

PRUDENCE WINS OVER PRIDE AND WAR

Czech students' tale based on Bohemian, Croatian, Greek, Romanian, and Turkish folk tales

CHARACTERS

Athena: Greek virgin goddess of wisdom and justful war

Artemis: Greek virgin goddess of hunting

Ctirad: Bohemian hero

Delu: Romanian hero

Dracula: Romanian duke

Jože: Croatian giant

Vlasta: Bohemian maiden, fighting against men

Poseidon: Greek god of sea

Coachman: Romanian servant of Dracula

SYNOPSIS

Dracula, who was cruelly ruling his country, wanted to marry the Goddess Athena, so he came to Greece. Athena neither wanted nor could marry Dracula. The Goddess Artemis was on Athena's side and she besided to her huntress. She asked Vlasta and her girls for help. Dracula asked Delu Dumrul for help, who was even really far away known for his strength, and Ctirad, Vlasta's enemy. They also asked the Great Jože for help, but he refused and went to cultivate his field on the Doghead hill. During the war, Poseidon gave the army of men horses for help. Athena thought that the whole conflict was pointless, so she ultimately planted olive tree seed to the centre of the field to provoke a desire for peace of the combatants.

SCENE ONE

THE TOP OF OLYMPUS MOUNTAIN

On the top of Olympus there stand gold thrones of the Greece Gods, all being empty, except Athena's throne. She sits on her throne, deep in her thoughts. Suddenly Dracula comes to Olympus, with his gutsy and rapid steps as a large as rolling water.

The Goddess, angry that Dracula disturbed her meditation, rises from her throne.

Athena: How can a mortal like you believe that he can only compete to marry a goddess?

Dracula: I'm not a mere mortal; I am the Count Dracula, wise and powerful monarch, whose people are the most honest.

Athena (*disdainfully*): That is so, but only under threat of death.

Dracula: The main thing is that it works.

Athena: Even if you were the wisest of the wisest, and the most powerful of the most powerful, I would never marry you. Not only because your cruelty is disgusting me, but I also have taken an oath that I will never marry any god or man ever.

Dracula: I don't care about your oath! (*raising his voice*) I am the Count Dracula and your oath means nothing to me. I am offering you a marriage, so take it!

Suddenly a Goddess Artemis appears beside Athena.

Artemis: How dare you, you worm! Perhaps you didn't hear. Athena sworn and she will obey it! Do you want me to send my huntress on you? (*threatening him*)

Dracula: I fear nothing and no one! Your huntress will be a breeze for me!

Artemis: (*nearly red by anger, screaming at Dracula*) As you want, this means war! My warriors will be not fighting with you alone. Get some fighters and after two days we will meet at the foot of the Acropolis, where we will crush you.

Dracula: (*proudly*) Well then, we have a deal!

After he said it, he was quickly walking away. Athena and Artemis are just staying there alone.

Athena: Did you lose your mind? You don't have enough hunters to defeat him. There is no way we can beat them. (*Athena was really worried*)

Artemis: Dear Athena, you are really wise, but I probably know something that you don't. Far away, in the Bohemian lands, there is a maidens' war happening right now; a war between men and women. I think that the women leader Vlasta could help us. We just have to convince her.

Athena: But how can you convince her to join this war, when she has a lot of her own problems?

Artemis: (*smiling and disappearing*) Trust me, let me do it on my own.

SCENE TWO

SOMEWHERE ON THE OLYMPUS

Dracula, indignant because of the rejection, he is leaving and wondering who should ask him for help. He is coming down to the carriage, which is waiting for him. Near the carriage, there is a coachman standing by his horses.

Coachman: Where is the bride, sir?

Dracula is still mad, looking at the driver and sighing

Dracula: There will be no wedding, but a war instead. It means I have to find some good warriors.

Coachman: And what about your army sir? You have hundreds of soldiers and brave warriors. Isn't that enough?

Dracula: No! I need something better if I want to fight back for my honour! I need something special.

Coachman: And what about the brave and courageous hero Delu Dumrul? I heard he is enormously strong, there is also a rumour about some great Jože. That is something special. And also a man called Ctirad could help you, he is in war now, but I am sure he will have enough of time for you.

Dracula was surprised how much the driver knew and he also liked the fighter that he had been informed about.

Dracula: How do you know so much? Where did you learn this?

Coachman: You know, always when I'm waiting for you I am reading newspapers and I always learn something interesting.

