

Story 1361 (1986 Tape 1)

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Two Girls and Some ^{All}Jinns¹ in the ^{All}Mill

Once in the past there was a woman who had two daughters. One was her own daughter, and the other was her stepdaughter. Her own daughter was quite an ugly girl, but the stepdaughter was very beautiful. She always dressed her own daughter in good clothes and took her to weddings and other social events. She gave her stepdaughter only old clothes to wear, and made her do all of the housework.

One day this woman gave the stepdaughter a large sack of corn and said, "You are to grind all of this corn, and if you return to the house with any of it still unground, I shall throw you out without even a loaf of bread."

The poor girl put the heavy sack of corn on her shoulder and carried it to the village mill. When she got there, she discovered that the mill wheel was not turning. The

¹The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes forth from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi belief and in other mystical systems.

Stepdaughter - All
Jinns
Mill

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stream of water that turned the mill wheel had been diverted away from the mill by someone. The girl worked until noon redirecting the stream to the water wheel that ran the mill. Then she began grinding the corn. By the time darkness was falling, however, she was only partly done with her grinding. She said to herself, "I shall have to spend the night here at the mill, for there is no way in which I can finish grinding this corn today."

The stepdaughter lay down in a corner of the mill and slept for a short time. After a while, however, she was awakened by the sounds of drums and bells. The sounds came closer, closer, closer until she could see who was creating them. The drum beats and bell ringings were being produced by a group of jinns. When the girl saw these creatures, she became frightened, but she remembered something that her own mother had once told her about jinns. Her mother had said, "My girl, if you should ever encounter jinns at night, you must entertain them until that time in the morning when the rooster crows. Otherwise they will probably tear you into pieces and devour you."

As soon as the stepdaughter recalled this piece of advice, she stepped forth before the jinns and said, "I am going to

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tell you a story. Listen!" But just as she started her story, the last of the corn had been ground, and the now empty millstones began to clatter loudly as they continued to turn. Because of this loud noise, the girl and the jinns were unable to hear each other. The girl kept talking in that loud noise until dawn, when the jinns left hurriedly. In their haste to leave, they left behind one of their bags. When the girl opened that bag, she found that it was filled with pretty dresses and other clothes. Placing the sack of cornmeal on her shoulder and holding the bag of clothes beneath her other arm, the stepdaughter struggled home with them.

As soon as she arrived there, her stepsister and her evil-hearted stepmother asked, "Where did you get so many beautiful clothes?" The girl explained to them that the clothes had been left behind by a group of jinns who had come to the mill at night but had fled at dawn.

Thinking that they could get some beautiful clothes for themselves in the same way, the stepsister and the stepmother themselves went to the mill that night. They did not know, however, that jinns had to be controlled at night by some kind of entertainment. As a result, the villagers who went

*Stepdaughter
keeps
at
dawn*

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to the mill on the following day found only scraps and pieces of the stepmother and her daughter. In this way they were punished for their cruelty toward the stepdaughter.