

Story 895 (1961-62 Tape 18)

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Location: Damlama village,  
kaza of Tarsus,  
Içel Province

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The Giant at the River

Once there was and once there was not a group of fifteen children who went on a picnic. As they were on the way home afterwards, it was growing dark outside. They saw a light in the distance and started walking toward it. As they walked, however, the light seemed to recede for some time. At last they reached the place where the light was shining. It was the home of a giant and his wife. The giant caught all of the children, and he had his wife cook ten of them for their dinner that night. The rest he locked in a room.

The next day the giant told the children that he was going to town to buy some candy for them. This was not true. His reason for going to town was to have his teeth sharpened. While he was gone from the house, his wife let the five children who were left escape.

When the giant returned, the children were no longer locked in the room where he had put them. He asked his wife, "Where are the children?"

"They are behind the house playing," she said.

The giant looked for them behind the house, but there were no children there. When the giant understood that the children had escaped, he began following them. He followed them by smelling their footprints on the ground. He kept following them until he came to a river.

The children were on the opposite side of the river. The giant had a pocket full of stones, but he said to the children, "Look, I have a pocket full of candy for you." The children were very pleased to hear this. The giant then called to them, "How did you cross the river?"<sup>1</sup>

"We put razor blades on the stones in the river, and we walked across on them," they said

The giant tried to cross that way, but the razor blades cut his feet. So he called to them again, "How did you cross the river, children?"

"We put cakes of soap on the stones in the river, and then we walked across on them," they said.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Various supernatural creatures are incapable of crossing running water. This is particularly true of witches and giants and ghosts. Burns's "Tam o'Shanter" and Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" provide good literary illustrations of this belief.

<sup>2</sup> Children pursued by a witch, giant, or ogre in folktales often have magic or special objects which they throw in the path of the pursuer to deter him/her: a knife, which splits the ground, leaving the pursuer on the opposite side

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The giant tried to do the same thing, but he slipped into the river and drowned.

of a deep gorge; a needle, which becomes a whole mountain of needles; a bar of soap, which becomes an avalanche of suds. Although the effect of the objects is not so melodramatic in this tale, the sharp object and the soap are present. See ATON tale 372.