# Frolka-Siden — Variant 2

Once upon a time there was a tsar who had three daughters, such beauties that neither in a tale can it be told nor with a pen described; they loved to walk in their garden in the evenings, and the garden was large and glorious. And the Black Sea serpent took to flying there. One day the tsar's daughters lingered late in the garden, gazing at the flowers; suddenly out of nowhere the Black Sea serpent appeared and carried them off on his fiery wings. The tsar waited and waited — no daughters! He sent servants to look for them in the garden, but it was all in vain: the servants did not find the princesses. In the morning the tsar raised an alarm, and a multitude of people gathered. Then the tsar said: "Whoever finds my daughters, to him I will give as much money as he wants."

So three came forward: a drunken soldier, Frolka-siden, and Yerema; they made an agreement with the tsar and set off to search for the princesses. They walked and walked, and came to a dense, thick forest. No sooner had they entered it than a strong sleep began to overcome them. Frolka-siden took a snuffbox out of his pocket, tapped it, opened it and stuffed a handful of snuff up his nose; then he shouted: "Hey, brothers, let's not fall asleep, let's not doze! Go on."

So they went; they walked and walked and finally came to a huge house, and this house belonged to the five-headed serpent. For a long time they knocked on the gate and could not get through. Then Frolka-siden pushed aside the soldier and Yerema: "Let me at it, brothers!" Took a sniff of snuff and struck the door so hard that he smashed it. Then they entered the yard, sat in a circle and prepared to have a bite of whatever God had sent. And out of the house comes a maiden, such a beauty; she came out and said: "Why have you, my dears, come here? For a terrible serpent lives here; he will eat you! You are lucky that he is not at home now." Frolka answered her: "We ourselves will eat him!" He had hardly uttered these words when the serpent comes flying, flying and roaring: "Who has ravaged my kingdom? Are there opponents to me in the world? I have one opponent, but not even a raven has brought his bones here!" — "A raven will not bring me," said Frolka, "but a good horse will!" The serpent, hearing such words, said: "Shall we make peace, then, or fight?" — "I did not come to make peace," says Frolka, "but to fight!"

So they parted, closed in, and Frolka with one swing chopped off all five heads of the serpent, took them and laid them under a stone, and buried the body in the earth. Then the maiden rejoiced and said to these young men: "Take me with you, my dears." — "But whose are you?" they asked her. She said she was the tsar's

daughter; Frolka also told her what was needed; and so their business was settled! The princess called them into the chambers, fed and gave them drink, and asked them to rescue her other sisters as well. Frolka answered: "That is exactly why we were sent!" The princess told where her sisters lived: "With my middle sister it is even more terrible than with me: a seven-headed serpent lives with her." — "No matter!" said Frolka. "We will deal with that too; will I take long to deal with a twelve-headed serpent?" They took their leave and went on.

They come to the middle sister. The chambers in which she was imprisoned were huge, and around the chambers the fence was high, of cast iron. So they approached and began to look for the gate; they found it, Frolka hit the gate with all his might, and the gate swung open; they entered the yard and again as before sat down to have a bite. Suddenly the seven-headed serpent flies in. "Something smells of Russian spirit!" he says. "Bah! It is you, Frolka, who has come here. Why?" — "I know why!" answered Frolka, fought with the serpent and with one swing knocked off all seven heads, laid them under a stone, and buried the body in the earth. Then they entered the chambers; they pass one room, another and a third, in the fourth they saw the middle tsar's daughter — sitting on a sofa. When they told her how and why they had come here, she cheered up, began to treat them and asked them to rescue her younger sister from the twelve-headed serpent. Frolka said: "Of course! That is why we were sent. Only my heart is a bit faint; well, God willing! Bring us another cup each."

So they drank and went; they walked and walked and came to a steep ravine. On the other side of the ravine stood huge pillars instead of a gate, and to them were chained two terrible lions and they roared so loudly that only Frolka remained on his feet, while his companions fell to the ground from fear. Frolka said to them: "I have seen worse terrors — and did not falter, follow me!" — and they went on. Suddenly an old man came out of the chambers — about seventy years old, he saw them, went to meet them and says: "Where are you going, my dears?" — "Right into these chambers," answered Frolka. "Alas, my dears! You are not going to any good; a twelve-headed serpent lives in these chambers. He is not at home now, or he would eat you right away!" — "But that is exactly who we need." — "If so," said the old man, "go ahead; I will lead you there." The old man approached the lions and began to pet them; then Frolka made his way with his companions into the yard.

So they went up into the chambers; the old man led them to the room where the princess lived. Seeing them, she quickly jumped off the bed, approached and asked them: who they were and why they had come. They told her. The princess treated them, and she herself began to get ready. No sooner had they started to leave the

chambers than they see: a serpent flying a verst away from them. Then the tsar's daughter rushed back into the chambers, and Frolka with his companions went to meet him and fought with the serpent. The serpent at first attacked them very fiercely, but Frolka — a nimble fellow! — managed to gain the victory, knocked off all twelve heads and threw them into the ravine. Then they went back into the chambers and began to celebrate with joy more than before, and afterwards set off on their way and picked up the other princesses and all together arrived at their homeland. The tsar was very glad, opened his royal treasury to them and said: "Well, my faithful servants — take as much money as you want for your work." Frolka was shrewd: he brought his big treukh hat; the soldier brought his knapsack, and Yerema brought a chicken basket. So Frolka was the first to start filling, he poured, poured, and the treukh tore, and the silver sank into the mud. Frolka again began to pour: he pours, and it spills out of the treukh! "Nothing to be done!" said Frolka. "It seems the whole royal treasury will go to me." — "But what will be left for us?" asked his companions. "The tsar has enough in his treasury for you too!" Yerema, while there was still money, began filling the basket, and the soldier the knapsack, they filled them and went home. And Frolka with the treukh remained by the royal treasury and to this day sits there filling. When he fills the treukh, then I will tell more; but now I have no strength or breath.