

THE SHAMAN WHO TURNED INTO A FOX YUKAGHIR TALE

Превод от руски: Владимир Богораз, 1918

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THE SHAMAN WHO TURNED INTO A FOX^[0]

There lived an old man who had a pretty young daughter. He was a great shaman, and he wanted to find a husband for her, the best of all human kind. So he turned into an arctic fox and ran along. Whomsoever he met, by him he would allow himself to be caught. And as soon as the man caught him, his hand would stick to the fox's back. Then the fox would rush onward, dragging the man along. The fox would come to a river and turn into a fish. Then it would dive into the water, dragging the man along. And so the man would be drowned.

Another time he turned into a red fox and ran along. Whomsoever he met, by him he would permit himself to be caught. Then the hand of the man would stick to the fox's back. The fox would rush onward, dragging the man along, and soon would drown him in the river.

A third time he turned into an ermine, and the same happened as before.

Finally, he turned into a black fox and ran along. He met a young man, a wanderer, who knew neither father nor mother, and who walked about without aim and in great poverty. The fox allowed himself to be taken. Then the hand of the wanderer stuck to his back, and the fox rushed on, dragging the man along. The fox ran to the river, turned into a fish, and dived into the water, dragging the man along. The fish crossed the river, came to the opposite shore, and turned again into a fox. And, lo! the young man was still alive. The fox rushed on, and came to some rocks. The rocks were all covered with sharp-pointed spikes. The number of the rocks was ten. The fox ran through between all of them, and the man along with him. The man was winding along like a thin hair, and he was still alive. The fox ran into a forest, which was as dense and thick as the autumn grass. The

bark of one tree touched the bark of another. They crossed this dense forest, but the young man was still alive. The fox came to the sea, and plunged into the sea. He went across the sea to the opposite shore, but the man was still alive. Then the fox said, “Oh, you are an excellent man! I want to have you for a husband for my daughter. I will let go of your hand. So please let go of my back.” The man said, “I do not want to have your daughter. I want rather to have your skin.” He lifted the black fox high into the air, and then struck it upon the ground with much force. The fox was dead. That is all.

[0] Told by Innocent Karyakin, a Tundra Yukaghir man, on the western tundra of Kolyma, winter of 1895. ↑

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