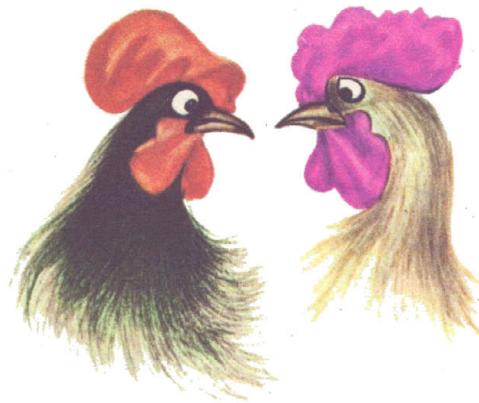


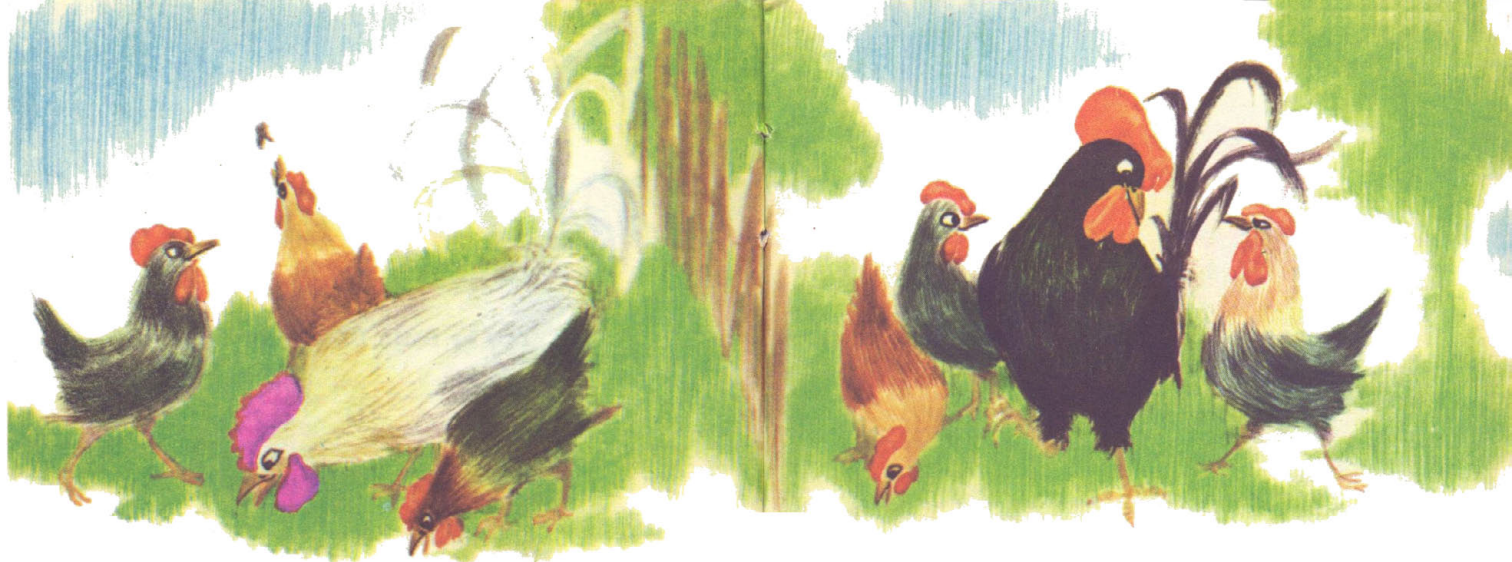
the fighters

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Text by EMIL GIRLEANU



Published by
BROWN WATSON
London



Published in the United Kingdom by Brown Watson,
43/44 Great Windmill Street, London W.1.

MCMLXXX

This is an old story of jealousy. Maybe it was the way fate meant it to be but it seems the two were meant to hate each other. Both of them were fine-looking roosters, each with his own territory, but they were deadly enemies.

