

Story 803 (1970 Tape 18)

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*youngest son,  
sucağı*

*older brother - hadears*

Karaçor and His Brothers

Once there was a man who had eleven sons. They were poor, and as time went on, they became poorer. Finally, when the father was an old man, the sons had to leave home to seek work elsewhere.

When the ten older brothers were ready to leave, the youngest, whose name was Karaçor, said, "I am coming, too."

"You are too young to come," they all said. "You stay here with our father."

"I am going to come, too," Karaçor said. He was determined to go along with them.

When the boy's ten older brothers were about to embark on a ship, he was crying behind them. Then he found a way to climb aboard the ship secretly. He remained hidden on the ship until it had gone out of sight of the shore. When Karaçor then appeared before them, all of his ten brothers were astonished. But what could they do? They could not very well throw him overboard, and so they took him along with them.

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After sailing for many days, they came to land and disembarked. As they walked along in this strange land, came to a large field planted with various crops. There was a large tree in the center of the field. They picked some of the things growing there, sat down beneath the tree, and started eating. Just at that moment, a giant came along and saw them there. The giant, who was the owner of the field, said to them, "Why are you sitting in my field? And why are you here, anyway?"

The giant wanted to eat them, but the brothers pleaded with him, "Please do not eat us!"

Then the giant said to the ten older brothers, "I am going to make a wager with you. I am going to reap the grain in this field and you will gather it up into sheaves. If you can keep up with me, I shall let you go. If you cannot, then I shall eat you."

They said, "All right! Start reaping." But the giant reaped an acre or two with each stroke of his huge sickle, in just a few minutes he was far ahead of the ten older brothers. The brothers lost the wager.

While the giant was preparing to eat them, Karaçor, who was sitting off to one side, said, "Giant, you may be going to eat them, but what are you going to do about me?"

"Oh, I will eat you, too."

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that is not so. I was not involved in your wager, but I shall wager with you now. I shall bet that I can reap more grain than you can put in sheaves. If you can keep up with me, you can eat me, too. But if you cannot keep up with me, we shall eat you."

The giant thought that if the ten older brothers could not beat him, then surely this younger brother could not do so alone. He therefore agreed to the wager.

Karaçor took out his little sickle and started reaping little clumps of grain with it, but as he reaped, he threw these clumps behind him, scattering them widely. Now this giant was very stingy, and he did not want to lose any of his crop. He started picking up the grain one straw at a time to sheave it. Running this way and that way to pick up the scattered grain, the giant soon was overcome with heat. Finally he shouted, "All right! I have lost." In this way Karaçor saved not only himself but his brothers, too

They all said to the giant, "Now we are going to eat you!" But, of course, they could not really eat the giant.

The giant pleaded with them not to be eaten. "If you will not eat me, I shall give you as brides the eleven daughters I have at home. And tonight I shall accept you as guests in my home."

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The brothers accepted this proposal and went to the giant's home with him. When it was time to go to bed, little Karaçor, who was a very clever little boy, decided not to go to sleep at all. In the big room in which everyone slept, they had placed fezzes on the heads of the brothers and <sup>head</sup>scarves on the heads of the daughters of the giant. In the middle of the night, Karaçor heard a noise just outside the room. It was the giant, who was awakening his wife and sharpening the knives. The giant said to "See that you do this very carefully. Cut off only the heads wearing fezzes, and leave alone the heads wearing scarves."

When Karaçor heard this, he went quickly and exchanged the fezzes on his brothers' heads with the scarves on the girls' heads. Then he went back to his place, also wearing a scarf on his head, and pretended to be asleep.

The door opened slowly, and very quietly the giant woman entered the room. Looking closely at the head of each sleeping person, she carefully cut off each head wearing a fez and then left the room

After she had gone, Karaçor shook each of his brothers, saying softly, "Brothers, brothers, get up, get up!"

"What are you doing? they asked. "Don't waken us donkey!"

*Donkey* for

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"Get up! Get up! I have just saved your lives!"

When they arose and looked about them, they saw heads of the eleven girls lying all around, and there was blood all over the place. They then leaped from a window and ran for their lives. After running a great distance, they came to a settlement and soon saw a palace at its center. It was the palace of a padişah. When they were permitted to talk to the padişah, they told him their whole story and pleaded with him for employment of some kind

Pitying their situation, the padişah hired them, assigning the ten older brothers to different positions about the palace, but he could not immediately think of a job for the youngest. Then he said, "Well, you can be my <sup>?</sup>~~gooseherd~~." He was given a large flock of geese to tend, and he cared for them so well that he soon earned the padişah's favor. He was so well liked by the padişah, in fact, that he was able to kill a goose whenever he wished, and he ate goose meat every day.

His brothers grew very <sup>jealous</sup> jealous of Karaçor's success, and they began to plot against him. First they went to the padişah and complained about him. They said, "Your Majesty, he is killing several geese every day. Why don't you reproach him for this?" But the padişah made no answer to them at all.

