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**Bridging Cultures—East Europe Course Module**

**Course: Concepts of Literature (LITR 210)**

**Course Description for LITR 210**

This course introduces students to the three major forms of literary expression: fiction, poetry, and drama. Significant works from each form will be analyzed to reveal creative techniques, how they represent an author’s time, and how they reflect today’s human condition.

**Eastern Europe Course Module Title**

Swapping Stories: Examining Culture through Fairy Tales

**Module Description**

In this course module for an introductory literature class, students will be introduced to Russian & Ukrainian fairy tales, exploring themes that emerge and comparing them with the versions by the Grimm brothers. Folk tales are some of our earliest evidence of the values and concerns of cultures that began to take shape long before print overcame orality. Within them, we find the great universal fears and hopes of humankind as well as the particular accents of each culture. Students are as likely to be unfamiliar with the original Grimm tales as they are with Slavic tales, but introducing them to the less familiar (but intriguing) while reintroducing them to what they thought they knew, will hopefully prove fruitful!

By participating in the NEH grant program, “Bridging Cultures,” I’ve been exposed to literature, history, and political background that enriches my perspective of Eastern Europe. Though I’d already had experience in Ukraine, I can now situate that experience in the context of the broader Slavic world.

**Learning Objectives**

After completing this module, students will be able to

* Describe the plot of at least two-three Russian or Ukrainian fairy tales
* Explain and analyze prominent themes and symbols in the tales studied
* Relate the Slavic tales studied to Western tales—comparing and contrasting their storylines, themes, and symbol-use
* Explore possible cultural values that may underlie each tale

**List/description of Learning Activities**

* Students will be assigned readings at least one class before the class session(s) that focus on this course module (readings still being narrowed down)
* One or two class periods will be spent discussing the stories, examining themes, working on comparison
* A short analysis paper will be required, focusing on one particular Russian or Ukrainian tale.
* ***Students may also have the opportunity to discuss a prominent Russian/Ukrainian tale with a Ukrainian classroom (Skype session).*** *The goal of the discussion will be to find out how these tales “show up” in modern Ukrainian culture. How do Ukrainian students know them? Do they feel anything in the tales represents essential characteristics of Ukrainian culture? Are they familiar with similar Western fairy tales – and what do they think of them?*

**Bibliography**

Afanasʹev, A. N. et al. Russian Fairy Tales. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006. Print. Pantheon Fairy Tale & Folklore Library.

Grimm, Wilhelm et al., eds. The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Print.

Kennedy, X. J., and Dana Gioia, eds. Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing. Eighth compact edition. Boston: Pearson, 2016. Print.

Oparenko, Christina. Ukrainian Folk-Tales. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

**Additional Teaching Resources**

* Power Point presentation and notes may be added soon
* Several YouTube video versions of tales are available and will be added

**Connection of module to any other assignments in the course**

This module blends well with the unit on short stories—a foundational unit in the literature course. The course begins with a brief introduction to different types of fiction, including the tall tale and short story. We’ve already read the Grimm brothers version of Sleeping Beauty, and though we are now moving on to short stories, I hope to incorporate this module near the end of the short story unit, as part of our unit review.

\*Actual lesson plan on next page

**LESSON PLANS for Slavic Fairy Tales Course Module**

**Introduction**

Back near the beginning of the semester, we looked at traditional tales—fables, parables, and fairy tales. These were stories passed down, told rather than written (only to be written down later). We did a little research on fairy tales and also learned that there are many versions of the same tale in different cultures.

**Listen to this story and see if it sounds familiar at all to you:** (read w/out introducing) “The Runaway Bun,” Ukrainian Folk-tales. p. 42-46.

