

Story 2130 (Miscellaneous
Tape 10--1972)

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but tale taped at
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Two Very Different Stepsisters¹

There was once a woodcutter who had a wife and a daughter. When the wife died, the woodcutter soon married another woman, who had a daughter of her own. The stepmother disliked the woodcutter's daughter and wanted to get rid of her. One day the woman said to her husband, "You must kill your daughter. If you do not do so, then I shall kill her."

This upset the woodcutter greatly, and for awhile he did not know what to do. Then one morning as he was preparing to go to work, he said to his wife, "I shall take my daughter with me to the forest today, and there I shall kill her."

When the woodcutter and his daughter set out for the forest, they took some food along with them. In the forest they came to a small empty cabin. The woodcutter

¹The narrator had immigrated to İzmir in 1931 from Russia. He reported that he had first heard this tale from Turks in Russia.

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said, "Daughter, stay here while I am working. Cook some of this food for us, and when I have finished cutting wood, I shall come back here and eat dinner with you."

But by the time darkness had arrived, the father had not returned, and so the girl had no choice but to spend the night there.

In the middle of the night she heard a loud noise--palder, kalder!² Then someone knocked on the door--tak, tak! The girl asked, "Who is it out there?"

The voice outside said, "Open the door, my daughter, for I have come."

Thinking that it must be her father, the girl opened the door. Standing outside the door, however, was not her father but a huge skeleton. That skeleton said, "Daughter, I am very hungry. Can you give me some food?" She gave it the food she had prepared for her father.

After it had finished eating, the skeleton said, "I am very tired. Can you prepare for me a comfortable place to rest?" After the girl had arranged a bed for it,

²Apparently onomatopoeia to represent the sound outside. The tak, tak in the following sentence is onomatopoeia commonly used to represent the sound of knocking.

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the skeleton said, "Now, daughter, enter my head through my right ear and leave it through my left ear." After she had done this, the woodcutter's daughter became the most beautiful girl in the world. The skeleton gave her a bag of gold and then vanished.

On the second morning after that, the woodcutter returned to see how his daughter was getting along. He knocked on the door. When it was opened by his daughter, he did not recognize her at first because she had become so beautiful. She told him what had happened. He then took his daughter and her bag of gold back home

The stepmother was surprised when she saw the two of them appear, but the stepdaughter was so beautiful and so rich that she could not do anything about it. She at once became very jealous of her stepdaughter. She said to her husband, "Now you must take my daughter to the forest and have her stay at the cabin where your daughter did so that she too can benefit so greatly."

The woodcutter agreed to do this, and on the following morning he and his stepdaughter went to the forest. When they reached the cabin, he said to the girl, "I shall go now and cut down some trees. While I am gone,

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you cook the food we brought, and I shall return later in the day and eat dinner with you." He then left.

The girl was not pleased that he had asked her to do any work. She cooked the food hastily and not carefully, for she was a lazy girl. That evening she heard outside the loud noise--palder, kalder! Then someone knocked on the door--tak, tak! "Who is there?" shouted the girl?"

"Please open the door, daughter, for I have returned."

"Open the door yourself," shouted the girl.

When the skeleton entered the cabin, it said, "Daughter, I am very hungry. Please give me some food."

The girl responded, "The food is over there. If you want some of it, you can serve yourself."

After it had eaten some of the food, the skeleton said, "Daughter, I am very tired. Can you fix a place for me to sleep and get some rest?"

The girl said, "Who cares whether or not you are tired? Fix a bed for yourself if you want one."

The skeleton prepared a place where it could rest. Then it said to the girl, "Enter my head through my left ear and then leave it through my right ear." The girl did

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as the skeleton had directed, but when she came out of the right ear, she suddenly became a skeleton herself

While this was happening, the dog at the woodcutter's house began to bark--hav, hav!³ The woodcutter's wife was annoyed by this noise. She went outside and kicked the dog several times, but it would not stop barkinh.⁴

Two mornings later the woodcutter went to the cabin in the forest to get his stepdaughter. No one responded when he knocked on the door. He therefore opened the door and entered the building. But his stepdaughter was not there. All that was there was a heap of bones.

He returned at once and reported to his wife what had happened. The jealousy of that woman became so great that she fell to the floor in a fit and soon after that she died.

³Animal sounds are rendered differently in different countries. To English-speaking people, a dog's bark sounds like bow wow. In Turkish-speaking lands the dog is thought to bark hav hav.

⁴Some people think that animals have a greater sensibility to (almost extrasensory awareness of) the presence of death.

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Everyone should avoid jealousy. It is a dangerous quality to have. It can harm a person in various ways, even if it does not kill one.⁵

⁵This is only a fragment of a folktale. It is the opening episode of Aarne-Thompson type 403 The Black and the White Bride