

Story 1327 (1981 Tape 2)

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The Blind Padişah with Three Sons

Once there was and once there was not a padişah who had three sons. After this padişah's eyes had gone blind, he said to his sons, "You must find the medicine to restore my eyesight."

"All right, Father," they said. "Can you tell us where to go in order to find such medicine?"

The padişah gave them these instructions. "At such and such a place a seven-headed giant lives in a well. Down in that well there is a pomegranate tree. If you can get one of the pomegranates from that tree, we can open it and place its fruit upon my eyes. That will cure them."

The three brothers set out together on the road that led to that well. After a long journey they reached that well and discovered that its interior was very hot. The oldest brother was the first to descend into the well. After being lowered only a short distance, however, he shouted, "I am burning! It is too hot for me to descend any farther. Pull me out!"

After they had pulled him back to the surface, it was the turn of the middle brother to attempt a descent into the well.

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He too found it too hot to stand, and he too shouted, "Pull me out!"

When it was the turn of the youngest brother, he said, "Even if I shout that I am burning, continue to lower the rope." They did as he had directed, and the youngest brother soon found himself on the floor of the well. Tired by the time he got there, the youngest brother lay down and took a short nap. When he awakened, he looked to the left and saw nothing but when he looked to the right, he saw a door. When he opened that door, he saw behind it a girl so beautiful that she seemed to be saying to the moon, "Don't ride tonight. I shall do so in your place."¹ As the girl sat embroidering the edge of a scarf, she was watching a golden tray on which a golden greyhound chased a golden rabbit.²

When the girl saw the youngest son, she exclaimed, "Are

¹Throughout the Moslem Middle East the moon is greatly admired as a symbol of beauty. Both oral and written literature testify to this. To compare any woman's beauty to that of the moon is to flatter the female. Here the girl is not only being compared with the moon but she is even said to excel the celestial orb in beauty. So great is her beauty that it seems to be saying to the moon, "There is no point in your rising tonight, for I am more worthy of that role."

²The folktales of many peoples contain a variety of ingenious automata. Sometimes these clever devices are functional in the plot of the tale. Here they are merely decor, quite unnecessary to the plot line at this point, although they do serve as plot elements later in the tale.

Be it, female
compare with
that of moon

and

127 28, 39

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you a jinn or a human being?³ If the seven-headed giant owns this underground area wakes up and finds you here, he will kill and eat both of us."

"Show me where the giant is, and I shall take care of him," answered the boy. He went to the giant's quarters and somehow managed to kill the monster.

When he returned, the girl said, "I have two sisters who have also been imprisoned here. I am the oldest."

When the youngest son opened the second door, he found the middle sister sitting behind it. She too was very beautiful. As she sat at work sewing, she was watching a tray upon which a golden hen and a golden rooster were chasing each other. He then proceeded to open the third door, behind which sat the youngest and the most beautiful of the three girls. She was watching a golden tray upon which a golden cat was chasing a golden mouse.

The youngest son said to the sisters, "I am going to pick a magic pomegranate from that tree over there. Its fruit will cure the blindness of my father." After he had done this, he took the girls to the bottom of the well and shouted to brothers to pull them up, one at a time.

³If a person appears suddenly in an unlikely place, the

giant
jinn
the jinn
128, 136

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After the oldest and the middle sisters had been hoisted out of the well, the youngest and most beautiful sister to the boy, "You go up ahead of me. Otherwise, when they see me, they will decide not to raise you to the surface of the earth." Worried that the youngest sister might not follow him to the surface, she insisted that she precede him. girl then said, "Very well, then, but take this strand of my hair. If you are ever in difficulty, burn this hair, and an Arab will appear and do your bidding."⁴

The boy put the hair in his pocket. Then he tied the rope around the girl's waist and called to his brothers to pull her up

When the two older brothers had raised the third girl to the surface, they closed the mouth of the well with boulders

viewer quite understandably becomes wary of the true nature of the intruder. The formulaic query in Turkish is inmisin cinmisin?--are you a jinn or other supernatural being? In some early interpretations of the word in it seems to have meant human being, and so the response then is "I am human and not a jinn." But in most uses of this expression in Archive holdings, the question seems to be that given in the text above, for otherwise the response "Neither" would make no sense.

