

Story 1279 (1988 Tape 12)

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The Youngest Daughter and Her Evil Sister

Once there was and once there was not a very poor family which included three daughters. When the mother and father both died, the three daughters were left without any means of support. The family was so poor that it had no furniture, the only pieces of equipment in the house were a saç on which to bake yufka,¹ a large handmill for grinding grain, and a small handmill for grinding coffee

The girls decided that the only way they could possibly earn a living was by using these three pieces of household equipment. The oldest sister took the saç, the middle sister took the large handmill, and the youngest sister was left with the small handmill. Everyone eats bread, and so they began to have their yufka baked by the oldest sister, and they paid her for her work by giving her some of each batch of bread. Everyone who ate bread needed to have flour from which to make it,

¹yufka is a type of unleavened bread. It is baked not in an oven but on a saç, a stovetop piece of thin sheet metal, slightly convex and about two feet in diameter. Yufka is not loaf-shaped but flat, like a huge pancake. It is about half an inch thick, and when it cools, it becomes crisp and hard. A rural kitchen may have a stack of yufka six feet tall. Before it is used, a bread disc of yufka is placed for a short while

Story 1279

so they brought their wheat to the middle sister to have it ground. For this work they gave her a part of the flour. But everyone who lived in that village was too poor to afford coffee, and so the youngest sister had no business at all. As a result she could not earn anything to eat, and she went hungry.

The youngest daughter was so hungry that she used to search garbage heaps for bits of food that she might eat. One day while she was searching, she found a small bead in the garbage. She cried, and then she buried the bead in the ground. She dug it out, cried over it, and buried it again. Unable to find any food at all that day, she went home hungry.

The next morning she went again to the garbage heap to play with the bead and pass away time. When she arrived at the garbage heap, however, she saw there a tree which had not been there the day before. The girl started looking for the bead she had buried, calling, "Bead, bead!"

Upon hearing this, the tree began to talk. It said to the girl, "What is it?"

"How did you grow there?" she asked the tree

between two damp towels. It then becomes soft enough to be cut and folded into readily manageable individual servings. Yufka is not easily perishable, and a supply may last for months.

Story

"Through the work of your hand."

"How did you become green?"

"From your tears."

"Bead, ever since my mother and father died, I have been walking around hungry, living on only water."

The bead felt very sorry for the girl, and he caused there to be spread out before her forty-one different kinds of food. The girl ate and ate until her hunger was satisfied. After that, she began returning to the tree three times a day in order to be fed

Now, it happened that the palace of the padişah was just across the way from the small hut in which the girl lived. The son of the padişah observed the girl going three times daily to the tree, and he grew to be very interested in her. Finally he went to his mother and said, "Mother, I want you to ask for the hand of that girl in marriage to me."

His mother replied, "Son, she would not be an appropriate bride for you. You are the son of a padişah!"

"She is a creature of Allah, just as I am," he answered.

Because their son would not change his mind, the padişah and his wife went, most unwillingly, to request the hand of the girl. Because the girl had no parents, they went to the oldest sister to get permission for the marriage. After the oldest sister had granted permission, arrangements were made

Story 1279

for the wedding at the palace. The wedding celebration lasted for forty days and forty nights.

Even after she was married to the son of the padişah, the girl continued to visit the bead tree, and her husband often accompanied her when she did this. When a year had passed and a son had been born to them, they happily took the child along with them to the bead tree. They enjoyed very much the time that they spent with the tree.

After a while this began to irritate the oldest sister. She became very jealous of their happy life. Her jealousy grew and grew until she decided to destroy their happiness. "How can I accomplish that?" she asked herself. She gave a small boy some money and sent him to the market to buy three nails. After he returned with the nails, the oldest sister had a spell put upon them. Then, going to the palace, she said to the wife of the padişah, "I should like to take my sister to the bath.² May I have your permission to do this?"

"Of course!" said the wife of the padişah. "You are like a mother to her. Why shouldn't you take her to the bath?"

²Until recent times public baths were very popular in Turkey. These baths were made available to men and women at different times. Baths were patronized for social as well as sanitary reasons, and women would sometimes spend much of the day together there, eating and enjoying entertainment as well as bathing.

Enchantment
55 + 60

Story 1279

The youngest sister happily put on her jewelry and packed golden clogs. She dressed her infant son for the occasion the three of them went to the bath.

