



# *The Story of the Unlucky*

## *Days*

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Ukrainian

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*Intermediate*

*4 min read*

At the end of a village on the verge of the steppe dwelt two brothers, one rich and the other poor. One day the poor brother came to the rich brother's house and sat down at his table; but the rich brother drove him away and said, "How durst thou sit at my table? Be off! Thy proper place is in the fields to scare away the crows!"

So the poor brother went into the fields to scare away the crows. The crows all flew away when they saw him, but among them was a raven that flew back again and said to him, "O man! in this village thou wilt never be able to live, for here there is neither luck nor happiness for thee, but go into another village and thou shalt do well!"

Then the man went home, called together his wife and children, put up the few old clothes that still remained in his wardrobe, and went on to the next village, carrying his water-skin on his shoulders. On and on they tramped along the road, but the Unlucky Days clung on to the man behind, and said, "Why dost thou not take us with thee? We will never leave thee, for thou art ours!"

So they went on with him till they came to a river, and the man, who was thirsty, went down to the water's edge for a drink. He undid his water-skin, persuaded the Unlucky Days to get into it, tied it fast again and buried it on the bank close by the river. Then he and his family went on farther. They went on and on till they came to

another village, and at the very end of it was an empty hut--the people who had lived there had died of hunger.

There the whole family settled down. One day they were all sitting down there when they heard something in the mountain crying, "Catch hold! catch hold! catch hold!" The man went at once into his stable, took down the bit and reins that remained to him, and climbed up into the mountain. He looked all about him as he went, and at last he saw, sitting down, an old goat with two large horns--it was the Devil himself, but of course he didn't know that. So he made a lasso of the reins, threw them round the old goat, and began to drag it gently down the mountain-side. He dragged it all the way up the ladder of his barn, when the goat disappeared, but showers and showers of money came tumbling through the ceiling.

He collected them all together, and they filled two large coffers. Then the poor man made the most of his money, and in no very long time he was well-to-do. Then he sent some of his people to his rich brother, and invited him to come and live with him. The rich brother pondered the matter over. "Maybe he has nothing to eat," thought he, "and that is why he sends for me." So he bade them bake him a good store of fat pancakes, and set out accordingly. On the way he heard that his brother had grown rich, and the farther he went the more he heard of his brother's wealth. Then he regretted that he had brought all the pancakes with him, so he threw them away into the ditch. At last he came to his brother's house, and his brother showed him first one of the coffers full of money and then the other.

Then envy seized upon the rich brother, and he grew quite green in the face. But his brother said to him, "Look now! I have buried a lot more money in a water-skin, hard by the river; you may dig it up and keep it if you like, for I have lots of my own here!" The rich brother did not wait to be told twice. Off he went to the river, and began digging up the water-skin straightway. He unfastened it with greedy, trembling hands; but he had no sooner opened it than the Unlucky Days all popped out and clung on to him. "Thou art ours!" said they. He went home, and when he got there he found that all his wealth was consumed, and a heap of ashes stood where his house had been. So he went and lived in the place where his brother had lived, and the Unlucky Days lived with him ever afterward.

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