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Secrets of the Storytellers:

*Unveiling Legends from the Czech
Republic, Finland, Greece and Türkiye*

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Disclaimer

A dark, monochromatic illustration of a Gothic cityscape. The scene is dominated by tall, spired buildings and churches with pointed roofs. In the center, a large dragon with its wings spread wide is flying across the sky. The overall tone is mysterious and atmospheric, with a focus on architectural details and mythical creatures.

*Darkness, Dragons
and Golems:*

Exploring Czech Legends

The Legend of the Brno Dragon

One of the most famous legends in the city of Brno is that of the dragon that once threatened the people.

The beast terrorised the citizens and their livestock, and no one seemed to know how to stop it. The people had never seen such a beast before, so they called it a dragon. They shook with terror when they heard it roar. Merchants stopped coming to the city to sell, and women stopped going to the market. That is, until one day, a young butcher journeyman came to town and devised a plan to get rid of it.

He begged a cowhide from the town councillors, which he stuffed with quicklime and sewed back up. It looked like a juicy meal for the dragon. The beast became very thirsty after eating it. It flew to the river and gulped down as much water as it could swallow. After drinking so much water, its stomach expanded with the lime inside, and the dragon burst into a hundred pieces.

So, the citizens celebrated by having the dragon preserved. It is still hanging from the Old Town Hall.



The Legend of Macocha Abyss

Once upon a time, a widower lived with his small son in a village called Vilemovice. When he remarried, he provided his son with a new mother, and later, a new baby boy was born. The first son was a healthy boy, but the second was constantly ill.

The stepmother hated her stepson and took advice from an old woman herbalist who told her that if the stepson died, her natural son would get well. She took the stepson to pick berries in the forest, lured him to the steep abyss and pushed him in.

However, he fell only to a nearby ledge and was rescued by some woodcutters who heard his cries. The stepmother meanwhile rushed home in anticipation of finding a cured son, only to find him stone-cold dead.

In despair, she took the dead baby, rushed back to the abyss and threw herself into the chasm below. Thus, the abyss came to be known as Macocha, or “stepmother.” It is said that on stormy days you can still hear the mournful weeping of the stepmother from the abyss.



The Legend of the Brno Wheel

A wheel craftsman from Lednice city named George Birk made a bet with his friends that in a single day, he could cut down a tree, make a wheel from its timber, and roll that wheel by hand all the way to Brno. The men in the pub laughed. That was impossible, they said and bet a small fortune. They felt it was easy money.

But Birk, indeed, was a master of his craft. He did as he said. He made the wheel and rolled it fifty-five kilometres from the town of Lednice to the city of Brno within twelve hours. He managed to enter the town before the gates closed for the night.

The next day, he went to the town hall to get a confirmation that he had won the bet and thus won his twelve silver coins. He left the wheel in Brno, and it has been hanging in the passage of the Old Town Hall ever since.

Since normal humans considered the whole achievement impossible, people later believed that he had called on the devil for assistance. It is said that as a result, George Birk died in poverty. The money did not bring him happiness. People avoided him. He lost work and died alone and without friends.



The tale of the twisted pinnacle

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Brno councillors invited a well-known master, a stonemason, who had trained under the most famous Prague masters. They wanted him to build a town hall like no other.

Pilgram, the master's name, negotiated a wage, three pounds of silver for himself, building materials and wages for his workers, and they began. After some time, Pilgram asked the town councillors for an advance payment. They, however, began to get mad.

They didn't want to spend a penny before the town hall was finished. This angered the foreman. At first, he tried to negotiate with the councillors amicably. Still, he decided otherwise when he saw they would not come through. He had his stonemasons carve the longest pinnacle of the portal crooked.

The whole town came to see the twisted spire. The councilmen called the foreman in and ordered him to fix it immediately.

But Pilgram just smiled and said: "My dear sirs, your words were as crooked as the spire on the portal, and therefore no one will ever succeed in straightening it. It will always show your betrayal to the world." Before they knew it, he was gone.

