

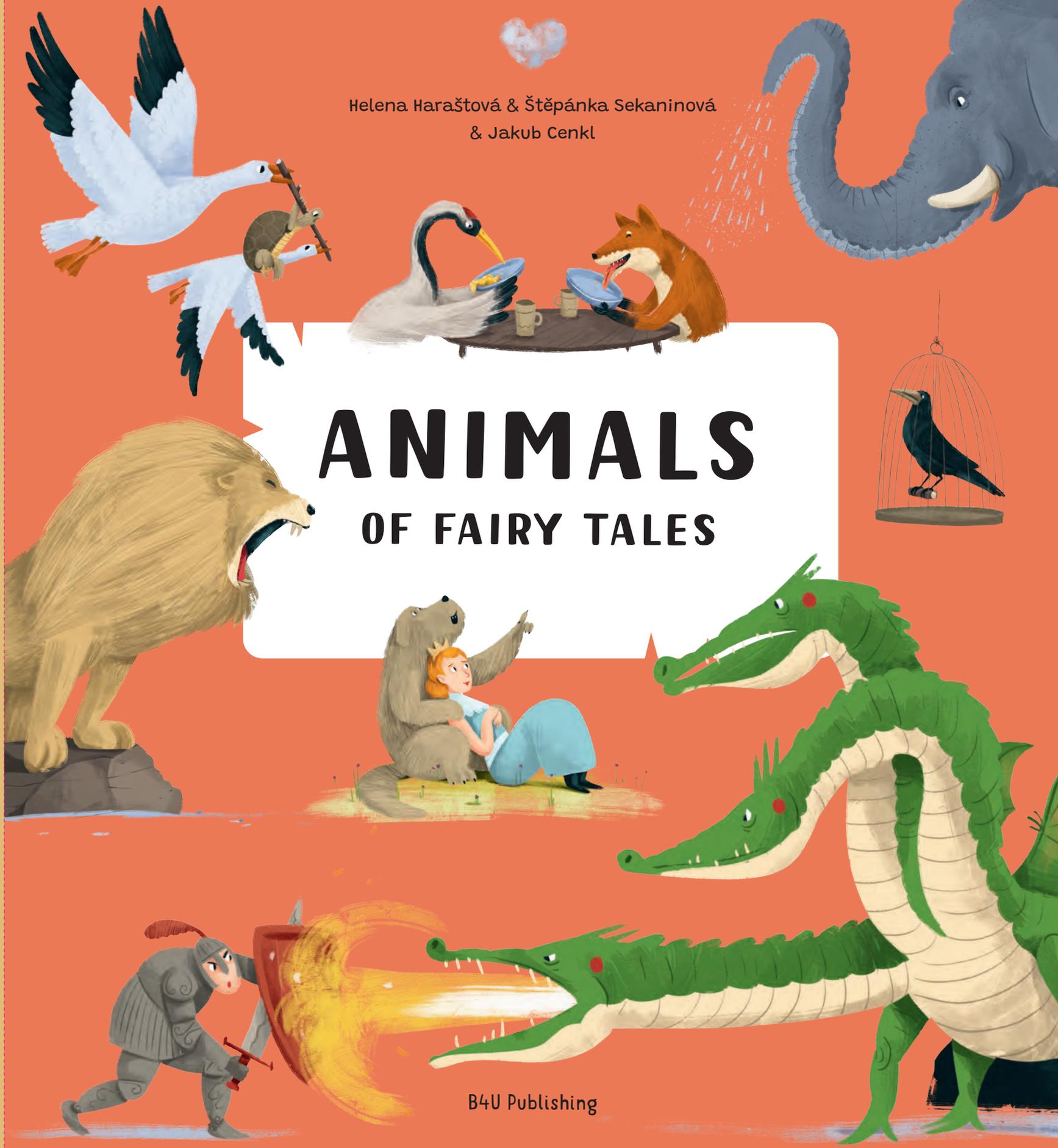
H. Harašťová, Š. Sekaninová & J. Cenkl

ANIMALS OF FAIRY TALES



Helena Harašťová & Štěpánka Sekaninová
& Jakub Cenkl

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B4U Publishing

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First, let's read
this book, alright?



