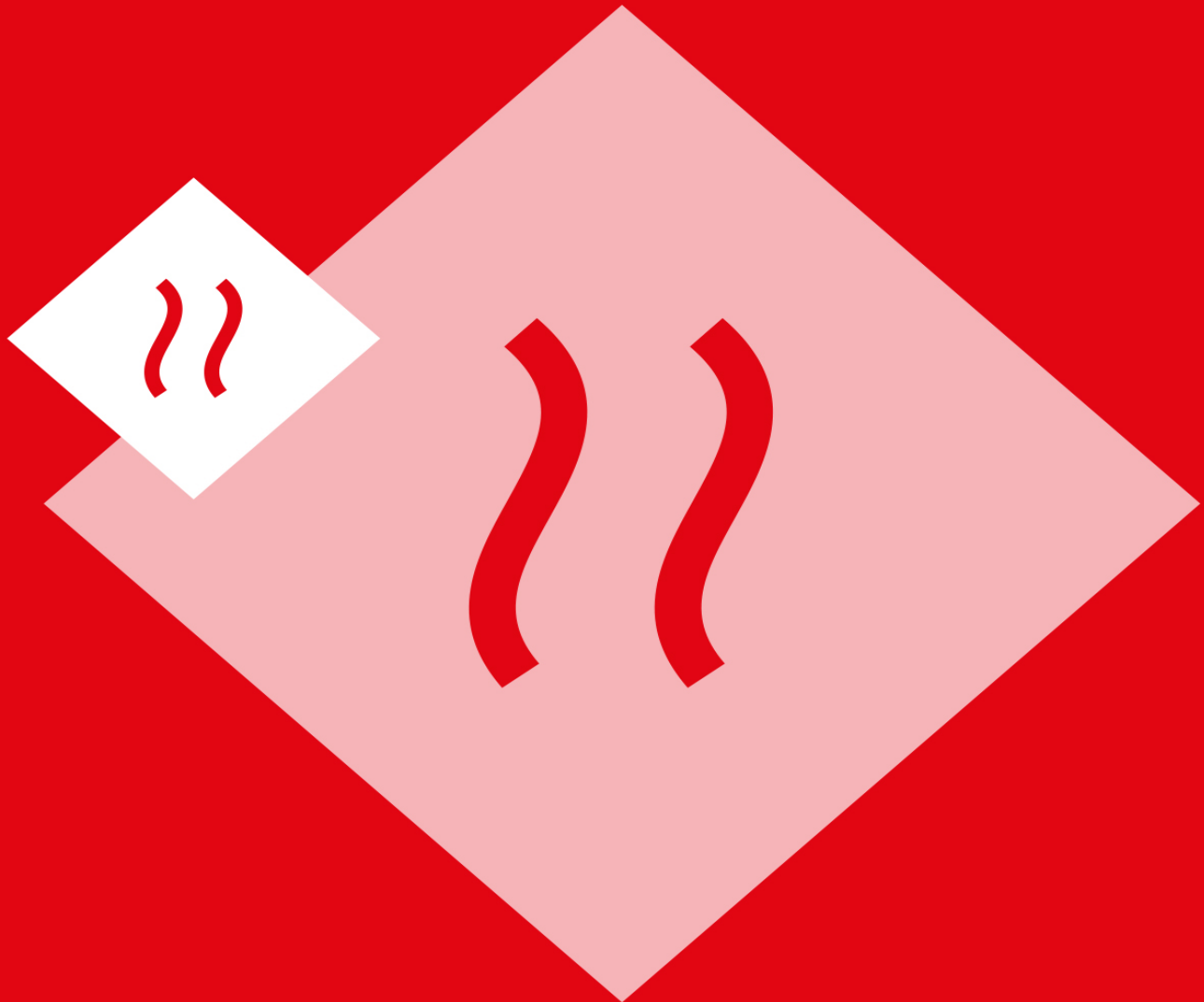


# 4 ELEMENTS

## Legends

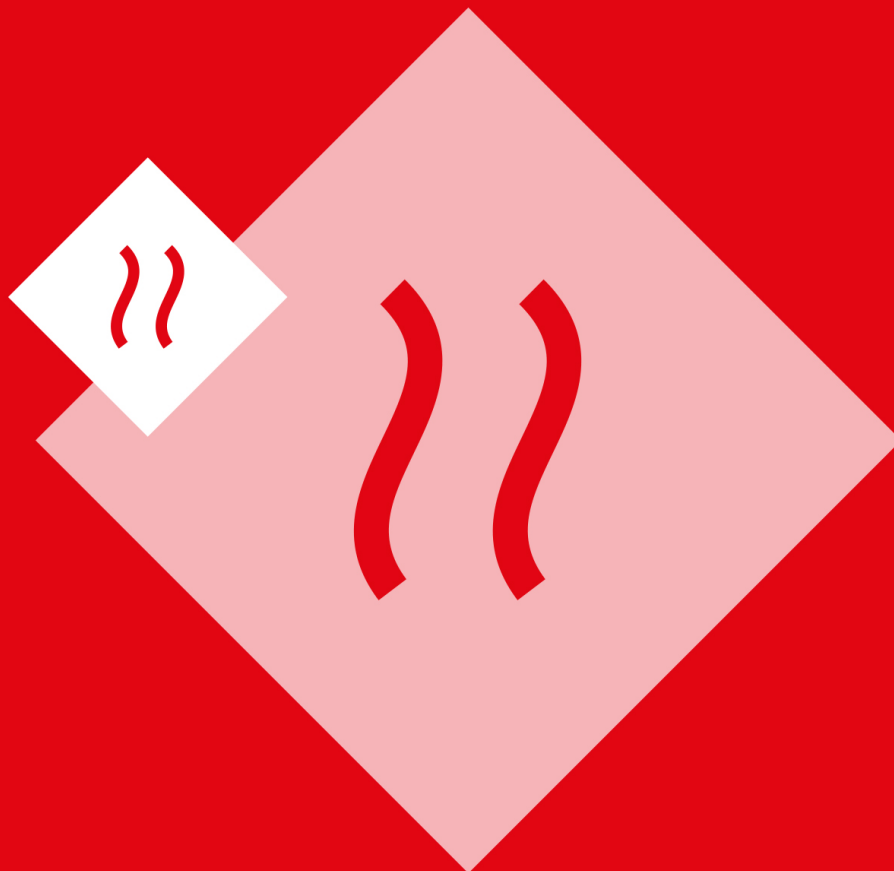
FIRE



# 4 ELEMENTS

## Legends

FIRE



# 4 ELEMENTS



Improve the foreign language  
learning and intercultural  
competences of adults through e-  
learning

## The project

FOUR ELEMENTS is an initiative called to raise awareness and appreciation of the importance of culture and heritage as well as to train educators working with adult learners who want to improve their skills and competences necessary in today's EU labour market.

The project will take advantage of the potential of the common European cultural values associated to the 4 elements (earth, water, air and fire) to empower adults to improve their digital, foreign language and intercultural competences.

The partnership expects to develop and deliver innovative teaching materials presented in a culturally accessible E-book consisting of European legends and stories – giving visibility to the underlying

common EU values and principles, especially adapted to learners with special needs.

To achieved such objectives, partners will develop:

- An interactive map: a collection of legends and stories related to earth, water, air and fire, in different EU countries.
- Digital Books with national legends and stories related to the four elements.
- Methodological recommendations for adult educators.

To find more information, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## **Digital books**

The nations of Europe all have rich cultures of myth and folklore which give the different regions their particular individual flavour. Here we have grouped traditional stories from Belgium, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain according to the four elements: earth, air, wind and fire.

They are specially adapted to adult learners and can be used to develop language or ICT skills among your students while enhancing intercultural understanding.

Alongside the stories, this digital book contains interactive exercises and is in Easy Read format. All the material in it can be downloaded and printed. Teachers and trainers will find tips and suggestions for how to use it on the Recommendations section of this site.

## European partnership

Four Elements is an Erasmus+ KA204 project designed to highlight the importance of culture and heritage at European Union level. It aims to train educators working with adult learners to enable them to acquire the skills and competences, including linguistic and digital skills and competences, required in the European labour market.

The project is coordinated by : CVO EduKempen (Belgium). The partnership also includes DomSpain Consulting (Spain), The Central Library of Võru County (Estonia), Les Apprimeurs (France), Istituto dei Sordi di Torino (Italy), Slovenian Third Age University (Slovenia), MyArtist (Greece).

## Erasmus+ project



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# Moon Extinguishers

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** 1687