The councillors wanted to sort out that crooked pinnacle. They paid another stonemason to straighten it, but by morning, the shape had returned to how Pilgram had carved it.

In vain, they searched for Pilgram everywhere. There was a rumour that he had gone to Vienna, where he had shown his skill in building St. Stephen's Cathedral. To this day, everyone who passes by the Old Town Hall admires its beautiful portal. However, many have yet to learn exactly why the spire is crooked.



Fortune Fairy and the Castle Lord

The first noble family to own Vranov Castle were the Lichtenburgs. The castle came into their possession in the 15th century and remained in their hands for two centuries. At that time, the forest fairy Fortune lived in the castle's surroundings.

One day, the castle lord shot a white deer during a hunt. Yet the wounded animal escaped, and the knight could not catch up until he reached a well where a lovely girl was sitting and nursing the deer's bleeding wound.

The knight would have killed the animal and returned the trophy to the castle. But the girl begged him to spare it. In return, she promised to keep a protective hand over him. The knight agreed so the maiden told him that he and his lady would soon be invited to the castle in Znojmo. She warned him that he had better leave his wife at home or something terrible would happen to her on the way.

As the fairy said, so it happened. Soon, a messenger arrived from Znojmo with an invitation to the grand festivities.

The lady of the castle began to look forward and prepare, so the knight concealed what had happened to him in the forest. He was sure she would have laughed at him. On the day of the celebration in Znojmo, he had a carriage brought and called three men-at-arms to accompany him. They all set off. As soon as the deep forest engulfed them, a horde of armed robbers ambushed them. The lady waited for nothing, mounted her horse and headed out of the forest. However, the horse stumbled over a tree root, and the lady fell and broke her neck.

The lord of the castle and his men-at-arms fought bravely and beat the robbers. Then, the lord began to look for his wife. He found her at the well where he had once caught up with a white deer.

He took his wife in his arms, but she opened her eyes only slightly and breathed her last breath. At that moment, Fortune Fairy appeared. The knight begged her to give his wife back her life as she had given the white deer stag. But the fairy just shook her head silently and disappeared again. The knight understood that his wife might still be alive if he had listened to Fortune. He stopped caring about his castle, neglecting his duties.

Eventually, he left it ultimately and began to wander the woods. He hoped to find his lost happiness, but he searched in vain. He returned to the castle after his death as a ghost. He still wanders here. He doesn't hurt anyone, but everyone he meets is overwhelmed with grief.



Ringing of the Bells on Petrov

This story happened during the great siege of Brno.

In the spring of 1645, the Swedish general Lennart Torstenson arrived at the city and decided to besiege it. If he had been successful, then the Swedes would have had victory over the Emperor within their grasp. Lay siege to Vienna, and the war would have been done and dusted. But the general had made a slight miscalculation, however.

Brno's walls were strong, and its defenders resolute—every city inhabitant organised to defy the enemy forces.

The siege was harsh. Many people died, and many homes were destroyed by cannon fire. But the townsfolk did not surrender.

The people from the surrounding villages suffered in their way. They had to cart hay to the Swedish camp for their horses, food for their soldiers, and above all else — wine. From these trips, it was clear the Swedes were faring poorly. Sickness and rage were rampant among the troops.

One day, a pub owner overheard the Swedish general telling his soldiers: "Tomorrow, I'm ordering the last attack. We can't carry on like this. If we don't take the city by noon, I'll give the order to retreat." The pub owner, who had to serve the Swedish soldiers, had learned to understand their foreign language. That night, he went through the secret underground tunnels and into the city to bring the message to the Commander of the Brno defence – Jean-Louis Raduit de Souches.

The following day, on 15 August, the Swedish army attacked. The attack was more ferocious than any of its predecessors.

The Swedes were solid and experienced, and they slowly began to break through the walls. It looked as if the city would not hold out.

Knowing that the Swedish would move on if they didn't seize the town by noon, the defenders decided to ring the bells for noon earlier. Even though it was only eleven o'clock, the cathedral's bells chimed twelve times.

