

Story 2101 (1988 Tape 16)

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The Incurable Daughters-in-Law

In a certain town there once lived a man, his wife, and their three sons. Their house had been built on a spacious piece of land.

Time passed, and the three sons reached the age of manhood. The father had the oldest son married neighborhood girl, and after the wedding ceremonies had ended, he had a good house built for the newlyweds. Not long after that the middle son was married, and he too was given a good house. And the same thing happened when the youngest son finally married. The houses of the four couples were built facing each other in a square at the center of the family property.

Within that square was a good-sized yard which needed to be kept clean and otherwise attended daily. After the three boys had been married, their mother expected that her daughters-in-law would perform this chore. But none of the daughters-in-law showed any interest in keeping that yard clean. None of them picked up the trash that

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accumulated or swept up the dirt. So, the older woman had no choice but to serve as custodian of that yard.

She did not complain about having to do this work, but her husband was displeased about it. He was greatly annoyed, in fact, by the irresponsibility of his daughters-in-law.

Early one morning, while the older woman was cleaning the yard, her husband decided to teach a lesson to their children. Going to his wife, he asked her to hand over the rake and broom to him. He said, "It is not entirely your responsibility to tend this yard, but you are actually the only one who works at it, and it makes you tired. Let me have your tools and do the work. That should shame our sons and daughters-in-law and teach them a lesson."

But his wife refused to let him have the tools. He grabbed them, but his wife did not let go of them, and so they started struggling to possess these implements. Not only did they vie for these tools, but they also started shouting and screaming at each other. Disturbed in her bed by this loud argument, the youngest daughter-in-law went out of her house to see what was going on. Observing her approach, the father of the family thought, "Aha! My

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point has been well made to at least one of our daughters-in-law!" But he was mistaken

The youngest daughter-in-law asked them, "What is the matter with the two of you? Why are you bothering everyone with all of this loud noise early in the morning?"

The man answered, "My daughter, you know that your mother cleans this large yard every day, and the work makes her very tired. We all know that it is not only duty to care about the cleanliness of this yard but also the duty of all of us. So, I decided to help her this morning, but she refuses to let me have the tools."

The youngest daughter-in-law said, "You should be ashamed of yourselves! For such a small thing you are disturbing both your neighbors and your own family. Why don't you take turns cleaning the yard? One day you do it, and then the next day let her do it."