There was once a fisherman named Tulcul who died leaving one son. The boy's mother used to work in the household of a rich pasha as a maid, and each night she would bring home bread and other food for her son to eat.

One day the boy said to his mother, "What was father's business?"

"He did not have much of a business," said his mother. "All he had was a net with which he used to fish. He was a fisherman."

"All right, then, I shall be a fisherman like my father," he said.

The next day he took his father's net and went down to the seashore. Although he tried very hard to catch a fish, on that first day he caught nothing but a tortoise shell. When he returned home, he put the tortoise shell on a shelf in the kitchen and said to his mother, "This is our kismet for today."

After that the boy was known as the Son of the Fisherman, and he became a good fisherman himself. The normal routine of their lives continued much the same but there was one difference. When the mother and son returned home from work, they discovered that the house was always swept, the dishes were washed, and the food was prepared, cooked, and set on the table ready for them. The son thought that his mother had done these things, and the mother thought that the son had done them. The boy said, "Mother, what is the meaning of this? You never used to bring such fine things to eat. We managed to survive with the scraps of food which you brought home. What is all this now?"

1A pasha is a general, in Turkish folktales usually rich.
2Kismet is what fate gives one, his lot, his fortune.
"I didn't bring anything home, son," she said. "Who could have done this?" After she had thought for a while she said, "I wonder if this is somehow the work of that tortoise shell which you brought home on the first day that you went fishing?"

One day shortly after that, the Son of the Fisherman decided to remain at home during the day and watch what happened in the house after he and his mother had supposedly left. He hid himself behind some furniture, and after a while he saw come from the tortoise shell a girl as beautiful as the fourteenth of the moon. She swept the house, washed the dishes and cooked a number of dishes of food, and then she walked back to the place where the tortoise shell was. But before she reached it, the young man ran ahead of her, took the tortoise shell, and smashed it into pieces. Then he asked the girl to stay with them and to marry him. She agreed to this, and very soon after that they were married, and the Son of the Fisherman, his new wife, and his mother lived very happily for a while.

One day the king of that city decided to go on a tour of inspection. Before he started out to examine all the houses, he called his grand vezir to him and ordered that the city be darkened for his visit, that all the lights be turned off. The grand vezir sent messengers to all parts of the city to tell the people to put out all lamps that evening.

As the king was making his tour of the city, however, he noticed a light coming from one house. "Didn't I ask you to have all the lights put out?" he asked his vezir angrily. When they came to the cottage from which the light

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3 A favorite simile in folk tales of Turkey to describe surpassing beauty. The moon would be full on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, but just before it is completely full it is thought to be most attractive—presumably at the beginning of the fourteenth day. [Explained in an earlier footnote.]
was shining, they found that the light was not coming from a lamp. In that
house there was a very beautiful woman sleeping by the window. Her arm hung
out of the window, and that arm was so beautiful that it gleamed brightly,
and it was this that they had thought was a lamp. beauty -- gleaming of

The king took one look at this girl with the bright arm, and he fell in
love with her at once. He ordered the doors of that cottage to be sealed
and the next morning he directed that the seals be broken and the girl brought
to him. But his vezir reasoned with him saying, "Your majesty, that woman
has a husband who is a fisherman and a poor man. We cannot just take his wife
away from him like that. Let us impose some task upon him which he cannot
possibly fulfill, and tell him that if he fails to perform the task success-
fully, we shall take his wife from him as punishment."

"Very well," said the king, "what shall we tell him to do?"

"You have twelve fierce lions, your majesty, said the vezir. "Let us tell
him he must produce twelve lions of his own to fight with your lions. If he
fails to produce the lions or if his lions are defeated by your lions, we
shall then take his wife from him."

The king agreed to this, and a messenger was sent to the house of the Son
of the Fisherman to tell him that he was wanted at the palace. Just before the
Son of the Fisherman left his home for the palace, his wife said to him, "What-
ever the king tells you to do, you must say: 'All right, your majesty.'"

In Turkish folktales, houses, castles, and palaces are often sealed to keep
occupants from escaping. In Turkish life today people are not sealed inside
houses, but the practice of sealing houses or apartments for legal reasons is
far more common than in America. If a will is contested, for example, the
home of the deceased will be sealed by the police until the case has been
settled. If the home happens to be a rented apartment, this works a hardship
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When the young man was shown into the presence of the king, he was told, "You will catch twelve lions to fight with my twelve lions. If you fail to catch twelve lions or if my lions beat those which you manage to catch, I shall take your wife from you as punishment. Go and get your lions."

"All right, your majesty," said the Son of the Fisherman and departed.

When he told his wife about the task which had been given him she said, "Take this seal and go with it to the place where you were standing on the beach the day that you caught the tortoise shell in your net. Stamp this seal on the large stone there and Arab will appear. Give him my greetings and tell him to provide you with twelve lions fiercer than those of the king."

