– Why are you laughing like a shameless child again?

– Have you ever heard about Black Cat the Famous Thief?!

– So what if we have?

– That's me!

– Are you that Black Cat, then?

The cat stroked his moustache:

– Yes, the world-famed Black Cat the Thief is in front of you and is preparing to crunch your bones with his teeth!

– Oh boy, we are fainting with fear! What is he talking about? Then, you are that famous Black Cat the Thief? – The chickens looked straight into his eyes.

– Maybe... you think I am a mouse? Yes? Squeak-squeak...

The chickens suddenly stepped back and raised their heads:

– We don't care if you are the Black Cat or a mouse!

The Black Cat was going round the chickens, sticking out his waist, puffing up his tail and sticking out his tongue:

– I s-e-e-e-e! You tasty little nestlings, are you going to try to run away? What if I snatch and swallow you?

– Haven't we warned you to swallow us slowly so we don't stick in your throat? – The chickens ran and pecked the cat's eye.

– Oh, oooooouch! My eye is falling out! – When the cat raised his hand to hold his eye, the breeze from his hand hit the chickens



and they fell over. They broke their wings.

– Cheep-cheep-cheep... - The chickens were both floundering on their beaks. Some policemen who were passing by heard this hubbub and came to the scene. They immediately tied the Black Cat's hands and pushed him into the car. They took the chickens to the hospital in an ambulance. Now the Black Cat and the chickens are in the recovery room. According to the doctors, the chickens will be discharged after a week. But the Black Cat's condition is not good. Dear spectators, stay with us! We'll be right back after these advertisements!"

– Thank God! Thank God! – The Mother Hen stood up and opened the grain sack. – Come closer, my darlings, come closer. Take a beakfull of barley each. Throw it to the garden, for other birds to eat.

– Why to waste it, mommy?

– Let it be alms for my grey chickens!

### **3. THE GREY ROOSTERS, THE BLACK CAT AND TEARS...**

**T**he naughty grey chickens had grown up and became the Grey Roosters. They didn't understand that they were meat, soft and tasty meat. Who wouldn't want to eat tasty meat? Maybe it's ironic that God created more carnivores than herbivores. So, the Grey Roosters were always in the garden. One day, the Freckled Rooster and the Tufted Pullet invited them to their house. When they stepped outside, they suddenly jumped in fear and huddled together. The Black Cat was sitting on the sidewalk and staring at them. He had black sunglasses on. But the Black Cat didn't say anything to them, and was just staring.

The Grey Roosters waited for a while, but saw that the Black Cat didn't say anything. They started whispering to each other. Then they raised their heads and walked over to the Black Cat:

– Good afternoon, Black Cat the world-famous thief!

– Meow...meow...oooow... - The Black Cat bitterly smiled. Then started to talk as if he was talking to himself. – Those days are behind... They passed as fast as lightning... Happiness will never come back to me. Now I don't have any fame, except my color and name. Once, my color was the sign of my courage and bravery, but now it's a sign of bad luck. People don't want me to cross their road. They are afraid that I will bring misfortune to them.

– What happened to you, Mister Black Cat? – The Grey roosters looked at each other.

– Can't you see?!

– See what?! I cannot see anything now!

– Whaaat?!

– Who are you, kind creatures who wish me “good luck”?

– We have just said “Good afternoon” to you!

– “Good afternoon” means the same as “good luck.”

– We don't know... - The Grey Roosters shrugged their shoulders. – We thought it is just a simple word.

–Of course, it is a simple word! But it's a blessing said for the sake of God! Who are you? I couldn't recognize you!

– We...we... - They looked at each other. – We are... the Grey Roosters!

– Grey Roosters... Grey Roosters... Gre-e-e-y... Roosters... No, I don't remember you. I have memory problems.

– Hey, Black Cat the Famous Thief...

– Haven't I told you that I am just a simple Black Cat now?! I cannot do anything but beg and eat!

– Did you know any grey chickens?

– Of course... Of course... Is it possible not to know such heroes? To be honest, even though they made me blind, I always praise their Mother Hen for bringing them up in such a brave spirit! – The Roosters lowered their beaks and remained silent. – Why don't you talk? You didn't say who you are?!

– We are guilty, Mister Black Cat!

– “Guilty”?.. Is that your name?

– No! No! That's not our name! We mean that we have sinned, we are guilty!

– I have asked your name. What relation does your guilt have to your name?

– We are those grey chickens that you knew...

– Yo-o-o-u?!

– Please, forgive us, for God’s sake!

– Those brave chickens are you? Well done! Well done! If I only could see you! It means the proverb “Heard about the hero, but didn’t see him” applies to me!

– We have grown up. We have grown up from grey chickens and become roosters. We are called the Grey Roosters now.

