

Bodri and the Others
Poem by Dezső Király
Drawings by Ernő Zórád

What you shall now see is
No true story, just a tale.
It's quite a happy fable
To please you: it won't fail.

We hope that you will like our tale,
And understand the point we make
Even though in this fine story
Animals take humans' place.

The owl once had a great idea:
To organize a meeting
For all the wild and tame beasts
Who were around him residing.

So they all came: the fox, the pig
The rabbit, donkey and the bird
The noise they made was so loud,
Nothing else could be heard.

“The meeting is open!”
So says the old, wise owl.
The naughty squirrel cuts in:
“Chatting's not our goal!”

But the goose pinched him
And said in deep resentment:
“Shut up and behave, you fool
We must heed the president!”

“Hear me, my kind animal-fellows,”
The President speaks, “We may live
In the woods, the village or meadows,
But we all form one community!”

“Alone, we are very weak
So if we want good for our nation,
I'll tell you what we need:
To start some cooperation!”

Of course, the debate grew heated,
Everyone wanted to be heard,
The goat, the deer, the pig,
The cow, the cat, and the bird.

They all made their suggestions
Which they argued long about
Until they chose one idea
Which was to be carried out.

They cast their votes and thus
The cooperative store was formed.
The hard work came after that
Keeping them from being bored!

The owl became the main manager,
His knowledge everywhere prevails
The mouse made a good accountant
Having an eye for the small details!

Who should be the store-keeper?
The donkey was the volunteer.
But the bull made such a holler
Everyone said "Oh, my dear!"
store!

"Of course I protest, you ask why?
Everyone knows the deficit will soar
If the you appoint a stupid donkey
To be in charge of running the

So the others all admitted:
That the bull knew the procedure
And they voted and selected
The deer to be store-manager.

She's nice and clever
And on top, well-meaning
Everyone is fond of her
Because she is so pleasing.

At the start it all went well,
There were no bad incidents
But then some creatures raised hell
Over unimportant events.

Foul gossip and bad rumors
Complaints every now and then
As usual the main source was
Who else, but Big Mamma the Hen.

But there always is a reason
If normal business is balked
Bodri the dog sadly listened
To all the co-op members talk.

Bodri's on the store's board
So he sets out to investigate.
He smells trouble, and the culprit
He must surely castigate.

Bodri promptly sets the date
To pay a visit to the store
And what he saw in it was
More than he allowed for!

There were too few goods,
Their quality is spiteful.
The deer is good-hearted
But her weakness is quite frightful!

Mrs. Cow wants silk, the store
Has flannel – no good for a blouse.
Mister Goat cannot buy salt,
He sadly returns to his house!

The young Rooster dates the Chick
He'd like to surprise her with a gift.
He goes to the store to buy a dress,
And again, he's unable to get it!

On top of it all, the sales assistant,
Is the insolent magpie. She shrieks
At the meek buyers in the instant
They dare to voice their critiques.

And that's nothing, she even steals
Unless you watch her ardently
She has no respect for other's things
Even less for common property.

Bodri checks the storage room:
And what chaos he finds there!
Petrol mixed with perfume,
The place needs some fresh air!

The storage is a mess, but with Pig's
Management, no one wonders why
Bordi sadly says: I can see now
Why this place is like a pig-sty!

Bodri has surely seen enough here,
And to continue the inspection
He goes to check on the supplier
To see what needs correction.

He heard there were problems
Around purchasing the stock
Arguments and fights flared
Since the buyer is the sly fox!

Chicken Fanny, Meg the Hen,
All run off their legs
To deliver baskets
Full of first class eggs.

Mary the Cow brings milk
This one Bodri approves
He watches with content
As surplus produce accrues.

But the sly fox makes them wait
As if they weren't even there
Knowing that their anger is great
'Cause he's behaving so unfair.

Finally, he's at his "throne."
But frustration prevails:
The apples weighed more at home
Than now on the fox's scales.

Taking note of all these things,
Bodri now heads for the pub.
The place is dirty, the tables filthy
The floor is in need of a scrub.

Squirrel, the waiter, is in hiding
Munching on peanuts in the back
Customers are not being served
Fruitlessly waiting for their snack.

“Let’s go on!”, Bodri says
And visits the freighter.
Two oxen pull the cart,
Which could be much fuller.

Only a basket of apples
Are sitting on the coach.
“This is not efficient!”
Warns Bodri with reproach.

Bodri, the conscientious
Now runs to his office
To discuss his findings
According to his promise.

