

A CENTURY OF IVANA  
BRLIĆ-MAŽURANIĆ'S  
CROATIAN TALES OF  
LONG AGO)  
(PRIČE IZ DAVNINE)

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m l a d o s t

# Life and family background

- Born in 1874 in Ogulin, in a politically prominent family
- Grandfather Ivan Mažuranić – known as Ban commoner, one of the most important figures in the 19 century Croatia's political life
- Father Vladimir Mažuranić – a famous lawyer and politician just like her future husband
- Diary - Good Morning, World!
- Autobiography (written in 1916, published in 1930)





„ My greatest wish that some day something coming from my pen will be printed was early repressed by another, very strong feeling.

...very early in life my own reasoning led me to understand that writing collides with woman's duties”

(Autobiography, 1916, pp. 179)

"When my children were big enough to develop a desire to read, I suddenly realised that I had found the point where my desire to write makes peace with my understanding of my duties.

My children wanted to read – what a joy for me to be their guide... to open for them the doors into the glorious world every child enters when it starts reading for the first time... How could such work disagree with my duties?!...

This peace was made naturally, of its own accord, without me even knowing; one day I simply sat down to write my first book..."

(Autobiography, 1916, pp. 183)



# Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in the European literary context

- At the beginning she wrote short stories and poems (initially written in French) – “brief and amusing reading”
- 1913 – “The Marvelous Adventures and Misadventures of Hlapić the Apprentice “, also known as “ The Brave Adventures of Lapitch “ (Čudnovate zgode šegrta Hlapića)



Svi su se pastiri sakupili oko Gite i Hlapića, i oko Bundaša i papige, i nijesu znali kakva su to šarena čudovišta.





