

MARISSTELLA OCTEK (SL ČIŽMEŠIJA)

RISAN IS TEUTA

Historical literary Fiction

About the Story:

The story "Risan is Teuta" was published 2019 in the Croatian language in the Montenegrin literary Magazine ARS by publisher OKF Cetinje:

ARS : 2019. Nr. 1-2 (pages 141-150) :

<https://okf-cetinje.org/marisstella-octek-risan-jest-teuta/>

The story is historical literary fiction, which is why it is presented in some versions of the WIKIPEDIA in the content of historical topics about the Illyrian tribe, the Illyrian Queen Teuta, and the small city Risan in Boka Kotorska - Bocche di Cattaro - Bay of Kotor.

This ebook was created with StreetLib Write

<https://writeapp.io>

Table of contents

PATRON OF THE EDITION & PUBLICATION :	1
EDITION :	3
MARISSTELLA OCTEK (SL ČIŽMEŠIJA) : RISAN IS TEUTA	5
RISAN IS TEUTA	7
About the Author:	51
About the AUZUGDBK = ASACSBK = ASACSBC	53

PATRON OF THE EDITION &
PUBLICATION :

hrv. AUZUGDBK = eng. ASACSBK = ita.
ASACSBK

PATRON OF THE EDITION & PUBLICA-
TION:

AKADEMIJA UČENJAŠTVA ZNANOSTI I
UMJETNOSTI GRADA - DRŽAVE BOKA
KOTORSKA

=

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS OF
THE CITY - STATE OF THE BOKA KO-
TORSKA (BAY OF KOTOR)

=

ACADEMIA DI SCIENZE E ARTI DI CITTA -
STATO BOCCHE DI CATTARO

hrv. AUZUGDBK = eng. ASACSBK = ita.
ASACSBC

EDITION :

*ANCIENT BOKA KOTORSKA (BOCCHE DI
CATTARO) : WOMEN STORIES*

EDITION :

ANCIENT BOKA KOTORSKA (BOCCHE DI
CATTARO) :

WOMEN STORIES

MARISSTELLA OCTEK (SL ČIŽMEŠIJA) :
RISAN IS TEUTA

Historical literary Fiction

MARISSTELLA OCTEK (SL
ČIŽMEŠIJA) :

RISAN IS TEUTA

Translation from Croatian: Maris-
stella Octek

Copyright © 2025 Marisstella
Octek

RISAN IS TEUTA

In the whirlwind of reminiscence... in the whirlpool of recollection... my breath stopped: nothing comes out of me, nothing enters me: to immerse myself – within myself, to anchor myself – in a vision, in a dream, in the hypnotic silence of a wraith, an apparition, a simulacrum, an illusion.

Here, in the indented shore of the fjord, behind the receptive islets, the sharp cliffs, hidden to the path of the ships, in the imperceptible shadow, at the foot of the dark mountains – for many centuries they have been persistently silent while the ancestors from ancient times, having come from the same silence, even more quietly, devotedly, board a sailing ship... with them, solemnly rises and, carried by the rough, polished waves, sails away (where?) this identity of mine, my ownness, my essence – everything that I was and that I am – all mine, all of mine sails away

from me who remains alone, at the same time scorched by the heat, dried by the wind bora and wet by the summoned mountain rains; truncated, alienated from myself, lonely in the ruins of the once glorious walls: Risan.

&

She held her breath, anchored – her spirit floats, sails outside, above, and frees herself from this temporal flow so that she can encompass – everything. They do not know the reason – why Teuta is silent – they are quiet too, silent closed in their lives, certain, sure: she is now carrying historicity and decisions instead of them in her maturation of time and being... She, instead of them, in her ripening of time and being carries history and decisions: called by the gods to sail through the ancient Illyrian dream, she is the only one that transmits, only she convey the blessing of the ancestors who wove... who weave their timeless trajectory into the implementation of the same, Illyrian, faithful, staged love... such a seer... like this, called by the gods, how many times are they born? And in this and that knowledge – born for them –

they seem to love her – it looks like they love her; her Illyrians love her, knowing when her beloved is breathing and when she is holding her breath.

- Who am I? – I used to ask myself on those nights that give an ordinary child sleep, a dream... and to me doubts and a desire, a thirst for knowledge – to find out who I am... Who am I? I still remember the will of that little, very small trembling hand that sneaked out in the middle of the night and knocked quietly on the door of the Greek woman.

- Who's there? Who is it? – asked the Greek woman as she opened the temple, decorated with a fibula made of bronze round plates, buckles clasps, and gold bracelets with serpents, big snakeheads, and a beautiful diadem that glittered...sparkled...

- You are! – she said cordially, warmly, as if she were expecting me – and the soft voice answered her bravely:

- I have come to find out what kind of genus, of the tribe I am, what my lineage is!

- You mean, I... Can I help you? – she smiled slightly, gently, waiting to see if I would give up, but my intention was already woven into her hunch or even... knowledge?

I looked first at her dark, deep, old eyes — then at her delicate, long, youthful fingers.

- Aren't you a sorceress? – I asked – Didn't the Delphic Sibyl raise you?.. Wasn't the Delphic Sibyl raising you?

– I was... once, a long time ago. – she replied mysteriously, answered warmly.