The Son of the Fisherman did as his wife directed him. When he pressed the seal against the large stone, the Arab appeared and said, "What do you want with me?"

"The girl from the tortoise shell sends you her greetings and orders that you provide me with twelve lions fiercer than those of the king," said the Son of the Fisherman.

The lions were produced in a short time, and the next morning the young man took them to the palace saying, "Here are my lions." In the fight that followed, his lions tore apart the lions of the king and threw about the pieces of their bodies.

A few days later, the king began to think again of the girl with the gleaming arm. He called his vezir to him and said, "I want that girl for myself."

"Well, your majesty, let us set another task for her husband. If he performs the task, very well. But if he does not perform it, we shall have reason to take his wife from him."

"What difficult task can we set for him this time?" asked the king.
the entire population of this city for a whole day. He will not possibly be able to do this, and so we shall have reason to punish him by taking his wife."

"A very good proposal," said the king.

A messenger was sent to tell the Son of the Fisherman that he was wanted at the palace. Again his wife said to him as he was leaving, "Whatever the king tells you to do, you must say, 'All right, your majesty.' Then everything will be all right."

When the young man arrived before the king, he was told, "Tomorrow you must feed the entire population of this city."

"All right, your majesty," the young man answered.

When he returned home, his wife asked him, "What did the king ask you to do this time?"

"He said that I must feed the entire population of this city tomorrow," replied the young man.

"Very well," she said. "Take this seal again and stamp it on the same stone on the beach. When the Arab comes, give him my greetings and then he will do whatever you wish. Tell him that the girl from the tortoise shell wants him to provide the food you need."

The Son of the Fisherman went to the beach and stamped the seal against the stone, and again the Arab appeared. "The girl from the tortoise shell sends you her greetings. She wants you to provide me with enough food to feed the entire population of the city tomorrow." The Arab handed him a hazel nut and nothing more. Not knowing what to do with one hazel nut, the young man threw it on the ground.

Hazel nut --- magic --- produces varied and
food --- at command --- served on golden dishes.

Magic hazel nut --- common among
"Go and pick it up," the Arab told him, "for it is full of food. Whenever you need food, just crack the shell and say, 'Open, my food store, and let hundreds of different kinds of food be scattered about, and let all the dishes be of gold.' When you do this, you will suddenly have tons of food brought to you in golden dishes."

In the meantime, the king had sent criers around the city announcing that everyone should come to the public square tomorrow for a huge feast. The next morning, thousands of people began to gather in the square to await the feast. When they were all assembled, the Son of the Fisherman took the hazel nut from his pocket, cracked the shell, and said, "Open, my food store, and let hundreds of different kinds of food be spread about, and let all the dishes be of gold."

As soon as he had said this, the entire city square was simply filled with food of all kinds. Everyone ate and drank as much as he could. Just before the feast was over, the Son of the Fisherman had criers go among the crowd and announce, "All guests may take their golden dishes home with them if they wish to do so." When the people heard this, they all took some of the golden dishes home with them. Even the king took a few with him.5

The king then forgot about the wife of the fisherman for a while, but then she came into his mind again and he desired her. He called his vezir to him and said, "I want that girl from you. Deliver her to me!"

"Please, your majesty," said the vezir. "You have seen that the Son of the Fisherman is a person who can perform miracles. He has had your lions killed and he has fed the entire population of this city. How can we take his wife from him without cause? He might put a curse upon your head."

"But I want that girl!" shouted the king.

5 Giving one's guests a parting gift is an old Turkish custom. Sometimes it was food, sometimes a gold piece. To justify such an additional largesse and assuage the guest's pride, the host said, "This is for the rental of your teeth."
"Then let us require of him an even more difficult task," said the vezir.

"Let us require him to build a wall around the city, with four iron gates in it, all within twenty-four hours. Of course, he will not be able to do it, and as punishment we shall kill him and take his wife."

"An excellent idea," said the king.

The next morning a messenger was sent to the Son of the Fisherman to tell him that he was wanted again at the palace. "You must build a wall around the city, with four iron gates in it, within twenty-four hours, or I shall have your head cut off," said the king.

The young man returned to his home and told his wife what the king had demanded this time. She gave him the magic seal again and told him that the Arab would do the work for him and have the wall built within the required twenty-four hours.

The Son of the Fisherman went to the beach, struck the seal on the stone, and when the Arab appeared, he said, "The girl from the tortoise shell sends you her greetings and says that you are to build at once a wall around our city, and in that wall you are to place four iron gates." When he walked back to the city, the young man was amazed to see that the wall with the iron gates had already been built by the Arab.

