

THE RAIN-FAIRY
(treatment)
Jan Míka

This is a fairy-tale about the strength of human love which overcomes greed, desire for money, hatred and intrigues. The main heroine is a country girl Anna (Little Flower) who undertakes a very difficult task and meets the challenge at the cost of her own life.

The story starts when the elements ruling the earth – sun, wind, storm, mist and rain – are on their regular „inspection tour“. They are finding out how people behave, what kinds of relationships they have, whether love and tolerance are prevailing, or whether it is wickedness and hatred. Whether people deserve to be helped by the elements.

Out of all the elements, we are following the rain-fairy. She is walking through the country called Lowlands, dressed like a beggar-woman. It is cold. A snowstorm is raging and she walks into our village where the main part of the whole story takes place. She looks pitiful, she must be cold and hungry. She is knocking on a gate, nobody opens her, she knocks on another gate, the result is the same – at one point, a barking dog chases her out.

Those people who just accumulate money and entirely lost compassion and love for one's neighbour are represented by a farmer named Miser (Lakota).

The rain-fairy knocks on his gate as well. We have to add that he is killing the hog right now, since Beta Straw (Běta Slámová) and her parents are arriving soon, and she will be engaged to his son Jan. We can see lots of food in the farm; the tables and frying-pans are full. Miser himself opens the gate.

„What is it, woman? Did you get lost? We don't have anything. The harvest was awful, even the cattle is starving. Whomever I see owes me, but nobody pays back. Try our neighbour Mrs. Stump (Pařízková).“ He cleverly gets rid of her, although he very well knows that widow Stump belongs to the poorest people in the village. And that she has hundred times less than himself.

The beggar-woman/rain-fairy no longer doubts that people really started thinking mainly about money; love and goodness have disappeared. What remains is only words, without any value or weight.

Nevertheless, she still knocks on the door at the Stumps. Nobody is opening. She wants to leave, but all of a sudden the door opens and there is Anna. She apologizes that they do not have anything else in the house, but in spite of that shares the last piece of bread. Anna is, as mentioned above, a nice, hard-working girl with big heart and good will, but she also has bad luck. She loves Miser's son Jan. And we know that he is to be engaged to Beta in a minute. Jan doesn't love Beta, though, he loves Anna. But what does love between a huge farm and a meagre cottage mean? Will Jan pass the following big test? Will he give Anna up, will he deny her?

The beggar-woman takes the donated bread, but all of a sudden she sees a sleigh pulled by trimmed horses approaching Miser's farm. She asks Anna who that is, what that means. Anna sadly replies that Beta Straw from a nearby village arrived to be engaged... She will steal away my Jan.

The beggar-woman listens to her sad reply, reaches into her ragged furcoat and gives Anna two coins. Anna rejects, it's lots of money for a piece of bread, but the beggar-woman says: „These are not to pay.“

„What are they for, then?“

„You will find out yourself,“ the beggar-woman/rain-fairy replies. One coin is for you and the other one for that person who deserves it best.

The engagement is going on. The parents of both Beta and Jan quickly agree on everything; they are dealing with property – who gives what, who gets what, and both sides are satisfied.

„Now, we are content, so let’s eat,“ Mrs. Straw says.

But how about Jan? Has he given up that easily?

It looks like that, but suddenly he gathers all his strength and loudly announces: „I cannot marry Beta. She is beautiful, she is even rich, but I love Anna Stump.“

After his words, the whole banquet turns into a tableaux. How impertinent, how unbecoming, with his future wife Beta next to him.

The first one to recover is Mrs. Straw, and she solves the problem in a practical manner. Nothing else should be expected from her. „How rich is she?“

Once she gets to know that Anna is poor, that she comes from a cottage with just a few lambs and a goat, she bursts out laughing, and all the others join her. Nobody talks about it any longer. The marriage has been simply agreed on, as soon as the haymaking is over.

The beggar-woman is leaving the village. The wind is still blowing, scattering the snowflakes. Nearby the first forest, she meets Grandpa Stump. He wonders where is she heading for, in such a weather. He offers her a sip of something from his bottle, to warm her up, but the beggar-woman refuses. „I do not live so far.“

Grandpa doesn’t quite believe her, because he doesn’t know her. „Where are you going? To the gamekeeper’s?“

„A little bit further.“

„But there are just forests there.“

And Grandpa Stump is even more astonished when the beggar-woman all of a sudden, without any connection, says: „Tell everyone that only Anna Stump can come and see me.“

„This is my granddaughter. Why would she go? And where to?“

„I live in every sincere tear,“ the beggar-woman/rain-fairy answers.

