



# The Image of the Hero in Ukrainian Fairy Tales and Contemporary War Narratives

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# INTERVIEW

# RESPONDENTS

| Codename           | Native city                 | Military branch    | Age (now) | Start of military service | Education   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---|
| Professor 1        | Zhytomyr                    | Mortarman          | 58        | 2022                      | Higher education (Doctor of Science, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) |
| Professor 2        | Kropyvnytskyi               | Footsoldier        | 48        | 2022                      | Higher education (PhD)  |
| Fakir ("magician") | Cherkasy                    | Footsoldier        | 20        | 2022                      | Incomplete higher education (student)   |
| Docent             | Kyiv                        | Special forces     | 42        | 2022                      | Higher education (PhD)  |
| Kit ("cat")        | Kryvyi Rih                  | Paratrooper        | 37        | 2014                      | Secondary education   |
| Korshun ("hawk")   | Cherkasy                    | Special forces     | 37        | 2014                      | Secondary education   |
| Chub ("bangs")     | Kyiv                        | Mortarman          | 40        | 2014                      | Higher education  |
| Hor                | Kamyanets-Podilskyi         | Deminer            | 28        | 2022                      | Secondary education   |
| Prorab ("foreman") | Kyiv                        | Special forces     | 47        | 2022                      | Higher education  |
| Moskalyk           | Rivne                       | Secret service man | 37        | 2021                      | Secondary education   |
| Berya              | Cherkasy                    | Paratrooper        | 29        | 2014                      | Higher education  |
| Bur ("borer")      | Bakhmut<br>(Donetsk region) | Secret service man | 43        | 2014                      | Secondary education   |
| Luhanchanka        | Luhansk                     | Shooter            | 33        | 2014                      | Higher education  |

# HOMETOWNS OF THE RESPONDENTS



# CALL TO ADVENTURE

0352

Сайт міста  
Тернополя



**Kyrylo Kozhumiaka (ATU 300):**

Serpent settled near Kyiv and every year a tribute was sent to it – a young boy or a girl. When it was the turn of the prince's daughter, she got to know from the Serpent that only Kyrylo Kozhumiaka could defeat him. So, the prince asks the orphans to persuade Kyrylo Kozhumiaka to go fight the Serpent.

**Luhanchanka (2014):** *“You must go and defend your country and your people. I mean, it's not something you think about or discuss. There is the war. That's it, I'm going.”*

**Professor 1 (2022):** *“What prompted this decision? Well, Olesia... The defense of the Motherland. We have one homeland. Whether you are a driver, a teacher, or a professor... If an uninvited guest comes to your house, he will not look at your regalia. He will just rob, kill, rape your family in front of you. That's the motivation with a gun in your hand.”*

Volunteers in line at the military registration and enlistment office

25.02.2022

# THE IMAGE OF THE SERPENT AS AN ANTAGONIST

► Professor 1: "Unlike in the fairy tale, the Moscow serpent is not just more powerful, he has a whole den of snakes behind him, and many more snake cubs and sympathizers around the world. In the tale, the serpent often asks the hero: "Shall we fight, or shall we make peace?" So I'll tell you this: the answer is "Fight!" – [and it is] the only correct one. You cannot make peace with snakes and snake babies. This has been proven in practice."

► Dotsent: "They seem to be genetically deformed. I believe that this is an existential war. Between the forces of goodness, light, love and some kind of Orwellian world. They have no desire to call someone before they die, to say goodbye. They are fulfilling a program. It's scary. It is really hard to fight with such people. These are people who do not value their own life or anyone else's. In reality, Europe would fall if they attacked Europe. They will simply face the fact that we have a certain continuity of struggle with them."

► Fakir: "What is on a warrior's mind? A warrior actually has a lot on his mind when he goes to combat positions, and every minute, in addition to repelling enemy attacks, he also fights with something internal, with some thoughts that are imposed, with some emotions, with some fear, and he has to fight the enemy, so to speak, both physically, with the Russians, and with the internal enemy, with these thoughts, with emotions. And this is heroism."



# MAGICAL HELPERS

## ANTHROPOMORPHIC

### ZOOMORPHIC

**Luhanchanka:** “We had a cat, so we already knew when the artillery shelling would start. She always jumped into the dugout before the shelling. Somehow she could feel it. So we were already watching her. As soon as she got into the dugout, we followed her. That’s how she saved us.”

**Berya:** “That’s what they say in all the brigades. We had a dog in Avdiivka. It was walking along the parapet. And when she ran to the dugout, we already knew there would be a shelling. She brought us puppies there as well.”

