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Story 932 1977 Tape 23)

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Location: Yeleşli village,
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Province

Date: March 5, 1977

The Padişah's Weak Son, His Strong Son, and the World Beauty

Once there was and once there was not a padişah who had two sons. The older one was named Arslan¹ and the younger, Şehzade. Time passed, and Şehzade grew to be a young man like his older brother.

One day while Şehzade was sitting on a bench near a fountain, a very old woman with a clay jar came to that fountain to get water. Şehzade threw a stone at her jar and broke a hole in it so that the water began to flow out upon the ground. Looking around to see who could have done this, the old woman saw Şehzade sitting there laughing. Very angry, the old woman said, "I am capable of placing a curse on you, Şehzade, but I won't, for I know that you are loved by your parents. Instead, I shall simply say, "May you fall in love with the sister of the forty giants!" 105-114

Soon after that, his brother, Arslan, noticed that there was something wrong with Şehzade. He was doing

¹Arslan means lion and suggests bravery and other leonine qualities. A brave and determined person is sometimes nicknamed Arslan. The variant Aslan may be used more often.

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nothing but lie around all day. Arslan asked, "My dear brother, why are you lying around in this way all day?"

Şehzade answered, "Oh, my brother, I have fallen in love with the sister of the forty giants, and, of course, it will be impossible for me to marry that girl.

"Don't worry about that, my brother," said Arslan. "Nothing could be easier than winning that girl. Tomorrow we shall go to the giants' house and ask them for the hand of their sister."

That same day, however, they went first to their father's palace to request his permission to leave and to secure his blessing. When the padişah heard that they intended to go to the home of the forty giants and request their permission to have Şehzade marry their sister, he said, "That is an impossible thing to do! I once wanted that same girl for myself, and I sent many soldiers to get her, but they could never succeed in doing that. You will not succeed either.

But even without any encouragement from their father, the two brothers insisted on going to the home of the forty giants. Placing gold and food in their horses' saddlebags, they prepared for their journey, and then one night they departed secretly. After riding a great distance, they came to a forest in the vicinity of the giants' home. There

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Arslan said, "Come, Şehzade, let us rest for a while here. We are very tired and need some sleep. This forest is a good place in which to rest." They each took turns at keeping watch while the other slept

While they were doing this, they were not unobserved.

forty giants saw that someone had entered their forest. One of them said, "We should go and see what is happening there."

Among the forty giant brothers there was one who was lame. This lame giant said, "Every time there is something like this to be done, one of you always goes to attend to it. This time I want to go. I shall discover who those people in our forest are, where they came from, and what they want." The other giant brothers agreed to let him go this time, and so he proceeded to the forest

Şehzade was on watch when the lame giant approached, as soon as Şehzade got a look at him, he became terrified. He immediately ran to his brother and began to shake him. "Hey, Arslan! Hey, Arslan A giant is coming, I am very frightened!"

Arslan got up at once, grabbed his sword, and went to meet the lame giant. He quickly cut off the lame giant's ears and slashed his face.

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When the other giants saw their lame brother returning with his face covered with blood, they grew very angry. This time they sent their largest brother to the forest to investigate what was happening there.

Again Şehzade was terrified and hid behind Arslan. And again brave Arslan engaged the giant in battle. But the giant was very wary. Knowing what was likely to happen to him, the giant said to Arslan, "Please don't cut off my ears and mark my face. Just tell me what you want here

"All right," said Arslan. "Go and tell your brothers that we came here to get your sister as bride for my brother, Şehzade. If I am considered as one, then my brother would make five like me."

The largest giant went home and told his brothers what Arslan had said to him. Then he added, "We had better give our sister as wife to his brother, for if we do not, they may chop us all to bits!"

The oldest of the giants then said, "Go and bring them here. We shall give them housing as our guests." The giants then went to the forest and escorted the two brothers back to their home. Arslan was not a bit afraid of these giants, but whenever Şehzade looked at one of them, his heart leapt into his mouth.