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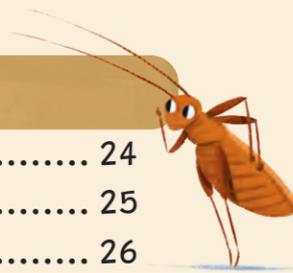


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ANIMALS IN FAIRY TALES

Maybe you think you have grown out of classic fairy tales (*Mum! It's boring!!! I know it off by heart!!!*). But as you have picked up this book, I know that you still have an open mind. For keen explorers, the fairy-tale world never closes. It stays with them their whole life long, in good times and in bad.



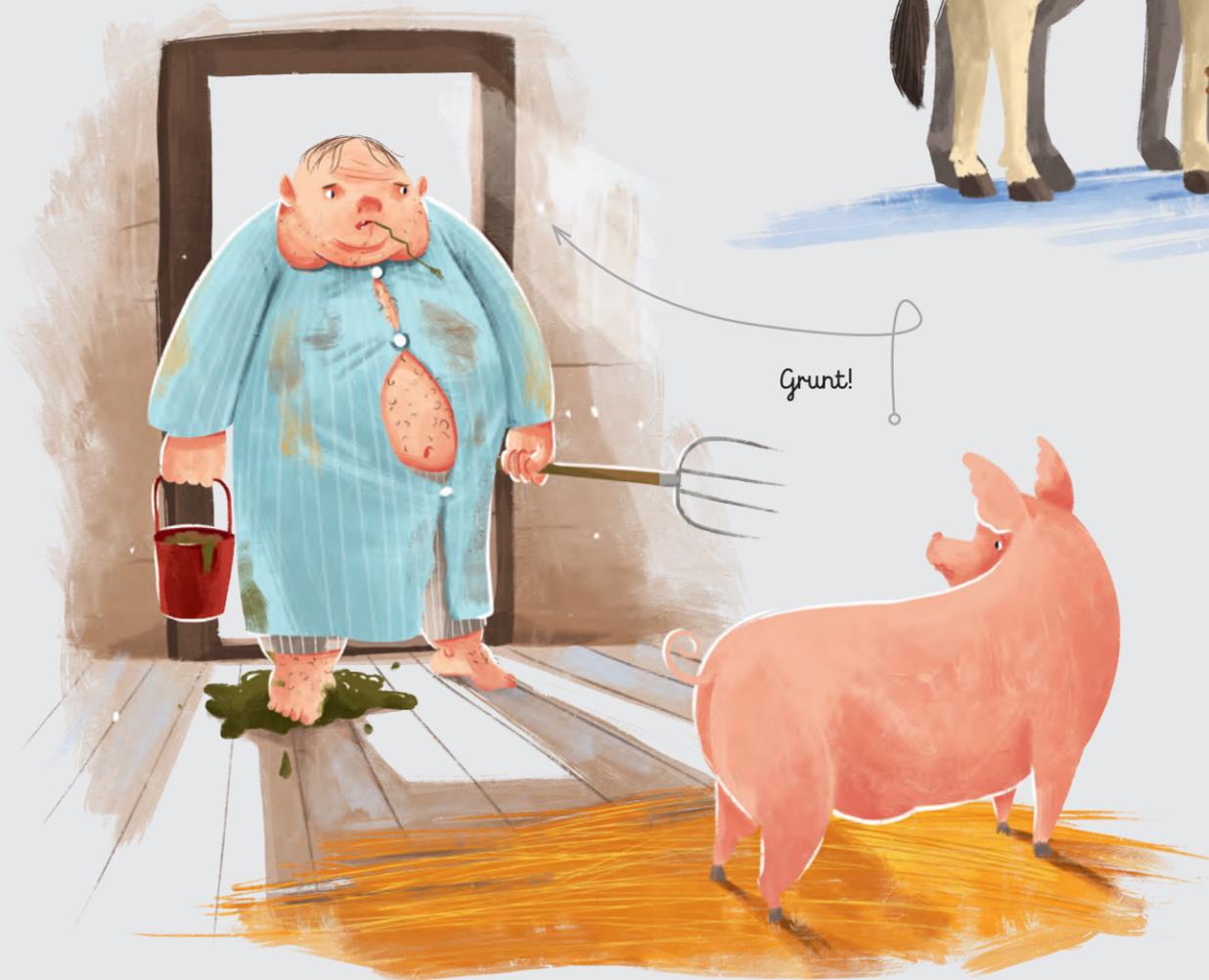
Wow,
this is exciting!

