



LOCAL TALES GLOBAL VOICES

12 Different Local Tales of 4 Different Countries





**Centrul de excelenta in
transporturi Moldova**



**Bozüyük Borsa İstanbul
Anadolu Lisesi Türkiye**



**High School Petru Rareș
Romania**

STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLA SPOJŮ



A INFORMATIKY TÁBOR

**Střední škola spojů a
informatiky, Tábor,
Czech Republic**

WHO ARE WE?

We are schools from four different countries working together with a shared goal: to connect diverse cultures through collaboration. Although we are geographically distant, we aim to build strong bridges by sharing stories, experiences, and ideas, and by fostering mutual understanding and respect.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This e-book brings together twelve tales, each one a doorway to a different world.

Some stories whisper, some linger, and some arrive like a sudden storm—but all of them carry a quiet truth about fear, hope, love, memory, and courage. Within these pages, you will meet ordinary people at extraordinary moments, forgotten legends that refuse to stay silent, and small choices that change lives forever. Each tale stands on its own, yet together they form a journey—through shadow and light, loss and wonder.

Read them in order, or open the book at random. Every story waits patiently for the reader who is ready to step inside.

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1

THE CURSE OF MONOPETRA



BOZÜYÜK BORSA İSTANBUL
ANADOLU LİSESİ

CHAPTER 1 — “The Whisper Beneath the Stone”

In the northern forests of Gölpazarı, deep among the trees, a massive rock stood alone:

Monopetra.

The villagers called it “The Single Stone,” but that was not its true name. For generations, people whispered stories of monks walking around it at night, and of a silver-colored mist sometimes rising from its surface.

Ayda, a young history teacher, did not believe in legends.

But one night, a student whom she deeply cared for handed her a notebook.

On its cover were the words:

“The Hidden Diary of Monopetra – 1912”

The pages were filled with shaky handwriting.

The very first sentence was:

“Beneath this stone sleeps a breath that no human should ever know.”

A chill ran through Ayda.

Though she had always dismissed legends, she could not deny the unsettling sense of reality in those words.



CHAPTER 2 — “The Stone’s Dark Past”

The next morning, Ayda went into the forest to speak with Kadri Ağa, the oldest man in the village—considered the last living witness to the legend.

The moment Kadri Ağa saw the diary in her hands, his face turned as pale as ash.

“Where did you find that?” he asked.

When Ayda explained that a student had brought it to her, the old man spoke slowly:

“That diary... belonged to the assistant of the monk who wrote down the curse of the stone.

That monk feared only one thing: human curiosity.”

Ayda hesitated.

“You mentioned a chest... What was inside it?”





Kadri Ağa closed his eyes.

“While fleeing the Byzantines, the monk carried not something holy—but something forbidden.

They bound a spirit in chains, tore it from beneath the lake, and sealed it inside a chest.

They buried that chest beneath Monopetra.

The stone is not merely a stone—it is a seal.”

Ayda laughed softly. “A spirit? Just a folk tale.”

Kadri Ağa stared at her sharply.

“My child... you have never seen that stone at midnight.

If you had, you would not be laughing.”



CHAPTER 3 — “The Shadow That Walks at Night”

That evening, Ayda could no longer resist.

After sunset, she took her flashlight and walked toward Monopetra.

The moment she entered the forest, silence fell.

No leaves stirred. No wind breathed.

When she reached the stone, moonlight struck its surface, making it shine like metal.

Just as she turned to leave, her flashlight caught a thin line at the base of the stone.

The soil had been disturbed.

As if someone had dug there recently.

Ayda bent closer.

A hissing sound echoed—

cold, unnatural, unlike human breath.



She stumbled back as a shadow moved across Monopetra's surface.

It was shaped like a human—but had no face.

No features.

Only emptiness.

Gripping her flashlight, Ayda managed only a whisper:

“Who... are you?”

The forest seemed to answer:

“The seal... has weakened...”

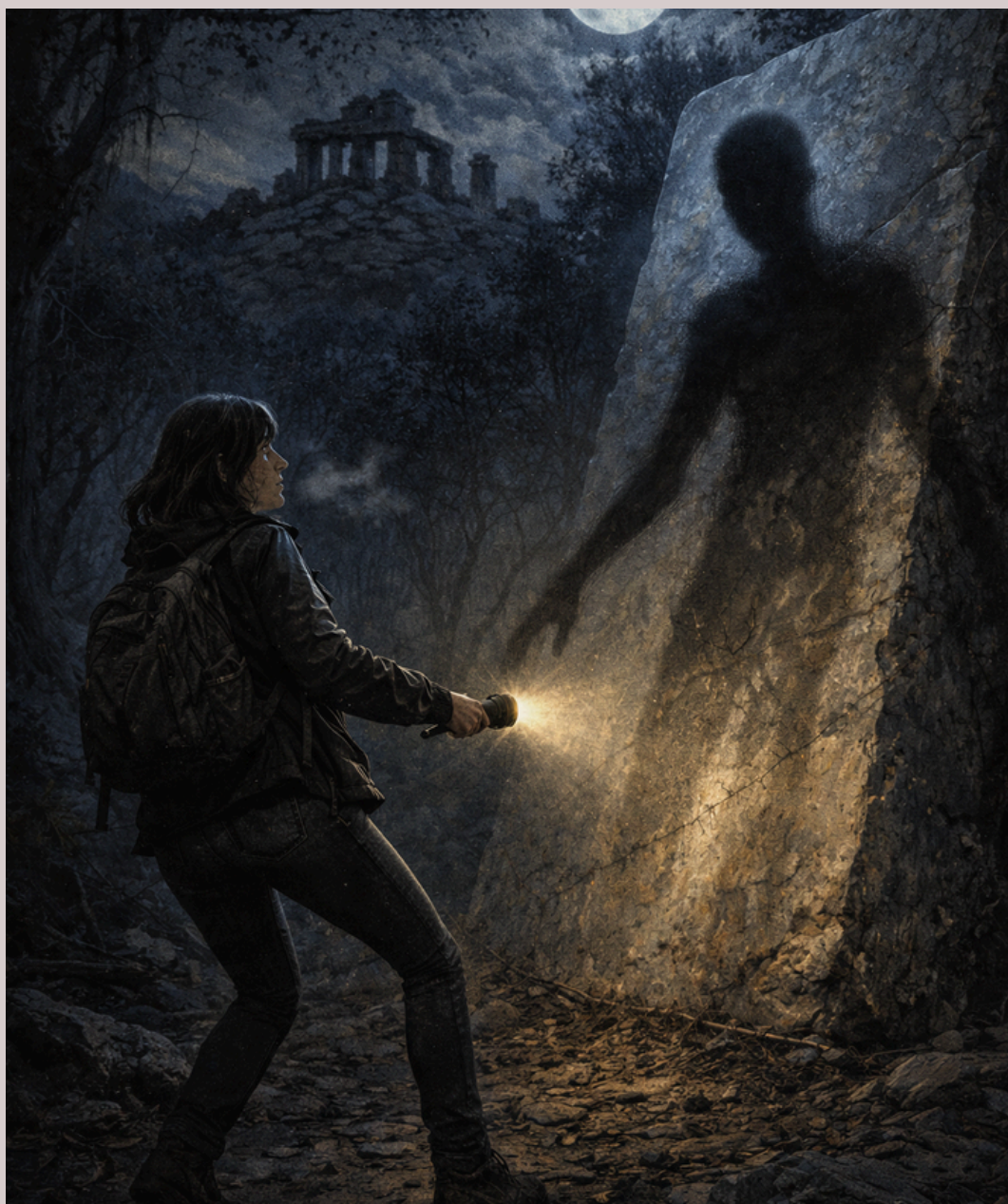
Ayda felt her breath freeze in her chest.

