



The Story of Little Tsar Novishny, the False Sister, and the Faithful Beasts

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Ukrainian

Intermediate
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Once upon a time, in a certain kingdom, in a certain empire, there dwelt a certain Tsar who had never had a child. One day this Tsar went to the bazaar (such a bazaar as we have at Kherson) to buy food for his needs. For though he was a Tsar, he had a mean and churlish soul, and used always to do his own marketing, and so now, too, he bought a little salt fish and went home with it. On his way homeward, a great thirst suddenly fell upon him, so he turned aside into a lonely mountain where he knew, as his father had known before him, there was a spring of crystal-clear water. He was so very thirsty that he flung himself down headlong by this spring without first crossing himself, wherefore that Accursed One, Satan, immediately had power over him, and caught him by the beard. The Tsar sprang back in terror, and cried, "Let me go!"

But the Accursed One held him all the tighter. "Nay, I will not let thee go!" cried he. Then the Tsar began to entreat him piteously. "Ask what thou wilt of me," said he, "only let me go."--"Give me, then," said the Accursed One, "something that thou hast in the house, and then I'll let thee go!"--"Let me see, what have I got?" said the Tsar. "Oh, I know. I've got eight horses at home, the like of which I have seen nowhere else, and I'll immediately bid my equerry bring them to thee to this spring--take them."--"I won't have them!" cried the Accursed One, and he held him still more tightly by the beard. "Well, then, hearken now!" cried the Tsar. "I have eight oxen. They have never yet gone a-ploughing for me, or done a day's work. I'll have them brought

hither. I'll feast my eyes on them once more, and then I'll have them driven into thy steppes--take them."--"No, that won't do either!" said the Accursed One. The Tsar went over, one by one, all the most precious things he had at home, but the Accursed One said "No!" all along, and pulled him more and more tightly by the beard. When the Tsar saw that the Accursed One would take none of all these things, he said to him at last, "Look now! I have a wife so lovely that the like of her is not to be found in the whole world, take her and let me go!"--"No!" replied the Accursed One, "I will not have her." The Tsar was in great straits. "What am I to do now?" thought he. "I have offered him my lovely wife, who is the very choicest of my chattels, and he won't have her!"--Then said the Accursed One, "Promise me what thou shalt find awaiting thee at home, and I'll let thee go."

The Tsar gladly promised this, for he could think of naught else that he had, and then the Accursed One let him go.

But while he had been away from home, there had been born to him a Tsarevko (little Tzar) and a Tsarivna; and they grew up not by the day, or even by the hour, but by the minute: never were known such fine children. And his wife saw him coming from afar, and went out to meet him, with her two children, with great joy. But he, the moment he saw them, burst into tears. "Nay, my dear love," cried she, "wherefore dost thou burst into tears? Or art thou so delighted that such children have been born unto thee that thou canst not find thy voice for tears of joy?"--And he answered her, "My darling wife, on my way back from the bazaar I was athirst, and turned toward a mountain known of old to my father and me, and it seemed to me as though there were a spring of water there, though the water was very near dried up. But looking closer, I saw that it was quite full; so I bethought me that I would drink thereof, and I leaned over, when lo! that Evil-wanton (I mean the Devil) caught me by the beard and would not let me go. I begged and prayed, but still he held me tight. 'Give me,' said he, 'what thou hast at home, or I'll never let thee go!'--And I said to him, 'Lo! now, I have horses.'--'I don't want thy horses!' said he.--'I have oxen,' I said.--'I don't want thine oxen!' said he.--'I have,' said I, 'a wife so fair that the like of her is not to be found in God's fair world; take her, but let me go.'--'I don't want thy fair wife!' said he.--Then I promised him what I should find at home when I got there, for I never thought that God had blessed me so. Come now, my darling wife! and let us bury them both lest he take them!"--"Nay, nay! my dear husband, we had better hide them somewhere. Let us dig a ditch by our hut--just under the gables!" (For there were no lordly mansions in those days, and the Tsars dwelt in peasants' huts.) So they dug a ditch

right under the gables, and put their children inside it, and gave them provision of bread and water. Then they covered it up and smoothed it down, and turned into their own little hut.

