Folk Tale No. 163

In a certain kingdom, in a certain state, there once lived a certain Bukhtan Bukhtanovich; Bukhtan Bukhtanovich had a stove built for him in the middle of a field, on pillars. He lies on the stove up to his elbow in cockroach milk. A fox came to him and said: "Bukhtan Bukhtanovich, would you like me to marry you to the tsar's daughter?" — "What do you mean, little fox!" — "Do you have any money at all?" — "Yes, I have: just one pyatak." — "Give me that too!" The fox went and changed the pyatak into small coins — kopecks, denezhki and polushki; she went to the tsar and says: "Tsar, free man! Give me a chetverik to measure Bukhtan Bukhtanovich's money." He says: "Take it." She brought it home; she slipped the denezhka and kopeck behind the hoop and took it to the tsar and says: "Tsar, free man! A chetverik is not enough; give me a polmera to measure Bukhtan Bukhtanovich's money." — "Take it."

She took it, brought it home; she slipped the denezhka and kopeck behind the hoop and took it to the tsar: "Tsar, free man! A polmera is not enough, give me a mera." — "Take the mera." She took it, brought it home and slipped the rest of the pyatak behind the hoop and took it to the tsar. The tsar says: "Have you measured it, little fox?" The little fox said: "All intact. Well, tsar, free man! I've come to you with a good deed: give your daughter in marriage to Bukhtan Bukhtanovich." — "Well, all right, show me the groom." She ran home. "Bukhtan Bukhtanovich! Do you have any clothes? Put them on." Bukhtan Bukhtanovich got dressed and went with the fox to the tsar. They walk along the row, and they happened to cross a little bridge — such a dirty one! The little fox pushed him, and Bukhtan Bukhtanovich fell into the mud. She ran up to him: "What's wrong, what's wrong, Bukhtan Bukhtanovich?" And she herself smeared him all over with mud. "Wait, Bukhtan Bukhtanovich! I'll run to the tsar."

The little fox ran to the tsar and says: "Tsar, free man! Bukhtan Bukhtanovich and I were walking across the bridge — such a nasty bridge! — we somehow didn't watch our step and fell in; Bukhtan Bukhtanovich got all muddy; it's not good to go to the city like that; don't you have any everyday clothes?" — "Here, take it." The little fox ran. She ran back. "Bukhtan Bukhtanovich! Here, change and let's go." They came to the tsar. The tsar already had everything set out on the table. Bukhtan Bukhtanovich doesn't look anywhere but at himself — he had never in his life seen such clothes! The tsar winked at the fox: "Little fox, why is Bukhtan Bukhtanovich not looking anywhere but at himself?" — "Tsar, free man! He seems ashamed of these clothes on him; Bukhtan Bukhtanovich has never in his life worn anything shabby. Tsar, free man! Give him the clothes you wear at Easter." And

she herself whispered to Bukhtan Bukhtanovich: "Don't look at yourself!" Bukhtan Bukhtanovich again doesn't look anywhere, at the chair: the chair was gilded. The tsar whispered to the fox: "Little fox, why is Bukhtan Bukhtanovich not looking anywhere, at the chair?" — "Tsar, free man! They have plenty of such chairs in their bathhouses." The tsar tossed the chair out the door. The fox whispered to Bukhtan Bukhtanovich: "Don't stare at one spot; look here and there." Well, then they started talking about the good deed, about the matchmaking.

Well, they had the wedding; was it long at the tsar's? No need to brew beer or distill wine, everything was ready. They loaded three ships for Bukhtan Bukhtanovich, and they set off home by ship.

They sail home: Bukhtan Bukhtanovich sails on the ships with his wife, and the little fox runs along the shore. Bukhtan Bukhtanovich saw his stove and shouted: "Little fox, little fox! There's my stove!" — "Hush, Bukhtan Bukhtanovich; shameful!" Bukhtan Bukhtanovich sails on, and the little fox runs ahead along the shore; she ran ahead and climbed the hill: there stands on the hill a huge stone house, and the kingdom appeared enormous. She went into the izba — no one in the izba; she ran into the chamber — in the big corner lies stretched out Zmey Zmeevich, sitting on the stove post is Voron Voronovich, sitting on the throne is Kokot Kokotovich. The little fox says: "Why are you sitting here! The tsar comes with fire, the tsaritsa with a little one, they'll burn and raze you." — "Little fox, where do we go?" — "Kokot Kokotovich, get into the barrel!" The little fox locked Kokot Kokotovich in the barrel. "Voron Voronovich, get into the mortar, come on!" She locked Voron Voronovich in the mortar; she wrapped Zmey Zmeevich in straw and carried him out to the street. The ships arrived. The little fox ordered them all to be taken into the water; the Cossacks immediately took them into the water. Bukhtan Bukhtanovich moved all his household goods to that house, lived there, prospered, reigned and ruled, and ended his days there.