

# TALES FROM AFAR

OLD STORIES FROM  
NEW RESIDENTS



Edited by Dale Jarvis and Katherine Harvey



# TALES FROM AFAR

OLD STORIES FROM  
NEW RESIDENTS

Edited by Dale Jarvis and Katherine Harvey



Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Intangible Cultural Heritage Office  
St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5V5

Layout/design by Graham Blair

2018





## INTRODUCTION

*Once upon a time, Truth went for a walk, barefoot, naked, and cold. When people saw him so bare and unadorned, they turned away in distaste.*

*Truth was depressed and forlorn, deeply saddened that no one wanted to talk to him.*

*Further along the road he met someone dressed in resplendent garments. This was Truth's ancient friend, Story.*

*"My old friend," said Story, "why do you look so sad?"*

*Truth began to complain that no one would listen to him.*

*"The trouble," explained Story, "is not with you, but with your appearance. Take my beautiful cloak, wrap yourself up in it, and people will listen to you."*

*And this is exactly what Truth did. From that day on, he wrapped himself up in Story's beautiful garments, and he was welcomed with open arms.*

Attributed to Rabbi  
Jacob ben Wolf Kranz  
of Lithuania (1740-1804)

When European settlers first arrived in Newfoundland and Labrador, they brought from their home countries their old friend Story. Today, this is part of the reason we have such a unique oral tradition here in the province, with our yarns of fairies, merb'ys, and the like. But that process of importing stories from away didn't stop; new people coming here are bringing their own oral traditions, continually adding to the richness of our local lore.

As our province becomes more multicultural, sharing these stories is an important way to better understand one another. Sharing folktales can highlight the commonalities between cultures, and help build a common understanding between people

by bridging cultural, political, and religious divides. Sharing the stories we grew up with is a way of bringing people together.

“Tales From Afar: Old Stories from New Residents” is a step in that direction, and represents a new partnership between the St. John’s Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) and the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL). We set out to look for folktales, legends, myths, stories of saints and miracles, ghost stories, fables, or traditional children’s tales – any story that had been passed down by word of mouth. We collected stories from new Canadians, recent immigrants, refugees, international students, and long-time residents who have moved to Newfoundland and Labrador from other countries. We heard from storytellers from Scotland, France, Germany, Croatia, Ukraine, Nigeria, Syria, Iran, China, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, and the USA. And we were well-rewarded in this task, hearing stories of transformation, mermaids, biker gangs, talking tigers, and magic snails. We learned why chickens always seem to be scratching the ground, how a dog swallowed the moon, and about the importance of never giving up, even when it feels like you are drowning.

The goal of this project was to collect and share the diversity of oral traditions that exist within this region, and to create a showcase of traditional stories and folktales from around the world. I think we have managed to do that, though the stories here are just a sampling of what I believe to be a deep pool of folk material waiting to be explored.

Read on, enjoy, and if you know an old folktale you learned as a child, I would love to hear it!

*Dale Jarvis*  
*ichb@heritagefoundation.ca*  
*709-739-1892 x2*



## SCOTLAND

### The Hunting o' the Haggis

*As told by Jennifer ML Whitfield*

*Jennifer Whitfield is Newfoundland's own "Haggis Lady." Jennifer was raised in Glasgow, lived there until she was twenty-five, then boarded the second voyage of the QEII and sailed away to the new world. She moved to Newfoundland in 1976. She's been making haggis since 1981, has made haggis locally for the Burns' Night supper, and ships her haggis across Canada.*



long time ago in an old, old city lived a man and woman with three wee girls. The man loved to teach his girls all about the old, old city in Scotland – its parks where the gardeners meticulously arranged beautiful flowers in the midst of careful landscaping... where the awesome pond hosted swans – such a vital part of the surrounding view. Where they all visited regularly the Petrified Forest housed within an airy glass room. It's hard to believe that this forest was once alive with green leaves, birds skitting around pecking at the insects climbing on these now cold, black fossils. Its rivers with glorious waterfalls where the salmon came home to leap up the falls in order to lay the eggs for the next round of wonderful salmon fish...such an amazing sight to watch and understand.







Then, of course, the man and his wife took these girls on their summer holidays. This entailed walking with all their luggage to embark on a train which took them to the paddle steamer on the big river of the old, old city. The journey on the paddle steamer doon the watter was always accompanied with music! It was such an exciting time listening to the accordion player sing, tap his feet and make the journey doon the beautiful river so very pleasant. A bus awaited the passengers off the boat and this long bus journey ended up at a seaside fishing village where the family spent two glorious weeks.

Being Scottish, the man and woman celebrated the Scottish special days, *i.e.* St. Andrew's Day and, of course, Burns' Day. Robert Burns is the best known Scottish poet ever to have lived. And this brings us to what the man loved most... HAGGIS! Now haggis is a beloved traditional dish which won the attention of the bard – Robert Burns! He wrote a poem for this poor man's dish called *The Address to a Haggis* which brought great fame to the lowly haggis all around the world! The haggis became part of all Burns' suppers in Scotland and all the other places where wandering Scots celebrated the birth of this amazing poet!

Now, the man's favourite story about the haggis starts with The Official Hunting Day o' the Haggis, which is on August 11<sup>th</sup> every year. However, the official Grouse Shooting day is August 12<sup>th</sup> each year. This special day for Haggis Hunting comes immediately before the Grouse Hunting! Imagine the confusion for some hunters who want to have a go at both the haggis and the grouse. The hunter has to go to a place where there are hills and start beating the ground to get the bonnie wee haggises out in the open, while the next day the same hunter has to run around seeking out grouse!

When one stops to look at a wild haggis runnin' round the hillside, it becomes obvious that these wee animals have a strange look to them... they have two (or twa in Scottish tongue) legs longer on one side o' their body and twa shorter ones on the other side. Now, why is this, you ask. Well ony Scot can tell you that this is so's the haggis keeps its balance as it runs around the hillside!! It canna turn and go the other way

because it would fall over and roll right down to the bottom o' the hill and that's not very good, is it?

I would write more about the man and woman with the three wee girls, however I feel this will whet your appetite for reading further in some of the great Scottish books available to all in our libraries.❧



## FRANCE

### The Legend of St. Nicolas

*As told by Celine Schneider*

*This story-song originates from Lorraine, a region in the northeast of France. Celine learned it when she was three years old. Celine is an Adjunct Professor in Chemistry and Research Laboratory Associate at Memorial University, and was the first person to contribute a story to the "Tales From Afar" project.*

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

Arrived one night at a butcher's  
Butcher, will give us shelter?  
Come in, come in, little children  
For sure you can have lodgings

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

No sooner did they enter  
They were slaughtered by the butcher  
Who cut them up in small pieces  
Threw them in a salting tub, just as pork pieces

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

Seven long years had passed  
When St. Nicolas visited here  
Arrived at the butcher  
Butcher, will you give me supper?

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

Some salt meat would be nice  
The one you prepared seven years past  
When the butcher heard St. Nicolas  
By the door he flew to run afar

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

By the side of the salting tub  
St. Nicolas went to sit  
Placed three fingers above it  
The three wee ones raised up

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields

The first said: I slept well  
The second said: So did I  
The third one concluded: I thought I was in Paradise

They were three little children  
Who were going to glean the fields









## GERMANY

### The Black Cat That Roams at Night

*As told by Antje Springmann*

*Antje Springmann was born in Peine, Germany. At age two, she moved to Vöhrum, Germany and then emigrated to Canada at age twelve. Her mother was lured by a German book titled “Canada: The Land of Unlimited Possibility.” The family first lived in Toronto, moved to Calgary, and ended up in Newfoundland.*



he story that affected me most when I was a kid was about a black cat. There is a black cat that roams around at night, though some people believe that he is a sorcerer who can turn himself into a cat to catch naughty children. It comes out after dusk, and it hides in dark corners. And it's huge, it's ferocious! It's as big as a giant dog – a big, mean guard dog. It is black, and has eyes that glow like coals, and it's got claws like daggers. It walks around and hides, and it looks for little children who are outside after dusk making a lot of noise in the streets.

As it's prowling, it's looking for the ones that make the most noise. When he finds one of these children, his eyes light up even bigger. He stares at them. His fur starts to get bigger and bigger, his claws come out like giant daggers, and he frightens the children so much that they can't even move. They're terrorized. His eyes get big, and cause a panic in these kids. The kids start



to scream even louder, so that they put fear into those who are already in their houses. Then this cat, if it catches you three times outside, making a noise with your friends, after dusk, and it touches you with his tail three times, your life is forfeit. You are doomed. You will never succeed in your studies. You will never be a good apprentice. You will fail at everything that you do. You are bound to live in poverty. You will always be outside, you will never have a proper home. So good little children know that the best thing to do is come in at dusk, and never stay out at night or take any chances. Good little children spend their time indoors after dusk doing their homework and their chores; they are the ones who are going to succeed. That's the story of the cat.

There's another sort of character that's really similar. He's kind of like the Bogeyman, but this one is the Bussekater, and "Busse" is kind of like penance, or being punished for something, and "kater" is a male cat, so a tomcat. So it's the Bussekater, the tomcat who prowls. I would look outside to see if I could see it, and it just gets bigger and bigger in your child's mind, so you're waiting for this huge thing of fur to go past your window, but you're safe because you're indoors. It did cause some nightmares, though.

