

***MÓR  
JÓKAI***



***IN LOVE WITH  
THE CZARINA,  
AND OTHER  
STORIES***

**Mór Jókai**

# **In Love With the Czarina, and Other Stories**

EAN 8596547363262

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA

TAMERLAN THE TARTAR

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV.

VALDIVIA

BIZEBAN

THE MOONLIGHT SOMNAMBULIST

# INTRODUCTION

## [Table of Contents](#)

The entire Hungarian nation—king and people—have recently been celebrating the jubilee of Hungary's greatest writer, Maurice Jókai, whose pen, during half a century of literary activity, has given no less than 250 volumes to the world. Admired and beloved by his patriotic fellow-countrymen, Jókai has displayed that kind of genius which fascinates the learned and unlearned alike, the old and the young. He enchants the children of Hungary by his fairy-tales, and as they grow up into men and women he implants within them a passion for their native land and a knowledge of its splendid history such as only his poetic and dramatic pen could engrave upon their memory. His versatility of talent—for, besides being the Hungarian poet-laureate, he is a novelist, playwright, historian, and orator—enables the Hungarians to see in him their Heine, their Byron, their Walter Scott, and their Victor Hugo.

Jókai began his career at a period when Hungary aspired to political freedom, and his powerful pen, in combination with that of his familiar friend, Alexander Petőfi, Hungary's greatest lyric poet, was mainly instrumental in rousing the nation to arms. In 1849, when the Hungarian nation had sustained a cruel defeat, it was Jókai who cheered the flagging spirits of the Magyars, and by the potency and skill of his extraordinary pen influenced that reconciliation between Sovereign and people which was ultimately accomplished by Hungary's greatest statesman, Francis Deák.

The Hungarian language is one of the richest of Turanian tongues, and particularly lends itself to the didactic and romantic styles. So far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century we find traces of Hungarian literature, and, if it had been permitted to develop, Hungary might now have possessed a literature second to none in the modern world. But in consequence of political struggles the Hungarian language and literature had to give way, at times, either to the Latin or German races, so much so that as late as 1849 all scientific subjects had to be taught either in German or in Latin. It was then that a few patriotic Magyars took the matter acutely to heart, and strove to restore the language and literature of their country, with the happy result that Hungary now, in proportion to its population, comes immediately after Germany in the number of its universities, colleges, and scientific institutions, where all subjects are taught in the *Hungarian language only*.

Maurice Jókai is not only one of those who restored Hungarian literature, but is the creator of a particular style of romance, which stamps his works as unique, and has caused them to be eagerly read, and translated into almost every modern language. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Hungarians, who are a cultured race, should delight in showing all honour and respect to the veteran author, who has given to the world over a hundred splendid works on all subjects, comprising 250 volumes.

Jókai is descended from a middle-class family, a fact which he is always proud to own, and has no ambition to rise in higher spheres of society, although the greatest

people in the land, including the Empress-Queen herself, favour him with their personal friendship.

He is a tall, fine-looking man, and carries himself well. He generally dresses in a black-braided costume, which is the favourite national Hungarian uniform of those patriots who belong to the forty-eight period, which marks such an epoch in the history of Hungary. In his younger days his beard was dark and silky, but now he is quite grey. He occupies a modest house, and leads a very simple life.

To give the full history of such a great writer as Maurice Jókai, the titles of whose works fill nine pages of the British Museum catalogue, would be a task of considerable research, and would itself extend to volumes. I therefore only propose to touch upon a few of the salient points of his career.

Jókai was born on February 19, 1825, at Komárom, which city, by-the-by, is known as the "Virgin Fortress of Hungary."

He received his education partly in his native town and at Pozsony, the ancient capital of Hungary, Pápa and Kecskemét; and in 1846 he passed an examination as an advocate, though he did not follow the profession afterwards.

In the same year he took up his abode at Budapest, where in the following year he assumed the editorship of a paper called *Életképek* (Pictures of Life).

In 1848 he played an important part in the revolution, both in inciting the people by his literary writings and as a soldier. In 1849 he married Rose Laborfalvi, the famous actress. In the same year he followed the National Hungarian Government, which removed its seat to

Debreczen, and became the editor of the *Esti Lapok* (Evening News). From that time activity characterised his literary and general career.