I thought she sympathized with someone similar to herself, sympathizing with someone like me: rootless, homeless, far from her own.

- What is your name, little one?

– They call me Teuta – those who adopted me.

– They gave you a beautiful and glorious name.

- By whom? After whom?

– Don't look for a riddle or an answer in the name. You won't find it in the name.

– But you said – glorious, famous?

– And you will never get some answers. Maybe this is one of those.

– I will not give up! – my answer broke in, even before I had thought about it.

– Tomorrow... I will wait for you at the exit of the temple: be there... slightly before noon.

– I will come! Thank you! –

I ran through the night in trembling longing, in desire, not thinking about that one tear of hers... I thought then: she was moved, lonely. I didn't think about my fate, about my Destiny.

&

How beautiful she was in all her simplicity! How beautiful in all simplicity she welcomed me! In a long dress with the color of blossoming meadows, wrapped in a wreath of intertwined irises and white roses, and a veil that fell from her thick hair to the ground. She notices my necklace made of multicolored glass beads and the gold buckle around my waist belt... and smiles, assuming that I have brought with me the most beautiful thing I have.

We set out on our way towards the hill, towards Vidasus, the god of pastures and forests: soon we found ourselves on a path unknown to me, and as the heat was getting bigger and bigger, grow stronger and stronger, there was no wind from anywhere, no sound – not even the usual bleating, meowing of sheep and goats – I stopped to ob-

serve the path; gilding the barberry, silvering the cypresses and pines, yellowing the olives - drying and turning the olive trees dust-yellow, the Sun glistened, shone evenly over the vegetation, sucking its harshness and scents... The road to the top was impenetrable, vast, and long. I looked back.

– Yes, take a good look. – she said when I had already forgotten her voice. – Look down at our settlements... and now in the width of all those circular hillforts, fortifications... hills and mountains everywhere; behind them – there are powerful tribes – and you, you ask, who are you – you? Do you want to know? – she asked me, already dazed from... by the heat.

Isn't she hot? – I thought, but I attributed to her (again wrongly concluding) supernatural powers. It was not clear to the child's imagination: a Greek woman, accustomed to the heat. What followed – for which I now mourned, lamented myself – was what determined my trajectory, my path, and took possession of my being completely, resolutely, boldly... My being was taken over completely, resolutely, decisively, boldly!

– I see, you blindly follow your desire – said

the Greek woman – but I will be the first to ascend. I will climb first. At some point you will not see me; but whatever it is, but whatever happens, remember, you have to persevere and go the way forward. You must persevere and pass the path... you must move... forward! Giving up would be your instant, immediate death. Death. Are you listening to me? Do you... listen to me?– she said that so mildly, so gently... Under the unbearable heat, I did not think that there was anything terrible in the death she was mentioning, but my childish soul cannot imagine.

We continued along a narrow mountain path – when by the edges of the stones, at the edge of the rocks, behind the vegetation, from the earthen holes, one by one, a snake, a snake, snakes, snakes... All shapes, types, and colors... they got bigger and bigger and started towards us... longer and longer they came towards us: they crawled towards the Greek woman lazily, slowly, slowly... it seemed to me that they were hissing in fragmentation, in pieces... My stiff body couldn't move at first... The Greek woman continued... not even, nor – to move... but then I remembered that I still did not know who I was (who am

I?), and filled with inexplicable strength I began to follow the rhythm of the Greek woman: and behold, the snakes would block her path, but as she approached one (her dress rustled magically?), they would retreat in an instant... And she walked past them – as if they were not there! I took a closer look... bravely looked closer... In front of her steps, they would curl up in a ball... at her steps, they curled up into a ball... I was astonished, stunned; only snake heads emerged from the bouquet of snakes... out of the bouquet of serpents were only the heads of serpents, and they were all looking at me! What was this... I trembled in fear and horror, but instead of fear and disgust, I continued to walk... walking... I was overwhelmed with sincere astonishment, with genuine amazement; The Greek women had long since left me... in front of me she had been gone for a long time, and the snakes, one by one, curled up into a ball and stared fixedly at me! Looked at me stiffly! What was more unbearable – their tiny persistent gaze or that scorched heat without a drop, without a droplet liquid, without the sound of water, without a breeze, without a hint of wind, without a sound...

How long it lasted, I don't know... I lost all sense of time... All in mental tension and physical exhaustion, I lost track of time... Suddenly, the path is blocked by a rock. At the end of the road, someone addresses me. In front of me, a fresh, smiling, stood a Greek woman.

– You are the great-great-great-granddaughter of Cadmus and Harmonia, daughters of the Enchelean tribe, the very heart of the Illyrian! – she said and disappeared again in the dry shimmering of the unbearable heat.

When I woke up, I heard... I learned that they had found me unconscious, in front of the temple.

– What were you doing there, dressed so solemnly, daughter... and... why are you smiling?

&

That same night I fell asleep: the hall was dark, full of sacral silence and flickering candles, at the bottom – stood the throne, there the queen, my mother, stretched out her hands, and extended her arms to me:

– You are smiling beautifully! – my mother

hugs me.

- Come, daughter! – my father called out to me gently, spreading his arms, hugging me, kissing my hair. Suddenly, the tenderness of the silence is interrupted by a powerful, strong blow of the gong, and the king and queen stand up. From the end of the hall, he walked beautifully, handsomely, and upright, followed by some unusual balls that turned... strange balls that rotated around their axis and threw themselves from the air to the ground, from the air to the ground...

