



tales from the
LAKE OF LEGENDS



LEGENDS AND TALES ABOUT POGRADEC

2024

LIBRAZHD



GRAMSH

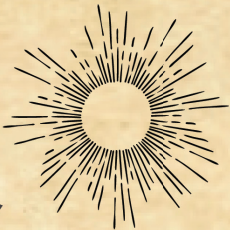
POGRADEC



OHRID LAKE



















KORÇË





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the Lost Treasure of Kamja




In the area around the Stone of Kamja, there lived a wealthy old woman blessed with many sons and men in her household. Over the years, they had accumulated great wealth that filled the house with glory and riches.

But the day came when half of the household's bravest, the old woman's sons, passed away, leaving her worried about the great wealth that remained. Concerned and distressed, the old woman decided to hide her treasure in a safe place. After much contemplation, she chose to bury her treasure in the depths of the stone nearby. She marked the location inside the cave with special signs and left, leaving behind a sudden enigma. For a long time, the village scoured the old woman's home, searching zealously for the hidden treasure, but to no avail. Many believed that the old woman had a great hidden fortune, and thus, the village gave her the nickname "Kamja" and called the stone where the treasure was buried "The Stone of Kamja." Thus, the legend remains that within this stone, there are three tunnels or wells at the upper part. The paths through these tunnels, filled with water, are hidden and create a mysterious labyrinth that leads to the much-sought treasure. These tunnels are filled with cold and deep water, and only those willing to face darkness and danger can solve the enigma and reach the lost treasure.





the Prayer of Arbër 



During the reign of Sultan Murat over Albania, a peasant named Arbër, who lived in the vicinity of Pogradec, was in love with a beautiful girl named Mira. They were deeply in love with each other, but when the Sultan heard about Mira's beauty, he ordered her to be brought to his palace to become part of his harem. Arbër was furious at the Sultan's decision but could do nothing to save his beloved. Nevertheless, he did not give



up and decided to go to a sacred place on the mountain near Pogradec to seek help from the gods. He set off on a long journey and, upon arrival, began praying earnestly for Mira's return. After many days of prayer, Arbër returned to his village and found Mira free. Mira told him how the Sultan had tried to

make her part of his harem, but one day after her arrival at the palace, he ordered her to be sent back to her village. It was said that the night before this decision, he had a dream in which a high figure told him that if Mira was not returned to her village, a power greater than the mountains would overthrow the Sultan's rule.

