

Dobrynya

BYLINAS

Written down by Anna Zubkova

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Under the editorship of

Dr. Vladimir Antonov

Translated into English by

Anton Teplyy and Vladimir Antonov

Correctors of the English translation:

Hiero Nani and Keenan Murphy

This book, compiled of bylina — the Heroic tales in Slavic folklore tradition — is about how to live in the Truth, serve the Good and grow spiritually.

Let the parents and teachers read this book to children, as well as children, parents, and all other people — to themselves.

***Gentle breeze is calling you by your name
To listen to the exploits of Dobrynya:
How Dobrynya-Hero was living on the land,
How Dobrynya was serving God-the-Father.
The wind sings songs about old days
And tells honest tales and bylinas.
It sings about love and courage,
About strong friendship and faithfulness,
About our beloved Mother-the-Earth,
And about the wisdom of the omnipotent Good!
Gentle breeze is calling you by your name
To listen to the exploits of Dobrynya:
How Dobrynya-Hero was living on the land,
How Dobrynya was serving God-the-Father.***

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How Dobrynya Became a Hero

Morning! The night passed, the day has come!

Morning! The sun is rising above the land!

“Morning! Morning!” — an owl hooted and flew to sleep.

“The sun is rising and giving life to everything!” — a robin is singing.

A snipe flew to the sky, and its song began to flow from there:

“The sky is pure! The land is beautiful! I see the endless expanse!”

The snipe flew down, singing with its tail:

“I love my land!”

... Every day is like this from century to century: the sun rises, the day comes!

... This happened in ancient times. Dobrynya was born on the land and endowed with infinite power and kindness. When Dobrynya grew up, he began to prepare himself for the road and asked the permission of his mother:

“Permit me, my dear mother, to set on a journey to find out why I was born on the Earth, how to protect everything and everyone from evil, and how to help those who are good.

Dobrynya’s mother let her child go. She said to him in her farewell speech:

“There is one Mother for all people — Mother-the-Earth. Wherever you are — It will be with you, because its loving heart beats with my heart simultaneously! Protect our beloved Earth!

“And all people have one Father — God. He is the Creator and the Parent of all creatures. Wherever you are — He is always with you! Observe His commandments, listen to His advice, and fulfill His instructions!

“In the world, there is a great and kind power called *love*! There is nothing more powerful than it!”

Dobrynya embraced his mother and started his journey.

... He was walking and saw a beautiful mare galloping in a meadow; a free wind was caressing her mane. Her movements were light and free. It seemed that she was flying over the earth, without trampling down thick grass. A colt, as beautiful as his mother, was with her.

Dobrynya bowed to the ground before the mare and asked her:

“Let your son go with me: he will be for me not a servant but a friend!”

The mare looked in Dobrynya’s eyes and sent her son with him. Yet she asked Dobrynya not to sit on the colt during one year until he became stronger.

Dobrynya and the colt became friends. They walked together along the fields and forests, bathed together in clean rivers, and smiled together at the sun!

The colt grew up and became a horse. That horse could understand Dobrynya without words, cross strong rivers, and gallop tirelessly day and night.

Dobrynya was riding across the land, but in each place he visited, he saw only unhappiness and afflictions! Everywhere there were only sad, cheerless and sickly people, who forgot ancient laws and unselfish love!

Dobrynya saw that people became unkind. He saw widows and orphans shedding their tears, old men

cursing their fate and quarreling, the youth showing their disrespect for them, old women swearing, crying, and lamenting over their wasted lives. Maidens forgot what the beauty of the soul is. The daring of fine fellows began to decline. Children were rarely born, and even those who were born — were ailing and weak. One clan waged war against another clan! People were destroying themselves! Princes lived in enmity, seeking only glory and riches! They did not respect the peace...

Dobrynya started thinking how he could help people in their troubles but could not find it out. So he began to ask people why they lived in this way and what for.

He asked one of them:

“What do you live for, oh man?”

“I don’t know... I live because I live...”

“And what do you do?”

“I work, eat and drink...”

“And what can you do?”

“I can carry stones, and I receive food and drink for this.”

“But what for do you carry these stones?”

“I don’t know...”

Dobrynya asked another man:

“What do you live for, oh man?”

“I don’t know...”

“And what can you do?”

“I can beat others with my fists...”

“And what do you beat for, and whom?”

“I beat everyone whom I was told to beat! I receive a lot of money for this...”

Dobrynya saw that people did not know what they lived for and why they were so unhappy.

So he began to ask Mother-the-Earth:

“You, beloved Mother-the-Earth, carry all of us on Yourself. Tell me why your children live in troubles and afflictions, how I can help them, and how I can overcome this misfortune.”

Mother-the-Earth answered Dobrynya:

“It is not easy to help my children! And not everyone can do this. The great power is needed for this, pure love is needed, and endless patience...”

“Teach me how to find this love, power, and patience,” — Dobrynya asked.

“Look, do you see how the *River of the Living Light* is flowing above Me like a living solar wind? This is the gentle Flow of the Divine Love! Become this *Light* and embrace all My children! And remember My main precept: everything is born by *love*, everything can be healed by *love*, and everything can be changed by *love!*”

Dobrynya merged with this *Light*, flew over the land, and saw how the *Light* was washing all living beings. Those who responded to the *Light* with love — received tenderness and affection in return. But those in whom malice and sadness lived were as if being gnawed by the worms from inside. They did not feel the *Light* of God, did not radiate the *light* themselves, and were rejecting all God’s Grace...

“Now cling on to My chest, listen to the beats of My motherly heart! Understand where My power and patience come from...”

Dobrynya began to embrace Mother-the-Earth and listen to the pulsation of Its Heart in Its depths. He merged with all Its Power and filled himself with Its deepest shining *Light* and wisdom. Now he could hold everyone on his palms and know the entire destiny of any person!

Mother-the-Earth told him:

“Now go to the *Holy Mountains* and meet there Svyatogor. He has a special weapon for Heroes. Not everyone can raise it. Only that one who is ready to dedicate all his life, up to its last minute, to the Heroic service can use this weapon. Ask for the transforming sword and the reflecting evil shield — he will give them to you.”

Dobrynya came to the *Holy Mountains*, climbed them, and reached the blue sky. Svyatogor-Hero met him. He himself was like a huge *Mountain*, filled with unbelievable power.

Dobrynya bowed to Svyatogor-Hero:

“I was sent to you by Mother-the-Earth. I want to serve God-the-Father: to protect the Earth, defend the truth and good, and help people. Mother-the-Earth told me that you guard the arms for Heroes that not everyone can raise.”

“Well, Dobrynya, your thoughts are pure, your hands are strong, and your heart is full of shining *fire!* Choose a sword and shield for yourself!”

Dobrynya chose the transforming sword and the reflecting evil shield.

Svyatogor wondered:

“You have chosen well! Now, to overcome the troubles on the Earth, you, Dobrynya, should temper both the shield and the sword and fill them with great power.”

Suddenly, a terrible black cloud, with enormous power inside it, swooped on Dobrynya.

Dobrynya raised his shield, gathered his strength, and repulsed the attack, cutting the blackness with his sword.

The sword blazed up with red fire! The black cloud parted and turned into the rain that watered the earth.

Dobrynya did not have time to take a breath and admire the new shining sword, because another black cloud was approaching him, bigger than the first one. It fell upon Dobrynya with all its terrible force... Dobrynya raised his shield to repulse this onslaught. His body sank to its waist in the earth, but he recalled how he merged with the Power of Mother-the-Earth and repulsed this pressure with his shield, repelling this onslaught too. Then he cut the black cloud with his sword, and the sword blazed up like radiant golden lightning! The black cloud parted and dispersed. The sky lit up the land with the tender light.

Dobrynya stood still, admiring the beauty and majesty of the sky. His sword was shining with the golden light.

But he did not have time to admire this beauty for long: a third black cloud came. Tremendous evil power was in it, with no end in sight! Dobrynya raised his shield, but he did not have enough power to withstand this might. It was impossible for Dobrynya alone to resist that pressure... Then God-the-Father revealed for Dobrynya His Great Power. Dobrynya merged with that Power, and his shield began shining like a mirror that reflects the light; his sword shone with the Divine Fire! Dobrynya struck with his sword and the black cloud dispersed. The sun appeared and lit up everything with its light!

Then God-the-Father blessed Dobrynya:

“Go now and perform your Heroic service: protect your Mother-the-Earth from afflictions, help to the kindness in everything and everywhere, root out evil, and transform people with love and wisdom!

“And don’t forget to ask for My advice!

“Remember: that enemy is dangerous which is inside and not outside!

