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*Two legends
in one story*

Sarzyna – Barcelos 2023

This story happened a long time ago, hundreds of years have passed since then. Did it really happen? No one can answer this question anymore. It took place in Krakow, a city already known all over the world. It must be admitted that you will not find a similar place on the entire globe.

There flows a beautiful river near the hill called Wawel. On the one hand, it delights with its beauty, and on the other hand, it is powerful and sometimes awe-inspiring when it floods the surrounding areas in the spring. In summer, the water flows swiftly, providing pleasant cooling and numerous benefits. Fishermen catch fish, wicker workers cut wicker twigs for basket over it, women wash clothes on the sandy and gentle shore, and children splash merrily on the warmest days.

- Our beloved Vistula - say the inhabitants of the city. And they are right. The river benefits everyone.

When we overcome the steep slope of the hill and go higher, we will see narrow and wide streets. They all lead to a large square called the market. How many houses there. And how colorful and beautifully decorated they are. Opposite the widest street you can see a fruit merchant.



To the left there lives a shoemaker, to the right a baker, further on there are shops, and deep down there is a house of a rich merchant who goes to distant countries and brings delicacies, beautiful fabrics, objects that people see for the first time with their eyes. Maciej - because that's the name of the merchant, he also tells interesting stories.

The wise king who ruled the whole country from Wawel Hill found out about it.



- Send for Maciej. He returned yesterday with goods from overseas countries. Let him tell us some extraordinary story he heard about during his journey - said the king to his subjects.

- Lord, we are already fulfilling your order - replied the courtiers who loved their ruler very much and would do anything to make his time more pleasant.

Maciej arrived not in a hurry, because he had many things to do on the way. At last he arrived at the king's castle.



- Hello, our lord. I come at your command, Maciej the merchant bowed politely.

Hello dear friend, replied the king. I told you to come because I'm curious to see what you saw and heard in the world far away.

-Lord, I have lived many dangerous moments, I have seen great cities, I have heard many extraordinary stories.

Tell me about one of them, the king asked.

As you know, sir, I set out on my journey a year ago in the spring, when the ground became dry and I was able to drive my wagon through the muddy roads. Already at the beginning I missed my children very much, whom I love more than life, and I knew that I had to come back from my journey unharmed.



I rode in a two-horse cart many nights and days. At last we arrived with the servants in a place where merchants come from all over the world. And how big this world is, no one knows yet. They say there are other countries beyond the great waters, but I don't believe it.

- Well, my Maciej, you really had interesting moments - said the king.

-I met a merchant there who told me a story. Listen...

In a town that lies very far from here and is called Barcelos - Maciej began his story - there was a theft. The silver vessels of a great rich man had been stolen. Suspicion fell on an unknown newcomer making a pilgrimage, because one of the roads leading to the grave of St. Jacob. Although the pilgrim claimed his innocence, the judge was not convinced and he was sentenced to death by hanging. Just before his execution, the man asked to be allowed to appear again in front of the judge. His will was fulfilled.

The judge was having lunch with his friends at that moment. On the table, on a platter, there was a wonderful roast rooster. The convict spoke of his innocence, but his words were not taken into account. Then the desperate pilgrim exclaimed:

- I am so sure of my innocence that when the executioner executes my sentence, the rooster will rise from the plate and crow three times.

Laughter echoed through the hall. The condemned man was led away, and as he was being noosed, the seemingly impossible happened.... The rooster came to life and crowed... The judge jumped up from the table, ran to the execution ground and supported the pilgrim's legs with his own hands, thus preventing his death . Since then, the rooster has become a symbol of good luck and trust in this city.



Interesting story, I've never heard of it. Nothing like this has ever happened in our city," said the ruler.

"Sir, such a story did not happen with us in Krakow, but other wonders took place here," said the servant who was sitting closest to the king. "If you wish, sir, I will tell you."

- Okay, I'm curious what stories happened to us near Wawel.

- In the times of King Krak, the founder of the city of Krakow, a dragon lived in a large cave on the slope of the Wawel Hill - the servant began his story. - It was a huge animal with a mouth and a long tail. It devoured sheep and cows that people grazed in the meadows along the Vistula River.

The king decided to give his daughter's hand to the one who would slay the dangerous dragon. More and more knights began to come to Krakow, but none of them managed to defeat the dragon.



Then a young shoemaker, Skuba, appeared at the royal court and promised that he would deal with the dangerous beast. The entire retinue of knights surrounding the king burst out laughing, treating the cobbler's words as a good joke. However, Scuba was not easily discouraged.

The next day he obtained a ram's skin, stuffed it with sulfur, and put it out in front of the dragon's lair. The dragon, lured by the sight of a tasty snack, quickly grabbed the ram and ate it.

Then sulfur began to burn his belly, the dragon breathed real fire. Wanting to relieve the burning pain, the dragon began to drink water from the Vistula. He drank and drank and grew bigger and bigger until he finally exploded.



And so a clever, inconspicuous shoemaker freed Krakow from a dangerous dragon. In return, he received the hand of the princess, with whom he lived happily ever after.

-Our Krakow has extraordinary legends – the king was happy. -When you go on another expedition, Maciej, tell your friend this Polish story of ours.

- Sir, I will certainly tell my friend about Krak, but also about Lech, Piast and Wanda - said kind Maciej.

"Perhaps in many years, when we are no more, people will still be telling each other similar stories," said the wise ruler. – What was the name of the place where the story with the rooster happened?

-Sir, this is Barcelos. To get there, you have to cover many roads - replied the merchant Maciej.

"I hope that someday people will be able to move around the world much faster," said the king. – They will be able to learn about other countries and their history.

And so ended Maciej's visit to the ruler at Wawel. He walked slowly back to his house, thinking about what the king had said. Maybe someday people will actually have devices to move quickly from country to country. And in the meantime, the merchant began to plan a new trip to overseas lands. He thought he would travel for many, many days.

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