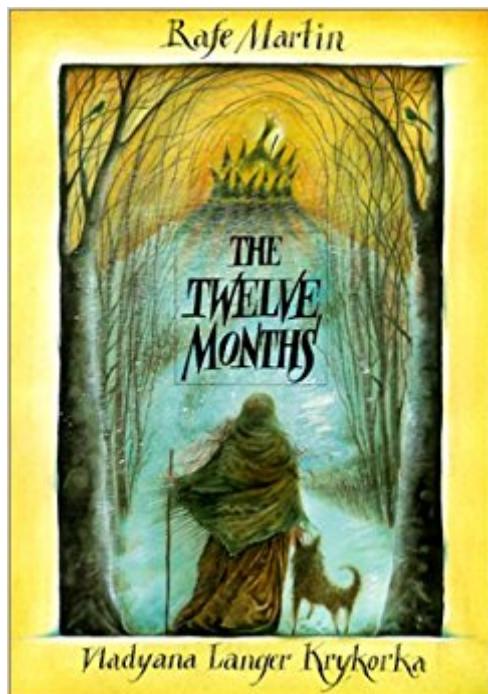


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# Twelve Months



## **Synopsis**

"Sew, Marushka! Weave, Marushka. Chop the wood! Milk the cows! Cut the hay and stack it -- Marushka!" The poor girl. No matter what she does or how hard she tries, Marushka can never please her cruel aunt and cousin. Determined to be rid of her, they give Marushka three impossible tasks. She must bring them fresh violets, strawberries, and apples \_ in the dead of winter \_ or be cast out of their home for good! Lost and freezing, Marushka is without hope. Then she meets the twelve months of the year seated around a fire on the mountaintop. With their kind help, the impossible becomes possible. Without it? Well . . . as Marushka\_s greedy relatives are about to discover, that\_s another story. Rafe Martin and Vladyana Langer Krykorka give this timeless Slavic tale a delightful new twist.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Following his successful The Rough-Face Girl, a retelling of a Native-American Cinderella story, Rafe Martin introduces The Twelve Months, illus. by Vladyana Langer Krykorka, a Slavic Cinderella tale. Here there is no prince, but the 12 months play the part of the fairy godmother to Marushka, returning once a year to help celebrate the harvest. The artwork evokes the rustic setting and, as the 12 months work their magic, the illustrations light up with yellows and golds, and the characters' faces reveal wonderment. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Gr 1-5-A retelling of a Slavic folktale. Marushka, an orphan, does all the household tasks. No matter how hard she works, it is never enough to please her hard-hearted aunt and cousin. As the young

woman finds pleasure in her burdensome work, her beauty increases. The jealous aunt and cousin plot to get rid of her, sending her off in the dead of winter, first to find violets, then strawberries, and then apples. Alone in the forest, Marushka climbs to the top of the mountain and discovers 12 men, representing the months of the year, seated around a fire. Sympathetic to her plight, January briefly changes places with the month that will enable her to complete her task. The author does not provide his sources for the tale or information on its roots or variants. This version ends with a surprise: the small dog that appears in the illustrations is the narrator of the story, a twist that seems unnecessary for the well-told folktale. The framed paintings with captions contribute to the traditional tone of the story. The bluish hues and curving, lacy bare branches are effective in creating a sense of the cold, mysterious world. A good addition to folktale collections. Adele Greenlee, Bethel College, St. Paul, MN Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Beautifully illustrated and written. Not easy to find a book about this story and ballet suitable for 8-10 yr old girl. Very satisfied.

I rate this as a gold star. This Slavic Cinderella tale does not need a Prince Charming to live happily ever after. What I love about Marushka is that despite her trials and sufferings she has to endure from her mean aunt and cousin; she remains pure of heart. She is blessed with inner and outer beauty. They intend to get rid of her by sending her to find violets, strawberries, and apples in the dead of winter. Alone in the forest, Marushka climbs to the top of the mountain and discovers 12 men, representing the months of the year, seated around a fire. Sympathetic to her plight, January briefly changes places with the month that will enable her to complete her task. As you can guess, her aunt and cousin are not satisfied with what Marushka brought, and they rudely demand that the twelve months provide them with apples and because of this they allow the cold winter to become even harsher which causes the aunt and cousin to be frozen to death which means that Marushka inherits everything. She keeps the seeds from the apples and plants the seeds during springtime. The fall has brought an abundant of apples that she has picked to celebrate the harvest with her neighbors. Guess who Marushka runs into? That's right, it is the twelve months who wishes to take part in the celebration.

I'm a big fan of Rafe Martin and this is one of my favorite books he's written. The tale is somewhat like Cinderella without the prince. A mean aunt and cousin plot to do away with an orphan by making her do impossible tasks. The twelve months assist her in doing the impossible which

enrages her relatives. This is a good book to do in the fall. It teaches the 12 months, seasons, apples and harvest time. I enjoy this book very much.

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