



# *A hedgehog who loved the fog*

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Humor

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Once upon a time lived a hedgehog in the fog. And it was very comfortable. For example, if some reckless hedgehog was inviting him to tippale a Birch juice, he always could answer seriously:

– I can't! I am a hedgehog in the fog!

And everybody accepted it. The fog is not some trifle, it is a fog! Anybody can be lost there. And while one's crawling where, like a soldier in a trench, the juice may be already tippaled by the others, and the Birch trees may be cut down by some poachers.

Or, another example, some she-hedgehog hits him and move her needles coquettishly. And insinuates that she is interested in marriage. And then he tells her sadly:

– I can't. I am a hedgehog in the fog.

Well, it is evident, that there is no room for love in the fog. It is not loving. It is just suffering! Till the end of their lives, they may search each other there, trying to light up the way by their marriage certificates.

And relatives don't come. And if they come, they don't find a way home. But if they find, they come again to the hedgehog in a fog never-never-ever. And neighbors don't ask him to lend them mushrooms till the after next autumn. And It was making a hedgehog happy. Because the only mushrooms which we could borrow them light-heartedly were toadstools. As much as they wish. Even a full basket. But neighbors never came. And the hedgehog was drying toadstools with hope, that once his relatives will visit him.

But once a fog dissolved, and the hedgehog was mortally frightened. And he had a reason for his fear. Because of the fog, the Tax police hadn't been monitoring him for forty-four years and two months. The hedgehog knew that he will likely be jailed for the same term for not paying taxes. And suddenly somebody knocked at his

hut's door.

– Talk of the devil and he is here... – grumbled the hedgehog and opened the door. There were two tax police officers with hairy muzzles, who were looking at him malevolently. “Oh, couldn't they comb their muzzles?” – thought the hedgehog feeling fated. “Oh God, what's the physiognomy!” – thought tax workers and asked politely:

– May we come in?

“And ears are dirty... – thought a hedgehog, – look like pigs. Oh, they are really pigs! – He finally guessed. A kind of taxing-oinking”.

Tax workers observed the hut unfriendly. “Why are they so displeased? – thought the hedgehog. – I cleaned it up just a year ago!”

– Where is the toilet here? – asked one of the officers.

– Are you going to make an inventory of my sanitary engineering? – wondered the hedgehog sullenly.

Pigs exchanged glances.

– When have you paid your taxes last time?

– I did it the same time as I paid for the first time. The first time became the last, as it is used to say.

– Have you got a heritage?! – barked one of them.

– Well, I was supposed to get, but it is too far to travel to take it... If you go there for it, you can leave thirty percent for yourself.

– And what are these mushrooms, which you are drying here?

– Which? Oh, this! – the hedgehog livened up. – They are porcini, porcini!

– So, why are they green?

– Aaaah... – the hedgehog tried to make a sincere tone, – They always look like that when they are being dried.

And with the hope he asked:

– Maybe, want some mushrooms?

– Thank you, we don't eat in line of duty!

– The hedgehog wilted, but soon he was lightened up by hope again.

– I also have some berries! I don't remember their name, but those who survived told they very were very tasteful!

– A pig licked his lips and said:

- We'll take your garbage can for the expertise. And that stub.
- That is not the stub! – the hedgehog resented. – It is my geranium!
- We take it anyway. And tomorrow we are coming back to take the rest.

The hedgehog saddened. And in revenge, he bit off half of the geranium before give it away. And the geranium was stuck in his throat. Also in revenge, because the hedgehog hadn't been watering it as long as he hadn't paid his taxes.

The hedgehog opened the door, and to his delight, he saw that the fog is back! He opened the door more widely, let the taxing pigs out, into the tight twilight and cried happily:

- Farewell!

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