

# **SERBIAN FAIRY TALES**

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Serbian fairy tales by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**SERBIAN  
FAIRY TALES**





SIDNEY STANLEY

# SERBIAN FAIRY TALES

TRANSLATED FROM THE SERBIAN  
BY  
'MADAME ELODIE L. MIATOVICH



ILLUSTRATED BY  
SIDNEY STANLEY

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE BEAR'S SON	I
THE GOLDEN APPLE-TREE AND THE NINE PEAHENS	9
PAPALLUGA ; OR, THE GOLDEN SLIPPER	25
SATAN'S JUGGLINGS AND GOD'S MIGHT	32
GOOD DEEDS ARE NEVER LOST	36
THE WICKED STEPMOTHER	46
BIRD GIRL	52
SIR PEPPERCORN	55
BASH-CHALEK ; OR, TRUE STEEL	77
THE BITER BIT	104
THE TRADE THAT NO ONE KNOWS	119
THE THREE SUITORS	134
THE GOLDEN-HAIRED TWINS	141
THE DREAM OF THE KING'S SON	150
THE THREE BROTHERS	158
THE SHEPHERD AND THE KING'S DAUGHTER	190

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### IN COLOUR

"Fished out a small box" (see page 146)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
"On the grave stood a large box of valuable clothes of different kinds"	<i>To face page 28</i>
"The old witch spat on the fire"	" 34
"He noticed an old man on the shore"	" 42
"There appeared a great alligator with three heads"	" 82
"The giant brought out a tray on which stood a sparrow, a turtle-dove, and a quail"	" 112
"The old man on his great goat"	" 154
"He drove the cow to the hut where he had passed the night"	" 194

### IN BLACK AND WHITE

"Tied up the iron into a bundle, which he hung at the end of his staff"	" 4
"At length she came to a fine large house"	" 46



viii      LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"On the summit of that hill there is an old woman who . . . holds a bird in her bosom"	<i>To face page</i>	51
"They pulled him up as they had promised"	"	66
"The King's son drew his sword and cut his head off"	"	86
"The giants asked the young man if he had been in the first room"	"	124
"She saw an old man with a thick grey beard and long white hair"	"	138
"Three winged horses came into the field"	"	164

## THE BEAR'S SON

ONCE upon a time a bear married a woman, and they had one son. When the boy was yet a little fellow he begged very hard to be allowed to leave the bear's cave, and to go out into the world to see what was in it. His father, the Bear, however, would not consent to this, saying, "You are too young yet, and not strong enough. In the world there are multitudes of wicked beasts called men, who will kill you." So the boy was quieted for a while, and remained in the cave.

But, after some time, the boy prayed so earnestly that the Bear, his father, would let him go into the world, that the Bear brought him into the wood, and showed him a beech-tree, saying, "If you can pull up that beech by the roots, I will let you go; but if you cannot, then this is a proof that you are still too weak, and must remain with me." The boy tried to pull up the tree, but, after long trying, had to give it up, and go home again to the cave.

Again some time passed, and he then begged again to be allowed to go into the world, and his father told him, as before, if he could pull up the beech-tree he

might go out into the world. This time the boy pulled up the tree, so the Bear consented to let him go, first, however, making him cut away the branches from the beech, so that he might use the trunk for a club. The boy now started on his journey, carrying the trunk of the beech over his shoulder.

One day as the Bear's son was journeying he came to a field, where he found hundreds of ploughmen working for their master. He asked them to give him something to eat, and they told him to wait a bit till their dinner was brought them, when he should have something, they said, "Where so many are dining one mouth more or less matters but little." Whilst they were speaking there came carts, horses, mules, and asses, all carrying the dinner. But when the meats were spread out the Bear's son declared he could eat all that up himself. The workmen wondered greatly at his words, not believing it possible that one man could consume as great a quantity of victuals as would satisfy several hundred men. This, however, the Bear's son persisted in affirming he could do, and offered to bet with them that he would do this. He proposed that the stakes should be all the iron of their ploughshares and other agricultural implements. To this they assented. No sooner had they made the wager than he fell upon the provisions, and in a short time consumed the whole. Not a fragment was left. Hereupon the labourers, in accordance with their wager, gave him all the iron which they possessed.