⁴The magic helpers that answer the summons of rubbed lamps, rubbed rings, burned hairs, or burned feathers are usually either jinns or Arabs. But the narrator has confused two magic-helper sequences. When the protagonist of this tale burns the hairs, help does appear, but it is not in the form of an Arab.

g' d'g'nd
29, 30
29, 141
Heu
magic

de h'at'ha
h'at'ha

29-141
141

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and left their brother trapped below. They did this because they would have been ashamed to go home and have to report that it was only the youngest brother who could endure the heat of the well to be able to pick the magic pomegranate. Taking the pomegranate from the youngest sister, who had carried it up with her, they took it to the palace and applied its fruit to their father's eyes. The remedy was effective; the padişah's blindness was cured. As soon as he could see again, he looked around and asked, "Where is my youngest son?"

The older brothers said, "Father, he parted company with us soon after we started traveling to the well, and we have not seen him since that time." They had secretly locked the three sisters from the well in separate rooms so that they could not tell anyone what had actually happened.

Let us see what the youngest son was doing in the meantime. The boy sat thinking for some time in an effort to find some solution to his difficulty. He had temporarily forgotten all about the magic hair in his pocket. When he fell asleep, however, the hair was recalled to his mind in a dream. He woke up immediately and burned the end of the magic hair. A

See below. One of the traditional escapes from the underworld does, however, involve black and white rams. To this point in the ATON tales processed, there has been no supernatural Arab.

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1/4 13
+ 38
+ well
small puddle appeared suddenly between him and two rams, the one white and the other black. The girl had told him that if he mounted the white ram, it would carry him up to the surface of the earth, but if he mounted the black ram, it would take him seven levels deeper into the underworld.

When the boy jumped across the puddle, he tried to mount the white ram, but his foot slipped and he landed on top of the black one. As soon as he did this, the ram plunged downward another seven levels beneath the surface of the earth.

There he found another world, but it was night there and darkness was everywhere. Unable to see very much, he began wandering about down there. When he encountered an old woman, he said, "Grandmother, I am a lonely boy far away from home. Will you accept me as a guest?"

"Be my guest, son," she said.

When they reached the old woman's house, the boy said, "Grandmother, why does this water taste salty?" (Without water to give her guest, she had urinated in a pan and given him the urine.

"Forgive me, son, but we have almost no water down here."

"What is the reason for that?"

"The only well in this land is controlled by a seven-headed

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 dragon Each year it comes and eats one of us, and for that price it gives us a supply of water. Today is the end of the year, and tomorrow the dragon will come and eat another of us, and this time it will be the turn of the padişah's daughter to be sacrificed. And next year the dragon will come again and eat someone else.

The youngest son said, "Go and see that girl, but don't tell anyone but her that you have seen me. Tell her not to go right to the entrance of the well tomorrow but to stand back a way and say to the dragon, 'You come farther forward to eat me. I cannot go any farther toward your well. When the dragon extends its head farther out, I shall kill it and save her

The old woman went to the palace and spoke privately with the princess. She said, "There is a boy here from the other world. He says that you should not go very close to the mouth of the well but should make the dragon come out of the well to get you tomorrow. He is going to kill the dragon and save you."

In the morning when drums began to be beaten and zurnas⁵

⁵The zurna is a double-reed instrument similar to the oboe. In the world of Turkish peasantry all public events, weddings, and other ceremonies are accompanied by drum and zurna music.

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played, the boy put on his cloak⁶ and hid himself near the well. A procession of people--many of them crying--delivered the girl to the edge of the well and then quickly returned home.

