

RADOMIR PUTNIKOVICH

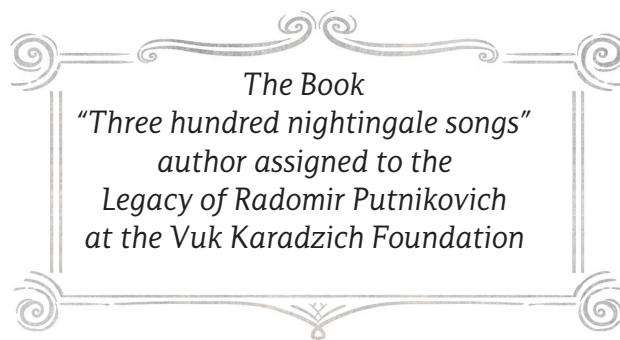
THREE HUNDRED
NIGHTINGALE
SONGS

F · A · B · L · E · S

Illustrations
Ana Grigorjev



PROMETEJ
Novi Sad



The Book

*"Three hundred nightingale songs"
author assigned to the
Legacy of Radomir Putnikovich
at the Vuk Karadzich Foundation*



THREE HUNDRED NIGHTINGALE SONGS

In a wide old woodland one summer's day the birds sang until mid-day. When the sun was at its hottest, all the birds looked for shelter in thick shade. Silence reigned as the voices and songs quietened down.

A little later the woodland folk made themselves heard again. First was the blackbird.

"You're the first to start singing during the day but your song is simple and flat, just one long sound", the starling told the blackbird.

"And how many songs do you know, then?" the song thrush asked the starling.

"Two... and that is enough to make me happy", replied the starling.

“That’s not very many”, said the lark. “I know at least six. And when the barley is ripe and I am flying over fields of crops, I’m not even sure myself how many different songs I have sung.”

“I know a song which can be heard far away, even on the other side of the woods”, said the self-assured cuckoo. Nobody took any notice of her, as her song was always the same, and nobody knew if it was sad or merry.

When he heard the others talking about the cuckoo’s song, the woodpecker thought that it wasn’t good to talk about himself, although everyone liked to hear his song in the late afternoon, when the sun lay its chin over the woods.

After the cuckoo, the chaffinch chirped up and then after her the dove.

“I can sing six songs”, said the chaffinch.

“And I know seven”, added the dove.

Listening to everything was the owl, who used to pretend she was sleeping during the day, but watched all that was going on with one eye and listened with open ears. She asked the nightingale:

“Why don’t you say anything? We all know that you can sing a great number of songs.”

The nightingale was silent.

“I know! Because you are modest, you don’t want to say how many songs you can sing, so that you don’t make the others envious. I will tell them for you”, said the owl. “You and your relatives in other woods and faraway lands know three hundred different songs.”



In the end the nightingale said:

"I am not sure how many songs I know. My relatives in other woods certainly know more songs than me. I sing to everybody under the sky, and those who carry love in their hearts know who I am singing to, and how many songs I know."



Moral:

We get to the truth with common sense but also with our hearts.





THE DEER AND THE SPIDER



One sunny day, a spider who lived in a dark cave, asked a deer to take him for a walk in the wood. The deer agreed and let the spider make a web on his antlers.

After they had visited clearings in the wood, the spider said that it was time to go home. While the deer was taking him back to the cave, the spider started to thank him. The deer shook his head and said:

“You needn’t think that you owe me anything. What could a spider do for a deer?”

After a while, hunters with guns, dogs and sticks gathered in the wood. The hunters saw footprints of the deer and started to follow them. Looking for somewhere to hide, the deer rushed into the cave where the spider lived.



"If only I could shrink, I would hide in the crack of a stone where you hide."

"Leave it to me", said the spider calmly. "Stay here in the cave".

While the hunters were running through the wood and getting nearer and nearer, the spider spun a web and quickly stretched it from one side of the cave entrance to the other.

When the hunters arrived in front of the cave, they saw the spider's web. They thought that nobody had gone into the cave for a long time, so continued on their way.

Hearing the voices of the hunters fading in the distance, the deer put his head down to the spider, and said:

“I did not know that a spider could help a deer.”




Moral:

Small people can often be as helpful as big ones.





TWO MICE

nce there were two mice, two pals, two sailors. Together they travelled the seas by ship and went to many ports. They made their home under the deck of the ship next to the store filled with food and rum.

One day when he was exploring the ship, the older mouse noticed that biscuits in the bottom of the ship were wet. So he said to his young friend:

“It’s time to move away from this ship. The biscuits in the bottom are wet. The ship is letting in water.”

“Who cares about biscuits in the bottom of the store room?”, replied his younger pal. “I only eat ham and sausages which are at the entrance to the store room. If you want to leave the ship, then go ahead. I’m staying. I will never find such good food as here.”

When the ship docked at the next port, the older mouse threw his bag on his back and left the ship. His



friend stayed under the deck to enjoy ham, bacon and sausages.