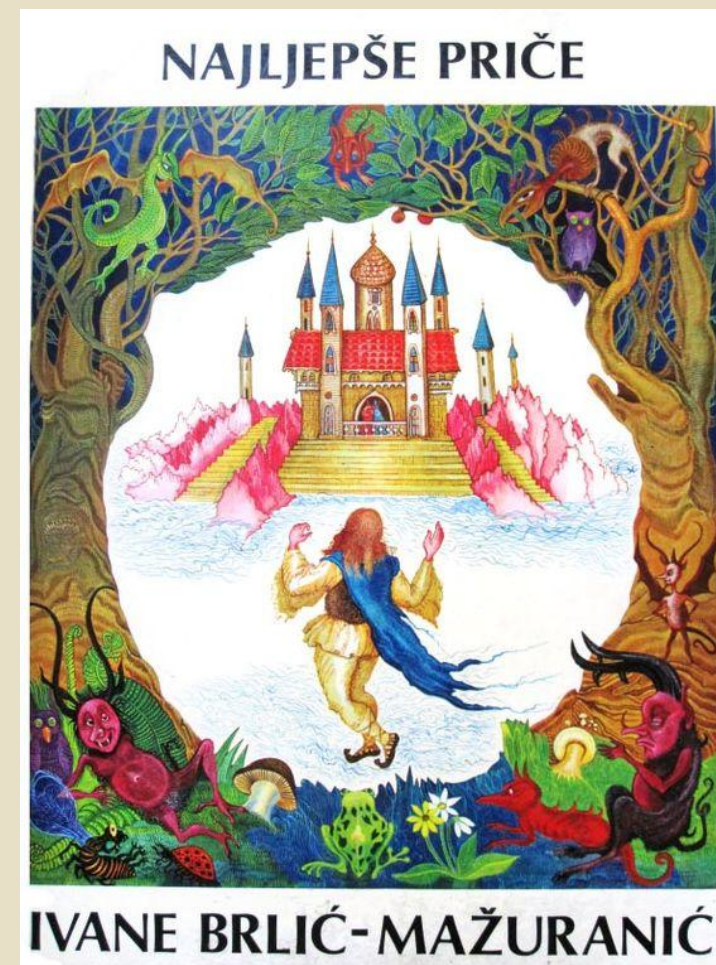
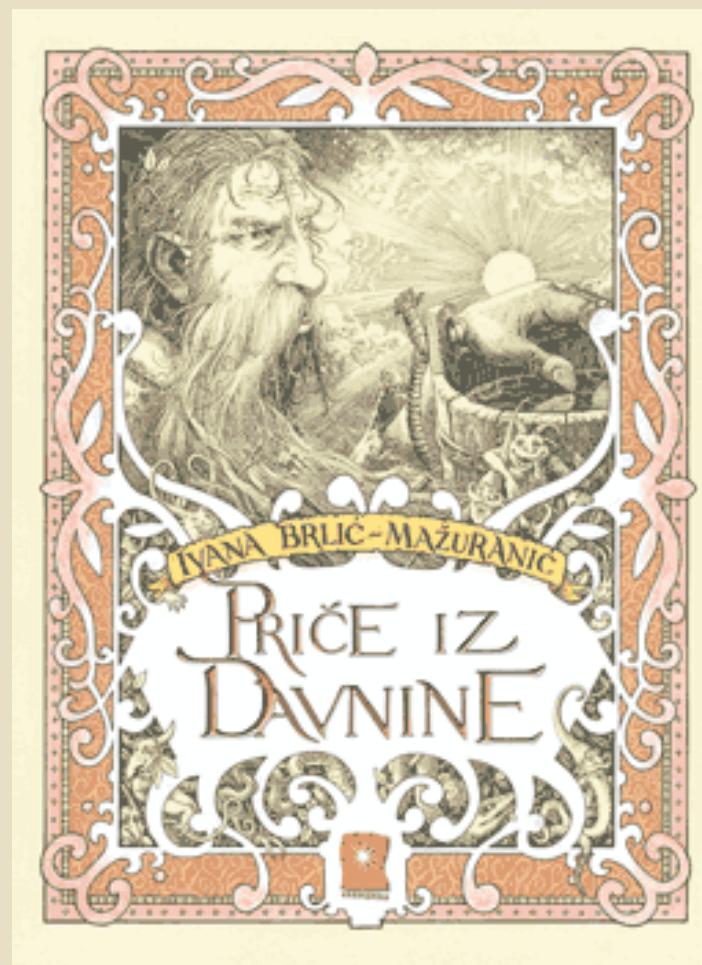
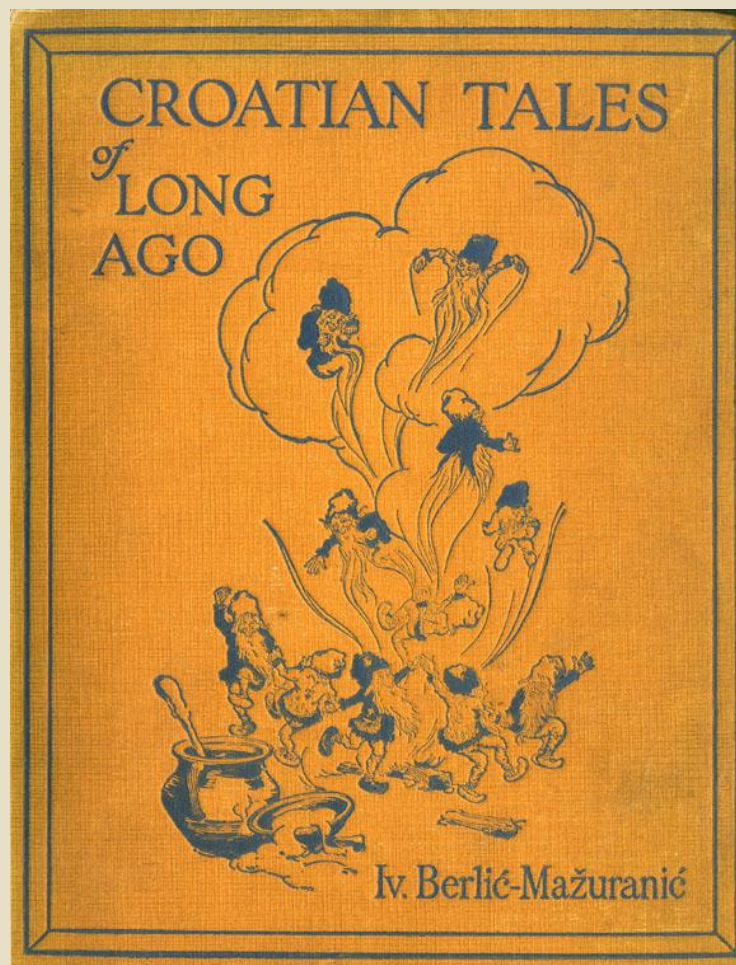




