Roumanian Fairy Tales

Roumanian Fairy Tales



Various

ADAPTED AND ARRANGED
BY
J. M. PERCIVAL

Compiler: Mite Kremnitz
Editor: J. M. Percival

ILLUSTRATED &

PUBLISHED BY

E-KİTAP PROJESİ & CHEAPEST BOOKS



www.cheapestboooks.com

www.facebook.com/EKitapProjesi

Copyright, 2019 by e-Kitap Projesi

Istanbul

ISBN: 978-605-7876-81-2

© All rights reserved. No part of this book shell be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or by any information or retrieval system, without written permission form the publisher.

Table of Contents

PREFACE. 6
Stan Bolovan. 7
The Wonderful Bird. 23
The Twins With the Golden Star. 37
Youth Without Age and Life Without Death. 50
The Little Purse with two Half-pennies. 64
Mogarzea and His Son. 70
Cunning Ileane. 78
The Princess and the Fisherman. 92
Little Wild-Rose. 99
The Voice of Death. 113
The Old Woman and the Old Man. 118
The Pea Emperor. 121
The Morning Star and The Evening Star. 130
The Two Step-Sisters. 139
The Poor Boy. 148
Mother's Darling Jack 172
Tellerchen. 187
The Fairy Aurora. 199



PREFACE.



This collection contains translations of Roumanian tales which, however, comprise but a small portion of the inexhaustible treasure that exists in the nation. The originals are scattered throughout Roumanian literature. The finest collection is Herr P. Ispirescu's, from which the stories numbered in the contents 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 17 in the present volume have been selected. No. 11 is taken from Herr T. M. Arsenie's small collection; the others have been drawn from the columns of the periodical *Convorbiri Literare*. Of these Nos. 5 and 14 are by the pen of Herr J. Creanga, No. 9 is the work of Herr Miron Pompilin, while Nos. 1, 3, 7, 16 and 18 are by Herr Slavice, who wrote No. 15 specially for this volume, in the Roumanian language, just as it was related to him by the peasants.



Stan Bolovan.

nce upon a time, something happened. If it hadn't happened, it wouldn't be told.

At the edge of the village, where the peasants' oxen break through the hedges and the neighbors' hogs wallow in the ground under the fences, there once stood a house. In this house lived a man, and the man had a wife; but the wife grieved all day long.

"What troubles you, dear wife, that you sit there drooping like a frost-bitten bud in the sunlight?" her husband asked one day. "You have all you need. So be cheerful, like other folks."

"Let me alone, and ask no more questions!" replied the wife, and became still more melancholy than before.

Her husband questioned her the second time, and received the same reply. But, when he asked again, she answered more fully.

"Dear me," she said, "why do you trouble your head about it? If you know, you'll be just sorrowful as I am. It's better for me not to tell you."

But, to this, people will never agree. If you tell a person he must sit still, he is more anxious to move than ever. Stan was now determined to know what was in his wife's mind.

"If you are determined to hear, I'll tell you," said the wife. "There's no luck in the house, husband,—there's no luck in the house!"

"Isn't the cow a good one? Are not the fruit-trees and bee-hives full? Are not the fields fertile?" asked Stan. "You talk nonsense, if you complain of any thing."

"But, husband, we have no children."

Stan understood; and, when a man realizes such a thing, it isn't well. From this time, a sorrowful man and a sorrowful woman lived in the house on the edge of the village. And they were sorrowful because the Lord had given them no children. When the wife saw her husband sad, she grew still more melancholy; and the more melancholy she was, the greater his grief became.

This continued for a long time.

They had masses repeated and prayers read in all the churches. They questioned all the witches, but God's gift did not come.

One day, two travelers arrived at Stan's house, and were joyfully received and entertained with the best food he had. They were angels in disguise; and, perceiving that Stan and his wife were good people, one of them, while throwing his knapsack over his shoulder to continue his journey, asked his host what he most desired, and said that any three of his wishes should be fulfilled.