Russia & Ukraine fight over the fairy tale: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13206871>

Compare to The Gingerbread Man: https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NjDUMeBaUo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NjDUMeBaUo)

**Fairy Tale Collections/categories online:**

* “The Runaway Pancake”: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type2025.html>
* Multilingual database using ATU: <http://www.mftd.org/index.php?action=atu>
* Read about Vladimir Propp on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir\_Propp

ASSIGN READINGS TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE NEXT CLASS

**Part Two: Continuing the Fairy Tale Course Module**

Divide into groups for discussion:

* What piece of all three stories was the same? Any shared elements among just 2 of the stories?
* What kinds of animals are good/bad? What kinds of people are good/bad?
* How is the husband/wife relationship depicted? Brother/sister in H&G?
* Any values or morals conveyed? Themes?

VIDEO *\*\*\*Have them jot down a few questions to ask Natasha*

**Watch the Ukrainian version:**

Ivasik-Telesik: https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bHYDOvel3s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bHYDOvel3s)

**Compare a little with Russian:** https://[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkzuQZZpH2g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkzuQZZpH2g)

**Discuss the videos and their responses to the above questions**

**Skype with contact from Ukraine**

* What are some of your favorite fairy tales (from any cultural background)
* What is it about "Ivasik Telesik" that seems particularly Ukrainian?
* What do you grow up learning about Baba Yaga?
* Are there any differences between Russian and Ukrainian fairy tales? How are they similar? (Are Slavic tales all similar in any way that sets them apart from - say - Grimm and Andersen)
* Do you see differences between the kinds of stories Ukrainian kids read/hear growing up and the stories you know we read and hear in the US?

READINGS WITH HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT AT END

**Baba-Yaga and the Brave Youth (A Russian Fairy Tale)**

[<http://anomalyinfo.com/Stories/1867-pub-baba-yaga-and-brave-youth>]

*from a 1945 translation of a Russian folk-tale first published by Alexander Afanasyev around 1867*

There was a brave youth, a cat, and a sparrow who all lived together. One day, the cat and the sparrow went to the forest to chop wood, and they warned the brave youth: "If Baba-Yaga should come to count the spoons, hide and say nothing!" The youth agreed to this, and the cat and sparrow left.

Sure enough, Baba-Yaga came into the house some time later and grabbed up the house's three spoons... and, though hidden, the brave youth could not keep quiet: "Put down my spoon!" Baba-Yaga seized the brave youth and flew away with him on her magic mortar, steering with her pestle, and sweeping away her tracks with her broom. The cat and the sparrow heard the brave youth calling them, and they scratched and pecked at Baba-Yaga until she dropped the brave youth.

The next day, the cat and the sparrow went to the forest to chop wood, and again warned the brave youth again to keep quiet if Baba-Yaga should appear... today, both cat and sparrow would be far away in the forest. Again, Baba-Yaga came to count the spoons; again, the brave youth told her to put his spoon down, and again, the brave youth was snatched up by the witch. Luckily, the cat and sparrow heard his call again, and were able to scratch and peck at Baba-Yaga until she released the brave youth.

On the third day, cat and sparrow strongly warned the brave youth to hold his tongue if Baba-Yaga should invade their home, for cat and sparrow were traveling even farther away to chop wood. Again, Baba-Yaga appeared and snatched up the spoons to count them. She counted them once; and the brave youth held his tongue. She counted them again, and still he said nothing. But the third time she counted them, he could no longer hold back: "Don't touch my spoon!" In an instant the witch had snatched the brave youth up, and started to fly away with him. He called for the cat and the sparrow, but they were too far away to hear him; so, Baba-Yaga took him to her hut and put him in a wooden shed by her stove, then stoked up a new fire to cook him. Baba-Yaga, who had business to attend to in Russia, instructed her eldest daughter to cook the brave youth for her dinner, which her daughter dutifully agreed to do.

When the oven grew hot, the eldest daughter opened the shed and ordered the brave youth to lie on a pan... he did so, but stretched one leg to the ceiling, and one leg to the floor. "Not like that! not like that!" complained the eldest daughter. "Then show me how!" complained back the brave youth... and when the eldest daughter lay on the pan to show him the correct way to do it, he popped her into the oven, shut the door, and returned to the wooden shed. When Baba-Yaga returned, looking forward to her feast, he informed her he was quite fine but she could dine on her eldest daughter if she wished.

