

BEST STORIES

# RUSSIAN

FAIRY TALE AND FOLKLORE

CHRONICLE PRESS

# RUSSIAN FAIRY TALE AND FOLKLORE

*Collection of Timeless Tales from Russian Mythology*



CHRONICLE PRESS

Copyright © 2024

*All rights reserved. Without the showing prior written permission of the publisher, none of the portions of this book may be copied, kept in a retrieval system, or communicated in any form, whether mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise. This includes transmitting it in any language.*

Copyright © 2024

## Hourly Myth Journey

*Set out on an hourly myth journey! Dive into captivating stories based on old mythology that were carefully written so you can finish reading them in an hour. Our carefully chosen collection lets you unleash the power of famous stories. Each page opens up a world of gods, heroes, creatures and timeless wonders. In just an hour, you can spark your mind, enjoy the magic, and escape into worlds that come to life. Mythology meets speed, and you'll find the joy of an epic story in each quick part.*

*Each book in the series is a testament to the power of story, and they all invite you to learn more about well-known and less well-known legends. As you read these pages, you'll meet gods and humans, face monsters and secrets, and learn about love and betrayal. You are about to start a trip like no other. Each book holds a new story that is ready to start in the time it takes for the sands to fall through an hourglass. Get better at reading one story at a time because legends are waiting, and time is running out!*

## **Disclaimer**

The author is solely responsible for this book's information, ideas, and opinions; they do not necessarily represent the views of any institutions or individuals associated with the author. The author has made what they believe to be reasonable steps to make sure that the material contained in this book is accurate. However, neither the author nor the publisher makes any representations or guarantees, either stated or implied, regarding the completeness, accuracy, reliability, appropriateness, or availability of the content contained within. It is strongly recommended that readers seek assistance from relevant professionals or specialists in specific disciplines by consulting with them to acquire precise information tailored to their particular situations. The author disclaims liability for any loss, damage, or harm resulting from using the information provided in this book and any omissions or errors.

This book may reference websites, goods, services, or resources owned or operated by third parties. These references are solely offered for your convenience, and their inclusion does not indicate that we approve, sponsor, or recommend the content provided by the third party. Because the author and the publisher do not have any control over the nature, content, or availability of external websites, they cannot be held liable for any actions, decisions, or consequences resulting from using such external resources.

## **Forward**

I would want to extend an invitation to go on a voyage that is genuinely extraordinary to those of you who are interested in unearthing ancient knowledge, who are captivated by the mysterious stories that are woven through the fabric of human life, and who are aficionados of the rich tapestry of mythology that transcends boundaries and resonates across time. Within this book's covers, we will explore the halls of myth and completely submerge ourselves in the ageless tales that have enthralled the human imagination for as long as anybody can remember.



Mostly, mythology is more than stories about gods, heroes, and animals. It's the mirror that shows us our darkest fears, our highest hopes, and our unspoken wants. These stories, which have been told for generations, are fun and vital lessons about right and wrong, bravery, and the complexity of the human heart. In all of its magnificence, mythology acts as a compass that directs us through the complexities of the human experience. It is a mirror that reflects our perception of the universe and our role and embodies our collective dreams, fears, goals, and ideals. Mythology invites us to investigate the hidden aspects of our lives, whether we are more interested in the sweeping conflicts between gods and heroes or the hidden meanings in the stories of how the world was created.

Within these pages, you will encounter many pantheons and deities, each providing a distinctive perspective to examine the more expansive universe. It is essential to remember that mythology is not only a relic of the past but a living phenomenon that continues to impact our contemporary reality. Its influence can be seen in literature, art, music, and daily language. It invigorates us, sparks the fire of our imagination, and gives us a glimpse into the intricate web that is the history of humanity.

Mythology also acts as a connector, bringing together people from different cultures worldwide. It brings us together by highlighting the similarities in our experiences and the uniqueness of each of us as individuals. In the vast pantheon of mythical figures, we find examples of universal themes such as love, betrayal, heroism, and sacrifice. These themes connect with every human heart, regardless of when or where they were written.

Before you start this journey, think about these old myths. They will remind you of how stories can connect us across time and place to the core of what it means to be human. These stories are meant to bring you joy, knowledge, and maybe even a glimpse of the divine. At its core, mythology is more than just stories about monsters, gods, and heroes. It is the mirror that shows us our deepest fears, our greatest hopes, and our unspoken wants. These stories have been told for generations and are both fun and vital

lessons about right and wrong, bravery, and the complexity of the human heart.

This book is both a celebration of mythology and an invitation to go on an adventure of discovery. This is a homage to the innumerable storytellers who have ensured the survival of these myths through the ebb and flow of the sands of time by passing them down from generation to generation. It is devoted to all people interested in mythology, namely those who find comfort in the ageless stories that have shaped our world since the beginning of time and continue to do so Today.

Therefore, I implore you, dear reader, to turn the page and completely submerge yourself in the enthralling delights that are still to come. Let us all come together to celebrate the mythology that brings us together, is not limited by the constraints of culture or time, and imparts a feeling of awe and wonder into our everyday lives.

Your imagination will be stoked, your horizons will be expanded, and you will be reminded of the eternal power of storytelling if you allow yourself to go on this voyage into the realms of mythology. And may you emerge from these pages, like the heroes of old, changed by the insight and enchantment that mythology has to give due to what you've learned here.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[Introduction](#)

[Vasilisa the Beautiful](#)

[Donotknow](#)

[The Armless Maiden](#)

[The Golden Slipper](#)

[Princess Vasilisa and Firebird](#)

[Vasilisa the Wise](#)

[Three Wonderful Beggars](#)

[The White Duck](#)

[Firebird and the Gray Wolf](#)

[The Frog Princess](#)

[Tale of Tsar Saltan](#)

[Wicked Sisters](#)

[Twelve Dancing Princesses](#)

[Feather of Finist the Falcon](#)

[Ivan and the Norka](#)

[Language of the Birds](#)

[The Queen's Disguise](#)

[The Bold Knight](#)

[The Maiden Tsar](#)

[One Last Thing...](#)

# Introduction

After the Soviet Union broke up, Russian fairy tales were almost extinct because communists believed that folklore went against their views. Maxim Gorky, on the other hand, said that the country's tradition was important for art and culture. He was able to convince Soviet leaders that fairy tales were in line with communist ideas and would help Soviet society grow and build pride. Because of Gorky's work, the 1920s are known as the "Golden Age" of Russian Folklore. More study and preservation efforts helped the country's collection of fairy tales and folk tales grow. Many new writers took the stage and wrote modern folklore that praised political leaders like Stalin and Lenin and taught the morals and goals of communism. In this way, Russia's folklore was both a way to keep traditions alive and teach morals and values to a community, as well as a way to spread Soviet messaging to the general public.

As the Soviet Union was being formed in the 1920s, storytelling became a big part of people's culture. Many people now think of this time as the "golden age." However, at the time, the young government was too busy with important matters of the state to pay much attention to literature and myth. Because of this oversight, two major academic groups grew, both eager to learn more about the ancient stories that made up Eastern European culture.

The first was the formalist movement, which looked at how old fairy tales and byliny were made into art. Formalism scholars didn't just read these stories; they also broke them down and studied their bones or the structures and poetic techniques that made them work. They thought that understanding how these stories were put together was important for appreciating their art and, by extension, their societal importance.

The Finnish school of thought ran along with this. The way this group did things was more tribal. They gathered stories from all over the world, not just to enjoy their magic but also to make a kind of family tree of folklore.



Finnish researchers wanted to find out how these great stories got from one place to another by comparing stories from different places. They did this by putting together a cross-cultural quilt that covered a large part of Eastern Europe. However, the intellectual freedom that made these projects possible didn't last long. The Soviet government looked down upon folklore after Joseph Stalin became leader, and his strict five-year plans were carried out in 1928. These stories reminded the new government of the old tsarist system and the capitalist society of the past, which they wanted to get rid of.

It was very dangerous for Stalin's government to use fairy tales and children's stories to spread ideas. The Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), which thought these kinds of stories were spreading bourgeois ideas, was told to get rid of these apparently harmful stories from the shelves. They made sure that children's books were clean and free of fantasy. Instead, they put in books that praised nature, science, and the communist state. This change had a big effect on Soviet writing. Censorship grew, and in 1932, the Union of Soviet Writers was formed.