"Give me children," replied Stan.

"What else shall I give you?"

"Children, sir, give me children!"

"Take care," said the angel, "or there will be too many of them. Have you enough to support them?"

"Never mind that, sir,—only give them to me!"

The travelers departed; but Stan accompanied them as far as the high-road, that they might not lose their way among the fields and woods.

When Stan reached home again, he found the house, yard, and garden filled with children, in all not less than a hundred. Not one was larger than the other; but each was more quarrelsome, bolder, more mischievous and noisier than the rest. And, in some way, God made Stan feel and know that they all belonged to him and were his.

"Good gracious! What a lot of them!" he cried, standing in the midst of the throng.

"But not too many, husband," replied his wife, bringing a little flock with her.

Then followed days which can only be experienced by a man who has a hundred children. The house and village echoed with shouts of "father" and "mother," and the world was full of happiness.

But taking care of children isn't so simple a matter. Many pleasures come with many troubles, and many troubles with many joys. When, after a few days, the children began to shout, "Father, I'm hungry!" Stan began to scratch his head. There did not seem to him to be too many children, for God's gift is good, however large it may be; but his barns were too small, the cow was growing thin, and the fields did not produce enough.

"I'll tell you what, wife," said Stan one day, "it seems to me that there isn't much harmony in our affairs. As God was good enough to give us so many children, He ought to have filled the measure of His goodness, and sent us food for them, too."

"Search for it, husband," the wife answered. "Who knows where it may be concealed? The Lord never does a thing by halves."

Stan went out into the wide world to find God's gift. He was firmly resolved to return home laden with food.

Aha! The road of the hungry is always a long one. A man doesn't earn food for a hundred greedy children in a trice. Stan wandered on, on, on, till he had fairly run himself off his feet. When he had thus arrived nearly at the end of the world, where what is mixes with what is not, he saw in the distance, in the middle of a field which lay spread out as flat as a cake, a sheep-fold. By it stood seven shepherds, and in the shadow within lay a flock of sheep.

"Lord, help me," said Stan, and went up to the fold to see whether, by patience and discretion, he might not find some employment there. But he soon discovered that there was not much more hope here than in the other places whither he had journeyed. This was the state of affairs: every night, at precisely twelve o'clock, a furious dragon came and took from the herd a ram, a sheep, and a lamb, three animals in all. He also carried milk enough for seventy-seven lambkins to the old she-dragon, that she might bathe in it and grow young. The shepherds were very angry about it, and complained bitterly. So Stan saw

that he was not likely to return home from here richly laden with food for his children.

But there is no spur more powerful than for a man to see his children starving. An idea entered Stan's head, and he said boldly, "What would you give me, if I released you from the greedy dragon?"

"One of each three rams shall be yours, one-third of the sheep, and one-third of the lambs," replied the shepherds.

"Agreed," said Stan; yet he felt rather anxious, lest he might find it too hard to drive the flock home alone.

But there was no hurry about that. It was some time before midnight. And besides, to tell the truth, Stan did not exactly know how he was to get rid of the dragon. "The Lord will send me some clever plan," he said to himself, and then counted the flock again to see how many animals he would have.

Just at midnight, when day and night, weary of strife, for a moment stood still, Stan felt that he was about to see something he had never beheld before. It was something that can not be described. It is a horrible thing to have a dragon come. It seemed as if the monster was hurling huge rocks at the trees, and thus forcing a way through primeval forests. Even Stan felt that he should be wise to take the quickest way off, and enter into no quarrel with a dragon. Ah! but his children at home were starving.

"I'll kill you or you shall kill me!" Stan said to himself, and remained where he was, close by the sheep-fold.

"Stop!" he cried, when he saw the dragon near the fold; and he shouted as though he was a person of importance.

"H'm," said the dragon: "where did you come from, that you screech at me so?"