A BOTTOMLESS WELL OF LEARNING

The fairy-tale world is as rich and diverse as the human imagination. Which is hardly surprising when you consider that it has been forming for the past thousand years! Wisdom and thoughts on good and evil, truth and falsehood, courage and cowardice are passed through the ages, teaching each generation to understand the real world.

WHY FAIRY-TALE ANIMALS?

Why did storytellers of the distant past populate their tales with animals rather than people? Fairy-tale animals boast a spectacular range of bizarre characters with remarkable similarities to what we find in humans. It is easy – and fun – to look for connections between them and us. In this book, as you see how animals are humanized, you won't fail to smile about human shortcomings.



Grunt!



FAIRY TALES: WITNESSES OF THE DISTANT PAST

In times when people told each other thrilling tales after dark, they lived in close connection with nature. They were with animals every day. On one hand, animals helped them survive; on the other, they threatened their existence. Although today our connection with the wild is not so tight, in fairy tales the closeness between humans and nature is preserved.

WHICH ANIMALS ROAM THE FAIRY-TALE WORLD?

Farm animals, domestic pets, beasts of prey, aquatic animals, birds, huge creatures, tiny bugs – over the centuries, many fairy-tale animals acquired unique characteristics. This explains why we encounter talking horses, magical cats and snakes with healing powers. Some fairy-tale animals, such as the dragon and the unicorn, are products of the human imagination.



Have you heard the joke yet? They say I don't exist! Hah! Hah!

SHEEP

FOWL



SUBMISSIVENESS DOESN'T PAY

The fairy-tale world needs gentle, obedient heroes. But for the innocent, defenceless sheep, it is always difficult to survive when a wolf appears in front of it! They need help. In a Tibetan tale, the sheep is saved by a cunning hare who claims he has killed nine wolves!



A KING WITH A RAM'S HEAD

The sheep is loyal by nature. Long, long ago, a story was told in France about a king's daughter who has to flee the castle. She takes refuge with a strange host – a ram king. On discovering that the ram is in fact a human prince placed under a curse by a wicked fairy, she falls in love with him.



A LAMB'S DRUM

An Indian lamb tries to flee from several hungry beasts, so he hides inside a drum. Only the jackal is not deceived. Recognizing the lamb's voice, he rips open the drum and gobbles up the sneaky little sheep.



THE WORLD IS DOOMED! In Western Europe and the USA, for centuries children have been told a story most commonly known as Henny Penny or Chicken Licken. Chicken Licken is frightened out of his wits by something that has fallen on his head. Although this thing was probably a leaf or an acorn, he is convinced that the sky is falling in.



A COCK'S PRIDE

In the Spanish fairy tale The Half-Chick, there is a very proud cock with only one wing and one leg. On his travels, he meets water, fire and wind who ask him for help, but the chick simply laughs. No wonder that he ends up roasted! And since he is missing one wing and one leg, he cannot be served to the king, and so the wind carries him to the roof, where it will be a weathercock forevermore.



GRAIN IN THE THROAT

In the past, hens, ducks, geese and other feathered creatures were an integral part of every farm. Perhaps this explains how the story of the miserly cock and his devoted hen came about. Or the one about the poor hen and her slow cock? This fairy tale is known in two versions: either the hen or the cock starts choking on a seed and the other goes for help.

VALUABLE PROPERTY

Although domestic fowl are probably not the smartest of animals, they are treasured by their owners. In the fairy tale *The Golden Goose*, for services rendered a poor lad is given a golden goose by a magical old man. Each time someone tries to steal the goose from the lad, the culprit is stuck fast to it. Soon there is a long parade ...