Very soon after the ship left the port, there was a big gale. The old worn-out ship, with wet biscuits on the bottom, could not withstand the heavy seas. It fell apart like a cane basket.

When the gales had calmed down, a seagull who was returning to the beach from the open sea, noticed a mouse in the water. It was sailing with his tail wrapped tightly round a sausage.




Moral:

Greed does no good to anybody.





THE WILD GEESE AND THE HAWK

utumn had arrived. A cold wind started to blow over the lake, so the gaggle of geese began to prepare themselves for the journey to warmer lands. When they were ready, they flew towards the hills in the distance. The oldest goose flew in front at the head of the gaggle. After they had flown a large part of the journey, the wild geese arrived at a land where there were high mountains. Just as they were passing a wooded mountain, a hawk appeared. He had been hiding in the trees waiting for prey. Seeing danger ahead, the leader of the gaggle said to the other geese:

“Stay as close as possible to each other, fly together as much as we can. When the hawk sees how we



flap our wings in unison, he will think that we are just one big bird.”

Everybody followed the advice of the old goose, except for the youngest in the gaggle. It was her first journey to the sunny lands of the south. Noticing the danger, the young goose thought: “The time has come for everybody to look after themselves. I am going to fly to the forest at the bottom of the mountain and hide in a bush. The enemy will never find me...”.

The hawk could not attack the geese when they were together, but when he saw that one of them had separated from the others, he flew after her and very soon reached her. He caught her before she got to the wood at the bottom of the mountain.

The gaggle continued their journey. All the geese flapped their wings in unison breaking up the clouds and wind. Soon they left the mountain behind them.



Moral:

*Together with your friends you are
stronger than by yourself.*



THE COCKEREL AND THE GANDER

The cockerel used to sleep in a tree in the middle of the wide farmyard. Every evening he would fly up to it, and in the morning would crow from the lowest branch to make himself heard. The hens, geese and ducks were gathered round the tree when he flew down amongst them. One gander, who wasn't interested in what was going on in the world around him, not even the food left for them beside the trough of water, was annoyed the cockerel had a home in the tree. One morning he flapped his wings around the yard and started hissing:

“Why don't you sleep on the ground like the rest of us? You sleep in the tree because in the morning, when the day starts, you want to be higher than all



of us. You want to show off with your feathers and voice!”

Hearing this, another cockerel from the same yard spoke up.

“Why are you bothered because somebody lives a life different from yours?!” he asked the gander. “It’s a pleasure to all of us in the morning when the cockerel sings from the tree, and I reply to him from the ground among the hens, ducks and turkeys where we are all happy together. When he sings from the tree and I reply, the horse in the stable stops neighing, and the doves under the eaves become quiet.”

The dog who was passing through the yard, added:

“We are lucky that we have someone who flies to a tree at night, and sings to us next morning. We should be grateful to everybody who does something to make our daily life different and better. We all need that!”



Moral:

*Being different needs to be cherished
if it is not a bother to others.*





THE DOG AND THE CAT



ne morning a dog and a cat met in the yard and started talking.

“Why can’t you and I live in peace and harmony?” said the dog. “The yard is big enough, you can use the roof as well. There is room for both of us.”

“Let’s be friends, instead of quarrelling all the time! All we need is to respect each other”, agreed the cat. “You let me hunt freely in the yard, and I won’t take any notice when you bark at the birds and sleep in the middle of the day, so that next door’s pig walks into the garden and makes a mess of the lettuces.”

“Who sleeps in the middle of the day? Why are you poking your nose into other people’s business!”, snapped the dog.

“You sleep in the middle of the day under the pear tree”, said the cat. “And last evening I saw you chasing



the chickens. You pulled six feathers out of the cockerel's tail, four red and two blue."

"There is plenty I could say about you! Yesterday I saw you stealing sausages from the kitchen. You leave your kittens on the roof of the hen house so they miaow all afternoon and beg for someone to get them down! You're greedy! You would even eat a greasy mop!"

"That's not true", hissed the cat.

"It is!", snarled the dog.

And the cat moved to defend her truth with open claws, and the dog growled ready to defend his. The snapping, barking and scratching went on for quite a time under the pear tree in the yard.



Moral:

Every quarrel has a beginning. The one who starts it cannot expect to be treated nicely.





THE TURKEY AND THE COCKEREL



turkey, a horse, a cat, ducks, hens and a cockerel lived in the farmyard. The turkey liked to give everybody advice.

“Don’t hurry to get into a puddle”, the turkey told the ducks every morning. “First put your beak in the water to check that it’s not too cold. One day you will catch a cold!”

“You can be heard eating from the next yard”, he said passing the horse who was crunching juicy grass. “Don’t you know what good manners are?” Then he went on to teach the cat how to catch a bird.

“You should first creep up. Then crawl on your tummy try to get as close as possible to the prey. Then jump and grab him!”, the turkey said to the cat.