

Morozko

Once upon a time, there was an old woman who had both a stepdaughter and a daughter of her own. Her own daughter could do no wrong in her mother's eyes. She would always praise her, and give her a pat on the head and say, "such a clever girl!" But the old woman found only fault with her stepdaughter, and the poor girl cried herself to sleep every night. Yet, if the truth be told, the girl was really as good as gold.

A storm may rage, but sooner or later it will blow itself out. But once the old woman was roused, there was nothing that would calm her. She raged away at her husband, and shouted, "Take that girl out of my sight, old man, so that my eyes won't be plagued by the sight of her, nor my ears tormented by the sound of her voice! Take her away from here, far, far away to the depths of the forest and let the cutting-frost do for her!"

And although the old man grieved and wept, he lifted his daughter up onto the sledge. He wanted to cover her with a horse-blanket, but was too frightened of his wife to do even that. He drove her out into the bitter cold of the forest, and set her down under a large pine tree.



The old man drove his daughter out into the bitter cold.

Yana Peretrakhina
8 years old



The poor lass sat there shivering
Tanya Posvina, 11 years old

He made the sign of the cross over her, and drove away quickly so he didn't have to witness her cold and certain death. The poor lass was left there shivering and saying her prayers.

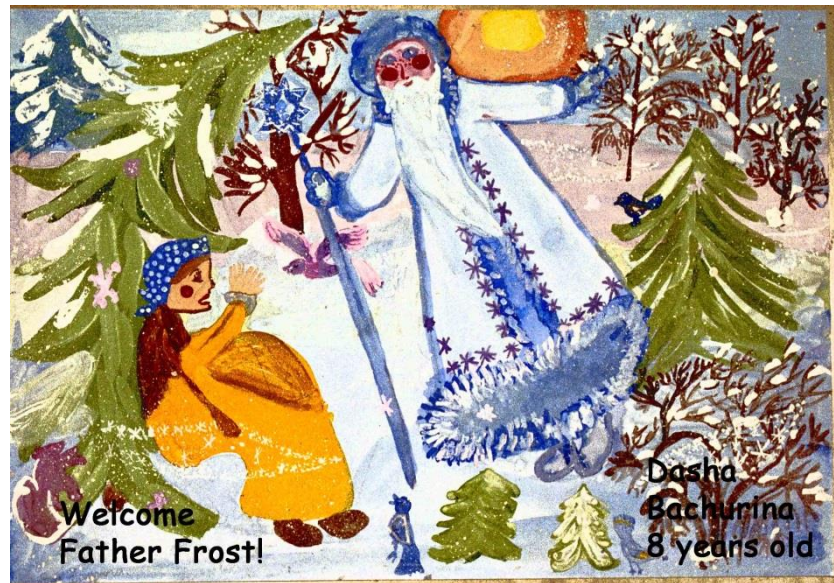


Suddenly, *Morozko*, or 'Father Frost' as he is often known, came leaping and dancing up. Casting glances at the beautiful maiden, he snapped:

I am Father Frost, my pretty lass,

They call me Red Nose wherever I pass!

The girl
replied:



Welcome, Father Frost!

You must be part of God's scheme,

Sent for my sinful soul to redeem!

Frost had intended to embrace her, causing her to freeze to death, but he was taken with her wise and god-fearing words. So he took pity on her and tossed her a warm fur coat. She put it on, and sat there with her knees tucked up under her chin to keep warm. Once again Father Frost came leaping and dancing towards her. Casting glances at the lovely maiden, he cried out:

I am Father Frost my pretty lass,

They call me Red Nose wherever I pass!

The girl once again replied:

Welcome, Father Frost!

You must be part of God's scheme,

Sent for my sinful soul to redeem!

But Father Frost had not come to save her sinful soul at all. He had brought her a great and heavy dowry chest, full of pretty clothes and all things fine. She sat on the chest, and looked so gay and pretty in her fur coat!

Once again Frost the Red Nose came leaping, dancing and casting glances at the beautiful maiden. She again greeted him graciously, and he gave her a rich robe embroidered in silver and gold. She put on the robe and sat there singing songs so sweetly. So beautiful she looked, and so stately!

Meanwhile, the girl's stepmother had prepared a funeral feast for her, and had baked platefuls of pancakes. "Go and bring back your daughter, old man, so that we may bury her and hold the funeral wake", she said. Just as the old man was leaving, the dog under the table began to bark:

Woof, woof!

