

Classic books in accessible format

WP4: Literary and cultural activities

**PAGE – a Project Advancing coGnitive accessibility in publishing
101173233 – PAGE – CREA-CULT-2024-COOP**

Deliverable nr: D4.1

Dissemination level: Public

Delivery date: May 2026

Language: English

Abstract: This publication is part of the project deliverable dedicated to the adaptation of national classic books into accessible formats. In each piloting country, project partners selected one copyright-free classic book from their national literary heritage and adapted it into simplified language. This PDF contains the accessible adaptation of the selected national classic in English, in order to support both local use during the piloting activities and shared dissemination within the international partnership. The aim of this work is to make classic literature more accessible to participants with different reading and comprehension needs, while preserving the cultural value and narrative meaning of the original text. This accessible version will be used during the project's cultural and reading workshops, supporting participants through guided, inclusive and participatory activities.



Croatian Tales of Long Ago

Introduction

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić was
a Croatian writer.

She wrote the book Croatian Tales of Long Ago.

The book contains eight stories.

The stories are about people,
animals and magical beings.

The characters face different problems
and experience unusual events.

This book contains all eight stories,
adapted to make them easier to read
and understand.

The sentences are short and clear.

At the beginning of each story,
you will meet the main characters.

This will help you know who they are
before you start reading the story.

After each story,
there are questions about the story.

The questions help you check
if you understood the story.

Now you can start reading.

How Quest Searched for the Truth

Characters

Grandpa Sage

Marun – grandson

Grouch – grandson

Quest – youngest grandson

Allarose– God disguised as a young man

Furyman – Goblin master

Goblins – little evil spirits

Grandpa and his three grandsons

Grandpa Sage lived in an old forest.

His three grandsons, Marun, Grouch and Quest,
lived there with him.

Grandpa raised his grandsons
and taught them to work.

He told them:

“Go into the forest.

Check to see if the bees are doing well

after the winter.”

An encounter with Allarose

The brothers went into the forest.

It was early in the morning.

The forest was quiet and a little scary.

Marun, Grouch and Quest wanted to know

what there was in the world

so they began to sing

and call to the sun.

A bright light suddenly shone.

Before them appeared Allarose.

He was dressed in gold clothing

and his clothes shone like the sun.

The brothers saw: wealth, cities, armies,

stars and the sky.

And last of all, Allarose told the grandsons:

“Stay by Grandpa’s side.

Don’t go out into the world

until you return his love.”

Then he was gone.

Furyman and the goblins

Furyman, the goblin master, heard
all of this.

He did not like old man Sage
because Sage protected the sacred flame.

Furyman decided
to turn the brothers into bad men.
He sent three little goblins
to trick them.

Marun and Grouch

When the brothers returned home

Grandpa asked them:

“What did Allarose tell you?”

Marun couldn’t remember.

Then a goblin whispered:

“He said you’ll be richest of all.”

Marun told this to his grandfather.

The goblin hid in Marun's bag.

Grouch also couldn't remember.

The second goblin whispered to him:

"Say: you'll be strongest of all."

Grouch said what the goblin had told him.

The goblin hid in Grouch's clothes.

Quest speaks the truth

When Grandpa asked Quest,

Quest said:

"I don't know, Grandpa.

I don't remember."

Quest didn't want to lie.

So this angered the goblin

and it bit Quest on the leg.

Quest seeks the truth

Quest was honest.



He wanted to find out

what Allarose said.

He thought it over for three days.

He told Grandpa:

“I’m going into the forest.

I’ll only return when I find the truth.”

Grandpa was saddened to hear this.

But he let Quest go.

A goblin pesters Quest

Quest sat on a rock

And tried to think.

But a goblin kept pestering him.

He pelted Quest with apples.

He doused him with water.

He dropped crickets into Quest’s clothes.

Quest couldn’t think clearly.

Quest locks up goblins



The goblins were playing one day and
they slid down a cliff
on pieces of wood.

Quest shoved aside a boulder.

The goblins tumbled into a well.

Quest sealed the well with the boulder.

That is how Quest got rid of the goblins
and was left alone.

But the goblins yelped from inside the well.

Quest freed one of them.

That goblin stayed at Quest's side.

Marun and Grouch become evil

Meanwhile,

Quest's brothers did what the goblins told them
that were hidden in their bag and clothes.

They could only think of riches and weapons.

They were not concerned about Grandpa

And stopped speaking to him.

They became so bad
that they burned down Grandpa's house.

The truth

Quest was left alone
with one goblin.
The goblin didn't pester him any more
because Quest had saved him.
Quest was sad
that he couldn't remember Mr. Allrose's words.
He called to Allarose again.
Allarose said:
What's most important is to love Grandpa
and stay by his side.
Quest realized
he had done the wrong thing
by leaving.

Quest drowns



Quest wanted to return home

and be by Grandpa's side.

But first he wanted to rinse his face at the well.

Quest leaned over,

He tumbled into the well and drowned.

The goblin shouted and yelped.

His brothers, the other goblins,

came.

They took the goblin to Furyman.

And so it was that the goblins

abandoned Marun and Grouch.

Marun and Grouch return to Grandpa

Now Marun and Grouch

were free to be good again.

They rushed off to Grandpa Sage.

They managed to save him from the fire.

The brothers and grandfather went looking for Quest.



With Allarose

The brothers and Grandpa found Quest with Mr. Allrose.

When Quest died,

Allarose brought him to his castle.

Grandpa wanted to stay with Quest.

He said Quest

was the most honest of the brothers.

Marun and Grouch stay at Grandpa's house

Marun and Grouch were now very good and honest.

They stayed on living at Grandpa's house.

They protected the sacred flame.

Furyman was very angry.

Goodness and honesty had conquered evil.