However, Soviet traditional studies did not end up being shut down. By 1934, the intellectual community had a new defender in Maxim Gorky. At a meeting of the Union of Soviet Writers, he spoke strongly about the value of folklore. For Gorky, his speech was an appeal for folklore to be a part of communist philosophy. He told these old stories not as relics of a backwards time but as sources of optimism and community spirit, traits that were thought to be typical of a good Soviet citizen.

Gorky pointed out how these stories are naturally communal, with the successes and tragedies being shared by a group rather than a single person. He said this was completely in line with communist ideas, which said that the group was everything and that each person was just a part of the whole. He also said that the characters in these stories often had a positive outlook on life, which was important as the country moved toward the bright future that communism offered.

In an odd turn of events, folklore in the Soviet Union has turned around from something that was seen as a threat to the growing communist ideology into something that was used to spread it. With their strong ties to the community and positive outlooks, these old stories were reimagined as communist guiding lights that helped the Soviet people find their way in the vast, unknown waters of their new political landscape. This deliberate use of tradition brought out a deeper truth: stories, no matter where they come from, have the power to shape societies, change ideas, and change the way people think about things.

Early on in the Soviet Union, the culture was very active. Folklore wasn't just a gathering of old stories; the government also used it to shape people's ideas. Folklore changed to support a sense of community and the ideas of the new communist regime. At the same time, leaders like Joseph Stalin watched over it. During this time, Russian stories from the past were used in new ways to help people in the present and plan for the future.

The 1920s were a turning point in the Soviet Union's relationship with its history and culture. Folklore, which was usually passed down orally by working people, was embraced by government officials and intellectuals as a way to inspire and urge everyone to work together. In these stories, the main characters often go on travels, which teaches them how important it is to value the group over the individual. This is similar to how the Soviet government valued group values over individual values.

Because these stories were so powerful, the Union of Soviet Writers started to collect and organize tales all over the country. They did this with the help of thinkers like Iurii Sokolov and the rhetoric of Maxim Gorky. It was important for them to find stories that showed how great the Soviet system was and how things were getting better under communist rule. Many people told these stories, which spread the ideas they held to every part of the Soviet Union and changed people's thoughts.

During Stalin's rule, the government tightened its control over cultural practices. As a result, a new type of folklore grew, one that wasn't based on

the natural development of shared stories but on orders from the government. The traditional structures of byliny were mixed with modern Soviet life in these new stories, called noviny. They showed sharp contrasts between the bad times under tsarist rule and the good times now under communist rule.

Folklorists were not the people who wrote these noviny. Instead, they were often actors and writers who, despite not having a formal education, learned a lot about Marxism to make sure their stories followed government rules. Through travelling all over the Soviet Union and living like the proletariat, these people were able to connect more deeply with their audiences, making their shows more real and powerful.

Heroes in these stories were often like the "New Soviet Man," Stalin's idea of the perfect citizen under communism. The heroes were shown to be better people because they had given up the things that held them back in the old world and adopted the new society's technical and philosophical advances. In these stories, the bad guys were often made to look like old tsarist supporters, showing them as backward and morally corrupt in comparison to the good and unbeatable Soviet citizens.

But when Stalin died in 1953, things changed a lot about how people saw these stories that the government spread. People used to praise the noviny as Russian folklore brought to life in modern times, but they were quickly written off as fake folklore. They didn't have the same real link to the people as traditional stories because they were based on what the government told them instead of what the people actually wanted and experienced.

People today don't see these stories as the golden age of Russian legends. Instead, they see them as a time when ideas were forced on people and artists were limited in their work. This time is remembered through a complicated web of cultural control and manipulation. Folklore was used not only for fun but also to spread ideas, showing how stories have the power to change both political facts and people's identities.

# Vasilisa the Beautiful

A merchant had one daughter by his first wife. She was called Vasilisa the Beautiful. An eight-year-old girl's mother died. When it was clear that she was dying, she called Vasilisa to her bedside and gave her a tiny, one-of-a-kind wooden doll talisman called a Motanka doll. She also gave Vasilisa clear instructions: she should always keep the doll on her person and never let anyone see it or know it exists; whenever Vasilisa needs help, whether it's fighting evil or getting through a tough situation, all she has to do is give it some food and water, and the doll will give her what she needs. After her mother died, Vasilisa gave it some food and drink, which helped her feel better during her sad time.

After the time of grief, Vasilisa's father decided he needed to get married again so that he could have a mother figure for his daughter and take care of the house. He chose a widow as his new wife because he thought she would be the perfect mother figure for his daughter. Vasilisa's stepmother, on the other hand, was mean to her when her new husband wasn't around. But with the doll, Vasilisa could always do all the chores that were given to her.

For business reasons, the trader had to go on a long trip out of town one day. His wife saw a chance to get rid of Vasilisa, so she sold their house and moved into a new one that was far from everyone else, in the woods. When Vasilisa's stepmother wasn't giving her too many chores, she would send her deep into the woods on pointless tasks to make it more likely that Baba Yaga would find her and eat her. This way, the stepmother wouldn't be seen as responsible. Vasilisa was only able to keep doing chores and stay safe when she left the house, always coming back without getting hurt. The stepmother changed her strategy because she was getting angry at her stepdaughter for not only staying alive but also getting more beautiful. Before going to bed one night, she gave her a job: put out all the fires but one candle.

She did what the doll told her to do and went. As she walked, a strange man in white riding a white horse with all-white gear rode by her in the early hours of the morning. Then, another man in red did the same thing. She came to a house that stood on chicken legs and had a fence made of bones from people. Someone in black, along with someone in white and red, rode by her. It got dark, and the skulls in the fence's eye sockets started to glow like lamps. That's why Baba Yaga found Vasilisa when she came in her huge flying cannon. She was too scared to run away.

After learning why the girl was there, Baba Yaga told Vasilisa she would have to do things to earn the fire or be killed. Vasilisa had to clean the house and yard, do Baba Yaga's laundry, and cook her a meal for twelve people, which Baba Yaga ate all by herself. She also had to sort poppy seeds from soil grains and rotten corn grains from healthy corn grains. Baba Yaga left the hut for the day, and Vasilisa gave up because she had worked so hard and was tired. The doll whispered to Vasilisa that she would do the work for her and that the girl should go to sleep when it looked like there was no way to finish the job.

The white rider went by at dawn, and the red one did the same thing at or before noon. As the black rider went by, Baba Yaga came back and had nothing bad to say. She told three non-living hands to grab the corn and squeeze the oil out of it. Then she asked Vasilisa if she had any more questions.

The white rider was called Day, the red one was Sun, and the black one was Night. Vasilisa asked who they were. But the doll in Vasilisa's pocket shook when she thought about asking about the hands that didn't have bodies. Vasilisa knew she shouldn't ask, so she told Baba Yaga she had nothing else to say. In return, Baba Yaga asked Vasilisa what had made her so successful. What did Baba Yaga do when she heard "by my mother's blessing"? She threw Vasilisa out of her house and sent her home with a skull lantern full of burning coals to light the way for her stepfamily.

She came back to find that her stepfamily had not been able to light any candles or fires in their home since she had been sent out on her mission. There was no point in bringing lamps or candles inside from the outside because they would all go out as soon as they crossed the doorway. Vasilisa's stepmother and stepsisters were burned to death by the coals in the skull lantern. Vasilisa buried the skull the way it was said to be buried so it would never hurt anyone. In later years, Vasilisa worked as a helper to a cloth maker in Russia's capital city. She got so good at her job that the Tsar noticed it and later married her.



# Donotknow

This story is set in a world where luck changes quickly. Ivan is the son of a wealthy seller, and his new wife is an envious stepmother. Good things happen at the beginning of Ivan's journey. His father finds him "luck" in the form of a scabby foal. This small animal that doesn't seem important at first becomes Ivan's friend and ally, and they take care of it even though their home is very busy.

However, Ivan's stepmother has a bad intention hidden behind the appearance of family unity. Together with a strange old woman, she plans to get rid of Ivan by poisoning wine and thresholds to try to end his life. Ivan is always saved from the stepmother's dangerous traps by the foal's tears and warnings. This shows that the bond between man and Horse can't be broken.

After failing to kill Ivan, the stepmother turns her evil attention to the foal and tricks Ivan's father into believing a scary dream that says the foal must be sacrificed. Ivan listens to the foal's desperate plea for help even though it breaks his heart. Ivan rides the Horse away to a faraway kingdom, following its vague directions. He says goodbye to his father with all his heart.