There's also the Busseman, who is the penance or punishment man. He is like the Bogeyman, except this one does not live under your bed. You are only safe in your own room. He hides in dark corners of the house to jump out and grab you. He mainly lives in the really good rooms, so what would have been the salon or the living room; other people's rooms. You are safe in the kitchen, basically, but you also do not go out after dark. You stay in your room, you do not go to the kitchen to get a glass of water, because the Busseman is hiding in the corners to come and grab you. ❀

# The Frogs in the Bucket

*As told by Antje Springmann*



I am going to tell you about a couple of frogs. Now these frogs – it was about three hundred years ago – and these frogs found themselves in the larder of the pasture. And there was a bucket of milk, and they fell into the bucket of milk. And they couldn't get out, because there was nothing for them to catch their feet on. They couldn't touch the bottom, so they couldn't jump back out.

Both of them were swimming and swimming and trying to stay above the surface of the milk. And it was very, very hard work. One of them said,

“What's the point? We're going to drown anyway.”

So he gave one last gasp, and sank beneath the surface of the milk.

But the other frog would not give up. He kicked, and he pushed, and no matter how much he was ready to lose hope, he kept kicking and pushing, all night long.

In the morning when the sun started to rise, as it was just creeping over the edge of the pail of milk, the frog suddenly felt something under his feet. He realized that from all this kicking, he had churned the milk into butter. There was a big lump of butter at the bottom, and that's what he used to push himself out of the bucket. So the moral of the story is that you don't give up, and that all of your hard work will come to something in the end.



## CROATIA

### The Forest of Stribor

*By Ivana Brlić Mažuranić*

*Translated and retold by Bojan Fürst and Michelle Porter*

*Bojan Fürst is the Manager of Knowledge Mobilization at the Leslie Harris  
Centre of Regional Policy and Development, Memorial University.*

*Michelle Porter is the lead editor for The Independent.*



he story begins with a young woodsman who finds an enchanted snake in the woods. When the snake turns into a young woman she asks him to marry her. He agrees and takes her to his house, where he lives with his mother. The old woman sees the young woman for what she is, a snake who will bring evil to the family, and she warns her son. Her son ignores his mother's warnings. The snake woman sets the old mother on a series of impossible tasks. One night the old mother must get fish from a frozen lake. On another, she must get water from the top of a mountain. All this the old mother does, and she does not complain to God. But one night the snake woman refuses to let the mother mend her own son's shirts and, in great sadness, the old woman leaves the house, needle and thread in hand.

At that moment she saw a poor girl walking toward her wearing nothing but a ragged shirt, and a shoulder blue from cold. And yet she had a smile on her face because she was a gentle and kind soul. Under her arm she carried a yaffle of kindling.

“Grandmother, would you like to buy some kindling?” asked the girl.

“I don’t have any money, my child, but if you want me to, I will mend your sleeve,” said the sad old woman who was still holding the needle and thread she was going to use to mend her son’s shirt. The old woman mended the girl’s sleeve, and the girl gave her some kindling, thanked her sweetly, and went on her way happy that her shoulder wasn’t cold any more.

That evening the daughter-in-law said to the old mother: “We are going to visit our good friends, and you better heat up some water before I get back.” She was a gluttonous woman and was always looking for an invitation to a meal.

When they left, the old lady took some of that kindling the girl sold her and she started the fire in the hearth and then went into the storeroom to get some wood. While in the storeroom, she heard crackling and knocking from the kitchen: knock! knock!

“Who is it in God’s name?” asked the old woman from the storeroom.

“Domachi! Domachi!” chirped small voices from the kitchen like sparrows under the eaves.

The old woman asked herself what wonder was happening this night and so she went into the kitchen. When she got in, there on the hearth blazed the kindling and around the flame danced Domachi, tiny house spirits, all men, barely a foot tall. On them were sheep skins, little hats, and fire-red peasants’ shoes, hair and beards grey as ash, and eyes glowing as embers. More and more of them came out of the flames, one from every spark. As they came out, they laughed and screeched, somersaulting on the hearth, squealing from joy and dancing in a circle.

Faster and faster they danced: on the hearth, in the ashes, under the shelves, in the crockery, and on the bench. Dance! Dance! Fast! Faster! Screeching, squealing, pushing each other and pulling faces. They tipped over salt, spilt the yeast, trampled the flour – all from great joy. The fire in the hearth was flickering





and flaring, crackling and blazing; and old lady just watched and watched. She didn't regret the tipped over salt, or the spilt yeast, but took pleasure in the joy God had sent her as a comfort.

It seemed to the old mother that she became young again – she cooed like a dove, jumped like a girl, and stepped into the circle with the Domachi and danced. But still there was sadness in her heart and it was so heavy that the dance stopped.

“God's brothers,” said the old lady to Domachi. “Would you know how to help me see my daughter-in-law's tongue, so that I can tell my son what I saw with my own eyes and maybe then he will come to his senses?” And so the old mother told her story to Domachi – everything just as it happened. Domachi sat around the edge of the hearth, dangling their feet off the edge, close to each other like one burr to another and listening to the old lady's tale nodding their heads in disbelief. As they nodded their heads, their little red hats blazed so anyone would have thought it was the fire in the hearth itself blazing.

When the old mother finished her tale, one of the Domachi, his name was Malik Tintilnich, shouted: “I will help you! I will go to the sunny lands and I will bring you magpie eggs. We'll put them under a hen so when the young magpie chicks hatch the daughter-in-law won't be able to resist – she will get greedy like any other forest snake when she sees magpie chicks and will stick her tongue out.”

All the Domachi squealed with joy at Malik Tintilnich's good idea. They were still squealing when the daughter-in-law came back with a cake in her arms she intended to eat all by herself. She shoved the doors furiously to see what was all the racket in the kitchen about. But when she opened the door, bang! the flame shot up, the Domachi jumped and the flame carried them up under the roof – the tiles clanked and the Domachi disappeared. Only Malik Tintilnich stayed behind, hiding in the ashes.

As the flames burst with the noise of a cannon and the doors smashed into the wall, the daughter-in-law had the fright of her life and she crumpled to the ground like a sack. The cake fell apart in her arms, her hair and combs flew everywhere and, eyes bulging, she screamed angrily: “What is this, you old troublemaker?”

“The wind stirred the flame when you opened the doors,” said the old woman sagely.

“And what is that in the ashes?” said the daughter-in-law who noticed the little red peasant shoe on Malik Tintilnich’s foot.

“Those are embers,” said the old woman.

But the daughter-in-law did not believe her so she got up, her hair dishevelled, and came closer to the hearth. She put her face right up to the ashes, and Malik Tintilnich quickly kicked her with his heel right in the nose. She screamed like she was drowning in the sea, all covered in soot, with ash all over her matted hair.

“What is this you old troublemaker?” squeaked the daughter-in-law.

“It must be a chestnut that burst in the embers,” said the old woman while Malik Tintilnich was laughing his head off in the ashes.

When the daughter-in-law went to wash her face, the old lady took Malik Tintilnich to the coop where the daughter-in-law kept a hen so that she could have chickens for Christmas. That same night Malik brought magpie eggs and left them in place of the hen’s eggs.

The daughter-in-law ordered the old woman to watch over the hen and to let her know as soon as the eggs hatched. She was going to invite the whole village to show them how she had chickens for Christmas when nobody else did.

The time came and the magpie chicks hatched. The old lady let the daughter-in-law know and she invited the entire village. Friends and neighbours arrived, the little ones and the old ones, and the old lady’s son was there, too. The daughter-in-law ordered the old woman to bring the nest on the porch. The old mother brought the nest, lifted the hen, and in the nest something screeched: out jumped naked magpie chicks, and hop! hop! they bounced all over the porch.

When the daughter-in-law suddenly saw the magpie chicks, she forgot herself, her snake-self got greedy, and she flew across the porch after the magpie chicks, sticking out her thin, forked tongue as if she were in the forest. Friends and neighbours screamed and crossed themselves, snatching their

children and running to their homes because they realized she really was a forest snake.

But, the old mother happily went to her son and said: “Send her, my son, back to where you found her because now you’ve seen with your own eyes who you are harbouring in your house.” And the mother reached out to hug her dear son.

But the son really was a foolish man and so he grew even more obstinate in spite of the village and in spite of his mother and against what his own eyes had seen. He refused to judge his wife-snake, but instead he yelled at his mother: “Where did you get the magpie chicks in the dead of winter, you old witch. Get out of my house!”

Alas, then the mother saw there was no help. She wailed in despair and begged him to let her stay until nightfall so the village wouldn’t see the kind of son she had brought up.

The son relented and allowed his mother to stay in the house until evening. When darkness fell, the old woman put some bread and kindling in a bag. And then she left her son’s house, sobbing.

As soon as the old mother crossed the threshold, the fire in the hearth went out and the crucifix fell from the wall. The son and the daughter-in-law were left alone in the dark house – and now the son felt what a terrible wrong he had committed against his mother, and he profoundly repented. But, timid as he was, he did not dare to say this to his wife, so he only said: “Let’s follow the old mother to see how she dies of cold.”

Delighted, the wicked daughter-in-law brought out their sheep skins, and they put them on and followed the old woman from afar. The old woman, bent with sorrow, walked in the snow, in the middle of the night, across the fields. When she came to a large empty field, it became so frigid she could not take another step. So she pulled out some of that kindling from the bag, cleared the snow and started a fire to warm up a little.