Eggs of real gold would be extremely valuable in the real world, as would real-gold feathers. In addition to riches, gold in fairy tales often symbolizes a favourable destiny and goodness.

WHAT'S THIS?



GREED IS PUNISHED

Ownership of a golden bird often spoils a good heart, however. In India, it is said that when the wise Buddha died, he was reincarnated as a goose with golden feathers, and that this goose regularly took its feathers to his wife and children so that they would prosper. But the wife became so greedy that one day she grabbed the goose and plucked all its feathers. The feathers suddenly turned white, and the bird flew away, never to return.

I could have never imagined a goose would win a princess' heart for me!

I'll never ever steal anything again, I promise!



HIGH-BORN FOWL

Wild ducks and geese are graceful and elegant, so it is understandable that they appear in fairy tales as cursed princesses and queens. A case in point is the beautiful white duck that one day settles on the lake in the tsar's garden. The favour of the tsar has long been enjoyed by a heartless, evil witch. But then fortune takes a hand, and the white duck presents herself to the tsar in her true, human form.



Have you heard of the ugly duckling? This little hero - who at the end of the tale becomes a magnificent swan - was thought up by the Danish storyteller Hans Christian Andersen. Andersen had a long nose and came from a poor family, so he knew a lot about being ridiculed. Unlike the duckling, who needn't lift a claw to achieve transformation, Andersen worked hard all his life to make himself the world's best writer of fairy tales.

CAT

SOME CAT-LIKE SPOOKS

BAJUN, FROM SIBERIA

terrifying giant tom who lies in wait for unsuspecting travellers; can be defeated only by a daredevil in green gloves and a green helm

YULE, FROM ICELAND

huge cat who goes from house to house, eating up the stores of everyone who has not received new clothes for Christmas Eve – quite unpleasant before the long winter

SITH, FROM SCOTLAND

this large black cat with a white spot on its chest is a witch! It can transform from cat to human and back again nine times in its life, after which it remains a cat. Could this be the origin of the legend of the cat's nine lives?

MYSTERIOUS RULER OF HUMAN DWELLINGS

Since cats and humans teamed up 8000 years ago, it has been the destiny of the cat to play a leading role in fairy tales. The cat is mysterious, proud and vengeful, but also cuddly, soft and a faithful best friend. Who can know what goes on in a cat's head?

CONNECTED WITH MAGIC AND DARK FORCES

Our inability to predict a cat's intentions has long caused us to ascribe magic to them – black cats in particular. Cats keep the company of evil sorcerers and witches such as Russia's Baba Yaga of the hut on chicken legs.

BLACK OR WHITE?
In nature, these colours are strong and also rare. A landscape covered in snow is a landscape transformed, as if by magic. We associate white with light, a guarantee of human safety; white tends to symbolize goodness and love. Black is the colour of darkness and danger, and also of exceptionality. In the past, black dresses were the most expensive.



Sith,
from Scotland

Baba Yaga's
cat

Yule,
from Iceland

Bajun,
from Siberia



NOT WHO THEY APPEAR TO BE

Cats give people the impression that they are not who they appear to be. Maybe they are cursed princesses ...? In an old French tale, a white cat enchants the youngest son of a king before helping him perform tasks of incredible difficulty. You may be wondering why the prince takes it for granted that the dear, intelligent creature can speak, lives in a castle and has cat servants.

LAZY BUT CRAFTY

Some fairy-tale cats are brave and have a sense of humour which they can turn to their advantage. Like the tom of the Bremen Town Musicians, a case in point is His Excellency the Tom Ivanovitch from Russia, an old creature with one ear who lives a life of luxury with his vixen wife in the forest, where a bear and a wolf supply him with fresh game daily.



HIS MAJESTY THE CAT

A certain Englishman comes across a cat funeral! Before he can gather his wits, a tomcat stranger turns to him and says, "Tell Tom Tildrum that Tim Toldrum is dead." As he is relating this experience to his wife, their hitherto lazy tom springs to attention and declares, "Then I am now the King of the Cats!" The tom then runs from the house and never returns.

