

# **Tales From Tokaj**

# Príbehy z Tokaja

## / Tales From Tokaj

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# Tales From Tokaj

Košice, 2011

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## The land of royal tastes

“**V**inum regum, rex vinorum” – or “Wine of kings, king of wines”, with these words French King Louis XV offered Tokaj to his beloved Madame de Pompadour, when alongside his duties he found time for things which made his life enjoyable and pleasant. He was far from the first to discover the unrepeatability of taste and aroma of the jewel of Tokaj. His great grandfather King Louis XIV requested there always be Tokaj wines at the table for the royal dinner, and he savoured them daily. This monarch, also known as the Sun King, was a famed aesthetic and owner of refined taste. He had a king's taste for selecting the best wines as well.

The Russian tsar Peter I, known as the Great, was not far behind. He saw Tokaj wine as a gem worthy of appropriate protection. He sent an extensive military escort to accompany the merchants, just to ensure that it would never be missing from his dinner table. This tradition continued with the Russian empress Katarina.

And it was not only rulers, but a whole succession of high ranking statesmen, popes, writers, poets, and musical composers, who accepted the magical gifts of Tokaj as part of their lives.

Tokaj wine was loved by German poet, humanist and thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, by French philosopher and writer Francois Voltaire, by Austrian music composer of early romanticism Franz Peter Schubert, as well as Hungarian music composer and piano virtuoso Franz Liszt. Not least of all was one of the giants of global musical creation: Ludwig van Beethoven. All of the men knew how to create works which have entered the history of art. All of these men also knew how to determine the quality of wine.

The origins of vineyard cultivation in this region were indicated back in the first century AD, when the Roman legions trod here. From the array of nations which came to know the exceptional properties of the soil, it was the Slavs who settled here in the 8th century – the longest permanent cultural settlement in the area to this day. On this territory, where the Hungarians later settled, the local vineyards had developed to such a degree that they were mentioned in period documents of the 13th century. These were times when the local residents suffered incursions of Tatar invaders, although that difficult period was also a period of discovery in its way. People began to build an underground network of tunnels as hiding places, which was relatively light digging in the volcanic tufa ground. After the siege had finished, they found that the former hiding places were ideal places for the fermentation and storage of wine.

The Roman legions, the first Slavs and Hungarians, Italian winegrowers in the Middle-Ages, as well as Louis XIV, Franz Liszt and Ludwig van Beethoven belong to history. How is it with the local country and its glory today? Does it belong “only” to history as well? Certainly it does not. Tokaj wine is still exported around the world from here. It still wins

In Slovakia, Tokaj consists of seven communities – Bara, Čerhov, Černochovej, Malá Trňa, Slovenské Nové Mesto, Veľká Trňa a Viničky. Its 907 hectares rank it among the smallest vineyard areas of the world, yet at its pinnacle at the same time. The Tokaj wine trail also includes interesting nearby places, where we find the communities of Borša, Zemplín, Ladmovce and the entrance gate to Tokaj – the town of Trebišov. Tourists who favor a relaxed environment connected with local traditions, rich in folklore and agrotourism can expect a network of guest-houses on the Tokaj wine trail with a wide range of services. For those who require a continual change of residence during their vacation, the Tokaj wine trail may be connected with a visit to metropolis of Eastern Slovakia only 70 kilometers away – Košice, a city well-known for the largest historical district in Slovakia as well as its modern dynamic life. It is the center of the Košice self-administration district, upon the territory of which are found the national parks of Slovenský Raj and Slovenský Kras, as well as a number of castles, manor houses,

*mountain hikes, bicycle trails, caves and other natural and cultural points of interest. The Košice self-administration district is called the land of inspiration for good reason. But that is a story for another time...*

*numerous prestigious competitions every year. The present differs from the past mainly in that the jewels of local winegrowers' efforts are not accessible only to the artists and the aristocracy, but to everyone. And it is said that the best taste is first hand, in the centuries-old cellars.*







# Smuggler's run

**PLACE:** ČERHOV, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** 1921 TO 1934

**AUTHOR:** SLAVOMÍR SZABÓ

A north wind leaned into the walls of the houses. A cloud of snow was blown off the thatched roofs, only to be carried high above the village and then swept back down in tiny, icy crystals. This found the faces of all who hadn't yet crawled back into their shacks, but even in such an ungodly evening they wandered around the streets of Čerhov. The darkness was not great however, for the clear sky from which fell the cold light of the moon and the stars reflected off the white winter blanket. The end of the year was at hand, and it was the time when women met at their spinning wheels after dark, spun thread from the hempen yarn, talked and gossiped. Often unbelievable tales would come to light about witches, apparitions, and spirits of the deceased which had not found peace even after death. The men were no different, at least in that they didn't stay alone. Those young and single did go after the young girls at their spinning wheels, knocked at the window, squeezing themselves in, flirting with them, as is often the habit of those on the cusp of boyhood and manhood. Meanwhile the older, married ones met for just a bit of talk. A hempen spindle does not sit well in a boy's hand, that's woman's work, so they merely drank wine and conversed. They came together at various houses, at the Andriš place as well, Janko's father. As a nine year old boy, Janko merely listened to them.

Twilight presided in the room. A shame to waste kerosene or candles. The open hatch to the stove sufficed, emanating a weak red and shimmering light. Varied, ever-changing images floated along the walls and faces of men who remained silent; all except for one.

"You know Janko", fat Pišta, a young man with a double chin who never had it bad, said directly to the boy. "There are things we laugh at only to hide our own powerlessness. A man is a man, his hands are strong from ploughing the fields, from working the wagons, how is always loading and hauling goods from cart to cart, or from the spade when he tills his vineyard. One day you too will have hands like your father. Strong arms nourish the family. They take care of the work, and if necessary, protect the loved ones. But sometimes they are useless. Never take anything into your hand, pitch-fork, stick or knife, if you don't know what you are defending against".

"Hah, the witch talk has gotten to Pista! At least well have a small child here to hear it," Andriš slapped his own thigh with deliberation. "What do you say Janko? Interested?"

The boy had not taken his eyes from fat Pišta, just eagerly nodded. He knew his father's opinion, knew he belonged among the men who weren't for talk about things between heaven and Earth.

"Hey, look," Pišta lifted a meaty finger and pointed straight at Andriš. Your father

## ČERHOV



### Location

*The municipality of Čerhov is located in the Košice self-governing region district of Trebišov. The municipality is 18 km from the district town Trebišov, and 62 km from Košice city. Čerhov village varies in altitude from 112 to 120 meters, which places it among one of the lowest-lying villages in Slovakia.*

*Čerhov additional to six other villages are located in the unique Slovak region called Tokaj. It is situated in the southern part of the Eastern lowlands and on the south western foothills of the Zemplín Hills.*

### History of the village

*The Čerhov village is situated in one of the oldest lands, where human inhabitation dates back to the younger Stone Age – Neolit. The settlement located in Čerhov area were part of the potiská culture, later discoveries also revealed Lateen and Roman-barbarian findings.*

*In the book, the Municipalities of Zemplin County, (Zemplén vármegye községei) records suggest that the Čerhov village was established in 1067, as it was mentioned on the list of villages belonging to the properties of abbey.*

*The geographical dictionary of municipalities in Slovakia gives the year 1329 as the first written reference of the Čerhov village. Written records are related to property rights, and it states that property possession of Čerhov (Chergev) belonged to the nobles from Tolcsva.*



*The invasion of the Tartars (major allies of the Turks) entered the Čerhov village in 1567. The village was burned and the population fled away. In 1582 there were less than 5 populated settlements. In 1610 tax was payed only from 2 ports and 1port, in 1635 only from 1 port. (The tax was intended for the king, a tax from port was value of one guild, which was a hundred dinars.) Even on the turn of the 16th and 17th century inhabitants of the village had to pay tax to their landlords in naturalia (tithe) and financially from 50 to 100 denárov (dinars) per year per household. Cotters – people without their own land also payed rent from 25 to 50 denárov (dinars). It sounds odd nowadays, however it was stated that the thralls in the village were also obliged to buy from the landowner at least one cask of wine annually.*

*In the beginning of the 18th century the population of the whole east Slovakia decreased significantly due to the Rákoczy uprising and the plague. Many villages*

is a good example of how things go. Now that we are all here together in a group, he'll shake his head as if I've said something stupid. And do you know why? Because he believes only what he sees. And here is the essence of the thing. How would he defend himself against something he cannot see, doesn't know where it is from, or what it is? Do you understand what I am saying?"

Janko shifted uncertainly at the table and shrugged his shoulders that he didn't know, didn't understand... but was interested. The mood possessing him at that particular moment was a mixture of a little fear, a touch of suspense, but mostly a great desire to know more. No matter if it was all related by a man whose breath smelled of Tokaj wine. Fat Pišta slid a cigarette into his mouth and lit a match off the table while keeping his eye on the boy. With a practiced move he brought the tiny flame to the end of the cigarette, inhaled a puff, and then blew it out at the ceiling. Then he looked at Janko again. I'll explain it to you one more time. If you don't see anything, you only feel that something or someone if after your neck, then all power is worthless."

"Hmm," the boy breathed to himself, even though it was impossible to disagree with such a claim, he was none the wiser. The other lads also looked at fat Pišta, waiting to see where it all was leading. They guessed correctly that his speech had yet to finish.

"Night has its own power, it makes us weaker. Draped in darkness we cannot do much. We don't see the road ahead, can't perceive movement among the trees. We can pass through places we walk every day. We can think, even believe nothing is there to surprise us, but only until we begin to hear the sound."

"What kind of sound?" Mižo, a waggoner and neighbour from next door, joined the talk when fat Pišta had taken a break from his speech to blissfully puff his cigarette.

"What kind? That doesn't mater. Any kind. Trust me, I'm quite sure there are plenty of sounds we can distinguish only when we see what caused them. Anyone who doesn't agree can try this little game. Take a man and blindfold him, even midday, go to a place he knows well. Now slowly, and with a walking stick before him, let him clatter his way up the village at least to the fire house or Black Mountain. In that darkness which cloaks him, he focuses on the sounds as they come. What do you think, how many will he distinguish, for how many will he know the source? Of course he'll know some. But be certain that there will be many he feels he is hearing for the first time in his life. "And now Janko imagine this," fat Pišta angled himself closer to the boy, "that you're going somewhere at night: alone, quite alone. You know you are going in the right direction, but that is all. You can't see farther ahead than the toe of your boot. You listen, trying to tell apart the sounds which surround you, but you don't know the source. Yes, you know the bubbling of the brook and the whisper of the leaves. But all kinds of lapping, sucking, a low hissing, regular and dampened clicking, the scraping of what or who knows what... Now all of this you can try to distinguish, give a name to it, but in vain. If you're brave enough, perhaps you'll tell yourself it's not important. After all, who knows if the deer use a different voice at night than during the day, the same goes for other kinds of animals, and so you tell yourself not to shudder. But then there's an echo of something else, something which might even be pleasant under

other circumstances. The goose flesh starts to rise as you gather all your courage and finally believe what's at stake is that most dear – your life.”

“What was the sound?” asked one of the lads sitting in the corner of the room, Janko didn't know which one.

“The sound of clapping.”

“Clapping?” several surprised voices called out as one.

“Yes, clapping,” nodded fat Pišta and took another draw on his cigarette.

“Just like someone beginning to applaud after a performance, when the youngsters from the village play theatre? Hah! This is what you're trying to frighten the child with?” laughed out Janko's father and shot a glance over the other to see if they were enjoying themselves as much as he was.

“You know, Andriš, no one is ordinarily afraid of applause. But imagine it at night. Somewhere at the edge of the forest and you feel that someone is following you yet you can't see him. A little clapping would never scare you without reason. But the clapping itself is not important. What's important is who in the fields or in the woods, why is he there and what are his intentions with you.”

“My goodness! Clap, clap... Well, Pišta you have disappointed me, and perhaps Janko too. I've heard just about everything in my time, but that a man was afraid of some clapping? Not long ago, before the dawn of the Republic, it was said that you weren't to go drunk across the bridge from Sátoraljaújhely in the evening. A statue of St. John stands there, supposedly ready to kick the backsides of every drunk until they lumber their way home. Even Janko has to laugh. Let him go to his teacher Schill and ask: Sir, can the statue of St. John kick drunks in the backside? What would the teacher tell him? At the most he might ask the boy where he had heard such foolishness, and when he tells the man from you, at least the teacher will be amused.”

“But I've never spoken about Saint John! I maintain I never spoke of a statue. And it wouldn't hurt if you sometime took a walk at night around Roňava. Then you'd change your mind! We can leave out the girlish talk, but hey, I am telling you about a clapping that really does sound off at night near the river. My ears work just fine. Luckily so do my legs. And that's why I am here among you today, for when I heard it myself I flew off as fast as I could. Hands, strong arms, all worthless at a time like that; that is what I wanted to tell the boy. So Andriš, if you're looking to make fun of someone, find yourself another victim! I wanted to say more, but now I'll keep quiet!” Pišta was becoming angered, his chin quivered, he threw the cigarette through the small hatch into the stove and crossed his arms over his chest like an offended child.

The lads changed to another topic, what else – the war. There were memories of those who served and fought for the emperor, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and then on the other side of the front against him and his monarchy. Talk of war in the trenches, grenades exploding nearby at their feet, attacks with bayonets... The World War had fortunately avoided Čerhov, there was no fighting here save one gun-battle with the Hungarians, but that was after Czechoslovakia had formed. Even so, the entire village had to work and pay their dues to the army. Recruiting was hard with so few men in

*completely disappeared. Records from 1720 indicate that in Čerhov there were only 3 households.*

*In 1826 lived 496 people, who owned a total of 60 houses.*

*The main source of living was agriculture, particularly viticulture, additional to the production of cooperage and rattan products. From 1844, we know relatively accurate counts and population structures. It was recorded that there were 582 inhabitants, of whom 181 were Jewish.*

*In 1918, after the World War I and after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Čerhov became part of the new Czechoslovakia. In World War I, 11 Čerhov inhabitants were killed, who were conscripted in the army. There were no direct fights in Čerhov. However in 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic attacked Slovakia and occupied the east parts of the region up to Bardejov, which led to fighting in Čerhov.*



*Despite the position of Čerhov in south Slovakia, the population remained Slovak. For example, in the year 1930 during the first Czechoslovakian republic 539 Slovaks were recorded to have lived in Čerhov, 32 Hungarians, 29 Jews and 48 citizens of other they consisted of 10 families, who were all Czechs.*

*During the Austro-Hungarian Empire the Čerhov village was purely used for*

*agriculture. Craftsmen served the needs of farmers and vintners, thus mainly the blacksmiths and coopers worked in the village. Addition to their own fields, people also worked on the two manor-farms, orchard fields, the beer warehouse and mill which all belonged landlord of the time.*

*In 1938, after the Vienna Arbitration, the village became part of Horthy's Hungary. In March 1944, Hungarian authorities deported all the Jews from the village. From the 20 Jews, 14 died in concentration camps, gas chambers. The Hungarian army enlisted 42 men from Čerhov, whom 11 died during the war.*



*The army of the IV Ukrainian Front liberated Čerhov on 2nd December of 1944. However following the liberation Germans continued attacking the village for 3 days with mortars and cannons, firing from the nearby village of Nižný Regmec, in present day Hungary. With the surrender of the Nižný Regmec village the war for Čerhov ended. After the liberation of the village people were asked to enlist into the Czechoslovak Army Corps under the command of Ludvík Svoboda, twenty-one men enlisted from Čerhov, whom two died.*

*By restoring the Trianon agreement Čerhov once again became part of Czechoslovakia.*

the village. They enlisted. Eleven of them never returned home. Until recently it was counted as twelve, but then Janči Rimár appeared. No one had expected him. He had enlisted in nineteen fourteen and only now returned. No news of him for seven years! He was thought to have given himself up to the Russians and imprisonment, then entered the Czechoslovak legion and even though the battles had lulled and Czechoslovakia had emerged, they whisked him away him off somewhere to Vladivostok. It was from there he had come back, under his own power, on foot. Little wonder then that his return had come three years after the war.

The lads talked and talked, Mižo the waggoner most of all, for he and Rimár were distant family who met here and there and he knew some things. Janko wasn't taking much interest. He went up to the window and looked out, out into the darkness and the night. Out into a world that held wonders, oddities, and miracles. Fat Pišta wouldn't have spoken like that without cause. He'd never demean himself in front of the others if it weren't true, if he hadn't his own experience. Experience with spirits and witches, that is. Janko was sure of that – completely.

The seemingly trivial discussion, and there had been many of them, left quite a deep mark on the soul of Janko. Something mysterious remained inside him, that two worlds exist side by side. The world of the people who live during the day, and the other nameless beings who wake with the coming of darkness. Pišta's talk of the mysterious sounds had taken hold of him. Like the advice he was given, he often closed his eyes and tried to walk along the pathways and fields without watching, and what he heard. Each sound he tried to ascribe to something, then quickly opened his eyelids to see if he had guessed correctly. Except as the years went by new experiences were gathered, new knowledge, and the mysterious world of the dark withdrew slightly. The girls were more interesting, the smell of them, the chirping voices, their curvaceousness. Work as well. At first he had sought work at the farm, there were two in the village, but he was unsuccessful at both. Then there were the Moškovič family who had a beer storehouse. They bottled it; that meant it was poured from kegs into bottles and then distributed for sale in the neighbouring villages. That didn't work out. There was great interest among the lads for such work, for along with the pay a worker received a few bottles of the frothy drink. So he stayed with his father and struggled, they barely eked out a living on his land. Meanwhile he could be saving something, for he was a young man and soon would be ready for marriage. The men often cursed, and mainly at the Czechs. On the properties of Baron Sennyey they had built a large, long storey house, which looked more like a barracks, and within were ten Czech families in total. All of their men were members of the financial guard, or rather guards of the state frontier. This bothered the lads from the village most of all, since from the formation of Czechoslovakia smuggling had proven the best opportunity for earnings on the side. It wasn't done on large scale, even if it was said that the winecellar of the landowner Il'kovič led underground all the way to Hungary and was making him a fortune. However, everyone knew that such claims were hollow, for such cellars would have

to also tunnel under the river. Even though the Roňava was not a large river, it did make the idea seem foolish.

“Financi”, as the Czech guard was called, always went to work at the frontier at least two at a time. This did not discourage many from smuggling, secretly, at night in the dark. The nearest Hungarian village was a mere two kilometers. Andriš never smuggled anything, he preferred honest work and steered Janko in that direction. That is until two harvests looked as if the ten plagues of Egypt had visited upon them, and there mightn’t be anything to take to the mill. Not enough grain meant not enough flour, or bread. This real threat was not only to them. There was an extreme drought exactly at the time people were learning new words, old words in fact but used together in a novel way. One thing was on the lips of everyone – economic crisis – men without work, fields without crops, families without futures. Or at least those which hadn’t yet packed their things and left on a ship for America just as their grandfathers had at the turn of the century.

Janko also thought of leaving for America, though he knew he didn’t have money to even get himself the permission, or the train to Hamburg, or the ship. The year was nineteen hundred and thirty-four and the village was becoming deserted. For the first time Andriš stepped away from his principles. He decided that when he was walking around the house of the financial guard and looking at the satisfied Czechs, how they were strolling about in Čerhov. He whispered quietly: “We go tonight, to Nižny Regmec.”

“Where?” asked an unbelieving Janko, although he had heard well.

