



the hare

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Text by EMIL GÎRLEANU



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In winter, the forest is like a fairy tale world. The sugar frosted trees glisten and shine with snow, the fields are like crystal and the pond like a mirror of polished glass.

The sky, lighting its candles like a huge chandelier, seemed like a huge ball-room, and the wind in the trees made a soft rhythm. It was as if the animals were bewitched by its spell. The birds flew as if it was day, the wolf lay on his haunches and waited; the fox rested, not wishing to go hunting, and the tiny squirrel leapt from tree to tree in his excitement. He was so happy, he sprang from one branch to the next as if it was spring.

No one could remember a scene like this before. The soft snow, carpeting the earth, made everything silent, and the glistening



snow-capped trees seemed alive with the frost.

The brown hare scuttled on, playing in the snow. At first, scared by the white, white fields, he crept slowly and stealthily from his hiding place behind the big tree. When he reached the boundary and saw endless fields, crisp and white in the moonlight, he jumped for joy.

"Maybe I'll meet a friend," he thought to himself.

"Maybe you will."

"Perhaps I'll meet a girl friend."

He leapt in the air for joy.

He danced along, laughing and singing. He was a very happy little hare indeed.



On and on went the little hare, through the woods, past the tall trees standing like statues in the moonlight. The moon hid behind a cloud and the world darkened. For a moment, the little hare felt scared. It seemed so dark suddenly and there was no one else to be seen. He paused by a huge tree and wondered. Was it safe? "It's very exciting to be out like this," he told himself, and then he wondered. He wished he felt braver. Once the moon shines again, all will be well, he thought. It was so dark now, he did not like it at all.





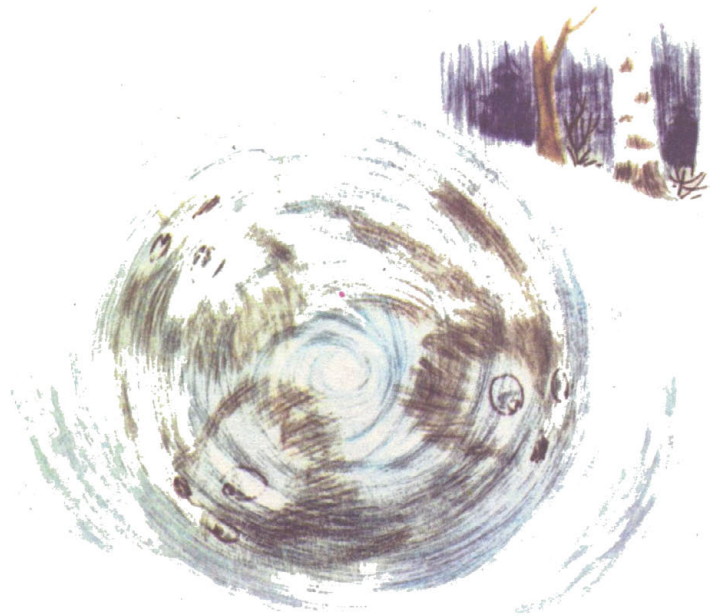
Just then, without warning, out came the moon and the whole world was bright and shining. The hare sat transfixed with fear. Close beside him on the ground lay a fearsome monster, two enormous horns, stretched before him!



“Help, oh help, a monster is after me,” cried the hare, jumping up like a coiled spring and rushing headlong down the slippery slope.

Faster and faster he went, down and down, until he turned head over heels, like a snowball!

On and on he sped until he reached the bottom of the hill.





For a moment he sat there. Then he stood up slowly. He had escaped the monster!

He curled up in the hollow of the old tree and shut his eyes tightly. He felt safe now he could no longer see the monster. Soon, he was fast asleep. Do you think he was dreaming?





Translated by ANA CARTIANU
Illustrated by ILEANA CEAUȘU-PANDELE

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