INVALUABLE HELPER

Cats have many qualities, but their ability to catch mice is second to none. In the Italian tale *The Two Good Cats*, a generous merchant gives two cats to the king of a foreign land plagued by mice. The king rewards him for his good deed with expensive gifts.

When they came to serve me, the huge bear and the fearsome wolf would shake with fear: Me, an ordinary old tomcat ... It was hilarious!



CATS CAN CHANGE DESTINY
There is no more celebrated fairy-tale cat than Puss in Boots, a shining example of how a cat can make his master happy. He relies on his intelligence, cunning, the thrill of the hunt and his love for a man who treats him well. He has been around since the 17th century, when he emerged from the pen of French scholar Charles Perrault.

GOAT



WICKED HORNED RASCAL

The fairy-tale goat has a taste for good food and a somewhat ungrateful nature. And she is forever complaining, even when taken to the juiciest pasture! Sometimes she tries a companion's patience so much that she earns herself a beating; in worse cases, she is flayed and roasted. Whether roasted or beaten, the goat will still escape and intimidate anyone who tries to bring her to her senses.

What can I tell you? Me-e-eh! I took a gamble and got away with it.

CLEVER WANDERER

In an Indian tale, an ordinary elderly goat tricks a lion. Having wandered far from home, the goat has no choice but to spend the night in a cave. On discovering that this cave is home to the king of the animals, she keeps her cool. She introduces herself as the queen of the goats, and she says she has eaten 100 tigers, 25 elephants and is now looking for 10 lions. She speaks with such authority that the lion takes flight and flees. The daring acting masterclass has saved the old goat's life.



WHEN A GOAT IS A MOTHER

In fairy tales, there is no more caring mother than a goat mother. Even if she has seven or nine offspring, she provides all with loving protection. When she has to go out, she makes it plain to her kids that they must open the door to no one. But we know that these young, inexperienced creatures will always fall for the tricks of the hungry wolf.

MEETING A TROLL

For further evidence of goats' craftiness, we can go to the Scandinavian tale Three Billy Goats Gruff. In order to get to their pasture, the three kids must cross a bridge controlled by a wicked troll. First, they send the youngest to the bridge. When the troll is about to pounce on the little kid, he points out how thin he is, saying the kid behind him is much chubbier. So the troll lets the youngest kid pass. The second billy goat tells the troll the same thing. But the third kid strikes the troll with such force that the wicked creature is caught off balance, tossed into the river and never seen again.



STAG

Among Native Americans, the deer is an important totem, symbolizing wisdom, nobility, strength, the life force and its renewal. They see the regular dropping of the antlers as clear evidence of the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

WHEN A STAG IS A FATHER

Fairy-tale stags are wise and good through and through. In a Czech tale, Smolíček is raised with love and care by a golden-antlered stag. In a different tale, an orphaned brother and sister lose their way in the woods. The reckless boy drinks water from an animal's paw-print, and turns into a stag! He takes good care of his sister, whose fear of the forest has driven her up to the top of a tall tree, and since fairy tales end well, the girl finally marries a king, and her brother becomes a boy again.



INCOMPATIBLE HOUSEMATES

In a certain Native American tale, a shy stag and a jaguar decide to share a house. But is it possible? After the jaguar brings home a dead deer for his supper, the stag takes his revenge by killing the jaguar. Some animals can never be friends – and the same can be said about humans.



HEDGEHOG

DIVIDING THINGS FAIRLY

The wisdom of the hedgehog is presented best in a Moroccan tale. Twice in a row, the hedgehog tricks the mean jackal and manages to eat food – which they have found together – all by himself.

Did you know I only eat apples in fairy tales?



You can go. I'll wait for a better princess who will become my wife.



JACK MY HEDGEHOG

In a different tale, a half-human, half-hedgehog guy called Jack My Hedgehog moves into the forest. One day, this strange young man comes to the rescue of a king who has lost his way, and as a reward, he can marry the king's daughter. But the princess is very proud and ungrateful. When Jack finds out her character, he pricks her with his spines and sends her home in shame.