Had the voice come from the stone?

Or from the shadow?

She wanted to run—but her feet would not move.

The shadow slowly began to approach her.



CHAPTER 4 — “The Last Page of the Diary”

The next day, Ayda somehow made it home, her hands trembling.

She placed the diary on the table and hurriedly turned to the final page.

The last lines read:

“The monk imprisoned the spirit beneath the stone, but in time the seal will weaken.

All who approach will witness the hunger of the spirit.

If the seal breaks... that which lies beneath the lake will awaken.”

As Ayda closed the diary, a sound came from outside.

Three knocks on the door.

She hesitated.

The knocking came again—slower, deeper this time.

As if a claw were scraping against the wood.

As Ayda stepped closer, a thin mist seeped in from beneath the door.

A freezing voice whispered, echoing against the walls:

“The seal... is broken...”

Ayda staggered back and grabbed her flashlight.

She knew she had to return to Monopetra.

Because if the seal truly broke, no one in the village would survive.



CHAPTER 5 — “The Breath Beneath the Stone”

Under the moonlight, Monopetra no longer shimmered.

The earth beneath it had fully opened.
From within rose a flaking black mist.

A shape emerged—resembling a human arm, but with bones far too long.

In that moment, Ayda understood the truth behind the villagers’ fear:

This spirit did not resemble humanity.

It did not understand humanity.

It did not remember humanity.

It only wanted to be free.

As Ayda was about to scream, a small piece of paper slipped from between the diary’s pages.

On it was a single sentence:

“If the seal breaks, the spirit can only be stopped by returning it to where it came from:

into the lake.”

Ayda understood instantly.

She ran toward the mist-covered entity.

If she could force it toward the shore, perhaps the seal could be restored.

But the moment the creature touched her, her mind froze.

For an instant, she saw beneath the water...

A pair of eyes waiting in the darkness for centuries.

And then—

The forest fell silent.

The next morning, villagers found Monopetra just as it had always been.

The earth beneath it was sealed once more.

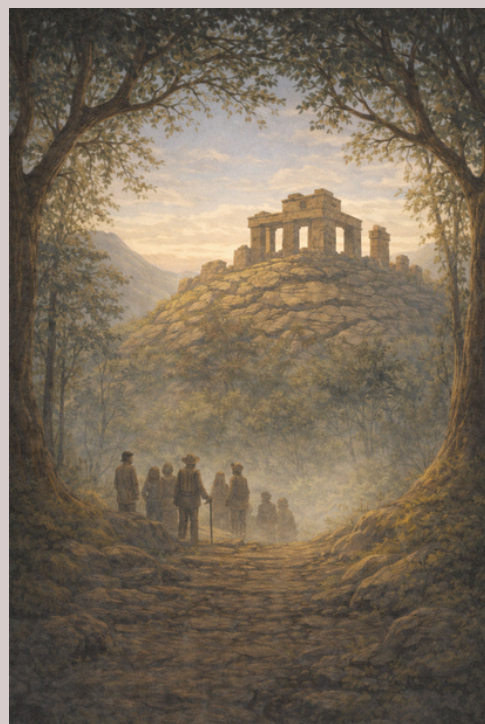
Ayda, however, had vanished.

From that day on, a white mist drifted across the lake every night.

And the people of the region still say:

“Monopetra is now the guardian of two souls.

One cursed, and one brave.”





2

THE LEGEND OF THE GIANT OF ORHEI



CENTRUL DE EXCELENȚA ÎN
TRANSPORTURI MOLDOVA

Long ago, in a village located where the city of Orhei stands today, people lived simple lives, working the land and raising animals. But life was not easy: droughts and famine always threatened to disturb their peace.



One day, a giant came to the village. He was so huge that his shadow covered the houses, yet his heart was kind. At first, the villagers were afraid, but they soon realized he meant no harm. The giant listened to their worries and offered wise advice.



Summer came without rain. Wells dried up, and the ground cracked under the scorching sun. People didn't know what to do, and fear of famine spread among them. In desperation, they ran to the giant, asking for his help.



Moved by their suffering, the giant bent down and struck the ground with his huge hands. The earth trembled, and a clear spring burst forth. Water flowed through the village streets, and people drank and watered their fields. The village came alive again under the gaze of their protector.



The villagers thanked the giant and named him their protector. The spring remained a symbol of generosity and benevolent power. It is said that even today, the Giant of Orhei quietly watches over the land, and those who believe in kindness and courage can feel his presence.