“Across the border. I’ve found out everything. It’s worthwhile bringing bluestone to Hungary. The wine makers are complaining that it’s expensive down there, but not here. Soda for washing too... they need that. You can trade it for cigarettes and wheat, which are cheaper than here. I know exactly which homes to visit. The wheat and cigarettes we can sell at a profit, buy more soda and bluestone, and bring them the next batch. We’ll go tonight, after midnight.”

“Father, if those over there catch us?” Janko pointed his chin at the two “financi” who were walking a good thirty meters ahead of them.

“You know I was never for such things. Hardship pushes us. Think of the winter. Unless we want to beg we’ll have to smuggle. Even if they catch us we’ll survive. I hear they caught two lads from Trna. The “financi” took them to the station at Újhely made some entry in their records, and the next day let them go home – nothing more.”

“Do we have soda and bluestone? How much do we buy?”

“A lot. As much as possible, I know firsthand, some friends told me who and where, we take it at once. Now on the way home I’ll visit the Jew, and he can sell it to me. He won’t ask questions and be pleased he earned money.”

It was dark. Black and thick, the moon and the stars had hidden behind the clouds. So seeing was out of the question, and one had to rely on his hearing. What Janko heard the most was the breath of his father, as well as his own. They walked along Hungarian territory from Nižny Regmec both stightly bent forward, each with two sacks on his

## Contemporary Čerhov

*The village is part of a unique cross-border region of Tokay. While the Hungarian part belongs already to the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Slovak part is still pending an invite to join. Even today it is largely an agricultural and wine region.*

*Currently there are approximately 830 people living in Čerhov. In Čerhov you can find the House of traditions with a collection of local ethnographic items, the house of traditions is also the tourist information office for the Slovak region of Tokay. In Čerhov, the Municipal wine cellar, also present wines from the regional wine makers. In Čerhov you can also find the Roman Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary which holds a rare painting from the great artist Vojtech Klimkovič dating from 1871 named: the Resurrection of Lazarus.*



## Municipal contact

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Dlhá 100*

*076 81 Čerhov*

*Telephone: 056 – 679 3222*

*E-mail: starosta@cerhov.sk*

*Home web page: www.cerhov.sk*

## ČERHOV: Dense Beans

*The following recipe for dense beans differs from bean soup cooked in nearby villages mainly due to the addition of garlic and juška (juice from sauerkraut). It is cooked so densely that a spoon could easily stand up straight in it.*



### Ingredients:

- *pie'd beans (one handful served per person)*
- *1 - 1,5 kilos of potatoes*
- *salt*
- *ground red pepper*
- *lard for roux*
- *1 onion*
- *4 - 5 cloves of garlic*
- *juice from sauerkraut (juška)*
- *water*

### Instructions:

*The day prior to cooking soak the beans in cold water. In the morning remove the water, put the beans into a pot in which it will be cooked and add clean cold water. The level of the water must be three fingers above the layer of the beans.*

*When the beans have been cooked half way, add salt, add ground pepper, mash garlic cloves and cleanly diced small raw potatoes. Let the soup boil and then*

shoulders. The exchanged the bluestone and the soda, so far everything was going well and they took wheat for the way back. They didn't want cigarettes, or at least the father said the price of wheat was going up by the week and therefore more profitable. Their backs ached, and the sacks got heavier with each meter passed, but the fear of being apprehended pushed them on. They were quiet apart from the breathing. The grass deadened their footsteps. They could only imagine how far to the Roňava, for that little river was the border. It was traversed by a wooden bridge, built during the Monarchy. No one had hauled it down, although at the time it must have been clear to everyone that its main service would be to smugglers. On the other hand, Janko considered, since it is the only bridge the financi have a good chance to catch everyone trying to bring their cargo across the river. For them, it is the place where greatest threat lurks. Darkness all around, the financi only need to sit quietly nearby and listen for someone approaching, then stand up, take a few steps and make the arrest. If they caught them, not directly on the bridge, or without seeing them on the bridge, it would be easier. Janko already had it set in his mind, in that case he would claim only one thing: that they had never been in Hungary. It is forbidden to cross the border, but not forbidden to walk nearby the border with sacks on your back, even at night, and what of it? The Czech wouldn't eat them alive just for taking a stroll to air out the grain, and in the end they couldn't prove anything.

"Here we are," murmured Andriš softly and looked upon his son.

Janko looked around, but the father's announcement was of little value. He saw only what he had until that point: darkness. They both stopped though, and waited to catch their breath and listen. A light breeze was blowing, and from the distance a weak creaking sounded, but so quietly that it was hard to say if something really creaked. From the rear, perhaps even from Regmec they heard the muffled bark of dogs, but that was about all.

"Hmm?" Silently, more for himself than for his father Janko wordlessly posed the question, which was to mean "are we going?" or "is everything all right?". Something moved Andriš. A few more steps and they heard the small river and stepped onto the bridge. It creaked a little. Second step, then a third... At that moment everything changed, quite everything. The silence which had surrounded them like a faithful dark friend vanished. Directly beside them was the sound of clapping. It was strong and keen, as if wistful youth were applauding the musicians. It was not the clapping of a lone pair of hands. Hard to say how many, but it was so clear, uproarious and vehement that it was deafening and Janko set off at a run with his father. The sacks were suddenly weightless. They stretched their legs running, caring little where the stepped, just away, quickly out of there before someone or something caught them. In the hasty run whole images appeared in Janko's mind's eye: the open hatch to the stove and the reddish light, falling on the fleshy face of fat Pišta. The finger raised in warning to everyone as he spoke and the smoke of his cigarette dwindling in the room. The clapping was still echoing even though it had stopped. It lingered somewhere near the bridge and Andriš and Janko sighed in relief when they reached the edge of Čerhov.

Their hearts were thumping, throats dry, eyes full of dust. Later they simply dragged their feet, slowly, so as to not be seen.

Andriš did not much want to speak of what they had heard. He fended off questions from Janko, saying there was no time to waste on chatter when they can't explain it anyhow. He only added that there was all kinds of talk in the village. Some saying there were ghosts, perhaps pleased that some had come to the river, others saying it was a flock of birds frightened from their sleep, although it didn't sound like that. It was even said that there are so many smugglers that they are frightening each other unwillingly, or perhaps it is not clapping but the echoed footfalls of people approaching the bridge. Janko refused that possibility. He had heard the sound quite well. He was most pleased by talk that the Czechs are not as strict as they are forced to appear. It seems that thanks to the bridge they could have caught all of the smugglers long ago, but they only do it once in a while, to fulfill all directives and standards. Otherwise, they were said to only sit around at nights, taking pleasure from frightening people with their clapping. Others say certainly not, for the clapping has been heard for much longer, the grandfathers of their grandfathers told of it.

Whatever the source, Janko and his father hauled the bluestone and soda to Hungary and wheat to Slovakia many more times, earning on the side to survive the economic crisis and wait for better years to come. No, they didn't always hear the clapping, but enough times that they got accustomed to it as much as one could. And they say down by the Roňava, on the frontier which separates two states as well as two villages, it still haunts to this day.

*decrease the gas or withdraw the pot onto the edge of the furnace. Let it cook slowly.*

*Meanwhile, the beans are cooking, prepare roux from a tablespoon of lard, finely chopped onion and ground red pepper. Sprinkle pepper onto the lard, but avoid overheating which could bring a bitter taste. Stir the mix constantly, slightly fry it, and then pour hot brine from the soup pot onto it. However, prior to pouring beans into the roux, mash beans and potatoes (into a thick mix). Then pour the soup and let it boil together with the juice from the sauerkraut. Add as much juice from the sauerkraut as you wish to add to the sour flavor of the beans.*

*Once the meal is complete serve it with bread.*





# Fear will reach you

**PLACE:** MALÁ TRŇA, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** WINTER, THE END OF THE 1950'S

**AUTHOR:** JIŘÍ ZAŤOVIČ

“It always ends up this way,” said Ďuso angrily, instead of the lower end – his sister’s – he and his father headed toward the upper end; to the cellars. He had looked forward to finally arriving early. That next to the television, that wonderful invention thanks to which he could actually look upon what the commentators were describing, he would find the best place. Sit so close that he would be able to tell apart the numbers on the team jerseys, to watch the puck fly from hockey stick to stick as our boys set the cauldron brewing in front of the other team’s goaltender and defencemen.

Only that father had decided otherwise, and first they shall go to the cellar. They cannot arrive empty-handed, even if bringing wine on a visit in Mala Trna was like bringing wood to the forest. As soon as they sat you down they would produce a bottle of the liquid gold. So why go up there now when his sister surely has plenty of wine?! Others are bringing it... people from every corner of the village came to watch the hockey championships. “Eh, it was a fine inheritance from the Turks,” Ďuso’s father sighed with joy. Ďuso knew this well. Now comes the lecture about how in the sixteenth century and after the invasion of the Turks. The local people had kept hidden that they had found this miraculous land, all around for the taking. Later they hid it from the emperor’s soldiers, and later still from the wild thieving hordes which came to complete this work of destruction. How they holed up until they discovered the tufa could be dug easily, and they started to dig long tunnels and alcoves.

“You still haven’t told me how many tunnels there are!” Ďuso recalled his father’s promise.

“And I won’t. I’ve asked and nobody knows. People talk about kilometers. But how many... perhaps one day you’ll manage to count them.”

“Father, we should hurry to Marika’s. We’ll be too late again.” And I won’t see anything again, he added to himself. He didn’t want his father getting angry and sending him straight home.

They went down together by blinding candlelight, turned left, and counted off to the seventh alcove where father turned the lock open and put more pieces of candle onto the candlestick on the table. He had a pocketful of it. When visibility had improved, or when they got oriented in the weak light, they descended another floor where a row of casks loaded with wine lay arranged side by side.

Ďuso would have enjoyed being here at another time; he liked the velvety mould on the walls and aroma of the Tokaj wine which he wasn’t allowed to have... but had already tried and liked it. He liked the glimmering shadows, and every time he came

## MALÁ TRŇA



### Location

*The municipality of Malá Trňa is located in the Košice self-government region in the district of Trebišov. To get to the village you need to turn from road 79, which passes from Trebišov through Slovenské Nové Mesto to Hungary. Malá Trňa is 20 km from Trebišo, and 65 km from Košice. Malá Trňa is also connected by a rail link. Highest altitude in the middle of the municipality is 180 meters.*

*Malá Trňa additional to six other villages is located in the unique Slovak region called Tokaj. It is situated in the southern part of the Eastern lowlands and on the south western foothills of the Zemplín Hills.*

### History of the village

*The territory of Malá Trňa was already inhabited in the Palaeolith age (the older Stone Age) and Neolith (the younger Stone Age). In the area of the village, traces of settlement dating back to bukovohorska culture (5000 to 4700 BC) were also found.*

*If we consider municipalities of Nižný and Vyšný Turuň which were mentioned in the history of Zemplín župa (county), which are identical to the currently existing communities of Veľká and Malá*

*Trňa, we can say that the village already existed in the year 1067. The same can be said about the village neighbouring village Tolna, which existed already in the early 13th century and belonged to the family Katha. Tolna's existence is recorded in document dated back from the year 1220.*

*The first report of wine growing in this area dates back to year 1248, when Belo IV was the ruling king. The first written reference of Malá Trňa is known from the year 1392, where at that time belonged to the Peréni (Perényi) family. According to the census from the year 1441 inhabitants of Malá Trňa payed the king tax of 12 guilders.*



*In 1567 the village almost disappeared as it was invaded by Turkish Ottoman troops, who plundered the vineyards and eleven houses. Around that time the emergence of typical underground cellars were dug in the tuffaceous soil. In nowadays tuffaceous soil cellars are used primarily for storage of wine, but at that time it can be said that it served as a shelter against the Turkish Ottoman incursions.*

*According to the records the village in 1557 only had 13 ports. Port was gate that led to the farm, which were large enough that a horse-drawn carriage could pass through them. At that time villagers were not counted, but the taxes were paid by port numbers or peasant production*

here with his father he wiped the dust from the small wine altar in the corner. But today he was agitated, surely the hockey has already started, and our boys have scored the first goal...

We played the world championships at home this year. Ďuso knew the entire roster by heart, and when he played with the lads outside it made no difference whether he was Gut, Fako, Golonka alebo Starší. He wanted to score the goals and be the best.

“Go on then!” his father granted, seeing Ďuso was nervous and let him out of the cellar. He would draw another glass from the jug, and then would come. He wasn't much for hockey.

Ďuso shot from the cellar, running up the stairs in the dark didn't matter to him, he knew where the steps would be. Some snow sparkled outside, the moon peeked out from behind the clouds, but it was of little concern to him, he only wanted to get seated amongst the lads and yell Goal! He felt in his bones that the Czechoslovaks would win today and wanted to catch as much of the match as he could.

“Good evening,” the doors flew open to the front room and before him floated a cloud of thick and acrid smoke. Of course he had come too late. The boys had occupied all the best places, he was left to jump and catch glimpses from a distance upon a scene that looked the size of a postage stamp. But the main reason it was impossible to talk of picture quality was because of the smoke. There shouldn't have been smoking here and Marika mentioned it, but was afraid to say just anything to the boys. What would become of them if they let a woman give orders!

“What's the score?” he asked Mižo, but that one had a hard time focusing his glassy eyes. Of course! Mižo never took interest in hockey or any other sport. Just as he drinks at the football match, hockey on the television is another chance to get drunk.

“How much time gone?” he tried his luck.

“Ninth minute,” Fero replied from the side of his mouth, he was a lab worker at the winery institute. “We're leading two-zero.”

“I could have guessed,” Ďuso hung his shoulders. On the one hand he was overjoyed that his team was sticking it to the Finns, but he regretted not seeing it with his own eyes. He'd have to dream something up at school if asked about it. There was no other television in the village. His sister Marika, or rather brother-in-law Mito, or better said the two of them had made the decision and purchased it. Just as they were the first to have a motorcycle and now are registered on the waiting list for an automobile.

“Marika, tell them to let me through to the front. I'll sit on the floor. I don't need anything.” He implored the sister to intervene.

“I wouldn't go there, you'll suffocate, look at that smoke!”

“Have them open a window. Some of them may even revive!” he laughed at his own idea.

“What are you doing? Watch him. Can't you see that Makalamuho is making a move?!” yelled out the neighbour Lajoš and clenched a fist. The Finnish player avoided Tikal elegantly, wound up and...

“Goal! Damn, they scored!” Lajoš banged the fist on the table. The goaltender Kulíček sadly fished the puck from the net. Players gathered in the center ice circle and the referee set up the face-off.

“And that was clear icing! The referee is blind!”

“What do you expect when one is named Gustavsson and second one is a Swede? They’re giving us payback for unloading on Sweden last night!”

The referee brought to an end what appeared to be a promising attack and pointed to the benches: Intermission.

“Finally,” rejoiced Ďuso. Marika entered the room, opened both windows, cleaned empty plates from the table and brought more open sandwiches.

“Aren’t you hungry?” she handed Ďuso a plate. “And where is father?”

“He went down to the cellar so he wouldn’t come empty-handed, he said...”

“I could have guessed. As if we wouldn’t have any,” she sighed.

She feared for her father. Since grandfather died he had been a little strange, somewhat reclusive, and was often found in the wine cellar. This winter did not agree with him, it was a long one, and gave him a lot of time for thinking... and drinking. She knew how the father had adored the grandfather... it was his father after all. He taught him everything he needed for life, raised him into a wine specialist. Intercession from the grandfather got him employment with Count Bessenyi, and he spoke of him in praiseworthy terms even before the war. No one doubted that after the war he would continue at work. The gentlemen had given him distinction. Father found grandfather to be even more precious, for as a boy he did not have enough of him. Grandfather, like many of his peers, reckoned that our land was very hard for making ends meet, so he prevailed upon an agent, and borrowed money from him for a ticket to Hamburg. There, apart from repaying the loan, he earned for a ticket on a ship. From a young age Marika heard how it was a dangerous journey, so many unfortunate ones crammed into the underdeck, in third class. Not third class as found in a train, but it differed only by the wooden benches. Almost everyone was seasick, though they barely saw the sea, many took ill, for food they received was what at home even the hogs wouldn’t eat. When they disembarked on Ellis Island they found themselves in the hands of an immigration officer, a mighty and important individual. Anyone sick in the least was taken immediately to quarantine and wasn’t certain whether they would be allowed on the mainland at all. But grandfather had toiled in life; he had healthy roots and was hard-working. He got himself hired for the toughest jobs only to find that he who worked the most got the least, as if all this America was for him to find that a pauper is a pauper everywhere. He managed to save something anyway and returned home. It was enough to repair the little house, buy a piece of vineyard and a small cow. From then on he did things his way, doted on the children, and was as devoted to them as a teacher at school. Often he would say that he went to America to learn to appreciate his family.

He died in the autumn. He was not old, but drained of life. And father is having a hard time coming to terms with it. Perhaps Ďuso should have stayed with him...

*settlements. Per one port at least seven villagers were counted (which included peasant families and their servants), which in 1557 counted to at least 91 people living in Malá Trňa.*

*In 1598 the village belonged to the family Doba. In the 17th century village was ruled by the Rákoci (Rákóczy) family, followed by the Lipot family. In 1660 the village was attacked by imperial soldiers who fought again the Rákoci family who were in power again. The imperial soldiers looted many wine cellars.*

*In 1715 there were 12 inhabited and 35 abandoned settlements. Throughout this time many villages disappeared as the area of contemporary eastern Slovakia was very depopulated, which was a direct result from the Rákoci uprisings and the plagues of the time. In 1787, 87 houses were recorded and 374 inhabitants.*



*In the 19th century the village was dominated by the Lóniai (Lónyay) family. In 1828 there were 48 houses and lived 372 inhabitants.*

*From 1938 to 1945 the village belonged amongst the village that were attached to Horthy’s Hungary.*

*During World War II the village was liberated on the 2nd of December 1944th. In 1924 wine research institute was established and in 1947 the village was electrified. From 1946 to 1952 the winery cooperative Tokay was established.*

*In 1952 the Minor type of Uniformed Agricultural Cooperative was established, and the Major Type in 1957. In 1964 the village Malá Trňa was merged with the municipality Velka Trňa into one large village called Trňa. Both villages were again separated in 1991.*

### **Contemporary Malá Trňa**

*The village is part of a unique cross-border region named Tokaj. While the Hungarian part belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Slovak part of the region is still pending enlisting. Even today it is largely an agricultural and wine region, which holds several kilometre long underground cellars, which are in Slovakia protected as immovable monuments. In Malá Trňa there are numerous wineries, where Tokaj wine can be purchased directly.*

*Today 435 people were recorded to be living in the village, according to the latest census one third of the people were recorded to be of Hungarian nationality.*

*In Malá Trňa there is a manor whose origins date back to the early 18th century. In times of „real socialism“ the building was rebuilt for a wine research station and was architecturally discarded. However in the basement there are still remains of the historical old vaulted spaces.*

*In the upper part of the village stands the Evangelical Reformed Church, built in Renaissance style in the 1656. It was repaired in 1848 in the old classicist style. The Church was built on the foundations of an old Gothic church.*

### **Tourist services**

*Tokaj village Mala Trňa is particularly known for its vineyards and wines. Tourists have the opportunity to visit some five hundred years old wines cellars,*

“Ďuso?”

“I can't now, I'm watching, later at the intermission!” he rebuffed her.

Sure my boy. What does he know of the twists and turns of life? He has hardly finished basic school and wants to be a wine-maker like his father and grandfather, he's at one with his father on that, and is used to the work. But he is silly as all boys are. Now that he has got hockey in his head it will be hard to explain that he should be with his father and help him. And he certainly would reject her.