Ivan's life takes a strange turn when he is hired as a scarecrow on the king's grounds in this foreign land. Here, among rows of lush beauty, Ivan's true bravery stays hidden, even as political pressures rise between the kingdom and a foreign prince who wants the throne. When the Prince asks for the hand of the king's most beautiful daughter, war is about to break out, and Ivan's bravery comes to the surface.

As the foal's magic tells him to, Ivan joins the war and puts on a mask and steel to fight the attacking armies. Ivan's skill means that only the foreign Prince and a few men are left standing after a fierce battle. In war, people

both fear and respect him. As soon as Ivan takes over, though, he goes back to his regular work. He is really brave, but only the princess who is taking care of his wounds and his faithful Horse knows it.

People are amazed and impressed when Ivan shows up in the yard. As the party goes on, new friends are made. When she sees her kerchief wrapped around Ivan's hurt hand, the princess is the only one who can tell that he is not really a gardener. As she grows closer to him, she asks her father for permission to marry him. This puts together Ivan's bravery and the royal family of the kingdom.

But the peace doesn't last long because the foreign Prince, who hasn't been scared off by earlier losses, challenges Ivan to a final duel for the princess's hand. The fighter calls his loyal Horse for one last battle and tells everyone that his real name is Ivan Donotknow. Ivan wins a battle of honour and determination, showing that he is not only a good guardian of kingdoms but also a good person with a pure heart whom the king can trust and love.

The humble foal led Ivan on a trip that was full of tests of bravery and loyalty. It all ends with a victorious return to his father's side. New threads are added to Ivan's life as time goes on. Because Ivan was always there for him and was so brave, the king celebrates him at a big party where everyone talks about the mysterious gardener-turned-warrior. But the third princess knows what's going on and sees that her kerchief is around Ivan's hurt hand.

She asks her father to marry him because they have a bond that was formed in battle and strengthened in quiet times spent together in the garden. The king lets them get married because he knows Ivan is good and loves his daughter. Ivan is now not only a guardian of the country but also a beloved member of the royal family. Even though he has been politely turned down and lost before, the Arab Prince keeps asking the princess to marry him. This makes it hard for peace to come about.

.

As a last resort, the Arab Prince dares Ivan to fight to the death, hoping that a duel with the weight of a kingdom will settle the score. Ivan takes off his mask one last time, calls out his faithful Horse, and meets his enemy on the field of honour. People on both sides are mad and remember fights from the past. But Ivan wins in the end because his sword cuts through the Prince, who is trying to take something that isn't his.

You can see Ivan's real self when he wins. He is not only a good fighter but also a brave and honest person who has earned the love of a princess and the respect of kings. Ivan is now married to a hero, so the king is glad to have him as a family member. He is happy about the union because it makes the realm safe and happy. Ivan and his princess build a life together based on love and trust, while those who try to trick and betray them are punished.

So, Ivan's journey from living in the quiet home of a merchant to becoming a knight and being favoured by the king shows how strong courage, love, and unwavering determination of those who dare to resist fate for the sake of honour and justice can be. Here, Ivan Donotknow is shown to be more than just a legendary hero. He is also a symbol of hope for everyone who wants to make their way in the turbulent past of the world.

## **The Armless Maiden**

A brother and sister lived in a small town that was being blown around by winds of sadness and change. They were linked by blood and the pain of not having parents. The brother and sister went to a new town to start over. He opened a small shop here and married someone, trying to put his life back together again. But the peace didn't last long because his choice to give his sister housework duties made his wife angry.

Because the wife was unhappy, she lost her temper and broke the family's furniture, accusing the sister of being responsible. The brother, who was always cool, told them they could get new things to make up for what they lost. Because the wife wasn't happy and was getting meaner, she killed her brother's favourite Horse and blamed her sister again. Even though he was sad about the death, the brother said that the dogs would use the poor animal.

The peak of her brutality was horrifying. After giving birth, the wife did something horrible to her flesh and blood by cutting off the baby's head, then she lied and blamed her sister for this horrible act. The brother made a terrible choice to get away because he was sad and had to stay close to his family. He pushed his carriage deep into the thorns and told his sister to clear a way for them. As soon as she agreed, he cheated her in the worst way possible by cutting off her arms at the elbows and leaving her in the woods.

With her strong will, the sister made it through the bush to a busy trade town. The meeting with the trader's son gave her hope. He chose to marry her even though she was sick because he loved her so much. Their short time together was happy, and it was marked by the birth of a miraculous child with golden arms and signs of the heavens, which meant the child would go on to have a great life.

But there was darkness around the edges. While the merchant's son was away, his evil sister-in-law sent him a letter that had been changed to say that his wife had given birth to a monster. He told them not to hurt the child until he got back because he felt he had to, but he was also filled with doubt. With yet another fake letter, the lying continued, and his parents cruelly kicked out his wife and their baby.

The young mother was desperate and broke, and she had to go through more problems. As she tried to get water, her child fell into the well. In her deepest sorrow, an old man showed up and told her that her arms would be

healed if she could reach her child. By some miracle, she was able to do it; God healed her limbs or maybe just the love of a mother.

That wasn't the end of her trip. After making sure her child was safe, she kept going until she found a house where her husband and brother lived. Her heartless sister-in-law first thought she was a beggar, but the sad stories of her life showed who she really was. When her child's divine features were shown, she was right.

When her brother saw how bad his wife's sins were, he punished her by tying her to a horse and pulling her until only her braid was left. This was a shocking turn in the legal system. Once the family was back together, they went back to the house where they grew up. They were put to the test, but their ties didn't break. Also, they were worn out but not broken.

Our story is over now. It showed how strong people are and the worst emotions people can have. In a world where bad guys can look like people you know and heroes can appear out of nowhere, the line between right and wrong gets fuzzy. Our hearts are heavy with thoughts of fairness, forgiveness, and how strong people can be.

# The Golden Slipper

There was a cute town tucked between two hills with trees and hills that went up and down. There was an old man and his two kids living there. Their mother was mean to their younger daughter and liked their bigger daughter more. The old man came home from the market one day with two fish for each of his daughters. One daughter just ate hers, but the other talked to her fish when it looked like it might be interesting. The fish's voice telling her to put it in the well was a surprise. It would make her feel good.

There was magic going on between the mother and daughter, but the mother kept making her daughter feel bad about herself. Her older daughter wore nice clothes to Mass, and her younger daughter had to husk two bags of rye, which was a tough job. The younger daughter was sad and by herself when she cried by the well. When she asked for pretty clothes, the magic fish gave them to her. They were so pretty that a noblewoman might have worn them. The fish did its job and let her sneak off to Mass with a flick of its tail.

She was so pretty, and at Mass, there was something strange about her that made everyone want to stay close. The pretty stranger left in the same quiet way she came, having suddenly finished her work at home. No one knew who she was. The older daughter's mother and sister came back and told stories about the unknown beauty. They kept the younger girl's secret a secret.

The mother still didn't know what was going on. She told her younger daughter to husk three measures of wheat and that she had another tough day coming up. It helped her again like magic. It got her even more dressed up this time and took her to Mass. Things were different this time. A prince wanted to know who she was because she seemed so pretty and easy to talk to. He made it possible for her to follow. He knew what to do because her shoe got stuck when she did that.



With only a boot to help him, the Prince set out to find the person who owned this strange shoe. He found the house where the two sisters lived right away. The mother really wanted her older daughter to be the Prince's dream girl, but the boot was just right for her younger daughter. It felt good to find out who she was after all the bad things she had been through and how kind and humble she had been the whole time.

People who knew them well and behaved well were praised at their wedding. Because the younger daughter was so kind, she not only won the heart of a prince, but the magic of the fish also changed her fate. The fish, which looked out for good people, changed her life forever and added her story to the stories of the town.

This story has both magical and moral lessons. The moral lessons teach us about the power of kindness and the secret forces that often decide our fates. Help can come from the weirdest places when we feel like there is no way out.

# Princess Vasilisa and Firebird

There was a royal huntsman who lived in a country full of magic and the whispers of old stories. He was known for being brave and loyal. During a normal trip into the magical woods that bordered the kingdom, he came across a shimmering feather that belonged to the mythical Firebird, a very beautiful and powerful creature. The huntsman picked up the feather even though his smart Horse told him not to. He was curious and liked the thrill of the unknown, so he did. Without realizing it, he set the wheels of fate in motion.