"I am Stan Bolovan, who at night devours rocks and by day grazes on the trees of the primeval forests; and if you touch the flock, I'll cut a cross on your back, and bathe you in holy water."

When the dragon heard these words, he stopped in the midst of his career; for he saw that he had found his match.

"But you must first fight with me," replied the dragon, hesitatingly.

"*I* fight with you?" cried Stan. "Beware of the words that have escaped your lips. My breath is stronger than your whole body." Then, taking from his knapsack a piece of white cheese, he showed it to the dragon. "Do you see this stone?" he said. "Pick one up from the bank of yonder stream, and we'll try our strength."

The dragon took a stone from the shore of the brook.

"Can you squeeze buttermilk out of the stone?" asked Stan.

The dragon crushed the stone in his hand, so that he crumbled it into powder. But he squeezed no buttermilk from it.

"It can't be done," he said rather angrily.

"I'll show you whether it can be done," replied Stan, and then squeezed the soft cheese in his hand, till the buttermilk trickled down between his fingers.

When the dragon saw this, he began to look about him to find the shortest road to run away; but Stan placed himself before the forest. "Let us have a little reckoning about what you have taken from the fold," he said. "Nothing is given away here."

The poor dragon would have taken flight, if he hadn't been afraid that Stan might blow behind him, and bury him under the trees in the forest. So he stood still, like a person who doesn't know what else to do.

"Listen!" he said, after a while. "I see that you are a useful man. My mother has long been looking for a servant like you, but has not been able to find one. Enter our service. The year has three days, and each day's wages is seven sacks of ducats!"

Three times seven sacks of ducats! A fine business! That was just what Stan needed. "And," he thought, "if I've outwitted the dragon, I can probably get the better of his mother!" So he didn't waste many words about the matter, but set off with the monster. A long, rough road; but still it was too short, since it led to a bad end. It seemed to Stan as if he had arrived almost before he started.

The old she-dragon, old as Time itself, was waiting for them. She had made a fire under the huge caldron, in which she meant to boil the milk and mix it with the blood of a lamb and the marrow from its bones, that the liquid might have healing power. Stan saw her eyes glistening in

the darkness when they were still three gun-shots off. But, when they reached the spot and the she-dragon perceived that her son had brought her nothing, she was very angry. This she-dragon was by no means lovable. She had a wrinkled face, open jaws, tangled hair, sunken eyes, parched lips, and a breath reeking with the smell of onions.

"Stay here," said the dragon. "I'll go and make arrangements with my mother."

Stan would willingly have stood still further off, but he had no choice now that he had once entered upon this evil business. So he let the dragon go on.

"Listen, mother!" said the dragon, when he had entered the house. "I've brought you a man to get rid of. He's a terrible fellow, who eats pieces of rock and squeezes buttermilk out of stones." Then he told her what had happened.

"Just leave him to me," she said, after hearing the whole story. "No man ever slipped through *my* fingers."

So the matter remained as it had first been settled. Stan Bolovan became the servant of this monster and his mother. A terrible fix! I really don't know what will come of it.

The next day, the she-dragon gave him his task. They were to give a signal to the dragon world with a club sheathed in seven thicknesses of iron. The dragon raised the club and hurled it three miles, then he set off with Stan, that he might also throw it three miles, or, if possible, further still. When Stan reached the club, he began to look

at it rather anxiously. He saw that he and all his children together could not even lift it from the ground.

"Why are you standing there?" asked the dragon.

"Why, you see, it's such a handsome club. I'm sorry," replied Stan.

"Sorry? Why?" inquired the dragon.

"Because," answered Stan, "I'm afraid you'll never see it again in your whole life, if I throw it; for I know my own strength."

"Don't fear. Just throw it," replied the dragon.

"If you really mean it, we'll first go and get provisions enough to last three days; for we shall have to travel at least three days, if not longer, to get it."