After the second period the boys were yelled hoarse. They had to shout a lot for our team was scoring goal after goal and were winning six to one. More than one predicted a blow-out as bad or worse than the Polish team received. Marika aired out the room again and cleared off the table. She worked her way over to Mito and whispered to him that the lads shouldn't smoke so much and that the foul air would make everyone ill.

“If you knew how it was in the tavern!” Mito chortled.

“Except we're not in the tavern!” Marika protested. “They are at our place. This is your work too! Will you white-wash it in the spring?”

“Don't concern yourself, next year more of them will have televisions. Then we shall sit here alone and recall how merry it all was.”

There's no talking with boys, she waved her hand. Persevere and wait, the hockey will over and there will be peace.

Ďuso's eyes itched and his throat was scratchy. This was from sitting in front of everybody, closest to the television but on the floor. Cold came from behind the windows, the cigarette smoke could be cut with a knife and packaged for export. The hockey had finished and Ďuso sat happily at the table. Our team won eight to two! The lads said goodbye and thanked them. From the look of many of them, they were less sober than when leaving a tavern. Yelling throughout the village once again. The priest might mention the devil's invention which leads us to evil. Church should be entertaining. As if the priest didn't know that the lads need no invention, only opportunity. Opportunity...that is a table upon which a bottle may be set, a glass, and someone with time to spare. Sometimes the boys said that drinking was a kind of mass, for when they did they also gave thanks to God for the gold he had endowed them with.

“Father didn't come,” Marika pulled her brother from his thoughts. “Are you going to see him?”

“In this dark?” Ďuso shuddered. Not that I am afraid, but I wouldn't like to cross the whole village again and grope around in that dark cellar. What'd more, father is probably home. Father doesn't sit around too long. He'll have a glass, perhaps two, and he leaves. Surely he just forgot the hockey.

“And you're not worried?” Marika made a smirk. “What a big boy!” she taunted the younger brother.

“I don't fear the devil himself!” he tried to outmaneuver her. But then he realized it was too late and he would be making his way down to the cellars.

“Thank you , Ďusko. You know that I would come along but just look at the mess you left behind! So good night then and watch under your feet!” she led her brother to the door and then watched as he slowly shuffled over the knoll.

Do you know darkness? Only the black kind? For Ďuso walked up the village in an altogether white darkness. Silence enveloped him, not one star was in the heavens and the moon was hidden, the sky was like a shirt gone grey. The snow crunched underfoot and the night grew severe. The wind picked up and wrapped Ďuso into a white veil from which he saw nothing. He continued up the village, that he knew for he was stepping into a hill. He dreamed of bed, rolling and finding a nook. He stopped, his father had certainly gone home, why drag himself all the way there?

He was about to spin around, when he felt a burden on his shoulders. Something leaned upon him, so much that his knees became weak. He was freezing. He raised his ears but heard nothing. Wind? It wasn't that. It twisted around him from all sides and could have danced with him. One of the jokesters who had come to watch television? The boys had been drinking and took the shortest paths home...

“Sportsmen,” he scoffed with some amusement, but it gave him little courage. His shoulders were weighed down like hauling tubs of grapes in the autumn. The silence deepened. Ďuso's head reeled with thoughts of witches and their spells, the kind that old ladies told and he never wanted to believe, they were for frightening small children. A chill ran along his back, he would turn, but he was afraid as well. He wanted to yell out but his throat was dry. If he screamed and it comes out that someone had been playing a trick on him it would be a shame before the entire village.

He moved and the weight dropped from him. He turned his head with care, prepared to run if necessary. It was indeed. Behind his back there stood a monster with gaping and slavering jaws. A black dog in the white snow, hanging from its jaws was a huge red tongue and glistening fangs.

“Aah!” Ďuso wailed and run up the village. He slipped and fell but got back to his feet and fled. He stumbled over the remains of a snowman which had been rolled up by the children in the afternoon, banging his knee on the ice. Someone had made it slippery on purpose for the ladies to fall down on in front of the grocer's, and the shop lady forgot to spread ash on it. He left the last yard behind him and kept running. He halted above the village, above the wine cellars he had run through in fright. Now he'd have to return, though he would rather run to the next village and hide. He stood shaken and frightened, his knees not holding him. He slumped to the snow and sobbed. No one had ever seen such a dog in the village. He also knew the neighboring territory and could say for certain he hadn't encountered such a monster. Where did it come from? What did it want? Had it crawled out from one of the Turkish cellars? What if someone had left it here and it wanders the passageways, avoiding people and only occasionally sticking its head out for air? Why did it choose exactly him to scare? Ďuso was a proper lad, didn't backtalk, was helpful, liked his parents and siblings, has a good attitude toward work and studied well... There was a roar in his head and thoughts

*and have the opportunity to taste and or to purchase the great quality wines. Tourists even have the option of selecting and picking your own grapes.*



#### **Accommodation:**

***Penzión U Macika – Tokay Macik***

***Winery, s.r.o., Medzipivničná 174,***

***076 82 Malá Trňa***

*Capacity of 20 beds, further information available on the web page: [www.tokaymacik.sk](http://www.tokaymacik.sk)*

#### **Wine tasting:**

***Tokay & CO, s.r.o., Malá Trňa 202***

*Besides selling wines we also operate a historic tuffs wine cellar with a tasting options and an archive of Tokay wines, cold kitchen is included. Contact: 0918 868 381, [www.tokay.sk](http://www.tokay.sk)*

***Tokay Macik Winnery, s.r.o.,***

***Medzipivničná 202, Malá Trňa***

*Wine tasting in the wine cellar (seating 70), or in a stylishly decorated barn (seating 60) or in a wine house (seating 20) offers warm Zemplín specialities including traditional Slovak and Hungarian cuisines, and accommodation in the guesthouse. Contact: 056 679 34 66, 0905 31 33 52 [www.tokaymacik.sk](http://www.tokaymacik.sk)*

**SANPO, Královka 159/22, Malá Třňa**  
*The wine tasting in a wine cellar with the capacity of 120 people.*  
Contact: 0907 815 541, [www.sanpo.sk](http://www.sanpo.sk)

**Wine tasting by local private producers of Tokay wine in wine cellars can seat a capacity of 10 to 15 people:**

**Gabriel Čonka, Malá Třňa 40:**  
0908 485 632, 056-6793 449

**Štefan Doczy, Malá Třňa 33:**  
0902 644 685, 0902 276 823

**Tibor Ganóczy, Malá Třňa 19:**  
0905 520 468

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were mixed up, he couldn't concentrate. He tried to get up but his legs were shaking like a fawn taking her first steps. He too made his first, second, third, inhaled and, taking a look around in all directions, approached the cellars. Sure he'll go and see if father is still sitting there, of course he'll go home with him. Sure... Of course now he wouldn't have gone alone.

In the cellars it was pitch black and he had forgotten to bring candles and matches, nor did he have a flashlight. The barred grate had always been left unlocked. As he opened it he noticed the terrible creak of the rusting hinges. So many farmers with a cellar, and not one of them with vaseline oil... He certainly would come back in the day and coat them.

He moved along the stairs one by one, and with each step the darkness thickened. He sensed paws extending from all sides, at times he heard noisy panting, slobbering, and the choking back of saliva. Even though he was descending the stairs, he sweat like he was climbing Rozhľadna, the hill that protrudes above town. Something made a faint noise and he held his breath. After a long pause he took another step. His hand held the wall and the velvety mildew calmed him, he counted the turns until he arrived at the seventh, that is, the turn to their wine cellar. He saw tiny candle flames, or so it seemed. The bar was down and the grate was open. Could father still be here?

The outer grate shrieked out, the sound slicing into Ďuso's head and bringing tears to his eyes. He was alone, deep in the earth, in the darkness. Nobody knew about him and it mattered to no one that he was lost. He couldn't stop the stream of tears he felt so sorry for himself. Then he realized that he really did see the low-burning wick of a candle, he wiped his eyes and face with his sleeve and stepped forward more decisively. What did the people who had to hide themselves here go through? – flashed through his head.

Father sat at the table, his head rested next to a glass, one arm hanging down. Had he gotten drunk? Ďuso sat on the bench and pat his shoulder: "Get up, we're going home. If you had come with me... our boys won, very good hockey!" he spoke through the previous fear, happy to be near father, even if not pleased to find him drunk. "Come on then, step by step we'll make it home!" lifting father's passive arm, but it didn't move. And that arm...

"Father!" shouted Ďuso. The mildew of the walls absobed the outcry. "Can you hear me?!"

The father slipped next to the table, hit his chin on the tabletop and fell to the ground. "Father, what's the matter?!" Ďuso was scared once more. He hopped up closer, took his face in his hands and tried to bring him around. "Do you hear me? Wake up, come out of it! Can you hear me father?!" He sobbed but the father's face sensed nothing – nothing at all. He steeled himself and gave him a slap. The face did not react. He arose and pulled his father by the arm. It was hard to move with the motionless body. He grabbed him under the armpits and hauled him back out of the cellar, on the stairs. He gathered all his strength, but it seemed as if time was running too fast and they would never get to the open air. Perhaps he was just feeling faint a needed some

fresh air, that happened, thus a person never dwelled too long alone in the cellars, and more people came when there was more work. He set him on the ground, placed his thick sweater under his head, and ran up the stairs. He stumbled, tearing a trouser leg, and tripped again with hands scrambling along the wall he broke a nail and tore skin off a knuckle. The doorway ahead was a grey darkness. He began to distinguish things as he neared the top, and began to shout for help. He sprinted outside, but none of the houses had a light in the window. He approached the nearest door and thumped on it.

“Help people, open up, it’s my father!”

He ran to the next house and pounded on it but, lo and behold, it didn’t break .

A neighbour appeared, behind him another.

“And what trouble are you up to that you’re not sleeping rascal?!” the first farmer demanded accusingly, his knickers sticking out from under his coat.

“Something happened with father!” Ďuso pulled the farmer by the sleeve down to the cellar.

“And what of it?! Something good happened to him, he drank more than he should and fell asleep,” the second neighbour Mižo, who not long ago was sleeping in front of the television under the weight of his own intoxication, turned the thing into a joke.

“No, he’s not moving, something happened to him.”

“Give us some light then, let’s see something!” the farmer ordered and treaded downstairs with his ray of light. The light cut into the dark jagged outlines, until it rested upon the motionless body.

“Listen Matej, you’re going to catch a cold laying around like that. Like own wine you won’t mature!” the farmer scolded Ďuso’s father, but saw at once that something was not right.

“We’ll need a doctor,” he muttered under his breath. Matej was breathing but the pulse was weak, they carried him up, out into the air. Now half the village was up, the windows alight and the people gathered.

The ambulance took Ďuso as well. When the driver shut the door he finally began to cry.

“It’s a heart attack, don’t worry he’ll survive it, but will have to mind his health,” the doctor tried to mollify the weeping Ďuso. “Good luck that you found him. We’ll save him, you’re a brave boy!” he praised, but for Ďuso it only led to another fit of crying, which held all the fear of the evening, from what would become of his father to the terrible incident with the sinister dog. He reproached his own indolence, for he should have been to the cellars sooner. Indeed, if not for that dog he would have crawled under the blanket at home, and perhaps discovered in the morning his father had died. Where was the dog from? Who sent it? What if it emerged from the open cellar and returned in the confusion?

It could be just the gossip of old women. Yet Ďuso, at the last moment, ran to the cellar because of the dog. Ran in at the last moment. And there it is: Ďuso’s fright of the black dog saved his father’s life.

## MALÁ TRŇA: Lepčanka

*Soups in the past were often considered the main meal of the day. While meaty broth was only cooked on major holidays. Vegetable, milk or roux soups were not fulfilling enough; therefore people added lepčanka in addition to the soup. It was prepared mainly for dinner.*

### Ingredients:

- an estimate of 1 kilo of potatoes
- green parsley
- 1 egg
- 1 onion
- salt
- soft flour
- lard for frying

### Instructions:

*Clean raw potatoes shred into mash, not in noodle shape, but in the shape for the preparation of gnocchi. Add one very finely chopped onion, which prevents the grated potatoes turning black. Add fresh chopped green parsley. At times when green parsley was not available in the garden it was replaced by a handful of chopped sour cabbage.*

*Add salt, add an egg and mix the mass. Add spoons of flour while stirring. The resulting mass cannot be too dense. If we put a lot of flour, the lepčanka won’t bake well; it therefore will remain greasy and heavy. And if it is too sparse it will fall apart while baking.*

*In the pan heat up the lard and with a spoon put the mash potatoes into it. Then spread the mash with a spoon to the shape of a pancake. You can bake four to five lepčanka pancakes at the same time in one pan. Lepčanka is baked on both sides until golden brown.*





# Christmas Witch

**PLACE:** VEĽKÁ BARA, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** IN THE 1920'S

**AUTHOR:** SOŇA JAKEŠOVÁ

**E**rži stood at the table with a floured board. To be taller, she had a low wooden chair under her feet. The small fingers of the six-year-old pinched off a piece of dough from the great sticky mass before her. Between her palms she lightly rolled a small ball no bigger than a hen's egg, she sunk her fingers slightly into one side, closed them gently and made a small head with a beak. She then stuck in two kernels of corn and the world was blessed with another bubosh – a Christmas cake from sweet fermented dough. Mother Anika stood across from her and was pinning a thin slab of dough. She would spread the nut filling and roll in into a strudel. Poppy-seed and plum strudels were already set. Mama's face was red. This was from the effort, but also because the room in which she was working served as a kitchen in the winter, and was quite hot. First thing in the morning, Jánoš the father had really stoked the fire in the stove to be sure the cakes would be well-baked.

"Your bubosh is very pretty, just like the bird it reminds us of. It will fit right into the palm of a caroller," mother smiled as Erži finished another creation. "You've put together a beautiful flock," she added. The little one looked to her mother and fluttered her green eyes with satisfaction.

Erži inhales the mixture of Christmas aromas with relish: the vanilla sweetness of the cakes, the spice of the smoked meat and sour cabbage, and along with these the smell of spruce resin. She was suddenly disturbed by a strong nudge.

"Oww!," she shrieked and turned her head. Her three-year-old brother Ištván who was pattering along the clay floor squeezed in next to her and stretched out his hand. He nearly managed to grab a piece of the dough.

"Ištván, leave me be!" Erži grabbed his chubby hand quickly and tried to squeeze him away. "You stepped on my foot. Now go away, this is women's work!" she frowned and angrily stuck out her lower lip.

Laughter echoed out of the room. Erži lifted her head. Pigtails tightly braided from fine blonde hair slid along her back. She looked to her father who chuckled amusedly. He stood in the corner of the room, where he had been fitting the Christmas tree into its stand.

"Come to me Ištván, the women don't want you. This is men's work," Jánoš lured the son.

It didn't escape Erži that while doing that he aimed a roguish wink at mother. She showed her teeth and with flour on her hand involuntarily stroked a bulging stomach which pressed her away from the table. Flour from her fingers settled on the folds of the apron. Mama's tummy with its baby, was left powdered as if by a light snow.

## BARA



### Location

*Bara village is located in the Košice self-government region in the district of Trebišov. To get to the village you need to turn from the road 79, which passes from Trebišov through Slovenské Nové Mesto to Čierna nad Tisou. The turn to the village Bara is in the village Borša. The village Bara is 30 km from Trebišov and 80 km from Košice. Altitude in the middle of the municipality is 144 meters; and the zone of the village varies from 110 to 280 meters in altitude.*

### History of the village

*The village Bara was created by merging of two formerly separate municipalities Veľká and Malá Bara in 1960.*

### History of Malá Bara

*The first known written record dates back to year 1296. The village was owned by the gentry's families. According to records from 1557, there were only 1.5 ports. Port was the gate that led to the farm, which were large enough that a horse-drawn carriage could pass through it. At that time villagers were not counted, but the taxes were paid by port number or peasant production settlements. Per one port at least seven villagers were counted. Records from 1557 indicate that at least 10 people lived in Malá Bara.*

*Even records from 1712 indicate that Malá Bara was a small village. Records showed that only 2 houses were occupied and 6 were abandoned. Reasons for this were due to the Rákóczi uprisings against the Habsburgs which lead to depopulation throughout the upper Hungaria. At the beginning of the 18th century, an epidemic broke out (for many years it was believed to have been the plague, however modern research shows that in actual fact it was due to smallpox), which led to further depopulation and total inhalation of the remaining villages.*

*In the 18th century the Malá Bara belonged to the Andreáškov family (Andreázskovci) and to the Hungarian royal chamber. Records from 1787 indicate that 99 residents inhabited Malá Bara and 17 houses. In 1828 there were 281 inhabitants living in Malá Bara and 34 houses. In the 19th and in the early 20th century mainly all properties belonged to Countess Vay. In Malá Bara was a wine village, where people mainly devoted their time to agriculture. From 2nd of November 1938 to the 21st of January 1945, the village was part of Horthy's Hungary. In 1900, records indicate that there were 150 inhabitants lived in Malá Bara and 29 houses. 14 of them were Roman Catholics, 17 Orthodox, 106 Protestants, and 13 Jewish.*



Evening mass was still a long way off, and the cakes had already been baked and cooled. The tree was trimmed with bright colored paper with tinsel. Erži crouched near it with a twig clutched in her palm. She liked the sharp feel of the pine needles under her fingers. She pressed gently, so that the prickling bordered between pain and tickling. Mama washed the cooking sheets messy from grease and burnt bits of overcooked dough. She sang a carol in the meantime with a clear and vibrant voice. Erži was in a holiday mood since morning, tense and restless as well. Let it be evening already! When they have already eaten and returned from the church and will finally unwrap the presents. Surely mama has prepared something!

“Christ is born...” Anika sang. Erži didn't know all words to the song. She hummed along though, which was like the purring of a contented cat.

Father came out of the room with Ištván on his heels. Erži knew the “boys” were off to the stables. Shortly thereafter they returned with an armful of scented hay. They set it before the tree and fluffed it into decorous stacks. Erži and Ištván started to interpose apples, dry corn, carrot, potatoes, grain – a little of everything the parents wanted a good harvest from.

“Mama, may I put on that fine dress?” Erži impatiently drew out. She looked forward to being decked out in her new, red holiday dress with its white collar, belted with a lace pinafore. She'd put a pink sweater knitted by granny over it, then a satin ribbon in her hair.

“Hang on a moment while...” Anika wasn't finished talking when she was interrupted by an energetic banging. The person entering did not wait for an invitation, and immediately turned the handle and rushed into the room.

“Aunt Mary!” mama raised her eyebrows in surprise. All went quiet in the room and observed the old neighbor with curiosity. She was a hunched and frail figure in an oversize black blouse with frilly sleeves, a dark wide skirt belted with a soiled apron, sticking from underneath were her bumpy, veined calves.

“Good evening, Aunt Mary,” Erži greeted out loud. Auntie did not reply to the greeting. For a moment she just stood in the centre of the room and looked around hawkishly.

“I see you've got the baking done, Anika,” throwing a glance at the cakes.

Erži frowned. She did not like how the woman immediately took a tone slightly raised, almost screeching. Such things aren't done! Erži knows this even though she is young.

Mary rested her hands with their long bony fingers on her hips. She stood there like predatory bird waiting to catch something in it's talons. Even the head, wrapped in a flowered kerchief she pulled to the front, was thrusting out a pointed chin. For Erži it seemed she was looking for something to grab. She was not fond of the auntie because Mary was never kind. She either overlooked or screamed at the neighboring children for making a riot. It was best to steer clear of her. But when she occasionally came to their home there was no escape. There was always a kind of tension around Mary, as if the air thickened. Erži turned to Ištván. The otherwise restless tot stopped his babbling and stood motionless. She thought he had been changed into a statue.

