

# Stará Lubovňa town & Lubovňa castle



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Where can you find it?



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## The history of the town:

Stará Ľubovňa town is located in the Ľubovnianska fold just beside the inflow of the stream Jakubianka into the Poprad River. It evolved in the Šariš area and belongs to one of its most significant residencies.

Specifically, it evolved at the crossroad of the important roads and this location highly influenced its further development. The town became an important market place, meaning that it was a significant stop for the merchants travelling from Hungary to Poland. The name Ľubovňa comes from a Slavic personnel name Ľubel or from a word ľubŧ meaning kind. The first written record of the name was in 1256 as Lyblo (name of a stream that is nowadays called Jakubianka). In 1292 Ľubovňa (Libenow) has directly been mentioned for the first time (its inhabitants and citizens of Hniezdne were forced to help with reconstructions of Podolíneč).

The castle was most likely built in the second half of the 13th century. It was first mentioned in the 1311 when a widow of Omodej Aba and her sons were committing to return the castle to the king. Which means that the castle has been established by Ondrej III.

## Important events of the castle and the town:

Probably in 1364 the town was granted a privilege of town from the king Luudovít I. hence it was exempted from castle's and Podolíneč judicature.

At the end of the 14th century, the castle became a place of the Ugrian – Polish negotiation and the lords of the Hungarian Empire sometimes lived there.

In 1392, the Queen Mary and in the 1396 the Lord Sigmund Luxemburg, stayed there.

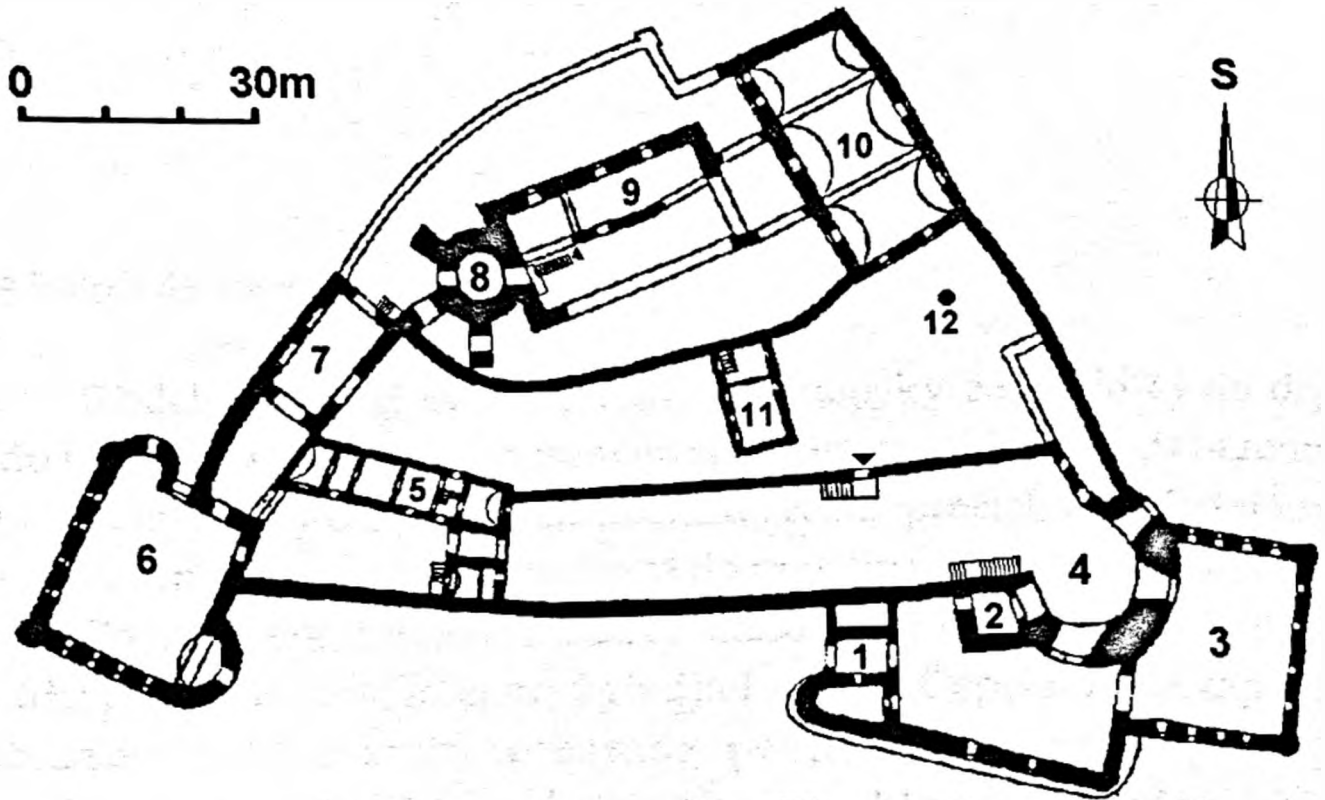
In the 15th century the town was completely destroyed by Poland because of the war between Sigmund and Poland. Móric Beňovsky, a famous adventurer (he was crowned a king of Madagascar) organised a mob and fought for barbican secessionists in 1768. He was captured by six soldiers and was imprisoned in the castle tower, from where he later escaped.

