

# A VIEW FROM THE

Folktales of the Pyrenees

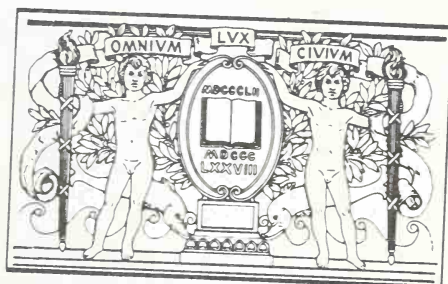
# WITCH'S

Edited by Luis de Barandiarán Irizar

# CAVE

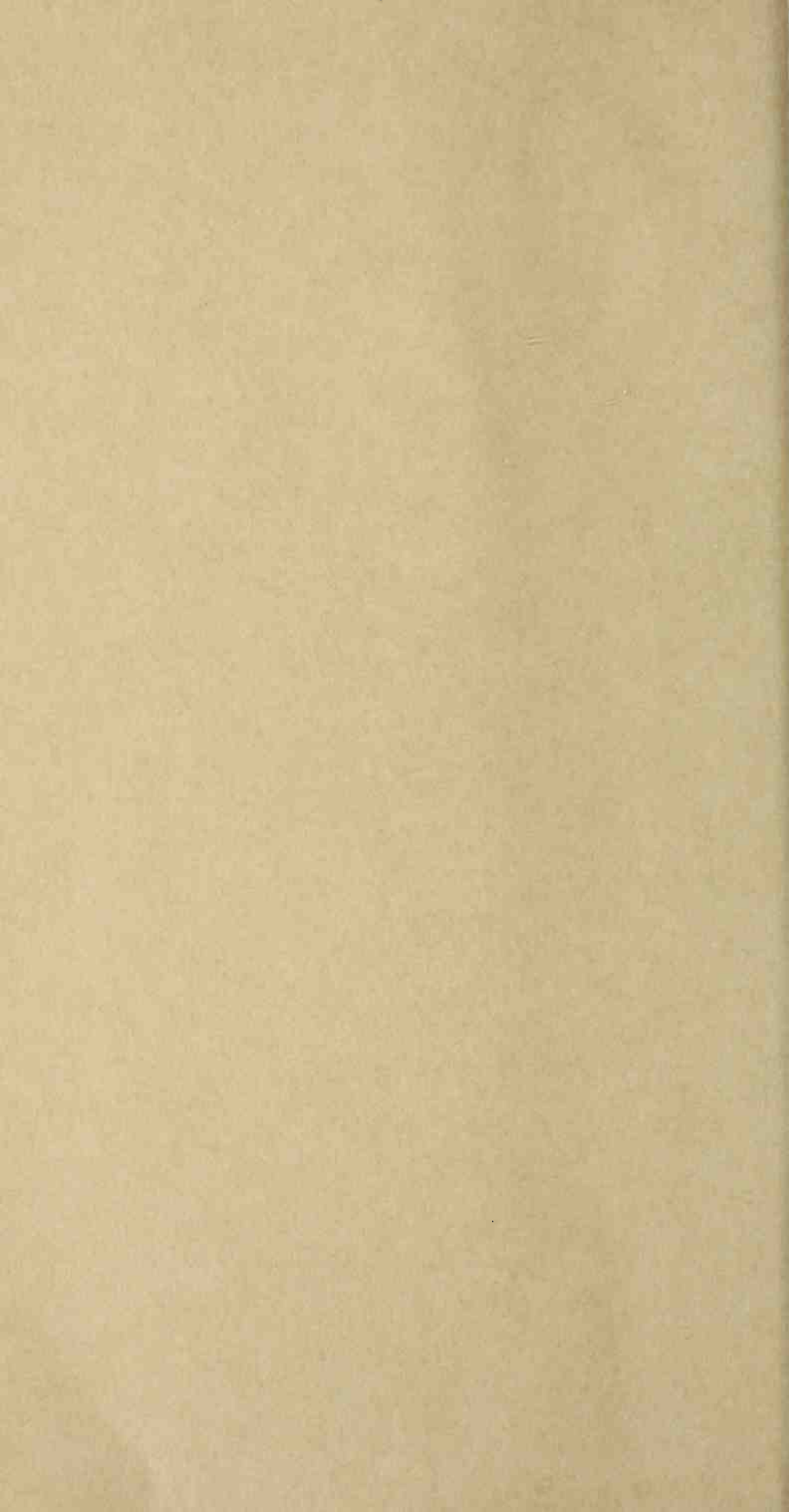
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Folktales of the Pyrenees  
edited by Luis de  
Barandiarán Irizar

Edited by

# Folktales

Luis de Barandiarán Irizar

of the

Collected, with a prologue

# Pyrenees

by José Miguel de Barandiarán

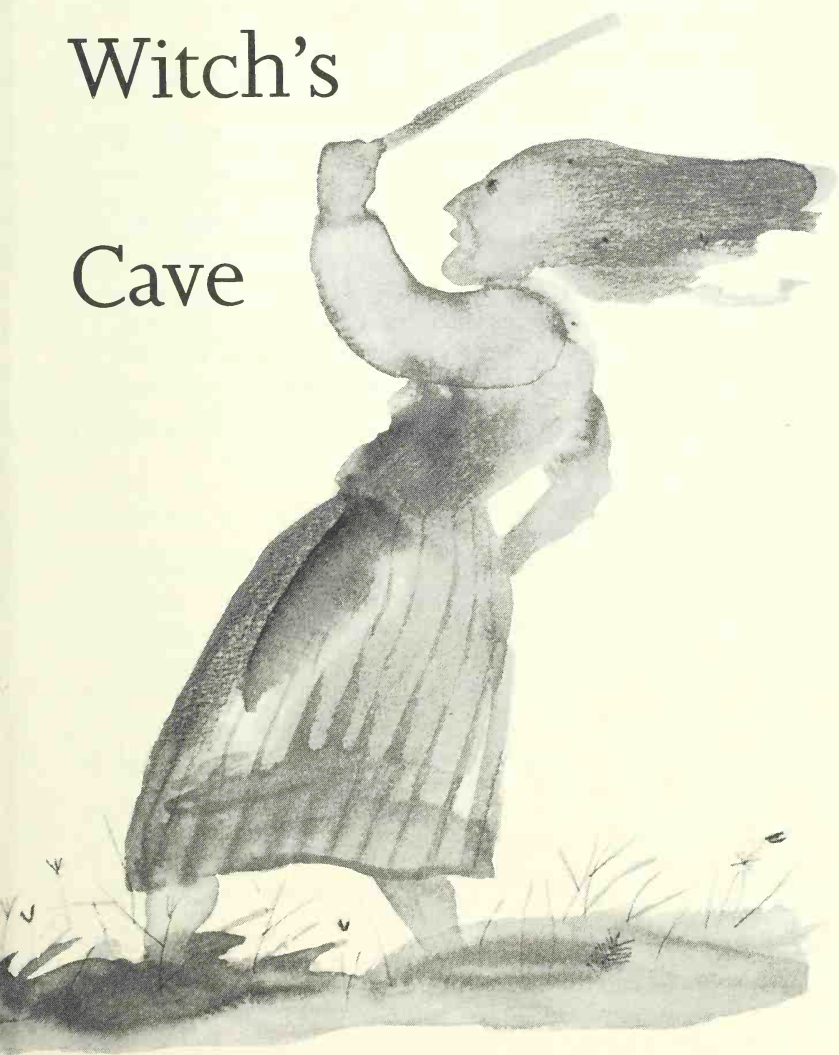
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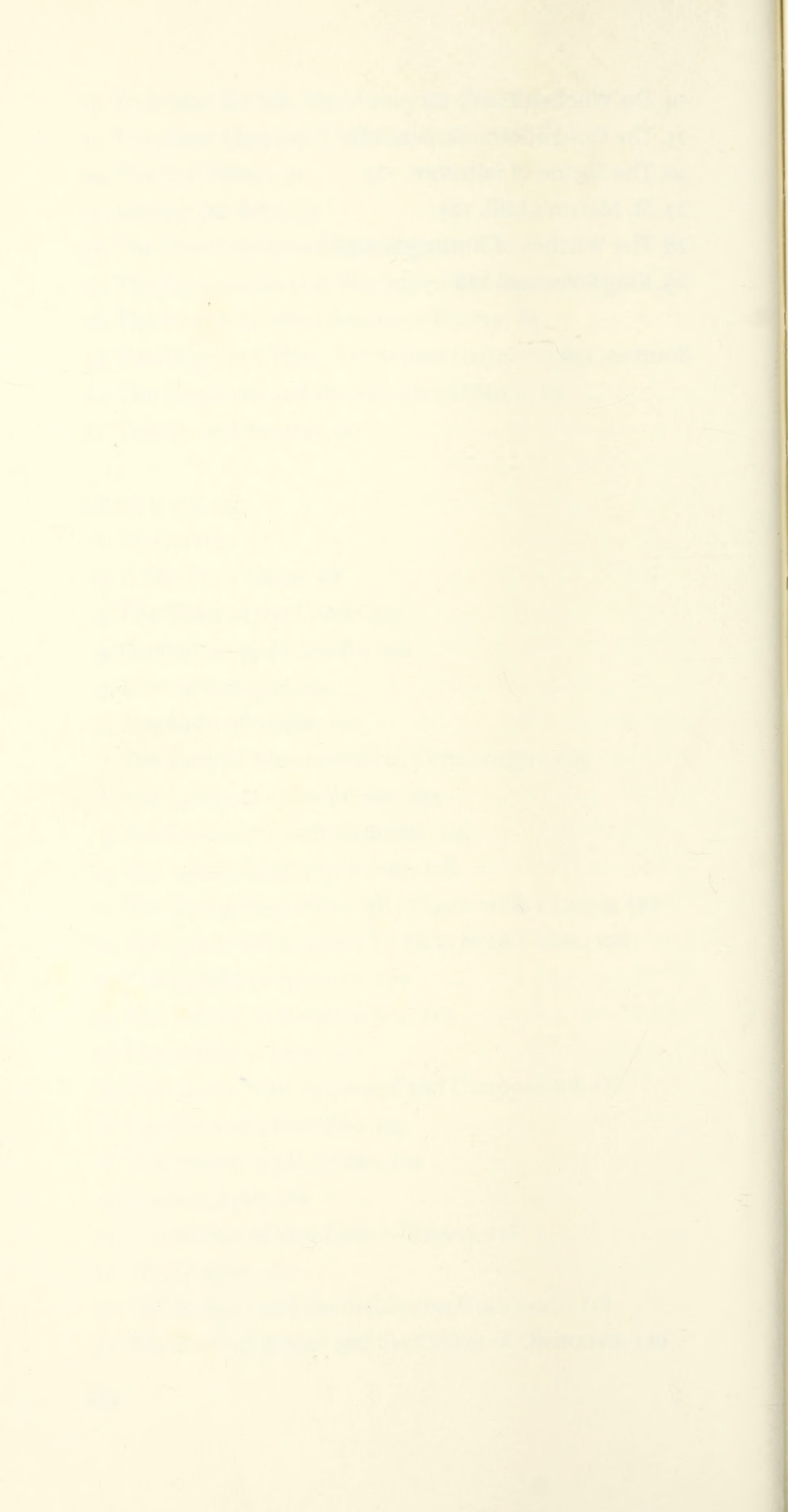
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## Prologue

Folktales correspond to the natural needs of the human soul, and their structure appears to be shaped by those needs as well, at least in the case of tales of wonder. For that reason, a structural analysis of such stories can reveal common origins among them—a common system that encompasses certain constant elements such as characters, actions, conflicts, behaviors, and patterns found in numerous stories throughout narrative literature.

Moreover, in combination with such constants, certain variables appear in all popular narration: echoes of different ways of life in each locale, of different tasks and customs in each place and time; images of the countryside, both natural and personified—mountains, caverns, springs, rivers, seas, roads, bridges, houses, castles, churches, retreats, and other monuments; and memories of saints, local heroes, animals, monsters, and spirits. In a certain way these subjects, these elements and categories of popular narration, distinguish and characterize each group and its culture. Thus, Basque oral literature is a characteristic of our people, who are both its support and its subject matter.

The stories and legends recorded in this book form a varied unit, an expression of one aspect of the mentality and culture of the Basque people, and this author has dedicated all his skill and affection to their selection, their adaptation into a suitable literary form, and their appropriate organization.

Even though much of the data recorded here occupies only the peripheral vision of modern Basques, it reminds us of ancient times, of the myths and cults of our ancestors—myths and cults associated with various thematic nuclei and other extraneous elements. The *erensuge* (dragon

of Saint Michael), the *estrakinburu* (the announcement of the birth of Kixmi, or Christ, with a dance by the pagans of Aralar), the Dama de Murumendi (Lady of Murumendi)—these characters and events bring to mind diverse beliefs and practices of ancient tradition. The belief in shadow-souls or *gerixetiek*; the ceremony of the pagans of Alotza in front of the monolith of the same name, dancing with their shadows on the night of the full moon; or the offerings of stones and money to the spirits of the caves—these and other customs of pagan origin have survived through the ages, in spite of the announcement by the *azti* (prophet) of Aralar who said paganism was dead when he saw the luminous cloud that signaled the birth of Christ.

Although Christianity later came to occupy center stage for the Basques, many elements of the old wisdom existed alongside or in the shadow of Christianity, albeit occasionally with some hostility. It is easy to verify this through numerous traditional customs as well as through folktales. As Bédier said, “The ancient tales are like gold dust: you need only a glancing blow delivered by chance to bring the sought-after materials out of the rock.”<sup>1</sup>

This is possible among our people even today. The stories and legends recorded in the pages of this book are fine proof of that. We hope that reading them will benefit all those interested in this curious facet of the traditional culture of the Basques.

Atáun, January 28, 1981

José Miguel de Barandiarán

1. Bédier, Joseph. *Les Fabliaux*. Paris, 1925. P. 91.

## Foreword

### Barandiarán: A Hundred Years of Storytelling

**H**ow old should a great storyteller be? At least one hundred years. How much wisdom should a story contain? A lifetime of experience. This is what one learns from José Miguel de Barandiarán who, on the last day of 1989, reached his first centennial and began the first day of a new century of life—a life of storytelling:

Once upon a time, a boy was born in Atáun, a place well known for fierce battles between pagan and Christian gods. His mother offered up her son to placate the fateful local spirits. He grew up virtuous and handsome. One day, while meditating on a solitary mountain about the solidity of stone, he was shaken by a revelatory incident. An underground mole was quaking the very foundations of the universe. His eyes wide open, the young man stood there motionless and observed—O portentous omen!—the earth yielding up to him an enigmatic gift: a thousand-year-old tooth that belonged to an ancient wild boar. From the epiphany of that moment, he knew it was his time: the revelation had been awaiting him underground, condensed in the warm womb of a hidden cave; it lay in stratified earth among osseous remains of ever-present animals and perhaps the menacing silhouette of a human jaw. It was uncovered by poking and excavating the soil—sifting and scanning—discovering the secret treasure and rediscovering a golden period.

Mesmerized by the revelation, the man of destiny rediscovered Basque prehistory, archaeology, and folklore. He would become the wise, century-old storyteller his people most needed:

He was a gentle and clever man. Soon he had many followers who understood that he was a providential figure. He became the shaman who made long journeys to the underworld of prehistoric caves, walked and lived among the paleolithic hunter-painters, and periodically returned—his boots muddy and his spirit tinted with wilderness—to write a paper on Urtiaga's fossils or lecture on Ekain's horses. His soft voice could hardly be heard, yet an entire hall could resonate with his bones, stones, and ancient stories as if the hall itself were a prehistoric cave. Deservedly, he was revered as the patriarch. His kingdom was primordial antiquity; his wisdom was storytelling.

When he was a century old, later generations began to unearth the tales discovered and rediscovered by the great storyteller. They were perplexed by the wondrous combination of reality and fiction, the rigors of science, and the beauties of mythology.

The collection of tales and legends offered in this volume, faithfully and filially selected by his nephew Luis de Barandiarán Irizar, is but a sample of his crucial work in the preservation of traditional folklore. But not only did the elder Barandiarán collect ancient tales, he was himself the principal instigator in creating—with the help of archaeological methods and scientific discourse—a new founding mythology of Basque autochthonous evolution and cultural worth. Those given to suspicion were alarmed by such prevalence of storytelling in a man of science. Worst of all, he had become himself a figure of legend; he might have been seen flying in the company of the queen witch Mari, whose faithful promulgator he had been during his hundred years of storytelling. Like his illustrious, legendary predecessors Atarrabi and Axular (sacerdotal figures of religion and knowledge), the storyteller from Atáun had

entered the timeless realm of his society's mythical corpus. Yet he was also a human being one could speak to in "real life," a man of great modesty always willing to learn and collaborate; if one were to visit him in his home, Sara, one would find a reserved writer surrounded by books and assisted by his nearly octogenarian niece.

When I was a child, I was fortunate enough to know a woman from Atáun, Errementeriko Maria, herself a neighbor of Barandiarán and of the same age. She also had vividly experienced the flying witch Mari's centuries-old tales of negation and power. A dignified and lovable woman, she recounted them in detail for us children. Her factually narrated stories about magical flights and incredible metamorphoses had an indelible effect on our imagination. We were told that such stories were "true" in the experience of our parents' generation, yet were no longer real. Such perplexities regarding the fictional nature of the real led me to become an anthropologist. So I moved from Maria's storytelling to Barandiarán's storytelling to anthropology's storytelling.