The girl then called to the dragon, "You must stretch your neck out farther to eat me. I cannot come any closer."

When the dragon stretched his neck out farther and opened his mouth to devour the girl, the boy killed the dragon with his bow and arrows. The blood of the dragon flowed everywhere. As soon as the dragon was dead, the boy fled and went back to the cottage of the old woman. Before he was able to get away from the well, however, the girl dipped her hand in dragon blood and pressed it on his back so that she would later be able to identify him

The news of the dragon's death was taken at once to the padişah. In his rejoicing over this turn of events, the padişah announced, "I shall give my daughter in marriage to the person who saved her." When his announcement was made known to his people, there were many men (between fifty and a hundred) who claimed to have slain the dragon. This confused the

⁶The literal word for cloak used here is aba--a coat made of strong coarse woolen cloth.

Hand
bloody,
133-134

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padişah greatly as he tried to decide which of these claimants was the actual slayer of the dragon.

Then one of his counselors stepped forward and said, "My padişah, this is not the way to handle this situation. You should place your daughter on a balcony of the palace and then have all of the men pass beneath that balcony so that she herself can identify the man who killed the dragon." The padişah followed this advice and had all the men in the city pass before his daughter so that she could take a good look at each and identify the dragon slayer. It took a long while for all of the men to pass beneath the balcony, but after the last man had done so, the princess had still not seen the man who had saved her

A man then went to the ruler and said, "My padişah, there is a stranger staying at the home of an old woman in our city. He may possibly be the one who killed the dragon. Why don't you have him brought here to pass before the princess?"

The boy was brought to the palace. When the princess saw the bloody hand print on the back of his cloak, she said "Father, this is the man who saved me."

When the padişah heard this, he called the boy, saying, "Come here, son, and ask me for anything you wish."

"I wish only for your good health, my padişah."⁷

⁷In Turkish folktales this is the standard response given to a ruler who asks the protagonist to make a wish for whatever he would like to have. Often the demurral is made twice, and sometimes thrice, before the protagonist indicates what he would like as his reward.

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"No, no, you must wish for something for yourself. I shall give you my daughter." (Narrator's interpolation: He had a fiancée back on the surface of the earth, and he did not want to marry anyone else--even if there had been fifty padişahs' daughters.

"I wish that you would send me to the upper world, to the surface of the earth."

135-138 "I may be able to help you get there. First of all, I shall give you a horse on which you can ride to such and such a place. There you will find a large plane tree in which lives an emerald-green Anka.⁸ That giant bird is the only creature that could carry you back up to the surface of the earth. Nothing else can do it. If the Anka agrees to do it, it will require forty batmans⁹ of meat and forty batmans of water to sustain it in its difficult flight. I shall provide these supplies if it promises to carry you there.

The boy mounted the horse and rode in the direction he had been told to go. When he reached the plane tree, he saw that

⁸The Anka is one of the several giant birds in the folklore of the Middle East. Others are the Phoenix, the Simurgh, and the Roc (Rukh) of Arabian Nights fame.

⁹A measure of weight varying between 5.5 and 22 pounds at different times.

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it was so huge that a whole army could have hidden among its boughs. He heard a chirping of nestlings coming from one of the large branches. Although he did not know it, the Anka had built a nest in that tree every year for many years, had laid eggs in that nest, and had hatched a brood of small ankas. But the nestlings had never grown to maturity, for every year a dragon had come and eaten the baby birds. As the boy was looking at the plane tree, he saw this dragon starting to climb the trunk of the tree. Drawing his sword, he hacked the dragon in half, and its body fell back to the ground dead. Tired by now, the boy decided to lie down in the shade of the plane tree and sleep for a while.