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giants then said to Arslan, "We have a very large cauldron with forty handles. Every day we slaughter forty oxen. We shall give our sister as wife to your brother if you alone can slaughter forty oxen and put their meat into this cauldron." Arslan slaughtered forty oxen, put their meat into the cauldron, and then lifted the cauldron with one hand to put it on the fire. When the forty giants saw him do this, they grew thoroughly afraid of Arslan and decided to surrender their sister.

Şehzade and the sister of the forty giants, whose name was Sultan Hanım, had a wedding celebration that lasted for forty days and forty nights. After all of the festivities were completed, they went to the mountains to spend their honeymoon.²

But all was not well for Şehzade and Sultan Hanım. There was another giant in the area named Ataşpara. This Ataşpara had long sought the hand of Sultan Hanım, but her brothers had refused to give her to him. Furthermore, to keep him away from her, the forty giants had hung Ataşpara by his hair from the ceiling of his own palace.

One day when Şehzade and Sultan Hanım were enjoying themselves by walking together about the countryside, they

² The idea of a honeymoon is here clearly anachronistic.

Hung by hair

Hung near

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came to Ataspara's palace. Since it looked deserted, Şehzade insisted upon opening the door and looking inside. Sultan Hanım pleaded with him not to do this, saying, "Please don't do that, my Şehzade. If you open that door the giant who lives here will kill you and then run away from here with me."

But stupid Şehzade opened the door anyway. When the hanging Ataspara saw Şehzade, he begged him to cut his hair loose from the ceiling and thus save him. Sultan Hanım then broke into this conversation and said to her husband, "Please, please do not cut his hair loose! Don't save him! He is tricking you. As soon as you cut him loose, he will kill you and carry me far, far away from here." But Şehzade paid no attention to his wife's advice and proceeded to cut the giant loose.

After the giant had been saved by Şehzade, he did almost exactly what Sultan Hanım had predicted. He struck Şehzade viciously, knocking him unconscious and leaving him in a pool of blood on the floor. Then he grabbed Sultan Hanım and ran away with her

The forty giants grew very concerned when their sister and their brother-in-law did not come home that day. They all began searching for the pair. When they came to the palace of Ataspara, they found Şehzade lying unconscious,

Ataspara
Hanım

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face covered with blood. The giants understood immediately that their sister had been abducted by Ataspara. Carrying Şehzade to their own place, they told the whole story to Arslan. "Your brother has caused the loss of our sister," they said.

Arslan said to them, "Let my brother remain here in your house for forty days. During that time I shall go and search for Sultan Hanım. If I do not bring her back in forty days, then on the forty-first day you may kill my brother."

Then he set out in search of Sultan Hanım. He walked and walked, covering a great distance. One day as he was walking along, he saw three brothers who were fighting with each other. As he drew closer, he asked them, "Why are you fighting?"

"We are fighting for the possession of this hat, this rug, and this whip," they said

"Why are these things worth fighting for?" he asked.

They answered, "If one wears this hat, one becomes invisible; he can see everyone and everything around him, but no one can see him. If you strike this rug with this whip and say, 'Please take me to such-and-such a place for God's sake,' the rug will carry you there

Magic Carpet

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When Arslan heard this, he realized how helpful these objects could be to him; he struck the three brothers as hard as he could, grabbed the three objects, and ran away with them.³ After he had gone a short distance, he spread the rug on the ground, stood upon it, struck it with the whip, and said, "O rug, take me to wherever Ataspara is now living, for God's sake!"

The rug took him to Ataspara's residence and landed him in the center of a very large room in that house. He saw Sultan Hanım sitting in one corner of that room looking very dejected. When she saw her brother-in-law, she said, "Oh, Arslan, I am so glad to see you! But you must hide immediately!"

Arslan said, "I shall move some furniture together in this corner and make a hiding place here." Before hiding himself there, Arslan said to Sultan Hanım, "When the giant comes home, you will say to him, 'Where do you keep your

³ In the Turkish folktale tradition when the hero comes upon three brothers quarreling or fighting over their inheritance of three magic objects, he takes the objects away from the brothers by trickery, not brute force. Although one must accord the narrator the right to tell a tale as he/she wishes to, one can also conclude that the narrator simply does not know the tradition. This is the only instance up to this point in ATON tales where the hero uses force to achieve his end. There are several points in this rendition of a fairly common tale that indicate that the narrator is anything but an accomplished raconteur.