Grandpa no longer likes her. „Hey! Where are you going? And who are you, after all?!“

„I am the rain-fairy.“

„Well, in that case, I have to bring you up. I happen to be a night guard as well. And I have to report individuals.“

But the beggar-woman transforms herself into a transparent being and disappears in front of Grandpa’s eyes. The confused Grandpa Stump rather hurries home.

At home, everybody is at first suspicious, because he keeps asking whether fairies exist, but they believe it’s the influence of alcohol.

„Of course not,“ Anna laughs.

„Well, yes. But one of them disappeared in front of my eyes. What then?“

Once the elements return from their inspection tour to their „boss“ the sun, they demand that people are severely punished. The sun has to agree with them, sees the same thing daily himself, but on the other hand hesitates – knows that people are people, and has no others. And he still likes them, in spite of their faults.

„Make everything dry as husk.“

„They deserve nothing else.“

„And what shall we be here for, once there are no people, ha?!“

„I have an idea,“ the thunder exclaims. „Out of all, punish those in the Lowlands. Those are the worst ones.“

The sun still does not know. At the last moment, the rain-fairy helps him – she asks whether she could not punish those people herself. The other elements accept that unwillingly,

she will be too mild, but the sun gladly agrees. He is happy that somebody else will do the job.

„What kind of punishment is it going to be?“ he wonders.

„I will take rain away from them,“ the rain-fairy says.

Everybody heartily laughs at that. This looks like a children’s game, not like a punishment. Yet, the sun agrees: „If you really think so, take rain away. End of meeting.“

The countryside called Lowlands (where our heroes live) is suffering from barrenness. People have nothing to harvest, there is no wheat growing, all the hay is almost burnt. The sky is blue, not a single cloud anywhere, and in the middle of that blueness, the sun is shining. The stream in the meadows is empty, the fields chapped. The only person satisfied is farmer Miser. His fields and meadows are on the swamps – there is still moisture and his harvest is fine. But the Stumps are bringing their hay home on a baby carriage.

Grandpa quite often talks about that beggar-woman whom he met in winter, who transformed herself into a fairy and said that only Anna could come and see her. Nobody believes him – the same as before. Everybody thinks that he is greatly confused and why should one believe him anyway, since it is generally known that he does enjoy a few sips from time to time.

Anna and Jan still secretly meet and talk about their love, but soon, the haymaking will be over, and then...

„What then?“

„Somebody will get married,“ Anna replies.

„In such a heat?“ Jan is joking. „Well, I pity that person.“

And his joking actually seems to be appropriate. Farmer Miser is a miser. The dry season interferes with his plans a bit. All of a sudden, he is in no rush as to his son’s marriage.

„A word is a word,“ Mrs. Straw objects.

„But everything is barren and we cannot afford that – you will end up in a shack and our son would as well. We are farmers.“

„Our farm is bigger,“ Mrs. Straw defends herself.

„But without water. Our fields are on the swamps, we do not have to worry. That marriage will have to wait.

Miser collects the debts in the village. During that tragic drought, people have nothing, and it is completely inhumane and absolutely coarse. He takes the very last goat, the last ram, or the very last coin.

He invades the Stumps’ cottage, too. „I came for my three florins.“

„I don’t have them,“ Mrs. Stump replies. „And I owe you only two.“

„And how about interest? For the time being, I will take these three lambs.“

„You cannot do that,“ Grandpa Stump protests.

„If you want to be a night guard, shut up, Grandpa. And, furthermore, I do not wish to see your Anna next to my Jan – never.“

His stablemen, in spite of all the resistance, take those three lambs. The only possession there is at the Stumps – with the exception of a goat.

But nothing is here forever, nobody is clever only and everybody makes mistakes. It doesn’t take long and Miser’s stableman comes running, really frightened.

„There’s no water in the well.“

Miser cannot believe that. In his well? In the deepest well in the village which was always full, always managed to satisfy both human and animal thirst? But it is indeed so, the bottom

is muddy, the rest of the water unclear. Miser understands that things are bad, that he has to start acting. But how? What to do? Then he remembers Grandpa Stump's constant talk about the rain-fairy. He is most likely confused, but it's still better than nothing.

He takes Jan and they are walking to the Stump's. „Listen, Mrs. Stump, we could do things differently, too. I would return your lambs and forgive you those florins, I would even give my son Jan to your Anna, but. . . .“

None of the people present believes his own ears.

„But?“ Mrs. Stump asks.