1945 – the Ľuvovňa castle became a possession of state after being confiscated from its previous owners.

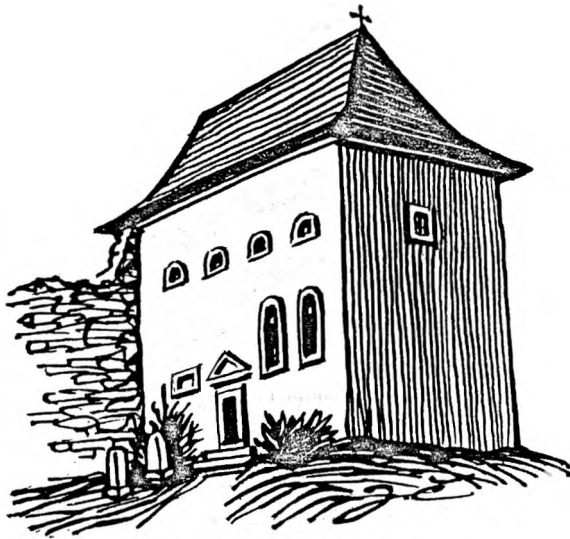
In 1956 a museum was established on the castle and also reconstructions began.

Nowadays Ľubovňa castle is one of the most visited sightseeing in Slovakia.

# Ground plan of the castle



1 - baroque bastion with the entrance gate, 2 - renaissance gate, 3 - eastern baroque bastion, 4 - rondel, 5 - baroque palace, 6 - western bastion, 7 - gothic gate, 8 - tower, 9 - gothic palace, 10 - renaissance palace, 11 - chapel, 12 - well