– Snakes! – I screamed with horror, in genuine horror, but already... He ran towards me. He began to hug me with a whisper:

- It is me, it's me, it's me! I am, I am, I am!

– Who? Who? Who are you?

Only years later, I realized; then in my dream, through my clairvoyance, He, Illyric, visited me.

&

Agron? My king, my husband. Did I love him? I did. And yet, what I loved more about him, was his duty as king. Yes, in him I loved more than himself – his duty as a king! I left

Triteuta long before you, he said; she gave me a son, but she would not worry about the kingdom, she did not want the cares of a kingdom; I wandered for a long time until I found you: you give me the strength to rule this kingdom... do you love my son, do you love Pinnes? Always the same conversation, always the same last sentence – a question. Why do you ask, are you afraid... but I would stop there, knowing that my king knows no fear... does not know fear... No, you are not afraid, but you know; yesterday the war, today the war, tomorrow the war... And when the anxiety, the apprehension, the dread of my beloved would subside, his eyebrows would flutter, would tremble along with the wrinkles under his eyes that I loved the most – because reminded me of the burden that he nobly carries, proudly bears; then I would come up to him, embrace him – and that smell, that smell, that scent, that scent....

– My Teuta! – my king would cry out only in bed, freed from all worries, freed, free,... – My Fate!

He loved me, I know and I have always known, for the sake... because of my Fate: I was predestined and ready to share the Fate

of all my ancestors. Only when he got out of bed I would cry too – from apprehension, dread, and anxiety. One day Pinnes came along:

- Why are you crying? – he whispered, although there was no one else but me and him.

- Only sometimes... I would rather not be who I am, what I am.

- The Fateful... Queen?

In that child, wisdom hummed.

&

- I'm paying him back! I am repaying my... debt!

-To the Macedonian, Demetrius II... are you now repaying the debt of your fathers? To Demetrius, that duplicitous, two-faced, vile, insatiable boaster, unworthy of you! He calls himself the greatest king... I have heard...

- Demetrius has strong allies!

- You call the Acarnanians– strong! They are not strong... not even... nor allies! And they turn wherever the winds blow!

- Shut up, woman, shut up! Be quiet, woman, be quiet!

– I am calm, you are screaming! I will speak;
 am I queen, am I queen?
 – Be quiet!
 – Have I ever given you the wrong advice?
 Did I?
 – No.
 – Have I ever advised you wrongly? Have I?
 – You didn't.
 – How many troops are you sending?
 – Five thousand soldiers.
 – And how many of them do the Aetolians
 have?
 – We will destroy them. Since when do we
 not attack in phalanxes, but in smaller and
 more mobile units...
 – Why don't you send your brother Sker-
 dialides? Why are always... you?
 – Because I am also a military leader, not just
 a king.
 – Where are the Aetolians now?
 – They are besieging Medion.
 – Are they besieging the Acarnanians? Aren't
 they Demetrius' concern?
 – You take me back to the beginning. You're
 taking me back to the beginning. What is re-
 ally, truly meaningful in this life?
 I hear them again at night: they hiss, they

hiss... hissing, hissing... Snakes; guardians of the hearth, keepers of the graves.

&

- She's so cold! – hissed Triteuta. – Who, who knows what virtue he found in her!? – she continued, half-screaming, hostile. To her crying, I was silent. I was silent at her sobbing. I was silent at her scream.. at the sound of her screaming... And in response to her loud prayer, which was joined by many, I remained silent.

– She is so cold! Tell her, tell her: This is Agron's death! – she roared, sobbing, hating Teuta from the bottom of her soul. She could not know, could not understand: in those moments, I fell in love with her personality, I loved her. She wept, cried my pain, my sorrow, my prayers, shamelessly showing my weakness as well; the weakness of a woman, wife Teuta!

Your pain is so young, Triteuta, I wanted to tell her, as young, as fresh, as light as your Destiny: it can still be opened, it can still be wept. Cold... Cold... the corridors of the Risan Palace resounded, echoed with the simultane-

ous weeping, crying, and prayer of the temple priestesses... It seemed, suffocated by the Queen's cold hearth... coldness! The queen – she was persistently silent, remained steadfastly silent for days. You could not have known, Tritauta, it was only in pain that I came to love you, I only loved you through pain; you have presented all the beauty of memory – shamelessly, in the passion of the call of life to us... And your queen? Silent, composed, collected, quiet; perhaps too haughty, rustling with long cloaks of mourning (cold – they whisper – so cold!) she closes, shuts herself in her chambers. You do not see her at night; look, at night, behold, she embraces the shadows, embraces sleeping children, embraces herself... wandering and sobbing, wandering around the palace – sobbing! She decided a long time ago; that no one would feel sorry, no one would pity this Queen. Tritauta let it mean pain. Let Tritauta mean pain.

&

I gave her, Tritauta, to shave his beard, break his sword sika into pieces, and put it with the

amulet and other utensils, paraphernalia in his grave: an expression of my condolences, my appreciation of her pain: the pain of the mother of the son of the heir. She did not want to appreciate that gesture of mine either. She joined, allied herself with haters, veiled (the hidden) enemies in gossiping about the Queen; «... Look, she despised customs, an unbeliever, infidel ... she didn't let go of the tears... she did not shed a tear... now it is clear – she just used him for the sake of the authorities, she only used him for the sake of power; she didn't care about him while he was alive, nor now about his sika... what will their children say about it!?»