## ... in the European literary context

- In 1916 (when Ivana was 42) she published *Tales of Long Ago*
- This collection is considered to be the best collection of fairy tales in Croatian literature
- In 1922, only 6 years later, *Tales of Long Ago* were translated in English







# Translations of Tales of Long Ago into foreign languages

## ENGLISH:

Croatian Tales of Long Ago 1922, 1924. London – New York: George Allen & Unwin LTD. – Frederick A. Stokes Company. Translated by Fanny S. Copeland; illustrations by Vladimir Kirin

## DANISH:

Lavendel og Rosmarin (1929). Koebenhavn: Henrik Koppels Forlag. Translated by Thorkil Barfod; illustrations by Vladimir Kirin

Gyldenlok og Kæmpen (1930). Koebenhavn: Henrik Koppels Forlag. Translated by Gudrun Lohse; illustrations by Vladimir Kirin

## SWEDISH:

Lavendel och Rosmarin : sagor för stora och smaa (1928). Stockholm: Bokförlaget Natur och kultur. Translated by Margit Miholić Wohlfart; illustrations by Vladimir Kirin





# Ivana Brlić Mažuranić in the European literary context



Brlić-Mažuranić (1874-1938)

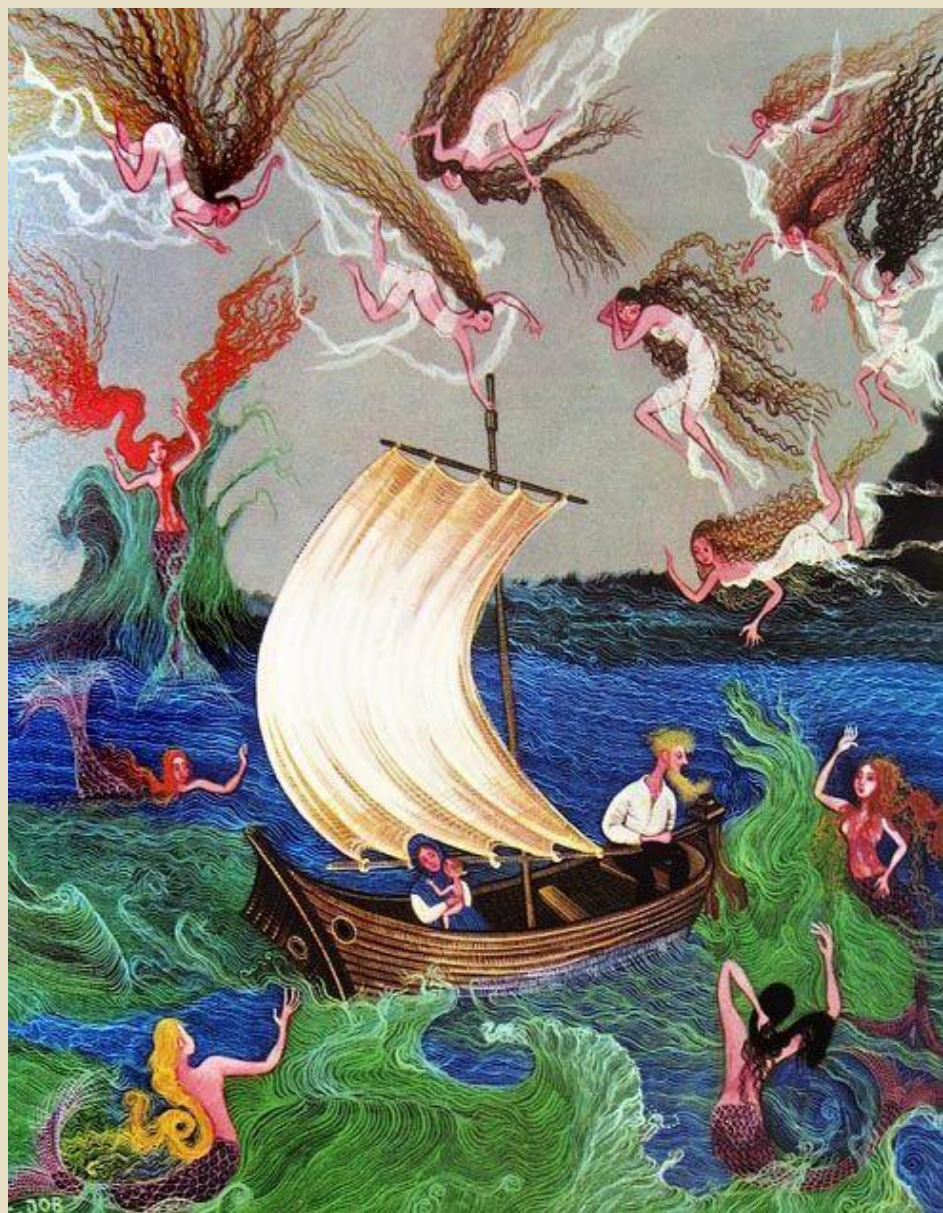
Torunn Selberg , Nevena Škrbić  
Alempijević; Turning Fiction into  
Reality: the Making of Two Places  
within Literary Geography (2013)