On one farm there lived a fine, black rooster. His collar and fine feathers, soft as silk, ran from his back to his spurs, and shone with a greenish gloss of sheer beauty. His wings were black as night, dull as charcoal, with a hidden fire. His gleaming breast had the greyish tint of steel and his long pliant tail feathers bending in a great arch had bluish changeable tints. His restless beady eyes shone like beetles in his head, and his flashing, rakishly set comb flamed scarlet. Truly, he was a magnificent bird.

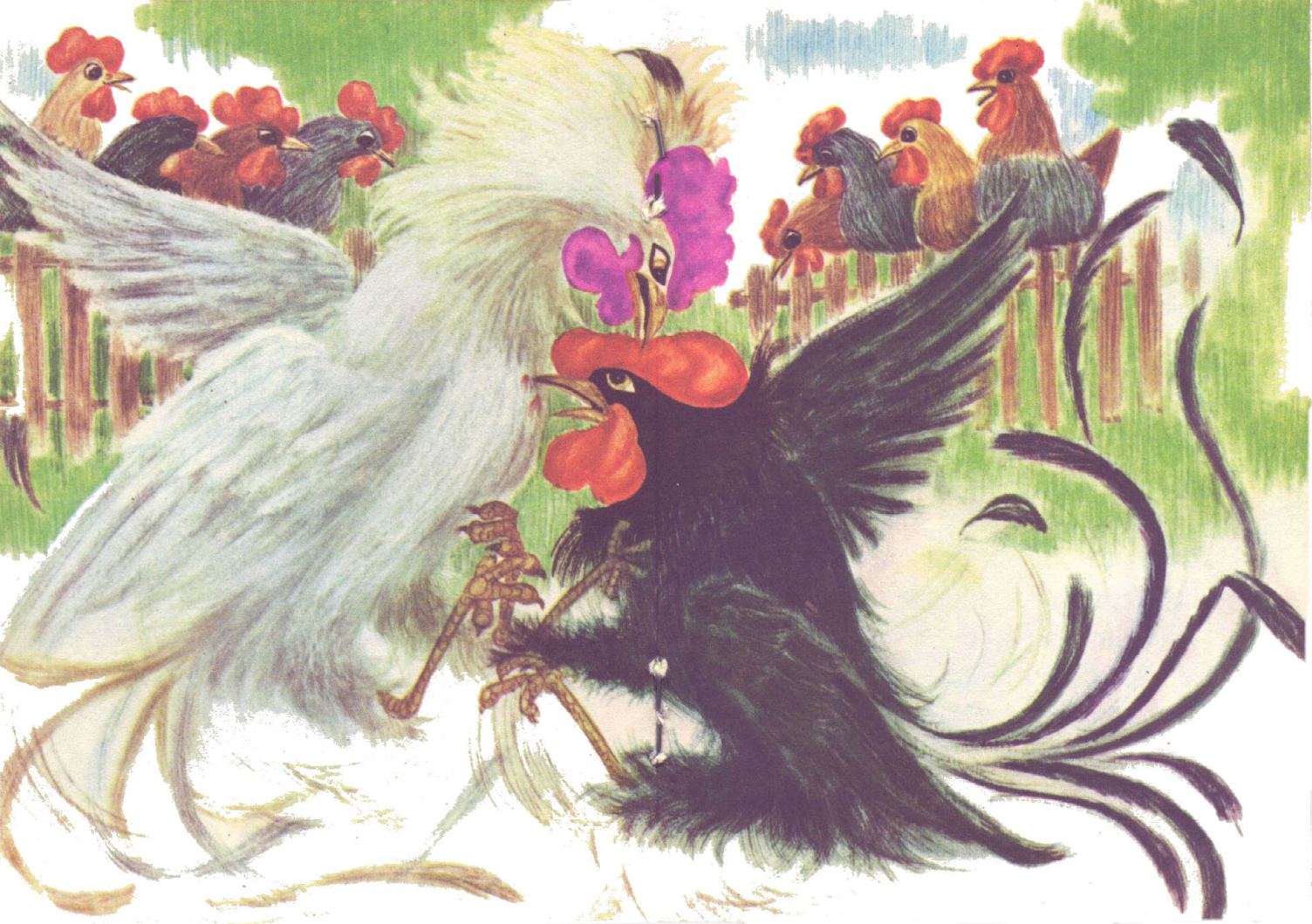
The farm next door also boasted a magnificent rooster. But he was