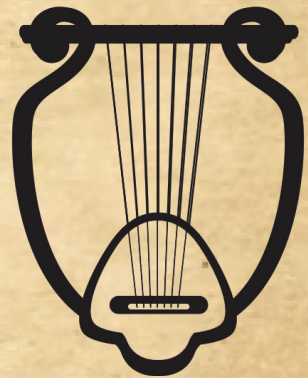


*the Earthly Paradise
in Voloreka*



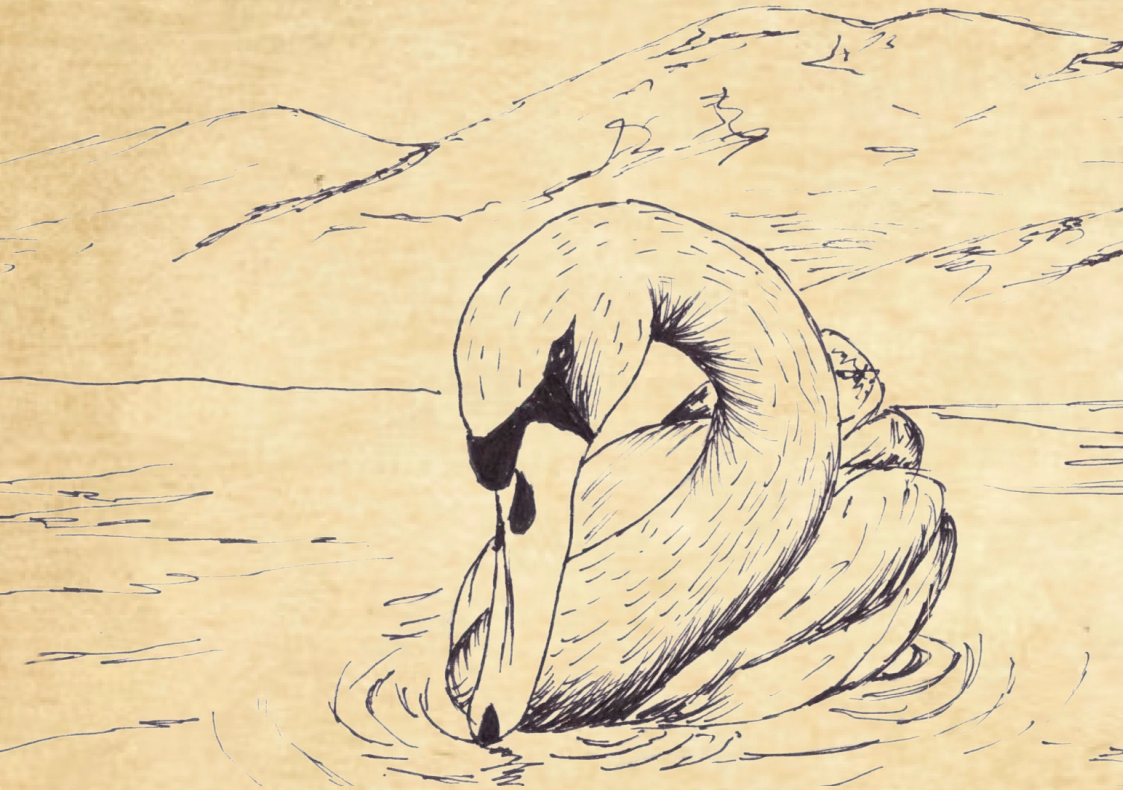
In a marvelous place called Voloreka, it is said that the gods descended to rest and enjoy the peace of this earthly paradise. This was the place where Anacreon's dove came to drink clear water, bringing with it its ancient wisdom. On its serene shores, the gods descended with harps and lyres, creating a divine symphony that united music with the living world in perfect harmony.

In this heavenly paradise, every melody was accompanied by the chirping of birds and the breath of nature, bringing life to every season and moment. Voloreka was a place where magic and life coexisted in an endless dance, where every sound was an invitation to dreams and tranquility. But one day, everything changed. The foot of man stepped on this sacred land, interrupting the divine harmony. With every step he took, the music began to fade, and the magic of Voloreka diminished in the memory of those who had known it. Yet, the memory of that perfect harmony still lives in the hearts of those who have heard the ancient songs of this earthly paradise. In the noise of the modern world, faint echoes of Voloreka's melodies can still be heard, reminding us of a time when gods and nature lived in harmony.





the Swan of the Lake



*On the shores of the lake lived a girl named Mjellma.
Every morning, she would go out to the edge of the lake
to await the dawn, which burst over Mount Thate
and poured its golden light upon her.*

Mjellma also greeted the moon in the evening, enjoying its quiet magic. Thus, the girl grew white and beautiful like the sun, with charms as bright as the moon.

Over time, Mjellma fell in love with the Dawn, whom she saw every day as he rose over her beloved mountain. She longed to meet and keep him close, but the Dawn never stayed. He emerged from the mountain, spread his white light over the lake, and continued his journey to the other side of the world. Consumed by love, Mjellma prayed to God to transform her into a bird so that she could fly to Mount Thate and meet the Dawn. God answered her prayer, turning her into a beautiful white bird. Filled with longing and joy, she flew toward the mountain, but as always, the Dawn poured its light over her and departed. Heartbroken, Mjellma fell into the lake, words frozen on her lips and her heart filled with sorrow. Two drops of tears fell from her eyes. The lake's water could not dissolve them, and those tears hardened, turning black and remaining forever on her yellow beak, beneath her black eyes. They are for the Dawn, an eternal reminder of her boundless love.



the Hope of Drilon



In ancient times, under the wings of the beautiful Thate Mountain and on the calm shores of Lake Pogradec, there was a renowned queen named Shpresa e Drilonit.



She was known for her unimaginable beauty and kindness. But one day, a dark fear rose over Pogradec. A black bird known as “The Loss of Hope” surrounded the city and began to spread a curse and sadness wherever it went. Queen Shpresa e Drilonit, who was a powerful protector of nature and harmony, took responsibility for saving her city and her people. Believing in the power of love and her intervention, she set out on a difficult journey to find the black bird and restore hope to the hearts of all the residents of Pogradec.

