

Story 988 (1966 Dictated)

Narrator: Miss Sümer, sister of Faruk Sümer the historian

Location: Aliçerçi village, Bozkır kaza, Konya Province (Tale collected at İstanbul.)

Date: July 1966

Mıtıcık and the Witch Woman

Once there were and once there were not three boys who went into the forest to gather flowers. They became thoroughly absorbed in searching for rare and beautiful flowers. In doing this, they forgot about the passage of time, and they also forgot to notice the way in which they walked deeper and deeper into the forest. They kept saying to one another, "Here's a pretty flower," and "There's an even prettier one!" until they finally realized that it was growing dark. Not able to find their way back home, they grew very frightened and soon began to cry.

Just as they had given up all hope, an old woman came along. She asked them, "Children, why are you crying?"

They said, "It has become dark, and we cannot find our way home. That's why we are crying.

my children, don't you worry about that. I shall take you to my home, where I shall feed you and give you nice

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soft beds for the night. I shall be your grandmother, and so you have no need to be afraid of anything."

She took the boys to her home and gave them all kinds of tasty things to eat. This was not because she liked them but because she wished to fatten them up in order to eat them. After she had fed them until they could eat no more, she put them to bed.

But Mıtıcık,¹ the youngest of the boys, was unable to sleep because he kept thinking of his mother. As he was lying there awake, he heard a noise coming from the kitchen. Getting out of bed, he crept quietly down the stairs and looked through the open door of the kitchen. There he saw the old woman sharpening and sharpening some knives. He said to himself, "Apparently she intends to kill us. If that is the case, I am not going to fall asleep." He went back upstairs, climbed into bed again, and pretended that he was asleep.

Shortly after that the old woman came to the room where the boys were sleeping. She asked, "Who is asleep, and who is awake?"

"Grandmother, everyone is asleep but me," said Mıtıcık.

"Why aren't you sleeping, son?" the woman asked.

"Well, my mother always used to kill a chicken before

¹A colloquial expression indicating the smallest person in a group.

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we went to bed and cook it for 'us. After we ate that chicken, we all fell deeply asleep at once." He said this because he knew that killing and cooking a chicken would take a long time.

(From here on, the story is like my mother's version of it.)²

²The narrator here told this tale immediately after her mother had rendered a somewhat different version. The mother's variant, bearing the same title, is ATON No. 372. The conclusion of the mother's variant, to which the narrator here refers us, begins on p. 24 of Volume XI.