Presently the serpent (for the Accursed One had changed himself into a serpent) came flying up in search of the children. He raged up and down outside the hut--but there was nothing to be seen. At last he cried out to the stove, "Stove, stove, where has the Tsar hidden his children?"--The stove replied, "The Tsar has been a good master to me; he has put lots of warm fuel inside me; I hold to him."--So, finding he could get nothing out of the stove, he cried to the hearth-broom, "Hearth-broom, hearth-broom, where has the Tsar hidden his children?"--But the hearth-broom answered, "The Tsar has always been a good master to me, for he always cleans the warm grate with me; I hold to him." So the Accursed One could get nothing out of the hearth-broom.--Then he cried to the hatchet, "Hatchet, hatchet, where has the Tsar hidden his children?"--The hatchet replied, "The Tsar has always been a good master to me. He chops his wood with me, and gives me a place to lie down in; so I'll not have him disturbed."--Then the Devil cried to the gimlet, "Gimlet, gimlet, where has the Tsar hidden his children?"--But the gimlet replied, "The Tsar has always been a good master to me. He drills little holes with me, and then lets me rest; so I'll let him rest too."--Then the serpent said to the gimlet, "So the Tsar's a good master to thee, eh! Well, I can only say that if he's the good master thou sayest he is, I am rather surprised that he knocks thee on the head so much with a hammer."--"Well, that's true," said the gimlet, "I never thought of that. Thou mayst take hold of me if thou wilt, and draw me out of the top of the hut, near the front gable; and wherever I fall into the marshy ground, there set to work and dig with me!"

The Devil did so, and began digging at the spot where the gimlet fell out on the marshy ground till he had dug out the children. Now, as they had been growing all along, they were children no more, but a stately youth and a fair damsel; and the serpent took them up and carried them off. But they were big and heavy, so he soon got tired and lay down to rest, and presently fell asleep. Then the Tsarivna sat down on his head, and the Tsarevko sat down beside her, till a horse came running up. The horse ran right up to them and said, "Hail! little Tsar Novishny; art thou here by thy leave or against thy leave?"--And the little Tsar Novishny replied, "Nay, little nag! we are here against our leave, not by our leave."--"Then sit on my back!" said the horse, "and I'll carry you off!" So they got on his back, for the serpent was asleep all the time. Then the horse galloped off with them; and he galloped far, far away. Presently the serpent awoke, looked all round him, and could see nothing till he had got up out of the reeds in which he lay, when he saw them in the far distance, and gave chase. He soon caught

them up; and little Tsar Novishny said to the horse, "Oh! little nag, how hot it is. It is all up with thee and us!" And, in truth, the horse's tail was already singed to a coal, for the serpent was hard behind them, blazing like fire. The horse perceived that he could do no more, so he gave one last wriggle and died; but they, poor things, were left alive. "Whom have you been listening to?" said the serpent as he flew up to them. "Don't you know that I only am your father and tsar, and have the right to carry you away?"--"Oh, dear daddy! we'll never listen to anybody else again!"--"Well, I'll forgive you this time," said the serpent; "but mind you never do it again."

Again the serpent took them up and carried them off. Presently he grew tired and again lay down to rest, and nodded off. Then the Tsarivna sat down on his head, and the Tsarevko sat down beside her, till a humble-bee came flying up. "Hail, little Tsar Novishny!" cried the humble-bee.--"Hail, little humble-bee!" said the little Tsar.--"Say, friends, are you here by your leave or against your leave?"--"Alas! little humble-bumble-bee, 'tis not with my leave I have been brought hither, but against my leave, as thou mayst see for thyself."--"Then sit on my back," said the bee, "and I'll carry you away."--"But, dear little humble-bumble-bee, if a horse couldn't save us, how will you?"--"I cannot tell till I try," said the humble-bee. "But if I cannot save you, I'll let you fall."--"Well, then," said the little Tsar, "we'll try. For we two must perish in any case, but thou perhaps mayst get off scot-free." So they embraced each other, sat on the humble-bee, and off they went. When the serpent awoke he missed them, and raising his head above the reeds and rushes, saw them flying far away, and set off after them at full speed. "Alas! little humble-bumble-bee," cried little Tsar Novishny, "how burning hot 'tis getting. We shall all three perish!" Then the humble-bee turned his wing and shook them off. They fell to the earth, and he flew away. Then the serpent came flying up and fell upon them with open jaws. "Ah-ha!" cried he, with a snort, "you've come to grief again, eh? Didn't I tell you to listen to nobody but me!" Then they fell to weeping and entreating, "We'll listen to you alone and to nobody else!" and they wept and entreated so much that at last he forgave them.

