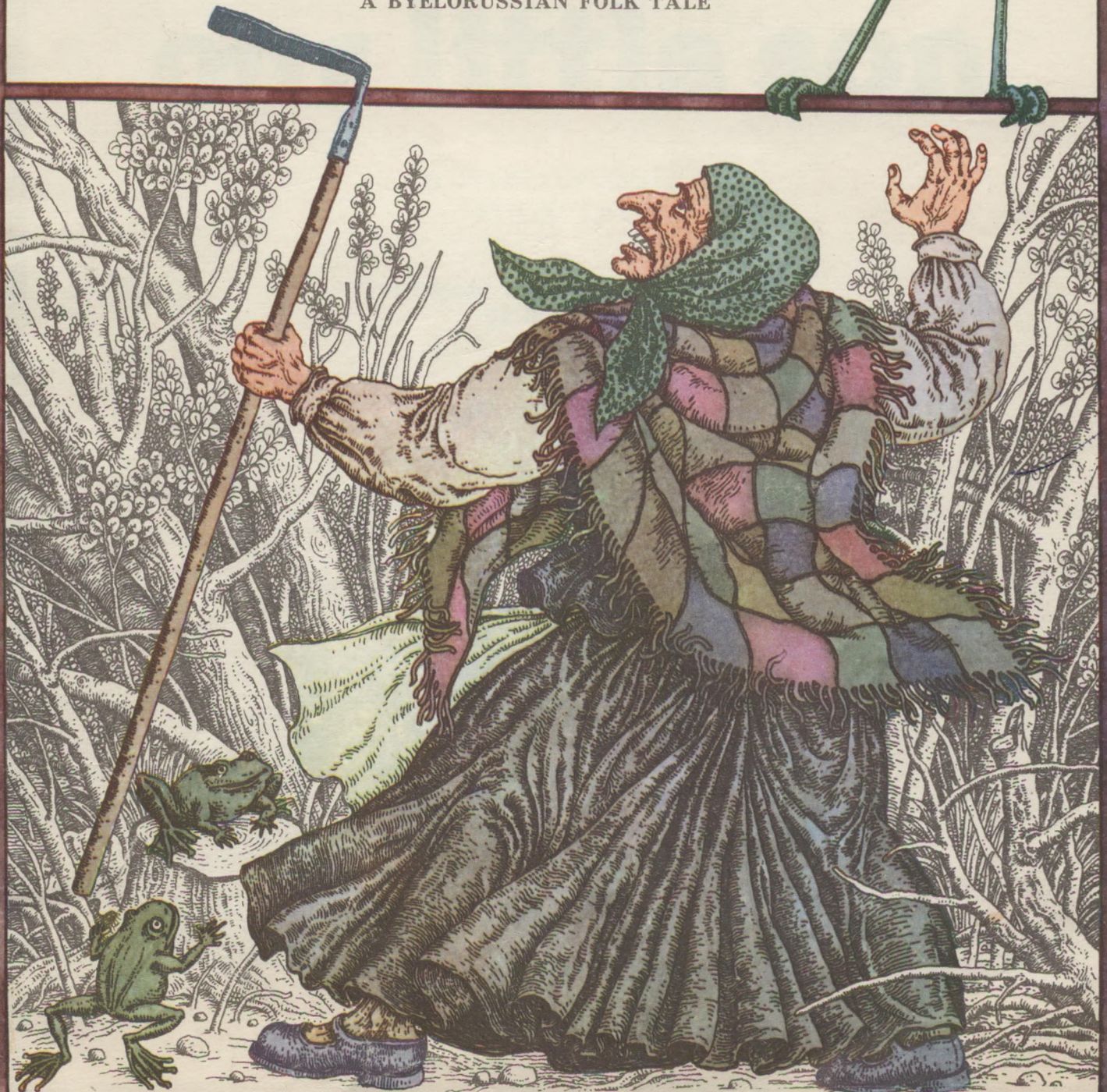




Pilipka- our little son

A BYELORUSSIAN FOLK TALE





Pilipka - our little son

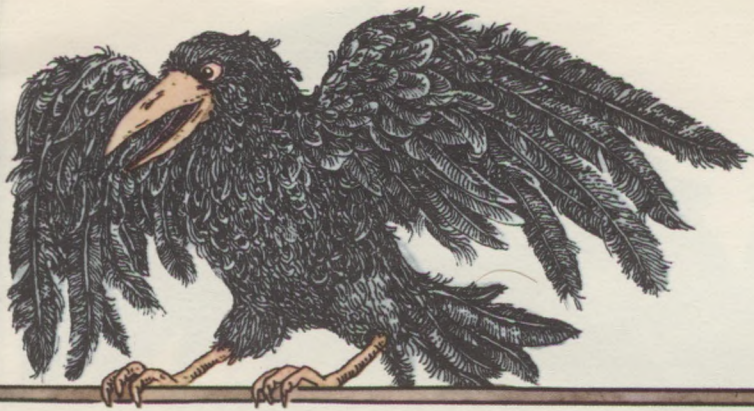
A BYELORUSSIAN
FOLK TALE

Translated from the Byelorussian
by M. MINTZ

Illustrated by V. SLAUK

MINSK "YUNATSTVA" 1989





Once upon a time there lived a man and his wife. Unfortunately they had no children. This upset his wife greatly: she had nobody to rock in the cradle, nobody to take care of and comfort.

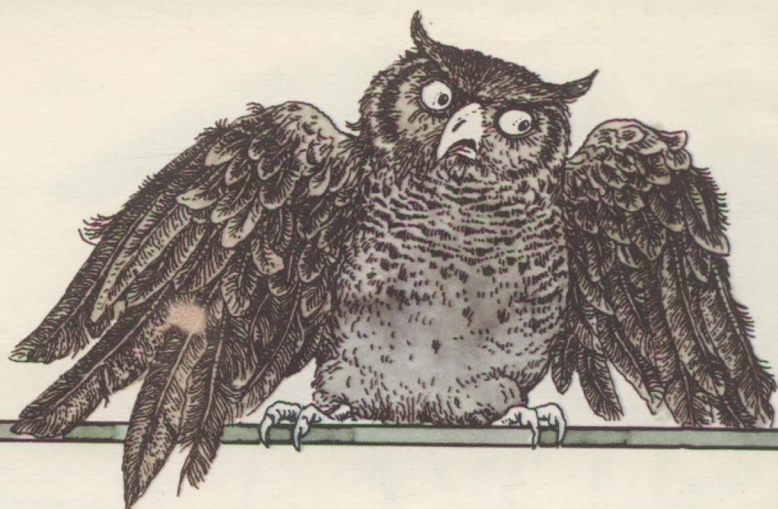
One day the man went to the forest, hewed down an alder log, brought it home to his wife and said: "Here, put it into the cradle and rock it."

His wife laid the log into the cradle and began to rock it singing lullabies.

"Sleep, my little baby, sleep, my white-shouldered, my black-eyed sonny."