**Origin of the legend:** The city of Mechelen in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**"Moon Extinguishers" is a term for the people of Mechelen that has been around since 1687.**

It is said that on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1687, St Rumbold's Tower was shrouded in a heavy winter mist. A none-too-sober local man noticed that the tower was ablaze with a reddish misty glow. He immediately raised the alarm and as the story goes the whole city was suddenly in a state of confusion. The mayor was soon organising the fire-fighting process. Buckets of water were being passed from hand to hand and then taken up the tower stairway. Yet before people had reached the top of the tower, the moon slipped through the haze and disappeared. The locals realised then that the reddish glow was not a fire but the moon. Between them, they agreed not to share the happenings of that night. Alas, the news soon spread across Flanders, whereupon the people of Mechelen became known as "Moon Extinguishers" even to this day. A brewery decided to brew an easily

drinkable city beer with just enough pep for the people of Mechelen. The Maneblusser is a light beer with an alcohol percentage of 5.8% vol. in which you can taste a subtle citrus aroma and a fine finish. It is brewed according to the traditional method of high fermentation.

# Manneken Pis

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** The earliest mention of the existence of Manneken Pis can be found in an administrative text, dating from 1451-1452.

**Origin of the legend:** Brussels (Belgium)

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The famous Manneken Pis remains the emblem of the rebellious spirit of the City of Brussels.**

In this legend, Manneken Pis is actually the young Duke Godfrey III of Leuven who was tied to an oak tree during battle. When Godfrey was two years old, his father died and two noblemen from the house of Berthout declared war. Godfrey's guardians asked the Count of Flanders for help. The Count of Flanders agreed, but his troops were unsure, demanding to see who exactly they were fighting for. To satisfy his army, the infant was shown and taken to battle. On the battlefield, Godfrey was placed in a basket that hung from an oak tree as a symbol of encouragement for the troops. And to encourage them the little Godfrey stood up – every now and then – and peed on the heads and fire of the Berthout enemies. Godfrey's allies won the

battle and celebrated in Brussels, where they planted the oak tree. Legend states that this is why the street next to Manneken Pis is named Rue du Chêne, meaning 'oak street'. And, of course, next to the oak, they erected a statue of the young peeing lord.

# Will-o'-the-wisp

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Dutch

**Date of origin:** In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, K. M. Briggs provides an extensive list of other names for the same phenomenon in her book *A dictionary of Fairies*.