These words frightened the dragon, but he did not yet believe that it would be so bad as Stan said. So they went home for the provisions, though he wasn't at all pleased with the idea of having Stan serve his year in merely going after the club. When they got back again to it, Stan sat down on the bag of provisions and became absorbed in staring at the moon.

"What are you doing?" asked the dragon.

"Only waiting for the moon to sail by."

"Why?"

"Don't you see that the moon is directly in my way?" said Stan. "Or do you want me to fling the club into the moon?"

The dragon now began to be seriously anxious. It was a club that had descended to him from his ancestors, and he wouldn't have liked to lose it in the moon.

"I'll tell you what," he said. "Don't throw the club. I'll do it myself."

"Certainly not. Heaven forbid!" replied Stan. "Only wait till the moon passes by."

Then a long conversation followed; for Stan would not consent to have the dragon throw the club again, except on the promise of seven sacks of ducats.

"Oh, dear! mother, he's a tremendously strong man," said the dragon. "I could scarcely prevent him from throwing the club into the moon."

The she-dragon began to be anxious, too. Just think of it! Would it be a joke to have a person able to throw any thing into the moon? She was a she-dragon of true dragon blood, however, and the next day had thought of a still harder task.

"Bring some water," she said early in the morning, and gave each twelve buffalo skins, ordering them to fill them by evening, and fetch them all home at once.

They went to the well; and, before one could wink, the dragon had filled the twelve skins, and was in the act of carrying them back. Stan was tired, he had scarcely been able to drag the empty skins along. A chill ran through his veins, when he thought of the full ones. What do you suppose he did? He pulled a worn-out knife blade from his

belt, and began to scratch the earth around the well with it.

"What are you doing?" asked the dragon.

"I'm not a blockhead, that I should go to the labor of filling the skins with water," replied Stan.

"But how will you carry the water to the house, then?"

"How? Just as you see," said Stan. "I'm going to take the well, you goose!"

The dragon stood with his mouth wide-open in amazement. He wouldn't have had this done on any account, for the well was one that had belonged to his ancestors.

"I'll tell you," he said anxiously, "let me carry your skins home, too."

"Certainly not. Heaven forbid!" replied Stan, digging on around the well.

Now, another long discussion followed; and this time, too, the dragon could only persuade Stan by promising him seven sacks of ducats.

On the third day, that is the last one, the she-dragon sent them into the forest for wood.

Before one could count three, the dragon tore up more trees than Stan had ever seen before in his whole life, and piled them up together. But Stan began to examine the trees, chose the very finest, climbed up into one and tied its top with a wild grape-vine to the next. So, without

saying a word, he continued to fasten one splendid tree to another.

"What are you doing there?" asked the dragon.

"You see what I am doing," replied Stan, working quietly on.

"Why are you tying the trees together?"

"Why, to save myself unnecessary work in pulling them up one by one," said Stan.

"But how are you going to carry them home?"

"I shall take the whole forest, you goose! Can't you understand that?" said Stan, continuing to fasten them together.

The dragon now felt as if he wanted to take to his heels, and never stop until he reached home.

But he was afraid that he should suddenly find Stan pulling the whole forest down on his head.

This time, as it was the end of the year's service, it seemed as if the discussion would never cease. Stan did not want to listen at all, but had set his mind upon flinging the forest on his back at any rate.

"I'll tell you what," said the dragon, trembling with fear, "your wages shall be seven times seven sacks of ducats. Content yourself with that."

"Well, be it so, as I see you are a good fellow," replied Stan, and agreed that the dragon should carry the wood for him.

The year was now over. Stan was anxious only about one things—how he was to drag so many ducats home.

In the evening, the dragon and his mother sat talking together in their room; but Stan listened in the entry.

"Woe betide us!" said the dragon: "this fellow upsets us terribly. Give him money, even more than he has, only let us get rid of him."

Ah, yes! but the she-dragon cared for money.

"Let me tell you one thing," she said: "you must kill this man to-night."

"I am afraid of him, mother," he answered in terror.