She sang him to sleep one day and another and on the third day she saw lying in the cradle not the alder log but a little boy!

The man and his wife were very happy. They named their son Pilipka and began to take care of him.



Pilipka grew up and said to his father:

“Make a golden canoe and a silver oar for me, father, I want to go fishing.”

The man made a golden canoe and a little silver oar for his son and sent him to the lake to fish.

So the son fished and fished: all day and all night he fished... He didn't even go home to eat — so good was his catch! His mother herself brought his dinner to him. She would go to the lake and call:

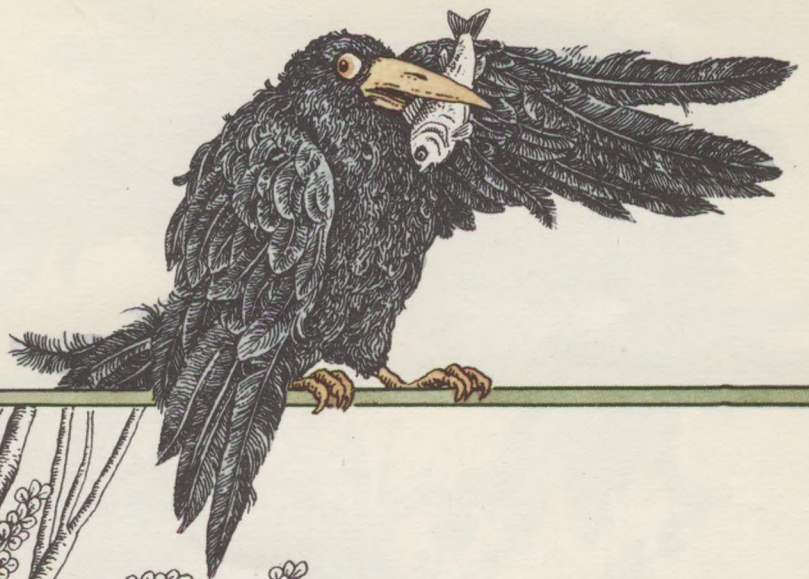
“Pilipka, Sonny-boy, row up to the shore, eat a pastry so tasty, and you'll ask for more.”