**Origin of the legend:** The Flemish author Ernest Claes gives a colorful description of the Will-o'-the-wisp in his book *Youth* (1940).

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## Lights in swamps of Kalmthout.

In Flemish folklore, will-o'-the-wisps appear at night in desolate places like the heathland of Kalmthout to lure lone travellers off their paths and into swamps and other dangers. According to most folkloric accounts, these ghost lights resemble flickering lanterns that constantly recede before the person following them, so that no one ever gets a close look at them. Also called ignis fatuus (Latin), these eerie illuminations are said to be caused by malevolent spirits of the dead or the spirits of unbaptized children. In Europe, the first jack-o-lanterns were created from turnips to imitate will-o'-the-wisps. They have been seen by so many people in so many different places

throughout the millennia that they seem to be an actual phenomenon rather than the product of frightened human imaginations. The most plausible scientific explanation for will-o'-the-wisps is that they are spontaneously igniting plumes of methane gas produced by rotting vegetation in swamps. But this hypothesis has not yet been proved for certain.

# The Burning Down of Toompea

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 1892

**Author:** Collected and written by Hans Anton Schultz

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Toompea is the name of upper town in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. It is situated on a hill and nowadays is best known as the location of Estonian Parliament.**

In old times, when important landlords and knights were living in Toompea and also performing as judges there, a lot of evil and unfair judging took place there. Plenty of innocent people were tortured and executed and a great deal of wicked deeds done. Toompea was the worst fear of every man who went to Tallinn. Everyone was keeping an eye out to avoid bumping into the judges of Toompea. So dreadful and terrifying were those lords of the court in the old days.

Once again it happened that they had beaten and tortured innocent men and burned them on iron grates to set an example for the others who tried to stand up to the lords. Suddenly flames fell down from the sky and all the court's houses caught fire and burned down, as well as the lords and servants of the court, all devices of

torture and everything else that was situated in Toompea. Even stones that had been carried up there burned down, only an empty hill was left behind. All the court books were also destroyed in the fire. However, in downtown there were no courtrooms and fire did not harm any of the buildings there, the city was left untouched.

Afterwards new courts were established, now already in downtown Tallinn and there the judging was already more unbiased and trustworthy.

# Burned at the Stake

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 1920

**Author:** Matthias Johann Eisen

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Once upon a time on Saaremaa island there was a law, which said that women were not allowed to leave the house without covering their hair. Should a woman leave the house bareheaded, she would be sentenced to death by burning.

In Kihelkonna there once lived a woman called Els. One Sunday she was sitting by the window and combing her hair, when she suddenly noticed a herd of oxen chasing her cow. Els forgot the strict laws of the island, dropped her hairbrush and rushed out to save the cow from the oxen. The cow was running fast, after it came the oxen, followed finally by Els.

Unfortunately, she came across a group of churchgoers. They were startled: "Els, don't you know that it is forbidden to leave the house bareheaded? You deserve to die!"

Now Els remembered the strict law of the island. She wanted to return home, but already the men were pulling her by the hair. They

tied her between two horses and took her to the forest. The whole village gathered to witness her punishment.

The men started to prepare the stake and soon it was finished. Els was condemned to the stake. No matter how hard she fought, she was tied to it and set on fire.

From the flames Els cursed her punishers: "May happiness abandon your homes and misfortune find its way to all your family members! I went to save my cow, not to break our laws! The fault lies with you!"

The people were not frightened by her curse and burned her as the law insisted. Yet, happiness was destroyed in Tagametsa and its whereabouts and misfortune was a frequent visitor in every family.

From the ashes of the burnt woman rose two white doves, flew to the top of the pine tree and cooed in a sad voice, as if saying: for no reason have you sacrificed an innocent soul because of your foolish laws!

The place where Els was burned is until this day called the Moor of Els. In past days every passer-by threw something at the place of burning to retain the memory of Els, whether a small branch, a wooden stick, a stone or anything else that was near at hand.

# The Treasure-bearers in the Wheel Hub

## FAIRY TALE

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Estonian

**Date of origin:** 1895

**Author:** Matthias Johann Eisen

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

The original name of "treasure-bearer" in the title of this fairy tale is "tulihänd" - a creature with a blazing tail. In Estonian folklore there often appear a magical creature, who has different names: "kratt", "pisuhänd", "tulihänd". It was a creature made of hay or old household implements and to bring it to life, its owner had to donate three drops of blood to the Devil. "Tulihänd" or "Kratt" did all kind of jobs for its master and was mostly used to steal or bring different goods to its owner. It could fly and it often left behind a trail of sparks or fire.

One man had two treasure-bearers. Those always brought him all kinds of goods. Every evening the master had to leave food in the attic for the treasure-bearers.

Once the master fell ill and couldn't take the meal to the treasure-bearers himself, so he sent a servant with a bowl of porridge to the attic.

But the crooked servant did not obey his master's orders. He ate the porridge himself and filled the bowl with pig feed. Took it to the attic and stayed behind to see what happens.

After a while the treasure-bearers arrived and went straight to the bowl to start eating.

One said: "Uh-oh, food!"

The other said: "Uh-oh, not food!"

So they stopped eating and started to plan how to get even with their master for deceiving them.

The first one suggested: "Why don't we strangle him?"

The other one said: "Let's burn down the barn instead!"

The first one then asked: "Where shall we hide ourselves?" and the other answered: "We'll hide under the woodpile, inside the wheel hub!"