“Remember also that there exist good and healing words of wisdom. If these words are said in time — then their great power changes what a sword has no power to change! If you tell people why they live on the Earth — then sadness and anger will leave them, and happiness will blossom! Everyone then will feel everything living, create harmony and joy, cognize the laws of love, become the shining *Light*, live under My laws of life, and create life on the Earth in love and joy! And you can accept those who will be able to learn all this to My host of Heroes!”

Then God-the-Father gave Dobrynya the magic bread. This bread of God was special: it did not decrease if one shared it with others!

Dobrynya set off, walking a long road, of the length of the entire life, the road of Heroes!

Svyatogor wished good luck to Dobrynya and asked him to seek new warriors-Heroes on the Earth, those warriors who could protect Mother-the-Earth and would maintain the glory of the warriors-Heroes for centuries!

... This was how Dobrynya became a Hero.

He began to travel around the world, performing his Heroic service, driving off misfortunes and healing human souls.

How Dobrynya Liberated a Town

Dobrynya was riding through the forests and fields, feeling his Heroic power. His heart was burning

with the Fire! His arms were filled with power and ready to embrace with love all of Mother-the-Earth!

Dobrynya looked into the distance, trying to understand where the Heroic deed that should be performed by him today was.

He saw a town on a mountain... Shutters were closed, gates were locked... People lived there in bondage, in fear, without knowing freedom...

Dobrynya looked around: no enemies were seen, but everything was closed and locked! There was no danger, but fear lived inside people...

... And all around there was expanse and beauty!... The wind blew freely in the open fields! A river was clean, fast, and full of silvery fish! In a forest, there were giant trunks that held the domes of foliage with their arms-branches!

Fur-bearing animals were free there! Fish were free! Birds were free! But people were unfree... There were no enemies around, but there was fear. There was no yoke, but there was slavery!...

And if those people came out of that locked town — they carried the bondage and death to everything around. They caught birds and put them in cages or even killed them; they caught fish with their nets, trapped and tortured fur-bearing animals... Those people of bondage and fear did not carry good to anyone, and they themselves lived unhappily!...

Dobrynya sat down on the bank of the clean river and started thinking about how he could help.

He took out some bread and began to eat. This was special bread, given by God. If one shared it with others, it did not decrease, no matter how much one gave!...

Birds flew to Dobrynya, small fur-bearing animals ran, fish swam... Dobrynya gave all of them some bread and began to ask their advice:

“Why do you, birds, love freedom, but people in this town don’t?”

The birds replied:

“We meet every morning, seeing the sun, and we want to sing! We see the beautiful blue sky — and we want to fly! Every dad among us sings songs about love, beauty, and freedom — and all our children listen to these songs and remember them...

“People, on the contrary, live in dark rooms, seeing neither the sun nor our blue sky! How can they strive for freedom if they even do not know about it? Fathers who grew up in slavery can teach their children only slavery!...”

Dobrynya thanked the birds.

Then he asked forest fur-bearing animals:

“Why do you love freedom, but people don’t?”

The forest fluffy animals replied:

“We feel how Mother-the-Earth carries us on Itself. If we dig burrows — the Earth will protect us from danger, put us to sleep, warm us in winter, cool us in summer. We feel tracks and trails with our legs; we know the smell of every blade of grass. We are covered every night with the starry veil of the sky. And during daytime we wash ourselves with transparent light. We live on our Earth happily! It is for us like a great Mother: It gives us water to drink; It feeds us and saves us from danger...

“But people... They have forgotten and no longer love Mother-the-Earth! And they do not feel Its warmth, Its help, and Its protection! How can they walk and live on It in happiness?...”

Dobrynya thanked the forest fur-bearing animals.

Then he began to ask the fish why people do not love freedom.

The fish said nothing in reply, but only — with the offence towards people — flashed in the sun with a silvery bend of their backs, submerged into the clean waters of the river and hid in the depths...

Dobrynya bowed to the fish.

Then he started thinking about how he could show to people the Heaven and the Earth, the water and the sun, how to sing to them the song about freedom.

He saw some beggars coming to him with their bags, moaning and groaning, singing their miserable song:

“Give us, good man, some money for food!... We are poor, poor, poor!... The sun burns us; the wind blows cold on us; we sleep on bare ground; our bones hurt... We are poor, poor, poor!...”

Dobrynya broke off some bread and gave it to one of the beggars. He hid it in his pocket, without sharing it with others, without thanking Dobrynya...

The second one started wailing and crying:

“Give me too, give me too!...”

Dobrynya gave him too... He did the same...

Dobrynya began to talk with them about this wonderful bread that did not decrease if one shared it with others... But they did not listen to him, waved their hands, and went away... Everyone ate his piece to the last crumb and remained the same beggar as before...

Dobrynya began asking God-the-Father:

“How can these people be awakened?”

God said:

“The key to Freedom is in the *spiritual heart of man!* This is the selfless love! Awaken love in those

souls! Only then they will ask for Freedom and forget their fears, because love is stronger than all fears!”

“But how can love be awakened?”

“Decide yourself...”

Dobrynya rode to the iron gate and began to knock. No one opened the gate... Then Dobrynya struck with his Heroic power, and the gate rattled; he struck another time, and it began to tremble; he struck the third time, and the gate flew off its hinges and fell to the ground.

Dobrynya started riding through the streets, and it was as if a fresh wind began blowing in the town, as if a ringing song began to flow, and as if the pure power began to stream... The wind opened the shutters of the houses; the sun started shining brighter; the birds flew over Dobrynya, singing their hymns of freedom. People were amazed! The sun lit up their homes, and they saw what were inside: just dust and unnecessary stuff. And the most daring ones rushed to the streets.

Dobrynya sat children on his horse in front of him, told them tales, and sang them songs. A lot of people ran to a square. They all were marveled!

Dobrynya began to tell them that everyone can vanquish a serpent with seven heads inside himself or herself. These heads were hatred, fear, laziness, resentment, anger, jealousy, and sadness. And then, after defeating them, one becomes free — and love begins shining in the soul like the bright sun!

“Do you hear, people, how the heart is beating in the chest of everyone? It’s the heart love in the chest — like a bird in a cage — that thrashes, asking to be released!... Open — as a window can be opened — these closed cages with the arms of the souls! Let the light of love — clean and bright like the morning sun — shine

in your chests! Let this light flow and expand in all directions! Smile to each other tenderly! Look how blue, high, transparent, and clear the sky is! Everyone, with the mouth of the heart, can say thanks to the sun for the light, warmth, and life! And then the light of your love, having streamed from your chests, will fill all the space around! The souls, having become free, will spread their gentle and wide wings over the expanse, embracing with love all lives: both Mother-the-Earth and everyone who lives on It!”

People went with Dobrynya to the clean river and bathed in its waters. And Dobrynya showed them even more: the *River of the Living Light* that flows over the ground and washes everything with Itself. And he spoke about Mother-the-Earth, which nourishes and nurtures everything and everyone with Its love, about God-the-Father, Who creates everything with Love and is ready to speak with each one, helping on the *Path of Love*.

Dobrynya began to gather the host so that Heroes would not come to an end on the Earth, and there would be those who could tell people about freedom! It was necessary, because locked towns are all around and people-slaves live in them!

... The tales about how Dobrynya vanquished the seven-headed serpent and liberated thousands of people still live in those regions to this day.

... And Dobrynya continued riding through the forests and fields, feeling his Heroic power. His heart was burning with Fire. His arms were filled with power and ready to embrace with love all of Mother-the-Earth!

How Vasilisa Became Wise

Dobrynya was riding along the land, protecting people from enemies. His fiery shield was in his hands, so arrows were not dangerous for Dobrynya. His sword, forged in an unbelievable way and hardened not by a simple fire, hung on his waist. Dobrynya single-handedly could defeat an army. When he faced those who decided to do evil to villages and towns, the fear arose among them.

If Dobrynya raised his fiery shield — the arrows did not fly at him. If Dobrynya unsheathed his shining sword — no force could equal him.

The horse under Dobrynya was also Heroic: this horse listened to the rider without reins, understood every thought, and felt the Power of Mother-the-Earth with each step.

When Dobrynya rode through thick forests and clear fields — his heart rejoiced at everything around: at fluffy forest animals, at free birds, at thick grass... But when he rode where people lived — he became sad...

Dobrynya came to a village, whose people called him to defend them. He saw well-built and rich houses, high fences covered with stakes. Angry dogs were sitting behind them on chains, barking and howling. They became like quarreling people... No one came out to meet the Hero, to receive him with bread and salt, and to invite him to pass the night after a long road. People only were showing with their hands where the enemy army was...