**Fakir:** “I don’t even know how to describe it. I mean, when you see an animal, your mood rises immediately. There are always abandoned animals in these settlements, and it was a sign for us that life will never die, it will continue. And we could not abandon these lives.”

**Prorab:** “We had to go to the positions on the road of death - it was open and completely shelled. But we didn’t go there every day. And with weapons. But there was a guy who brought us food every day along this road. Every day, can you imagine? So who’s more of a hero - us or him?”

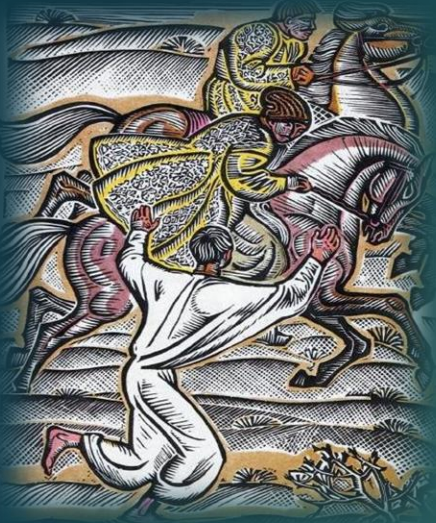
**Hor:** “The village of Moshchun was destroyed by more than 50%. There were almost no locals left, the front line passed through the village and people were forced to leave their homes. One of the locals who didn’t leave the village started helping us, he drove us where we needed to go by his car and supported us as best he could. I don’t know where he got the grenades from but he showed us. When I saw it... «Oh, man,» I said, «give me these «toys» otherwise something bad can happen». I took them away from him, maybe I saved his life. He was a very generous man. If you want coffee, tea, you’re welcome. He would get it out of the ground. He showed a very human attitude.”

# INITIATION OF THE HERO KATABASIS

- ▶ **Professor 2:** *“On the front line, you have to dig. We were digging. We made trenches, dugouts. At ground zero, everyone had their own dugout, a small and narrow hole. It was zigzagged so that a shell wouldn't hit it directly. When I first got in there, I thought: why is it so narrow? And when the shelling started, you lie there and think: why is it so big? In general, this is an underground war, so to speak...”*
- ▶ **Bur:** *“We were preparing a man for a mission in Crimea. He is a suicide bomber. And he knows about it. He has AIDS. He volunteered. He said: «I'm not going to live anyway. I want to atone for my sins in this way.”*
- ▶ **Moskalyk:** *“This is the work of a Secret service man. We often crawled behind enemy lines to do our work there. For eight kilometers. It's a lie that you carry another 25 kilograms - grenades, mines, etc. The maximum is 10. 25 - the straps of the backpack will break.”*



