

RUSALKA

by Antonín Dvořák

Cast

FIRST WOOD SPRITE (soprano)
SECOND WOOD SPRITE (soprano)
THIRD WOOD SPRITE (contralto)
THE WATER GNOME (bass)
RUSALKA, a water nymph (soprano)
JEZIBABA, a witch (mezzo-soprano)
A HUNTER (baritone)
THE PRINCE (tenor)
THE GAMEKEEPER (baritone)
THE TURNSPIT (soprano)
FOREIGN PRINCESS (soprano)
wood sprites, the Prince's entourage,
guests at the castle

Overture

ACT ONE

A glade at the edge of the lake, surrounded by forests in which, situated on the shore of the lake, stands Jezibaba's cottage. Moonlit night. On an old willow tree reclining towards the lake sits Rusalka, deep in thought.

THREE WATER SPRITES

dancing on the glade

Ho, ho, ho!

There's the moon above the lake!

Curiously she is peering

Till the bottom penetrating.

Water sprite his head is nodding,

Ho, ho, ho!

His old wise and greenish head.

Ho, ho, ho!

Who is coming through the night?

Water sprite, the moon is rising.

Through your window she is peeping,

Burglar-wise she will be breaking.

Ho, ho, ho!

Into your silvery hall!

Ho, ho, ho!

There's the moon roaming around!
With the waves the wind is playing.

Water sprite from sleep arousing,

Water sprite, the water-clown!

Ho, ho, ho!

Bubbles rise from down below.

The water sprite emerges and wipes out his eyes.

THE WATER SPRITES

Ho, ho, ho!

Water sprite from sleep aroused!

Water sprite wants to get married.

Which of us will claim the merit.

To have combed him, to have loved him,

Ho, ho, ho!

In his underwater realm?

They dance gaily around the water sprite.

THE WATER SPRITE

Welcome, you forest dwellers, to the lake!

You, perchance, feel sad in the forest gloom?

I, down below, have splendors never seen

And quantities of playful goldfishes —

Now quickly through the reed
I'll stretch my hand, indeed,
And seize one of the damsels
And grab her by her feet
And drag her down to me!

He tries clumsily to catch one of the water sprites.

THE WATER SPRITES
Water sprite, ab, heya, hey,
Try to catch us if you may!

Whichever you catch, dear man,
Will give you a kiss for prize!
But your woman, hahaha,
Water sprite, oh, hahaha,
She will twist your ears for that!

They disperse.

THE WATER SPRITE
Urchins, all of them!
Look how they are running
Uphill, down dale, across the fields —
Well, they're young!

RUSALKA
Water sprite, my Father dear!

THE WATER SPRITE
Child, you've made me jump up —
Are you trying to dry up
In moon rays my fish nettings?

RUSALKA
Water sprite, my Father dear,
Till the waters claim me.
Stay with me a little while,
Ban the sadness from me!

THE WATER SPRITE
How is that you're sad?

RUSALKA
You'll learn my story!

THE WATER SPRITE
Sad down below, too?

RUSALKA
Yes, sad unto death!

THE WATER SPRITE
Down there where gaiety reigns?
Can't believe it! What's your tale?

RUSALKA
I want to leave here, get out of deep waters,
I want to be human, live in the sunshine!

THE WATER SPRITE
Is that your wish? Can I trust my ears?
To become mortal? To become a human
being?

RUSALKA
I learned from you the tales I did not know
That they have souls of which we are
deprived
And that to heaven rise these human souls
When men do die and vanish from the earth!

THE WATER SPRITE
As long as these waves serve you for a cradle
Wish not for a soul which is full of sin!

RUSALKA
And also full of love!

THE WATER SPRITE
By eternal waters!
Do you mean to say you love a human
being?

RUSALKA
He comes here frequently,
Reposes in my embrace,
Leaves his clothes on the shore
And into my arms plunges.
Yet I'm only a wave,
He can't perceive my being.
I know that a woman
I must be undoubtedly
For him to be allowed
To take me in his arms.
To kiss me passionately
Like I'm embracing him!

THE WATER SPRITE

Daughter, daughter! Night after night
 Because of you, your sisters will shed tears!
 There is no help, there's nothing to be done
 Once you've succumbed to a human
 creature!

RUSALKA

Water sprite, ah, Water sprite!
 He must have a chance to see me! —
 Tell me, tell me. Father dear,
 What must I do to reach it!