On her journey, she faced great challenges and unimaginable dangers, but her faith in the power of love and goodness never waned. After a long and exhausting search, she found the black bird and removed the sorrows and fears it had brought upon Pogradec. By restoring hope in the hearts of the people, she turned this moment into a grand celebration for the entire city.


From that day on, it is said that the spirit of Shpresa e Drilonit tells the beauty and harmony of the city of Pogradec. And anyone seeking hope and relief in difficult moments believes that their beloved queen, Shpresa e Drilonit, will oversee and protect their city from any darkness.



the Birth of Lin



In the blue skies, the god of music, Apollo, moved with grace and harmony. One day, he met and fell in love with Terpsichore, the muse of songs and dances. In the endless sky, they united in a divine dance, and from this union, Lin was born, the son of art and harmony.



Lin grew up among sweet sounds and perfect melodies, inheriting his parents' talent for music. He became an unparalleled master of sounds, a free spirit flying through the skies, spreading his enchanting art.

One day, as he flew among the stars, Lin noticed Liknida, the place of light and beauty. Captivated by that view, he descended near it, flying around it with melodies that filled all the lands of Enkelana with music and art.

At the end of his beautiful journey, Lin stood on a peninsula that he saw from above. Inspired by the beauty and magic of that land, he named the place after himself, leaving behind an eternal musical and artistic legacy for generations to come.



the Love of Lake Lihnida



In ancient times, in the magical waters of Lake Ohrid, sailed a fisherman named Linkest. He spent his days fishing, enjoying the lake's peace, and seeking the hidden treasures nature had to offer.

One day, as he pulled the nets from the crystal-clear waters, Linkest caught a breathtaking sight: a beautiful nymph, glistening like sunlight on the lake's waves. His heart was filled with magic, and he tried to catch her, but the nymph leaped from the net and vanished into the depths, leaving only a small piece of her silver-colored garment in his hand.

Mesmerized and determined, Linkest did not stop until he found the beautiful nymph again. With all his heart, he expressed his love and desire to unite with her in life. The nymph, touched by his sincere feeling, accepted, and they married, creating a happy family blessed with two children, a son named Enkeled and a daughter named

Ohrida. Linkest always called his beloved by the name Lihnida, remembering her as the nymph who changed his life forever.

Every time he went to the lake to fish, he softly called her name, giving the lake her eternal name, Lihnida.





the Tears of Prespa and the Dry Mountain

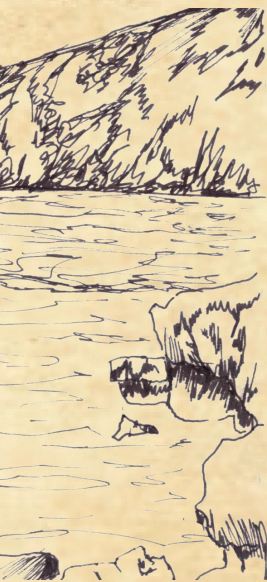


In the magical Lake Ohrid, a fisherman spent his days searching for the hidden treasures of the deep waters.



One day, while fishing, he caught something extraordinary in his net: a fairy of stunning beauty, shining like the sun on the lake's waves. One day, while fishing, he caught something extraordinary in his net: a fairy of stunning beauty, shining like the sun on the lake's waves. Enchanted by her appearance, the fisherman could not let her go.

The fairy fought with all her strength to free herself and finally managed to escape, but unfortunately, her magical dress remained tangled in the net. This dress was a part of her, and without it, she could no longer swim in the lake's deep waters. With a heavy heart, she begged the fisherman to return her dress, but he refused, blinded by his love for the fairy. He proposed marriage to her, promising to return her dress only if she agreed to be his wife. The fairy accepted, and they married, giving birth to two children: a son named Dry Mountain and a daughter named Prespa. Although she was



a loving and caring mother, the fairy missed the underwater world she came from and sought her dress every day. One day, when the fisherman was not at home, she finally found her hidden dress, put it on, and plunged into Lake Ohrid, returning forever to its depths. Her daughter, Prespa, was left heartbroken, and her tears flowed incessantly.

Nothing could stop those tears, which bore witness to the loss of her mother. Her brother, Dry Mountain, decided to help his sister and, with his strength, transformed into a tall and powerful mountain, trying to stop her tears from flowing. But no vegetation or trees could grow on this rocky mountain, as Prespa's tears were unstoppable.