Pilipka would row up to the shore, throw the fish out of the boat, eat a pastry and go fishing again.

Baba-Yaga, the bone-legged witch, happened to hear how his mother called Pilipka and decided to do away with him. She took a sack and a poker, went to the lake and began to call Pilipka:

“Pilipka, Sonny-boy, row up to the bank and you will thank for my pastry so tasty.”

Pilipka thought it was his mother and rowed up to the bank. Baba-Yaga hooked the boat with the poker, hauled it up onto the bank, caught Pilipka and shoved him into the sack.









“Aha”, she said, “You won’t fish here any more!”

She threw the sack across her back and carried it to her house in the thick forest.

Long did she carry it, got very tired, sat down to have a rest and fell asleep.

Meanwhile Pilipka crawled out of the sack, put heavy stones into it and returned to the lake.

Baba-Yaga awoke, took up the sack full of stones, and, groaning, carried it home.

When at home she said to her daughter:

“Bake me this fisherman for dinner.”

Baba-Yaga shook out the sack near the stove — nothing there but stones! She got very angry and shouted so loudly that you could hear her all over the place.

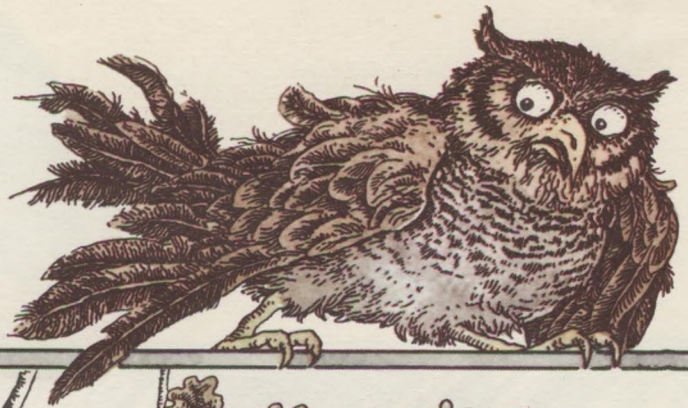
“Ah! So you would play tricks on me! I’ll teach you a lesson!”

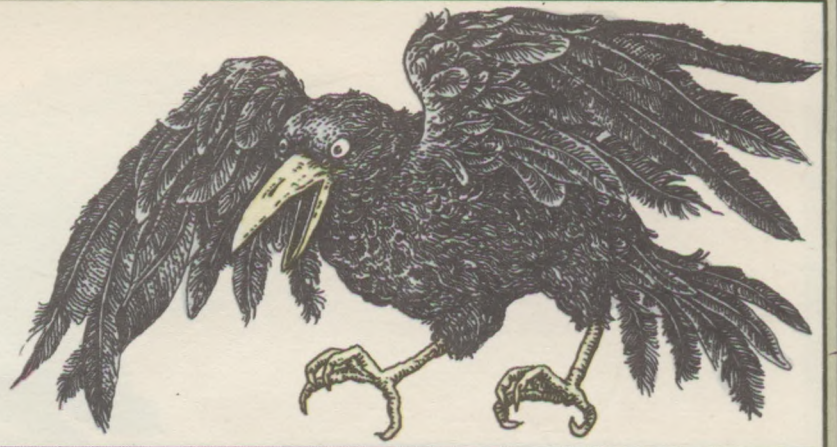
She ran to the bank of the lake again and began to call Pilipka:

“Pilipka, Sonny-boy, row up to the bank and eat a pastry so tasty!”

On hearing that Pilipka said:

“No, you are not my mother, you are Baba-Yaga, the witch! I know you perfectly well! My mother’s voice is much thinner.”







No matter how Baba-Yaga called Pilipka, he did not obey her.

“Well then,” thought Baba-Yaga, “I’ll make myself a thinner voice.”

She ran to the blacksmith and said:

“Blacksmith, my blacksmith, sharpen my tongue. It should be very, very thin.”