When the king saw the glowing feather, he was filled with a burning desire to own the Firebird itself. He told the huntsman to catch the elusive bird, which is a difficult job for even the most experienced explorers. Based on what his magical Horse told him, the huntsman asked that golden corn be spread out in the fields to attract the Firebird. The Firebird was drawn to the hunter's clever trap like a moth to a flame and caught in it.

The huntsman was proud and gave the king the Firebird, but the king was still very hungry. Now that he had the Firebird, he wanted a wife that was just as rare and beautiful. He chose Princess Vasilisa because of her ethereal beauty and brave heart. The king told the huntsman to go on this new task. The huntsman set out to the lake where Princess Vasilisa was rowing her silver boat with golden oars. He had food, a beautiful tent with a golden roof, and the unwavering support of his magical Horse.

With smart planning, the huntsman set up his beautiful tent by the lake and made a feast that no one could refuse. Princess Vasilisa went ashore because she could smell delicious foods and wine from other countries. The rich and strong wine quickly took its toll, and as she gave in to its pull, the huntsman snatched her up and took her to the king.

But Princess Vasilisa's will wasn't so easy to change. She said she would not get married until she found her wedding dress at the bottom of the sea. The huntsman and his Horse didn't give up, and as they got closer to the water, they saw a big crab that could get the gown back. By threatening the crab's life, they got the sea creatures to help, and they quickly delivered the dress to keep their boss safe.

But the princess had one more thing. She made the huntsman take a bath in hot water, which she thought was a dangerous test that no human could pass. The huntsman looked at his Horse again, and this time, the Horse magically made him strong enough to handle the heat. Not only did the huntsman come out of the water unharmed, he looked even better than before. When the king saw this, he jumped into the hot water, but he died because he was jealous and wanted to change into the same person.

The country didn't have a leader after the tyrant king died. The people chose the huntsman as their new king after seeing how brave and smart he was and how miraculously he changed. Princess Vasilisa agreed to marry him because she saw how determined he was and how good his heart was.

The huntsman, who had only been looking for a feather, became a king after going through a number of tests that showed how brave, smart, and hearty he was. He ruled fairly and had a deep knowledge of magic and mystery. It was the start of a golden age for the country. The story of the huntsman and the Firebird became a legend that has been told from one generation to the next as an example of what can happen when you have guts and help from people you wouldn't expect.

# Vasilisa the Wise

In a world where the every day and the supernatural coexisted, a kind human king once saved an injured eagle. He had no idea that this simple act of kindness would lead to an epic journey. The eagle thanked the king for his help and then turned out to be a magical being. It took the king on a beautiful flight across the sky to a faraway, secret land. There, the eagle gave the king two mysterious chests that were full of unknown powers.

The king was too curious to be careful, so he opened the coffins. When he did, he found that the goods could not be put back inside once they were out. In his panic, the Sea Tsar, who was a ruler of the deep sea and a very powerful figure, showed up in front of the king. As a way of saying thank you, the Sea Tsar said, "The thing you do not know is in your own house." The king agreed because he had to right away, but he didn't know that his queen had just given birth to a son.

When the king got back to his castle, he realized what a terrible mistake he had made: he had given the Sea Tsar his baby son because he didn't know any better. After many years, the truth finally came out, and the young Prince found out what his fate was. When it was time for him to be given to the Sea Tsar, the king went with his sad son to the shore. Fate, however, had other ideas. The Prince got lost in a thick forest and met the mysterious Baba Yaga. What did she say? The daughters of the Sea Tsar had changed into birds and gone to a nearby lake to swim.

The Prince looked at the beautiful woman in the sky because he was excited and thought that something big was about to happen to him. He was smart to hide the little princess's dress with feathers so she and her sisters couldn't fly away. The Prince saw her real body when she asked for it back. It was Vassilisa the Wise, the youngest daughter of the Sea Tsar. The Prince left the bush with her beauty still in his heart after giving her back her dress.

The Prince finally got to the Sea Tsar's underwater kingdom to keep the bad deal his father made. The Sea Tsar gave the Prince three difficult jobs to see how strong he was as a new subject. The Prince told Vasilisa about his problems, which were getting harder and harder, and she told him that they would get through them together. With her help and secret spells, they were able to finish the jobs, which made the Sea Tsar very happy. The Sea Tsar liked how determined and strong the Prince was, so he let him choose which of his twelve girls he wanted to marry. Vasilisa, who already knew the Prince well, helped him make the right choice. But getting married was just the start of their problems. The Prince said he wanted to go back to his home country because he missed it so much. This made Vasilisa warn them about the dangerous things that would happen if they left. They weren't deterred, so they set out on the dangerous trip back to "Holy Russia," using magic to avoid the Sea Tsar's forces.

With a strong desire to catch the couple, the Sea Tsar turned into an eagle and struck them again, this time as ducks. In a fierce battle at a lake, Vasilisa and the Prince barely made it out alive. They did so by diving under the water and fooling the strong Sea Tsar. When the couple lost, the Sea Tsar went back to his realm, leaving them safe to go back to their home country.

The princess and the Prince got married in a beautiful ceremony to honour their love and freedom. They didn't have to worry about the past anymore. Some stories went in a different direction when the Prince almost forgot about Vasilisa after a bad kiss. However, love won out and brought them back together in a touching memory of their journey and battles. What we choose has a big impact on our lives, and those lives can change in ways we can't predict. This story is full of sacrifice, wisdom, and healing. We learn that being kind makes us strong, that it's smart to ask for help, and that real love can get us through anything.

# Three Wonderful Beggars

A merchant named Marko lived in a land where unquenchable greed and heartless desire made people rich. His wealth was huge, but his heart was cold. There was a girl named Anastasia who was kind and caring, which stood out against the harsh personality of her father. One terrible day, Marko was about to let his vicious dogs loose on three poor bums when Anastasia stepped in and begged him to stop. Marko reluctantly gave in and let the beggars stay in the barn loft.

Because she was interested and wanted to help, Anastasia went to see the beggars. To her surprise, they weren't just any homeless people; they had magical skills. In Russian folklore and other versions of the story, these mysterious figures met Anastasia. They chose to give Marko's huge fortune to a baby boy named Vasilii, who was the seventh son of a poor farmer in a nearby village. Marko felt a mix of anger and excitement when Anastasia told her father about her choice.

Through a dark desire, Marko went to find the farmer's family and found that a child had just been born. He pretended to be kind and offered to be the child's uncle. He also offered to raise the boy himself and give the family money. But after the deal is made, Marko shows his true colours—he tries to kill the baby by throwing him off a cliff, which shows how scared he is of losing his money.

Lucky for Marko, other traders saved the baby and brought him back to him. Marko didn't give up. He put Vasilii in a barrel and threw him into the sea, thinking that the water would work where the cliff had failed. But fate had other ideas. The barrel floated to an abbey, where Vasilii was taken in by the abbot, who felt sorry for him and raised him as his child.

Years later, when Vasilii was a strong and good young man, Marko found out where he was. He tricked the abbot into letting him take Vasilii back by



saying he was sorry and offering to give much money to the monastery. According to a letter Marko sent, Vasilii was to be killed by being pushed into a pot used to make soap when he got to Marko's house. However, fate once again stepped in when Vasilii ran into the three mysterious beggars on the way. They changed the letter so that it said Vasilii should marry Anastasia right away, which is what Marko's wife did because it was in the letter.

When Marko got back, he was shocked to see Vasilii still living and married to his daughter. Marko sent Vasilii to get rent from the scary Tsar Zmey as his last-ditch effort to get rid of him. He hoped that the Serpent Emperor would finish what he had started. On his journey, Vasilii met three magical beings: a sentient oak, an eternal ferryman, and a whale that was used as a bridge. Each of them was cursed with a terrible fate and was looking for freedom.

Vasilii learned how to break the curses from a maiden he met at Tsar Zmey's castle: the oak had to be pushed over to reveal secret treasure, the ferryman had to push the boat off with someone on board, and the whale had to send twelve ships away without being digested. Vasilii cleverly kept these secrets from everyone until he could cross back safely. Then he helped each being find their way out.

Marko's ideas failed in the end. Following Vasilii's advice, the ferryman put Marko under his curse, which made him keep taking people back and forth forever. Vasilii went back to Anastasia, and the two of them got all of Marko's land and riches. The money that Marko had been hoarding was used to help many people during their rule, which brought peace and wealth back to the land.