For a long time I was unsure about the actual existence of Barandiarán, until one day when I dared to visit him and dispel my doubts. All we could talk about was the flying Mari, our mutual neighbor Errementeriko Maria, and his own part in the creation of this mythology. I became aware of how lucky we Basques are to have had such a humane mythmaker, a figure of shamanistic proportions who by unearthing buried prehistory and folklore brought folktales back to dignify our own sense of history and culture. Nothing was more alien to him than racism, cultural superiority, or political exclusion. He has been accused of not attempting interpretations, yet the art of the storyteller consists precisely of that marvelous freedom from explanation—there is nothing to be added when the truth of the story sinks in. One could say that seeing the world through



a storyteller's wisdom is like seeing it through the unforgettable eyes of a dying man; and, if not from death, where can a storyteller borrow his authority but from a century of life? By reaching one hundred years of age, Barandiarán reveals to us the truth that emerges from the fullness of time.

It was in my conversation with him that he revealed to me the mole's gift and the impact of the boar's tooth in deciding his future career. I sensed, however, that he was holding something back—not because he did not want to tell me, but because he could not say it in words. Then I realized why storytelling is his vocation: only a story—disguised as science or fairy tale, ethnography or mythology—can capture a glimpse of the magic and the beauty of the lifetime truth he knows.

Joseba Zulaika

## Preface

**T**he fable, the story, and the legend are different forms of narrative prose—although the fable may also appear in verse—that are all closely related. Their remote and obscure origins became literature when in ages past, already possessing language and having invented writing, man set down his tales in written form. Those that were not written down continued to form part of the shared reservoir of oral literature that people spread and modified through the generations, until it occurred to some curious scholar to collect them as an expression of the folklore of a specific nation or people.

The Basque Country, too, abounds with a variety of oral literature in the form of fables, stories, legends, traditions, and beliefs that somehow brings into the present a distant past that has survived in the minds of the people. It is this collective knowledge, archived and handed down from generation to generation, that provides us with valuable material from which we may piece together the spiritual physiognomy of our ancestors.

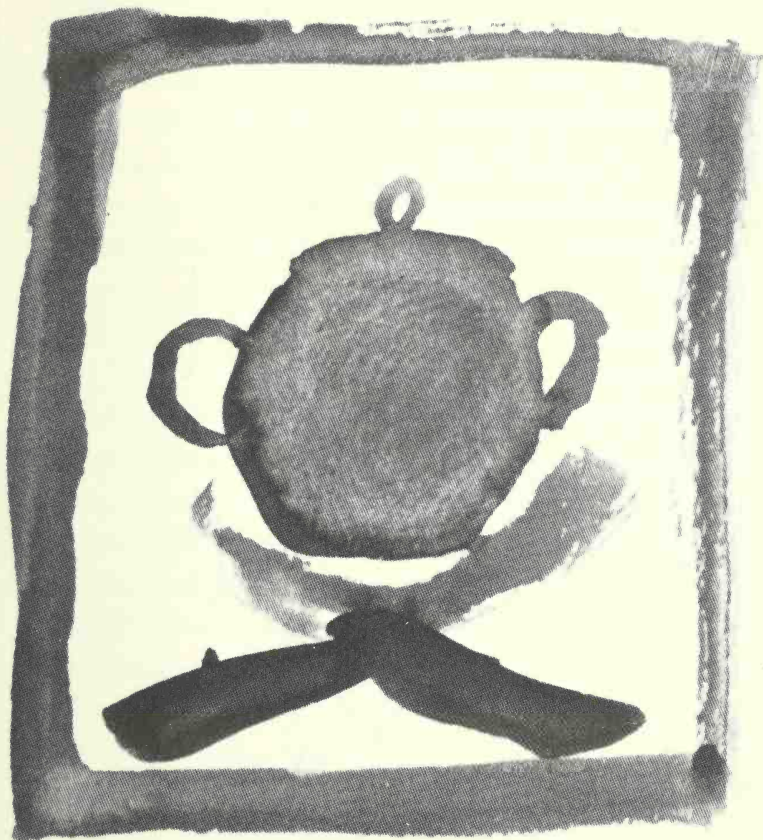
Worthy gentlemen such as Arturo Campión, Iturralde, and Azkue, have collected numerous samples of ancient tales transmitted orally from father to son. The material recorded by our folklorists is ample and varied. In this work, I will restrict myself to the fables, stories, and legends chronicled by my uncle José Miguel de Barandiarán.

By remaining faithful to the original text in Basque and to the simple style required by this literary genre, I have attempted to present a version that is more fluid and natural to read. I have also provided notes on primary sources and the identity of the individuals who recounted each tale. In this way, given the refreshing and ingenuous simplicity of

the literary style appropriate to such tales, the same material that helps us increase our knowledge of the remote roots of Basque culture will teach and entertain us at the same time.

Luis de Barandiarán Irizar

# Fables





## Fables

**T**he fable, or apologue, falls within the field of primitive literature. Most likely of oriental origin, it attained its pinnacle in Greece with Aesop, the indisputable master fabulist of all time. Félix María Samaniego, an illustrious Alavese gentleman and model fabulist of the eighteenth century, composed his masterpiece *Fábulas Morales* for the students of the Royal Seminary of Bergara. This seminary, created by the Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País (Royal Basque Society of Friends of the Country), was an important focal point for the spread of culture.

A fable is always allegorical fiction that offers a useful moral lesson by utilizing representations of human beings or personifications of irrational creatures such as animals. Frequently, Basque folklorists are accustomed to smelting the pieces of a fable together within the mold of a story. I prefer to distinguish clearly between these two literary types by offering the reader some samples that fall conclusively within the realm of the fable.

The ancient Basque maintained a constant dialogue with nature, and through fables, his knowledge of the animal world is revealed, as well as his knowledge of the secrets of the human soul. He censures its vices and exalts its virtues, all under the pretense of a narration about the lives of animals.

## 1 : The Man and the Snake

One day in Ormazareta<sup>1</sup> a shepherd took his sheep out to graze. Suddenly there appeared before him a young snake. The shepherd thought the little snake was so endearing that he carried it to his hut and taught it to drink whey from a dish. Every day after that, at a certain hour, the snake visited the shepherd's hut to drink its portion of whey.

When winter comes, shepherds leave their solitary retreats and take their sheep to the valleys below. Even so, the Ormazareta shepherd did not abandon his snake completely. Every spring he climbed the mountain and whistled for the snake, and the snake appeared.

One day the shepherd sold his flock of sheep and no longer journeyed into the Aralar mountains.

Years later, while on an excursion to San Miguel de Aralar in the company of friends, the old shepherd wagered as they passed by Ormazareta, "I'll bet I can make a monster appear."

Naturally, his friends did not believe their companion's boast. But—what do you know!—the shepherd whistled long and loud, and soon a giant snake appeared. Trustingly, the shepherd approached the snake, but when the snake did not find the whey that it expected, it sprang upon the shepherd, wrapped itself around him from his feet to his neck, and strangled him.

1. Ormazareta is a favorite grazing place in the Aralar mountains.



## 2 : The Serpent Challenger

**T**here was once a serpent who left its cave with the intention of measuring its strength against that of man. No sooner had it left than it ran into a fox, and the snake asked him where he might find some brawny men. The fox directed him to a building where ironmongers were, at that very moment, hard at their tasks. They could offer the serpent the opportunity to prove his strength.

The serpent went to the building, and there he encountered a man whom he challenged at once. The man told the snake that he would have to wait a while and also proposed two conditions: that the snake allow the man to take hold of him first and that the snake not move until the man had grasped him where he wanted to.

Meanwhile, the ironmonger lay a large pair of pincers on the foundry fire to heat. When they were red hot, he seized the serpent's middle with the pincers. Terrified, the snake screamed to be let go, for he now recognized man's superiority. The ironmonger explained to the serpent that if he had seized him with ten fingers instead of two, no part of the serpent's body would have been left undamaged.

This victory gave man dominion over all malignant creatures, and ever since then, all beasts of the earth have feared him.

### 3 : The Fox's Truths

**D**riven by hunger, a fox found it necessary to leave his den. But in order to find food, he had to overcome one problem: he had to cross a river. Since he had no money to pay the ferryman for a ride, the fox proposed telling the ferryman three truths in exchange for passage.

The ferry had barely begun to move when the fox offered his first truth. "The moon is bright, but not as bright as the day."

The ferryman replied, "You are right."

When they reached the middle of the river, the fox declared his second truth. "Other people's mothers are good, but there is no mother as good as one's own."

The ferryman replied, "You are right again."

At last they arrived at the opposite bank, and there the fox pronounced his third truth. "Ferryman, ferryman, your trousers are threadbare! If you ferry many others as you have myself, I cannot prophesy better fortune for your trousers."

The ferryman replied, "You are right about that, too."

#### 4 : The Fox, the Dove, and the Dapple-Gray Horse

A fox, a dove, and a dapple-gray horse joined together to farm the hillside. The fox proposed, "I will agree to plow the land on the condition that you two take charge of fencing it in."

The dove and the dapple-gray horse fenced in the land.

Afterward, the fox continued, "I will agree to plant the wheat on the condition that you two take charge of plowing the land."

The dove and the dapple-gray horse plowed the land.

And still the fox continued, "I will agree to do all the labor of the harvest on the condition that you two plant the wheat."

In this way the fox managed to get the dove and the dapple-gray horse to do all the work.

At last it was time to divide the harvest. Addressing first the dove and then the dapple-gray horse, the fox announced, "Because you are white, you get the straw. Because you are gray, you get the chaff. And because I am the golden fox, I get the golden wheat."

## 5 : Axarko, Otsoko, and Beleko

On the branch of a tree perched Beleko the crow with his young. Suddenly there appeared Axarko the fox and Otsoko the wolf. Seeing Beleko in the tree, Axarko drew near.

"Hello, Beleko!" he greeted. "Why don't you toss me down one of your babies?"

But Beleko turned a deaf ear on Axarko's request.

"If you don't toss me down one of your babies," threatened Axarko, "I will shake the tree and they will all fall down."

Faced with this terrible threat, the crow threw down one of his offspring. But before Axarko could finish devouring the first one, he already craved another. At first Beleko refused. But finally, afraid that the fox would shake the tree, he knocked down all of his children, one by one.

After finishing his meal, Axarko left with Otsoko. Along the road they met two men who were engrossed in conversation. One of them carried a basket full of cheeses.

When he saw the cheeses, Axarko crept up and stole them without Otsoko or the two men noticing.

Afterward, he asked Otsoko, "Do you like cheese?"

"Yes, I do, Axarko, very much."

"Well, then, sneak up on that man and take the ones he carries in his basket."

Otsoko approached the man to steal the cheese, but the man saw him and, noticing his empty basket, beat Otsoko black and blue with a stick.

## 6 : The Fox's Tragedy

One day a fox was thinking about the snowflakes that fell from the sky. As he was thinking, a vulture approached him and asked, "What are you doing, Lukito?"<sup>1</sup>

"I am wondering about these things, whatever they may be, that are falling from the heavens."

"You really don't know what they are?" asked the vulture. "Why, they're chicken feathers! Today they are celebrating a very important wedding in heaven with a chicken dinner, and all these things that are falling are chicken feathers."

"Do you know that I, too, would like to be in heaven?" declared the fox, "for chicken is my favorite dish."

"Well, if that is all you want, let me show you how fast I can get you there in a single flight. Take hold of my tail."

The fox seized the vulture's tail in his mouth, and the vulture took flight through the air with the fox in tow. As they flew above the clouds, the vulture asked the fox, "Are you all right, Lukito?"

But the fox was silent.

"I am asking you if you are all right," repeated the vulture. Still the fox was silent.

"Answer me, otherwise I will let you fall to earth."

"I'm fine," replied the fox without thinking.

Naturally, the moment he answered, he opened his mouth and began falling like a stone.

As he fell from the heavens, the fox shouted at the rocks rushing up to meet him, "Move aside, rocks! Get out of my way!"

With these words he hoped to convince the rocks that

1. Lukito is a proper name traditionally used to identify the fox.

if they didn't let him pass, his impact would reduce them to dust.

But the rocks waited for him, and the fox was flattened.

## 7 : The Wounded Fox on the Back of the Wolf

Once upon a time a wolf and a fox were pillaging in the vicinity of a house with the dishonest intention of stealing food. That particular occasion seemed to be a good time to do so because several threshing-season laborers were staying in the house, and they were quite noisy. That made it easier for the wolf and the fox to approach the dwelling without being noticed.

The wolf decided to enter the house to see if he could find something to eat. The fox, who had better vision than the wolf, spied a cauldron of aia (wheat mush) through the window. He had just enough time to climb through the window and eat aia until he was full.

Meanwhile, the threshers surprised the unfortunate wolf as he entered the house. They beat him with sticks till his ribs were broken, then chased him away. Alerted by the cries of the wolf, the fox jumped through the window and ran away with traces of white aia all over his head.

Later, the wolf and the fox met at a crossroads. Whimpering pitifully, the wolf complained about his ill-treated ribs and begged the fox, for the love of God, to let him ride upon his shoulders.

The fox, in turn, presented his whitened head and set about convincing the wolf that his brains were leaking out and that he, the fox, was the one more in need of a ride.

While they talked, a man appeared, and they consulted him about their problem. They asked the man which was more serious, broken ribs or leaking brains. The man declared that ribs usually healed themselves, but he had never known anyone to be cured after their brains fell out.

As soon as he heard the man's decision in his favor, the cheeky fox leaped upon the wolf and exposed his injury as a



fake by singing out triumphantly, "I'm a tricky fox mounted on the back of a wolf!"

The poor wolf was consumed with rage and crawled along as best he could. When the fox saw that he was in front of his den he leaped toward it, but the wolf seized him by his tail and stopped him cold, not letting him take a single step.

The fox's den was surrounded by a gorse thicket, and the fox began to shout, "You think you have taken hold of my tail, but what you are biting down on is a gorse root!"

The wolf believed the fox and let go of his tail, only to actually bite down on a real gorse root nearby. Free to move deeper into his den, the fox shouted at the humiliated wolf, "You weren't really biting a gorse root before, but you are now!"

## 8 : The Ass and the Wolf

**T**he story of the ass and the wolf happened a very long time ago when not just man but all creatures were able to talk. And so it was that an ass, loaded down with a full wineskin, was traveling from Navarra to Atáun. All of a sudden, a hungry wolf jumped out to greet him.

The ass said to the wolf, "If you are thirsty, I carry drink to quench your thirst."

The wolf replied, "It is not thirst from which I suffer but hunger, a voracious hunger, and right now I am going to eat your head and your ears."

The ass countered, "Up that hill is an entire flock of sheep without a sheepdog. Take heart and climb up there, for there you will find a pair of meek sheep."

But the wolf continued, "I have thorns in my foot and cannot walk. And besides, why should I do that when the solution to my hunger stands here before me?"

Then the ass suggested shrewdly, "On that hill there is a shrine to St. Bartholomew. If you like, we could go up together and you can give me the opportunity to hear a final mass."

The proposal was accepted, and the ass went to the shrine. The wolf took the ass's suggestion and went off in search of the sheep. But the flock was nowhere to be found, so the wolf headed for the shrine as well. But the ass had kicked the door shut.

The wolf shouted from the other side, "You sneaky old ass! Now I see that you are very clever. But on the day I catch you, I promise you will not have time to hear another mass!"

The ass, in turn, replied from inside, "Ah, evil-minded

and ill-mannered Otxango, Otxango!<sup>1</sup> You may eat me tomorrow, but at least I am alive today."

1. Name used to personify the wolf.

## 9 : The Lame Burro and the Blacksmith Wolf

Once there was a burro grazing peacefully on a hillside, unaware that a wolf lay in ambush and was creeping toward him. When the burro realized his danger, he began to limp. The wolf drew closer and inquired about the limp. The burro explained to the wolf that he had lost a shoe, and that a remaining nail was the cause of his suffering.

The wolf then announced, "Ah! Well, I just happen to be an excellent blacksmith."

Without hesitation, the burro crooked his leg, and the wolf approached to remove the bothersome shoe nail. The burro took advantage of that moment to kick the wolf in the mouth and knock all his teeth out.

Whining and complaining, the wolf lamented sadly, "It's my own fault for pretending to be a blacksmith when I'm really a butcher."

## 10 : The Burro, the Dog, the Cat, the Rooster, and the Ram

Once there lived a burro who was so old that he was no longer able to work. A servant in the household told his master to kill the burro right away, and thereby save the food that the burro would eat. The burro overheard the conversation, fled the household, and started walking down the road. Along the way, he met a dog.

"Why aren't you barking?" asked the puzzled burro.

"How am I supposed to feel like barking," replied the dog, "if tomorrow they plan to kill me because I'm too old?"

"Come with me, then," encouraged the burro.

Together they walked and walked, and as they walked, they recounted their misfortunes. Suddenly, they spied a cat meowing mournfully in the window of a house.

Their interest piqued, the burro and the dog asked, "What has happened to make you so sad?"

"How can I not be sad when the lady of the house has promised to kill me for stealing a piece of meat?"

The burro and the dog looked at each other in amazement. "What a coincidence!" they cried. "We are both in similar predicaments. Join us, for it is always better to flee than to die."

So the three animals traveled together in perfect harmony for a long distance. It was just about noon when they spied, under the thatched eave of a house, a brilliantly colored rooster whose proud bearing contradicted his listless gaze and his silence, a silence uninterrupted by even the most timid cock-doodle-doo. Spurred by curiosity, the three animals approached the rooster and asked, "What are you doing there under the eaves at this hour without crowing?"

"How can I sing, if a stew pot on the fire is awaiting me tomorrow at this time?"

Once again, the animals extended their cordial invitation. "Forget about the stew pot and come with\* us, for a risky life is better than certain death."