“All right!” the blacksmith said to her, “I’ll sharpen it if you want. Put your tongue on the anvil.”

Baba-Yaga put her long tongue on the anvil. The blacksmith took his hammer and began to beat the tongue. He hammered it until it became quite thin.

Baba-Yaga ran to the lake and called in a very thin voice:

“Pilipka, Sonny-boy, row up to the bank, eat a pastry so tasty.”

Pilipka heard her and thought it was his mother calling him. He rowed up to the bank, Baba-Yaga seized him and — into her bag she thrust him!

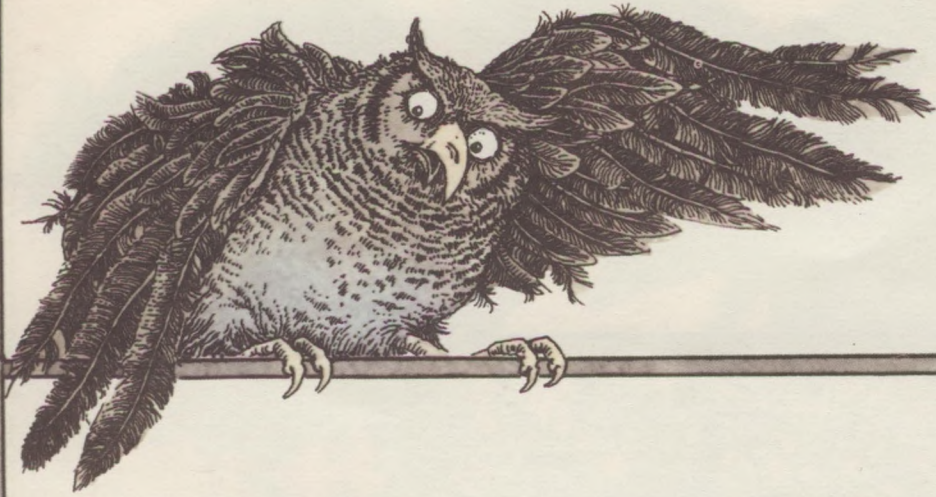
“Now you won’t fool me any more!” Baba-Yaga rejoiced.

And without a moment’s rest she brought him home, threw him out of the bag and said to her daughter:









“Here he is, the trickster! Heat the stove and bake him. To be ready by dinner-time!”

After these words, she herself went off somewhere.

Her daughter made the stove, brought the wooden shovel and said to Pilipka:

“Lie down on the shovel, I’ll seat you into the stove.”

Pilipka lay down and held his knees up high.

“Not like that!” Baba-Yaga’s daughter barked at him. “This is how you must do it! Look!”

She lay down on the shovel and stretched herself out on it.

Pilipka grabbed the shovel and into the stove with it! And he shut her in with the oven door. Then he put the witch’s heavy mortar against it she should not be able to jump out from the stove.

Hardly had he run out of the hut, than he saw Baba-Yaga coming. Pilipka climbed up a tall thick maple-tree and hid himself among the branches. Baba-Yaga came into the hut, sniffed — it smelled of roasted meat! She took out the roasted meat from the oven, ate her full of the meat, and the bones she threw out into the yard and began to roll on them, stamping on them, saying slyly:



“I’ll fall and roll, of Pilipka’s meat my full I’ll eat, of his blood my full I’ll drink.”

And Pilipka answered Baba-Yaga from the maple:

“Fall down and roll, and of your daughter’s meat eat your full, and of your daughter’s blood drink your full.”

On hearing this the witch even turned black with fury. She ran over to the maple and began to gnaw it with her teeth. She gnawed and gnawed, broke her teeth, but the mighty maple stands as it stood.

Baba-Yaga then ran to the blacksmith.

“Blacksmith, oh, Blacksmith, forge me a steel axe, otherwise I’ll eat up your children.”

The blacksmith was frightened and he made an axe for her.

Baba-Yaga ran over to the maple and began to cut it down.