the castle chapel

*Hradná kaplnka*



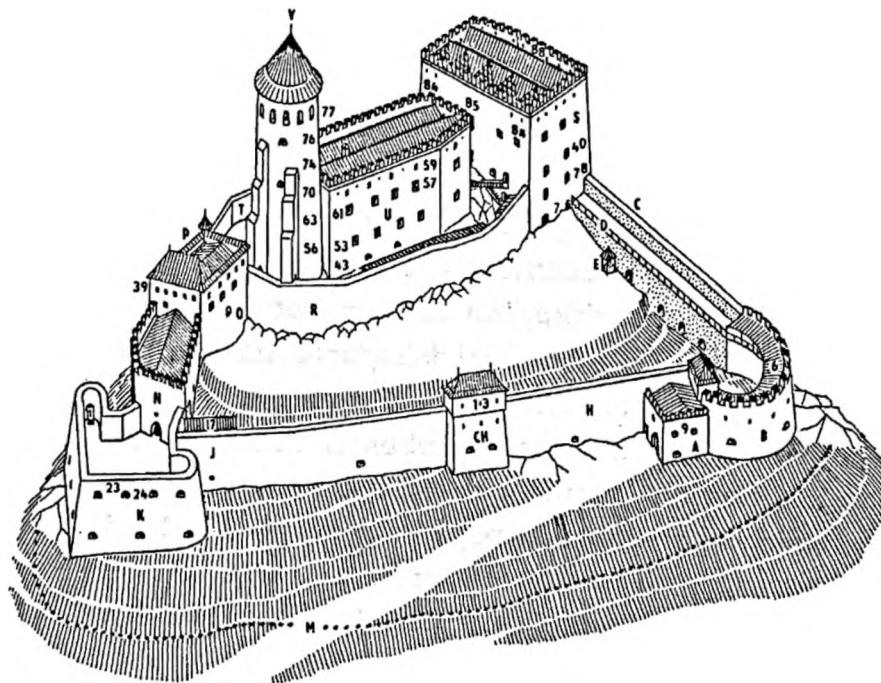
the renaissance  
palace

*Renesančný palác*

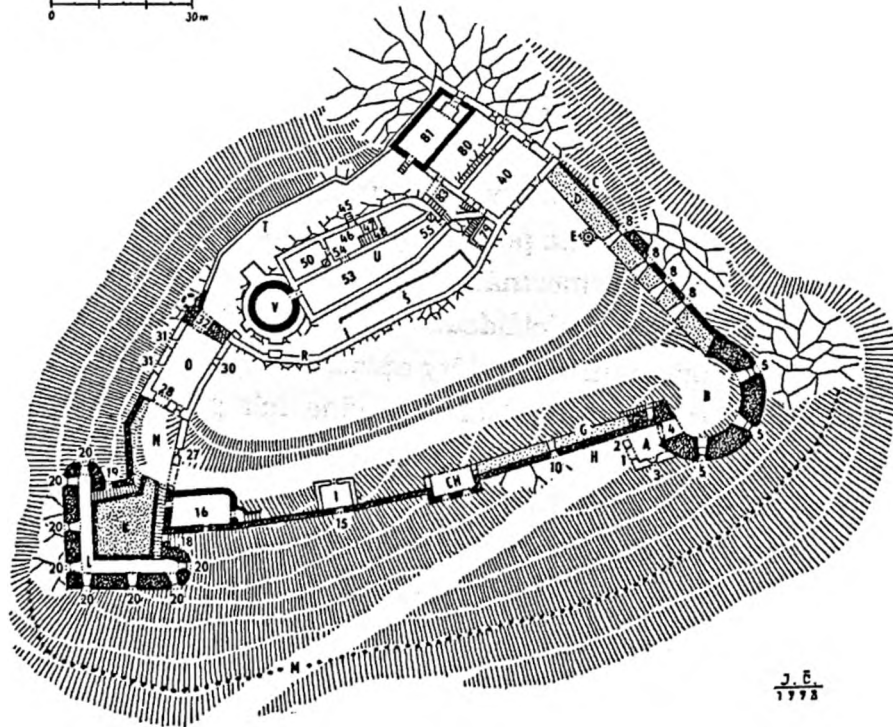


the baroque  
entrance bastion

*Vstupný barokový bastión*

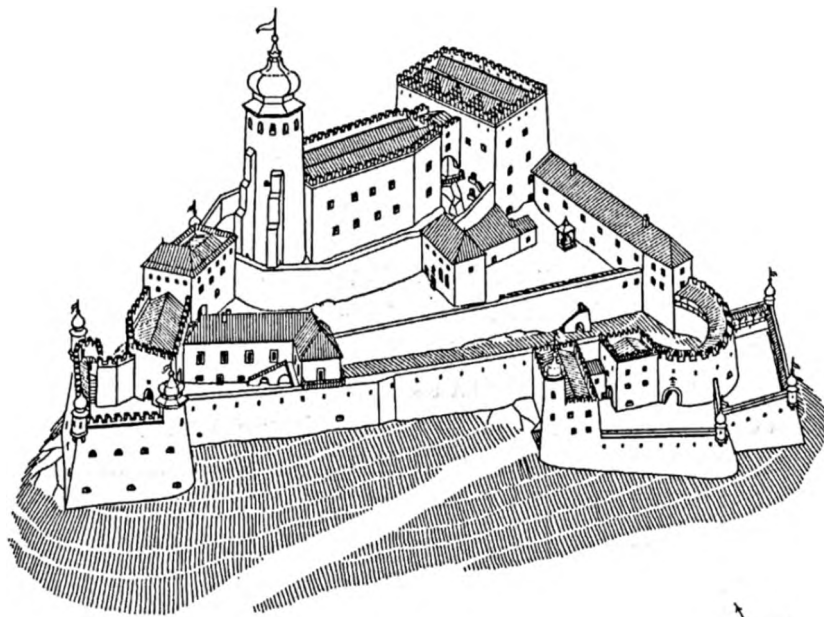


0 30m

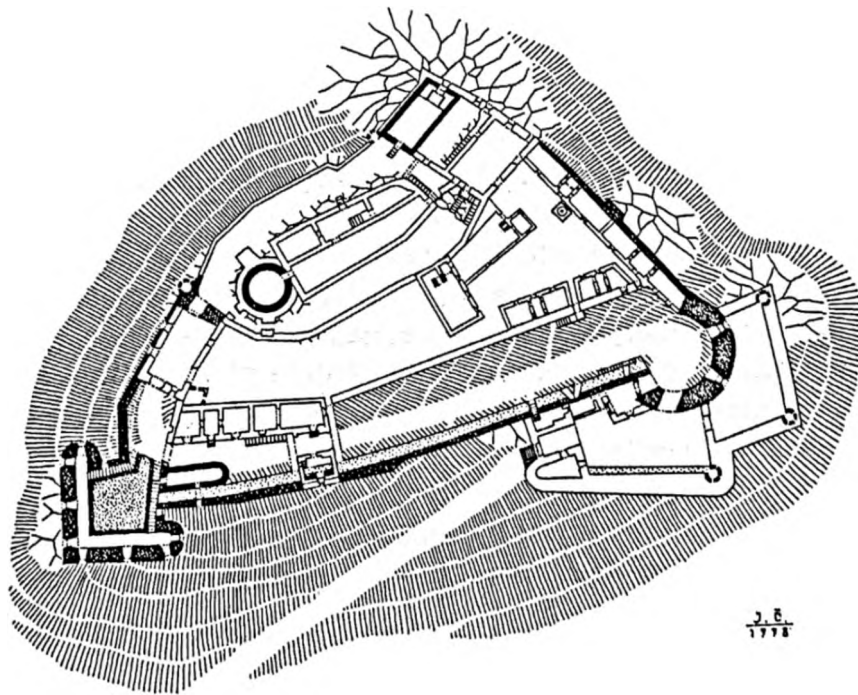


J. E.  
1798

Image of the castle in 1564 after the  
renaissance reconstruction

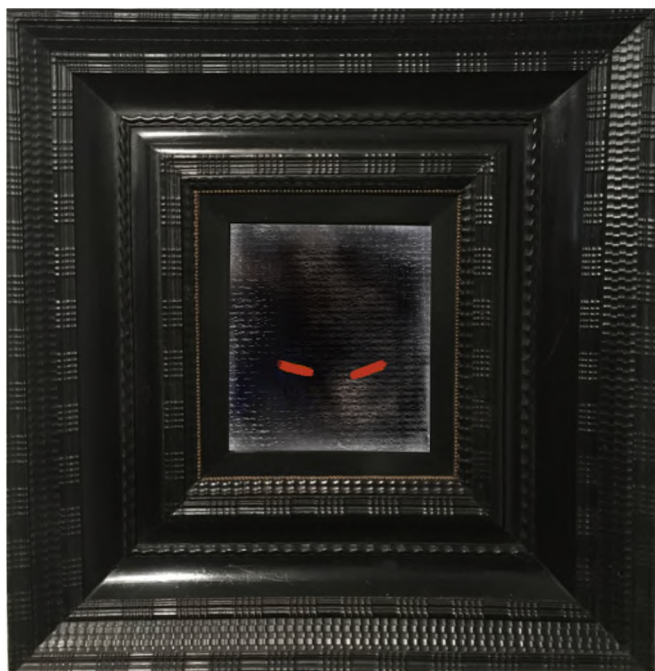


0 30 m



J. E.  
1778

Image of the castle in the second half of the 17th century after the early baroque reconstruction



# The monster of Stará Ľubovňa

Three centuries ago in Stará Ľubovňa a very strange thing happened. A lot of scholars tried to explain the incident and many writers wrote about it. But three centuries is enough time for people to forget about it. Thus the story was buried under the dust longer than when it had been spreading and bringing chills to people. But there are still people who are alive and possess the knowledge about the horrors the story tells. So now I'll tell you about it.



But these steps were useless. Gašparek started to do even worse things afterwards. He said:

„You burned me, now I will burn you!“

So Gašparek still tormented people. He attacked women and girls in fields. He sent the scariest threats to the people who dared to oppose him. He fertilized his wife and a few maids, too. And what is more, in May and June there were a lot of wildfire outbreaks in Stará Ľubovňa.

Two bishops tried exorcism, but nothing happened. Gašparek's relatives had to sworn that he neither owned any magical ring nor made a deal with the devil.

Once Gašparek appeared at a wedding. He demanded a meal. He said that he will return and he WILL eat it. Suesters weren't happy and they didn't want to let him enter, but he started to scare them, so they had to let him join them. His mood was good, so he didn't hurt anyone.

He did a lot of bad things. Some people considered him alive and he borrowed money from them. Neither his wife had peace from him so she built up her coarage to ask him why he isn't there where the God sent him. He said that it is because they burned foreign heart instead of his.