Questions about the story

1. How many grandchildren does Grandpa Sage have?
2. What did Allarose tell the grandsons?
3. Who are the Goblins?
4. What did Marun and Grouch tell Grandpa?
5. Where did Quest go?
6. Who was bothering Quest?

7. How did Quest get rid of the Goblins?
8. What happened to Grandpa's house?
9. What happened to Quest?
10. Did the brothers change?

Palunko the Fisherman and His Wife

Characters

Palunko – a poor fisherman

Palunko's wife – a good, patient woman

Vlatko – their son

Dawn-Maiden – a marvelous sea being

Sea King – king of the sea

Red Deer – mother's spirit come to help the woman

Snakes and birds – they help the woman

Golden bee – guardian of lightning

The poor fisherman

Palunko the fisherman lived by the sea.

He was very poor.

He fished using a fishing rod and fishhook.



He caught very little.

Everything he caught

he ate that same day.

Palunko was not satisfied.

He said to himself:

“What sort of life is this?

I work all day

and have nothing.”

He heard there were people

who lived with vast wealth.

Palunko wanted a life like that.

An encounter with Dawn-Maiden

He decided that for three days he wouldn't catch or eat fish.

On the third day a silver boat appeared from the sea.

Dawn-Maiden was sitting in it.

She told Palunko:

“For three days you caught no fish.

You spared my little fish.



Tell me what you wish.”

Palunko said:

“I wish for a better life.

I don’t want to be poor anymore.”

Dawn-Maiden told him:

“Go home.

You’ll find what you need.”

Palunko and his wife

When Palunko came home

a poor girl was there.

She said:

“My mother died.

I am all alone.

Take me for your wife.”

Palunko thought:

“Maybe this is the happiness

the Dawn-Maiden sent me.”

He married the girl.

They lived together.

They had a son.

They called him Vlatko.

Palunko lost his temper

Life was the same as it was before.

Palunko caught fish.

The woman picked plants on the mountain.

They ate dinner together in the evenings.

The woman told wonderful stories.

She told of kings

and great wealth.

Palunko longed even more to be rich.

He thought his wife knew

where to find treasure.

He told her:

“You must show me

where the Sea King lives!”

The woman said:



“I don’t know.”

Palunko didn’t believe her.

Little Vlatko disappears

Palunko sent his wife and child

to discover the way to the Sea King.

The woman took long walks by the seaside.

She was very tired.

One day she fell asleep on the rocks.

When she woke

the child was gone.

Her sorrow was so great

that the woman lost her ability to speak.

Palunko meets Dawn-Maiden again

Palunko went out to sea again.

For three days he fasted.

Dawn-Maiden appeared again.

Palunko told her:



“Our child has disappeared.

My wife can’t speak.”

Dawn-Maiden asked:

“What is your wish now?”

Palunko didn’t ask for his son.

He didn’t ask for his wife to speak again.

He said:

“Show me the way
to the Sea King.”

The palace of the Sea King

Dawn-Maiden showed him the way.

Palunko reached the amazing palace under the sea.

The Sea King was there.

Everything was full of gold
and shining sands.

Palunko was thrilled.

The Sea King invited him in.

Palunko was given food and drink.

Palunko recognized his son

There was a baby boy in the palace.

He was in a golden cradle.

He held a golden apple.

Palunko recognized him.

It was his son, Vlatko.

Vlatko didn't recognize him.

He thought Palunko was one of the palace servants.

Palunko was very sad.

He decided to escape with his son.

A mother's search

Meanwhile the woman was searching for her son.

At her mother's grave she met a red deer.

The red deer said to her:

"You can help Palunko.

there is a large fish in the sea

with a golden fin.

You must catch it."



The woman set out on her journey.

Three caves

There were three dangerous caves along her way.

In the first was the huge snake

that makes the waves.

In the second was the great bird

that makes storms.

In the third was the golden bee

that makes lightning.

The woman played the flute.

Snakes and birds helped her.

They helped her pass through the caves.

Seeing her child

The golden bee showed the woman a boat.

Little Vlatko was in it.

The mother saw her boy.

But she couldn't reach him.

She had to continue on her way.

She wanted to find Palunko.

Saving Palunko

Palunko escaped that night from the palace.

On his back he carried the cradle with his son.

He swam up toward the sea surface.

Just then the woman cast her fishing line into the sea.

The fishhook caught the cradle.

The woman reeled in the line.

From the sea emerged

Palunko, Vlatko and the golden cradle.

The family was together again.

Happy ending

Palunko saw his mistake.

He saw that wealth

is not more important than family.

His wife forgave him.

They went home.

They lived modestly

but happily.

Questions about the story

1. Why was Palunko unhappy?
2. Why did the Dawn-Maiden help Palunko?
3. What did Palunko ask for?
4. Who was waiting for Palunko in front of his house?
5. How did Palunko and his wife live?
6. Was Palunko happy?
7. What happened to Palunko's son?
8. What did Palunko ask the Dawn-Maiden for this time?
9. Where did Palunko find his son?
10. Who did Palunko's wife meet in the caves?
11. How did Palunko's wife save her family?
12. What did Palunko learn?

Regoch

Characters

Curlylocks – small fairy

Regoch – giant, a very tall man

Lilio – boy

Herders – children tending horses or sheep

A fairy and a horse

One summer night the fairies flew to a meadow.

Herders were tending horses

but they'd fallen asleep.

The fairies mounted the horses

and began galloping them around the meadow.

Among the fairies there was a little one named Curlylocks.

She was on earth for the first time.

Curlylocks rode a fast black horse.

But the horse was suddenly spooked.

It raced off far away.

Travel

The horse took Curlylocks

over fields, rivers and mountains.

Curlylocks looked out at the world

and was amazed by it all.

Finally they arrived at a broad plain.

There was not a blade of grass or a tree there.

It was very cold.

