Lithuanian folk tale "Sigutė"

I part

Once upon a time there lived a brother who had a sister whose name was Sigutė, she was a very good and beautiful girl. They lived with their witch stepmother, but they did not know that she is the witch. The stepmother had her real daughter, but she was bad and not beautiful at all. She sat in the farmhouse like a guest all flashy dressed and decked, and did absolutely nothing. While brother was at home, Sigute's life wasn't hard, although the stepmother hated her very much. But one day Sigute's brother had to go to the war, to the distant countries and left his sister alone with their stepmother. Then the stepmother began to afflict Sigutė in every way: she had to do the hardest works, clean the house and herd the flock in Summer. After all the work Sigutė had to sleep and eat in the barns, together with animals. Therefore, she was very dirty and slovenly. There were a black dog and a little black cow in the house. They both were able to speak, because it was once said, that long time ago, all animals had the ability to speak. At home, day after day, Sigutė would take the dog for a walk or would go to milk the little cow. Due to talking away with the little cow, she would usually forget to do the household chores or milking, and that would lead to being shouted at by the stepmother. The stepmother would always think that Sigutė is fooling around too much and does not work enough.

II part

One day, while Sigutė was herding the animals, the witch told her to take off her shirt, and while handing over some tow, in a thick voice said to her:

Spin the spinning tow,
Weave the cloth:
You will wear what you make.

What was Sigutė supposed to do? She took of her shirt, took the tow, and with tears in her eyes stormed outside. After herding the flock out, she wrapped her arms around the neck of the little black cow and started weeping, she was moaning so hard that it looked as if her hearth would split in two. Because when would she find the time to spin herself a new shirt? The little cow felt sorry for Sigutė and she spoke to her in a thin voice:

Oh Sigutė, Oh my dear,
Please don’t cry
I’ll spin a new shirt for you.

Sigutė nicely thanked the little cow and gave her a kiss on the face. As the evening came and Sigutė was herding back the flock, the witch saw that she was downed in a beautiful cloth shirt, she got surprised and decided to find out how was she able to spin herself a new shirt that quickly. The next day, while Sigutė was herding the flock, the which, once again, told Sigutė to take of her shirt, and while giving some tow, in a thick voice said to her:

Spin the spinning tow,
Weave the cloth:
You will wear what you make.

III part

Once Sigutė had herded the flock, the witch sent her daughter to check on Sigutė and find out how was she able to spin these shirts. While hidden behind some trees, the daughter

saw everything: how Sigutė was wrapping her arms around the neck of the little black cow and crying, how the little cow ate the tow and afterwards spewed out a shirt, and told everything she saw to the witch as soon as she got back home. The witch realized: “That because the animals are standing up for Sigutė, she would be able to call them as witnesses and tell on the witch to her brother, once he got back, and that would leave the witch in trouble”.

Therefore, she decided to get rid of Sigutė by burning her. Together with her daughter, the witch immediately started digging a hole beneath the threshold of the hut. They had been digging throughout day and night. The next day, before leaving her to herd the flock, the witch did not tell Sigutė to take of her shirt, on the contrary, she even folded her.

Once Sigutė had herded the flock to the forest, the witch heated the oven and, after gathering the cinder, poured them in to the hole that had been dig up beneath the threshold. Afterwards, she neatly covered the hole with twigs, laid some straws on the twigs and poured some dirt on top of the straws. Smoothly levelled everything and the hole was gone. Once Sigutė got back with the flock, the witch called her in a thick voice, this was the first time she had called her since the leaving of her brother, to come inside the hut.

Come Sigutė, come my dearest!
Warm bread is baked today,
Sour kvass is fermented today:
Eat as much as you can -
Drink as much as you want.

Sigutė already wanted to go but the dog, who saw what the witch did, came and warned her:

Don’t go Sigutė, don’t do it sister
There is a hole full of cinder beneath the threshold
If you go, you will fall.

Sigutė had listened the dog and didn't go, therefore the witch became so angry that she ran into the house and broke the dog's first leg.

IV part

The next day after Sigutė got back with the flock the witch said to her again:

Come Sigutė, come my dearest!
Warm bread is baked today,
Sour kvass is fermented today:
Eat as much as you can -
Drink as much as you want.

But the dog warned her again:

Don’t go Sigutė, don’t do it sister
There is a hole full of cinder beneath the threshold
If you go, you will fall.

The witch was so angry that she broke the dog's second leg. The same was in the third and fourth day: the witch broke the dog's last two legs. The fifth day, after Sigutė got back with the flock, the witch said to her again:

Come Sigutė, come my dearest!
Warm bread is baked today,
Sour kvass is fermented today:
Eat as much as you can -
Drink as much as you want.

The dog one more time warned Sigutė. This time the witch was so angry that she pulled out the dog's tongue.

Come Sigutė, come my dearest!
Warm bread is baked today,
Sour kvass is fermented today:
Eat as much as you can -
Drink as much as you want.

This time there was no one who could warn Sigutė. Sigutė took a step, fell in to a hole and burned. The witch swept up Sigute's ashes and left them under the gates.

The little black cow came near the gates and recognized Sigute's smell. She licked the ashes with her tongue, the green saliva popped and the duck came out.

V part

When the war ended, Sigute's brother was finally able to come home. He had to ride through the forest. While riding he heard his sister's voice and stopped to listen. He couldn't see who is singing:

Oh my brother, oh my dear,
Our witch stepmother
Dug a hole beneath the threshold of the hut
Gathered the cinder and poured them in to the hole,
Oh my brother, oh my dear,
Our witch stepmother
Dug a hole beneath the threshold of the hut
Gathered the cinder and poured them in to the hole,
And said to me:
Come Sigutė, come my dearest!
Warm bread is baked today,
Sour kvass is fermented today:
Eat as much as you can -
Drink as much as you want.
Oh my brother, oh my dear,
I've listened to the stepmother,
I've listened to that witch,
I took one step and fell in to a hole
Oh my brother, oh my dear
Our witch stepmother
Swept up my ashes
And left them under the gates
Oh my brother, oh my dear
The little black cow licked the ashes
The saliva popped out
And I became a duck.

Finally, the brother saw the duck, who was singing to him. He started asking her questions and she told him everything. He was so angry that decided to revenge the witch. He smeared his horse with a thick layer of resin and rode out back home. The witch heard that her stepson is coming back so she took a golden cup filled with wine and went to wait for him. The brother saw the witch, therefore he quickly jumped from his horse on the other side.

The stepmother said to him:

– My dearest son, please take the horse from the path, I'm afraid of him.

– It's a good horse, he won't kick. Push him with your hand and he will go away.

She slapped the horse, and her hand got stuck.

Then the witch said:

– My dearest son, my hand got stuck.

– Slap with other hand and this one will bounce back.

She slapped with other hand and it got stuck too.

– Kick with your leg and both hands will bounce back.

And her leg got stuck.

– Kick with other one.

And the second leg got stuck. The witch, caught in great fear, started asking.

– Slap with your forehead and you will bounce back.

The witch slapped with her forehead and it got stuck.

Then Sigute's brother said to her:

Now you'll know
How to hurt my sister
Now you'll know
How to burn her.

He turned to the horse and thus said:

– Run horse where your legs bring you, where your eyes see. Pour and scatter witch’s brains all over the world.

And the horse ran out. And now in snowy winter when it's so cold outside and the snow is shining, remember it's the witch’s brains that shine.