Prespa's tears created Lake Prespa, a lake that bore witness to her deep love and loss. They flow down the mountain through channels, eventually ending in Lake Ohrid, where her beloved mother resides. This is the story of tears that never run dry and the eternal love that binds her family.



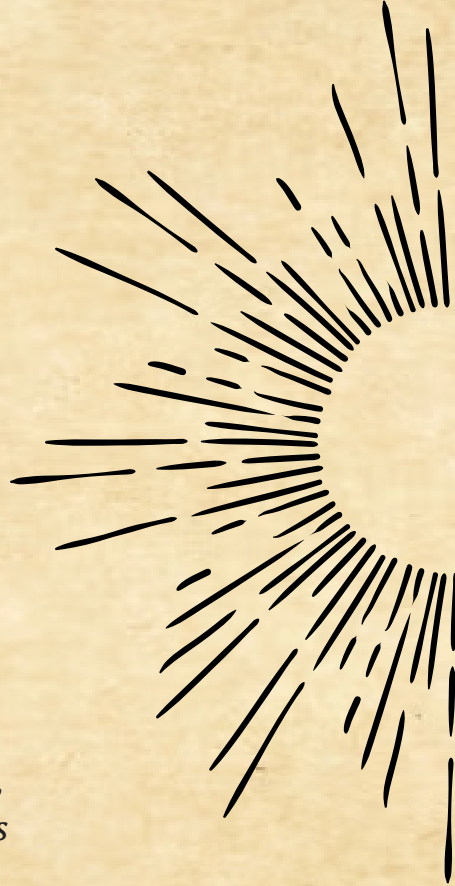
the Divine Creation of the Lake

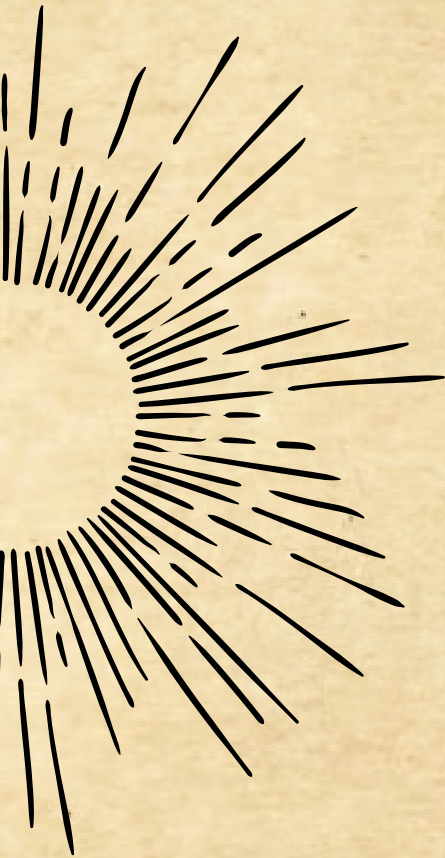


In ancient times, the Sun, with its bright rays, looked down upon a land filled with good and hardworking people who lived in harmony with one another. However, life was not easy for them. Water, the source of life, was scarce. They relied on small springs and streams fed by the winter's snow, struggling in their efforts to survive and tend their livestock. One summer day, the inhabitants decided to offer their gratitude to the Sun, hoping that it would bless them with water. They gathered at the bottom of a large depression, lit fires, and sacrificed livestock as offerings to the Sun. As the aroma of the roasted meat rose to the sky, they knelt with their hands raised, praying and praising the Sun for its help. They spent the day in prayer and praise, returning to their homes in the evening with hearts full of hope. When dawn broke the next morning, the Sun, observing their lands, decided to do something special. A tear of light rolled down from the mountain's face and transformed into an old man with a bent staff, with long white hair, mustache, and beard. The old man began to walk through nature, listening to its sounds. Along the way, he met a shepherd with sheep who warmly invited him to his fold. The old man thanked him and continued.

Later, two men with cattle greeted him, gave him water, and invited him to rest in their cottages. With every step he took, the old man was met with kindness and hospitality from all the inhabitants. They worked in peace and cared for one another, despite their great thirst.

After a long journey, the old man returned and saw the large depression, saying sadly, "Lifeless." During his journey, he relied on his staff, which tapped on the ground with a special rhythm. When he reached the end of the day at the mountain's foot, he sat in a meadow near white flowers to spend the night.





