

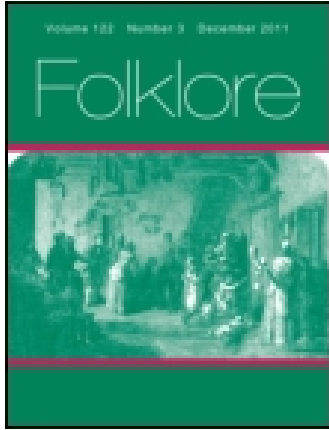
This article was downloaded by: [New York University]

On: 16 May 2015, At: 10:58

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfol20>

### The False Bride

Gertrude M. Godden

Published online: 14 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: Gertrude M. Godden (1893) The False Bride, *Folklore*, 4:2, 142-148, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1893.9720149](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1893.9720149)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1893.9720149>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is

expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## THE FALSE BRIDE.

Δαίδαλα and Grozdanka.

A BULGARIAN story has lately fallen under my notice to which I should be glad to draw attention, in relation to the Greek festival of the Dædala, and to some rites and customs of the European peasantry.

The tale is widespread in Europe, and the following version is not perhaps the fullest, but I give it as a typical example; the likeness between the myth as told by Plutarch and this Bulgarian peasant legend will be at once apparent:—

### GROZDANKA.

"Slunce, on St. George's Day, drew up to him, as his bride, Grozdanka in a golden cradle; when for nine years she became dumb.

"On which account she must needs make way for another bride, and she herself appear at the wedding as a bridesmaid.

"Thereat the veil of the false bride took fire, and . . . Grozdanka regained her speech, and became the wife of Slunce." (W. Mannhardt, "Lettischen Sonnenmythen," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. vii, p. 236.)

In a parallel legend given by Hahn, and quoted by Mannhardt, p. 284, the *true* bride is called the "Laurel-child" (Lorbeerkind) grows up as a laurel tree, and emerges, Dryad-like, from the cleft bark on the appearance of her future husband.

### DÆDALA.

"It is better to relate the primitive form of the story.

"It is said that Zeus, when Hera quarrelled with him, wandered about till taught to deceive her by simulating another marriage.

"He adorned an oak-tree like a bride, shaped it, and called it Dædala. Then they sang the bridal hymn, and brought lustral water; when Hera, filled with anger, came to Zeus.

"When the trick was discovered she was reconciled to Zeus with tears and laughter, and herself led the bridal procession. The image of Dædala she burnt." (Plutarch, *Fragments*, ix, 6. Cf. Pausanias, ix, 3.)

Pausanias says that Hera tore off the False Bride's clothes, and found beneath a wooden image instead of a young bride.

This tale of a false bride temporarily supplanting the true bride is common, with many delightful variations and additions, to Bulgaria (Grozdanka), Albania or Greece (Lorbeerkind), Denmark (Allerliebste Freund), and Germany (Gänsemagd of the Grimms); and it also occurs in the thirteenth-century compilations of Saxo Grammaticus (Sigrid), and in the Italian collection of the seventeenth century known as the *Pentamerone*.<sup>1</sup> It may be possible to sift and criticise this group of legends when fuller evidence, and especially evidence of the savage parallels which probably exist, has come to light. At present, I am chiefly anxious to draw attention to their presence and diffusion. Any further versions would be acceptable, but savage parallels would be of the greatest value, and have as yet eluded discovery.

Any criticism, therefore, of these stories, as of a group of legends, would as yet seem premature. But their literary interest, is, I think, their least claim to attention. The real interest of the group seems to me to lie in the possibility of these tales having originated in certain primitive ideas and usages, which at present can be only guessed at, but which it may be quite possible to trace and follow out