# BETRAYAL



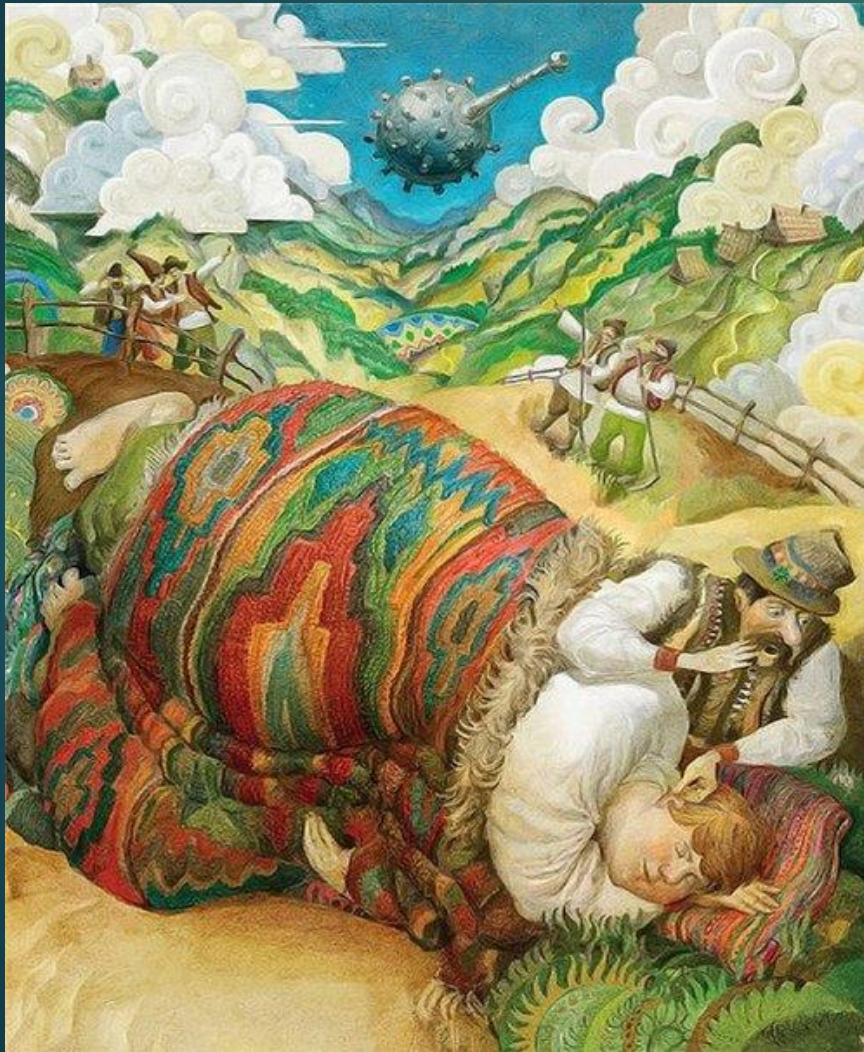
- ▶ “So he thinks: «Maybe I'll tie a stone first, and then I'll see what kind of betrayal will happen.» So he tied up a stone. They pulled him up, and he stepped back. When they pulled it up to halfway, and then let it go! The stone fell and scattered like sand! They also threw the chain.”
- ▶ “Having cut off all twelve heads of the serpent, Garasym chopped it into pieces. Then Garasym decided to do the following: cut off a piece of tongue from each snake's head. He cut the tongues and put them in his traveling bag. He lay down on the bag and fell asleep. Now the king had a blacksmith, and he saw the battle. He watched from behind the bushes as Garasim fought the snake. He took the sack, took the heads and went to the king. «I killed the snake, not the one I said I did. Here are the heads».”

**Berya:** “When we were standing in <...>, the other brigades on the flanks withdrew. We didn't know that, so we were completely surrounded.”

**Kit:** “I was on vacation. We were grilling kebabs on the river bank with my godfather. One man comes along and starts telling me where he fought and what a hero he is. Those who were really in serious battles do not talk about them. And my godfather said: «Who are you! He (to me) is a real hero.» And that man: «Sorry, brother!» And he walked away.”



# Serpent fighters



## «Strongman»

(heroes who win through extraordinary physical strength)

## «Quick-witted strongman»

(heroes who win due to extraordinary physical strength and cleverness)

## «Quick-witted man»

(who wins by cleverness)

# 1.1. «Serpent fighter-Strongman»



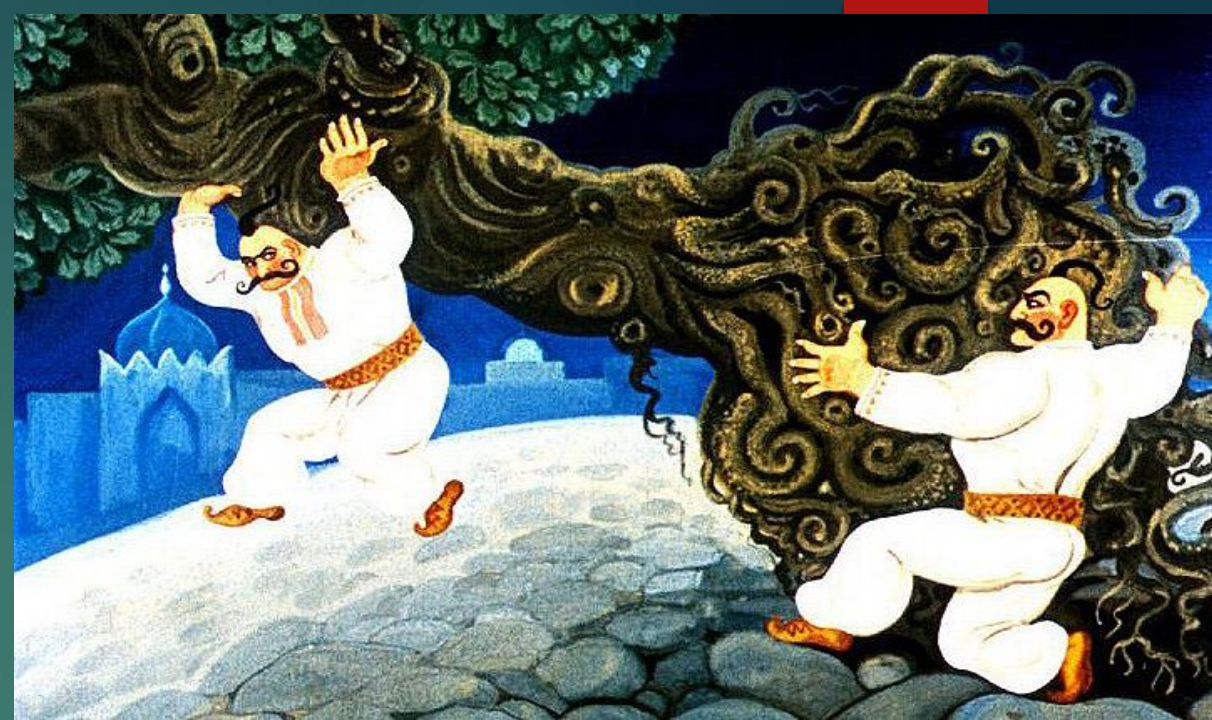
Exceptional physical strength since childhood