3

KOZÍ HRÁDEK: WHERE
A THOUGHT OUTLIVED
STONE

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CZECH REPUBLIC

Not only people, but castles too have their own, often very complex fates. This applies to Kozí Hrádek as well. It was a very modest structure; in size and grandeur, it could not measure up to the residential castles of noble families. It did not become famous for magnificent tournaments, nor the clash of swords in knightly jousts. It survived only for a short time and would surely have fallen into oblivion and vanished without a trace were it not for Master Jan Hus, whose stay here made it a significant monument of our history. And so, the general fame of Kozí Hrádek is connected with the glory of a thought that lives longer than a man.

After the abandonment of the Hrádek (castle), its masonry was gradually dismantled as suitable building material, and what remained was blown up with gunpowder in the 18th century so that nefarious and dubious elements could not hide in the ruins. Thus, as time went on, rubble grew over the ruins until they disappeared entirely, and in the place of the former Hrádek, a conspicuously cone-shaped hill formed. When F. S. Heber came here in the mid-19th century, he found that people living even an hour's walk away had no clue about the former existence of Kozí Hrádek.



The impulse for the resurrection of Kozí Hrádek came from Prof. A. Sedláček. He had digging started in places where he suspected the former castle tower. Masonry of the castle palace was found, but the work had to be stopped due to a lack of money. Later, the exploration was taken up by the teacher Josef Švehla, who dedicated thirty years of his life to Hrádek. The place of Hus's former stay emerged into the light of day only during the 500th anniversary celebrations of the city of Tábor.



In the time when Master Jan Hus stayed at Kozí Hrádek, people from the wide surroundings came here to draw hope and strength from his sermons. According to traditional legend, they gathered in a clearing in the forest that was shaped like a heart. It was dominated by an ancient linden tree, under which Master Jan preached. But as happens in life, every passion gradually fades, and after the pious pilgrims, people came who sought hidden treasures in the castle ruins. And even though it defies logic, according to folklore, there was supposed to be a significant amount of them. One only had to discover them!

Below Hrádek, there is the so-called "Zemanská louka" (Yeoman's Meadow), bordered on one side by a slope and on the other by the Kozský stream and the forest. A shepherd from the nearby Červený dvůr (Red Court) was once pasturing his flock on it. Once—it was on Good Friday—the shepherd was just loitering about because he was bored. Suddenly, a suspicious clinking caught his attention. He followed the sound, and to his astonishment, when he looked, he saw gold coins rolling across the meadow from Kozí Hrádek, one after another, disappearing into the opposite slope.

It took a while for the shepherd to recover, but then he threw his staff at the row of rolling coins. He managed to knock two coins out of the line, but the rest disappeared irretrievably into the slope.



When the shepherd verified that they were indeed made of pure gold, he ran to Červený dvůr for a hoe and dug in the spot where the coins had vanished. But his effort was in vain. He found absolutely nothing; on the contrary, the two coins struck by his staff had turned into worthless stones in his pocket. And so, the treasure continues to wait for its discoverer. But finding it will not be easy. On that meadow, the ghost of a greedy steward of Červený dvůr is said to appear, leading people astray and doing everything otherwise to prevent them from finding the treasure. According to folk tradition, Červený dvůr itself is built entirely of stone obtained from the castle ruins.

Another legend says that a secret underground passage leads from Kozí Hrádek, ending as far away as Podolský Kostelec. The story of this once kept two men awake at night, who believed they could find treasure in that corridor. They began to dig in the ruins, and just when it seemed to them that their effort was futile and they would not find the secret passage, they hit upon a heavily iron-bound door. Just then, the noon bells rang, and so the men said to themselves that they would continue digging after lunch. But when they returned, they searched in vain for the place where they had previously found—as they believed—the entrance to the secret passage. The door never appeared again.





4

PINTEA THE BRAVE



HIGH SCHOOL PETRU RAREȘ
ROMANIA

Grigore Pinteă, famously known as Pinteă the Brave, was born around 1670 in the village of Băga, near present-day Cluj. He came from Maramureș, a region known for its rugged mountains and proud traditions. His mother belonged to a family of free peasants, while his father died in battle against Ottoman invaders. From an early age, Pinteă showed curiosity and courage, traveling extensively across different lands to learn languages, study combat techniques, and gain knowledge about the world. These journeys shaped him into a skilled, educated, and strategic leader.



Upon returning home, Pinteă settled in the Gutâi Mountains, where he gathered and trained a band of haiduks—outlaws who fought against oppression. His forces were organized into three detachments, the main one counting around 120 men, remarkably well-equipped with firearms, swords, and armor for the time. Pinteă himself wore chainmail and a helmet, and his men even had uniforms, a rarity among outlaw groups of that era. Together, they conducted raids in Baia Mare and across vast regions such as Sătmar, Sălaj, Bihor, and Someș, fighting against corruption and injustice

In 1700, Pintea was captured and imprisoned in Satu Mare, but he was later pardoned after signing a non-aggression pact. Soon afterward, he joined the uprising led by Prince Francis II Rákóczi against Habsburg rule. In August 1703, Pintea's forces attacked Baia Mare. After a prolonged siege, betrayal within the city's leadership led to a sudden assault. On the evening of August 13, 1703, Pintea was fatally shot at the city gate, ending his earthly fight



Legends surrounding Pintea grew even after his death. He was said to possess a magical horse and twelve loyal companions. He stole from the rich and shared the wealth with the poor, punishing nobles who abused peasants in Maramureş. Tales tell of his miraculous escapes: jumping across rocky peaks or flying with primitive wooden gliders. He was also believed to have brought treasures from Poland, which he hid in caves and mountain shelters, using clever tricks to keep them safe



Folklore even ascribes supernatural strength to Pinteă, gained from the magical “iron-grass” that bloomed only on the night of Midsummer. By placing it on a small cut beneath the arm, he could unlock any lock, master weapons, and gain extraordinary power. Only a vulnerable spot under his chainmail could end his life.