Pilipka said:

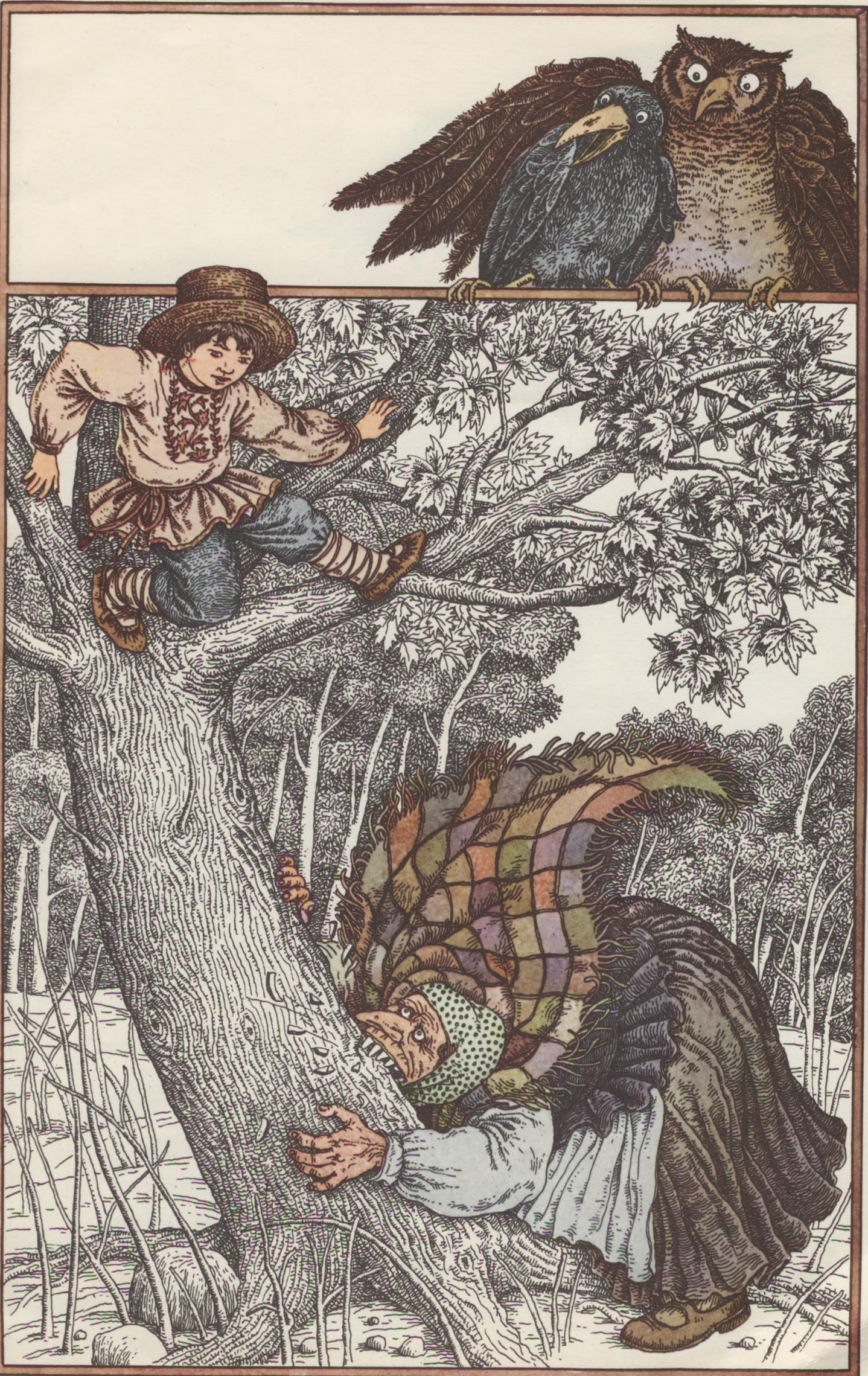
“Beat not the maple but the stone!”

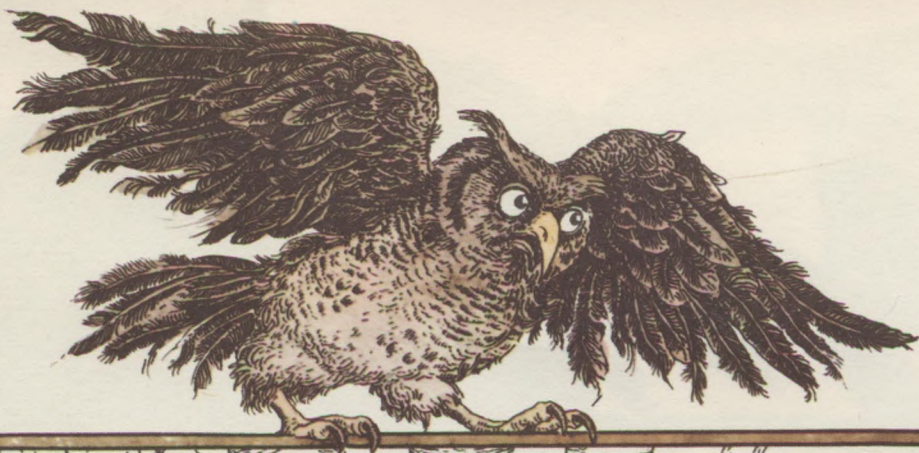
But the witch goes on cutting the tree down:
“Not the stone but the maple!”

