

Story 1852 (1981 Tape)

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Evil Deeds of the Alkarısı¹

The Alkarısı goes to any place where a baby is about to be born. Sometimes it is thought that such a creature comes to take away or kill the newborn baby. An Alkarısı sometimes chokes the baby to death and then cuts out the liver of the mother. We learned about these things from our mothers.

They used to warn children that Alkarısıs lived in lakes and other bodies of water. They would say, "Don't get too close to the edge of the lake or the Alkarısı may catch you." I think that parents sometimes pretended this in order to keep children from falling into the water and drowning.

¹The Alkarısı is often represented as being red, and it is then known as the Red Witch. This creature is sometimes the personification of puerperal fever, until the mid-19th century a common cause of death of mothers shortly after they had borne a child. In common parlance this disease is more often called childbed fever. The Alkarısı is sometimes identified as Lilith, a female demon in rabbinical legend.