Once there was and once there was not, a time when there were three sisters. The oldest of these sisters used to say, "If the Son of the Bey\(^1\) should decide to marry me, I would weave him an enormous rug."\(^2\) After a while the Son of the Bey heard about this remark that the girl had made, and he decided to marry her. After they were married, however, he discovered that she could not weave at all.

The middle sister used to say to people, "If the Son of the Bey should ever marry me, I should prepare the biggest cauldron of food in the world for him."\(^3\) But, like her older sister, this girl did not even make any effort to keep her promise once she was married to the Son of the Bey.

The youngest sister made a very different kind of boast. She used to say, "If the Son of the Bey should ever marry me, I should present him with two children, a girl with golden hair and a boy with locks of silver." Very soon after she was married to the Son of the Bey, this youngest sister became pregnant.

\(^1\)Bey means lord or baron. It is an aristocratic title.

\(^2\)Literally, the text reads, "I shall weave him a rug right up to the door." Right up to the door is a proverbial metaphor of hyperbole.

\(^3\)Again, the narrator says, "I shall cook food for him right up to the door."
On the day that the youngest wife was to give birth, the Son of the Bey was away from home hunting. During his absence, his youngest wife gave birth to a girl with golden hair and a boy with silver locks—twins. When the older sisters discovered that their younger sister had borne such beautiful children they were very jealous. Taking the two children from their mother's bed, they constructed a wooden box, placed the babies in it, and threw it into the sea. When they returned, they brought with them two newly born puppies and placed them in the bed of their youngest sister, close to her breasts. When, after a short while, the Son of the Bey returned, the older sisters went to him saying, "Good news! Good news! Your wife has given birth to two baby dogs."

When the Son of the Bey heard this, he was furious. Calling some soldiers to his presence, he said, "I have been so disgraced that I had probably better not go out at all. But I want you to dig a pit immediately, over there in the middle of the garden. I will command you to dig in the pit as punishment for allegedly having borne two puppies to son of Bey.

They did at once what the Son of the Bey had ordered, and then, following his instructions, they placed the youngest wife in that pit and buried her there up to her neck. As they did so, they reviled her for bringing forth two baby dogs. Her two older sisters were still wives of the Son of the Bey, and they remained in the palace.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the town, there were a man and wife...
Husband and wife—old and poor—interrupted at meal time—by knocking on door by supernatural agency.

Story 676

Twin babies—abandoned—washed ashore in chest—before home of poor, aged couple.

A poor old couple. They lived in a small house by the sea. They had just finished cooking a chicken which they had stolen earlier that day, and they set it before themselves, ready to eat. Just as they were about to start dining, they heard a loud knocking on the door. Carefully hiding the chicken, they went to the door to see who was there. But there was no one there at all.

Puzzled, they returned, set out the chicken again, and once more prepared to eat. Again, however, there was a loud knocking at the door, but again, there was no one outside when they got to the door and opened it. This happened several times until, finally, when they went to the door, they saw no person, but they saw that the waves of the sea had washed ashore, right close to their house, a large wooden box. Taking the wooden box from the beach, they placed it inside their house, quite close to the door.

They brought out the chicken one more time and placed it on the table, ready to eat. But before they began, they heard coming from the box a voice that said, "We are also human beings, creatures created by God and obeying him—just like you! Let us out of here, and let us come, sit at the table, and eat, like you!" When they opened the box, they found inside two children, a girl with golden hair and a boy with locks of silver. Thus it happened that they all sat down at the table, four of them, and ate that chicken together. 4

It is totally unrealistic, of course, for newly born babies to sit at a table and eat chicken! There is no demand for reality, however, in the world of the folktale.
The children grew and developed under the care and supervision of this couple. When they were old enough to do so, the brother and sister attended school regularly. When the Son of the Bey saw them passing daily, going to and from the school, he admired them greatly. To himself he said, "If I should ever have any children, do you suppose that they might look like this pair?"

The time was passing in this way until one day one of the ill-intentioned aunts of the children saw them and recognized them. She called the boy to her and said to him, "In such-and-such a place there is an extremely beautiful girl. If you will go and get her and then bring her to the palace, I shall honor all three of you."

"All right, I shall go and get her and bring her to the palace."

where are you going? Tell me."

The boy answered, "There is a very beautiful girl living at such-and-such a place. I am going there to get her and bring her back home with me."

The old woman said, "Oh, son, that place to which you are going is the home of a family of giants. The giant mother

5 This is a motif common in the folktale: A faithless person (usually a relative) sends the hero or heroine on a mission so dangerous that he/she is likely to be killed.
will be busy sweeping out her oven when you arrive. When you 
there, take one of her breasts and suck on it. You must 
approach her breast while she is busy sweeping out her oven, 
for then she will not see you."