His eyes were open wide, only from the corner of his mouth and on his chin was the slow flow of shiny saliva.

“Yes, we’ve got everything prepared,” humored mama after a moment. “What can we do for you Auntie?”

“This sheet would come in handy,” the neighbor pointed. “The baking is almost done but I’m missing one sheet. If you don’t need it I’ll take it,” as she rolled to the table and already held it in her hand.

“Just lending,” Anika allowed herself.

“Fine,” Mary threw in contently.

Erži thought for the first time she had smiled a bit, so oddly though, that the wrinkles on her face arranged themselves in a kind of grimace. The old lady left the room as hurried as she had entered it moments earlier.

“Ach, that’s not good. That will bring us bad luck,” mama began with her lament. “She should not have taken anything from us. Lending something to a witch is bad luck,” clasping her hands together. “Let nothing happen to our calf!” she added, careworn.

“Mama, what could happen?” implored Erži.

“Well, the cow could lose her milk, without that the calf has nothing to eat. It is still small and needs it.”

“I can’t imagine you believe all that tittle-tattle!” János rebuked the woman. “I never knew Mary had imprints from a flying broom on her backside.”

“How do you know she’s a witch?” Erži wanted to know.

“There are no witches! Only in the fairytales, fabricated,” János persisted.

“And what Mary does with her cows, you think it so easy?” Mama did not give up. “How is it that hers gave twice the milk of those owned by others? She always had enough to sell. Impossible without witchcraft.”

“Nothing strange there,” János spoke out. “Auntie knows which herb makes the cow’s udder flow.”

“I have heard that her animals are cursed. There are no herbs. The poor cows, at Mary’s they hardly last two years. First a stream of milk flows from them, and then they wither away, the udders shrivel up, they shrink until their skin hangs limp on them.” said Anika.

“If she was the wretch you say, no one would have taken her for a wife. She was married, had children, normal ones without a hoof on one foot. The husband never complained that Mary turned into a toad, or that she had cold feet,” laughed the father. With a drink in hand Miklós surely would have bragged that his wife lights the wood in the stove with her own spittle, though he might not have been against it if she changed herself into a pretty woman from time to time.”

“That’s no way to talk!” she scolded him. “...not about an older person and not in front of the children,” she lightly struck him with the linen apron she was holding. “Erži, go a put on your Christmas dress, it’s high time we were off to church,” she turned to her daughter and ended the quarrel about Mary.

Until that point Erži had pricked up her ears. She wanted to discover more about

## History of Velká Bara

*The village was founded in 1416, in the region of Malá Bara in the bases of purchase law. The Lóňai (Lónyay) family became the owners of Velká Bara. In 1557 there were 3.5 ports, which are estimated to be around 24 people.*

*In the 18th century village belonged to the Aspremont and Kazinci (Kazinczy) families. In 1715 in Velká Bara there were 11 abandoned and 12 occupied households. In 1787 221 inhabitants lived and there stood 41 houses. The village had an agricultural character, which was dominated by viticulture. From 2nd of November 1938 till the 21st of January 1945 the village was part of Horthy’s Hungary. The Uniformed Agricultural Cooperative was founded in 1952.*

*After the merger of Velká and Malá Bara municipalities in 1962, the Uniformed Agricultural Cooperative became state property. The state farms caused the extinction of many wine cellars. This was due to the use of artificial fertilizer which spread on the soil above the cellars which in turn collapsed and filled up due to the changed composition of soil.*

## Contemporary Bara

*Currently there are approximately 330 people living in Bara. Bara is located in the Protected Landscape Area called Latorica.*

*Although contemporary Bara currently acts as one single municipal village in terms of law, territorially it is considered as two separate geographical locations, still considered as Velká and Malá Bara. A church dominates Malá Bara which is of precious and pure architecture dating back to mid 13th century. The church consists of Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles. Velká Bara is also*

*dominated by a Church dating back to 1801, which was reconstructed in classicist style in 1890.*

### **Regular Public Events**

**4th week of August** – Saturday – Prior harvest street entertainment

**4th week of September** – Tokay grapes harvesting- Open Day of Tokay vineyards

### **Tourist services**

*Through Bara passes the Tokay Wine Route, for more information, please visit [www.tvc.sk](http://www.tvc.sk).*

### **Local private producers provide tasting and selling of Tokay wines:**

**Ing. Ladislav Hrenyo**, Malá Bara 9,  
telefón: 056/679 23 76, 0918 948 616

**Ing. Gejza Csizmadia**, Velká Bara 73,  
telefón: 056/679 24 74, 0905 709 820

**Július Sütő**, Velká Bara 43,  
telefón: 056/679 22 53

**Gabriel Lipan**, Velká Bara 114,  
telefón: 056/679 24 63

**Gejza Sereš**, Velká Bara 32,  
telefón: 056/679 20 60

### **Municipal contact:**

*Address: Municipal office*

*Bara č.7, 076 32 p. Borša*

*Telephone: +421 56 679 22 43*

*E-mail: [obeckara@kid.sk](mailto:obeckara@kid.sk)*

*Home web page: [www.bara.ocu.sk](http://www.bara.ocu.sk)*

how Mary really was. Is she a witch or not? The parents went silent. She would find out for herself, but must be careful doing it, so that Auntie doesn't change her into a toad!

Two weeks had passed since Christmas. On Piliš, a hill behind the village with vineyards, there was a sea of snow and more falling in clumps from the sky. It was freezing; even the creek was under ice. Erži stood in a barn leaning against a wooden rafter and shivering from the cold. Tears trickled down her cheeks. She had a cold face, bitten from frost, her own tears felt like warm sticky streams. The woolen shawl tightly wound around her head did not warm her, nor did the coat made of rabbit fur. She looked upon her father and how he leaned over the spotted calf.

“Poor thing has lost so much weight it hasn't the strength to stand on its legs: They're as bony as twigs. There's no helping him. He just lies there, and may catch pneumonia. If we want any profit of him, well...” Jánoš didn't finish. He looked upon Erži and then Anika. His wife understood immediately, that the calf would get the knife. They tried to somehow change the subject before the youngster, for the little bull had been a dear one since he had arrived to this world. Erži visited him very day. She spoke to him, took joy in him. When father took the cow from its little one, took it from her jealous gaze, Erži stroked him along the length of his body, along the fine coat of its back and sides. The hot breath of the little creature warmed her face. He gave off the pleasurable smell of fresh cream. She adored it all when the calf was healthy. But now everything had suddenly changed.

“He's dying?” Erži said slowly as she wiped the wet streams of tears from her cheeks with delicate fingers.

Father and mother looked upon one another, as if they wanted to decide by a glance which of them would explain. They were both silent.

“It's all because of that witch! Aunt Mary!” Erži blurted out. “Our cow lost her milk and the calf has nothing to eat!”

“Erži...” Mama began. She wanted to tell her about heaven, which is there for calves too. She was hardly able to take her breath when the girl burst out of the stable.

Anika drew her woolen strapped scarf tighter to her body, which she had wrapped around her shoulders, and went out quickly after the daughter. On the yard she saw the fresh tracks from her boots and how they twisted back toward their house. She sighed, and with slow and careful steps, set off for the little one.

The late spring had covered the village and the surrounding hills in a lush green. Fruit trees in the gardens rained tiny flower petals and they piled up against the tree trunks like shrouds. Bees were buzzing like mad in the crowns of the trees, flying tirelessly among the branches. Erži crouched near a wooden fence and watched with concentration the neighboring yard through a cleft in the material. “Uncle” Miklós came out of the house. He sat himself on a bench under the windows and stuffed tobacco into his pipe with thick darkened fingers. His wife appeared soon after. With her wicker broom, Mary briskly swept fallen twigs from the yard which the wind had

ripped off. Erži trained her eyes on her. She was hoping that auntie would make some queer movement. Perhaps she would grasp the broom in some unusual way, push off from the ground and fly at least to the chimney.

“Erži, are you hanging by that fence again?” she heard her mother’s voice behind her. “Come and play with Ištván, get him from under my feet in the kitchen.”

She arose unwillingly, not letting Mary from her sight. It seemed to her that Mary had just bundled her skirt, lifted it above her knees and...

“Come already!” mother hastened her.

Here it comes, she hoped. Now comes the proof of her witchcraft.

“Erži!” the voice raised now.

The girl reluctantly looked back. Little Ištván was approaching her with a slice of marmalade bread in his hand. All of his mouth and cheeks were mussed; even his nose had been smudged by from the sticky sweet dainty.

“Na,” he reached his hand to his sister for her to take a bite.

Erži took the bread, and while biting turned her head to the neighboring yard. Mary was not there. Only Miklós was dozing on the bench with his pipe extinguished between his teeth. Erži quickly lifted her eyes to the chimney and then searched the skies. Where had she stolen off to? She hoped she’d see auntie’s skirt flapping above the treetops.

“Because of you I didn’t see how Mary...” she turned with reproach toward the brother. An outcry interrupted her finishing.

“Miklós, wake up! Come here quickly!” was urged from the neighboring stable. It was Mary.

“Oh, she hasn’t flown off yet,” Erži’s chin drooped in disappointment.

“Anika, we’ve butchered the cow, here you are, I’ve brought you some meat. I’m selling it cheap, the same as last time,” Mary produced a piece of dark red meat bundled into stiff wrapping paper. “Want some?”

“Yes, leave it on the table,” Mama turned to the cupboard to fetch the money.

“What happened to your cow Aunt Mary?” blurted out Erži, she had been sitting on the bench friskily swinging her bare feet.

Mama shot her a stern look.

“It stopped giving milk, it got old,” the old lady crisply cut her off. She took the money Anika had counted out on her palm and hastened out.

Anika thoroughly inspected the meat she had purchased, scrutinizing its richness of color, sniffing it.

“For now I’ll cut off just a piece, wrap the rest in nettle and drop it in the well. The meat is fresh, in the coolness it should last several days.” Mama said. “Erži, fetch me some nettle. Pick the biggest leaves,” she said, handing the daughter a basket and scissors.

The young one arose and left out without grumbling. She was used to getting more chores since the baby arrived. She met Piroška in front of the house, a friend from her street.

## **BARA:** **Stewed rabbit on an onion base**



*Once in the surrounding meadows and forests ran many hares as to now. Witnesses mentioned that especially in winter time villagers would bring in full bags from set traps. The catch was always shared among many families. In spring and in summer traps were not set up, because as many hares were in breeding season. Delicacies from wild hare represented a diverse diet for humble villagers. Today such food is considered a delicacy, as hare on a plate is rare. In this recipe, we offer instructions for an easily prepared rabbit braised in wine and onion base.*

### **Ingredients:**

- rabbit
- a large amount of onion
- lard
- a speck of wine
- water
- salt, pepper, a bay leaf
- bread and or boiled potatoes as a side dish

### **Instructions:**

*Divide into portions the skinned rabbit without the viscera and head. In lard fry onion chopped in large pieces. For the*

*preparation of this meal in the use of a wild rabbit you will need a lot of onions, according to its size from two to four pieces. On the onion base put the portions of rabbit, salt and pour a speck of wine. Add black pepper, bay leaves, pour hot water and simmer on a low flame. Count with a longer preparation as the meat of a rabbit is stiffer. While simmering add occasional water (if necessary) and let it simmer for at least one and a half hour. If the rabbit is larger in size you will be required to simmer it for up to two hours. The soft rabbit meat is served topped with the onion juice base. The rabbit tastes delicious with fresh bread or with boiled potatoes.*

“Where are you going?” she lisped through missing front teeth.

While Erži explained, the other girl loped alongside, once on one bare foot, then the other.

“Mary visited us too,” she admitted. “And my mother bought meat from her so she wouldn’t be offended. We don’t eat meat from Auntie, it goes to the dogs.”

“Why?” Erži enquired.

“Well, because she is a witch,” Piroška retorted, as if annoyed to have to explain such a matter of course.

“How do you know?”

“Mother. She said Aunt Mary casts spells. How is strictly confidential,” Piroška rattled on.

“I must hurry,” Erži quickened the pace. “My father said it’s only idle gossip about Mary,” she added sorely. She didn’t like that Piroška perhaps knew more about it all than she did, nor that she wanted to look so important. She decided not to join her friend’s little game.

Dusk had arrived when Jánoš fed the dogs. One whelp scampered around his feet, restlessly wagging its bushy tail. He rested his devoted dark gaze on his master and impatiently whined; frothy saliva dripped from its chops to the ground. Erži liked watching this theater, when this great animal quivered for what was given in an old chipped pot. So she stood nearby and awaited the sound of greedy champing.

“You’ll enjoy this today,” Jánoš told the furry creature. “There’s meat enough to have you licking around your ears,” he placed the full pot with large dark pieces near the doghouse.

“He gets meat, and we didn’t have any,” wondered Erži. The dog always got the leftovers, what they hadn’t eaten. “Is that meat from Aunt Mary?”

“Weeell...” Jánoš started unwillingly. “We didn’t cook it because...” and he didn’t finish.

Erži waited a moment patiently, and when no answer was forthcoming she blurted directly: “It’s from a witch. Something could happen to us.”

“You needn’t believe everything people say,” father added evasively.

Something clanked near the doghouse. The pot, which had been licked-clean, had upended and was rolling toward the fence in a wide arc. Erži and her father looked upon it as a revelation. The vessel was jumping about the yard as if wafted by some force. The steel pot banged into the fence and then remained there, its bottom facing upward. The dog with its scared whimpering and drawn in tail crawled into its little house. From the neighboring yard the laughter of old Mary befell them.



## ČERNOCHOV



### Location

*Village Černochovo is situated in the Košice self-governing region in the Trebišov district. To the village leads secondary road stemming from the road no. 79, which passes from Trebišov across the Slovenské Nové Mesto to the Čierna nad Tisou. Secondary road digress in village Borša, then leads through village Bara to the Černochovo. From the district town Trebišov the village Černochovo is about 30 km away, from Košice about 85 km away. Altitude in the middle of village is 168 m, in the land-register of this village from 140 m to 411 m.*

*This village together with other six villages is located in Slovak area of the unique region Tokaj. They are situated in the south part of Eastern Slovak Lowland on the southwest foot of Mountains of Zemplín.*

### History of the village

*The first written mention of Černochovo originates in the year 1298. As serfs community village often changed their landlords. At the end of the 15th century Černochovo belonged to Rozgony, in the 16th century to the Palóczy, then to the Dobo family, next to the monastic order St. Clare, Perény and part of village to the manor of Blatný Potok (Sárospatak).*

## Xénia of Černochovo

**PLACE:** ČERNOCHOVO, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** IN THE 1940'S

**AUTHOR:** ANNA DOMANIKOVÁ

**M**y name is Xénia. Xénia Kováčsová. Tóthová after my first husband, and I shall reminisce a while. People do it often. They hunt through memories and recall the times which became etched in their souls... or their hearts, I don't really know. I would more likely say the mind. For the heart does not reminisce, it only aches. The soul does not reminisce, it only yearns. There is no confusion in my head. I know just where to reach for the images and incidents, the faces of people; so I can recollect their and my feelings of fear and joy, injustice, humiliation, hopelessness and the belief that one day it would be better, more beautiful, with more safety and certainty.

I arrived in Černochovo after the First World War. I had come from Siberia. There I came to know my first husband. It was wartime... a World War which we today call the First, and he had come as a soldier. I was twenty-five at the time, and had been treasuring no one within my heart. I hardly understood a word of Jánoš, but his eyes were miraculous. When he cast his eyes on me there was no need for words. I read it from his face, lips, touch and laughter. He laughed beautifully, from the heart. It was liberated, childlike innocent, and free. I worked as a teacher at the basic school, but when I was first brought here to a little village full of unfamiliar people, customs, and language, I had to get another trade. At home, in faraway Russia, I often caught fish, read books, knitted myself sweaters and sewed skirts. This last one I could do here. After a time my husband bought me a sewing machine and I gradually bettered myself. I knew how to sew not only bedclothes and curtains, but also tablecloths and dresses for women in the village. I mended trousers for children, sewed holiday suits, colorful vests for brides and I also learned to embroider patterns which usually decorated common and festive bed covers.

The beginning was difficult. But then who can say that jumping into a new world and a new relationship is carefree? Myself, and my husband were oriented toward – I am not saying we had a hard time feeding ourselves, not that – not just living from day to day, but augmenting our middling assets: small field, little home, vineyard. I was overwhelmed with joy when I found I was with child. Together with my husband we looked forward to the child. I wanted it to be a son, to continue the lineage, and I would teach him history and geography, arithmetic and science, he would have the eyes and the smile of his father. God listened, and I bore a son. He was tiny, tearful, just beautiful. I only gazed at him for a moment and the midwife took him away, the next time I saw him it was in a small casket. He died soon after birth. It is pointless to look for the reason. It was such a time. My child was neither the first nor last to declare their life with a cry,



and then be silenced in an instant. The soul returned to God. I gave my husband a second son, and then a daughter a year later. We raised them as well as we were able. Our life had both good and bad times, but the worst when my husband unexpectedly breathed his last. He never complained of pain or illness, was not weak or pale. He went quietly, neither of us suffered.

He was a good person. My second husband was as well. A woman alone means nothing. Justice is not on her side and she has no way of gaining it. Only with a man at her side is she heard, only then her opinions and what she says are heeded. I was never hard-headed or acquisitive, or domineering. I lived my life in peace, humble before God, holding all in esteem. But the solitude weighed on me. I thought to myself that I should return to where I came from. Those were merely unhappy thoughts. I had two children. I was convinced that they had a better life here, it is their home and I cannot force another world on them, poorer than this one from all sides. Not to mention the language. I knew Hungarian, in fact I spoke well enough that all could understand me. They told me I was still young and needed backing, someone to help around the children and the farmwork. A skilled craftsman named Béla who knew something of everything courted me. He could repair shoes, the wheel on a cart, mend a leaking roof, plant a tree, manage work in the vinyard and around the homestead. I was grateful to destiny for him. I became his wife and my life had new meaning. I was content and happy... for a while.

The village was tranquil until the end of the thirties. The militia was to ensure this. A few of our men with rifles were to protect us from evil. Apart from the few lads who had to enlist, we would not have known of the war. It came nonetheless. War – a terrible word and a more appalling reality. It dug its long, sharp, bloody nails into the country and destroyed everything standing in its path. News first came from waggoners going to Sátoraljaújhely as well as from the Hungarian gendarmes who appeared in the village occasionally. They had no reason to be there, but Černochovej belonged to Hungary at the time. They came so it was clear who lorded over it. It went so until autumn of forty-four. I feared the Germans, who never resided in Černochovej, though in one of the yards they built a kitchen garden. I was afraid even if they had never physically harmed us. I spoke Hungarian, but my Russian accent was still discernable and I constantly mangled the odd word. A good number of soldiers circled the kitchen at lunch and dinnertime. They came for meals from the surrounding villages as well. When the cook was at work, a pleasant aroma filled the village. They had their own everything. They took nothing from us. They even brought the log under the stove on their truck. Otherwise there was only the cook, his aides, and the guard. Youngsters armed to the teeth with machine guns and helmets on their heads.

“Xénia, go to the Germans,” Hermína ran up once, red in the face and gasping for breath.

“What for?” I whispered, my palms sweating from fear.

“They are rationing out food... black bread, chocolate... margarine. They don't ask who you are and want nothing for it. They only give priority to those with small children.”