The castle of Legen

In the middle of the plain stood the ancient castle of Legen.

The caste was in ruins.

Curlylocks walked among the walls.

Suddenly she saw a huge man.

He was taller than a tower.

His name was Regoch.

Regoch lived in Legen

And counted the stones in the castle.

He had been doing this for many years.

Curlylocks persuades Regoch

Curlylocks said:

“Why do you live here?

Let’s go together to see the world.”



Regoch had never considered this.

But Curlylocks persuaded him.

They decided to travel.

An underground journey

Curlylocks had a little bag with pearls.

Whenever she threw a pearl,
the object she needed would appear.

She created a little basket.

Regoch hung the basket on his ear
and carried Curlylocks in it.

They decided to travel underground.

Underground marvels

Under the ground they saw many marvels:
Old palaces, weapons, treasure and gold crowns.

Curlylocks wanted to see everything.

She took a staff
that was holding up a big pillar.

But the pillar came tumbling down.

The passageway filled with dirt.

Curlylocks was left alone, buried under the dirt.

Regoch saves Curlylocks

Regoch began walking on.

But soon he felt

he was missing something.

He realized that Curlylocks wasn't with him.

He went back.

He started digging in the dirt.

Finally he found Curlylocks.

He held her in his hands and warmed her.

Curlylocks woke up.

Curlylocks and Regoch were overjoyed.

They cried with happiness.

After that they became true friends.

Return to the surface



Finally they came up to the surface.

They came to a forest

between two villages.

The villages were fighting.

But children from both villages

played together

and herded sheep.

The children were scared of Regoch.

One boy wasn't afraid.

His name was Lilio.

He said: "Don't be afraid.

This giant isn't evil."

Flood

Curlylocks danced and played with children.

But mean people from one village

decided to flood the other village.

The river flooded both the villages.

Regoch and Curlylocks



helped the children.

Regoch stopped the water with his body.

He drank all the water that was left.

Curlylocks stays in the village

All the people drowned.

Only the children survived.

And an elderly couple also survived – grandfather and grandmother.

They looked after the children.

Curlylocks stayed to live among the good people.

Regoch returned to the stones of castle of Legen.

Questions about the story

1. Who is Curlylocks?
2. What happened to the horse?
3. Where did Curlylocks go?
4. Who is Regoch?
5. What did Regoch do in the castle of Legen?
6. What did Curlylocks persuade Regoch to do?
7. What happened to Curlylocks underground?
8. Who did Regoch and Curlylocks meet on the surface?
9. What happened to the villages?

10. How did Regoch help?
11. What happened to the children?
12. What happened to Curlylocks and Regoch at the end?

Stribor's Forest

Characters:

Lad – a young man

Snake – Daughter-in-law

Mother – the lad's mother

Girl with kindling – a poor girl selling kindling

Household sprites – little creatures from old Croatian tales who help people.
They'd come out from fire.

Malik Tintilinkie – a household sprite

Stribor – a forest elder who manages the forest

The enchanted forest

A lad entered Stribor's forest.

He didn't know the forest was enchanted

Strange things happen in that forest.



Some of the things are good, and some are bad.

Every person gets what they deserve.

The magic in the forest may also cease.

It will cease

when somebody enters the forest

who loves their unhappiness

more than treasure.

The snake-girl

The lad was chopping wood.

He sat on a tree stump to rest.

A snake came out of the stump.

The snake snuggled up to him.

This was not a real snake.

It was under a spell

as punishment for the evil things it had done.

It could free itself of the magic spell

only if someone married it.

The snake shone like silver.



It looked the lad in the eyes.

The lad joked, saying:

“So beautiful. I’d almost take it home with me.”

The snake thought:

“Here’s the man who will free me.”

Right away she turned into a beautiful girl.

She had beautiful clothes and small, slim feet.

But she still had her snake tongue in her mouth
because she’d had bad thoughts.

The girl said:

“Take me home and marry me!”

The lad was good, but timid and bashful.

He wasn’t thinking clearly.

He didn’t see the danger

and he liked the girl.

He took her home.

The lad brings his wife to his mother

The lad lived with his elderly mother.

When they came home, he said:

“Mother, this is my wife.”

His mother looked at the girl.

His mother was old and wise.

She immediately saw that her daughter-in-law was not good.

When her daughter-in-law left, his mother told her son:

“She is beautiful, but watch out, she may be a snake.”

Her son was surprised and it made him angry.

He thought:

“How did Mother know that she used to be a snake?

Maybe my mother is a witch!”

And he began to hate his mother.

The daughter-in-law and his mother

The son, daughter-in-law and mother lived together, but unhappily.

The daughter-in-law was nasty,

loud and rude.

She was gluttonous and coarse.

The daughter-in-law pushed his mother around

and gave her difficult tasks to do.

“Bring snow from the tall mountain for me to wash my face with it.”

His mother said: “No road goes there.”

The daughter-in-law answered rudely,

and the son laughed to please his wife.

This sorely hurt his mother.

But she did go to fetch the snow.

She didn’t want to pray to God for help,

so God wouldn’t see her son’s bad behavior.

But God helped her anyway.

She returned happily with the snow.

The daughter-in-law gave Mother another task.

“Go to the frozen lake. Catch me a carp.”

Mother was afraid: “The ice will crack.”

The daughter-in-law mocked her and again the son laughed.

Mother left.

This was very hard for her.

But a seagull dropped the fish in front of her.

Mother picked it up and brought it to her daughter-in-law.

The third day Mother thought she would mend her son's shirt.

The daughter-in-law shouted:

"Leave it! You're old and blind! That's not your job!"

Mother left the house and sat on a bench in the cold.

For the first time she prayed sincerely to God:

"Oh God, help me, please!"

The girl with kindling

A poor girl came over to Mother.