The kindling barely caught fire when – a miracle! Out of the fire leaped the Domachi, just like from a hearth. They jumped into the snow and the sparks flew everywhere in the dark night.

The old woman was glad, so glad they didn’t leave her alone in her exile that she could have cried. And they gathered around her, laughed and whistled.

“God’s brothers,” said the old woman, “I am not in mood for joy, and yet I need you to help me in my sorrow.” And so the old woman told the tale to the Domachi of how her son had become ever more obstinate and wicked since the moment he and the whole village had seen for themselves that the daughter-in-law had indeed a snake’s tongue in her mouth.

“He exiled me and I beg you to help me if you know how.” The Domachi grew quiet, they squirmed and knocked the snow from their peasant shoes, but had no advice for the old woman. And then Malik Tintilinich said: “Let us go and see Stribor, our master. He has advice for everything.”

And so Malik jumped on a hawthorn bush, whistled on his fingers and out of the darkness, across the field, came a deer and twelve squirrels. They helped the old woman onto the deer, the Domachi hopped on the squirrels, and they galloped towards the Forest of Stribor.

In the heart of the forest she meets Stribor, the god of wind and forest, who offers the old mother eternal youth. Stribor tells her that she would remember neither her son nor her troubles anymore. But the old mother does not want to forget her son. She offers her thanks to Stribor, but refuses eternal youth. She would rather grow old while remembering her son than accept eternal youth. The magic of the forest falls away and the snake woman turns back into a snake. The son carries his mother back to their house and begs her forgiveness. Once home, he marries the young woman who carried the kindling, the one who brought the Domachi into the house. ❁

*Bojan writes, “At the turn of the 20th century in the plains of Croatia, Ivana Brlić Mažuranić wrote a collection of beautiful fairytales combining Slavic folklore, Christianity, and the deep sensibility of a poet. The collection was translated in English in 1922 and 1924 (published in London and New York) but since then the stories have disappeared from the English speaking world. These are the stories that I grew up listening to and reading. Since my children were born, I’ve been telling these stories out loud. These re-tellings awakened a desire to translate these Croatian tales into English. Michelle Porter and I have been working together to make that happen. Here, I’d like to share an excerpt from an early draft of a translation we are working on from the story titled ‘The Forest of Stribor.’”*



## UKRAINE

### The Founders of Kyiv

*As told by Nataliya Bezborodova*

*Nataliya Bezborodova is a former graduate student of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University, and is currently studying in Alberta.*



Three brothers and a sister came down from the north and found a beautiful place by a river to settle. The names of the brothers were Kyi, Shcheck, and Khoryv, and their sister was Lybid'.

Kyi picked the hill known today as Borychiv; Shcheck picked another hill, today known as Shchekovytsia; and Khoryv picked the third hill, and it got the name Khoryvytsia. A small river running into the bigger one got their sister's name, Lybid'.

They founded a town in honour of the oldest brother, and called it Kyiv.

There were great forests with many animals around the town, perfect for hunting. They were wise and handy, and they took the name Polans (meaning "eastern"). Since that time, there are many Polans in Kyiv.

Some, not knowing the full story, said that Kyi was a ferryman, saying that he ran a ferry from the other side of the Dniپر River, providing transport to Kyiv. However, if Kyi was a ferryman, he would have never gone to Tsarhorod (Constantinople).



Kyi was instead a prince, and he paid a visit to a king in Tsarhorod. However, we don't know for sure which king. We know that the king paid great honour to his visit, as people have told.

On his way back, Kyi stopped at the Danube River, and founded a small town there. He was willing to stay there with his kin, but local folks opposed him. Since that time, the Danube people have called that town Kyievets.

Instead of staying there, Kyi went back to his town of Kyiv and lived there for the rest of his life. His brothers, Shcheck and Khoryv, and their sister Lybid' also lived their whole lives there.❧



Kiev — Monastère Petcherski



## NIGERIA

### The Origin of the *Tsindza*

*Translated by Zainab Jerrett*

*Dr. Zainab Jerrett is a community organizer and the Executive Director of the Tombolo Multicultural Festival. She is also the owner of two businesses: Multi Ethnic Food Kitchen; and the annual International Food and Craft Expo shows in St. John's, CBS, and Paradise. This legend is taken from an interview conducted by Zainab with the Bura tsindza (xylophone) maker Usman Boaja, from Northeastern Nigeria.*



It was said that a very long time ago, two brothers were living together in the forest. They used to hunt animals and gather food for themselves to eat. But they used to eat their foods uncooked because by then there was no fire. One night when they were sleeping, one of the two brothers dreamt about how fire is made.

The following morning, he told his brother his dream about how to make fire. He then took a dry corn stalk and demonstrated how to make fire which he learned in his dream. Fortunately, flames of fire lit up. His brother bought the fire from him and used it to smelt metal and make a hoe with it. He used the hoe to clear the bush for farmland. He planted guinea corn on his farm. Because he used the hoe to work on his farm, that year he had a bumper harvest. He and his family had plenty of food to eat. They also used the fire to cook their foods. They were very happy.

One night, he and his children sat together and were laughing. They wanted something for entertainment. When their father went back to the bush the following morning to gather some dry *udzum* (wood), one piece of wood fell from his hand to the ground and it produced a very nice sound.

Then he picked up the piece of wood and threw it again on the ground and it produced the same nice sound. He cut the wood and dropped it again on the ground and the sound was even sweeter. He cut the wood and made it smaller and he cut six other pieces of wood and made them into similar sizes. He put them together and played them and they produced nice music. He took the seven pieces of wood home and he tied them together to look like a platform.

At night, when they had had their supper and were resting, he took the instrument and placed it between his knees and he played for his children to dance. He made one for his brother to take home and play it for his children.

That was how the *tsindza* instrument was first invented.❧





## SYRIA

### The Blind Wolf

*As told by Moaveya Alahmad*

*Moaveya Alahmad, originally from Syria, is an adult level 5 English student with the Association for New Canadians in St. John's.*



any years ago, there was a rancher who lived with his wife in a small village. He was not satisfied with his job. Every morning, before the sun rose, he would wake up. He would gather the herd of sheep and take them out of the village to the mountains. Then, in the evening, he would bring them back in the darkness.

His work was difficult, but they needed food, clothes, and other things. His wife said, "You must be patient." He looked at her, and thought to himself, "For how long?"

After a few weeks, something began to happen. Every two weeks, one billy goat or nanny goat or sheep would be lost. Why, he didn't know, and neither did the people of the village. So he thought to himself, "Why are the animals getting lost?" He decided to find out.

One evening, in the dark, he walked home behind the herd. Suddenly, one of the kid goats stopped and headed towards the mountain. While the man watched, the kid entered a cave, and began to cry out "ma ma ma ma maaaaa" in the cave.

Suddenly a wolf appeared.

“Oh oh,” the man said. But how was this possible? The wolf was blind.

The man thought about that for a long time, and then in the morning, he went back to his house. He decided to quit his job.

“If my God sends food for a blind wolf in a cave,” he said, “he can send food to me.”

One week passed.

Two weeks passed.

But there was nothing new.

So on the third week, the wife decided to take a job as a woodcutter. After a few days working, she hit the ground with the axe, and the axe went down into a hole. When she looked into the hole, there was a jar of gold.

She went back to her home, and when her husband saw the gold, he said: “Thank you my God!” ❁





## IRAN

### The Prince Who Became a Carpetmaker

*As told by Mahdi Khaksar*

*Mahdi Khaksar is an Iranian graduate student in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University. He remembers learning this story years ago, while reading a book about Persian carpets.*



nce upon a time, a Persian aristocrat went out from the city of Isfahan (a city in the center of Iran that is famous for its carpets) to go gazelle-hunting. The prince faced a sudden storm and found shelter in a farmer's cottage.

There, he fell in love with the farmer's beautiful daughter. He asked the father for his daughter's hand in marriage. But the father asked him what abilities he had, other than gazelle-hunting. Of course he had none, but he explained to the farmer that he did not need any skills because he came from a royal family and he did not need to have a profession.

But the father was firm in his demand. He made a condition that he would accept the wedding only if the nobleman learned a profession.

The young prince returned to his father's castle in Isfahan. His father made a proclamation, and asked all the expert weavers of the city to come to the palace. He asked them to

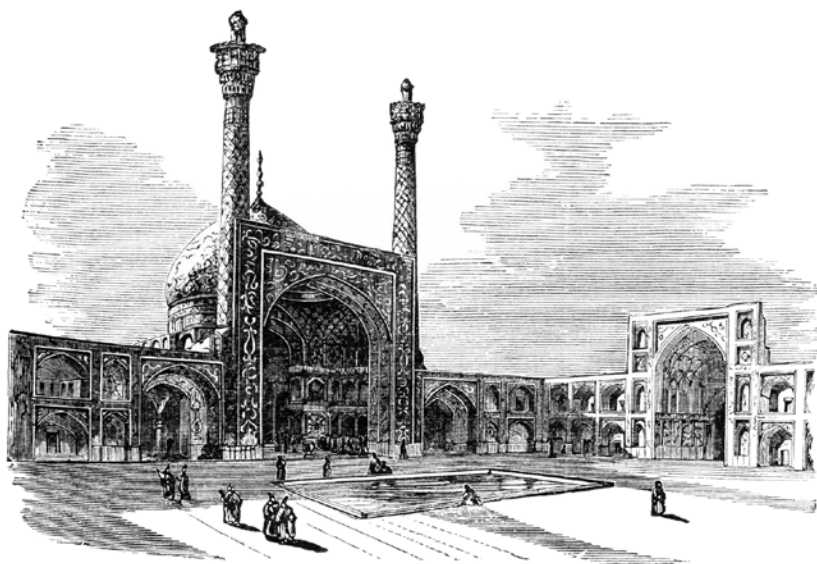


teach his boy how to weave a carpet. After a while the prince became a famous weaver, and he was able to weave rugs as good as his professors.