The ruse worked. From the Swedish camp, trumpets sounded the retreat, and the soldiers stopped fighting. They gave up. Two days later, not a trace remained of the Swedish encampment.

Ever since the midday bells of the Cathedral of Saints, Peter and Paul ring an hour early to commemorate the city's salvation.



The Golem of Prague

One of the most notable Czech and Jewish folklore figures is the Golem, a legendary, supernatural creature who once stalked the crooked alleyways and dark corners of Prague's Jewish ghetto.

The tale goes that in the 16th century, the renowned Rabbi Juda Loew ben Bezalel, also known as the Maharal of Prague, was seeking a way to protect the local Jewish people from pogroms and the whim of unpredictable rulers up at Prague Castle. Endowed with the power to transform the four elements into living things, he moulded a superhuman from the mud of the Vltava river – the Golem.

To bring the Golem to life, Rabbi Loew had to insert a shem (a clay tablet bearing the name of God) into its mouth.

Rabbi and his men dressed Golem and took him back to Prague. They brought him along to the house of Rabbi Loew and said it was a new servant. He was helping in the synagogue during the day and fulfilled his main tasks at night. He was walking through the streets of the Prague ghetto and was guarding to prevent attacks against the Jewish citizens whom he protected.

One day, a maid from a Christian family got lost in the neighbourhood of the Jewish Ghetto. The first suspect, selected by the Christians, was Golem, who they were scared of. There was no other way to prove his innocence except for finding the lost maid. So the Rabbi ordered Golem to go and look for her. It took him some time to finally do so, and the situation calmed down again.

Rabbi Loew had to deactivate Golem every Sabbath to allow the creature to rest according to the Jewish custom.

However, one day, he forgot, and the Golem raged through the ghetto, destroying everything in his path.

Rabbi Loew was reciting Psalm 92 in the Old New Synagogue when he was interrupted and told of the chaos the Golem was causing. He eventually confronted the monster outside the synagogue, where he removed the shem.

The Golem was never revived again and was later stored in the synagogue's attic, which has remained locked for centuries. So, Golem no longer exists in his animated form and remains a lifeless figure, waiting to be brought to life again if needed. To this day, to commemorate the legend, the Old New synagogue maintains the tradition of reciting the psalm twice during its services on Sabbath mornings.



A monochromatic illustration in shades of teal and grey. It depicts a fisherman in a forest stream. The fisherman is wearing a hat and boots, and is carrying a large fish on his back. The fish is positioned horizontally across his back, with its head towards the right. The fisherman is standing in the water, holding a fishing rod. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees. The water is depicted with wavy lines, and there are several large rocks in the stream. The overall style is that of a woodcut or a detailed line drawing.

*Echoes of the
Kalevala:*

*Creation, Love, and Revenge in
Finnish Mythology*

Ilmatar and the Creation of the World

The goddess of the air, Ilmatar, floats in the clouds and lives the boring life of a virgin. However, she soon gets tired of such a life and descends into the waves, where the wind fertilises her. A duck flies over the sea when it spots Ilmatar's knee sticking out of the water and lays seven eggs on it—six of gold and one of iron.

But Ilmatar moves and drops the eggs, and they shatter on the waves. The shattered shells are not lost. The lower halves become the earth's bottom and surface; the upper ones create the sky. The yolk became the sun, the white the moon. Ilmatar then gives birth to a son, the mighty and wise Väinämöinen, who swims to shore after eight years.



Väinämöinen and Aino

The wise and powerful Väinämöinen manages the land well. He sent the little man Sampsu Pellervoinen to sow trees and flowers and planted a great oak tree, for which the eagle made a fire in gratitude. But he still lacks a companion, so he seeks out a girl named Aino, the beautiful young sister of Joukahainen. Aino, however, is not interested in old Väinämöinen. The sad Aino confides in her mother, who advises her to marry the famous singer Väinämöinen.