She had a torn sleeve and she was cold.

She was carrying a bundle of kindling.

The girl asked:

"Would you like to buy some kindling?"

Mother said:

"I have no money but I could mend your sleeve."

Mother mended the sleeve with needle and thread.

The girl gave her a bundle of wood and went off happy.

Household sprites



One evening the daughter-in-law said to Mother:

“We’ve been invited out. Heat the water before we come back.”

When they left, Mother lit the fire with the kindling.

Suddenly she heard: knock-knock.

She asked: “Who’s there?”

Soft voices could be heard:

“Household sprites! Household Sprites!”

Mother saw something amazing:

out the fire stepped tiny people.

They were only as tall as a forearm.

They had little red caps and red shoes.

Their eyes gleamed like embers.

More and more of them came.

They laughed and danced around the fire.

They were so merry that they scattered salt and flour.

Mother didn’t mind.

She was glad.

Mother said:

“Help me. I want my son to see the truth.



I want him to see his wife's snake tongue."

One of the household sprites, Malik Tintilinkie, said:

"I'll bring birds' eggs.

We'll slip them under the hen.

When the baby birds hatch,
your daughter-in-law will rush at them
and show her snake tongue."

Then the daughter-in-law returned and opened the door.

The household sprites quickly vanished.

Only Malik hid in the ashes.

The daughter-in-law noticed something in the ashes.

She came closer and was punched in the nose.

Mother calmly said:

"Must be a spark from the fire."

Later Malik secretly slipped the birds' eggs under the hen.

The daughter-in-law and the baby birds

The day came when the baby birds were ready to hatch.

The daughter-in-law invited all the villagers to see the chicks.

When they lifted the hen, out flew the baby birds.

They were odd-looking and noisy.

The daughter-in-law rushed at them.

She wanted to eat them.

She flicked her thin, pointy tongue.

The villagers were scared.

They realized the daughter-in-law was not an ordinary woman.

Mother told her son:

“Now you’ve seen it. Send her away.”

But her son was stubborn

and he couldn’t see the bad side of his wife.

He didn’t believe his mother.

He yelled at her:

“You are a witch! Get out of the house!”

His mother was very sad.

All she asked for was to leave in the evening.

She didn’t want the villagers to see

that her son had sent her away.

Mother leaves the house

Mother took some bread and the kindling.

She walked away through the snow.

As soon as Mother left the house

the fire went out in the stove.

The son and daughter-in-law were left in the dark.

The son realized he had treated his mother poorly.

He was sorry

but he didn't dare admit this to his wife.

He told her he'd like to follow his mother

to see it when she froze.

The daughter-in-law was pleased by this.

They followed Mother.

Mother walked alone through the snow.

She came to a field.

She felt very cold.

She couldn't walk on.

She lit a fire,

and the household sprites came out again.

Mother said:

“Help me. My son threw me out.”

Malik Tintilinkie said:

“Let’s go to Stribor.

He’ll tell us what to do.”

Malik gave a short whistle.

In Stribor’s forest

A deer and twelve squirrels came.

The deer had stars on its antlers.

Mother mounted the deer, and the household sprites mounted the squirrels.

That is how they reached Stribor’s forest.

The daughter-in-law and son watched this from afar.

The daughter-in-law recognized the enchanted forest.

It didn’t occur to her that she might be the one to get hurt

for the evil things she’d done.

She was happy

because she believed

Mother would be the one to get hurt.



There was a large oak tree in the forest.

It was so big

that inside it there were golden courts

and a silver village surrounded by a wall.

That is where Stribor, the forest elder, sat.

The household sprites told Stribor what had happened.

Stribor told Mother:

“Don’t worry. I will help you.”

He showed her the village of her youth.

There was merriment, music, and ringing bells.

Stribor said:

“You may go in. Clap your hands.

You’ll immediately become young.

You’ll be as happy as you used to be.”

Mother was thrilled.

She had already started to walk toward the door.

But then she asked:

“And what will happen to my son?”

Stribor said:



“If you become young again, you’ll forget your son
You won’t even know he exists.”

Mother’s decision

Mother stopped

and gave this some thought.

She told Stribor:

“Thank you for the happiness, but I choose my misfortune.

I wish to still be a mother.

I do not want to forget my son.”

At that moment the forest shivered.

The magic came to an end.

Everything disappeared: the courts, the village and the household sprites.

The daughter-in-law turned back into a snake and fled.

Mother and son found themselves alone in the forest.

Her son fell to his knees.

He cried and begged Mother for forgiveness.

Mother forgave him.

Later the lad married

the good poor girl

who'd been selling kindling.

They lived peacefully and happily.

And sometimes Malik Tintilinkie visited them on a winter's evening.

Questions about the story

1. Where did the young man go?
2. What was the forest like?
3. Who did the young man meet in the forest?
4. Why did the snake turn into a girl?
5. What was the young man's mother like?
6. How did the daughter-in-law treat Mother?
7. What tasks was Mother given?
8. How did the Household Sprites appear?
9. What did the daughter-in-law do when she saw the chicks?
10. Who did Mother go to for advice?
11. What did Stribor offer Mother?
12. How does the story end?

Little Brother Primrose and Sister Rue

Characters

Queen

Rue – a girl

Primrose – her brother

Milojka – their mother

Fiery Dragon

Captive Fairies – Evil Fairies

Klikun – eagle

Relja

The queen and the shepherdess

Enemies attacked the castle of a good queen.

The queen was forced to escape.

In her arms she carried her little son.

She escaped by night.

Before dawn she arrived in a valley.

In this valley lived shepherdess Milojka.

The queen begged her:

“Hide me and my child till nightfall.”

Milojka hid them in her cabin.

After dark the queen had to go on her way.

She gave Milojka a golden belt and a little gold cross.



She said: "Take care of these till I return."

