

2007 GLOSSA Scholarship Awards

For more information visit:
<http://www.glossa.pl/polish/english/scholarship.php>

Liliya Ivanchenko (Ukraine)

A Story about a magic land, wise kings, a constitution, a girl and more...

Once upon a time there was a land, a magic kingdom, known far and wide for its beauty and wisdom. There were high mountains and peaceful lakes, white shores and marvelous cities, fertile lands and forests full of bright sunshine. The people who lived there were famous for their free will and independent mind. Many paths led through the land and people from distant kingdoms were coming to see it. The land was ruled by wise and just kings, whose names became legend: Boleslaus the Brave, Boleslaus the Generous, Kazimierz the Restorer, Mieszko the Old, Kazimierz the Just to name just a few of them. In ancient times the magic kingdom became a democracy, the first of all the countries of the old world. Then, a long dark fell over the magic land, and foreigners divided it amongst them and ruled for a long time from the ancient thrones of the kings of old. But the people never forgot the times, when they were united in freedom, they remembered their country, they passed on their language, their wisdom, their songs and traditions to their children. And thus, after more than a hundred years they gained their kingdom back. At the time, where our story begins, the kingdom was again known for its skilled craftsmen, its gifted artists and wise men. The cities and castles, the churches and monuments that show the splendor of the old days have been rebuild, and many new masterpieces have been added.

Not far from this country lived a little girl. Although she was still young, she had seen many lands and was now living far from the city where she was born. She had been hearing stories and legends about the magic kingdom for as long as she could remember. She had heard about a city, so beautiful, that no words can do justice to its wonders. A city were kings had ruled in the old days, where a dragon was living under the hill beneath the ancient castle of the kings, a city of wisdom and knowledge and a city of teachings. Many a famous scholar or renowned artist gained his skills in this city: Nikolaj Kopernik, who had put the world on its right place in the universe, Stanisław Wyspianski, who had created sheer beauty out of light and color and many many more.

Travelers told the little girl about the skilled cooks and the marvelous dishes of this city, and many evening she listened – eyes wide open – to men who were describing the long and wonderful meals they had in the small taverns of the city of the kings. She knew in her heart: One day she would go to the ancient city, she would walk its streets and alleys and would see the dragon under the hill...

So she began to collect all knowledge, she could gather about the magic kingdom, she started to learn its language, she studied its history and culture. She asked the scholars and talked to travelers, wise men and merchants. At the places of teaching she listened to the lectures, held by the masters of the sciences of the magic kingdom. She studied feverishly, especially the language, for she knew that it was the key to unlock the secrets of the magic land and its people.

Then, one day, she set out for the city, she had heard so much about, and on a bright day at the end of winter she walked through its gates. The smell of spring was in the air, and she watched with astonishment the marvels of the old city. She stood in the churches and looked at the paintings and woodcuts of the old masters, bathed in the colorful light that fell through the stained glass windows made by Wyspianski and the other craftsmen. She climbed the hill of the kings, and she saw the old palace, and the dragon in the caverns. The warm spring sun fell through the windows of the small taverns, where she was sitting, eating the famous dishes of this city of cooks and listening to people. On the big squares and in the small alleys she saw travelers from every corner of the world, and in the depths of the world she looked at the wonders, that miners and artists made out of salt, deep down in the dark. She took her residence in the outskirts of the town, and continued her studies of language at the places of teaching....

There is some truth in most fairy tales, and in the one you just read, there is a lot of it. I was born in Kiev, Ukraine, where I studied economics and finished with the degree of Bachelor of economics and business administration at the International Christian University Vienna - Kiev. I went to Germany in 2001, where I have been living in Heidelberg, Mannheim and Jena. I learned German, got married with a German and enrolled at the University of Jena.

I have always taken a lot of interest in intercultural relations and communication, I am very keen on discovering the differences and even more the similarities between people from different cultures. As an eastern European, living in Germany I have acted as an intermediary of eastern

European culture many times. I believe in the importance of intercultural exchange, especially between European countries, be it in science, art, economy or on personal basis. That is why I started my studies of slavistics with focus on Russia and Poland and of international economic relations with focus on Germany and eastern Europe at the University of Jena. I came to Cracow at the end of February this year and have been studying Polish at the center for Polish language and culture since.