THE WATER SPRITE

Doomed you are, doomed you are for all
 time,
 Made over, made over to a man!
 No sense to ask you to play down below!
 Call on Jezibaba, the witch,
 Pitiful Rusalka pallid!
He submerges.
 Alas! Alas! Alas!
He disappears under the water.

RUSALKA (“Song to the Moon”)

O, moon high up in the deep, deep sky,
 Your light sees far away regions,
 You travel round the wide, wide world
 Peering into human dwellings.
 O, moon stand still for a while.
 Tell me, ah, tell me where is my lover!
 Tell him, please, silvery moon in the sky.
 That I am hugging him firmly.
 That he should for at least a while
 Remember me in his dreams!
 Light up his far-away place,
 Tell him, ah, tell him who is here waiting!
 If he is dreaming about me,
 May this remembrance waken him!
 O, moon, don't disappear, disappear!
The moon hides behind a cloud.
 That water is cold! Oh, so cold!
She trembles with anxiety.
 Jezibaba! Jezibaba!

THE WATER SPRITE

under the water

Pitiful Rusalka pallid!

Alas! Alas! Alas!

RUSALKA

with urgency
 Jezibaba! Jezibaba!

JEZIBABA

coming out of her cottage, looks around
 Crying, sighing and lamenting
 Who's waking me before daybreak?

RUSALKA

Jezibaba, help me, help me,
 From my captivity free me!

JEZIBABA

Hear I something? Smell I something?
 Speak up! Tell me who you are!

RUSALKA

Rusalka, the water-fairy
 Wants a philtre, dearest auntie!

JEZIBABA

If you're a nymph, appear quickly,
 Show yourself up, lovely child!

RUSALKA

Waves like fetters weigh me down.
 Water lilies hold me tightly.

JEZIBABA

Tear yourself away and hurry.
 Hasten to me, to the cottage!
 Let her, wavelet, let her come here
 As soon as her feet touch the ground!

*Rusalka jumps down and moves with
 difficulty toward the witch.*

JEZIBABA

Little feet, carry her, little feet, support her!
 Look, look, how her little feet know to walk
 already!

RUSALKA

falls to Jezibaba's feet
 Jezibaba, help me!

Your ancient wisdom knows everything,
 You've seen through Nature's mysteries.
 You dream about people on a dark night,
 The elements are within your might,
 The poisons of earth and the rays of the moon
 You know how to concoct and make into drinks.
 You know to connect, you know to destroy.
 You know how to kill and you know to create.
 Man into a monster and back again
 Your age-long wisdom knows how to transform.
 You make the nymphs tremble during the nights.
 For human ailments you prepare strange drugs.
 To us and to people in the far flung world
 You're both the element and the prototype man.
 Mortal and immortal, you are both! —
 Help me, ah, help me, you miracle's work!

JEZIBABA

I know that. I know that,
 That's what everybody says!
 Listen though, listen though
 Ere you touch the drug you demand.
 You've pearls, you have charm,
 If I help you what get I?

RUSALKA

Take all that I have
 But transform me into man!

JEZIBABA

Is that all? Nothing more?
 That's why you came crying here?

Water does no longer hold you,
 Now you want a human body
 To be loved and to return love,
 To be kissed and to give kisses!
 I know that. I know that.
 That's what everybody wants!

RUSALKA

Your wisdom guesses everything —
 Give me human body, human soul!

JEZIBABA

I'll do that!
 By the devil, yes!
 But you'll give me in return
 Your transparent water veil.
 And should you fail to obtain love
 in the world.
 You will have to live rejected
 Cursed by the undersea world!
 Should the love be wasted which you now
 desire
 Angry water powers will drive you into mire.
 And even now you'll have to suffer, too.
 To all human beings,
 you'll have to remain mute!
 Do you want to be
 Mute to him whose love you seek?

RUSALKA

If I'm allowed to know his love
 My tongue I'll gladly sacrifice!

JEZIBABA

Keep him, keep him
 And know this too:
 Should with a curse you return to your native
 waters.
 Your lover also will find his end here!
 Forever he will share with you
 Your curse, eternal damnation!

RUSALKA

My human soul, my precious human soul,
 My love will counteract this magic!

JEZIBABA

Then let's go, quickly go,
 To my cottage come with me!
 Poisons shall we brew together,
 Rusalka will drink the philtre.
 Then she will be as good as mute,
 Abracadabra!