So once again they started off, and once again they encountered a surprise—this time a ram who neither bleated nor ate. They suspected at once that the poor animal had gone through some crisis similar to their own. They asked sympathetically, "What has happened to you to keep you from being tempted to eat this fresh, tasty grass?"

"Yes, that is what those who brought me here had in mind," replied the ram. "I should fatten myself up so that eight days from now, when the master's daughter marries, I can be served on the wedding banquet table."

And, as in the earlier cases, the four animals pressed the ram to join them in order to escape death. The poor ram was worried, afraid that perhaps he would fall into the hands of yet another master who would end up hurting him. But at last he made up his mind and left with the other four.

They traveled so far that, before they knew it, it was midnight. It was then, in the heart of the dark night, that they noticed a light shining from the window of a den of thieves. Full of curiosity, the five animals approached the house. Suddenly, the dog began to bark, and all of the animals hid except for the ram, who battered at the door with his horns.

The thieves were overcome with terror for they thought the attack came from a rival band, and they decided to go upstairs and hide. Meanwhile, the ram persisted in his onslaught until he broke down the door. Then all the animals converged on the house.

First, the burro blew out the light with a powerful breath. Next, they took up strategic positions: the cat next to the stove, the rooster in the chimney, the dog behind the door,

and the ram beneath the staircase. The burro posted himself beside the door to the stable.

Meanwhile, the thieves remained puzzled, not knowing what caused the noises—so they decided to find out. They drew straws to see who would go down to the kitchen.

The unfortunate winner of the draw entered the kitchen and drew near the stove in a cautious exploration. Unintentionally, he brushed against the cat who immediately leapt upon him and clawed him severely. The thief barely had time to pull himself together after the cat's attack when the rooster gouged him in the eye with his foot. When the thief tried to flee that corner of the room, he felt the dog's fangs in his flesh. When he passed the staircase, the ram attacked him with a series of butts that left him all black and blue. The thief tried to hide in the stable, but waiting for him there was the burro, who gave him a couple of kicks that left him laid out on the floor.

When they realized that their companion was not coming back, the other thieves feared for their lives and did not go downstairs again. The five animals celebrated the absence of the thieves by calmly eating the meal that they had left behind.



## 11 : Mari and the Fox

A cunning fox had located his den carefully in the forest so that, from its safety, he could easily see everything that happened inside the windows of Peru and Mari's kitchen. And in this way, he knew the precise moment every morning when Mari put the milk on to heat.

As soon as the milk was on the stove, the fox would imitate the voice of a neighbor from Goiko-etze and cleverly call to Mari, "Mari! The cow is eating the corn!"

Alerted by the fox's warning, Mari would run worriedly after the cows. Meanwhile, the fox would enter the house and drink the milk at his leisure. When poor Mari returned to the house, she always found the kettle empty, and she never knew how to explain it to Peru.

Peru, in turn, would blame her because he went without breakfast every morning. That was a constant source of suffering for unhappy Mari, and the cause of many arguments between man and wife.

## 12 : The War between the Animals

Once upon a time, a heavy animal—either a camel or a horse, no one knows for certain—was grazing in a meadow when he accidentally stepped on a tiny beetle.

The unhappy beetle shouted his complaint, “Ay! Ay! Lift your foot for you are crushing me beneath your hoof!” But the animal played deaf.

“So that’s how it is, eh?” chattered the beetle nervously as he worked his way out from under the trap of the heavy foot.

Once free, the beetle called a clandestine meeting of all creatures smaller than a fox. The outcome of the meeting was unanimous and categorical. They decided to declare war on all animals larger than a fox.

Once the challenge was officially announced, both sides prepared for the attack. The large animals gathered on one mountain and the small ones on another, and both warring forces maintained their positions in the face of the opposition. The larger animals then agreed to send the fox behind enemy lines as a spy to learn the number and type of the enemy forces. The fox departed to carry out his mission, but he had the bad luck of being discovered by the smaller animals. The bees and mosquitoes immediately launched an attack. They riddled the poor fox’s body with stings and sent him fleeing, but not before he gave a tragic display of aerial leaps and jumps.

On his way to the enemy’s mountain, the fox had carried his tail proudly aloft, but now on his return to his own side it was tucked shamefully between his legs, for he was humiliated by the beating he had received. Once he reached his own camp, his comrades asked impatiently, “Tell us, how did it go?”

"Fellows," replied the fox, half in confusion and half in admiration, "they may be small, but they're sharp!"

## 13 : The Wolf, the Bear, and the Fox

Once upon a time, a wolf, a bear, and a fox were working together, clearing the land and breaking up the earth. Around noon, the fox went to prepare their meal. He improvised the meal around an earthen bowl of yogurt that he had stolen from a shepherd's hut. But it looked so appetizing that he could not resist the temptation to taste it. He ate a little bit, and then a little bit more, until half the yogurt was gone. Then he took the remaining yogurt out of the bowl, filled the vessel halfway up with cow dung, and spread the yogurt over the top.

The wolf and the bear came to eat, and the fox asked them which they preferred—the top, the middle, or the bottom.

The bear said, "I prefer the bottom."

The wolf said, "I prefer the middle."

And the fox hastened to add, "Well, I prefer the top." So the fox ate the yogurt that was on the top and left the cow dung for the others.

When the wolf and the bear recognized the contents of the bowl, they began to chase the fox. The wolf managed to seize the fox by one paw, and the fox said to him, "Let go of that paw and grab me by the other." As soon as the wolf let go of the paw, the fox sped away like a shot.

They continued the chase until they reached a river, which the fox jumped over in a single leap while wagering with the others, "Let's see who can pass gas the loudest while we are jumping across!"

Of course, the fox won the bet.

At last, the fox reached the refuge of his burrow. The wolf and the bear prepared a bonfire at the mouth of his den with the intention of burning him alive. But the fox called

out from inside his den, "I thank you very much for the heat you are providing me."

The bear and wolf then changed their tactics and began flooding the burrow with water in hopes of drowning the fox. But the fox addressed them once again, "Before, you offered me heat, and now I must thank you for cooling me off so well."

After this last attempt, the wolf and the bear knew they had failed, so they left.

## 14 : The Wolf, the Fox, and the Woodcutter

One day a man was chopping firewood while a fox and a wolf watched him from a small hill. The wolf suggested to the fox, "We should kill that man and eat him."

The fox replied, "I don't trust that man very much because he has blue hair."

So the wolf went down to where the man was and expressed his desire to devour him.

"I invite you to eat fried ham with me instead," said the woodcutter, "but first we need to cut firewood to make a fire."

"That sounds fine to me," said the wolf.

The man began to split a log and asked the wolf to put his front legs in the crack of the log to make his job easier. The wolf placed his front legs in the crack, and at that same instant, the man pulled his axe free, leaving the wolf's front legs stuck in the log. The man then took that opportunity to cut the wolf's throat.

# Stories







## Stories

When it comes time to write about the story in literature, we are bound by three distinct frontiers whose lines are, nevertheless, difficult to determine. On the one hand there is the difficulty of extracting from the story the historical roots that give it substance, roots whose presence has been veiled by the tangle of fiction. Secondly, it is not an easy task to differentiate the characteristics that define and clarify the fields of story and legend. For some literary theorists, a story is any narration that sets down real or imaginary events, among which reality or a strong sense of possibility prevails. Legend, on the other hand, would be the telling of any event that contains a supernatural element or the intervention of a figure who is more than human.

For my uncle José Miguel de Barandiarán, a story is any popular narration whose characters, location, and time frame are undetermined, as in these popular introductory phrases: *Antziñan . . .* ("In the old days . . ."); *Etxe baten . . .* ("In a certain house . . ."); *Aita bat iru semekin bizi ementzan . . .* ("They say a father lived here with his three sons . . .").

On the other hand, in a legend the characters and the location are specified. Furthermore, the Basque story has a hallowed formula with which the tale often begins, as well as a formulaic ending that brings the narration to a close.

In this collection, I have omitted such formulas in the interest of greater clarity. However, I will give some examples of them here.

Formulas for beginning a story:

*Munduan asko bezela . . .* ("Like many in the world . . .")  
(Used in Atáun)

*Antxiñen munduen asko lez . . .* ("Like many in the world in the old days . . .") (Used in Elantxobe)

Munduan asko lez, arto koxko lez . . . ("Like many in the world, like an ear of corn . . .") (Used in Kortézubi)

Formulas for ending a story:

Oi ala bazan,  
sartu deilla kalabazan,  
d'ata deilla  
Bitoriko plazan.

("If this was the way it happened, jump into a pumpkin and jump out in the plaza of Vitoria.") (Used in Atáun)

Ori alan ixen bazan  
sartu deitela kalabazan  
eta urten deyela  
Derio'ko plazan.

("If this was the way it happened, jump into a pumpkin and jump out in the plaza of Derio.") (Used in Bermeo)

Finally, we must affirm that in spite of the Basques' sustained devotion to their legends and stories, their surroundings cannot be definitively established as if the stories were told only within the borders of the Basque Country. No people can remain so isolated that they do not feel their neighbors' influence. And this is especially true when we speak of the cultural influence of one people upon another.

Regarding this theme, my uncle writes, "A story cannot rightly be considered exclusively Basque, or of Basque origin, just because it was collected among our people, until after the necessary research we see that no similar story exists or has ever existed elsewhere, or that the story was produced here and later spread through other lands."

Nor can we accept the criterion of those folklorists who reject a popular story for the simple reason that its themes have already been treated by Calleja or appeared in Andersen's collections. In this anthology, for example, there appear the stories of a Cinderella story and a female version of Tom Thumb named Baratxuri, both of which are traditional in any collection of this genre.

A father once lived in a house with his three sons. The oldest son went far away to work as a servant. After he spent a year in service to a certain household, he was given a burro as his salary. But this was a unique burro: one had only to say, "Give me gold," and the burro would immediately defecate it.

One evening while returning to his father's house, the servant took a room for the night in an isolated inn. Before retiring to his room, he warned the innkeeper, "Don't even think of saying 'Give me gold' to my burro."

But as soon as the young man had shut himself in his room, the innkeeper approached the burro to take advantage of its secret. "Give me gold," said the master of the house, half curious and half greedy. And at that very instant, the burro produced an abundance of gold. The shrewd innkeeper immediately hid the burro and replaced it with a look-alike.

The following morning when the young man left his room and saw the burro, he did not notice any change. And so, in good spirits, he set off on the road toward his father's house.

As soon as he arrived home, he wasted no time in telling his father and his brothers about the gold mine that he had discovered in his burro. He immediately lay a sheet on the floor and prepared to give them a demonstration, placing the burro in the center of the sheet in such a way that it could produce the desired gold.

"Give me gold," said the young man to the burro, but the burro did not produce gold. The young man persisted, repeating his formula to the burro, but instead of producing the desired gold, the burro produced only manure.

Later, the second son went away to work as a servant. At

the end of a year, his master gave him a table in payment for his services. This table also had unique and mysterious qualities. If he said, "Prepare dinner" to the table, it would obey, and in doing so it offered a complete table service along with the meal it prepared.

While returning to his father's house, this young man stopped to spend the night in the same inn where his brother's burro had been stolen. Before going to bed, he warned the innkeeper, "Don't even think of saying 'Prepare dinner' to my table."

But as soon as the young man retired for a good night's sleep, the innkeeper cautiously approached the table and pronounced the magic words, "Prepare dinner." At that very instant the table offered up a succulent meal. As he had done the time before, the innkeeper hid the table and replaced it with a look-alike.

The following morning, the young man took the table and set off on the road home. When he arrived, he could not hide his excitement over acquiring his mysterious piece of furniture, and he wanted to demonstrate its secret powers to his family. He commanded the table, "Prepare dinner!" But the table stood still and empty, and did not prepare any kind of meal whatsoever. As you would expect, the poor young man was saddened and shamed by his failure.

Finally, the youngest brother decided to go to work as a servant. When he finished his year of service, his master gave him a stick. But this stick had exceptional powers: he had only to pronounce the word "Makilakixki" in the presence of the stick, and it would begin raining blows on everyone in its vicinity. The only one it would not strike was its young owner.

As luck would have it, on his trip home the youngest son also spent the night in the same inn where his brothers had been robbed.

On this occasion as well, before going to bed the young

man warned the innkeeper, "Do not address my stick by the name 'Makilakixki'."

"Don't worry," the innkeeper assured him. But once more, the owner of the inn betrayed the young man. He approached the stick and shouted "Makilakixki!"

Obedying the voice that called to it, the stick began to beat everything and everyone it encountered, beginning with the innkeeper and moving on to his servants. There is no need to describe the confusion caused by this mysterious stick. The innkeeper ran in search of its young owner to ask him to stop the punishing rod. It was then that the young man demanded that the innkeeper return the burro and the table stolen from the young man's brothers or else the stick would continue to hand out its punishment.

And that was how the rascally innkeeper returned the burro and the table he had stolen. The youngest son returned home happily with his stick, the table, and the burro. And from that moment on, happiness dwelt in the house.

## 2 : The Unloved Daughter-in-Law

**T**here was once a young married couple who lived with the husband's mother. One day, the husband had to leave home and go on a long journey to a distant land. Thus the daughter-in-law remained in the mother-in-law's home.

A few days after the husband's departure, the daughter-in-law gave birth to two babies, a boy and a girl. The mother-in-law hated her daughter-in-law so much that she could not bear to look at her. For that reason, when she notified her son that his wife had given birth, she added maliciously that the offspring were a dog and a cat. Terrified by this news, the husband ordered his mother to throw his wife out of their home. In fact, the mother-in-law ordered a servant to conduct her daughter-in-law and the two children to a remote mountain and kill the three of them. Moreover, she demanded that the servant bring back her daughter-in-law's heart and both her hands.

And so the servant set off down the road with the daughter-in-law, her two babes, and a little dog to keep them company. When they arrived at the mountain, the servant revealed his orders to the daughter-in-law. Sobbing miserably, the unhappy woman begged him to kill her but let her two children live.

The servant felt sorry for the daughter-in-law, but he was afraid of the old woman. Then it occurred to him to cut off the mother's two hands and tear out the little dog's heart. In that way the mother and her two children would live. And in fact, it was no sooner said than done. Afterward, the servant hung two straw knapsacks from the mother's neck and placed one of the babes in the front and the other behind. Then he left them alone on the mountain.

The poor mother wandered over the mountain with her



little ones in their baskets. As she approached a river, the babies cried, "Water! Water!" The mother knelt down at the bank of the river so that her children could sip at the water, but as luck would have it, the two children slipped from their baskets into the water and drowned before her eyes.

The poor mother sat down on an outcrop of rock and began to cry inconsolably. At that moment, an extraordinarily beautiful woman holding a small wand in her hand appeared on the opposite bank of the river.

"What are you doing there?" she asked.

The mother recounted her misfortune.

"Put your right arm in the water," said the beautiful woman.

The unfortunate mother obeyed and a moment later raised her arm from the water with her delicate hand attached.

"Put your other arm in also," the beautiful woman commanded again.

And once again the mother pulled her arm from the water with her hand attached. Immediately, she plunged both arms in the river and pulled her two babies out alive.

Then the beautiful woman told her, "Take this wand. Carry it with you to that mountain. On top of the mountain you will find a wide flat space. Trace a line with the wand in the middle of that clearing, and you will instantly have the house that you need." Having said this, the woman disappeared. She was, of course, the Virgin Mary.

Following her instructions, the mother climbed to the top of the mountain and traced a line in the earth, and to her astonishment a precious white house suddenly appeared before her eyes. The mother and her children lived there for many years. The boy and the girl both grew up to be more beautiful than the sun.

Then one day three hunters appeared on the mountain. When night fell they asked for lodging in the house on the

summit. The lady of the house befriended them and took them in.

Soon after the hunters had dined, one of them knocked on the lady's door and went in to her room. She then said to him, "Close that window."

The hunter closed the window, but no sooner had he done so than it flew open again. And so, he spent the whole night trying to close the window.

The next day the three hunters returned again to spend the night at the house. That night the second hunter knocked on the lady's door, but he also spent the night closing the window.

On the third night, the third hunter knocked on the lady's door, but she did not charge this fellow with closing the window.

The next morning, the boy of the house approached the third hunter with a pitcher in his hands and said, "Father, here is some water to wash your face and hands."

Next, the girl approached him and offered him a towel, saying, "Father, take this towel to dry your hands and face."

The hunter could not hide his surprise at hearing the children speak those words, so he asked the lady of the house for an explanation, and it was then that the woman told him the disastrous story of her life.

The hunter realized the truth, then, that he had been maliciously deceived by his mother, and at that very instant he took his wife and his children home with him to his house. As for the witch-like mother-in-law, he ordered her to be burned in the middle of the town square.

### 3 : Kastillopranko

In a certain town there lived a young man with a reputation for gambling. One night, as he left the casino after losing all his money, he ran into a sturdy fellow on the stairs. The two of them began a conversation.

"I am Kastillopranko," the sturdy fellow introduced himself. "I promise you that if tomorrow you come to my house before I have my second boot on and do three things for me that I will order you to do, you will recover the entire fortune that you have lost."

Having said that, Kastillopranko disappeared.

The young man began to inquire as to the whereabouts of Kastillopranko's house, but no one knew how to find it. One person indicated that there was a shelter for animals on a certain mountain and that, perhaps, one of the wild beasts would have news of Kastillopranko.

The young man headed at once for the mountain shelter. He knocked on the door and a crow appeared. He asked the crow about the location of Kastillopranko's house. The crow answered that he did not know, but perhaps his brother the winged lion could shed some light on it. So he went to ask the lion.

"Yes," answered the lion, "I know where Kastillopranko lives, but the road is very long, and if you wish me to take you there, you will have to provide me with an ox to eat along the way."