"Very well," said the boy, and he renewed his journey to 
such-and-such a place. By going and going and going he at last 
arrived at the home of the giants. He looked and saw that the 
giant woman was indeed sweeping out her oven. Her sons were 
nowhere to be seen, for they had gone hunting. He went in and, 
seizing one of her breasts, he began to suck on it.

The giant woman said, "Aha, oho! You came here at just the 
right time, and you were therefore able to suck my breast. Now 
have also become one of my sons. You need not be afraid of 
me any longer. What caused you to come here, anyway?"

"Well, mother, this and that happened. I have come to ask 
the human girl who lives with you here in this house."

"That will be all right. When my children return today, 
may take the girl and depart with her." When the giant sons 
arrived home, their mother explained this to them. They 

The "milk relationship" is common both in Turkish real 
life and in Turkish folktales. By sucking the breast of a 
nursing woman, a person becomes her "son," and the families of 
the two become kin committed to reciprocal support.

This is an obvious instance of telescoping. In a regular 
storytelling session, the narrator would probably repeat the 
whole sequence of events which had brought the boy to the giants' 
home. There would be no haste to shorten the tale, and the 
audience would actually appreciate the repetition, for being 
familiar with what had happened, they would, in a limited sense, 
be able to participate in the narration.
immediately gave the girl to the boy with silver locks.

Taking her by the hand, the boy led this beautiful girl back to his own home. They were soon married, and now these young people were three—each one more beautiful than the others.

One day one of the wicked aunts of the children of the youngest sister said to the Son of the Bey, "You know what beautiful children they are. Why not invite them to the palace and give them a feast?"

Following this suggestion, the Son of the Bey sent a message to the children: "Please come to our home this evening to dine with us." Meanwhile, the two aunts went to the kitchen and put poison in all the food that was to be served to the children, for they wished to kill them. The new bride, who was now the wife of the boy with silver locks, knew of their plans by her special power of perception. Therefore, she immediately went outside and slaughtered a chicken, a chick, and a rooster, but she did not magic them to cook them.

8This bit of illogical description, a folk formula for describing the surpassing beauty of several people, is actually a very effective expression.

9The bride is clearly a person with supernatural powers. Usually the hero brings home someone such as the daughter of the Padişah of Fairies. The inept narrator gave no indication that the bride was other than just a girl; obviously, she is much more than that.
When it grew dark, the three of them went together to the palace of the Son of the Bey for the feast. They sat down at the table before the poisoned food. The new bride had placed on her finger a special ring before she had come to the feast, and she now shoved that ring into each of the dishes of food, saying afterwards, "Eat." None of them was harmed by the poison. It was around this time of the evening [same as the time of the narration] when they had finished eating and had arisen from the table.

After they had left the table, the new bride said, "Bring in here the woman who is buried in the garden!"

The other women said, "She is a filthy woman, and besides, she is about to die anyway. What will you do with such a person in here?"

But the bride said, "No, no! Do not refuse. That woman must definitely come here." She had the woman removed from the pit, washed thoroughly, dressed appropriately, and brought to the palace. The poor innocent woman came there and sat down by the boy.

The bride then ordered, "Place a trivet in the oven immediately." This was done, and the fire at that time was very hot.

The other women [the two older sisters of the youngest wife of the Son of the Bey] understood their situation and surmised what would happen to them. One of them said, "Let me go
and bring this." And the other said, "Let me go and bring that." Both of them wished to escape from the room.

the bride said, "No! Close and lock the door!" The servants did as she ordered.

there were sitting there together the two aunts, the three children (the son, his bride, and the daughter), the mother of the son and daughter, and the Son of the Bey. And as they sat, the trivet was slowly growing red hot. The bride now brought out and placed before the Son of the Bey the chick, the chicken, and the rooster which she has slaughtered and cleaned. "Come, now Ağa Bey, and distinguish among these three. Which is the chick? Which is the rooster? And which is the chicken?"

"How am I to distinguish among them? They all look quite alike."

Then the bride said, "Look here! This is the chick, this one is the chicken, and this one is the rooster." Then turning to those seated there, she said, "This chick is your daughter; this rooster is your son; and this chicken is your youngest wife." After saying this, she took the hot trivet and inserted it into the throat of each aunt, thus killing both of them.10

All of the rest remained there and lived together in the palace. Even to this day they are living there.

10There is clearly a great degree of telescoping here. The execution of the two elder wives obviously demands some explanation. Ordinarily in such a tale, someone—in this case, undoubtedly the preternaturally perceptive bride—recounts the treachery of the villains and the sufferings of the innocent youngest sister before the executions take place.