Maramureș still honors Pinteă the Brave through places bearing his name—Spring, Cave, Peak, Camp, and Well. His armor and weapons are preserved, and tales of his courage endure, keeping him a lasting symbol of justice, strength, and hope





5

THE SPIRIT OF HARMANKAYA CANYON



BOZÜYÜK BORSA İSTANBUL
ANADOLU LİSESİ

Bilecik's Inhisar side, Harmankaya canyon where the sound of the wind echoes, it always hid a deep silence even in summer between the rocks there was a chilling coolness, when the night began there would be a thin fog on the canyon, the villagers says that the fog is "the breath of the mountain"
This legend began with a piece of advice passed down from generation to generation.
"Nature is not entrusted to people, but people is entrusted to the nature. The guard of the harmankaya guards this faith"



CHAPTER 1-THE WARNING

Emir, one of the youngest kids on the village. He was known for his adventurousness. He goes to places everybody is scared about. He used to hang around forbidden paths. One day while he was chatting with a friend they began talking about the canyon's legend, one of them said in fear "when there's fog we can't enter the canyon, the breath of the mountain doesn't like that"

Emir laughs and says" come on dear! Its just a few rocks. That's it"

Elder villager Dursun grandfather heard them chat he approached them while tapping his cane on the ground and said "I remember when I was a child, a giant walking between rocks looked at me as if it was reading my mind. It protects Harmankaya it goes against the people who harms the nature" But Emir didn't care at all. He decided that night he was going to enter the canyon on a foggy day and see the legend himself



CHAPTER 2 – FOG FALLS

The next morning the weather was overcast. Emir grabbed his backpack and walked to the entrance of the canyon alone, while the wind was echoing in the paths the sky was grey like a gray curtain that had fallen, the fog slowly began to glide through the rocks.

When he went deeper in to the canyon, sounds of birds stopped. The wind stopped it was only Emir's breath.

The fog got thicker, it was so thick that Emir was barely seeing forward, In that moment he heard a rumble from the deep it was like a giant's step shaking the land.

The fog slowly disappeared and above the rocks a silhouette that looked like a giant appeared, The body of the giant was made with rocks. The arms were covered in mosses the eyes were shaking like a glowing stone.

Emir tried to step back but he couldn't move his legs.



CHAPTER 3 - MOUNTAINS VOICE

Gaint soul took a big step and it's voice echoed off the canyon walls:

"Why did you come here human?"

Emir's voice shook."I just wanted too see if the legend was true"

The soul bent, it's voice was like a hum: "Human curiosity harms nature,what are you doing here?"

Emir looked around. He hadn't broken even a tree branch before. "I dont have any intention of malice. I just want to understand"

Mountain soul got quiet for a long time. Finally: "Anyone who wants to understand nature must be respect it .If your curiosty is innocent, then learn." said.

Soul raised it's hand and the fog receded. Canyons hidden beauty was appeared: glowing water sources, eagles soaring among the rocks, centuries-old trees..

At that moment Emir understood that the canyon wasn't an ordinary place, It was a living being.

"Humas tries to destory this place," soul said. "Burn fire, dismantle rocks, leave their rubbish ... That's why I warn them. I am Harmankaya's spirit"

Emir bowed his head "I promise, I will protect here as much as I can"



CHAPTER 4 - COMEBACK

Soul stepped back. It receded as if swallowed by the fog. It's last word echoed by canyon walls:

"Whoever protects nature, is my friend"...

Dursun granpa smiled when Emir came back to village. "You saw mountains soul, right?"

Emir just nodded his head.

From that day on, he made a small sign to protect the canyon:

"Respect to Harmankaya. Protect the nature. Mountain Soul is watching you!"

From that day on, the villagers have treated the canyon with greater respect.. Because everyone knows:

Harmankaya's spirit there, when the fog falls...





