There were once two married sisters who lived in the same house. As it happened, both of these brides became pregnant on the same day. When the time for the birth of their children approached, they both began to have labor pains at the same time. As their labor pains were increasing, an old man appeared, around sixty or seventy years of age. On his back he had a bag hung from a string that passed around his neck.

This old man knocked on the door of one of the sisters and asked for alms, but his request was rejected. That sister said, "Look at this old man. Here I am in labor, trying to give birth to a boy, and you came asking for alms. Get out!"

In response to this the old man said, "May you give birth not to a boy but to a girl, and may one of her lips be so big that it drags on the ground, and may the other be so big that it touches the sky. I hope that you will never get a buyer nor sell her!"

The old man who spoke in this way was the Blessed Hızır.  

1 Hızır is a saint widely known throughout the entire Middle East. He is a granter of wishes, a last-minute rescuer, and an agent of the will of Allah. He is also a fertility god.
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He went to the next door and knocked. His knock was answered by the second sister, whose labor was also at a very critical stage. She responded to the old man's plea by going to the pantry and there filling a bag with food for him.

In response to her kindness, the old man said, "May you have a daughter whose hands will cause water to spring forth from any place that they touch, a girl whose face will cause roses to bloom wherever she looks. Instead of lice, may liras fall from her hair. I have made this prayer in your behalf, and I now request your permission to depart." But before he actually left, a girl was born to this sister, one of the most beautiful girls in the world.

The other sister bore a girl whose one lip dragged on the ground and whose other lip swept the sky. Her face was so ugly that it caused terror to anyone who happened to look at her.

The first girl grew more beautiful with time. From the time that she was five years old, her beauty began to be known everywhere. And wherever she touched the ground, water and a water god who has been known since long before the Greco-Roman classical period. He is not mentioned by name in the Koran, nor is he accepted by the Moslem Establishment, but there is a very large religious cult which worships him and pays him homage. This cult is primarily in rural areas, where fertility and water are of more immediate concern than they are to urbanites.
sprang forth; wherever she looked, roses bloomed. And when she combed her hair, not lice but liras fell from her tresses. A few years later the son of the padişah sent a matchmaker to her family, saying, "If they do not give her to me, I shall never marry at all. I want no one but her."

When this beauty was about to leave her home to go to the palace to become the wife of the son of the padişah, the ugly girl insisted that she wanted to go along with her. No one objected much to this, for the two girls were, after all, cousins. "Let her go along," they all said.

Before the girls started out to the palace, the mother of the ugly cousin gave her some cörek made of ashes salt plus a bottle of water. These the ugly cousin carried in her bosom. After the girls had traveled a short distance in their carriage, the ugly girl said, "You were too excited to eat any breakfast. Now eat some of this bread.

"All right, I shall take a small piece." But when she took one bite of the cörek it burned her mouth, and she cried out, "Oh, I am thirsty. Give me some water, cousin!"

"I shall give you some water for one of your eyes."

"Please do not be so cruel!"

At that, the ugly girl poked her finger into the beau-

^A round, ring-shaped type of bread, often slightly sweetened.
tiful girl's eye and plucked it out. Then she gave her cousin just a sip of water.

"Oh, I am burning! Give me some more water!"

"I shall give you more water for your other eye."

After she had taken the other eye, she put both eyes in her pocket and gave her cousin some more water. Later, when they were going along a road so curvy that it made the carriage sway back and forth, she pushed the beautiful girl out of the carriage. She then put on some of the clothes and the head scarf\(^3\) of her beautiful cousin and proceeded (with one lip dragging on the ground and the other up in the sky) to the palace as the bride of the son of the padişah.

When the son of the padişah saw her, he could not believe that it was the same girl he had wished to marry. "You are not the girl I arranged to wed! You have one lip on the ground and the other in the sky. What happened to you? You used to be beautiful!"

"Well, since a great mishap befell me, I counted the days,\(^4\) and they aged me so much that I look like this.

\(^3\)The narrator describes her head covering as a fez, a hat then worn by males.

\(^4\)This is a figurative way of saying that time dragged on so slowly that it had the effect of much more calendar time than actually elapsed.
The son of the padişah reluctantly accepted this explanation, and the wedding preparations continued.

In the meantime, a shepherd of that area found the beautiful girl in a ditch by the side of the road. Hungry and miserable for the want of food and water, she was moaning so weakly that the shepherd thought at first that it was one of his flock. Then he saw that it was a very beautiful girl—but without eyes! Carrying her on his back the shepherd took her home to his own house and delivered her into the care of his wife.

The other villagers learned of this, they taunted the shepherd and his wife, saying, "You have hardly enough to take care of yourselves. And now you bring this girl into your household!" And hearing that, the shepherd's wife also began to reproach him: "Why did you ever bring a blind girl to your home? You are only a shepherd who eats dry bread!"

"O wife, do not speak that way! She is a blind girl, and there may be people who will give her a loaf of bread which we can all share."