O Illyria, to the wicked, imbued with treachery! Oh, Illyria, evildoers, imbued with betrayal! After the funeral dance, I watched them without enthusiasm, as they were: imbued with envy, greed (greed, greed!), lack of sincere compassion – togetherness – community - solidarity, and most of all, a lack of self-knowledge. Have they ever longed, asked in childhood – who am I? I had already seen through... and despised... many of them.

Because no dangers, no fear, no power, absolutely nothing at all could keep me out my

desire... from yearning... to love devotedly, faithfully, most of all, above all, to love... Illyria.

&

What is to rule if not for the good of all? Why rule if not for the good of all – and they, the ungrateful, treacherously stalk, slyly spy, mocking; first they flatter, and then behind our backs they pass on lies... they spread lies behind our backs... jealous, envious that they do not have more power. Even greater power, even greater power... how far the power reaches...

- Power is their only goal, Queen - said Pinnes on his deathbed, at the age of fifteen - and I am ready to die, indeed, I am ready because I long so much I long for that undisturbed peace of the ancestors... profound untroubled peace of the ancestors... and you do not cry, you will live in me... with me and my ancestors and beyond... While we love each other – you taught me – we live in each other... Do not be afraid, I know how much you love me, I will live in you... Do not worry so much about the kingdom: about this present, theirs

– by themselves – deceived Kingdom!
– You need to rest now!
– But there's so much more I want to tell you... I want to tell you so much more...
– I know everything, child. Now... I know.
– What do you know, tell me, what do you know? – he asked impatiently, squeezing me with trembling hands.
– I know who smiles in me when sadness overwhelms me, I know who strengthens me when I experience defeat... I?
– And... me too?
And you, Pinnes. Pinnes, the angelic soul.

&

The present? The present does not contain me. How do I know? I see on the faces of the same ones who once knew me, who once worshipped me, bowed down to me, and now elude me, they are slipping away; they only smile slightly as they pass by me somewhere (where, where?) rushing, without touching me... not touching me or my shadow. Your time has passed... is over, Teuta, that voice tells me, the walls of the Risan Palace whisper, the streets and the leaves of the trees that bor-

der, that line the Risan - whisper... while the whispers of the same words, scattered, already rooted, hum through the meadows, the fields behind the walls... throughout beautiful, all over beautiful Illyria! New ones are coming, and all your sons of Illyria are now certainly built, embedded into the walls of history, like you – in memory...

If you fell asleep... – whisper the walls of Risan – ... We know, we know, you would have dreamed the same dream of a homeland – the same dream – but your kingdom, your dear homeland, is growing up with some other children: no, they don't speak your language, no, they don't speak the language of your ancestors; but remember, weren't you the first to say: life is important, life is important, and... you missed: by giving in, allowing everyone to make omissions, mistakes (and all of them were betrayals) for the reason – this reason: just let our good deeds spare the lives of all children, just let all Illyrian children be spared life through our good deeds! And what have you gained? And what did you get? You have Illyrian children, you don't have a language.

–... Everything is good! – you shout: now to

the walls of Risan, now to yourself – ... Everything is going well: there is children's laughter, there are memories, there are still living traditions and there is still love: look, there is! Perhaps an even better, fairer power is being born than you had, gave, used: more just power than you had: a power that is and is not yours at the same time as great-grandfathers! All the old ones are dead, all the greats, great men of your history are dead, and the new ones only know you superficially through half-true stories and vain self-serving manifestations of (whose?) power – because the arms of your (and it was exclusively theirs, theirs alone!) power reached strangely, you don't even know which way, by which path, to the most remote to the farthest tribe of the Illyrian state, to the most ordinary man, to the most remote fortress or the dilapidated shepherd's hut... The power of your word. You have tasted the power of all the false patriots who sneaked up, crept up on you in the rhythms of insidious, treacherous spies, hidden behind heavy doors, pressed, huddled against the walls beneath the palace chambers... absorbing every word from the queen and the king, disseminating - spread-

ing them to others; having previously shaped them according to their measurements, arranging them, molding them, redrawing, reshaping them already according to the need for the power and according to the measure of the power of everyone, of the power of each: precisely each of these and those sycophants falsely attached, falsely devoted to the king of Illyria and the homeland! O how heavy, gloomy, and overwhelming did many of Thy decrees resonate... have reverberated... Oh how unjust, oh how dissimilar, unjust, oh how unlike to being-character-nature of Illyria: unlike the king, unlike the queen!

– Don't trust anyone! Trust no one! – I taught Pinnes, but he had a benevolent, gentle, innocent soul because of which he gave knowing that he should not give and received even though he knew that he must not receive:

– Why are you going against yourself? – I asked him.