"Have no fear," replied his mother. "When you see that he is asleep, take your club and strike him in the middle of the forehead."

So it was agreed. Ah, yes! but Stan always had a bright idea at the right time. When he saw that the dragon and his mother had put out the light, he took the pig's trough, and laid it bottom upward in his place, covered it carefully with a shaggy coat, and lay down himself under the bed, where he began to snore like a person who is sound asleep.

The dragon went out softly, approached the bed, raised his club, and struck one blow on the spot where Stan's head ought to have been. The trough sounded hollow, Stan groaned, and the dragon tiptoed back again.

Stan then crept out from under the bed, cleaned it, and lay down, but was wise enough not to close an eye all night long.

The dragon and his mother were rigid with amazement when they saw Stan come in the next morning as sound as an egg.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning; but how did you sleep last night?"

"Very well," replied Stan. "Only I dreamed that a flea bit me just here on the forehead, and it seems as if it still pained me."

"Just listen to that, mother!" cried the dragon. "Did you hear? He talks about a flea, and I hit him with my club!"

This was too much for the she-dragon. She perceived that it isn't worth while to argue with such people. So they hastened to fill his sacks, in order to get rid of him as quickly as possible. But poor Stan now began to perspire. When he stood beside the bags, he trembled like an aspen leaf, because he was unable to lift even one of them from the ground. So he stood staring at them.

"Why are you standing there?" asked the dragon.

"H'm! I'm waiting," replied Stan, "because I would rather stay with you another year. I'm ashamed to have any body see me carry away so little at one time. I'm afraid people will say, 'Look at Stan Bolovan, who in one year has grown as weak as a dragon.'"

Now, it was the two dragons' turn to be frightened.

They vainly told him that they would give him seven—nay, three times seven or even seven times seven—sacks of ducats, if he would only go away.

"I'll tell you what," said Stan, at last. "As I see you don't want to keep me, I won't force you to do so. Have it your own way. I'll go. But, that I need not be ashamed before the people, you must carry this treasure home for me."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the dragon picked up the sacks and set off with Stan.

Short and smooth, yet always too long, is the road that leads home. But, when Stan found himself close to his house, and heard his children's shouts, he began to walk slower. It seemed too near; for he was afraid that, if the dragon knew where he lived, he might come to take away the treasure. Only he was puzzled to find any way of carrying his money home alone.

"I really don't know what to do," he said, turning to the dragon. "I have a hundred hungry children, and fear you may fare badly among them, because they are very fond of fighting. But just behave sensibly, and I'll protect you as well as I can."

A hundred children! That's no joke! The dragon—though a dragon of dragon race—let the bags fall in his fright. But, from sheer terror, he picked them up again. Yet his fear did not gain the mastery till they entered the court-yard. When the hungry children saw their father coming with the loaded dragon, they rushed toward him, each one with a knife in the right hand and a fork in the left. Then they all began to whet the knives on the forks, shrieking at the top of their lungs, "We want dragon meat!"

This was enough to scare Satan himself. The dragon threw down the sacks, and then took to flight, so

frightened that since that time he has never dared to come back to the world.



The Wonderful Bird.

nce upon a time, something happened. If it had not happened, it would not be told.

There was a good, pious emperor, who had three sons. Among many other benefits bestowed upon the inhabitants of his empire he built a church, about which marvelous stories were told, for he adorned it with gold, precious stones and every thing the workmen of that country regarded as beautiful and valuable. Within and in front of this church were numbers of marble columns, and it was supplied with the finest paintings, silver chandeliers, huge silver lamps, and the rarest books. The more the emperor rejoiced in its beauty, the more sorrowful he felt that he could not finish it, for the steeple continually fell down.