It saddens the daughter even more, and she drowns herself in the lake. When Väinämöinen learns what has happened to Aino, he sets out to fish her out. But all he catches is a strange fish. He wants to cook and eat it, but the fish slips away and falls back into the water. It turns back to Väinämöinen and tells him it is not a fish but Aino, who has turned into a fish after drowning. The loss of his beloved saddens the powerful Väinämöinen, and he returns home.



Kullervo

The families of two brothers, Untamo and Kalervo, are at war. Untamo, mean and wicked, deceives his brother by trickery and murders his entire family, except for his pregnant wife. She must serve Untamo's family. She then gave birth to a son, whom she named Kullervo. Untamo wants to raise the boy as one of his own, but little Kullervo wants nothing more than revenge on his family. As he grows, he proves to be a poor worker. He works poorly in the forest, fields, or forge. Untamo loses patience with the boy and sells him to Karelia to the famous blacksmith Ilmarinen.

Ilmarinen's wife, however, is full of hatred for her new serf, and she wreaks evil on him. She sends Kullervo to herd game and bakes a stone in his bread. So Kullervo goes out to graze, and after a while, he wants to rest and unwraps the bread that Ilmarinen's wife has baked for him. However, he breaks a knife on it, the only remembrance of his late father. Great anger seizes Kullervo, so he drives his flock into the mud, then summons a pack of wolves and bears, which he sets upon Ilmarinen's evil wife. The wild beasts tear the cruel woman apart and kill her.

Kullervo then runs away from Ilmarinen and wanders sadly through the forest. The lady of the forest he meets tells him that his family is still alive and that Untamo did not exterminate it. Cheered by this news, the boy hurries home, happily reuniting with his family. Afterwards, he does various jobs for his parents but is useless. So, his father sends him to collect the annual tax. On the way back, Kullervo meets a pretty girl in the forest. He strikes up a conversation with her and seduces her.

When he returns from his journey, he discovers the girl is his sister. She commits suicide, and Kullervo wants to do the same. However, his mother talks him out of it, and Kullervo goes to war to take revenge on Untamo. He burns down his entire village and returns home satisfied. But there, he finds no one but an old dog. It is too much even for Kullervo, and he goes to the place where he seduced his sister and ends his own life with his sword.





*From Love's Arrow
to Flowing Waters:*

*Greek Myths of Passion and
Nature*

Apollo and Daphne

In a tale as old as time, Apollo found himself in love with the daughter of Pineios, Daphne. His passion for her was so intense that he relentlessly pursued her. But when he attempted to embrace her, her father intervened, transforming her into a plant we now know as the laurel. She stood, vibrant and radiant, on the riverbanks, her roots planted in the earth.

Devastated by the loss of his beloved, Apollo took solace in the laurel. He fashioned a wreath from its branches and placed it upon his head, vowing that the laurel would forever be his sacred tree. From that moment on, the laurel became synonymous with Apollo and was used in pilgrimages and rites in his honour. The laurel's use in the rites at Delphi was a tribute to the nymph Daphne, forever immortalised in the plant that Apollo cherished.



The Path of Asclepius

Many hidden gems in Greece are often overlooked and shrouded in mystery. One such enigma is the fabled 'Path of Asclepius', nestled in the heart of Thessaly, Trikala. This route was believed to have been traversed by the god of medicine and health, Asclepius, in ancient times. A place of magic and wonder, it captivates visitors with its breathtaking landscapes and the symphony of nature's sounds and scents.

The journey along the 'Path of Asclepius' commences from the picturesque village of Gorgogiri, a mere 19 kilometres west of Trikala.

As you traverse this path, prepare to be enchanted. The path is adorned with majestic, century-old plane trees and a myriad of aromatic plants and medicinal herbs believed to have been collected by Asclepius.

The gentle murmur of the river's running waters adds to the idyllic setting of untamed beauty. The initial stretch of the path is easily navigable and paved for convenience.

The forest that houses the Path of Asclepius holds a secret, a peculiar feature that adds to its allure. The trees bear a unique shape, a testament to a fascinating legend.