Acija Alfirević; Vladimir Vidrić  
and Edvard Munch, the authors of  
the painting and poem the "The Sin,,  
(2010)



Sigrid Undset (1882-1949)





SAD DA JE ONO BIO SIGURAN I  
DOSJETLJIV MOMAK I MAHNUO  
SJEKIROM NA NJU, POSTALA BI  
DJEVOJKA OPET ZMIJOM, UTEK-  
LA BI I - NIKOMU NISTA.







## Tales of Long Ago in the context of European children's literature

- 19th century to the First World War - the golden era of children's literature – educate and entertain as well
- IBM in the rarest group of authors – those whose work represent the meeting point of children and adults

# Tales of Long Ago in the context of European children's literature

- The collection is a creation of an original fairy-tale world, based on Croatian oral literature and the rich Slavic mythology
- Tales of Long Ago have been interpreted by the theory of literature from various aspects – literary, historical and cultural aspects, theoretical approaches, linguistic and stylistic aspects...





# Croatian tales of Long Ago – about the collection

“...these stories are in their essence as much as in their execution purely and completely my original work. They are built around names and characters taken from Slavic mythology and that is all and in itself external connection with folk mythology. Not a single scene, a single plot, a single development, a single tendency in these stories was found ready in our mythology.”



# Croatian tales of Long Ago – about the collection

1st edition of Tales of Long Ago include 6 fary tales (for 3rd ed. IBM adds 2 more)

The titles of 6 fary tales in the 1st edition:

- How Quest Sought the Truth
- Fisherman Plunk and His Wife
- Reygoch
- Bridesman Sun and Bride Bridekins
- Stribor's Forest
- Little Brother Primrose and Sister Lavende



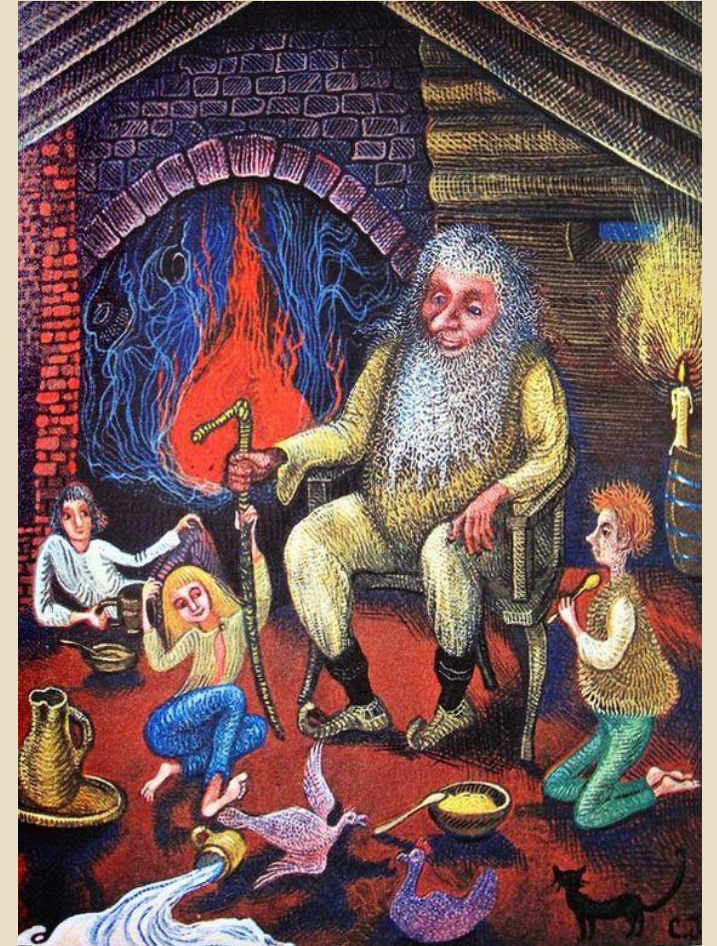
The 3rd edition of the Tales contains two additional tales: Toporko the Wanderer and the Nine Princes and Yagor