A few days later the beautiful girl said to the shepherd's wife, "Grandmother, please give me a comb and a pan of water. I have some lice in my hair, and I want to comb them out.
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"Oh, blind girl, what a thing to ask for! Where am I to find a pan and a comb for you?"

"Well, anything of the sort will do for me."

Thereupon, the wife of the shepherd looked around and finally found a dirty and broken bowl that had been used as a dog's dish. She asked, "Will this do?"

"Oh, yes." And after the shepherd's wife had also found her a piece of an old comb, the beautiful girl began to comb her hair. Every time that the comb passed through her hair there was a "Tink! Tink! Tink!" sound in the bowl.

"Blind girl!"

"Yes, mother?"

"What fell from your hair into the bowl?"

"Nothing."

But when the shepherd's wife went and looked into the bowl, she could hardly believe her eyes, for she saw two gold lirets glittering brightly. As the gold coins continued to fall from the girl's hair, the shepherd's wife grew more and more pleased. When she showed her husband these coins that evening, the two of them placed a large kettle beneath the beautiful girl's head and then combed and combed her hair until the kettle was full of gold lirets. With the money they bought some fine clothes for themselves and for the blind girl.
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At that time the padişah announced through the criers that he had seventy colts to be fed and kept over the winter. Anyone who was willing to do so should come to the palace, take a colt, and care for it until the following summer, when it was to be returned.  

When the beautiful girl heard about this, she said to the shepherd, "Father, go and ask for one of these colts from the padişah."

"But, daughter, we are poor people. We have neither a good enough stable to house such a colt nor hay which to feed him."

"Never mind all that. Just go and ask for one of the colts."

When the shepherd went to the palace to ask for a colt, he was given a very sickly animal. It was very weak, and it was mangy. The girl took this colt and tied it in their old stable. Every place touched by the girl had water gush from it, and everywhere she turned her face, roses bloomed and grain grew. With so much good water to

5The rationale for boarding out horses has been lost in this variant of the tale. Usually there is a famine or drought in the land, and the ruler, therefore, to save his very large herd of horses, assigns one to each of several subjects to care for until the crisis has passed. The beautiful girl's ability to bring forth water and make vegetation flourish thus becomes functionally integrated into the narrative.
drink, and with such an abundance of grain to eat, the colt became taller and stronger every day, and by spring he had become an unusually fine horse.

When spring came round, the padişah had criers announce that the time had come for the return of the colts. If any colt had died over the winter, its caretaker was to return its hide. After this message had reached the home of the shepherd, grooms of the padişah arrived to reclaim the colt. But the blind girl said to them, "He will not come out of the stable unless the padişah sends his son for him." The grooms noticed that the colt had grown so large that it could hardly pass through the stable door.

After they had gone, the girl said to the colt, "When the son of the padişah comes for you, you just lie here and refuse to get up until I say these lines:

'What good came to me from your master?
No good came to me from your master--
So, what good can I hope for from you?'

When you hear me saying these lines, then you should get on your feet." She whispered these words into the colt's ear so that no one else could hear them.

The padişah's grooms returned to the palace and reported, "Your majesty, one of your colts has grown into an exceptionally fine horse over the winter. He has grown as
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tall as the stable itself at the home of such-and-such a shepherd. But this powerful horse will not come out of the stable unless your son comes in person to get him."

When the son of the padişah arrived at the stable, he was surprised at what he saw there. He was surprised at the size of the horse. He was surprised by the ample supply of water that gushed from the ground in fountains. He was surprised by the rich pastures all around the stable.

"Why doesn't the colt get up?" he asked.

The shepherd said, "He will not arise unless our sultan-hanim comes to him."

When the beautiful girl came, her face covered with a veil, she said, "Stand up, O horse!" But the colt did not move. Then she spoke again:

"What good came to me from your master?"

No good came to me from your master--

So, what good can I hope for from you?"

As soon as it heard these words, the colt sprang up immediately. As it did so, its head just grazed the ceiling of the stable. The son of the padişah was beside himself with amazement. He found it difficult to believe that

6This is a mildly humorous and ironic epithet: lady sultan. It is a figurative way of indicating the superior ability and power of the blind girl.
the sickly colt had been transformed into a horse so strong.

After he had ridden the colt back to the palace, son of the padişah called his wife to him and said to her, "Today you will grind bulgur⁷ here in the palace. You will call all of the women in the neighborhood to come to the palace to help you grind this bulgur. At the home of such-and-such a shepherd, there lives a blind woman. I want you to include her among those you call to the palace.

A servant was sent to the home of that shepherd. He said to the shepherd, "The women of the palace are grinding bulgur today. Other women of the neighborhood have been invited to come and help them. We have heard that there is a blind girl living here. Let her come and grind bulgur with the others.