So he took them up and carried them off once more. Again he sat down to rest and fell asleep, and again the Tsarivna sat upon his head and the Tsarevko sat down by her side, till a bullock came up, full tilt, and said to them, "Hail, little Tsar Novishny! art thou here with thy leave or art thou here against thy leave?"--"Alas! dear little bullock, I came not hither by my leave; but maybe I was brought here against my leave!"--"Sit on my back, then," said the bullock, "and I'll carry you away."--But they said, "Nay, if a horse and a bee could not manage it, how wilt thou?"--"Nonsense!" said the bullock. "Sit down, and I'll carry you off!" So he persuaded

them.--“Well, we can only perish once!” they cried; and the bullock carried them off. And every little while they went a little mile, and jolted so that they very nearly tumbled off. Presently the serpent awoke and was very very wrath. He rose high above the woods and flew after them--oh! how fast he did fly! Then cried the little Tsar, “Alas! bullock, how hot it turns. Thou wilt perish, and we shall perish also!”--Then said the bullock, “Little Tsar! look into my left ear and thou wilt see a horse-comb. Pull it out and throw it behind thee!”--The little Tsar took out the comb and threw it behind him, and it became a huge wood, as thick and jagged as the teeth of a horse-comb. But the bullock went on at his old pace: every little while they went a little mile, and jolted so that they nearly tumbled off. The serpent, however, managed to gnaw his way through the wood, and then flew after them again. Then cried the little Tsar, “Alas! bullock, it begins to burn again. Thou wilt perish, and we shall perish also!”--Then said the bullock, “Look into my right ear, and pull out the brush thou dost find there, and fling it behind thee!”--So he threw it behind him, and it became a forest as thick as a brush. Then the serpent came up to the forest and began to gnaw at it; and at last he gnawed his way right through it. But the bullock went on at his old pace: every little while they went a little mile, and they jolted so that they nearly tumbled off. But when the serpent had gnawed his way through the forest, he again pursued them; and again they felt a burning. And the little Tsar said, “Alas! bullock, look! look! how it burns. Look! look! how we perish.” Now the bullock was already nearing the sea. “Look into my right ear,” said the bullock, “draw out the little handkerchief thou findest there, and throw it in front of me.” He drew it out and flung it, and before them stood a bridge. Over this bridge they galloped, and by the time they had done so, the serpent reached the sea. Then said the bullock to the little Tsar, “Take up the handkerchief again and wave it behind me.” Then he took and waved it till the bridge doubled up behind them, and went and spread out again right in front of them. The serpent came up to the edge of the sea; but there he had to stop, for he had nothing to run upon.

So they crossed over that sea right to the other side, and the serpent remained on his own side. Then the bullock said to them, “I’ll lead you to a hut close to the sea, and in that hut you must live, and you must take and slay me.” But they fell a-weeping sore. “How shall we slay thee!” they cried; “thou art our own little dad, and hast saved us from death!”--“Nay!” said the bullock; “but you must slay me, and one quarter of me you must hang up on the stove, and the second quarter you must place on the ground in a corner, and the third quarter you must put in the corner at the entrance of the hut, and the fourth quarter you must put round the threshold, so that there will be a quarter in all four corners.” So they took and slew him in front of the threshold, and they hung his four quarters in the four corners as he had bidden them, and then they laid them down to sleep. Now

the Tsarevko awoke at midnight, and saw in the right-hand corner a horse so gorgeously caparisoned that he could not resist rising at once and mounting it; and in the threshold corner there was a self-slicing sword, and in the third corner stood the dog Protius, and in the stove corner stood the dog Nedviga. The little Tsar longed to be off. "Rise, little sister!" cried he. "God has been good to us! Rise, dear little sister, and let us pray to God!" So they arose and prayed to God, and while they prayed the day dawned. Then he mounted his horse and took the dogs with him, that he might live by what they caught.

