# How the Peasant Conquered the Buckwheat

What things don't happen in this world!.. There was once a peasant named Filat in a village, and he was no good at work. He should have been plowing the land, but all he wanted was to lie on his side. Once Filat came home from somewhere, and his wife said to him: "Eh, you lazybones! I've already threshed the buckwheat without you. You'd better go and at least pour it into sacks." -- "All right..." Filat went to the threshing floor, sat on the straw, and thought: "Just look how much buckwheat the woman has threshed. When will it ever get poured into sacks? Now that would be something if the buckwheat climbed into the sacks by itself. Let me try." No sooner said than done. He opened a sack and said: "Buckwheat, hey Buckwheat! Climb into the sack." And Buckwheat answered him: "They beat me, they thrashed me, and now I'm to climb into a sack myself? I won't!" -- "Ah, you so-and-so, disobeying your master! Just wait, I'll deal with you... Hey, Mice, come eat the Buckwheat!" -- "You must think we're fools!" said the Mice. "We've had our fill of wheat already; we're not going to break our teeth on your Buckwheat."

The peasant grew angry. "What kind of mutiny is this!" he said. "Even the Mice won't obey me. I'll send Cat Vaska after them." He went home and said to the Cat: "Vaska, hey Vaska, go to the threshing floor and catch the Mice: the Mice won't eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." But Vaska was lying on the stove, wagging his tail, and answered his master: "I won't go: I've got mice to catch at home and can't catch them all."

The peasant grew angrier still: "Just you wait, Cat: I'll send the Dog after you, and then you'll see what it means to disobey your master." He went out into the yard and called: "Zhuchka, hey Zhuchka! Go and crush Cat Vaska: the Cat won't catch the Mice, the Mice won't eat the Buckwheat, the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." But Zhuchka knows her business: she wagged her tail, went to her master, and said: "Though they say no one lives worse than cat and dog together, that's slander. How can I crush Vaska when he's my crony?"

"What's the matter with my household, everything's in disorder?" thought the peasant. "I'll go and complain about Zhuchka to the Wolf." He went into the forest and saw: under a bush lay the Wolf. "Wolf, hey Wolf! Go and tear my Zhuchka apart: Zhuchka won't crush Vaska, Vaska won't catch the Mice, the Mice won't eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." -- "I don't want to go

eat your Zhuchka: I've just eaten a sheep. You'd better go while you're in one piece, before I tear you apart myself!"

"Just you wait, Wolf," said the peasant, "I'll send People after you!" He came to the village and said: "Have pity on me, good people; go and shoot the Wolf: the Wolf won't strangle Zhuchka, Zhuchka won't crush Vaska, Vaska won't catch the Mice, the Mice won't eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." -- "Go away," said the men, "we have no time to bother with your wolves. We need to hurry to pay our taxes."

"And if you won't help me, I'll set the red rooster on you!" Filat went to the Fire: "Father Bright, Fire, go and burn the village: the People won't go beat the Wolf, the Wolf won't go strangle Zhuchka, Zhuchka won't go crush Vaska, Vaska won't go catch the Mice, the Mice won't go eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." -- "There's already a bad rumor about me that I burn villages myself," said the Fire. "And now I have no time, you see: I'm baking potatoes. I won't go!"

"Just you wait, Fire; I'll send the Water after you, and that will be the end of you!" The peasant went to the river and begged it: "Mother Cold Water, go and put out the Fire: the Fire won't burn the Village, the Village won't go beat the Wolf, the Wolf won't go strangle Zhuchka, Zhuchka won't go crush Vaska, Vaska won't go catch the Mice, the Mice won't go eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." -- "Leave me alone," said the Water, "you see: there's so little of me, I can barely turn the mill. I won't go!"

"Very well," said the peasant, "I'll send the Earth after you: it will bury you, and that will be the last of you... Nourisher, Mother Earth, I have no hope but in you now. Go and bury the River... Or else the Water won't go put out the Fire, the Fire won't go burn the Village, the Village won't go beat the Wolf, the Wolf won't go strangle Zhuchka, Zhuchka won't go crush Vaska, Vaska won't go catch the Mice, the Mice won't go eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat won't climb into the sack." -- "That's right," said the Earth, "you all rely on me. Go on, take a shovel and throw me into the River. Very well then: I'll bury the River for you."

Peasant Filat was glad of that: he ran home, grabbed a shovel, and started throwing Earth into the River. He threw for a day, he threw for two days, he threw for three days... The River went to put out the Fire, the Fire went to burn the Village, the Village went to beat the Wolf, the Wolf went to strangle Zhuchka, Zhuchka went to crush Vaska, Vaska went to catch the Mice, the Mice went to eat the Buckwheat, and the Buckwheat went to climb into the sacks.

The wife took those sacks, carted them to the mill, ground them into flour, and baked pancakes. I ate those very pancakes, fell asleep on the stove after drinking, and saw this very tale in my dream.