– Oh! – The Black Cat put his hand on his forehead. – Since I became blind, I see everything in the dark and think that everything remains the same and doesn’t grow up.

– Forgive us, Black Cat! Please, forgive us for the sake of God!

– Forgive?! For what?! God has already forgiven you! If you didn’t blind me, I would have eaten you! God saved your lives!

– How do you make a living now?! Probably no one volunteers for you to eat him!

– I put my hat out and live off of the money they put into it. Sometimes I stay hungry for weeks.

– Don’t you go anywhere?!

– Where can I go, if I don’t have a home?!

– Wait a minute! Wait here a minute! – The Grey Roosters immediately returned home and ran to the garden. They went directly to the kitchen. Granny was frying a steak in the pan. – Give us a piece of that, dear Granny!

– Why, don’t you have any grain?

– We are going to take it to the Black Cat! You know, he is blind now and has been hungry for days.

Granny put a slice of bread and two fried steaks into a plate and gave them to the Grey Roosters. The tasty smell of meat tempted the roosters; they wrinkled their noses and winked at each other:

– Let’s taste it!

Then they scolded themselves:

– No, we shouldn't eat someone else's food! Let's go. –

When the Grey Roosters returned back with the plate, the Black Cat deeply inhaled:

– Woww! What an amazing smell?! Is it a smell of meat coming to my nose?! Well done! Well done!

– Who are you talking to, Black Cat?

– Nothing... I have just smelled meat. Perhaps I am hallucinating in hunger.

– It's not a hallucination!

– What is it then?!

– Reality!

– What do you mean by reality?

– We have brought you some meat!

– Wh-a-a-a-a-t?!

– Here you are!

– May God bless you! Give me that! My mouth is watering!

But the Grey Roosters acted carefully; they used a tree branch to push the plate to the Black Cat. Then they started to crow:

– Bon appetit, Black Cat!

The Black Cat put his right hand into the plate:

– Do you know what I have just remembered, my dears?

– What?

– I was teasing you in our first meeting, do you remember?

– Of course! Of course! You were calling us "Mister" all the time. And we were protesting!

– Well done! You have an amazing memory! Now it is my turn to protest to you...

– Protest? Why?

– Don't call me "Mister" anymore!

– Why?! But you deserve to be a "Mister"!

– Maybe you are right, but I cannot be called "Mister" anymore. It is very hard to bear this name. Not everyone can carry it on his shoulders. And neither can I!

– Why?!

– I beg you, don't call me "Mister" if you respect me! –

Then the Black Cat took the plate with one hand and threw the meat into his mouth with the other hand. He chewed it for a while and then swallowed it. – Aaaaaazing! My mouth finally tasted something wonderful! May God bless you!

The Grey Roosters miserably stared at each other and looked down.

The Black Cat was biting pieces of meat, chewing and swallowing it, licking his lips and biting it again.

– Why are you eating so slowly, Black Cat?

– When I wasn't blind, I could find meat at every step and ate it quickly. To be honest, I couldn't taste it. I ate until I was totally full. I would get so full I couldn't breathe. Blindness taught me so much. It turns out that you shouldn't hurry in anything. Scientists say we should eat in order to live. We shouldn't compete with our bellies. But know, if I eat once a month, the taste remains in my mouth for a long time. That is why I eat slowly, in order to fully taste the food. – The Black Cat was praising the Grey Roosters after swallowing the pieces of meat: “May God bless you!”

In their turn, the Grey Roosters were sighing and weeping. After they wept, they cleaned their beaks with their wings, whispered something and turned to the Black Cat:

– Black Cat! – The Black Cat was completely satisfied; he was mumbling, licking the piece of meat, tearing and chewing it. But the Grey Roosters were calling him stubbornly. – Hey, Black Cat! Hey you, Black Cat! – After a while, the Black Cat swallowed and turned his head to the Grey Roosters. – Black Cat!

– Yes, please!

– We were calling you for a long time!

– I live in such hardship! I haven't eaten anything since I became blind. I am so happy to eat that I have lost all my senses. Excuse me, please!

– It's okay!

– I'm listening to you!

– May we ask you a question?!

– Of course you may!

– Why don't you go to a doctor?

– You are rubbing salt on my wound. I have forgotten to say

that when you pecked my eye, they took me to the hospital and after that, they wanted to imprison me. My thief friends heard about it and broke me out of the hospital that night. I also neglected myself and didn't go to a doctor for months!

– Why?!

– To be honest, I also had lots of money, but when I became blind, my wife took everything and left me.

– And what about your children?!

– Oh! You renewed my sorrow! Can an ignoble wife give birth to noble children? They also left me and went with their mother.

– Don't be sad, Black Cat! We will not leave you hungry! Don't lose your hope!