So they lived in their hut by the sea, and one day the sister went down to the sea to wash her bed-linen and her body-linen in the blue waters. And the serpent came and said to her, "How didst thou manage to jump over the sea?"—"Look, now!" said she, "we crossed over in this way. My brother has a handkerchief which becomes a bridge when he waves it behind him."—And the serpent said to her, "I tell thee what, ask him for this handkerchief; say thou dost want to wash it, and take and wave it, and I'll then be able to cross over to thee and live with thee, and we'll poison thy brother."—Then she went home and said to her brother, "Give me that handkerchief, dear little brother; it is dirty, so I'll wash and give it back to thee." And he believed her and gave it to her, for she was dear to him, and he thought her good and true. Then she took the handkerchief, went down to the sea, and waved it—and behold there was a bridge. Then the serpent crossed over to her side, and they walked to the hut together and consulted as to the best way of destroying her brother and removing him from God's fair world. Now it was his custom to rise at dawn, mount his horse, and go a-hunting, for hunting he dearly loved. So the serpent said to her, "Take to thy bed and pretend to be ill, and say to him, 'I dreamed a dream, dear brother, and lo, I saw thee go and fetch me wolf's milk to make me well.' Then he'll go and fetch it, and the wolves will tear his dogs to pieces, and then we can take and do to him as we list, for his strength is in his dogs."

So when the brother came home from hunting the serpent hid himself, but the sister said, "I have dreamed a dream, dear brother. Methought thou didst go and fetch me wolf's milk, and I drank of it, and my health came back to me, for I am so weak that God grant I die not."—"I'll fetch it," said her brother. So he mounted his horse and set off. Presently he came to a little thicket, and immediately a she-wolf came out. Then Protius ran her down and Nedviga held her fast, and the little Tsar milked her and let her go. And the she-wolf looked round and said, "Well for thee, little Tsar Novishny, that thou hast let me go. Methought thou wouldst not let me go alive. For that thou hast let me go, I'll give thee, little Tsar Novishny, a wolf-whelp."—Then she said to

the little wolf, "Thou shalt serve this dear little Tsar as though he were thine own dear father." Then the little Tsar went back, and now there were with him two dogs and a little wolf-whelp that trotted behind them.

Now the serpent and the false sister saw him coming from afar, and three dogs trotting behind him. And the serpent said to her, "What a sly, wily one it is! He has added another watch-dog to his train! Lie down, and make thyself out worse than ever, and ask bear's milk of him, for the bears will tear him to pieces without doubt." Then the serpent turned himself into a needle, and she took him up and stuck him in the wall.

Meanwhile the brother dismounted from his horse and came with his dogs and the wolf to the hut, and the dogs began snuffing at the needle in the wall. And his sister said to him, "Tell me, why dost thou keep these big dogs? They let me have no rest." Then he called to the dogs, and they sat down. And his sister said to him, "I dreamed a dream, my brother. I saw thee go and search and fetch me from somewhere bear's milk, and I drank of it, and my health came back to me."--"I will fetch it," said her brother.

But first of all he laid him down to sleep. Nedviga lay at his head, and Protius at his feet, and Vovchok (little wolf) by his side. So he slept through the night, and at dawn he arose and mounted his good steed and hied him thence. Again they came to a little thicket, and this time a she-bear came out. Protius ran her down, Nedviga held her fast, and the little Tsar milked her and let her go. Then the she-bear said, "Hail to thee, little Tsar Novishny; because thou hast let me go, I'll give thee a bear-cub." But to the little bear she said, "Obey him as though he were thine own father." So he set off home, and the serpent and his sister saw that four were now trotting behind him. "Look!" said the serpent, "if there are not four running behind him! Shall we never be able to destroy him? I tell thee what. Ask him to get thee hare's milk; perhaps his beasts will gobble up the hare before he can milk it." So he turned himself into a needle again, and she fastened him in the wall, only a little higher up, so that the dogs should not get at him. Then, when the little Tsar dismounted from his horse, he and his dogs came into the hut, and the dogs began snuffing at the needle in the wall and barked at it, but the brother knew not the cause thereof. But his sister burst into tears and said, "Why dost thou keep such monstrous dogs? Such a kennel of them makes me ill with anguish!" Then he shouted to the dogs, and they sat down quite still. Then she said to him, "I am so ill, brother, that nothing will make me well but hare's milk. Go and get it for me."--"I'll get it," said he.