Dobrynya became sad, thinking: “How to protect You, Mother-the-Earth, if Your children meet a Hero in

this way? They even did not give him a sip of spring water... But well, I have to accustom myself to this!”

So he went to an open field to sleep and prepare himself for the battle.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a little girl came to Dobrynya. Her body was very small and puny. It was surprising how it retained the soul. She wore an old shirt with patches. Her two braids were sticking out like mouse tails. Her nose was covered with freckles. Her eyes were kind: golden lights were burning in them, and if the girl smiled — they would start shining.

She bowed to the ground before Dobrynya and handed him some spring water in a scoop and some strawberries in her palm.

Dobrynya took these gifts and thanked her warmly for fragrant berries, for pure water, for the good and affection.

“What should I call you, honey?” — he asked.

“Vasilisa-orphan,” — the girl replied, being glad about the praise.

“But why has no one taken you in the house?”

“They took me to be a worker, but I didn’t cope with it,” — Vasilisa answered.

Dobrynya broke off some bread for Vasilisa and explained the nature of its magic. Then he said:

“Go away from this village, Vasilisa. Here a battle will be. Go where the sun rises in the morning. There you will find kind people.”

... The next morning Dobrynya went to a clear field and saw a foreign army... Yet he felt confused, thinking: “Are the people from the village better than their enemies? They live a comfortable life but did not even shelter an orphan...”

Dobrynya was riding to face the hosts...

Dobrynya was riding, but he was not raising his fiery shield...

Dobrynya was riding, but he was not unsheathing his sword...

The enemies' arrows started flying already...

But Dobrynya kept riding without raising his fiery shield...

He was riding without unsheathing his sword...

The blood already started flowing on the grass from the wounds of Dobrynya...

But he kept riding without raising his fiery shield...

He was riding without unsheathing his sword...

The enemies became frightened and fled from that warrior who could not be killed...

... And Dobrynya fell to the ground. Blood was streaming from his body... But death did not take him...

He fell into unconscious state, and saw before him the Great Bright Sun, and heard inside his own great heart the tender Voice of God-the-Father:

“Why did you, Dobrynya, decide to abandon your service? Why did you lower your fiery shield that I tempered? Why did you leave the sword that I gave you?

“If everything on the Earth was in order, if people were living in love and tenderness, would I have sent you to perform your Heroic service? Come back! Carry out your duty: I gave you the power and understanding for that very purpose!”

While God-the-Father was saying these strict words, He was embracing Dobrynya with Love and Tenderness at the same time.

Dobrynya opened his eyes and saw Vasilisa standing above him and washing his wounds with living water. And next to her, his Heroic horse stood.

His wounds closed up, as if they had not existed.

And Vasilisa said to him:

“Take me, Dobrynya, with you! You can’t be left without my care!”

Dobrynya sat Vasilisa before him on his horse — and they rode.

They rode through the village where Vasilisa lived. People were glad about what Dobrynya had done but did not thank him. Only boys ran out into the street and started shouting:

“Give us your strength, Hero! Give! Give! Give!”

Dobrynya decided to play with these boys. He dismounted and gave the reins to Vasilisa. He took off his belt and said:

“Well, let’s play ‘tug-of-war’! I have this magic belt. There is great power in it. The one who will put it on will have a hundred times more power! Let’s pull this belt: that one who will win will receive the belt with all its magic power.”

“You are sly: we can’t compete with you! You are trying to deceive us!” — the boys answered to him.

“Well, I’ll pull it with my little finger only...”

“All right!” — the boys agreed.

Every one of them tried to pull, but no one was stronger than Dobrynya’s little finger.

Dobrynya then said:

“Pull it all together!”

All the boys grabbed the belt and pulled. At that time Dobrynya released it secretly — and the boys won. Then they began to fight about who would be the owner of the belt and the strongest one of them.

Dobrynya said:

“Thus nothing good will come out! You have gained the belt together — so its power may be yours only when you are doing everything together. If one of

you should help his father to chop wood — you all should help. In this case, the work will be completed in a moment. When one of you should help his father to repair the roof — do it all together as well. In this way, you will increase your common strength! And when every one of you grow up to the age of a Hero — each one will have such power, as you all together have.”

The boys thanked Dobrynya, and he told them the most important precept:

“This belt is filled with the power that can be directed for *good* purposes only! So if someone tries to use it for an evil purpose, the power will leave this belt and never return...”

The boys started thinking how they should live from now on... They gradually began learning goodness and friendship. They started working together and accumulating the Heroic power.

... Dobrynya with Vasilisa rode further.

During the daytime Vasilisa sat in front of him, and Dobrynya was narrating tales to her and showing everything around. During the nights she hid under Dobrynya’s raincoat, embraced him with her arms and slept. When the enemy approached them, Dobrynya sat Vasilisa on a high tree and waged a battle alone.

If Dobrynya just directed his sword towards the enemies, those who planned evil — a robbery, murder, or seizure — trembled with fear and ran away. The shield reflected the spite of enemies back to them. And the sword was shining with great purity and never stained with blood. There was great power in it: the power of Love, which is beyond the power of death. This power was received from God-the-Father.

Yet it was inconvenient for Dobrynya to perform his Heroic service with Vasilisa. That is why he was

searching for a house where she could grow and become beautiful and wise.

Once they saw a good and well-built house with a well-kept field near it. The earth in that place gave a lot of fruits, and the apples bowed the branches of the apple trees to the ground. In that house three brothers lived: Mikula, Jaroslav, Ivan, and their sister Mary-Weaver.

Mary-Weaver came out to meet the guests. She was beautiful: stately, rubicund. She has thick and light-brown braids. Her hands were strong but gentle; her eyes were as if the entire sky had reflected in them in a clear day! Mary-Weaver bowed to Dobrynya and called him to a chamber. She was happy to receive the Hero and show him her beauty...

“Where have you, marvel Hero, found this so unsightly companion?” — she asked.

But Vasilisa did not travel with Dobrynya in vain: she learned to meet the unfriendly words with no offense.

Dobrynya put his hand on the shoulder of Vasilisa. They smiled, bowed to the ground before the owners, and passed to the chamber.

Dobrynya began to present some gifts to the hosts.

He handed the first gift to Mary-Weaver:

“This is a magic mirror. A human soul in all its beauty reflects in it. Would you like to take it?”

Mary-Weaver took the mirror with joy, looked in it to admire her own beauty... — but suddenly burned with shame... Tears welled up in her eyes...

“Will you keep this gift for yourself?” — Dobrynya asked and glanced at Mary-Weaver.

“I’ll keep it... Thank you, Dobrynya! And especially thank you, Vasilisa! Forgive me, unreasonable and arrogant, for the unfriendly words! Live at our home! I’ll be a kind sister for you! And the magic mirror will serve for both of us: you, too, will look in it sometimes and grow up even more beautiful than I am! And I will teach you to bake bread, weave cloth, and embroider skillfully!”

Dobrynya smiled. The first gift turned out to be good!

The brothers also took their gifts:

“These are the plow that helps to produce a lot of grain, the ax that helps to build beautiful houses, and the pipe that awakens and exhilarates hearts. Choose which one you like!”

Mikula, the elder brother, chose the plow. He thanked Dobrynya:

“Your gift is pleasant to me, Dobrynya! I will grow wheat, bake bread and feed people! And this plow will never become blunt!”

Jaroslav, the middle brother, chose the ax. He thanked Dobrynya:

“I like your gift, Dobrynya! I will build good and beautiful houses for the prosperity of people!”

Ivan, the younger brother, chose the pipe awakening hearts. He thanked Dobrynya, then brought the pipe to his lips and began to play... Marvelous music started flowing. It was like running spring water, like opening green leaves, like blooming fragrant flowers... If people heard this music during their work, this work became joyful! If this pipe played on a holiday — the happiness came! If a disagreement arose, the pipe began to play, and people forgot completely about the cause of their dispute and about how to be angry...

Vasilisa rejoiced at this music, began dancing, and the golden sparks in her eyes started shining with bright light!

“Thank you, Dobrynya, for the main present: for our new youngest sister,” — Mary and her brothers said.

Here Dobrynya began to say goodbye:

“Well, now, Vasilisa, listen to my instructions! If you can fulfill them — you will become not only beautiful but also wise! I give you the task of observing that the plow will not become blunt, that the ax will not lay idle, and the pipe, awakening the souls, will not become silent! And if one of your brothers forgets about these instructions, you with Mary immediately bring him the magic mirror that reflects the soul, so that he can see himself and become ashamed!”