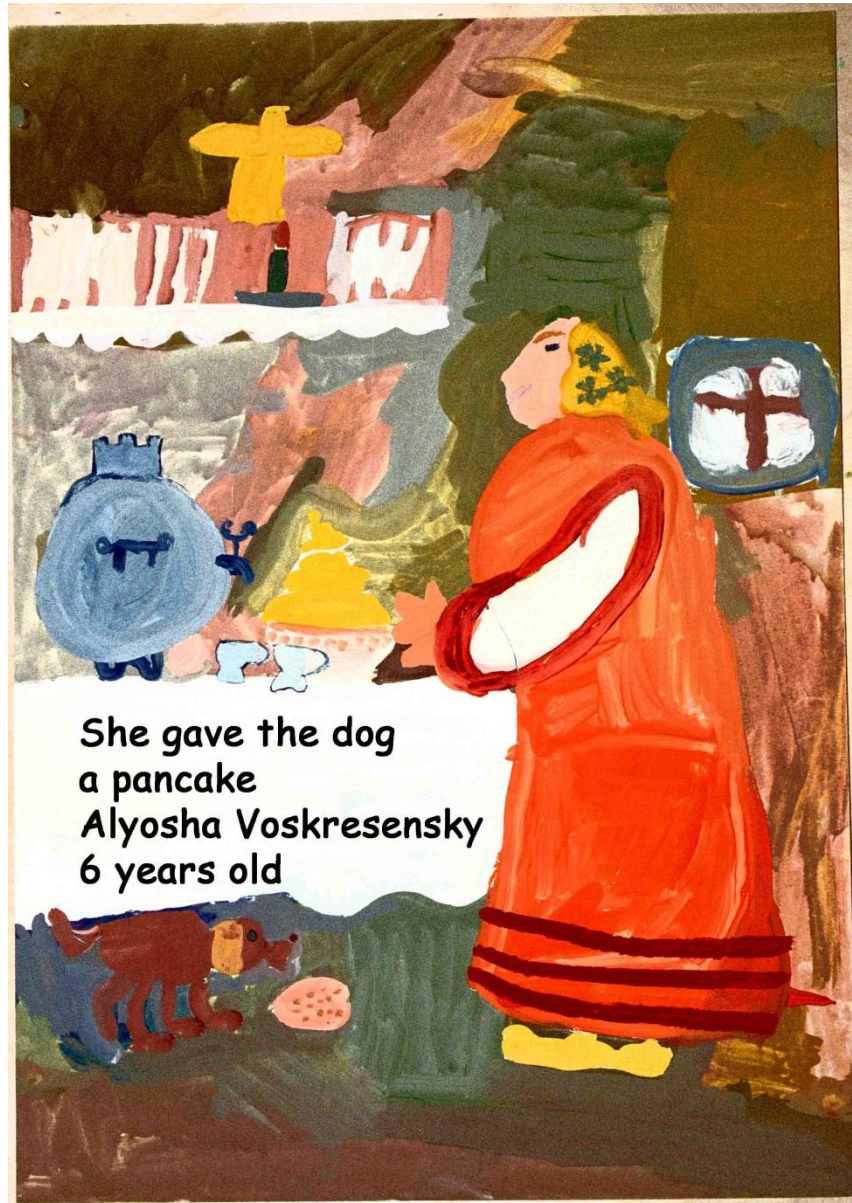
***His** daughter returns in silver and gold,*

***Her** daughter will no suitor hold!*

"Keep your jaws, shut you stupid mutt!" scolded the woman. "There's a pancake for you, but you must say:

*'**Her** daughter by suitors will be sought,*

***His** daughter stiff-frozen home will be brought!'* "



The dog didn't waste a second in gobbling down the pancake, but only barked and said:

Woof, woof!

***His** daughter returns in silver and gold,*

***Her** daughter will no suitor hold!*

The old woman gave the dog some more pancakes, and a thrashing for good measure, but the dog kept on repeating:

Woof, woof!

***His** daughter returns in silver and gold,*

Her daughter will no suitor hold!

Suddenly the door creaked and flew open, and a great, heavy chest was brought in. The stepdaughter walked in dressed in her robe embroidered in silver and gold and she looked like an elegant and radiant lady. The stepmother threw up her hands in bewilderment. “Old man, old man, harness the horses, and take my daughter to the exact same spot in the forest and leave her there!” The old man took her to the forest, and placed her under the same large pine tree. Father Frost, the Red Nose, reappeared. He leapt, danced and at the girl glanced, but the girl spoke no kind words to him. So he grew angry, gripped her body with all his might, and froze her to death.



Later, the old woman said to her husband, “Old man, go and bring back my daughter. Harness our fastest horses, and take care

not to overturn the sledge and lose the chest!” But the dog under the table barked and said:

Woof, woof!

***His** daughter by suitors will be sought,*

***Her** daughter back in a sack will be brought!*

“Don’t tell such wicked lies!” scolded the woman. “Here’s a pie for you; now say this instead:

*‘**Her** daughter returns in silver and gold!’ ”*

But just then the door flew open, and the old woman rushed out to welcome her daughter, but found instead only her cold and stiff body to embrace. The old woman wept and wailed, but couldn’t bring her daughter back to life.