

Story #224 (Milli Kütüphane Tape)

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Location: Sivas

Date: Collected in the 1950's by a student of P. N. Boratav; translated in April 1962 by Neriman Hızır and Barbara K. Walker

The Silent Beauty and the Three Riddling Questions

TEK Once there was and once there was not, when God's creatures were many, and it was a sin to talk too much, when I was rocking my mother's cradle tingir mingir, there was a padişah, and this padişah had a son. This son one day went to the market and bought himself a talking bird, a parrot. He brought the parrot home and hung it in his own room by his bed, which faced the ocean. The bird hung there, and it never talked, it never talked, it never talked.

One day, a bird happened to fly over the water in front of the window, and when the parrot saw the bird, it called, "Bird, bird, take my greetings to my mate." *Bird, speaking human language*

When the padişah's son heard the bird talk, he said, "Now, look here You never talked before. Why did you not talk before?"

Well, the bird did not talk because all the time he wanted to find his mate. So the prince said, "I shall help you find your mate if you will help me get the most beautiful girl in the world as my wife." It seems there was a very, very beautiful girl in that country who was known to be the most beautiful girl in the world. The prince said, "If you can get that beautiful girl for me, I shall see to it that you get to your mate

The parrot said, "All right. Let us go tomorrow."

The next day they got up, and the prince got dressed in all his best

clothing. He had a good shave, and he was combed and cleaned, and he looked at his best. So they started on the way. He took the bird and put it in his pocket, and they went to the house where the beautiful girl lived.

There was a golden chair right in front of that girl's house, and every-^{Jaypige}
^{gubkiki} body who wanted to marry that girl went there and sat in that chair. But could the prince satisfy the girl? Until that time, nobody had been able to get her.

When the prince went and sat in the chair, the girl saw him from the window and said, "Ahh, ahh, ahh. Look! Another fool is sitting on that chair again. Let us see if he can defeat me. Take him in."

When he came in, there was a lamp table in the room. He took his shoe off and put it under the lamp table, and put the parrot in the shoe. All during this time, the girl was there behind the curtain. The condition for winning the girl was that the prospective husband should make the girl talk ^{Talks as}
^{under foot} three times. If anybody made her talk three times, then she would marry that man.

The prince started by saying, "Greetings to you, you lamp table!"
all the time, the shoe was there, and inside was the parrot

The parrot answered from under the table, "Greetings to you, my prince! Welcome! You have brought roses for my eyes. You are welcome. You are welcome. You will always be welcome a hundred times a day, my prince."

Well, the greetings said, they sat there like that, and then the prince said, "Well, this will not do. Either you say something and I shall listen, or I shall say something and you listen. I do not have anything to say to you."

So the table began to talk. (But of course it was not the table talking; it was the parrot.) "Once upon a time there were three friends. [And, see, here is a story in a story. And all three of these friends wanted to marry a certain girl. So the girl said one day, 'All of you go out into the

world and work--work hard. Whoever comes back soonest with the greatest amount of money I shall marry.'

"They all scattered around and they worked hard, trying to make a fortune for themselves. Finally they were all ready, and they started on their way back. All three of them happened to come together, and before they reached their country they stopped one night at an inn, and talked among themselves.

"One of them said, 'Now, listen, friends. We are going back to ask for the girl, but we do not even know if she is in good health, or even if she is living.'

"It seems one of them had the power to listen through the ground, so he put his ear to the ground and listened carefully. Then he said, 'Oh, she is sick! The doctors are going back and forth, and they are beating drugs in pots for her, trying to make her well

"The second one, it seems, was a doctor. He said, 'What am I doing here? I shall go and make her well and marry her

"The third one was a magic healer. 'I am still better,' said the third one. 'I can go and heal her faster than you can.'"

"Now," said the table, "which one, my prince, would you say should marry the girl?"

The prince said, "Well, if you ask me, I should give her to the doctor because he could make the girl well again.

And the table said, "No. I would give her to the magic healer because the magic healer could make her well even sooner.

The girl heard all this from behind the curtain, and she clapped her hands and said, "No, no. You do not know. To the ground hearer you should give the girl, because if he had not known she was in trouble, neither of the others could do anything for her

The padişah's son felt happy because he had made the beautiful girl talk once, and the magic was broken. He was sure that he could make her talk further. So he said, "Well, I am leaving for today." He got up and took the parrot out of his shoe and put it in his pocket. He took his shoe, too, and he walked out

When he had gone, the beautiful girl came out from behind the curtain "Oh," she said to her servants, "oh, girls, this man, I am afraid, is going to defeat me. He made the table talk."