Dracula was surprised. He never heard of newspapers and what he just heard fascinated him.

Dracula: So newspapers you say? And do you know where can I find those men?

Coachman: Oh! Sure thing! Get in the carriage and I will take you to Delu Dumrul. (*Dracula is hopping on carriage and coachman is urging the horses*)

Coachman: You know he has this bridge... (*drives voice was lost in the distance*)

SCENE THREE

NEAR THE FORTRESS DĚVÍN (MAIDENSBERG)

Around the wooden fortress Devin is everything quiet, you can hear almost nothing but the soft rustle of the wind and the occasional groan of a slowly dying men. Vlasta, standing with one foot on body of the dead man, is cleaning her sword from blood and watching how men are escaping on the horizon. Or at least what's left of them.

Vlasta: Yeah! Another battle won! Perhaps they will know that they have no chance against us, and they will finally give up. I'm tired of fighting all the time with those same cowards.

Suddenly goddess Artemis appears beside Vlasta.

Artemis: That's good to hear, brave Vlasta.

Vlasta: (*surprised, staring on the goddess*) Who are you? Živa? Lada? Baba jaga? Goddess? Fairy? Ghost? And what is good to hear?

Artemis: I'm the virgin goddess Artemis and I want to offer you and your girls a chance to co-work with my hunter in the fight against one unbearable man. You help us, and then we will help you with your final battle against men.

Vlasta thought for a moment, looked around the dead bodies and hid her, now glittering sword back into its sheath.

Vlasta: It is true that we have this struggle almost in our pockets, and a little cheer up somewhere else would help us. I just wanted to know who is the awful man, and then we will know what we can expect from him.

Artemis: To be honest, I do not know myself. It's a Count Dracula. He thinks about himself that he is terribly clever and powerful, maybe he is, but I want to show him that he cannot have everything he wants. I want to cash his army and I need your help, if you join us.

Vlasta: I crash men to dust. I'd love to help you. Where and when will the fight be? We can go anytime.

Artemis: Leave traveling on me, nothing is impossible for the goddess of hunting! (*clapping her hands, and with Vlasta and all her girls is disappearing*)

SCENE FOUR

THE DELU DUMRUL'S BRIDGE

Above the dry riverbed stands a stone bridge. At its centre sits a man on a stool, counting gold in the bag. Suddenly some decorated carriage is arriving to the bridge. Count Dracula is hopping of the carriage and going to the man.

Dracula: (*imperiously*) Are you Delu Dumrul?

Delu: Yes I am, and you should give me 33 akchas.

Dracula: (*surprised*) **What?**

Delu: You are crossing my bridge, so you have to give me 33 akchas. Otherwise I will beat you and I will take 40 akchas.

Dracula: (*loughing*) I like your attitude. But I'm not going to go across your bridge. I am coming to ask you, if you join my army in a battle.

Delu: (*surprised*) Really?

Dracula: Yes, I have heard that you are a great and strong hero. I think that we have to fight together.

Delu: I want to go with you, but if I do not guard the bridge, who will be collecting 33 akchas from everyone who wants to cross the bridge?

Dracula: Oh, do not worry, come with us, after we win, I will give you 3333 akchas!

Delu: 3333! Well, good deal, ok than. I'm with you.

Dracula and Delu Dumrul are shaking their right hands, and together they are hopping on the carriage.

Dracula: Hey, coachman! Take us to that giant.

(Dracula is doing the order and carriage is slowly moving off)

SCENE FIVE

DOGHEAD HILL

Carriage is driving slowly up the Doghead hill, but the hill doesn't look like a dog's head, it looks like a normal hill. Dracula and Delu Dumrul are slowly leaving the carriage and walking up the hill. On the hill they are seeing a giant,

working on his field. Dracula is coming to him and shaking with him, so the giant can hear him.

Dracula: Hey, Giant! Hey, could you stop working for a while; I would like to talk with you.

Giant Jože: What do you want me to do and why are you yelling, I'm not deaf man!

Dracula: Giant, I would like you to join me in a fight.

Giant Jože: Why would I fight with you? I do not need to fight against anyone. I can make it on my own with my field.

Dracula: I'll pay you a lot of gold, Giant.

Giant Jože: I do not want your gold, it's useless for me, and my name is not Giant, but Jože, my name is Jože!

Dracula: What about your friends? Those wouldn't go to war with us?

Jože: No! Fight your own war, little sir, we'll stay here at the Doghead. We are fed up with human deals. Working for people, fighting for people, dying for people – do not bother us anymore!