*In 1952 this part of Uhorsko was conquered by Turks, and specifically in the area of Tokaj their allies were fighting – Crimean Tatars. Conquered territory was held in their possession for about 170 years. According to historical records from 1557th, the village consisted of 6 ports. In that time, they didn't count people but ports, and port is the gate leading to the farm settlement, across this gate can cross loaded carriage pulled by horses. It is generally calculated that in one such homestead, family has at least seven people including servants. Moreover, according to registration in Černochovej there were even three ironmongers. In 1557 thus at least 45 people lived here.*



*In 1663 during the Turkish occupation in Uhorsko, plague appeared, which significantly reduced the status of all people. The existence of vineyards in the village and its surroundings confirms the registration of 1715. Then there were 15 households situated. At those times it was good, at least in the sense that village did not disappear. This is because the influence of Rákóczi Kuruc uprising and the other plague wounds in this part of present-day Slovakia, many villages remained temporarily depopulated, many even permanently.*



*Data from 1787 show that in Černochove there were living already 386 residents in 69 houses. This increase can be justified by colonization of valaská, when new population of Rusyn origin immigrated to this area. In that year the village belonged to the royal chamber of Uhorsko. In 1828 there lived 397 people in 53 houses. Residents were mostly farmers and wine-growers. Largely they devoted to fruit growing, particularly to cherries growing. Most of the land belonged to the genus county of Wallis. In 1831 a cholera epidemic struck the village.*

*After the first World War in 1918, the Černochove became the part of Czechoslovakia. A fire in 1927 destroyed almost the entire village and it had to be built again. From 2th November 1938 to 21st January 1945 the village was split off from Czechoslovakia and became part of Horthy's Hungary. At that time there were 106 houses. After the war, the border returned to their original state.*

*Uniform agricultural cooperatives in the village established in 1952, about ten years later it passed into the ownership of state property. Electricity in Čenochove was introduced in 1953, in 1958 they even had their own cinema. Public announcer with drum and sticks in 1962 was replaced by the local radio. Regular bus connections here began to run since 1963.*

I did not go, not wanting to tempt fate. In my heart I thanked them, all of them. I even told myself, be things as they may, they never stopped being people, and this despite the all-pervasive malevolence, killing and hatred. Explosions were heard in the distance, but the village was free of gunfire, or still was. We were like a tiny island in the middle of a stormy sea. When we heard the blasts more often, and ever closer, the rapid-flow firing of automatic weapons clearly discernable, the Germans became nervous. Their anxiety carried over to us. We knew the front was approaching and the battle was here. One day they hastily packed their kitchen and left Černochove. People said the war's end was near, peace was at hand and we could return to the old ways. Except... other soldiers entered the village towards evening: Russians. They also had machine guns and sought Germans.

Our house stood in the middle of the village. It was big, one of the largest on the way from church to the cemetery. Anyone coming from the upper or lower end passed before it. That day the village was lifeless, everyone cowered at home and waited. I was on pins and needles. I hoped the Russians would come and leave, not stay. I was wrong. In that uneasy early evening silence even the dogs were quiet. I felt that time had stopped. Everything was numb, muted, only our feelings were whipped into a frenzy. I heard a woman's cry outside, when I went to the door I saw Erži. She was running, tripping over her own feet and wiping tears from her face. Her clothes were torn. Underneath her kerchief, which had slipped almost to her shoulders, poked out tufts of brown hair. I raced in front of her but it was as if she had not seen me. She gazed in the distance and wept awfully. If I hadn't caught her and held tightly she would have pushed me aside.

"Eržika, Erži," I tried to get her attention, "What happened? Where are you running to? Her mouth gaped like a fish on dry land, but not a single word came from her throat. She wailed. That is how women cry when the most horrible has befallen them. I ask no further. I led her to our home, washed her face in the basin in the kitchen and dressed her in my clothes. For a long time I held her as I would my own child. Wordlessly I soothed her and listened to her recount through the tears.

Four Russian soldiers burst into the house. They were just four: scout, intelligence agents, a patrol. Two of them pushed her husband against the wall with their machine guns and continually asked about the Germans, where they were and how many. The other two fell upon Eržika and dragged her to the front room. She was unable to continue, and didn't have to. I ached with her but didn't succumb to the feeling. What's more, she said the sentence: "They were yours! That is how they are? Why?"

I was ashamed. Ours. Long years – and I realize it only now – I thought of faraway Siberia as a country behind the Urals with the taiga and the steppes, deep forests, wide rivers full of fish, wolves and stout bears, snow up to the knees, frost that reached into the bones and Cossacks. That was all. I never remembered the people. Everything I needed, what fulfilled me and made me happy I had here, in Černochove. Until that time I had not divided people into ours and yours. All at once I was ashamed of ours, those from my birthplace. Something had broken within me and a defiance was aroused. I didn't know against what or whom, but suddenly I felt strong and resolute for everything. First in line were those who took me as an equal...their own.

The next day, when Russians arrived at the village with freight cars and horses, they found only old men and women in the houses. At night I had run around to all and warned them of the soldiers. I was distraught but convincing. Women, girls and children were hidden in my cellar, which was large enough for them. We had dug one the length of the house.

Soldiers kicked in the doors to houses and robbed. They looted, yelled, stole, destroyed, instilled fear, misgiving and hatred. They burst into our house as well. First they fell upon my husband and demanded to know where we kept the swine and the cattle. They nosed through my cabinets, looked for food, and were filthy. My husband tried to explain he was a craftsman and no landholder. He had nothing to give them. The Russians were not pleased. They yelled, roared. They dug into him... Then I spoke out...in Russian.

“You are one of us?” clearly they were unnerved, perhaps alarmed.

“How did you get here? Who are you?” Their questions were endless. I explained nothing. I merely repeated: “I am Russian.”

“A soldier? Why are you here” they cried. There was curiosity reflected in their eyes, and weapons which had been aimed were now pointed downward, it even seemed to me they had drawn back a couple of steps.

“If you don’t stop this looting I will inform your commander!” I threatened, even if I felt my heart would leap from my chest. They left. I was relieved, for below me were ten terrified women and children. If they had been found...

The commander came to know that I spoke Russian. Immediately two were settled into our home and I was the translator. The rest of the soldiers were put up in the other houses. They robbed everywhere. They took cups, duvets, clothes, statuettes and crosses from the walls, but especially foodstuff. They broke the necks of a fowl and roasted it over a fire. They slaughtered all of the pigs. The horses were led away and harnessed to carts. As if by slight of hand sausages disappeared from the pantry, potatoes from the cellar. The ravaging was unheard of, the entire village was a shambles. Not one bomb fell on any roof, but the rampage of the soldiers was worse.

At the first shooting I ran to the street I heard a woman cry out from a nearby house. It was the sister of my late first husband. She stood before the house with her head in her hands and heart-rending lamentation. She was frightened and confused.

“What kind of people are these? They shot him. Xenka, they shot him!” she hissed and fell to her knee.

I entered the house. Laying at the threshold of the door was the fallen body of the woman’s son, Sandor. A puddle of blood, leaking out below the chest, was spreading. The numb fingers held a rifle and there was no movement. The Russians had acted as usual. The older lady had screamed, protecting her middling possessions. Sandor, a member of the militia had run up with his rifle upon her shouting and the uproar to sort things out. The Russians thought he had come to attack and shot him, murdered him. I took a deep breath and let off a shower of unbecoming Russian sentences at the soldiers. I was angry, I shouted, I ordered them out of the house.

The mood of the village was horrible. The killing of the young man had divided the villagers and Russians into two enemy camps. The entire world battled the entire

## Contemporary Černocho

*The village is part of a unique cross-border Tokaj region. While the Hungarian part belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Slovak part is still waiting on this entry. In May 2009, 215 residents lived in Černocho. Today it is listed in the land-register of village vineyard on area of 11,2 hectares. Among the protected buildings there is the Calvinist church built in 1793. Behind the village there are about ten underground cellars of Tokaj.*

## Tourist services

*Across the village passes Tokaj Wine Route, for more information, please visit [www.tvc.sk](http://www.tvc.sk).*

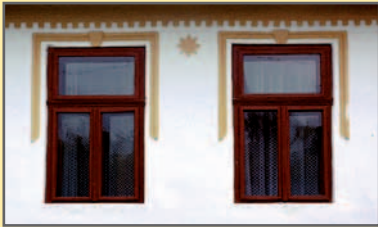
## Wine tasting and buying wine from low-growers can be obtained from:

**Ladislav Tóth**, Černocho 34  
**Karol Rosoha**, Lesná 43, Černocho  
**Alexander Kováč**, Černocho 74

## Municipal contact

*Address: Municipal office  
Lesná 40/12  
076 32 Černocho  
Telephone/fax: 056/ 67922 17  
Telephone: 056/668 39 50  
E-mail: [obec.cernocho@post.sk](mailto:obec.cernocho@post.sk)*

## ČERNOCHOV: Hrstovník



*The tradition of baking begins with the preparation of homemade bread, for which was made in especially large heated ovens. These ovens were probably in all village houses in the past. Along with baking bread, smaller bread loaves or bread pancakes from the same dough were also prepared. Later on sourdough buchty (cakes) filled with plum jam or nuts or poppy seeds were also made. The following recipe is for hrstovník which was made from the kneading dough, rather than yeast dough. Hrstovník was most popular among children.*

### Ingredients:

- dve hrste hrubej múky
- 2 handfuls of gross flour
- 1 handful of granulated sugar
- a teaspoon of salajka (baking powder)
- a tablespoon of lard
- 1 egg
- sugar and walnut kernels for garnish

### Instructions:

*All the ingredients (except the nuts) are mixed on a board into supple dough. Then the dough is rolled into a slab form, not thicker than two millimeters. Cut circles of dough slab using a circular glass as a cutter. Sprinkle circles of granulated*

world. A handful of locals hated with all their hearts those who were to liberate us from tyrants. Well these...

“Why do you allow it? Why don't you intervene?” I asked the commanding officers. “Your soldiers are akin to ravens, maggies.”

“You are hysterical,” they replied. “People die in a war. That is what it is all about. Without battles and death there is no victory...”

“Have you lost you mind? You fight with those who offer no resistance. We are not your enemies! And you take the last crumb. Over there, two houses down you looted all the food from a woman with six children. You killed all the livestock!”

“From which woman? No woman was there. Nor were there any children. Where are the women of Černochoch anyway?” I was silent.

“Do you hear? What women are you talking about? There are only old ladies and yourself. Where are the others, hah?”

“What would I know? Perhaps in the cellars.”

“In which ones? We have searched them all.”

“Not in the houses! The wine cellars, on the hillsides above the village. There perhaps,” I diverted their attention.

They believed me. The spectre of women hidden in those tufa cellars mobilized all of the soldiers. They left in the morning and returned the next day early evening. They dragged Mihál, a farmer limping on his left leg, to accompany them up there. He returned after several hours and started to talk. He described what happened. The Russians smashed the doors to the cellars. First they were looking for the women, and when they failed to find them, or anyone else, they headed for the wine casks. They tasted each one. At first smacking and rolling it on their tongues. Later they drank regardless of wine or cellar, they guzzled. When they had their fill they shot the casks with their machine guns, ruining many of them. They sang, laughed and danced.

I used their absence to bring food and hot milk and tea to the women and children in our cellar. Yes, they were hidden where the Russians would least expect them, in the large cellar under my house in which the Russian commanding officers resided. Many of them wanted to go and see their homes. They were afraid yet urged on by curiosity and yearning. They had fled all at once, not even taking care of the livestock. I could not tell them they had nothing more to worry about. Or that their homes had been plundered, they were left with four bare walls and their bare lives. I only quieted them and promised that if they stayed in place nothing would happen to them. The Russians would not be here forever, and they needed to bear it, a few days more...

The soldiers returned from the cellars in the early evening. All were drunk, even the officers who lived with us. They reeked terribly and hardly stood on their feet. They wobbled from side to side and smoked one cigarette after the other. Then there was the roar of an airplane and a bomb exploded. The officers arranged their uniforms, took something from the rucksacks which were strewn near the bench in the kitchen, and ran out to the street. I followed. It seemed they had sobered within seconds, and were going to shoot. I went after them so there would be no target from Černochoch. The bomb had

fallen beyond the village, near Cserjekút. One of the officers leaned forward, struck the ground with something he held in his fingers. Something fired from his hand. A sharp light in the shape of a narrow beam flew high in the sky and illuminated the village. I watched with my mouth open, not understanding.

“You want them to see us?” I was startled.

“Not to worry my girl, fear not,” he smirked at me. “That’s our airplane, Russian, driving out the Germans.”

“None are here. Why the bomb? And the light, what have you done?”

“The Germans are everywhere! Remember that. You don’t see them but they are here! They must be chased in a piggish march back to where they crawled out of... That light is a signal flare. I’m letting the pilot know we are here. Russians, like him, and you. He won’t be bombing here, he is supposed to keep flying.”

“Signal flare?”

“Yes. Do you know what we call it? Stalin’s candle. That’s right.”

The Russians remained in the village for another two weeks. I saw how they behaved, how they looked and what they did. They taught me to detest while not shedding tears: to resist, scream, curse. To lie, conceal, defend everything and everyone despite the Russian blood flowing in their veins, as in mine. I realized that environment and circumstance change a person more than I was willing to admit before. I had always believed that what people have imprinted on the brain in their youth remains and accompanies them always and everywhere. The foundation upon which one can build: a solid base, inalterable.

After two weeks of transgressions by the Russian soldiers in Černochoch the officers finally sent the command for them to start packing in the middle of December. The stolen items, along with their own, were loaded onto motor cars and carts. I could hardly wait until they left. I trudged impatiently in the yard and counted the minutes. I prayed, and silently I drove them away. Everything had been loaded. Just get in and clear out. But they had guns on their shoulders and went from house to house, and took all the lads with them, this was for a “maľenkuju rabótu”. They claimed they would repair the bridge in Streda nad Bodrogom, only old men, women, and children remained in the village. The men did come back after three days, but fourteen of them never returned.

It is said that memories are either pretty or ugly. I agree, for the neutral ones give us little reason to preserve them and remember. We recall events which struck our lives with force, which changed us. They enrich our feelings and souls, if not always in a positive manner.

I have remembered. I have tried to not leave out anything important from the story, one which I retain in my memory forevermore.

*sugar and in the middle of each dough circle add a walnut core. Next put the circles of dough onto a greased and floured spilled baking form and bake them in a pre-heated oven until they turn pink.*



# Pain and Desire

PLACE: VINIČKY, OKRES TREBIŠOV

TIME: IN THE 1930's

AUTHOR: SLAVOMÍR SZABÓ

God that arm hurts... it hurts terribly! It took a good while to get my shirt off, every little movement was pure suffering. When I turned my head, I noticed that the shoulder had swollen, maybe even dislocated. I can't even breathe properly! My ribs cracked against the floor, at that moment I saw all the stars in the heavens. And my head? That I didn't hit, but it is ringing something awful... What will the parents say when they arrive home? Surely they'll take me to the doctor. He'll ask for such payment since we'll be interrupting his evening that my father will lay another one on me. Then they might as well pile the earth up on me straight! I should lay down and wait, maybe even sleep if possible. I know it won't be. So I'll just stand and try and arrange this all in my head. How did it happen?

I am not from a rich family, though father always says we have reason to be proud. We can earn a living. I understand him more or less, he's got no choice other than carry on with that talk. That is, if he has time. He is almost always working somewhere, and me with him. When winter comes we go for the pond. A normal person puts away his scythe in early winter, but that's when we fetch ours out. We have no fields or meadows, but we do have scythes. Whenever the water's surface is covered by ice we hurry down. The reeds draw us there. We cut them nicely just above the ice and then tow them home in such bunches that we have enough for at least a year. Then we dry them. People make roofs from straw, nowadays from steel sheets, but father is clever, I must admit. Those reed roofs he put up in Viničky might outlive me.

We go on the wagon as well. Horse and wagon, that's what sustains us through the year. The horse is older, and father holds his tongue, not wanting to admit it. Nor will he admit that we don't have enough for a new one. I know he is saving for it. Therefore when he discovers that instead of a horse he'll be paying for a physician, he'll lay another one on me. And since I have been calculating how we get our food and money, I shouldn't forget about the vineyards and fields. We go to them and work them, but not our own, to Berty's father's place, he owns the most. Csepregi, Diöska, Borszhegy, more than half the land around the village is his: vines and tobacco. What he cultivates needs our work. Do you know how many tobacco leaves have passed through my hands, when I thrust the needle through on a long cord, for them to dry in the sun and wind? There were hundreds and hundreds of kilos.

## VINIČKY



### Location

*Village Viničky is situated in the Košice self-governing region in the district of Trebišov. To the village leads road no. 79, which passes from Trebišov through the Slovenské Nové Mesto with branch to Hungary on the Slovak territory road continue to the Čierna nad Tisou. From the district town of Trebišov village is about 30 km away, from Košice about 80 km. Altitude in the middle of village is 100 m, in the land-register of this village from 94 m to 267 m.*

*This village is located together with six other villages in the Slovak area of the unique region Tokaj. They are situated in the south part of Easter Slovak Lowland on the southwest foot of Mountains of Zemplín.*

### History of the village

*The area was inhabited in the Neolithic Age by people of the bukovohorská culture. In the land-register of village were discovered archaeological findings of ottoman culture from the Bronze Age, and bronze and gold objects of Hallstatt culture from the Iron Age.*

*Publication Zemplén vármegye mentions the existence of the village as early as 1029, but this note is unreliable*

for historians. The first known written mention is from the year 1273 where the village is mentioned under the name Zeuleus. According to the record from the year 1399, there was ford across the river Bodrog near the village. Viničky was owned by several aristocratic and landlord genus. In the 1403 village was acquired by the Pány family, after then Rátkai family, in the 1526 Tárczai, in 16th century followed Báthory, in 17th century part of the village Sennyev, then Szentyványi, followed Almássy and in the 19th century Andrássy.

According to historical records from 1557, the village consisted of 5 and half ports. In that time, they didn't count people but ports, and port is the gate leading to the farm settlement, across this gate can cross loaded carriage pulled by horses. It is generally calculated that in one such homestead, family has at least seven people including servants. In 1557 thus in Viničky lived at least 38 residents. In the year 1663, plague struck the village.



Uprising against the Habsburgs led to depopulation of large populations throughout the upper Hungaria. At the beginning of the 18th century broke out another epidemic (generally for many years was believed that was the plague, new research show that that was the smallpox), consequently lot of villages disappeared. Data from 1715 records that in Viničky were located 15 residential and 9 abandoned homes.

After all, tobacco is expensive. Father says we don't need tobacco to survive, a shame to waste even the smallest of money on it. However, you will almost never see an older man without a pipe, and some chew it. The ground around them is covered in spit after a while of sitting. And my friends? They learned long ago how to finely mash dried tobacco leaves, sprinkle them on a paper, salivate a bit on its end while rolling it with one hand. Is a girl passing by? From the corner of their eye they watch whether she has taken notice of what a knack they have. I only smoked once. I almost choked to death. The smoke went into my lungs and up my nose, in the end I threw up. But every beginner must pass through that before they can become a chap who knows how to enjoy smoking. They say they the aroma of tobacco attracts the ladies. That must be it, otherwise no one would bother trying to overcome the suffocation. Then there wouldn't be such great tobacco fields like we've got, and Berty's father would just have vineyards everywhere.