The shepherd replied, "She can come only if the son of the padişah comes and stretches his father's silken

Bulgur is made of wheat that is first cooked and dehusked, and then, after it has been dried, roughly ground into half- or quarter-kernels. It is then an instant cereal food, ready-cooked, that may be very quickly heated and eaten plain or mixed into other foods, especially soup. The grinding of the bulgur is the final stage of the process of making the bulgur. --It is most unlikely, of course, that the wife of a ruler would engage in the arduous work of grinding bulgur. Here, as elsewhere, the peasant narrator adjusts the story to fit the context which he and his listeners know best.
cummerbund upon the ground for her to walk upon."

When the servant returned to the son of the pâdişâh, he reported, "The blind girl at the home of the shepherd will not come unless you stretch your father's silken cummerbund upon the ground for her to walk upon."

The cummerbund that the girl requested was provided, now she had another requirement to be met before she would go to the palace to grind bulgur: "I have two eyes missing. Unless they are returned to me, I shall not go.

When the son of the pâdişâh heard this, he had criers announce everywhere, "Anyone who has two eyes to sell will be paid well for them."

Upon learning of this, the wife of the son of the pâdişâh called a servant to her and said, "Here, take these two eyes and sell them for as much as you can get them, and I shall split the money with you.

When the man took the eyes to the pâdişâh's son to sell them, the prince asked, "How much do you want for them?"

In Turkey the cummerbund is not a simple wrap-around sash of the kind used upon dress occasions in Europe or America. A foot wide and sometimes as much as thirty feet long, it is wound many times about the waist. It is worn for purposes of health as well as of decoration. Farmers and some others consider it heathful to have one's abdomen tightly bound while they are engaged in heavy work.
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"I want 5,000 gold liras"

"Very well," said the prince, and he paid the man that amount.

When the eyes were delivered to the blind girl, she said, "Ya, Allah! Bismillah!" Placing the eyes in their sockets, she recited two elham prayers, rubbed her hands over her eyes, and was able to see. Both eyes saw as well as if they had been newly created. She once again became as beautiful as she had been in the past, for she had received the blessing of Hızır.

She went to the palace and after looking around, she found fifty women all working away grinding bulgar and telling each other their life stories. "What has happened to you in this world?" And, "What adventures have you had?" "And you?" --"Well, such-and-such happened to me." And, "This was my fortune." And, "I once did so-and-so.

When it was the turn of the beautiful girl to tell her life story, the ugly girl (with one lip on the ground and the other in the sky) realized the situation she would be in, and so she tried to prevent her cousin from

9 I begin with the name of Allah.
10 A prayer which begins, "God is great, the owner of the universe."
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talking. "Don't try to compel her to talk. She would not care to discuss such things with you.

But the others all said, "No, no! We want to hear her story, too!"

All the while this was going on, the son of the padişah was hiding behind a curtain listening. He listened to the stories of all the women because he wanted to learn if the beautiful girl was, as he suspected, his former fiancée.

The beauty said to the other women, "How can I tell you my experiences? What has happened to me is worse than the fate of a cooked hen, I suffered a great deal."

One of the women asked, "What was it? Please tell us!"

Another said, "I shall be your slave if you will only tell it to us."

Still another said, "I shall be your dog if you will tell us

(They said all these things to urge her to tell her story because, after all, they were women!)

Her cousin tried once more to prevent her from talking by saying, "What could she tell you? What is so remarkable about her story?"

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11This is a colorful proverbial expression in Turkish.
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But when the others all continued to insist that she tell her story, the beautiful girl decided to do so. "Once there were two sisters who became pregnant on the same day. When they were about to deliver their children, the Blessed Hızir visited them separately, asking each for alms. My aunt refused alms, but my mother gave him alms and pleased him. Because she had rudely rejected Hızir, he cursed with ugliness the girl my aunt was about to bear. Because my mother had treated him respectfully, he blessed with beauty and special powers the girl she was to bear.

"When it was time for me to go to the palace to wed the son of the padişah, my cousin insisted upon accompanying me. On the way to the palace she gave me some bread which burned my mouth. When I cried out for water to drink, she would give it to me only in exchange for my two eyes. A little farther along the route, she pushed me out of the carriage and left me in a ditch in the wilderness. There a shepherd found me and carried me to his home, where he and his wife reared me. And that is the story of my life."

Right at that point the son of the padişah stepped out from behind the curtain. Pointing to the beautiful girl he said, "This was my fiancée. This was the girl I intended
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to wed." Turning then to the girl with one lip on the
ground and the other in the sky, he asked, "Would you like
to return to the home of your father, or would you be car-
ried away by Kirat?" When the ugly girl preferred the horse, he took her to
the village cemetery, tied her to the tail of a horse, and
whipped the animal into a gallop. She was, as a result,
bounced to pieces against the stones.

12 The word Kirat means gray horse. When the first
letter is capitalized, Kirat, the term refers to one par-
ticular gray horse, that of Koroğlu, the legendary outlaw
who is the subject of countless stories and songs in Turkey.
Other heroes, such as Bamsi Beyrek of The Book of Dede
Korkut, have also ridden gray horses. So many have, in
fact, that kirat (gray horse) has often been used when
the speaker is referring to any horse (at).