Pilipka still says:

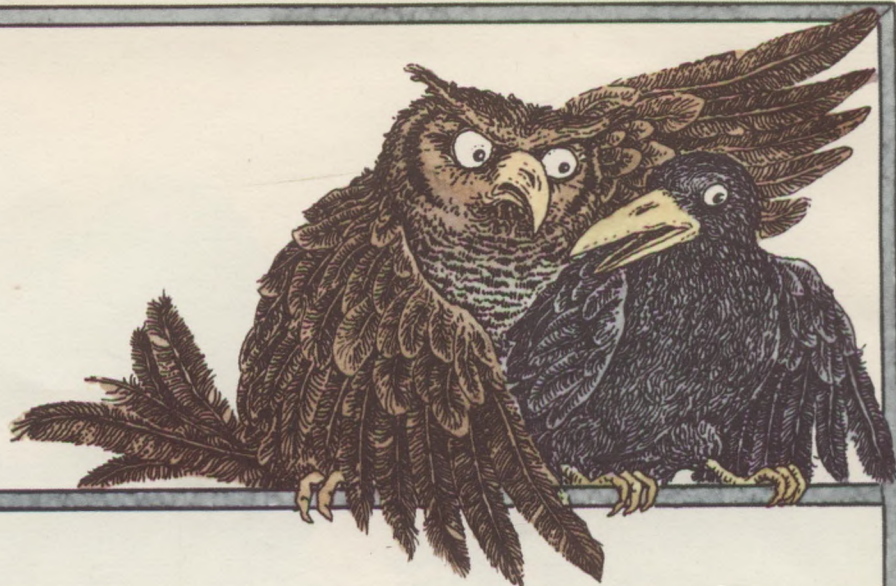
“Not the maple but the stone.”

Here the axe strikes the stone so hard that the axe breaks. The witch groans with fury, grabs









the axe and runs to the blacksmith to sharpen it.

Pilipka sees the maple is beginning to sway already. The witch had almost cut it down!.. It is necessary to save himself before it is too late.

A flock of geese comes flying. Pilipka says to them:

“Geese, dear geese, throw me down each one of you a feather. I’ll fly together with you to my father and mother, there I’ll repay you...”

The geese threw down to him each one a feather. Pilipka made from these feathers half a wing only.