When he went to return to the farmer's cottage, he was kidnapped by the ferocious Tartars from the north. He was held captive in a dungeon. While he was in the dungeon he wove a beautiful carpet and wrote the story of his capture into the border of the rug. He persuaded his guards that the king of Isfahan would give them an enormous reward if they presented the carpet to the king.

When his father saw the carpet, he sent an army and rescued his son. So the prince owed his life to the demand of the farmer to learn weaving as a useful trade.

Finally the prince returned to the farmer's house and showed his weaving skills to the farmer. The farmer recognized him as a real man, and accepted his request to be wed to his daughter. ❀



Isfahan. — Cour de la Grande Mosquée.



## BANGLADESH

### A Love Like Salt

*As told by Nadia Sarwar*

*Nadia Sarwar is a graduate student in the Department  
of Folklore at Memorial University.*



nce upon a time there was a king. The king had three daughters. One day, the king summoned his daughters in front of him to ask how much they loved their father.

The eldest daughter informed him that she loved her father as much as she loved honey. The king was very pleased after hearing this. Then, the second daughter said that she loved her father as much as she loved sweets. Again, the king was very happy with the answer of the second daughter. At last, he asked his youngest daughter and she replied that she loved him as much as she loved salt. The king was very angry after hearing this, and he decided to banish her to a forest and divide his kingdom between the two other daughters.

One day, a king of another kingdom came to the forest hunting and met the younger daughter, who was passing very miserable days. The king fell in love with the girl and took her to his kingdom and married her.

Meanwhile, after getting all their properties, the other two girls become very cruel to their father. Out of sorrow, the king

left his kingdom and came to a new kingdom. An old man took the old king to the king of that kingdom. The king was very upset seeing the old king in a miserable condition and invited him to have lunch with him.

From behind a curtain, the queen recognized the old king as her father. With the help of the servants, the queen arranged to have all the food served to the old king to consist only of honey and sweets. But the king could not eat much of this.

Then, the old king was served with foods that were perfectly seasoned with salt, and the old king ate very hungrily. It was then that the old king realized what his younger daughter had told him, and he was very remorseful of his decision.

Seeing the old king in this miserable condition, the queen came in front of the old king and revealed her identity. The old king was surprised but immediately gave a big hug to his daughter, asking for her forgiveness. After many days, with the help of the king of that kingdom, the old king was able to regain his own kingdom. After regaining the kingdom, the old king banished his selfish daughters to the forest and lived happily ever after. ❀

*Sarwar writes, "Most of my childhood stories were told to me by my grandmother when we used to visit our village during vacations and/or festivals. I along with my sister and other cousins used to sit in front of her, listening to her stories one after one. This story is a very famous story which is almost known to everybody in my community. When I grew up, I came to know that this story has many similarities with William Shakespeare's drama King Lear."*





## CHINA

### The Legend of Snail Island

*As told by Tanyan Ye*

*Tanyan Ye is from the Fujian Province, which is in the southeast of China. She is a graduate student in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University.*



It is said that about two thousand years ago, there was a poor, single, young farmer who lived alone in Fuzhou (at that time it was called Houguan 侯官). He was a nice hard-working young man, but he was so poor that he could not afford to marry a woman. One day, when he went to the farmland to work, a huge snail appeared out of nowhere. He picked up the snail, and brought it back home. He did not want to cook the snail, as other poor farmers might have done, but kept it in a water vat.

From that day on, every day when he came back home from work, he would find hot food on the table ready for him. He was very confused, because he lived alone, and so there should have been no one to cook for him. He asked all his neighbors, but none of them admitted that the food was from them.

After a few days, the young man decided to find out the truth. One day in the morning, he pretended to go to work, but secretly hid at home, watching the kitchen. When it was about lunchtime, he saw the snail crawl out of the water vat, onto the

ground, and the most beautiful young woman appeared from the snail shell. She started to cook lunch deftly.

The young man crept into the kitchen, grabbed the snail shell and hid it, and then asked the woman,

“Who are you? I really appreciate what you’ve done for me.”

The young woman panicked at first. She tried to fade into the snail shell, but could not find it. At last, shyly she answered,

“I am a fairy from the heavenly river (that is the name Chinese people give to the Milky Way). Since you are an honest man, I came down to earth to help you.”

They got married, and lived happily ever after. Since the woman appeared from the snail, she was called the Snail Girl. A few years later, the couple had a few lovely kids. With the help of the Snail Girl, the family gradually became rich. At the same time, the kind-hearted Snail Girl helped their neighbors to overcome all sorts of difficulties and earn a better life as well.

However, one day, the Jade Emperor, the highest ruler of the heaven, found out that the fairy of heavenly river had secretly descended to earth. This was against the rules in the heavens. He was very angry, so he sent a god to capture her. The god, accompanied by hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the heavenly court, went to where she was to take her back to heaven. The Snail Girl didn’t want to be separated from her husband and children, but she was not able to resist. At last, out of desperation, she jumped into the Minjiang River, and turned into an island.

To commemorate her, people named the place “Snail Island.”



35

and drums were banged"



# A Short Story about the Lunar Eclipse

*As told by Xingpei Li*

*Xingpei Li is a recent graduate of the Public Folklore MA  
program at Memorial University. He is currently working for  
Them Days magazine and archives in Labrador.*



In the old days, people had no idea about astronomy, or how and why the lunar eclipse happened. People believed that there was a dog in the sky who sometimes swallowed the moon. They believed that was why the moon disappeared.

It was not a pleasant experience in the old days without light in the nighttime. People were very scared by the darkness when the lunar eclipse happened. To drive away the dog who devoured the moon, people used to make noises, such as ringing bells, or beating drums or any metal utensils they could find at home. In this way, they hoped to be able to get the moon, and subsequently the light, to return.

There are different versions of this story in China, but the main plot is as described above. 🌿



## KOREA

### The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon

*As told by Jae Hong Jin*

*Jae Hong Jin is a researcher, photographer, and musician who is currently working as a library assistant at the QEII library at Memorial University, with a background in the anthropology and folklore of his native country, Korea. Since his college days, he has been a tradition bearer of the intangible cultural heritage of farmers' music and drumming ensembles. He learned a short version of this tale from his grandmother.*



Once upon a time, it was a severely cold winter and the world was blanketed white with snow. Birds in the sky and animals on the earth were having a very hard time finding food. After many days of starvation, a tiger roamed about in search of food, but had no luck. At last he decided to go down to a village to try to find something like a hen or a dog to fill his empty stomach.

He stopped under the window of a house. He stood listening, to learn what was going on in the house. Then a baby began to cry, and the voice of his mother said, "Listen! Stop crying. There is a wild cat out there."

But the baby kept crying. The mother then said, "Oh my! A wolf has come out there!"

But the baby didn't stop crying.



“Waa, waa, waa...”

The tiger wondered, “How strange! The child is afraid of neither a wild cat nor a wolf!”

Then, the mother held the child firmly in her arms, as if to protect him, her voice said again, “Listen! There is a large tiger outside window!”

The tiger was taken aback and squatted flat on the ground. He thought in great wonder, “How does she know I am here?”

The baby continued to weep freely, far from stifling his cries. There was not a single sign of fear to be noticed in him.

“He is really a dreadful child. He is not even afraid of me,” the tiger thought. Until then, the tiger had thought that he was the strongest and most fearful being in and around the mountain. He was greatly perplexed to find such a fearless child.

Then the mother was heard saying again, “Look! Dried persimmon!”

All at once, the child’s vigorous cries stopped. It was quiet in the house.

The tiger, thought to himself, “Dried Persimmon! How dreadful he must be! After all, he must be more dreadful than a wild cat, or a wolf, or even myself. I’d better leave here at once and hide somewhere.” The tiger hurried to the cattle shed.

That night, it so happened that a burglar broke into the house. And he took a tiger, crouching in a dark corner of the stable for a calf. He got on the tiger’s back and slapped it’s buttock with his hand to make him stand up and move forward.

“Dear me! This fellow must be the dried persimmon!”

The tiger was astounded and rushed out fearing for his dear life, and continued to run through the ridges between fields, up mountain slopes, across plains.

The burglar was almost beside himself on the back of what he still believed to be a calf. He firmly held the neck of the speeding animal and tried not to fall off. He did not know where he was being taken. But finally it began to dawn and the burglar found that the animal was not a calf, but a tiger.

“Phew, now I am doomed!”

The burglar thought, and racked his brains for a way of escape. Just then the tiger was passing under a big tree. The

burglar jumped up, caught hold of a branch, and pulled himself up into the tree. The tiger felt greatly relieved. But dared not look back, and just ran on, saying, "He is really a terrible fellow. I hope I never meet him again. I was nearly killed."