The young man went up on the mountain and got the lion an ox. Then the lion ordered him, "Divide this ox in four pieces and place two on my right wing, the other two on my left wing, and I will carry you in the center."

The boy did exactly as the lion commanded. The lion suddenly began to fly, carrying all his cargo. He flew and

he flew. At one moment during the flight he addressed the boy, saying, "Give me one of those ox pieces." The young man did so, and the lion swallowed it in one gulp. And again he flew and he flew.

Later the lion asked for a second piece, and he devoured it as he had the one before. And so he ate the third piece and then the fourth. The young man began to fear that the lion would conclude by eating him. But such was not the case.

It was nearly daybreak when the lion said to the young man, "Do you see that house?"

"Yes."

"Do you see those red doors?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's where Kastillopranko lives."

They walked a short distance and soon arrived at Kastillopranko's house. There the lion said good-bye to the young man and returned to his own mountain shelter.

When the young man knocked on the door, Kastillopranko was just putting on his second boot. Kastillopranko said, "You have arrived just in time, but you still have to perform the three tests that I will now propose to you. Do you see that mountain covered with brambles and underbrush? Go there and cut it all down, burn it, and plant wheat. When the wheat is ready, harvest it and grind it. And lastly, have a small loaf of bread made out of your flour and serve it at my table by eleven o'clock this morning."

Desolate, the young gambler left the house.

Kastillopranko had three daughters. The two oldest were devilishly bad, but there was something heavenly about the youngest, and it was she who came out to meet the young man and ask him what her father had proposed.

The young man relayed his entire interview in great detail. The charming young woman encouraged him, saying, "Don't be afraid. You will soon comply with everything

you have been ordered to do." She herself took charge of carrying out all the work, and before eleven o'clock, she handed the young man a small loaf of bread.

"Well done," said Kastillopranko when he saw the small loaf on his table. "You have accomplished the first task."

Next came the second test.

"I have three horses," said Kastillopranko. "I want you to tame them for me this very afternoon."

Once again the young man left Kastillopranko's presence in a sad state. And once again the mysterious young lady appeared before him.

"What has happened to you now?" she asked.

The boy told her about the second test, and she explained to him, "Those three horses are my father and my two brothers. But don't be afraid, I will help you with this new task as well." And so, with the young lady's help, he managed to tame the three horses in time.

Then Kastillopranko submitted him to the third test.

"My youngest daughter has lost a ring in the sea. Go look for it and bring it to me."

This task was certainly the most difficult of all, and it seemed an impossible one to the poor fellow. But the mysterious young woman appeared to him yet again and asked him what had happened. The boy gave her the hopeless details of his situation.

"Take heart," said the young woman, "and fulfill every detail of the instructions I am about to give you. Take an axe and chop my entire body into tiny pieces. Afterward, collect all my blood and put it in a bottle without losing a drop. Next, after sealing the bottle well, throw it into the sea. Wherever you see the water bubbling, there you will find the bottle. Put your hand in the water, take out the bottle, pour all the blood over my chopped-up body, and I will once again be as I was before."

The young man carried out all these instructions in

scrupulous detail. And when he pulled the bottle out of the water, he saw with surprise that the ring had settled around the cork.

Next, he sprinkled the girl's chopped-up body with the blood in the bottle, and the lovely figure of the mysterious young woman appeared at once before his eyes.

But the result was not perfect. The young man had accidentally missed a single drop of blood when collecting it in the bottle. For that reason the young woman lost the little finger of her left hand.

Kastillopranko kept his promise and presented the boy with everything he had lost at gambling. Moreover, he offered him one of his daughters for a bride, but he imposed one condition: the young man would have to choose one of the three with his eyes blindfolded. The gambler accepted the proposal, and after having his eyes covered Kastillopranko placed him before his daughters. The young man took each of the three daughters' hands in his own and chose the one who had no little finger on her left hand. Afterward, he and the beautiful woman were married.

Kastillopranko, however, was planning to kill the newlyweds. But that very night, after everyone had gone to bed, the young wife revealed her father's cruel plan to her husband, and they decided to avoid death by fleeing the house at once. With that in mind, the young woman said to her husband, "Go to the stable, and there you will find three horses. One runs with the speed of thought, the second with the speed of the wind, and the third walks very slowly. Mount the first one and have him ready at the door so that we may flee." With that, the husband went quickly to the stable.

Kastillopranko, meanwhile, was maintaining a vigil, and every now and then he would approach the door of the newlyweds' bedroom and ask, "Are you asleep yet?"

"Not yet," the wife would answer from within.

While the young husband was preparing a horse in the stable, his wife was implementing yet another plan. She spat saliva all over the floor, and every time Kastillopranko would ask on his nocturnal rounds, "Are you asleep yet?" the saliva would respond, "Not yet."

Once the horse was ready to travel, they lay a wineskin in their bed as their replacement. Then the two of them climbed on the mount's back and fled. But it turned out that the horses had gotten mixed up, and it was not the first one that carried them but the one that only ran like the wind.

While they were fleeing as fast as the wind, Kastillopranko continued to ask at the bedroom door, "Are you asleep yet?" and the saliva continued to answer, "Not yet."

As one would expect, with the passage of time, the saliva began to dry. When it was almost all dry, Kastillopranko asked his usual question, but the saliva could not answer more than, "N-n-n-o-t-t . . ."

Again Kastillopranko shouted, "Are you asleep yet?" And this time no one answered. At that moment, Kastillopranko entered the room and attacked the newlyweds' bed, stabbing it repeatedly with a knife. The wine escaped from the wineskin and flooded the whole room.

The next day, when Kastillopranko entered the newlyweds' room, and saw that instead of killing the young couple he had stabbed a wineskin, he stomped furiously out to the stable where he mounted the horse that ran as fast as thought and took off at full speed after the fugitives.

At one point he met some reapers harvesting a wheat field, and he asked them if they had seen a couple in those parts mounted on a horse running as fast as the wind.

They said no, and Kastillopranko began to lose hope when one of the workers told him, "Now I remember nine



months ago, when we were sowing this very field, a couple passed by on the back of a horse that ran at dizzying speed."

"If it was only nine months ago," replied Kastillopranko, "it's not a problem."

And he took up the chase again, riding at top speed. At one point he caught sight of the couple at the very moment they were hiding themselves behind the peak of a distant mountain. The young wife had also become aware of Kastillopranko's presence, so she proposed to her husband, "Let's dismount here. I will turn myself into an onion and you set about digging the earth. If Kastillopranko asks you anything, you answer that it's very good weather for working."

And in fact, Kastillopranko arrived and asked the young man about the couple on the horse.

"It's very good weather for working," replied the young man.

"That is not what I asked you. I asked if you have seen two young people on horseback in these parts."

"Yes, it is very good weather for working," the young man replied again.

Kastillopranko took him for a madman and spurred his horse toward the horizon at top speed. Delivered from danger, the two young people remounted and continued on their way. But one day they noticed that Kastillopranko was coming after them once more. And so, the mysterious woman turned their horse into a shrine, herself into a statue, and her husband into a sacristan. When Kastillopranko reached them, the sacristan was ringing the bell. Kastillopranko asked him if he had seen two young people on horseback pass by there.

"The Mass is about to begin," came the answer.

"That is not what I asked you. I asked if you have seen two young people in these parts."

"In fact," the young man replied, hoping to mislead him, "the Mass has already begun."

Faced with this last response, Kastillopranko admitted defeat and headed home. The young married couple, in turn, headed for the husband's village where they lived for many years in total harmony and happiness.

#### 4 : Dar-Dar-Dar

**I**n an isolated house on a mountain there lived two siblings, a boy and a girl. The two of them were engaged in the unusual occupation of gathering ash and selling it. In this simple way they made their living.

One day they were walking through the forest carrying a cauldron full of ash when suddenly a man appeared before them who offered to train them in a more dignified line of work. He put a rifle and two large dogs at their disposal and suggested that they dedicate themselves to hunting and selling game.

Following the man's advice, the brother became a hunter while the sister took care of the household chores. One day while the sister was alone in the house, the devil himself came to the door and shouted at her threateningly, "Dar-Dar-Dar, give me the first finger of your right hand."

"No, I will not," answered the girl.

"If you don't give it to me, I will eat you."

Faced with this threat, the girl became frightened and stretched a finger through a crack in the door.

The devil sucked on it until he had sucked all the flesh off. Then he added in a menacing tone, "I will return tomorrow morning at ten. If you tell anyone about me I will eat you."

The devil returned the next morning at ten o'clock and once again threatened the girl from the doorway.

"Dar-Dar-Dar, give me the second finger of your right hand."

The girl slipped her second finger through the crack in the door, and the devil sucked at it until he sucked all the flesh off. The girl could no longer hide her sadness. Her brother noticed her change of mood and asked her what was causing her suffering.

"It's nothing," she replied.

The following day, the devil returned and again demanded, "Dar-Dar-Dar, give me the third finger of your right hand."

Once again, the girl slipped her finger through the crack in the door and once again the devil sucked all its flesh off. And the devil came a fourth time and sucked the flesh from her fourth finger.

The poor girl finally fell ill. Her brother persisted in his questions until at last the girl confessed the truth to him. So on the fifth day the hunter stayed home. He posted the two dogs to protect the girl's bed and, armed with his rifle, he placed himself in the center of it.

Once more the devil came and shouted through the door, "Dar-Dar-Dar, give me the fifth finger of your right hand."

"I don't think I will," answered the girl.

"If you don't give it to me, then I will eat you both." And with that, the devil broke down the door and entered the house.

Then the boy untied the dogs and sicced them on the devil. The two dogs made sure they destroyed the devil once and for all.

Some time later the same young hunter was roaming about the mountain when a man appeared before him and said without preamble, "Come with me to my house."

The man's house was a veritable palace. The two entered, but the owner behaved in a very strange way with the young man. They had barely entered one room when the owner led them out of it and into another. In this way, they passed through twelve rooms. When they arrived at the thirteenth room, the owner stood still and asked the young man point-blank, "Do you know who killed my brother?" And with that, he closed the thirteen doors with thirteen keys and left the young man locked in.

When he realized his situation, the young man began to shout for his dogs, but his only response was silence. He

shouted again and again, with only the same reply. But soon the distant echo of a bark reached the young man's ears. So he shouted again, putting all his soul into the cry. And indeed, the sound of barking was coming closer and closer. At last, the two dogs arrived at the door of the palace. Immediately they hurled themselves upon the devil and killed him. Then they broke down the thirteen doors and freed their master.

After that, the two siblings decided to move away from that place. So they walked and walked, and while they were walking, they spied the marvelous palace of a king. The king's son fell in love with the young girl and married her, and the two of them lived very happily.

The boy, on the other hand, decided to travel to a very distant mountain. On that mountain was a cave inhabited by a seven-headed dragon. This dragon needed to eat a whole person every day. If he did not find a person to eat at the mouth of his cave, he would descend to the villages and commit terrible deeds. His presence incited such fear in the villages that the inhabitants decided to provide him with his daily ration by drawing straws to see who would be his next victim. The king of that region had promised to give his own daughter in marriage to the man who was able to kill the dragon.

On the very day that our young hunter arrived on that mountain, none other than the daughter of the king was waiting her turn at the mouth of the cave. Expectant and trembling, the unfortunate young woman was awaiting the dragon's arrival. She carried with her a bushel of gold to give to anyone who could take her place in that tragic circumstance. As soon as the hunter realized what her situation was, he alertly ordered, "Stand behind me."

A short time later, the horrendous figure of the dragon appeared at the mouth of the cave, and the beast com-

manded the hunter, "Bring to me the one you have behind you."

"I think not," the young man responded bravely.

"I assure you, if you do not do as I tell you, then I will eat you both."

The young man then challenged him, "Come closer if you dare."

At that very instant, the unusually enormous monster began its exit from the cave, and the boy sicced his dogs on it. Between them, the two dogs tore away four of the dragon's heads, and the hunter destroyed the other three with his rifle. As a result, the dragon was most definitely dead.

The young man then cut the tongues from the seven heads and asked the king's daughter how many garments she was wearing.

"Seven," she replied.

"May I have a piece of each one?" he asked.

"Of course." And the king's daughter did as the hunter asked and gave him a piece of each of her garments. The young man wrapped each tongue in a piece of garment and went into the forest to continue his hunt.

Several days later, a charcoal maker spied the heads of the dragon and cut them into pieces. Afterward, he presented himself, along with the seven dragon heads, in the king's palace, saying that he had killed the dragon. Naturally, everyone believed him and the king offered him the hand of his daughter and held a great feast in his honor.

Meanwhile, the young hunter continued to hunt through the mountains. One day he met a man walking along in the company of a little dog. They struck up a conversation, and soon an argument arose between them concerning each other's dogs, and the argument ended in a wager designed to demonstrate which of the dogs was the smartest.

The hunter commanded one of his large dogs to bring him the first cup of broth that would be served at the king's table. The owner of the little dog commanded his, in turn, to bring him the first cup of wine. The hunter's dog brought the cup of broth without spilling a drop. The little dog also brought a cup to his owner, but it was empty.

When the king saw the dogs take the broth and the wine from his table, he flew into a rage and ordered his men to follow them. When the king's men arrived at the place where the hunter and his companion were, they took them prisoner and delivered them before the king.

The king was very impressed with the hunter's intelligence and invited him to dine at his table. The charcoal maker was there as well, displaying the seven heads and telling everyone his own version of how he killed the dragon. The hunter then asked him pointedly if perhaps the heads were tongueless. When he heard this question, the charcoal maker became nervous and tried to find a way out of his uncomfortable situation.

The hunter then produced the seven tongues wrapped in the seven fragments of garment, and placing them before the king's daughter, he asked her, "Do you recognize these pieces of garment?" And in fact, she did recognize the tiny remnants. In the face of this evidence, they burned the charcoal maker in the middle of the square, and the hunter married the princess.



## 5 : The Wondrous Men

In the remote past, when there were no trains or automobiles or any other means of locomotion, a runner heard that the king was ill and raced off in the direction of Madrid.

During his trip, he noticed a man bending near the earth with his ear to the ground. The runner approached him and asked, "My good man, what are you doing in that position?"

"I am trying to hear the sound of a seed germinating."

Deeply impressed, the runner persisted, "Can you really hear the noise made by a germinating seed?"

"I certainly can," assured the man with keen hearing.

"I see that you are more intelligent than other people. Why don't you come with me to Madrid? The king is ill and he may need us."

"Ah! That sounds like a good idea. I shall accompany you."

And so the two of them set off for Madrid. As they walked along, another man caught their attention. His feet were firmly planted on the ground, and he was pointing the muzzle of his rifle toward the clouds.

They approached him and asked, "Why are you behaving so strangely?"

"Well, look," he replied, "I just now hit a bull's-eye on that animal that is beginning to fall from the sky."

But no matter how hard they tried, neither of the two men could see a thing.

"Where is this animal?"

"There!" pointed the hunter. "Don't you see it?"

The two men looked at one another in astonishment and said to the third, "My good man, we are amazed by your feat. We are sure that no one can do what you do. Why don't you come with us to Madrid? The king is ill and may need our help."

The hunter slung his rifle over his shoulder and accepted their offer. "Agreed. I shall go with you."

And so the three men were walking along in the direction of Madrid when they spied yet another man blowing his nose over and over again.

"What good is this practice of blowing your nose?" they asked the man as they approached.

"It caught your attention, didn't it?" answered the clever fellow. "Besides, I can move that windmill with nothing but the blowing of my nose."

The three companions could not hide their surprise and invited him along. "We are going to Madrid because we know that the king is ill. You may wish to accompany us, for he may need our help."

"Let's go," he responded decisively. And so the team grew to include a fourth member.

They had covered a good stretch of road when they spied the figure of a woodcutter chopping an enormous log, and they struck up a conversation. "Will you be able to cut through this entire trunk with one blow of your axe?" they asked curiously.

"Yes, of course."

"And how will you transport all this heavy wood after cutting it?" they inquired.

"By carrying it on my back," the woodcutter answered easily.

The four companions were impressed by the strength of the woodcutter and, just as they had done on previous occasions, they said to him, "You should come with us to Madrid! We have learned that the king is ill, and we are going to offer our services in case he needs us."

"Then I shall go with you as well."

And so the men fulfilled their pledge and presented themselves at the door of the royal palace. The five fellows stood at the door, waiting for an opportunity to enter,

when the king's doctor passed by on his way to see the king. After visiting his illustrious patient, he prescribed medicinal water from a distant spa. The palace staff offered no less than seven ox hides filled with gold to whoever brought the prescribed water most quickly. When the five men heard about this, the runner offered to complete the task. But a shrewd woman who likewise hoped to earn the gold also offered to go in search of the medicinal water. The two competitors departed, having been provided with jugs to carry the water in. Everyone else remained behind, anxiously awaiting the outcome.

The runner moved ahead of the woman very quickly, but as he returned loaded down with water he met her going the other way, and the woman said to him, "Well, we can see that you have won the bet. Let's stop and chat for a bit while we rest."

All the woman's hopes were centered on winning that gold, and while they talked and rested, she offered the man some opium. Almost immediately, he was deeply asleep. The woman took advantage of his condition to make off with his jugs full of water, leaving her empty ones in their place, and she left quickly for Madrid.

Meanwhile, the man's companions were waiting impatiently to hear some news of the race. The man who could hear a seed germinate identified the sound of the woman's footsteps. He approached his companions and said, "We've had some bad luck. The woman has passed our man. We have lost." Needless to say, the men became very concerned.

