

Greenhair reindeer and aunties oštrokondje

In our family, it was customary for Una to be lulled to sleep with a story every night. We told various well-known fairy tales and legends, so we had occasionally, in order not to repeat ourselves, to start inventing our own stories. One of those stories was the one about the greenhair reindeer. Every night we changed and adapted it a little bit, and to this day this version has been preserved in my memory.

So it goes like this: In a country far away (or very close just around the corner) there was a reindeer living in a place where nobody liked him. People chased him away, nobody wanted his company. He wondered why but could not find an answer to his question. He walked through the forest, further and further until one day he came to a large lake. He had never seen such a large body of water before and was a little afraid to approach it. Over time, he got encouraged and went into the water near the coast.

One morning, without a breath of wind, when the lake was calm and the surface of the water smooth, entering the water he looked down and saw his reflection in the water. He finally found the answer to his question why no one wants to hang out with him. He was different from all the other deer in the forest, so he was also different from all the other animals in the forest. He was the only one with green hair. It is it was enough for everyone to avoid him.

The greenhair reindeer accepted the lake as his best friend, he came there more and more often, he slowly encouraged himself to go deeper and deeper, and after a while he realized that he could swim. He enjoyed swimming more and more every day. Not much time passed when he noticed that he could also dive. He also noticed that even under water he had no breathing problems and he stayed under water longer and longer.

On one of his underwater trips, he observed that at the bottom of the lake, quite far from the shore, something sparkled. When he got closer to that light, he saw something like a small town at the bottom of the lake. He was scared at first and moved away very quickly. After a few days, he returned to the place he remembered well. He saw from a distance a small town covered by a transparent dome with houses, streets and, of course, numerous squares surrounded by parks and forests. He finally took courage and entered.

To his great surprise, the first living creature he met was a large and beautiful reindeer that greeted him in a very friendly manner. An even bigger surprise was when he noticed that the friendly reindeer also had green hair! It was thought that it might be a place where people like him meet and hang out, and that soon proved to be quite true.

Some reindeers and all the other animals in that underwater place had green hair, but also hair of all kinds of other colours and they got along extremely well with each other. The hosts accepted him into their community and the reindeer felt happy, satisfied and carefree, not different and unimportant.

Someone else lived in that town. Middle-aged aunties could be seen all around. Of course, reindeer didn't know who those women were, and he couldn't even ask anyone. To his surprise, once when he met one of them in a small square, she greeted him and he realized that he also understood that language very well. He became friends with her after that and not only with her but also with many other women in town. They told him who they were and where they were from.

Everyone called them aunties oštrokondje, and their story was quite similar to the story of our reindeer. The aunties used to live everywhere in the surrounding towns and villages, they felt different, unloved by everyone, people avoided them.

Why, the reindeer wondered. Thanks to their nature, they commented, objected, added and invented something in their stories about events and experiences from the past and about plans for the future. People did not accept it.

They were called aunties oštrokondje, a term very difficult to translate into any language, but something that should mean brawlers, which of course was not true. They were also quick on the tongue, answered questions without hesitation, and had their own personal opinion, in everything mostly different from everyone around them.

However, the children loved them very much, they were always their favourite aunts or grandmothers, but when those children grew up and went their own way, they would remain lonely and wander around aimlessly. Some of them, like our greenhair reindeer, swam, and later dived into the lake and eventually found the underwater city from this story.

Their experience of the environment where they were accepted and where everyone accepted them nicely, other aunts and maybe some uncles, animals with green hair, and maybe with hair of some other colours, passed on to others interested in a life full of understanding, of course, including the main hero of our story, the greenhair reindeer. Over time, that city grew, filled with numerous attractive squares, streets and interesting buildings.

All of them together had one more important task left, to somehow convey to the rest of the world that feeling of mutual acceptance and explain to them that the right to be different is a basic human right.

I added this last paragraph just now, I don't remember at all how, when this story was conceived, it ended, maybe it didn't even have a conclusion?.