– Because I can't fight against my people, all those who are mine now. Everybody, everybody, everybody! All, all, all! – cried Pinnes, the wise child's head. – And that is why I love you, Teuta... – he said on his deathbed – ... I love you, Teuta because you do not partici-

pate in anyone's hatred... in anyone's hatred!
The present? The present does not contain me. I see the shadows, the shadows of the shadows. Illyricum again comes back to my dreams, but briefly, no longer lavishly and intimately, as luxurious and intimate as in childhood, and no longer as bright, devoted, clear and mature as in the time of my greatest power; now he comes like a seemingly neglected, disinherited stranger, like Odysseus who finally knocks on the door of his home... He calls to himself: to history, into the graves? History shapes by character. You have dreamed, you've got it figured out, Teuta! And your Illyria, which remained mine, let it stay, let it remain... maybe... perhaps only as a pledge... of the future? I don't know, I don't want to prophesy, but the Greek woman said: after Teuta, Teuta. And what does it mean, and what does it mean to me, to the future ones who are being born now, what does that mean? Because of these words of hers, I named each female godchild Teuta and curiously kissed each of them, begging them to succeed me, praying that they may inherit me, may they inherit me... to succeed me, and to keep themselves wiser, wiser, wiser, and

happier.

&

– Your complaints and the complaints of the Issaeans are a bit... childish! - was the first thing this reserved woman said and continued:

– How can I subsequently suspend the war operations against Issa that have begun? I wonder... I'm amazed at the Roman Senate: since when has it been interested in the Issaeans? And strange... I would say, it is significant that you subsequently intervene in our disputes! Please do not mention the above to me again! And as for piracy, I deny pirate attacks on Italic and Greek merchant ships! My power is only the power of the queen, but if you wish, I can also order by decree, decree the cessation of piracy as a means of acquiring goods for the kingdom.

- You admit it, then...

- No! Piracy is not our method of growth and development. These are our mines of silver, gold, iron, copper, lead, and salt... our fishing, cattle breeding, agriculture, trade...

– Are you rich enough?

– My power is not absolute. My power is the power of a woman accompanied and followed by a lying, a false echo. The first ones who hear me will be happy to listen to me, and will gladly listen to me. But those who do not want my words, who cannot yet accept that they have a queen after the death of a king above all kings, dare to do what they would never do to Agron: and a priori they will neither hear me rightly - properly nor hear me justly; of course, they will not kill because murder is punishable, but we will not be able to prevent the soaking, the siphoning of funds for private purposes - only by a brief decree, a decree... with just a meager decree. Private individuals have their customs and I have no right to interfere as a queen. But we need to talk to them... to convince, persuade people...

– You have just given me a negative answer! You just gave me a negative answer? And Rome sends us expecting only one: an irrevocably positive one! May I tell you, they call you the queen pirate... the pirate queen! – said the Roman Gaius and Lucius sneered superiorly, more viciously, maliciously.

– I gave you the answer of the queen who

rules from the river Neretva in the north to the Gulf of Ambrachia... Ambracian Gulf in the south... but who knows where and within the kingdom itself her power extends - how far queen's power reaches within the kingdom itself! We are an alliance of equal tribes, but some tribes are still more autonomous than others. Personally, I can neither control nor prevent anyone's private ambitions. If they do not respect the agreement, they respect and obey the laws. I will convey the agreement, talk to them... My Illyrians are responsible and mature political participants in my kingdom and I believe that the instructions, especially those agreed, will be followed. But what do you think: who created this kingdom? Yes, create it. The Illyrians. Agron is just a good star sent by the divine heavens to be followed.

– We know the merits of the great noble Agron, Queen!

– Then why did you come? If you know him, you also know what he created: you should have performed, and acted with more confidence!

– We need your word.

– There are no robberies, murders, and re-

venge under Teuta's reign, under Teuta's rule and there will never be, there will be none: there are only those who scheme, plot, set me up, who accommodate me, who do evil to you and all of us! But I note that no law can respond to a private decision...

Gaius interrupted her angrily:

- If it is as it has been so far... If it goes on as it has been... Rome will defend all its people and subjects from the Illyrian pirates on its own, and we will force you to either change or apply the laws!

- Force? - there was more than resistance in the Queen's voice: a contemptuous, threatening force.

- Yes: you will have to introduce better laws or enforce the existing ones more strictly!

- Introduce better laws? You are mocking me. You know very well what the greatest laws are: the laws that the gods have bequeathed... have handed down to us as an inheritance. How many such laws do you and yours follow in Rome?

They were silent. After a long pause, it seemed, that the hostess wanted to appease the dispatch:

- And the smallest?

– State laws? Statesmanlike? – the Roman replied half-mockingly.

– No. They are all great because they are a copy of the laws given to us by our gods.

When they departed with the gifts she personally presented to them, she ordered the fleet to be ready. The faithful – they set sail with their queen. It was known; that there will always be self-serving people, those who are greedy, who will both want and know how to play even the best laws and the noblest agreements by breaking them without any conscience... violating them without the slightest conscience – and for the sake of their particular well-being. While she was sailing with the most faithful, it was precisely such self-loving, self-proclaimed Illyrians, who killed the Romans in an ambush, the brothers Gaius and Lucius Coruncanius, and the Issaian Greek Kleemporos, accompanied by them: all whom she had previously received and welcomed with open hospitality... willingly, full of hospitable hope in the possibility of reaching an agreement with the powerful of the world.