This story, which has themes of greed, bravery, and forgiveness, shows us how powerful kindness can be and how people who give in to their darker urges will eventually fail. Vasilii's journey from a doomed baby to a wise and fair king shows how compassion and moral character can change people.

# The White Duck

A story of magic and sadness that has been told for generations took place in a country ruled by a fair and good king. The story began when the king had to go on a long trip because he had to after getting married to his beautiful queen. Before he left, he gave his queen a harsh warning to stay in the safety of the women's rooms and avoid listening to anyone who was trying to trick her. They didn't know that there was a shadow in the form of a witch who was jealous and wanted the queen to be with the king.

The wicked witch saw her chance and used her skill to trick the queen into going into the grounds, which she had been warned not to do. Under the cover of a walk, the witch took her to a magical pool and cast a dark spell that turned her into a white duck. After that, she went to the court.

In her new form, the white duck found peace by a lake on the castle grounds, away from everyone else. She used the reeds and flowers to make a nest and laid three eggs in it. From these eggs came three little ducklings and a drake. The white duck taught her chicks to be careful and stay away from the castle and its dishonest owner, even though things were calm at first.

They went into the castle because they were interested in one bad day, and the witch had a smart way of getting them to come in. Even though they fell asleep in a place with strange comforts, the little Drake stayed awake. The witch wanted to get rid of these memories of the real queen, so she checked to see if they were awake. She finally got close and found them asleep, but the Drake's answers had fooled her. Because she was evil, she took their innocent lives.

The white duck was very sad when she found her ducklings' dead bodies and cried over their deaths. When the king came back, her sad cries reached him and made him wonder what strange things had been going on while he

was away. Even though the witch who was dressed as the queen tried to play down the king's worries, he felt uneasy and chose to look into it further.

In his quest to find the truth, the king went up to the lake and saw the white duck. When she saw her loving king, she flew into his arms and changed back into the queen. She told them about a magical bottle that was hidden in the nest. Either they found it, or a magpie sent for magical water and found it. When the ducklings and the Drake were sprayed with the magical water, it broke the spell and brought them back to life as three beautiful children.

When people found out the truth, they quickly did what was right. Now that the witch was caught and had no more power, she was put to death, ending her evil impact on the land for good.

The king and queen brought love and peace back to their country when they saw their kids again. The story of the white duck became a legend about strength and healing. It taught people how important it is to stay alert and how strong family love is. Some things in this story are sad, and some are happy. It shows how great courage and true love can be in the face of evil and lies.

# Firebird and the Gray Wolf

One golden apple fell from a king's apple tree every night, but it was stolen. The guards said the Firebird took them. What did the king tell his two oldest sons? The one who caught the bird would get half of his land and become his heir. To see who would be first, they drew lots, but both of them fell asleep. They tried to say it hadn't come, but it had taken an apple. Finally, the youngest boy, Ivan Tsarevich, asked to try. His father didn't want to because he was so young, but he agreed. Ivan stayed awake the whole time and tried to catch the bird by its tail when he saw it. Ivan was only able to grab one feather, which was too bad. The Firebird never came back, but the king missed it very much. Anybody who caught it would still get half of his land and be his heir.

The bigger boys left. Someone who took the first road would be hungry and cold, someone who took the second would live, but their Horse would die, and someone who took the third would die, but their Horse would live. They didn't know what to do, so they did nothing.

Ivan begged his father to let him go until he gave in. A dog ate His Horse after he took the second road. The wolf offered to carry him when he was too tired to walk any further. It took him to the garden with the Firebird and told him not to touch its golden cage while he took it out. The Prince went inside, but he felt bad not taking the cage. When he touched it, bells went off, waking everyone up, and he was caught. The First King heard his story and told him he could have had it for free, but he could only be spared now if he could show the king the Horse with the Golden Mane.

He met the wolf and told it that he had broken the rules. And it told him not to use the golden bridle. It took him to the kingdom and stables where he could get the Horse. Its beauty drew him in, and when he touched it, brass instruments started to play. His capture was announced by the Second King, who said that he would have given him the Horse if he had come with the

word. However, he would only let him go if he brought him Helen the Beautiful to marry him.

Ivan went back to the wolf and told her what he had done. She took him to her home. The wolf grabbed her and ran off, but Ivan calmed her down. Ivan took her back to the Second King, but he cried because he loved her so much. The dog changed into the princess and asked Ivan to trade it for the Horse with the Golden Mane. They got on the Horse and rode off. The dog got away from the king. It got to Ivan and Helen. Helen rode the Horse, and Ivan rode the dog. Ivan told the wolf to change into a horse so that he could trade it for the Firebird and keep the Horse. It was a deal, and the wolf agreed. Ivan took Helen, the Horse, and the Firebird back to his own country.

When they got back to where it had eaten Ivan's Horse, the wolf said its job was done. Once they were off the Horse, Ivan got off and cried. After a while, they went to sleep. He and his brothers found them, killed Ivan, and cut up his body. They then threatened to kill Helen if she didn't say that they had won the Horse, the Firebird, and her. They gave them to their father. The oldest son was to marry Helen, and the second son got half of the country.

If the Grey Wolf hadn't caught two young crows, they would have eaten Ivan's body. When their mother begged the wolf to save them, he sent her to get the water of death, which healed the body, and the water of life, which brought him back to life. He got to the wedding on time because the wolf had carried him there. The older brothers were either made slaves or killed by the wolf, but Ivan married Helen and was happy with her.

# The Frog Princess

When people live in a world full of folklore, and both kings and commoners play important parts, the search for a good bride often turns magical. One story that has been told in many countries shows not only a journey to get married but also a journey into the heart of magic.

In the middle of this story is a king who wants all three of his kids to get married. He comes up with a special test to help them find wives. As he tells each Prince to shoot an arrow, he says that the Prince who gets their arrow close to the woman will marry her. A test like this might seem pointless, but it has much meaning and connects fate with the unpredictable winds of chance.

The youngest Prince's arrow is found by a frog, who may have been led by fate or something more magical. In most stories, princes save women from towers or dragons. But in this one, the Prince has to deal with the fact that his bride is a frog from the swamp. This turn of events sets the stage for a number of challenges that this unusual bride-to-be must face, such as baking bread and spinning cloth. The king chose these tasks to see how strong and worthy his potential daughters-in-law would be.

In this story's magical realism, the frog does better than the other, more human competitors. While they struggle with the boring jobs they are given, the frog uses magic, which shows what she is really like and where she comes from. In this case, the magic isn't just for show; it's a way for her to show how smart and mysterious she is. But the young Prince is ashamed of her abilities and can't see past her amphibian form to the promise inside her.

There are more layers to the story as it moves between countries. In Calvino's Italian version, the princes don't use bows but slings instead, which changes the nature of their quest in a small way. The Greek version goes in a more straight line, with each Prince leaving one after the other,



which suggests that fate and duty are understood in a certain order. In the Russian version of the story, Prince Ivan meets the Frog Princess, Vasilisa the Wise, who is not just a magical being but also a victim of charm because the evil Koschei trapped her in a frog's body.

This version goes into more detail about the story, turning it from a simple quest into a saga about love, loss, and forgiveness. Ivan's trip turns into more than just looking for a bride; it turns into a rescue mission where the mysterious Baba Yaga puts him through tough tests. With each setback and subsequent struggle, Ivan shows more of his character, his determination, and his growth potential. Even though the Prince meant well when he hurriedly decided to destroy Vasilisa's frog skin, it had terrible effects that taught him a harsh lesson about being patient and understanding.

In some versions, the Frog Princess's change is a reward from God for her good behaviour, a witches' whimsy meant to be funny, or even a reveal of her true identity as an enchanted princess. Each version gives the story a different shade of meaning. Not only are these stories fun to read, but they also teach lessons about things like patience, understanding, and the truth that true worth may be hidden behind the most dishonest appearances.

Folklore's rich fabric not only entertains but also teaches, connecting people of all ages and places. It shows the values, fears, and dreams of the cultures that tell it. Each version is like a verse in the bigger story of human life. These stories tell us how understanding and love can change things and how important it is to look past what someone looks like and see their heart beating beneath.

In their search for brides, arrows, and changes, these stories weave a complicated web of fate and magic that makes us think more about the stories we tell and why they continue to teach and enchant us.