„God doesn't want me in heaven and neither does the devil in hell. I have to wander and torment people for seven years, then I will be freed.“

We don't know how this incident ended. We know many ideas and legends, but we don't know the truth. And we still don't know why he had to drink human blood – we only know that it was a punishment, because he committed a terrible deed (or maybe a few more bad things). And of course, the story is more of a legend rather than something that actually happened.

However, the story of a Slovak vampire sends shivers down the spine nevertheless.



# Who wrote about the vampire?



In July 1718 a magazine *Europäischer Niemand* which stemmed in Norimberg wrote the vampire's words after his execution. („You burned me, now I will burn you!“)

In May 1890 in a magazine *Spoločnosti pre etnografiu Uhorska* was also written about him.

In 1723 Matej Bel mentioned Gašparek in his *Posol zo starého a nového Uhorska*.

We don't know what exactly happened and why the story arose. However, a lot of interesting theories of its origin were created.

## Here is the list:

1. Gašparek's corpse still wandered through Hungary.
2. Gašparek was dead and everything else people just made up.
3. Maybe something from this legend came from a weird experiment...
4. Gašparek is dead but he (his ghost) was the cause of wildfire in Stará Ľubovňa.
5. „Bad ghost“ took an appearance of a human.
6. The vampire (we don't mean Gašparek, only the monster) wasn't anything special. The „vampire“ was a human, but the others thought that he is Gašparek = vampire. And he abused it.
7. People were bored so they thought up a ghost story.
8. Maybe a wife poisoned her husband because she wanted to with her lover...

## The legend's reasoning for him becoming a vampire:

Gašparek was a tax collector or a trader. But he stole a barrel of gold. He didn't want to return it and he falsely swore, he said: „May ground don't take my body, may heaven don't take my ghost if I am falsely swearing!“ – so as a punishment, he had to become a vampire.

Our own theory is, that it might have something to do with the origin of a vampire as a concept. Now, there is also many theories on that. However, one of them is: Because of the premature burials, some people woke up already buried under the ground. The scratching and banging on a coffin may have led to a belief in vampires. Something similar could have happened with Gašparek as well. But that we will never know for sure.



## Today's burning of Gašparek



Nowadays in Stará Ľubovňa they still remember the story of Gašparek. When they have „Ľubovniansky jarmok“, they organise an accompaniment which includes burning Gašparek's figure.

Children dress up as monsters and accompany Gašparek in front of the main stage. Also a monk accompanies Gašparek and the main dráb (something like historical version of nowadays' police boss). People hold burning torches and they listen to music called gregorian chant (music which you can especially hear in some churches and can sound scary at night).

Then they burn Gašparek's figure – to symbolise casting out every ghost and monster from the town.