They enter the cottage and a red glow pours out of its window. A stream of sparks bursts out of the chimney. In a while we hear the brew seething in the kettle. These sounds mingle with Jezibaba's incantations. The water sprites come running out of the woods and frightened peep in through the window.

JEZIBABA

in the cottage

Abracadabra!

Fog is lifting in the glade!

Dragon's blood — one droplet,

Add ten drops of bile

A bird's heart still beating

And the kettle's brimming!

Jump, my tomcat, jump and jump,

Stir the brew a little bit!

Abracadabra!

There will be no greater pain

This will make you human

And you have to drink it.

When you drink what's cooked in here,

Your tongue will become wooden!

Jump, my tomcat, hola, height!

Pour that brew into her mouth!

Abracadabra!

And from now on not a word!

The hissing sound from the cottage weakens. the water sprites have dispersed. The sky clears and horns are heard from the distance. Morning glow appears over the lake.

THE WATER SPRITE

from the depths

Pitiful Rusalka pallid!

Alas! Alas! Alas!

The horns became more distinct. The hunters are approaching. We hear the song of the hunter.

THE HUNTER

from distance

Rode a young hunter, rode and rode,

He saw a white doe in the woods.

She had a pair of deep-set eyes.

My arrow, will it strike her down?

Ride on, young hunter, do not stay

And do not at that white doe aim!

From her white body keep away!

My arrow, will it strike her down?

The horns are sounded again.

THE PRINCE

emerges from the woods, bow in hand

Here she appeared and again disappeared!

Uphill and down dale, through woods and fields

This strangest of games is roaming about —

And here now its tracks have vanished for good!

And rippling with secrets and mystery

These waters are inviting, luring me

As if all my hunting passion should

Cool off again in their wet embrace.

My step wavers, strange nostalgia I feel,

My tired hands refuse to carry arms.

The hunt just started, yet I have enough,

And that strange magic captured me again!

The hunters approach.

THE HUNTER

approaching

That was no doe — hunter, stop!

God protect your body and soul!

Your heart is all as good as dead!

Who was it your arrow attained?

The hunters emerge from the woods.

THE PRINCE

The hunt is over, return home at once,

Sinister magic haunts the woods today,

Still stronger magic chills my heart! -

Go home, my friends, and leave me alone!

The hunters depart. The prince sits down on the shore of the lake, but when he looks up he sees Rusalka standing before him. Rusalka left the cottage. She is barefoot and clad in a grey garment of a destitute child. Her beautiful

golden hair streams down along her body. She is mute.

THE PRINCE

jumps up

Beautiful vision, delightful.
Are you a woman or a fairy tale?
Want you to protect that precious game
Which I have just seen in the forest?

Are you come to beg her life,
You and the doe are kindred blood?
Or do you yourself, coming to me,
Intend to be the hunter's trophy?

Unable to speak, Rusalka stretches out her hands towards him.

THE PRINCE

Secrets, perhaps, have closed your lips
Or are you forever mute?
If mute are your lips, I swear to God,
They will answer to my kiss!
Explain the mysteries that have allured me
here,
That have been calling me over thorns, over
rocks,
So that I finally on this blissful day
Could feel the enchantment of your lovely
regard!
What is there hidden in your heart.
If you do love me, tell it me.
If you do love me, tell it me!

Rusalka throws herself into his arms.

THE WATER SPRITES

under the water

Sisters, one of us is missing!

Rusalka listens frightened.

THE WATER SPRITES

Dear, sister, where did you go?

Rusalka trembles for indecision and fright.

THE WATER SPRITE

under the water

Uphill and down dale, through the woods!

THE WATER SPRITES

Sister, ah, sister, where are you?

Rusalka clings to the prince.

THE PRINCE

I know you're but magic that will pass
And dissolve in the rolling mists —
But until our time expires
O, fairytale, do not vanish!
My hunting ends - why think of it?
You're the most precious of my does!
Golden star shining in the night —
Fairytale mine, a, come with me!

He takes Rusalka away.

ACT TWO

A park surrounding the Prince's castle. In the background a gallery and the banquet hall. In the foreground a pond under old trees. Late afternoon, dusk and later night.