&

I saw the death of that kingdom, I watched it die... its death... every day. Do something, I shouted to Agron, and he hid his face from me: I will, I will, he would speak and mumble and run... run away, murmuring: even at night he could no longer bear my face because my eyes were increasingly insistently searching for his action: do something, do something, do something, look at fashion: they ignore your decrees, your commandments, all commands: they pervert, they twist your words, your dream: bribed by the Romans, they speak Latin in schools, and even Greek, on top of Illyrian, is no longer enough for them! The Illyrian language is our bed: the mother tongue is a pillow and our hands: through the language we run through the language we dream through the language we remember: I remember everything you said to me I remember everything you did: and I judge and forgive by loudly speaking in the words of my mother tongue... in vain? Merchants bring beautiful dresses, decorated verses, and the latest fashion, but fashion is not in Illyrian, fashion is in Latin: fashion is exclusively Roman?!

– Why is the queen complaining when everyone in Illyria knows Illyrian well?

What kind of Illyrian is it with so many Latin words inserted (and inserted like stalkers, like a spy), and what kind of Illyrian is it without its artists, without linguistic virtuosos, without those in love with Illyrian? ... They don't fall in love with Illyrian? What a fashion it is to write in Latin and invite writers exclusively with Latin texts to Rome: to Rome, which the ambitious arrogantly, the triumphant proudly call the capital... well, here in Illyria is the capital! What led to the fact that you are famous only if you are accepted in Rome and use a foreign language: when it happened, when did that happen: when we were young there was still no unpatriotic scramble for everything foreign... who allowed all that? ... Haven't you seen how many of them don't care, and do you see clearly now?!

– What is it about your husband that avoids your bed at night: he runs away to drinking parties, gets drunk on beer and mead, and dedicates, devotes himself to the god Dualos by invoking Sabaia and not the kingdom? Keep Queen beloved Agron with you: do not worry about the kingdom now, neglect the

kingdom now!

– I can't do without Illyria, I can't be without Illyria: she gave me everything, she gave us everything! -

Why do others not care... Why don't others care why they prefer everything foreign and strange: you speak of language, of Illyrian poetry, and you do not see who lives within your walls: the most valuable houses have already been sold to the Romans, the most well-kept, well-groomed estates, the most fertile land have already been sold to the Romans: already all our most beautiful daughters have married the sons of Rome, Roman sons: this mixing of cultures has already arisen, has already occurred: do you think that in your kingdom there are only the sons of the ancestors of Illyricum... Illyrian ancestors? Do you think that there are a lot of those who care: now there are many more who don't care if there is Illyria, whether there will be Illyria or not and most of them would sell both you and Illyria for their more luxurious life: don't you see why you don't see all this... Tears won't help you, Teuta.

&

„– Okay, I'll order the Liburnian sails to be prepared."

„- Is our fleet finally practicing a new tactic of war... a new war tactic is: mooring, tying up ships four by four, then suddenly - attacking..."

„- What did you just say, who threatens us, threatens my kingdom again?"

„ – The fleet commander is waiting? The Greek Demetrius of Pharos? Where would this fickle lover of the Romans and the defiant, dashing lover of Triteuta lead the entire fleet and Queen Teuta?"

„– It's better that the Queen doesn't know where she's going to sail ?!"

&

I probably wanted to live forever, I was probably wrong, I probably made mistakes but who am I, if I distinguish myself from my kingdom... Do I distinguish myself from my kingdom: is the life of a queen a trap with more madness, with more compassion, with more self-sacrifice, with more understanding, with more knowledge: where were the others

in my lives, where did they reside...they resided only now, I see that I didn't store them anywhere because I believed in the fidelity of the collective memory, in that unlimited power of perpetuating dedication to the same goal.

After all, I believed in the power of history! Yes, yes I understood history as an implementing atmosphere... as an implementation atmosphere that would encompass everything, that would weave a solid fishing net that cannot be unraveled, that is indestructible like the foundations of a temple that never collapse... What did they teach you – I ask myself – what did they teach you? And always the same answer: Love.

&

With the pulens, sloops at the stern, and the bow in the shape of a snake, in the lembus that he had given me – we sailed with full sails when he said:

– Soon! And now, close your eyes, my nymph, my goddess!

I closed my eyes and surrendered to the wind that shone, flashed from Agron's eyes to-

wards the sky... forcing, urging... even Aeolus himself to fill our sails with the help of the god of the sea, Bindus.

–Look at it! – he suddenly said and fell silent. I was surprised. Never had he sailed so close to the Cape alone, without an escort... he had never sailed unaccompanied, without his royal guard... In the eyes of the open sea.

– What do you see? Only one answer emanated from the gleam, the brilliance of his eyes. – Beloved... do you see... Illyria? – he excitedly anticipated my answer.

Yes, Illyria.

–What do you see?

– You're happy. You are very happy.

– I am happy to see: Illyria and you who love her, my woman Illyria, as much as I do! Whom you love as much as I do! I love your Fate, your Destiny, I love your youth! You will say to our children one day: "There is a point on the map of the world, in the infinity under the stars of the heaven, of the sky... a point from which Illyria can be seen! It exists! Exists!"

I remember that point. I remember clearly: crystalline, crystal clear, pure. Crystalline, crystal clear, pure. Once upon a time, Illyria.

