# Story of a Shoemaker and his Servant Prituitshkin

There lived in a certain kingdom a renowned Prince, Mistafor Skurlatovich, who had a servant named Goria, the son of Krutshinin. And Mistafor gave him a skilful master to teach him the art of shoemaking that he should become the best and most skilful of all workmen in that craft. Goria went on learning for several years, and became so clever that he made shoes even better than his master. Then Mistafor Skurlatovich took him into his house and ordered him to make some shoes; so he set to work and made twenty dozen pairs, but not a single pair of them satisfied Mistafor Skurlatovich. So he beat him unmercifully till the shoemaker, Goria Krutshinin, was half dead, and lay sick for ten long weeks.As soon as Goria began to recover, Mistafor Skurlatovich ordered him to make some more shoes. And when Goria had finished several pairs he took them to his master to try on; but not a single pair pleased him. Then Skurlatovich flung the shoes at his head, and beat him until his face was covered with blood. Goria Krutshinin, who had one poor copper altine in his pocket, went to spend it in a public-house by the road-side, and, as he sat down, he said to himself: “I wish the devil would free me from this master of mine!”Suddenly a stranger stood before him, and said: “Why are you in such a passion, my good lad?”“How can I help it?” replied Goria, the shoemaker; “my master is as cruel as a mad dog; you see how he has dressed me down, and ten weeks ago he beat me even still more than now.”“Why does he beat you so?” said the stranger. And Goria replied: “I have learnt the art of shoemaking better than my teacher, and I make shoes for my master, but though I work for him all I can, do what I will, I never can please him; and instead of thanking me, he beats me as you see.”Then the stranger said: “I know your master well enough; you must be freed from his cruelty; and, if you like, I will marry Mistafor’s daughter to you instead of to the Prince to whom she is betrothed.”“Are you mad?” said Goria; “what nonsense are you talking?” “Trust me,” replied the stranger, “I can bring it all about.” But the shoemaker could not believe him, and said: “You may talk and promise what you will, I do not believe a word.” “Whether or no, you shall see that what I promise I can perform.”So saying the stranger desired him to shut his eyes, throw himself on the ground facing the sun, and then retire two steps backwards. When Goria had done so, the stranger told him to look at himself. Goria was amazed at seeing himself attired in a costly dress, and said: “Without doubt you must be the devil in man’s form!”“Certainly I am a devilkin; you called me, and on your summons I came. I will serve you, and marry you to Mistafor’s daughter.” “How is that possible?” said Goria: “I am known down yonder by every one—the very dogs know me.” But the stranger replied: “Nay, it is not so. No one, I promise, will recognise you: every one will mistake you for Prince Dardavan, to whom Mistafor’s daughter Dogada is betrothed.”“Good, very good,” said Goria, “if what you say prove true.” “It shall all come to pass as I have said,” replied the other. And thereupon the stranger desired Goria to go three steps backward and shut his eyes, and then open them again. On a sudden Goria saw before him a splendid palace of white marble, and in amazement, he exclaimed: “You are in truth the devil himself, and no man, to do such marvellous things!”“I tell the truth, you see, and do not deceive you,” replied the stranger; “and now I make you a present of this marble palace, and will remain with you and serve you faithfully. Call me Prituitshkin!”Thereupon the servant conducted his new master Goria, the shoemaker, into the courtyard, where he beheld a great throng of servants, horses, and carriages, in the most splendid array; and the servants all made their obeisance to him, as to the Prince, and the musicians played on all sorts of instruments; and when the music ceased, Goria the shoemaker went into the marble palace, where he saw a table covered with all kinds of dishes; so he seated himself at the table, ate and drank his fill, and lived in this palace like a great man.Meanwhile Prince Dardavan, after his betrothal with Dogada, was travelling on business to another city; and the trusty servant Prituitshkin thought this a favourable opportunity to marry Goria the shoemaker to Dogada. So he went to his master, the shoemaker, and said: “Now is the time to settle this affair; we must contrive that Mistafor takes you for Dardavan.” So saying, he went out in front of the marble palace, raised a large tent, and ordered all the musicians to strike up. When Mistafor heard such a variety of beautiful sounds he bethought himself that Prince Dardavan must be arrived, and sent to inquire. As soon as he was informed that the supposed Prince Dardavan had arrived, he sent a number of his people to invite his dear son-in-law to a feast. Then the messengers went to Goria, bowed humbly before him, and invited him in the name of their Prince Mistafor Skurlatovich to visit him and be his guest. “Go,” answered Goria, “and tell Mistafor Skurlatovich that I will soon come to him.” So the ambassadors bowed low to the shoemaker, and returned