

Story 2033 (1997 Tape 2)

Narrator: Ayla Demirtürk,
teacher, 28

Location: Yeşilova village
Acıpayam kaza,
Denizli Province

Date: June 9,

A Crazy Family

There was once a small family that consisted of a father, a mother, their son, and that son's wife. They all lived in the same house. The father, the mother, and their daughter-in-law were all crazy. Only the son was a normal person. That young man was very distressed about the condition of the other members of the family, but there seemed to be nothing that he could do to help them. Day after day the three lunatics grew more and more insane.

One day he observed that his mother and his wife had made a small paper ship and placed it in a puddle of rainwater in the garden. His mother and his wife were trying to stand in that ship, and as they were doing so, they first made the sound of a steamship--chuff, chuff, chuff--and then they screamed in laughter. The young man then went to see what his father was doing, and he found him sitting on a wooden horse and pretending that it was

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a real horse. As the father did this, he kept urging the horse to go faster, and he made the sound of galloping hooves--tıkıdık, tıkıdık, tıkıdık. The young man decided to leave the house and go somewhere in search of a cure for the mad members of his family.

As he was walking along, he soon came across an old woman carrying a large empty bag. As the young man approached her, she held up the open end of the bag and said to it, "Shut your mouth!" Then, holding the bag shut, she rushed with it into her house. A few minutes later she came out with another large open bag. To this bag she also said, "Shut your mouth!" Then she took this second bag into her house also.

The young man was surprised and confused by her behavior. When the old woman came back out again, he asked her, "Auntie, what are you doing?"

The old woman answered, "My house does not have any sunshine in it, and so I am catching bags of sunshine and taking them in there. But I have been unsuccessful in my efforts. I keep filling bags with sunshine, but before I can get them inside my house, the sunshine I have caught always manages to escape. All day, every day

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I keep trying to take sunshine into my house, but no matter how hard I work at it, I always fail."

"Oh, auntie," he said. "That is not the way to get sunshine in your house. Let me help you." He then cut a window into one wall of her house, and immediately sunshine poured into the building.

The old woman was delighted. She said, "My son, you are a very clever man. Please do not go away but remain here and be my son."

"I cannot remain here," answered the young man, "but I can stay long enough to eat lunch with you." The old woman fed him well, and all during the time he was eating, she pleaded with him to stay there. But after he had finished lunch, the young man thanked her and renewed his journey.

After he had walked for awhile, he came to a large group of people who were engaged in a wedding celebration. People in that crowd were singing, dancing, and enjoying themselves. Entering that throng, the young man joined the wedding festivities. But as the people drew closer to the house where the newlyweds were to live, they began arguing among themselves. Some were saying that to get the bride into the house, they should cut off her hands and feet. Others suggested that they cut off

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her head to get her into the house

The young man could not understand what was going on. "What is the problem here? What are you arguing about?"

Some members of the crowd said to him, "The bride is too tall to pass through the front door of this building. Some of us think that she should be shortened by having her hands and feet cut off. Others think that should be shortened by having her head cut off.

"Are all you people crazy?" asked the young man. "I should not cut off any part of the bride's body. Simply ask her to bend her head down as she passes through the doorway

Pleased with this solution, the crowd cheered the young man. They said to him, "You are such an intelligent man. Remain here with us. We should like to have you live in our village."

"No, I cannot remain here long, but I can stay long enough to eat dinner with you." That was exactly how long he did stay in that village, and after he had finished eating, he set out again on his quest.

When he had gone some distance, he saw a mother and her daughter seated on the bank of a river and crying

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loudly. The mother wailed, "How can anyone stand such pain?"

Moving closer to the woman, the young man asked, "Auntie, what is wrong? Why are you crying? What causes your pain?"

The woman answered, "Why shouldn't we cry and feel pain? Just think about this problem. If my daughter marries the padishah's son, they may have a son. If that little boy should wander to this river and fall into its water, he might drown. Wouldn't that be terrible? How can we help crying about that?"

The young man thought, "O Allah, Allah! How crazy are this woman and her daughter!" Then he asked the woman "Is your daughter married?"

"No."

"Does your daughter have a son?"

"No."

"What makes you think that the padishah's son will meet your daughter, marry her, and have a son borne by her? You are crying about things that do not exist.

The mother and the daughter agreed with what he had said. "He is right! We should not cry but instead celebrate the fact that we do not have such a problem!" Then

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turning to the young man, the mother said, "You are such a clever young man that you should stay here and marry my daughter yourself."

"I cannot remain here. Furthermore, I am already married. I must return home."

As he continued walking, the young man thought about the people he had met along his way. He thought about the old woman who tried to capture sunshine in a bag and take it into her house. He thought about the argument among the wedding guests about getting the tall bride through a door. Then he thought about the grief of a mother and daughter over the drowning of a child that did not exist. He thought, "There may be crazy people everywhere, and each of them may be mad in a different way. I should return to my own crazy family. I may not be able to change them, but I may be able to learn how to accept them and how to deal with them."

Turning around, he walked back to his home. There he found his father still riding a wooden horse. There he found his mother and his wife still playing with a toy ship in a puddle in the garden. He greeted them, and said, "I am glad to be back. You are my crazy family, but your

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madness is not as bad as that of some other people I
have seen."