But the queen never returned.

Nobody knew what had happened to her.

Milojka's children

The years passed.

Milojka married and had two children:

a daughter, Rue, and a son, Primrose.

They lived in poverty.

When Milojka felt her time had come to die,

she summoned her children.

She gave the golden belt to Rue.

To Primrose she gave the little gold cross.

She said:

"Take care of each other and these gifts."

Then she died.

The children were left alone.

An eagle carries off Rue



One day something terrible happened.

Klikun, a big eagle, swooped down from the sky.

It grabbed Rue by the belt...

Up high it soared with her and flew toward a mountain.

There was a little lake on the mountaintop.

In the middle of the lake there was an island.

On the island there was an old chapel.

When Rue saw the chapel

she remembered her mother.

Her belt unbuckled

and Rue dropped into the lake.

This saved her from the eagle.

She crawled out onto the little island.

But now she was alone

at the top of the terrible mountain.

Primrose sets off on his search

In the village people said:

“It will be easier for us having only Primrose to look after.”

Nobody thought about Rue.

Primrose decided:

He would search for his sister.

He'd seen where the eagle flew.

He set off in that direction.

So it was that he reached the mountain.

Evil fairies

Captive fairies lived on the mountain.

They served the dragon

and hated people.

When they saw Primrose

they wanted to kill him.

But Primrose had the little gold cross.

Because of the cross the fairies didn't dare to touch him.

So they tried to trick him.

They led him to a hole.

In the hole there were sharp posts.

Primrose fell,



but he fell on leaves and wasn't hurt.

Rain, a she-bear and poisonous strawberries

The fairies made heavy rain fall.

They wanted to drown Primrose.

Rue saw the rain.

She rang the chapel bells and prayed.

She didn't know Primrose was in danger.

The fairies ran away.

The water lifted Primrose up and brought him
to safety.

Then the fairies sent in the she-bear.

She chased Primrose.

Then the she-bear heard her baby bears and returned to them.

She attacked a fairy.

Again Primrose was saved.

The fairies wanted to poison Primrose.

On the path there were red and black strawberries.

Both were poisonous.

Primrose ate some black strawberries.

He felt sick.

The fairies gave him red strawberries.

They thought he'd die that way.

But the red poison canceled out the black poison.

Primrose recovered.

A scary bird named Clamor and a dragon

The fairy was afraid

that Primrose might reach the lake.

So she flew

to her brother Clamor.

The noisy bird Clamor appeared.

But the bird was not able to kill Primrose.

Then a dragon came.

The dragon puffed and a mighty wind lifted Primrose up.

The wind blew Primrose onto the little island in the lake.

The dragon couldn't hurt him there.

The meeting between brother and sister

Rue heard laughter.

She recognized her brother.

They hugged.

They were very happy

They lived together on the island.

They had water and food.

Rue took care of Primrose.

But she worried about what was to come.

A little fairy

One day

the youngest fairy came.

She wanted

the golden belt Rue wore.

She promised Rue

she'd help them leave the mountain.

Rue answered:

"I can't.



This belt was given to me by my mother.”

Rue felt awful.

She really wanted to leave the mountain.

But she did not give up her belt.

In the end the fairy left, sad.

She sat on a rock

and burst into tears

because she couldn't get the belt.

The queen and her son

The good queen hadn't died.

She dwelt in a faraway land.

She lived with her son.

Nobody knew

she was a queen.

Her son's name was Relja.

He was strong and brave.

One day she told him

the truth about the golden gifts

– the belt and the little cross.

Relja set off to find them.

He reached the mountain.

He beat the dragon.

Relja finds the children

The fairy led Relja to the children.

She hoped Relja would would help her
take the belt.

But Relja saw the children were good.

He decided to help them.

He chased the fairy away.

Leaving the mountain

They took a candle from the chapel.

They set off through the mountain.

Wherever they passed with the candle,
all evil disappeared.

Relja and the children came safely down off the mountain.

A New Family

They came to a valley.

Relja brought his mother, the queen.

She hugged the children.

They all lived together.

Happy ending

The people loved Relja.

He became king.

He married Rue.

Primrose grew up to become a brave young man.

They all lived happily.

Questions about the story

1. Why did the queen hide at Milojka's home?
2. What did the queen leave with Milojka?
3. Who took Rue away?
4. How did Rue escape from the eagle?
5. What did Primrose decide to do?
6. Who wanted to harm Primrose?
7. What protected Primrose from the fairies?

8. What happened when Primrose ate the strawberries?
9. How did Primrose reach his sister?
10. Who is Relja?
11. Were the brother and sister safe in the end?
12. How does the story end?

Sun the Groomsman and Neva the Bride

Characters

Miller and his wife – bad people

Granny Mokosh – magical powers

Neva the Bride – the miller’s daughter, a good girl

Oleg the Hero

Princess – mean, vengeful

Sun the Groomsman – helps Neva the Bride

The miller and grandmother

The miller and his wife

were not good people.

They ground grain for the wealthy free of charge

but asked the poor for payment.

One winter day

a poor grandmother came.

She asked them to grind her grain.

The miller asked for half of her grain as his pay.

The grandmother left.

But this was no ordinary grandmother.

She was Granny Mokosh.

Neva's kindness

The miller's daughter, Neva the Bride,
was a kind girl.

The next day she ground the grain for Granny Mokosh herself
and wouldn't take payment.

Mokosh told her:

"I'll help you when you need help."

From that day forward the mill worked
only when Neva ran it.

This upset her parents.

The princess's keys

One day the princess lost her keys.

She said:

Whoever finds them will be given a reward.

If a maiden finds them,

I will bring her to the court.

And if a lad finds them,

I'll marry him.

Mokosh showed Neva

where the keys were.

Oleg the Hero was out on a meadow.

