

Story #673 (From one of the 1964 tapes that were erased to permit additional recording.)

Narrator: Nuriye Hoca (age 74 years)
Location: Taşköprü [kaza town] Kastamonu Province
Date: July 1964

#673^e enchanted husband -- dis-enchanted

Childlessness
Sterility

#673 #673 #673
Fatma, Yılan-Bey, and Sinan-Bey*

padişah -- wife of

Once there was and once there was not the wife of a padişah who had never had any children. She waited for years for a child, but she never had one. Finally one day she became pregnant, but when nine months were complete, she could not give birth. All the midwives in İstanbul came and looked at her, but none could help her. And strangely each one who examined the padişah's wife was later found dead. The town criers were sent around asking if anyone with knowledge of midwifery could help her. The town criers call[ed], "Is

there not anyone who knows midwifery?"

A wicked stepmother ^{wicked - plots death of stepdaughter} reported to the police that her daughter Fatma was a midwife, because she knew that all the midwives were being killed.

the padişah saw her and asked her, wife?"

* Fatma and Sinan are regular proper names. Yılan is not. Yılan means snake, and Yılan-Bey means Mr. Snake or Lord Snake.

Story

K-- basinfu

"Yes, I do, but I need a basin full of milk."

The milk was brought and put by the padişah's wife.

Soon a snake dropped from her womb. The good news was sent to the padişah: "Your Majesty, you have an heir." Guns were fired to announce the event. The midwife put the snake in swaddling clothes and took it to the presence of the padişah and explained that this was the creature his wife had borne.

The padişah was sorry to learn this, for at this time there was also the threat of war with a foreign power. She said, "May all turn out well for you, Your Majesty."

War -- threat of

The snake was fed with milk. The midwife left the palace after a few days. The snake grew and grew in time, and tore apart its swaddling clothes. The viziers held councils and discussed it and tried to find a way to get rid of the snake. One of the viziers suggested that they recall the midwife who understood about such a child. The midwife came and said, "Your Majesty, I would like you to give me a room. The prince cannot be tied all the time. He must be let loose."

They gave her a room, where she kept the snake untied for seven years. Then the snake had grown into a huge monster. Nobody was able to keep him under control. He was being fed large quantities of milk. The viziers were still discussing the possibility of getting rid of him. An old vizier said, "Let us call the midwife again. She understands

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this creature.

She returned again, but first, before she did so, she ^{Stepdaughter (Fetme)} visited the grave of ~~her~~ ^{real} mother. She had, in fact, done this each time. (Her mother was one of the ermiş.)¹

After looking at the monster, she said to the padişah "Your Majesty, it is time he is circumcised. I advise you to begin preparations for the circumcision of the monster."

The padişah said, "But who will circumcise him? You are the only one who can come close to him, so perhaps had better circumcise him.

She answered, "All right, Your Majesty. I'll try my best."

Circumcision Ceremony
The preparations were started. Pilav² and sweets were cooked.³ People were invited to the ceremony by sending them telegrams and telephoning them,⁴ and everyone wanted to come

Anechronism -- telegrams and telephoning -- in context of padişah ^{and Supernatural events}
¹Holy, sainted. --In this variant a great amount is omitted concerning the girl's dead mother. Each time a task is assigned to the girl, she goes to the grave of her mother, explains her problem, and receives detailed instructions about how to deal with it. In this variant there is just the barest suggestion of this advice from the other world.

²A rich dish flavored with pine nuts, currants, and small flecks of meat.

³Circumcision is more than a medical operation. It is a large celebration, a rite of passage. Music, dancing, and feasting may go on for three days.

⁴This is obviously an anachronism. This very old tale, set in the days of padişahs, predates telegraphy and telephones by many centuries.

Story 673 *mother - dead - - a divine daughter - - at time of crisis*

and see the circumcision of the monster.

The midwife's mother [ermiş] had advised her to cut one handspan from the tail side. This she did, and the matter was completed safely. When the monster saw the midwife, he was always calm, quiet, and well behaved.