In the political movements of 1861 he was to the front both as member of parliament and as newspaper editor. In 1860 he was elected member of the Kisfaludy Society, and in 1861 he became a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, of which institute he is now a member of the executive committee. He is also the president of the Petőfi Society.

His first novel was "A Hétköznapiak" (Days of the Week), which appeared in 1846, and since then hardly a year elapsed without the issue of several volumes from his pen.

Amongst his novels the most celebrated are:

"Egy Magyar Nábob" (The Hungarian Nabob).

"Kárpáthy Zoltán."

"A Kőszívű Ember Fiai" (The Sons of the Stonehearted Man).

"Szerelem Bolondjai" (Love's Puppet).

"Névtelen Vár" (The Nameless Fortress).

"Erdély Aranykora" (The Golden Period of Transylvania).

"Bálványosvár" (Idol Fortunes).

"Fekete Gyémántok" (Black Diamonds).

"A Jövő Század Regénye" (The Romance of the Future Century).

"Az Új Földesúr" (The New Landlord).

"Nincsen Ördög" (There is no Devil).

"Az Arany Ember" (The Gold Man).

"A Szép Mikhál" (Pretty Michael).

Of his recent novels the most famous is the one published in 1892, in which Monk Gregory is the hero.

The short stories that we are presenting in this volume belong to his earliest writings.

Jókai's novels—in which his own strong personality everywhere reveals itself—are characterised by great imaginative power and by a light, humorous style which fascinates the reader. It may be said, without much exaggeration, that in point of wit and humour few living writers can compare with him. His subjects are principally drawn from history; but many of his works are remarkable for their vivid descriptions of Hungarian life, both past and present. In one word it might justly be said that in reading Jókai's novels one reads the history of Europe, and in reading Jókai's history one reads a novel drawn from actual life.

As a poet he occupies a unique position, and stands altogether alone: for his lyrics, ballads, and heroic verse are even sung by the schoolchildren throughout Hungary. As a dramatist his fame is extensive; and his "Könyves Kálmán" (Koloman, King of Hungary, surnamed the Book King), "Dózsa György, The Martyr of Szigetvár," "Az Arany Ember" (The Golden Man), and "Fekete Gyémántok" (Black Diamonds), have been incessantly performed with the greatest success.

As a politician he has made a considerable mark, and no one who has had the privilege of hearing him deliver an oration will forget the music and sonority of his fine voice. What is less generally known is that he is an enthusiastic botanical student and an admirable painter.



These are a few outlines of the life of Hungary's greatest writer, and in the interest of literature let it be hoped that his life may be long spared, and that his remaining years may be spent in the utmost happiness. Such is the fervent wish of all his admirers, who are drawn, not only from this country, but from all civilised peoples, nations, and languages.

LOUIS FELBERMANN

*(Author of "Hungary and its People").*

---

## **IN LOVE WITH THE CZARINA**

### [Table of Contents](#)

In the time of the Czar Peter III. a secret society existed at St. Petersburg which bore the title of "The Nameless." Its members used to assemble in the house of a Russian nobleman, Jelagin by name, who alone knew the personality of each visitor, they being, for the most part, unknown to one another. Distinguished men, princes, ladies of the Court, officers of the Guard, Cossack soldiers, young commercial men, musicians, street-singers, actors and actresses, scientific men, clergymen and statesmen, used to meet here. Beauty and talent were alone qualifications for entry into the Society, the members of which were selected by Jelagin. Everyone addressed the other as "thee" and "thou," and they only made use of Christian names such as Anne, Alexandra, Katharine, Olga, Peter, Alexis, and Ivan. And for what purpose did they assemble here? To amuse themselves at their ease. Those who, by the prejudices of caste and rank, were utterly severed, and who occupied the

mutual position of master and slave, tore the chains of their barriers asunder, and all met here. It is quite possible that he with whom the grenadier-private is now playing chess is the very same General who might order him a hundred lashes to-morrow, should he take a step on parade without his command! And now he contends with him to make a queen out of a pawn!

It is also probable that the pretty woman who is singing sportive French songs to the accompaniment of the instrument she strikes with her left hand, is one of the Court ladies of the Czarina, who, as a rule, throws half-roubles out of her carriage to the street-musicians! Perhaps she is a Princess? possibly the wife of the Lord Chamberlain? or even higher in grade than this? Russian society, both high and low, flower and root, met in Jelagin's castle, and while there enjoyed equality in the widest sense of the word. Strange phenomenon! That this should take place in Russia, where so much is thought of aristocratic rank, official garb, and exterior pomp; where an inferior is bound to dismount from his horse upon meeting a superior, where sub-officers take off their coats in token of salute when they meet those of higher rank, and where generals kiss the priests' hands and the highest aristocrats fall on their faces before the Czar! Here they sing and dance and joke together, make fun of the Government, and tell anecdotes of the High Priests, utterly fearless, and dispensing with salutations!