Neva the Bride liked him very much.

She found the keys

but gave them to Oleg.

Oleg returned the keys to the princess,

but he didn't want to marry her.

Oleg the Hero said:

"Neva will be my wife."

Together they fled.



Wedding

Neva and Oleg decided to hold a small wedding.

They invited:

twenty heroes, twenty of the poor,
a wolf and she-wolf, an eagle and a hawk
and a turtledove and a swallow.

Neva said:

“The sun will be my groomsman.”

The groomsman is the groom’s brother,
a very important person at a wedding.

The princess’s anger

The princess was very angry.

She was jealous
because Oleg the Hero hadn’t chosen her.

Oleg thanked the princess in front of others
but chose Neva for his wife.

This gravely insulted the princess.

The princess sends the army

The princess convinced the king, her father,
to give her the army.

The king agreed.

The princess marched the army
to the land of Oleg the Hero.

The army was huge.

The soldiers were told
to capture Oleg the Hero,
and to pluck Neva's heart out.

This was a horrible threat.

Neva is not afraid

When he saw the army,
Oleg the Hero asked Neva:

"Are you afraid?"

Neva said:

"No, I'm not."

She believed in the wolf and she-wolf, the twenty heroes,

the twenty of the poor, in Oleg the Hero and the turtledove and swallow.

She was brave and calm.

The battle begins

The wedding party armed themselves with weapons.

They stood by the windows of the house

and waited for the army.

But the princess's army was much stronger.

There were so many soldiers.

The wolf and she-wolf were the first to be struck down.

They faced the army bravely

but the troops killed them.

Then a huge battle began with bows and arrows.

Arrows flew on both sides.

But there were many more enemy arrows.

Many heroes were hurt.

There were wounded among the poor as well.

Oleg the Hero was hurt the most.

He was badly wounded.

Neva asks for help

Neva helped Oleg.

She rinsed his wounds.

Oleg the Hero was sad.

He thought all was lost.

He said the enemy would soon smash down the door

and they'd all be killed.

But Neva remembered help.

She said:

"I'll send the turtledove to Mokosh.

She knows a lot and maybe she can help."

The turtledove quickly flew off

and brought Mokosh back.

Mokosh doesn't want to help

Mokosh arrived in the form of a crow.

She sat on the roof of the house.

At the same time the army banged at the door.

There was loud clamor.



All of them were all in danger.

Neva asked Mokosh for help.

But Mokosh didn't want to help.

She was angry because Neva preferred Oleg the Hero
to the princess and wealth.

She told Neva she would have to help herself.

When Oleg the Hero heard this,

he was furious at Mokosh.

He said crows had never helped heroes.

He told Neva that

if he was killed,

she should go to the princess and enter into her service at the court.

Then Oleg the Hero went to the door.

He was about to open it

and fight to the end.

Neva looks up at the sky

Neva was left standing there alone.

She struggled.

She agonized about what to do.

She looked around.

She searched for help.

Then she looked up at the sky.

The sun was out.

The sun saw Neva.

He recognized her.

He rememberd she was a kind girl.

she'd given him gifts

and wanted him as her groomsman.

The sun heard what Mokosh had said to Neva

and he was angry about it.

The sun punishes Mokosh

The sun bellowed at Mokosh.

He told her she was nasty

and didn't know what was right.

He reminded her that Neva's goodness

must not be forgotten.



The sun commanded Mokosh to fall and for the ground to swallow her up.

Mokosh had to obey him.

The ground swallowed her up.

The sun saves Neva and Oleg

Then the sun beat down even stronger.

The day became awfully hot.

All the weapons became scorching hot.

The army struggled.

Soldiers collapsed from the heat.

They couldn't stand or fight any more.

Whenever someone fell,

the ground swallowed them up.

And so it was that the entire army collapsed.

One by one they vanished into the ground.

The princess also disappeared.

The weapons disappeared too.

Soon there was no army left.

The only ones left alive were those



who were inside the house.

Salvation and joy

A hush settled over everything.

Neva appeared at the window.

She was happy because they were spared.

The heroes recovered.

And the poor recovered.

Their wounds healed.

Oleg the Hero also got better.

With Neva at his side he felt much better.

A big celebration

In the morning they sent a swallow to the sun.

They sent it greetings.

The swallow came back in the evening.

She brought a message from the sun:

they should prepare for a big wedding the next day

and the sun would be their groomsman.



They were overjoyed.

The next day they prepared the wedding.

There was much merriment,

song and celebration.

It was a grand and beautiful wedding.

Never anywhere has there been such a wedding.

Questions about the story

1. What were the miller and his wife like?
2. What was Neva like?
3. Who is Granny Mokosh?
4. What did the princess lose?
5. Who found the keys?
6. Why did Neva give the keys to Oleg?
7. Why was the princess angry?
8. What did the princess send?
9. Who did not want to help Neva?
10. Who helped in the end?
11. How does the story end?

JAGOR

Characters

Jagor – a boy

Stepmother – an evil woman

Father – Jagor’s father

Big Belle the Cow

Goat

Bagan – a sprite protecting the house

Crazybat Baba – a magic, dangerous being from ancient tales that lives underground

Jagor and his evil stepmother

There once was a boy named Jagor.

His mother passed away.

Jagor’s father remarried.

The new wife was an evil stepmother.

The stepmother often beat Jagor.

She didn’t give him enough to eat.

Jagor’s father didn’t notice what was happening.

The stepmother lied to his father and hid what she was doing.

Jagor was sad

and often cried.

One day he hid in the barn



where the farm animals lived.

He lay down in the hay and sobbed.

A voice in the barn

Jagor heard a whispering voice.

The voice said:

“Don’t cry, Jagor.

We’ll help you.”

Jagor was amazed.

He looked around.

In the barn were only:

The goat and Big Belle the cow.

