How the Old Woman Found a Bast Shoe

An old woman was walking along the road and found a bast shoe. She came to a village and begs:
— Let me stay overnight!
— Well, sleep — you don't carry lodging with you.
— Where should I put my bast shoe?
— Put it under the bench.
— No, my bast shoe is used to sleeping in the henhouse.
And she put the bast shoe in with the hens.

In the morning she got up and says:
— Where is my little hen?
— What are you talking about, old woman, — the peasant says to her, — you had a bast shoe!
— No, I had a hen! And if you don't give it back, I'll go to court, I'll sue you!
Well, the peasant gave her the hen.

The old woman went on further along the road. She walked and walked — evening came again.
She comes to a village and begs:
— Let me stay overnight!
— Sleep, sleep — you don't carry lodging with you.
— Where should I put my hen?
— Let her sleep with our hens.
— No, my hen is used to the geese.
And she put the hen in with the geese.

And the next day she got up:
— Where is my little goose?
— What little goose of yours? You had a hen!
— No, I had a little goose! Give back the goose, or I'll go to court, to the boyars, I'll sue you!
They gave her the goose. The old woman took the goose and went along the road. The day was drawing toward evening. The old woman begged to stay overnight again and asks:
— Where will you put the goose for the night?
— Just put her with our geese.

— No, my little goose is used to the little sheep.
— Well, put her with the sheep.
The old woman put the goose in with the sheep.

She slept through the night, and in the morning she asks:
— Give me my little sheep!
— What are you saying, what are you saying, you had a little goose!
— No, I had a little sheep! If you don't give back the sheep, I'll go to the voivode to sue, I'll sue you!
There was nothing to do — they gave her the sheep.

She took the sheep and went along the road.
Again the day was drawing toward evening. She begged to stay overnight and says:
— My little sheep is used at home to the little bulls, put her with your bulls for the night.
— Well, let her spend the night with the bulls.
In the morning the old woman got up:
— Where is my little bull?
— What bull? You had a little sheep!
— I don't know anything about that! I had a little bull! Give back the bull, or I'll go to the Tsar himself, I'll sue!
The master grieved — there was nothing to do, he gave her the bull.

The old woman harnessed the bull to the sled, drove off and sings:
— For the bast shoe — a hen,
For the hen — a goose,
For the goose — a sheep,
For the sheep — a bull...

Gee, gee, little bull,
Straw-sided one,
The sled is not ours,
The collar is not our own,
Drive on — don't stand...

Coming toward her goes a fox:
— Give me a ride, grandma!
— Get in the sled.
The fox got into the sled, and she and the old woman sang together:
Gee, gee, little bull,

Straw-sided one,
The sled is not ours,
The collar is not our own,
Drive on — don't stand...

Coming toward them goes a wolf:
— Let me into the sled, granny!
— Get in.
The wolf got in. The three of them sang:
The sled is not ours,
The collar is not our own,
Drive on — don't stand...

Coming toward them — a bear:
— Let me into the sled!
— Get in.
The bear flopped into the sled and broke the shaft.

The old woman says:
— Go, fox, into the forest, bring a shaft!
The fox went into the forest and brought an aspen twig.
— An aspen twig won't do for a shaft.
The old woman sent the wolf. The wolf went into the forest and brought a crooked, rotten birch.
— A crooked, rotten birch won't do for a shaft.
The old woman sent the bear. The bear went into the forest and dragged a big fir tree — could hardly carry it.
The old woman got angry. She went herself for a shaft.

No sooner had she gone than the bear rushed at the bull and crushed it. The wolf skinned it. The fox ate the entrails. Then the bear, the wolf, and the fox stuffed the skin with straw and set it beside the sled, and ran away themselves.

The old woman returned from the forest with a shaft, fitted it, got into the sled and sang:
Gee, gee, little bull,
Straw-sided one,
The sled is not ours,
The collar is not our own,
Drive on — don't stand...

But the bull didn't budge. She whipped the bull, and it fell over. Only then did the old woman realize that only the skin remained of the bull.

The old woman wept and went on alone along the road.