Miraculous birth

Achieved victory without magical items and helpers



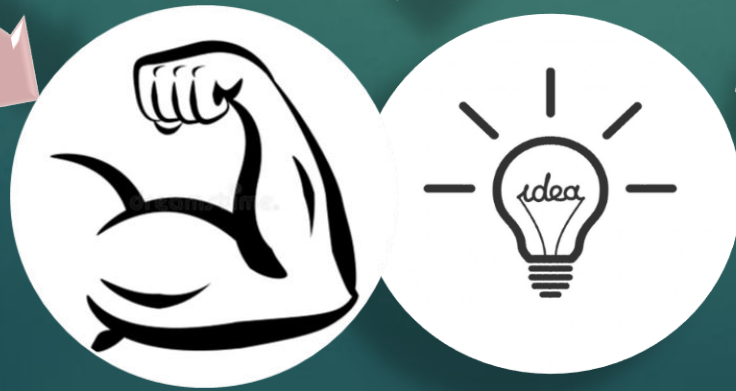
# 1.2. «Quick-witted strong man»



A female character who causes conflict

Social background

Magical assistants, items; women's advice



# 1.3. «Quick-witted man»



The hero's trick

Absence of physical combat with the evildoer

Cleverness  
>  
physical power



**Korshun:** "There are desperate heroes who stay in position, covering the retreat of their comrades. There are heroes who stop enemy vehicles at the cost of their own lives. Like, for example, a young guy who, at the beginning of a full-scale war, mined a bridge with himself to prevent the enemy from passing through. This is heroism. There was no remote detonation, and he blew himself up along with the bridge. A young man, 19 years old. A border guard. Among my fighters, I consider my fellow soldiers to be heroes, like Dimov, who was wounded for 8 hours and did not leave his position."

I consider the deceased Doc a hero, who stayed on the position to the last and with his medical supplies helped everyone he could and gave his life for Ukraine. My fallen comrade Hladkyi Sania, who took all the wounded out of the position and returned with another guy, is a hero for me, and they stayed there forever.

Unfortunately, they have not been taken back yet, so they are still missing. Heroism is, in the kingdom of heaven, Kostya Zabizhny. When the city of Sievierodonetsk was completely surrendered, we withdrew. He made a raft out of sticks and plastic bottles, swam to the other side and took all his fallen comrades. He took all the dead to the side of Lysychansk, when it was still ours. He also took those guys from other brigades who could not be taken.

For me, Shyzik is a hero, he has been fighting since he was 14. He has already received so many wounds, probably 18, but he does not give up, he is always on the front line."

**Chub:** "When we were completely surrounded in Illovaysk (where I was later captured), we did a lot of things to confuse the enemy. For example, we found a plumbing pipe and put it at a 45-degree angle. The russians thought it was an artillery unit and fired at it. And we saw where they were shooting from and hit back. Or we would drive empty cars back and forth to make them think we had reinforcements."

**Berya:** "We were doing all sorts of things! We asked volunteers to send us mannequins. We put hot water bags in their heads. We dug whole holes away from our dugouts. We put them in the holes, and that's how we drew away russian drones with thermal imagers."

