

Story 2009 (1976 Tape 17)

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Location: Village of Beyoğası,
kaza of Köyceğiz,
Province of Muğla

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The Children and the Giant

Once there was and once there wasn't a cruel man who had two children. One day he took his little son and his little daughter to the mountains to pick berries. But before they left home, he had cut holes in the cloth bags in which they were supposed to put the berries. The children picked and picked berries, but their bags did not fill. When the children discovered the reason for this, they sat down and tied knots over the holes in order to close them. When the father saw them engaged in this work, he quietly descended the mountains and left the children there alone.

When the children could not find their father, they began wandering about and looking for help. They walked around for several hours, and near the end of the day they saw two cottages on the side of the next mountain. One of the cottages had smoke coming from its chimney, and the other had a barking dog tied outside its door. The boy asked, "To which cottage should we go?"

The girl answered, "Let us go to the one with smoke rising from its chimney." And that was the cottage to which they went.

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When they knocked on the door of that cottage, the old giant woman who lived there opened the door and said, "Come in, my children, come in!" The children went into her house, and after awhile they were given dinner. A little later the giant woman felt the boy's fat arms and said, "Now, children, I shall make up beds for you."

Although the children went to bed, they stayed awake. They suspected that if they fell asleep, the giant woman would eat them. Then, in the middle of the night, the children arose and fled from that cottage.

It was two hours before the giant woman realized that the children had left her cottage. By the time she started to pursue them, they had gone quite a long distance. After awhile, however, she began to overtake them, for she could run much faster than they could. As dawn was breaking, the children encountered a wizard, who gave them some magic objects: nine spoons, a comb, a bar of soap, and a very long piece of string. The children stretched out the string and laid the comb across it. The string became a river, and the comb was like a bridge across it. After the children had crossed the river, they recovered the comb, and so the giant woman was unable to follow them.¹

¹In several cultures it is believed that witches, giants, and some other supernatural creatures are unable to cross running water.

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The children then continued walking and walking without knowing where they were or where they were going. They came to a fountain from which water flowed through two taps. From one tap flowed plain water, and from the other flowed the water of enchantment, but the children did not know this. The girl drank from the tap giving plain water and was refreshed by it. Her brother drank from the other tap and was immediately transformed into a deer.

There was a large tree growing alongside that fountain, and when the children heard someone approaching, the deer boy helped his sister climb into that tree where she would be safe. The person approaching was a young man who was bringing his farm animals to the fountain to water them. The animals avoided the water of enchantment but drank from the other tap. Observing which tap that was, the girl came down briefly and drank again from that same tap. The young herdsman took one look at that girl and immediately fell in love with her. The herdsman returned home and said to his mother, "I saw a beautiful girl by the fountain, and I wish to marry her."

Later that day an old woman arrived at the fountain but did not see her anywhere. She noticed, however, that a deer was talking to someone in the large tree by the fountain. Looking up, the woman saw the girl and called to her, "My daughter, come down from that tree and help me." When the girl descended to the ground, the old woman

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grabbed her by the hair and pulled her into the village. There the girl was married to the herdsman. Each night her deer brother came to the garden of the bride's new home and talked with her.

Whenever the young herdsman went hunting, his wife cautioned him, "If you see any deer while you are hunting, be very careful not to kill my brother." Because of that warning, the deer, who always stayed close to his sister's new home, managed to survive.²

²This is a very poor rendition of Aarne-Thompson 327—The Children and the Ogre. For better narrations of this type in ATON, see variants in ATON Catalogue or ATON NOTES, Vol. XI.