

## *Lotilko's Wings*

*A folk tale from Tunguzka (Siberia)*

Once upon a time there was a flying human. His name was Lotilko.

Lotilko flew over the lands oceans high up in the skies and sometimes flew too far away from home. Exactly that happened when Lotilko just flew joyfully above the clouds whole day until the dark night began. He had to search for shelter.

- I have to spend the night here somewhere. I'll only get home in the morning.

He thought, and landed in an unknown settlement.

But I wish he had knocked on good people's door for a night's lodging! Unfortunately, he just found Teventej... Teventei was hospitable, invited him inside, he offered him all kind of good food and drink by his wife. Then showed the guestroom and Lotilko was thankful. Teventei saw through the half opened door how Lotilko detaches the wings and hanged them on the chair.

From that moment he could not find his peace of mind.

- This person has hands and legs, so he can work and walk. Why it be needed those wings? So at sunrise he stole the wings away...

As Lotilko woke up searched for the wings but he could not find them anywhere. He went out from the house and there he met Teventei so began to beg him for the wings, but he said he will give them back when he returns from the hunting he is about to go on to faraway lands.

Lotilko began to search his wings everywhere, being sad and hopeless. Asked also Teventei's wife to give back the wings, but she was so afraid from her husband she refused to help. In the way out from the courtyard, one moment he just looked up and saw the birds flying.

Asked them for help:

- Birds, hey dear birds!
- Could you tell me please where can I find my wings?
- We can't tell you...Teventei would kill us...!
- Tell me please and I'll take you a big fat deer.
- All right, bring that deer and we'll tell you! They said.

He caught a fat reindeer as prey and made a great feast of it for the birds. They invaded the deer like a thick cloud, soon only its white bones seemed.

- Now finally tell me where my wings are! Lotilko asked them again.

The jackdaws answered: - First search on one side of the river, then on the other side!

Well, Lotilko was already very angry with that.

- May your beaks be bent forever! - He exclaimed in anger. The curse came true immediately. The beaks of these birds and their entire genus immediately became curved, and have remained so to this day. Since then, they have been called crooked-beaked jackdaw.

Teventei arrived from the hunt. Lotilko began to beg him: - Now tell me where my wings are so I can return home! But Teventei just laughed evilly: -Give me your boots, and then I'll give you back your wings! Lotilko began to think, looking at his warm leather boots. How will he live without it? But if he'll get his wings back, he'll be fine even without boots! He pulled the boots off his feet and gave them to Teventei, who hid them, then went on a big hunt again.

-Give me back my wings!, - Lotilko shouted after him. But Teventei just laughed at him. He went to the people for help:

-Give me, please, a pair of good boots, you can see, I was left without footwear! But the people just shook their heads: - We don't have a single unnecessary pair of boots left. They didn't give him boots because they were also afraid of Teventei.

Lotilko saw that he could not expect help from anyone, he could only help himself. So he went into the forest to collect bird feathers. He needed a lot of feathers to make himself a new wing. But he made it anyway. He had just strapped his new wings over his shoulder when Teventei arrived from hunting. Lotilko flew up into the air, Tevetej shouted after him:

- Lotilko, Lotilko! Where are you going?
- I'm going home to my homeland! - came the happy answer from above.

Teventei just watched as Lotilko flapped his wings high above the wide wasteland, like a huge bird. He flew, flew, and seemed smaller and smaller, then he disappeared forever into the distance...

At that moment, Teventei also felt an irresistible desire to rise to the heights like Lotilko. He ran to the hiding place where he had hidden the wings. He strapped it on his shoulder, swung it, tried to fly, but of course it didn't work. There was no way he could separate himself from the ground. His wife tried, but in vain, she could not rise into the air either.

- This wing is worthless! - She told her husband.

- Throw it in the fire, it must be burned! Teventei took Lotilko's wing, threw it into the fire, and it burned. He still hasn't learned to fly.