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Hungarian Folktales: The Art of Zsuzsanna Palko (World Folktale Library)

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This annotated collection of thirty-five folktales represents the repertoire of one of the world's greatest storytellers, Zsuzsanna Palko, a Hungarian peasant woman whose art kept listeners spellbound through many winter nights and wakes.Before publication of Hungarian Folktales, Zsuzsanna Palko was one of the best known but least read folktale tellers of our time. Having first gained renown through Linda Degh's classic Folktales and Society, she became a familiar name to readers of European folktales. However, because few of her tales had been translated from her Hungarian dialect, thousands who knew her by reputation had little chance to experience her art. Hungarian Folktales gives readers of English their long-awaited opportunity to experience her verbal magic as her village audience did. Linda Degh unobtrusively recorded Mrs. Palko as she told stories to her neighbors, and the verbatim transcripts preserved the natural beauty of spontaneous narration, unlike most tales in print today, which have been rewritten to the point of obscuring the voice of the original storytellers.In Mrs. Palko's masterful magic tales, the imaginative world of dragons, talking animals, and castles on rooster feet also embraces ordinary hardworking farmers and artisans like those in her Hungarian audiences. In earthly and humorous tales, she uses comedy to present models of appropriate behavior for the girls and young women of her village. In other tales fantasy merges with folk belief to create chilling accounts of the supernatural.In her introduction, Degh describes Mrs. Palko and the Szekely Hungarian culture in which she lived. In notes to each tale, she explains cultural references, discussesvariants of the tale, and relates the performance style and storytelling situation.

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