FOX

WHAT A FINE VOICE YOU HAVE

The most typical characteristics of the fairy-tale fox are cleverness and cunning, so it is hardly surprising that some of them turn out to be excellent cheats. It is never a good idea to take from them what is rightfully theirs – as a bear and a pig in a Serbian tale discover, when they grow grain together. And only a fool would sit down on a fox's nose!

The Little Doughnut was so prideful! When he sat on my nose, I had to eat him. Yum!



MORE PRIDE THAN WISDOM

Fairy-tale foxes don't always have their famous cunning under control, however. In a Polish tale, the fox is outwitted by an ordinary snail who simply jumps to the finish line from the fox's tail. In an Arabian tale, a fox is defeated by a jackal. When the lion, the king of the animals, falls ill, the sly fox advises him to take the blood of the jackal, for it will surely cure him. But the cunning jackal adds that his blood will be effective only if mixed with a fox's brains. In the end, the fox's head is smashed while the jackal gets away with a cut to his paw.

Run as fast as you can, fox, but I'll take off from your tail and jump right into the finish!



THREE STEPS TO WISDOM

Sometimes the cunning fox is given a lesson. In a certain Japanese tale, a fox rescued from some cruel children by a poor old man decides to return the favour by giving the man a carefree life of great wealth. But whatever the fox transforms into – a posh teapot sold to a collector of antiques, or a horse sold to the farmer – the new owner returns in disgust. Finally, the fox turns into a beautiful girl and moves to the town, where she plays and sings. She hands over the money from her performances to the old man, at last giving him the reward he deserves.

I never knew I was so talented!



Humankind has respected the fox since time immemorial. In the imagination of the ancient Sumerians, the fox was a sacred animal, while the Celts saw the fox as a guide for souls in the Other World. The wise fox (kitsune) has long had an important role in Japanese folklore, as a protector of humans. On the other hand, the Chinese fox (hu li) has a craving for human flesh and blood.

BEAR



I just wanted to join the party! Who could know the roof would collapse?

FRIENDLY, BUT SO STUPID!

The fairy-tale bear is disadvantaged by his fatness and huge dimensions. Even when his intentions are the best, such a stout animal is no match for the others. A case in point is the Slavic wordplay about animals who move into a cottage. Maybe they would get along fine were it not for the keenness of the bear to befriend them. Unable to squeeze inside, he has the foolish idea of climbing onto the roof ...

HELP YOURSELF

Fairy-tale bears are also known for their laziness. In a Siberian tale, such a bear helps a breeze to turn into a wind and in return, the wind blows a fat seal on a floe to the shore. The bear happily eats the seal and falls asleep. As he doesn't want to help the wind any more, the wind punishes him – by blowing him into the path of hunters.



Slavic languages provide evidence of how much our ancestors feared bears. Long ago, when all Slavs spoke the same language, they used a word for 'bear' which we no longer know. As they feared that by speaking the animal's name they would summon it, they referred to it only as "the one that knows where the honey is". And this expression has become the new word for "bear".

A BEAR'S GRATITUDE

Fairy-tale bears can be truly ungrateful! Do you know the story about the bear who gets a bone stuck in his throat? In his desperation, he asks animals of many kinds to take it out, but all are too scared of him to make the attempt – all but the stork. The stork pokes his long beak deep into the bear's throat and plucks the bone out. Guess how the bear rewards him. Well, having recovered his composure, he runs back into the forest, calling over his shoulder to the stork that he should be glad not to have ended up as a bear's lunch!

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Illustrated by Jakub Cenk

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Illustrator: Jakub Cenk
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Now that I've read this book ...
Are you a monkey or a prince?





SLEEP IS MY FAVOURITE DAILY ACTIVITY.



MUSIC! I LOVE IT EVEN MORE THAN MEAT!

Have you ever wondered why the lion is considered the king of the animals? Was it chosen for the role? Or why the wolf is reputed to be a cruel, wicked man-eater when in reality it hunts weaker animals to feed its hunger, just as other animals do? Is the tortoise truly as wise and cunning as it is shown to be? Take a trip with us to the fairy-tale realm where animals have most say, and discover the wit, wisdom and topicality of ages-old animal stories from all over the world.



WHAT'S THIS? A SPEAKING DRUM?!



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