While he was sleeping there, the emerald-green Anka bird returned. Alarmed at seeing someone that close to its nest, she swooped down to peck off the boy's head, but the cries of her children prevented her from doing so. "No, no, Mother they called. "He killed the dragon that had come here to eat us." When she heard this, the Anka spread her wings above the boy to make an even better shade under which he could sleep.

When the boy woke up, the Anka asked him, "Are you a jinn or some other supernatural creature?"¹⁰

¹⁰ See Note 3 above.

*jinn
In m...
Jinn... boy*

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"I am not a jinn nor any other supernatural creature but a human being.

"Tell me what you wish for most.

"I wish that you would take me back to the surface of the earth.

"You arrived here at a time when I have reached old said the Anka, "but I shall try to carry you there, for have saved my children from the dragon. For years the dragon has eaten my nestlings, but you saved my present children, and so I shall save you. Go and tell the padişah to prepare forty batmans of meat and forty batmans of water to be loaded on my back for the trip."

The boy returned to the palace and got the meat and water which the padişah had earlier promised him. He loaded these supplies on the back of the Anka, and he himself sat in the center of them. As the giant bird flew upward, he fed her meat when she said, "Ka," and water when she said, "Ku."¹¹ As they were approaching the surface of the earth, however the supply of meat was exhausted. The next time that the bird said "Ka," he took out his knife, cut a piece of flesh from

¹¹ An anomaly of this tale type is the fact that this giant bird can speak human language fluently at all times except when it is in flight. At that time, however, all it can manage is bird sounds (Gak/guk, or Ka/Ku).

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his own thigh, and fed that to the Anka. The bird realized at once that she had been given human flesh, and so she did not swallow it but held it in her mouth. When they reached the surface, the bird said, "Here you are! You may now go to your home."

Not wishing to let the bird see that he was unable to walk very well, the boy said, "You can return to your own land now. I shall start home in a short while

Cure
"Come here, human being," said the Anka. "I did not swallow your flesh." Pushing the flesh forward with the tip of her tongue, she said, "In the name of Allah," and pressed it back in place on the boy's thigh. The wound healed almost immediately.

The Anka returned to the underworld, and the boy set out on his journey toward home. Along his way he met a shepherd tending his flock. He asked the shepherd, "Will you sell me a sheep?"

"Yes, I will."

When he paid the shepherd for the sheep, he said, "You may keep the meat and the hide. All I want is the stomach." Opening the sheep's stomach, he cleaned it out and washed it in a brook. Then, stretching it out, he pulled it over his

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Disg
Keloğlan

head to give himself the appearance of a keloğlan.¹² /Narra-
tor's interpolation: Now look at what has happened. He was
the son of a padişah, but now he has come down to being a
keloğlan. But what else could he do? He had no other choice.⁷
Disguised in that way, the boy went to a jewelry shop and
asked the jeweler, "Will you accept me as your apprentice?"

But h

Meanwhile the oldest brother decided to marry the oldest
of the three sisters from the well. The girl said, "I shall
not marry you unless you can bring me a golden tray on which
a golden greyhound is chasing a golden rabbit." The girl
asked for this in order to find out whether the youngest
had yet, after five or six years, escaped from the underworld,
for only he would be able to have such a toy made

The oldest son of the padişah went to the jeweler and
said, "You must make me a golden tray on which a golden grey-
hound is chasing a golden rabbit. It must be ready within
three or four days--in time for my wedding.

¹²The word keloğlan means bald boy, but the baldness is
not that caused by aging. It is caused by ringworm infesta-
tion of the scalp. This disease often strikes the younger
and perhaps improperly tended younger children of large peas-
ant families. It is encouraged by uncleanness. In folktales
the keloğlan is a definite personality type, a winner, and a
sympathetic figure. In tales the keloğlan image is often used
as a disguise. Disguisers hide their hair by covering it
either with a sheepskin turned inside out or with the cleaned
lining of a sheep's stomach.

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The jeweler was shocked by this order. He knew very well that there was no way in which gold could be turned into living creatures. He said, "My prince, you have ordered something that is impossible."

