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Mila Pavićević – Croatia

*Djevojčica od leda i druge bajke
(2006)*

Ice girl and other fairy tales

Publishing House **Naklada Bošković**

Biography

Mila Pavićević was born in Dubrovnik on the 4 July 1988. She reads Comparative literature and Greek language and literature at the Zagreb University. She received several literary awards for young writers in Croatia.

Synopsis

The book, entitled *Ice girl and other fairy tales* and consisting of 13 stories, is a clever combination of the miraculous and supernatural intertwined with the real. It's written in such a way that there is no obvious separation or contrast between the real and the invented, between possible and impossible.

Djevojčica od leda i druge bajke

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BIJELI

Svaki put kada umre klaun, njegov crveni nos pretvori se u zvijezdu. (Sve one tvore zvijezde Velikog igrača koje se vidi samo s druge strane sjevera.) Dok mu nos svijetli u noći, besmrtni duh klauna otiđe u Zemlju Mjeseca i ondje se odmara od svojih šala...

Jednom davno, u nekoj pustinji, skitao se poprilično mlad i poprilično bezimen klaun. Nije imao kuću, čak ni onu koju bi nosio sa sobom. Sve što je imao, što mu je trebalo u pustinji, bila je svirala kojom je dozivao ptice i jedna velika košara u kojoj je čuvao svoju ne tako dobru publiku – velikog sivog mačka po imenu Auror.

Tumarao je taj bezimeni klaun pustinjom iz dana u dan i tražio nekoga koga bi nasmijavao, nekoga čiji bi smijeh uistinu mogao čuti. Auror se nije znao smijati. Nije znao čak ni govoriti, a nije bio ni posve dobar prijatelj. Ptice, koje je klaun dozivao sviralom, bile su mu najbolja pustinjska publika. Činile su ga sretnim jer mu se često činilo da čuje dječji smijeh u njihovu cvrkutu.

I tako jednoga dana, dok je sjedio na svojoj omiljenoj dini i čekao da iziđe sunce, klaun je izvadio sviralu i počeo svirati svoju najljepšu melodiju u nadi da će ptice doći. Ali ptice tog dana nisu došle jer je bilo previše rano. Ptice uvijek dolaze sa suncem. Čak je i Auror još uvijek drijemao u svojoj košari. Samo se jedna šarena, ne posve zla zmija prikrala klaunu iza leđa da čuje njegovu svirku. Kada je stigao do najljepšeg dijela melodije, zmija ga je, sasvim slučajno, ugrizla i klaun je u trenu usnuo.

Ptice i dalje nisu dolazile, a Auror se nije pomaknuo iz svoje košare jer je bio odveć lijen. Zmija je otpuzala kao da se ništa nije dogodilo. A klaun? Njegov crveni nos otišao je u zvijezde i sada tvori najsjajniju u zviježđu. Na pijesku je ostala ležati odjeća čije će boje s vremenom izbljedjeti od sunca. U Zemlji Mjeseca od svojih šala odmara se besmrtni duh bezimenog klauna koji je tek sada... gle!... dobio ime – Bijeli.

TAMA

Jednom davno, posve davno, dok još nije postojala bitna razlika između dana i noći, u Zemlji Šapata živio je starac čije su jedino blago bile njegove tri kćeri. Bili su siromašni i živjeli su vrlo skromno u maloj kolibi na vrhu brda, daleko od prvog sela.

Bila je zima i bližio se rođendan sviju sestara. Starac nije imao novca i baš zato nije znao što bi im mogao darovati. Zaputio se u selo u nadi da će pronaći nešto što bi im mogao dati.

Putem je sreo staru vješticu i zamolio je za pomoć. Ona mu je obećala. Imala je samo dva poklona: srebrenu kutiju i zeleni prsten što ga iz stijene na vrhu brda izvadiše dva krilata orla. Oba dara vještica pokloni starcu. Jedino što je tražila zauzvrat bilo je obećanje da će ih starčeve kćeri dobro čuvati, ili će ih u protivnom stići strašna kazna. Starac obeća vješticu da će čuvati darove pa se otputi kući još tužniji jer je shvatio da svojoj najljepšoj kćeri, Tami, nema ništa pokloniti.