At the bath the oldest offered to wash the hair of her younger sister. As she was washing the youngest sister's long hair, she stuck a nail into her neck. When the girl complained that this hurt, the oldest sister said, "Oh, how frail you seem to have become! Don't allow yourself to be so weak just because you are the bride of the son of the padişah."

Right after the first nail was inserted, the youngest daughter turned into a bird from her feet up to her waist. When the second nail was inserted, she became a bird up to her neck. When the third nail was inserted, she turned completely into a bird and flew out of a window of the bath. After this had happened, the oldest sister packed up their belongings picked up the child, and went home. The child cried and cried for its mother, and there was nothing that the oldest sister could do to quiet it. Let us leave them that way for now

There was a shepherd who grazed his flock on the edge of that village. One day as he was watching over his flock, the shepherd saw a bird land in a nearby tree. This bird called to him, "Brother shepherd! Brother shepherd!" The man was so astonished to hear a bird speak that he himself was speechless.

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Shepherd
56-59

Language /
- spoken by bird

Story 1279

Then the bird continued, "How is my son? Is that wicked woman still at home?"

startled shepherd did not know what to reply, and so he said, "He is fine. Yes, she is at home."

Every day after that, the bird returned at the same time and spoke to the shepherd. The shepherd was confused by this strange occurrence. After a while he became so disturbed by it that he could keep it to himself no longer. One day after the bird had flown away, the shepherd ran down the mountain pasture into the village, and there in the public square he began shouting, "There is a bird that comes to me every day and says this and that!"

People gathered around him to listen to what he was saying, but none of these people believed what they heard. One person said to him, "Shepherd, you are lying!"

Another person in the crowd said, "This shepherd has gone mad!"

son of the padişah was wandering about in the marketplace that day, and his attention was drawn to the crowd that had gathered around the shepherd. Approaching the crowd, he said, "What is the matter? What has happened?"

man nearest him said to the son of the padişah, "That shepherd has gone crazy. He claims that a bird goes to the pasture and talks to him every day."

Story 1279

Interested in this matter, the son of the padişah went to the shepherd and asked, "Exactly what was it that happened to you?"

The shepherd described what had happened. "For several days a bird has come to the pasture and spoken to me. It calls, 'Brother shepherd, how is my son? And is that evil woman still at home?' I do not know what it means, and so I always answer it simply, 'Yes, yes.'"

Upon hearing this, the prince ordered the other people to leave the square and return to their own concerns. After they had gone, the prince handed the shepherd two gold coins, saying, "Take these coins. Come for me tomorrow morning as are on your way to the mountainside with your flock and take me with you. Do that, and I shall give you two more pieces of gold.

The shepherd returned home with the two gold coins in his sash. He was so excited that he could not sleep at all that night. He was amazed at having so much money, and he wondered why the son of the padişah had given him that gold

On the following morning he took the son of the padişah with him as he drove his flock to the mountain pasture. As they went along, the prince gave him the two additional gold coins he had promised. After they had arrived at the pasture, the son of the padişah sat beneath the tree on which the bird

Story 1279

always perched.

After a while the bird appeared and began talking with the shepherd. It said, "Shepherd brother, how are you?"

"I am fine

"Is my son also fine?"

"Yes, he is also fine."

At that point the son of the padişah caught the bird by throwing his coat over it. Examining the bird carefully, he discovered that there were three nails stuck into the back of its head. He then called to the shepherd, "Go back to the village quickly and get a pair of pliers and some clothing for a woman."

Returning to the village excitedly, the shepherd told the people there what he needed, and they provided him with pliers and clothing. Word of this spread quickly through the village, and when the oldest sister heard it, she said to herself, "They must have found the bird! What am I going to do now?"

When the shepherd returned to the pasture, the prince took the pliers and at once started removing the nails from the bird's head. When he pulled out the first nail, the bird became human again from its feet up to its waist. When he pulled out the second nail, it became human up to its neck. And when he pulled out the third nail, the bird was completely

Story 1279

restored to human form. He then dressed his restored wife in the clothes that the shepherd had brought and took her home. Everyone was so filled with joy at the return of the prince's wife that they held another wedding ceremony for the young couple that lasted forty days and forty nights.

Execution
Because the oldest sister had been so evil, the padişah ordered that she be executed. They tied one of her hands to a foot of one horse and her other hand to the foot of a second horse. They then whipped the horses and released forty caged wolves to pursue them. It was in this way that the oldest sister was killed.

But the youngest daughter and the son of the padişah had their wishes fulfilled. May we all be as fortunate as they were