6

ANA AND THE VILLAGE OF CIORESCU

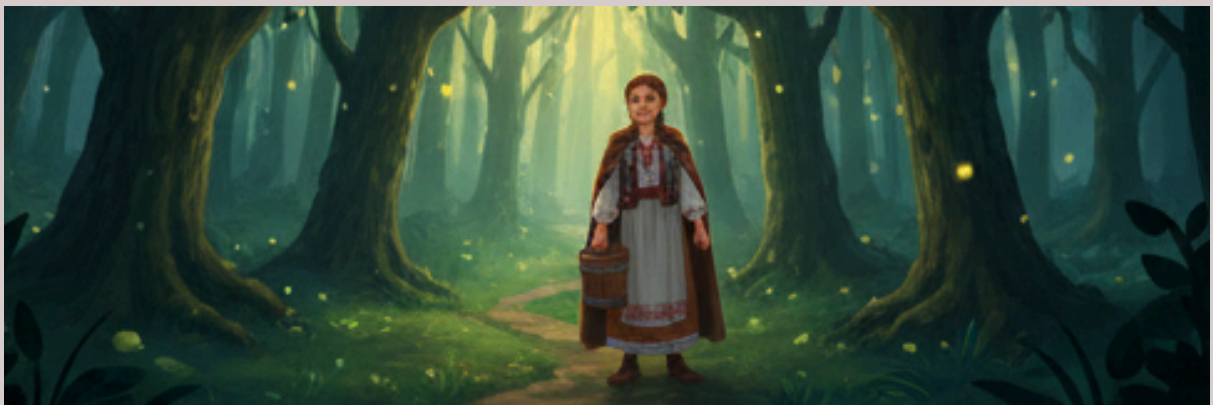


CENTRUL DE EXCELENȚA ÎN
TRANSPORTURI MOLDOVA

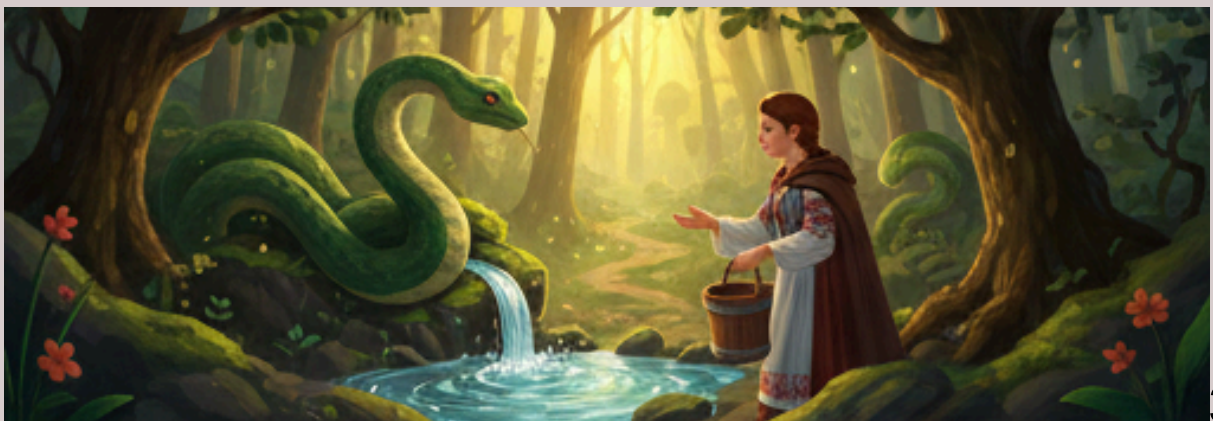
Long ago, in a picturesque village called Ciorescu, people lived in harmony with the land. But one summer came without rain. The wells dried up, and the fields no longer bore crops. The villagers were sad and worried about their future.



In the village lived Ana, a brave and kind-hearted girl, known for her wisdom. Seeing the suffering of the people, Ana decided to venture into the nearby forest, where it was said that a magical spring existed that could bring life back to the land.



After a long journey, Ana found the spring, clear as crystal, but guarded by a large and wise serpent. The girl was not afraid and spoke to it with respect, asking for its help for her village.



Impressed by Ana's courage and kindness, the serpent showed her how to bring the spring's water to the village. Ana returned home and followed the instructions. The water began to flow through the houses and fields, restoring life and hope to the village.



The village of Ciorescu flourished once again, and the people celebrated Ana's bravery and generosity. From that day on, Ana remained a symbol of courage, kindness, and humanity's connection to nature.





7

ROBBER KNIGHT ZÚL AND THE SECRETS OF CHÝNOV CASTLE

STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLA SPOJŮ



A INFORMATIKY TÁBOR

STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLA SPOJŮ A
INFORMATIKY, TÁBOR,
CZECH REPUBLIC

Chýnov is a strange town. It is said that everything Southern Bohemia was in the past can be found in its history. In it, you can sense that the people here look toward the future with a typical South Bohemian thoughtfulness.

The place belongs to the oldest and longest permanently settled areas in our country. A castle was built here as early as the 10th century, demarcating the southern border of the territory controlled by the Slavník dynasty. Important paths also crossed here, one of which ensured contact between Southern Bohemia and Moravia.

An old legend about Chýnov Castle tells of a time when it was the seat of the greatly feared robber knight, Mikoláš Zúl. His band excelled in audacity, and did not shy away from cruelty and violence, carrying out their nefarious trade far beyond the borders. But nothing lasts forever. Reports of Zúl's rampaging finally reached King Wenceslas IV himself. When he heard of Zúl's crimes, he became very angry and immediately had a band of experienced warriors dispatched to punish him.

It didn't take long for the punitive expedition to capture Zúl and transport him to Prague in chains. The trial was short and the verdict unambiguous – death by hanging. The execution was carried out before a large crowd of people, as a warning to everyone who might dare to violate the king's peace.

On his final journey to the gallows, the convict was accompanied by a young, then almost unknown priest. This last conversation with the convict, standing already beneath the gallows, moved him to repentance so much that in the final moments of his life, he turned to the watching crowd and begged for prayers for the salvation of his soul. That priest was said to be Master Jan Hus.



The legend, however, does not end there.

Zúl's body hung on the gallows for seven years as a warning to all who might perhaps want to follow in his footsteps. The legend tells that at that time, a feeble-minded pauper lived there, suffering from a strange mental deviation which manifested in the fact that he liked to bury hanged men above all else. One night, he took down Zúl's body, but this time he did not lay it in a grave, but used the cover of night and sat it in a shopkeeper's stall. When the shopkeeper came early in the morning, she thought it was the devil's rampant work. She was so frightened that she nearly died of shock. Finally, everything was explained, and Zúl's body was finally laid to eternal rest.



Another legend also features a criminal, this time in connection with the legendary regent of the Rosenberg estates and the famous builder of South Bohemian ponds – Jakub Krčín of Jelčany. His works were so bold that the common people suspected him of being in league with unclean forces.

The owner of the estate, Mr. Jan Malovec, called for Krčín to Chýnov to bring drinking water to him. That was not a big problem for Krčín, but the issue was where to get a plentiful water source. Tradition has it that a criminal sentenced to death revealed it to him in exchange for impunity and freedom. In return, Krčín secured impunity for him. Krčín then built a water reservoir on the edge of the village and led abundant and mainly excellent springs into it from nearby Rutice. From the reservoir, the water was then distributed through wooden pipes to fountains in the town.

However, it is known that the Rutice springs had flooded the meadows since time immemorial and formed a rather extensive lake. According to legend, there was a deep pool in the lake, which people considered bottomless. It was said that a hundred-year-old oak tree once fell into it. The water preserved it, and so it is said to still stand under the earth, untouched to this day. The pool became fatal for a rider who rode into it with his horse. The message which he was carrying as a swift messenger to Chýnov Castle was never delivered.



Chýnov is surrounded by beautiful forests. One is traditionally called the Knight's Forest. According to legend, a strong castle once stood here, where a powerful and brave knight sat. He liked to ride through the forests, and on one ride he met a monk whom he had never heard of. So he asked him where he came from. The hermit looked at the knight for a long time and instead of answering, told him to prepare for an early departure from this world. Then he suddenly vanished. The knight considered the apparition to be a delusion of the senses, but the hermit's prediction was soon fulfilled. The brave knight died unexpectedly. His wife had him buried at the place where that mysterious man from the castle had appeared to him. The castle dilapidated, crumbled, until it disappeared completely. But the name of the forest has survived the ages.

