

Nina Sadur

Outline

- Announcements
 - Recitation this week
 - Examination #3
 - Regular
 - Makeup
 - Extra credit
- Legendary birds
- Sorcery in Russia today
- Nina Sadur
 - Background
 - Stories
 - “The Cute Little Redhead”
 - “Silky Hair”
 - “The Witch’s Tears”
 - “Rings”

Recitation This Week

- Yes, there is recitation this week
- Censored tales
 - Some fairy tales collected by Afanas’ev are clearly intended for adults (!)
 - Print out, read, and bring with you to recitation the “Censored tales” posted under Course Documents
 - These are authentic Russian fairy tales
 - Our treatment of these tales will be serious and professional, and nobody will be expected to say anything embarrassing

Why You Should Attend the Final Recitation

- One more chance to improve your recitation grade
- Topic is “Censored Tales”
- Student course evaluations

Examination #3

- Examination #3: Wednesday, April 15 in class
- Makeup examination
 - When: Thursday, April 23 at 4:00 p.m.
 - This is the time that would have been allocated to our final examination, had we had one
 - Where: Slavic Department (1417 CL)

Extra-Credit Deadline

- Extra credit work due by 5:00 p.m. (sharp!) Wednesday, April 15
- Accepted only from students who had conferences by the required deadline
- Must be submitted by uploading to Turnitin
- No extensions (early submissions welcome)

Legendary Birds

- *Sirin*: Traditionally a bird of joy and success
 - The image of the classical *Siren* is split in Russian folk belief between the *Sirin* and the *Rusalka*
 - Note that the meaning of *Sirin* in the Tolstaya story differs from the standard function
- *Alkonost*: Traditionally a bird of sorrow and melancholy
- *Gamaiun*: Traditionally fortells happiness
- *Finist* (cf. Phoenix)

Bilibin



Vasnetsov (1)



Vasnetsov (2)



Lubok (1)

Sirin, first half of nineteenth century



Lubok (2)

Alkonost, turn of the nineteenth century



Sadur: Biography

- Born 1950 in Novosibirsk (Siberia)
- Raised in working-class neighborhood; mother was a teacher of Russian literature, father a poet
- Early appreciation of rich language and beliefs of the uneducated
- Former cleaning lady, Pushkin Theater, Moscow



Sadur: Works

- Drama
 - *The Wondrous Old Woman* (1982/89)
 - *Pannochka* (1985–86) (based on Gogol's "Viy")
- Prose
 - *Touched* (1990; our stories are from this collection)
 - *The Garden* (1993–95)

Sadur: Characteristics (1)

- "Realism of the illusory"
- Siberia and the countryside
- Female characters

Sadur: Characteristics (2)

- Characters' perspective
- Unreliable narrators
- The Devil and unclean forces

“That”

“There is something in it, of course. One cannot understand it right away, cannot name what is abnormal, out of the ordinary, different from all the things that we do in life. If you choose to numb yourself with everyday life routine you may not notice how *that* is always with us, watching our every step ... our age chose to ignore it for people not to be afraid of events that are unclear or inapplicable to reality ... But the person who, stubbornly, would want to penetrate into *that* is doomed. He will go crazy, or die, or become a drunkard.”

Sadur Tales

- Tales of Spoiling
 - “Silky Hair”
 - “The Witch’s Tears”
- Tales of Initiation
 - “The Cute Little Redhead”
 - “Rings”

“Cute Little Redhead” (Cast)

- Characters
 - Natashka Soloviova (“Sleepy”)
 - Landlady
 - Murzik
 - “The Cute Little Redhead”
 - Serezha Koloskov

“The Cute Little Redhead” (1)

- What is the story about? How do we know?
- What tasks does Natashka’s landlady assign her, and why? Whom does she resemble from the fairy-tale tradition? How?
- Why does the landlady disapprove of Natashka’s medication?

“The Cute Little Redhead” (2)

- What is the significance of Natashka’s school project?
- Who is Murzik and what is his function?
- Who or what is the “cute little redhead”? Why does he resemble Natashka? How does his visit change her life?
- Who is the narrator?
- What determines what Natashka knows and what she reveals?

“Silky Hair”

- Why did Yelena cast a spell on the woman’s child?
- Why are the babies of the two women so mysteriously linked?
- Why should the woman protect Yelena when she meets with the fortune teller? Why should she try to hide Yelena’s face?
- Why does Yelena keep a photograph of the woman? What is its function?
- What is the role of the man in the story?

“The Witch’s Tears” (1)

- Where does the story take place?
 - What street? What color is the house? What is ominous about the setting?
- “Nadia” = ‘hope’; the soldier is named “Viktor”
- Why does Nadia seek the witch’s help?
 - Whom does she hold responsible for what happened to her?
- What is the meaning of the scene with Nadia’s purse in the witch’s house?

“The Witch’s Tears” (2)

- How do images of babies or children figure in the story? Why?
- What does Nadia want from the witch and how does she feel about her desire? Does she get what she wants?
- What sort of witch is this? What does the title suggest?

“The Witch’s Tears” (3)

- Whom is the witch protecting? Who is spoiled in the story?
- Who is Sadur’s narrator?
- What’s the point of the story?

“Rings” (1)

- Characters:
 - Larisa (narrator)
 - Liubka (= ‘love’) Vakheta
 - Levan
 - Sasha
- What traditional type of fairy tale does this story suggest?

“Rings” (2)

- What is the story about? How do we know?
 - How is this narrator deceptive?
- How are rings and dreams similar and different?
- What are the functions of the two rings?
- How are Larisa and Liubka similar and different? How is their relationship represented?
- What do the three dreams suggest? What is suggested by their context?
- How are the two men similar? How are their fates related?
