

Story 758 (1985 Tape 2)

Narrator: Hülya Kırkıcı, 25

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Denizli Province

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Stone Baby

Once there was a nomad family living in eastern Turkey. They were a father, mother, their son, and their son's bride. They were part of a large group of nomads who wandered with their flocks. There was just one thing wrong with this family, and that was that it had no child. They wanted to have a baby among them, but the bride did not have a child.

Kid Klemson

Other people in the nomadic tribe criticized the young woman for her inability to have children. The women were especially harsh in their criticism. They said to the bride, "You cannot give birth to a child because you are not a good wife or a good person in any other way." These same women warned their own children to stay away from the bride. "Don't go near her or even talk to her. God has not given her a child because she would be unable to care for one." So the young woman lived on for several years in this family and remained childless. Although she was saddened by her childlessness, she did not complain or become impatient with her lot.

After several years had passed, the tribe arrived one

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day at the side of a mountain where they decided to camp for a while. While they were there, the bride left the main group and walked alone to the base of the mountain. When she reached the foot of the mountain, she prayed, "God, you have not given me a child! Please give me one that I can take care of, even if it is a stone baby!"

*Birth
narrator*

Then God gave a baby to her, a stone baby. The young woman was very pleased to have a baby as other women did, she spent most of her time taking care of it. Several years now passed during which God was testing her patience, her care of the stone baby, and her cherishing it. Finally he concluded that she was a good wife and a good mother, and so he decided to give her a real baby as a reward for her patience.

Thus, after seven years, the young woman had a baby like that of everyone else. She lived very happily then with her baby and her husband.¹

¹The narrator insisted that this was not a folktale but an account of actual incidents. It is thus a legend.