She walked to the lamp table and said, "Greetings, lamp table! Greetings!"

Of course, the table did not answer her. How can a table talk? So the girl became very, very angry. She said, "You, lamp table. You knew he was a prince and you talked to him. Do you not know I am the most beautiful girl in the world?" And, "Bring me an ax, girls," she called. "I am going to break this table." After she had broken the table, she called her servants and maids again, and she said, "Now, listen to me. I am afraid this man is going to make me talk. Do not let me talk. Try to keep me from talking, even if you have to hold my mouth."

That night the padişah's son was very, very happy. As he went to bed, he said, "Well, everything is in order. Once we made her talk; we can certainly make her talk again. We shall hear her voice yet."

The next morning he got dressed up again. This time he put on a different sort of clothing, and he was all washed and shaved and combed, and he looked his finest. He took his bird in his pocket and he started again. When he got to the beautiful girl's house, they opened the door for him and he went in.

"Oh," he said to himself, "there was a table here yesterday." But of course the table was not there any more. "But never mind," he said to himself, "I can use this chair. Let me use this chair." He put his shoe under the

chair, and put the parrot in the shoe. "Greetings to you, you chair!"

And the chair--of course, the parrot--answered, "Greetings to you, my prince! Welcome! You have brought roses for my eyes. You are welcome. You are welcome. You will always be welcome a hundred times a day, my prince."

The beautiful girl again was behind the curtain, afraid all the time of talking. She kept on calling the girls to her and saying, "Do not let me talk! Do not let me talk!"

The chair began, "Here we are, my prince, face to face together. Let us

Either you say something and I shall listen, or I shall say something and you listen."

"I do not have anything to say," said the prince. "You talk."

Then the chair began to talk. "Well, there were three friends, once upon a time, and these three friends started on their way. They walked and walked and walked and walked, and one evening they arrived at a forest. They were afraid to go any farther, so they decided to spend the night in the forest. Because they were afraid, they decided that two would sleep and one would keep watch over them for an hour, and then the next one would keep an eye on them and the others would sleep. Well, two of them went to sleep, and the other one started keeping watch over them. He happened to be a carver. He had his knife in his pocket, and it was very easy to find wood in that forest. So he cut a piece of wood from one of the trees and he started carving a beautiful doll out of the wood. By the time his hour was over, the wooden doll was finished. He just laid it against the tree and woke the next one up, and he to sleep.

"It seems the second one was a tailor, and when he woke up and saw a beautiful girl doll had been carved by his first friend, he said, 'Oh, I must dress this doll.' So he got the hats of his friends, and he picked up thorns

from the grass, and he used his scissors which were in his pocket. He cut the hats to pieces and made a dress for the wooden doll, putting it together with thorns, and the wooden doll was dressed very well by the time his hour was over. So he woke up the third friend, and he went to sleep.

"The third one happened to be a priest. When he saw a well-dressed doll there, he said, 'Oh, it's a pity this beautiful doll does not have a soul. So he decided to pray hard and ask God to give a soul to this beautiful doll. That's what he did, and before his prayer was over, the beautiful doll shook herself and became a girl as beautiful as hyacinths."

The chair asked the padişah's son, "If you were asked, who would you think fit to become the husband of this girl?"

The prince said, "Of course, the priest, because he gave a soul to the doll."

The chair said, "No. If you ask me, I would give her to the tailor because he made the doll look pretty

And when the beautiful girl behind the curtain heard this, she clapped her hands and said, "No, no! You do not know. You cannot answer. I would give her to the carver because he was the one who started her."

The servants wanted to stop her. They rushed at her, but she shook herself free and said, "No! The truth has to be said. I have to say what I think is the truth."

The prince, very well satisfied, left the palace, after taking the bird and putting it into his pocket, and taking his shoe, too.

After he had left, the beautiful girl said, "Oh, why did you let me talk?"

The servants said, "What could we do? You kept on talking. We could not stop you."

Well, the prince and the shoe, and the parrot, of course, were gone. The beautiful girl came to the chair which had talked to the prince, and she said, "Greetings to you, chair! Greetings to you!"