Fifteen years later he had become a very large monster. The midwife was called back once more. As usual, she went to her mother to get advice

She [her mother] said, "Now he wants to get married. You will be asked to marry him, but don't be afraid."

The girl came to the palace and saw the padişah.

"Well, young woman, what now?"

"Your Majesty, your son wants to get married."

"Who would dare marry him? There is no one in the whole world who can understand his language except you. Could you marry him?"

"If you accept the child of a poor woman as your daughter-in-law, I would agree to it."

The padişah was pleased with the girl's willingness to marry his monstrous son. (Her name is Fatma. Preparations for the coming wedding were begun. The palace was decorated. Telegrams were sent.

skins."

dresses -- forty sets made of hedgehog skins
hedgehog skins -- dresses made of

girl -- marries monster -- but protects self with
forty layers of dresses made of 5
hedgehog skins

Story 673 monster -- married by girl -- who protects self (saw a che)

advised her.⁵ These forty dresses were made for her, and a wedding was held that lasted forty days and nights

When the nuptial night came, she wore the forty sets of dresses made of hedgehog skins, one on top of the other. She was led into her husband's room. Everybody was waiting in excitement, and the padişah had taken precautionary measures and lined fifteen soldiers around the nuptial room in case there should be trouble inside.⁶ In case of trouble, the soldiers were ordered to break into the chamber.

The girl entered the nuptial chamber unmoved. She proceeded to the bed and lay down with no fear. The monster lay there, too. When he nudged her body here and there with his head, she said, "If Your Highness undresses, so will I."

Skin -- forty layers
of -- on monster
The monster shed one layer of skin and the girl took off one porcupine dress. To make a long story short, each
Forty layers
of skin
took off forty layers of clothing until a very handsome young man came forth from the monster, but by then it was morning.

The padişah had an anxious time waiting outside because there

was no noise coming from the room. When the morning ezan⁷ was
Transformation -- monster became human -- by shedding forty layers of skin -- to
match bride's shedding forty layers of hedgehog-skin dresses

⁵There is a considerable amount of telescoping in this tale. The girl's visits to her mother's grave each time she has a serious problem are usually protracted episodes told in detail.

⁶Also telescoped is the problem of getting a bride to survive even one night with Yılan-Bey. After he has killed a long succession of brides, no other will volunteer for the role. Only then does Fatma assume the role.

⁷The call to prayer from the minaret.

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Onomatopoeia -- for knocking on door
 being chanted, the padişah knocked on the door, "Tak tuk
tuh!"

To Fatma he said, "How are you, my dear?" *kissing of hand -- as sign of respect*

"Padişah father, we are going to come to kiss your hands,

but you must send each of us clothing." *firing of -- anachronistic*

Anachronism -- firing of guns -- spread all over the land. Beautiful clothes were made and sent in context of padişah and supernatural tale
 The padişah was very happy. Guns were fired, and joy
 spread all over the land. Beautiful clothes were made and sent
 into the room. Fatma-hanım came from the chamber first and
 then Yılan-bey, each more beautiful than the other. They all
 embraced each other. They lived very happily in the palace

for a month. Then it was time for Yılan-bey to do his military
service.⁸ *-- of padişah's son -- anachronistic*

duty -- military -- of padişah's son -- anachronistic
 Speaking to his father, Yılan-bey said, "I am
 going to be called for military service, but what will happen
 to Fatma?" *anachronism -- military duty, required -- of padişah's son*

"Don't worry about her

Yılan-bey was called up. He put on a uniform and went
 to the army.

bridge -- et Taşköprü

is to this house.

mother to say goodbye to her. While he was there, he went to

⁸This is a matter of acculturation. All Turkish males serve two years of military duty now. This would hardly have been the case for a padişah's son.

⁹The "stone bridge" (Taşköprü) is a Roman bridge across a small river. It lies at a distance of about four city blocks from the home in which this tale was told.