On the way, the tiger came across a bear. The bear asked him.

"Mr. Tiger, where are you going so early in the morning, and in such a hurry?"

The tiger answered, "I have come to an awful pass. Last night, a dried persimmon stuck on my back. I have just gotten rid of it. And I am running for fear it might cling to my back."

The bear burst into a laugh. He pointed to the hanging burglar in the tree and said, "What do you mean by a dried persimmon, Mr. Tiger? Don't you see it is a human being? Let us go and catch him. He will make a delicious feast for us."

The tiger started and said, "You don't say so. How can a man ride on the back of a tiger? There is no doubt that he is a dried persimmon."

"If you cannot believe what I say, then follow me."

On saying this, the bear proceeded ahead of the tiger. The tiger was still doubtful, but followed the bear. The burglar was watching all this and hurriedly hid himself in a hole of the tree. The bear climbed up the tree to the hole and looked into it, but he could not reach the burglar. Then the bear sat on the hole and blocked it up in order to smother the burglar to death. The stifled burglar could stand it no longer. In desperation he looked up and saw the private parts of the bear dangling. He untied his belt and bound them with it and pulled hard.

The bear jumped up, screaming. After struggling with the unbearable pain, the bear was finally exhausted and died.

The tiger said, "Didn't I tell you that he is a dried persimmon? If you had listened to me, this would not have happened."

He was prepared to run away again.

The burglar then came down the tree. He lit a fire and heated a thin flat stone. Then he roasted the meat of the bear and ate it.

In the distance, the tiger was watching him and suddenly found himself very hungry. The tiger timidly approached the burglar and begged, "Mr. Persimmon, could you give me some of the meat?"

The burglar said calmly, “All right, you shall have some. But when I throw a chop, you must catch it in your mouth and eat it, before it falls to the ground. If you fail to catch it, I will eat you up as well. Do you understand?”

Now the tiger was afraid of the burglar more than ever. The burglar threw a red hot stone, saying, “Here you are!”

The tiger did not know that it was a heated stone, and caught it in his mouth. But it was so hot that the tiger gulped it down at once. Now his stomach began to roast. He could not stand it and rushed to a stream and drank water. But he drank too much to move. He crouched, helpless.

Then the burglar came to the tiger, killed him, and skinned him. He offered the skins of the tiger and the bear to the king.

In return, the king bestowed a prize of much money upon him. So he put an end to his thievery, since he could lead a decent life on the prize money. Thus, he lived happily ever after.❁









## TAIWAN

### Tiger Grandma

*As told by Zoë Wu*

*Originally from Taiwan, Zoë Wu is an entrepreneur, mother, occasional storyteller, and the owner of the Cross Road Mini Mart and Deli on Allandale Road. She also might be trying to fatten you up for her own sinister purposes...*



very living creature has a spirit. Through meditation or sacrifice, you can eventually become a human. Once, there was a tigress who wanted to become human. But this takes time, five hundred years or a thousand years. She heard that if you ate little children, it would speed up the process, and that you would become a human sooner. She would not have to suffer by not eating meat for a thousand years.

One very dark, dark night, Tiger Grandma started to wander through the village, looking for kids on their own, kids who stayed outside instead of going home, or bad kids. She started to collect these kids and take them home to her lair, a cave in the mountains. She locked them up, figuring that she could eat them and become a human sooner.

In the village, there was a little sister and brother. That night, their mother needed to go to their uncle's house to help out a little bit. So the mother said to the children,

“Do not open the door. Do not go out after dark. If you do, the Tiger Grandma will come and find you. Go to bed early, or Tiger Grandma will bite your fingers, and bite your little ears, starting from the endpoints.”

The mother left, and the two children were left to play in their home. Suddenly, they heard a knock at the door.

“Knock, knock, knock.”

The little brother said,

“Who is this?”

“This is your grandmom, your grandfather’s sister,” said Tiger Grandma. “I haven’t seen you in a while, and your mother asked me to come here to help you, because you are home alone.”

The sister said,

“No, no, no! Don’t open the door, because it could be Tiger Grandma.”

The brother said,

“We don’t know you. When was the last time you saw us? Tell us a little bit about us.”

Because Tiger Grandma had been wandering in the village and listening, she started to talk a bit about the brother and sister. So the little brother opened the door. Of course, Tiger Grandma came in, grabbed them, and took the little ones to her lair.

The sister was very smart. Before she got grabbed, she took up some paper and some old cloth. Along the way, she would tear a piece and drop it on the path, in the hope that someone would eventually find them.

They came to the lair, where there were a lot of children locked away by Tiger Grandma, who was very mean. They were all scared. Tiger Grandma had started to eat some of the children, because she loved their fingers. That was the best part! They could hear a “crunching, crunching, crunching” sound. The sister asked Tiger Grandma,

“What are you eating?”

Tiger Grandma said,

“Oh, I am just having some snacks, some peanuts. Do you want some nuts?”

She gave the sister a little piece of the children’s fingers. So the sister was very scared, knowing what was going to happen.

Meanwhile, the mother came back, and checked out the house. There was nobody, and no message. She was very worried. She went and collected all the villagers, so they could help find the two little children.

It was the night of the full moon, and the villagers got together enough people and collected weapons. It was very dark, but the villagers found the trail, those little pieces of cloth and paper that the girl had dropped. They all followed the trail which led into the deep mountains.

Day arrived, and Tiger Grandma was going to boil and eat all the children. She really wanted to speed things up and become a human, because she was half tigress and half human. She started to boil a big pot of water, to cook all the children.

Just then, the villagers came to her lair, and saved the kids. Together, the villagers cooked Tiger Grandma before she could actually eat all the children.

Depending on where you are from, there is a different ending. If you are not from the mountain area, you don't have mountains, only trees. So there is another version.

In that version, Tiger Grandma took the brother, and ate him. But the sister ran away, and climbed up a tree. Tiger Grandma tried to scare the girl, and told her,

“Come down, I’m going to eat you anyways.”

“OK,” said the little girl. “I know you are going to eat me anyways, so before you eat me, can you boil a pot of hot oil? There is a bird up here in the tree that I’ve never eaten. Bring the pot of hot oil to me up here in the tree. After I eat this bird, then I will come down, and you can eat me.”

Tiger Grandma did not have the intelligence of a human, so she gave the girl a pot of hot oil. When the little girl got the pot of hot oil, she just poured it over Tiger Grandma, and killed her. ❀



## PHILIPPINES

### Why Chickens Scratch the Ground – A Visayan Folktale

*As told by Marissa Francisco Farabbod*

*Marissa Farabbod is a graduate student in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University, doing research on immigrant food traditions. In 2017 she organized “NL Stories: How do Newcomers Experience Newfoundland?” an evening of storytelling featuring multicultural voices.*



o you know why chickens always seem to be scratching the ground as if they are looking for something? There is a story behind that.

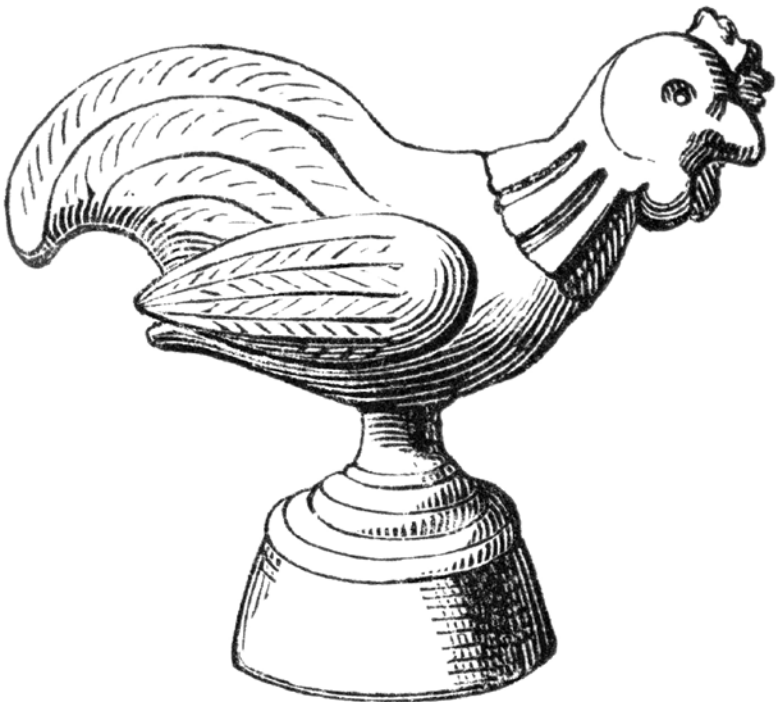
Once upon a time, a hawk soaring in the blue skies noticed a beautiful hen on the ground. Dazzled by her beauty, the hawk came to the hen and asked for her hand in marriage. The hen accepted and asked the hawk to wait until she could grow wings so that she could fly along with the hawk. Upon her consent, the hawk said that he would wait for her and gave her a ring to mark their betrothal. The hen happily wore the ring around her neck.

But alas! She was being deceptive! When a rooster that she had promised to marry before saw her ring, he got angry and convinced her to dispose of the ring and keep her promise to him. Seeing that the hawk was gone, the hen threw her ring away.