<sup>1</sup> I owe to Dr. Weinhold, President of the Verein für Volkskunde, the reference to the "False Bride" in the article on Saxo Grammaticus published by Herr Olrik in the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vol. ii, No. 3, p. 252; in Herr Olrik's article will be found the Danish "Allerliebste Freund", and others. The remaining references are: Kreck, *Trad. Lit.*, p. 82; *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, vol. vii, p. 236-7, where Mannhardt gives many further references, and speaks of the tale as one widely diffused through South Europe; Hahn, *Griechische und Albanische Märchen*, p. 163, No. 21; "Goose Girl", Grimm's *German Stories*, English ed., Reprint, p. 151; *Pentamerone*, iv, 7. Mr. Jacobs informs me that the mention in his paper on the "Science of Fairy Tales" (Folk-lore Congress, 1891, *Report*, p. 77) of the Substituted Bride as a type in folk-tales, referred to such stories as the Goose-Girl. The *Handbook of Folk-lore* recently issued by the Society classifies, in the section on Folk-tale Types, the *Pentamerone* version as Type No. 26, and names it the "Bertha Type".

in the light of further knowledge. Taking, for clearness' sake, Grozdanka as a type of the legends, it may be well to justify this appeal for more facts by noting the chief points of interest.

The Greek version has all the appearance of that commonest form of Greek myth—technically known as the ætiological myth; in which a popular story grows up round some ancient rite, of which rite the old meaning has become obsolete in the progress of thought and idea, but of which the prescribed ritual is still faithfully observed. This is not the place in which to discuss the ætiology of the Greek sacred legend; so, only noting that an ancient religious rite (*i.e.*, the Dædala festival) will probably be found to stand behind, or beside, the Greek myth, one asks, Is there any European rite or custom that may account for the parallel European legend?

The gist of Grozdanka's story seems to be the date, St. George's Day (April 23rd); the nine years' dumbness<sup>1</sup>; the consequent supplanting by the False Bride; the discovery of the fraud; and reunion of bride and bridegroom.

I should like, first, to specially emphasise the time of year, which this version has preserved, scanty though its other details are. Can anyone quote any other legends of False Brides discovered, and true brides reinstated and happily married, in the spring or early summer? Or—which would be far more valuable—any temple or popular ceremonies where a Sacred Wedding is celebrated with these traits? I should expect to find the latter in India: can anyone versed in Indian cults supply any clue or reference?

The Spring Bride is, of course, of universal occurrence in European peasant custom; the *Maibraut*, and our own

<sup>1</sup> This tempts comparison with the exact parallel of the Greek *ἐννεαετηρία*. See *Handbuch der griechischen Chronologie*, Adolf Schmidt, i, § 8, p. 56; and p. 420.

Lady of the May, will occur to every reader of Mannhardt and of English folk-lore. But we want a Spring bride temporarily supplanted. Is she to be found? <sup>1</sup> The possibility of the Greek and European myths having some connection with Spring rites is of course strengthened by the theory that Hera's Dædala festival was celebrated in the Spring (J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i, p. 100).

Secondly, I would note the separation of true bride and bridegroom—the wandering of Zeus, and the dumbness of Grozdanka. To students of Greek cults, the wandering will at once suggest a chthonic phase: it is interesting to note that dumbness is regarded by H. D. Müller<sup>2</sup> as a special attribute of deities of winter, night, death, and the lower world—in other words, as a chthonic characteristic. Is there any evidence among European or other False Brides that they ever enacted the "Death" or "Winter" which is almost as common to peasant folk-custom as the May Bride or Queen of the May, and which is generally destroyed, driven, or carried out, in village festival early in Spring, as a preliminary rite to the joyful fetching in of the May Bride or "Summer"? I need not refer in detail to this universal custom. W. Mannhardt, J. G. Frazer, and all folk-lore collections abound in examples.<sup>3</sup>

The Golden Cradle is a tempting detail to enlarge

<sup>1</sup> Mannhardt (*Zeit. für Ethnologie*, vii, p. 285), in commenting on the "Lorbeerkind", says "*the exchange of the true bride for a false one is a known mythical expression for Night and Winter*". I do not like to lay stress on this remark, as the essay was published in 1875, after which date Mannhardt reversed many of the views he once held; but the passage at least seems to indicate the diffusion of the stories, and to confirm in some measure the above suggestion.

<sup>2</sup> H. D. Müller, *Mythologie der griechischen Stämme*, vol. ii, p. 52; vol. i, p. 182, etc.