Vasilisa said:

“Let me, my good brothers and my affectionate sister, accompany Dobrynya on his way to the outskirts.”

“Accompany and return home quickly!” — they answered.

Dobrynya took Vasilisa’s hand and started walking with slow pace. Vasilisa began to ask him questions:

“Tell me, Dobrynya, how that magic mirror became magical.”

“If one is ready to see the reflection of oneself-soul in its true appearance, then every mirror becomes magical!”

“Tell me, Dobrynya, how that plow became magical.”

“That plow met kind hands and hot heart — and so it became filled with the magical power for good work!”

“And the same with the ax, right? And the same with the pipe that sings the song of the beautiful soul of the singer?”

“Yes. You are clever, Vasilisa: you understood the secret of this magic! Now you, growing up, help people with your brothers and Mary! Give people magical gifts and awaken the souls from their sleep!”

Dobrynya embraced Vasilisa, and she ran home happily. He followed her with his eyes and saw that she would grow, become wise and beautiful and be able to help people greatly!

... Dobrynya rode further.

Dobrynya was riding along the land, protecting people from enemies. His fiery shield was in his hands, so arrows were not dangerous for Dobrynya. His sword, forged in an unbelievable way and hardened not by a simple fire, hung on his waist. Dobrynya alone could defeat an army. When he faced those who decided to do evil to villages and towns, the fear arose among them.

If Dobrynya raised his fiery shield — the arrows did not fly at him. If Dobrynya unsheathed his shining sword — no force could equal him.

The horse under Dobrynya was also Heroic: this horse listened to the rider without reins, understood every thought, and felt the Power of Mother-the-Earth with each step.

Three Feats of Dobrynya

Dobrynya was riding through the forests and fields. And it seemed that the sun was shining in his Heroic chest! There was no affair that would be beyond

his strength! There was no enemy that could overcome him!

Each time he saw a maiden, her beauty started blossoming like an apple tree in spring. Each time he saw a fellow, the good strength of that fellow increased. Each time he saw either a grandfather or grandmother and looked into the soul where love and youth lived, their infirmities of the old age were healed and their eyes lighted up with a good smile. Dobrynya smiled at everyone and said:

“Now live in this way!”

And people lived according to the words of Dobrynya and kept his commandments of Love and Good; and harmony reigned in houses, and light shone in the hearts!

... Dobrynya was riding and observing everything.

He saw a stone lying in the intersection of three roads. The following words were on this stone:

“The one who will go to the left will be married.

The one who will go to the right will be rich.

The one who will go straight will be killed.”

Dobrynya was surprised, thinking: “Who has invented such orders?” He decided to check all three roads.

So he rode to the left, thinking: “It’s not right for a Hero to be married! I’ll go and have a look!”

Soon he saw two high patterned towers and approached the closer one of them. In that tower, there were rouged damsels whose eyebrows were penciled with antimony. Those damsels were shining with flashy beauty and seducing with immodest clothes. They rushed to meet and embrace the Hero, wanting to give him roast pen-swans and make him drunk with wine to rob him then...

But Dobrynya looked at them with surprise. He neither drank their wine, nor ate their fried pen-swans, nor became enticed with their artificial beauty.

He said to them:

“Were these beautiful bodies given to you to obtain riches with low-down actions? Human happiness is not in worldly riches! I feel sorry for you, poor: you haven’t even heard about real happiness and joy! The wealth of the souls has flowed away with your wine, and joy has died like a caught and killed pen-swan... Old age will come to you soon and after it — death... So you will never cognize love! You are wasting your lives...”

The damsels had never heard such words before. They became afraid when Dobrynya spoke about old age and death. They began weeping, and their paint started flowing down their cheeks...

Dobrynya asked them:

“Where are those fellows who have drunk your wine and eaten your pen-swans?”

The damsels replied:

“Some went away naked and barefoot; others live like we,” — and they pointed at the adjacent tower where the fellows seduced damsels, made them drunk with wine and stole their riches...

“Bring them here quickly! You were living unjustly together — so you all must answer and correct your mistakes!”

Dobrynya gathered fellows and damsels in front of him and began explaining to them about life and death, happiness and selfless love. He also said that everyone would answer for his or her evil deeds and have to correct them.

“Choose a companion for yourself: a damsel — a fellow, a fellow — a damsel. And go along your land, giving back what you took from others unjustly! And help those whom you can help! Only thus your hearts will become free! And only then you will be able to love each other! Understand also that good and gentle babies are born only when their parents live in heart love! A new life can come to you only if your hearts are full of love! Only then you will find that happiness which fears neither old age nor death!”

The fellows and damsels did everything according to Dobrynya’s words. They went along their land to give back that which was stolen and learn the lost kindness and unselfish love.

Dobrynya came back to the stone and etched out the first inscription with his sword. It disappeared, as if it was not there at all.

... Dobrynya rode to the right, thinking: “It’s wrong for a Hero to be rich! I’ll go and have a look!”

Soon he saw before him a mountain full of gold and gems. Heaps of human bones were seen under it. Among those heaps, people were walking and dragging bags with gold and jewels. They dragged them but could not carry away all that their greed wanted to take.

And in the mountain, the serpent with thirty heads was sitting, eating with pleasure, sleeping with pleasure, and throwing the human bones down the mountain. That serpent always had his dinner ready, since those treasures, like heavy chains, fettered people to the mountain! They wanted to take more and more but could not carry them away!

Dobrynya gathered people bent under the excessive weight and explained to them about the serpent that lived in the mountain. He also said that only those

riches really belong to a person which he or she is able to take to another world and which he or she is ready to give. Besides, he explained that only the wealth that is used for good purposes can ever increase.

People began to straighten and feel free. They went to give others what they could take with them. They also went to do good and spread the words of Dobrynya about the golden mountain and real human treasures.

Here the serpent felt that something was wrong: he looked everywhere, but there were no humans, just gold and precious stones... Only Dobrynya stood before the mountain and waited for the serpent.

So he rushed to Dobrynya, spitting fire out of his thirty heads and puffing out stinking smoke.

Dobrynya said to him:

“Why are you so punished, poor serpent?”

All his heads hissed at Dobrynya:

“Why have you come here? Are you looking for your death? So, know that you have found it! People will not see you on earth anymore! I’ll pick your bones and put them on a prominent place, so that other Heroes won’t dare to prevent me from living as I want! I lived without grief: every day I had a bunch of people for dinner! They walked around the mountain as if being chained to the gold. You freed them, so you will die a horrible death!”

“We will see who will win,” — Dobrynya smiled, raised his fiery shield, and unsheathed his shining sword.

The battle began.

The serpent spat fire out of his thirty heads and swooped down on Dobrynya. Dobrynya reflected that

fire with his shield and knocked down the scales of the serpent's armor with his sword.

They were fighting day and night. And on the third day, the serpent became naked: not a single scale remained on his body. Then Dobrynya cut him into pieces, and every head received its part.

Thirty snakes started crawling on the ground, asking Dobrynya for forgiveness...

And Dobrynya told them:

“Because you have killed so many people, you will live in the bodies of snakes and change your skin every year until neither anger nor poison remains in you! Then you will be allowed to become frogs and lizards and cognize how to live on the Earth without malice!”

Dobrynya came back to the stone and etched out the second inscription with his sword. It disappeared, as if it was not there at all.

... Dobrynya rode straight to that place where one should be killed. “It's not right for a Hero to be killed!” — he thought. — “I'll go and have a look!”

He was riding without noticing anything dangerous.

Soon a capital town appeared before him. A prince met Dobrynya, sat him at a table next to himself, to the place of honor, and served him diverse fare. Psaltery players started singing and praising him; servants placed a golden helmet on his head and gave him ornate armor. When the time to sleep came, they laid down Dobrynya on a soft featherbed and covered him with a silk blanket. Dobrynya was surrounded by fame and glory, but still there was no danger!

Time passed, and nothing changed! There was no one to whom Dobrynya could help, no one who could be delivered from bondage!

Dobrynya felt disquieted, since he was not used to a life in which he would be doing nothing!

He started asking God-the-Father:

“Where is that enemy against whom I should fight?”

“The main enemy can live inside. If you had yielded to those abundant praises and to the life in contentment, if you had forgotten about people’s afflictions and about your Heroic predestination — this would have been the end of Dobrynya-Hero! The most difficult feat is to overcome oneself! The one in whom the selfness is dead and love became all-encompassing is, truly, a Great Hero! You have withstood this test! You didn’t yield to the glory and fame! You didn’t forget your predestination!”

Dobrynya thanked the prince and his servants for their reception and honor and prepared himself for the road.