But first he laid him down to sleep. Nedviga lay at his head, Protius at his feet, and Vovchok and Medvedik (little bear) each on one side. He slept through the night, but at dawn he mounted his steed, took his pack with

him, and departed. Again he came to a little thicket, and a she-hare popped out. Protius ran her down, Nedviga held her fast, then he milked her and let her go. Then the hare said, "Hail to thee, little Tsar Novishny; because thou hast let me go--I thought thou wouldst have torn me to pieces with thy dogs--I'll give thee a leveret." But to the leveret she said, "Obey him, as though he were thine own father." Then he went home, and again they saw him from afar. "What a wily rogue it is!" said they. "All five are following him, and he is as well as ever!"--"Ask him to get thee fox's milk!" said the serpent; "perhaps when he goes for it his beasts will leave him in the lurch!" Then he changed himself into a needle, and she stuck him still higher in the wall, so that the dogs could not get at him. The Tsar again dismounted from his horse, and his dogs rushed up to the hut and began snuffing at the needle. But his sister fell a-weeping, and said, "Why dost thou keep such monstrous dogs?" He shouted to them, and they sat down quietly on their haunches. Then his sister said again, "I am ailing, my brother; go and get me fox's milk, and I shall be well."--"I'll fetch it for thee," said her brother.

But first he lay down to sleep. Nedviga lay at his head, Protius at his feet, and Vovchok, Medvedik, and the leveret by his side. The little Tsar slept through the night, and at dawn he arose, mounted his horse, took his pack with him, and went off. They came to a little thicket, and a vixen popped out. Protius ran her down, Nedviga held her fast, and the little Tsar milked her and let her go. Then said the vixen to him, "Thanks to thee, little Tsar Novishny, that thou hast let me go. Methought thou wouldst tear me in pieces with thy dogs. For thy kindness I'll give thee a little fox." But to the little fox she said, "Obey him as though he were thine own father." So he went home, and they saw him coming from afar, and lo! now he had six guardians, and yet had come by no harm. "Tis no good; we shall never do for him," said the serpent. "Look, now! Make thyself worse than ever, and say to him, 'I am very ill, my brother, because in another realm, far, far away, there is a wild boar who ploughs with his nose, and sows with his ears, and harrows with his tail--and in that same empire there is a mill with twelve furnaces that grinds its own grain and casts forth its own meal, and if thou wilt bring me of the meal that is beneath these twelve furnaces, so that I may make me a cake of it and eat, my soul shall live.'"--Then her brother said to her, "Methinks thou art not my sister, but my foe!"--But she replied, "How can I be thy foe when we two live all alone together in a strange land?"--"Well, I will get it for thee," said he. For again he believed in his sister.

So he mounted his steed, took his pack with him, and departed, and he came to the land where were that boar and that mill she had told him of. He came up to the mill, tied his horse to it, and entered into it. And there

were twelve furnaces there and twelve doors, and these twelve doors needed no man to open or shut them, for they opened and shut themselves. He took meal from beneath the first furnace and went through the second door, but the dogs were shut in by the doors. Through all twelve doors he went, and came out again at the first door, and looked about him, and--there were no dogs to be seen. He whistled, and he heard his dogs whining where they could not get out. Then he wept sore, mounted his horse, and went home. He got home, and there was his sister making merry with the serpent. And no sooner did the brother enter the hut than the serpent said, "Well, we wanted flesh, and now flesh has come to us!" For they had just slain a bullock, and on the ground where they had slain it there sprang up a whitethorn-tree, so lovely that it may be told of in tales, but neither imagined nor divined. When the little Tsar saw it, he said, "Oh, my dear brother-in-law!" (for without his dogs he must needs be courteous to the serpent) "pray let me climb up that whitethorn-tree, and have a good look about me!" But the sister said to the serpent, "Dear friend, make him get ready boiling water for himself, and we will boil him, for it does not become thee to dirty thy hands."--"Very well," said the serpent; "he shall make the boiling water ready!" So they ordered the little Tsar to go and chop wood and get the hot water ready. Then he went and chopped wood, but as he was doing so, a starling flew out and said to him, "Not so fast, not so fast, little Tsar Novishny. Be as slow as thou canst, for thy dogs have gnawed their way through two doors."