„But Anna has to see to it that our fields have rain. She has to bring rain.“

„Mr. Miser,“ Mrs. Stump replies slowly, „you must be crazy. Isn't it impossible?“

„Everything is possible. Isn't she acquainted with that rain-fairy? So let her try; at least we will see how much she loves Jan.“

Mrs. Stump gets furious. „Listen, Miser, rather than letting her loose in the world because of your riches, I would chain her home. Until she puts such a stupidity out of her mind.“

It is an impossible task. Nobody can call rain back, but Anna nevertheless does talk to her Grandpa – how was it in reality with that fairy, and where to go in order to see her.

„She supposedly lives in every sincere tear.“

This is not a practical advice, but what can Anna do.

Not a day passes and Mrs. Straw angrily visits our Miser. „Miser, you promised Jan to Anna? You won't get away with that.“

„Calm down, Mrs. Straw. I suggested that she went for rain, what's wrong with that? She will not bring rain, maybe she will get lost in the world, and it has to start raining at some point, anyway. So what? You Beta will get Jan no matter what. Rather than shouting, you should thank me.

At night, Anna meets Jan at the pond and announces that she will set out for that fairy in the morning. Jan cannot persuade her otherwise, so he decides to go and search with her. Therefore, Anna gives him the second coin she got from the fairy. Jan considers it worthless, but the moment he touches it, both coins start to shine. As an indication that as long as the coins are shining, they are both alive, they love each other and think about themselves. They agree that early in the morning, before the sunrise, they will meet here and together leave, in search of the fairy. Having said that, they part. However, they have no idea that Miser and Mrs. Straw were listening to their conversation hidden in the willows, and that they immediately started to act. In a scientific manner, almost.

They visit the local healer and witch who lives over the village in a forest, and she prepares a bunch of herbs and spices that – in her words – puts to sleep even a huge bull. And, of course, any man. And it proves to be true.

In the morning, Anna waits at the pond, but Jan is nowhere to be seen. The sun is already winking above the peaks of the trees. There is nothing to be done, she starts walking alone. She is disappointed – she has no way of knowing that Jan is asleep nearby the oven, and there is a bunch of herbs and spices next to his head.

Jan does not wake up even at noon, so they are calling the doctor, but he is shaking his head. There is nothing wrong with Jan, he is just asleep. He doesn't wake up in the evening, either. At that point, Anna is far, far away.

The doctor suspects that there is some evil involved, so he visits the healer. He was right. At first, she is denying everything, but then reveals what kinds of flowers and spices she mixed for Miser and that woman from a nearby village, Mrs. Straw.

When the doctor seizes the bunch, it is already late. Jan wakes up and discovers how much he overslept. Yet, nobody can keep him home – he jumps on the horse and starts looking for Anna in all possible directions.

In the meantime, Anna walks and keeps asking where the fairy lives. Finally „a trace“; she arrives to a cottage where a merry old couple lives. They joke with her, give her something to eat and then explain to her in detail the way to the rain-fairy. Supposedly, they went to see her lots of times. Anna thanks them sincerely and runs. Once she is far enough, the old man sighs: „Poor girl, she still believes in a rain-fairy.“

So understandably, Anna walks, but the rain-fairy is nowhere to be found. She walks one day, another, everything is in vain. In despair, she starts to call her, but only mist responds. Once Anna explains where is she going (the mist knows it very well, though), the mist promises to help – he would lead Anna to the rain-fairy. The mist meets the rain-fairy almost on a daily basis. But how can one go with the mist, how can one see in the mist, given the fact one primarily gets lost there?

In the meantime, Jan reaches a town. At the market, he is observing, asking, searching. Thus he becomes the centre of attention of three bad guys; a father with two sons. They like Jan’s horse. They are not offering enough money and Jan does not want to sell, of course – without a horse, he would be lost. They pressure him more and more, but fortunately, Jan manages to escape.

Anna is exhausted; she is still lost in the mist.

„Where are you leading me? You promised help.“

„I help as mist may.“

„I no longer want your help.“

„As you wish. But do not expect my help anymore.“

The mist disappears and Anna discovers that she is back, that she ended up in her country again. She is hopeless. She cries, the tears are falling. Nobody can question how sincere they are, since as soon as the first drop touches the ground, it miraculously transforms itself into a rain-fairy.

„Why are you crying, Anna?“

„You know me, madam?“ Anna asks, astonished.

„Of course. This winter, the beggar-woman, you gave me a slice of bread. I gave you two coins. I am the rain-fairy.“

Anna is happy. „I came to ask you for rain, for water.“

„Nothing can be easier – go home, and your well will be full.“

However, Anna explains that she does not need the water just for herself, but for all the fields, all the people, and also in order to get her Jan.