Whoever visits the Chýnov deanery church today probably does not suspect that, according to local tradition, it stands on the site of a former grove of the pagan god Triglav. In the circuit of the deanery, traces of two underground passages leading in various directions were allegedly once found. The surrounding houses have deep cellars, some are even two-story. Many barrels of beer used to be stored in them, because the old custom of tapping beer "in turn" was maintained in Chýnov for a long time. Whoever came across a keg quickly hung a whisp of straw on the house and tapped until he sold out. Then it was his neighbor's turn. Small-batch brewing was very prevalent in Chýnov and its surroundings, and the local excellent water was made for brewing beer. Some beer connoisseurs even claimed that if they had Chýnov water in Plzeň, their beer would be even better.

Underground passages are also said to lead from the former Chýnov castle. One opens into the nearby Obora forest, where legendary treasures are buried. But no one knows in which place, and so they are still waiting to be discovered. A romantic legend tells that Jan Žižka spared Chýnov Castle from destruction only because his sister was a nun in the monastery that stood on the site of the later brewery. As a souvenir of Jan Žižka's stay, there is supposedly an old stone table standing to this day in the castle courtyard. The famous warrior supposedly dined at it.



A legend from the post-White Mountain period tells of a strange, inexplicable phenomenon. According to it, shortly before an unhappy battle, the walls of Chýnov Castle began to sweat blood. According to eyewitnesses, blood dripped from the furniture, from the tables and chairs. a similar phenomenon was never repeated again.





8

THE LEGEND OF ROHIA MONASTERY



HIGH SCHOOL PETRU RAREȘ
ROMANIA



The story behind this place of worship, with its evident supernatural touch, adds to the charm of the site. The monastery was built by priest Nicolae Gherman, from the village of Rohia, 94 years ago. A father of ten children, he was deeply marked by the loss of one of his daughters, Ana, who died at only 10 years old.



Legend says that the pain of losing his daughter was so great that he began to see her in his dreams, telling him to build a church. In these dreams, the little girl showed him the exact place where he should build “a house for the Mother of God.” The place was called “Dealul Viei” (The Vineyard Hill), which is where the monastery stands today, according to the monastery’s abbot, Father Macarie Motogna. The priest did not want to tell anyone about the strange dreams in which his daughter appeared to him, nor about his inner turmoil, for fear of being considered insane.



However, legend says that one day a faithful woman from the village, Floarea lui Ilie, came to him and said: “Father, why do you not listen to the voice of God, who commands you, through little Anuța, to build a house for the Mother of God on Dealul Viei?” Surprised, the priest asked her what kind of house he should build, and she replied: “A monastery you should build, Father!”

The Cross That Moved by Itself At that moment, Father Nicolae realized that this was a divine decision. Filled with inner peace, he decided to build a monastery in memory of his daughter and for the comfort of the believers in these lands. Legend further says that the priest thought of changing the location shown in the dream, because it was very difficult to access. After consulting with several villagers, they chose a more accessible place, in a clearing called “La stejarul lui Pinteia” (At Pinteia’s Oak). According to custom, a cross is placed where a church or monastery is to be built. The villagers did so, but overnight the cross was taken and moved to the ridge of the hill, onto a rock.



At first, the priest and the villagers thought it was the work of a troublemaker, so they placed the cross back in the chosen clearing and posted a guard overnight. During the night it began to snow, and the guard, frightened, decided to go home. To everyone’s amazement, in the morning the cross was once again moved onto the rock, yet there were no footprints in the snow. This was also considered a divine sign

There is said to be a miraculous icon in the monastery church. The first miracle attributed to it occurred one year after it was consecrated, when it was only slightly affected by a fire: the entire wooden frame burned, yet the icon was found in the embers. Other inexplicable events took place during the communist period, when the secret police unsuccessfully tried to close the monastery. "In 1959, when almost all the monks were expelled from monasteries by Decree 410, His Eminence Justin remained here with only two monks. The Securitate wanted to close the monastery and came here repeatedly, asking the abbot for the key to the church so they could lock it. He always left the key at the icon of the Mother of God and told them to take it from there. But no one dared," says Father Macarie. The Place Where Nicolae Steinhardt Spent the Last Years of His Life Today, 15 monks live at Rohia Monastery. It is also the place where Nicolae Steinhardt spent the last years of his life. The cell in which he lived between 1980 and 1989, as a monk of Rohia Monastery, has been arranged as a small museum preserving his personal belongings: manuscripts, books, icons, paintings, and furniture. The church was rebuilt a few years ago, and currently a vast cultural center is under construction. In the monastery museum, visitors can also see an impressive collection of old books, some volumes dating back to the 1600s. The library holds over 40,000 volumes: liturgical books, theological and secular journals, theological, universal and Romanian literature, history, philosophy, and other fields.



9

06.30 TRAIN



BOZÜYÜK BORSA İSTANBUL
ANADOLU LİSESİ

In the quiet and fertile plain of Bozüyük, life began and ended with the rhythm of trains. In this small town, life was mostly about waiting. Every morning, it was as if the whole town held its breath and started to breathe again when the Kurtalan Post Train left Haydarpaşa and arrived. When the train appeared from afar, the dusty rails shook and the station suddenly became lively.

The fifteen minutes that the train stayed at the station were like a short carnival every evening for Bozüyük. Young girls wore their most colorful scarves, and young men fixed their hair while running to the station. It was as if the train brought not only passengers, but also hope. At that time, the station was full of young people, and the arrival of the train became a reason to meet.

It was among this crowd that Elif and Kemal met one summer morning.

Elif was a young girl who worked in her father's small shoe repair shop. Her eyes shone like the spring sun. When she heard the first sound of the train whistle, she ran out of her house near the station. Meeting the post train was not just a habit for her, but a ritual since childhood.

Kemal was a traveler who went from city to city, collecting stories. He was lonely like a traveler and careful like a writer. He had passed through Bozüyük many times while traveling from Istanbul to Ankara, but that morning felt different. As soon as he got off the train for the short break, he felt that his life would never be the same. Because across the crowd, he met Elif's eyes.



At that moment, even the sound of the train's metal wheels seemed to become quiet.

They looked at each other for only one second, but that second changed their destiny. That day, they only looked at each other. Yet those looks said more than many words ever could.

