

Story 17: The Rusalka

Story shared by: *Viktoriia*

Representing: *Ukrainian*

The Story:

In a quiet village by the edge of a dark, deep lake, there was a legend about the Rusalka, a mermaid-like creature known for her beauty and danger. They were mischievous and deadly, with voices as sweet as honey and faces as beautiful as the moon. One day, a young man from the village, still grieving the tragic loss of his beloved girlfriend, wandered by the lake. As he walked, he heard a song drifting across the water, more beautiful than anything he had ever heard. He followed the sound and, to his astonishment, saw a stunning woman sitting on a rock. To his shock, she looked exactly like his lost love. The young man's heart ached with hope and longing. He couldn't believe it—his girlfriend, whom he had loved so deeply, was right in front of him. Overcome with emotion, he begged her to leave the lake and live with him in the village. But the Rusalka, still wearing the face of his beloved, smiled sadly. She told him she could not live on the land; the water was her home, and she could never leave it. Instead, she asked him to join her beneath the waves, promising they would be happy together in the depths. The young man hesitated, remembering the villagers' warnings. "She cannot be trusted," they had said. "She will lure you into the water, and you will never return." But as he looked into her eyes, the same eyes he had loved so much, he could not resist. How could he doubt her? Ignoring the warnings, he took her hand and stepped into the lake. As they waded deeper, the Rusalka's song grew sweeter, wrapping around him like a dream. He followed her without hesitation, drawn by her beauty and the promise of a love he thought he had lost forever. The villagers waited for him to return, but he never did. The Rusalka, in the guise of his lost love, had taken him, just as she had taken many before. Her haunting song continued to echo across the lake, luring more men into the depths, forever lost to her enchantment.

Story Moral: *Be wary of who you trust, and do not let your hopes and desires blind you.*