Not surprisingly, Baba-Yaga now ordered her second daughter to cook him and left... and he tricked and roasted her in the same manner. Finally, Baba-Yaga order her youngest daughter to do the job and then left... and lost her youngest daughter in the same way. To say Baba-Yaga was angry when she returned would not describe her mood!

Determined to feast on his bones after all of the trouble, Baba-Yaga herself ordered him onto the pan. Once again, he lay down on the pan but stretched a foot to the ceiling and the other foot to the floor. "Not that way! Not that way!" screamed the irate Baba-Yaga. "But I don't know how," protested the brave youth; "Show me." With that Baba- Yaga curled up on the pan to demonstrate the best technique... and the brave youth popped the witch into her own oven, then ran home and said to his brothers: "That's what I did with Baba-Yaga!"

**Hansel and Gretel**

**Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm**

[**http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm015.html**](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm015.html)

**(A German Fairy Tale)**

Next to a great forest there lived a poor woodcutter with his wife and his two children. The boy's name was Hansel and the girl's name was Gretel. He had but little to eat, and once, when a great famine came to the land, he could no longer provide even their daily bread.

One evening as he was lying in bed worrying about his problems, he sighed and said to his wife, "What is to become of us? How can we feed our children when we have nothing for ourselves?"

"Man, do you know what?" answered the woman. "Early tomorrow morning we will take the two children out into the thickest part of the woods, make a fire for them, and give each of them a little piece of bread, then leave them by themselves and go off to our work. They will not find their way back home, and we will be rid of them."

"No, woman," said the man. "I will not do that. How could I bring myself to abandon my own children alone in the woods? Wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces."

"Oh, you fool," she said, "then all four of us will starve. All you can do is to plane the boards for our coffins." And she gave him no peace until he agreed.

"But I do feel sorry for the poor children," said the man.

The two children had not been able to fall asleep because of their hunger, and they heard what the stepmother had said to the father.

Gretel cried bitter tears and said to Hansel, "It is over with us!"

"Be quiet, Gretel," said Hansel, "and don't worry. I know what to do."

And as soon as the adults had fallen asleep, he got up, pulled on his jacket, opened the lower door, and crept outside. The moon was shining brightly, and the white pebbles in front of the house were glistening like silver coins. Hansel bent over and filled his jacket pockets with them, as many as would fit. Then he went back into the house and said, "Don't worry, Gretel. Sleep well. God will not forsake us." Then he went back to bed.

At daybreak, even before sunrise, the woman came and woke the two children. "Get up, you lazybones. We are going into the woods to fetch wood." Then she gave each one a little piece of bread, saying, "Here is something for midday. Don't eat it any sooner, for you'll not get any more."

Gretel put the bread under her apron, because Hansel's pockets were full of stones. Then all together they set forth into the woods. After they had walked a little way, Hansel began stopping again and again and looking back toward the house.

The father said, "Hansel, why are you stopping and looking back? Pay attention now, and don't forget your legs."

"Oh, father," said Hansel, "I am looking at my white cat that is sitting on the roof and wants to say good- bye to me."

The woman said, "You fool, that isn't your cat. That's the morning sun shining on the chimney."

However, Hansel had not been looking at his cat but instead had been dropping the shiny pebbles from his pocket onto the path.

When they arrived in the middle of the woods, the father said, "You children gather some wood, and I will make a fire so you won't freeze."

Hansel and Gretel gathered together some twigs, a pile as high as a small mountain

The twigs were set afire, and when the flames were burning well, the woman said, "Lie down by the fire and rest. We will go into the woods to cut wood. When we are finished, we will come back and get you." Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire. When midday came each one ate his little piece of bread. Because they could hear the blows of an ax, they thought that the father was nearby. However, it was not an ax. It was a branch that he had tied to a dead tree and that the wind was beating back and forth. After they had sat there a long time, their eyes grew weary and closed, and they fell sound sleep.

When they finally awoke, it was dark at night. Gretel began to cry and said, "How will we get out of woods?"