It is said that these trees once danced, so their trunks are now forever curved, a whimsical reminder of their past. With its intriguing history and natural wonders, this forest is a must-visit for any adventurer.



Kalotchies – Good Luck Fairies

Once upon a time, all the mountains surrounding Trikala were inhabited by Kalotchies (Good Luck Fairies).

They lived in caves and only left their home when it was dark, under the moonlight. They dived into the river to wash themselves and then sat on the banks, weaving and singing.

One of the most well-known of these fairies was named Karpouza (as in watermelon). She used to live on the Boundoura mountain, overlooking the village of Pertouli.

Every time the moon was full, Karpouza left her cave and went down to the village in three leaps. The first leap took her to Fourka, the second on the school roof, and the third leap took her to the river.

However, she did not enjoy people's company. Any shepherd with his band was unlucky enough to stand in the way and had to bear her anger and her punishment. They all lost their voice.



The Birth of Peneios River – How the Fairies Kidnapped a River

As an old tale goes, Salabria was a river (aka Peneios). It is the medieval name of the river (from the 10th century), meaning flood from the rain. It comes from the Latin verb "saluber, salubris": clean, healthy. Well, Salabria had two brothers, Aoos and Acheloos.

One day, the three siblings went up a mountain to gather wood. Once they found a safe shelter, they lay down to rest.

The two brothers woke up the following day and realised their sister was gone.

In search of the girl, they went in two different directions. No matter where they looked, she was not to be found. The girl had been kidnapped and hidden underground by the fairies. A long time passed, and fairies went to the meadow to gather veggies. Salabria managed to find a way out and escape.

Overlooking Thessaly from the top of the mountain, she fell in love with the prairie and decided to go down.

Since then, she has been a calm river, as is proper for a modest girl.



The Tears That Formed the River Pineios

Once upon a time, the Olympian Gods envied Apollo's favour for the beautiful mountain Pindos, to which he had given his loved Muses and Nymphs.

To avoid the Gods' evil upcoming plans, Apollo arranged the wedding of Pindos and the mountain Lygkos. The loving couple lived happily together, and as a result of their wedding, majestic valleys and beautiful sceneries were starting to appear in Western Greece.

This made the Gods even more furious, leading them to demand the couple's separation. The couple begged the Gods to let them stay together while shedding many tears, but the Gods had already decided. They were harsh to them, which led to the couple's final break up.

Despite this event, Pindos and Lygkos felt nostalgic for their love and happiness, continuously shedding more and more tears. This caused the giant river of Thessaly, Pineios, to form. Pineios emanates from the spot of these mountains' separation.



The Myth of the Constellation Cygnus (the Swan)

The myth of Cygnus is associated with the constellation of Cygnus, which is rather prominent in the summer. According to one of the three versions of the myth, Cygnus was a close friend of Phaeton, the son of God Helios (the Sun).

In the story, Phaeton took Helios' chariot but failed to control it. His father, Helios, tried to help him by crossing the sky, thus endangering Earth with disaster.

Because of that, rivers were dry, and the land was in flames.

Zeus, the King of the twelve Ancient Greek Gods of Mount Olympus, was furious and killed Phaeton with thunder to save the Earth.

Cygnus watched his friend die and dived into the river, looking for his body.

The twelve Gods were moved by Cygnus' friendship and transformed him into a swan, placing his image in the sky as a constellation to honour a real friendship.



The Myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha

According to the myth, during Deucalion's reign in Thessaly, its people were in a bad moral situation. Greed, anger, jealousy and hate existed among people. The Gods were angry at humans, and Zeus decided to destroy all humankind.

Only two people would seem right: Deucalion, the son of Prometheus, and his wife, Pyrrha, a very fair lady. The Gods had perceived them to be the most righteous among the men and women on Earth and had chosen them to be the only survivors of that catastrophe.

One day, Prometheus told Deucalion that a great flood would destroy everything on earth. Alarmed by this warning, Deucalion and Pyrrha constructed a boat together, got on it and waited for the disaster.