Then the hunter scanned the horizon and saw their companion sleeping deeply, his head pillowed on a rock. Without hesitation, he swung his rifle up to his shoulder and fired a shot so well placed that it shattered the stone on which the runner's head was resting.

The man woke up, took the empty jugs, and ran at dizzy-

ing speed to fill them with water from the spa. He then retraced his steps so quickly that he arrived in Madrid before the woman did. The palace staff gave him the seven ox hides filled with gold and the strong man carried it all on his back.

They were returning home, singing, happy and content, when the people of Madrid began to regret their generosity. They decided the reward was excessive, so they sent troops after the men. But the man who could move a windmill by blowing his nose blew them all away as if they were dry leaves. And from that day on, they all enjoyed life with their abundant wealth.

## 6 : More Wondrous Men: John the Soldier

**J**ohn the Soldier was a very strong man and a close friend of Saint Peter. But after Jesus Christ called on Saint Peter to be an apostle, John and Saint Peter were forced to separate.

So John the Soldier went out in search of new companions. And that was how he met Johnny the Hunter, who was standing with one leg tied to a millstone, on the lookout for a hare. John the Soldier inquired curiously why the millstone was tied to his leg. Johnny answered that the stone kept his leg still and stopped him whenever he felt the urge to hop off in pursuit of the hare.

John the Soldier invited him along to travel the world. And so the two fellows were walking along together when they met a man who flattened mountains by sitting on them. They invited this man to travel the world with them.

The three men were continuing their journey when they met another fellow. This man stored no less than 1,250 pounds of wool in each nostril. They asked him why he kept so much wool up his nose, and he answered that it was a precaution to keep his breath inside and avoid catastrophe. They asked him to give them a demonstration by unstopping one of his nostrils. No sooner was his nasal passage open than all the trees in the surrounding area were knocked down by the force of his breath.

John the Soldier was very impressed by this feat and ordered the man to plug the nostril at once. John then invited him to accompany the group on their journey.

They continued on, looking for a fifth companion, when they happened to run into a woodcutter who uprooted trees as if they were scallions and piled them in bundles to carry them home. John the Soldier asked him what he earned in that line of work.

"About four maravedis a day," he replied. And so the woodcutter became associated with the four world travelers.

However, it turned out that in spite of their long journey throughout the world, they did not encounter any opposition. Then one of the members of the group became very thirsty, no doubt as a result of their long walk, and he stopped at a river for a drink of water. He drank so deeply that he sucked up a ship that was traveling in that area. Subsequently, he got a bellyache and died. His death affected the others greatly, and they all returned home.



## 7 : Patxi the Blacksmith

**T**hey say that Patxi the Blacksmith was a very bad man. He was so bad that a devil was sent to carry Patxi to hell. One morning the devil appeared in Patxi's blacksmith shop. Patxi happened to be working at that moment, busy with the various chores of his profession: hammering on his anvil, pumping his bellows, removing hot embers, and inserting axes, plowshares, and other iron implements into his forge.

"Good morning," greeted the devil.

"Morning," responded Patxi.

"They have assured me," said the devil, "that you behave like a very bad man, and I have come to take you with me to hell."

"Agreed!" said Patxi, "but first, let me invite you to have breakfast with me." So they went and sat at the table and had breakfast.

When breakfast was over, Patxi got up and said to the devil, "Now we may leave whenever you wish." The devil started to get up, but no matter how hard he tried—and he struggled vigorously—he could not rise from the table. It turned out that Patxi had spread pitch on that part of the table and the unhappy devil was stuck there, unable to move.

Patxi kept the devil in that condition for three years, until one day when the devil warmed the pitch with fire and it melted. As soon as the devil realized he was free, he escaped as fast as he could and tried never to think of Patxi again. But far from being punished, Patxi continued to behave badly. So once more those in hell decided to send a new devil to conduct him to Hades.

But the devil who had gone before warned the new one,



"You be careful. And if Patxi invites you to sit at his table, don't you dare accept."

The second devil also knocked one morning on the door of Patxi's blacksmith shop.

"Good morning," greeted the devil.

"Morning," replied Patxi.

"The news has reached my ears," said the devil, "that you commit truly outrageous acts in the world, and I have come with express orders to take you to hell."

"Agreed!" said Patxi, "but first let me invite you to have breakfast with me."

"Yes, let's!" said the devil.

And the two of them entered Patxi's kitchen.

"Sit down at my table," said Patxi to the devil.

"No, thank you, I'll be fine on my feet," replied the devil.

"Well then, make yourself comfortable on that bench and rest a bit while I have breakfast, for you could use a rest after such a long journey."

"That sounds like a better idea," said the devil, and he sat down on the bench.

As soon as Patxi finished his breakfast he addressed the devil, "Well, we can leave whenever you wish." But no matter how hard he tried, the poor devil could not get up from the bench. This time Patxi had smeared the bench with pitch, and he kept this devil for three years as well until it occurred to the devil to melt the pitch with fire. No sooner did the devil realize he was free than he fled at great speed down the road to hell.

Patxi continued to live in the world, committing deeds that were even worse than before, if that was possible. Meanwhile, in hell they were worried about Patxi's behavior, for it was unworthy of a man, and so they decided to send yet another devil.

The first two devils warned the third one not to accept any offer to sit at the table or on the bench. With these

cautions in mind, the last devil went into the world and approached Patxi's house.

"Good morning," greeted the devil.

"Morning," replied Patxi.

"Everywhere I go," said the devil, "I hear nothing but talk about the evil deeds you do."

"That is not true."

"How can it not be true if I have come with orders to carry you off to hell with me this very moment?"

"Agreed!" said Patxi, "but first we can at least have breakfast together."

"Yes, let's!"

They had no sooner entered the kitchen when Patxi said to the devil, "Sit down at the table."

"No, I'll be fine standing up," replied the devil.

"Then rest yourself a bit on that bench, for you could use a rest after such a long journey."

"The truth of the matter is, I'm not at all tired."

"Well, then, climb up that fig tree by the door and eat all the figs you want while I have some breakfast. I can assure you," he said cleverly, "that the figs are very ripe."

"That sounds like a better idea," said the devil. "I will climb the fig tree." And in a single leap, the devil reached the top of the tree.

As soon as he finished breakfast, Patxi called to the devil from the doorway. And it was then, when the devil tried to climb down, that he realized he too had been the victim of a trap. The fig tree was covered with pitch and the devil was stuck.

The most tragic hours of the day for the poor devil were when the children got out of school, for they all came by the tree to throw rocks at him. The devil occasionally shouted rude things, but Patxi was deaf to his cries. He kept the devil there for three years until the devil melted the pitch with the heat of a flame. When the devil realized he

was free, he ran away as fast as he could, and once more Patxi continued to live in the world.

But as time went by, the hour of Patxi's death finally arrived. No sooner had he died than Patxi headed off toward hell with his hammer, his roasting spit, and his pincers. He knocked on the door with his hammer: bang, bang, bang.

"Who is it?" they asked from inside.

"Patxi the Blacksmith," he replied.

When they heard Patxi's name, the devils pushed as hard as they could to brace the door shut so that he could not enter. One of the devils wanted to verify that it was really Patxi on the other side of the door, and he put his eye up to a crack to peek through.

Patxi put out his eye with the roasting spit.

Another devil decided to recognize him by his voice and pressed his ear to the crack in the door.

Patxi pulled his ear off with the pincers.

Finally, seeing that those in hell would not open the door to him, he set off toward heaven. He knocked at the gates of heaven. Saint Peter opened the gate and asked him who he was.

"I'm Patxi the Blacksmith," he replied.

When Saint Peter heard his name, he would not let him pass.

At that moment an old woman appeared at the gate. She recognized Patxi the Blacksmith and became afraid. But to keep him from hurting her, she began to praise him, lauding his good behavior in the world, presenting him as a famous benefactor, and endowing him with other excellent qualities. Upon hearing the old woman's affirmation of Patxi's virtues, Saint Peter opened the gates of heaven to him.

And that is how Patxi the Blacksmith came to enjoy Paradise.

## 8 : A Cinderella Story

**T**here was once a mother who lived with her two daughters, Jane and Mary. Jane was very ugly, but her mother loved her very much. Mary, however, was beautiful, but her mother did not love her at all. The mother kept Mary shut away in the pigpen and fed her only the hulls of seeds.

One day when the neighboring household was having a wedding, the mother and Jane attended as invited guests while Mary stayed behind in the pigpen. But then the Virgin Mother appeared to Mary and entertained her with a splendid meal. Next, she dressed her in gold and silver and conducted her to the house where they were celebrating the wedding. There, Mary had the extraordinary opportunity of dancing with the king. Afterward, the Virgin Mother accompanied her home once again, gave her something more to eat, and left her in her pigpen.

When Jane returned with her mother, she said to her sister, "We had the good luck of witnessing a marvelous sight. Nothing less than the king dancing with a handsome young woman."

Mary asked suggestively, "I don't suppose it was me, was it?"

"Oh, yes," her sister commented scornfully. "Hah! How could it be you, standing there in that pigpen?"

The next day, the wedding celebration continued, and they all attended as they had the day before. But this time Mary lost one of her shoes on the staircase. As fate would have it, the king found the shoe and promised to marry the woman whose foot fit inside it.

All the girls of the village lined up to try on the shoe, but it did not fit any of them. Jane also tried to put it on, and she even managed to succeed by forcing her toes into it.

So the king took Jane away on a trip, but a mysterious little bird accused Jane, saying her foot did not fit that shoe and that she was not the woman intended for the king.

The king asked Jane if she had a sister. She answered yes, she did. The king made Jane send for her sister, and he tried the shoe on Mary, and it fit perfectly.

Then Mary and the king were married and they lived happily ever after.

## 9 : The Little Cobbler

**I**n a certain village there lived a little cobbler. He was always busy making shoes, but he never finished any. So it is no surprise that he lived in poverty.

One fine day, he left his house determined to better his condition. And so he walked and walked until he came to a dwelling. He knocked at the door and a woman came out. He asked her if she could give him lodging for the night.

The woman replied, "As far as I'm concerned, I'd be happy to take you into my home, as long as you keep in mind that my son is a giant, and if he finds you here when he returns, he is sure to eat you."

Pretending a self-confidence that he did not feel, the little cobbler said, "Ah, well, I don't care if he is two giants."

When she saw how sure of himself he was, the woman invited him to enter. She immediately served him dinner and then conducted him to a pile of straw in the attic. There, in a corner of the pile, the little cobbler cringed in fear, thinking about what would happen to him that night. Filled with so much nervous tension, it is no wonder that he could hardly sleep. After a while, he heard someone knock at the door: bang, bang, bang.

It was the giant. When he entered the house, he began to sniff and said in a threatening tone, "There is a stranger in this house."

"Yes, there is," replied his mother. "In the hayloft there is a man who assured me that he is not afraid of even two giants."

"Indeed? Well, now we shall see," said the giant as he strode up toward the attic.

The little cobbler trembled in his straw-filled corner. He did not even have the strength to move, but he did have

an excellent throat and a powerful voice. He left his corner and shouted loudly, "What are you looking for here?"

The attic was very dark, and the giant trembled when he heard that voice. He explained that he was coming in friendship with no harm intended.

"Well, such had better be the case," said the cobbler, becoming more bold, "because I am not one who jokes around." So the two of them made their peace and agreed to live together in the house.

One day they went up on a mountain and found a cherry tree loaded with cherries. The giant seized the top of the cherry tree and doubled it over until it touched the ground so that the two of them could eat their fill. Once the giant had eaten all the cherries he wanted, he let go of the branch he was holding, and the cherry tree righted itself, taking with it the little cobbler who wound up hanging from a branch.

"What are you doing up there," asked the giant.

"Well, as you can see," replied the cobbler, "I am demonstrating my agility."

On another occasion, they went to a remote cave where a dragon lived. They had decided to kill the dragon, and with that plan in mind they guarded the mouth of the cave for a long time. When they grew tired of waiting, they drew straws to see which one would enter the cave. The cobbler won the draw.

No sooner had the cobbler entered the cave when the dragon saw him, took him by the waist with its dagger-like teeth, and carried him outside. When the giant saw his companion in the mouth of the dragon, he killed the beast with a hammer blow to the head.

The cobbler was filled with joy at being saved, but he did not want to appear too humble, so feigning disgust he reprimanded the giant for having killed the dragon while he



was bringing it out alive, dragging it by the tongue, to do with as they saw fit.

The giant was surprised. "Ah! Well, I thought that the reverse was true. I thought it was the dragon who had conquered you."

"You were wrong," replied the cobbler. "My plan was to bring it out alive so the two of us could decide its fate."

As it happened, the king in those parts had promised to bestow great riches upon whoever brought him the head of the dragon. The little cobbler stood on the giant's shoulders and cut off the dragon's head and presented it to the king.

The king kept his promise and loaded the cobbler down with riches, and the cobbler returned to his village a wealthy man.

Once upon a time there was a married couple with two children, Catalina and Bernardo, both of whom went to school. One day their mother promised them that she was going to leave a cup of milk in the cupboard for the one who returned home from school first. Bernardo was the first to arrive. He opened the door of the cupboard but did not find any milk, so he ran looking for his mother.

"Mother, the milk is not in the cupboard."

"Yes, it's there, Bernardo," replied his mother. "Put your head way inside."

Bernardo put his head farther inside, but at that very instant his mother closed the door with a bang and cut off his head. Next she cut him up in little pieces and put him in a cauldron to cook.

A short time later, Catalina came home and asked about her brother.

"He still has not returned," replied her mother. "There is milk for you in the cupboard. Go get it."

But suddenly, Catalina observed with horror that her brother's fingers were floating to the top of the boiling cauldron. Then her mother reminded her that she had to take dinner to her father.

Catalina was walking along with the meal balanced on her head, crying inconsolably, when she met an old woman.

"What has happened to you, Catalina?" she asked.

"Nothing you can help me with."

"Why not, child? I will solve your problem."

The girl told the old woman the whole story, including the part about her brother, the pieces of whom she was carrying to her father for dinner. The old woman suggested

that she carefully gather all the bones that her father threw away. And she added, "Your father will ask you, 'Why are you keeping those bones, Catalina?' You must answer him, 'To play with.' Next, return to your house, take out a hoe, make a hole in the ground, and bury all the bones. Your mother will wonder and ask you, 'What are you doing there, Catalina?' And you must answer, 'Planting garlic.' That will seem like a good idea to your mother and she will say to you, 'Very well, very well, plant garlic, we need some.'"

Catalina reached the place where her father was, and as he ate, she followed the advice of the old woman and carefully collected the bones that her father tossed away. Her father asked her, "What do you want those bones for, Catalina?"

"To play with."

When she returned home, she dug the hole and was burying the bones when her mother asked her, "What are you doing there, Catalina?"

"Planting garlic."

"Ah, good, we need some!"

The following morning when her father got up, he saw a graceful tree growing in the middle of the garden. Up in the tree was Bernardo holding a tempting orange in one hand and a sword in the other. His father said to him, "My son, give me that beautiful orange."

"I will give it to you," said the son, "if you will jump over my sword three times." The father jumped, once, twice, and the third time Bernardo cut off his head.

Later his mother came and said to him, "My son, will you give me that beautiful orange?"

"I will give it to you," said the son, "if you will jump over my sword three times." The mother jumped, once, twice, and the third time Bernardo cut off her head.

A little later, he saw his sister Catalina, and she said to

him, "Bernardo, now you can give me that beautiful orange."

"I will give it to you," said her brother, "if you will jump over my sword three times."

"No! You will cut off my head like you did our parents!"

"Calm yourself. I will not hurt you."

Catalina jumped three times, and her brother gave her the orange. And from that moment on, they were both very happy.

## II : Baratzxuri

**T**hey say that in the distant past there lived a man and wife with their tiny little daughter. The daughter was called Baratzxuri, or "Little Garlic," and she accompanied her mother during all her domestic chores while her father worked on the mountain.

One day Baratzxuri took the cows out to graze, and while they grazed, she fell asleep. One cow mistook her for a blade of grass and swallowed her whole. When she saw that the cows did not return home, the mother feared that some accident had befallen Baratzxuri and she ran out in search of her. When she arrived at the place where the cows were grazing, the mother began to call Baratzxuri's name, and Baratzxuri answered, "Here I am!"

The mother could hear her but could not see her, and she asked where she was. Baratzxuri replied that she was in the stomach of a cow. Then her mother gathered the cattle and drove them home, and when the time came, one of the cows expelled Baratzxuri along with a pile of manure.

On another day Baratzxuri's mother gave her the task of taking lunch to her father. But Baratzxuri was frightened and told her mother that she did not dare go alone. Her mother calmed her and told her not to worry. The burro knew the way very well, and she could travel hidden in the animal's ear.

So Baratzxuri followed her mother's advice and took lunch to her father while traveling in the ear of a burro, and she did the same when it came time to return home.

But while she was returning, she met up with a group of thieves who were at that moment distributing their day's take. The thief in charge of the split was saying, "This is for me, and this is for you, and this is for him."

When Baratxuri heard the thieves' conversation she asked, "And for me?"

When the thieves heard her voice, they were startled, but since they did not see anyone, they continued their task of splitting the take. "This is for me, and this is for you, and this is for him."

And Baratxuri repeated from the burro's ear, "And for me?"

Once again the thieves were startled, but when they saw nothing but the burro, they continued their task. "This is for me, and this is for you, and this is for him."

But Baratxuri asked a third time, "And for me?"

When the thieves heard the mysterious voice a third time they panicked and fled in terror, abandoning their loot. Whereupon Baratxuri gathered it all up, loaded it on the burro, and returned happily to her home.

From that day forward, there was no lack of wealth in that house.

