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GREECE – TRADITIONAL TALE

THE LEGEND OF KING ANILIAGOS

Once upon a time, in a place called Elis, the place where we come from, there was a village, Kastro. The village was built on the top of a hill overlooking the blue Ionian Sea. There lived a beautiful lady "Rini", who was the daughter of the local magistrate. Her long hair was blond and wavy and her eyes were brighter than the stars. Her cheeks were like two red apples and her lips sweeter than honey. She was so beautiful and timid that even the elderly of the village called her "mistress Rini". And she would always smile back at them politely.

But the times were hard, and pirates roamed the shores and stole everything they could. You see there was no castle to protect the people. And on top of that, water was hard to find. Farmers could not grow their crops and people did not have enough water to cover their needs.

Somewhere in the near distance there were two kingdoms. Each with different problems of their own. But both kings agreed that they had to find water and build a castle. But how?

And then the King said to Aniliagos:

King: Troubles again, my people complain there is no water and pirates attack and empty our warehouses. What can I do? I have to find a way but the successor of my throne is hopeless. My son is tormented by a cruel curse and if the rays of the sun touch him, he dies. When my son was born he was such a beautiful baby that even the Sun envied his beauty. So the witches cursed him and he cannot be under the sun. He will immediately be

turned into stone. That's why they call him Aniliagos. Only the tears of true love can release him from the curse.

Aniliagos: How can I help my father and my people? I can only hide in the basement of my parent's palace. I need to do something but most important I must find someone to talk because I can only get out of the palace at night where I only find wild animals to talk with.

King: How can I ask from my son to build a whole castle? The sun will destroy him before he even starts explaining his designs to the workers.

The second king also had a son, Gyftakis. Bold and warlike, he never stayed in one place for a long time.

The second king told his son about the problems of his kingdom and asked him to help find a solution.

Gyftakis rejected his father's request because he thought he was strong enough to face his enemies and solve the problems of his kingdom.

But then one day Gyftakis saw mistress Rini from a distance. He was dazzled by her beauty and he instantly decided that she should be the lady of his heart and his kingdom.

Gyftakis "What a beautiful lady. She will be my wife one day!!!!"

And he wasted no time. He talked to his father and sent matchmakers with horses and precious gifts, worthy of the lady's beauty.

But mistress Rini refused their offer saying that she wasn't going to marry someone for his money even if it was to a prince.

Rini's father insisted on her marrying prince Gyftakis as he was strong and wealthy. But mistress Rini said that she will marry for love, not money.

Not very far away, Aniliagos could not face the day light, so he would go out and wander during the night. When he came back into the basement of the palace before dawn, he would paint images of what he had seen and draw the changing of the moon.

One night as he was following the shadows of the full moon, he started humming a melodious tune. Rini heard his sweet voice and opened her window. She was up all night

knitting and embroidering her dowry. When Aniliagos saw her, he thought he would be destroyed by the brightness of her beauty. A few seconds later he started singing his misery.

Mistress Rini was deeply touched by his voice and his misfortune. They spent the whole night and many other nights after that chatting and laughing. They were such a good match!!!

But Rini's father kept insisting on the marriage. He believed his daughter should marry prince Gifakis because he was wealthy and powerful. But Rini rejected her father's wish and quarrels were frequent in their house. One day he decided that he would punish his daughter until she agreed to his wish. She had to remain locked in her room.

Time went by in grief and sorrow. Rini never opened her window again at night while Aniliagos stayed in the palace drawing sketches of his beloved face. As for Gifakis, he could not take no for an answer, so he kept himself busy in meaningless fights, drinking and shouting.

And then, there was the day when things couldn't be worse. The water was so little that people were desperate. Pirates would sail in the gulf by numbers knowing that the people were weak.

Rini's father was in total despair. His land and his daughter were wasted away. One day, he couldn't take it anymore and called for his daughter.

"Daughter! You have spent so many days crying in sorrow! I can't bear it any more. Make your decision and I will accept it. Just be careful!!! You have to choose the one who is worthy of you!!!!!!"

Rini lay for two days without speaking. Her heart was already promised, but how could she decide against her father's will?

And then she had the most brilliant of ideas:

Rini: "Father, I've made up my mind. I will marry the one who is worthy of me."

Father "Who is it?"

Rini "Alas, it is not so simple! I will ask both of them to complete two tasks. Aniliagos will have to bring water from the lake to the valley for the people while Gifakis will have to

built a castle around the village to protect us. The one who completes the task first will be my husband.”

Silence fell after her words. No one expected that a wise woman like Rini would ask for such an unreasonable request. There was no way Gyftakis would miss his drinking sessions and built a whole castle by himself. And Aniliagos? How could he dig the earth without the sun turning him into stone? Both kings were disappointed! Their sons were incapable of performing the tasks!

But there are few things love can't do. So Gyftakis decided to start immediately with his task. With the right tools at hand, he camped outside the village and built night and day, trying to win mistress Rini's heart.

Aniliagos was nowhere to be found. Even his own father believed that he would try to put an end to his life because of his sadness. But it wasn't true. Hidden in underground passages, he dug day and night, until he came to a river. And then water started coming up from the tunnels and into the village.

It was late at night, and Gyftakis also finished the castle walls, and he was very tired. He thought it would be OK to visit Rini's house in the morning. So he went to bed to rest.

Aniliagos stepped out of the tunnels and headed to his beloved. She was waiting at the window. When she saw Aniliagos walking towards her, she knew they would be together for life. But it was time for the night to step away and sun to come up. And the first rays touched him.

She ran to him shouting, “Please move away, hide...”

But it was too late. When she reached him, he had already been turned into stone. She hugged him and started crying.

“Life is so cruel...!”

Her tears were flowing now like a river. Her true love had just died. His clothes and his face were wet by her tears. Sobbing she tried to hold him closer and she understood that his body was not stiff anymore. She could move his arms. Looking at his face, she saw he was trying to open his eyes. True love had saved him!!!!

The next day, matchmakers arrived at mistress Rini's manor.

Father-How can you turn away a prince? Can you find a better offer? He will provide everything for you and you will have a comfortable life. This is a golden opportunity, and you're wasting it. You will remain locked in this tower, until you understand what you've done.

Rini "I won't marry him even if he is the wealthiest person on earth. All the riches of the world can't make up for his character. He is rude and I don't want him. I will marry out of love, not money."

When the rumor was spread, Aniliagos was terrified. He couldn't bear the thought of his "Rini" with another man. His mind was made up. He would speak to his father about his feelings and send matchmakers to Rini's father.

But when the matchmakers arrived at her house, they had to deal with her father:

Father "My daughter will marry "Gyftakis". I've made up my mind and I don't care. I don't want to hear anything else about it. It's a matter of time until she comes to her senses."

Rini's father was in total despair. His land and his daughter were wasted away. One day he couldn't take it anymore and called for his daughter.

Father "Daughter! You have wasted so many days crying in sorrow. I can't bear it any more. Make your decision and I will accept it. Just be careful. You have to choose the one who is worthy of you!"