It all started four years ago, I was fourteen and so was Berty. We went to school together and the teacher sat us at one desk. Until then I hadn't really noticed him. I knew who he was but had no reason to start a friendship. I came from school to my parents and had to help cart the wood, or weave baskets with mother, because that's what she did. There are many basket-makers in Viničky and it is a hard way to earn a living. Sometimes I went with the lads down to the Bodrog to catch fish, but not just for sport, rather when father was out of a job and we had to eat. And Berty? He came home and sat on his stallion and went racing about, for he loved to ride. Then they cooked him a nice soup, along with some roasted meat followed by cake. Our worlds were incompatible. Despite this he started acting quite nicely to me, as if he didn't see the differences. What allied us the most however, was the outrage in a fourteen-year-old boy's soul.

Imagine that from first grade you attend school with girls. Some of them are pretty, and you realize over time they are very pretty. So much so that you dream of them. Their voice sounds delicate, like the trilling of the nightingale together with a chorus of angels. You begin to notice their lips. That is no longer a mouth for speaking and eating, it is the gate to first delight. You long to get closer, embrace them and place a kiss on their lips. A proper one, a real one, until you are flooded by a wave of delight which knows no bounds. I haven't tried yet but I am pretty sure that's how it must be. And those eyes! I have to admit that sometimes I cast my gaze down, for when our eyes meet I can barely keep from dropping to my knee and begging for a little affection. And as for a caress or at least a fleeting touch, there is one which will be long in fading and make my heart tremble whenever I recall it. Simply, I came to realize that girls are not just screeching creatures, born only so that boys had braids to tug. But here begins the outrage: that injustice which no boy can come to terms with at my age. In the eyes of others, a fourteen-year-old girl is a young woman and



therefore all things are allowed to her; especially dances. She can take music, spin around with others in a csardas, be hugged the waist, enjoy herself with the young lads. But a fourteen-year-old boy? Allegedly he is still a child and can't go anywhere. Did you notice? I said – allegedly. That's because none of us at fourteen feels like a child. And if we are then so are the girls! In vain they say that girls become women earlier than boys become men! Is that really the case? Mama also said that from childish folly such girls forget everything that has gotten them this far. Then they come with papers from the doctor so they can have the priest's consent for marriage at the age of fifteen, sixteen... but the time we become "swain" has been raised up to eighteen! Only then may we approach the girls, otherwise woe onto us! We would get a thrashing, perhaps ending up worse than I look now.

Once Berty and I were talking about it and we decided it was a foolish custom and should perish. At least we went for "peeping", that was all right. First we watched how the lads met at the wall by Andráši manor house. We pretended that we were just playing, but we got a good look how the girls themselves came that way for a walk intentionally, how proudly they carried themselves, stealing a glance to see which lad would chase after them. Often they stopped near the wall and hung around awhile together. And when dusk arrived, each lad would walk one of the girls home. Once we watched Júlia with Pišta, how they were kissing. I couldn't sleep that night. The girls from our class went there too: Žofi, Margit, Erszébet, Anna and who knows who else. They stayed behind as if calling out for us to behold how pretty they were, like little flowers that you have to sniff gently at first, but then later you could pick one for yourself. I would have taken the whole bunch! The time came when they didn't show themselves for a couple of days; surely their mothers talked them out of it. It happened that some Žuža from Ladmovce, who was sixteen, found herself expecting. She didn't want to marry the boy and supposedly drowned herself in the Laborec. Everyone spoke about it, but you see, it didn't discourage the girls, after about a week they were hanging around by the wall again.

I have told you that Berty's father had tobacco fields and vineyards. It suddenly had new meaning for us: a great advantage. Every year after gathering the grapes, which has people working from Viničky, as well as Bara, Ladmovce, and even from Zemplín, Berty's father arranges a big dance. He always calls the Gypsies so the music is good and has one of his barns decorated. Everybody attended, and they presented him a welcome wreath of the finest grapes as a token of gratitude for the work; for the money they were able to earn really, but that doesn't matter. We were allowed to attend these great dances. Berty was the landholder's son, and I was his best friend. Of course we weren't allowed to dance, but we could watch. I must admit though, I don't know whether that was good or bad. It was clear at once that I would never think of anything else but the girls.

*In the following years, in this territory was valaska colonization on the top, thereat the Rusyn people came to this area. Record from 1787 indicates that there was 270 residents living in 54 households. In 1828 there lived already 396 inhabitants in 52 houses, the record specifies the method of their subsistence. They were mostly farmers, wine-growers, fishermen and basket makers.*

*The wave of emigration to America caught South Zemplín too. In 1869 in Viničky lived 395 people, in 1880 it was 322. The second wave of emigration came in the thirties of the 20th century in a time of economic crisis, but the natural population growth was so high that in 1940 there were 532 people there.*

*Records from the years 1772 and 1799 finds that it is a wine region with particularly good conditions for growing quality wine, so there are extensive vineyards and they produce quality wine. In 1873 had vineyards an area of 94.4 ha??.*

*In 1918 the village belonged to a newly created state – Czechoslovakia. However, after Vienna Arbitration in 1938, with moving of southern borders village became the part of Horthy Hungary. The village was liberated by the Red Army IV. Ukrainian Front on 2nd December 1944 and from 21st January 1945, when was restored pre-war status and the Trianon agreement in force again, were Viničky again the village of Czechoslovakia. Electricity in Viničky was introduced in 1950. In 1952, there were based agricultural vocational school in field gardener wine-grower, to this day is school transformed into a Secondary vocational school wine-fruit-growing. Uniform agricultural cooperatives in the village were founded in 1955 and in 1961 were included in the state property.*

## Contemporary Viničky

*The village is part of a unique cross-border region of Tokaj. While the Hungarian part belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Slovak part is still waiting on this entry.*

*Up to 31st December 2008, 508 residents lived in Viničky. Today are in the land-register of village vineyard on area of 133 ha. It works here Secondary school wine-fruit-growing. Across the land-register Viničiek is flowing river Bodrog.*

*From the protected buildings here is the park of the former manor house in a chapel of St. Joseph from the late 18 century, also protected are the underground Tokaj cellars. The bridge leading across the river from the village to the Streda nad Bodrogom is protected technical monument.*

## Regular Public Events

### **4th week of May**

*– International Competition of wine tasting organized by the Wine School*

### **1st week of June**

*– Tokaj Festival – Folk event*

### **4th week of August**

*– the day of the village*

### **4th week of September**

*– Tokaj vintage – Open day of Tokaj vineyards*

## Tourist services

*Across the village passes Tokaj Wine Route, for more information, please visit [www.tvc.sk](http://www.tvc.sk).*

## Accommodation, food and wine tasting:

*Accommodation is possible to provide on the college Secondary vocational school wine-fruit-growing, especially for groups*

Andráš came up to us then and asked me: “Do you want wine?”

Sure I did, I nodded. Berty’s parents had full cellars of it in huge casks, and we hadn’t had one gulp of it. Just the fact that I was addressed by one of the lads filled me with the sense of being a suitable person to talk with, and someday perhaps would belong in their group.

“Go fetch Erszébet. Do you know where she lives?”

I nodded.

“Go to her and tell her that her girlfriends don’t know why she didn’t come and they’re concerned about her. Žofi and Mária miss her and are calling her here. Understand?”

I nodded again.

“Off with you then! But don’t say that I sent you, it was Žofi with Mária.”

I ran and Berty was with me. We stopped at Erszébet’s in the yard. I could imagine how Berty’s heart was beating. I noticed long ago how he fixed his eyes on her. She was pretty, practically perfect: lithe legs that could take your breath away, waist as thin as a wasp, and her blouse was heaving upon her. I couldn’t tear my eyes away. She listened to us and asked once again to make sure if it was really her friends who sent us. We lied because that’s what we promised Andráš. She said she would come to the dance and that we should bring a message back. Once we did that, Andráš really did give us a bottle of white wine, but ordered us to not tell anyone how we got it. So we went out farther into the dark, and we sat on the ground. We were just about to open it when we noticed Erszébet was coming. She strode like a nymph, as if her feet didn’t touch the ground. Then Andráš suddenly emerged from the darkness. We didn’t see when he came out, but certainly he was waiting there for her.

“You sent those children after me? You? I’m angry with you!” Erszébet turned her head to the side, but Andráš caught her in his arms, powerfully nestled in and kissed her face.

“Don’t be upset please, don’t be angry,” he tried to lead her somewhere and she was having none of it.

“Fine, but I’m not going anywhere, just dancing!” They vanished from the barn.

I was afraid Berty would throw the bottle at Andráš. He felt wretched seeing her run off with him! The girl of his dreams and he runs around to get her together with Andráš. The earth could have swallowed him up at that point. What’s more, she called us children. I knew well how he felt. We didn’t go back inside, just watched some of the dancing through a hole in the sideboards. Andráš and Erszébet were twirling. Cords with bunches of grapes were stretched across and hanging under the ceiling as decoration. Andráš caught her by the waist, lifted her high, and she plucked off one of the clusters. Then they passed it back and forth: once she bit at it, then he did. The veins were beating at Berty’s temples when he whispered: “Even that grape is ours!” Then he turned and went straight home without a word.

That is how we used to watch the dance for four years! Four years of desire unfulfilled, where we just stood and watched through a window or some hole in the fence. Some of the girls we went to school with got married over time, some even had children. Now we're nearing eighteen and at least I have the feeling I can't endure much longer. Berty's father asked us what was the matter, whether we would become "swain", and what are we waiting for. His father had an overview. For us he was an older man, but he himself thought he was in his prime years. As a great landholder the doors were open to him everywhere and he was always where the music played. He wasn't one for dancing, he would sit about reviewing the girls and smoke his incredibly long pipe. He always had his demijohn with him, and it was offered to whomever sat down. Perhaps this was so he never sat alone the whole time. Who knows, I rather didn't ask Berty.

It happened today. Christmas has passed, and there is a dance at the tavern of the Jew Filipovič. I went there again of course, to have a look around with Berty. The windows had fogged up on the inside and we could hardly see anything. Suddenly the door opened.

"And here are our peepers!"

I looked and saw Andráš. Berty turned to stone, he always had a problem keeping himself in check when meeting him, but had just about managed so far.

"Boys, it's about time you became lads!"

When I heard this sentence, my opinion of Andráš changed immediately. I had an urge to leap over and give him a kiss. Hey, I know it's a man, but he had opened the gates to the pleasures of youth.

"Really?" is what Berty stammered, whereas I hadn't managed a word.

"Do you know the swain baptism?" Andráš began directly. Without waiting for an answer he continued: "Each of you must bring wine. This you present to the lads. They then throw you aloft, drink the wine, declare you as one of them, and you dance your fist dance with one of the girls. That's it. From that moment on you may come to all of the dances with us and flirt with the young women at their spinners."

Andráš turned, went back into the tavern and slammed the door. Wine, we'll have to get some wine, we told each other with a mute glance, and as Berty and I were looking, I have to say I wasn't waiting for anything. I still had what Andráš had given me before. It was tucked away nicely for this occasion in my hiding place in the cellar under the house behind the shelves. I ran home, took the bottle and raced back. When I entered the tavern I didn't see Berty. Only his father was sitting at one table with his demijohn and releasing small clouds of smoke from his pipe.

"You have it?" Andráš grabbed my shoulder and I lifted the bottle high. When the music finished he yelled out: "Your attention please! The time has come to welcome a new swain. May he feel fine among us for he is no longer a child, but a young man. So, fellows, to the task, let's give him a hurl!"

*of up to 60 people. Under the school there are wine cellars. It has two rooms for tasting wines with a capacity of 10 and 15 people.*

*Contact: [www.svosvinicky.sk](http://www.svosvinicky.sk)*

*Accommodation for 40 persons, conference hall for 60 persons, lounge and wine tasting with expert interpretation is offered by Tokaj Viničky Company.*

*Contact: [www.tokajvinicky.sk](http://www.tokajvinicky.sk)*

*Cellar 1,5km long and tasting of wines from its own archive and a tasting room for 40 people is owned by Chateau Viničky.*

*Contact: [www.vino-tokaj.sk](http://www.vino-tokaj.sk).*

*Tasting of its own Tokaj wine in the vineyard with a capacity of 45 persons, even in cellar with own wine archive is offered by Company Zlatý stravec.*

*Contact: 056/637 39 75*

*On the opposite bank of Bodrog is harbor with cruise ship Arthur, which has a capacity of 47 seats. From there it is possible to make the voyage of the Bodrog, which is connected with an educational commentary about local history, flora and fauna, and the program includes tour of the castle in Sárospatak. Contact: Lumix Trade, 056/672 59 07, 056/637 32 10.*

## **Municipal contact**

*Address: Municipal office*

*Tokajská 191/5*

*076 31 Viničky*

*Telephone/fax: 056/ 637 32 81*

*E-mail: [obecvinicky@kid.sk](mailto:obecvinicky@kid.sk),*

*Home web page: [www.vinicky.ocu.sk](http://www.vinicky.ocu.sk)*

## VINIČKY: Čeregy (Csöröge)



*The Fašiangy (Carnival) is characterized by a richly set table with broth from various kinds of meat, plus roasted, fried and stewed meats, puddings and, of course, sweets. Sweets include čeregy, which are considered the most characteristic food of the Carnival. Who nobody would guess of its origins from China. The Chinese have been preparing von-tont (meat pastries) and hsiemping, which is nothing more than filled pampúch (donut) dating back a thousand years. There are many kinds of donuts, which are prepared from different dough and in different ways. In old housewives recipes čeregy was also known as šiška or pampúch, which was fruit soaked in pancake dough and then fried in oil. Čeregy were bind to different customs, for example in some regions they kept the first fried donut, let it dry, grounded into the powder and used it then as medicine. In houses where they had daughters to be married it was accustomed to bake čeregy and goose or turkey on the day when a young man came to ask a lady for her hand in marriage.*

At that moment they all crowded in, all those for whom I had been blind with envy. They grabbed my arms and legs and I was flying all the way to the ceiling! They threw me in the air and all around were smiling until I found a smile was on my lips as well. The end; this the end of this humble period and life starts now! Real life with everything that entails! That means with girls, their beauty, tenderness and passion! Out of the corner of my eye I saw that the door was opening.

“Aha, him!” hollered one of the swain and they stood apart. I was in the air at that moment and no one caught me. I hit the floor. Darkness gathered before my eyes, and within that all the stars in the heavens. But I mentioned that at the beginning. Unbelievable pain shot from my shoulder to my head and hip and I felt quite battered. I fought to catch my breath, and when light returned to my eyes everything was blurry. I was convinced that it was all over for me. Except when my sight became sharper, I saw that all of the lads were crowded toward the door and no one noticed me. And why would they. Berty had entered with a full demijohn of wine! The second demijohn really, for his father already had one on the table. However this one was not for those who, instead of dancing, wanted to carry on conversation with the landholder. This one was for the swain and they jubilated and slapped Berty on the shoulders as if he were already one of them.

Andráš came to his senses first.

“Does that hurt?”

I nodded that it did, and he nodded he was sorry about that. I should try to stand and offer the others wine so the baptism followed custom. They drank the bottle in a flash, it went from mouth to mouth, then each one shook my hand and dancing was to come next. The moment I had been long waiting for. I could call upon any girl I wanted, catch her by the middle, feel her waist between my hands and bravely look her in the eye. The Gypsies started into the csardas: Lively, fiery.

“Irén, come dance!” I waved to her the way I watched others do it when we would be peeking. She came over and we started. But do you know what it is to dance a “chapash” when your hip is about to fall off and each movement means untold suffering? I don’t imagine I can describe the pain. I knew that my official dance, which I had imagined countless times before, had indeed finished for me. The Gypsies finished up their song a little earlier than usual; perhaps someone suggested it. I felt that tears were flowing on my cheeks. The the lads gathered around Berty and took him in their arms. I went outside. I didn’t want them to see me cry. I had to leave. So I came all the way home.

... God that arm hurts... It hurts terribly! It took a good while to get my shirt off, every little move was pure suffering for me. When I turned my head I noticed that the shoulder had swollen, maybe even dislocated. I can’t even breath properly! It will heal though, I have to believe it will. And then it begins. Everything that I had only

dreamed about until now! I'll have to get myself back in shape, and then believe it, there won't be a bigger swain than me. Other girls have grown up into quite pretty young women, Viničky has much to choose from. And who should they snuggle up to if not me? To their schoolmates? No, those little boys will have to wait a few more years. I can't bear how they try to push into our dances. This is our time, our pleasure, the joy of the swain.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 liter of sour milk
- 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate soda
- a pinch of salt
- flour
- powdered sugar
- oil for baking

**Instructions:**

*Sour milk, in an indicated amount, is mixed with flour to create the mouldable dough. Add bicarbonate sodium, salt and knead the mass until the dough is smooth without lumps.*

*Roll the dough to a thickness of half a centimetre and then cut four squares into ten centimetre squares with a knife. Cut an „x” in the middle of each square and join each opposite corners. Thus, the dough is slightly curved.*

*In the hot oil fry the squares into a golden colour and then sprinkle them with powdered sugar.*



# The secret of Black Mountain

**PLACE:** VEĽKÁ TRŇA, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** THE BALLAD TAKES PLACE IN A TIME UNDETERMINED

**AUTHOR:** SLAVOMÍR SZABÓ

**A**nuška felt like she could take wing; just spread her arms and be carried high over the vineyards above the village, over the whole Tokaj region up to the sky itself where she could hear the song of the angels. Yet even a heavenly choir at that moment would not sound as beautiful and melodious as Imre's words, which he had just whispered in her ear. It was like all the colors of the rainbow fused into a single one, which now shone mightily, flooding the world, life and her future with the radiant light of joy. A life in which there was no place for shadows, pain, sorrow or regret. That would all vanish, be lost never to return and tenderness and love would rule everywhere. She smiled with happiness, and would have danced if she could. What does it matter that she is alone in the middle of the village? A person in love sees the world different from the others. And someone in love, and loved at the same time, sees it as she does now.

She walked from the upper end of Veľka Trňa with a basket full of grapes. Other days it might have seemed heavy after a day of hard work, but today she didn't notice. She treaded the road in bare feet, stones and all, not a care in the world. The men called that every helping hand was required, and she had been in the vineyards since morning, never one to shy away from work. Imre's father, as one of the greatest and richest winemakers in Tokaj, did not stop by next to her. He was carted about by coach, getting out here and there to look at the grapes. Here a muscat, there a furmint or lindenblattriger. He tasted them and then was driven onward. And she, even though she did not stop working, was constantly looking from side to side trying to catch sight of Imre. No, he himself did not call for her, he sent a servant for this, and ordered him to tell her that it would be a great pleasure if he saw her among those gathering. She didn't feel it absolutely, but she very much wished it was not like that, a kind of joke from a young gentleman who otherwise enjoyed himself with the daughters of the burghers at balls. But Imre... They had known each other from an early age. They played together as children before his parents picked up the mannerisms they have today. Nothing kept them apart, not even the fact that while he slept in his own room on a feather bed, she barely squeezed into her little room with her mother and brother. There would be more of them if she still had a father. Her memories of him are hazy; it was rather the feeling she used to have when he took her in his arms and cuddled her. Her father died when she had just turned four and her brother was still a toddler. He was killed by a tree in the forest when they were cutting wood. They

## VEĽKÁ TRŇA



### Location

*The village is located in autonomous region of Košice within the county of Trebišov. A short digression leads from the road no. 79 in the village of Čerhov, which passes through Trebišov and Slovenské Nové Mesto to Hungary. The village is about 20 kilometers far from the county town Trebišov and 65 kilometers far from Košice. The altitude in the middle of the village is 176 meters. This village with six others is located in the unique Slovakian Tokaj region. It's situated in the southern part of east slovakian lowlands on southwestern foothills of Zemplín hills.*

### History of the village

*The territory of the village was inhabited in the palaeolithic period (the older Stone Age) and neolithic period (the younger Stone Age), in the area were found traces of a settlement dating back to Bukovohorská culture (5000 – 4700 bc). If the villages Nižný and Vyšný Turuň, which recall the history of the Zemplín county, are identical to the current villages Veľká and Malá Trňa, then they existed in 1067. The same can be said about the village Tolna, which existed in the beginning of the 13th century, it belonged to the Káth's clan, and its existence is recorded in the dokument*

from 1220. The first report about the wine growing in this area is dated back to 1248, when Belo IV. was the king. Written references about Velká Trňa are known from 1254, their owners were the Balasey's. During the 13th century in the village lived a Paulin monks order, and into the given period is calculated the creation of the Romanesque church, which is here up to this day. According to the village history description, drawn up by Anton Szirmay de Szirma, King Ondrej II. donated half of the village to Paulin's. The Paulin's monastery was apparently destroyed by Tatars in 1241. However the truth is that the paulin's order was established in 1261, ergo 40 years after he allegedly owned the village. The Paulin monastic order, shows in its history ten municipalities in the area of nowadays Slovakia, where they had during the Middle Ages their monasteries. Velká Trňa is not between them.