## 12 : Your Soul for Me, My Money for You

Once there were two brothers who began studying for the priesthood, but they were so poor that they could not continue. While hiking in the mountains one day they met a man who asked them what they did.

"We planned to study for the priesthood," they answered, "but we had to quit for lack of money."

The man made them a proposition. "I am going to give you a sack full of gold and a vase. If within one year you can guess what the vase is made of, the sack of gold will be yours. If you cannot, your souls will belong to me."

The two brothers returned home and prayed to God that they might know what material the vase was made of. They had only one day left before the year ran out, and on that day one of the brothers climbed a mountain and sat down at the mouth of a cave.

He was very comfortable there when he saw the devil dancing with a witch, and he heard the devil tell the witch, "Tomorrow at this time I have an appointment with two young men."

"What for?" asked the witch.

"I gave them a vase and told them that if they could guess what it was made of I would give them a sack of gold, and if they couldn't they would have to give me their souls."

"And tell me," said the curious witch, "what is the vase made of?"

"Fingernails cut on Fridays and Saturdays."

Naturally, the young man overheard the entire conversation.

The next day, the two brothers went up into the mountains. The devil, mounted on a red horse, appeared on the



road before them and asked, "Have you guessed what the vase is made of yet?"

"Fingernails cut on Fridays and Saturdays," answered the two in unison.

The devil had no choice but to leave them the sack of gold—plenty of money to pay for their studies.

### 13 : Two Sane Men and Their Crazy Brother

Once upon a time a mother lived in a house with her three sons, one of whom was half crazy. The mother fell ill, and the doctor prescribed a hot bath. Two of the brothers had to go to work on the mountain. The one that was left at home was the half-crazy one. His brothers gave him the task of giving their mother her hot bath.

And in fact, he put water on to heat in a large cauldron, and then put his mother in the cauldron of boiling water. Afterward, he took her out—dead—put her in bed, dressed her, and placed her distaff at her waist. Then he left her there as if she were spinning.

At nightfall, the two sane brothers came home from work.

“How is mother?” they asked.

“Ah, she’s fine! I bathed her, and she felt very rested afterwards. Right now she’s spinning.”

You can imagine what the two brothers thought when they entered their mother’s bedroom and found her dead!

Since they were very poor, they decided to go out into the world to try to find a more profitable line of work. So they loaded the large front door of the house on their backs and headed up a mountain. As evening approached, they climbed up into a fat oak tree, dragging their door behind them, and settled down to spend the night.

A short time later, a gang of thieves camped beneath that same tree. After lighting a fire, the thieves set about preparing dinner and put a piece of meat in a frying pan to cook. Meanwhile, the three brothers sat silently in the top of the tree. But all of a sudden the half-crazy brother expressed a need to relieve himself.

"Then move carefully to the end of that branch and pee a little bit at a time," his brothers said.

So he did as they told him: he moved to the end of the branch and peed, all of it falling directly into the frying pan below.

The thieves jumped for joy.

"How great is God!" they cried. "He has sent us butter and oil from heaven!"

After dinner, they began to count out their stolen money. While the thieves counted, the three brothers let the door drop on top of them, killing some and causing the others to take flight. Their panic was such that they did not remember to rescue their stolen money, and they abandoned it under the tree. The three brothers climbed down and took possession of the money.

Afterward they returned to their home and lived happily ever after.

## 14 : The Evil Witch

**I**n a certain village there lived a young married couple. They were rich and lacked for nothing. They also had a son who was still very small and who attracted a great deal of attention because of his comeliness.

One day the mother was seated with her baby in the shade of an ash tree when a very ugly old woman approached her.

"Would you like me to comb your hair?" asked the old woman.

"No, I don't need my hair combed."

"Well, it's very mussed," continued the old woman, "and it wouldn't hurt to give it just a little touching up. I will fix it myself."

"Since you are so bent on doing it," said the young woman, resignedly, "comb my hair." And she put her head in the old woman's hands.

But it happened that the old woman was a witch, and she fastened a pin with a black skull on it in the young woman's hair. At that very moment, the young woman changed into a dove and flew away. The ugly old woman, in turn, sat down in the shade of the tree with the baby on her lap.

A few people who passed by the tree saw her and stared at her in wonder. They even asked her who she was. She responded that she was the baby's mother, but no one believed her because they knew that the baby's mother was a very beautiful young woman.

Nevertheless, the old woman insisted that she was the mother and defended herself, saying that a witch had turned her into an ugly old hag. She persisted so strongly in her story that in the end they believed her and took her home. There she lived for a time as the lady of the house.

Meanwhile, a very white, very beautiful dove frequently

came to perch in the garden. The man of the house watched the dove and looked for an opportunity to catch her, but the witch, posing as his wife, tried everything she could think of to make him abandon his plan. She asked him again and again why he wanted a dove that was so colorless.

But one fine day the man of the house succeeded in trapping the dove. He was caressing it affectionately when he noticed that it had something on its head. Indeed, after a thorough examination, he discovered the black skull pin. He took it off, and immediately the dove changed into a woman whom the man recognized as his first wife.

Shortly thereafter, when the young woman recounted what had happened, they captured the old witch, dragged her to the village square, and burned her.

From that time on, the father, the mother, and the baby lived happily together in their home.

## 15 : Johnny the Bear

**I**n a certain cave there once lived a young woman who had been kidnapped by a bear. While she was in the cave, she gave birth to a baby boy. The bear held both of them prisoner by means of a large stone that he used to seal the mouth of the cave.

One day when the child was five years old, he asked his mother, "Why are we shut in this cave?"

"We are prisoners, and we cannot escape because there is a huge stone blocking the door."

"I will remove the stone," said the boy.

"If you do, the bear will catch us."

"Don't worry. I will finish with him once and for all."

"In that case, there is nothing left to say but 'remove the stone!'"

The boy seized the stone with great strength and lifted it. On the outside he found the bear waiting for him, so he dropped the stone on the bear and killed it.

Then the mother and the boy returned to her village. They baptized the boy and gave him the name John. When John began going to school, his schoolmates nicknamed him Johnny the Bear.

The teacher grew frightened of Johnny because of his uncommon strength, and begged his mother not to send him to school anymore so that he would not accidentally kill everyone in a moment of anger.

The mother told Johnny that he could not go back to school. So Johnny told his mother, "I shall dedicate myself to traveling the world, but first I ask that you obtain for me a four-hundred-pound hammer."

His mother got him the hammer, but the boy broke it with his first blow. Then he begged his mother to get him a sixteen-hundred-pound hammer. She got the hammer

he wanted, and he tested it by breaking a stone with a single blow.

"This is definitely a good hammer," he declared.

So he took his hammer and headed down the road.

During his travels, he met a man who was holding up a steep craggy slope that threatened to fall and crush a church.

"How much do they pay you for that work?" asked the boy.

"Nine *reales*."

"If you should decide to come with me, I will pay you ten."

So the man went with him.

They were traveling along together when they met another man who flattened mountains by sitting on them.

They asked him, "How much do you earn for that work?"

"Ten *reales*."

"We will give you eleven if you should decide to come with us."

So this man also joined their company.

Then they came to a cave with a great abyss inside it. They wanted to know what was at the bottom of the abyss, so they tied a rope to the fellow who had been holding up the steep slope and began to lower him down. But before they started, they gave him a bell with the instruction that he ring it if some emergency arose.

Right away the bell rang, and they pulled him topside immediately.

"Did something happen?" they asked him.

"No, nothing. It's just that I cannot go down there."

"Well, then, I shall do it," said Johnny. "My signal will be this: the more I ring the bell, the farther you should lower me."

And so Johnny went down, and soon he found a door. He knocked but no one opened it. Then he beat on the door



with his sixteen-hundred-pound hammer and demolished it. On the other side of the door was a young lady.

"What brings you here?" she asked.

"Nothing in particular. I saw a door and felt like entering."

"Well, now you must leave immediately, because the devils are sleeping, and as soon as they awaken they will finish you."

"I am not afraid of any inhabitant of this cave."

"If you show them that you are not afraid, it is certain that they will challenge you to a sword fight. They will offer you two types of sword. Some will be rusty and look uncared for, and the others will be very white and polished. Do not take the white ones, for they will not cut."

A devil approached him then, and asked what he wanted.

"Whatever you want," he replied.

"Do you wish to try your hand with a sword?"

"Yes, as you wish."

"Fine, well, here you have some swords. Choose whichever pleases you."

Johnny chose one of the rusty swords. Then they began to fight, and soon the devil had lost an ear. Johnny picked the ear up off the ground and put it in a leather pouch. The devil ran away as fast as lightning.

Johnny invited the young lady to leave with him. Together they went to the door that opened onto the abyss, but as it turned out, those who were holding Johnny's rope had left.

So Johnny bit the devil's ear that he had in his leather pouch and the devil appeared, crying "Ay, ay!" and asked him, "What do you want?"

"We want to leave."

So the devil carried the two of them up to the edge of the abyss. But Johnny had forgotten his hammer. Once again he began to bite on the devil's ear. And once again the devil appeared, crying, "Ay, ay! What do you want now? Leave me alone for you are hurting me."

"I am calling you because I have forgotten my hammer down below. Bring it up to me." And the devil brought it up. Then Johnny went back to his village with the girl.

One day he asked her, "What did you do to be condemned to that place?"

"Once, after receiving Communion, I carried the Host in my mouth to the doorway of the church and spit it out."

"Well, listen to what I am going to say," he told her mysteriously. "Under a large flagstone in the atrium of the church is a great toad. In his mouth you will find what you once spit out. Take it from him and eat it."

The young lady did as Johnny ordered. Soon after, she married him. And that young lady was nothing less than the daughter of a king.

## 16 : The Four Orphaned Brothers

Once there were four brothers who were orphaned. When their father died, he left them nothing more than a loaf of bread as their inheritance. They decided that they should go out into the world to earn their living. And so they left their house.

When they arrived at a crossroads, the four brothers made the following agreement: "We are going to divide this loaf of bread in four parts. After that, we will separate and go in four different directions. Seven years from today at two o'clock sharp we must meet again at this place." Then each one left by a different road.

One of them met an astronomer.

"Where are you going on this road, boy?" asked the astronomer.

"Well, you see, my three brothers and I have been orphaned. The only thing our father left us was a loaf of bread. There was nothing left for us to do but go out into the world to earn a living."

"I am an astronomer. If you like my profession, I can promise you bread to eat."

"Yes, I like it!" affirmed the young man. And so he stayed with the astronomer.

The second brother met a tailor.

"Where are you going, little one?" asked the tailor.

"Well, my three brothers and I lost our father and mother, and I am trying to earn my daily bread."

"If you like my profession, you may learn it from me, and furthermore your daily bread will be assured."

"Oh, well, I like it then!" And he stayed with the tailor.

The third brother ran into a hunter.

"Where are you headed, boy?" asked the hunter.

"My three brothers and I have been orphaned, and I am traveling through the world to earn my bread."

"If you like my profession and want to learn it, you will never be without food."

"I like it!"

The fourth brother ran into a thief on his journey.

"Where are you going, young one?" asked the thief.

"Me? To earn my bread where I may find it, for my father has died and left me with nothing."

"Well, if you like, I can teach you my profession."

"And what is your profession?"

"I am a thief. If you wish, I can teach you to steal."

"I wouldn't like that. My parents always taught me that it was a bad thing to do."

"All right, but you can learn how to be a thief and afterward it would be up to you whether you steal or not. Once you learn this profession, you will be prepared to take possession of things that have no owner."

"Oh, well then, I will learn your profession!"

And so he stayed with the thief.

After seven years, the four brothers returned to meet at the appointed place and asked each other about their adventures.

"What have you done?" they asked the first one.

"Well, I learned the profession of astronomer. With a device that my master gave me, I can see everything I want to see."

"And what have you done?" they asked the second one.

"I learned the profession of tailor, and my master has given me a needle that will sew anything."

"And what have you done?" they asked the third.

"I have learned to hunt, and my master has given me a rifle that kills anything I aim at."

"And you?" they asked the fourth.

"Well, I am ashamed to tell you."

"You have no reason for misgivings, not even if you were a thief," said the astronomer.

"Behold! You have just guessed my profession!"

"Well then, let's do something. A dragon has stolen the king's daughter. The king has promised to proclaim as king anyone who returns his daughter, and I know where she is," said the astronomer.

"Brother," affirmed the thief, "if I know the place, I can take on the task of stealing her back."

"And if I see the dragon, I will take charge of killing him," said the hunter.

"And you," they said to the tailor, "shall accompany us because you are our brother and we have not seen you for a long time."

And so the four of them went to the king.

The astronomer told the king that he knew where his daughter was, but he needed a ship to retrieve her for it was necessary to travel by sea. The king gave them a ship and the four of them set sail. As soon as they arrived at their destination, the astronomer told the thief the exact location where he would find the king's daughter.

"She is there in the dragon's den," he said. "While you steal her back, we shall remain here."

The thief marched off and cautiously approached the dragon's den. He managed to steal the dragon's prisoner while the beast slept. Just as he set foot aboard the ship the dragon awoke and chased after the vessel. But no sooner did he get close than the hunter shot him. When the dragon fell dead, the ship was so badly shaken that it split in two. Then the tailor took out his needle and sewed the ship together before it could sink.

Finally, they took the maiden to her father. The first one to speak to the king was the astronomer. "I should marry

your daughter because it was I who located her.”

“The one who should marry her is I,” said the thief to the astronomer, “for I stole her back.”

Then the hunter addressed his brothers. “Don’t you understand that if I had not killed the dragon, none of us would be alive now? Therefore, no one has as much right to marry her as I.”

“We would all have drowned,” said the tailor, “if I had not sewn the ship together in time. Therefore, no one has as strong an argument as I for marrying her.”

The king was confused and did not know who was right. So he tried to please them all by giving them each a great fortune.



## 17 : The Inheritance that Was Stolen and Recovered

**T**here was once a young man who returned home from military service and asked for the inheritance that was rightfully his. His family gave him a beautiful cow, but when he set off down the road toward the fair, a band of thieves came out of a house and stole the beast.

Out of the young man's anger, an ingenious idea was born. He decided to dress up like a woman and return to the house of the thieves. Since he was beardless, the thieves did not recognize him.

When the leader of the thieves saw "her," he fell in love and invited "her" to sleep with him, but the "woman" did not want to accept such an invitation.

The leader of the thieves insisted, however, and suspecting that she was afraid of the other thieves, he promised to lock them away downstairs. But still the "woman" cried inconsolably.

At last, night fell, and the two of them retired to the bedroom. The "woman" indicated to the leader that he should get in bed first and take off his shirt because that was what she was accustomed to. No sooner did the thief take off his shirt than the disguised young man seized a stick and thrashed his back until it was covered with welts, repeating all the while, "I am the one with the cow! I am the one with the cow!"

The other thieves could not interfere in all this for they were locked away. Then the young man took a chest full of money and escaped.

Later, he returned to the house of the thieves. This time he came disguised as a doctor and entered the leader's chamber. The "doctor" told the leader that he was not at all well, but that he should take heart for the "doctor" knew



where the necessary medicine could be found. Then he sent all the thieves after the medicine.

Taking advantage of their absence, he seized the stick again and gave the leader another beating, all the while shouting as before, "I am the one with the cow! I am the one with the cow!" Then he took possession of another chest full of money and left.

He later returned to the house a third time. On this occasion, he was accompanied by friends. When they drew near the house, he signaled one of his friends to shout, "Here is the one with the cow! Here is the one with the cow!" As soon as they heard the shout, all the thieves chased after the friend in a mad rush.

The young man then went upstairs to the leader's bedroom and beat him again more brutally than before while shouting, "I am the one with the cow! I am the one with the cow!"

And as he had done twice before, he took a coffer filled with money and left.

## 18 : The Poor Man Who Became a Doctor

Once a man lived on a farm with his wife and children. They were a large family and he had barely enough food to feed them all.

In contrast, in the same neighborhood, there lived a first-born son who had inherited everything, with no family and lots of money. When the poor man compared his situation with the other, he fell into despair.

Still, he had a new son, and he decided to find it a godfather. So he went out in search of a godfather and ran into a man who asked him where he was going.

"To look for a godfather," he replied.

The man offered to be the godfather himself, and the poor man asked him who he was. He replied that he was God.

When the poor man heard this, he replied that he would not let him be godfather to his son because he was convinced that God did not do things well, for he was poor and had many children and his neighbor was rich and had no family. So he continued on his way.

Next he met a large man, and this fellow also asked him where he was going.

"To find a good godfather," he replied.

The large man answered that he himself would be the godfather, and the poor man asked him who he was. He replied that he was Death. It seemed to the father of the child that he was not a bad choice because death made everyone equal, rich and poor alike.

So Death took the child in his arms and became its godfather. He advised the father to choose the profession of medicine for his son. In that way he would be able to support his family. He also added that when he began to visit the sick, if Death stood at the head of the bed, he should

recommend that the patient be given the Last Rites. On the other hand, if Death stood at the foot of the bed, he could prescribe that the patient eat and drink whatever he wanted.

And so it happened years later that while other doctors had many patients die without the Last Rites because they could not see Death, the son became very famous, earned a lot of money, and lived very comfortably.

One day he met Death on the road, and Death asked the doctor how it was going. He responded that it was going very well. Then Death reminded the doctor that he also had to die and would expire as soon as he finished reciting the Lord's Prayer. The doctor seemed content enough with being able to live until he finished reciting the Paternoster. So he left Death and went on his way. He was walking along calmly when he noticed a man who had been hung, swinging from the branch of a chestnut tree. When he saw the poor fellow, he felt compassion for him and recited a Paternoster for his soul.

As soon as he finished praying, the doctor died as well.