As the old man walked, water began to spring forth from every place where his staff had tapped. There were many taps, and many springs were created.

At the dawn of the new day, the old man saw that the depression had filled with clear, pure water, forming a magnificent lake.

Then, he transformed into a beam of light and dissolved into the Sun, continuing his celestial journey.

The new lake, surrounded by beautiful light, became home to rare and marvelous fish, a divine gift solely for that land. In the time of the Illyrians, the lake was named Liknidë, meaning “light,” as a reminder of the Sun’s blessing and the hospitality of its people.



the Amazing Stone of Kamja



Two shepherds had five sick goats and did not know what to do to cure them. One of them suggested taking them to the “Stone of Kamja,” although neither of them had much hope that the goats would be cured. They tied the goats with ropes to the top of the cliff and left them there. When spring arrived and the scent of flowers began to spread, the shepherds decided to

return to the base of the Stone of Kamja. After finding the goats bleating joyfully, they climbed up and were astonished to find them cured and standing on their feet. It is said that at the top of the “Stone of Kamja,” there was a healing shepherd who had helped the forlorn plants that had been left in despair.

According to legends, within this special stone, there are three tunnels or wells at its upper part. These tunnels are filled with red water and contain deep gold. The water in these wells is not ordinary; it is red and imbued with a special magic that aids in the creation of an extraordinary treasure. However, a long time ago, a group attempting to reach this treasure never returned. The enchantment of the magical gold led them to fall into the well and be lost forever. For this reason, the locals, fearful of the possibility of being hypnotized by the magical gold, avoid climbing this path and steer clear of any attempts to reach the depths of the Stone of Kamja.



Saint Marena Fulfills the Prayers of the Believers



The legend says that Saint Marena was born far away in Asia Minor in the year 270 AD. God had endowed her with great gifts which she intended to use for people in need and as a means of spreading Christianity. Her pagan father did not accept this, so Saint Marena moved to distant lands, settling in the region of Mokra near Llënga. Angered, her father sent people to kill her. Saint Marena lived in a crystal stone cave with many rooms, the last of which contained a cross. She slept there, while she drank and bathed in the Najazma spring. She lived hidden,



doing good for the people nearby. Grateful villagers decided to build her a church in 1660 on top of the Mujaza meadows, on a hillside. The materials gathered there had mysteriously moved from the shore one morning to the place where the church now stands. There, they realized that Saint Marena had chosen that location.

After the church was burned down in 1754, it was rebuilt, and this time its walls were painted with her image and spirit. To this day, people from various places have turned it into a pilgrimage site, as it is said that there are many testimonies of Saint Marena hearing every prayer of the faithful. They pray in the Church and spend time meditating in the churchyard, sleeping in tents or the monastery rooms, with prayers on their lips and supplications, hoping that their prayers will be heard.

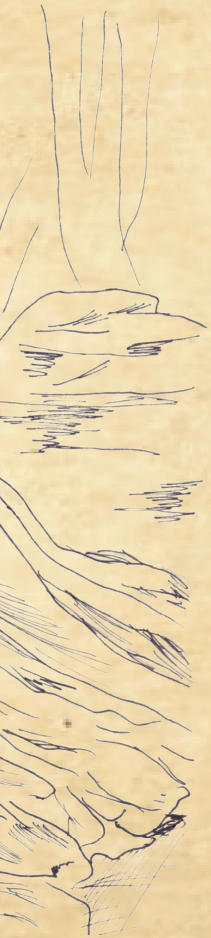


*the Stones of the Bride and
Groom – The Curse*



A grand wedding had begun, the drums beating, songs and dances filling the house, and the scent of roast meat in the air. Everyone was happy except the bride. Her heart was crying even though she didn't show it on her face.

She prayed for morning not to come, but morning, like every day, arrived with its noise. The herald announced that the guests were arriving, and the courtyard filled with gunshots to perform the customary rites. Only the bride felt uneasy. She hoped her mother and brother, who were nearby, would understand her, but the procession was underway, and she was leaving without fully grasping it herself. Her two attendants helped her onto the horse, and she came to her senses. The clamor of the festivity surrounded her until someone shouted loudly, "May this wedding never take place." The bride was startled, wondering who had cursed, but the noise overwhelmed her again. A horse's whinny brought her back to reality, and she noticed that the weather had changed; the wind blew fiercely, and she heard people shouting loudly: "Demons!" Immediately, her thoughts turned to the curse, and she kept her hand on the saddle. Then she saw before her eyes the beautiful shores and valleys where she had grown up, along with some sheep flowers, and she remained in that state. Today, people look in astonishment at the stones, with the bride in the middle, all turned to rock, and no one knows who cast the curse.