Then the little Tsar poured water into the cauldron, and put fire under it. But the wood that he had cut was rotten and very very dry, so that it burned most fiercely, and he took and sprinkled it with water, and sprinkled it again and again, so that it might not burn too much. And when he went out into the courtyard for more water, the starling said to him, "Not so fast, not so fast, little Tsar Novishny, for thy dogs have gnawed their way through four doors!" As he was returning to the hut his sister said to him, "That water does not boil up quickly enough! Take the fire-shovel and poke the fire!" So he did so, and the faggots blazed up, but when she had gone away he sprinkled them with water again, so that they might burn more slowly. Then he went into the courtyard again, and the starling met him and said, "Not so fast, not so fast, little Tsar; be as slow as thou canst, for thy dogs have gnawed their way through six doors." Then he returned to the hut, and his sister again took up the shovel and made him poke up the fire, and when she went away he again flung water on the burning coals. So he kept going in and out of the courtyard. "Tis weary work!" cried he; but the starling said to him, "Not so fast, not so fast, little Tsar Novishny, for thy dogs have already gnawed their way through ten doors!" The little Tsar picked up the rottenest wood he could find and flung it on the fire, to make believe he

was making haste, but sprinkled it at the same time with water, so that it might not burn up too quickly, and yet the kettle soon began to boil. Again he went to the forest for more wood, and the starling said to him, "Not so fast, not so fast, little Tsar, for thy dogs have already gnawed their way through all the doors, and are now resting!" But now the water was boiling, and his sister ran up and said to him, "Come, boil thyself, be quick; how much longer art thou going to keep us waiting?" Then he, poor thing, began ladling the boiling water over himself, while she got the table ready and spread the cloth, that the serpent might eat her brother on that very table.

But he, poor thing, kept ladling himself, and cried, "Oh, my dear brother-in-law, pray let me climb up to the top of that whitethorn-tree; let me have a look out from the top of it, for thence one can see afar!" -- "Don't let him, dear!" said the sister to the serpent; "he will stay there too long and lose our precious time." -- But the serpent replied, "It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter; let him climb up if he likes." So the little Tsar went up to the tree, and began to climb it; he did not miss a single branch, and stopped a little at each one to gain time, and so he climbed up to the very top, and then he took out his flute and began to play upon it. But the starling flew up to him and said, "Not so fast, little Tsar Novishny, for lo! thy dogs are running to thee with all their might." But his sister ran out and said, "What art thou playing up there for? Thou dost forget perhaps that we are waiting for thee down here!" Then he began to descend the tree, but he stopped at every branch on his way down, while his sister kept on calling to him to come down quicker. At last he came to the last branch, and as he stood upon it and leaped down to the ground, he thought to himself, "Now I perish!" At that same instant his dogs and his beasts, growling loudly, came running up, and stood in a circle around him. Then he crossed himself and said, "Glory to Thee, O Lord! I have still, perchance, a little time to live in Thy fair world!" Then he called aloud to the serpent and said, "And now, dear brother-in-law, come out, for I am ready for thee!" Out came the serpent to eat him, but he said to his dogs and his beasts, "Vovchok! Medvedik! Protius! Nedviga! Seize him!" Then the dogs and the beasts rushed upon him and tore him to bits.