## 19 : Two Eggs and Three Marvelous Garments

**T**here was once a widow with two sons. She worked as a servant in the house of a bachelor who had inherited everything as a first-born son. The servant's boys were going to school one day when they spied the nest of a little bird. The nest contained two eggs, and each egg had an inscription. One said, "He who eats me will be a bishop." The other said, "He who eats me will be king."

The boys took the eggs and carried them home. When they reached the house, they told their mother about the inscriptions and asked her to prepare the eggs so that they could eat them. Their mother informed her master of what had happened, and the master of the house responded by telling her that she should serve him the eggs, for he had decided to marry her.

The mother answered him, "Yes, now you promise marriage, but once you eat the eggs you will not remember your promise."

But the master of the house persisted. "Keep these eggs. Once we are married, we will both eat them."

So they left to get married, but first they ordered the cook to have the two eggs ready to eat when they returned from the wedding. But it happened that the two boys ate the prepared eggs without telling the cook. When the master returned home and learned what had happened, he sent the young men away.

While the two brothers were walking down the road, they encountered three men who were involved in an argument.

"Why are you arguing?" asked the brothers.

"Well, we have three common garments that we do not know how to divide. We have a hat that, when placed on

the head, renders both itself and the wearer invisible. We also have a cape that, when one is wrapped in it, transports everything the wearer touches wherever he desires. And finally, we have a purse whose contents never run out."

"If you wish," responded the boys, "we could help you with the division."

"How so?"

"The three of you take off at a gallop toward the tree that grows on that ridge. He who returns first may take whichever of the three garments he wishes. The second to arrive may choose between the two that remain, and the third will take what the others have left."

"That's not a bad idea," they replied. And so the three of them took off at a gallop toward the tree. Meanwhile, the two brothers took possession of the purse and the hat and wrapped themselves in the cape to flee.

They were transported to a city where each decided to pursue his career. One of them said to the other, "I am going to become bishop. Give me some money." His brother handed over some money and, in time, that boy became bishop.

The other began working to realize his own dream, to marry the daughter of the king. The king's daughter asked him, "What treasure could you bring to the marriage?"

"I have a mysterious purse that is never empty."

"Won't you show me? I'm so curious."

He showed her the purse, and immediately the king's daughter took possession of it.

Later the young man dressed in his hat and cape and entered the chamber where the princess slept. He wrapped her in his cape and transported her to a mountain. Once on the mountain, the young woman asked, "How have you brought me here? And how did you get into our house?"

"Look at this hat. When I put it on, I become invisible.

Look at this cape. When I wear it, everything I touch is transported wherever I wish."

The young woman asked him again to show them to her up close. As soon as she had them in her hand, the girl fled with his hat and cape.

So once again the boy set off on the highway. As he traveled he saw some figs, and he asked a passerby whose figs they were. He was told that they were a very bad sort of fig, for everyone who ate them sprouted a horn for each fig consumed.

"And how are the horns removed?" he asked.

"They are easily removed with the liquid secreted by those same trees."

So he took some figs and charged a few of his friends to sell them to the daughter of the king. At the same time, he told them not to sell them to anyone else because they were bad.

The princess bought the figs and took them home to the palace for dinner. The king, the queen, and the princess each ate a fig, and indeed, each one sprouted a horn on the forehead. And the three of them, in turn, said in astonishment, "Oh, father! What a horn you have on your forehead!"

"And you, mother! What a horn has appeared on your forehead."

"And you, daughter! A horn has appeared on you as well!"

They reported it, of course, and the doctor appeared in court right away.

Meanwhile, the young man asked around to learn if anything had happened to the king, the queen, and the princess, and he was told how horns had sprouted on their bodies.

"Bah! That is very easy to cure," he said confidently. "I know the remedy." So the boy went to the king's palace.

First he cured the king, and then the queen, but when he approached the princess he asked what had happened to his hat, his cape, and his purse.

"This horn will remain on your forehead until you return them to me," he promised.

So the princess brought him his three garments, and afterward they were married.



## 20 : The Shepherd and the Month of March

Once upon a time a certain shepherd observed that the month of March killed several of his sheep every year. But one year, March was good and did not kill a single sheep. When the last day of March arrived, the shepherd addressed the month gratefully, saying, "This time you have left without doing me harm."

March immediately stole two days from February and destroyed his flock completely.

Ever since then, the month of February has been two days short.

## 21 : Tartaro and Amalau

Once there were two strong men named Amalau and Tartaro (a giant with one eye). Amalau wanted to prove which of the two was stronger. With that goal in mind, he headed for Tartaro's house. Tartaro offered him a succulent meal and then retired to a bedroom to sleep.

For some reason, Amalau could not relax in that house. So before he went to sleep, he looked under his bed and found some dead bodies. Right away Amalau placed one of the bodies on the bed and he hid underneath.

Around midnight Tartaro entered the room silently and stabbed the cadaver, thinking it was Amalau. Next, he hid it under the bed and went back to his room to sleep.

Meanwhile, Amalau left his hiding place and headed for the door of the house with the intention of escaping, but the door was obstructed by a huge stone that Amalau could not move. So he tried another solution. He built a fire, heated a roasting spit red hot, and burned out Tartaro's eye, leaving him completely blind.

After that, Amalau sought refuge among the sheep in the corral so that Tartaro could not find him. But even though he was blind, Tartaro appeared at the gate ready to take his sheep out. He opened his legs and had the sheep pass through them one by one. Amalau pulled a sheepskin over his shoulders and passed between Tartaro's legs as if he were just another sheep. As soon as he was out, Amalau threw the sheepskin at Tartaro and said, "Keep this for yourself, because it's yours."

Tartaro wanted to stop Amalau. "Wait a moment," he said as he tossed Amalau a ring. "Take this ring and put it on your finger."

The ring was precious and Amalau succumbed to temp-

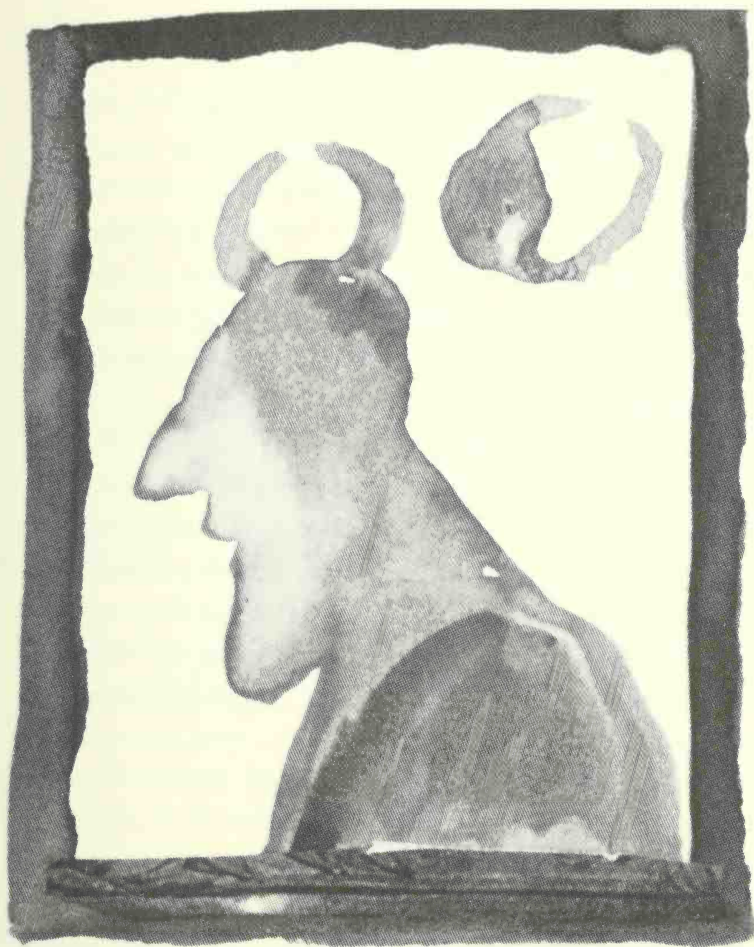
tation and put it on his finger. At that very moment, the ring began to cry out, "Here I am! Here I am!"

Tartaro chased Amalau by following the ring's voice. Since Amalau could neither escape nor remove the ring, he decided to cut off his finger and throw it far away.

And that is how Amalau managed to escape from Tartaro.



# Legends







## Legends

**I**t is obvious that the origins of both the story and the legend lie within human nature and man's desire to explain phenomena and actions that take place in the world around him. They are an expression of an ingenuous experience of nature.

But it is in the legend most of all where man comes face to face with all that is inexplicable to him. And so it is that he feels the need to believe in marvelous elements that preside over physical phenomena, and that he creates superhuman myths that make relationships between man and the higher powers intelligible.

The popular Basque mind was rich with imagination when it came to creating different legends in response to the questions that arose from nature and from man's immediate surroundings. Ancient legends were retold a thousand times by firelight from the hearth, while outside the storm roared on, the whistling wind blew in through cracks in farmhouse walls, and tongues of primitive flame threw sinister shadows that danced mysteriously across the faces of those who lived there.

In that archaic and primitive setting, stories came unstrung from the endless rosary of legends supplied with spirits and pagans, monsters and subterranean animals, and especially the human or semi-human figure known by the names of Mari, Lamia, Lady, or Dame—names that are always used to identify witches in Basque legends.

There exist a large variety of forms and representations of the numen Mari. She is the beautiful woman seated at the mouth of the cave, combing her hair with a gold comb. She is the launcher of storms who disguises herself as different species of animals. She is also the judge who tries



and condemns certain less proper behaviors such as lying, stealing, and being too proud.

It is not surprising that Mari appears in various combinations in the names for locations, caves, springs, and so on: Mariturri, Marizulo, Marikutx.

Over time, many of the spirits that were once designated with the name Mari have received the appellation Lami, Lamin, or Lamiñ (Lamia). Sometimes they are women with duck feet. In the coastal villages they are sirens whose bodies are half woman and half fish.

The Lamias have also left their mark on the place names of the Basque Country: Lamiarri, Lamiako, Lamitegi, Lamiñazulo.

## I : Mariurrika

A certain king of Navarra once solemnly\* promised, "I shall give my daughter in marriage to the man who vanquishes one of my black subjects." A man from the Muntzas farm near Abadiano accepted the king's proposal and managed to vanquish the black man. The king kept his promise and gave him his daughter's hand, and the couple moved into the Palace of Abadiano, located in the Muntzas district.

A son and a daughter were the products of that marriage. Ibon was the older, and Mariurrika was the younger, and as such she was quite spoiled. One day, Mariurrika and a servant had the cruel idea of killing Ibon to claim his inheritance. With that in mind, they took him to spend the day at Amboto. During their meal, they gave Ibon too much wine. After he had fallen into a drunken sleep, Mariurrika and the servant hurled him over a cliff and he died.

When Mariurrika returned home, she told her parents that Ibon had had an accident and had fallen over a cliff. But she could not silence the screaming of her conscience, which accused her of her brother's death. That night while Mariurrika was in the kitchen, she saw devils sliding down the chimney.

Mariurrika died on the spot, and ever since then, she has spent eternity flying from the mountaintop of Amboto to the mountaintop of Oiz in the form of a fireball. She takes refuge in two caves, one in Amboto (the cave of Mari), and the other in Sarrimendi.

## 2 : A Mother's Curse

**I**n a certain house there once lived a mother and her daughter. Ignoring her mother's advice, the daughter lived solely according to her own desires.

One day she gave her mother an impudent reply to some question, and her mother was offended and put a curse on her daughter. "May heaven and earth close their doors to you!"

Since that time, she has been forced to fly through the air between heaven and earth. During the day, she usually resides in the cavern of Amboto. There, she spends hours spinning and spinning, but she never manages to make thread. At night, she leaves the cavern and transports herself to other latitudes, leaving a stream of sparks in her wake.

### 3 : The Theft of the Comb

**I**n Amboto there lives a very beautiful lady. In the distant past she could be seen each day, flying overhead toward Kutzebarri and leaving a trail of fire behind her. As she crossed the heavens, she would comb her long blonde hair with an exquisite comb that made a unique “pir-pir” sound.

One day a daring young woman stole the exquisite comb, but the Lady of Amboto knew of the theft at once. She went to the young woman’s house and demanded that she return the comb by leaving it in the cave of Kutzebarri. If the young woman refused, she would be turned to flame.

The young woman was terrified, and she took the comb to the place indicated by the Lady of Amboto.

The next day when the townsfolk went up to the cave, the comb was not there. The Lady of Amboto had retrieved it.

## 4 : Carried Away by Devils

**I**n Cerain there is a farm that is known by the name of Euzkita. One day while a terrible storm was raging, the mother of the house ordered her daughter to go up and close the windows in the attic. But the young girl did not want to obey, so her mother cursed her and asked that she be carried away by devils. Finally, the daughter went up to close the windows, but she never came down again; she had been carried away by a devil.

Since that time, she has wandered errantly from one place to another. Sometimes she is seen in Aizkorri, and other times in Aralar and in Amboto.

When she was in Aizkorri, she carried a ram to her cave. The shepherds went there to ask her to return the ram. During the shepherds' visit, she sat on the back of the ram while a young woman combed her hair. The shepherds finally recovered the ram when they used a candle that had been blessed by a priest to light their way into the cave.

**M**ari lived on a farm called Iraregui,\*located at the foot of Mount Txindoki. One festival day, against her mother's wishes, she decided not to go to Mass. Her mother scolded her harshly, "I hope that by the time I return from Mass, some infernal spirit has carried you away!" And in fact, Mari was not at home when her mother returned; an infernal spirit had transported her to the peak of Txindoki.

After a while, a vision of Mari appeared to her family members and told them, "The devil has me in chains, but I believe that you can free me if you do as I instruct you. Take all the blessed rosaries there are in the house and place them on the walnut tree by the entryway. Knock the fruit down from the tree and carry the walnuts to Rome."

The family members replied that this was absurd, and they did nothing. So she appeared before them again. On her second visit, she charged them with building a small altar and placing it on the summit of Txindoki.

They built the altar, but they forgot to give it the opening in front that altars normally have for religious objects, and for that reason Mari could not break free.

Sometimes she can be seen leaving the summit of Txindoki in fire and flames, headed toward the sanctuary of San Miguel.

## 6 : The Lady of Aralar

**I**n Ugarte, near Amézqueta, stands the Zubiñ farm, and in its woods is found the Azari-zulo cave where the Lady of Aralar is accustomed to resting when she travels.

Legend has it that in the distant past the Lady of Aralar was a bad girl who fell victim to her mother's curse, "May the devils carry you away!" She was immediately engulfed in flames and disappeared from sight.

She lives in the caves of Aralar, Aizkorri, and Burumendi. On nights when she moves from one mountain to another there is tremendous thunder and lightning.

One day two strong men, well supplied with religious medallions and scapulars, approached the witch's summit to prove to themselves that she existed. They found her combing her hair, standing behind two candelabras made of gold. As soon as she noticed the presence of the men, she hid in the depths of the cave, leaving the candelabras behind her. The two men took the candelabras and, guarding them jealously, carried them home. But by the time they reached their houses, the candelabras had turned into toads.



## 7 : The Lady of Murumendi in Ormaiztegui

**T**he Lady of Murumendi was from the Beasain farm. She had ten children, and she was a woman not at all interested in church-related things. On the pretext that she was always sick, she never went to Mass.

After giving birth to her last child, her husband insisted that he would no longer permit her to miss Mass. So he put her on a cart and transported her to church by force. But at the very moment she was about to tread on the entryway of the church, she disappeared from sight in a burst of flame.

After that she was occasionally seen passing from one mountain to another.

## 8 : The Lamia of Mondarrain

**I**t is said that the summit of Mondarrain in Ezpeleta is inhabited by lamias. One morning an old shepherd encountered a lamia who was combing her hair with a comb made of gold. The shepherd stole the comb from her, and the lamia chased him. When he approached the Xistiko-harria stone, the sun was shining on that very spot.

Then the lamia said to the shepherd, "You may give thanks to the one who has wrapped you in his light." And she backed away.

## 9 : The Lamia of Lamiñateguieta

One day the lady of the Iturriaga household approached Lamiñateguieta where a lamia was combing her hair and said to her, "How swiftly you are combing your hair!"

When the lamia heard her, she leaped into a pit and was gone, leaving her comb behind. The lady from Iturriaga took the comb and carried it home.

A few nights later the lamia appeared, stationed herself at the door, and threatened the woman, "Either you give me back my comb, madame, or I will blow your brains out."

From inside the house, the woman promised to return the comb and invited the lamia to slide her hand underneath the door to receive it. Then the woman shrewdly cut off the lamia's hand with an axe.

## 10 : The Lamia, Seeker of Butter

**W**hen María Ignacia, from Arrosane, was spinning in the evening, a lamia would come down the chimney and say, "María Ignacia, give me a little butter."

One day when she did not have any butter, the woman told her husband what had been happening. "If you like," proposed the husband, "I will take your place tonight." He put on his wife's clothes and sat down to spin, awaiting the arrival of the lamia.

And in fact the lamia arrived at her usual time and said, "Yesterday pirra-pirra [you were spinning finely], and today pordolka-pordolka [you spin roughly]. Who are you?"

"Myself, in my opinion."

"Give me a little butter, then."

So the man took the melted butter hidden in his hand and threw it in the lamia's face.

The lamia reacted with blood-curdling screams and ran off. When the other lamias heard her shrieking, they left their cave and asked her, "Who did this to you?"

"Myself-In-My-Opinion!"

"Well, if you did it to yourself, you cannot cast blame on anyone else."