and related to their Prince what they had heard from the supposed Tsarevich Dardavan, and all they had seen.After the departure of Mistafor’s messengers, Prituitshkin went to Goria the shoemaker and said: “Now is the time for you to go to Mistafor; listen to what I say: when you come to the courtyard of the palace, and dismount from your steed, do not fasten him up, nor give him to anyone to hold, but only cough loudly, and stamp on the ground with all your might. When you enter the hall, seat yourself on the chair numbered One. In the evening, when it is time to retire to rest, remain behind, and as soon as your bed is ready, do not lie down upon it, for Prince Dardavan always lies on his own bed, which weighs a hundred poods. I will provide you with such a bed; and if I delay, strike me in the presence of Mistafor and his daughter. When you go to bed, and the servants bring you a number of lights, bid them take the lights all away, and order me to bring you a stone, which Prince Dardavan always lays on his table at night. I will bring you this stone, which shows more light than a thousand candles.”When Goria the shoemaker heard these directions he promised to observe them all. So he went into the courtyard, and Prituitshkin brought him the horse saddled. Then Goria mounted the steed, and Prituitshkin another, and away they rode to Mistafor Skurlatovich; and when they entered the courtyard, Mistafor came out to meet his beloved son-in-law, the supposed Prince Dardavan. Then Goria the shoemaker dismounted from his gallant steed; but he did not fasten him up, nor did he give him to anyone to hold: he only coughed aloud and stamped upon the ground. The horse stood, as if rooted to the spot. Then Goria went into the hall and bowed to all four sides, kissed his host, and seated himself upon the chair with the number One. Mistafor went to his daughter Dogada, and bade her come and welcome her betrothed husband, Prince Dardavan; but Dogada was discreet and cunning, and replied; “My gracious lord and father, this is indeed not Prince Dardavan, but our shoemaker Goria Krutshinin.” “Don’t talk nonsense,” said Mistafor; “I have seen Prince Dardavan face to face, and know him well; this is the Prince, and no shoemaker indeed.”“Well and good,” said Dogada; “I will go and welcome him; but only bear in mind what I say: it is not Prince Dardavan, but our shoemaker Goria, disguised like him. Now mind one thing: when we sit down at table to eat, order white bread and brown bread to be brought to him: and if you observe that this guest cuts first a piece of the brown bread you will know that he is not Prince Dardavan but the shoemaker Goria, for Dardavan always eats first the white bread.”“Good,” said Mistafor, “I will observe.”Then he invited Goria the shoemaker to sit down at table; and, when they were all seated, and white and brown bread was brought, Goria first took of the brown bread, and Mistafor and Dogada remarked this. Then said Mistafor: “My dear and honoured son-in-law, Prince Dardavan, how is it that you cut so much brown bread and no white?”When the servant Prituitshkin heard this, he went invisibly up to Goria and whispered in his ear: “Tell Mistafor that your father, when he sat at table, always gave first to the poor a piece of bread to eat, and instead of salt, used to pour out to them a bag of gold: and so saying, order me to bring you the bag of gold.”Then the supposed Tsarevich Dardavan repeated those words to Mistafor, cut some more slices of brown bread, and called to his servant Prituitshkin to bring him the bag of gold. In the twinkling of an eye Prituitshkin brought the money, which he had stolen from Mistafor’s treasury, and Goria desired him to collect a troop of beggars. So the servant ran out and returned in a trice with a crowd of hungry men, and Goria distributed the bread, giving to each a piece of gold out of the bag. And when he had given away all the bread and the golden coins, he himself fell to eating.After dinner Mistafor said to his daughter: “What say you now—is not this Prince Dardavan?” “No, dear father,” replied Dogada, “this is not the Prince, but our shoemaker Krutshinin.”“Why, have you lost your wits, child?” said Mistafor; “we have got rid of Goria Krutshinin long ago.” “Well, mark you,” replied Dogada, “I will prove that this man is not the Prince. Invite him to spend the night here, and order a bed to be made ready for him; and if he lies down upon it he is not Prince Dardavan, but the shoemaker Goria.”When the evening came, and it grew late, Mistafor ordered the best bed to be made ready for the shoemaker; then Mistafor asked the pretended Tsarevich whether, as it was growing late, he wished to retire to rest. So Goria went into the bedchamber, and, seeing that it was not the bed of which Prituitshkin had spoken, he instantly called his servant, as if in a passion, and giving him a box on the ears, said: “You rascal, why have you not made ready my bed? You know very well that I always sleep on my hundred-pood bed: go instantly and bring it to me!” Thereupon Prituitshkin ran as fast as he could and brought the hundred-pood bed, which he had stolen from Prince Dardavan.Then Goria the shoemaker undressed, and lay down upon the bed; and Dogada, on purpose to try him, ordered