

Story 941 (1977 Tape 26)

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Göle kaza,
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The Youngest Sister and the Son of the Giant

Once there were and once there were not three sisters.

One day the middle sister said to the youngest sister, "I want to make up your bed today.

But when the oldest sister heard this, she said to the youngest sister, "No, I want to make up your bed." And then the two older sisters began to quarrel about which of them would make up the youngest sister's bed.

One day passed, two days passed, and then a third day passed. The youngest sister kept thinking to herself, "Why do my sisters quarrel about making up my bed? There must be some reason for that which I do not understand." She finally decided to begin making up her own bed. While she was doing this, she discovered a piece of gold beneath her

When the two older sisters realized that she had found the gold piece that day, they said to her, "One comes every day, and in some way it comes in here through that window."¹

¹ The introductory part of this tale is missing. It is a common situation for a young person to receive daily small or large amounts of gold from some supernatural source. But there is normally some action, some previous episode which explains why they have earned this benefit or how they have earned it.

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Bird speaks human language

The youngest sister then began sitting by that window, waiting to see if she could detect how the gold entered the room. After a while a bird came and perched on the window-sill. In doing so, however, it cut itself on some broken glass that lay there. When this happened, the bird said, "Oh, young girl, now I can no longer remain in this country. If you wish to find me again,² you will have to search for me. You must have someone make you a pair of iron shoes and an iron walking stick. When you have traveled so far that you have worn out both the iron shoes and the iron walking stick, you will have reached the area where I am."³ Then the bird flew away.

The girl had a blacksmith make her a pair of iron shoes and an iron walking stick. After these were ready, she started out on her journey. After walking and walking for a very long time, she stopped one day at a fountain to get a drink of water. As she was drinking, she saw herself reflected in the water, and she noticed how worn were her iron shoes and her iron walking stick. She knew from this

² The implication, of course, is that the bird is the bearer of the daily gold coin.

³ Wearing out iron shoes and iron walking stick is a Turkish folktale formula. It provides a metaphor to represent a long and arduous journey over a considerable period of time.

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that she must be approaching the place where the bird now lived.

She started walking again, and after a short while she met a boy who said to her, "Oh, Sister, you must be careful! There is a mother ⁵¹⁻⁵⁴giant here who eats human beings. I am one of her children. To protect yourself, you must suck some of her milk, and then she will not harm you. When she works, she throws her breasts over her shoulders to her back, to keep them out of the way. You must sneak up behind her very quietly and suck her breast. Then you should say, 'Now I am one of your children too. After that she will not be able to eat you, but before that, she will certainly eat you if she has the opportunity.'"⁴

The girl did exactly what the boy had told her to do. She went up quietly behind the giant mother and drank some of her milk. Confused by what had happened, the mother giant said to herself, "Now I shall be unable to eat this

⁴ The concept of milk siblings and milk children is by no means limited to the folktale. In fact, its use in the folktale comes directly from Turkish life. Turkish mothers often nurse each other's children, however briefly, in order to make the two families milk relatives. This is not as close a tie as a blood relationship, but it is recognized as a definite bond between the families. The relationship does not require a momentary swapping of babies. It also exists if a child of one family is nursed by a mother of another family.

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human being, but I shall send her to my sister, who will have no reason for not eating her." She said to the girl, "Oh, my dear child, please go to my sister's house and ask her for some flour. I shall make some bread."

As the girl was on the way to the home of the giant mother's sister, she was again met by the boy. He stopped her and said to her, "My mother has played a trick on you. Don't show yourself to my aunt, for if you do, she will eat you. I know where the flour is kept, and I shall show you where it is. You can then take some flour without revealing yourself to my aunt." When the boy showed her the flour the girl quickly took some flour and left without being seen.

When the giant mother saw the girl returning alive, she was again confused. She could not understand why her sister had not eaten this human being. She decided to send her back to her sister's house to fetch something else. But again the boy intercepted her, showed her where the desired object was in his aunt's house, and thus enabled the youngest sister to get that object without being detected. When the girl returned alive with this object, the giant mother was even more confused than she had been before. After she had thought about this for some time, she realized that it must have been her own son who had been revealing family secrets

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to the human girl. She said to her son, "Son, I shall arrange to get my sister's daughter for you as your wife.

The wedding ceremonies began, and they were to last for ~~forty days and forty nights~~. When the wedding began, the giant mother handed the youngest sister forty candles and said to her, "Oh, girl, you must hold these candles in hands and continue holding them, without ever putting them down, until the bride and groom come here on the nuptial night."

She gave the girl the forty candles to hold in the nuptial room. But the boy took the candles away from her and gave them instead to his aunt's daughter to hold. the boy and the youngest daughter were secretly married. For forty days they lived in the nuptial room, where they gave no food to the giant girl holding the candles.

On the forty-first day the giant mother and her sister opened the door of the nuptial room. When they did this, they discovered that the giant girl was dead. The two older giants were very angry at this, and they tried to kill the youngest sister and the son of the giant mother. But they

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themselves were killed by the boy and girl, who lived happily together after that.⁵

⁵ Again Dilfülöz Yolcu has demonstrated her incompetence as a raconteur. She has grouped together motifs from several different folktales and failed to tell a story that holds together. In the middle of the tale, the entire first half is dropped and forgotten. What happens after the girl reaches the giants' home bears no relationship whatsoever to the action of the first half of the story.