

Liudmila Rzhnevskaya



FAIRY TALES OF THE WISE  
GRANDMA  
AGATHA

**Liudmila Petrovna Rzhevskaya**  
**Fairy tales of the**  
**wise grandma Agatha**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=39411698](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=39411698)*

*ISBN 9785449373526*

**Аннотация**

“Nastenka, you’re so smart, lovely girl, you’re our Skvorushka, we know that you can understand the language of birds and animals, we know that you can talk to them, and these aliens are bothering us, they will soon steal everything from our village and will kill everyone, for they have no conscience, no pity, gold and profit obscured their brains, nothing sacred remained in them. Help us, together with your animals, to get them away from here. We will be very grateful to you.”

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# **Fairy tales of the wise grandma Agatha**

**Liudmila Petrovna  
Rzhevskaya**

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ISBN 978-5-4493-7352-6

Created with Ridero smart publishing system

# Foreword

In the very distant place, in Russia, in taiga of the Far East, there is a tiny village called Kalenovka. It is located on the bank of a small river, and on the other bank of the river begins the dark thick forest. No more than 20 little houses are in this village, and now, their number is probably even less. But in this village lives the old grandmother Agatha, aged, maybe, one hundred years old, and maybe more. And during the endless winter evenings all the children and adults of the village, local and travelling, gather at grandmother Agatha's place to listen to her lovely fairy tales. And the tales of Grandma Agatha are really remarkable! Once I was there, listened to her tales and I want to share them with you.



# Nastenka-Skvorushka

Beside grandmother Agatha there lived a little girl Nastenka. In the village people called her Skvorushka for her cheerful chirping, so lovely temper, and also because of her ability to talk with birds, forest animals and pets. Nastenka was only seven years old when her father went for hunting and did not return. So she lived with her mother. Most of all, Nastenka loved to spend time with her grandmother Agatha. They went to the river or to the woods, Skvorushka joyfully told her grandmother about what the thrush is singing or what the hedgehog is telling to them, or what a cat or a kitten purrs about. Grandmother chuckled at her. But she listened to the girl. And due to the fact that Nastenka understood the language of birds and animals, and she knew how to talk with them, all the birds in the district and the animals remembered Nastenka and loved her.

Very often Nastenka brought to her home the thrown out, homeless kittens or dogs, fed them, warmed them, and then gave them out to the people living in the village. But she did not just give them out, but she said: "This cat will bring peace and happiness to your house, and one day it will save your baby. And this dog will guard your house and will not let a thief or a dashing man come to the door. "People were amazed at the girl, but they took the animals, because they knew that the things will happen, just as Nastenka said. She often treated little animals and saved

them from death, pulling them out of the traps they fell into. Hunters liked to visit their forest and shoot animals, set traps on them, collect pine nuts. The girl really did not like it when there was gunfire in the forest.

She imagined how many lives of animals, adults and little ones will come to end because of the evil hunters, and how many birds they will shoot, how much blood will be shed on the ground.

And one day the girl thought about how to save forest dwellers from dashing hunters and just fans of shooting game. She came to the edge of the forest, gathered birds and animals and told them.

“I will not let people kill you and your little ones, I’ll tell when hunters arrive to the village, and at that time all of you will stay inside your burrows.” I will be passing such news on this meadow, firstly to the magpie, then to the squirrel, and they will carry the message through the forest. As soon as the hunters can not find anything to take in this forest, they will surely stop going here, and you will live here, feeling no fear. If you urgently need my care, to cure your children or you, let the magpie or the swallow fly to me, tap on my window, and I’ll know that some of you are in need for help, and I’ll come to this meadow. And if I need help, then I will rely on you too”, the girl told them and looked at the old she-wolf.

“You are so smart and kind girl,” the she-wolf answered her,

“we will obey you, because we know that you are our friend, and you can be sure that we will always give you our help and will never betray you. We are grateful to you for taking care of us and our little ones. We love you, Skvorushka.”

And it was so. As soon as the hunters came to Kalenovka, Nastenka rushed to the edge of the forest and called for the magpie and the squirrel, they met her, and the girl warned the birds and the animals that “hunters are in the village, beware of traps and shots.”

The magpie and the squirrel immediately spread the news around, and all the living creatures in the forest were hiding so that neither bullets of hunters nor their traps could reach them. But if any of the little ones occasionally got caught in a trap, then the magpie flew to Nastenka, and she followed the magpie and rescued the baby from the trap. The hunters were just wondering where all the wild fowl has gone from this forest, for earlier in these places there were really many of it, but now everything disappeared so suddenly. They came one, two, three times, could not catch anything, and could not shoot anything, and then left the forest. So the girl and the forest animals lived peacefully and well, until the gold diggers came to Nastenka’s village. And they found golden sand in Kalenovka river. And they began to wash out golden grains from the river sand.