The servant went in the house and waited for what was going to happen.

After a while the barn went up in flames. The master and the servant ran out and the servant tried to rescue some things from the burning barn. His master forbade him by saying: "Leave it be - what fire has brought me, should also be taken by fire."

In a little while the servant fetched the wheel hub from under the woodpile and threw it into the fire, saying: "If everything else has burned already, let's also burn this old piece of junk."

The master charged like a madman towards the barn and tried to save the wheel hub, but he couldn't get to it because the flames were

too hot.

Then he turned to his servant and said: "From this moment you are fired! You have made me a poor man in an instant! Inside this wheel hub was my biggest fortune and now I have lost this for good."

# The Villedieu-lès-Bailleuls dragon

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** 1845

**Author:** Octave Ferré

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The legend of *Villedieu-lès-Bailleul dragon* was popularized around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but shows aspects of medieval literature. This legend developed around a large cave close to the village.**

The village of Villedieu-lès-Bailleul was a place where it was good to live. The land was fertile and fruitful and the village was known to be the most privileged land in Normandy. However, there was a place beyond the boundaries which clashed with the vigorous and lush nature of the village: a ravine whose walls were scorched rocks and where lived a terrible dragon.

The legend has it that the lord of the land committed the most horrible crime, so horrible that the legend does not tell. The dragon was therefore sent as a punishment. It terrorized the entire village and devastated everything around it. Woe to the one who crossed its path!

The village wise men, realizing that their prayers did not change a thing, decided to visit an augur who had a great reputation. They begged him to tell what they could do to appease the dragon. The augur told them that every month during new moon day, they would have to sacrifice the most beautiful young woman of the village by offering her to the beast.

The news spread out quickly in the village and all the young girls who were pretty cried. Nobles and knights from all over the area came to the village and tried to fight the dragon. But they all ended up burnt to ashes. Even the bravest and strongest knight of all the kingdom did not succeed in the task.

One day, however, a young knight dressed in tinplate armour went to the dragon's ravine. The young man was the fiancé of Mathilde, the most beautiful young girl in the village. She was supposed to be sacrificed the next day. Enraged by the idea of losing his fiancée, the young man rushed toward the dragon, determined to kill it. After a long and restless fight, the knight managed to fatally injure the dragon.

However, as he thought the dragon dead, the young man let down his guard for a second. Huge mistake, as the dragon, in a dying breath, set fire to the young knight.

The villagers, though freed from the dragon, did not feel like celebrating their victory. Too many young men had died in order to save the village. The church bells rang to thank them for their bravery.

The legend has it that Mathilde, though she was freed from her terrible destiny, thanks to her fiancé's sacrifice, died of sorrow the

next day.

# The legend of Mont Saint-Michel

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** IX<sup>th</sup> century

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The Mont Saint-Michel is a small island of granite in Normandy which name comes from the archangel Saint Michel. The latter is a major character in Christian history: as the chef of the celestial militia, Saint Michel is often represented fighting the devil.**

Saint Michel, one of the seven archangels in Christianity, was one day called to fight the devil. The latter turned into a formidable dragon to lead the fight. The battle started on the Mont Dol in Brittany. Satan, supported by an evil horde of demons, fought fiercely against the archangel. But the battle, whose outcome was uncertain, continued for days in the sky before it ended on the Mont Tombe, the former name of Mont Saint-Michel.

Aubert, the bishop of Avranches, witnessed the fight. In a dream, he received Saint Michel's order to build a place of worship at the exact location where he won against the devil. The poor bishop, who thought he was losing his mind, did not dare to do anything and

decided to wait. The archangel appeared to him a second time, but Aubert still doubted this apparition.

When Saint Michel manifested himself a third time, Aubert could not doubt any more. However, Saint Michel was furious about the bishop's hesitation and left on the latter's skull an indisputable proof of his presence: a circular hole. Now sure of Saint Michel's apparition, the bishop built the actual Mont Saint-Michel to celebrate the archangel's victory over the devil.

Today, the bishop's skull is still kept in the basilica of Avranches.

# Jean the bear

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** French

**Date of origin:** XV<sup>th</sup> century

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Jean the bear is the most famous name given to a legendary and hybrid creature half human and half bear. He's provided with superhuman strength which makes him almost invincible. *Jean the bear* is the most popular legend of the Pyrenean mythology. The first apparition of this character goes back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century on several paintings and engravings. In the Pyrenees and during centuries, bears were feared by villagers.

A young woman was kidnapped by a gigantic bear while she was walking through the woods. The bear held her captive in its cave. A few months later, the woman, who was pregnant, delivered a half-bear half-human baby she called Jean de l'Ours. When the child grew up and became tall and strong enough, he helped his mother escape from the cave by lifting the huge rock that was blocking the way out. Jean de l'Ours and his mother returned to the village, and he started a new life amongst the people there.

Jean de l'Ours went to school but one day he punched another student. When the teacher tried to punish him, Jean de l'Ours threw him out the window. The half- bear child got expelled from school. Then, he started an apprenticeship in a forge: an art he mastered quickly. Several years later, Jean de l'Ours decided to travel across France, and he forged an unbreakable iron cane to help him during his journey.

On the road, he met three extremely strong young boys who decided to come with him. After several days' walking, they discovered a mysterious castle and decided to settle in it. However, in the castle lived a giant who beat all of Jean de l'Ours' friends. Only Jean de l'Ours managed to defeat the giant thanks to his unbreakable iron cane.