Then the little Tsar collected the pieces and burnt them to ashes, and the little fox rolled his brush in the ashes till it was covered with them, and then went out into the open field and scattered them to the four winds. But while they were tearing the serpent to pieces the wicked sister knocked out his tooth and hid it. After it was all over the little Tsar said to her, "As thou hast been such a false friend to me, sister, thou must remain here while I go into another kingdom." Then he made two buckets and hung them up on the whitethorn-tree, and said to

his sister, "Look now, sister! if thou weepest for me, this bucket will fill with tears, but if thou weepest for the serpent that bucket will fill with blood!" Then she fell a-weeping and praying, and said to him, "Don't leave me, brother, but take me with thee."—"I won't," said he; "such a false friend as thou art I'll not have with me. Stay where thou art." So he mounted his horse, called to him his dogs and his beasts, and went his way into another kingdom and into another empire.

He went on and on till he came to a certain city, and in this city there was only one spring, and in this spring sat a dragon with twelve heads. And it was so that when any went to draw water from this well the dragon rose up and ate them, and there was no other place whence that city could draw its water. So the little Tsar came to that town and put up at the stranger's inn, and he asked his host, "What is the meaning of all this running and crying of the people in the streets?"—"Why, dost thou not know?" said he; "it is the turn of the Tsar to send his daughter to the dragon!"—Then he went out and listened, and heard the people say, "The Tsar proclaims that whoever is able to slay the dragon, to him will he give his daughter and one-half of his tsardom!" Then little Tsar Novishny stepped forth and said, "I am able to slay this evil dragon!" So all the people immediately sent and told the Tsar, "A stranger has come hither who says he is ready to meet and slay the dragon." Then the Tsar bade them take him to the watch-house and put him among the guards.

Then they led out the Tsarivna, and behind her they led him, and behind him came his beasts and his horse. And the Tsarivna was so lovely and so richly attired that all who beheld her burst into tears. But the moment the dragon appeared and opened his mouth to devour the Tsarivna, the little Tsar cried to his self-slicing sword, "Fall upon him!" and to his beasts he cried, "Protius! Medvedik! Vovchok! Nedviga! Seize him!" Then the self-slicing sword and the beasts fell upon him, and tore him into little bits. When they had finished tearing him, the little Tsar took the remains of the body and burnt them to ashes, and the little fox took up all the ashes on her tail, and scattered them to the four winds. Then he took the Tsarivna by the hand, and led her to the Tsar, and the people rejoiced because their water was free again. And the Tsarivna gave him the nuptial ring.

Then they set off home again. They went on and on, for it was a long way from the tsardom of that Tsar, and at last he grew weary and lay down in the grass, and she sat at his head. Then his lackey crept up to him, unfastened the self-slicing sword from his side, went up to the little Tsar, and said, "Self-slicing sword! slay him!" Then the self-slicing sword cut him into little bits, and his beasts knew nothing about it, for they were sleeping after their labours. After that the lackey said to the Tsarivna, "Thou must say now to all men that I

saved thee from death, or if not, I will do to thee what I have done to him. Swear that thou wilt say this thing!" Then she said, "I will swear that thou didst save me from death," for she was sore afraid of the lackey. Then they returned to the city, and the Tsar was very glad to see them, and clothed the lackey in goodly apparel, and they all made merry together.

Now when Nedviga awoke he perceived that his master was no longer there, and immediately awoke all the rest, and they all began to think and consider which of them was the swiftest. And when they had thought it well over they judged that the hare was the swiftest, and they resolved that the hare should run and get living and healing water and the apple of youth also. So the hare ran to fetch this water and this apple, and he ran and ran till he came to a certain land, and in this land the hare saw a spring, and close to the spring grew an apple-tree with the apples of youth, and this spring and this apple-tree were guarded by a Muscovite, oh! so strong, so strong, and he waved his sabre again and again so that not even a mouse could make its way up to that well. What was to be done? Then the little hare had resort to subtlety, and made herself crooked, and limped toward the spring as if she were lame. When the Muscovite saw her he said, "What sort of a little beast is this? I never saw the like of it before!" So the hare passed him by, and went farther and farther on till she came right up to the well. The Muscovite stood there and opened his eyes wide, but the hare had now got up to the spring, and took a little flask of the water and nipped off a little apple, and was off in a trice.

