

Story 717 (1976 Tape 4)

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Location: Yakacık village,
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The Frog Wife

Once there was and once there was not a man who had three sons. When they had grown into young men, the two older sons were married, but the youngest son remained single. This so annoyed the father that he said to his youngest son, "If you do not choose a girl to marry, I shall get you a frog for your bride." The very next day the father mounted his horse, rode to the bank of the Sakarya River,¹ and there caught a frog to be the bride of his youngest son.

That evening while the bride awaited him in the nuptial chamber the young man thought to himself, "What can I ever do with a frog? I shall simply throw it out into the courtyard." Before he entered the room, however, he looked inside through the keyhole, and to his amazement he saw there the most beautiful girl he had ever seen²--

¹The Sakarya is one of the major rivers of western Turkey.

²The moon is greatly admired in Moslem culture, and to compare anyone to the moon is to compliment that person. The moon is at the full on the fourteenth of the month on the lunar calendar; when full, it is considered most beautiful.

*Transformation:
Supernatural wife*

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as beautiful as the fourteenth of the moon. After he entered the room, he decided that he would really marry this frog girl, and a regular wedding ceremony was arranged.

After the wedding the boy's father invited him and his new wife to come to his home for dinner. When the meal was finished, the father said to the boy, "My son, you must bring me a fresh cucumber or I shall kill you with a knife and take your bride as my own."

The boy returned to his own home worrying about this demand put upon him by his father. His wife said to him, my ³ bey what are you thinking about in such a sober way?"

^{2, 3, 5} "My father has demanded that I bring to him a fresh cucumber. If I don't do so, he says that he will kill me and take you as his wife. How can I ever find a fresh cucumber at this time of the year?"

She said to him, "Go to the bank of the Sakarya River and shout, 'Küçükatma! Küçükatma!' When they appear,⁴ tell them that you want a fresh cucumber, and they will find one for you."

Following his wife's directions, the young man went to the bank of the Sakarya River and shouted, "Küçükatma!

³ Bey means literally lord or master. It is used as an honorific or merely as a gesture of respect.

⁴ Just who or what "they" are is not explained. Obviously they are supernatural agents of some sort from the same supernatural milieu from which the frog wife herself had emerged.

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awakening her
to attend his
wife

supernatural
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Küçükatma!" Then when they appeared, he said, "My father wants a fresh cucumber. Please bring me one." Almost immediately the cucumber was produced, and the young man delivered this to his father

It was not long after that that the older of his two brothers sent him an invitation: "You and your wife come to dinner at our house." The youngest son's wife used to go everywhere wearing her frog costume. While they were eating dinner their father arrived, and after the meal was finished, he said to the youngest son, "My late father, who is now in the other world, wore a special ³⁻⁵ring on his finger. I want you to get that ring for me, and if you fail to do so, I shall have you executed."

When they reached their own home the frog wife said "My ³⁻⁵bey, what is bothering you that you look so sad?"

"Well, my father has demanded that I bring him a certain ring from the hand of his father, but his father is dead and in the next world. How can I get that ring? But if I do not get it, he says that he will execute me and marry you."

"Is that what you are so worried about? That can be taken care of easily. Just go to the bank of the Sakarya River and again shout, 'Küçükatma! Küçükatma!' Tell them that you need that ring from the hand of your grandfather, they will help you to get it."

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¶ The husband went to the Sakarya River and, standing on bank, called, "Küçukatma! Küçukatma!" When he explained what he wanted, Küçukatma took him to the next world, where ^{other} ~~world~~ he began to look for his grandfather.

The first person he saw was an old woman who was sweeping out an oven with her breasts. "What are you doing, aunt?" he asked.

She said, "What but this should I be doing, son? When I was alive and well in the other world, I always used to leave my oven filled with ashes. I left it dirty. Now here in this world the demons compel me to clean ovens in this way." ^{Hell}

The next person he encountered was a man building a bridge. "What are you doing, uncle?"

"What should I be doing, son? In the other world I always wanted to build a bridge but never accomplished task. Now they make me build bridges continually in this world."⁵

Leaving the bridge builder to do his work, the youngest son continued searching for his grandfather. At last he saw him and called, "Grandfather! Grandfather!"

"Hey! What are you doing here in this world?"

"My father said that you wore a certain ring on your

⁵ These punishments in the next world for shortcomings or sins committed in this world have a Dantean quality.

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finger. He wants that ring. I came here to get it from you if you will give it to me, in order to take it back to him."

right, son. Here--you may have it." Saying this, he removed the ring from his finger and gave it to his grandson

The boy took the ring and returned with it to the other world. Once there, he went immediately to his father and handed him the ring.

One day shortly after that, he and his wife were invited to dinner at the home of the younger of his two elder brothers. As usual, his father arrived at the dinner late. After the meal was finished, he took aside his youngest son and said to him, "Within two days I want you to bring to me a dwarf so small that he will stand no taller than my hand, but he must have a beard five handspans in length. If you cannot bring him to me in two days' time, I shall have you beheaded."

The boy returned to his own home thinking hard and worrying about this task. "What are you worrying about so much, my ~~boy~~?" asked his wife.

"My father has demanded that I bring to him within two days a dwarf only one handspan tall but having a beard five handspans in length. How could such a person ever be found? But if I cannot find it, I shall be beheaded."

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"Go to the Sakarya River bank again and shout 'Küçükatma! Küçükatma!' and ask Küçükatma to find such a dwarf for you

Again the young man went to the riverbank and told Küçükatma what it was that his father wanted this time. Without any delay whatsoever, Küçükatma found a dwarf of this description and brought it to the young man. On his way home he became so tired that he sat down to rest, but sitting became lying, and he soon fell asleep. When he awakened, the dwarf was nowhere to be seen. "Oh, my God, I have lost the dwarf! Now if my father wishes to behead me, that will be my fate. What can I do to prevent it?"

When he arrived home, his wife asked, "Well, did you get the dwarf?"

"Yes, I did, but then I fell asleep on the way home and thus lost him."

"Shake out your jacket," she said.

When he did as she directed, the dwarf fell out of the jacket to the floor. He then picked up the dwarf and took him to his father.

There the dwarf began talking. He said to the father, "You wanted a fresh cucumber, and it was brought to you. You wanted a ring from the hand of a dead man in the other world, and this was also gotten for you. Then you demanded a dwarf whose height was only one handspan in length but whose beard

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was five handspans long. This too was found for you. Why have you committed such offenses against these people? May you petrify from your feet to your waist for your first offense!"

As soon as these words were spoken, the legs of the father turned to stone. The dwarf then spoke again: "For your second offense, may you petrify up to your neck!"

No sooner had he said this than the father's body began to stiffen until it was stone from his feet to his neck. The dwarf then said, "And for your third offense, may you petrify up to the top of your head and become one solid piece of rock that man and beast can walk upon you!"

is exactly what happened, and after that the young man and his frog wife lived happily without further trouble.