Can this be done for love of novelty? The existence of this secret society was repeatedly divulged to the police, and these cannot be reproached for not having taken the necessary steps to denounce it; but proceedings, once

begun, usually evaporated into thin air, and led to no results. The investigating officer either never discovered suspicious facts, or, if he did, matters were adjourned. Those who were arrested in connection with the affair were in some way set at liberty in peace and quietness; every document relating to the matter was either burnt or vanished, and whole sealed cases of writings were turned into plain white paper. When an influential officer took energetically in hand the prosecution of "The Nameless," he was generally sent to a foreign country on an important mission, from which he did not return for a considerable period. "The Nameless Society" must have had very powerful protectors. At the conclusion of one of these free and easy entertainments, a young Cossack hetman remained behind the crowd of departing guests, and when quite alone with the host he said to him:

"Jelagin, did you see the pretty woman with whom I danced the mazurka to-night?"

"Yes, I saw her. Are you smitten with her, as others have been?"

"That woman I must make my wife."

Jelagin gave the Cossack a blow on the shoulder and looked into his eyes.

"That you will not do! You will not take her as your wife, friend Jemeljan."

"I shall marry her—I have resolved to do so."

"You will not marry her, for she will not go to you."

"If she does not come I will carry her off against her will."

"You can't marry her, because she has a husband."

"If she has a husband I will carry her off in company with him!"

"You can't carry her off, for she lives in a palace—she is guarded by many soldiers, and accompanied in her carriage by many outriders."

"I will take her away with her palace, her soldiers, and her carriage. I swear it by St. Gregory!"

Jelagin laughed mockingly.

"Good Jemeljan, go home and sleep out your love—that pretty woman is the Czarina!"

The hetman became pale for a moment, his breath stopped; but the next instant, with sparkling eyes, he said to Jelagin:

"In spite of this, what I have said I have said."

Jelagin showed the door to his guest. But, improbable as it may seem, Jemeljan was really not intoxicated, unless it were with the eyes of the pretty woman.

A few years elapsed. The Society of "The Nameless" was dissolved, or changed into one of another form. Katharine had her husband, the Czar, killed, and wore the crown herself. Many people said she had him killed, others took her part. It was urged that she knew what was going to happen, but could not prevent it—that she was compelled to act as she did, and to affect, after a great struggle with her generous heart, complete ignorance of poison being administered to her husband. It was said that she had acted rightly, and that the Czar's fate was a just one, for he was a wicked man; and finally, it was asserted that the whole statement was untrue, and that no one had killed Czar Peter, who died from intense inflammation of the stomach.

He drank too much brandy. The immortal Voltaire is responsible for this last assertion. Whatever may have happened, Czar Peter was buried, and the Czarina Katharine now saw that her late husband belonged to those dead who do not sleep quietly. They rise—rise from their graves—stretch out their hands from their shrouds, and touch with them those who have forgotten them. They turn over in their last resting-place, and the whole earth seems to tremble under the feet of those who walk above them!

Amongst the numerous contradictory stories told, one, difficult to believe, but which the people gladly credited, and which caused much bloodshed before it was wiped out of their memory, was this—that Czar Peter died neither by his own hand, nor by the hands of others, but that he still lived. It was said that a common soldier, with pock-marked face resembling the Czar, was shown in his stead to the public on the death-couch at St. Petersburg, and that the Czar himself had escaped from prison in soldier's clothes, and would return to retake his throne, to vanquish his wife, and behead his enemies! Five Czar pretenders rose one after the other in the wastes of the Russian domains. One followed the other with the motto, "Revenge on the faithless!" The usurpers conquered sometimes a northern, sometimes a southern province, collected forces, captured towns, drove out all officials, and put new ones in their places, so that it was necessary to send forces against them. If one was subjugated and driven away into the ice deserts, or captured and hung on the next tree, another Czar Peter would rise up in his place and cause rebellion, alarming the Court circle whilst they were enjoying themselves; and so