She ran back to the little Tsar Novishny, and Nedviga immediately took the water and sprinkled therewith the fragments of the little Tsar, and the fragments came together again. Then he poured some of the living water into his mouth and he became alive, and gave him a bite of the apple of youth, and he instantly grew young again and stronger than ever. Then the little Tsar rose upon his feet, stretched himself, and yawned. "What a long time I've been asleep!" cried he.--"Tis a good thing for thee that we got the living and healing water!" said Protius.--"But what shall we do next?" said they all. Then they all took council together, and agreed that the little Tsar should disguise himself as an old man, and so go to the Tsar's palace.

So the little Tsar Novishny disguised himself as an old man, and went to the palace of the Tsar. And when he got there he begged them to let him in that he might see the young married people. But the lackeys would not let him in. Then the Tsarivna herself heard the sound of his begging and praying, and commanded them to admit him. Now when he entered the room and took off his cap and cloak, the ring which the Tsarivna had given him when he slew the serpent sparkled so that she knew him, but, not believing her own eyes, she said to

him, "Come hither, thou godly old pilgrim, that I may show thee hospitality!" Then the little Tsar drew near to the table, and the Tsarivna poured him out a glass of wine and gave it to him, and he took it with his left hand. She marked that he did not take it with the hand on which was the ring, so she drank off that glass herself. Then she filled another glass and gave it him, and he took it with his right hand. Then she immediately recognized her ring, and said to her father, "This man is my husband who delivered me from death, but that fellow"--pointing to the lackey--"that rascally slavish soul killed my husband and made me say that he was my husband." When the Tsar heard this he boiled over with rage. "So that is what thou art!" said he to the lackey, and immediately he bade them bind him and tie him to the tail of a horse so savage that no man could ride it, and then turn it loose into the endless steppe. But the little Tsar Novishny sat down behind the table and made merry.

So the Tsarevko and the Tsarivna lived a long time together in happiness, but one day she asked him, "What of thy kindred and thy father's house?" Then he told her all about his sister. She immediately bade him saddle his horse, and taking his beasts with him, go in search of her. They came to the place where he had left her, and saw that the bucket which was put up for the serpent was full of blood, but that the little Tsar's bucket was all dry and falling to pieces. Then he perceived that she was still lamenting for the serpent, and said to her, "God be with thee, but I will know thee no more. Stay here, and never will I look upon thy face again!" But she began to entreat and caress and implore him that he would take her with him. Then the brother had compassion on his sister and took her away with him.

Now when they got home she took out the serpent's tooth which she had hidden about her, and put it beneath his pillow on the bed whereon he slept. And at night-time the little Tsar went to lie down and the tooth killed him. His wife thought that he was sulky, and therefore did not speak to her, so she begged him not to be angry; and, getting no answer, took him by the hand, and lo! his hand was cold, as cold as lead, and she screamed out. But Protius came bounding through the door and kissed his master. Then the little Tsar became alive again, but Protius died. Then Nedviga kissed Protius and Protius became alive, but Nedviga died. Then the Tsarevko said to Medvedik, "Kiss Nedviga!" He did so, and Nedviga became alive again, but Medvedik died. And so they went on kissing each other from the greatest to the smallest, till the turn came to the hare. She kissed Vovchok and died, but Vovchok remained alive. What was to be done? Now that the little hare had died there was none to kiss her back into life again. "Kiss her," said the little Tsar to the little fox. But the little fox was artful, and

taking the little hare on his shoulder, he trotted off to the forest. He carried her to a place where lay a felled oak, with two branches one on the top of the other, and put the hare on the lower branch; then he ran under the branch and kissed the hare, but took good care that the branch should be between them. Thereupon the serpent's tooth flew out of the hare and fastened itself in the upper branch, and both fox and hare scampered back out of the forest alive and well. When the others saw them both alive they rejoiced greatly that no harm had come to any of them from the tooth. But they seized the sister and tied her to the tail of a savage horse and let her loose upon the endless steppe.

So they all lived the merry lives of Tsars who feast continually. And I was there too, and drank wine and mead till my mouth ran over and it trickled all down my beard. So there's the whole kazka for you.

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