THE GAMEKEEPER

comes in with the turnspit

Well then, well then, my dear boy,
Tell your story to the end!
What for are the festivities
Which are taking place today?
Guests are swarming in the hall.
There is bustle in the kitchen.
On the tables, on the racks
Utensils of every kind!

THE TURNSPIT

We are in a hurry,
Dearest Uncle Vanek,
From dawn to dusk and through the night
We work without respite or rest!
Think of it, just think of it.
Have you ever heard such a thing:
The prince has in the woods

Found a female creature ?
 And the chances are
 He will marry her!
 He has found her in your woods.
 In your deep, deep, gloomy woods
 Wherever he might have found her,
 I would be afraid of her!
 Utters not a single word,
 Does not have a drop of blood,
 Moves around like without sense —
 That would be a fine, fine bride!

THE GAMEKEEPER

All this seems to confirm
 What I've heard as rumor!
 Like it or not, brother,
 It will be as you say!
 Lord keep us from evil.
 For my reason tells me
 That in this lovemaking
 There must be some magic!
 My forest is haunted
 By sinister powers.
 Stranger still the creatures
 Which at midnight meet there.
 Any weakling runs the danger
 To be enthralled by the witch,
 At the dam the Water sprite can
 Drag you quick down to his realm.
 And who gets to see the WATER SPRITES
 Naked, without skirts or shirts
 He is bound to lose his head —
 Lord deliver us from that!

THE TURNSPIT

with anxiety
 Uncle, I am frightened!

THE GAMEKEEPER

I can understand,
 May the Lord show mercy
 To your sinful soul!

THE TURNSPIT

Handsome used to be the prince.
 See how transformed is he now!
 He's no longer what he has been.
 Wanders around like bemused.

Auntie Háta pays for prayers
 Offered for him day by day.
 And the parson as he learned it
 Came to warn him of the danger
 But the prince: "No and no!
 She stays here! And that is all!"

THE GAMEKEEPER

That's why there are noble guests!
 Why supplies are running low!
 Why I had, and with speed,
 Killed and brought here so much game!

THE TURNSPIT

With a bit of luck, though
 Nothing comes of it,
 And another woman
 Can thereby profit!
 Auntie Háta told us all
 That the prince is inconstant:
 That his love's already vanishing.
 Another he has in mind.
 To a lovely foreign princess
 He began to turn his eyes!

THE GAMEKEEPER

God be praised, God be praised,
 Bless him, keep him, give him peace!
 In his place I without ado
 Would chase out that foreign girl
 Ere she drags me into hell:
 Run her out, that gold-digger!

THE TURNSPIT

suddenly
 Huh, there comes the prince and the monster
 too!

He runs away.

THE GAMEKEEPER

Neither I shall await her arrival!

*He runs in an opposite direction. Rusalka,
 beautifully attired, but always sad and pole,
 is coming with the prince.*

THE PRINCE

A week now do you dwell with me

And fairy-like you seem to be,
 In vain do I search in your eyes
 To understand your mystery!
 When we are married shall I get
 What love has long been seeking
 That you should burn with passion
 And be a whole, whole woman!
 Why is your embrace always cold,
 Why do you flee from passion?
 Why anxiously I tremble must
 When in my arms I hold you?
 In vain, in vain I still this feeling sad,
 From your embrace I cannot free myself —
 And though you be as frigid as you are,
 I must possess you, possess you at last!

THE PRINCESS

*comes through the gallery, sees the prince
 and Rusalka*

It is not love, but well an angry feeling
 That another is where I should have been
 But if I am denied to be his wife,
 Neither the two shall live in happiness!
She comes forward.

I wonder if the prince will recollect
 That though a lover he's also a host!
seducingly

Shall all your guests silently contemplate
 That happiness which you seem to enjoy?

She stands between the prince and Rusalka.

THE PRINCE

startles as soon as he sees the princess
 Ah, your reproach is really timely
 And from your lips I bear it gladly:
 Even the bridegroom, beautiful princess,
 Is above all, only your servant!

THE PRINCESS

regarding Rusalka
 But say, this beauty, the lady of your heart,
 How can she bear it and not to say a word?

Rusalka regards her with pain and anger.

THE PRINCESS

ironically

Or do her eyes have so much tenderness
 That only through them you communicate?

THE PRINCE

embarrassed

Her eyes have though forgotten to remind me
 That as a host I became negligent.
 So with your leave I shall now compensate
 for
 What for a while I neglected to do.

