

## Jūratė and Kastytis

The calm Baltic Sea spreads ambers on the coast after the storm; it seems as if it wants to apologize for the spurt of anger. As soon as the thunder, which is nicely called Dundulis by children, moves away, everybody rushes to the seashore to pick up the gifts of the sea. These yellowish, the heat beaming little stones elevate joyful amazement for some people – “Look, what Jūratė gives us!” Other people just remember the old seacoast legend about Jūratė and Kastytis.

Uneasy was life for fishermen on the seacoast. The Baltic Sea was lavish only for the strong and stout-hearted people. Not one valiant, who was self-reliant overmuch, was taught a lesson: the sea tore the fishing nets and broke the oars. People used to talk in dismay and anxiety about those who didn't come back. Children used to say that the mermaids wiled and rocked the fishermen to sleep.

Young fisherman Kastytis lived in the poor seacoast cabin only with his mother, because his father didn't come back from the sea. It was hard to live near the seashore for a widow, whose son Kastytis looked towards the sea again and again. The earth, its troubles, hard and dirty work didn't attract him. The boy liked waves white with foam that nestled to his bare feet. Looking at misty distance Kastytis sang, and these songs were so nice that nobody could be annoyed with him and nobody could objugate him for his lack of care for his home and his mother.

Kastytis grew up fast. He was an attractive guy and his songs charmed a lot of girls. But none of the beauty's heart tied him on the coast. It seemed that somebody from the bottom of the sea was listening to the songs of Kastytis. Just as Kastytis started to sing, the waves calmed down, everything around subsided and pricked up ears... Insensibly Kastytis swam further than other fishermen, and his fishing nets were full of fish.

A water goddess Jūratė lived at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. At that time there were a lot of water-nymphs, which dove in the waves. They started to talk to Jūratė about Kastytis, his orotund songs and courage to fish more and more often. Jūratė was curious why a terrestrial had disturbed the sea rules: he fascinated her subordinates by his songs and swam too far from the coast. Jūratė summoned her servants water-nymphs and decided to see the defiant valiant.

The goddess ordered to sail the most beautiful ship from the deep waters to let commoner from the land see, what a wealth lived in the sea. From the distance she looked like a queen of earthly dream vested in a sparkling scaly wrap.

Dreamy Kastytis saw Jūratė in such an appearance. He hauled a net and sang quietly, his song flew like earthly bird and its sweet wing touched the ears of Jūratė. She listened to that earthly song in astonishment, and the anger in her heart started to melt...

“Hey, fisherman, you steal my fishes,” reproached Jūratė in a strict voice.

Kastytis felt silent. Dazzling of a girl's beauty, the guy rubbed his eyes. Could he be dreaming? But it wasn't a dream. He was stupefied and didn't notice how quickly black clouds were rising from the distance and overcast the sky. Formidable Perkūnas (The Thunder) swung his flaming arrows as he didn't want the earthly bug Kastytis to hope being loved by the sea goddess...

“Never swim there anymore, listen, how angry Perkūnas has become, “the goddess flashed out against the fisherman and dove in the waves. But later she appeared on the surfaced of the water once again and said, “But you sing very nicely,” and she disappeared in the waves.

Kastytis didn't remember the time he came back. Just as he stepped ashore, Perkūnas hit so angrily that the biggest pine tree on the seashore became black from his wrath. In an hour's time the awful storm started in the sea, it seemed that “heaven and earth” had mixed up. In such a way Perkūnas was down on Jūratė, as she dared to show herself and even to talk to the man, whose life is so tenuous and short.

Kastytis went to the sea more and more often. Sounding songs wafted over the waves of the sea. That summer was stormy as never. Perkūnas beat, splashed over the waves almost every day and every night took his revenge on the fisherman for his inhuman courage and on Jūratė for her godlike forwardness. They met more and more often, they talked increasingly and didn't perceive that they started to yearn and later fell in love with each other.

Kastytis told his mother what he saw in the sea, and his mother became very startled. He went to the sea more often, he saw nothing around him neither his cabin, nor sandy hills, or his old mother, who was worried a lot. Have you ever seen a man who was eager to get into the water world where the goddess of the sea Jūratė lived?

“My son, don't go to the sea,”- cried his mother. “Isn't this earth feeding us enough? Look, the rye near the cabin is already pale.” But Kastytis was silent. He heard and saw nothing. He just looked for the right time to go to the sea.

In the afternoon his mother was sad and silent. She didn't like her son's joy, as wherever he went he sang songs and wherever he looked he saw only the sea. The old mother understood that the waves ranted and raved him. When Kastytis sat in the boat, white foams surrounded it, and powerful windflaw blew from the coast and took the boat forward.

Shining, pretty sea goddess Jūratė was waiting for her darling Kastytis. From a distance they saw each other. Nobody could stop them – neither rising waves, nor flaming arrows of Perkūnas, and neither his menace. Sparkling, sweet and miracle Jūratė invited her lover – the son of Earth. He stretched his hands and they forgot themselves in the infinite felicity of their meeting.

But as soon as Jūratė's arms embraced Kastytis' neck, a painful flaming arrow was thrust at Kastytis' heart. Jūratė saw the fading lover's eyes, his sloping arms that had just been holding her embraced. Despair and displeasure caught her. She pretended being the Earth's daughter-in-law but not the Baltic Sea goddess. She gently laid her lover on the wave, stroke his eyes with her godlike fingers and asked the water-nymphs to take care of him. The water-nymphs quickly took Kastytis to the coast.

In a fit of temper Perkūnas knocked and banged about the Baltic Sea for a long time. Rigorous sky king could not understand how it is possible to set one's heart on earthly felicity so airily. He broke Jūratė's castle, the next arrow aimed at her perfect ships. Later, only a lot of chips, which were dissipated by the stormy waves, were lying in the deep waters.

Nobody has seen Jūratė since then. Only the amber, which is upcast from the Baltic Sea after the storms, recalls that water goddess, who wanted earthly fortune and therefore was painfully punished, had lived in the deep sea. The ambers that were polished by centuries and the waves told their story about the godlike Jūratė.

If you take a piece of amber in your hands, it isn't difficult to imagine, that it had its own great history to tell as it was beaten and fondled by the waves, heated by the sun, frozen by frost. Not a shorter way the legends went from mouth to mouth, they were told differently, and they were differently coloured by narrator. The legend "Jūratė and Kastytis" tells us about the inexorable desire of fortune, about the love like a present, about the happiness and death...