

Story 732 | (1976 Tape 732)

Narrator: Emine Kıvrak, 55

Location: Yakacık village,
Söğüt kaza,
Bilecik Province

Date: August 1976

The Fish Bride

Once there was and once there was not a young man who was an orphan[?]. His father and mother had died many years before, and the only person he had in this world was an aunt

This young man was a fisherman, and every day he took his net to the Sakarya River¹ and caught fish. One day he caught a large fish there, and when he took it home, he placed it beneath a large baking pan to keep it safe. When he returned to the river, this large fish came from beneath the baking pan as a beautiful girl. She cleaned the house, cooked some food, and then went back beneath the baking pan. Every day she did this, cooking many different kinds of foods over several days.

After this had happened for many days, the young man asked his aunt about this: "Auntie, have you been coming to my house every day recently and cooking all kinds of foods for me?"

The woman said, "No, my son. You always keep your home

¹The Sakarya is a major river of Western Turkey

Iran: term +¹⁰⁰
26 28

Story 732

locked, and there is no way that I could enter it to do this. How could I?"

He said, "I cannot understand this. My door is always locked, and yet someone enters the house and cooks for me. Who could do such a thing? Who could it be?"

His aunt said, "Tomorrow pretend that you have gone fishing, but do not really go. Remain at home. Hide yourself somewhere and watch to see what happens."

The next day the young man acted as though he were leaving home, but he hid inside the house to watch and see what person would come to cook his food. When the fish girl thought that he had gone, she came out into the room. Jumping out from his hiding place, the young man asked her, ("Are you a supernatural being or a jinn")²

"I am neither," said the girl, "but a human being like yourself."

But the young man was so startled that he asked again, "Are you supernatural being or jinn?"

"I just told you that I am a human being like yourself."

After that happened, the young man went to his aunt and said, "The person who has been cooking food in my house is a girl that had been transformed into a fish. I want to marry

²This is the stock question asked of an unknown person who materializes suddenly and startles someone: Inmisiin cinmisiin?

on man
from

Story

that girl. Will you make wedding arrangements for us and have us married?"

The aunt said, "All right, my son. I shall arrange for wedding ceremonies and have the two of you married." She did this, and after a few days they were husband and wife.

A short while later the muhtar³ and his council summoned the young man to their presence. They said to him, "Unless you and your wife have a child by tomorrow, we shall take your beautiful wife away from you

Surprised and depressed by this announcement, the young man went home. Noticing how thoughtful he was, his fish bride asked him, "My dear husband, why are you thinking so deeply?"

Her husband answered, "They told me today at the muhtar's office that if we do not have a child by tomorrow, they will take you away from me."

"That is not a problem that requires such deep thought. Go to the bank of the Sakarya River where you were standing when you caught me in your net. There you will find an ear of corn. Pick this up and bring it here to me."

Doing just as his wife had directed, the fisherman

³The muhtar is the head man in a village or a city mahalle (ward). He is elected directly by the people of that village or ward. In some rural areas the muhtar is the only elected official with whom the people come into contact, all other government officials being appointees of various federal ministries or agencies.

Yes
to acquire his
beautiful wife
128-130
+ hero

Story 732

went to the bank of the Sakarya. Picking up the ear of corn, he put it in his pocket and started home. As he was walking along, he heard a voice saying, "Walk faster. It is raining, and we shall get wet!"

The young man could not understand where this sound was coming from. Looking to the right and then to the left, he could see no one around. As he walked a bit farther same voice was heard saying, "Father, Father, walk faster or we shall get wet!"

no separate
He then suddenly realized that this sound was coming from his pocket. Looking into that pocket, he saw that the ear of corn had become a child. He then took the child to the muhtar's office and showed it to them: "This is our child. We had it in one day, as you ordered."

It was not many days later before the young man was again summoned to the muhtar's office. This time they said to him, "You must build in a day a palace in which all floors are carpeted. If you cannot manage to do this, your wife will be taken away from you."

The young man went home from there greatly upset thinking deeply. When he reached his home, his wife said, "My dear husband, why are you so very thoughtful and serious tonight?"

He said, "Today they told me at the muhtar's office

Story

that I must build in a day a palace in which all of the floors are carpeted. How could anyone possibly do that?"

His fish bride said, "That is really not a problem worth giving so much thought. Take an adze with you to the bank of the Sakarya River where you were standing when you caught me in your net. Strike the rock bank there with the adze, and it will become a palace in which every floor is covered with carpet.

Taking an adze, the young man went to the bank of the Sakarya River and struck the rocks there. As soon as he struck the rocks in this way, they were turned into a beautiful palace with all its floors carpeted. Going to the muhtar's office, the young man led the muhtar and his council to the palace so that they might inspect it. He said to them, "This is the palace that you ordered. Is there anything else that you want me to do?"

Examining the palace, they were very impressed with it. They said, "No, there is nothing else required of you. You may go home, and henceforth you and your wife may live happily."

And that is what they are still doing.