Hansel comforted her, "Wait a little until the moon comes up, and then we'll find the way."

After the full moon had come up, Hansel took his little sister by the hand. They followed the pebbles that glistened there like newly minted coins, showing them the way. They walked throughout the entire night, and as morning was breaking, they arrived at the father's house.

They knocked on the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said, "You wicked children, why did you sleep so long in the woods? We thought that you did not want to come back."

But the father was overjoyed when he saw his children once more, for he had not wanted to leave them alone.

Not long afterward there was once again great need everywhere, and one evening the children heard the mother say to the father, "We have again eaten up everything. We have only a half loaf of bread, and then the song will be over. We must get rid of the children. We will take them deeper into the woods, so they will not find their way out. Otherwise there will be no help for us."

The man was very disheartened, and he thought, "It would be better to share the last bit with the children." But the woman would not listen to him, scolded him, and criticized him. He who says A must also say B, and because he had given in the first time, he had to do so the second time as well.

The children were still awake and had overheard the conversation. When the adults were asleep, Hansel got up again and wanted to gather pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and

Hansel could not get out. But he comforted his little sister and said, "Don't cry, Gretel. Sleep well. God will help us."

Early the next morning the woman came and got the children from their beds. They received their little pieces of bread, even less than the last time. On the way to the woods, Hansel crumbled his piece in his pocket, then often stood still, and threw crumbs onto the ground.

"Hansel, why are you always stopping and looking around?" said his father. "Keep walking straight ahead." "I can see my pigeon sitting on the roof. It wants to say good-bye to me."

"Fool," said the woman, "that isn't your pigeon. That's the morning sun shining on the chimney."

But little by little Hansel dropped all the crumbs onto the path. The woman took them deeper into the woods than they had ever been in their whole lifetime.

Once again a large fire was made, and the mother said, "Sit here, children. If you get tired you can sleep a little. We are going into the woods to cut wood. We will come and get you in the evening when we are finished."

When it was midday Gretel shared her bread with Hansel, who had scattered his piece along the path. Then they fell asleep, and evening passed, but no one came to get the poor children.

It was dark at night when they awoke, and Hansel comforted Gretel and said, "Wait, when the moon comes up I will be able to see the crumbs of bread that I scattered, and they will show us the way back home."

When the moon appeared they got up, but they could not find any crumbs, for the many thousands of birds that fly about in the woods and in the fields had pecked them up.

Hansel said to Gretel, "We will find our way," but they did not find it.

They walked through the entire night and the next day from morning until evening, but they did not find their way out of the woods. They were terribly hungry, for they had eaten only a few small berries that were growing on the ground. And because they were so tired that their legs would no longer carry them, they lay down under a tree and fell asleep. It was already the third morning since they had left the father's house. They started walking again, but managed only to go deeper and deeper into the woods. If help did not come soon, they would perish. At midday they saw a little snow-white bird sitting on a branch. It sang so beautifully that they stopped to listen. When it was finished it stretched its wings and flew in front of them. They followed it until they came to a little house. The bird sat on the roof, and when they came closer, they saw that the little house was built entirely from bread with a roof made of cake, and the windows were made of clear sugar.

"Let's help ourselves to a good meal," said Hansel. "I'll eat a piece of the roof, and Gretel, you eat from the window. That will be sweet."

Hansel reached up and broke off a little of the roof to see how it tasted, while Gretel stood next to the windowpanes and was nibbling at them. Then a gentle voice called out from inside:

Nibble, nibble, little mouse,

Who is nibbling at my house?

The children answered:

The wind, the wind,

The heavenly child.

They continued to eat, without being distracted. Hansel, who very much like the taste of the roof, tore down another large piece, and Gretel poked out an entire round windowpane. Suddenly the door opened, and a woman, as old as the hills and leaning on a crutch, came creeping out. Hansel and Gretel were so frightened that they dropped what they were holding in their hands.

But the old woman shook her head and said, "Oh, you dear children, who brought you here? Just come in and stay with me. No harm will come to you."

