

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June

## Baba Yaga and the Black Geese Story

A long time ago in a far-away land, there lived two children who went by the names of Olga and Sergei. On this particular day, Olga and Sergei were playing outside, climbing the trees and playing hide and seek when, all of a sudden, they heard the bellowing voice of their terrified mama calling down to them from the house. "Olga! Sergei! Get indoors quickly! We've just heard, Baba Yaga's black geese have been seen round here."

Now if you don't know about Baba Yaga's three black geese, I'd better tell you. Baba Yaga has three dark-winged servants who fly around the world searching for delicious-looking children for Baba Yaga to eat. If you ever see them, be sure to hide.

Olga and Sergei came indoors and settled down in their bedroom to read. Now, as you can best imagine, on a nice day, it's very boring to be playing indoors. So when their mama and papa called upstairs to say that they were going to the market, the children waited until their horse and cart were out of sight, and crept outside to play.

Sure enough, from high in the sky, three black geese looked down to the ground and saw two delicious-looking children to eat and swooped down. Grabbing Sergei by the scruff of his neck they pulled him high into the sky, and off towards the deep, dark woods. Olga, who'd only managed to escape by diving under a prickly bush, knew what she had to do. As quick as she could, she put on her best running shoes and set off towards the deep, dark, woods.

She ran like the wind until... in a high, gurgly kind of voice she heard, "Olga! Olga! Olga!"

"I haven't got time to stop!" shouted Olga. "I'm in a rush to get to the deep, dark woods to save my brother Sergei from Baba Yaga." But when she looked down to see what had been making this peculiar little noise, she saw a tiny, silver fish. The poor thing had been swimming down the river when, accidentally, he'd jumped too high and landed on the bank. Being a kind person, Olga bent down, picked the fish up in the palm of her hand and

gently dropped it back into the river. The fish darted to the bottom and popped back up with a present. It was a shell, and the fish said: "As you have helped me, so I shall help you. If ever you find yourself in trouble, take this shell, throw it over your shoulder and I will come and help you." "Thanks," said Olga and she put the shell into her pocket and again, set off towards the deep, dark, woods.

She ran like the wind until... in a chirpy, yappy kind of a voice, she heard, "Olga! Olga! Olga!" "I haven't got time to stop!" cried Olga. "I'm in a rush to get to the deep, dark woods to save my brother Sergei from Baba Yaga." But when she looked down to see what had been making this bizarre little noise, she saw a very anguished looking squirrel. The poor little thing had been bounding around in a field when he'd accidentally put his foot in one of the farmer's rabbit traps and couldn't get out. Being a kind person, Olga bent down, pulled open the trap and freed the squirrel. The brown, furry creature limped his way up the nearest oak tree and came back down with a present. It was an acorn, and the squirrel said: "As you have helped me, so I shall help you. If ever you find yourself in trouble, take this acorn, throw it over your shoulder and I will come and help you." "Thanks," said Olga and she put the acorn into her pocket and again, set off towards the deep, dark, woods.

She ran like the wind until... in a squeaky, squally kind of a voice, she heard, "Olga! Olga! Olga!" "I haven't got time to stop!" snapped Olga. "I'm in a rush to get to the deep, dark woods to save my brother Sergei from Baba Yaga." But when she looked down to see what had been making this annoying little noise, she saw the tiniest animal of all; a very sad-looking field mouse. Someone had been moving stones and boulders to make a wall and had covered up the mouse's hole. Being a kind person, Olga bent down to the boulder, grabbed it with both hands and pushed. The boulder rolled away and the tiny mouse gleefully jumped down its hole and came back up with a present. It was a stone, and the mouse said: "As you have helped me, so I shall help you. If ever you find yourself in trouble, take this stone, throw it over your shoulder and I will come and help you." "Thanks," said Olga and she put the stone into her pocket and went on until she came to the outskirts of the deep,

dark, woods. Olga crept into the woods and through the tangled smelly trees. She was, hoping against hope, that she could find Baba Yaga's house in time.

Suddenly, there in a clearing she saw it. But Baba Yaga's House is no ordinary house. It stands on three chicken legs. It moves. And it talks. "Go away!" The house moaned. "Baba Yaga will surely eat you." But Olga knew what she had to do. She climbed up onto one of the legs and pulled herself up and into the house. And there she was. Baba Yaga, asleep in her rocking chair, snoring like a troll.

Now, if you don't know what Baba Yaga looks like, I'd better tell you. Baba Yaga has long white hair that comes all the way down to the floor. In it live some of the strangest creatures alive. Sometimes, she'll just pick them out of her hair and crunch on them with her long, red fangs. Her nose is long and crooked, with a twist at the end like a helter-skelter. From it drips the most disgusting, green slime. She lets it drip into a bucket, and when it's full she sucks it all up in one big mouthful. Baba Yaga has two pointed ears full of fur, rather like a badger's, only hers are full of treacherous wax. She wears a green, pointy hat and a long, green cape that hides her long, bony arms and long, bony legs. Now, as you know, Baba Yaga likes, more than anything else in the world, to eat children!

Sitting next to Baba Yaga, too scared to move, was Olga's brother, Sergei. Knowing what she had to do, Olga tiptoed right up to Sergei and whispered: "Baba Yaga's asleep. Come on. We can make our escape." As quietly as they could, the children slid down the legs of Baba Yaga's house. But Sergei was only halfway down when he slipped and crashed to the forest floor with an almighty bang! The three black geese, who had been perched on the roof in a deep slumber, woke up and squawked: "Baba Yaga! Baba Yaga! Someone's taking your dinner!" As quick as she could, Baba Yaga jumped to her feet and started to chase the children.

With her long, bony arms and her long, bony legs she reached out to grab the children when... Olga put her hand in her pocket and pulled out the present from the fish. Taking the shell, she

threw it over her shoulder and... just like magic, a huge lake appeared. Baba Yaga was stuck on the other side. But do you think a lake can stop Baba Yaga? Bending down, she put her mouth right up to the water's edge, and started to slurp. In one humungous mouthful, Baba Yaga drank the whole lake, and with her cavernous belly full of water, she started to chase the children again.

With her long, bony arms and her long, bony legs she reached out to grab the children when... Olga put her hand in her pocket and pulled out the present from the squirrel. Taking the acorn, she threw it over her shoulder and... just like magic, a huge forest appeared, with Baba Yaga stuck on one side and the children safe on the other. But do you think a forest can stop Baba Yaga? Opening her tremendous jaws she started to eat the trees one by one until she'd devoured the entire forest. With her stomach full to bursting point, she started to chase the children again.

With her long, bony arms and her long, bony legs she reached out to grab the children for the final time when... Olga put her hand in her pocket and pulled out the present from the mouse. Taking the stone, she threw it over her shoulder and... just like magic, a huge mountain appeared, one so big that its summit disappeared into the clouds, with Baba Yaga stuck on one side and the children safe on the other. Not even Baba Yaga, with a belly full of lake and forest, can eat a mountain this size. She had to turn around and walk all the way back to the deep, dark wood, without any children to eat for tea. Olga and Sergei ran back home as fast as their legs could carry them and got back inside just in time to see mama and papa pulling up in their horse and cart. "Olga! Sergei!" they called. "We're home! We've got sugar buns for tea." Neither their mama or their papa ever got to hear the story of what happened to their children that day, but needless to say, whenever Baba Yaga's black geese were seen around those parts, Olga and Sergei stayed indoors with the door firmly shut!