– May God bless you! My hope keeps me alive! And let me give you advice. While you are young, you haven't seen the hardships of this life, keep your faith and don't believe everyone.

– Thank you for your advice! – The Grey Roosters squawked.

– Darlings, we live in such time that it is dangerous to trust anyone! I had given some money to my younger sister to keep for hard times. Long live my sister! She took me to a doctor a few days ago...

The Grey Roosters shook their wings with impatience:

– What did the doctor say, Black Cat, what did he say?!

– Long live the doctor, he examined me for an hour. He said, I am a little bit late, but it isn't too late, Black Cat the famous Thief... Believe me, he said that I will be able to see!

– Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! Thank God! Thank God! We were so worried about you, Black Cat! – The Grey Roosters shook their hands, crowed and jumped about.

– I will have surgery next month! – The Black Cat smiled and put another piece of meat into his mouth. He was tearing it, putting between his teeth, slowly chewing and then swallowing.

– Black Cat, we think it would be better if no one ate meat in this world!

But the Black Cat was busy eating and didn't hear the Grey Roosters. He was enjoying the taste of the meat.

Poems

## **A little sparrow**

A little sparrow  
Jumped from  
lower branch  
up to high branch  
of an apple-tree:

–I cannot  
Have a rest!  
Now this hill  
I perch,  
Now that hill  
I perch,  
I am free.

## **Wind**

Since early morning  
The wind is blowing  
–Swoosh! Whoosh!...  
–What’s up, Sham-Sham?  
–What are you thinking?!  
–Do you hear  
The wind’s Blowing?  
–So, what if it blows?  
–It is shivering...



## **Allah**

Syllabizing the word “Allah”  
Sham-Sham grasped my hand:  
–Don’t spell it, Grandad!  
Haven’t you said:  
–Allah is one!

## **Two**

Two men were going,  
One of them was a spade.  
Twice it was raining,  
One was a torrent.  
Twice it was blowing,  
One of them was wind.  
Wind took away torrent  
Torrent took away spade,  
Only three were left alone-  
The man, the rain and the wind.

## **Larks**

Larks do not leave roads and ways,  
Even the snow was half-leg high.  
They sing their sweet songs,  
Paying no regard to summer,  
Paying no regard to winter.  
Larks - the stones on the way,  
Larks- the birds on the sky.

## **Accomplices**

–Will you stop  
reproaching me,  
Granddad?  
–Reproaching you? Why?  
– “We have the same name”!-  
You say.  
–Wowww...  
How fast did you remove me  
From complicity?!  
–Granddad!  
–Yes, dear.  
–What is your name?  
–Gasham.  
–Your real name?  
–Gasham.  
–We would be accomplices  
–If you have name “Ga”,  
–I have name “Sham”.

## **Stones**

The stones were lorried  
One day to our yard.  
Stones raised voice:  
–We protest  
Against the fence!

## **Sparrow and winter**

Sparrow was having sandy-bath,  
Rain was looking from cloud...  
Suddenly the weather changed-  
Winter came and it snowed.

## **Trees**

Trees are full of red-ripe fruit-  
That's why they are tired:  
-If winter comes very soon,  
We'd have a rest and be spared.

## **Summer**

The branches of the trees  
Are full of fruits  
Sparrows and starling flock  
Are on the top of trees.

## **Autumn**

Look at the trees –  
wind tears out them by the trunk,  
Look at the clouds –  
they look like rain-bag...

## **Kittens**

Two kittens live in the house  
One is smaller than another.  
As soon as one miauls  
Another says: "Dear sister!"

## **Spring**

There is no snow left on the roof of house,  
Grey clouds disappeared after snow.  
In a day the pond turned into the field,  
In five days grass was half-leg high, indeed.

## **Lesson**

–If there is a flock of sparrows on the ground,  
If you are so brave, throw the stone,  
Make them fly and count them in the sky.  
–Is it possible to throw the stone to the birds, Dad?!

## **We are...**

–What is the Sky?  
    –It is support.  
–What is the Earth?  
    –A firm foothold.  
–Who is human?  
    –Future unthought.

## **Oh, winter**

Without snowing for a while  
Oh, winter, why you leave us?  
Then what will spring bring  
For the people when it comes?

### **Oh, snow**

Oh snow, you are so late,  
You are not the snow now!

You fall down as a load,  
You are not abundance now!

You are snowing, but in vain,  
You are not wealth for soil now!

### **Oh, granddad**

Oh, granddad, how your feet  
Are very mischievous!  
They do not want and wear  
When I give them my own boots!

### **My Granny**

My Granny is alone in the village,  
She lives alone in three-roomed house.  
She has oven made of clay in the yard  
She has salt-bread and keeps open house.  
–I look like Allah – she often says,  
In my life's last period.  
As Allah is alone, I am also alone,  
In the lap of the wide world.