They set up tents on the river bank, began to build something there, to make bonfires, to fish and shoot the wildlife. They were all enormous and scary, constantly drunk, with mustaches and

beards, big hands and loud voices. Oh, Nastenka, for sure did not like all this. There was awful noise in the village and in the forest because of those people. Without any need, they often used their guns to shoot. They frightened the men in the village, if they refused to give them any food, and once the diggers robbed a pig from a village family, fried it and ate it.

The villagers got tired of all this. Once the women of Kalenovka came to Nastenka's house and told her:

“Nastenka, you're so smart, lovely girl, you're our Skvorushka, we know that you can understand the language of birds and animals, we know that you can talk to them, and these aliens are bothering us, they will soon steal everything from our village and will kill everyone, for they have no conscience, no pity, gold and profit obscured their brains, nothing sacred remained in them. Help us, together with your animals, to get them away from here. We will be very grateful to you.”

“Yes, I already thought about it myself,” Nastenka answered them. “I'll try to invent something together with my friends.”

Early in the morning, when the sun touched the tops of the trees, Nastenka jumped out of the house and rushed into the forest. She ran to her meadow, whistled for the squirrel and the magpie, they instantly rushed to her. Skvorushka ordered to urgently gather the animals for the council, so that to solve the clamorous matter. A magpie flew off; the squirrel ran off to carry to everyone the message that their little girl was calling everyone to her.

All the birds and animals fled and run for the council. Nastenka told them about her worry. Animals and birds agreed that there was uneasy in the woods because of the strangers, these people did not take care of anything, and they did not honor anything in the forest. They destroyed everything and everyone. It was time to get rid of such barbarians using their own methods. Just kick them away. But how this can be done?

And Nastenka found out, how they could do all this, so that to scare the gold diggers and drive them away from the village and the whole area around.

When the entire camp of gold diggers was already sleeping, and the moon was shining over the forest, like a huge buttered pancake, the old she-wolf and her pack surrounded the tents of strangers and howled loudly and drawlingly. They howled so loudly and so drawlingly that they woke up almost all the people living nearby. Holding their rifles, the gold diggers jumped out of the tents, started screaming and looking around, but because of the tall grass around the camp nothing could be seen, only a terrible lingering wolf howl could be heard, and it was so strong that it made their skin crawl.

“Wolves! Where are they from? What do they need from us? It’s summer now! And in summer wolves do not attack people”, the elder in the brigade of gold diggers, Ivan said.

“Whether they attack or not – it does not matter,” Kirill said, “but they came to howl at the moon to our camp, and it’s not just by chance. They warn us about something. Otherwise why

would they come here?”

“Let’s shoot, maybe they’ll run away, otherwise we are unable to fall asleep with such a howl!” the third gold digger, whose name was Taras, said.

Everyone agreed with him and started to shoot from the guns upside and on the grass.

The wolves clung to the ground and fell silent.

People stood for another ten minutes and went to sleep in their tents. But they just began to doze, when the terrible wolf howl came again, this time not drawling, but threatening, as if the animals asked: “Why did you come here? Why did you break our peace? Now we will not let you sleep, there will be no rest for you.”

Gold diggers this time not only began to shoot, but also made a fire. They began to throw burning flakes into the grass and bushes. The howl was interrupted, but not for long. As soon as people climbed into the tents, they heard the wolf howl again, and each time with increasing force, as if there was not a pack of wolves, but three or four of such packs. So it continued until the sunrise, people in tents did not close their eyes until morning. In the morning the wolves left. But the gold diggers could not work, they fell asleep in tents after a sleepless night.

During the day, birds worked at the gold digging place. Many of them flew to the tents, rose up such a whim that the strangers, waking up, could not understand for a long time, what was happening outside, and when they came out and saw a huge

number of birds that grabbed everything from their tables and from the ground, and then were throwing all this onto them, the diggers were not only surprised by such an invasion, but also frightened.

“It seems that it is not very good place here”, the most cowardly of the gold diggers, blond Nazar said. “We have to leave this place, guys; I do not like this at all.”

“How to leave, when the gold in the river was just found, we just began washing it, a dredge was put, so much effort we took, and now we have to leave because of some birds? Well, we shoot them all, and it’s over!”

“What about wolves? At night, you could hardly understand where to shoot!” Nazar continued. “They can bite us themselves.”