<sup>3</sup> In this connection may be noted the *burning* of the false bride's veil, and the *destruction* of the Dædala image; both in the myth as told by Plutarch, and in the festival rite described by Pausanias.

upon, but more evidence is needed to allow the indulgence of theorising ; as also the fact that Grozdanka is drawn up (cf. the *ἀνοδος* of Greek rites) to her bridegroom.

Thus it seems possible that fuller evidence may reveal in the Dædala myth, and in the Grozdanka group of legends, primitive "May Brides", supplanted by the powers of winter, released and wedded in triumph in the spring. If this should prove to be the case, such an instance of primitive ideas and rites centred round the year and its recurring seasons, of their dominance in Greek religion, and their power of survival among the European peasantry, would in itself be of sufficient value.

But the False Bride hints at another significance. It is possible that she may be simply a necessary part of the marriage ceremony of our primitive Aryan ancestors, and that she has thus got into the Greek myth of the Sacred Wedding (*ἱερὸς γάμος*), and into the many legends which turn on the temporary separation of bride and bridegroom and their final happy reunion.

This, again, it is impossible to discuss till fuller evidence is obtained ; and these possibilities and premature theories are only put forward in the hope of thereby eliciting fuller facts from which light may come. Therefore I would emphatically disclaim any attempt at present to demonstrate that in the Dædala festival and myth, and in the many European parallels, traits of a primitive, perhaps Indo-Aryan, marriage ceremony have been preserved, with singular exactness ; or further, that in the Dædala festival the marriage of the god was celebrated in this manner. But the following incidental remarks of Dr. Winternitz, Prof. Jevons, and Mr. E. S. Hartland, taken together with the declared prevalence of the "False Bride" legends, seem to justify a search into both Aryan and non-Aryan wedding customs.

Dr. Winternitz says : "The custom of *substituting an old woman for the bride* is certainly one of the most prevalent

customs among Slavonic, Teutonic, and Romance peoples."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hartland, in discussing the paper by Dr. Winternitz, spoke of the custom of disguising the bride as found in more than one Indo-European race, and "notably in the Balkan peninsula."<sup>2</sup> A closer acquaintance with this *disguised bride* is much to be desired.

Prof. Jevons says: "The practice of substituting an old woman in disguise for the bride when the groom comes to take her to the church, is found in many places in Germany, amongst the Poles, the Wends, the Winds, the Servians, the Roumanians, the Swiss, the French."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Schroeder thinks that Usener has made it probable that the curious myth in Ovid (*Fasti*, iii, 677) of the wedding of Mars and Minerva (*Nerio*) reflects the existence of the custom among the Romans; this again looks as if we were on the right track for solving the Dædala riddle.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Schroeder cites the custom from all parts of Europe, and gives some variations, the interest of which only increases the desire for more details: such as the enacting of the False Bride among the Esthonians by the bride's brother in woman's clothes; in Bavaria, by a bearded man called the "Wilde Braut"; in Poland, by an old woman veiled in white, and *lame*; again, among the Esthonians, by an old woman with a *birch-bark* crown; in Brittany, where the substitutes are first a little girl, then the mistress of the house, and lastly the grandmother.<sup>5</sup>

These rites and myths would, I think, prove of interest to all who care for the thoughts and ways of classical or

<sup>1</sup> *Report*, Folk-lore Congress, 1891, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Report*, Folk-lore Congress, 1891, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. L. V. Schroeder, *Die Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten in Vergl. mit denen der Indogermanischen Völker*, 1888, p. 72; H. Usener, *Italische Mythen*, Rhein. Museum, xxx, 183.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Schroeder, p. 72.



peasant folk, could we by help of further evidence approach nearer to their meaning and disentangle their complexities. And I would lay special stress on the hope they afford of gaining light on (1) the primitive religious year, with its successive seasons of ordered ritual ; and (2) the occurrence in sacred festivals, and complex ritual, of ceremonies belonging to the primitive social life.

GERTRUDE M. GODDEN.

---