a number of tapers to be lighted and taken into his bedchamber. But Goria instantly drove all the servants away with the lights, and ordered Prituitshkin to give him the stone, which the latter presently brought, having stolen this also from Prince Dardavan. Then Goria placed the stone on the table, and lay down to sleep; and the light shed by the stone was more dazzling than a meteor in the sky.At midnight, Dogada sent one of her attendants into the bedroom of the shoemaker, desiring her to steal away the stone from the table. But hardly had the girl entered the apartment, and was about to run off with the stone, than the servant Prituitshkin, who was lying by the door, jumped up and exclaimed: “Is it not a shame for you, pretty girl, to rob your future lord and master! You must leave me now a pledge for your conduct.” So saying, he drew off the maid’s slipper and head-dress and dismissed her. Then the girl went to her mistress and told her the whole affair; but Dogada did not despair, and, after an hour, thinking that Goria and his servant Prituitshkin would now be asleep, she sent another maid to steal the stone. When the girl entered the bedchamber, up jumped Prituitshkin again as before, pulled off her slipper, head-dress and jacket, and let her go. But after another hour had passed, Dogada, again thinking they must have fallen asleep, resolved to go herself and fetch the stone. Scarcely, however, had she entered the bedroom of the shoemaker Goria, and laid her hand upon the stone, than up jumped Prituitshkin, and, seizing her, exclaimed: “How! is it not a shame for your Grace to contrive such wickedness? It is not becoming the daughter of so renowned a father to be plotting such tricks; therefore, I must beg of you, fair lady, to leave me a pledge.” No sooner said than done: Prituitshkin slipped off her jacket, slipper, and head-dress, and dismissed Dogada in shame and remorse.Early the next day, when the shoemaker Goria arose, his servant Prituitshkin told him all that passed during the night, and advised him, when Mistafor should propose to him a riddle, to answer: “Riddle me no riddle, but I will give you a riddle, and then,” continued he, “propose to Mistafor this riddle: ‘I went to walk in your green meadows and caught three goats, and stripped from each of them three skins.’ If Mistafor doubts, and says that it is impossible for a goat to have three skins, call me and order me to bring the skins.”When Goria received these directions from his servant Prituitshkin, he went to Mistafor, who at once began to propose to him a riddle, but Goria answered; “I will give you a riddle.” And he continued: “I went to walk in your green meadows and caught three goats, and stripped from each of them three skins.” Mistafor doubted greatly and said: “It is impossible for a goat to have three skins.”“At all events ’tis quite true,” replied Goria; and so saying, he ordered Prituitshkin to bring the three skins which he had taken from the three goats. So the servant immediately brought them to him.When Mistafor beheld his daughter’s dress he was troubled, scolded her in his heart, and asked the pretended Tsarevich how Dogada’s dress had come into his hands. So the shoemaker told him all that had happened. Mistafor, enraged against his daughter, exclaimed: “Look ye, did you not say that this was not Prince Dardavan, but the shoemaker Goria Krutshinin? I have no longer patience—prepare instantly for your wedding.” And Goria the shoemaker married the Princess Dogada that very day.Sometime after this the servant Prituitshkin came to Goria and said: “Now that I have made your fortune, do something for me in return: I have a request to make. In your garden is a pond, in which I formerly lived. A maiden was one day washing linen, and dropped a ring into the pond, and by that means she drove me from it. Order now the water to be let off and the pond to be cleaned out: desire that whoever finds the ring shall bring it to you, and when it is found, order the pond to be filled with clear water and a boat to be built; and in this boat sail with your wife and me. I will then throw myself into the water, and when your wife exclaims: ‘Ah! the servant Prituitshkin is drowned!’ only reply: ‘The devil take him!’”When Goria the shoemaker heard this, he ordered the pond in the garden to be emptied and cleaned, and that whatever was found in it should be brought to him. And when the pond was drained, the ring was found at the bottom by a boy, who brought it to Goria the shoemaker. Then Goria ordered the water to be let into the pond, and a boat to be built. As soon as all was ready, he seated himself, with his wife and servant, Prituitshkin, in the boat, and sailed out into the middle of the pond. But on a sudden Prituitshkin jumped into the water, and Dogada exclaimed: “Ah! see, the servant Prituitshkin is drowned!” Then said Goria: “The devil take him! I want him no longer.”Prince Dardavan, the real affianced husband of Dogada, was sent out to battle, and there lost his life. Goria the shoemaker ever after went by his name, and lived many years with Dogada in great happiness, forgetting his former unhappy fate.

## http://www.fairytales247.com/catalog/russia-folktales/story-of-a-shoemaker-and-his-servant-prituitshkin-1425/