She took them by the hand and led them into her house. Then she served them a good meal: milk and pancakes with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterward she made two nice beds for them, decked in white. Hansel and Gretel went to bed, thinking they were in heaven. But the old woman had only pretended to be friendly. She was a wicked witch who was lying in wait there for children. She had built her house of bread only in order to lure them to her, and if she captured one, she would kill him, cook him, and eat him; and for her that was a day to celebrate.

Witches have red eyes and cannot see very far, but they have a sense of smell like animals, and know when humans are approaching.

When Hansel and Gretel came near to her, she laughed wickedly and spoke scornfully, "Now I have them. They will not get away from me again."

Early the next morning, before they awoke, she got up, went to their beds, and looked at the two of them lying there so peacefully, with their full red cheeks. "They will be a good mouthful," she mumbled to herself. Then she grabbed Hansel with her withered hand and carried him to a little stall, where she locked him behind a cage door. Cry as he might, there was no help for him.

Then she shook Gretel and cried, "Get up, lazybones! Fetch water and cook something good for your brother. He is locked outside in the stall and is to be fattened up. When he is fat I am going to eat him." Gretel began to cry, but it was all for nothing. She had to do what the witch demanded. Now Hansel was given the best things to eat every day, but Gretel received nothing but crayfish shells.

Every morning the old woman crept out to the stall and shouted, "Hansel, stick out your finger, so I can feel if you are fat yet."

But Hansel stuck out a little bone, and the old woman, who had bad eyes and could not see the bone, thought it was Hansel's finger, and she wondered why he didn't get fat.

When four weeks had passed and Hansel was still thin, impatience overcame her, and she would wait no longer. "Hey, Gretel!" she shouted to the girl, "Hurry up and fetch some water. Whether Hansel is fat or thin, tomorrow I am going to slaughter him and boil him."

Oh, how the poor little sister sobbed as she was forced to carry the water, and how the tears streamed down her cheeks! "Dear God, please help us," she cried. "If only the wild animals had devoured us in the woods, then we would have died together."

"Save your slobbering," said the old woman. "It doesn't help you at all."

The next morning Gretel had to get up early, hang up the kettle with water, and make a fire.

"First we are going to bake," said the old woman. "I have already made a fire in the oven and kneaded the dough."

She pushed poor Gretel outside to the oven, from which fiery flames were leaping. "Climb in," said the witch, "and see if it is hot enough to put the bread in yet." And when Gretel was inside, she intended to close the oven, and bake her, and eat her as well.

But Gretel saw what she had in mind, so she said, "I don't know how to do that. How can I get inside?" "Stupid goose," said the old woman. The opening is big enough. See, I myself could get in." And she crawled up stuck her head into the oven.

Then Gretel gave her a shove, causing her to fall in. Then she closed the iron door and secured it with a bar. The old woman began to howl frightfully. But Gretel ran away, and the godless witch burned up miserably. Gretel ran straight to Hansel, unlocked his stall, and cried, "Hansel, we are saved. The old witch is dead." Then Hansel jumped out, like a bird from its cage when someone opens its door. How happy they were!

They threw their arms around each other's necks, jumped with joy, and kissed one another. Because they now had nothing to fear, they went into the witch's house. In every corner were chests of pearls and precious stones.

"These are better than pebbles," said Hansel, filling his pockets.

Gretel said, "I will take some home with me as well," and she filled her apron full. "But now we must leave," said Hansel, "and get out of these witch-woods."

After walking a few hours they arrived at a large body of water. "We cannot get across," said Hansel. "I cannot see a walkway or a bridge."

"There are no boats here," answered Gretel, "but there is a white duck swimming. If I ask it, it will help us across."

Then she called out:

Duckling, duckling,

Here stand Gretel and Hansel.

Neither a walkway nor a bridge,

Take us onto your white back.

The duckling came up to them, and Hansel climbed onto it, then asked his little sister to sit down next to him.

"No," answered Gretel. "That would be too heavy for the duckling. It should take us across one at a time."