When a short time had passed after the wall had been built, the king again started thinking about the girl and desiring her. He called his vezir and this time said to him angrily, "Don't you understand that I really want that girl? You must get her for me!"

The vezir knew now that the Son of the Fisherman had been assisted by magic power of some kind, and so he said to the king, "Please, your majesty, do not try again to take this woman from her husband. He is a man who has performed miracles. He may curse us or he may bring about some great calamity to the city."
"I don't care. I must have her," said the king.

"Then we must impose an even more difficult task upon him," said the vezir. "Let us ask him to capture the wild mare with the forty colts that lives in the mountains."6

When the messenger had summoned the Son of the Fisherman to the palace, and when the young man had arrived there, the king said to him, "You must capture and bring to me the wild mare who eats everyone who comes near her. You will bring her and her forty colts here. You will fight the mare and thus save your wife and yourself. If you lose the fight the mare will eat you anyway."

The Son of the Fisherman went home and told his wife what he had been ordered to do. She said to him, "First get a horse, and ride it to the beach. There strike the stone twice with the seal, and you will find a set of reins. Take those reins and go to the mountain. There you will find a fountain with a large pond full of water before it. Drain this pond and fill the hollow space with wine. At noon the mare with the forty colts will come to drink from the pond, and when they drink their fill of the wine, they will become intoxicated. Then you will be able to fight the mare and capture her, and when you have done this, put the magic reins on her at once. After that, you will be able to control her."

The Son of the Fisherman did all the things which his wife had told him to do. When the mare had drunk from the wine in the pond, it attacked the young man's horse. The Son of the Fisherman defeated the mare, however, and putting the reins on her head, led her into the city with the forty colts following their mother. The news spread all over the city that Son of the Fisherman had captured the mare with the forty colts and was leading her into the city. Everyone was amazed.

6 A legendary creature about whom little except her existence seems to be known.
Again the king forgot for a while about the wife of the Son of the Fisherman, but again he began to think about her after a few days had passed. Once more she came back into his mind. He called his vezir to him and said, "For the last time, I am ordering you to get that girl for me. Do not fail this time!"

The vezir was afraid again and said once more to the king, "Your majesty, won't you please forget about this girl? We have seen the great power of this fisherman many times. Sooner or later he will surely avenge himself upon you."

"It makes no difference. I want the girl anyway," said the king, "and this time I shall set the task for him. Tell him to go and bring back the sister of the seven giants who live in such-and-such a place. Tell him that she is even more beautiful than his wife. If he brings her, he can have her; if he fails—well, he will be killed anyway by her seven brothers."

A messenger was sent again to the home of the Son of the Fisherman to invite him to the palace. When he arrived at the palace, the vezir said to him, "In such-and-such a place there live seven giants with a sister. Must go and bring their sister back here, and if you do, you shall have her. She is even more beautiful than your wife. If you do not bring her back with you, I shall have you executed."

When the Son of the Fisherman returned home this time and told his wife about the new task, she said to him, "Alas! I cannot help you in this matter. You will have to perform this task by yourself."

The Son of the Fisherman set out on his journey to such-and-such a place where seven millstones were all grinding wheat. A large man was eating the flour as fast as the seven millstones could grind it, and this man still complained to the miller that he was hungry.

At this point, the narrator paused and addressed the collectors specifically and said, "Oh, we know thousands of such stories, but we don't tell them to strangers because we think they are not worth anything."
The Son of the Fisherman approached this man and said to him, "You must be a very powerful man to be able to eat so much flour and still be hungry."

"What I do is nothing compared with the achievements of a man called the Son of the Fisherman," said the Big Eater. "I wish I were like him."

"Would you like to be a friend of this person?" asked the young man.

"Of course I would," replied the Big Eater.

"Well, I am he," said the Son of the Fisherman.

The two became friends, and the Big Eater, who was almost as strong as a giant himself, decided to go along with the Son of the Fisherman. After the two had traveled along together for a while, they came to a river. There they saw a huge man who was stopping the water of the river with one hand while he scooped it up into his mouth with his other hand. Between swallows, he kept complaining, "Oh, I am thirsty! I cannot quench my thirst!"

"What a powerful man you are to be able to drink so much water," said the Son of the Fisherman. "It is nothing compared with the things that the Son of the Fisherman can do," answered the Big Drinker.

"Would you like to be a friend of this person?" asked the young man.

"Of course I would," replied the Big Drinker.

"Well, I am he," said the Son of the Fisherman.

The Big Drinker and the Son of the Fisherman became friends, and the Big Drinker joined the young man and the Big Eater. The three of them walked along for a way when they came upon a man playing a flute so beautifully that rocks and streams and even the hills were dancing to the tune.8

"What a marvelous art!" said the young man to the Flute Player.