*Offers the princess his hand. Rusalka steps
 forward and firmly takes hold of it.*

THE PRINCE:

Why are you embarrassed? Why are you
 trembling so?
 Now hasten to your room and prepare for the
 ball!

He takes the princess away.

THE PRINCESS

departing, to Rusalka

O, dress yourself in your most superb gown:
 I have his gallantry, yet you possess his
 heart!

*Rusalka stares after them as if she would like
 to restrain the prince from going, but then, sad
 and heartbroken, she departs through the
 gallery. Dusk sets in, night falls and later
 appears the moon. In the hall festive music is
 heard and lights are lighted. Festive milling is
 seen in the background, guests are arriving
 and forming circles. Later singing and
 dancing.*

THE WATER SPRITE

*emerges from the fishpond and looks into the
 gaily animated hall*

Pitiful Rusalka pallid,
 Caught in the web of wordliness!
 Alas! Alas!

No one in this world can give you
 What my own realm abounds in!
 No matter you are human now,
 An age-long bond is binding you,
 Although a man seems to love you,

You won't entice him forever!
 Pitiful Rusalka pallid,
 Caught in the web of wordliness!
 Everywhere your sisters seek you,
 Try in vain to embrace you!
 When you'll come back to your sisters,
 Death will spread all around you,
 You will come back sick of life
 Eternal curse attached to you!

CHORUS

from the hall is heard
 White blossoms all along the road,
 Along the road all over,

A boy was riding to his maid
 And the day smiled so brightly.
 Do not wait, my lad, hasten there,
 Soon you will attain manhood,
 When you will come back by this way,
 Red roses will be blooming.
 All the white blossoms were the first
 To succumb to the sun's rays,
 But all the roses fiery
 Adorn the bridal chamber.

*Now and then the prince appears among the
 guests, courting the foreign princess and
 neglecting Rusalka.*

THE WATER SPRITE

Pitiful Rusalka pallid,
 Caught in the web of wordliness!
 Alas! Alas!
 Waterlily's blossoms white
 Will be your sad companions —
 No red roses will decorate
 Ever your bridal chamber!

*Rusalka, desperate, runs from the hall and
 flies through the park to the fishpond.*

THE WATER SPRITE

surprised
 Rusalka, daughter, I am here!

RUSALKA

suddenly regaining speech
 Water sprite, my dearest father!

THE WATER SPRITE

So I came to your lovely place
 To find you already crying?

RUSALKA

Father mine, Water sprite, save me, save,
 A terrible fright has seized me!
 Woe me that I'd have betrayed you,
 Woe him who's known the humans!
 Alas! Alas!
 Another's charm has captured him,
 Passionate human beauty —
 Stranger am I again to him,
 Rusalka from the waters!

THE WATER SPRITE

He did reject you who loved you so?
 Now you must, you must persevere!

RUSALKA

O, useless, useless, useless it is,
 And emptiness is in my heart,

And useless are now all my charms,
 If I am only half a man!
 He does not know me anymore,
 Rusalka from the waters!
 Her eyes are burning with a passion,
 That human passion damnable,
 I have been born of tepid water
 And passion that I don't possess!
 Accursed by you, lost to him forever,
 Of Nature's wild forces an echo dull,
 Neither a fairy, nor a woman,
 I can neither die, nor can I live!

*The prince and the princess come out of the
 banquet hall.*

RUSALKA

See them, oh, see them! Here they are —
 Father mine, Father mine, save me, save!

THE PRINCESS

accompanied by the prince
 Strange fire in your eyes is burning,
 Enchanted I listen to you,
 You're growing both sweeter and warmer —
 O, prince, say what does all that mean?

Where has your chosen one disappeared,
 She that is mute and without name?
 Where has she fled? She ought to see
 Her prince who is completely changed!

THE PRINCE

Where did she go? God only knows!
 But you alone have caused this change —
 This summer night will not reveal
 That other charms have captured me.
 Call it a whim or what you will
 That for a while I have loved her
 And be a blazing fire where
 The moon's pale light ruled up to now!

THE PRINCESS

But when my fire will have burnt you
 And frightened all your passions wild
 And when I'm gone far, far from you —
 What will you do with that lunar shine?
 When you'll be embraced by the lovely
 Arms of that mute sleepwalker yours —
 Who will inflame your passions then?
 O, pitty, pitty, passion that!

