

THE BLACK DRAGON

AND THE BLUE LAKE



MÉI HUĀ ~ THE QUEEN OF NANJING

Cristina Bertrand

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Rosa Roja was bored. On her walks through the infinite steppes of her territories, she couldn't help reminiscing about her last adventures in the fascinating cities of Florence and Dubai. She missed their sounds, the bustle of the inhabitants, and she even enjoyed listening to the people in the streets despite not knowing the language. In other words, she liked the city as much as the steppe.

On these occasions the best thing to do was to seek the help of Rosa Negra, and stroll leisurely through her immense library—one of the largest in the world—where the books waited quietly for their visitors.

But this time she didn't know what she was looking for; she just knew it was a city, preferably with a river running through it. Since she always traveled with her Red Dragon, it was necessary to have a river close by so the dragon could follow its course, and rest in its waters.

She set out and Rosa Negra welcomed her with great joy, although she knew that she was looking for something. Neither her nor White Rose would go very long without browsing the many rooms of her library. So, as soon as she arrived, she asked what she was looking for.

Rosa Roja answered that she was searching for a crowded city with a river. “What do you want the river for?” she asked, although she imagined that it would be for her Red Dragon. And it was.

Rosa Negra recommended a great selection in the library dedicated to cities, one of them from a country they knew well—China. And she had a surprise that Rosa Roja could never have imagined. “I'm going to take you to the Hall of Dragons.” Rosa Roja was speechless, she had never been to that room. “I opened it recently because a professor of ancient history and mythology recommended several books about dragons. The subject was intriguing and

mysterious, so I bought all the books he recommended and opened a new room, the Hall of Dragons.”

When Rosa Roja entered the Hall of Dragons she was amazed because, in addition to books, there were drawings and paintings of all kinds of dragons. She had never imagined that there were so many and of so many colors. She thought her Red Dragon was very original because of its color, but there were hundreds of drawings that competed in size and shape. Above their differences, however, there was one thing they all shared: their fierce and noble gaze. Without a doubt, they had been created to help humanity.

Suddenly she spotted the figure of a magnificent Black Dragon. It was said that it lived on the Blue Lake in a city called Nanjing, through which one of China's three largest rivers—the Yangtze River—flowed. And it was a big city. There was also a mountain that stood beside the lake, and legends claimed that at night it disappeared occasionally from the sight of people strolling along the shore and plunged into the lake to rest. Later, it would return to its usual mountain altitude.

The inhabitants were used to these disappearances, and they left it alone because they knew the mountain would always return to protect the lake with its height.

However, there was a problem with the Black Dragon and the Blue Lake. Some historians had named the lake after the dragon, but other historians disagreed and said that the name originated from a turtle that also lived in the lake.

A turtle? This bothered the Black Dragon a bit, as he was very fast and could cross the lake from shore to shore in less than a few minutes. How could a turtle cross the lake when they are so painfully slow? The mystery was yet to be resolved. Nobody had seen both animals, some claimed to have seen the dragon, and others the turtle. Who was right?

Rosa Roja decided to solve the mystery. Or maybe the Red Dragon would solve it...



Sometimes the people strolling along the Blue Lake saw the Black Dragon appear with white sparkles on its back... could they be plum blossoms?

Other times they saw the Black Tortoise with the same white sparkles on its shell. She wished to be admired and was always attentive to her appearance.

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