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113- Life force? Tell me so that I can befriend it and thus have
114 something to talk with when you are away."

After a while the giant, Ataspara, entered the room. He looked at the girl and said, "Sultan Hanım, why do you sit so quietly and look so sad?"

She said, "Oh, my giant, when you are away, I am very lonely and bored. Tell me where you keep your life force so that I will be able to talk with it."

Ataspara said, "My life force? Oh, my life force is in this broom."

After he had left the room, Sultan Hanım dressed the broom and made it look like a baby doll, and she began to play with it. When Ataspara returned that night and saw Sultan Hanım treating the broom in that fashion, he felt that she would not endanger his life force in any way. He therefore said to her, "Sultan Hanım, my life force is not really inside that broom."

She then asked, "Well, then, where is your life force? Tell me the truth."

The giant said, "My life force is in the drawer that is inserted in this wall. There are three pigeons inside that drawer, and those three birds contain my life force. If they should die, then I would die too."

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The next time that the giant left the room, Arslan came out from his hiding place. Removing the pigeons from the drawer in the wall, he quickly tore off their heads, thus killing not only the birds but the giant as well.⁴

Arslan took Sultan Hanım and left that house. Standing upon the magic rug, they were both carried swiftly to the palace of the forty giants. They arrived there just barely in time, for Sultan Hanım's brothers were just about to kill Şehzade. The giants were glad to see Arslan bringing Sultan Hanım but disappointed in not having the right now to kill Şehzade.

Arslan, Şehzade, and Sultan Hanım remained for a while at the home of the forty giants. They then started to travel to Arslan's and Şehzade's country. Along the way they stopped at the home of a girl who had painted her face black. This girl cooked pilaf,⁵ but this pilaf was never to be eaten by her guests. The girl had a practice of killing anyone who ate any of that pilaf. Arslan said to his

*the
sequels ?*

⁴ This is an extremely truncated episode. Usually there are several false leads about where the life force is hidden. Usually the hero does not so unceremoniously destroy the life force and the giant. He usually kills just part of the force at first. With his remaining strength the giant returns either to fight the hero or to beg for his life.

⁵ Pilaf or pilav is a rice dish containing small shreds of meat. It may also contain pine nuts and currants. It is a staple of Turkish cuisine.

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brother, "Don't cause me any more trouble. Don't eat any of that pilaf!"

But, as usual, Şehzade did not listen to advice given to him by anyone. Troublemaking Şehzade took a spoonful of the pilaf, and the black-faced girl immediately attacked him in an effort to kill him

Poor Arslan again had to run to the assistance of Şehzade. He said to the black-faced girl, "Don't fight with him! Fight with me!"

The girl and Arslan began to fight, but the girl was really no match for Arslan. He quickly threw her down and held his sword to her throat. She said, "Please do not kill me. I promise not to harm you." So now there were four of them traveling along toward the home territory of Arslan and Şehzade.

As they got closer to the home of Arslan and Şehzade, their father received news of their approach and of their success in winning Sultan Hanım, the sister of the forty giants. He was so jealous of his sons' success that he stationed troops along their way with orders to kill his two sons. As soon as the four travelers reached the border of his land, they were attacked by the troops, and fighting lasted all day long.

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Toward evening one of the weary soldiers asked, "Why am I fighting? What is all this conflict to achieve? The father of these two boys has behaved very badly. His action is disgusting." Saying this, he left the battlefield. Because he was a famous fighter, he was followed off the battlefield by the rest of the padişah's soldiers.

Şehzade and Arslan returned to their father's palace. They were exhausted, and they were very angry. They killed their father, and then they lived there in the palace very happily with their wives ⁶

⁶ Again, this is a greatly truncated episode. In most variants the father is not so quickly and easily dispatched. He usually persecutes and plots against either his stronger son or both of his sons, and it is only after protracted abuse that the sons finally decide to kill the father. See, for example, "The Son of the Carpenter," ATON tale No. 46.