„If you want water for all the people, you have to accompany me.“

And she leads Anna to her „kingdom of rain“. „You will get rain, but only if you manage to meet three wishes of mine. Tomorrow, I will tell you the first one.“

In the meantime, Jan is still wandering around the villages. He keeps asking, but doesn’t know that those bad guys whom he escaped from at the market are still following him.

It is morning, the first day at the rain-fairy, and she announces her first wish. „The people in your country, thanks to their selfishness and desire to own, closed the water well I am taking their rain from. You have to unlock the well. But be careful – the fire and the heat are

guarding it. You will be very, very thirsty. I will give you a jar with water. You will go to the well, but may not drink before you unlock the well.“

Anna is walking to the well. The journey is hellish; real stifling heat. At least twice she wants to drink, but resists. The third time she almost drinks, but the shining coin she constantly carries stops her. She reaches the well. There is a lock on the well, but also a key placed nearby. Glowing, red-hot. When she wants to touch it, she cannot. What remains to be done – she pours all the water from the jar over the key till it becomes cold. She herself suffers from thirst all the time. She takes the key, is unlocking. Her jar is full of water again. Finally, she can satisfy her thirst.

The second day, the second wish. „So we have water,“ the rain-fairy says, „but all the little lambs that have to drink from the well and transform themselves into the rain clouds run away. You need to gather them close to the well.“

Anna is calling, but the sky in the water kingdom is absolutely clear, cloudless. What remains to be done – she sadly sits down and without thinking, almost automatically starts singing a song she used to sing at home in order to call in the little flock of sheep. And it doesn't last long before the lambs start appearing even here – they are coming and drinking.... It seems to Anna that the coin is shining even more than any other time.

Before the third wish is announced, the robbers, that is the father and his sons finally catch Jan in the forest. They surprise him while he is asleep. They take his horse, money, and even the shining coin. Jan begs them not to steal at least that coin, but with thieves, wishes do not count. It shines the most, it will pay the most. So Jan is left completely alone in a completely unknown forest. Without Anna and without the coin that connected them. He does not know the way out of the forest, nor the way to Anna.

The third day Anna sleeps a little longer and since she is hurrying to the fairy, she accidentally forgets the coin in her room.

„The third wish is the easiest and the most difficult one at the same time,“ the rain-fairy says. „The well is lacking the last drop of water; that last drop has to be alive.“

Anna: Where should I look for a drop of live water?

Fairy: You yourself have to become a drop of water.

Anna: To sacrifice my life? Because of water?

Fairy: Because of the people, because of life in your country. If rain doesn't come, people will die of thirst, of lack of crops. Their guilt is that huge.

Anna: Some of them are not to blame.

Fairy: The rain falls either on all or on nobody.

Anna: I went to fetch the rain so that I could have Jan. This way, I will have neither Jan nor the rain. I will not even live. Don't I get the choice?

Fairy: You do. Sacrifice whomever is dearest to you, and thus you will be saved.

Anna: But that is Jan.

Fairy: Sacrifice Jan. Thus you will live and have rain as well.

Anna stands stunned. She wants to consult the coin, but no matter how hard she tries, she cannot find it.

Anna runs to her room and finds the coin, but it is dim, without any light. She naively begs it to shine again, but the coin looks like an old tin. It cannot shine, because the other coin was stolen from Jan by the thieves.

Therefore she asks the rain-fairy whether Jan lives, and she finally nods, yes, he does. So why is the coin not shining?

„Because he no longer loves you,“ the thunder suggests.
„Sacrifice him,“ the mists advises.
„People do not deserve any compassion or sacrifice. People are selfish and wicked.
Sacrifice Jan, save your own life.“
„Fairy, please, give me some advice.“
„You have to decide yourself,“ the fairy answers.

We are back in the Lowlands. Everything is green, people are harvesting. The streams are full of water; it is clear that rain has returned. Just Jan is nowhere to be seen.

And a strange thing is happening here. From time to time the farmer leaves his house, walks through the village and throws money around. Meditative, silent. The children are collecting the money as long as he is throwing, before his stablemen lead him back home.

And every day, Grandpa Stump tells the children in the village green a story about Anna and Jan, who set out for the rain-fairy and never came back.

We are in the kingdom of rain. We see that Anna transformed herself into a live drop of rain. That she sacrificed herself. She does not look like herself, but is somehow transparent, immaterial, like the rain-fairy. But that transformation did not help her any, she worries and worries.

Once the rain-fairy cannot stand that suffering of her new drop of water, that is Anna, anymore; she goes to see the sun. Then she comes back to Anna and tells her:

„Your sacrifice was great and therefore I begged the sun to listen to me. If Jan stays faithful for three years and will not replace you with another girl or woman, he will deserve your sacrifice and I will ask the sun to give you permission to return to the earth again.“

Autumn begins.