He went to the stone, struck it with his sword, and the last inscription disappeared, as if it was not there at all.

Then Dobrynya cut the stone in half — and the source of clear, healing water appeared between the two parts. A lake formed. From that moment on, this clear water quenched thirst, cured sicknesses, and filled with joy.

Fish began to live in that lake.

Birds came to that lake to build their nests.

Fluffy forest animals came there to drink.

People came to that lake too. They bathed in its waters — and a passion for worldly riches and fame

decreased in them. The bodies and souls became pure and filled with love.

... And Dobrynya rode further.

Dobrynya was riding through the forests and fields. And it seemed that the sun was shining in his Heroic chest! There was no affair that would be beyond his strength! There was no enemy that could overcome him!

How Dobrynya Defeated an Idol

Dobrynya was riding along the land, gathering a small host. He recruited those who were bold and strong in spirit and instructed them how to perform the Heroic service. Dobrynya taught them the Heroic commandments:

The first commandment was to create *Good* on the Earth, live not for oneself but for people and act not as one wants, but as God wills.

The second commandment was to raise great Heroic *Power* and fight against enemies not with anger and aggression, but with Love and Calm.

The third commandment was to obtain *Wisdom* in order to be able to distinguish righteously the good and the evil — so as not to destroy an innocent, not to embitter a guilty person but to change and heal this person, multiplying the forces of Good and directing all people towards the light of Love.

... Dobrynya was riding and looking into the distance. He was thinking: “Where is the next feat that I should accomplish today?”

Suddenly, he saw an empty idol. People that lived around worshiped this idol, bringing rich offerings to it. They thought in this way it would protect them from their enemies, make the rain fall, heal the sick, and multiply their harvest... They prostrated themselves in fear before this empty statue, praying it for mercy...

And during the nights, the idol sparked with its fiery eyes and spoke with a terrible voice, promising punishment to all those who would disobey...

A little man lived near the idol. He accepted all the offerings, dictated the rules on behalf of the idol, and demanded the obedience from others...

That little man himself used all the offerings given to the idol, and his power over people was great...

Dobrynya was surprised and then became sad, seeing that people did not address living God-the-Father but the empty idol instead.

He began asking people why they worshiped the empty statue.

People answered to him:

“Our parents and grandparents lived in this way, and we teach our children to fear and obey the idol. God about Whom you speak is not seen, and thus, is unknown to us, but the idol is right here, and it will punish the disobedient ones! We are afraid even to hear you! It is better for you to leave this place to avoid troubles!”

Only a few of the most daring ones said to Dobrynya:

“Show us that the idol is empty inside, and we will believe you!”

Dobrynya gathered the bold ones around him, and they went to the idol.

The little man ran to meet them. He threatened everyone who would come close to the idol with a terrible retribution and promised death and eternal suffering after it. He uttered terrible oaths!...

Dobrynya smiled, raised his shield quietly — and the anger of the little man reflected back to him. He ran away in fear barely alive...

Dobrynya showed the daring ones that the idol was empty inside. He explained to them that the little man came here during the nights, set fire — and the idol's eyes glittered horribly. The little man read aloud the inscription carved on the walls by his ancestors — and the emptiness inside the idol buzzed, creating an inhuman voice...

Then the daring ones began to ask Dobrynya:

“You have showed us the emptiness there. Well, now show us God-the-Father!”

Dobrynya answered to them:

“God-the-Father is the Parent and Creator of everything. He is everywhere!

“Look at the beautiful trees, green grass, fluffy mosses, fragrant flowers, distant hills, blue sky, and the radiant sun! Let the souls become filled with the gratitude for such beauty, created by the Divine Father!

“He is everywhere — and He has neither limits nor barriers! He is where distant mountains are! He is where the blue sea is! He is where high forests are! He is where you are! He is where I am! The door to the world of God-the-Father opens in the *human heart* filled with love for our common Parent! *There* — He is seen like the Pure Light, shining brighter than the sun! *There* — everyone can hear Him, because He is the Loving Father for everyone!”

“How can we learn to hear God-the-Father?”

“The first thing you need to learn is to listen to the *silence*: listen to it in the heart full of love. You can also listen to the trees — how they rustle with their leaves, or to the chirring of grass-hoppers on a far meadow... You can listen to the songs of birds in the blue sky above the land...

“You can listen to Mother-the-Earth and submerge yourselves into Its gentle calm... You can hear how our Mother-the-Earth sings lullabies... It caresses everything and everyone, embraces, cradles, and gives Its power... The light of the Earth gently lulls all creatures and is ready to fill them with the power of love...

Then — if you listen in the silence of your *open and huge spiritual heart* — God’s words will be heard clearly. Just ask — and at once you will hear the answer, and God’s Light will embrace you with His Love!... In this way, God-the-Father fills with His Love all those sons and daughters who have cognized Him.”

The daring ones were amazed! The doors to their spiritual hearts opened a bit. They saw the Pure Light, shining brighter than the sun, and felt the Love of God-the-Father!

They told all other people about what happened. And people began to ask Dobrynya to free them of the idol.

Dobrynya unsheathed His shining sword and cut down the idol like a rotten tree. In this moment, all people saw the emptiness inside... And there was no more fear before the idol in humans.

Dobrynya began to tell everyone about God-the-Father and teach how to fill oneself with the heart love, in order to be able to see and hear the Parent-Creator. He also taught how to keep the commandments of Love and Good and to live happily on the beautiful Earth.

He taught the daring ones even more. He taught how to love other people, how to protect them, teach, fulfill God's precepts totally, accumulate kind power and become a Hero.

Thus more Heroes appeared on the Earth.

... And Dobrynya rode further.

Dobrynya was riding along the land, gathering a small host. He recruited those who were bold and strong in spirit and instructed them how to perform the Heroic service.

How Volga Searched for the Heroic Power

Dobrynya was riding along the land and smiling. Everything around pleased Him. Birds were singing Him their songs; fluffy forest animals were running next to Him; flowers wished to give Him their fragrance; bushes wanted to share with Him their ripe berries.

Dobrynya was dressed in a white shirt, and not in military armor. His light-brown curls were caressed by a free wind. His sword hid its great power in sheath, and His shield was strapped to a saddle. It was joyful in the warrior's heart when peace and calm were around!

Dobrynya was riding and saw how some boys and girls were playing a war game...

Dobrynya rode to them and asked:

"Don't you have another game?"

"It's boring to play house-building and baking bread!"

"But can it be fun to play at cutting off each other's head?"

Children then started thinking if this game was good...

Dobrynya also started thinking and became sad: “While fathers forge and grind swords, while people wage wars against each other — it will be impossible to break children of the habit of playing games in which they try to kill one another more artfully!...”.

... Dobrynya rode further and soon saw a boy riding on a horse and cutting off the heads of grass and flowers with his sword.

Dobrynya asked him:

“Why do you execute the flowers and grass? What do you blame them for?”

The boy fell to thinking and then answered:

“I want to become strong and agile and protect my native land from enemies! I want to become a great hero like Dobrynya!”

The boy did not recognize Him... He thought that He was just a usual traveler.

Dobrynya began to ask the boy:

“What is your name, future hero?”

“Volga is my name. From infancy, I was growing being endowed with strength and intelligence. I said to my mother and father that my destiny would not be to go after a plow but to be a hero! Therefore, now I seek Dobrynya-Hero to learn from Him.”

“Well, if you are endowed with intelligence, think about where the border of your native land, which you want to defend, is. Is it the fence around your house or the outskirts of your village? Or is it where the hand of your prince reaches? Or is it where a nearby prince has power?”

“The distance from one neighborhood to another may be either short or long. But wherever you go, the

Earth is like a mother for all its children! And there are no lines on our land that indicate the borders! People themselves draw those lines!

“One neighbor builds a fence to separate himself from another neighbor. Another neighbor, on the contrary, constructs a road to another neighbor! Yet in every house, people live and raise their children. And for all of us Mother-the-Earth is only one!

“Do you want to learn to protect its children?”

“Yes, I want to!” — Volga answered.

“Then look!” — Dobrynya said and showed his palm with the head of the flower cut off by Volga. — “If you had not cut it, the seeds of this flower would have matured and then sprouted next year, and our land would have been decorated with new flowers!...”

Volga asked the flowers to forgive him...

“Can you return the life to this needlessly killed flower?” — and thanks to the warmth of Dobrynya’s hand, the head of the flower suddenly turned into a capsule with seeds. These seeds ripped and spilt out on Dobrynya’s palm. He sowed them to make them sprout next year and become flowers.