"I do not understand how it is to be made, but if you do not have it ready within three or four days, I shall ask my father to have you hanged."

It was just after that that Keloğlan arrived at the jewelry shop and asked, "Master, will you accept me as your apprentice?"

"Don't bother me now, for I am in trouble. The padişah's oldest son is getting married, and he has ordered that I make for that occasion a golden tray on which a golden greyhound is chasing a golden rabbit. If I cannot make this golden toy, he is going to have me hanged. Go away and leave me alone!"

"Good health to you, master. If you will accept me as your apprentice, I shall make this golden toy for you

The jeweler's wife was there, and she felt sorry for the boy. She said, "Perhaps he can indeed make it. Take him as your apprentice."

After the jeweler had followed his wife's advice, Keloğlan said, "Master, bring me a kilo of raisins, a kilo of chickpeas,

Apprentice

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and a kilo of walnuts. Buy these and bring them to me, I shall make the golden toy."

As the jeweler was going after these things, he laughed and said, "Can he make the golden toy out of these things? He does not ask for tools, or steel or wire. All he wants are things to eat. He cannot make it out of such materials, but inasmuch as I am going to be hanged anyway, there is no need to break his heart about this matter. I shall go get what he has asked for."

Late that night the jeweler was not sleeping but was worrying about his difficult situation. He looked into Keloğlan's room and saw that the boy was singing as he ate raisins and nuts but that he was doing nothing to make the golden toy that was needed. Going then to his wife, the jeweler said, "Woman, didn't I tell you that that keloğlan would not be good for anything?"

"Don't worry. Allah will help us," she said. /Narrator's interpolation: People who believe in Allah will have good things come to them.7

Just before dawn Keloğlan burned the end of the magic hair. An Arab appeared and asked, "What do you want? Shall I build or destroy?" ■

Story

"Neither build nor destroy. What I want is a golden tray upon which a golden greyhound is chasing a golden rabbit.

"Close your eyes," said the Arab, and Keloğlan closed his eyes. "Now open your eyes," said the Arab, and when the boy did so he found the golden toy before him.

There was a big covered basket in the corner of that room. It was the kind of basket they used to use to cover milk so that flies would not fall into it.) Keloğlan placed the golden toy inside that basket and pulled the cover over it

In the morning the jeweler went to that room and asked, "Well, what did you do, Keloğlan?"

"It is ready."

"Don't tell me that! How can it be ready? I came here in the middle of the night and found you doing nothing but singing songs and eating raisins and nuts. You do not even have any tools or materials to use. How could you have done it?"

"Open the basket carefully and look inside," said Keloğlan

When the jeweler looked into the basket, he was amazed. He was so delighted that he hugged Keloğlan and kissed him on both cheeks. He sent the good news to the padişah's son, who came and took the toy to the palace. There the girls said

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among themselves, "The youngest son has returned to the surface of the earth, but we do not yet know where he is. We must remain patient and watch to see what will happen

After a few days Keloğlan said to the jeweler, "Master, it has been announced that they are going to play cirit¹³ during the wedding celebrations today. May I go and watch?"

"No, son, it is too dangerous. The horses used in the cirit games might get out of control and hurt you. You are now an artist, more valuable to me than my own son. I won't let you go."

"All right, then, I shall stay here," said Keloğlan.

The jeweler himself went to the cirit games. He had to attend the wedding celebrations for the padişah's son. As the activities were being renewed for that day, Keloğlan went to an unoccupied part of the city, and there he burned the magic hair. The Arab who appeared asked, "Shall I build or shall I destroy?"

"Neither build nor destroy but bring me a black suit, a white horse, and three javelins for cirit."

"Close your eyes," said the Arab, and after the boy had

¹³Cirit (pronounced jirit) is an ancient Turkish sport comparable to jousting in the West during the Middle Ages.