Then, Jean de l'Ours explored the entire castle. He noticed that the floor of one of the rooms sounded hollow. Under the floor, he found a big hole from which he could hear screaming. The friends all decided to go and see what was down the hole but only Jean de l'Ours was brave enough to climb all the way down. At the bottom of the hole Jean de l'Ours met a fairy who told him there were three rooms in the tunnel. In two of them were demons and in the last one lived three beautiful princesses.

Jean de l'Ours fought all the demons and helped the princesses climb back up to the castle.

Each princess gave him a sphere; one was decorated with pearls, one with diamonds and one with emeralds. However, when Jean de l'Ours tried to join his friends, the three men cut the rope he was using, and he fell into the hole again. The fairy helped Jean de l'Ours

find his way out of the tunnel where he ran into his former companions. Very angry, he chased them out of the castle. The three beautiful princesses went back to their kingdom and Jean de l'Ours continued his journey.

Some time later, Jean de l'Ours went to the princesses' kingdom where he started to work for a blacksmith. The king asked them to forge three spheres decorated with pearls, diamonds and emeralds.

Jean de l'Ours agreed and a few days later he gave to the king the three balls the princesses offered him years ago. The king, very satisfied with Jean de l'Ours' work, offered him in marriage the youngest and most beautiful of his three daughters.

# Hephaestus the Smith

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## **A myth about Hephaestus and his hatred of his parents.**

In Greek mythology, Hephaestus was the god of fire. He used fire to process metals, especially precious metals. He had a disability: he was lame.

According to a legend, Hephaestus was disappointed with his parents because he thought it was their fault that he was lame. He waited for an opportunity to express his bitterness. He found this opportunity when he was asked to make thrones for the Gods. The throne of his mother, Hera, was made out of pure gold. But when Ira sat upon it, she was immediately tied up with invisible small metal strings and the throne rose up, suspending the goddess in the air. The other gods were unable to help Hera and they asked Hephaestus to free her, but he refused. At last Dionysus managed to persuade him. He gave Hephaestus lots of wine to make him drunk and then made a deal with him. The deal was that Hephaestus would free Hera and in

return the gods would give him Aphrodite, the goddess of love, as his wife.

# Hephaestus's lost secret

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

## **A traditional story trying to explain volcanic activity.**

In Greek mythology, Hephaestus was the god of fire and volcanic activity. He had a palace and a blacksmith's workshop on Mount Olympus.

As the god of fire, Hephaestus commanded the fire that existed in the depths of the earth, causing the molten rocksmelted materials to eject from their holes, which people called volcanoes.

Hephaestus made all the weapons and shields of Agamemnon and he made the jewellery and thrones of the gods. He was an excellent metal craftsman and so he became the god of metallurgy. He forged Achilles' shield.

Hephaestus was the protector of fire, until Prometheus stole it to give to people. People used fire for heating metals to make weapons and for cooking their food.

# Prometheus and the present of fire

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Greek

**Origin of the legend:** Greek mythology

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**A traditional story about how fire was stolen from the gods and given to people.**

After Zeus had fought with his father, the Titan Kronos, and had become the leader of the Olympic gods, he was hostile to humans. Zeus wanted to destroy them all in order to start afresh. But another Titan, Prometheus, did not let him carry out his plan. Prometheus was the son of a Titan and a mythical sea creature named Asia.

Prometheus was always close to men and, with his brother Epimetheus, was in charge of giving people skills and abilities. Prometheus gave men the ability to think and taught them many arts, skills and sciences, like astronomy, so that they could follow stars' orbits and use their knowledge in order to plan sea trips.

With the knowledge that Prometheus taught them, people started to become stronger and that made Zeus angry. One day, a sacrifice was made to the gods. Prometheus wanted to give humans as much

food as he could, so he divided the parts of the sacrifice they had made into two parts and covered them so that from the outside they would look the same. In the first part, the bigger one, he put all the bones and the fat and in the other one, the smaller one, he put the actual meat. He gave the smaller portion to the gods and Zeus complained, so then he gave the gods the bigger part and the smaller one to the humans.

When Zeus understood what Prometheus had done, in order to punish him, he took fire away from humans, so that they could not cook their food and would not be able to eat it. But Prometheus was smarter. He went to Olympus, the home of the gods, and stole the fire from the sun's chariot. He hid the fire in the blossom of a plant and took it back to the humans.

Zeus wanted to punish Prometheus for stealing the fire. He chained him to a rock in the Caucasus and left him there to suffer from the hot sun and the frost. In addition, Zeus sent a huge eagle every day to eat Prometheus's liver. Every night, his liver grew back and every day the eagle ate it, so that the torture was never-ending.

# The torch of the desires

## FAIRY TALE

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Once upon a time there was an old farmer who lived in a poor hut with his son Fortunato. Fortunato's name was misleading. The boy was sickly, hunchbacked and crippled. When he was nearly eighteen, Fortunato decided to leave his home and slowly to go on the road with his crutch to seek his fortune, considering that up to that moment it had not been very good.

He crossed mountains, lowlands and rivers, hungry and thirsty. But no good fortune arrived.

One day, at sunset, he got lost into a wood. He hurried as much as he could, but already he could hear wolves howling. At last he arrived at a lamp-lit hut. The door opened and a small old lady appeared. Fortunato asked for help and refuge. She let him come inside her small house and offered him for dinner a bowl with one crumb and two grains of rice in it. Fortunato saw the old lady make a sign with her right hand and then the bowl started to grow until its contents had been transformed into appetizing, steaming hot soup! Fortunato ate, amazed, and the curious old lady asked him to tell her his story.