But the hawk came back sooner than she expected and was

surprised to see the ring gone. When he enquired about the ring the hen lied to him and said that she had lost the ring by accident. But the hawk saw through her lies and cursed the chicken. He told her that she must find his ring and that he would always observe the hen carefully and make her scratch every patch of ground until she has found his ring.

The curse has not yet been lifted as even today, chickens are scratching the ground still looking for the hawk's ring. ❁



## Two Ghost Stories from the Philippines

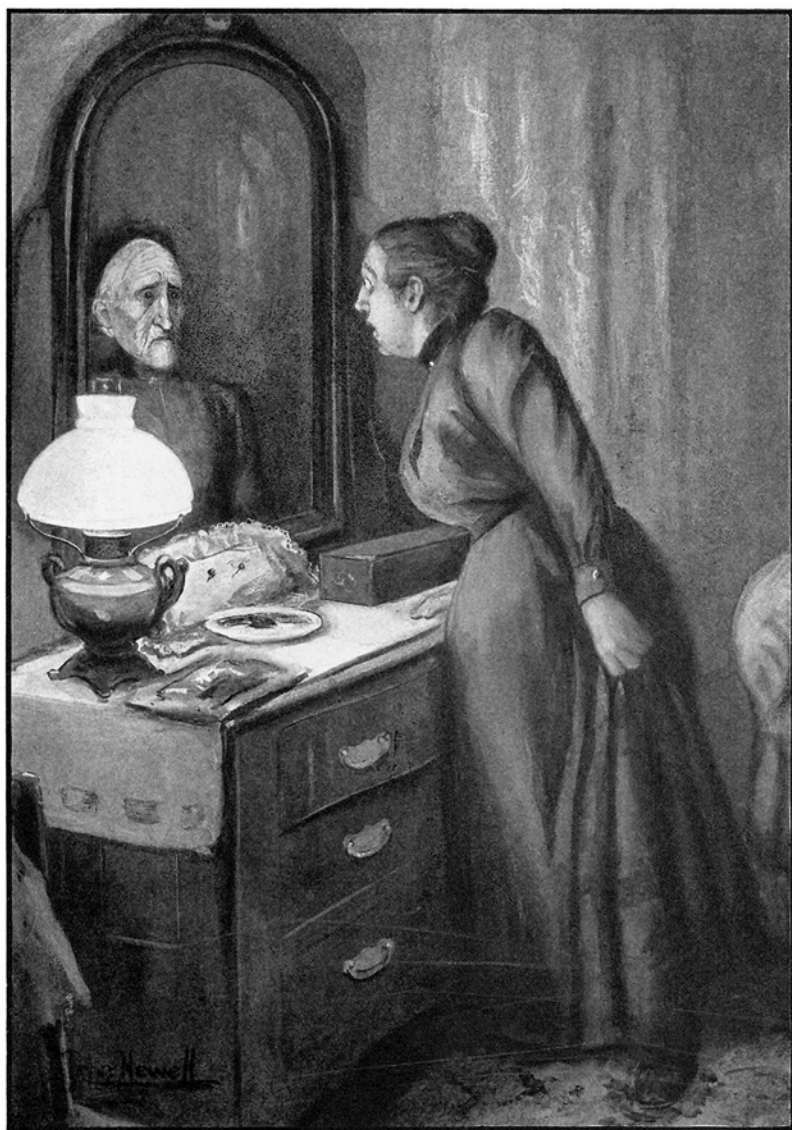
*As told by Jorge Villanueva*

*Jorge came to NL in the 1970s and settled down in Pasadena, where he still lives after his retirement from teaching. Currently he is a member of a musical group called The Valleyemen, who entertain seniors living in retirement homes in Deer Lake, Pasadena and Corner Brook. Jorge writes, "We enjoy bringing back old memories, especially to residents of Mountain View and the Long Term Care Facility in Corner Brook. Listening to popular songs of the past always bring smiles to their faces, something we look forward to during our visit. My serenading in the Philippines has somehow been brought back here to enjoy."*



Serenading was a tradition of young male Filipinos growing up in the 1960s in the Philippines, especially in the province of Cebu. I'm not sure if it's still strong today as it was during that time, but perhaps like mummering in Newfoundland and Labrador the practice could have changed. Serenading was a rite of passage for male Filipinos, especially between adolescence and adulthood. At that time it was common for a young man to request his male friends to accompany him serenading a girl he was attracted to. This is the story of a fateful evening in a little village in Cebu in 1960.

It was moonlight night and seven of us, led by my friend and with a guitarist in tow, trudged toward a house owned by a family whose daughter was the focus of that night's romantic adventure. As we stood underneath the window of the girl's bedroom our guitarist started doing his introductory picking while I cleared my throat. I was to be the first singer that night and I selected a song by Elvis Presley popular at that time, a ballad called "Love Me Tender."





I did one more song and then the next friend took over and did his share of Filipino and English ditties. Everything was turning out well, and the romantic music was wafting through the hillside on that beautiful evening when the unexpected occurred. My cousin, who was with us but who was extremely shy and never could sing a note, suddenly became bold and blurted out that it was his turn to sing. I suspected from his smell that he was drunk but the spirit of the group was always to allow participation so we couldn't refuse.

Well, right from the start we knew it was going to be a disaster because instead of soft endearing sound from his vocal cord, what came was a loud croaking noise, almost shouting. Suddenly, the window opened and the image of the father appeared with a sharp bolo gleaming by his hand, shouting and cursing at us for insulting his daughter. Nobody waited for a cue and in an instant we ran as fast as we could.

Of course, at a distance we had to stop for the sake of our guitarist who had difficulty running because of the guitar. As we settled down we decided to take an off-the-beaten path for home. We needed to walk by the town cemetery, and of course it was not a pleasant feeling because Filipinos are by religious practice and tradition highly superstitious.

Although it was a narrow one-person trail, somehow we managed to walk abreast as if on a marching drill, for nobody wants to be left behind. At that moment, I noticed a shadow on my left behind one of the graves and in an instant everybody ran. I glanced back and I noticed the shadow was chasing us, and I ran faster.

Then somebody noticed the shadow was actually two men and not ghosts. So we stopped running and accosted them for chasing us. Their response was, "You must have seen something, because why did seven of you run? We got scared too so we followed you."

It turned out they were fishermen on an early morning trek. That was a memorable experience in my younger days back in the Philippines.

I remember distinctly another story my mother told me when I was about seven. This incident happened where an old

bureau stood on the corner of the bedroom. This bureau had a full sized mirror in front, quite common in the olden days. As usual my mother would face this mirror in the evening to comb her hair before going to bed. It was a quiet calm night, with not much wind at all and the kerosene lamp was brightly shining as she did her grooming.

At that time, the practice or custom at that time was to have some photos inserted into the corner of the mirror, tucked in tight at the edge. My mother's special photo was that of her twin sister who happened to live in the city.

All of sudden while combing her hair, the photo suddenly fell from its place and onto the floor. My mother was surprised because that never happened before and the window was closed. However, she didn't put much thought to it and just picked up and inserted it back to the slot.

Not too long after as she was already in bed, she heard a loud knock on the door and when she opened it, it was her sister's husband driving all the way from the city telling her that her sister had a heart attack just a few hours ago.

Was that a sheer coincidence or a ghostly visit? ❀

# Cursed!

*As told by Joseph James Rosario*

*Joseph James Rosario is originally from Iligan City, Philippines, a coastal city in Mindanao, the second largest island of the Philippines.*

*It is considered the city of waterfalls with twenty-four waterfalls scattered all over the city and the surrounding communities. James arrived in Newfoundland in January 2013 as an international student at MUN. Today, he is a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC), CEO of Veritas Canada Immigration Services Inc., and Manager of Immigration Services at Work Global Canada.*



When I had my first job at one of the remote villages on one of the islands in the Philippines, I had the opportunity to attend a local wedding. My host however told me that some elders in the town did not usually welcome outsiders unless they were guests of respected townsfolk. My host was the town mayor so I wasn't afraid.

After eating some *kabaw* (buffalo) stew, I poured water into a clear glass. Suddenly, the bottom of the glass fell onto the floor and broke into tiny pieces. My host looked at me and gasped.

"Someone is trying to curse you!"

He then asked one of his helpers to hurry and get a small vial from his room that contained *lana* (oil). He rubbed some of the oil onto my belly, then strung the vial with a cord and tied the cord around my waist. It all happened so fast that I just stood there doing nothing, but I was scared out of my wits.

Finally, I asked, "What just happened? Why did the bottom of the glass break?"

"Somebody just tried to cast a curse on you," my host replied. "Fortunately," he added, "the curse was absorbed by the bottom of the glass, thus falling and breaking into pieces."

You are lucky, someone you know must be protecting you and that protection diverted the curse from you into the glass.”

I asked about the oil and my host explained that the *lana* had special powers that protect the wearer from any spells and curses. He pulled his shirt up and showed me that he was also wearing one. He smiled, and said,

“All of us townsfolk actually wear one.” ❀





## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### The Legend of Dog Lady Island

*As told by Jill Jablonski*

*Jill Jablonski is an international student working on her MA in Public  
Folklore at Memorial University.*



In Monroe, one of Michigan's oldest counties, you can find the house of General Custer. Many ghosts drift along the River Raisin and occupy an island in the middle of Plum Creek. On the island, there are Native American artifacts, trash from partying teenagers, the shells of burnt out homes, the remains of mutilated small game like raccoons and rabbits, and Dog Lady. Dog Lady Island may sound like a wasteland, and perhaps it is. Once upon a time ago, it was known as Fox Island and housed a mansion that served as a religious school for women. In the 1800s, the rich Kausler family bought the island and renamed it Kausler Island. They lived in the mansion and had two caretakers: a husband and a wife.