Cirit
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done so, the Arab said, "Now open them." When the boy opened his eyes, he saw that what he had requested was there before him and the Arab was gone.

After dressing, the youngest son mounted his horse and rode to the place in the celebrations where cirit was being played. As he entered the playing field, he saw that the bridegroom, his older brother, was among the contestants. The boy threw his javelin at the bridegroom and killed him.

The crowd shouted, "Capture him! He has killed the bridegroom!" Several people chased the youngest son, but they could not catch him, for his horse was much faster than any ordinary horse.

That evening when the jeweler returned, Keloğlan asked him, "How was the wedding celebration, master? Did everything go well?"

"It was not a good wedding celebration. The bridegroom, the padişah's son, was killed. A young man appeared on a horse more marvelous than you have ever seen and when he threw his javelin among the players, it killed the bridegroom."

A week later it was announced that the middle son of the padişah was to be married. The middle sister from the well agreed to marry the middle son of the padişah only on the

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condition that he would get for her a golden tray on which a golden hen and golden rooster were chasing each other. The middle son went to the jeweler and ordered this golden toy. Again it was Keloğlan who provided the toy by burning the magic hair and calling the Arab

As before, part of the wedding celebration was to be a cirit game. After the jeweler had left for the celebration Keloğlan ordered the Arab to bring him a white suit and a black horse and three cirit javelins. He changed the colors of his suit and his horse so that no one would recognize him as the one who had killed the padişah's oldest son. Again he rode to the playing field and entered the cirit game. This time he threw a javelin at his next oldest brother and struck him between the eyes, killing him immediately.

The youngest brother tried to escape as he had before, but this time he and his horse were surrounded too quickly to allow him to flee. He was captured and placed in the dungeon to await his execution by hanging.

The three sisters heard all of this news, and they realized that the prisoner was the young man who had rescued them from the giant in the well. But the padişah did not recognize him, for it had now been several years since the older brothers had

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told him that his youngest son had run away and left them. Because the girls were still locked in their rooms, there was no way that they could go to the padişah and tell him what had really happened.

In the morning the boy said to the kadı¹⁴ and the executioners, "You are going to hang me, but first take me before the padişah so that I can make my statement to him." The kadı granted him his request and ordered that he be taken to the presence of the padişah.

When the boy appeared before him, the padişah said to him, "Why do you want to make a statement? You have already killed my two sons. Is that not enough? I am going to have you hanged."

"My padişah, you are going to have me hanged anyway, and so first let me tell you my problem. You can hang me after that. My padişah, how many sons do you have?"

"I had three sons. The youngest was the one I loved the most, but soon after I went blind I lost that son. I sent all three sons to get from a certain well a magic pomegranate that would restore my sight. My two older sons found the well,

¹⁴The kadı was a judge of canonical law during the Ottoman Empire. Many storytellers use the word as a generic term for any judge of that earlier time.

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went down into it, and got the magic pomegranate, but youngest son ran away."

"Would you recognize your youngest son if you were to see him?"

"Of course I would. How could I fail to do so?" asked the padişah.

"Then why do you not recognize me? I am that youngest son."

After the father and son had embraced each other, boy told his father about everything that had happened. He said, "Father, they did this and this and this and that to me. I went down the well, killed the dragon at the bottom, picked the magic pomegranate. I rescued the three girls and had my brothers pull them up to the surface of the earth. When it was my turn to be pulled up, however, my brothers refused to raise me but instead closed the mouth of the well and left me down there. Then they returned and told you lies about what had really happened. Allah helped me go through many difficulties and much suffering. It was I who made it possible for you to recover your eyesight."

Knowing the truth at last, the padişah took the matter into his own hands. He had the oldest of the sisters from the well married to his grand vizier, and he had the middle sister from

Recognized
reborn
Identified

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the well married to his second vizier. Finally, he had his youngest son married to the youngest sister from the well. And that was the way their story ended.