Zeus opened the waterfalls of Uranus, and Greece was flooded, and people vanished. Only Deucalion and Pyrrha aboard the boat were kept safe.

The boat drifted for nine days and nights, and it finally rested on dry land on top of Mount Parnassus, near the Delphi area, on the tenth day.

Deucalion and Pyrrha were devastated by sadness as they watched the destruction caused by the flood. The first thing they did was sacrifice to Zeus, begging him to bring the human race back to life. In response, Zeus sent Hermes, his messenger, to assure them their first wish would only be granted if they "threw their mother's bones over their shoulders".

Correctly interpreting the message, the couple threw their mother Earth's stones ("the bones") over their shoulders. The stones thrown by Deucalion became men, and those thrown by Pyrrha became women.

The first stone Deucalion threw gave birth to Hellen, the first ancestor of the Hellenic race.



Erysichthon and Greed

King Erysichthon, whose realm was a rich and fertile plain north of Lake Boebis (today called Carla), decided to expand his palace by building a new dining hall.

In the Hymn to Demeter (Goddess of Earth and Agriculture) by the ancient poet Callimachus, Erysichthon is presented as a spoiled unmarried youth who, on a whim, appears impious and violent as he cuts down the sacred grove of Demeter, named Dotio patio alley). The sacred alley is in Thessaly, close to Larissa, next to the town called Agia.

The king's purpose was to build, he says, a spacious room with the wood of the trees where he would provide lavish meals for his friends.

In another version of the myth, Erysichthon has a family and a daughter named Mistra. She has a role later in this story. The king took his servants to the nearby sacred forest to gather wood.

Suddenly, an old woman appeared before him. "My child, spare these trees and cut them not".

Erysichthon was furious 'Vanish you stupid old crone", he shouted while raising his axe to strike her. It was then that a great bank was born. Now, the old woman had been replaced by Dimitar in all her glory. "Damned and cursed you shall be. Whoever you may try, you should never satisfy your hunger," the goddess shouted in her fury.

From that day, King Erysichthon has always been hungry. He would eat whatever he found on his way. He ate everything within the royal Cellars and then the animals he inherited from his father. He resorted to stealing the crops of his citizens. His kingdom became turbulent, and his people became unhappy.

His daughter Mistra decided or was forced, depending on the version of the legend, to help her father. Having been given by the gods the ability to take the form of any animal, she planned to take the form of a large animal so her father could sell her for food in the market. After being sold, she would turn into a human and return to her father so he could sell her repeatedly; however, no villager would trade with Erysichthon because the animals he sold disappeared the next day.

Erysichthon started devouring his very body until he was eliminated.





*Whispers of
Anatolia:*

*Unveiling Turkish Legends of
Serpents, Pomegranates,
and Wolves*

Demeter And Seasons

In Greek mythology, there was a Goddess named Demeter, who was not only the deity of Seasons but also of Wealth. She had a daughter named Kore, also known as Persephone, whom she shared with Zeus, the King of the Gods. However, their peaceful existence was shattered when Hades, the God of the Underworld, fell in love with Kore and decided to kidnap her while she was innocently picking flowers. In the Underworld, Hades showered Kore with treats, and she unknowingly ate one of the pomegranate seeds.

Unbeknownst to Kore, anyone who consumes food in the Underworld is bound to stay there forever. As Demeter frantically searched for her daughter, she discovered that Kore had been taken to the Underworld. Overwhelmed with grief, Demeter ceased to eat, which led to a devastating shortage of crops. This crisis caught the attention of Zeus, who was compelled to intervene and find a solution to the unfolding tragedy.

However, Zeus is not innocent either because he is the one who tells Hades to kidnap Kore. In the meantime, Hades married Kore and made her the Queen of the Underworld. Zeus and Hades made a deal. According to the agreement, Persephone would spend three months of the year with Hades in the Underworld, and for the rest of the months, she would live on the Earth with her mother.