# Tale of Tsar Saltan

There are three women in the story. Tsar Saltan (Saltán) picks the youngest to be his wife. He tells the other two sisters to cook and weave for him. They dislike their younger sister and want to be like her. The Tsaritsa has a son named Prince Gvidon (Gvidón) while the Tsar is at war. They make plans for the Tsaritsa and the child to be locked up in a barrel and thrown into the sea.

Out of kindness, the sea throws them off the coast of Buyan, a faraway island. The son quickly grew while he was in the barrel, so he shot the game. In the end, he saves a magical swan from a flying bird.

As some merchants make their way to Tsar Saltan's court, they stop to enjoy the swan's work and tell Tsar Saltan about it. The swan helps Gvidon feel better by turning him into a bug because he misses his home. He goes to Tsar Saltan's court under this mask. When the trader told stories about the city in Buyan, his middle aunt laughed at them. Instead, she told him about a more interesting sight: a squirrel lives in an oak tree and sings songs while cracking nuts with a golden shell and an emerald kernel. As a bug, Gvidon stings his aunt in the eye and then runs away.

Gvidon gets the magical squirrel from the swan when he gets back to his world. He still longs for home, though, so the swan changes him again, this time into a fly. In this disguise, Prince Gvidon goes back to Saltan's court. He listens to his older aunt telling the traders about an army of 33 men led by Chernomor that is marching on the sea. Gvidon flies back to Buyan after stinging his older aunt in the eye. What does the swan say about the 33 "sea knights"? She replies that they are her brothers. They come out of the water and say they will protect and watch over Gvidon's city. Then they disappear.

The third time, the Prince changes into a bumblebee and goes to the court of his father. His maternal grandma tells the merchants about a beautiful

princess who is more beautiful than the sun in the morning and the moon at night. The princess has crescent moons on her braids and a star on her forehead. Gvidon stings the tip of her nose and flies back to Buyan.

Going back to Buyan, he sighs because he doesn't have a partner. When the swan asks why, Gvidon tells it about the beautiful girl his grandmother told him about. He tells the swan to wait until the next day because it will find the girl. The swan turns to a human princess the next day to show that she is the princess his grandmother told him about. So, Gvidon takes her to his mother and tells her she is going to be his bride. His mother gives her blessing, and the two people get married.

At the end of the story, the merchants arrive at Tsar Saltan's court. He is impressed by what they told him and chooses to visit the legendary island kingdom right away, even though his sisters-in-law and mother-in-law are against it. He and the court set sail for Buyan, where Gvidon greets them. The Prince leads Saltan to find his lost Tsaritsa, who is Gvidon's mother, and finds out what her family is up to. He is so happy to see his son and daughter-in-law, who are now married.

# Wicked Sisters

In a world surrounded by soft winds and clear blue skies, there was a young prince named Ivan. His fate was to become linked with three sisters, each with her special promise. The older sisters promised the Prince a gift that would really mean something: they would make him a shirt made from the silken threads of twilight. It would be so beautiful that it would shine brighter than any other king's clothes. She whispered a promise of life, though, and her heart was beating to a different beat. She promised to bless Prince Ivan with three boys who would have sunlit foreheads, moonlit napes, and stars falling down their cheeks.

When the older sisters heard the younger sister's bold promise, they felt jealous. Their envy led to a bad plan that cast a shadow over their initial claims. When the younger sister gave birth to her sons, each marked by the signs in the sky that she had seen, betrayal began. Driven by their dark wants, the older sisters worked with the palace staff to take the baby princes away. Instead, they gave Ivan a pet, a kitten, and a normal child, saying that these were the things that his wife had promised.

Prince Ivan's heart hardened because he felt hurt and lied to. He turned against his youngest wife because he thought her vows made fun of him. The princess was found guilty by a court led by a chief justice who was as strict as the rocky cliffs that surrounded the country. She was going to be blindfolded and thrown into the water in a barrel with the normal child they said was hers. The sea would be her grave if she weren't really innocent. If she were, fate would let her live.

Fate, on the other hand, seemed to favour the truth. Every hour, the child inside the barrel gained the wisdom of the ages, even though it looked like any other kid. He told the sea to take them to safety using strange and deep powers. When he got to the shore, his strong, authoritative voice made a bathhouse appear out of the sand. He fixed the princess's sight there by using water from the well of the world's tears. He called forth a grand house

not far from the stretch of golden sands that echoed the grandeur of the one they had lost.

Inside the castle, a meeting of hearts was planned. The young hero asked the princess to make three cakes that were both magical and homey. After they were done, the stolen kings, who had been hiding in an arbour, could smell their real home. They said that their brother could only be the one who could tell the story about their mother and these cakes. So, the family got back together under the vault of their new palace. The hard times they had been through have made their ties stronger.

Their story spread outside of their walls thanks to travelling monks who ate at their table and were moved by it. When Prince Ivan heard about the miraculous house and the royal people who lived there, he felt both guilt and hope. He hurried to the palace, where he saw his wife and her heavenly sons break down any remaining lies. The truth was made clear, and the oldest sister, who was the cause of their pain, died because of the sentence she had planned for someone else. Being thrown into the sea in a barrel did not miraculously save her; her evil plans set her fate.

So, Prince Ivan and his family did well in a country where the winds still whisper of fairness and kindness. The palace by the water was a shining example of honesty, and its walls showed how strong it is to keep a word. Three young princes used to have stars, moons, and suns on their heads. Now, they shone brighter, a celestial memory of how much their mother loved them and how pure her heart was.

# Twelve Dancing Princesses

A king and his twelve children live in a kingdom. The twelve girls all sleep in the same bedroom, which has twelve beds. Their father locks the doors to that room every night. It seems like the girls danced all night because every morning, when the king opens their bedroom doors, their shoes are worn out. The king is confused and says that any man who can figure out the mystery can marry any among the twelve princesses and receive the kingdom. However, each suitor has only three days and three nights to figure out the princess's secret, or he will be killed.

Many princes try to find out where the twelve ladies dance every night, but they all fail and are killed. When an old soldier comes home from war, he meets an old woman and tells her that he is going to try the king's dare. The old woman tells the soldier not to drink the wine that the ladies are going to give him and to act like he is fast asleep until they leave. She also gives him a cloak that makes him invisible so that he can watch them. Remembering what the old woman said, the soldier pours the wine into a sponge that he has tied under his chin and then snores loudly as if he were asleep while lying in bed.

Since the twelve princesses are sure that the soldier is asleep, they get dressed in fancy dance clothes and use a tunnel under the oldest princess's bed to get out of their room. This makes the guard put on his disguise and follows them down a flight of stairs. The eldest princess tells the younger princess not to tell her sisters because he stepped on her dress. The path takes them to three groups of trees. The first group has silver trees, the second has golden trees, and the third has diamond trees. As proof, the unseen soldier cuts off a branch from each grove, which scares the youngest princess every time.

The oldest princess brushes off the youngest princess's warnings about the sound of wood cracking as she salutes. They keep walking until they reach a big, clear lake. There, twelve princes are waiting in twelve boats for the

twelve girls. One boat is for each princess, and the soldier gets on with the youngest girl. When the twelfth prince tells the twelfth princess that their vessel is heavier than normal, they don't know that there is also a soldier on board. There is a castle on the other side of the lake, and the twelve ladies go there to dance the night away.

Once the twelve ladies' shoes are worn out at 3 a.m., they have to leave because they are still dancing. The soldier sits next to the oldest girl when the twelve men row the twelve princesses back across the lake. Once the twelve princesses and the soldier get to the top of the secret stairs, the soldier runs ahead of them and snores to make them think that their secret is safe.

Not right away, the soldier tells the king about what he found. Instead, he follows and watches the twelve girls on the second and third nights, just like the first night. On the third night, though, the soldier takes a cup with him as a fourth sign of where he has been. When it's time for him to tell the king about the ladies' secret, the soldier shows him the three sticks and the cup and talks about everything he has seen. The queens know that lying about the truth doesn't help, so they tell it. Since the soldier is no longer a young man, he picks the oldest princess to marry. He is then made the king's heir. The twelve princes will be cursed over as many nights as they danced with the twelve women.

# Feather of Finist the Falcon

It was said that she went to see her dad. She and her sisters got dressed up and went to church. Her sisters told her stories about the Prince and princess who came to church when they got back. When her dad saw the carriage stuck outside his door the third time, he asked her to tell him the truth. Her husband was the best.