That is what the good animal did, and when they were safely on the other side, and had walked on a little while, the woods grew more and more familiar to them, and finally they saw the father's house in the distance. They began to run, rushed inside, and threw their arms around the father's neck.

The man had not had even one happy hour since he had left the children in the woods. However, the woman had died. Gretel shook out her apron, scattering pearls and precious stones around the room, and Hansel added to them by throwing one handful after the other from his pockets.

Now all their cares were at an end, and they lived happily together.

My tale is done,

A mouse has run.

And whoever catches it can make for himself from it a large, large fur cap.

Source: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Hänsel und Grethel," Kinder- und Hausmärchen [Children's and Household Tales -- Grimms' Fairy Tales], vol. 1, 7th ed. (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1857), no. 15, pp. 79-87.

Translated by D. L. Ashliman. © 2000-2002.

The Grimms' specific source is unclear. Although they state that it derives "from various stories from Hessen," a handwritten marginal note in the Grimms' personal copy of the first edition reveals that in 1813 Henriette Dorothea (Dortchen) Wild contributed the children's verse answer to the witch, "The wind, the wind,/ The heavenly child," which rhymes in German: "Der Wind, der Wind,/ Das himmlische Kind." It is likely that the Grimms heard the entire story in the Wild household. Willhelm Grimm married Dortchen Wild in 1825.

"Hansel and Gretel" is the classic version of an Aarne-Thompson-Uther type 327A tale. The episode of burning the witch in her own oven is classified as type 1121.

Another type 327A tale known to the Grimms is Ninnillo and Nennella from The Pentamerone (day 5, tale 8) of Giambattista Basile (1575-1632). Also closely related is the type 327B tale Little Thumb by Charles Perrault (1628-1703).

**Ivasik Telesyk**

**(A Ukrainian Fairy Tale)**

“Telesyk, One of the Most Ancient Ukrainian Folk Fairy Tales.” *Welcome to Ukraine.*

Welcome to Ukraine. Web. 1 March 2016.

<http://www.wumag.kiev.ua/index2.php?param=pgs20043/106>

Once upon a time, there lived a man and his wife. Years passed, they grew old but they remained childless. “Who will take care of us when we get feeble and die,” bemoaned they their sorry condition.

One day the woman tells her husband, “Go to the forest, find a nice piece of wood and bring it home. We’ll make a cradle, I’ll put that piece of wood into the cradle and rock it to sleep. It’ll comfort me a little.”

At first, the man refused to do it but his wife kept begging, and finally he yielded to her entreaties. He went to the forest, cut down a sturdy branch, returned home and made a cradle. They put the branch into the cradle and the woman began rocking it and singing lullabies,

Sleep, baby, sleep,

Go into sleep deep,

O Telesyk, my boy,

Bring us joy!

She kept rocking the cradle well into the night, and rocked herself to sleep. When she woke up in the morning she discovered a little boy in the cradle. What a joy it was for the old man and the old woman to see this miracle happen. They gave the boy a pretty name, Ivasyk-Telesyk.

The boy grew fast, and soon he became very handsome and so nice that the old man and his wife were overjoyed and delighted.

When he grew some more, he said, “Father, make a little gold boat for me and a little silver oar. I’ll go fishing and will catch enough fish to feed you.”

The old man made a little gold boat and a little silver oar for Telesyk, and took it to the river and put it on the water. Telesyk climbed into the boat and went fishing. He had a good catch and brought the fish home. The fish was cooked and the old couple ate and had their fill. And Telesyk went back fishing.

The old woman said she would bring food for Telesyk. “When I start calling you, please come back to the bank, but if you hear someone else calling you, keep away.”

She cooked breakfast for Telesyk, brought it to the bank and started calling,

“Ivasyk-Telesyk, my boy,

Come back here to enjoy

Food and drink, ahoy!”

Telesyk heard her calling him.

“Come closer, my boy, it’s me, your mother, I’ve brought some food for you!

He steered his boat to the place where she was standing, got out of the boat, ate and had his fill, then climbed back into the boat, pushed off, and went fishing again.

