

Story 1052 (1972 Tape 8)

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The Shepherd Who Came as Ali and Returned as a Girl

There was once a family with several children. Three of them were girls and the rest were boys. The boys all began working at an early age, and some of them had been working hard for many years, but the girls did nothing. After a while this situation annoyed their father. He said to them, "My sons are all working, but you have done nothing except eat."

At last one day the girls said to him, "Father, we want to work too"

The oldest daughter said, "Father, I am going to start working right away." She started out from home with the intention of getting a job somewhere. But one of the boys hid by the bridge²²⁻²³ waiting for her to come along. When she reached the bridge, he did something to frighten her, and so she returned home.

The middle daughter then decided to go away from home to seek a job, but the same thing happened to her. When she reached the bridge, she was frightened by the boy, and so she turned around and went back home again.

Daughter 3
Sister 3

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*Daughter - youngest -
no conflict*

Then the youngest daughter wanted to go. Her sisters warned her, but she said, "I shall go anyway." She put on shepherd's ^{DISGUISE} clothes so that she would look like a boy, and she took the name of Ali. She wasn't afraid of her brother, and she walked right past the bridge. Along the way she was joined by a small greyhound who began to follow her. She walked and walked some distance, and after a while she reached a village. There she began to work as a shepherd for an aga.¹

After a while the aga's son began to suspect that this shepherd was really a girl, even though she wore the same kind of clothes that other shepherds did. This young man had noticed that a hole had been punctured in the shepherd's ear. Still, he could not be absolutely certain whether the shepherd was a boy or a girl. He went to his mother and said, "I think that that shepherd is a girl, but how can I prove it?" (The aga's son was a ²³⁻²⁵keloçlan² who was also named Ali, though people usually called him Borazan³ Ali.)

¹An aga is a rural landowner, often wealthy, sometimes powerful.

²Keloçlan literally means bald boy, but his baldness is caused not by aging but by ringworm infestation of the scalp.

³Borazan means trumpet or trumpeter. It is not clear what bearing, if any, that epithet has on the story.

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His mother said, "Have the shepherd cut wood with you. If he does it well, then he is a boy. If he is clumsy and can cut very little wood, then the shepherd is a girl."

Animal helpful

While this conversation was going on, the little greyhound was lying before the front door. It was listening to everything that was said between the keloçlan and his mother. Then it went to the girl who called herself Ali and repeated the whole conversation. "They will require you to cut wood. Be very careful how you proceed to do that, and follow carefully the instructions I shall now give you. I shall change my position from the right side of the wood to the left side, and then I shall switch back to the right. When I do that, strike me with the axe and say, 'Alas!' After you have done that, the axe will do all of the cutting for you."

Advice

When they went to the forest to cut wood, the shepherd did exactly as the little greyhound had directed, and as a result the shepherd cut many big lengths of timber in a very short time. The keloçlan and his mother now began to believe that the shepherd was a boy after all, but they could not be certain, and so they decided to test the shepherd in another way. They said, "Let us

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Jat take the shepherd to such-and-such marketplace.⁴ If he chooses to buy nothing but corals and pearls, then he is a girl. On the other hand, if he chooses to buy a knife or a rifle or a pistol, then he is a boy."

Again the small greyhound heard everything that they said. He went to the shepherd and said, "When they take to such-and-such a marketplace, buy only a knife, a rifle, or a pistol.

They all went to such-and-such a marketplace, and there Ali did exactly what the dog had directed. This certainly did not prove that the shepherd was a girl. But the keloğlan was determined to try again. He said to his mother, "Let me take this shepherd to a public bath. If we go there together, I may be able to discover the facts this time."

After the greyhound had overheard this conversation, it again went to Ali. It said, "While we are out pasturing the flock, they will take you to a public bath. At that time, I shall run among the sheep and make them all confused. Just as soon as you get to the bath door, start shouting, 'A beast has gotten among the sheep! A beast

⁴The narrator repeatedly says that they are going to the pearl and coral mountain. This must be taken figuratively, for a store or marketplace is clearly implied.

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gotten among the sheep!' Then turn around and run back to the pasture instead of entering the bath. That will prevent them from recognizing that you are a girl."

On the following day they told the shepherd that they would take him to a bath. When they were about to enter the bath, Ali did just as his dog had instructed him to do, and thus they could not determine for sure whether the shepherd was a boy or a girl.

After that, days passed, months passed, and the time came when the shepherd was to finish his work for the ağa and return home. Borazan Ali was very sad about this. He had been unable to discover whether this shepherd was a boy or not, and now the shepherd was going to leave.

At the time of departure the shepherd Ali wrote a note to Borazan Ali. The note said this:

I came here in the summer;
am leaving in the fall.
came here as Ali;
am leaving as a girl.

Putting this paper under Borazan Ali's pillow, the shepherd left and started on her way home.

When Borazan Ali awakened and found this note, he was so sad that he did not know what to do. He was afraid

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that he might never see the girl again. After thinking about this for a few minutes, he decided to follow the girl and try to find her. He packed some provisions and started out. He walked and walked, and everywhere he asked villagers, "Have you seen a shepherd with a small greyhound?" After he had asked many people this question someone finally said, "Yes, I did. He came here and then left again."

Borazan Ali continued walking, and after a while he arrived at the village where the girl lived and found her home. Entering that house quietly at night, he sprinkled everywhere some powerful sleeping powder. This caused the entire family to remain unconscious for a number of hours. During that time, Borazan Ali carried the girl back to his own home, and she was still asleep when he got there. When she finally opened her eyes a little, she said, "Mother! Mother! That rooster crowing sounds just like Borazan Ali's rooster, and those chickens clucking sound just like Borazan Ali's chickens." She said this thinking that was at her parents' home. Borazan Ali sat watching her, and when she came to herself fully, she saw him. She then said at once, "I cannot be your wife. We could live together happily."

Drug?

Abdu + om

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Borazan Ali was disappointed by this remark, he still wanted to marry this girl. He therefore went to get the help of a witch⁵ to persuade the girl to accept him.

One day the girl named Ali, the witch woman, Borazan Ali were sitting together by the fireplace. The witch had placed a kettle full of milk over the fire in the fireplace. While the girl was sitting there, quite close to the fireplace, the milk boiled over. The very moment that that happened, the witch shouted, "Hay bride! Huy bride Blind bride! Your milk has boiled over!"⁶

Upon hearing that, the girl, who had not yet spoken to Borazan Ali, said something to him. They were married after that, and so the story is finished

⁵One should not make too quick an equation between the word witch as used in one culture and the same word as it is used in another culture. In Turkish lore a witch may be an agent of evil, or may be ghoulish to the extent of eating newly-buried corpses, or may be a shrewd, perceptive, conniving person who will, for a good price, undertake a mission directed to immoral purposes.

⁶Is this some sort of incantation? Hayhuy means loud and continuous noise, tumult. Is the boiling over of milk a meaningful symbol in some arcane ritual? If so, then perhaps the ending of the tale makes more sense than it seems to on the surface. The tale seems to fall apart in the last two paragraphs.