

Story 1056 (Transcribed from Narrator: Ayşe Yılan
 tape by Tuncer
 Gülensoy; ATON Location: Beyobası village,
 does not have Köyceğiz kaza,
 tape) Muğla Province

Date: 1975

Finger Child

There was a woman who had a great many tiny children¹. She could not keep them all fed, for as fast as she baked bread, the children gobbled it up and asked for more. One she became so angry at them that she took a stick and started beating them with it. One of the tiny children managed to elude her blows by climbing up on top of a closet until her anger had gone. The rest were all killed.

The woman then baked more bread and she sent a loaf to her husband, who was plowing in one of his fields. She had the bread taken to the field by the one tiny boy who not been killed. When the boy reached the field, he decided to find some way to eat the loaf of bread himself. He called out to his father, "Father, how should I come?"

His father answered, "Son, come from this side.

When the boy heard that, he ate this side of the bread. Then he called again, "Father, how should I come

¹This is sheer fantasy and not a realistic tale. In most variants the woman was sterile until, through some supernatural agency, she became pregnant and gave birth to 100 tiny children, each the size of a finger.

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now?"

His father answered, "Son, come from the middle

The boy then ate the middle part of the bread. Then he called to his father and asked, "Father, which side should I come from now?"

His father said, "Come from the other side now." The boy then ate the other side of the loaf and finished bread. He then went to his father empty-handed.

"Where is the bread, son?" his father asked.

The boy answered, "When you said to come from this side, I ate the bread from this side. When you said to come from the middle, I ate the bread from the middle. When you said to come from the other side, I ate the bread from the other side, and then the loaf was finished."

The boy then started home, but on the way he met a grape-seller. He bought several bags of grapes from this man and proceeded to eat all of the grapes. They had a strange effect upon him, however, for they made him grow even smaller than he had been. He was reduced to the size of a chickpea. The boy was so small that as he walked through the pasture on his way home, the family cow could not see him. She swallowed him with some grass that she was eating.

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evening the woman wanted to milk the cow but she was unable to do so because the cow kept kicking. She called to her husband and said, "Let us slaughter this cow. There is something wrong with her, and she keeps kicking."²

they slaughtered the cow, they cut open its stomach and found the child no bigger than a chickpea. They said to each other, "Oh, she had our Chickpea inside her stomach. That is why we could not milk her!

²Turkish peasants watch ailing livestock closely so that they can be slaughtered before they can die from any other cause. If an animal dies of illness or natural causes, its blood congeals in its veins and arteries, and thus it can never be properly bled in the required Moslem fashion. Thus a head of livestock which dies before it can be slaughtered is a total loss.