

# THE WORLD OF FOLK AND LITERARY FAIRY TALES

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## WORLD OF FAIRY TALE AND LITERATURE

The meaning of literature and especially of fairy tales in Ukrainian culture could not be overrated. Hundreds of generations tried to teach their children and explain the reality in their own way for many years. Literature is an amazing example of cultural identifier as the values of the country and the nation itself is presented there. That is why we even know some typical characters of each specific national literature as a sample of their cultural experience and outlook.

Ukrainian literature has a long history, dating back to medieval times, and has been influenced by various cultural, historical, and political factors.

Throughout its development, Ukrainian literature has experienced periods of flourishing creativity as well as suppression and censorship under different rulers. It has often been a vehicle for expressing the cultural identity, national consciousness, and struggles for independence of the Ukrainian people.

Nowadays it is especially important to understand the value of Ukrainian literature through the current events. Russian war which has caused a lot of damage has led to many victims of destroyed fates. However it is essential to emphasize that as our ancestors, Cossacks, Ukrainian heroes of the modern times are brave enough to stand for our future, stand for the truth. Literature of our country shows it perfectly, that the strong spirit of Ukrainian defenders in different times gives us opportunity to live in a democratic country with its strong and independent citizens.

Speaking about Ukrainian literature, it is important to emphasize on the folklore, as it is a great part of the national consciousness. It keeps our traditions, tells the world about our culture and preserves our national memory for the future generations. Folklore, with its rich tapestry of myths, legends, and traditional stories, has influenced Ukrainian literature significantly. Writers often draw inspiration from folk narratives, incorporating them into their works to create a sense of cultural continuity. One of the features of Ukrainian folk tales is that many of them depict pictures of human life by means of allegory – through the images of animals. Cats, goats, dogs, hares, foxes, wolves, bears and other animals in fairy tales do the same things that people do in real life. They talk, quarrel, sing, get married, visit each other, arrange feasts, sing carols, go to court in search of justice, etc. In fairy tales about animals, we see the life of the Ukrainian people and their traditions. Ukrainian literature has played a crucial role in promoting and asserting Ukrainian identity, especially during times of foreign domination. Writers actively contributed to the national awakening by fostering a sense of pride in Ukrainian heritage. One of such examples is the tale of Kotyhoroshko, which is one of the most popular Ukrainian folk tales. It tells the story of a poor boy who, thanks

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to his strength and courage, rescues the king's daughter from the dragon's captivity. The tale is rich in symbolic images. Symbols help us understand the fairy tale's meaning and moral lessons. The fairy tale about Kotyhoroshko is a unique creation of folk art. It is part of our cultural heritage. It will continue to delight and educate us for many years to come.

**Ivan Kotliarevsky.** He was a Ukrainian writer, poet and playwright, social activist, regarded as the pioneer of modern Ukrainian literature and the creator of the central image of Ukrainian culture. "Aeneid" is a hilarious and insightful retelling of Virgil's epic poem, but with a distinctly Cossack twist. Imagine Aeneas not as a noble Trojan hero, but as a cunning Zaporozhian Cossack named Enei! That's the delightful premise of Kotliarevsky's poem. Enei, along with his band of Cossack companions, embarks on a journey from Troy (transformed into the Cossack Sich) to Italy. Their adventures are filled with bawdy humor, slapstick comedy, and sharp social commentary. Published in 1798, the "Aeneid" is considered a landmark work in Ukrainian literature. It played a crucial role in establishing the modern Ukrainian language and paved the way for a new era of national literature. Kotliarevsky's masterpiece continues to be enjoyed and studied today, delighting readers with its humor, wit, and enduring social commentary.

**Taras Shevchenko.** A Ukrainian poet, writer, artist, public and political figure, folklorist and ethnographer. His pseudonym was Kobzar. Moreover, "Kobzar" is also a collection of poems by Taras Shevchenko. It is considered to be one of the most important works in Ukrainian literature and is often referred to as the "Ukrainian national epic." "Kobzar" was first published in 1840 and contains 82 poems, including some of Shevchenko's most famous works, such as "The Dream," and "The Caucasus." The poems in "Kobzar" cover a wide range of topics, including love, loss, freedom, and national identity. Shevchenko wrote "Kobzar" in a simple, accessible style that was intended to appeal to a wide audience. He used Ukrainian folk music and folklore to create a unique and memorable literary voice. "Kobzar" was a major influence on the development of Ukrainian literature and helped to raise awareness of Ukrainian culture and identity.

**Ivan Franko.** He was a Ukrainian poet, writer, social and literary critic, journalist, translator, economist, political activist, doctor of philosophy, ethnographer, and the author of the first detective novels and modern poetry in the Ukrainian language. His pseudonym was "Kamenyar" (Stonemason). His piece of literature named "Lys Mykyta" ("Fox Mykyta") is a story, written as a satirical fairy tale poem in 1902. It tells the adventures of a cunning fox named Mykyta who uses his wit and trickery to outsmart his enemies, often other animals like wolves and bears. The story can be seen as a celebration of cleverness, a cautionary tale about vice, or a humorous reflection of human nature.

**Lesia Ukrainka.** One of Ukrainian literature's foremost writers, best known for her poems and plays. She was also an active political, civil, and feminist activist in Ukrainian literature. Her real name was Larysa Petrivna Kosach. "Mavka. Forest Song" is the play written by Lesya Ukrainka in 1911. It is considered a masterpiece of Ukrainian drama and explores themes of love, loss, nature, and the human condition. The story emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. Mavka's struggle highlights the consequences of disrupting this balance. We're reminded that respecting and safeguarding nature is crucial for our own well-being. Throughout the story, music serves as a bridge between humans and nature, a tool for understanding and appreciation. It symbolizes the unifying and healing power of art,

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highlighting its potential to bridge divides and inspire environmental consciousness. Mavka's transformation and Lukas' journey remind us of the cycle of life and the inevitability of change. The story encourages acceptance of impermanence while celebrating the enduring spirit of nature and the legacy of love.

At the end of the day it is important to emphasize on the idea, that there are a lot of decent and unique pieces of literature written in Ukrainian, and the most essential thing is to respect them as the national literary treasure and as a significant tool of preserving and spreading Ukrainian language.

To sum up, we would like to use a quote from the poem "Caucasus" from "Kobzar," written by Taras Shevchenko. It masterfully captures the tenacity of resistance against the threat of foreign subjugation and extolls determination to defend one's homeland. Here we can observe the role of Caucasus in the landscape of culture, identity, and politics in Ukraine and other countries that experienced russian imperialism in the nineteenth century.

Keep fighting – you are sure to win!  
God helps you in your fight!  
For fame and freedom march with you,  
And right is on your side!

### References:

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