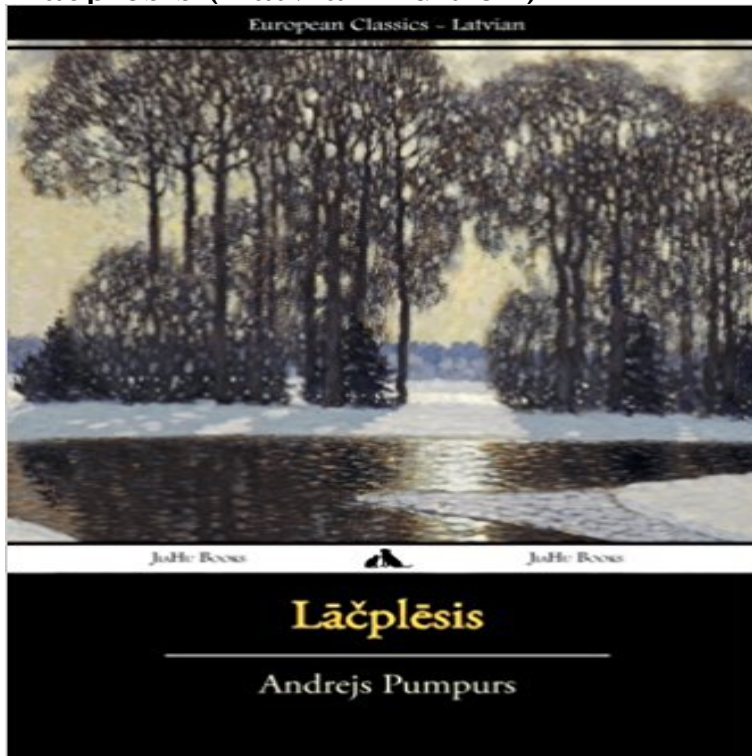


## Lacplesis (Latvian Edition)



Lacplesis is an epic poem by Andrejs Pumpurs, a Latvian poet, who wrote it between 1872-1887 based on local legends. Lacplesis is regarded as the Latvian national epic. The poem recounts the life of the legendary hero Lacplesis, chosen by the gods to become a hero of his people. His name means Bear-slayer, because as a young man, living as the adopted son of the Lord of Lielvarde, he kills a bear by ripping its jaws apart with his hands. At the castle of Lord Aizkrauklis, he spies on the activities of the witch Spidola (Spidala), who is under the control of the Devil, and the holy man Kangars, who is in reality a traitor plotting to replace the old gods with Christianity. Spidola tries to drown Lacplesis by throwing him into the whirlpool of Staburags in the Daugava, but he is rescued by the goddess Staburadze and taken to her underwater crystal castle. There Lacplesis meets and falls in love with the maiden Laimdota. Shortly afterwards, Lacplesis becomes friends with another hero, Koknesis (Wood-bearer), and they study together at the Castle of Burtnieks, Laimdotas father. Kangars provokes a war with the Estonians, and Lacplesis sets out to fight the giant Kalapuisis (Estonian: Kalevipoeg (the Kalapuisis name is derived from kalapoiss), probably refers to the hero of the Estonian epic poem Kalevipoeg), to win the hand of Laimdota. He defeats the giant, and the two make peace and decide to join forces to fight their common enemy, the German missionaries, led by the priest Dietrich (Ditrihs). Lacplesis performs another heroic deed by spending the night in a sunken castle, breaking the curse and allowing the castle to rise into the air again. Laimdota and Lacplesis are engaged. In the following episodes, Laimdota reads from the old books about the Creation and ancient Latvian teachings.

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