The evil spirit of Yambuya

Chapter “Zagrya”



I don’t know how long I slept. I woke up feeling someone’s hot breathing. This was my dog Zagrya. Sometimes he wants to lay near me. He seeks me among the sleeping ones until he gets to me. And then my faithful dog gets close to my side, lays its head in front of my face and breathes on my face until I wake up. I hug my dog, pull him closer to me. In my head a story told by Khararbakh resurrects. Going from a think to other think I recalled a dog story full of interesting adventures.

Zagrya was brought up by an angry, domineering Evenki laika called Noorka. At that time, we were working at Olekminsky taiga. The Expedition headquarters was placed in Upland village that is on the Aldan tract. One morning I woke up and heard a suspicious rustling on the porch of my room. I was going to go out to know what happened, but my door suddenly swung open and I saw a man, dressed in a doha [*fur coat having fur both inside and out*], getting through my door with his back. By force he dragged a dog trembling with fear into the room.

“Stupid, doesn’t want to go. Thinks I am going to cause her something bad.” – he said shutting the door.

The stranger looked at me his black eyes. Then he threw the leash on the floor with which he pulled the dog into the room, unbuttoned his doha, went to the room corner and sat on the floor not undressing.

“Sit on the chair, please” – I said trying hide my perplexity.

“This is more habitually for me. Old men say: You can get warm being even beside the choom [kind of building used by the northern peoples] of a good person but being even beside the bonfire of a bad person you can’t get warm… So, we are from Omakhta that is on Uchoor. Do you know? I am going to Leningrad to study. On halfway my dog Noorka has caught me up. I would need to return to bring her home, but I have already gone far from the camp. My family can’t survive without the dog. What another dog will my wife hunt with? Along the way, I wanted to leave the dog with the old fisherman who is in Gonama, later she would come back to Omakhta by itself. So, I came to the winter hut, but the old man had migrated to the great-grandfathers. So, I’ve brought my dog here, Upland village and I am thinking: where should I leave my dog? To take it with me in the car is not allowed. Moreover, why does it need Leningrad, there the dog will be wilted without taiga, hunting for animals. I tried to kick her away, doesn’t go… just to leave her in the village, the heart is bleeding. You know, I’ve heard, people chat, as if you have nice dogs. Please, take Noorka… be man, for her you will remember kindness of Timunchik from Omakhta. No money needed, yet, give me your word, you will not offend her!”

Timunchik spoke slowly, weighty, as if he has chosen what to say in advance. He kept to gaze looking at me inspecting me from my feet to my head, as if he was afraid if I that I was deceive ing him. He looked like he was not older 25. He drew his self-made smoking pipe with long chubuk from his bosom, took a tobacco pinch out of his pocket and set fire to the match with his trembling hand.

Noorka was pressing its back against the wall and looked at me hostilely. It was a ginger female dog with pointy ears.