the Superstition of the Wedding Guests



On the road linking Laktesh with Senisht, an unusual event occurred that forever bound this place to a unique legend. Two groups of wedding guests, each with their own bride, were traveling in opposite directions along this road. When they met in Ponik, an extraordinary incident occurred that broke the usual norms of wedding guests and marriages. According to the legend, at the moment of the encounter, one group of wedding guests turned to stone, while the other turned to poison. This transformation was a punishment for violating local beliefs, which stated that wedding guests should not be met on the road. This strange event is associated with the punishment of those who did not respect community traditions. Now, the two groups are eternally memorialized as stones and poison, serving as a deep reminder for those who pass by. They are present in a form that carries an important lesson for the future: respecting customs and traditions is essential for harmony and well-being. This legend remains a significant part of the culture and history of the area, constantly reminding of the importance of respecting and staying faithful to traditions.





the Treasure of the Golik Bridge



It is said that due to its strategic position connecting four regions and its location over the tumultuous river, this bridge, a branch of the Egnatia, witnessed many battles and upheavals during the Roman period. Armies were overturned, and their treasures were buried in the riverbed and the foundations of the bridge. The builders of the bridge, around 300 years ago,

are believed to have used the stones of the bridge to hide their own riches. This explains why the bridge still stands strong to this day. Even today, treasure hunters scour the base of the bridge in search of hidden wealth, often causing damage in the process. It remains unknown whether these treasures have been discovered, as the search continues.

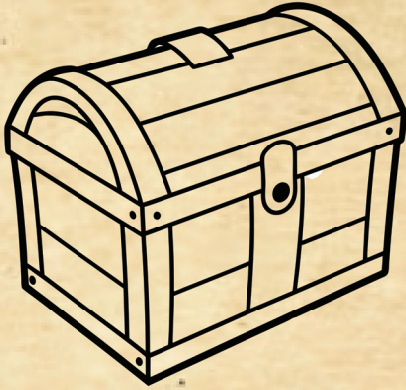
The Golik Bridge stands stoically over the gold and silver of its legendary past.





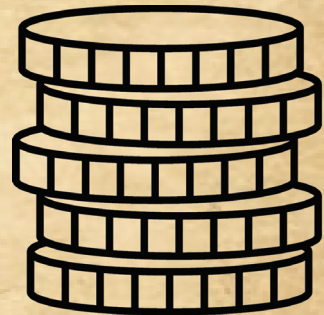
The Hidden Treasure of Llënga Canyon





The region of Mokra is steeped in legends of hidden riches, one of which speaks of a treasure concealed in the Llëngë area. This treasure is believed to have belonged to Queen Teuta. During the First Illyrian-Roman War, Queen


Teuta took drastic measures to safeguard her royal hoard. The treasure was transported along the ancient Egnatian Way, deep into Illyria, and eventually reached Llëngë. Here, amidst the Llëngë Canyon and the narrow pass of Gryka e Gurit, it was buried. The hoard was said to include vast amounts of gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones, carried by forty mules. Legend has it that the builders diverted the river's course to conceal the treasure and then sealed the entrance.





The Dragon, Son of a Fairy





The fairies would rest atop Kozica, near the cold springs untouched by human feet. They lived by strict rules, never to be seen by anyone. Yet one day, a fairy strayed from her secret haven and saw, by the spring, a shepherd. She fell in love with him. She returned to her hidden place, but her heart remained elsewhere. Day after day, she would visit the shepherd until she became pregnant. By breaking the sacred laws of the fairies, she could no longer return to their realm. Alone, she left and gave birth to the child. But now, what would she do? The child had to be hidden. Across from Kozica, atop Trebinjë, stood a cradle of stone. She went there, chained the infant, and returned to her fairy sisters. From her refuge, she watched over him each day and secretly fed him. The boy, with wings beneath his arms, grew in this way. One morning, a loud crack pierced the air. The sun rose, and the fairy saw that the dragon was no longer there. Where he had gone, no one knows.

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Bashkia Pogradec



Këshilli Rinor Pogradec