

Story #115 (Tape 18,
1961-1962)

Narrator: Ahmet Ercan, 12 years old
Location: Damlama village, kaza
of Tarsus, foothills of
Taurus mountains
Date: April 1962

Buzdo¹ and the Giant

Once there were (three brothers) whose parents had both died. They owned nothing in the world but the hut they lived in and a knife which their father had given to Buzdo, the oldest of them. They earned their living by carrying (firewood) from a wild place in the (Taurus Mountains) where other people were afraid to go. It was a place where giants lived.

One day while they were collecting their loads of wood, they became lost and they were unable to return to their village before dark. They knocked on a door and asked if they could spend the night in that house. The owner was a giant, and all three of the brothers were frightened, but they did not want to spend the night outdoors where the wolves might eat them.

They awoke before dawn and decided to leave before the giant awoke. They left his house quietly, but after they had gone a way, Buzdo discovered that he had left his father's (knife) at the giant's house. His two younger brothers went on home with their loads of wood but Buzdo returned to the home of the giant to search for his knife.

The giant awoke and found Buzdo looking through his bed for the knife. The giant said to him, "I am hungry, and I shall eat you this morning."

Buzdo asked, "Would you like to eat me raw or cooked?"

"Which way would be better for me?" asked the giant.

¹The word Buzdo does not have any ready meaning in Turkish. Occasionally the suffix ju, juh, ja (spelled -cu, -cuh, -ca in Turkish) meaning -man (kapi: door; kapici: doorman) is pronounced dialectally -du, duh, da, di, etc. Buz means ice, and so buzdu would mean iceman, but this has no special application or even meaning within this tale.

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"You might better eat me cooked," answered Buzdo, "for when I am cooked, I shall swell up so much that you can invite in all your relatives for a feast. Why don't you tie me to a tree and have your daughter start boiling a large cauldron of water. While she is doing this, you go to the neighbors and invite them to the feast

The giant was not very smart, and so he did what Buzdo suggested to him. While he was gone, his daughter filled a large cauldron with water, and then she tried to light a fire under it, but she was unable to start the fire.

Buzdo said to her, "If you untie one of my legs, you will probably be able to start the fire better."

She untied one of his legs and tried again to start the fire. She tried many times, but nothing happened.

"If you untie my other leg, perhaps the fire will start," he said.

The daughter of the giant untied Buzdo's other leg. Still she was unable to light the fire.

"If you will untie my hands, I shall be able to light the fire for you," Buzdo said.

"Are you sure that you could do it?" she asked him.

"Yes, I am sure that I could," he said.

So the daughter of the giant untied his hands and Buzdo built a large fire under the cauldron. When the water was boiling, he asked the daughter of the giant to stir it. While she was stirring it, Buzdo sneaked up behind her and pushed her into the cauldron. Then Buzdo took his father's knife and went home.

The people of the village had heard from his younger brothers how Buzdo had returned to the house of the giant for his father's knife. They were

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amazed to see him come back alive after this, and everyone talked about his bravery. He became very well liked among the people, and news of this reached the padişah of that place. The padişah was jealous of Buzdo, and he ordered him to be brought to his house.

"You will go back to the mountains and bring me the horse of the giant," said the padişah, "or I shall have your head cut off."

Buzdo went back to the home of the giant and he dug a hole in the ground near the place where the giant's horse was tied to a stake. He stuck his head out of the hole, and when he did so the horse neighed loudly. The giant came out to see what was the matter with the horse, but he could see nothing. Buzdo did this again, but again the giant could not discover why the horse was neighing. Buzdo did this so many times that the giant ignored his horse's neighing, and then after a while the horse became so accustomed to seeing Buzdo that it stopped neighing. Then Buzdo was able to mount the horse and ride away before the giant could catch him. He took the horse to the padişah.

The padişah was surprised to see Buzdo with the horse of the giant. He said, "Now you must bring me the lamp of the giant or I shall have your head cut off."

Buzdo returned to the home of the giant and hid himself in the hole he had dug. When it grew dark, he climbed up on the roof of the giant's house and started to stamp his feet. The giant finally came out to see what was causing the noise on his roof, but by this time Buzdo had returned to the hole where he hid. After this had happened several times, the giant decided to leave his lamp on the roof so that he could see who it was that was making the noise. Buzdo blew out the lamp and carried it back to the padişah

The padisah was surprised that Buzdo had been able to bring him this lamp. "I have one more job for you," said the padişah. "You must now bring me the body of the giant or I shall have your head cut off."

Buzdo said to the padişah, "Efendi, I shall bring you the body of the giant if you will give me forty boards, forty sharp axes, and forty horses."² When these things were provided by the padişah's men, Buzdo started back to the home of the giant.

On the way he cut down some trees and made some pegs a meter long with them. When he reached the giant's house, he immediately started building a large chest, pounding it together with the metre-long wooden pegs. He made so much noise that the giant shouted at him, "Stop banging that hammer so loud!"

Buzdo just ignored him and continued making the chest. The giant came to him and asked, "Aren't you the Buzdo that we used to know?"

"No, I am not," said the boy. "We cooked that Buzdo, and I have come to make a chest in which to carry you to the feast we are going to have upon his flesh."

When Buzdo had finished the chest, he said to the giant, "Let us see if it is big enough for you."

The giant jumped into the chest and Buzdo nailed down the lid tightly. Then he used some pulleys to hoist the giant up on the forty horses provided by the padişah, and after that he delivered the giant to the padişah. This time the padişah was pleased with what Buzdo had done. He had the giant cooked, and the whole village had a good feast upon his flesh.

²There is no reason for forty here except that it is the favorite number in Turkish tales.