But the serpent that was hiding in the bushes, heard how Telesyk’s mother called Telesyk to get back to the bank and now he began calling to the boy himself,

“Ivasyk-Telesyk, my boy,

Come back here to enjoy

Food and drink, ahoy!”

But the serpent had a gruff voice, and though the boy heard the call, he said to himself, “No, it’s not my mother’s voice! Sail on, my boat! Sail on!”

And he put the oar into the water and started rowing. The serpent waited and waited on the bank, but seeing that the boy was not coming, he turned and went away.

In the meantime, the old woman cooked lunch for Telesyk and brought it to the river. She stood on the bank and began calling out,

“Ivasyk-Telesyk, my boy,

Come back here to enjoy

Food and drink, ahoy!”

Telesyk heard her calling and turned his boat towards the bank, “Sail, my boat, sail to the bank! It’s my mother calling me to give me lunch.”

He climbed out of the boat, ate and had his fill, gave his mother the fish that he had caught, climbed back into the boat, pushed off, and went fishing again.

Then the serpent came back to the bank again and started calling in the same gruff voice,

“Ivasyk-Telesyk, my boy,

Come back here to enjoy

Food and drink, ahoy!”

Telesyk heard the call but he knew it was not his mother’s voice. He put the oar into the water and started rowing away. “Sail on, my boat! Sail on!”

The serpent, seeing he could not lure the boy to the bank, left and went straight to the blacksmith. “Hey, blacksmith, forge a very thin voice for me, a voice like Telesyk’s mother’s!”

And the blacksmith did as he was bidden. The serpent returned to the river and started calling, “Ivasyk-Telesyk, my boy,

Come back here to enjoy Food and drink, ahoy!”

Telesyk heard the call and thought it was his mother calling out to him.

“Sail, my boat, sail to the bank. It’s my mother calling me. She’s brought food for me!”

The moment he reached the bank, the serpent jumped out of the bushes, grabbed the boy and brought him to his house.

The serpent knocked on the door, and shouted, “Olenka, little serpent, open the door!”

Olenka, the serpent’s daughter, opened the door, and the serpent walked in. “Now, Olenka, get the oven so hot that the stones become red, and bake this boy well. I’ll go and invite guests! We’ll have a feast!”

The serpent turned and left. He flew over dale and vale, over hill and rill, inviting guests.

Olenka gets the oven so hot the stones become red, and says, “Now, Telesyk, get on this shovel!”

And he says,“I don’t know how.”

Olenka says, “O come on, just climb on it!”

He puts a hand on the shovel and says, “Like this?”

“No, not just the hand, get all of yourself onto the shovel!”

Telesyk puts his head on the shovel. “Like this?”

“No! No! Not like this!”

“But how?” says Telesyk. “Show me how to do it!”

She climbed onto the shovel and the moment she did it, Telesyk grabbed hold of the handle and shoved the shovel with Olenka the Serpent on it into the oven. Then he shut the oven door firmly, latched it, and ran out, closing the door behind him.

Telesyk climbed the tallest maple tree that stood close by and hid himself there.

The serpent arrived with guests in tow. “Hey, Olenka, open the door, we are back!”

No answer.

“Hey, Olenka, open the door, we are back!” No answer.

“Olenka, damn you, where are you?” No answer.

“She’s gone somewhere,” said the serpent angrily and pushed the door. The door opened and the serpent and his guests trooped into the house. They sat down at the table and the serpent opened the oven door and pulled out what was inside. When they saw food on the table, they fell to and ate eagerly. They had their fill and then walked out of the house. They fell down on the ground and began rolling on the grass, shouting, “What a good meal we’ve had! Telesyk tasted not too bad!”

And Telesyk, hearing this, piped from the maple, “Roll on the grass, friends, roll, with your stomachs full of Olenka’s all!”

They heard this but did not know where it came from. They continued rolling on the grass back and forth, and shouting, “What a good meal we’ve had! Telesyk tasted not too bad!”

And again they heard a voice piping, “Roll on the grass, friends, roll, with your stomachs full of Olenka’s all!”

