

АНГЛИЙСКИЕ ЛЕГЕНДЫ

ENGLISH LEGENDS

ЭКСКЛЮЗИВНОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ
НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

The logo for 'Lingua' features a stylized quill pen nib on the left, with the word 'Lingua' written in a cursive script to its right.

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В книгу вошли лучшие английские легенды: короткие и длинные, печальные и со счастливым концом, но все одинаково красивые и неизменно вызывающие отклик в душе читателя.

Текст произведения снабжен грамматическим комментарием и словарем, в который вошли ВСЕ слова, содержащиеся в тексте. Благодаря этому книга подойдет для любого уровня владения английским языком.

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The Lass of Roch Royal, or, Lord Gregory

It was a wild, stormy night, many years ago since now, when a fair-haired young girl knocked on the gate of the Roch Royal Castle. Her clothes were **soaking wet**¹ with rain; her large, sad eyes were moist with tears; and in her arms there was a bundle containing a small baby.

“I am a poor young girl that came from **Cappoquin**²,” she cried, “I’m in search of Lord Gregory, pray God I’ll find him! The rain beats my yellow locks and the dew wets me still. Besides, my child is cold and shivering in my arms. Lord Gregory, let me in!”

A window-shutter clanged high above her, and a rough female voice shouted:

“Lord Gregory is not here and henceforth can’t be seen, as he is gone to bonny Scotland

¹ **soaking wet** — насквозь мокрый

² **Cappoquin** — Каппоквин

to bring home his new wife. So leave now these windows and likewise this castle, for it is deep in the sea you should hide your downfall.”

“But who will shoe my baby’s little feet?” the girl moaned, in despair. “Who will put gloves on her hands? Who will put a long linen band around her waist? Who will comb her yellow hair with an ivory comb? Who will be her father till Lord Gregory comes home?”

But there was no answer; the gates remained shut.

“Do you recall, darling Gregory,” the unfortunate lass continued, her voice breaking with sorrow, “that night in Cappelquin, when we exchanged pocket handkerchiefs, and, as for me, it was against my will? Your handkerchief was pure linen, love, and mine just coarse cloth, for yours cost a guinea, and mine but a penny? Do you remember, love Gregory, that night in Cappelquin, when we exchanged rings on our fingers, and me—against my will? For yours was pure silver, and as for mine, it was simple tin, for your ring cost a guinea, and mine but one cent. But Lord Gregory, I’m standing at your door now, with your child in my hands. Pray, open to me, let me in, let us get warm and merry

again by your heat! I beg you to show some mercy at least, if I'm denied your love!"

No sound came from within the castle; only the storm and the sea waves united to turn the night into the chaos of the **elements**¹.

The girl raised her eyes, trying to **catch a glimpse**² of some movement behind the windows, but could only see the streams of heavy rain, a lightning, and the sky, **cracked from side to side**³. As for the hall behind the gate, nothing seemed to stir inside.

The poor lass was desperate. There was a boat waiting for her in the nearby bay; and it was there she turned, still holding the child in her arms. She **set the sail**⁴, and the boat pulled out, a mere chip in the terrible storm. Soon it could not be seen anymore behind the thick veil of the shower.

A few hours later, nevertheless, the storm subsided. Morning came fresh and clean, with the autumn sun shining from behind the light mist. The sea waves looked tamed now; but

¹ **elements** — стихия

² **catch a glimpse** — уловить движение

³ **cracked from side to side** — треснувшее от края до края

⁴ **set the sail** — поставить парус

no sign of the night visitation were there to find.

Soon after waking up, the young Lord Gregory went to tell his mother of the weird dream he saw that night.

“You told me to get back to bed, mother, but I was sure I heard a female voice, young, melodic and sorrowful, at our gates.”

“Oh my foolish son!” the old lady exclaimed, “There was no one at night. I told you to sleep on and bother yourself not.”

“You deceive me, mother!” young lord protested. “I dreamt of the lass I love who came here, bearing my child in her white, slender arms.”

“My son, this was but a beggar who foolishly claimed to be your wife. What she wanted was to deceive you, to bind you with the bounds of the promise you aren’t obliged to keep. I told her to get away and to **seek refuge**¹ for herself and her shame at the bottom of the sea. That wearisome girl must be lying down there now.”

“Now my curse on you, mother!” cried the lord, horrified. “Sure I heard the girl come knocking to my door, and you didn’t let her

¹ **seek refuge** — искать приют

in! Now, go and order three horses to be saddled for me: the black, the brown and the bay, saddle me the best horses in my stable; and I promise I'll range over mountains, over wide valleys and over the sea shore till I find the girl."

And so he rushed away from Roch Royal to find the cold body of the drowned lass and to fall dead by her side.

The Dream of Maxen Wledig¹

The Emperor Maxen Wledig was the most powerful Caesar who had ever ruled Europe from the **City of the Seven Hills**². He was an incredibly handsome man, tall and strong and skilled in all manly exercises; besides, he was gracious and friendly to all his vassals and **tributary kings**³, so that he was universally loved. One day he went hunting, and was accompanied on his expedition down the Tiber valley by thirty two vassal kings, with whom he enjoyed the sport heartily. At noon the

¹ **Maxen Wledig** — Магн Максим, император-узурпатор Запада Римской империи в 383—388 годах.