The boy took advantage of their friendly conversation to ask her a spell for finding good fortune. The old woman fondly responded saying that unfortunately she was not a powerful fairy, therefore she could not help him very much. However, she could reveal the way to the Castle of Desires and how he could enter it.

So next morning, at sunrise, the old lady took Fortunato to a crossroads in the woods and explained to him what to do. The boy would have to walk for three days and three nights, but he could only reach the castle if he never looked back. He could enter the castle only by knocking with a stone given by the old woman. Inside the castle he would have to go through rooms and long hallways until he reached an old wizard who was asleep on his feet and with a green candle in his hand. That candle was the talisman that Fortunato had to take and which would give him whatever he desired. He had to watch out for the wizard, the dragons and the spirits in the castle: they fell asleep from midday to one o'clock and if he was still there when they woke, he would be lost forever.

Fortunato took the stone, thanked the old woman and set off with his crutch on the path she had indicated. Three times he heard someone calling him as if people were in danger, and so he looked back three times. Each time he had to start again from the beginning, until he decided to plug his ears with wads of cloth.

Arriving at the castle, he knocked at the door with the stone given to him by the old woman and when he entered he saw a courtyard full of giant salamanders, toads, vipers and huge scorpions. Fortunato was horrified, but it was midday and they were all sleeping. So with his crutch he passed through those beasts. As the old woman had

told him, he went through long hallways and courtyards and through three rooms: one full of silver coins, the second full of gold coins and the last one full of precious gems. Each time Fortunato went through one of those rooms he emptied and filled his pockets with the new wealth that he found. Finally he arrived in a big, dark room: here there was the sleeping wizard with the candle in his hand. Fortunato took the candle and immediately started to run because the time was expiring and soon all the creatures in the castle would be awake. As soon as he was safe out of the castle, he heard dreadful cries coming from inside the walls behind him: it was monsters discovering the theft!

Fortunato immediately lit the candle and asked it to make his hump disappear and straighten his legs. As he spoke each desire he lit the candle and then he extinguished it so as not to waste it. Since it was now evening, Fortunato told the candle he wanted a wonderful palace on a hill above a city. In the morning, the city's inhabitants admired Fortunato's beautiful building. But the tyrant King was envious and sent a servant to Fortunato commanding him to come to his court. Fortunato didn't accept this order and continued living his rich life of splendor and luxury, but he wasn't happy, feeling something was missing.

One day, walking through the city Fortunato saw, leaning out of a window in the palace, the King's daughter, and fell in love with her. He didn't know how to get close to her. Then he thought of the candle and asked for Nazzarena, the king's daughter, to become invisible and brought to him. His desire was granted. At the beginning the girl was afraid, but after Fortunato had spoken gentle words expressing all the love he felt for her, Nazzarena was happy. At

sunrise Fortunato commanded at the green candle to bring the princess back in the castle. These night-time visits became frequent.

An envious maid discovered the movements of the princess and revealed them to the King. The King asked a wizard for advice, and was told to hang a perforated bag with flour inside on Nazzarena's nightdress, to show where the girl went every night.

The perforated bag was hung secretly on the nightdress and the following morning the King with his army followed the trail of flour which led them to Fortunato's palace.

The King captured Fortunato while he was sleeping, had him locked up in prison and sentenced him to death. On the day of his execution, Fortunato was allowed to have one last desire granted, and Fortunato asked for the candle for which he cared so much. So, Fortunato in front of the flame of the candle asked that all of the inhabitants of the kingdom, except Nazzarena, could sink into the ground up to the chin. And everyone suddenly sank into the earth. Fortunato took the princess and went up to the King to ask for his daughter in marriage. The King saw that the boy was young, beautiful, strong and rich and thought that he could be a good successor. He also wanted to be dug up, so he accepted!

That same day, instead of the death sentence, the wedding was celebrated.

# Devil's stone

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Little villages in the Piedmont region are full of stories and legends like this one: usually that's because of the lack of scientific knowledge available to people in the past. People tried to give a meaning to what they saw and perceived through these stories. In many of these kind of legends there is the fight between good (God) and evil (Devil) and the natural world around can only obey these two powerful decision-makers.**

Many years ago, in a village in Piedmont, at the point where the way to the cemetery is crossed by the main street, there was a huge stone, extending up to the shoulders of a man. It seemed as if that stone had been put there on purpose so that people coming from the mill and carrying bags full of flour could rest there. But it was also a tradition, when someone of the village died, to go to this stone called "the black stone", lay the coffin down and wait for the priest and his last benediction. It was said that before the priest arrived, the devil always came to steal the soul of the corpse. These stories existed

because all the time the coffin was on the black stone, it smelled like sulphur and burning.

One day at the beginning of July, the "Saint" died. She was an old woman in her nineties who lived alone in a little isolated house. The day of the burial was typically summer: the sky was clear, the wheat was cuddled by the sun, cicadas sang and lizards rested quietly on the rocks. Suddenly a very strong smell of sulphur and burning spread through the air. It was so strong that the cicadas stopped singing and the lizards hid. The procession for the Saint's burial had almost reached the black stone, but the rock burned under that warm summer sun, while the devil behind the rock happily looked forward to the new soul that he was going to take. But this time the priest arrived first and didn't let anyone stop at the stone, so they continued toward the cemetery. The singing and praying continued, the cicadas sang again and the lizards went back to their sunny rocks. At the cemetery the coffin was lowered into the earth. Then everyone returned to their work in the fields.

