

Story 704 (1976 Tape 4)

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The Grapevine Girl

Once there was and once there was not, and it was in that time when a woman and her husband went to work in their vineyard. "My husband," the woman said, "even the grapevines in this vineyard have sprouts, but we still do not have any young ones." But one day soon after that the woman finally became pregnant, and in due time she gave birth to a grapevine. They planted this grapevine in the courtyard.<sup>1</sup>

One day the son of the bey<sup>2</sup> came along and saw that grapevine. He decided, for some reason or another, that he wanted to have that grapevine. He gave the couple a tray full of gold coins for the plant, and then he took it and planted it in the courtyard of his father's house.

After a while a girl popped out of the grapevine--singir.<sup>3</sup> She would come out of the vine, walk about the courtyard, and

<sup>1</sup>This paragraph is an extremely truncated rendition of a very common plot sequence in Turkish folktales. It concerns the frustration and tribulations of a childless couple who finally acquire a child by means of some kind of supernatural intervention: magic food delivered to them by a saint or religious figure; prayers (individual or group), etc.

<sup>2</sup>Bey is equivalent to lord, an aristocratic leader in a community, usually affluent if not actually rich.

<sup>3</sup>Onomatopoeia for the sound of the girl's exit from the plant.

*Chellam*

*Bey. husband*

*Information*

then re-enter the vine. Feeling more and more attracted to the grapevine, the son of the bey one day had it dug up and replanted in his own room.

As he was examining and handling the plant one day, the girl stepped forth into his room. The two talked for a while and became somewhat acquainted. One thing led to another, however, and it was not very long before they became lovers.

When the son of the bey was called up to do his military service, he took steps to protect the girl. Before leaving home, the young man said to his mother, "During my absence I do not want anyone to open the door of my room, but every day at noon I want you to leave some good food outside the door." He then left his home village to do his military duty in the army.

There was another girl, quite ugly in appearance, who had for a long time, been in love with the son of the bey. This was his cousin, the daughter of his aunt. While he was away in the army, this cousin and this aunt entered his room. There they discovered the grapevine, and as they were touching it and examining it, the girl stepped forth. They attacked this girl, beating and stabbing her.

dead,

found the girl, who was actually still alive, and, picking her

up, he carried her to his own home.<sup>4</sup>

After the usual time, the son of the bey completed his military service in the army. When he got back to his village, the news of his arrival soon reached his loved one, the girl from the grapevine. As soon as she heard this good news, she started to prepare some soup for him. Before pouring the soup into a bowl, she dropped into the bowl the ring which the young man had given her before leaving to join the army.

When the soup was brought to him, the young man asked "Where did this bowl of soup come from?"

"It came from the home of the watchman," he was told.

As he was eating the soup, he found at the bottom the ring which he had given to the girl. "This means," he said to himself, "that the girl I love is now living in the home of the watchman."

Taking a tray full of gold coins, he gave this money to the watchman in exchange for his beloved. After he had taken the girl home and had talked to her for a while, he went to the quarters of his aunt and his cousin, her daughter. He said to them, "You have beaten and stabbed the girl I love. Is that not so?" Taking out a knife he had brought with him, he

<sup>4</sup>Again, this is extremely abbreviated. When a man is parted from his supernatural wife or lover, both ordinarily have many experiences, some of them quite lengthy and complex, before they are reunited. Often the girl (as with the Cucumber Girl of Tale 25 and the Orange Girl of Tale 144) undergoes a series of transformations before she is restored to mortal form and reunited with her lover.

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stabbed them both to death and threw their bodies into the Sakarya River. It is said that he and the girl he loved lived happily ever after that.