# Croatian tales of Long Ago – about the collection

“ONCE upon a beautiful summer night the men were watching their horses in the meadow. And as they watched, they fell asleep. And as they slept, the fairies flew out of the clouds to have some sport with the horses, as is the fairies' way.” (Reygoch)

“ONCE upon a time very long ago there lived an old man in a glade in the midst of an ancient forest.” (How Qyest Sought the Truth)

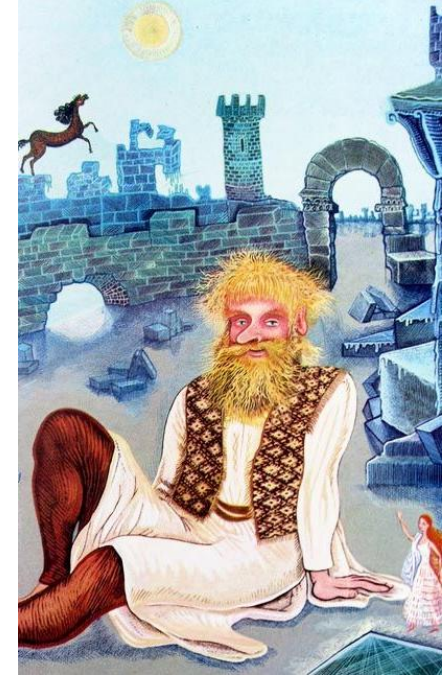




“There he is sitting to this very day, counting the stones and praying the Lord never again to tempt him away from that vast and desolate spot, which is the very place for one so big and so simple.” (Reygoch)

“And such a wedding as they had, and such songs as were sung that day in the Barren Marches you'll not find again in a hundred years, nor through-out nine empires.”

(Bridesman Sun and Bride Bridekis)





- The Tales are based on the common principles of
  - fight between good and evil,
  - old age and wisdom against young foolishness,
  - man and female principle based on man's strength and woman's intuition.
- nature is the symbol of eternal, divine force which opposes evil and dark forces.
- sources of inspiration for the collection – Slavic mythology and Christian philosophy