THE PRINCE

full of passion
 And should the whole, whole world
 Disapprove of my longing —
 You are that blossom red
 Though for a moment only!
 It's now I realize
 What made my body dying
 When with the help of love
 It sought to become healthy!

THE PRINCESS

Why, only now I realize
 That suddenly I'm being courted —
 The bridegroom does not know himself
 Whether he courts me or the other!

THE PRINCE

suddenly embraces the princess
 What will remain of that love
 Into whose trap I fell?
 Its bonds I'll gladly tear up
 If I can but love you!

Rusalka, desperate, runs out of her hiding place and throws herself into the prince's arms.

THE PRINCE

mortally frightened
 Your shoulders are as cold as ice,
 You, frigid beauty, cold and white!

He pushes Rusalka away.

THE WATER SPRITE

appears in full moonlight and shouts
 Hasten into the other's arms!
 Rusalka's embrace you can't escape!

He drags Rusalka into the pond.

THE PRINCE

stupefied and not understanding anything
 From the hand of this mysterious force
 Save me, oh, save me, oh, save me!

He falls to the Princess's feet.

THE PRINCESS

in an outburst of laughter
 Into the nameless abyss of hell
 Hasten to rejoin your chosen one!

She departs.

ACT THREE

The glade on the shore of a lake. Night is descending, the sky is overcast, yet later evening glow appears and finally, there is a moonlit night. Rusalka sits above the lake where she sat previously. She is all white and pale. Her hair has turned ashen, her eyes are extinguished.

RUSALKA

Insensible water power,
 You've dragged me into the depth —
 Why can't I in your cold embrace
 Pass away, ah, pass away?
 Deprived of my youthfulness.

Of my sisters' company,
 For my love for ever banished
 Grieve in these cold currents bleak.
 Having lost my erstwhile sweet charm,
 Cursed by my beloved,
 In vain do I seek my sisters,
 In vain long I for the world.
 Where's the charm of summer nights
 When the waterlilies bloomed?
 Why can't I in this cold embrace
 Pass away, ah, pass away?

JEZIBABA

comes out of her cottage

Ah, ah! Already you have come back?
 Well, you have not been away long!
 And your cheeks, they have turned so pale,
 And how you lament here, all alone!
 Say, have not kisses tasted so well
 And human bed failed to warm you up?

RUSALKA

Woe me, woe me, my dear auntie,
 All betrayed me and I have lost everything!

JEZIBABA

Short has been your honeymooning,
 Long will be your lamenting,
 After kissing human lips
 Fasting will be infinite!
 A man is a man, outcast by Nature,
 His roots were severed since time out of
 mind,
 Woe him who after his love was longing,
 By his betrayal who now is condemned!

RUSALKA

Auntie, my wise one, auntie, say,
 Cannot I, cannot I be helped?

JEZIBABA

Your lover has turned on you,
 ceased to love you
 And now Jezibaba should again help you?
 After wordly pleasures, my daughter unwise,
 You would like to return to your sisters gay?

Well, I have a counsel, very good indeed
 Whether you will like it, that's another thing!
 Only human blood can cleanse you
 From the Nature's curse,
 From the love which you were seeking
 In a man's embrace!
 You shall be 'gain what you have been
 Ere this deception —
 Yet warm human blood is only
 The means of your health.
 Every pain will abandon you,
 Happy you'll be 'gain
 If by your own hand will perish
 Who has seduced you!

RUSALKA

frightened

Jezibaba, woe me, much you ask!

JEZIBABA

offers her a knife

Take this knife and vow that you will obey!

RUSALKA

throws the knife into the lake

You inspire horror, let me go!
 I'll rather suffer anxieties,
 I'll rather be forever cursed.
 All of my unrequited love
 All of my despair I'll rather live
 But he, he must, must happy be!

JEZIBABA

bursting into a wild laughter

Into silly human life you
 Have through longing been enticed —
 And now you seem to lack the strength
 To spill a drop of human blood!
 Mind you, man attains to manhood only
 When he has dipped his hand in blood,
 When moved by passion till blood spilling
 He became drunk with his neighbor's blood.
 To say that you wished to be human
 To impress him with your passion!
 You're just an empty water bubble
 A lunar, pallid good-for-nothing!
 Go then and suffer through all ages —
 Dry up in longing for your man!

She hobbles back to her cottage.

