BabaJaga — text 1 of 2

Once upon a time there lived a husband and wife, and they had a daughter; then the wife died. The man married another woman, and by her had a daughter. So the wife took a dislike to the stepdaughter; the orphan had no peace. The man thought and thought, and took his daughter into the forest. He rides through the forest — and looks: there stands a hut on chicken legs. So the man says: "Hut, hut! Turn your back to the forest and your front to me." And the hut turned around.

The man goes into the hut, and in it sits Baba Yaga: her head in front, one leg in one corner, the other in another. "It smells of Russian spirit!" says the Yaga. The man bows: "Baba Yaga, bony leg! I have brought you my daughter to serve you." — "Well, all right! Serve me, serve me," says the Yaga to the girl, "and I will reward you for it."

The father said goodbye and rode home. And Baba Yaga set the girl to spin a boxful of yarn, to heat the stove, to get everything ready, and herself went away. So the girl bustles by the stove, and weeps bitterly. Little mice ran out and said to her: "Maiden, maiden, why are you weeping? Give us some porridge; we will tell you something good." She gave them porridge. "Here you are," they say, "spin a thread onto every spindle." Baba Yaga came: "Well," she says, "have you got everything ready?" And the girl had everything ready. "Well, now go — wash me in the bathhouse." The Yaga praised the girl and gave her all sorts of clothes. Again the Yaga went away and set an even harder task. The girl wept again. The little mice run out: "Why are you," they say, "beautiful maiden, weeping? Give us porridge; we will tell you something good." She gave them porridge, and they again taught her what and how to do. Baba Yaga, having come again, praised her and gave her even more clothes... And the stepmother sends the husband to find out whether his daughter is alive.

The man rode; he arrives and sees that his daughter has become rich beyond measure. The Yaga was not at home, so he took her with him. As they approach their village, the little dog at home is straining: "Ham, ham, ham! They're bringing the mistress, they're bringing the mistress!" The stepmother ran out and struck the dog with a rolling pin. "You're lying," she says, "say: bones are rattling in the box!" But the dog went on with its own. They arrived. The stepmother kept urging the husband — to take her daughter there too. The man took her.

So Baba Yaga set her to work, and herself went away. The girl was beside herself with vexation and wept. Mice run out. "Maiden, maiden! What are you," they say,

"weeping about?" And she did not let them finish, hitting one with the rolling pin, then the other; she fussed with them, and the work was not done. The Yaga came and was angry. Another time the same again; the Yaga broke her, and put the bones in a box. So the mother sends the husband for the daughter. The father arrived and took only the bones. As he approaches the village, the little dog again barks on the porch: "Ham, ham, ham! They're bringing bones in a box!" The stepmother runs with the rolling pin: "You're lying," she says, "say: they're bringing the mistress!" But the dog went on with its own: "Ham, ham, ham! Bones are rattling in the box!" The husband arrived; and then the wife wailed! Here's a tale for you, and a jug of butter for me.