

DORUNTINA AND STANDIN

AN ANCIENT ALBANIAN LEGEND
OF SACRIFICE, AND AN OATH
THAT CHOSES BEYOND DEATH.



Doruntina and the Solemn Oath

gatim shtepie



Deep within the rugged, mist-shrouded mountains of Albania, a loving mother lives happily with her nine brave sons and her only beautiful daughter, Doruntina. The family bond is unbreakable, filled with laughter, traditional music, and warm evenings around the stone hearth.



A handsome prince from a distant kingdom across the sea arrives to ask for Doruntina's hand in marriage, sparking a fierce debate among the brothers. While the mother and eight brothers fear losing her forever to a faraway land, the youngest son, Kostandin, steps forward to support the union.



To ease his mother's weeping heart, Kostandin gives his 'Besa'—the sacred, unbreakable Albanian oath of honor. He solemnly promises that no matter how great the distance, he will personally cross mountains and seas to bring Doruntina back whenever her mother needs her.



Doruntina marries the foreign prince and departs for her new home, leaving her family behind in their stone villa. Not long after her departure, a terrible plague sweeps through the homeland, tragically claiming the lives of all nine brothers and leaving the mother entirely alone in her overwhelming grief.



In her desolate home, the heartbroken mother weeps bitterly by the windows, calling out into the empty night. She curses Kostandin's broken promise, demanding to know how he could leave her completely abandoned without fulfilling his solemn oath.



Deep within the earth of the village graveyard, the power of the mother's immense grief and the weight of the unfulfilled Besa shake Kostandin's resting place. Driven by his sacred word, the young man miraculously rises from the grave, dusts off his dark cloak, and leaps onto his black stallion.



Kostandin rides like the wind through stormy nights and treacherous terrains, his spectral form fueled by pure determination. He crosses borders and uncharted lands until he finally reaches the distant palace where Doruntina lives, finding her dancing at a grand feast.



Surprised but overjoyed to see her brother, Doruntina leaps onto the back of his swift horse, completely unaware of the tragedy that has befallen their family. As they ride back together through the moonlit forests, she notices that his clothes smell of damp earth and his hair is covered in white dust.



They reach the edge of their native village just as the church bells begin to toll, and Kostandin tells his sister to go ahead to their mother's house while he rests his horse. In the blink of an eye, he vanishes into the morning mist near the graveyard, returning to his eternal slumber.



Doruntina knocks on the heavy wooden door of her old home, and her frail mother opens it in utter disbelief. As they embrace and realize the miraculous truth of how Doruntina returned, they collapse together, overwhelmed by the realization that Kostandin kept his sacred promise even from beyond the grave.