The Cat and the Fox — Variant 3

There once lived an old man and an old woman. The old man and the old woman had neither a son nor a daughter; they had only one gray cat. He fed and watered them, brought them sable and squirrels, hazel grouse, black grouse, and all sorts of little beasts. The gray cat grew old. The old woman said to the old man: "Why do we keep the cat, old man? He just takes up space on the stove for nothing!" — "But where are we to put him?" — "Put him in a sack and carry him off to the island; let him sort out his own life there." The old man carried him off. The cat was left on the island, went hungry one day, two, three, and began to weep. A fox came along and asked the cat: "Why are you weeping, Kotay Ivanovich?" — "Oh, fox, how can I not weep? I lived with the old man and the old woman, fed and watered them, grew old, and they drove me out." And the fox said: "Come, Kotay Ivanovich, let's get married!" — "How can I marry! I only need to feed myself; and you, I suppose, have kits — you have mouths to feed and water." — "Never mind, we'll manage somehow." So the fox married Kotay Ivanovich.

Once a bear and a hare were walking past the fox's den. The fox saw them and shouted: "Hey you, thick-pawed bear, and you, lop-eared hare! When I was a widow, not one of you ever passed my den, but now that I'm married, you loiter by every day; look what paths you've worn! Just wait until Kotay Ivanovich gives you what for!" So, as they went along the road, the bear said to the hare: "What sort of husband does she have, this Kotay Ivanovich? Is he greater than me?" And the hare: "Faster than me? Let's go tomorrow and take a look at him." They came the next day to the fox's den and see: the cat is gnawing a whole side of beef, purring to himself: "Not enough, not enough!" — "Well, brother," said the bear to the hare, "we're in trouble; Kotay keeps saying: not enough, not enough! Let's hide — you lie under the brushwood, and I'll climb a tree." No sooner had they settled into their places than a mouse ran out from under the brushwood. The cat saw it and at once darted after it toward the brushwood. The hare was frightened and bolted off; and the bear, hearing the alarm, tried to turn around, but in his panic fell from the tree and was killed outright. The fox and the cat live on to this day, feasting on the bear.