&

The thought of immortality. To have the opportunity to try everything, see everything, know everything, weigh everything, judge everything – by insight... with the insight of experiential knowledge and not just according to old records, rumors, advice, or assumptions... Only a long-lived, eternal, would be able to write down the whole, the entire life of Illyria, to preserve the language of its population, to order the scribes: write parchments and parchments of everything I know, because I have remembered all the most beautiful things from our history, our common heritage, all Illyrian lives! We have been given this short life precisely so that, disguised in the shadow, as the shadow of immortality of the shadow, we may, we would see a little of the truth of everything: we are here now, just like everyone else next to us, around us, to participate in human creation, full of confidence that we will all contribute; Is it just a flash of desire – is there beauty in that: only in transience and through transience – the transience of the moment, fi-

delity, life...

Many would spend, waste their immortality in vain, as they spend, waste their own lives; then there would be even more decadence and destruction: imagination without temporal coercion, the constraint would be diluted, and so would love...as would love – imagine that feeling – a love that lasts, lasts, never ends! I gave birth to everything I created despite mortality despite history, and in honor of history, because I reckoned, calculated that in immortality there is no history and we do not need it, and we, we, should preserve, guard the treasure given to us...

Here, in this temporality, I thought, a state without history and a man without history are like a house without a household or a shadow without a character for which no one knows to whom it belongs (who it belongs to?), but which, by causing discomfort, bothers everyone... I thought that only history binds us together, into unity, the goal of our lives and the outside world, the world that surrounds us and remains after all of us. History is shaped by its characters.

– I am here! – I shouted to my capital Risan from the viewpoint, of the lookout at the top

of the palace:

– Write me out, tell my story!

&

– How do we know each other? – asked this anciently built, strong man, approaching with a wide, broad smile.

– Yes...I do... We know each other – I confirmed, smiling back.

– As far as I remember, my husband met us, he introduced us, but I don't remember...

– Lucky guy! – he interrupts me abruptly.

– He died.

– I am sorry! – he sighs sincerely, gently squeezing my hand... slightly, but his face hardens. His thoughts seemed to wander, but he soon asked with interest:

- And who is making you laugh now?

– We have children together.

- You have... The children? So fragile... thin? With that sparkle in your eyes... – he measured and looked me over boldly.

- Where are you from, sweet-talking young man?

– From Macedonia.

As soon as he said the name of his state, of

the country, my heart pounded, and Helen, my most faithful courtier, a Greek, turned her eyes away from the magnificent, the defiant crowd, and the sumptuous folk festivities, visibly trembling.

– And you are?

– Filip, military leader.

– King Argon introduced us. But... How come I did not remember your origin or your name?

To his surprise, at his astonished look, I asked:

- Don't you remember meeting Teuta?

He retreats, and steps back, speechless. After a long silence, he looked up.

- You were pregnant with your youngest son, the Queen...

Nights of secret meetings followed, nights of secret encounters, the power of attraction and passion was stronger than reason, condemnation, danger, the spies of the Romans... But those hands, that strength, that masculinity, that tenderness, such a young, protective passion! I had never shone so brightly, but all my duties as a stateswoman, all statesmanship duties were intensified, heightened: no one was allowed to know: no one! And yet, it seemed to me that everyone knew by

smelling his trace on me even after baths made of essences of roses, seaweed, milk, rosemary, honey... I breathed myself with his scent intensely, deeply... Helen was not allowed to wash the sheets, and pillows, no trace in the rooms was to be erased until nightfall, night to night... he would enter through the secret door smiling as he had done the first time, reflecting the same sparkle. Shine in my eyes; Oh, I was biting the pillows, screaming quieter inside me... bit the pillows, screaming to myself, more and more quietly... but he would sob... he would moan... it could be heard, they could hear... He conquered the queen and with this sin drew a handful of enemies on himself... He brought upon himself enemies. They heard.

&

And when I cried the most, I sent for the old prophetess.

– You must not die. You have to keep going. You must continue. Do not blame yourself for anything.

– If he wanted to...

– I know; If he had willed,.. if he had wanted to... You would have kept the child, proclaimed, declared an alliance between the kingdoms.

– Strengthen the tribes, uniting them, bind them together! But... why, Greek woman?

– I once told you that you will never find out some answers... some answers you will never know. Remember, you were still a child...

– Like my daughter now. But... why?

– The powerful of the world always looks at the short term. Short-term. They are driven and guided by current, immediate interests. They do not bother to look beyond the limits of the visible or within the limits of imagined possibilities. They do not even try to look beyond the boundaries of the visible or within the limits of imaginary possibilities! They... run away... leave... escape... go... turn their backs. Understand, even though... although... he loved you.

– But a child, the child?

– The Kingdoms judge.

– The gods...

– The heavens know your soul, the gods see your suffering; Heaven has already forgiven you.

- Our son would be our common... kingdom!
- As your son, he would be quickly killed by your enemies. You know. Say: I know, they would kill him.
- I shouldn't have expanded, extended my power to my kingdom!?
- You must continue to live!

The pain in which I got over the death of my king, I overcame the death of my king, the pain in which I got over all their departures, I overcame all their departures... the pain in which I drowned the soul of my Destiny... a pain that has never forgave the passionate, imaginative, unreasonable, ambitious, in love woman Teuta.

Again, remained only She. Queen.