Suddenly, during the night, lightning quivered in the sky, and thunder made the houses tremble. Lightning flashed and hail beat down. The bells began to ring a death knell. The inhabitants woke up. Their hearts were in their throats and they couldn't understand what was happening. The sound of a strong blow was heard from the crossroads by the black stone: a sphere of fire sank into the ground and again there was the smell of sulphur and burning.

The tempest ended in the blink of an eye, the bells stopped ringing, and quiet and silence returned to the village.

Next morning the black stone had disappeared, shattered into a thousand pieces scattered across the burnt ground. On the biggest of these fragments there was the track of a horseshoe.

Since then the black stone has been known as the "devil's stone" and it is said that sometimes there still is a smell of sulphur and burning in that place.

# The extinct volcano

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Italian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Like other legends connected with this area of Italy and the elements that compose it - for example rocks, mountains, rivers - this legend tries to give an explanation for natural phenomena. As mentioned in the story, Monte Bracco has a particular shape, similar to a volcano: people living around it started to think it could really be a volcano, but since it has never erupted it is best to say that it has been extinguished.

Seen from the lowlands that surround it, Mount Bracco seems to be a volcano due to its pyramidal shape, like many others in Italy, for instance Etna or Vesuvius. One day, however, St. James “turned it off” for ever. That’s the story...

One day the earth began to tremble in the villages at the foot of the mountains that guard Mount Viso., Strong explosions pounded the valleys and big cracks were opened up in the walls of the houses. It seemed that Mount Bracco quivered, while something inside the mountain was bursting. From a huge break that opened on the crest of the mountain a plume of smoke came out and straight afterwards

red tongue of fire shot into the sky. Lava poured down and the scared inhabitants began to abandon their houses. It seemed to be the end of the world. The farmers were asking where St. James was, and why he didn't help them.

The Apostle James, or St. James the Greater, was far away at that moment, maybe in France or maybe in Galicia, where today one can find his sanctuaries. The saint loved to travel. He used to bring with him a wooden stick to support him during his long walks. There was a little pumpkin tied to the stick that served as a flask. His walking trail was really special: he had the capability to become a giant and to travel kilometres in just one step.

The night Bracco burned, James felt voices calling him from a far distance. They were farmers' voices. St. James decided to climb the top of Mount Bracco. The inhabitants saw him open the "pumpkin-flask" and pour every last drop of water in it into the crater. The flames reacted immediately, first jumping up to the sky, then going down and disappearing.

At dawn Mount Bracco regained its tranquillity and silence and since then it has remained just a mountain. To St. James are dedicated two chapels: one in the village of Barge, at the foot of the mountain, and the other up on the mountainside. Every year on July 25<sup>th</sup> there is a celebration. If the saint does not have other obligations on that day, he pours his water into the volcano and the surrounding land.

# The Alley of the Hell

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Spanish

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

The legend has it that a Spanish noble, Don Felipe de Pantoja, fell in love with a young Jewish woman named Rebeca, who was in fact engaged to another man, Samuel, a young and wealthy Jew. Don Felipe, determined to find a solution, decided to visit a beautiful witch known by all as “The She-Devil”. She cast a spell and summoned the necromancer. Felipe had to visit the witch again after a few days, as his beloved Rebeca was still seeing Samuel, and told the witch her cast had not worked. She did not take it very well and, annoyed, told him “the die is cast, I have not failed”. In order to prove she was right, she suggested both went together to the Jewish quarter the following night and find out what was going on. That night, they saw the beautiful Rebeca with her family leaving the synagogue and Samuel’s lifeless body leaning against a wall in a nearby street. Sometime after, Rebeca and Felipe got married, and Felipe went to visit the witch again to pay for her services. Although their marriage had had a high cost, young Samuel’s death, the She-Devil was not too worried about that and wanted Felipe to pay some coins for the horrible spell. Don Felipe went to the same old alley

where they had met the first time and as he threw the coins to the witch and they touched her hands, blue and green flames sparked out and spread throughout her body until it consumed the witch completely. A strong impulse threw Felipe against the ground, and frightened, as soon as he recovered after the shock, he ran out of the alley. On the next day, as always, there was a blind man begging at the Toledo Cathedral's door singing in the souk while the women around were doing the sign of the holy cross and saying: "Yesterday the She-Devil died, consumed by the fire; yesterday the She-Devil died, the one with olive eyes; the She-Devil, the She-Devil, of the demon she was possessed".

# Saint George and the Dragon

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Catalan

**Date of origin:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries

**Origin of the legend:** The first known references to this legend are found in the Greek Palimpsests of the Austrian National Library, in Vienna, a 5<sup>th</sup> century document that collecting lower scripts and manuscripts. Some fragments by Pasícrates, who can be considered the first 'biographer' of St George, narrate his martyrdom. Later on, the legend became well known by the Golden Legend (Legenda aurea in Latin) a collection of hagiographies written by Jacobus de Varagine (Iacopo da Varazze) around 1260 which was widely read in late medieval Europe. To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

The main character of this legend, St George, is believed to be a Roman soldier, converted to Christianity, from Diospolis, Palestine, from year 270. This soldier was a great protagonist of a great knightly deed in Libya, and many similar legends are told in the Middle East. However, a certain Catalan tradition (Costumari Catalán de Joan Amades) tells that the origin of the legend are the crusades taking place in the Crown of Aragon (current Spain).