A businessman asked his three children what they wanted him to get them from the fair. The bigger two girls want dresses or shawls, but the little girl wants either Finist the Falcon's feather or a red flower. In some stories, he went to the fair twice and brought back what her older sisters had asked for but not what she had asked for. She did not change her request, however. He either found the feather on the third or first visit, or he found the flower and had to promise that his daughter would marry Finist the Falcon if he did. Finist the Falcon came to her at night because of the flower or the feather, and he wooed her. Instead of giving her the flower, he gave her a feather that would help her.

Her sisters found out about the visit. They may have seen her sneaking around, or she may have worn fancier clothes than they knew she had, or she may have looked like a strange woman at church (like Cinderella at the ball) because of her fancy clothes and not hidden them quickly enough when she got home. When they started to think something wasn't right, they listened a lot. When they heard a man's voice, they tried to convince their dad that their sister had a boyfriend, but they failed. No matter how they found out, the sisters hurt him by putting knives in the window. He told her to look for him, which would wear out three sets of iron shoes and three sets of iron staves. He didn't come back. She goes to look for him.

She finds a hut with a witch, who is sometimes called a Baba Yaga. The witch gives her a gift, like a silver spinning wheel and a golden spindle, and then sends her to another witch. This witch sends her to a third witch with another gift, like a silver dish and a golden egg. This one sends her to the



castle where Finist is going to get married and gives her a third gift, like a golden needlework frame and a needle that sews itself.

In some stories, she found someone washing Finist's shirt with blood on it and did it herself. In the end, she was able to trade the bride's gifts for a night's stay with Finist. Either the princess put a special pin in his hair or gave him a sleeping drink to keep him asleep. On the third night, either the Finist is told not to drink the drink or the pin falls out. He woke up and knew her.

He sometimes asked the nobles which woman he should marry: the one who sold him or the one who bought him. They both agreed that the woman who bought him should have him.

It was said that she went to see her dad. She and her sisters got dressed up and went to church. Her sisters told her stories about the Prince and princess who came to church when they got back. When her dad saw the carriage stuck outside his door the third time, he asked her to tell him the truth. Her husband was the best.

# Ivan and the Norka

A very long time ago, there was a country that was scared of a terrible animal named the Norka. Things were not going well for the King. Norkas were huge monsters that ate the King's animals and made the land a mess. The King made a dangerous deal to save his country: any of his sons who could kill the Norka would get half of his land. The King's two oldest boys, on the other hand, were not up to the task. My kids wouldn't help me hunt the beast, even though their dad begged them to. Instead, they went out to drink and party. That honour went to their jerk youngest son Ivan, who jumped at the chance. He was different from his brothers because Ivan was strong and never gave up.

Ivan set out to find the Norka because he was brave. He finally caught up to the animal and hurt it, but the Norka got away and went under a big rock. Ivan lifted the stone and went down into the underworld to find the thing. He wasn't scared. He met a talking horse in this strange world. The Horse called him Ivan and offered to help him. Horse took Ivan to a beautiful copper house owned by a woman who turned out to be one of Norka's sisters. Over the course of his trip, van found two more homes, one made of silver and one of gold. A different Norka sister owned each house. These girls were pretty and nice, not like their mean brother.

The younger sister, who lived in the golden palace, told everyone that the Norka was sound asleep at sea. She gave Ivan a magical sword and the Water of Strength and told him to use one strike to cut off Norka's head. As she told him to, Ivan found the Norka and cut off its head with the sword. The Norka said its last words as the head fell into the water: "Well, I'm done for now!" Ivan got ready to go back to the surface now that the beast was dead. The three sisters, who were now in love with Ivan, chose to go with him. They used magic to turn their houses into eggs and showed Ivan how to do the same.

There were many dangerous parts of Ivan's and the sisters' trip to the surface. His brothers were jealous and didn't want to share the glory, so they pulled the girls up first and then tried to kill Ivan by cutting the rope in half. Ivan, however, smartly switched himself out for a stone and survived the fall. He walked around in the underworld until he came across a nest of baby birds that were caught in the rain. He hugged them and kept them safe with his coat. Their giant mother thanked him and carried him back to the surface.

When Ivan got back, he found out that his brothers were going to marry the dark maidens. But the sisters wouldn't get married until their wedding dresses were made in the style of their home country, without having to be measured. Ivan told a tailor to take the job while he was still dressed in rags. He used the special eggs to turn them back into palaces at night, got the dresses, and then turned the palaces back into eggs.

The tailor brought the dresses, and the King gave him money as a gift. Ivan did this process again and again with the shoemaker and other artisans, making everything that was needed for the weddings. At this point, Ivan's younger sister recognized him, even though he was dressed up. She grabbed him and took him to the house, where she told the King everything. She told them that Ivan's brothers had tried to kill him and made threats against the sisters to keep quiet.

Because the King was so angry that his older boys had betrayed him, he punished them very harshly. Then, to honour Ivan's bravery and intelligence, he planned three big weddings. Ivan married the youngest sister, and his brothers, who were now more modest, married the other two sisters. Being brave and kind saved the country in the end, and it also made Ivan's family happy and fair. The tale of Ivan and the Norka turned into a legend that taught everyone that real bravery comes from having a good heart.

# Language of the Birds

Ivan was a young man who lived in a faraway place. He came from a wealthy family. It was the sounds of birds that interested Ivan in nature all his life. He really wanted to learn their language and figure out what their songs were trying to say. Ivan found a small nest with four chicks inside while he was hunting in the bush. Birds were afraid that the big storm would flood their homes. Ivan quickly took off his kaftan and put it over the chicks to keep them dry when it rained.

When the mother bird came back from the storm, she saw that her chicks were safe and sound under Ivan's veil. The mother bird was so thankful that she gave Ivan a one-of-a-kind gift. He could understand and talk to birds after she taught him bird language. When Ivan heard birds singing nearby, he was very happy and paid close attention. He learned new things and got smarter because of their songs.

Ivan was with his parents one night when he heard a bird singing. The beautiful music made him feel bad. The bird was making Ivan's dad feel bad, so he made him listen to what it was saying. Ivan really didn't want to tell his dad about the word from the nightingale. It said Ivan would stop being the son of a trader and become the son of the king. It said his dad would help him, too. People who knew Ivan were scared by this weather report. They did something terrible because they were afraid for their son's future and what the nightingale's song meant. To try to change what would happen to Ivan, they put him in a boat and pushed it off the shore. Ivan had many doubts as the boat left.

Someone on the street finally found the boat and helped Ivan get on. Ivan told the shop owner that Birds had told him about a storm. He was glad that they had warned him. Even though the dealer didn't believe Ivan at first, the storm did much damage to the ship. Once more, Ivan listened to the birds while the ship was being fixed up. He then told the crew that pirates were coming. It was safe for them to hide this time because they did what he

said. After being at sea for days, they finally reached a place far away. They learned that three crows had been sitting outside the king's window and making him sad. The king promised that anyone who could get rid of the crows would get to marry his youngest daughter and get half of his land as a prize.

Ivan saw a chance and decided to help the king with his new skill. He paid close attention to the crows and learned that they were having a very bad argument. Ivan asked to meet with the king and told him that the crows needed a royal decision. The young crow had to decide whether to follow its mother or father. After giving it some thought, the king told the young crow to follow its father. The mother crow flew off by herself, and the father crow flew off with the young crow, leaving the king alone.

The king kept his word, gave Ivan half of the country, and married his youngest daughter. Ivan's life had changed a lot since he was a merchant's son, and now he is a prince. He was happy with his new life, but he never forgot how he got there or the people who raised him. Back in his home country, Ivan's father was having a hard time. He lost everything he owned and had to beg for money. The father was poor, and one day, he was begging outside the gates of a big castle. He didn't know it, but this house belonged to his son Ivan. As soon as Ivan saw his father, he brought him into the house and took care of him by feeding, clothing, and housing him.

Ivan's dad asked to be taken in as a helper, but he didn't know he was in his son's house. Ivan told his father who he was and reminded him of what the bird had said. He promised his parents that he would look after them and meet their needs. Even though the nightingale's song had come true, Ivan still loved and respected his parents. Ivan was kind, brave, and smart all the way through his life, from being the son of a trader to the son of the king. His skill to understand bird language brought him unexpected wealth and made a prophecy come true. Ivan's actions showed that even though fate is sure, it can be met with kindness and bravery. His story shows that a person's character and choices, not their luck, tell the story of their true heritage.