Jagor asked the cow:

“Did you speak?”

The cow said:

“No, I didn’t.”

Then he asked the goat:

“Did you speak?”

The goat said:



“I didn’t either.”

Jagor asked again:

“So who spoke?”

The cow said:

“It was Bagan.”

Who was Bagan

Bagan was a sprite
that lived in the barn.

It hid in a sheaf of wheat
woven into the barn wall.

The sheaf had been there
for fifty years.

It was put there by Jagor’s grandfather.

He wanted Bagan to protect the house
and the animals in the barn.

The cow told Jagor:

“If you want our help
you’ll have to help Bagan.”

Jagor helps Bagan

Jagor built a little manger as a shelter for Bagan.

Every day he left Bagan things to eat.

He placed hay in the shelter for Bagan's bed.

After that Jagor felt better.

The cow and goat gave him milk.

Bagan kept him warm at night

when it got cold.

Jagor grew

and became stronger.

People were surprised

that a boy with an evil stepmother

could be so healthy.

His stepmother was more and more angry.

The stepmother has a plan

His stepmother spent a long time plotting.

Finally she invented a plan.

One morning she told her husband:

“Don’t take your lunch with you to the meadow.

I’ll have Jagor bring it.”

His father went off to mow the grass.

At noon the stepmother gave Jagor a basket.

In the basket were a pot of porridge and some bread.

She said:

“Take this to your father.”

But the stepmother knew

that Crazybat Baba was waiting

on that path.

Crazybat Baba

Jagor walked along the path.

The sun beat down.

Everything was quiet.

Then out of the bushes stepped

Crazybat Baba.

In her hand she held nettles.

She ran over to Jagor
and hit him with the nettles.

Jagor fainted.

Crazybat Baba ate the lunch he was bringing to his father.

Then she took Jagor
to her underground lair.

The underground world

Jagor woke up underground.

He saw twelve big ovens.

Bread was baking in some of them.

Sheep were roasting in others.

Everything was big.

The heat was terrible.

But the heat didn't bother Jagor
because Crazybat Baba had cast a spell over him.

Terrible sheep

Crazybat Baba led Jagor on.



They came to a place
where there were very big sheep.
Baba said:
“You’ll keep watch over my sheep.”
Jagor was left alone with the sheep.

His father looks for Jagor

His father came home in the evening.
He found Jagor’s basket in the field.
He was afraid something had happened to Jagor.
Jagor’s stepmother told him not to feel sad about his son.
Without Jagor they’d have more to eat.
But his father was sad anyway.
He went to the barn.
At night he heard a voice
telling him:
“Go find your son.
Go to the lair of Crazybat Baba.
There you’ll find him.



But bring with you a pot of water
to protect you from the heat.”

Jagor’s father set out.

But he forgot to drink the water
that was supposed to protect him.

When he entered the underground lair
the heat burned his throat.

And so it was that Jagor’s father died.

The cow and goat look for Jagor

The stepmother saw that the father, too, was not coming back.

She wasn’t sad.

She said:

“What was theirs is now mine.”

Both the cow and the goat saw
that Jagor had disappeared.

They decided to look for him.

They asked Bagan to go with them

but Bagan said

he had to protect Jagor's home.

The cow and goat set off for the mountain.

The journey was long and hard.

They traveled over meadows and mountains.

Finally they reached

the home of Crazybat Baba.

The goat finds Jagor

The goat climbed a cliff.

She saw Jagor,

Fast asleep.

She called to him.

Jagor woke up.

The goat helped him escape.

The cow fed him with her milk.

They saved Jagor.

The return

Meanwhile the stepmother



was at home alone.

She was glad the goat and cow were gone.

She was glad to have no worries,

and everything belonged to her.

But Bagan told all the objects in the house and barn

not to obey the will of the evil stepmother.

The stepmother couldn't do a thing.

There was always something causing trouble:

whether it was a grain of wheat, a piece of wool,

or some hay.

This made her very angry.

Crazybat Baba came to the stepmother.

She asked the stepmother to help her catch Jagor again.

The stepmother was happy to help.

Crazybat Baba and the stepmother planned to trick Jagor

into falling into a hole.

The farm animals helped him.

They kept him away from the hole.

In the end the stepmother fell into the hole.

And Crazybat Baba also died.

But Jagor was free once again

with his goat and cow and

the kindly sprite, Bagan.

Questions about the story

1. What was Jagor's life like?
2. Who helped him?
3. Who is Bagan?
4. Where did Jagor's stepmother send him?
5. Who attacked Jagor on the way?
6. Where did Jagor end up after that?
7. What did Jagor have to do at Crazybat Baba's home?
8. What happened to Jagor's father?
9. Who went to look for Jagor?
10. Who helped Jagor escape?
11. How does the story end?

Toporko the Wanderer and the Magistrate's Nine Sons

Characters

Toporko

Magistrate's Nine Sons



Jurina the Magistrate

Old Man Weather

The Magistrate's Wife

Court Servant – Evil Servant

Old Carpenter

Old Carpenter's wife – Granny

Nine trees

Jurina the Magistrate toured his land.

He wished to see whether help was needed anywhere.

On a meadow he saw nine young trees.

They had no water.

The magistrate was sorry to see this.

He ordered people to water the trees.

The water flowed.

The trees began to grow.

The magistrate said:

“Grow and be strong.”

Then he went away.

Old Man Weather

Old Man Weather lived in the sky.

He took care of nature:

the rain, dew, sun and fog.

He saw the magistrate helping the trees.

So Old Man Weather decided he would help, too.

Every day he watered the trees with rain.

He warmed them with sun.

The trees grew nice and tall.

Next to them grew a small tree.

It was smaller and weaker than the rest.

The magistrate's wish

After a few years the magistrate saw the trees again.

Now they were big, strong trees.