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A few days later, Karaçor invited his brothers to visit him. He killed several geese and said, "Come on, brothers! Let us eat!" They sat with him and ate the food which he had prepared for them, but their jealousy grew even stronger. After they had left Karaçor, they talked about him together, and their jealousy led them to a plan to destroy him.

One of the older brothers said, "Let us have him sent to the giant."

All the others said, "All right! Let us do that!"

Going to the presence of the ruler, they said, "My Padişah, there is a giant who lives in such-and-such a place. He has a beautiful quilt all covered with pearls. It is a quilt suitable only for a padişah like you

"Aha! What do you think we should do about that?"

"Our Karaçor would be able to get it for you," they said.

right," said the padişah, and he ordered that Karaçor be called to him right away. When he had explained what he wanted, the padişah asked Karaçor, "Will you do this work for me?"

"Yes, I shall."

"What will you need to accomplish it?"

"I shall need a box full of fleas and some cotton."

After he had received the supplies he had requested,

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he set out during the night for the home of the giant. Reaching his house, he quietly entered and crept softly to the bedroom. There he opened the box full of fleas, and the thousands of fleas jumped out all over everything. The giant and his wife were sleeping, but their flea bites made them scratch, and their scratching woke them up. As they were thrashing around, the quilt covered with pearls slipped off the bed. Karaçor quickly stretched the cotton strips between the rows of pearls in order to prevent their tinkling against each other. Then he folded up the quilt and ran away with it.

When the giants had fully wakened, they missed their quilt. "Alas, our quilt is gone!" said the giant. He ran outside immediately looking for it, and he then saw Karaçor escaping with it. The giant chased Karaçor to the border of his own territory, but there he had to abandon his pursuit, for all the borders of his land were so <sup>enchanted</sup> enchanted as to make it impossible for him to cross them.<sup>1</sup>

Karaçor had been gone long enough so that his brothers now concluded that he had failed and would not return. "He has not been able to get that quilt," they agreed among

<sup>1</sup> In many stories of this type, giants (or witches, or other supernatural beings) are unable to cross running water. Boundaries of their territories are rivers and streams.

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themselves. Thus, when Karaçor appeared shortly afterwards bearing the precious quilt for the padişah, his brothers were astonished. After this accomplishment, Karaçor killed ten geese, making his brothers even more jealous than they had been before. One of them said, "Let us next have him fetch the giant's horse. He will surely be caught trying to do that." The other nine all agree to this. When they went to the ruler, their spokesman said, "My Padişah, the giant who owned the precious quilt has a very powerful and talented horse. It is such a superior horse that only a padişah should own it. Why don't you have our Karaçor bring it to you?"

"It is a good thought," said the padişah. Calling Karaçor to him, he ordered him to bring the horse, and he asked Karaçor, "What will you need in order to do this?"

"I shall need a bag of mixed peanuts and hazelnuts as an appetizing enticement. I shall need a silver saddle. I shall also need a long roll of felt." When these things were brought to him, he put the saddle on his back and took one of the other items under each arm, and went to the territory of the giant. When he reached the giant's home, he went quietly to the stable and spoke to the horse:

"Look! I have brought you a bag of delicious peanuts and hazelnuts. If I give these to you to eat, will you come

he says

George  
fellow  
8-9



with me?"

course I will! But will you give me all of them at once?"

"Yes, I shall. See here. I have also brought a silver saddle to be put on your back, and a long roll of soft felt to stretch along the ground where you walk. These will not hurt you in any way. I shall ride you, and we shall make a brief trip."

horse said, "All right."

Karaçor at once placed the silver saddle on the horse's back, unrolled the felt beneath its feet, and hung the bag of nuts around its neck. As they started, however, the giant somehow heard them and woke up, saying, "Woman, woman! Wake up! Our horse is leaving!"

"Alas! It must be that Karaçor again," she said.

The giant ran as hard as he could in great strides after the horse and horseman. Karaçor urged the horse onward, and once they had gone beyond the giant's territory, they were safe, for the giant was incapable of crossing the border.

Having failed to save his horse, the giant returned home, where he sat down and beat his knees in grief.<sup>2</sup> His

<sup>2</sup> A person beset with any of several different emotions--grief, confusion, frustration, despair--may give

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also beat her knees in grief. She said, "Oh, that Karaçor has again done to us just what he wanted to do! He has deprived us of our daughters, our precious quilt, and our horse! They are all lost!"

Again, his brothers were astonished to see Karaçor return from his dangerous task. They asked each other, "How did he manage to bring back the horse?" and "How did he survive in this dangerous undertaking?"

A few days later, the ten older brothers again went to the padişah with a suggestion. One of them said, "My Padişah, wouldn't you like to see the giant from whom Karaçor has taken the precious quilt and the superior horse? Have you ever seen a giant?"