The owl is hunched in there
Behind a stack of records
 He’s so busy reading them
He ignores his fellows.

He’s detached from others
Buried in his files
He became a bureaucrat
To Bodri’s great surprise.

“Since you don’t hear me,
I won’t waste my breath on you”
Bodri now goes furiously
To the cashier, the kangaroo.

Bodri finds the cashier strange:
He’s unable to stay in his seat,
He jumps from wall to wall but
Can’t find any invoice or receipt.

The kangaroo’s huge purse
Has hardly any money in it
Who’s going to reimburse
The store for this deficit?

Bodri calls upon the giraffe,
Who’s a member of the board,
Since he got elected
He acts like a conceited Lord.

Bodri tries to talk to him,
But in vain does he bark,
The giraffe’s head is in the clouds
Doesn’t even make a remark.

But Bodri won't stop here,
He'll get down to the nitty-gritty
He'll see the bear, the president
Of the overseeing committee.

Uncle Bear is wolfing down
A huge plate of honey-pie
As Bodri gripes of problems
Hoping he would find an ally.

Uncle Bear grunts back at him:
"I'm sure it's not that grave..."
"Really? Even birds in the tree
Are chirping about it all day..."

"That's just women's talk..."
Mumbles the Bear, aloof
And falls asleep with a snore
That palpitates the roof.

"Dog-gone it!" yelps Bodri
Who understands the crisis
"We must hold a meeting,
Let the members all hear this!"

Bodri springs to action
And with great expectations
He has the carrier pigeon
Deliver all the invitations.

What a huge gathering
All the members are here
Nobody is missing
To the rule they adhere.

They came today, the owl,
The bear, the horse and the snake
Because they all understand:
Their own interest is at stake.

Bodri is the first to speak.
While looking for assent
He's not afraid to boldly
Criticize management.

He states everyone's faults
Where performance is weak
Doesn't spare anyone
From constructive critique.

Bodri condemns the owl,
The squirrel, fox and bear
They all accept the blame
To protest: They don't dare.

The members agree:
"Our status is bleak."
The owl wants to speak
To exercise self critique.

The giraffe and the bear
Both admit their fault
They see that Bodri's speech
Was not meant as an assault.

All of them take a vow
To correct the mistakes
And to be hardworking
How ever much it takes.

The members' decision:
Forgive them this time
Granted that from now on
Their work will be prime.

Only the raven croaks:
"There's no one I trust
Why work in cooperation?
I'm full of disgust!"

But the others hoot him down
Even the sheep must bleat:
"That's just empty slander,
Not a genuine critique!"

The fox and magpie, though
Will pay for their misdeeds
They must leave the co-op
The members unanimously decreed.

"Stop here, fellow-members!"
Bodri fervently barks
"We all committed mistakes,"
He vehemently remarks.

"We didn't care well enough
About the common gain
Don't forget: the co-op is ours!
And this will never happen again."

This is how it has gone since then,
Days of laziness are gone
The owl is present everywhere,
Whether it's noon, night or dawn.

A huge array of goods in stock,
Deer smartly buys the supply
Quail became the sales assistant,
Surely faster than the magpie!

The squirrel in the restaurant
Endeavors to do his best
Food is promptly brought
To the table of the guest.

The new supplier is the pigeon.
With her, no one wants to fight
She swiftly accepts the produce
And the scale is always right.

All the branches flourish
Since indolence has ceased
The kangaroo is happy too
Their revenues have increased.

Piggy in the warehouse
Now doesn't spare the mop
The Bear makes frequent rounds
To check the co-op's shop.

They work in joyous mood
Because they all know it:
When business is good
Members do benefit from it.

Increased sales mean
That when at the year-end
They distribute the profit,
They get a bigger dividend.

The members are all joyful
And happy about the advance
The rooster says: cock-a-doodle!
And asks the hen up for a dance.

The hen pairs up with him,
The others follow suit:
The rabbit makes somersaults
The turkey plays the flute.

There still occur some faults
But they notice them right away
The members now care for the co-op
And they keep troubles at bay.

They've learned a useful lesson:
Thanks to Bodri, that good dog:
The members should be involved
In the life of the co-op!

Let's see what they do
When a mistake happens
The cow moos like crazy
The goose loudly cackles.

The horse neighs grimly
The hen clucks in anger
The goat bleats to warn
Members of the danger.

All the members understand
That they are owners of the store
The mule is the only one
Who's even slacker than before.

The mule is stubborn, never
Listens to the wise source
Why? Because the mule is:
Half a donkey, half a horse!

The end