Demeter was satisfied with this deal, and her sadness ended. The wealth of the fields returned, and the famine ended. Ultimately, the three months she spends in the Underworld go through winter, and the time she spends on the surface goes through spring.



The Legend of Aspendos

In the ancient era, legends, stories, and myths are boundless. Among them, the legend of Aspendos stands tall, showcasing two architectural marvels that defy time. These structures, each vying for the title of the most beautiful, were not mere creations but the result of a passionate duel between two rival lovers in ancient times.

As the legend goes, the king of Aspendos proclaims that he will bestow his daughter's hand upon the architect who can create the most beneficial structure for the city.

The challenge sets off a flurry of construction as numerous contenders vie for the coveted prize. Yet, the works of two rival architect brothers truly captivate the city, their competition stretching over the years: the theatre and the aqueducts.

The king, faced with a difficult decision, first examines the aqueducts.

The structure is aesthetically pleasing and serves a vital function, bringing water from distant lands to meet the city's needs.

The king is impressed, yet it tears his heart. He must also consider the theatre a testament to human creativity and innovation.

The king is amazed by the grandeur of the theatre; its size alone is a marvel. But the theatre's acoustics, a feat far beyond its time, genuinely astounds him. The sound of a coin dropped on the ground resonates even in the highest rows, a testament to the architect's ingenuity. According to the legend, this sways the king's decision.

The king hears a whisper while examining the building in the top rows. The voice is evident. What reaches his ear is the phrase, "You should marry your daughter to me."

Turning his head towards the sound, the king sees the theatre's architect on the stage. The architect had whispered to himself on stage, and it reached the king from the top rows. This theatre, which can carry the sound of Aspendos to distant places, dramatically impresses the king. Instead of choosing the aqueducts, he decides to marry his daughter to the architect Zenon.

Another ending to this legend is that the King couldn't decide which famous architect he liked, so he couldn't choose which architect to marry his daughter. As a result, he decided to cut his daughter in half with a sword, giving one half to Zenon and the other half to the other architect.



The Turkish Pomegranate Myth

The name of the ancient city of Side derives from the unique pomegranate trees in this region. Mythologically, Side is depicted as the daughter of a mountain goddess, the Goddess of Nature, who represents the natural beauty and fertility of the Taurus Mountains. One day, while strolling along the banks of the Melas (Manavgat) River with her woodland nymphs, Side encounters a magical area adorned with beautiful flowers.

As Side plucks a beautiful flower for her daughter, the consequences of this action deeply affect her. The tree swiftly transforms into a pomegranate tree with blood flowing from the flower she picked. Despite her frightened and sorrowful attempts to flee, her feet become rooted to the ground, and she can never move again. Over time, her body becomes encased in bark, remaining within the tree.

During her transformation, the Goddess Side forms the crimson fruits of the pomegranate tree to shield herself. This story, circulating among people, explains the origin of the ancient city of Side and the pomegranate trees, symbols of this region.

The Goddess Side desires her daughter to come to her and play in her shade but reminds her not to pick the trees and harm nature. Today, tracing this mythological story's traces to the ancient city of Side is possible. This unique ancient city continues to enchant visitors with its historical and natural beauties. Side shines as one of the unique regions of Antalya, carrying the texture of the past and mythology.



The legend of Shahmaran

Shahmaran, a captivating mythical creature, is a unique blend of woman and snake who lives in a breathtaking underground garden. The legend unfolds when, one fateful day, his companions left a young man named Camsap alone in a cave, engrossed in a honey collection.

Camsap was scared and thought he would die alone there, but he found a hole in the cave. He worked in the hole using a knife until it was big enough to go through.

He ended up in a mysterious garden surrounded by snakes. Among the snakes was the supernatural creature, Shahmaran. She introduced herself to him.

Shahmaran, a being of unparalleled beauty, wisdom, intelligence, and kindness, had ensnared Camsap's heart. The two of them shared a blissful existence in the underground garden.