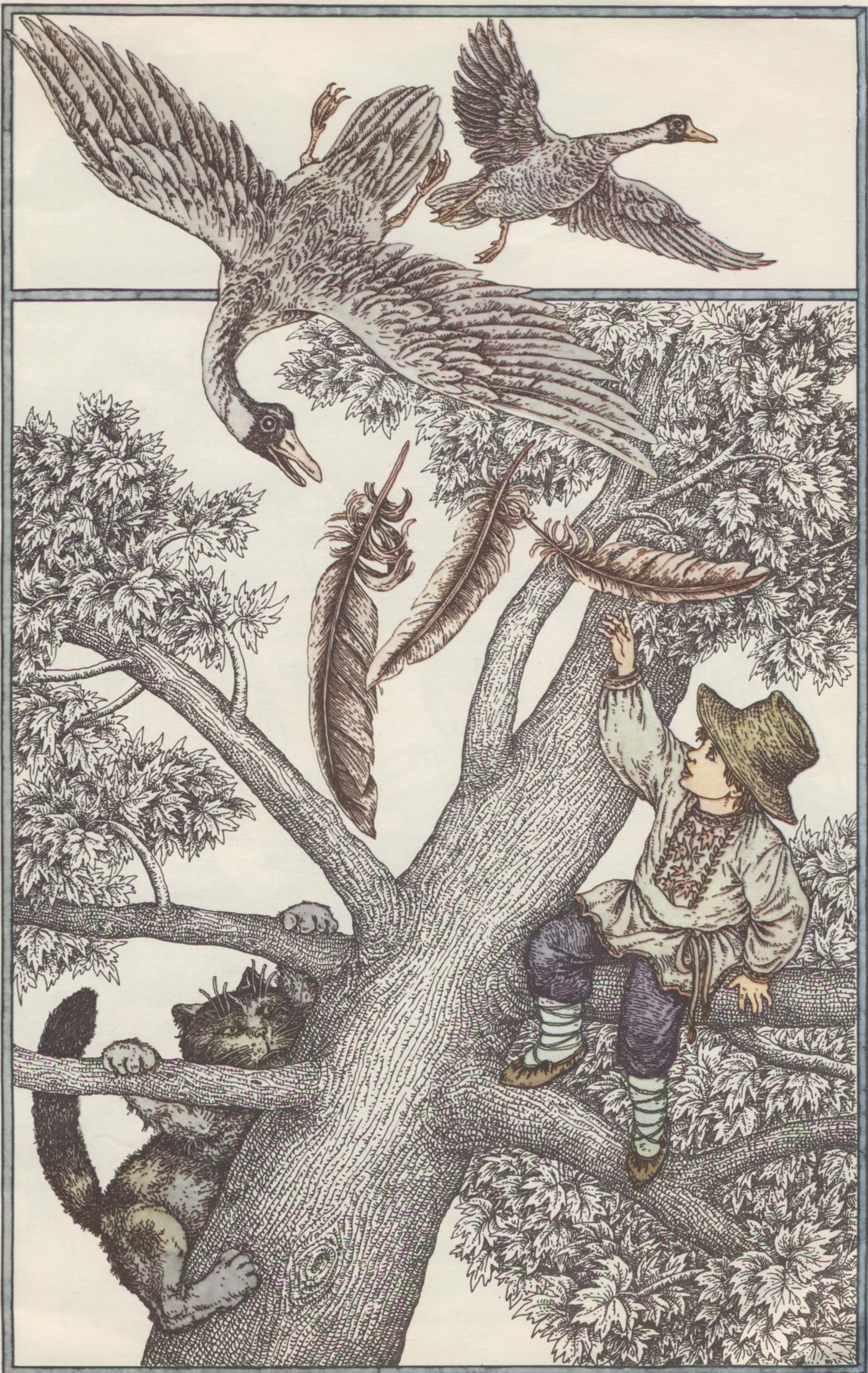
Another flock of geese comes flying. Pilipka asks:

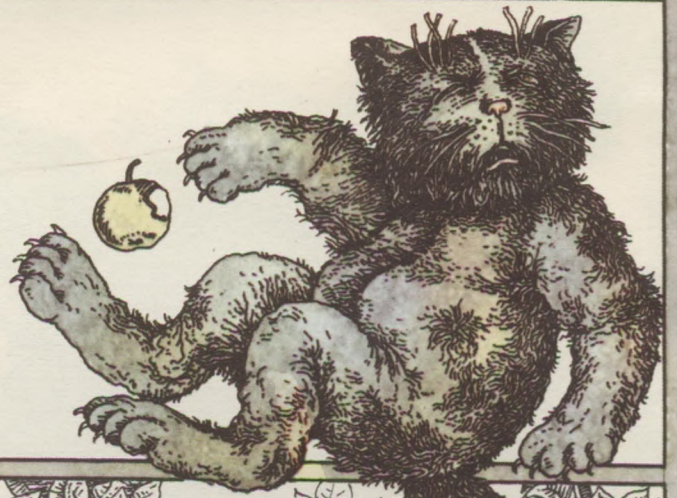
“Geese, dear geese, throw me down each one of you a feather. I’ll fly together with you to my father and mother, there I’ll repay you...”