I tako, vraćajući se kući, zastao je kraj kamene rijeke i ondje našao malu kamenu jegulju. Budući da je jegulja izgledala jako lijepo, starac je odlučio ponijeti Tami. Došavši kući, svojoj najstarijoj kćeri pokloni srebrenu kutiju, a ona slegne ramenima. Svojoj srednjoj pokloni zeleni prsten, a ona se

nevoljko zahvali. Tami pokloni kamenu jegulju, a ona se toliko razveseli da joj sestre odmah pozavidješe.

Jedne večeri dok je Tama spavala, zlobne sestre odluče ukrasti kamenu jegulju. To im je pošlo za rukom. Tada se počеше otimati oko plijena i tako im jegulja ispadne na pod i na mjestu oživi. Prestrašene sestre pobjegoše u svoje sobe, a jegulja odgmiže za njima.

Kako je prilično dugo bila okamenjena, jegulja bijaše vrlo gladna pa stade jesti sve redom. Pojede i srebrenu kutiju i zeleni prsten.

Stara vještica, koja je odmah saznala što se dogodilo, jer vještice uvijek nekako sve saznaju, bijaše zaista bijesna te odluči kazniti nemarne sestre istom onom prestrašnom kaznom koju starcu bijaše obećala.

Djevojke se pretvoriše u zrnca cementa na obali kamene rijeke. Kažu da će zauvijek tu ostati. A Tama? Ona od silne tuge za sestrama nestade, preseli se u nebo. Tako je, kažu, nastala ona svakodnevna pojava što je danas olako shvaćamo – tako je, kažu, nastala noć.

DJEVOJČICA OD LEDA

Jednom davno, posve davno, u jednom malom i sasvim nepoznatom kraljevstvu živjela je posve sama mala djevojčica od leda. Djevojčica nije imala roditelje, barem ih sama nije nikad upoznala. Nije imala ni prijatelje, bila je odviše hladna da bi se itko s njom igrao.

Živjela je na vrhu zvjezdane, snježne planine u malenoj snježnoj kućici. Svako jutro bezimena snježna djevojčica izlazila bi iz kućice i gledala sunce. Nije ga mogla previše gledati da se ne bi rastopila.

Na susjednoj planini živio je, pak, oholi kralj sa svojom obitelji: zlom kraljicom i njihovim jedinim sinom. Princ je bio mlad, pošten, lijep kao sunce. Bio je prava suprotnost svojih starih i ružnih roditelja. Jednog dana princ je pošao u šetnju i, kako to obično biva, sreo je djevojčicu.

Odmah se zaljubio: bila je tako bijela, a lijepa kao led. Iz dana u dan, kada bi sunce izlazilo, princ je dolazio gledati ledenu djevojčicu kako gleda sunce. U kraljevski se dvor vraćao neobično sretan. To je zasmetalo njegovim roditeljima pa su odlučili potražiti pomoć.

Otišli su do seoskog vrača, bezvrijednog i jadnog sluga. Vrač je bio sav siv kao miš, tanak kao prut, a zloća mu je nadirala iz krvavocrvenih očiju. Kada je vrač vidio kralja i kraljicu na svojim vratima, duboko se naklonio, onako kako to već čine sve ulizice. Ipak, to nije bio posve običan vrač. Znao je proreći istinu, i to na njemu svojstven način. Uzeo bi dvije glinene posude, jednu bi ispunio vinom, drugu mlijekom, i pretakao bi iz jedne posude u drugu dok u tekućini ne bi vidio istinu. I tako vrač uze obavljati svoju vradžbinu i proreče kralju i kraljici: 'Vaši problemi bit će riješeni. Ona koju zavolje vaš princ, prijateljica je konja.' Posve nezadovoljni odgovorom odoše kralj i kraljica natrag u dvor a da nisu shvatili ni riječi od onoga što im vrač prorekao.

