Once there was and once there was not, at a time when
the sieve was in the hay, when the camel was a town crier
and the rooster was a barber, when my father was rocking my
mother's cradle, tingir-tingir, there was a woman who had
three daughters. Onomatopoeic -- for rocking of cradle

One evening while these three girls were sitting in their
home talking among themselves,

"Let me walk
through the city tonight and see what the people are saying
and what they are doing." When he came to the home of the three
sisters, he was curious to know what they were talking about,
and so he climbed up onto the roof so that he could listen
through the chimney.

He heard the eldest sister say, "If the son of the padişah
were to marry me, I would weave him a rug so large that he
could gather all his soldiers--his whole army--upon it and
still occupy only half the rug." The middle daughter then
said, "If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would

1 This is onomatopoeia for the sound of the rocking of
the cradle. It is a standard feature of this tekerleme of
introductory nonsense formula.
The youngest sister then said, "If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would bear him a son with hair of golden locks and a daughter with teeth like pearls."

When the son of the padişah heard these three statements, he said to himself, "Aha! All three of these girls have unusual skills!" In the morning he asked his mother to go to the home of the three girls and ask, by the will of Allah, for the hand of the eldest daughter for him. After all of the proper formalities had been completed, the young man's mother arranged to have the girl marry her son.

After they had been married for a short time, the son of the padişah one day said to his wife, "I overheard you say, the son of the padişah should marry me, I would weave him a rug so large that all his soldiers--his whole army--could sit upon it and still not cover more than half the rug. Will you do that now?"

"Oh, I said that just in order to encourage you to marry me. What should I know about weaving rugs?"

"Is that the way it is? Very well," he said, and he gave orders that she should be removed from the palace. A short while after this, he had his mother make arrangements for him to marry the middle sister. So the son of the padişah then married the middle sister.
After they had been married for a while, the son of the padişah asked her about her boast. "I once overheard you say, 'If the son of the padişah should marry me, I should cook for him a cauldron of food so huge that all his soldiers--his whole army--could feed from it and still have food left over.' Will you do that now?"

"Well, I really deceived you about that," said the middle sister, "in order to make you wish to marry me."

When morning arrived, this middle sister was also moved out of the palace. She had hardly left when the son of the padişah asked his mother to arrange for his marriage now to the youngest sister. This was accomplished as quickly as possible, and the son of the padişah married this girl, too. When she moved into the palace, the son of the padişah said, "I once overheard you say, 'If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would bear him a son with hair of golden locks and a daughter with teeth like pearls.' Will you do that?"

"With the aid of Allah, I shall bear such children," said the youngest sister.

She soon became pregnant, and after nine months, nine days and nine hours, she began to have labor pains. Her formulaic description -- for period of gestation: nine months, nine days, two nine hours.

This is a folk formula for the period of human gestation. Often nine minutes are added to this time.
Story 674

Sixty-three years ago, the eldest sister was jealous of her youngest sister. She had a baby girl and a boy, and she was jealous because the youngest sister had a baby boy and a baby girl. The eldest sister took the two babies and placed them in a chest, and then threw the chest into the sea. When she returned, her baby girl was dead. The baby boy was called upon and he came back to life and said, "Welcome to our family." The eldest sister was so angry that she said, "Take this woman to the garbage dump. Do not allow her to remain in bed any longer. Take her out and throw her in the garbage dump." Her attendants carried out this order at once.

The news of his wife's having been brought to childbirth and then later having borne two kittens reached the son of the padişah. Very angry, he said, "Take this woman to the garbage dump. Do not allow her to remain in bed any longer. Take her out and throw her in the garbage dump." His attendants carried out this order at once.

Let us now see what is happening to the two children.

Son - of padişah - orders wife (younger sister) into chest - and throws into sea - by older sister

Babies - of younger sister - placed in chest - and thrown into sea - by older sister

Sister - oldest sister - jealousy - of younger sister - causes them - substitute two kittens for baby - to disguise her babies - substitute babies born by their younger sister

Sister - oldest sister - jealous of younger sister's bearing of twins - substitutes two kittens for baby - to disguise her babies - born by their younger sister

Padişah did not, of course, live in villages. This is the peasant narrator's adaptation of the tale to her own environment.
A grandfatherly old man who every day loaded his donkey with brooms and went about the countryside selling them came to the seashore and saw a chest floating in the waves. He took this chest from the sea loaded it on his donkey, and went home with it. There he opened the chest and found two children, a boy baby with hair of golden locks and a girl baby whose tiny teeth were like pearls. His old wife put water on to heat and when it was warm, she washed both of the children. As she washed the children, the water began to turn into gold coins, and soon the whole pan was filled with gold. Her husband said, "Hey, wife, we have found our prosperity! We are now going to be rich. There is something very unusual about all of this. Wife, in the morning you must arise early and go about like a town crier, calling, 'I am looking for a wet nurse! I am looking for a milk mother!' These children must definitely have such a mother!"

The son of the padişah compelled the real mother of these two children to wash dishes and scrub pots and pans in the garbage area where slops were thrown. Sometimes he, the dirty dishes' contents poured over her whenever he remembered that she had borne him two kittens. As she was working there, the youngest sister heard someone calling, "I need a wet nurse! I am looking for a milk mother!"

She said to herself, "Instead of staying here doing this, I should prefer to be a milk mother," and she thereupon

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Children -- abandoned -- found by (broom seller)

old man broom seller

Story 674

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The old woman took her back to her own home and said to her, "My daughter, see these two children. You are going to breast-feed and rear these two infants."