Dracula: Little sir? Small sir? I am Count Dracula, not a small man! As you want, I just wanted to help you. Do as you think. (*Indignantly left*) Such a rude man, if he was in my country he would no longer have his head on his neck.

Dracula rejected by Jože told the coachman to take him to Ctirad. His carriage is driving towards the Bohemian lands.

SCENE SIX

AROUND THE DĚVÍN FORTRESS

Around the fortress Devin is complete silence. Everywhere are lying bodies of killed men but they do not groan anymore. Ctirad and his men are looking over the battlefield in astonishment and wondering what has happened to their rivals. Suddenly a carriage is coming. Dracula and Delu are hopping of the carriage, coming to Ctirad, who is staying between them and his men.

Dracula: Are you Ctirad? (*looking around*) I have thought that you are fighting in the war.

Ctirad: Me too. But It seems like our rivals have disappeared.

Dracula: Well, that's wonderful! (*rejoicing and clapping hands happily*) So that means that you can go with us; you will be able follow us into a battle. Come on! Get on board.

Ctirad: To what? Fight? And why we should help you? Moreover, I have no idea who you are.

Dracula: I am Romanian Count Dracula and you will come with me, because I have said so. So let's go, time is running out. We have to go to Greece.

Ctirad: Romania? Greece? Where is it? And I still do not think that anything you have said is a good reason for us to go with you.

Dracula had to think for a moment: he needs Ctirad to join him. Finally, he decided that he will simply give him money.

Dracula: How about this, if you take your men and join us, I will give you as much gold, as you weigh with all your armour.

Ctirad: Well that sounds good, and moreover we have nothing to do since the maidens and women have gone. (*shouting*) All right then, let's go to Greece!

Ctirad is hopping on the carriage with Dracula and Delu Dumrul and his men are running behind them.

SCENE SEVEN

THE FOOT OF THE ACROPOLIS

The time to fight has come. Artemis huntress with Vlasta and her maidens are staying in full armour on one side, on the other side is slowly arriving Dracula's carriage, pulled by donkeys, and running Ctirad's men behind it, along with Dracula's army.

Athena is watching it all with disgust. Dracula, Delu Dumrul, and Ctirad are hopping of the carriage and seizing their weapons. Suddenly Poseidon appears among the men. He is coming because he was mad at Athena, because Zeus decided that Erectheo's village will be named after her. He is coming to Dracula with the intention to give him a gift.

Poseidon: Count Dracula, here I am offering you a gift: a horse. So you never have to ride on a donkey. Perhaps he will serve well in combat. (*is giving the Count a bridle which has beautiful white horse at its end.*)

Poseidon is disappearing.

Dracula is getting on a horse and wants to go into battle. On the other side, while the girls are honing swords and knives, Vlasta is acquainting with the tactics of the fight.

Athena cannot look how they all are going to this absurd war, and so she is deciding to stop it. She is coming to the battlefield. When she reaches the middle, she is trusting a hole in the ground and throwing small seed in it and enveloping it with soil. Then she is moving away.

Suddenly from out of the ground is growing a little sprout, changing into a beautiful tall tree with a strong trunk.

Athena: Look! (*Nobly crying*) this is Olive. I have planted it here to remind you peace; and that this conflict is totally unnecessary. Look at this tree, and fold your weapons before someone gets hurt!

Everyone is staring at the tree, its thick trunk and on the leaves, which beautifully reflect sunlight. Suddenly everybody feels like they do not want to fight anymore, they want peace. And so they put down their weapons.

Count Dracula is drinking with bliss, sending his soldiers home, giving Ctirad as much gold as he can carry.

Ctirad with his men are going back to Bohemia in front of fortress Děvín.

Dracula is giving Delu Dumrul promised 3333 akchas and even is adding extra one. Artemis is going to say farewell to Vlasta.

Artemis: Vlasta, I thank you that you have joined us. As a thanks to you, I'll send one of my huntress, whose name is Šárka, perhaps she will be useful in your war.

Vlasta then with her girls and Šárka is returning back home.

Athena: (powerfully) Goodbye, Dracula!

Dracula: I promise you that I will never return to Greece. Look, I have a wonderful idea: to look more after my own country, to give everyone order and law. Thank you for meeting with your prudence.

When all go away, Athena returns to Olympus, sits down on her throne, continuing with the meditations.

► THE END ◀