Za to vrijeme bijaše pošao mladi princ svojoj ledenoj djevojčici kadli putem vidje čudnu spodobu, zakukuljenu, a sivu kao miš, s crvenim očima iz kojih je nadiralo neko svjetlo. Mladi princ bijaše premlad i neiskusn pa ne znađaše prepoznati da ono svjetlo nije bilo ništa drugo nego zloća. I pristupi mladi princ toj spodobi. Ona mu se predstavi kao siromašni trgovački putnik koji prodaje čarobni napitak. Tako princ kupi napitak. (Iako nije vjerovao da je čaroban, želio je pomoći spodobi.) Čim je kupio malu tamnocrvenu bočicu, spodobe

nestade. Budući da je princ bio vrlo ožednio, uzme gutljaj iz bočice i... istog trenutka princ, lijep kao sunce, postade konj.

I tako je princ – konj lutao danima (i noćima) planinom, prestrašen i osamljen, dok jednog jutra nije vidio svoju malu ledenu djevojčicu kako gleda sunce. Prišao joj je (sada kada je bio konj, mogao joj je prići). Djevojčici se konj učinio toliko lijepim i ona pristade na igru s njime. Igrali su se čitav dan, ali eto nesreće! Kada je igra bila najljepša, okliznu se princu kopito i on na mjestu zdrobi malenu djevojčicu. Nato konj preneraženo krikne i otrči da se više nikad ne vrati.

Za njim je uskoro došla i Smrt. Bila je posve bijela, poput snijega. Kleknula je kraj razasutih krhotina ledene djevojčice, uzela ih i odnijela ih u svoj podzemni kraljevski dvor a da nitko nije znao da je djevojčica i postojala.

I tako su se ljudi, prolazeći, pitali: ‘Tko živi u onoj maloj snježnoj kućici na vrhu brda?’ Sve dok im se jednom nije vratila jeka: ‘Nitko! Bilo je to previše davno!’

Ice girl and other fairy tales

Mila Pavićević

Translated from the Croatian by Nikola Đuretić

WHITE CLOWN

Every time a clown dies, his red nose turns into a star. (All of those stars make up the Great Player constellation that can be seen only from the other side of the North.) While his nose is burning bright in the night, the immortal spirit of the clown goes to the Land of the Moon, where it rests from his jokes...

Once upon a time, somewhere in a desert, a fairly young and rather unknown clown was wandering about. He had no house, not even one he could carry around with him. All he had, all he ever needed in the desert, was a flute he used to call the birds and a large basket in which he kept his not-so-good audience – one large grey tomcat named Auror.

From day to day, this nameless clown roamed the desert looking for someone whom he could make laugh, someone whose laughter he could really hear. Auror, you see, did not know how to laugh. He did not even know how to speak and, as far as friends go, he was not one of the best. So, the birds that the clown would summon with his flute were his best audience in the desert. They made him happy because he often thought he could hear children's laughter in their chirping.

And so, one morning, as he was sitting on his favourite sand dune, waiting for the sun to come up, the clown took out his flute and started to play his most beautiful melody, hoping the birds would come. But the birds did not come on that

day, for it was too early. The birds always came with the sun. Even Auror was still dozing in his basket. Only one colourful and not terribly nasty snake crept up to the clown to listen to his playing. When he reached the most beautiful part of the tune, the snake accidentally bit him and the clown instantly fell asleep.

The birds were still not coming and Auror was not moving in his basket, for he was too lazy. And the snake went away as though nothing had happened.

And what happened to the clown? His red nose flew up to the stars and there it is today, the brightest star in the entire constellation. Left lying on the sand were his clothes, whose colours would fade in the sun with time.

And in the Land of the Moon, resting from his jokes, is the immortal spirit of the nameless clown who only now... what do you know!... has been given a name – White Clown.

DARKNESS

Long ago, a very long time ago, when there was still not much difference between day and night, an old man, whose three daughters were his only treasure, lived in the Land of Whispers. They were poor and lived a modest life in a cottage on top of the mountain, far away from the nearest village.

It was wintertime and the birthday of all three sisters was approaching. The old man had no money and did not know what to give them as presents. He went to the village hoping to find something for their birthday. On the way he met an old witch and asked her for help, which she promised to give him. But she had only two presents: a silver box and a green ring taken out of a rock on top of the mountain by two flying eagles. The witch gave both presents to the old man. The only

thing she asked in return was that the old man promise her his daughters would cherish the presents and look after them; otherwise, they would suffer a terrible punishment. The old man promised the witch they would do so and went home even sadder, for he realised he had no present for his most beautiful daughter – Darkness.