8The Orpheus theme here is obvious.
"It is nothing compared with the ability of the man known as the Son of the Fisherman," replied the Flute Player.

"If you met this person, would you be a friend to him?" asked the young man.

"Yes, I would," replied the Flute Player.

"Well, I am he," said the Son of the Fisherman.

The Flute Player joined the three and all four of them walked along until they came to another river. There they saw a man kneeling on the bank with his ear to the ground.

"What are you doing there?" asked the Son of the Fisherman.

"Oh, I am just listening to the tinkling of a needle that my mother dropped here seven years ago," replied the man, who was a Seer. (He could do all sorts of things like find articles that had been lost.) The Seer joined the group without any comment.

After they had walked a way, the Son of the Fisherman asked the Seer, "Do you know where we are going?"

"Yes," he said, "we are going to see the sister of the seven giants. These giants have two chairs. If we sit on the one on the right-hand side, it will mean that we have come to ask for the hand of their sister. If we sit on the chair on the left-hand side, it will mean that we have come for war. We should go and sit at once on the right-hand chair. If they should say, 'Get up from there and sit on the other chair,' we should refuse to do so."

They proceeded on their journey and eventually came to the home of the giants. As soon as they entered the house, they all went immediately and sat in the chair on the right. "You cannot sit there," he said, pointing to the chair on the left. But the visitors refused.

Chairs to which special meanings are attached are common in Turkish folk tales. Most common of them is the chair occupied by a person who intends to ask for the hand of a girl. Both host and guest understand the gesture and they both come to the point immediately. Symbolic language -- sitting on right-hand chair means person comes to seek hand of girl in marriage; sitting in left-hand chair means person has come for war.
At this point, the giants all looked each other in the eye, and then one of them made the following proposition to the Son of the Fisherman and his friends: "We are seven brothers. We cook and eat seven cauldrons of meat a day. If one of you can eat all this meat, he can have our sister."

They arose and killed a few water buffaloes and cooked seven cauldrons of water buffalo meat. The Big Eater, who could not be satisfied with the flour ground by seven millstones, swallowed up all the meat, some of it before it was even properly cooked. As he ate it, he kept saying, "I am starving! I am so hungry!"

When the giants saw this, they all looked at each other again, and one of them said, "There is still another requirement before we will give our sister away. Here are seven skins full of water. If one of you can drink all of this water, he can have our sister."

The Big Drinker took up the seven skinfuls of water and went, "Luk, luk, luk," and emptied them one after another.

The seven giants now realized that they could not defeat these men by ordinary trials, and so they went aside and decided among themselves to poison them. They ordered bread to be baked and poison to be put in some of the loaves. They would serve poisoned bread to the guests and themselves eat the pure bread.

The Seer, the man who had been listening to the tinkling of a needle dropped seven years before, said to the Son of the Fisherman, "The loaves of bread given to us are all poisoned."

When the Flute Player heard this, he said, "You need not worry. When the dishes are brought, I shall play my flute and make all the dishes dance. Then I shall have them change places so that the poisoned dishes go to the giants."
The poisoned food was brought in dishes and placed in front of the guests, and pure food was served to the giants. The Flute Player then spoke: "This is a fine feast. We must have music on such an occasion." He began to play his flute, and to the tune of the music he made, all the dishes began to dance. The giants were so amazed at the beautiful music that they were not looking at their dishes but at the Flute Player. They did not see that the dishes were dancing about, and so when the music stopped, the giants ate the poisoned food and they all died.

The Son of the Fisherman took the sister of the seven giants. The Big Eater went back to his mill. The Big Drinker went back to the bank of the river. The Flute Player returned to the forest, and the Seer again listened for the beautiful tinkling of the needle his mother had dropped seven years before.

As the Son of the Fisherman was leading the sister of the giants home, she said to him, "Where are you taking me?"

The Son of the Fisherman then explained to the giantess: "The king of my land has been causing me trouble for a long while now. He wants my wife, and to deprive me of her, he has given me very difficult tasks to perform. If I should fail to perform any of these, he will take my wife. He ordered me to deliver you to him. If I had failed, either your seven brothers or the king would have killed me, and thus he would have taken my wife."

As they neared the town, the sister of the seven giants said, "I shall help you. Pitch your tent here, and when the king's army comes, we shall fight them. I am a wrestler, and I could destroy the entire population of this town in twenty-four hours if I wanted to do so." The Son of the Fisherman did so as she directed.

In the meantime, the king was informed that the Son of the Fisherman had arrived with the sister of the seven giants and was camped outside the walls of the town. He sent a large army to capture the Son of the Fisherman and the
giantess, but she routed the entire army. Later, when the king led forth another army, she defeated it, too, and in the battle she killed the king himself. After that, the Son of the Fisherman sat on the throne and no one tried again to take his beautiful wife from him.