Volga asked Dobrynya:

“But how do we reap grain, grind it and bake bread from it? It also means that we take lives from those ears and grains.”

“Each grain, turned into bread, will rise in human bodies as life power. It will give its power to people instead of dying in vain! And people should thank Mother-the-Earth and God-the-Father for their daily bread and use this power for good deeds.

“If you want, I will give you some bread, and we will continue our conversation while eating.”

Volga agreed, and they sat to eat. The boy became more and more influenced by Dobrynya's responses and asked new questions:

“How to obtain Heroic power, but at the same time not kill anyone?”

“Before trying to obtain power, it is necessary to cultivate in ourselves the kindness and love for our smaller brothers and sisters: for growing flowers and trees, for birds singing songs, for fur-bearing animals and for all other creatures!” — Dobrynya answered Volga.

He stretched out His hand with bread crumbs, and at once some birds came and confidently sat on His palm and began to eat. Fluffy forest animals came and began to eat too, showing their gratitude and affection for Dobrynya.

Then Volga also stretched out his hand with crumbs, and birds sat on it too and began to eat.

One little bird, sitting on the palm of Volga, started singing a thankful song for this meal. And it became so warm in the heart of Volga, as if the bright sun had risen inside!

Volga caressed the red fluffy fur of a squirrel that came and then stroked the ears of a hare that trustfully leaned against his leg. He himself was surprised at the affection that had awakened in him! It was as if he had become related with every animal! It was as if every creature became for him a sister or brother!

And Volga realized with Whom he was eating: it was not a simple traveler who kept the conversation with him but Dobrynya-Hero!

“How do You perform Your Heroic service if You have pity for everything and everyone, if You cannot offend even an ant or another insect?” — Volga asked.

“One can be strong and bold but give one’s life struggling for an unjust cause. This is why a hero should be wise so as to be able to distinguish between the evil and the good, help everyone in good, and stop evil everywhere!

“Come with Me, Volga! I’ll show you how I teach My warriors to care about everything! I’ll show you how to develop the power of goodness! I’ll teach you how to ask for advice from God and become the defender of the righteous life on our Mother-the-Earth. Then God will accept you in His Heroic Host!”

They rode further. Dobrynya spoke about the great power of Good, which can save souls from vices and direct them to the realization of good deeds.

Dobrynya and Volga rode and saw an old man who came out to meet them. He said:

“Do not use this road, good fellows! It has become dangerous here, since ten brothers-robbers with a hundred of companions are robbing in this place. And no one can pass by them: neither a trader, nor a simple traveler, nor a brave hero.”

“But how do you live here now? Can’t you go to the towns? Can’t you carry your products to fairs in order to sell them? Can’t you go to the forest to pick up berries and mushrooms?”

“That’s how we live...” — the old man replied sadly with a deep sigh and shook his gray head...

“Well, Volga, let’s restore a proper order!”

“Let’s!” — Volga replied, without trying to suppress his joy.

Dobrynya instructed him:

“When we fight against the robbers — you, Volga, keep yourself close to Me! Don’t move away even a bit! Thus we will overcome the robbers together.”

They kept riding... Suddenly, a bandit whistling and a howl sounded from all sides. The robbers rushed upon Dobrynya and Volga, and the battle started. Soon Volga became excited, forgot Dobrynya's instructions, and moved away from Him... Then the chief robber knocked Volga down from his horse, put a sharp knife to his throat and shouted:

"Surrender, Dobrynya-Hero! We won! If you move even slightly — I will kill your friend! But if you do as I want — you both will stay alive! Join us, Dobrynya, as a companion! These are hard times now! Each one lives by his own truth, follows his own laws and robs by his own laws: 'He who is sly and quick is not a thief! He who is greedy and brave will eat! He who is strong and cunning is right!' Come to us, Dobrynya! We will live by our own laws! With your power, we will rule over the whole world! All the princes around will bow at our feet and bring a rich tribute to us!"

Dobrynya responded:

"Well, you surprised Me! Never before has Dobrynya heard such words! Never did He eat thieved bread..."

"But My companion is dear to Me..."

"Tell Me who of us will be the chief if I agree, you or Me? Who will be the owner of this sword of power? Who will share the riches? Who will establish the truth and administer?"

"It would be a strange victory if I put you above myself!" — the chief robber laughed and winked at the younger robbers. His fellows giggled and whistled...

"Well, let it be so: your truth is crooked but let it be with you... Take My sword," — Dobrynya said, coming closer to the chief and throwing His sword on the ground...

The chief robber set Volga free, grabbed the sword with both his hands, and was stuck to it: he could neither lift it nor free himself...

Dobrynya needed only this moment: He grabbed Volga, scattered a hundred of the robbers above the ground with His shield, and tied all other robbers with ropes.

He said to them:

“I didn’t lie to you, but it is your lie that came back to you!

“The power of the Heroic sword is beyond the capacities of the thieves! This power is great but pure, so the one who will decide to unsheathe it for a wrong deed will be burned to ashes.

“You have a lot of strength, more than enough. But your truth has mixed with untruth! And until you change this, there will be neither peace in the souls nor happiness in your homes!... It’s impossible to obtain the real good with non-good deeds!”

The blows of Dobrynya’s shield beat the desire to be robbers out of them. They saw their lives as already finished: as if they were already dead, and death caught them unawares. The life passed like an empty dream... And they could not remember even a minute of kindness... And they could not take the stolen with them over the threshold of the death...

“What should we do, Dobrynya-Hero?” — the robbers asked.

“Return to people and give away what you robbed. Build roads between villages and towns and protect these roads so that everyone can walk safely. Become kind guards of these roads and from now on see to it that no one does harm and violence there!”

Volga untied the robbers, raised Dobrynya's sword and gave it to Him with a bow.

... They rode further.

So Volga began to learn to be a Hero: to serve God selflessly and accumulate the Power of Love, which God helps to increase and which is inexhaustible!

Dobrynya was riding along the land and smiling. Everything around pleased Him. Birds were singing Him their songs; fluffy forest animals were running next to Him; flowers wished to give Him their fragrance; bushes wanted to share with Him their ripe berries.

Dobrynya was dressed in a white shirt, and not in military armor. His light-brown curls were caressed by a free wind. His sword hid its great power in sheath, and His shield was strapped to a saddle. It was joyful in the warrior's heart when peace and calm were around!

About "Double-Trouble" and Destiny

Dobrynya was riding through the fields and forests. Meanwhile the spring came to the land and brought love and joy, an awakening of every living creature and a new birth for everything and everyone.

Spring brooks started babbling: "Hail, beauty of spring!"

Birds in unison started coming back home: "Hail, beauty of spring!"

Flowers started opening their corollas: "Hail, beauty of spring!"

Fluffy forest animals began walking in pairs: "Hail, beauty of spring!"

Beautiful spring, you are the awakening of love and a new birth for all living beings!

People welcomed the spring with a celebration. Damsels chose fellows, and fellows chose damsels. Joyful weddings were celebrated everywhere.

Dobrynya was also called to a wedding: to be a guest of honor and to wish good luck to the newly married couple.

He thought: “What haven’t I seen at weddings? Haven’t I drunk sweet honey? I truly never took wine in My mouth, since I didn’t need this! The Heroic Power doesn’t live in the one who drinks wine.”

He wanted to refuse, but God said to Him:

“Go! You will find woe and eliminate it!”

So Dobrynya rode.

Soon He saw a river flowing between steep banks. The water undermined one of them, and a huge rock fell in the river and blocked its flow. The water began to rise and flood everything around but could not move the stone or flow around it. Soon this water would reach a nearby village and flood the houses...

Dobrynya decided to help the river. He entered the water and pushed the stone with his shoulder. Once, twice... Only the third time the stone moved from its place. Dobrynya laid it on the other bank of the river, and the water started flowing freely again. The river ran down to the blue sea, carrying its spring waters.

Dobrynya lay down under a tree to take a rest and allow His horse to eat green, spring grass.

When He woke up, He heard a conversation. Evil people were devising a perfidious plan. They were discussing how they would come to the wedding, make everyone drunk with foreign wine, and when everyone fell asleep, abduct the bride and all beautiful damsels,

take them away to other land and sell to the prince as concubines.

The bad people rode away and did not notice Dobrynya.

He saddled His horse and caught up to those villains.

He asked them:

“Where are you going?”

“We were called to the wedding.”

“I ride to this wedding too. What gifts are you carrying?”

“We are carrying expensive foreign wine,” — unkind people replied.

“And I am,” — Dobrynya said, — “carrying the Heroic sword. I know that evil people want to make all people drunk at this wedding, and in the morning, when everyone falls asleep, they will steal the bride and all beautiful damsels to sell them to the prince as concubines. This is when My sword will serve! When those unkind people start doing this, My sword will cut off their wicked heads!”