&

When men talk about love, they assign and give it boundaries, limits, deadlines, colors, sides, lifespan, symbolism, and shapes: not suspecting, not realizing that for women such visibility and tangibility of love is a sign of weakness, fragile power and imminent collapse. For women, love includes everything; all sides, all colors: it is boundless, limitless,

invisible, intangible, and eternal! I am talking about a mother's unconditional love for her children: then for the father of her children: then for the fathers of her children's fathers, great-great-grandfathers: then for the one who gave them all, for the Homeland. And these inflamed male passions and those brief flashes of their short-lived ecstasies, raptures – followed inevitably by divisions, distributed interests, guilt, wars, indulgences, dying vigilance, the fading of vigilance – and the reconquest of positions of power, now by those with a stronger, fresher, newly, just awakened passion. Oh, how easily their kingdoms disappear... Oh, how mothers constantly – cry!

&

I tried to tailor them to the measure of my vision. According to the measure of my loyalty, fidelity to one statesmanship ideal: the State ideal. They say you tried to mold them thinking you knew what was best for them. Even today, I confidently say, claim: I knew what was the best for Illyria: first for Illyria, Illyria: therefore for all of them. Illyrians, for all of them. But they didn't believe me or they

weren't interested... What would Illyria tell them?

„They were not interested in me. They wanted to be inscribed in their small interests, self-interest, in their – they thought – innocent lives. But there are no innocents in inaction, when I, Illyria, call them. There are no innocents in complicity, while they were plotting, digging against me, Illyria. There are no innocents in participating in the same devastating silence. If anyone is sorry that Illyria is no more, I tell them: there is no Illyria because you did not want to be in it. There is no Illyria because all of you are not in it. First, you have extracted from it your lives with all your customs: then your thoughts and the native language, mother tongue of your thoughts, of your ancestors: then your heirs: then your memory.”

Ruins remained for them: the ruins of Illyria, the ruins of the palace of Risan.

&

Behold, at the bottom of the sea fjord, on the walls of Rhizon, the city of the god of war Medaurus, where the mountains plunge, fall

steeply and darkly into the sea, an old woman in self-exile – sobs. And the birds, sometimes-now mountain birds, sometimes-now sea birds, fly over and land all around her, defying the drops of sea foam that are blown and cooled by the imaginative, conceited, summoned from the mountains, sharp mountain wind. The birds seemed to be croaking, to caw at her;

- Do you still... Do you still... still... Now that no one is anymore, now that nobody... anymore...

- Do you still care about her, Teuta?

Is. Illyria.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Born 1969 in Kotor, Dalmatian fjord of Boka Kotorska.

Writer, Essayist, and Editor of the City - State Boka Kotorska (CSBK): known as the POET-ESSA OF THE RESTORED / RENEWED WORDS.

Croatian Mother of two children, TV Screenwriter, Stage manager, Music Teacher, Singer, Lecturer, Financial Consultant, Proofreader, Reviewer, Librarian, Cataloguer, Head of faculty academic Library...

MARISStella published poems and prose for adults and children in numerous CROatian (Zagreb) literary magazines and books since 1994 and in several MOn Montenegrin (Cetinje) literary magazines and books since 2017.

MARISStella published poems in the literary magazines of the CROatians in BiH (MOstar)

since 2018: which is readable in databases CEEOL and EBSCO Information Sciences.

Indie author: a self-publisher: since 2019 she is writing, creating, shaping, editing and producing (publishing) her E-books in Croatian language in the database SMASHWORDS.

In CROatia MARISStella published under the names Stella Levanić Čižmešija and Marisstella Otek.

ABOUT THE AUZUGDBK = ASACSBK =
ASACSBK

About the AUZUGDBK = ASACSBK =
ASACSBK

AKADEMIJA UČENJAŠTVA ZNANOSTI I
UMJETNOSTI GRADA - DRŽAVE BOKA
KOTORSKA

=

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS OF
THE CITY-STATE OF THE BOKA KO-
TORSKA (BAY OF KOTOR)

=

ACADEMIA DI SCIENZE E ARTI DI CITTA -
STATO BOCHE DI CATTARO

hrv. AUZUGDBK = eng. ASACSBK = ita.
ASACSBK

is tasked with caring for the spiritual heritage
of the Boka Kotorska – Bocche di Cattaro -

Bay of Kotor.

The initial period of heritage studies dates from the end of the 14th century when the city of Herceg - Novi was founded.

From then until today, the Boka has belonged to the countries of Italy, Austria, France, Croatia, and Montenegro.

Considering the nearly one hundred church buildings (churches, chapels, monasteries, etc.), the majority of the Boka territory is Catholic, primarily linked to the Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of the Vatican, and then to a much lesser extent to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

The official languages of the multicultural Central European and Mediterranean Academy are: Croatian, Italian, German, French, Montenegrin, and Latin, a total of six (6) languages.

The Academy is active in the content of FB thematic groups.

NOTES

¹ Copyright © 2025 Marisstella Octek

CREDITS

Acknowledgment - Appreciation - Credit -
Gratitude –Thankfulness:

I thank my beloved children Martin and Anika
Ana Marija Čižmešija who lived with me
(during their childhood) while I wrote and
shaped the story.

I thank dear God for giving me many talents
and for being the only one who gives me
permanent and sincere support for all my
creativity.