The chair did not answer her. How could a chair talk? And the girl said, "Oh, you! You knew that he was a prince, and you talked to him. Do you not know I am the most beautiful girl in the world?"

Of course, the chair did not answer her, and she was angry again. She called her servants and asked for an ax, and she broke the chair to pieces. And all this time the prince had gone home, his heart full of hope. He had made the beautiful girl talk a second time. Surely he would hear her voice again.

The third day the prince got up and dressed in still a different suit of clothes. He was washed and shaved and combed and shiny and handsome. He put his bird in his pocket and started on his way. He went to the house of the beautiful girl. They opened the door for him, and he went in. And this time when he looked around, the lamp table was gone and the chair was gone, too. He looked around again, and he saw a shelf, so he put his shoe on the shelf, with the parrot in the shoe.

"Greetings to you, you shelf!" the prince said.

And the shelf answered, "Greetings to you, my prince! Welcome! You have brought roses for my eyes. You are welcome. You are welcome. You will always be welcome a hundred times a day, my prince."

The greetings said, they sat there like that, and then the shelf said "Well, my prince, this will not do. Either you say something and I shall listen, or I shall say something and you listen.

The prince said, "I do not know what to say. You start talking."

So the shelf started talking. "Once upon a time there was a girl, the

daughter of a big aga. This family had a freed slave, and the slave was a childhood friend of the girl's. One day this freed slave, wanting to marry the girl, asked her parents to give her to him by the will of God. But the aga did not give her to him. One day the freed slave said to the girl, 'Listen to me, I asked your hand in marriage from your father, but he would not give you to me. One thing I want of you: when you get married to someone else, on your wedding night, with all your bridal attire, you come to me. I shall roast a lamb for you. I shall give it to you and you will take it back and have it with your husband

"When she was old enough to get married, she did get married. On her wedding night, when she was sitting with her husband, she said, 'I shall ask of you a favor, sir. We used to have a freed slave. We had been childhood friends, and he was very fond of me. Once he asked me, "On your wedding night, come to me with all your bridal finery and let me see you. I shall roast a lamb for you. You will take it back and have it with your husband." Will you please allow me to go and let him see me?'

"Her husband said, 'All right. I shall let you go. But go quickly, come back soon.'

"So the girl, with all her finery--gold and silver and jewelry and fişır ⁰¹ fişır dress--ran to the freed slave, who had become a shepherd by now.

"It seems there were forty thieves in that neighborhood. When they saw her coming, they said, 'Oh,' and they circled around her.

"But the girl kept saying, 'Please do not take me now. I shall tell what I am about, and afterwards you may take from me whatever you want.' she told them the whole story

"'Oh,' the forty thieves said, 'what a good man your husband must be, and what a poor soul that shepherd must be. We are not going to harm you any. You

are our sister. Go on! Go on and see the shepherd!'

left the forty thieves and went toward where the shepherd was. The shepherd was there, weeping and roasting a lamb. She said, 'I have come.'

"The shepherd looked at her with tears in his eyes, and then he put the lamb on a big tray, put the tray on her head, and sent her back."

tell me," said the shelf, "whose should this bride be?"

"The shepherd's," said the prince.

"No," said the shelf. "I would give her to the forty thieves. They have been so good to her, although they had her in their hands, with all her fişır fişır dress."

When the beautiful girl heard that from behind the curtain, she clapped her hands. "No! No! You do not know!" she said. "I would give her to the hus--" And while she was trying to talk, the servants around her tried to stop her from talking. But they could not stop her because she kept on saying, "The truth is not dead in this world yet. It is meant to be spoken out. And I would give her to the bridegroom, because no bridegroom lets his bride go away. He was such a good man to let her go, so I should give her to the bridegroom."

Then the prince said, "The magic is broken. The beautiful girl has spoken three times

The curtain opened, and the beautiful girl was such a beauty that the padişah's son fainted when he saw her. The servants sprinkled water over his face, and when he came to, they sat down and they talked to each other. He said, "I am the son of a padişah, and I have everything to keep you. We do not have to stay here. Let us carry everything that is light in weight but heavy in value along with us." So he took the bride to his palace, with all the servants and maids and good of various kinds, and they went to the padişah's palace.

After a long, long wedding they ate and drank, and they got settled. And they lived happily ever after

They had their wish fulfilled. Let us go up and sit in their seats.