The magistrate was sad because he had no sons.

He said:

“If only I had nine sons.”

Then Old Man Weather appeared again.

He told the magistrate:

“Cut these trees down.

Little boys will grow from the stumps.

But take care, the boys are trees,

They can only grow in sun and rain.”

The magistrate did as he was told.

That night the magistrate’s nine sons were born.

They were strong and healthy.

Tents

The magistrate’s wife worried.

She put tents up over the boys

to protect them.

When Old Man Weather saw this

he was angry.

Trees need to grow

in the rain and sun.

So he stopped looking after them.



Little Toporko

Next to the trees the magistrate had chosen

Another small tree grew.

It, too, was cut down.

The magistrate's servant

gave it to an old carpenter.

He wanted the carpenter to make a handle for his ax.

He saw a red heart in the stump

and knew he'd recognize it by that.

But Granny, the carpenter's wife,

put the stump in a cradle.

A little boy was born at midnight.

They called him Toporko.

Toporko was small and poor.

He slept outdoors.

He grew with nature.

He became smart and able.

He often went wandering.

That's why he was called The Wanderer.



At night Old Man Weather would come
and teach him things.
Toporko found out that he had nine brothers.

The brothers meet

One day Toporko came
to the wall around the magistrate's palace.
He found a stone in the wall
that was loose.
He pried it out
and made a hole.
Through the hole he called to his brothers.
The nine magistrate's sons came to the wall.
And so it was that the brothers met.
They agreed to meet again in secret.

Peril

The evil court servant hated the magistrate's sons.
He was jealous.

He wanted to kill them.

He came to the old carpenter

to pick up the handle for his ax.

The carpenter and his wife were scared.

They had none of the wood left.

The wood had turned into Toporko.

To save the old couple,

Toporko changed himself back into a piece of wood.

The carpenter made an ax handle from it.

The evil servant came to pick up the handle.

He was happy.

He wanted to use it to kill the magistrate's sons.

Toporko didn't let him.

The ax attacked the evil servant

and chopped off his thumb.

The handle turned back into Toporko.

The tents where the magistrate's sons had been living

burned to the ground,

but Toporko saved his brothers.



He took them to Old Man Weather on the mountain.

With Old Man Weather

They had a hard time at Old Man Weather's.

He didn't like them living in tents,

in wealth and laziness.

He wanted to teach them

everything about nature and a hard life.

The children went hungry.

They were made to work hard.

The magistrate's sons lost their nice clothes.

They became modest and tough.

Toporko felt bad about his brothers.

He thought of a plan to bring them home.

Sorrow at court

During this time great sorrow reigned

at the magistrate's court.

The tents had burned down.



The magistrate's sons had disappeared.

Jurina the Magistrate was worried.

He summoned wise men and elders.

He asked them:

"Where are my sons?

How did the fire start?

Whose fault is it?"

The wise men said:

"The boys burned up in the fire."

The elders said:

"Someone set the fire and ran away."

Nobody knew the truth.

The magistrate meets Toporko

The magistrate was restless.

Every day he rode through the mountains.

He was searching for his boys.

One day he met a little man.

The man was small but brave.

He was Toporko.

Toporko said:

“I can help you.”

He asked for a reward:

A half sack of hazelnuts.

The magistrate agreed.

Toporko saves his brothers

Toporko took the hazelnuts
given to him by the magistrate.

He went to Granny.

He told her:

“Come early tomorrow.

Climb up in a tree and wait.”

Then he went off to the mountain.

He brought hazelnuts to the boys.

He told them:

“Eat some.

We must be prepared to escape.”

In the morning the boys escaped.

They sat on fog as if it were clouds.

The wind carried them through the air.

Granny was waiting for them on the tree.

She was holding Toporko's cap.

When they passed by,

Toporko reached for his cap.

Granny pulled him to her.

All the boys fell to the ground.

They were saved.

Return

The boys and Granny set off for the city.

They saw the magistrate's palace.

They were happy.

Toporko said:

"We must hurry.

Soon the culprit will be caught."

They came to the meadow.



The magistrate was already there.

All the people were standing in front of him.

The boys came too, quietly, on the side.

Catching the culprit

Toporko changed again.

He turned himself back into an ax handle.

The magistrate commanded:

“Try the handle with each ax.”

The handle fit only one ax.

The ax that belonged to the evil servant.

The magistrate called him up.

He commanded:

“Show us your hand.”

The court servant was hiding his hand.

He was missing his thumb.

They all understood:

He was the culprit.



A fight

The court servant attacked the magistrate.

The magistrate had no weapons.

Then the boys all jumped up.

They had swords.

They defended their father.

They stopped the criminal.

The magistrate was saved.

A happy meeting

The magistrate recognized his sons.

He hugged them.

They were all happy.

Granny cried because she couldn't see Toporko.

But then Toporko appeared.

He leaped into her arms.

He was alive and well.

The magistrate asked:

“What do you want as your reward?”

Tomporko and the children said:

“Leave the wall open.”

The magistrate thought about it.

He understood:

Walls don’t protect children.”

Their freedom is what protects them.

The magistrate commanded:

“Tear down the walls!”

The people began tearing down the walls of the building.

The castle became open.

The castle was safe because of the people, not the walls.

The magistrate’s sons grew up.

They lived in harmony.

Toporko and Granny traveled the world.

They helped people.

Everybody loved them.

Questions about the story

1. What did the Magistrate see in the meadow?
2. What grew from the tree stumps?



3. Who is Toporko?
4. Where did Toporko grow up?
5. What did the evil servant want to do?
6. How did Toporko save his brothers?
7. How did the Magistrate's sons live with Old Man Weather?
8. Who was looking for the children?
9. What did Toporko ask for as a reward?
10. How did they discover who was guilty?
11. How does the story end?