As days passed, meetings turned into gatherings, and gatherings turned into waiting.

Every morning, Elif went to the station and whispered Kemal's name while looking at the rails. Each time Kemal came, he brought something with him: sometimes a small memory from another city, sometimes a new story, sometimes just his smiling eyes.

Sometimes, during the short break, they went to the Zingildak meadow near the station. When the wind blew, the smell of grass made Kemal feel more peaceful than his hometown. While sharing fresh tomatoes picked from Elif's father's garden, they talked quietly about the future and protected even the smallest hope.

But every arrival had a departure.

Every goodbye became heavier with the sound of the train whistle.

Every wave of the hand hurt a little more.

Separation was the shadow of their love.



And one day...

The Kurtalan Post Train arrived late. While the crowd waited nervously, Kemal held Elif's hands at the edge of the station. There was a strange sadness in his eyes. He had to say something he had never said before.

"Elif... This time, my return may take a long time."

"How long?"

"I don't know."

At that moment, Elif felt her world slowly break inside. But she tried to smile, because sometimes love means hiding the truth.

Kemal gave her a small notebook.

"Wherever I am, I will keep writing. In every line, I will think of you."

When the train moved, Elif waved... not with her eyes, but with her heart. Because her eyes were already full of tears.



Days turned into months, months into seasons.
Every time the Post Train arrived, Elif ran to the station.
But Kemal never got off again.

Sometimes she waited with hope, sometimes with deep sadness.

After each train, she looked at the long rails.

Then she went home and looked at the tomatoes in the garden, the lonely swing in the park, the empty benches...

And each time, she became a little quieter.

One autumn day, a passenger got off the train holding a letter.
Elif's name was written on it.

It was the last letter from Kemal.

He had become seriously ill and went to Ankara for treatment.
He could not tell Elif and could not return.

Elif read the letter with shaking hands. One sentence stayed in her heart forever:



“The day I first saw you, I knew that wherever I went, I was taking the most valuable thing with me: your heart.”

After that day, Elif continued to wait for the post train.
People thought she was still waiting for Kemal.
But she knew the truth:

Some people never return...
But some loves never leave.

In Bozüyük, the rhythm of the post train can still be heard.
Every time the train arrives, the wind softly moves Elif’s hair.
And the sound of the rails lives on as a sad echo of two hearts
whose story was left unfinished.

Because in that town, the Kurtalan Post Train no longer carries
only passengers...
It also carries the silent fate of two lovers who could never
meet again.





10

THE FLOWER BRIDGE OF UNGHENI



CENTRUL DE EXCELENȚA ÎN
TRANSPORTURI MOLDOVA

Long ago, on the banks of the Prut River, there was a small, beautiful village with hardworking people and fields full of flowers. Yet, the villagers lived separated by a wide river, and the connections between them were weak. Each family stayed in its own area, and the children did not play together.



In the village lived Ana, a cheerful girl who loved nature and flowers more than anything. She dreamed of bringing people together and helping them enjoy the beauty of the world. Every day, she gathered flowers from gardens and placed them along the riverbank, dreaming of a bridge that could unite the village.



One night, while watching the moon's reflection in the water, Ana heard a gentle voice saying: "If you bring flowers from every garden, they will form a colorful bridge that will connect the hearts of the people." She awoke with her heart full of courage and hope.



Ana began collecting flowers from each family in the village. As people gave her flowers, they started talking, laughing, and growing closer. Soon, the flowers arranged themselves across the river, forming a beautiful, colorful, and fragrant bridge.



The villagers crossed the bridge and discovered that the river was no longer an obstacle but a path of friendship and joy. The village became united and happy, and the Bridge of Flowers remained a symbol of the bond between people and the beauty of nature. Since then, every child who crosses the bridge adds a flower, keeping the legend alive.