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the toilet, leaving his jacket outside, and Fatma's stepmother stole his seal ^{of padişah's son - stolen - by evil stepmother of his wife} from his pocket. He later put on his jacket and left.

^{letter -- forged -- by evil mother-in-law -- damaging to her stepdaughter (her own wife)}
A week later, Fatma's stepmother wrote a letter and sealed it with Yılan-bey's seal to make it look like a letter from him. In this letter she said, "Father, as soon as you receive this letter, do not keep Fatma at home for even minutes." Signed--Your Son

The padişah looked very upset when he received this letter. Fatma asked him, "Father, what is the matter? Is my husband ill?"

"No, daughter, no. It is nothing that would concern you.

When two weeks had passed by and nothing had happened, Fatma's stepmother sent another letter to the padişah. When finally the third letter arrived, the girl begged the padişah to tell her about its contents, for she had noticed that with the arrival of each letter, her father-in-law's attitude toward her seemed to change. Finally, he revealed to her the truth about the messages which he had received

Upon hearing this, Fatma decided to go away. After giving it some thought, she decided to go into the mountains, no matter what might happen to her there. Without taking anything from the palace, she departed, crying as she went along. Finally she came to a tomb ^{box-shaped} shaped like a very large box or chest. As she examined this tomb from all sides, she

Hevnie -- flees to mountains -- after forged letters by her evil stepmother malign her
mountains -- Hevnie flees to -- after forged letters by her evil stepmother malign her
stepmother -- evil -- forger letters maligning stepdaughter

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observed what appeared to be a ^{from} window on one side ^{of it} of it. When she looked in through this window, she saw that there was a handsome young man sitting inside. He was a young and very handsome man named Sinan-Bey. She said, "Selâmünaleyküm," "Aleykümselam."¹⁰

"What are you doing there, young man, sitting in such a closed-in place?"

"Oh, do not ask me such a question I am the son of a bey of such-and-such a country. My mother had had no children for many years, but finally they found ^{childlessness -- cured by} me after ~~sacrificing~~

^{Son of bey -} nine sheep ¹ When I was seven days old and still in my mother's ^{abducted and enchanted} childbed, I was stolen. My captors have been feeding me ^{-- when seven day old --} and keeping me here for seventeen years in this tomb. I eat and drink well, but I miss having parents. I am sometimes ^{and held cap-} ^{tive for} allowed to go out for an hour and scent my parents' smell¹¹ by ^{seventeen years} ^{tomb} standing outside their chimney. That is how I live, but time does not pass easily here. Now tell me about yourself."

Captive -- taken periodically close enough to home -- so that he can scent smell of parents

¹⁰ These are the traditional Moslem greetings exchanged by strangers: "Greetings, and my peace be unto you." "Return greetings, and may peace be unto you too."

¹¹ In both Turkish folktales and in Turkish real life, relatives are said to be able to recognize each other by their respective scents. The clothes and living quarters of an individual acquire a distinctive, individual odor. Such olfactory discrimination is not often referred to among most peoples or in their narratives.

See

person

unfiable be relatives

wedding - village type - without official registration

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She told him what she had experienced and how she had suffered at the hands of her stepmother. She told him how she had reared Yılan-bey. They decided to get married by means of a village wedding, without ~~any~~ official registration of their marriage. So they were married, and they got along well, for there was sufficient food and drink provided for them. But after a while Fatma became pregnant, and one day Sinan-Bey said to his wife, "We have managed to live here together very well so far, but what shall we do when this child arrives? You may be able to do for him the same things which you did for Yılan-Bey. On such-and-such a street in such-and-such a town there is a house -- painted house which belongs to us. There is a fountain in front of the house. You go and sit by that fountain, and when an Arab nurse appears there to get water, you tell her that you are pregnant with Sinan-bey's child."

nurse -- Arab

Fatma found the house in that town, and when she reached it, she sat by the fountain waiting for the Arab woman to appear. The woman came to get water, and the two of them commenced to talk. Fatma said to her, "I am pregnant with the child of Sinan-Bey, and I shall need help in my pain and suffering."