# Taboo-breaking hero



Help from a woman

Magical abilities  
(Main character or magical assistant)

The main character is generally nameless

~~TABOO~~



► **Fakir:** "There was an incident that could have turned into a tragedy for us. A group of people in cartoons with Ukrainian flags on their chevrons approached us. We started talking to them. And then one of my comrades noticed that one of them was wearing the chevron of our guy, who died a couple of days ago and was considered missing. Then my colleague looks down and sees a white bandage on this man's leg. That's how they identified themselves, they were katsaps. They were wearing our uniforms, but to identify each other, they put white rags on their legs. Without hesitation, he takes an assault rifle and starts shooting at them. And we already understood and joined this process. And then it really turned out that it was an enemy reconnaissance group. They also spoke Russian, and we somehow allowed ourselves to make this mistake, but thanks to the attentiveness of our brother, we managed to avoid casualties on our side, but it happened."

► **Moskalyk:** "The commander ordered me to go check one position where the guys were not communicating. I took four guys and we went. They asked for passwords from afar. They knew them! They just spoke Russian. We didn't pay attention. And when we got closer, they opened a point-blank fire. I was the only one who survived. Only because they thought I was dead too. There was not a living spot on me. It was a miracle I survived."

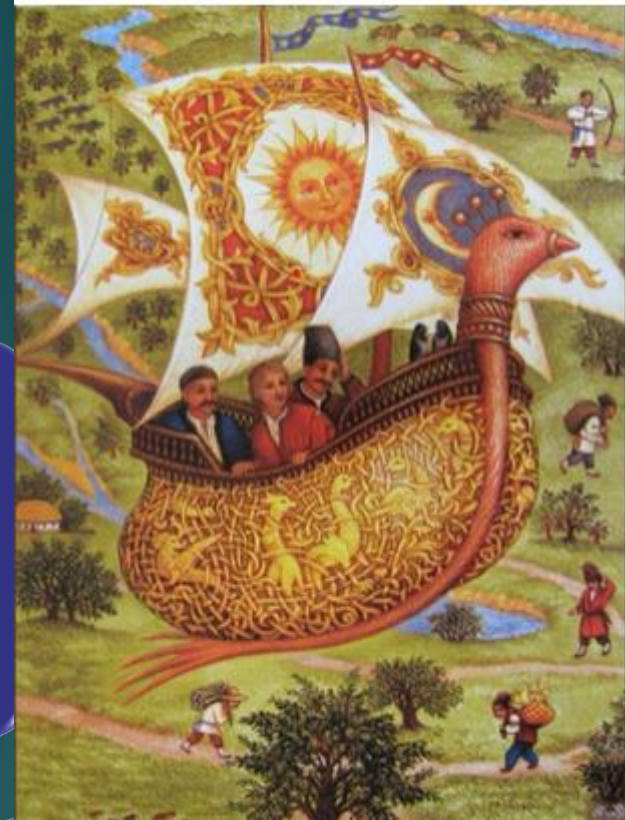
# Victim hero

Some resentment

Namelessness  
(epithet «foolish»)

Kindness and a  
sharp mind

Magical items,  
abilities,  
assistants







“There was an old man and a woman, and they had three sons: two smart and one stupid. They favored the smart ones, and their grandmother gave them white shirts every Sunday, but everyone scolded the stupid one, laughed at him, and he was baking in the oven in millet, wearing a black shirt and no pants. If they give him food, he eats it, but if they don't, he goes hungry.”



► **Professor 1:** “There are a lot of them. When we were preparing, we were in some situations, not in the combat zone, and when we got to the combat zone, I'm not saying all of them, but there are many of them that you would never think that a person would behave like that. Like, oh, my God, sometimes the sergeants in training quietly say to the commander: «My God, what will he do there, how will he behave?» And at the front, he is.... He just stands there with a grenade in his hand. His hands are numb and the check is off. Well, the situation was like this when they were storming. Here was a man whom few people expected to be able to stand up to the Russians. They barely split his fingers to make it neat... This is what happened, and these are not isolated cases. And calling in fire on yourself? Imagine that, when you are running out of ammunition on all sides: «I'm calling it in on myself, because we're not going to win anyway....» Well, Olesia, this is real, this is not a myth. It's just incredible to see the people you walk with, they are everywhere!”

# Glory to Heroes!

► **Korshun**: “For me, a hero is every soldier who voluntarily holds the front line. Heroism for me is when you save the lives of others by your actions. In principle, all soldiers on the front line do this.”

► **Dotsent**: “Of course we will win! What will I do after the victory? If I live...., I will live! I will give my son the flag. I will say: «Hold it tight, son! I held it! You hold it too!”





Thank you for  
attention!

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