The unkind people became frightened and fell on their knees in front of Dobrynya, bowing to Him and asking to forgive them...

Dobrynya said:

“Thank God that your evil deeds have remained unfinished! Think in future what gifts you will bring to people and what you will reap from this. Your crafty plan could have been unknown to Me, but no one can hide anything from God, neither a thought, nor a word, nor an action! Whatever you do, the hour will come to answer for this. You will receive your reward and obtain what you deserve! Go now in peace, and tell people what has happened to you. If thanks to this, there will

be less evil intentions on the Earth — this will mean that you have washed your guilt from your destinies.”

So they went through the land and began to tell people about All-Seeing God. People listened to them and became better.

... Dobrynya rode further.

He came to the well-built, beautiful house, where He was called to the wedding, and saw that it was full of guests. A joyous feast was in full swing. On the table were different kinds of sweet honey, freshly-baked breads, mushrooms, pickles, jams...

Dobrynya wished good luck to the newly married couple, bowed to the owners and guests, and wanted to go further.

But God said to Him:

“Wait! You haven’t explained anything to anyone yet!”

“But who is going to listen to Me at the wedding?”

“There is one person...”

“All right, I will stay,” — Dobrynya answered.

He saw a young but not beautiful girl, the bride’s younger sister, carrying a scoop with honey to Him. Then she stumbled and fell, spilt the honey, got herself dirty, got a bump, causing the guests to laugh.

Her mother and father told her:

“Sit down behind the stove, Double-Trouble! Don’t disgrace us before our dear guest!”

The girl wiped her face, put a copper coin on her forehead and sat behind the stove. She was sitting quietly and was unhappy — but not angry, joyless — but not offended.

The feast was in full swing around! Everyone was full of joy! They all suddenly forgot about Dobrynya.

He sat on the bench near the stove and asked the girl:

“What’s your name?”

“Alyona,” — she responded. — “But everyone calls me Double-Trouble. They don’t even remember my real name.”

“Let’s go outside, Alyona, and talk. It’s stuffy here.”

When they were coming out of the house, Alyona pushed accidentally a shelf with clay pots and all the dishes fell and broke... Her mother wanted to shout at her but didn’t, thinking “What can I say to such a clumsy girl?”

Alyona sat down under a tree, wiped away her tears, and asked Dobrynya:

“You help and save everyone. Save me too! It seems that woe and misfortune were born before me! I don’t have luck in anything! I don’t know how to live! Maybe, I should go and drown myself in a well! But I will probably fail in this too: I will stick in it and become an obstacle for everyone!”

“Only you alone can help yourself, Alyona! One alone, like a spinner, spins one’s own destiny. One spins the cloth of one’s life from the thread of one’s actions. Every action puts a milestone in the life of a person and influences his or her future during many years. The destiny is weaved from many former acts, that is why it’s not easy to change. The thread of human destiny extends for many lives. It stretches from the past to the future.

“Do you understand now how afflictions entwine themselves in a human destiny? Pain and sorrow that one person causes to others return back to that person as an unkind destiny. No matter how quickly or slowly

they return back, to correct the evil that was done is harder than to try not to do it. If now something bad happens to you, don't cry and don't be sad, but say gently 'Forgive me!' to that person who suffered because of your evil deeds before. Thus the next dark knot in your destiny will be untied.

"As a smith forges iron and gold, tempers them in fire, and pours water over them — so one can change one's destiny. To get rid of a bitter destiny, you must change yourself. For this, firmness is needed — and not for one day only!"

Here Alyona began to cry even more. Her handkerchief became completely wet:

"How did you find out about the smith, about my greatest affliction? I didn't tell about this to anyone. I even tried not to think about him... I love smith Vavila!... He is a handyman: he can shoe a horse and make a wedding ring of a gold stick. His hands are strong but gentle. He can do any work, as if iron, silver, copper, and gold listen to him... But it can't be possible that he loves me! Why would he love such a blunderer when there are so many beautiful girls around?"

"Why is it affliction if you love a good man? How can the love that you give be an affliction? This is the great happiness when love has awakened in the heart!

"Why are you crying and suffering? Probably, you don't love smith Vavila but rather yourself as you are: awkward, unlucky, useless... You feel sorry for yourself and love yourself only!

"If you want to live without this affliction, you need to change instead of continuing to love yourself! You must transform yourself to get rid of this bitter fate!

"So, are you going to make good, gentle, able, beautiful, caring, and wise Alyona from a blunderer?"

“I have nothing to lose besides my bitter fate! It cannot be worse than this is!...”

“Then start! Go to a river, wash your dirty clothes, wash away your bitter tears, bathe yourself as well, and begin to live anew!”

Alyona bathed in the river — in the spring fresh water! She washed away her bitter tears and washed her dress, warmed up and dried her body under the sun and became like a newly born person!

Dobrynya told her:

“Alyona, with your heart love, thank the Sun that dried your body and healed you!”

Alyona raised her hands in gratitude to the Sun — and a stream of pure, goldish Light poured on her! She stood under it for a while and became full of this living Light! Now another Alyona stood! It was as if a bud of maidenly beauty blossomed suddenly! Shining with happiness, Alyona said to Dobrynya thankful words:

“Never before have I felt such a joy and well-being! Thank you, Dobrynya!”

Dobrynya replied:

“You are now that light which has kindled inside you! Send this light of love from your heart to the whole world! Love every being by it: your mom and dad, your brothers and sister, your fellow whom you love, the radiant Sun, the pure water, the fish moving softly in it, and birds flying in the sky!... Wish happiness to everyone: to all creatures on the Earth! In this case, the light and joy will remain in you!”

It was as if the sun began to shine in Alyona’s chest! She began dancing because of joy, stretched her transparent arms of the soul like wings and caressed all living beings with them! She was glad to share this

happiness and love that were coming from her heart with all creatures!

Meanwhile Vavila came to the bank. Although he did not love Alyona yet, but he was worried, thinking: “Where has this Double-Trouble disappeared? What if something bad has happened to her again?”

Dobrynya did not stay to see how a happy girl’s heart lighted with love the heart of the young smith...

Dobrynya rode further. He was riding and thinking: “Everyone is a smith of one’s own destiny. Man is the crown in the whole Creation of God! Yet everyone must work hard to fulfill the plan of the Creator!”

... Dobrynya rides through the fields and forests. The spring came to the land and brought love and joy, an awakening of every living creature and a new birth for everything and everyone.

Spring brooks started babbling: “Hail, beauty of spring!”

Birds in unison started coming back home: “Hail, beauty of spring!”

Flowers started opening their corollas: “Hail, beauty of spring!”

Fluffy forest animals began walking in pairs: “Hail, beauty of spring!”

Beautiful spring, you are the awakening of love and a new birth for all living beings!

How Dobrynya Vanquished Koschei¹ and Transformed the Iron Kingdom of Death

Dobrynya was riding along the land and thinking:

“A human soul grows being illuminated by Love of God as by the Great Sun. It can become bigger than forests and mountains. It can embrace all the expanse!

“The greatest battle of the soul is the battle against its flaws. If you eliminate all your flaws — then you will become invulnerable!

“In this way, the soul heals diseases and sorrows, obtains its power and beauty, and makes its love invincible! Father-the-Creator helps in this battle and shows the Path to His Abode...”

Dobrynya kept riding and saw a girl of particular beauty walking towards Him. She was stepping on the ground lightly and looked like the shining sun!

She bowed to the ground before Dobrynya and said:

“Accept me, Dobrynya, in Your Heroic host! I’ll help You!

“There is one plague in our land: the iron kingdom of death is growing! It destroys the Earth and people. The ruler of that kingdom is the immortal Koschei.

“Smoke and fumes are above that iron kingdom. The blue sky is covered with the black clouds of stench. The sunlight cannot pass through them and start the spring or summer! Birds don’t live in that

¹ One of the demons of ancient Russian folklore.

realm, and trees don't grow. An iron shell covered the land! Not even a single sprout can break through it!

"The iron kingdom lives by the laws of death. There is no meaning in human life there! People overstrain themselves doing backbreaking work, and thus they themselves strengthen and extend that iron kingdom which oppresses them!

"People serve Koschei throughout their lives. They only work, sleep, and eat. No one is glad about such a life there, but they do not even know that another life may be.

"Koschei's food is human anger. He enjoys human obedience and revels in his own power... No one can overcome him..."