The lady of that great house had been in mourning for seventeen years. Because of her grief, she had eaten and drunk very lightly all that time. In this fashion she mourned the loss of her son who had been abducted as an infant. The Arab

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servant woman related to this lady what had just happened:
"There is a girl outside who says she is pregnant with the child of Sinan-Bey."

Fatma was thereupon admitted into the household of Sinan's parents. When the time arrived, she gave birth to a child, a son. The next time Sinan was permitted to visit the outside of his parents' home, he came to the chimney and shouted,

"Fatma! Fatma! Where are you?"

"I am here in the stable.¹²

residence -- of rejected daughter -- in -- law
"We now have a son."
at rejected daughter -- in -- law

"What do you sleep on?"

"On a piece of a straw mat."

"With what do you cover yourself in order to keep warm?"

"A piece of rag."

as bed
as blanket -- for rejected daughter -- in -- law
as bed
son -- enchanted and captive of fairy world -- treating
scheme upon parents -- for his wife

"Have you been eating anything?"

"Only soup."

"Then shame upon my mother and shame upon my father!"

said Sinan as he departed

This conversation through the chimney had been overheard by the Arab servant. She went immediately and told her mistress that Fatma had been talking in a familiar way to some man

¹²Although the narrator calls the house a mansion, she is clearly thinking of it as a peasant cottage. In such a residence the people and their livestock may live under the same roof in separate sections of the building. Thus when Fatma says that she is in the stable, it does not mean that she is in another building. She can hear his voice coming down the house chimney because she is inside the house.

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as mean out com
man from be son
these on side d he

through the chimney. When the lady heard this, she decided to cast out of the house the girl [Fatma] after three more days had passed

On the third night the Arab servant invited her mistress to come near the chimney of the house and herself listen to the conversation between Fatma and a man outside. "Come and hear this with your own ears, lady," she said.

Sinan-Bey came, as usual, between the time of the evening meal and the yatsı prayer service,¹³ He shouted down the chimney to Fatma, "So you are sleeping on a piece of straw mat and covering yourself with a piece of rag while my golden cradle and silver bed stand empty upstairs! Shame upon my parents!"

Cradle -- of gold

bed -- of silver

When Sinan's mother heard this, she cried out, "My son! My son!" She then ran into the stable section to look at the baby. When she saw him, she exclaimed, "He is exactly like my son!" Fatma then related to her the whole story of her relationship with Sinan. The lady had Fatma and her son moved to the best part of the house. She had Fatma bathed, and she had expensive clothes made for the baby.

The next evening Sinan appeared outside the house again and called through the chimney, "Fatma, Fatma, where are you?"

¹³The yatsı, the last of the five daily prayer services, is held shortly after sunset.

"I am in the guest room."

"Have you eaten anything?"

"Yes, I have eaten many different kinds of food."

"What is our son doing?"

"He is sleeping comfortably in the golden cradle."

"May my mother live long, and may God cause my father to prosper!" said Sinan as he left.

When he arrived outside the following night, they asked

"What can we do to keep you here with us?"

"I am quite comfortable in my lot," he answered

Nevertheless, they still wished to do something that *enchantment -- dispelled by smell of red clay burned in fireplace* would cause him to remain there with them. They prepared some *disenchantment -- -- burned in fireplace -- as antidote to enchantment* red clay and placed it in the fireplace. When he arrived the *effected by* next night, he took just one smell of the smoke and was *smell of red* immediately *clay burned in* *fireplace* *disenchanted*. He then came down to where the women were. They all embraced him and welcomed him. Fatma was delighted to have her husband back again.¹⁴

¹⁴This is really a badly told tale, a result, perhaps, of the narrator's age. Not only are several episodes telescoped (as indicated above) but also key information is omitted or remembered only long after it should have been provided. For example, Sinan is clearly under some form of enchantment, a hostage held in another world, usually the Fairy World. In most variants of the type, it is known from the beginning that the male protagonist is under a spell, and sometimes we even see the cause and/or process of enchantment. In the present tale Sinan is clearly under some restraint, for though he can go to his parents' estate, he cannot identify himself to them or break loose from his captors to rejoin his family. It is only after the spell is broken that the narrator acknowledges restraint by supernatural means and says that he was "disenchanted."