RUSALKA

Uprooted and banished
 Into deep solitude
 Without my sisters must I go —
 Beloved, I know it, know,
 I'll see you nevermore!
 Woe me, a woe me hundred times!

She submerges in the lake.

THE NYMPHS

under water
 You have left us for the world.
 You have fled from our games —
 Now that there's a curse on you,
 Don't descend to us!
 He is banned from our dance
 Who has been by man embraced,
 We'll disperse, yes, we'll disperse
 If you approach us!
 From your sadness emanates
 Fright into our joyful games.
 With the will-o'the-wisps you play
 At night on the moors!
 Entice people with your light,
 At the crossroads make them stray,
 With your flimsy, bluish light
 Lead them to their graves!

At the crossroads, at the tombs,
 You will find yourself new friends,
 To the dance of water nymphs
 Do not dare come back!

Silence. Evening glow in the west.

THE GAMEKEEPER

brings in the turnspit
 That you're afraid? Don't be silly,
 Other people used to come here!
 Knock at the door and say gently
 What you've been ordered to say:
 Our prince that sick is gravely,
 That he is out of his senses.
 That a hellish creature cursed
 Was on visit at his home,

And that therefore Auntie Háta
 Begs Jezibaba's advice!

THE TURNSPIT

refusing
 Ah, my legs are failing,
 Foggy is my eye —
 For the sake of heaven,
 Uncle, you go there!

THE GAMEKEEPER

Many times I've passed by here
 During the dark hours of night —
 You're a coward if there's one
 Who's afraid of an old woman!

THE TURNSPIT

Last time when you came to us,
 Yourself have put fright in me,
 Don't be therefore surprised, uncle,
 That I feel frightened in the woods!

THE GAMEKEEPER

Idle talk, idle talk —
 I do overstate sometimes!
 Quickly now see to it,
 Get an answer from the witch!
 Rise up quick, go and knock,
 Ask the old hag for her wit!

THE TURNSPIT

I would surely mumble,
 I have such a fright —
 Better yourself ask her
 What she thinks of it!

THE GAMEKEEPER

Blushing I'd be, blushing
 If you were my son!
 But to show you that I
 Have no fright at all!
 Jezibaba! Hola, hola!

JEZIBABA

comes out of the cottage
 Who is noisy? Who is calling?

The turnspit hides behind the gamekeeper.

THE GAMEKEEPER

Auntie Háta sends us to you here,
To you, Jezibaba, for advice!

JEZIBABA

For that advice, for a bit of reason
Does she send me this here boy for
breakfast?

She touches the turnspit.

He needs to be fattened as I see,
Then he'll make a tasty, juicy roast!

THE TURNSPIT

defends himself desperately

Let go! Let go! Let me flee from here!
Uncle, Uncle, she wants to eat me!

JEZIBABA

shaking with laughter

Ha, ha, ha, ha,
Ah, you tiny dwarf, you,
Silly creature, you,
You would be a bad bit
For my digestion!
May the hell but swallow
Your accursed clan!
And now quickly tell me
What you have to say!

THE TURNSPIT

with anxiety

Our prince is gravely, gravely sick indeed,
He's under the spell of, of a mighty witch!
He's brought her to the castle, gave her all,
He did love her, I say, like he does himself.
Easily she might have been today his wife —
But the lovely witch has not waited till the
wedding day.
When her sway was firmly established,
That unfaithful witch has suddenly
disappeared.
The castle is still now under her spell —
The devil himself must have taken the witch
to hell!

THE WATER SPRITE

suddenly emerges from the lake
Who, you say, took her?

Whom, you say, she betrayed?
Accursed the man
Who has dispatched you here,
You wretched creatures,
You begetters of lies.
It's he betrayed her,
Subjected her to curse!

THE GAMEKEEPER

takes to his heels
Water sprite! Water sprite!

THE TURNSPIT

follows close after him

Uncle! Uncle! For heaven's sake, uncle!

THE WATER SPRITE

in a frightful voice

I'll take my revenge with all the might I
have!

JEZIBABA

Ha, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*She hobbles back to her cottage. The evening
glow vanished, night has fallen and the moon
is rising. Water sprites dance in the glade.*

FIRST WATER SPRITE

dancing

Hair, golden hair have I,
Glowworms like to whirl around them at
night,
My alabaster hand has now untied my hair,
And the moon is combing them with silver
rays.