The youngest daughter was happy to breast-feed these two infants, for they were her own children. It was through the unknowable intentions of Allah that they were in this way reunited. By the time that the children were four or five years old, the household was very wealthy. They had a great amount of gold stored in earthenware jars. The grandfatherly old man called to his presence some master builders and asked them, "Do you know how the home of the padisah is constructed?"

"Yes, we know it very well, for we were the ones who built it."

"Well, then, you are to construct a mansion for me exactly like that of the padisah."

"All right, we shall do that." They proceeded at once to carry out the old man's orders. They not only made the outer design of the house exactly like that of the padisah, but they also used the same kinds of materials for the interior that had been used for the royal mansion.

By the time the new house was finished, the children had become five or six years old. One day they said to the grandfatherly old man, "Why don't you go to the son of the padisah and tell him that it would be a great kindness if he
would come to dine with us?"

The old man still was not aware of the relationship between the children and the son of the padişah, and so he did not hesitate to follow this suggestion. He went to the house of the padişah and said, "May my padişah live long. You would do us a great kindness to come to our home for lunch tomorrow. We have had a new house constructed, and we should be honored if you were to be present at our table.

"Very well, grandfather broomseller. I shall come."

The next morning arrived, and when the afternoon arrived, the son of the padişah went to the broom seller's new home accompanied by his tutor. As they approached their host's house, they saw an Arab attendant standing outside the main door. The young man said, "Lâla, that is our Arab!"

"Be silent--and may your majesty live long! Would not a prince have as presentable an Arab as a stranger here would?"

"Lâla, this is our mansion!"

4 The Turkish term for the servant and tutor of a young man of an affluent family is Lâla.

5 He means that the Arab attendant they see is as capable and as presentable as the kind of servant who works at the royal palace.

6 The broomseller is not literally a stranger but rather someone who is outside the court circle.
"May your majesty live long! But be silent! Shame on you! Would not a prince have a home as good as that of a stranger?"

After they had entered the house, the young man said, "Lāla, this is my furniture!"

Again the tutor said, "My padişah, would not a prince have what a stranger has?"

At lunch the two children were helping to serve the food, and they were gracious, and they were doing so in a very proper manner. When the son of the padişah saw the children, he was quite beside himself: "The boy has hair with golden locks, and the girl has teeth like pearls!"

Bread was served, as were many different food dishes. As they were eating, the son of the padişah exclaimed, "Lāla, these are our spoons!"

"Be quiet--and may your majesty live long! Would not a prince have such spoons as a stranger has?"

As they continued to eat and drink, the woman [the children's mother] put a pear in a dish and placed a spoon with it. She gave this to the children with these instructions: "Take this and place it before the padişah's son. He will ask you, 'Is a pear ever eaten with a spoon?' Then you say, 'Well, my padişah, does a human being ever give birth to a kitten?""

The children took the dish containing the pear and placed...
it on the table before the son of the padişah. He said to them, "Dear children, is a pear ever eaten with a spoon?"

"Well, my padişah," they said, "does a human being ever give birth to a kitten?"

"Oh, lâla, what kind of a remark is that? There is more to all of this than meets the eye!" Then, turning to the old broomseller, he said, "Grandfather, where did these children come from?"

"My padişah, shall I tell you the truth?" asked the old man. "I found these children when they were newly born infants, in a chest that was floating along the seashore. I brought them here, and it was because of them that Allah gave me great prosperity. We sought a milk mother, and so we had a town crier announce our wish to hire one. We hired such a wet nurse in your section of the town. With the protection of Allah, this woman reared these children. May you live long, my padişah!"

Following the prince's order, the old man went to the kitchen and said to the woman, "My daughter, the son of the padişah wishes to see you."

She went to the dining room and welcomed the guests. She was well dressed and she conducted herself in a gracious manner. When he saw her, the son of the padişah said to her, "Who are you, and where have you come from?"

"I am your wife," she said, "and these are your children."
My older sisters cast them into the sea as soon as they were born, and they placed beside me in bed two kittens. You threw me into the garbage area to wash dirty dishes. This man came looking for one like me, and by the will of Allah I came here as a milk mother. I nursed and reared these children, who are our children. And this old man is their broom-seller grandfather."

When the son of the padişah heard this, he left immediately and returned to the palace. There he said to the older sisters of his young wife, "Which do you prefer--a knife with a black handle or a mule which has not been ridden in forty years?"

"Let the knife with the black handle be plunged into the heart of the one you love! We prefer the mule. Perhaps we can ride it and thus return to our home."

He had each of these sisters tied to the legs of a mule. Then the mules were whipped and driven into the mountains.

Then he returned and held wedding festivities that lasted 7

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7This is the traditional choice of execution given to criminals and villains in Turkish folktales: "Do you wish to be beheaded or dragged to death by mules [or horses]?"--Mules do not live to forty years old. This is a hyperbolic expression for mules that have not been ridden recently and so will be very frisky and un governable.
many days and nights. He kissed the eyes of the two children and took them and their mother with him back to the royal palace.

They went to that side and saw this side.\(^8\)

\[^8\text{This is a closing formula for the tale. Like opening formula, the tekerleme, the terminal formula need not be logical. Often it is sheer nonsense, but it is a signal folk audiences recognize for "The End."}\]