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let us see what Yılan-Bey is doing. He had by this time returned from his military service. When he arrived home, he asked his parents where Fatma was. His father said to him, "After we received your third letter directing us to dismiss her from our household, we informed her of your wishes and she left immediately.

"I did not write any such letters," said Yılan-Bey. "While I was visiting at the home of her stepmother, my personal seal was taken from the pocket of my jacket. It must have been her stepmother who took the seal and then later used it on letters that she wrote to you. It must have been she who wrote those letters to you. I shall go and search for Fatma, and I shall find her wherever she is, even if it is in a snake's nest."

*Snake -- nest of
nest -- of snake*

His mother said, "Yes, it must have been that stepmother who wrote those letters. But, son, you cannot find Fatma now, for it has been years since she left here." But no matter what they said, they could not dissuade him from going. He took his horse, filled a saddlebag ^{with} gold, and set out after

Finally, one day in his travels he stopped at a large home like this one we are in now,¹⁵ the kind of home that

¹⁵The tale was narrated in a three-storey, half-timber house, one of the larger houses in Taşköprü.

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has many visitors coming and going through its doors. This was the house where Fatma now lived. Yılan-Bey and Sinan-Bey each asked how the other was,¹⁶ and finally Sinan-Bey revealed that he was a very happy man who had been blessed with two sons. Although Sinan-Bey did not yet know that Yılan-Bey was a prince, he sensed his gentility, and finally he said, "There is somehow a trace of nobility about you."

Yılan-Bey responded, "Well, I have had a great adventure, if you are at all interested in hearing about it." He then proceeded to tell Sinan-Bey his life story, much the same story that Fatma had earlier told him about her first husband. Sinan-Bey soon realized that Yılan-Bey was there searching for Fatma.

After they had made their identities known to each other, Yılan-Bey said,

consider you my brother."¹⁷

Sinan-Bey called Fatma and said to her, "Fatma, do you

¹⁶This is a very abbreviated way of referring to the courteous ritualistic exchange of questions and answers between host and guest in Turkish society. The asking by each about the welfare of the other is just one of many questions asked.

¹⁷This is a figure of speech to indicate that there will be no enmity between them, at least as far as he is concerned.

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know who has come? Yılan-Bey is here. He has agreed that you make a choice between us. You will go to whichever of us you choose."

figurative

more handsome than the other¹⁸ She spoke first to Yılan-Bey, explaining that she was innocent in the theft of his seal and that she knew nothing of her stepmother's having stolen

She then begged Sinan-Bey's pardon, saying to him, "I entrust my two children to your care, but I myself choose to go with Yılan-Bey, for he was my first love." *woman -- bigamous -- chooses returned first husband, Est. engaged -*

Sinan-Bey then said, "Yılan-Bey, you and I ^{second} have become brothers, suckled by the same mother and from the same breast." He then gave Yılan-Bey and Fatma a supply of food and horses to carry them back home

Departing from that place, they returned home where they lived happily thereafter.¹⁹ *husband -- second -- returns wife to first husband -- when first returns to claim her -- and ^{she} becomes "brother" to first*

¹⁸This is a Turkish convention to indicate that each, in his or her respective way is unmatched in beauty. Of a group of several girls it is often said, "Each was more beautiful than all the rest."

¹⁹The dilemma at the end--which lover will Fatma choose?-- is caused by the narrator's confused attempt to combine two quite different tale types. In both the snake-prince type and the disenchanted-husband type, the male lead marries permanently the female lead. But when both the snake prince and the disenchanted husband appear in the same tale, both cannot have the heroine! This illustrates the fact that although motifs are like interchangeable parts, belonging exclusively to no one tale type, they do require an appropriate context and cannot simply be "plugged into" any tale.