And so, returning home, he stopped by a stony river where he found a small eel made of stone. The eel was very beautiful and the old man decided to take it home and give it to Darkness. Upon arriving home, he gave the silver box to his oldest daughter, but she just shrugged her shoulders. To his middle daughter he gave the green ring, but she thanked him grudgingly. And he gave the stony eel to Darkness, who was so happy that her sisters immediately became envious.

One evening as Darkness was having a nap, her wicked sisters decided to steal the stony eel. They succeeded in doing so. But then they started fighting over it and they dropped the eel on the floor. That very instant the eel came to life. Frightened, the two sisters ran into their rooms with the eel crawling after them.

Since the eel had been petrified for quite some time, it was very hungry, so it started eating everything in sight. It even gobbled up the silver box and the green ring.

The old witch, who had known straight away what had happened – for witches always have a way of finding out these things – was really furious, and she decided to punish the reckless sisters, just as she had warned the old man.

The girls turned into grains of cement on the banks of the stony river. People say they will stay there forever. And what about Darkness? Terribly saddened by what had happened to her sisters, she just disappeared. She went up to the

heavens. And that is how something we see every day and take for granted – darkness – came about. That, they say, is how night came to be.

ICE GIRL

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a small and completely unknown kingdom, a little ice girl lived all alone. The girl did not have parents, that is, she never got to know them. She did not have any friends either; she was too cold for anyone to play with her.

The girl lived on top of a starry, snowy mountain in a small house made of snow. Every morning the nameless snowy girl would come out of the house and watch the sun. She couldn't watch it too long, for she would melt.

On the neighbouring mountain lived an arrogant king with his family: an evil queen and their only son. The prince was young and honest and as beautiful as the sun. He was the total opposite of his old and ugly parents. One day the prince went for a walk and, as usually happens in life, he met the girl. He fell in love on the spot: she was very white and as beautiful as ice. For days, when the sun was rising, the prince would come to watch the girl observing the sun. He would return to the palace unusually happy. His parents didn't like that and they decided to look for help.

They visited the village sorcerer, a poor and useless servant. The sorcerer was all grey like a mouse, thin as a stick, and evil darted out from his bloodshot eyes. When the sorcerer saw the king and queen standing at his door, he made a low bow like all flatterers do. Nevertheless, he was not an ordinary sorcerer. He knew how to divine the truth and did it in his own peculiar way. He would take two clay pots, fill

one with wine and the other with milk, and he would pour the liquid from one pot into the other until he could see the truth in the liquid. And so the sorcerer started performing his sorcery and said to the king and queen: ‘Your problems will be solved. She who is loved by your prince is the friend of horses.’ Utterly unsatisfied with his advice, the king and queen went back to their palace without understanding a word of what the sorcerer had said.

In the meantime, the young prince went to see his ice girl but met a strange creature on his way, all shrouded and grey as a mouse with red eyes that were oozing some strange light. The young prince was too young and inexperienced, unable to recognise that this strange light was nothing but wickedness. So the young prince approached this creature, who said he was a poor travelling salesman selling magic potions. And thus the young prince bought one of these potions (although he did not believe the potion was magic, he wanted to help the creature). As soon as he purchased the small dark red bottle, the creature disappeared. The prince was very thirsty, so he took a sip from the bottle and... instantly, the prince, who was as beautiful as the sun, turned into a horse.

Thus, the prince-horse wandered up and down the mountain for days (and nights), frightened and lonely, until one morning he saw his small ice girl observing the sun. He came up to her (now that he was a horse he could approach her). The girl thought the horse was very beautiful and she agreed to play with him. They played the whole day long, but then misfortune struck! When their play was at its peak, the prince’s hoof slipped and he crushed the little girl. He screamed in panic and ran away, never to return.

Soon after that, Death came. She was completely white, like the snow. She knelt next to the strewn parts of the ice girl,

collected them and took them to her underworld palace, with no one even knowing that the ice girl had ever existed.

And so the people who passed by would wonder: 'Who lives in that small house made of snow on top of the mountain?' Until one day, back came the echo: 'No one! It was all too long ago!'



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