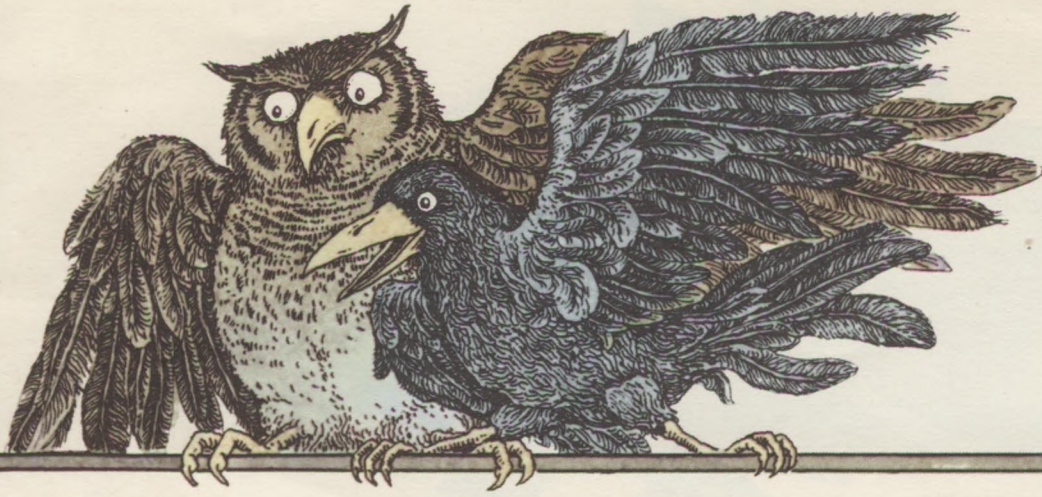
And this second flock of geese threw down to Pilipka each one a feather. Then there came flying a third and a fourth flock. And all the geese threw down to him each one a feather.

Pilipka made himself wings and flew after the geese.

Baba-Yaga came running from the blacksmith’s and struck at the maple so that chips fell.



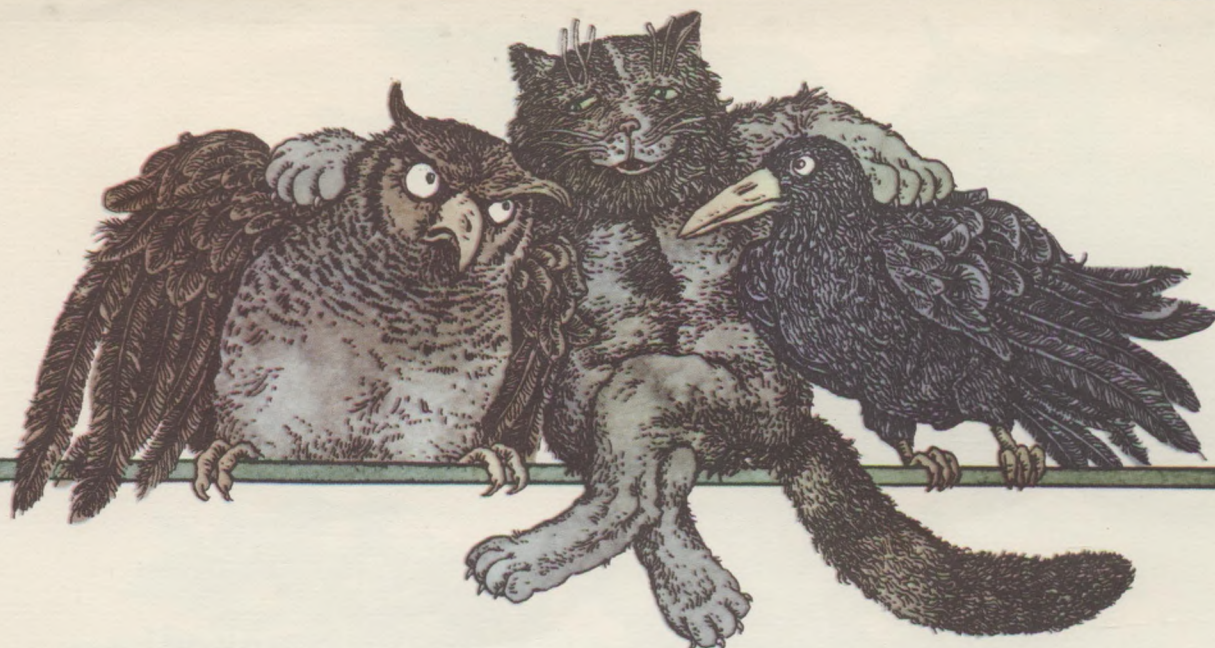




She struck and struck — the maple cracked! —
fell down on the witch and killed her.

And Pilipka flew with the geese to his hut. His
parents were so happy that Pilipka had returned,
they seated him at the table, gave him delicious
things to eat.

And they gave oats to the geese.
So this story has come to the end.



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Translated into English by M. MINTZ

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