Over the years, it became apparent that nothing would thrive on the island. Pig farms failed and dumps failed, and so too did the Kausler family. Not only was their attempt to develop the island by building cheap houses on it a failure but their mansion also burned to the ground. With no mansion and an island of disappointment,





the family moved to town in the 1930s. In fact, everyone on the island moved away. Well, everyone but the husband and wife caretakers.

Some say, like everything else on the island, the marriage failed, and the husband left his wife. Others say that he simply died. Either way, the devastated woman was left completely isolated from society, and with no humans on the island she turned to dogs for company. She befriended the feral Doberman Pinschers that inhabited the island with her, and then went feral herself, becoming not an owner, but a pack member, walking on all fours, barking, and snarling.

As everything else on the island, the woman's relationship with her dogs would end in failure. One day, the old caretaker tried to eat the kill of the day – which was a raw raccoon – before the senior members of the pack got their fair share, and the dogs turned on her. They bit her tongue and ripped it out of her mouth before going for the eyes and blinding her. Or at least that is the less gruesome theory. If it was not the dogs, then it was the Iron Coffins biker gang, who briefly took over the island, and tortured anyone who trespassed on their territory, especially teenagers. As for why they would have mutilated the woman, the answer is simple; they did unspeakable things to the old woman, and to stop her from talking, they cut out her tongue and blinded her so she could never identify them.

Without her ability to speak, the woman became even more animalistic. She began barking and howling like her dogs. She would jump on cars belonging to teenagers who tried using the island as a lover's lane, scratching their windshields. When teenagers partied on the island, she would descend upon them like a ferocious beast and try to maul their faces. This went on for years, and her apparent hatred of teenagers was exacerbated by the youths themselves. Indeed, Dog Lady did not take too kindly to prank calls from local teenagers who wanted to hear her snarls over the phone.

Eventually, the Iron Coffins tortured Dog Lady to death and put her remains in a wooden coffin that they hid on the island. Because of her violent death, she did not find eternal rest. Now, she roams the island as a vengeful spirit, eating small creatures, tormenting teenagers, and running with her dogs. ❀



# The Devil's Tramping Ground and The Devil's Courthouse

*As told by Grace Dow*

*Grace Dow grew up in Monroe, North Carolina, in the suburbs about thirty minutes outside of Charlotte. She is currently completing her MA in Folklore at Memorial University.*



If you have a few minutes to spare, I'd like to share with you two stories about the Devil. I grew up in Monroe, North Carolina, in the suburbs about thirty minutes outside of Charlotte. The first story, about the Devil's Tramping Ground, was one I heard frequently at slumber parties or told around campfires as a kid in the '90s. The second, the story of the Devil's Courthouse, I heard more often during summers when we'd go camping in Bryson City, North Carolina. I'm telling them together here because my favorite version of both stories was the one where they overlapped.

First, the Devil's Tramping Ground. I've found out in recent years that it's an actual place you can visit, about fifty miles outside of Greensboro in Chatham County. But growing up, I never knew that. When I heard the story, it always sounded like the sort of place you might come across by chance when walking alone in the woods.

They say somewhere in the forests around these parts you might come across a strange clearing where the earth is completely bare, in the shape of a near perfect circle about forty or fifty feet across. This is the Devil's Tramping Ground, the one place in this world where the Devil can truly be alone. Not even his demons dare to disturb him when he's in this ring, for here he paces back and forth plotting mankind's destruction, or he



dances and twirls and stomps his feet—which is why the earth is so barren and packed down.

You will know it's the Devil's Tramping Ground because no plants can grow inside it, and no animals will dare to go near. Birds won't even fly above it. If you leave something in the circle and come back the next day, you'll find it somewhere in the woods nearby, as if it was flung out of the way with great force. It doesn't matter how heavy it is. The Devil doesn't like things getting in the way of his dancing. And whatever you do, don't stand in the circle after nightfall, or you might just see a pair of glowing red eyes staring back at you from its center.

The second story I've heard told about the Devil in North Carolina had to do with a particular rock formation called The Devil's Courthouse. The Devil's Courthouse is in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, which is part of the Appalachian Mountain range. Every summer my family went to Deep Creek Campground, about an hour away from the Devil's Courthouse, and all sorts of people around those parts would tell this story. I heard it from other kids whose families were camping there and who had hiked the trails surrounding the Courthouse themselves. I heard it from the lady at the camp store. I heard a version of it when my family visited the reservation at Cherokee. Eventually I even told it to other people sometimes, like I'm doing here.

The story goes that there is a cave somewhere in the mountains near the Devil's Courthouse, and that's where the Devil holds court. (The Cherokee tribe has many legends that take place in these same mountains, so when I heard the story there it was not about the Devil but the Judaculla, a fierce giant with slanted eyes that can drink whole rivers in one gulp. But most of the time I heard the story it was just "the Devil.") The thing about this cave is that if you can find your way inside and follow it deeper and deeper into the heart of the mountain, eventually you will come to an opening on the other side. But the "other side" isn't the other side of the mountain. If you make it there, you've left the world of the living behind. Not many people would choose to go there, but if you know someone who's been taken from you, maybe a loved one who

died too soon, you might try to find them on the other side and bring them back. But if the Devil catches you, you'll be trapped among the dead forever, lost to life before it was your time.

I like to think the best time to try to sneak into the cave would be when the Devil goes out to his Tramping Ground to dance. Most often these stories were told to me separately, but for some reason they are always linked in my mind which is why I've chosen to tell them together.

According to the local park service, there are no caves below The Devil's Courthouse. As an adult, I've hiked up the mountain myself, and couldn't really see any obvious openings. But they say the Devil's greatest trick was convincing the world he didn't exist. So maybe it's there after all, just waiting for someone brave or crazy enough to find it. ❁



## BRAZIL

### Six Supernatural Creatures from Brazilian Folklore

*As told by Vinicius Tomé and Sarah Nivea*

*Vinicius Tomé is a student at Memorial University, and Sarah Nivea manages Terra Nova Mandalas. Both are from Brazil, and seem to love Newfoundland winters!*

## CURUPIRA



urupira is a forest being. His name means 'boy's body' and comes from Tupi-Guarani, the language spoken by the indigenous people in Brazil. At the beginning of Brazilian colonization, the Portuguese were introduced to this indigenous legend. The first reference can be found in the following citation by the Jesuit José de Anchieta in the year 1560:

Curupiras are demons that appear to the Indians in the forest, who whip them, hurt them and kill them. Our brothers who saw their victims several times are witnesses. This is why the Indians usually leave feathers, fanners, arrows and similar objects in certain paths when they go, where harsh thicket areas are to be expected or at

the summit of the highest mountain, as a kind of gift, praying with fervor to the Curupiras so they won't hurt them.

The Portuguese saw them as demons or bad spirits, however they could be seen also as tropical forest dwarves. This mythic character has long red hair and emits an eerie whistle that can be heard from far away, however their most noticeable characteristic is their backwards feet. This serves to confuse those who try to follow them, leading their trackers in the wrong direction. The Curupira aids fisherman and hunters who take their food from the forest, but harms those who try to damage it, diverting them, causing them to get lost in the woods.

Curupiras have a taste for tobacco and alcohol and so villagers will leave such presents by the path they go. A way to escape the Curupira is to make a very tangled knot ball. This creature is curious by nature and so this ball will keep his attention, allowing sufficient time for his victim to escape.

## **SACI-PERERÊ**

There are many contradictions concerning the appearance of the Saci. There are people who say that our indigenous character's features have been mixed with other characters from African culture thus morphing him into the myth we currently know. The most well-known representation of Saci is the one described by the Brazilian author Monteiro Lobato in his book "O Saci" (1938). The success of Lobato's book ended up delineating the creature as we know in the modern day.

The legend of Saci was born in the south of Brazil and depicts an African child who wears a red cap, has only one leg and is always smoking a pipe. Mostly inoffensive, Saci's greatest characteristic is to pull pranks on others. His pranks involves burning food, hiding objects, souring the milk and others. He can be found in the whirlwinds and he can be captured by throwing a net over him. After he has been caught, the capteur must tame him by taking his hat and trapping him inside a bottle.



## BOITATÁ

This legend is told everywhere in Brazil and each region tells it differently. The myth was brought by the Portuguese at the time of colonization, in the sixteenth century. The Jesuits used to describe a giant, undulating fire snake with light-emitting eyes and transparent skin that would sintillate in the night when it wandered by the shores. If you encountered the monster, you should stay still, without breathing and keep your eyes closed. Otherwise, you could turn blind, mad or die. The fire snake protects the fields and forests.

## BOTO

The boto is a typical animal in the Amazon forest. It looks like a dolphin, but it lives in the rivers of the Amazon region. Their anatomy is slightly different from their dolphin relatives. It is believed that on days when it is a full moon, he turns into a handsome man and leaves the Amazon river to attend night festivities by the fishermen villages, flirting and dancing with the





ladies. He then attracts women to the shores, gets them pregnant, abandoning them thereafter. By the river communities, mothers usually warn their daughters to avoid being seduced by the Boto, but in reality, the legend serves as a warning for women who get pregnant before marriage.