# The Queen's Disguise

A long time ago, there was a king and queen who were very happy with each other. They ran the kingdom well because they were smart and fair. However, the king began to yearn for danger and fame as time went on. He picked to fight a bad fellow king so that his country could grow and he could become famous. Because he was sure of his strength and plan, he left with his army and let his queen run the country.

The king's mission did not go as planned, which was a shame. It turned out that the evil king was a very strong enemy. In a decisive fight, the king was defeated and captured. While he was in jail in another country, he sent a message to his queen asking her to set up a bond for him. When the queen heard the news, she was very worried. She thought about what the best thing to do would be. She was afraid that the wicked king would take her as one of his wives if she went to see him herself. He knew how beautiful and important she was. She was also hesitant to trust her pastors because she wasn't sure if they would be loyal and honest. She came up with a risky plan to save her husband herself.

Her hair was long and flowing, so she cut it short and dressed like a boy. A gusli is a traditional stringed instrument that she picked up and set out on her dangerous trip to the wicked king's court. She was very good at hiding herself, and she looked like she was just a wandering musician.

When she got to the evil king's court, she played her gusli so beautifully and skillfully that everyone, even the wicked king, was caught off guard. Because the bad king was moved by the music and interested in the young musician, he offered to give the boy anything he wanted as a prize.

The queen took advantage of the chance and asked for a travel partner for her return. She told them to pick one of the prisoners. The evil king agreed because he didn't know who she really was and let her choose whoever she

wanted. She picked her husband, the king, right away. The king didn't see his wife on the way back to their country because she was dressed up. She stayed like a boy to make sure they got back safely. She left before she got to court, leaving the king to carry on by himself. The king didn't know what to do when he got home because he was happy and mad at the same time. He was even more angry when he found out that his wife had come back by herself instead of coming to free him. He thought she might have been seeing someone else while he was in jail.

.

The queen knew how her husband felt, so she set the fight aside for good. She put on the young musician's mask again to get to court. The king thought back to the promise he had made to the talented musician who had won over the evil king and said he would give him any prize he wanted. Still in disguise, the queen asked the king to be her prize. The court let out a gasp of shock and confusion. In a dramatic turn of events, she took off her mask and stood in front of her husband as his queen. She told him what she had done and how she had put everything at risk to save him.

It broke the king's heart to see how much his wife loved and braved him. He felt bad that he called her out and got mad at her for no reason. All the time, he told everyone how brave and smart she was and how she was always loyal and smart.

The queen's brave rescue and smart cover became stories told all over their country. Her story showed how strong and smart she was and how far she would go for love. It was told over and over again. They kept running their kingdom together even though their love for each other got stronger. Everyone could learn from how they lived and worked together. The brave queen not only saved the king, but she also showed everyone how important it is to trust and be loyal. It was clear that real power doesn't always come from a sword.

# The Bold Knight

It was said that there was a yard with apples that could make a man look younger and water, which would help him see again. His eldest son set out and came to a column with three paths. On one path, his Horse would be filled, and its rider would be hungry; on the next, the youth would die; and on the third, he would be full, and his Horse would be hungry. He went down the third path and stopped at a house in which a widow made him feel welcome. She also said she would let him stay the night with her child, Dunia. Dunia made the Prince fall into the basement after he agreed.

The second son of the king also went out and had the same thing happen to him. Even though his father didn't want to, the king's youngest son finally left. The boy turned down the widow's offer because he wanted to go to the baths first. Dunia led him there, and he thrashed her until she told him about his brothers. The youngest Prince freed them, but they were too embarrassed to go home.

When the third prince went back to his goal, he rode on and saw a pretty girl weaving. She couldn't show him the dream garden, so she sent him to her second sister instead. The second sister told him to leave the Horse with her and ride a horse with two wings to the third sister. He was given a horse with four wings by the third sister and told to make sure it could jump over the yard wall in one bound. If it couldn't, bells would go off, and the witch who was watching would wake up. His paw barely touched the wall as he tried to do what she said. It was too quiet to wake the witch up. Early in the day, the witch rode her six-winged Horse after him. She caught him when he was close to his land and didn't fear her. She cursed the Prince and said that his brothers would kill him if he didn't change.

The third prince woke up to find his brothers asleep next to him. He slept with them, but they took his fruits and threw him off a cliff. He went to a dark country after falling. There, a dragon asked for a pretty girl every year, and that year, it was the princess of the country. In exchange for the king's



promise to do what the boy asked, the knight stated he would save the princess. The king not only kept his word but also promised to marry the knight to the princess. When they got to where the beast was coming from, he fell asleep and told the princess to wake him up. The dragon came, but she couldn't wake the Prince up. So she started to cry, and one of her tears fell on his face and woke him up. The boy cut off the creature's heads, threw the heads under a rock, and then threw the body into the water.

Someone else crept up behind him and then cut off the remaining Prince's head. The killer told the princess he would kill her if she didn't say he killed the dragon. The king set up the wedding, but the girl went out to sea with some fishermen instead. She told them to throw back every fish they caught until they finally caught the third prince's corpse and head in their nets. She fixed them up and washed them with the water of life. She felt better after the Prince told her he was going to appear and make things right. He went to the king and asked if the man who was said to have killed the dragons could find the heads of the dragons. The fake couldn't, but the real Prince could.

It was the Prince's wish to return to his own country rather than marry the princess. But she didn't want to be apart from him. If it had enough food, she knew a spoon-billed bird that could take them. They caught a whole ox, but it wasn't enough. The princess had to cut off a piece of her thigh to eat it. The bird took them all the way and said that the last piece of meat was very sweet. When she showed it the work she had done, it spits out the piece. The Prince fixed it with the water of life. The third prince used the fluids of life to tell his father what both of his brothers had done. The boys jumped into the river because they were scared. The girl married the knight.

# The Maiden Tsar

This man and his wife have a son they call Ivan. The mother dies, and the trader hires a tutor to take care of Ivan. In the meantime, he gets married again. When Ivan turns 18, his mom falls in love with him. Ivan and his teacher went to the sea to fish one day and saw a fleet. The Maiden Tsar and her foster sisters were on board. They saw Ivan and the tutor floating on a raft, and they dropped anchor to ask them to come on board. Ivan agreed to the Maiden Tsar's promise to marry him because she loved him. She told him to come back the next day and then left.

This made Ivan's stepmother jealous, so she told the teacher to put a pin on Ivan's tunic. This would put him to sleep so deeply that no one could wake him up until the pin was taken out. He did this for three days, but the Maiden Tsar found out and sent Ivan a letter telling him to cut off the man's head and look for her in the tenth kingdom.

Before he went to find the Maiden Tsar, Ivan read the letter and killed the guard. She lived in a hut, and he asked her if she knew how to get to the land. The old woman told him to see her sister even though she didn't know how to get there. She didn't know how to get to the kingdom either, but she said her sister might. She told him that if he didn't get three horns and blow louder on each one, she would eat him.

When Ivan got to the house of the youngest sister, he begged her to let him blow three horns. Ivan was with the cannibal when a firebird came and flew him to the tenth and third countries. A woman he met asked him about his trip. As she took out her heart and put it away, she told him that the princess no longer loved him. The woman said she would find out where it was by asking her daughter, who worked in the Maiden Tsar's house. The next day, the mother asked her daughter where the heart was. The daughter said she didn't know but would check.

The next day, the girl told her mother where the heart was, so Ivan went to find it. He gave it back to the Maiden Tsar at a party, and they got married in her kingdom.

## One Last Thing...

We're glad you're interested in this book. I hope you have as much fun reading it as I did writing it. This book is for all those people with big eyes and many questions. I hope your interest in these old stories will help them live on forever. I have always considered your insightful reviews to be an excellent source of viewpoints on books, and it would be an honour for me if you would review This book. Your perceptive analysis and comments would not only be of great use to me as an author, but they would also serve potential readers in understanding the issues and traits covered in the book. I am very aware of the constraints imposed by the little time you have at your disposal; thus, I ask that you please consider the following request.

I am thankful that you considered what I had to say about the book and took the time to do so. I would be more than happy to provide some further input and ideas. Please do not hesitate to contact me. If you would like to give feedback on my book, you only need to navigate to the reviews part of my content. You will notice a sizable button that asks you to "Write a customer review." Select that link, and you will be taken to the appropriate page.