

Story 1183 (1990 Tape 4)

Narrator: Unidentified man

Location: Malatya, capital of  
Malatya Province

Date: 1990

Taped for ATON by Dr. Mehmet  
Yalvaç

The Girl Who Escaped from the Ogre<sup>1</sup>

Once there was and once there was not a time when a small family lived in the forest. There were just three of them: a husband, his wife, and their daughter. They were very poor, and the only way in which the father could earn a livelihood for his family was by taking branches of trees from the forest to the city and selling them for firewood

Week after

One day the daughter walked into the forest a short distance from their home. To her surprise, she came upon a fountain which she had not seen before. As she approached this fountain, she heard a voice saying, "O beautiful girl, O beautiful girl--can you find me?" She did not know where the voice was coming from. As she gazed at the fountain, she saw a ring floating on the surface of the pool of water that formed at its base. Taking the ring, the girl returned home

She explained to her father what had happened. "Father, while I was walking in the forest today, I came upon a fountain

<sup>1</sup>This is a badly told fragment of a much longer tale. See Notes volume for the folktale types from which it is apparently derived. It is included in ATON not for its plot or artistry but rather for the motifs it contains and for the example it provides of the devolution it evidences of a popular and widely distributed tale.

Story 1183

that I had never seen before. Someone spoke to me from the fountain, and then I saw this ring floating upon the surface of the water in the fountain pool."

"Let us go there and examine that fountain," said her father. But when they arrived at the place where the fountain had been, there was nothing there, neither fountain nor anything else. "Where is the fountain?" asked her father. "I do not see any sign of a fountain here

"But I am sure that this is the place where it was when I was here earlier," answered the girl. On the following day she returned to that same place, and there the fountain was flowing again. It was present there when she went there alone, but when her father accompanied her, it seemed to disappear completely. That happened for three days in a row, but on the fourth day the fountain remained visible even when her father was with her

This time they heard the fountain say, "O beautiful girl, O beautiful girl--can you be mine?"

After the father and daughter had conferred briefly about this, the father answered the question from the fountain: "Yes, you may have her."<sup>2</sup>

"Very well! I shall come here tomorrow morning to receive

<sup>2</sup>There is obviously a great amount omitted at this point. It is illogical for the father simply to give his only child to a stranger who never actually appears. The invisible suitor probably pays a substantial bride price, but there is absolutely no mention of this or the palaver in arranging it.

Story 1183

"

On the following morning the girl was met by several strange individuals. Some of them seemed to be jinns and some were like fairies. They placed her in a cart and carried her to a large mansion.<sup>3</sup>

One day after she had lived there for some time, she looked out one of the front windows and saw an old woman passing along the street. This old woman held out her hand in a gesture of begging for money. The girl now had plenty of money, and so she gave some to the old woman.

"My daughter, where did you come from? The man who owns this house is a cannibal. He might decide to eat you at any time. Why don't you flee from this place?"

"How can I manage to escape from this mansion, sister?" asked the girl.

"Run to that river over there. When your husband follows throw a rock at him. That will slow him down for a while. When he pursues you again, hit him with another rock, and then later hit him with a third rock. After he has been hit for the third time, he will return to his mansion and let you go."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Here another sizable omission occurs. We learn nothing about her husband, about his life style, or about his relations with his wife. Her escape from this man and his mansion follows immediately after her arrival.

<sup>4</sup>The narrator has heard but not understood (or remembered well) a tale of the Bluebeard type. He has the girl throw rocks at her husband as she flees. Why would three rocks

The girl did exactly as the old woman had directed her to do. After her hitting her husband for the third time with a stone, he turned around and returned to his mansion.

The girl then ran all the way back to her parents' home. There she found that both her father and her mother had grown much older.<sup>5</sup> She now worked with her father every day. She gathered wood in the forest and loaded it on his back. He carried this wood to the marketplace and sold it. With the money he received for the wood, he bought food. Although they were still poor, they now had enough food to eat, and they were satisfied with their life. May we be satisfied with ours

defeat a pursuer, and why does the girl run to a river? Usually the missiles thrown are not simply rocks but magic objects. One may be a bar of soap which becomes a slippery mountain which the pursuer cannot climb over but must run around. One may be a needle that turns into an extensive tangle of thorns. One may be a knife which splits the earth, causing a chasm to develop between pursuer and pursued. The river is not just an incidental element, as it seems to be here. It is a barrier over which giants, witches, and certain other supernatural beings cannot cross. If the girl can reach the river and cross it, she will be beyond the reach of her ogre husband. The fact that her husband is some sort of supernatural creature is indicated by (1) the fountain which he causes to appear and disappear; (2) his mysterious voice which comes from no discernible source; and (3) the jinnlike and fairylike attendants who take the girl to his mansion.

<sup>5</sup>This tale should be three or four times the length of this badly handled bundle of motifs.