Velká Trňa was owned by Mičbán's in 1321. Since 1330 until 1512 part of the village belonged to the monastic order of St. Clare of Blatný Potok, which is in present Sárospatak in Hungary. The other part of the village frequently amended owners. In 1479 they were the Semsey's, in 1481 the Czékey's, in 1511 the Butkay's. In 1512 a change occurred, when half of the village was again owned by Paulin monks, who has lived in Sátoraljaújhely

said it was an unfortunate accident. But then a few years ago Anuška's mother died from consumption. At this point her life changed down to its foundations. She and her brother remained as two orphans. She, not a woman yet only a bigger girl, took on the role of breadwinner. People helped as they could, that's true, but it was a dreary life; loveless and colorless. That is until today, until this moment.

It happened in the afternoon, just as she was loading bunches of the grapes collected into the press. Imre appeared suddenly and went straight to her, in his leather boots, a shirt as white as the first snow, and an embroidered vest more handsome that she had ever seen. She noticed at once that he had let his moustache grow. It was thin, light, more for a boy than a man, but she liked him anyway. She always did, even when Janko, her brother, served at their place. He was still a young boy and was supposed to collect apples from their garden. To this day no one knows quite what happened. Apparently Janko was not respectful enough, and argued with Imre, who then really threw him out and sicked the dog on him. From that day she stopped getting work at their place as well... until today. She always hoped that one day all would be explained. She believed that at each chance encounter over the years she saw remorse in Imre's blue eyes for what had occurred.

"So you came?" he asked her at work, to establish conversation.

"Yes. Thank you that I could. I was pleased."

"And I was pleased you were coming," Imre smiled and cast a look around in case he saw his father. "Are you tired?" he asked after a moment.

"No, I can manage. Really, I am used to working, I'm strong enough," she was taken slightly aback, not knowing why he asked.

"You really do that much? Show me your hands," he ordered, and she put them out. He looked at her palms, seeing the callouses, then he caught her by the wrists and looked into her eyes. "Well, really. Sometimes a rest is necessary. You deserve it. Such a beautiful girl could have much more from life than toil. It's odd. Whenever I behold you even for a moment, my heart flutters... on its own. The heart cannot be commanded. Can you feel how it beats?" he placed her palm on his chest and smiled.

Anuška blushed at that. She took notice of the eyes of the other workers, even if they only looked furtively, for no one dared to stop working before this young master, or rudely stare.

"Come, I need your help, in the cellars near the casks. I must see if they are prepared as they ought to be."

Firstly it occurred to Anuška that this should have been done before vintage, for if they found some defect on one of the casks now it would be too late. She didn't dare tell him that. She obeyed, even feeling honored that he had chosen just her to assist.

Up above Velká Trňa, where there are exactly thirty-three entrances in the slope, meandering within the mountain are unbelievably long passages of wine cellars, full



of barrels and casks of the best wine. They stopped there and Imre pulled a key from a leather sack. He had also noticed the cart and horses without a waggoner, and the doors to their cellars were open. He went in first and Anuška followed him. She felt at once how the air had cooled, it nipped at her legs and shoulders. Imre lit a candle and moved deep underground with her at his heels. Soon they saw a light. It was at a place where their cellar split into two sides, and some fellows were just preparing a few full casks to load on the cart. Surely they were being taken somewhere to be sold. Imre blew out the candle, leaving them in the dark, and Anuška felt something drape over her shoulder. It was his beautiful embroidered vest.

“It must be chilling, that I didn’t want.”

“Aren’t we inspecting the casks?” she asked naively, but Imre had come closer until she could feel his breath and he whispered in her ear: “You are beautiful. You are the most beautiful girl in the world and one day you will make a man unbelievably happy. I’d give my life for that man to be me. Please, come this evening to the end of Kondáš hill, just after dark. Heart and soul I yearn for us to meet, not just see each other by chance or when father needs workers. I very much long for us to meet and have time for one another: just you and I. Will you come? Please say that you will. Please...”

Anuška agreed, and very gladly. Imre! Until then she could only dream of it, even when she reproached herself that an orphan to dream of young masters is unbecoming. Now they stand next to each other, his vest warming her and he whispering his profession of love, the kind which leave no woman cold. She felt the warmth of his palm in a loving touch when he caressed her cheeks. This before he took her hand so they could return to the entrance in the dark. Then, after they were bathed in sunlight, she handed back the vest and he went in another direction. Surely it was so they wouldn’t return to the wine-press together. Except that after the chamberlain of his father had paid the workers and Anuška, Imre came and gave her a basket of grapes. Now she was heading home with it, smiling and happy that life is sometimes more beautiful than the most unbelievable and boldest ideas. Never had she looked forward to sunset more, if she could last until then. She will not tell Janko anything at home. He cannot bear Imre and his parents, even today they didn’t call him for work. He shall find out everything later, when the proper time comes.

“Anuška, is that you? My love, light of my life!” Imre nearly screamed out when at dusk he leapt from his horse and saw her at the agreed upon place. The sun had set beyond the horizon when he clasped her in his embrace without hesitation, she felt her body was being tossed upon a wave of bliss.

“My dear one, the dream of my nights full of thirst for yours kisses, come, sit up here in the saddle and I shall present you as my lady,” with yearning he led her to his stallion, set her upon it, and as he said, walked ahead and led the horse by its halter.

*and the other half belonged to the monks of St. Clare of Sárospatak. According to the written record from 1598 the owner of the village were Francis Paczoth and Dobó, and later on the Rákoci’s. In the 17th and 18th century the owners were the Asprement’s, in the 19th century Széchy’s, at the end of the 19th and beginig of the 20th century Alexander Szécheny owned the most of the property in the village.*



*The village almost extinguished in 1567. It was forfeited by Turkish forces who plundered the vineyard. The establishment of the typical underground cellars dug in tufa ground is ranked around that time. Now they are used primeraly for storage of wine, but at that time they served as a shelter against Ottoman incursions. In 1715 was situated here 12 inhabited and 50 deserted settlements. This time was known also for the dissolution of various villages, the nowadays area of eastern slovakian region was very depopulated, which was a result of the Rákoci uprising. A new wave of people who inhabited the village were mostly Slovak and Rusyn origin. In 1787 were here 111 houses and the village had 662 inhabitants. In the 18th century Velká Třňa was also known for its healing springs, next to them giving rise to a spa and there were treated rheumatic diseases. According*

to the records from 1828, there were 48 houses and 372 inhabitants in 1869 it risen up to 790 inhabitants. They devoted mainly to agriculture and viniculture. From 1938 to 1945 Malá Trňa belonged to those who were attached to Horthy's Hungary. The village was exempt in the II. World War on 12th of February 1944. A minority type of JRD was established here in 1952, which in 1964 passed to the state property. In 1964 the two villages Malá and Veľká Trňa merged in one village called Trňa. Both villages once again became independent in 1991.



### Contemporary Veľká Trňa

The village is part of a unique cross-border region Tokaj. While the hungarian side is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage list, for slovakian side this entry is yet to come. Even today it is an agricultural and wine village with 33 underground cellars, that have about 2,5 kilometers long corridors. Several winemakers operates here, the tokaj wine can be purchased directly from them.

Currently 441 inhabitants live here.

In Veľká Trňa is a Romansque-gothic church from the first half of the 13th century, which belongs to Reformed christian parish. There is also a Classicistic Greek-catholic church from the first third of the 19th century.

Anuška looked down upon him from above and was lost for words. She wanted so much to ask of his feelings, which he had concealed until now, but she said nothing. She only smiled in silence until they reached the edge of the small wood, where she jumped directly into his embrace. Imre boldly and shamelessly whispered that love knows no restraints. If she feels even a whit of what he does she must understand him well and follow her heart. They made love through the night. The stars and the moon bore witness to their delight, and twinkled upon them out from the black sky, creating a majestic arch above a sublime landscape. She gave herself to him body and soul, feeling as much tenderness and delight as only a woman can be enraptured. Only towards morning when the sky slowly paled and Imre still held her in his embrace, endowing her the last smouldering caresses of passion, did it cease. He dressed, helped her and then asked: "Will you marry me? I would be a good husband."

Anuška's throat felt parched. She couldn't swallow much less say a word. She had to take a breath, feeling as if wild blood coursed her veins, when she whispered her consent.

"Except your parents would never allow it. Never," she added shortly after.

Imre saddened. He pulled her as close to him as he could, and was long silent, perhaps searching for the proper words.

"My family approves of you. I've spoken with them. But they don't want to hear of your brother Jano."

"Janko? I can't abandon him just like that, he is too young, he can't support himself."

"Anuška, my love, I'll tell you something. I tell only you but I want you to swear to secrecy. Just look how he hangs on you, how he lets you toil for him. He never considers that he is a burden to you, an obstacle to your, our, happiness. You must trust that if the goal is clear, life knows no obstacles. None. I'll take you for my wife, make you the lady of my heart and my estates, but it is necessary you do one thing for me. You must kill your brother."

"What?" Anuška yelped and withdrew. "I should be a murderer?"

"Think what life awaits us. I love you and you know that. If you don't do it I shall be unhappy for the rest of my life. So will you. Do not languish with him, later you might end up alone or at best the wife of some drunkard, the last poor wretch, because without property no one will have you. That is how people see it. I have no need for more property. I need love. I need you!"

"But they would take me straight to the hangman!"

"Have no fear, really, trust me. I've thought it all through. I know the secret of how to do it so no one ever discovers, but you must go up to Black Mountain and you must go alone. Search until you find the green snake. This you kill. Cut it into three pieces and the three parts are cooked in three pots. Give your brother a little bit of soup from each pot. Later everyone will believe he died alone in his sleep."

In the darkness there was only the sound of horse hoofs. Imre mounted his horse and turned for home. Before departing he gave Anuška a kiss on the lips, different from those thousands at night. She now stood stone cold, and did not move. She tried not to think, not to take notice. The bliss of a night of love left her all at once. She bowed her head and walked quietly toward her own cottage.

The following days were misery for her. First of all she refused everything Imre proposed. Despite this she always, when she could, passed before the house of his parents, just in case he was there by chance. He was nowhere to be found. She felt desire for him, what they experienced was wonderful, beautiful. She also thought of herself. Imre was right. She was supposed to slave away until death, perhaps not live to see old age and then die of consumption like her mother. Meanwhile Imre had offered everything: his heart, a life full of love and security, she would never again know what poverty was. But then why had he sent her to find the green snake? She had never heard of it. Why precisely on Black Mountain? Some of the strangest stories are told about that hillock between Velká Třňa and Čerhov. People say that long ago, when the plague raged in the country, all of Třňa died. Even the monks who built the church fled at that time. They had the dead village burned down and then poured a heap of earth so the plague wouldn't spread further. They say waggoners came from the entire region bringing earth on their carts and people did a colossal amount of labour to stop further calamity. Some say that is how Black Mountain was formed, that under it is the destruction of the village and its deceased. Others say the village rests under the modern day one, only covered over. It was covered over by the earth of Black Mountain, for it is magical and has power to cast away even the plague. At any event it is a place of wonders, and if a green snake is anywhere, surely it is only there.

Anuška herself didn't know how she got to the top of the hill. She came at dawn one morning and the dew drenched her bare feet. She had a canvas bag in her hand, and in it was a knife wrapped in a hemp kerchief. She moved listlessly, thought of nothing, couldn't. There was only the desire to meet Imre, rest in his embrace, that drove her on. She felt her life had no meaning without him. And as the sunny disk rose higher in the sky and wore its way between the clouds, she noticed that something rustled in the grass: a snake. A green snake, a wonder of nature she had never seen before. It was a short instant, a mere second, as she quickly cut its head off on the ground, put it in the bag and returned home.

That day Janko had set out to find work in the neighboring villages, and she did everything as Imre had told her. The snake was cut into three pieces and each piece was placed into a different crock. She poured in water, added vegetables, and cooked soup.

## Regular public events

### 3rd week of May

- St. Urbain's day, the wine cellars open day and wine sanctification

### 3rd week of September

- The grape harvest festival

### 4th week of September

- The Tokaj festival of grape harvest and the wine cellars open day

## Tourist services

*Velká Třňa is particularly known for its vineyards and wine. Tourist has the opportunity to visit some of the approximately five hundred years old wine cellars, and taste or purchase quality wine. However there are other options too.*

*A Tokaj wine route passes through the village, for more information, please visit [www.tvc.sk](http://www.tvc.sk).*

## Accommodation, food and wine tasting:

*In the Tokaj house with bike rental, for more information [www.ostrozovic.sk](http://www.ostrozovic.sk).*

## Municipal contact

Address: Municipal office

Hlavná 122

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## VEĽKÁ TRŇA: Filling from chicken



*In the Tokaj region, and everywhere else where eating habits were mapped, soups were commonly most cooked. Usually they were very dense, milky and with roux. If the chicken soup was cooked, housewives served it on the table with polnina, which was made of liver filling. That made the soup richer, denser and removed the necessity of adding pasta.*

### Ingredients:

- chicken liver
- onion
- parsley
- lard
- black pepper
- salt
- 1 egg
- breadcrumbs
- plain flour

### Instructions:

*Scrape the liver with a knife into a thick paste. Chop the onion and the parsley into small pieces. Add a tablespoon of lard, salt and ground black pepper. Mix it. Add an egg into the mixture and add two tablespoons of bread crumbs. Again, stir and gradually add the spoons of flour*

“Do you have work?” she asked in the evening when Janko arrived home and sat at the table. He wasn’t in the mood to talk.

“You won’t tell me?” she entreated further.

“No, I haven’t anything. Hard times have come and nobody needs me. They say I’m still quite young, once they called me child, but they don’t try me to see how strong I am. We won’t have money for food.”

“Never fear Janko, never fear. Aha, today we’ve got soup, good soup, have some,” she set a bowl in front of him and poured in from the first pot. Janko ate. Apparently it tasted good. He didn’t say so but she could see his face and how hastily he scooped it. When finished it seemed he had become a little pale, she offered more anyway.

“Have another bowl. We have plenty and needn’t save.”

After finishing the soup from the second pot, Janko was surprised that she offered once again. She, ever thrifty, was now filling his bowl a third time, not waiting for him to ask. He was limp, pale, and sleepy, but still hungry as if he had a bottomless stomach. When the third bowl was empty he placed the spoon down, moved his stool back and stood up. He blinked his eyelids, wobbled curiously and then looked at his sister. Perhaps he wanted to say something, ask something, but never got the chance. He fell to the floor: he was dead.

Anuška ran from her home. She didn’t know what was happening to her. Now she should be mourning, hating herself for what she did, cry, despise herself. She only ran. She felt she had overcome the most difficult test, though memories of that act were being erased by Imre’s love, her happiness in a family without want, a brood of happy children she would bear him. She somehow must get to him first. She stopped at the house where he lived and looked whether a lantern light was flickering in Imre’s room. It was not. There was light but in another window. She decided to wait. When the time came and she was sure he was there she would climb the fence and knock at his window, tell him what happened and they would arrange everything. Surely then he would come out with her and they would spend another wonderful night out beyond the village, so that come morning they could announce to Imre’s parents their wedding plans.

Time marched on and the light in the next room was extinguished, but in Imre’s room there still wasn’t so much a flicker. Anuška waited, biting her nails fretfully. Certainly it was long past midnight when she heard the sound of a horse’s hoofs on the street. Imre! She spotted him in the distance, merely a black silhouette, but she was sure it was him. She ran toward him. When he halted his stallion she passed under closely and reached her arms to him.

“I’ve done it,” is all she said, looking for when he would climb down from the horse.

“What have you done?”

“Killed my brother, just as you wanted. At home he lies dead, for he ate the soup from the green snake.”

Imre was silent, motionless.

“Will you marry me?” she whispered.

“You? An orphan and a murderer? Get out of my sight!” he spurred the horse, almost throwing down Anuška, and leaving her alone. She watched as he passed through the gate into the yard of the majestic house, and was swallowed by darkness. For a moment she was numb. She didn't go after him, didn't want anything. She lowered her head, who knows what was taking place within it, and stepped forth into the night. Her steps were disrupted only by quiet sobs; perhaps for dissillusion in love, perhaps for knowing what a monstrous act she had committed, perhaps both. She went slowly up to Black Mountain, up to that magical place and keeper of secrets. From that day forth no one has ever seen Anuška.

*to gain denser dough from which we will cut out with spoon small pieces and put them into boiling soup. If you make the mix too sparse, the little pieces will fall apart while being cooked and the broth will turn out milky.*

*Polnina was served either as part of soup instead of noodles – usually in late spring, when housewives run out of their vegetable stock, or as a side dish to meat cooked in the soup instead of boiled potatoes.*



# It comes back to you!

**PLACE:** SLOVENSKÉ NOVÉ MESTO, OKRES TREBIŠOV

**TIME:** 1939 – 1946

**AUTHOR:** ANNA DOMANIKOVÁ

**T**hey say each beginning is hard. From my own experience I can you it's the truth, although I didn't see it that way at the time. I was just a small boy when I moved with my parents from Šariš to Slovenské Nové Mesto and my life changed. I don't want to say from its foundations, for a lot of reversals emerged in connection with the Vienna arbitrage and the change to state borders when we became part of Hungary. Then came the Second World War and another change to the state border. As a four-year-old I didn't consider this change of residence as good or bad. My perception was tinged by innocence and dependance on family. At first I couldn't find friends. The old ones remained in Šariš and I didn't know anyone here. Well everything changed when I entered school. The parents often emphasized that I would get to know more children there whom I would get along with and they would be my new friends. Mother cooked "demikat" soup and father looked after us. We spoke to each other as we were accustomed – in dialect.

A rainy and cool September in nineteen thirty-nine reminded me of summer at our little shack and its grassy yard, and of Anička over from the neighbors' who grazed the geese with me. I was sad, shaken, I recall tears welled in my eyes, and I couldn't think of anything good about having to go to school and not having mother with me. I was to learn to read and write. I remember how I was dressed in a festive white shirt and suit, her index finger drew a cross on my forehead and said: "Go Ivan, and behave yourself." The school was located in a former wagon-works, where they used to repair railway cars. It was close to our house and wasn't unfamiliar to me, father talked of it often.