white. His breast gleamed like hoar frost, merging into a silvery hue that reminded one of old silver coins. His wings were white, a tender white, like the freshly fallen snow. His collar was white, the tips of his feathers just slightly dipped with yellow as if rubbed with flecks of gold dust. His tail was white, with feather-like fronds that spread out like a huge fan. His golden eyes were set in coral eyelids and his pulpy comb creased with flame like an exotic carnation.

The two roosters had hated each other on sight. Every day they would glower at one another through the fence. But they had no





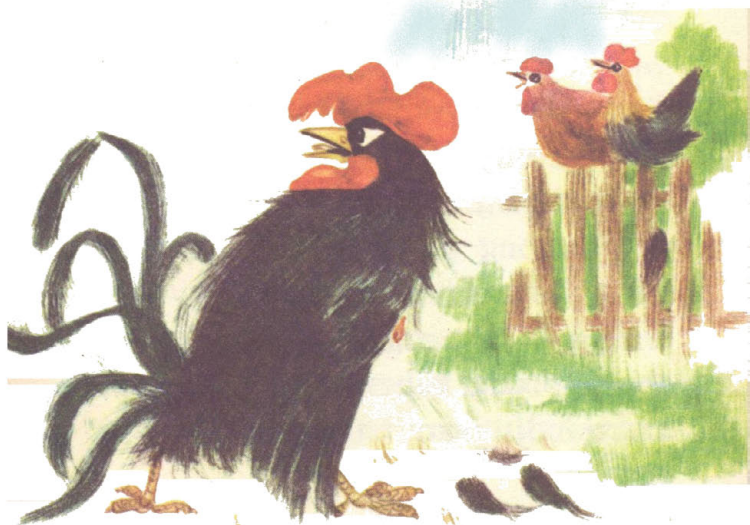


chance to fight, for always the fence kept them apart.

One day their chance came. The way was clear and they were ready. In a moment the two roosters stood facing one another, their tails high, their spurs ready. Behind them,

the hens watched and waited. What would happen now?

In a second they attacked each other. They stood apart, their necks arched, their feathers ruffled, their wings loose. The black one struck the white rooster with his spurs, cutting his white breast. The white



one struck back strongly. Again and again they attacked.

The black rooster was angry. For a long time he had waited to fight the boastful white rooster, and at first he was too excited to fight properly. He rushed in time and again, striking the white one, but doing little damage.

The white rooster smiled to himself. He would take things more slowly, only striking when he knew he could hurt the other. Both were very strong and they shook each other with great force.

Again and again they drew apart, then sprang together, their claws extended, ready to tear at one another.



They sprang sideways, trying to attack one another's backs until they were panting with effort.

Once more they lunged at one another.

Caught in each other's claws, they rolled on the ground. Feathers and dust were mingled in an untidy heap on the beaten ground and the

hens waited expectantly. This was the most exciting fight they had ever seen!

And so it went on, until they began to tire. Neither had defeated the other. They made one more effort but gave up, being spent and exhausted.

They stood, glaring at each other and the hens crowded round to praise their own roosters for their bravery. What a fight this had been, they would not forget it.

The roosters strode away haughtily, surrounded by their retinue. "We'll fight another day," they promised each other as they parted. Do you think they will ever be friends?





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Ion Creangă Publishing House
Bucharest
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Printed in Romania

Материалы на английском - качайте бесплатно:
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BL/1

ISBN 0-7097-4752-7