SECOND WATER SPRITE

dancing

Feet, white feet have I,
Using them I have run all around the glade,
I've been running barefoot and dew has
washed my feet
And the moon has shod them
with slippers of gold.

THIRD WATER SPRITE

dancing, together with the other
White, my body is white,

In the glade it glistens with all loveliness,
Wherever I move to, there my lovely body
Finds beautiful dresses made of moonlight
beams.

THE WATER SPRITES

Let us dance, sisters, ah, let us dance
In the fine nocturnal breeze!
It's about time for the Water sprite
To call us up from the reeds!

Seeing the Water sprite.

There he is, there he is
Already mending his nets!

dancing around him

Water sprite, ah, heya, hey.
Try to catch us if you may!
Whichever you catch, dear man,
Will give you a kiss for prize.
But your woman, hahaha,
Water sprite, ah, hahaha,
She will twist your ears for that!

THE WATER SPRITE

sadly
Stop your gaily romping,
My dear children golden-haired —
Our native water
Alas has been soiled by man.

THE WATER SPRITES

stand still
What is it that mars our gay dance?
Tell your tale, Water sprite, tell your tale!

THE WATER SPRITE

At the deep bottom laments
Rejected by her sisters
Pitiful Rusalka pallid!
Alas! Alas! Alas!

*He submerges. The moon hides behind
clouds.*

FIRST WATER SPRITE

Tears are rising to my eyes,
Suddenly I feel cold.

SECOND WATER SPRITE

Behind clouds of grey and black
The moon has now hidden.

THIRD WATER SPRITE

Darkness oppresses my head.
Sisters, sisters, let us flee!

They disperse.

THE PRINCE

like a madman runs out of the wood
Where are you, my white doe?
Fairytale! My silent image!
To my lamentations,
to my constant searching
Will there nevermore be an end?
Day after day be longing urged,
Breathless I seek you in the woods,
When night approaches I sense you there,
Look for you in the moonlit mist.
Search for you all over the earth —
Fairytale, fairytale, come to me!

He stops.

Here it has happened! Speak, silent forests!
Sweet apparition, beloved. Where are you?
By all that still lives in my heart
I entreat both heaven and earth,
I entreat God and the demons too —
Speak to me, speak up, where are you?

The moon emerges from the clouds.

RUSALKA

appears in the moonlight above the lake
Do you still know me, lover?
Do you still recall me to mind?

THE PRINCE

startled
If you are dead now, kill me quick!
If you are alive, save me, save!

RUSALKA

Living nor dead I, woman nor fairy,
Accursed I wander through the night!
In vain in your arms have I been dreaming
My poor love, my poor, wretched love —
Once in the past I have been your sweetheart,
Now I can only be your death!

THE PRINCE

Without you I can nowhere live —
Can you, oh, can you forgive me?

RUSALKA

Why did you hug me in your arms,
Why did your lips lie to me?
Now I'm but a lunar vision
Destined ever to torment you.
Now I am luring you at night,
Dishonored is my lap,
With the will-o'the-wisps I must
Drag you down to the depths.
You sought after passion, do I know
Which I have never had —
But if I give you a kiss now,
You are lost for all time!

THE PRINCE

staggering towards her
Kiss me, just kiss me, give me peace,
Never shall I turn to the world,
Kiss me if need be till I'm dead!

RUSALKA

And you have given me so much —
Why did you, my dearest, betray me?
Do you know, my lad, do you know,
From my embrace there's no return,
In my embrace you'll find your death?

THE PRINCE

All that I'll give you once again —
Kiss me, but kiss me a thousand times!
I don't want to return, let me die,
Kiss me, just kiss me, give me peace,
I don't think, I don't think of the past!

RUSALKA

embraces him and kisses him

My love will freeze all sentiments —
I have to, have to make you die,
Yet I must take you into my arms!

THE PRINCE

Kiss me, just kiss me, give me peace!
Your kisses, I know, will redeem my sin —
I'm dying happy in your embrace!

He dies.

THE WATER SPRITE

deep under water
In vain shall he die in your arms,
In vain is any sacrifice,
Pitiful Rusalka pallid!
Alas! Alas! Alas!

RUSALKA

kisses the dead prince for the last time
Because you loved, because you were good,
Because you were humanly fickle,
Because of all which makes up my fate —
God have mercy on you, human soul!

She submerges in the lake.

Curtain