## 11 : The Young Man Who Fell in Love with a Lamia

A young man from the Korriane farm (in Garagarza) went to Kobaundi, located on the mountain of Kobate. There he met a lamia. She was a very beautiful woman, much more beautiful than the Christian women in those parts. The lamia promised to marry the young man on one condition: he would have to guess how old she was.

The young man consulted with a neighbor woman about the procedure for learning the age of a lamia. The woman told him that she would discover the lamia's age for him. So the woman went to Kobaundi. She stood with her back to the mouth of the lamia's cave and bent over so that her face would peek between her own legs.

The lamia appeared and, startled by the sight, declared, "In all my 105 years, I have never seen such a thing."

Then the neighbor woman ran off to tell the boy the lamia's age. In this way the young man was able to tell the lamia with certainty, "You are 105 years old," so the lamia agreed to marry him.

The young man gave his news to his mother, and she ordered him to look carefully at the lamia's feet. The young man did so and saw that they looked like duck's feet. As a result, the poor boy was badly frightened and fell ill. Not long after that, he died.

## 12 : The Lamia Who Asked for Help from a Man

**M**any years ago on Mount Behorlegui, there were many lamias' caves. On one occasion, a shepherd spied a wild lady combing her hair with a golden comb in one of those caverns. After calming the startled shepherd, the wild lady begged him to take her out of the cave and carry her on his shoulders to the mountain of Apanize. In exchange for this favor, she would give him all the money that he could want.

The shepherd acceded to the woman's demand with pleasure. He sat her on his shoulders and had just taken his first few steps toward the cave's exit when suddenly a large group of animals blocked his passage. The shepherd was so frightened that he abandoned the wild lady on the spot and fled as fast as he could.

The wild lady let out a horrible howl and said, "Poor me! Now I will have to spend the next one thousand years in this cave!"

And in fact she is still imprisoned in that cave, for there is not a shepherd who will dare to approach that place.

### 13 : The Lamias of Aizpuru

**A**mong the rocks of Aizpuru, near Ituren, there lived some lamias. One day, one of them went into labor. The others approached the lady of the Yoanea farm and asked for her help as a midwife.

At first sight, the lamias' entire house appeared to be full of objects made of gold. When the midwife finished her work, the lamias asked her what she would charge for it. The midwife asked them for a teasel as payment. They gave her a teasel made of gold, and at the same time commanded that she not look backwards until she entered her home. Then the lamias accompanied her home to the sound of music.

But before she entered her house, with one foot inside and the other outside, the lady of the house gave in to the temptation to look back. At that very moment, the lamias tore half the teasel from her hands.

They say that with the other half, the Yoanea farmhouse was built.



## 14 : The Lamias of Bazterretxea

**T**hose who lived on the Bazterretxea farm used to leave a bowl of milk and pieces of toasted corn bread and bacon sprinkled with grease from a frying pan on one corner of the hearth every night before they went to bed. While everyone was sleeping, the lamias would slide down the chimney and have a party with the leftovers. Then, in greatest secrecy, they would disappear again up the chimney. The next day the Bazterretxea family would find the manure spread, the ditches cleaned, the fields plowed, and the cornfields weeded.

But one night the family forgot to leave the pieces of bacon and the crusts of corn bread on the corner of the hearth. After that, the resentful lamias moved to another neighborhood far away and never appeared again at Bazterretxea.

In Licq they built a bridge that was so flimsy that any flood could sweep it away. One day a lamia appeared before a man from Licq. The lamia proposed to build a solid, flood-proof bridge in the short space of time between nightfall and midnight, specifically before the cock could crow, if he would agree to belong to her when he died.

The man agreed to the proposal, saying "Why not?" But after thinking it over, the man grew afraid and went to the priest to ask for advice. The priest gave him two eggs laid by a black hen. One of the eggs would soon become a cock that would sing, "Cockle-doodle-doo!"

And so the lamias began the construction of the bridge. Among themselves they addressed each other by the same name. "There goes Guillén." "Give it to me, Guillén." "Take it, Guillén." And while they were passing stones from one to another, they were heard to comment, "Here we are, at least eleven thousand Guilléns."

All of a sudden, just at the moment when they were about to put the last stone in place, the voice of a cock was heard to sing, "Cockle-doodle-doo!"

The lamias became very angry and they protested as they abandoned their work, shouting, "Cursed be the egg laid by the black hen of March!"

And that was how the bridge at Licq was left without the finishing touch of the final stone. Since that time, no one has managed to place that last stone.

## 16 : The Lamia Who Appeared and Disappeared

One day long ago, when people worked at hauling things in carts, a man from Urkitza-aurre was on the road taking minerals to the iron foundry. Before arriving in Guizaburuaga, he noticed a beautiful lady seated on the rear pole of his cart. But when they arrived in front of the church, the lady disappeared.

Later, she reappeared just as before, but again she disappeared when they reached the crossroads. Then she appeared once more on the back part of the cart, but disappeared again when they reached the shrine of Oibar.

When the man saw her on the cart again he asked, "What is happening, friend?"

"Ah! Then you are a friend?" replied the lady.

"If you come with good intentions, of course I am a friend. But if you harbor evil intentions, do not come closer than seven furlongs from me."

"You have expressed yourself with true precision," explained the lady. "Thanks to this, nothing bad will happen to you. If you had done otherwise, I would have buried you in the river with your cart and your oxen."

And having said that, she wrapped herself in flames and disappeared into the gorge.

## 17 : The Cave of Morocillo

**T**hey say that once a man from the Apres farm caught a lamia from the cave of Morocillo on his fishing hook. As soon as he saw this monster come out of the river, he threw down his pole and ran away in terror.

The monster said to him, "Apres, man from Apres, you will not go without your little cape."

And so it is that the men from that house have always worn their little capes, and still do today.<sup>1</sup>

1. The cape was a sign of distinction, belonging to people of comfortable means.

## 18 : The Words of the Lamia

Once a man was employed as a highway worker in the vicinity of Mendaro. He took lodgings at a farm along with some companions. There, he heard tell that an old neighbor had once overpowered a lamia on the mountain and had carried it home to the farm. According to the story, the lamia looked like a monkey more than anything else. No one could make it speak.

One day they were sitting next to the hearth while a caldron of milk was heating over the fire. The whole family left the kitchen, leaving the lamia alone on a corner of the hearth.

Soon the milk began to boil over, and the lamia shouted, "Up with the white stuff!"

Having said that, it escaped through the chimney and left no trace of its existence behind.

They say it is bad luck to hide gold underground, but gold was once buried on the Lapatza farm. So many strange noises were heard during the night that the family found it necessary to build another house on a different spot because no one could get any sleep.

In the new house as well, however, similar noises were heard and no one could sleep there either. But there was one student named Fearless John who volunteered to sleep in there.

He entered the house and heard a voice coming down the chimney. "Shall I throw myself down?"

"Throw yourself, if you wish," he answered. And a piece of a man fell from the chimney. The student tossed it behind him.

Once again he heard the voice. "Shall I throw myself down?" And he answered in the same way. "Throw yourself, if you wish." And so, one piece at a time, an entire man fell out of the chimney.

The student had stacked all the pieces behind him. Suddenly, he glanced back and there was a whole man who said to him, "Take the hoe and the shovel."

"Take them yourself, if you wish," replied the student.

"Then, let's go to the stable."

The student accompanied him.

"Dig here," said the man.

"Dig yourself, if you wish," replied the student.

The man had barely begun to dig when gold became visible. They took out all the gold, and from that time on no more noises were heard.

## 20 : The Shrine of Our Lady of Ezozia

**I**n the very distant past—about a thousand years ago—the Virgin appeared to the owner of the Irigoin farm in Plazentzia and ordered him to build a church on his fields. The man tried to find a good spot, and it seemed to him that none was so appropriate as the nearby meadow of Aritxa because it was clean and flat. He spread the word among the neighbors and they agreed unanimously to begin work on the Aritxa meadow.

But it so happens that what they built each day was being knocked down at night, and what's more, all the stones and wooden planks were appearing in Ezози. Every morning they carried the stones once more to the meadow of Aritxa and began building again. But the same thing happened each time. All the stones were moved to Ezози at night.

The neighbors were getting tired of dealing with the same problem all the time, so the man from Irigoin decided to stand guard during the night. Then something unexpected happened: he saw the Virgin, dressed in a silver garment, transporting the stones to Ezози with the help of two cows whom she encouraged with the words, "White and yellow Aida, put out the eye of the one who is watching."

As a result of that mishap, the man from Irigoin lost an eye; and after that, eleven generations of his family suffered some defect of the eye.



## 21 : The Dragon

**T**hey say that the dragon is a gigantic serpent that grows in very wild places. Within a period of seven years it forms seven heads, one for each year, as long as no one sees it. But if someone manages to spy the dragon, it does not grow any more heads, and causes great misfortunes.

If no one sees the dragon during the seven years, at the moment when the seventh head forms the dragon changes into a glowing ember and dives into the sea amidst a great noise that sounds like thunder.

Legend has it that on a certain night a man heard a noise like thunder, and suspecting that a storm was brewing he went to the door to gather a bundle of furze to protect himself against the rainwater.

However, when he raised his eyes to the sky he saw that it was clear and full of stars. He left the furze there and went back to bed. The next day, people told him that the dragon had been seen, enveloped in flames, diving into the sea.

**T**hey say that once in a fit of rage a nobleman from Goñi murdered his father and his mother.

“Oh, what an abominable sin!” he cried. “I have stained my hands with the blood of those who gave me everything. There is nothing left for me to do but go quickly to Pamplona to beg the bishop to pardon my sin.”

The bishop sent him to Rome, assuring him that the Pope would pardon him. And in fact, the Pope did absolve him of his sin, but in exchange he imposed a grave penance. The nobleman was obliged to walk through the world carrying a heavy cross on his shoulders while wearing an iron pillory round his neck, two thick chains at his waist, and shoes of iron. He had to wander through the mountains until his shoes broke.

As soon as the unfortunate nobleman began his dramatic journey, the devil appeared to him in the guise of an honorable man and advised him, “Rub your shoes and shins with your own excrement and you will see that the shoes will soon break.”

The nobleman of Goñi followed the devil’s advice and observed that his shoes broke, but nothing more. And in this way, far from improving his lot, he complicated it further, for from that time on he had to walk barefoot.

He continued his painful pilgrimage and finally reached Aralar. There he spied a young woman posted next to the entrance to a pit. As it turned out, that young woman was waiting for a dragon who was going to eat her. If the dragon did not eat a person every day, he would go down to the villages and commit terrible acts of destruction.

As soon as the nobleman saw the young woman, he approached her and pleaded with her to kill the lice on his

head. But the young woman begged him to flee that place for, if he did not, the dragon would eat them both.

But the nobleman insisted, and faced with his persistence, the young woman began to examine his head for lice. At that very instant, the strange figure of the dragon appeared.

The nobleman began to battle the monster, but he soon weakened. In the midst of that unequal struggle, he called repeatedly on Saint Michael.

Jesus Christ approached Saint Michael and announced, "They are calling you from the earth."

"But if you do not accompany me," replied Saint Michael, "I cannot go alone."

"And how will you carry me?"

"Seated on my head."

And that is how Saint Michael appeared over the summit of Aralar, with a sword in one hand and Jesus Christ sitting on his head. He made the slightest gesture with his sword and instantly cut off not only the dragon's heads but the nobleman's pillory and chains as well. And the dragon's enormous eyes leaped from his severed head and rolled down the cliff like two balls of wool.

## 23 : The Birth of Kixmi and the Origin of Olentzero

**T**hey say that in the area of Martxabaleta in Aralar the pagans were dancing once in celebration of one of their festivals. Suddenly, they spied a luminous cloud approaching them from the east. Astonished by that rare light, they consulted an ancient heathen who lived with them and was famed for being well versed in matters of clouds and stars.

When the old pagan saw the strange phenomenon, he addressed the assembly in dramatic tones. "My children!" he began. "Kixmi has been born and our end is near. I no longer wish to live, and I beg you to throw me over that cliff!"

And in fact they complied with his wishes and threw him over the cliff, so he died tragically.

The luminous cloud continued to approach, closer and closer, blinding the pagans with its light as they fled in search of refuge. They arrived at a beech tree grove that stood in Arraztaran. As soon as the cloud stopped and hovered over them, they all buried themselves beneath a mound of stones that has been known ever since by the name "Jentillarri," or Stones of the Pagans.

In the language of the pagans, Kixmi meant Christ. But they did not all die buried beneath the stones, for one of them<sup>1</sup> survived to announce the birth of Kixmi to the other pagans who lived in those parts.

1. This pagan was the first to announce the existence of Christ in the Basque Country. The traditional Christmas character known by the name Olentzero personifies the heathen who announced the birth of Kixmi and who even now comes down the mountain every Christmas to proclaim the birth of Christ to the people.

One night a group of women were spinning when one of them declared that she did not believe in the existence of witches.

After they finished their work, each one left for home. The one who had affirmed that witches did not exist was suddenly besieged by a chorus of witches shouting, "We don't exist, eh? Well, here we all are, except for Mari-petralin."

And at the same time they spoke these words, they pulled her hair from her head until she was completely bald.

## 25 : The Gold of Mondarrain

**O**n the mountain called Mondarrain there is a gold mine that no one dares to enter. They say it is inhabited by serpents, vicious dogs, and other terrifying animals. It is generally believed that, because it was never blessed, the devil has taken possession of the mine.

They say that one day four people accompanied by a priest approached that place. One of them went into the cave to the place in the mine where the gold was kept. But as it happened, someone—surely the devil—snatched up the intruder and carried him outside in midair. Then the priest opened his prayer book and managed to get the man to fall to earth by saying a prayer.

## 26 : The Shrine of Salbatore

**T**hey say that in Ustaritz there exists a shřine known by the name of Salbatore. Evidently there used to be a shepherd's helper who went looking for his sheep every day in the place where the shrine is now located. Once a man appeared to him in that place and said to him, "Go tell your master to build a little house on this spot with seven roof tiles and three planks of wood."

The servant told his master of the task. The next day, the man appeared again and the shepherd's helper could only tell him that his master had not believed his story.

Then the mysterious man tore off one of the boy's arms in such a way that the boy felt no pain, and he sent the boy back to his master with the same message. The one-armed boy returned home and again told his master what had happened. Faced with this situation, his master had to believe him and he immediately built a little house on the spot designated by the man.

Later, Salbatore came to live in that little house and there he stays, looking very much like a living being.



## 27 : Saint Martin's Mill

**S**aint Martin built a new mill, but he could not make it work. The devil also had a mill, and it functioned perfectly.

A woman went to Saint Martin's mill and asked him why it didn't work. Saint Martin replied that it was lacking something but he could not figure out what.

The woman immediately headed for the devil's mill.

"Working, eh?" she commented in greeting.

"Yes, I'm working."

"Saint Martin is also working in his mill, lickety-split."

"So he put in an alder axle, eh?" inquired the devil.

"Not yet, but he will."

The woman ran to tell Saint Martin about her conversation with the devil. And that is how Saint Martin learned how to fix his mill.

## 28 : The Witches of Xuritegui

**A**ccording to the story, when she was a little girl María de Larraburu had in her house a servant from Lesaca. This was nearly seventy years ago.

One day the servant decided to go to Lesaca to visit her family. Since there was no clock in the house, she got the hours mixed up and set off on her journey at night, thinking that it was almost dawn. But before she reached Xuritegi'ko Borda (a farm in Sara), she spied a group of witches dancing to the music of the txistu (flute) and drum.

The witches shouted an invitation, "Come dance with us!"

But the servant was very frightened, and instead of joining them she ran away from there as fast as she could.

## 29 : King Solomon

**K**ing Solomon and his sister lived together at one time. Solomon asked his sister one day what, in her judgment, was the most exquisite food in the world.

"Eggs," she replied.

After one year, he asked her another question. "What do you season them with?"

"A little salt."

Every night, when Solomon went to close the door, he was accompanied by a cat holding a lighted candle in its paws. One night he said to his sister, "What a great thing intelligence is!"

And his sister answered, "But nature is even greater!"

Then his sister caught a live rat and tied a long cord to one of its paws. When night came and the cat was holding its candle, the rat jumped out of its hole. Then the cat dropped its candle and caught the rat.

Solomon grew angry and threw his sister out of the house and the kingdom. He ordered that she should never set foot on nor ride an animal through his kingdom again, not even if their parents should die. And one by one, he listed all the animals that she could not ride into his kingdom, but he forgot to mention the goat.

Later, Solomon's parents died and the news of their death reached the ears of his sister. And so, wishing to enter the kingdom again, she had a very large pair of shoes made for herself and she filled them with earth from the kingdom in which she was living. Then she put them on, straddled the back of a goat, and headed off.

When she reached Solomon's house she shouted from the door, "Solomon!"

"What is going on?"

And she replied, "Old Easter last, New Easter first. Your parents no longer suffer from hunger and thirst."

"Have they died, then?"

"It is as you have said."

"But did I not forbid you to walk on the earth of my realm?"

"In fact, I am walking on the earth of my own realm."

Solomon invited his sister to eat with him. But after the meal, he sent her back to her kingdom mounted on a horse. While crossing a river, the horse urinated in the water, and Solomon's sister pronounced sentence on her brother. "Each one shall get what he deserves. The devils of hell will carry my brother away."

Solomon offered a Mass on behalf of his parents and attended it in the company of his hunting dogs. Suddenly, a hare darted through the church at the moment of the consecration of the host. Solomon sicced his dogs on it, and they threw themselves into the chase.

The hare leaped through the air and Solomon and the dogs leaped after it. As it turned out, that hare was the devil.

Since that day, Solomon and his dogs have been seen in the skies howling and whistling. They say you can see them on clear nights.



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