## IARA

Iara can be described as a freshwater mermaid. From the indigenous Tupi language, Iara means: “Mistress of the waters.” Half woman, half fish, she lives in the waters of the great Amazon River, using her long black hair, brown eyes, indescribable beauty, and voice to lure men. She usually baths herself in the rivers and her chants attracts the men who she wants to marry, dragging them to the depths of the rivers. The indigenous people from the Amazon region have such a strong belief in this legend that they avoid rivers and ponds at dusk. Sixteenth and seventeenth century writers used to depict the character as a male who would devour the fishermen, named Ipupiara. Later, in the eighteenth century, the legend changed, representing a seductive female.

According to the legend, Iara was the best fighter of the tribe and used to receive many compliments from her father who was the *Pajé* (Chief). Her brothers were jealous and planned to kill her, but Iara heard the plan secretly and killed them first. Frightened of her father’s reaction towards her, she ran away. Her father found her and threw her in the water between the rivers Negro and Solimões. She was saved by the fish who turned her into a beautiful mermaid.

## THE VARGINHA EXTRATERRESTRIAL ALIEN

This is a modern legend that appeared in the city of Varginha in Minas Gerais State. On the night of the January 20<sup>th</sup> 1996, three women supposedly saw a creature that later was known as the “Et de Varginha” (Varginha E.T.). According to reports, the creature was 1.60m high, had a big head, a slender body,

red eyes and ‘V’ shaped feet. On that night, after perceiving the creature, the women ran scared and started spreading that they had seen the devil. The incident went to the media and started gaining more attention after uncommon military activity was reported by the locals. Rumors that a mysterious creature was captured alive, and the suspicious death of a military policeman contributed to reinforce the veracity of this story. Currently, the city of Varginha has decorations related to the incident, using its fame to attract tourists everywhere.❁

*They write, “The people of Brazil come from a variety of backgrounds. Indigenous people, African and European immigrants ended up combining to yield the rich Brazilian culture. We had the Dutch, in the Northeast; Germans and Italians, in the South; Japanese, in the Mid-West; Africans all over the Country, and more notably, the Portuguese, the first European nation to enter Brazil, molding the nation as we know today. This plurality of culture transformed food, habit, religion and of course, folklore. Most of the original folklore was modified becoming moderate versions of scary stories adapted to fit childhood and adolescence public, similarly to what happened to the Brother Grimm’s German tales modified to fit children’s movies. Nowadays, researchers try to bring back the original folktales, displaced from the superficial and prejudiced stereotypes, distorted over the centuries. There is no consensus as to how many folklore characters exist in Brazil, but there are surely hundreds. Here we present six well-known examples from Brazilian folklore as they are told in the modern day.”*

## List of Illustrations

### **The Hunting o' the Haggis**

Lurking in the Mountains. Speed, Lancelot. Under many flags, or, Stories of Scottish adventurers. London, New York: Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd, 1896.

### **The Legend of St. Nicolas**

Made a Stew. Daumier, Honoré. *Némésis médicale*, vol. 2. Paris: La Némésis Médicale, 1840.

### **The Black Cat That Roams at Night**

Made Herself into a Cat. Rackham, Arthur. Hansel & Grethel & other tales. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920.

Instead of a Charming Figure. Beaumont, Édouard de. *Le diable amoureux*. Paris: Henri Plon, 1871.

### **The Forest of Stribor**

Brownies Celebrated Still. Cox, Palmer. *The brownies: their book*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., n.d. (after 1915).

### **The Founders of Kyiv**

Kiev. Artist unknown. *Nouveau dictionnaire encyclopédique universel illustré*. Paris: La Librairie Illustrée, 1885-1891.

### **The Origin of the Tsindza**

Woods Deck'd with Leaves. Foster, Myles Birket. *Odes and sonnets*, illustrated. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1866.

### **The Blind Wolf**

Wolf & Shepherd Boy. Frost, Arthur Burdett. *Stuff and nonsense*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884.

### **The Prince Who Became a Carpetmaker**

Shah Mosque & Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Isfahan. Artist unknown. *Nouveau dictionnaire encyclopédique universel illustré*. Paris: La Librairie Illustrée, 1885-1891.

### **The Legend of Snail Island**

Woe Is Me. Bennett, Charles Henry, and Rogers, William Harry. *Quarles' emblems*. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1861.

### **A Short Story about the Lunar Eclipse**

Drums Were Banged. Thomson, Hugh. The ballad of Beau Brocade. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1903.

### **The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon**

Tigers. Artist unknown. Brehms Tierleben, vol. 1. Leipzig, Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1893.

### **Tiger Grandma**

Hansel Put Out a Knuckle-Bone. Rackham, Arthur. Hansel & Grethel & other tales. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920.

### **Why Chickens Scratch the Ground – A Visayan Folktale**

Gallo-Roman Statuette of a Rooster. Artist unknown. L'Illustration (Issue 770). Paris: Dubochet et Cie, 1857.

### **Two Ghost Stories from the Philippines**

Dead Aunt Harriet. Newell, Peter. The wind in the rose-bush and other stories of the supernatural. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1903.

### **Cursed!**

Polidori-Bradamanti. Daumier, Honoré. Les mystères de Paris, vol. 1. Paris: Charles Gosselin, 1843.

### **The Legend of Dog Lady Island**

Portrait of a Woman, Study. Carrière, Eugène. L'Image (1896-1897). Paris: Henri Floury, 1897.

### **The Devil's Tramping Ground and The Devil's Courthouse**

Satan Knew Pain. Doré, Gustave. Milton's paradise lost. New York: Collier, n.d. [ca 1880?]

### **Iara**

Prince Could Scarcely Swim. Browne, Gordon. Fairy tales from Hans Andersen. London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd, 1919.

### **Boitatá**

Great Serpent. Robida, Albert. Le voyage de M. Dumollet. Paris: Georges Decaux, n.d. [1883?].

## Thanks

Special thanks to Hazel Ouano Alpuerto, The Association for New Canadians, Terra Barrett, Jessica Barry, Graham Blair, Conservation Corp Newfoundland and Labrador, Eva Crocker, Sharon Fardy, Katherine Harvey, Meghan Hollett, Dale Jarvis, Elizabeth Lawrence, Andrea McGuire, Brian McHugh, Eileen Murcell, Colleen Power, and Sadie-Rae Werner.

This project would not have been possible  
without all our storytellers:

Moaweya Alahmad, Nataliya Bezborodova, Grace Dow, Marissa Francisco Farahbod, Bojan Fürst, Jill Jablonski, Zainab Jerrett, Jae Hong Jin, Mahdi Khaksar, Xingpei Li, Sarah Nivea, Michelle Porter, Joseph James Rosario, Nadia Sarwar, Celine Schneider, Antje Springmann, Vinicius Tomé, Jorge Villanueva, Jennifer Whitfield, Zoë Wu, and Tanyan Ye.



**Heritage Foundation**  
Newfoundland & Labrador

## **About Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador**

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador was established in 1984 to stimulate an understanding of and an appreciation for the architectural heritage of the province. The Heritage Foundation is also involved in work designed to safeguard and sustain the intangible cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador for present and future generations everywhere, as a vital part of the identities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as a valuable collection of unique knowledge and customs. This is achieved through initiatives that celebrate, record, disseminate, and promote our living heritage and help to build bridges between diverse cultural groups within and outside Newfoundland and Labrador.



## **About St. John's Local Immigration Partnership**

The St. John's Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a collaborative community initiative dedicated to improving immigrant integration and retention in St. John's. Aimed at helping newcomers fully engage in all aspects of social, economic, and cultural life and building on the knowledge gained through other LIP's across the country, the role is to:

- Establish priorities and develop action plans to help address key immigrant issues
- Encourage broader stakeholder collaboration
- Help St. John's grow as a welcoming community for newcomers

Established in 2015 and hosted by the City of St. John's, the St. John's LIP is co-chaired by the Association for New Canadians and is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. There are currently more than 60 LIPs across Canada, including seven in Atlantic Canada.

*\*No children were eaten during the production of this book.*





*Tales From Afar: Old Stories from New Residents* is a collection of traditional stories and folktales from around the world, told by new Canadians, recent immigrants, refugees, international students, and long-time residents who have moved to Newfoundland and Labrador from other places. It is a project to share the diversity of oral traditions that exist within our province, and way of bringing people together through the stories they love.

Some of these are tales of transformation: a prince might become a carpet-maker, or a magic snail might become a beautiful young girl. Some of these stories ask difficult questions, such as if there is anything more terrifying in the world than a dried persimmon. You will visit magical places where burglars ride tigers and the wicked are boiled in their own stew-pots. Along your journey, you will meet some characters you already might know, such as St. Nicholas, the Devil, and Elvis Presley himself, and other characters you might not: freshwater mermaids, biker gangs, blind wolves, fire snakes, and giant cats with eyes that glow like coals. You will learn why chickens always seem to be scratching the ground, where flames (and xylophones) come from, how a dog swallowed the moon, why single ladies should not go dancing with dolphin men, and about the importance of never giving up, even when it feels like you are drowning.

*Tales From Afar: Old Stories from New Residents* is a project of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and the St. John's Local Immigration Partnership, and is funded in part by the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