### **Little, very little**

I have been a little seed,  
Little, very little.

I have touched the ground  
Little by little.

The sun rose, ground warmed  
Little by little.

I took shelter under ground  
Little by little.

I fed on the Sun and ground  
Little by little.

In one morning I have shot  
Little by little.

I took root in the ground  
Little by little.

I 've grown up to cloud  
Little by little.

### **Don't worry, Granddad!**

I put your slippers  
Side by side your bed;  
Don't worry, your legs  
Will not be bored  
till daybreak, Granddad!

## **In the Zoo**

So many birds are here, wow...  
Their voice deafens people.  
Nightingale, lark and sparrow,  
All are in the cage, even eagle.

Our blue crow is here too  
You will see it in the cage.  
Here little larks all day coo  
They sing gloomy song and rage.

Who had put these poor birds  
into cage, dear mother?  
Don't they miss to fly over  
Flowery meadows, I wonder?

## **Bread - abundance**

I went to the yard with granddad  
There was a piece of bread on the sand.  
The old grandpfather sitting on his knees  
Taking put it on eyes and kissed.

## **Bread**

Bread is made of yellow wheat<sup>12</sup>  
It has a taste of our cornfields

My uncle ploughed up,  
My brother sowed seed.

My father watered seeds  
It grows with high speed.

Grandfather reaps wheat  
Says: bumper harvest!

Bread is made of yellow wheat  
It has a taste of our cornfields

Have a taste! How is it?..  
–Sweet!  
–My mother cooked it!

## **Spring**

The clouds have been crying,  
Flowers's eyes are full of tears.  
Tender eyes of violets, poppies  
Are rainy and lachrymose.  
Grasses have bent their necks  
Their glance are in dew-drops.

---

12 *Saribughda* – the best sort of the wheat in Azerbaijan



## Stone

- What is thundering over there?
- The sky...
- Who is roaring over there?
- The river...
- What is flying over there?
- A bird...
- But what is that?
- That is a stone  
Laying on the slope.

## Uncle Abdul

- Is this a bird, dear uncle?!
- This is a grasshopper, not a bird.
- But is this an owl, isn't it?!
- This is a rook, not an owl.
- Is this an elephant - so huge?!
- No, my son, it is buffalo!
- And this, which grew in the lake?!
- Sonny, this is reed and cane!
- And what is this...?
- Mulberry tree!
- And this one?..
- Sonny, this is a pear tree!
- The grasses are over knee,  
Meadow is as thick as jungle.  
There are so many birds and trees  
In our village, dear uncle?!

## **Oh, wind...**

–Oh, wind, why are you blowing?!

–I am nothing without blow!

–What's the use of your being?

–I have many advantages,

So, that is why I exist!

–What use of you in winter?

–I am rain and snow!

–And what about spring?!

–Blossom that awakens trees!

–And in summer, heavy wind?!

–In summer?...

–In summer I am spring!

–But in autumn?!

In autumn I am the wealth;

Gardens full of golden leaves,

Branches full of juicy fruits!

## **Seasons**

–What is winter?

–Snow and rain

is in heaps.

–What is spring?

–Flowers...

–What is summer?

–Summer houses..

–What is autumn?

–Leaving the place;

Greenery leaves mountains,

Birds leave nests in branches,

Leaves leave naked trees.

## Homeland

“Mother” has two syllables,  
“Father” has two syllables,  
“Homeland” has two syllables.  
Why hasn’t man two mothers?,  
Why hasn’t man two fathers?  
But why does Homeland consist  
Of separated two countries?<sup>13</sup>

## What is this?

What is the Sky?  
–It is support.  
What is the Earth?  
–A firm foothold.  
Who is human?  
–Future unthought.

## Sparrow

Sparrow is pecking the snow  
What is it searching there?

\*\*\*

Two sparrow eyes stared at me  
Which look like the sesame.

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*13 Czarist Russia and Iran divided Azerbaijan into two parts: Northern and Southern in 1828. Northern Azerbaijani is Independent now. Southern Azerbaijan is still a part of Iran.*

## **Winter**

Though the Sun brightly shining  
The weather is getting cold and cold.  
There is neither birds' chirping  
Nor the leaves' rustling is heard.  
Without snowing for a while  
Oh, winter, why you leave us?  
Then what spring will bring  
For the people when it comes?

## **Sham-Sham**

Sham-Sham raising right hand  
Put it on his breast  
    –Have I tired you?  
The hand silently said:  
    –When you will sleep,  
    Put me on your heart.  
    It will be enough,  
    I won't be worn-out.

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**Boo... Hoo... (Sniveller)**

(tale-narratives, stories, tales and poems)

**Baku-Shirvanneshr-2018**