"It's not a girl's work to fight against Koschei! Just tell Me your name and explain to Me how to reach the iron kingdom. I will find how to overcome Koschei and help people."

"My name is Nastenka. Don't refuse my help, Dobrynya! I will serve You! I will not become afraid and run away! I will help You in this difficult task!

"A lot of people live in the realm of Koschei, and he will send them first to protect his kingdom. We should not destroy them! I'll help You wake them up! It will be possible since free will is given to people by God-the-Father! I'll try to remind them why souls are sent to the Earth and why we live in human bodies! I can sing magic songs! The words of these songs come true unavoidably!"

She said this and began to sing²:

"Like a river of light, this song flows.

² The word for word translation of the song is given.

Dobrynya marveled at the unbelievable power of this girl, bowed to the ground before her, and said:

“I did not think before that a girl can perform Heroic exploits as well! All right, let’s go together to free people from the iron kingdom!”

Nastenka called her horse, jumped on it without a saddle, and they rode.

At last, they reached the iron kingdom.

Koschei sent simple people to fight against Dobrynya, thinking that He would spare them and go away.

Simple people rushed upon Dobrynya and began to beat Him, but He shook them off — and they were scattered around.

“Why are you beating Me? I’m not your enemy!”

“We were told by Koschei to drive you away! If we don’t do so — we will be killed!”

Dobrynya began telling them how they should live in the world: instead of serving the evil serve the good, create with love, shine with light, give joy, feel peace and calm, and heal with tenderness and kindness!

Here Nastenka came, gave them some bread and started singing her songs.

People became surprised and began thinking...

... Dobrynya and Nastenka rode further.

Dobrynya struck with His sword, and the iron shell that covered the ground started cracking. Where He struck once — a river began to flow! Where He struck another time — a spring gushed from the ground!

Nastenka, in her turn, threw seeds. She threw once, and grass appeared; she threw another time, and an apple tree grew; she threw one more time, and a pine together with a birch grew and started rustling with their crowns! She was shining with joy — every-

thing around bloomed! In the blink of an eye, the forest and garden grew, and animals hurried there!

So the realm of Koschei became green. Birds started singing on the trees; fluffy animals began to dig their burrows; fish started splashing in the rivers! The land became alive, and people woke up...

Koschei began to worry. He raised an army of his closest servants, dressed in iron armor from head to toe, and sent them to kill Dobrynya and Nastenka, to destroy forests and gardens, and to kill birds and other animals.

... The countless army set out. They went to cut down the trees with their axes, to shoot the animals with their arrows, and to kill Dobrynya and Nastenka with their swords.

As they saw Dobrynya, they lined up shield to shield, unsheathed their swords, and rushed to Dobrynya.

He caught a sunbeam with His shield and reflected it to the servants of Koschei clad in armor. They felt unbearably hot! The sun was shining so intensively that soon steam started coming from all the cracks in their armor! It was as if they were being cooked in caldrons or fried in frying-pans!...

They could not withstand the light of the sun anymore! They threw off their iron armor, breathed in the fresh air, and awakened from their terrible life!... They smelt the fragrance of the spring flowers! And none of them wanted to fight anymore!

Then Nastenka stepped forward:

“We’ve come to you not with a war but with peace! We brought you the light of love and the knowledge about the meaning of life!

“You have forgotten why the life on the Earth is given to people and how one can use it! That’s why you live according to Koschei’s orders!

“Even the air over your kingdom was poisonous! You wanted to defend the evil power that enslaves everyone and gives the immortality to Koschei!

“Life in your kingdom is hellish! No one here is glad about his or her bitter fate! You yourself allowed Koschei to subjugate you and ruin your own land! So you yourselves should free it now!

“If you eradicate anger and slavish obedience in yourselves — the power will not come back to Koschei! Only then we will be able to overcome him!

“You should know that a human soul doesn’t live on the Earth only once, and it doesn’t die with the death of its body. Later a soul will be born again: to learn to love and seek the Light!

“We live here to make ourselves as souls better, to be kinder and more beautiful, to transform ourselves into love, to learn the laws of life, to serve the Good and Light, and to love God-the-Father! We can cognize the Unity of all that exists and manifest God’s ideas in this world!”

... Nastenka washed them with the living water and gave them magical bread...

The spring was all around! Apple trees were blooming, and birds were singing!

... Dobrynya rode forth to prepare Himself for the battle with Koschei.

The latter realized that he himself would have to fight against Dobrynya. He gathered all his evil power, saddled a horse, and galloped towards Dobrynya:

“Prepare to die, Dobrynya! It’s impossible to overcome my power with your love! My evil will crush

your kindness! I am stronger than any goodness! After all, any good man has even a drop of evil in him or her! And from each drop of evil — my power only increases! That is why I'm immortal!" — Koschei was laughing.

The fight began.

Dobrynya's shield reflected Koschei's evil back to him, but Koschei absorbed that evil in himself and rejoiced. Dobrynya cut off with His sword the head of Koschei — but a new head immediately grew in the place of the old one, and every new head was even nastier than the former...

Koschei laughed triumphantly:

"You will never overcome my evil, Dobrynya!"

Dobrynya became tired, but did not retreat even a single step, for the revived land and awakened people were behind Him! He had to find a way to defeat this evil power!

But Koschei rushed upon Dobrynya, wanting to strangle Him with his malice.

Dobrynya understood that there was no anger in Him, only the power of the Great Love received from God-the-Father. Only that power could vanquish Koschei!

Dobrynya began to flood Koschei with the Light of the Father, shining from His chest, and the power of Koschei began melting and disappeared...

As the light drives darkness away — so the power of Love melts and disperses the evil.

Thus Koschei melted away completely. Nothing remained.

People began to thank Dobrynya and Nastenka.

They began to realize the truth: in order to transform the world and revive the land, everyone should start with himself or herself. People began to change,

filling the souls with love and doing the good actively!
They began to live on their land in a new way.

... And Dobrynya rode further.

Dobrynya was riding along the land and thinking:

“The human soul grows being illuminated by Love of God as by the Great Sun. It can become bigger than forests and mountains. It can embrace all the expanse!

“The greatest battle of the soul is the battle against its flaws. If you eliminate all your flaws — then you will become invulnerable!

“In this way, the soul heals diseases and sorrows, obtains its power and beauty, and makes its love invincible! Father-the-Creator helps in this battle and shows the Path into His Abode...”

A New Untold Bylina About How You Became a Hero...

This is the new bylina that should be written by you, reader or listener!

This is the new bylina that you should compose with your life!

This is the new bylina that should be transformed by you into reality!

Thus the Book of Existence of the Earth is written.

It is your turn to become a Hero: to obtain Love, Wisdom, and Power, to help the good, to stop the evil everywhere, and to transform life on the Earth with love and patience!

Your morning is coming!

Your sun is rising!

Morning! The night passed, the day has come!

Morning! The sun is rising above the land!

“Morning! Morning!” — an owl hooted and flew to sleep.

“The sun is rising and giving life to everything!” — a robin is singing.

A snipe flew to the sky, and its song began to flow from there:

“The sky is pure! The land is beautiful! I see the endless expanse!”

The snipe flew down, singing with its tail:

“I love my land!”

... Every day is like this from century to century: the sun rises, the day comes!

Recommended Literature

1. Antonov V.V. (ed.) — **Spiritual Work with Children. “New Atlanteans”**, Bancroft, 2008.
2. Teplyy A. — **Book of the Warriors of the Spirit. “New Atlanteans”**, Bancroft, 2008.
3. Zubkova A.B. — **The Tale about Princess Nesmeyana and Ivan. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2007.
4. Zubkova A.B. — **Dobrynya — Bylinas. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2008.
5. Zubkova A.B. — **Dialogues with Pythagoras. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2008.
6. Zubkova A.B. — **Divine Parables. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2008.
7. Zubkova A.B. — **Parables of Lao Tse. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2011.
8. Zubkova A.B. — **Parables about the Elder Zosima. «New Atlanteans»**, Bancroft, 2012.

Video Films

1. **Immersion in the Harmony of Nature. Way to Paradise. (Slide show). 90 minutes (on a CD or DVD),**
2. **Spiritual Heart. 70 minutes.**
3. **Sattva (Harmony, Purity). 60 minutes.**
4. **Sattva of Mists. 75 minutes.**
5. **Sattva of Spring. 90 minutes.**
6. **Art of Being Happy. 42 minutes (HD-video).**
7. **Psychical Self-Regulation. 112 minutes in 2 parts (HD-video).**

8. Yoga of Ancient Russians. 105 minutes in 2 parts (HD-video).

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www.new-ecopsychology.org

www.encyclopedia-of-religion.org

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