On the way I watched the other children who were going in my direction. Some of the boys I had seen before, I had played with some of them, but today they all pretended otherwise. A little festive, a bit conceited, in a word different from chasing around and hide-and-seek. It seemed to me that I was the only one scared. They had lived here since birth, kept secrets together, things to talk about, they understood the signs. With me they only exchanged glances. One taller one, he also looked older than me, walked up, patted me on the back, and shook my hand. I smiled in the hope that he had chosen me for a friend. He was from a higher grade, no longer a first grader and later he would just point his finger at me and laugh. He smirked when we seated ourselves at out desks as well.

The classroom was large and we all fit in it. No, not that there were so few of us, but all grades were in one place. At the time we called it a "one-roomer". For a while

## SLOVENSKÉ NOVÉ MESTO



### Location

*The municipality of Slovenské Nové mesto is located in the Košice self-governing region district of Trebišov. To the village leads road no. 79, which passes from Trebišov through the Slovenské Nové Mesto with branch to Hungary on the Slovak territory road continue to the Čierna nad Tisou. From the district town of Trebišov village is about 25 km away, from Košice about 70 km. Altitude in the middle of village is 103 m.*

*This village is located together with six other villages in the Slovak area of the unique region Tokaj. They are situated in the south part of Easter Slovak Lowland on the southwest foot of Mountains of Zemplín.*

### History of the village

*This area was originally inhabited by people of so called Bukovohorska culture during the Neolithic Age.*

*Slovenské Nové Mesto was established as a result of Treaty of Trianon which gave rise to new nations such as Czechoslovakia in 1918. The town was formed from detached neighborhoods Nádražie, Kiskarlapusza Nagypusza*

*of the Hungarian town Sátoraljaújhely. This arrangement also included several farms Čubakova solitude, Galata, Karla dvor, Katé, Krupov dvor, Marinčinová solitude and Papova solitude. Local people were townsmen rather than the villagers; although many of them lost their jobs because the local repair and manufacturing facility Vagónka stopped production. Reason for that was that part of the equipment was confiscated by Hungarians. The other part of the local population was mainly involved in agriculture, especially in viniculture.*



*Government ambitions during the first Czechoslovak republic were high. Slovenské Nové Mesto was intended to compete with Hungarian Sátoraljaújhely as to its size and significance. For this reason, a large construction and mass movements of the new inhabitants took place. Majority of those newcomers were Czechs who worked primarily as members of the financial guard, customs offices and heads of all offices. There are multiple buildings in the city from that period that used to house these workers. There was also population coming from Carpathian Ruthenia (later known as Transcarpathian Ukraine) which was at that time part of Czechoslovakia. The town had also a strong Jewish community,*

I took no notice of anything: no sounds, no images. Nothing. I was concentrating on the fact that my knees were shaking, and I was trying to suppress the urge to run home. I was pulled from my thoughts by a woman's voice. I heard the words but couldn't figure them out. I paid more attention and looked in front of me. She was standing there with a black chalkboard on a stand, a young woman in a dressy outfit who was telling us something with a smile. But in what language? In Hungarian. I bathed in sweat. How can I learn to read and write when I don't understand? I don't follow. What is she talking about? The only thing I caught was Margita. I reckoned that was her name. Then she wanted to meet us, so we were all to arise, walk past the board in front, and say our name. Luckily it started with the older students so I was ready when it came to me, although my quivering voice didn't reflect it. I had no sooner sat at my desk, when the teacher started repeating my name: "Ivan, Ivan, Ivan!" After each repetition she said a few Hungarian words, but as I said, I didn't understand them. And I didn't understand the others. Until she issued commands, when I took notice. The boys who were constantly laughing behind my back and whispering secretly went quiet as well. In that tense silence the teacher stepped forth with her gaze directly upon me, in our direction. I almost fell from the stool out of fear. She stood next to the desk and repeated: "Ivan..." I gulped empty and only managed to look at her face. I wished to know what she wanted from me, what I had done wrong. I recognized that she was asking me something, but I was unable to pull out the correct answer; or any at all. She extended her hand toward me and I closed my eyes. I blinked heavily, squinted my eye, and waited for what was coming to me. I felt that she touched my back, then took me by the shoulder and said something once again. She asked really, for the question at the end of the sentence was clear. I recall she repeated the question three times and then I couldn't endure any more: I looked like a deaf, dumb and frightened buffoon. I simply had to say something: "Teacher, Ma'am, I..." and that was all. I went as silent as a flock of sparrows, that time I threw a stone amidst them. The teacher clapped. She patted her small palms and motioned for me to stand up. Then she motioned for me to take off my coat. I expected the worst. I thought they would lock me in a dark cellar and I would never see Mommy again. After a moment of hesitation I handed it over. She took it, turned it to me, and showed me a muddy print, in the shape of a hand. I felt incredibly awkward. I was also angry as I reflected on my trip to school and when that older boy, who I now know is called Filip, patted me on the back. Some friend! I knew I would never be friends with him. He was malicious and enjoyed doing mean things to people. What I did not know is that I would come to rely on his help... literally. I would depend on him.

I paid attention to Filip after this incident. I didn't trust him. I did, however, trust the teacher more. In a few days I memorized her full name: Pecnářová Margita. She smiled much like my mother, so I was fond of her. Near her I felt safe. She had cleaned my coat after all, and was patient, kind, and took care of the first-graders in particular. Filip never left me alone on the way to school. And this day, which I mention, he yelled in my ear:

"Hey snotty-nose! Do you speak Hungarian yet?"



“Aww, cut it out!”

“Don’t you push me shorty! Do you want to crawl to school?”

I kept quiet, it wasn’t smart to oppose him. He was the tallest and strongest of all of them. He was forever horsing around, jabbing, laughing, tripping people, throwing paper, bumping and banging...

“Are you listening snotty-nose, or sniffing? Ha Ha, the teacher stroked your little head.”

“And yours never once. You don’t know the lesson.”

“Hah! I know enough that she’d never sell me away. She’d trade you for a sheep grazing on the Káty.”

Káty was a hill above the village where the herds grazed. I didn’t like Filip. His lack of concern bothered me, how he could solve anything, his fearlessness. At that moment I wished he be haunted by the most terrifying creatures to teach him some good graces.

The lessons ran in such a way: the teacher gave us a task we were to work upon. While we did this, she visited the higher grades and then came down to those still learning to write. I’ll tell you now it was no picnic. Although she drew us the first letters, showing on the board how to pull the pencil, my fingers weren’t listening. I still didn’t understand her speech. The one word I understood was: “Naďon jó, naďon jó”. She used this when praising me for being clever. I tried not pressing the pencil to the paper for the lead always broke. I think I licked my bottom lip and wanted draw the chubbiest, most beautiful letter a. I suddenly felt the need to go to the toilet. I tightened my muscles and trusted I would make it to the break. Except the urge was stronger and I was just about lying at my desk. I was sweating, turning red in the face and my palms were wet enough to stick to the notebook pages. I knew it was enough to lift my hand and ask, but I couldn’t in Hungarian. I felt an uncomfortable pressure in the stomach, a stitch in my side and thought I might rip apart. I turned:

“Filip, Filip,” I called in a whisper.

“What is it snotty-nose?”

“Help me... Please,” I added, and would have knelt if the situation permitted.

“You want me to sharpen your pencil, or what?” Surely he knew it was about more than a pencil, for he had stopped writing and looked at me with concentration. He raised his eyebrow, and I think he even stopped smirking for an instant. “What’s wrong with you?”

“I need the toilet and don’t know how to ask. Help me.”

“Aha, shorty. All right then. I told you you’d be better off up among the sheep,” the mocking tone did not relent, but he did ask the teacher for me to be excused.

I ran behind the school where the wooden lavatories were and sat down with relief. My feet didn’t touch the floor but I felt good. Sweat had ceased running down my back and my cheeks stopped burning. I was grateful to Filip. No matter how he was, he did manage to be aware of the situation and didn’t leave me to suffer. To myself I tried to apologize for all his shenanigans to that point and quietly snorted when the sirens

*which was mainly devoted to trade. In 1931 a new synagogue was built by this community.*

*After the Vienna Award, Slovenské Nové Mesto became part of Horthy’s Hungary, where it belonged from November 1938 until January 1945. At that time it was once again joined with the Hungarian town Sátoraljaújhely. A disinfecting station, which served to disinfect the wagons for Hungarian Jewish transports, was established here. The town was liberated on May 3 December 1944.*

*Restoration of pre-war borders and return of Slovenské Nové Mesto into Czechoslovakia has not been marked with such prosperity as it was during the First Czechoslovak Republic.*

*After the war there was a significant number of people coming from northern parts of Slovakia, especially from the war-torn Svidnik and its vicinity.*

*In 1947, there cold stores were founded, followed by winery in 1948, and JRD (Uniform Agricultural Cooperative) in 1949, which later in 1958 became part of state property*

## **Contemporary Slovenské Nové Mesto**

*The town is part of a unique cross-border region Tokaj. While the Hungarian part of this region belongs to the World Heritage List of UNESCO, the Slovak part is still on the waiting list. There is a state border with Hungary running nearby and a Slovenské Nové Mesto is also a main railway junction connecting the town with Trebisov, Kosice, Čierna nad Tisou and Hungary.*

*Currently the town has approximately 1070 inhabitants. From the historically protected buildings in the town is the*

*Roman Catholic church of St. Stephen, which was originally built as a synagogue.*

## **Regular public events**

**1st May** – “Dedovizeň”, an international festival of Slovak and event “Tokaj in Europe”

**4th week of September** – Festival “Tokaj vintage” a day of open wine cellars.

## **Tourist services**

*Through the village passes Tokaj Wine Route, for more information please visit [www.tvc.sk](http://www.tvc.sk).*

## **Accommodation, food and wine tasting:**

*In the restaurant and guest-house **Tulipán** on the road street Hraničná, for more information: [www.rest.tulipan.szm.sk](http://www.rest.tulipan.szm.sk).*

*In the restaurant **Čelejka**, for more information: [www.sanpo.sk](http://www.sanpo.sk)*

*Accommodation offers a **culture house in the Slovenské Nové Mesto**, which operates the general government.*

*In the middle of the village on Main Street is **Tokaj wine shop Ostrožovič** with a wide range.*

## **Municipal contact**

*Address: Municipal office*

*Hlavná 79/128*

*076 33 Slovenské Nové Mesto*

*Telephone: 056/ 668 35 80*

*E-mail: [obec Slov.n.m@stonline.sk](mailto:obec Slov.n.m@stonline.sk)*

*Home web page:*

*[www.slovnovemesto.szm.sk](http://www.slovnovemesto.szm.sk)*

started roaring outside. At the time I didn't know what gave off that strong, unpleasant, wailing noise. I had never heard it. It sounded like a signal warning of the end of the world. I was really scared. I didn't want to be alone and the first thing that occurred to me was to return to the classroom. I bolted out of the toilet and fled across the yard, tripping over my own feet. The noise of the siren pierced my ears and went deep into my head, filling it with dread. I didn't want this. I didn't know why all this was going on and needed to get to safety. When I rushed into the classroom I saw everyone standing at their places, motionless, speechless, and frightened as I was. Only the teacher was speaking and I failed to understand a single word. I stood like a statue in front of the blackboard and, eyes bulging, searched for my classmates. It didn't matter to me at all that I was half-dressed, my trousers hung around my ankles, and if not for my shirt they would have seen much more of me than bare thighs. The teacher approached me with a caring look and began to dress me. Now she said nothing. Nobody laughed, no one commented, except Filip:

“Hey, the cry-baby lost his pants hahaha. Show us what you've got there!” he laughed and pointed his finger at me. I was ashamed. I was very ashamed... and for him as well. How could he be so undignified? How come nothing ever happened to him that merited taunting and scorn? One day he'll get what's coming to him. I said that to myself and believed it strongly. It's not for nothing that they say the mills of God grind slowly... but surely. I almost wanted someone to cause his downfall.

Filip fell from sight during the war, or perhaps I fell from his. Despite my inauspicious beginnings, I did learn Hungarian, and learned it well enough that I attended the middle school in Sátoraljaújhely. It was only for two years however, for the war ruined everything it could. Fear and helplessness began to settle in among people, the schools remained empty, as did the pantries. Food was rationed and many never returned from the front. But then everything which has a beginning has an end, and war is no exception. December third nineteen forty-four was the final day for it in our village, and in March of the following year instruction began in the new, national school. This was in Slovenske Nove Mesto which belonged to Czechoslovakia once again.

The first teacher was Ján Maca, who had been “reclassified” to us from Ilava. He worked in a reformatory there. I say this in order to properly depict him. He was about forty, with an ugly wife and a cane with which he would often test on our backsides. Not that he recklessly beat us, not that. He struck when we deserved it. I came back to sixth grade and could finally learn in my mother tongue; the one in which I best understand and express everything I want to say without confusing things, or without having to assemble my thoughts before speaking almost letter by letter. Filip returned to class as well. He looked older and even more massive than I remembered him. It seemed he had become more serious, right up until the moment he came up to me.

“You're here too snot-nose? What 's the grimace for? Have you prepared your backside for the caning?”

“Glad to see you Filip. Are things well?”

“As well as can be, snot-nose, as well as can be. I’m looking forward to your presentation... ha ha.”

I hadn’t planned to catch anyone’s eye: not Filip’s, not the teacher’s, and certainly not his wife’s. This one thought herself a real “missis”. It’s true that our area was full of officials, state employees meaning mainly security, customs, teachers as well as laborers, railway men, postmen and merchants. Yet none of them was so very highbrow as the wife of our teacher. Early each spring we assembled for our lessons. She would run out from her apartment, which was part of the school, and after reviewing with much scrutiny would point her finger at two of the girls: “You and you come with me!”

“So, you are going to sweep, wash windows, and clean the lady’s little shoes.” Filip snickered. Only when Mrs. Teacher cast a venomous glare in his direction did he realize that he had overshot the mark. We all knew she could do just about anything, including taking girls directly from class for her cleaning, but no one said it aloud. The teacher was strict and she was even moreso. He commanded us and she him, and as soon as the girls were put to work she went after him and whispered something to him with a spiteful look on her face.

“Ivan!” I heard Filip. He never used my name. I was surprised. “Give me your notebooks.” “No way. You’re in a different grade, what good are they to you?”

“Don’t ask, give them to me!”

“I will not. You’ve got your own. “ I was proud of myself for not catering to him. I thought that he would knock me to the ground and pound on me or pull my hair, but he only looked at me as if I hadn’t understood and asked for notebooks from the others. I couldn’t imagine what he wanted with them, and lost interest once the lesson has begun. The teacher arrived with the cane in his hand, and instead of starting to teach called Filip in front of his desk.

“Up here!” he hollered and pointed a finger at him. Filip arose and walked to the teacher with small steps.

“Lie down there!”

“But teacher, Sir...”

“Nothing out of you! So you know how to behave toward my wife. You were saucy to her this morning and I know about it.”

I saw that Filip was merely pretending any fear or objection. He pulled the corners of his mouth into a smirk and his look was victory. He bent forward and put his stomach across the desk in such a way that when he stuck out his arms those in the front row could hold them. The teacher stood to the side and lashed with the cane; once, two times. Since he did it often we knew Filip would not be hit more than ten times. But something was amiss in the sound the stick gave out when it struck the trousers. It was hollow, muffled, somehow different. No sound came out of the mouth of the one being caned; not a hiss.

“Trousers down!” the teacher shouted.

As he pulled them down several notebooks fell out. He put them there because he knew what was in store for him. The teacher was enraged, and immediately thrashed

## SLOVENSKÉ NOVÉ MESTO: Roasted ram leg



*The tastiest meat can be said comes from lamb; which is a ram under the age of one year. Preparation of mutton can diverse. From the head and parts with small bones soup could be prepared. Leg, falat or zákrcie, which is the part between the neck and the back, filled up with garlic is suitable for baking and stewing in one part. From the shoulders and any other part of the ram a stew could also be prepared.*

*When preparing the mutton it has to be taken into account that the meat is served with bones, so you should count about thirty to forty decagram pieces per person.*

*Mutton is a fine meat, so while cooking, stirring, or baking it becomes quickly soft. It has a characteristic odour, which many regarded as unpleasant. It was to say that the odour was soften in Slovenské Nové Mesto by cleaning the meat from tallowish parts, such as strip from membranes and then scald with the boiling water mixed with vinegar. When the meat cooled down it was rinsed several times in cold water. When serving the meat from ram,*

*we make sure that it is served hot on the table. This is because it cools very quickly.*

*The mutton in this area was prepared in a variable ways. We have recorded the recipe for roasted ram leg.*

**Ingredients:**

- ram leg
- garlic
- lard
- ground red pepper
- ground black pepper
- salt

**Instructions:**

*Cleaned and rinsed by cold vinegar water we wash the meat well and dry it in a towel. Next you salt the meat from all sides, and sprinkle it with ground red and black pepper, and then you place it in a baking dish which is covered in three tablespoons of lard. Also spread the lard on the meat itself and then bake it in an oven at a moderate temperature for an hour to an hour and a half (once cooked the meat should be reddish to brownish in colour and soft). During cooking sprinkle the meat several times with gravy juice. Cut the baked meat into portions and serve it with boiled potatoes or with bread. If you use potatoes as a side dish, pour gravy on them, which is previously mixed with a bit of water.*

him twice. Once was for insulting his wife, the second for trying to cheat his way out of punishment.

Even though I felt some satisfaction, I felt sorry for him. Long years I had carried the desire for revenge with me. I wanted Filip to feel the fear and shame, and perhaps pain, just as when the sirens caused me to be in front of the class with my trousers at my ankles. What goes around comes around and he was no exception. Yet to wish someone punishment is just as cruel as witless taunting. I felt the same then as today. For if we bear a grudge with someone, it is we ourselves who are devoured the most.



**Terra Incognita**

Krajina nespoznaná

## About the programme

# Terra Incognita

**S**lovakia is a white place on a map of Europe for many visitors. Our region with its centre Košice, the second biggest city in Slovakia, has similar problems. Number two is exactly the reason why Košice shares destinies with so called “second cities” – markedly less is known about them in comparison with the capital cities. We would like to offer adventure to visitors of our region. The adventures of discovering and revealing secrets, experiencing beauties of picturesque corners and enjoying exciting moments. Programme Terra Incognita focuses on foreign visitors as well as local visitors. Interest of local people in their own region is the best source of inspiration for foreign visitors. Our region hides same treasures as any other attractive part of Slovakia, Europe or the World, so we can be proud of it. Therefore, we started to wander through our region – Terra Incognita and after the model of our great discoverers from the past centuries we reveal unique treasures of history, traditions and skills of our predecessors as well as coevals.

*This unknown country was in the past an important point on the map of Europe. During Turkish invasions Košice were the second most important city in Hungary. This was a place where cultures of middle Europe nations mixed. This was influenced by different cultural impacts because as mentioned above Tartar and Turkish invasions and long lasting occupation of this territory brought changes into local peoples' lives. Via thematic routes – Wine, Gothic and Iron route we record common history of Europe, history, which is close to all nations which used to live here and which still live here. It is an opportunity for a nowadays visitor to choose this part of a thematic route which appeals to him/her and enriches his/her knowledge or brings him/her precious cultural experiences. Welcome to the undiscovered country! Let Terra Incognita become a synonym of getting to know the beautiful region in the heart of Europe.*

*The Košice Self-governing Region program Terra Incognita is a part of the project EHMK Košice 2013.*

*Information about our activities can be found at [www.terraincognita.sk](http://www.terraincognita.sk).*