The country is covered with snow.

Spring begins.

There is summer again.

Jan is coming back to the village – tired, shabby. He hasn't seen Anna anywhere, hasn't met her, knows nothing about her. The farmer is happy, the future bride Beta shows up immediately and her parents as well; both his return and the future wedding are celebrated. Just Mrs. Stump is sad and Jan is somehow not quite able to face her. And that oak at the pond under which Jan and Anna used to meet withered. In spite of the fact that everything is green everywhere.

One cannot live from memories only, with a shadow. Especially when one is attacked by his own parents, Beta, and her parents as well. And so Jan slowly relaxes and one day, a wedding is agreed on. Moreover, everybody in the village approves of it; poor Anna is most probably no longer among those alive and life must go on.

Just the rain in the country gets sadder and sadder, since the rain is Anna and her hope is gradually waning. Her sincere tears – the rain – make one little twig on the oak green. One can hardly notice it.

The day of the wedding comes. A few more minutes and Anna will remain lost forever.

The bride and the bridegroom are sitting in the carriage, as well as all the guests. And they are heading for the church. But when the bridegroom's carriage reaches the crossroads, Jan suddenly takes the leading-rein and drives the horses to the pond. He is remembering the oak and what Anna always used to say: „If I am not coming for a long time and you just want to leave, climb the oak and see whether I am not coming, after all.“

The carriage stops and Jan is climbing the withered tree.

All the guests wonder whether he really did not get mad.

He reaches the highest branches. He is looking around, but doesn't see anything. Anna is not coming from any direction. There is just that withered tree. He is sad, does not see that two tears dropped on a small twig from somewhere upward, from where Anna is right now. Jan wants to climb down, but finally, he gets to understand the miracle. He realizes that it is not a chance, that it is a good sign.

„Anna is alive!“ he shouts into the whole countryside. He jumps down from the tree, quick as a lightning. „Don't be angry with me, but there is going to be no wedding.“

There will be one!“ the bride, Beta, screams, and after all the Misers as well.

„Otherwise, I will beat you up with a stick!“

The Straws are threatening with a lawsuit – the word was given, a contract signed. In the middle of this commotion, this quarrel where everybody is arguing with everybody, all of a sudden somebody exclaims:

„Look!“

The crowd gradually calms down and observes the sky. From above, there is a colourful wave coming and starting to take shape, and all of a sudden a beautiful golden carriage with terrific horses is placed on the ground. One would think that everything on that carriage is wedding-like and expensive.

And the bride is nobody but our Anna.

She is already embracing Jan and it is quite clear that something concerning the wedding will be changed. Mrs. Stump is also here, and with tears in her eyes welcomes her lost daughter. But it is not going to be that easy.

„Miser! Your last opportunity. Either the wedding, or you can expect a trial.“

„Beta will get Jan,“ Miser confirms. He is afraid of the court, but he is not absolutely sure, and neither is his wife. Another bride came all in gold, in a golden carriage. Now she is richer than the count, not mentioning Mr. Straw. A suit, or a golden carriage? He has to decide cleverly, like Solomon himself. But how?

„We were never forcing Jan to marry anybody,“ Mrs. Miser helps.

„Yes. Let him choose. There are two brides here. But we want the one with the golden carriage.“

„Anna is my bride,“ Jan exclaims decisively.

The previous bride with her company leaves, with lots of noise, threats and what not. And the new wedding is leaving for the church.

Once there is nobody near the pond, Grandpa Stump appears – with a goat. And out of nowhere, the beggar-woman/fairy.

„How come this oak withered?“ the beggar-woman asks. „Such a nice tree.“

„You wouldn't believe that, my dear. Here, everything is ruled by the rain-fairy. And by the way, I happen to know her.“

„You don't tell.“

„Well, really. There was no water. And I said, go to see the rain-fairy. And Anna went, but she will come back, I swear to that. Such a sweet and decent girl. And that tree, you see, all of a sudden...“

„Withered, didn't it?“ the beggar-woman adds.

„Withered,“ Grandpa Stump finishes, but as he can see, the oak is suddenly covered with green leaves.

„Listen, how did you do that,“ the beggar-woman asks. „That oak is no longer dead.“

Grandpa doesn't know, of course, but finds a way out. „You see, we can... we can do it here. We can do anything here. So let's go, mama, let's go,“ and he still watches the tree with

suspicion. „You are somehow suspicious, anyway, and I should bring you up. I happen to be the night guard here, you know?“

They are leaving in the same direction as the wedding.

The End