"How is it that this sacred church can not be completed?" he asked. "I have spent all my property and it is not yet done." So he ordered a proclamation to be sent throughout the empire, stating that any architect who could finish the church steeple would receive great gifts and honors. Besides this, a second proclamation was issued, commanding prayers to be read and services held in all the churches, that God might take pity on him and send him a good architect. The third night the monarch dreamed that if any one would fetch the wonderful bird from the other shore and put its nest in the steeple, the church could be finished. He told this dream to his sons,

and they vied with each other in offering to set out and devote themselves to their imperial father's service.

The emperor replied: "I see, my sons, that you all desire to fulfill your duty to God, but you can't all three go at once. My oldest son shall set out first, if he does not succeed, the second one, and so on until the Lord takes pity upon us."

The younger sons silently submitted; the oldest one made his preparations for the journey. He traveled as best he could, and when he had passed the frontiers of his father's empire, found himself in a beautiful grove. After lighting a fire he stood waiting until his food was cooked. Suddenly he saw a fox, which begged him to tie up his hound, give it a bit of bread and a glass of wine, and let it rest by his fire. Instead of granting the request the prince released the hound, which instantly pursued the animal, whereupon the fox, by a magic spell, transformed the emperor's son into a block of stone.

When the sovereign saw that his oldest son did not return, he listened to the entreaties of his second son, and gave him permission to set forth to find the wonderful bird. After making his preparations and taking some provisions with him, this prince also departed. On the spot where his brother had been turned to stone, the same thing happened to him, because he also refused the fox's entreaties, and tried to catch it, to get its skin.

The emperor grew very thoughtful, when after a long time his sons failed to return, either with or without the wonderful bird.

At last the youngest said: "You see, father, it is now a long time since my brothers set out to find the wonderful bird, and they haven't come home yet; give me some money and clothes for the journey that I may try my luck also. If I succeed, you will rejoice, because your dream will be fulfilled, and if I do not, you will suffer no mortification from it."

"Your older brothers have apparently been unable to get this wonderful bird," replied the emperor; "nay, perhaps they have even lost their lives, they have been absent so long. I am old; if you go too, who will help me in the cares of government; if I die, who is there to ascend the throne except you, my son? Stay here, my dear child, do not leave me."

"You know, my royal father, that I have never swerved a hair's breadth from your commands, and if I now venture to urge my petition it is only because, if possible, I would fain fulfill a wish that gives you no rest, which you have cherished so many years and striven to realize at so great a cost."

After many entreaties, the emperor yielded. The prince chose from the imperial stables a horse that pleased him, took a dog for a companion, supplied himself with sufficient food and departed.

After some time had passed, the emperor's two older sons suddenly arrived with the magic bird and a young girl, who was placed in charge of the poultry-yard. Every body wondered at the beauty of the bird, whose plumage glittered with a thousand hues, each feather shining like the

sun, and the church-steeple did not fall after the bird and its nest were placed within. One thing, however, was noticed; the bird seemed dumb, it never uttered a note, and all who saw it grieved that so beautiful a creature should have no song; even the emperor, spite of all the pleasure he took in the church and steeple, was sorrowful because the bird did not sing.

People began to forget the youngest son, so great was the rejoicing over the bird that seemed to keep the steeple from falling, and thus enabled the workmen to finish the church; but the emperor grieved because the prince was not there to share his subjects' pleasure.

One day the poultry-keeper came to him and said: "May thy face shine, mighty emperor, the whole city is marveling at the singing of the magic bird—a shepherd entered the church early this morning, and the bird instantly began to sing as if it would burst its throat, and is so happy that it can hardly keep in its nest. This has happened to-day for the second time. While the shepherd is in the church the bird never stops singing, but as soon as he goes away, it is silent."

"Let the shepherd be brought before me at once."

"Your majesty, the shepherd seems to be a stranger; no one here knows him. Your majesty's sons, I hear, have set guards to arrest him."

"Silence," said the emperor; "do not mention my sons; it is not seemly for you to speak against them."

The sovereign sent some of his most trusty servants to keep watch, seize the shepherd as soon as he entered the