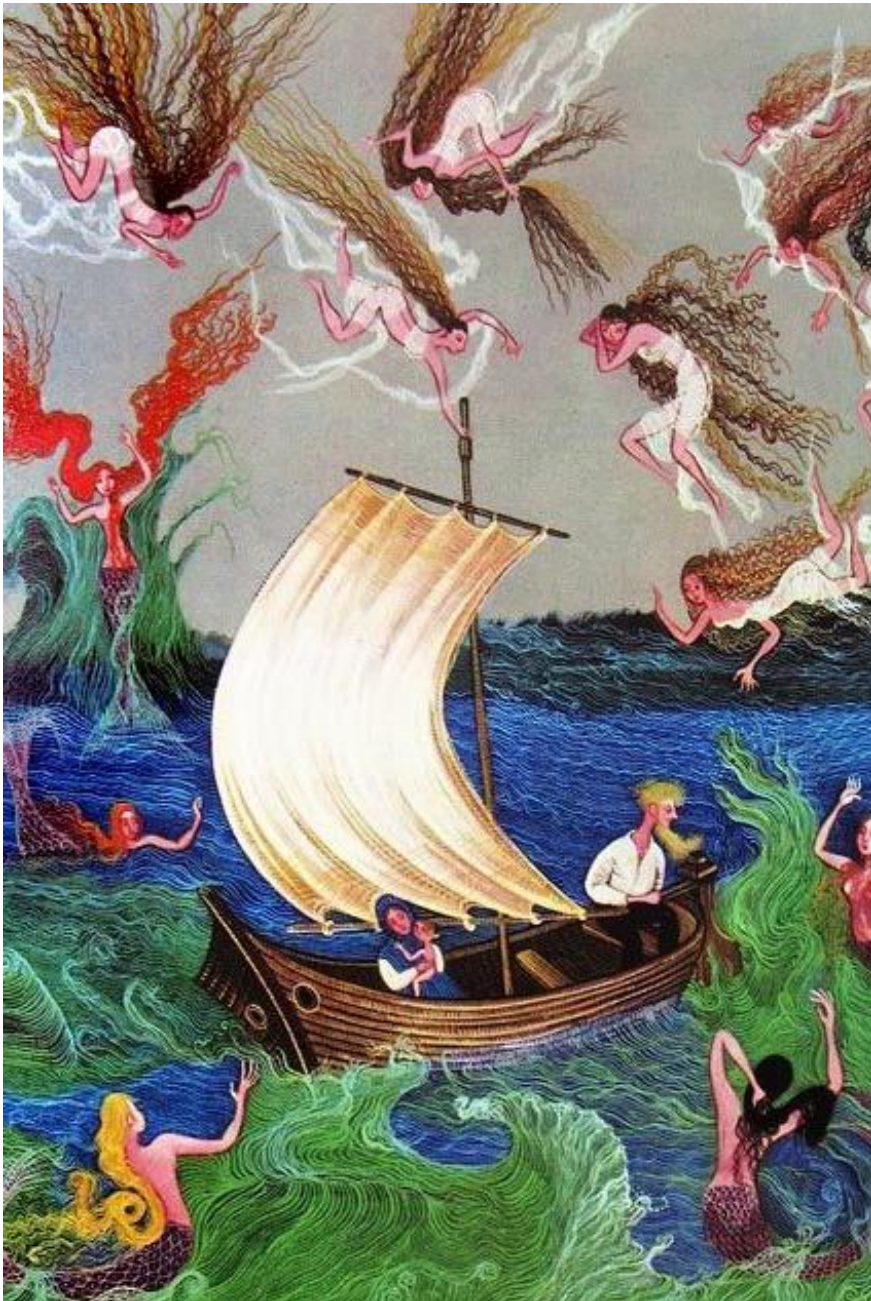
# Stribor's Forest

“They wore little fur coats; their caps and shoes were red as flames; their beards were grey as ashes, and their eyes sparkled like live coal. More and more of them danced out of the flames, one for each chip. (...) And how they danced! Round the hearth, in the ashes, under the cupboard, on the table, in the jug, on the chair! Round and round! Faster and faster! ”









# Modernism – Secession style

“The wind caught the boat and carried it along to the Unknown Sea, to the Isle Bountiful. Like a green garden the fruitful island floats upon the sea.

The grass grows rank, and the meadows lush, the vines are full of grapes and the almond-trees pink with blossom. In the midst of the island there is precious stone, the white blazing stone Gold-a-Fire. One half of the stone sheds its glow upon the island, and the other half lights up the sea under the island. And there on the Isle Bountiful, on the stone Gold-a-Fire, sits the Dawn-Maiden. ”

(Fisherman Plunk and His Wife)



# Conclusion

- IBM was the first woman accepted as a Member of the HAZU (Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (1937)
- she was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature (1931 and 1938).
- Tales of Long Ago - most published and translated Croatian prose collection





- “Now Stribor was lord of that Forest. He dwelt in the heart of the Forest, in an oak so huge that there was room in it for seven golden castles, and a village all fenced about with silver. In front of the finest of the castles sat Stribor himself on a throne, arrayed in a cloak of scarlet. (Stribor’s Forest)”

DONESI DAKLE JELEN BAKU PRED STRIBORA. STRIBOR PAK BIJAŠE ŠUMSKI STARJEŠINA. SIEDIO JE SRED ŠUME, U DUBU TAKO VELIKOM, DA JE U NJEM BILLO SEDAM ZLATNIH DVOROVA I OSMO SELO, OGRADIČOM OGRADENO. A SNAHA I SIN POSLJALI SE DO DUBA, PA GLEDAJU I SLUŠAJU ŠTO ĆE BITI.



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