However, Camsap's yearning for his homeland intensified as the days passed. He mustered the courage to express his desire to return, and Shahmaran, in a moment of selfless love, agreed. But she had one condition: never reveal her existence to anyone.

Years later, a mysterious illness struck the king of Camsap's city. In a desperate bid to save him, his assistant proposed a drastic solution: the king could only be cured by consuming the flesh of Shahmaran.

No one knew if Shahmaran truly existed. But the assistant claimed that if a man came into contact with Shahmaran's skin, scales would appear on his own.

The King ordered all servants to take public baths to check for scales, and scales began to appear on Camsap's skin. Under the excruciating torment, Camsap succumbed and revealed his secret, shattering his promise.

According to the fascinating version of this legend, whoever eats Shahmaran's tail will gain wisdom, and whoever eats her head will die. The King and his assistant ate the head of Shahmaran out of greed, while Camsap ate the tail because he couldn't accept the guilt after betraying his love. But to everybody's surprise, the King and his assistant died, and Camsap lived, gaining wisdom from the tail of Shahmaran.



The Epic of Descent

The "Türeyiş Destanı," also known as the "Epic of Descent" or "Oğuz Kağan Epic," is a narrative in Turkish mythology that recounts the ancestral origins of Turkic nomadic groups, mainly the Oghuz Turks. It serves as a significant source for understanding the historical and cultural roots of the Turkish people. The epic explores themes of heroism, tribal unity, and the nomadic way of life, providing insights into Turkic folklore and traditions.

Let's delve into the story of the Great Hun Khans, who once had two daughters. These girls were not just beautiful; they were divinely so. Their beauty was such that the Huns believed they were destined to marry Ilhans and were not meant for mere mortals.

Hakan also believed this and sought ways to keep both girls away from people. He had a very high tower built in the country's far north, where people had never visited or even set foot.

After months of construction of the tower, he took his two beautiful daughters to the tower and locked them in it.

Afterwards, he began to pray to the god he believed in within himself.

He prayed and prayed to his God so much that one day, his God came in the form of a grey wolf. Then, this grey wolf married his daughters.

From this union, a multitude of children were born. They were known as the Nine Oghuz - Ten Uyghurs, their voices echoing the howl of a grey wolf. These children, carrying the spirit of the Grey Wolf, would shape the future of the Turkic nomadic groups.



Eleni's Tears

Eleni's Tears is a legend of Alanya Castle. Behind the castle walls lies the sadness of a lived story in this magical place.

The legend's namesake, Eleni, is the daughter of the Byzantine Governor Argiles. Argiles wants to marry his daughter to Pirate Vasili to rid his country of the pirates plundering the country.

However, Eleni does not want this marriage and is in love with a poor shepherd. Angered by this, Argiles decides to teach his daughter a lesson by imprisoning her in the dungeons of Alanya Castle.

Eleni's small cell had only one window, which faced Damlataş Beach, because her father believed that if he showed Eleni all the beauties of Alanya, she would return to life and accept the marriage.

Despite Argiles' hopeful expectations, Eleni never gave up on her love. She never agreed to a marriage with Vasili and cried day and night.

The barren hill stretching from Alanya Castle to Damlatas was filled with Eleni's tears, overflowing. After some time, laurel, pomegranate, and oleander trees grew on this hill.

Since that day, whenever it rains, the people of Alanya feel as if they are suffocating with Eleni's sobs, accompanied by the scent of laurel they perceive.



The Legend of the Trembling Lake

One of the popular attractions in Manavgat, the Trembling Lake, has an interesting legend associated with it.

This legend revolves around an elderly fisherman who lived near the lake and used to feed the birds.

One day, hunters were hunting ducks on the lake, and the elderly fisherman tried to deter them by walking towards them.

However, when the hunters pushed and shoved the old man, all the ducks took flight immediately, creating a whirlwind with their wings. Frightened, the hunters fled the scene.

Since that day, the lake has been trembling, interpreted as the birds lamenting for the fisherman, and this legend has been passed down to this day.



Disclaimer

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