A legend has it that in a cave near a small village named Montblanc there lived a dragon, which terrorized the townsfolk. Every day, villagers were forced to give their cattle to feed the dragon, until the day came when they ran out of animals to feed the beast. Eventually, they came up with a solution: they would have a draw every day at the village's main square with the name of all the inhabitants to decide who would be sacrificed as food for the dragon. One day, it was the princess name that came out from the draw and, despite the great sadness of the king and all villagers, she set off to encounter the dragon. When the princess was about to be devoured by the animal, a handsome knight, Sant Jordi, appeared riding his horse and, with his sharp sword, confronted the dragon putting its life to an end. This legend tells that from the blood spilt by the dragon, a rose bush was born and the knight took the most beautiful flower to give it to the princess to show his love.

# The Mountain Legend: Origin of the Name "Pyrenees"

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Spanish

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The myth setting takes place in the Pyrenees mountains.**

The myth explains the relationship between Hercules and Pyrene, the daughter of the king Tubal. They were in a secret relationship, not accepted by the king, so when he discovered it, he decided to expel Hercules forever. When her beloved left, Pyrene felt lonely and wandered around the woods where she met Gerion, a monster that felt profound love for her but was rejected. When Pyrene saw him, she tried to escape and Gerion decided to burn the forest to leave Pyrene without the protection. She changed her mind and stayed in the woods crying. An eagle saw Pyrene and warned Hercules, but it was too late. Pyrene was able just to tell Hercules what had happened and she died. He decided to entomb her putting stones all over her body, originating the Pyrenees, the mountains where Pyrene was buried.

# The Ljubljana Dragon and the Argonauts

## MYTH

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

**Date of origin:** 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD

**Origin of the legend:** The Greek historian Zosimus was the first to establish the connection between Emona (now Ljubljana) and the Argonauts (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD).

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**Many folktales describe a dragon that can be defeated with a trick or by using force. A similar thing happened to the Postojna dragon.**

Once upon a time Jason, a famous Greek hero, was travelling together with the Argonauts, a group of his men, on a quest for the golden-fleeced sheep, which was guarded by a huge and terrible dragon, somewhere on the coast of the Black Sea. Jason won the battle with the dragon, psychologically helped by Medea, his sweetheart, who loved him dearly. They wanted to flee together, but the king, Medea's father, would not let them go. By mistake their ship, the Argo ("fast ship"), named after its builder, sailed into the Danube river instead of sailing into the Aegean Sea, towards Greece.

It was too late to change course, so the ship sailed up the Danube, the Sava and the Ljubljanica river. There, suddenly, a terrible storm

broke out. Jason, who was very strong, leaned against a cliff along the Ljubljanica river, thus anchoring the light ship. The print of his fist can still be seen in the cliff called Jason's fist. On the bank of the Ljubljanica river where the Argonauts had to stop, they built a settlement called Emona. But that was not easy since there was marshy land nearby guarded by another dragon, a huge monster. Jason and the dragon fought, and Jason again was the winner. So, Emona was built and the dragon was adopted as the symbol and coat of arms of Ljubljana later on. Emona was later renamed Ljubljana. There are many sights in Ljubljana recalling Emona.

# Jami Dragon in the Postojna Cave

## LEGEND

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

Being forceful, the dragon is believed to be a symbol of vitality, constructive and mostly destructive forces. But a dragon can also be a giver like the Jami dragon. In most Slovenian legends dragons appear as mythical ancestors or guardians of treasure. Dragons were believed to cause landslides, avalanches, earthquakes, and all sorts of natural catastrophes.

Fire-breathing dragons used to dwell in the Postojna Cave. One of these was Jami who was a 'good' dragon: peaceful, friendly and a lover of nature. Because he was living alone, he soon became depressed. A beetle came to his rescue and introduced him to the other small inhabitants of the cave. Jami's circle of friends quickly grew. Jami gladly agreed to protect his new friends' treasure of pearls hidden in the cave.

The ill-willed goblin was afraid of Jami; therefore he promised that he would fulfil his every wish. Jami asked to be turned into a human being. The wish was granted. Jami felt himself grow smaller. He

became a human fish for ever, destined to play with his cave-dwelling friends and guard the treasure of cave pearls.

# Fire in the House of Three Witches

## FAIRY TALE

**Main element:** Fire

**Language of the original:** Slovenian

**Date of origin:** 21<sup>st</sup> century

**Author:** Tinka Bačič

To find more information about the legend, access the Four Elements platform [here](#).

**The story is a modern Slovenian Fairy Tale. Recently an interesting national project Lahkonočnice (“Fairy Tales to Say Good Night”) has taken place. The most popular modern fairy tales were recorded by different older people in institutional care and published on YouTube as well as broadcasted on the national radio.**

It happened on a summer day. There was no cloud, no wind and the sun was shining. The three witches were playing with matches in their courtyard and set fire to their house made of honey and chocolate. “Fire shouldn’t be unattended,” said a black bird sitting on a tree branch to himself and he called for the fire brigade. In the meantime, fire was growing and it became really big. There was the good smell of chocolate and warm honey everywhere around. “Gosh!” the witches were crying, desperately and frantically running around in the courtyard. “Help! House on fire! Chocolate melting away!” the witches were crying. It was lucky that the black bird had called the

fire brigade. Soon the fire was stopped and everybody was served hot chocolate.

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