"No, I have never yet seen one, but I am curious about them. Have Karaçor bring him here so that I may see this creature.

They went to Karaçor and said, "This time you are to bring back the giant himself."

"I will do that, too," said Karaçor, and he went to report this to the padişah himself. "Your Majesty, I shall bring that giant right here for you.

vent to his feelings by lifting his hands chin-high and letting them fall upon his knees. Sometimes such a person may do more than just let his hands fall but may strike his knees with resounding slaps. This is the "beating" of the knees as referred to here.

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"What will you need to carry out this task?"

"I shall need some rags, an artificial moustache and an artificial beard, and an ~~axe~~--a blunt axe. That is all I shall need."

When these things were provided by the padişah, Karaçor dressed in the rags. He then attached to his face the artificial moustache and beard, which made him look like an old man. Taking his axe upon his shoulder, he went directly to the garden of the giant and began hitting trees, tak, tak, tak.<sup>3</sup>

Hearing this noise, the giant jumped up and said, "Hey, you stupid one! What are you doing there?"

"Ah, my giant friend, do not ask what has happened to me," said Karaçor. "This kismet<sup>4</sup> kept pursuing and pursuing me until it found me! There was a boy named Karaçor, and there was also a giant. That Karaçor had the giant's daughters slaughtered, and after that he had stolen the giant's precious quilt and his superior horse. He had carried out every trick he could against the giant. the padişah finally caught and killed that Karaçor, and I

<sup>3</sup> Onomatopoeia for the sound of an axe striking wood.

<sup>4</sup> One's kismet is his lot, his fortune, or his fate. It is something that is inevitable.

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have been ordered to make a coffin<sup>5</sup> for him. But I do not know how I am going to make it, and I don't know what size to make it, either."

what good news this is! He was the person who destroyed my happiness. He must have had the same measurements as I do. He must have been just over three meters tall."

good! Then you lie down here in this frame that I have started, and I shall make the coffin according to your measurements!"

"But what a blunt axe you have there!" said the giant "Here--let me make the coffin."

The giant was delighted to hear of the death of Karaçor. He brought a sharp axe from his house and began working right away, tak, tuk, tak, tuk.<sup>6</sup> He worked so hard that he had made a very large coffin in one hour. Then he lay down inside the coffin to test it for size.

Karaçor shut the lid of the coffin and said, "Just lie still for a minute while I hammer in a nail or two here and

<sup>5</sup> Most Turkish people are not buried in coffins. They are placed directly into the ground, covered only by their shroud. A coffin is used only for carrying the corpse in funeral procession to the cemetery.

<sup>6</sup> Onomatopoeia for the carpentering sounds made by the giant in constructing the coffin.

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here and here. How is it going to be?" As he was talking in this way, Karaçor was driving in nails all around the lid of the coffin. He also tied a strong rope several times around the coffin. The giant called from within the coffin, "Come on! Hurry up! I am getting bored in here! When am I going to get out of here?"

"Uh-huh! Just let me do this, and let me do that, and let me do so-and-so," and as he was saying this, he began dragging the coffin away.

"Hey, stupid one, where are you taking me?"

that Karaçor has played the same kind of trick again! I am Karaçor, and I am taking you to the padişah."

When the giant heard that, he began to cry inside the coffin, "Wait! Don't do that! You may have all of my property and all of my wealth, but don't take me to the padişah!"

But, of course, Karaçor paid no attention to him. He just kept on dragging the coffin, pull by pull by pull by pull. As he approached the city, a crowd of people gathered, and they began to roar, "Karaçor is bringing the giant! Karaçor is bringing the giant!" Soon the doors of the palace opened, and then everyone was waiting, with great curiosity, to see the giant. When he had finally dragged the coffin before the palace, the crowd started

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shouting, "Open it up! Open it up! Take off the cover!"

not I," said Karaçor. "I have done my share of the work. I have brought the giant here as I agreed to do. My brothers will open the coffin after I have left."

When the padişah heard Karaçor say he was leaving, the padişah said, "All right, Karaçor, but before you leave, wish from me whatever you want!"

"I want your fine horse, with a saddlebag on that horse and money in that saddlebag."

"You may have them," said the padişah, ordering that the saddlebag be filled with gold from the treasury.

After Karaçor had mounted his horse and ridden away came the time to take the cover off the coffin. The padişah was waiting for this moment with as much excitement as anyone else. The older brothers of Karaçor shivered with fear as they started to loosen the cover of the coffin. They had taken out about half of the nails and were about to pry up the lid when the giant burst out. He tore the head off the padişah, and then he tore off the heads of the ten older brothers. His wrath then began to cool

When Karaçor reached home, he found that his father had really grown very old by now. These two men who had not seen each other for years now embraced.

"Where are your brothers?" his father asked.

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"They behaved very treacherously toward me, and they reaped the fate that they deserved," said Karağor.

The father and son were no longer poor but wealthy. From that time onward, they lived comfortably and happily.