They got up from the ground and began looking around. They searched here and there and everywhere, and at last spotted Telesyk hiding in the maple tree. They rushed to the tree and began gnawing at it. They stopped gnawing only when they had all their teeth broken against the hard wood. But they failed to bring the tree down. And they rushed to the blacksmith. “Hey, blacksmith, forge us strong teeth so that we’ll be able to gnaw through that tree!”

And the blacksmith did as bidden. They rushed back to the tree and began gnawing at it again. The tree began to sway. As it was about to topple, Telesyk saw a flight of geese flying over him. He called out to them,

“O geese, high in the sky, kind geese,

Pick me up from this tree, o please,

Carry me back to my dad,

Who never treats anyone bad,

He’ll give you drink and food,

A place to rest, and you’ll feel good!”

But the front geese said, “Let those in the middle pick you up!” And flew on. The tree is shaking, about to topple. And Telesyk calls out again,

“O geese, high in the sky, kind geese,

Pick me up from this tree, o please,

Carry me back to my dad,

Who never treats anyone bad,

He’ll give you drink and food,

A place to rest, and you’ll feel good!”

But the geese in the middle of the flight said, “Let those in the back pick you up!” And flew on.

And the maple tree began leaning to the side. The serpents took a little rest and then got back to gnawing at the trunk. And Telesyk called out again,

“O geese, high in the sky, kind geese,

Pick me up from this tree, o please,

Carry me back to my dad,

Who never treats anyone bad,

He’ll give you drink and food,

A place to rest, and you’ll feel good!”

“Let that last one pick you up!” And flew on.

And the maple tree was already leaning, about to fall. Telesyk saw the last goose that was lagging behind all the others. It was small and very tired and could hardly keep itself in the air. Telesyk called out to it,

“O little, little goose, hurry up,

From this tree, pick me up,

Carry me home, to my dad, he’s best,

He’ll give you food and a place to rest!”

He’ll give you water, he’ll feed you up,

Then you’ll fly up again, and up and up!”

And the little goose picked Telesyk from the tree. It could not fly high and flew close to the ground. The serpent gave chase but failed to catch up with the goose.

The goose carried Telesyk all the way to his house, put him down on the ground in the backyard, and began grazing. Telesyk walked over to the window and heard the old woman say, “Take this cake, my dear, and I will take one for myself.”

And Telesyk called out through the window, “What about me?”

Then the old woman took another cake from the oven and offered it to her old man, “Take this cake, my dear, and I will take one for myself.”

And Telesyk called out through the window again, “What about me?” And they heard him this time. Whose voice is that?

“Have you heard it, my dear? A voice calling?” “Yes,” said the old man, “I think I heard a voice too.”

And then she took another cake from the oven and said, “Take this cake, my dear, and I will take one for myself.”

“What about me?” called out Telesyk again.

“Yes, a voice calls out again!” And she looked out the window and saw Telesyk.

They rushed out of the house, picked Telesyk up and carried him into the house. How happy they were!

The little goose was strutting around in the yard. The old woman saw it and said,

“Look, there’s a goose walking about the yard! I’ll catch it and butcher it and cook a meal!”

And she made as if to go but Telesyk cried out, “No, mother, don’t catch him! Better give him some food! If it were not for him, I would not be here with you!”

And they gave the little goose food and drink, and put millet under his wings to last him on his journey. And then the little goose flew away.

That’s a story for you, and you can give me a bag of bagels, if you liked it.

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

Read all three fairy tales (“Baba Yaga and the Brave Youth,” “Hansel and Gretel,” and “Ivasik-Telesik”) and write a response to the following questions.

* Give a brief plot summary of each of the three stories.
* Identify character “types” in these stories that are common in many fairy tales; for example, the witch/villian, abandoned children, benevolent animals, etc.
* Explain and analyze any symbols you can identify.
* What elements do the three stories have in common?
* Compare the Slavic tales, “Ivasik-Telesik” and “Baba Yaga,” with the German “Hansel and Gretel.” Can you detect any possible cultural differences?