“Stop whining,” furious Taras growled. He brought people here, he first found gold here, and only the work has started, the forest animals give them no peace now. He snatched a rifle from the tent and started shooting at the birds again. Those flew apart in a moment, but as soon as the silence came after the shots, the birds attacked the tents from above again.

People, exhausted by a sleepless night, furious because of uninvited guests during the day, covered their heads with blankets and fell asleep. How much they slept, no one knows, but when they woke up, they were horrified at what they saw. Their dredge, on which they washed river sand to find grains of gold, was broken by a bear – that’s what they thought, because everywhere on the ground there were footsteps of a large bear.

The foodstuffs were scattered and pecked out by birds, their two workhorses were bitten to the blood by the wasps and lamented plaintively on the tie. Almost the whole camp was destroyed.

There was nothing left for their work.

The gold diggers were broken. They talked to each other and decided to go down the river to another place.

“What kind of calamity happened, as if the whole forest world has rebelled against us?” they asked themselves. And in fact, the forest world rebelled against people who did not appreciate nature, mercilessly destroyed the forest, birds, animals. For their bad attitude to nature, local people and forest inhabitants, the gold miners paid the highest price: they lost a fine gold vein, which, if developed, could make them wealthy people. We must respect the laws of nature and live in peace with birds and all forest creatures. Then we ourselves shall lead a good life, and shall be respected.

This is how the grandmother Agatha finished her story. And what about Nastenka? The girl kept on growing. And many other stories happened to her.

# Nastenka and her tiger Sharik

One summer, Nastenka went into the woods, to pick berries for the grandmother Agata. She went into the forest thicket and saw under the tree a small red-haired kitty. The cat was very large and, for her pity, very sick. It could hardly move its paws and lift its head. Nastenka forgot about all her berries, picked up the kitty and ran home. Mom, seeing Nastenka, flung up her hands and cried out at her:

“Nastenka, why did you bring the little tiger home? What if a tigress comes to his smell here? Can you ever imagine what will happen to us?”

Nastenka opened her little mouth in fright and said:



“But Mom, it was alone in the forest, and then I thought it was a kitty. He really looks like a cat. Mom, how can it be, he’s alive, he needs to be cured, and the tigress, maybe, has already

forgotten about him.”

The mother agreed that the tiger needed to be cured, because he was really very sick, but after that, Nastenka should take him to the forest. And Nastenka agreed with this.

And Nastenka’s mother worked as a veterinarian in the village. Her name was Maria. For a whole month Nastenka with her mom cured a tiger cub. During this time, the tiger cub became so attached to Nastenka that it followed her like a dog. And the inhabitants of the village gave him the nickname Sharik. Everyone laughed when Nastenka went out into the street with her fosterling: “Ah, it’s you, Nastenka, with your Sharik came to us. What news will you tell us?” The girl sat down on the log next to other villagers and their children, the tiger cub was climbing her knees, licking her nose, wrinkling its snout and sneezing. And everyone laughed and said: “Well, it is a real dog; the name Sharik is so suitable.” So Nastenka and her mother began to call him Sharik. Time passed and Sharik grew up. He demanded more and more porridge and meat. And mother Maria once told Nastenka: “Well, Nastenka, take your Sharik into the forest. He is a forest animal and must live in the forest. And we can not feed him. We can hardly feed ourselves.” But Nastenka did not want to part with her Sharik. They were really attached to each other.

The tiger cub grew for the summer, his paws were much stronger, his voice was much coarser, and when he growled at strangers, they were afraid to approach Nastenka and tried

to stay away from her. And one day the boys started a fight, Nastenka rushed to set them apart, Sharik rushed to the boys to and, probably, he thought that the boys wanted to offend his adorable little girl, such a lovely mistress, and began to bite the boys randomly. They roared and rushed off the tiger cub, and Sharik ran after them, Nastenka ran after Sharik, shouting and cursing: "Oh you rascal, why you have bitten the boys, don't you dare to do it again!" But then Nastenka remembered that her Sharik was the forest animal and he did not understand the human language. She sat down on the grass, called Sharik to her, embraced him and began to talk with him in his own language, whispering something in his ear that only Sharik and Nastenka understood. Tiger guiltily lowered his head and followed Nastenka. And in the evening neighbors came to Nastenka's mom place, with complaints of Nastenka and her Sharik. The tiger cub guiltily hid under the bed and angrily rumbled, knowing that the conversation was about him. Nastenka stood up for her fosterling: "Why did the boys fight? If it was not Sharik, no one would set them apart, and maybe they would beat each other even more than Sharik bit them."

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