² **City on the Seven Hills** — Рим, «город на семи холмах»

³ **tributary king** — король подконтрольного империи королевства, обязанный платить метрополии дань

heat was intense, they were far from Rome, and all were tired. The emperor suggested they made a stop, and they dismounted to take rest. Maxen lay down to sleep with his head on a shield, and soldiers and attendants stood around making a shelter for him from the sun by a roof of shields hung on their spears.

Thus he fell into a sleep so deep that none dared to awake him. Hours passed by, and still he slept, and still the whole company waited impatiently for his awakening. At last, the soldiers grew so tired that they could not stand still any longer, and the sounds of their spears against the shields awoke Maxen Wledig. He roused **with a start**¹.

“Ah, why did you wake me?” he asked sadly.

“Lord, your dinner hour is long past—did you not know?” they said.

He shook his head mournfully, but said nothing, and, mounting his horse, rode in silence back to Rome, with his head sunk on his breast. Behind him the whole company of kings and tributaries rode in fear, as they knew nothing of the cause of his sorrowful mood.

¹ **with a start** — вздрогнув

From that day the emperor changed utterly. He rode no more, he hunted no more, he paid no attention to the business of the empire, but remained in his own apartments and slept. The court banquets continued without him, he refused to listen to music and songs, and, though in his sleep he smiled and was happy, when he awoke his melancholy could not be cheered. When this condition had continued for more than a week it was determined that the emperor must be cured from this dreadful state of apathy, and his **groom of the chamber**¹, a noble Roman of very high rank—indeed, a king, under the emperor—resolved to make the endeavour.

“My lord,” said he, “I have evil tidings for you. The people of Rome are beginning to murmur against you, because of the change that has come over you. They say that you are bewitched, that they can get no answers or decisions from you, and all the affairs of the empire are unattended while you sleep. You are no longer their emperor, they say, and they will no longer be loyal to you.”

Then Maxen Wledig roused himself and said to the noble: “Call my wisest senators

¹ **groom of the chamber** — СМОТРИТЕЛЬ ПОКОЕВ

and councilors, and I will explain the cause of my melancholy, and perhaps they will be able to give me relief.”

Accordingly, the senators came, and the emperor ascended his throne, looking so mournful that the whole Senate grieved for him, and feared that he would die.

He began to address them thus: “Senators and Sages of Rome, I have heard that my people murmur against me, and will rebel if I do not arouse myself. A terrible fate has fallen upon me, and I see no way of escape from my misery, unless you can find one. It is now more than a week since I went hunting with my court, and when I was wearied I dismounted and slept. In my sleep I dreamt, and a vision cast its spell upon me, so that I feel no happiness unless I am sleeping, and seem to live only in my dreams. I thought I was hunting along the Tiber valley, lost my companions, and rode to the head of the valley alone. I followed the river to its mouth. There was a great mountain, which looked to me the highest in the world; but I ascended it, and found beyond it fair and fertile plains, far more vast than any in Italy, with wide rivers flowing through that lovely country to the sea. I followed the course of the greatest

river, and reached its mouth, where a noble port stood on the shores of a sea unknown to me. In the harbour lay a fleet of good ships, and one of these was most beautifully decorated with gold and silver, and its sails were of silk. There was a gangway of ivory, so I entered the vessel, which immediately sailed into the ocean. The voyage was short, and we soon came to a wondrously beautiful island. In this island I walked, led by some secret guidance, till I reached its farthest shore, broken by cliffs and mountain ranges, while between the mountains and the sea I saw a fair and fruitful land through which there was flowing a silvery, winding river, with a castle at its mouth. When I came to the gate of the castle, I was amazed by its splendour. It was all covered with gold, silver and precious stones, and two fair youths, whom I saw playing chess, used pieces of gold on a board of silver. Their clothes were of black satin embroidered with gold, and golden circlets were on their heads. I gazed at the youths for a moment, and then became aware of an aged man sitting near them. His carved ivory seat was decorated with golden eagles, the token of Imperial Rome; his ornaments on arms and hands and neck were of

bright gold, and he was carving fresh chessmen from gold. Beside him sat, on a golden chair, a maiden (the loveliest in the whole world she seemed, and still seems, to me). White was her inner dress under a golden overdress, her crown was of rubies and pearls, and a golden waist was on her. The beauty of her face won my love in that moment, and I knelt and said: 'Hail, Empress of Rome!' but as she bent forward from her seat to greet me, I awoke. Now I have no peace and no joy except in sleep, for in dreams I always see my lady, and in dreams we love each other and are happy; therefore in dreams will I live, unless you can find some way to satisfy my longing while I wake."

The senators were at first greatly amazed, and then one of them said: "My lord, will you not send out messengers to search throughout all your lands for this maiden? Let each group of messengers search for one year, and return at the end of the year. So you shall live in good hope of success from year to year."

The messengers were sent out accordingly; but, however hard they tried, after three years three separate groups had brought back