## Other magical creatures in Stará Ľubovňa — legend about the origin of the castle

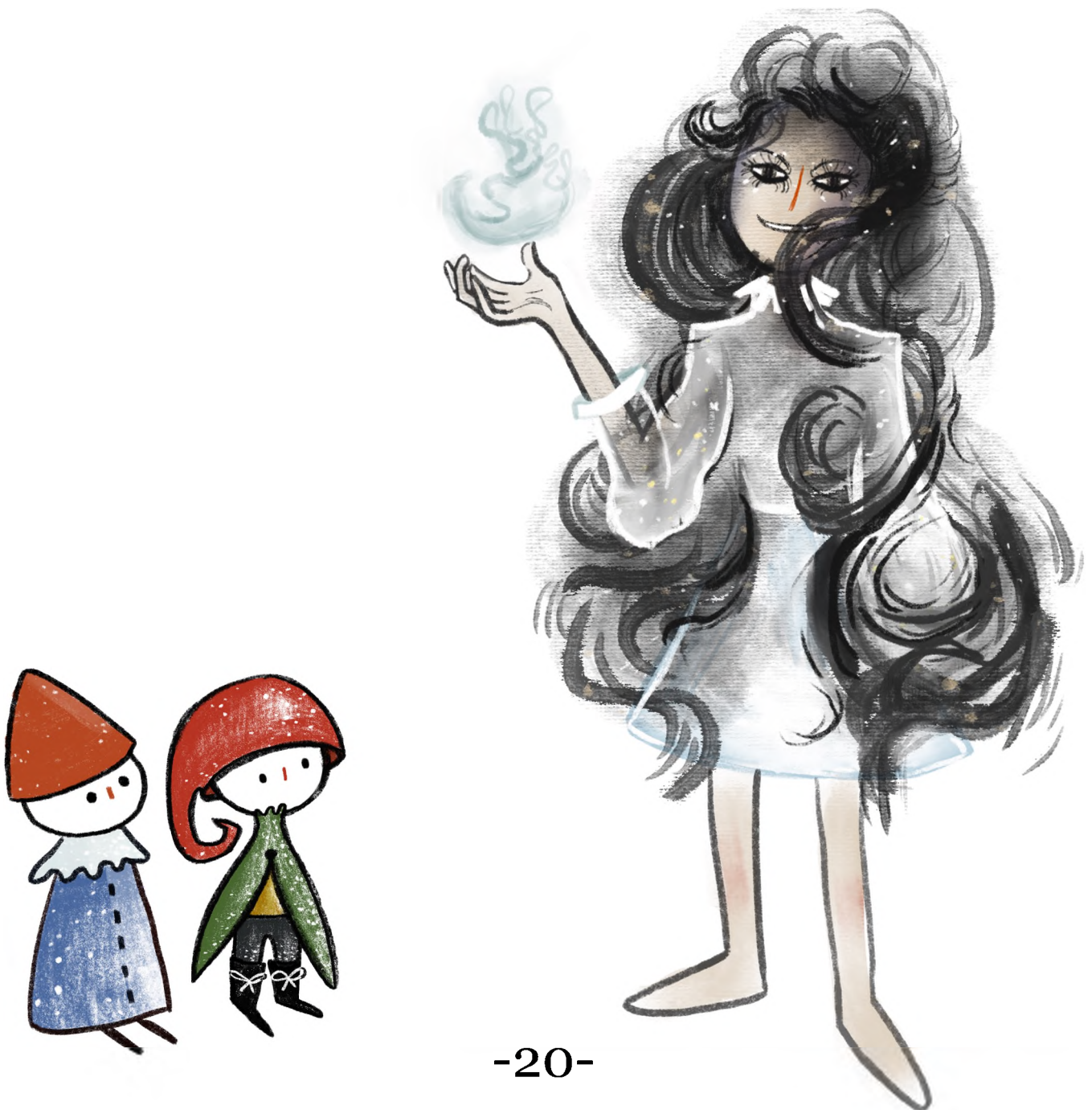
One sunny day, an old nobleman Ľubovenský with his sons and company, decided to rest at a riverside under a hill. They took a liking to the surrounding region and wanted to stay there. They had a great idea – to build a castle there on a limestone cliff of 711 m.

The sons started building right the next day. However, what they built in a day, disappeared without a trace at night. This repeated day after day until the builders had enough.

The old Ľubovniánsky found out that the location belongs to an evil fairy. So he went after her and they made a deal. The fairy stops sabotaging their castle construction for the old man's soul.

Thanks to that the castle was finished, but Ľubovensky didn't want to give up on his soul so he fooled the fairy. He visited a nearby monastery, where he confessed and asked God for mercy. The fairy was angered by his betrayal and wanted to throw a huge boulder on the castle. However, God heard the unfortunate penitent.

As the fairy flew, an evening bell rang from the monastery. Her muscles were weakened, leading her to let go of the rock. She couldn't do anything anymore. Ľubovenský named the castle Ľubovňa. His descendants lived there without being bothered by any magic and the fairy disappeared in the abyss of history.



# Our special thanks

We would like to thank for the opportunity to join the Erasmus project, because it taught us a lot of things. Thanks to this project we learned a lot about the lives of our ancestors, about the myths that they believed in, about the heritage of their stories they left us. Overall, it reminded us how important it is to remember and spread these treasures.

And thanks to all the readers who took the time to read our projects!

– Sincerely, Dorota Reguliová and Anna Pénzešová



# The end.

# Source:

Petraško, L.: Povesti, príbehy a povedačky z východu Slovenska. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej, 2018. 186 s. ISBN 978-80-8115-280-1

Števík M., Timková M.: Dejiny hradu Ľubovňa. Stará Ľubovňa: Ľubovnianske múzeum, 2005. ISBN 80-969234-1-2



Have you noticed the picture metaphor on the front page? :)

<https://cestovanie.pravda.sk/cestovny-ruch/clanok/477859-legenda-o-zlej-vile-ktora-sabotovala-vystavbu-hradu-lubovna/>

<https://spis.korzar.sme.sk/c/4519381/kupec-gasperek-opat-strasil-v-starej-lubovni.html>

<https://visitspis.sk/lubovnianska-legenda-o-kasparekovi/>