11

THE DEVILS ON ČERTOVA HRBATINA

STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLA SPOJŮ



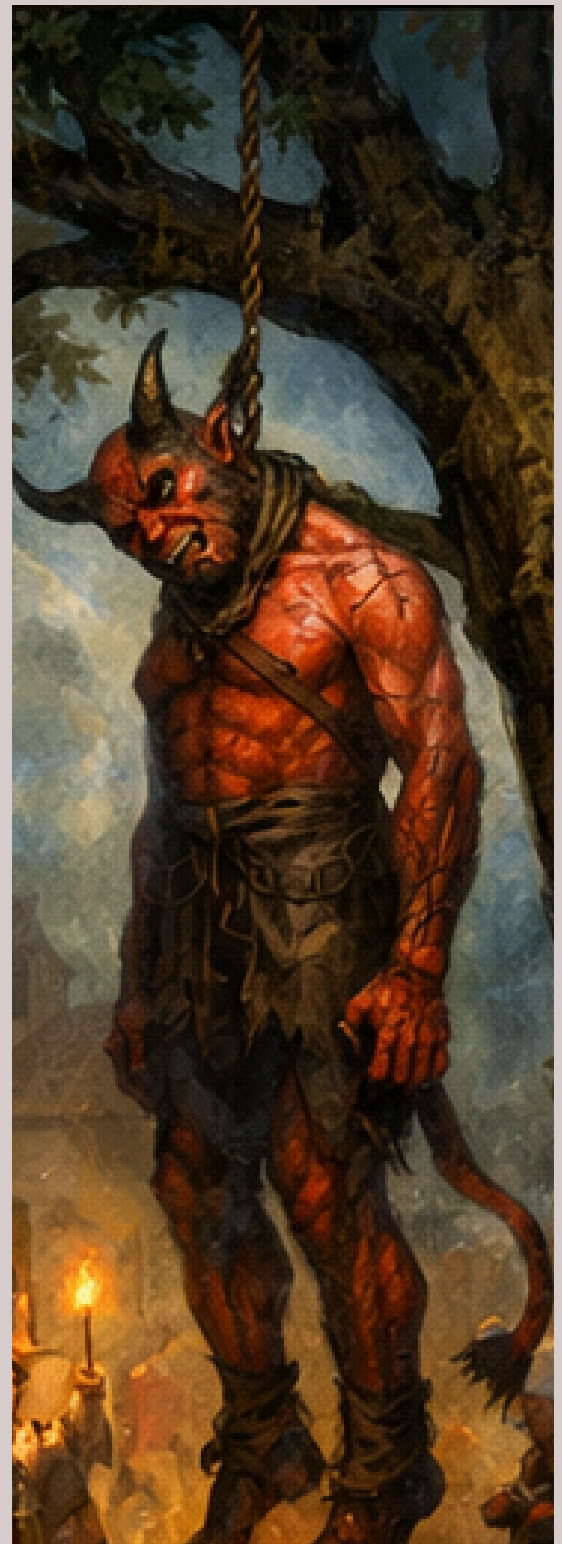
A INFORMATIKY TÁBOR

STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLA SPOJŮ A
INFORMATIKY, TÁBOR,
CZECH REPUBLIC

Čertova Hrbatina forms, in the north of the Tábor region, a kind of natural boundary between Central and Southern Bohemia. It is a land where, as we can easily imagine, when a native son and man of faith—the České Budějovice bishop J. V. Jirsík—came here years ago, overwhelmed by deep emotion at its beauty, he fell to his knees, kissed the ground, and fervently prayed for the welfare of the Czech nation.

From the name of the locality one might assume that the attribute “Devil’s” was acquired long ago, but this is not the case. The name Čertova Hrbatina was first used for this area only fifty years ago. Perhaps because, in local folk legends, devils are said to roam here quite openly. For example, tourists are familiar with an enormous boulder of bizarre shapes called the Devil’s Burden. It has many cracks, and on one side there is a clearly visible imprint of devilish claws.

Legend has it that a devil once practiced the blacksmith’s trade here. He was said to prosper greatly—until people discovered that he was stealing chains and iron from their plows and reworking them into new products, which he then sold back to them. Enraged villagers allegedly caught the devil and hanged him from the nearest tree. At that moment, out of a clear sky, a terrible storm broke out; lightning struck the devil’s forge, destroying it, and only a single wall remained—today’s Devil’s Burden.



In the settlement of Ounuz lived, many years ago, an old man who had no one in the world, and his only faithful companion was unimaginable poverty. One day, when he was alone pondering his life, he muttered to himself that he would rather have the devil take him already. Hardly had the words left his mouth when the lord of the Hell himself stood before him.

He said that he had come to the old man to fulfill his wish and before the poor man could recover, the devil took him in his arms and flew him up high. When the poor man saw his native land from a bird's eye view, he was moved by its beauty and forgot in that moment all the troubles he had experienced there. Thus he asked the devil to fulfill his last wish: to smoke his pipe and look around the landscape where he has lived his whole life from above. The devil granted his wish and flew with him to Javorová skála. The old man was happy for a long time and did not object when the devil took him to his kingdom after a while. Since then, that place has been called the Devil's Sitting Place.



Devils are known to be obsessed with churches because in them people confess their sins, receive absolution, and the devil loses the opportunity to claim their souls. Therefore, devils did everything they could to cancel the construction of churches. When they started building a church in Jistebnice, the devils from Hrbatina were given the task of destroying the building at all costs. And so it happened that when the people of Jistebnice woke up one morning, they found only rubble on the site of the church under construction. Instead of complaining, they got back to work and the church slowly grew. What was their horror when everything was destroyed again in the morning. When this happened again, the citizens decided to guard the building. They chose several strong and, above all, fearless heroes who hid near the building after dusk and watched what would happen. When midnight struck, they saw the destroyer of their work - the devil flew in and began to demolish the building.

The young men didn't wait, they jumped out of hiding and caught the devil. He was so surprised that he promised everything in the world if only they would leave him alone. The heroes decided that if the devil has enough energy to destroy, he can also use it for useful activities. Since they were short of stone when building the church, they ordered the devil to provide it. And they told him to bring it from Rome. What did the devil have left? He brought the stone to the construction site all night and when he flew all sooted for the last time, a rooster crowed in Cunkov and the devil had no choice but to drop his burden on the ground. The stones fell on Hrbatina and created the stone "herds" so typical for it."



A similar legend is told about the church in Nadějkov. Here, however, the devil wanted to cancel the construction of the church in a particularly reprehensible way. He cunningly let the people finish building the church and then set off for Jerusalem. There, he tore a huge stone from Solomon's Temple and flew it to Nadějkov with the goal of throwing the stone onto the newly completed church and thus destroying it. He hurried, but the stone was too heavy and so the devil's flight took longer than he expected. As he flew over the local area, he heard the bells in Nadějkov ringing, announcing that the church had just been consecrated. From that moment on, the devil could no longer harm the church. In a rage, he threw the stone to the ground, which shattered into many pieces and thus adorned the Devil's Hump.





12

THE FOREST MAIDEN



HIGH SCHOOL PETRU RAREȘ
ROMANIA

Romanian mythology who haunts the forests of Maramureş and brings misfortune to those who encounter her. She is described as having two appearances: one as a young and beautiful girl, with hair long enough to reach the ground, and another as an old and ugly woman, with a hunched back. Sometimes, she can also take the form of animals such as wolves, foxes, or bears.



The origin of the Forest Maiden is linked to a sad story, which says that she was once a simple girl who got lost in the forest and was seduced by an unknown man. He took her to a stone house and bewitched her, causing her to lose her mind and transform into an unrecognizable being. Then he sent her to wander through the forests, never able to return to the world of people.



Forest Maiden has supernatural powers that allow her to stir up storms, cast spells, lure men and steal their souls, kidnap children, or harm livestock. She appears mostly at night, when she can be heard laughing, crying, singing, or screaming through the woods. Those who see her are overwhelmed by fear and terror, and they can escape her only if they carry sacred objects or magical plants, such as linden rope, incense, celandine, basil, garlic, or pepper. They must also not answer her calls, not look her in the eyes, and pray.



The Forest Maiden is a legend that reflects the beliefs and fears of the people of Maramureș, who live close to nature and the forests. She is an expression of both the beauty and the danger represented by the forest—a space of mystery and fantasy, where unusual and inexplicable things happen. The Forest Maiden is, at the same time, both victim and culprit: a being who seeks love, yet causes suffering

