

Story #517 (not on tape)

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The Prince and the Pomegranate Seed

TEK
Once there was and once there wasn't, when God had many creatures and to talk too much was a sin, when camels were salesmen and fleas were shepherds, when I was rocking my mother's cradle ^{from} tungur mungur, in a certain country there was an old woman called the fairy mother.

One day with the other women of the village, the fairy mother took her old water pitcher and went to the spring of the prince to draw water. That day, the prince happened to be bored, so he sat at his window watching those who came to the spring. To amuse himself, he threw a precious stone--sometimes a diamond, sometimes a pearl--at each person who drew water. And of course he threw a gem at the old woman, that fairy mother. But the gem hit the pitcher, instead, and the pitcher broke in her hand, and the water spilled all over the ground. She looked to her left and to her right, but she saw no one. Then she looked up, and there sat the prince at his window, laughing. The fairy mother was very angry. She tossed her head, saying, "Son of the padişah, may you burn with desire for Pomegranate Curse Seed!" Without another word, she left. *thought*

Suddenly the prince began to burn inside, and nothing would ease the burning. Sick with desire, he neither ate nor slept, day after day. The servants reported this strange illness to the padişah, and the padişah told his wife, and the prince's mother came at once to see him. When she heard him moaning, "Pomegranate Seed!" she said, "What could be easier?"

and she had baskets and baskets of pomegranates sent to his room. But the prince didn't even look at them. "I burn!" he cried. "I am burning!"

Doctor after doctor was called, but none could discover the cause for the prince's pain. And if no cause is known, how can a cure be found? Finally, the only doctors left were Idi and Bidi. Idi came and looked at the prince. Then he said, "Only Bidi can tell what the illness is." As for Bidi, he, too, looked at the prince. Then he said, "Only Idi can tell what the illness is." From Idi to Bidi -- from Bidi to Idi -- and neither was willing to give an answer.

In truth, both Idi and Bidi knew that the prince burned with longing for Pomegranate Seed, but neither one dared to tell the padişah. And both Idi and Bidi knew that the fairy mother would not take back the curse she had laid on the prince.

The padişah sent his spies to the place where Idi and Bidi came to talk, and when they talked of the prince's illness, the spies hurried back to the padişah with the news. At once, the padişah sent for the old woman, but she refused to come, either for the padişah's servants or for his vezirs. "If the padişah wants to know about this matter, he must come here and ask me himself," she said.

That night, the padişah and his chief vizier disguised themselves in shabby clothes and went to the home of the fairy mother. Of course, she knew them, and how she laughed! But she had them sit down, and then she told the whole story of the prince's breaking her old pitcher--the pitcher she had had from her mother and her grandmother--and of his laughing and of the prince's burning love for Pomegranate Seed because of her curse. "Now," she said, "he will either burn forever for love of Pomegranate Seed or he will seek her and gain nothing but grief."

The padişah, remembering his son's cry "I am burning! I am burning!" wept as he begged the fairy mother to grant the prince the Pomegranate Seed he burned for. At last she said, "Your son cannot put the pieces of my jar together and recover the water that was spilled. He must, then, for seven days and nights carry water from one spring to another for me. If he can do that, I shall tell him how he can find Pomegranate Seed."

Task

Carrying the fairy mother's two big jars to the prince, the padişah said, "My son, there is no way of breaking the fairy mother's curse. must either gather up the water you spilled or you must carry water for her in these jars for seven days and seven nights."

What could the prince do? He burned for Pomegranate Seed! So he carried water, carried water, day and night for seven days, until his strength was almost finished. At the end of that time, the fairy mother called him to her. "This you must do," she said. "Pass seven mountains beyond Kaf Mountain.¹ Cross seven seas. Then you will see seven roads; choose one, and walk along it for seven years and seven months. Then you will find yourself in the land of Pomegranate Seed. The rest is up to you. If you are lucky, you will win Pomegranate Seed."

125, 127-

Quest

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129

132

The prince begged for mercy; he pleaded for a helper in the task; he even asked, "Who is Pomegranate Seed?" But he could get no further help.

"You must do this thing yourself, since the trouble is of your making. But watch and listen carefully the whole time," she warned.

There was no help for it: he must go by himself to seek Pomegranate Seed. So he went home. From his father he got a pair of iron shoes and an iron staff; from his mother he got an old robe and food for seven years. And he said neither "yes" nor "no," though his father beat his knees² and begged him to stay, and his mother asked him to forget this mad quest.

¹A mythical mountain at a great distance.

²To beat one's knees is to express, by body language, grief and anguish.

He just ³kissed their hands and left.

Familiar
effusive
He went over hills and across rivers. He went a little distance; he went far, and when he turned to look, he found he had gone only the length of a barley grain.⁴ "I am burning! I am burning!" he cried. But there was none to hear, so he went on. Suddenly he saw a beautiful fish on the road at his feet, flopping in the dust. The prince stopped, remembering^m that the fairy mother had told him, "But watch and listen carefully the whole time."

He listened, and the fish spoke. "Seven seas have thrown me out onto dry land, and I shall die without water. Son, O, Son, if you are human, take me to a sea before I perish."

126-127 Pitying the fish, the prince murmured, "May this bring me good luck," and he picked up the fish and started walking. In the closing and opening of an eye, he saw the sea, and he threw the fish into it.

In a moment, the ^{grateful} fish lifted his head above the water and said, "Son, O, Son, you helped me by returning me to the sea. Now I can help you. Come. I'll carry you to the other side of the sea on my back." And he carried the prince to a land just filled with roses. "Here, my son," he said. "You are on dry land again. But someday you may need help. Take three scales from my back and keep them safe. If you are ever in trouble burn one of those scales and I will come at once."

Arrived back home tonight
126-127
132

merge object
126-127
126-128
126-132
The prince took the scales and tucked them safely inside his sash. Then the fish sank into the water again, and the prince went on his way. He walked and walked and walked. As he walked, he saw a bird caught in a bush, with its wing all bloody. The bird said, "Son, O, Son, hear my trouble, and help me if you can. My wing is torn, and I cannot fly until it has been mended. If you are human, mend my wing so that I can fly."

³Kissing the hand of an older person and then touching the hand to one's forehead is a traditional act showing respect.

⁴A traditional image of disappointingly short distance covered.

*m. 4/18
repeats*

(Pitying the bird, the prince freed him from the bush and tied the broken wing and waited there until the bird could fly again. The bird flew a little way, and then he returned. "Son, O, Son," he said, "you have helped me. Now I can help you. I'll carry you on my back across the Kaf Mountain." And he carried the prince over the Kaf Mountain and set him down in the valley beyond. "You are here," he said, "but you may someday need help. Take three feathers from my mended wing and keep them safe. If you are ever in trouble, burn one of the feathers and I will come at once."

27-132

The bird flew away as soon as the prince had plucked the feathers and put them safely in his sash. Then the prince walked on and walked on and walked on, all the while shouting, "I am burning! I am burning!" As he walked, he came to a stone on which a sick ant was lying. Since the fairy mother had told him, "But watch and listen carefully the whole time," he stopped.

"Son, O, Son!" the ant cried. "Hear my story, and help me, if you can. Today both my son and my daughter are being married. There will be two weddings at my house. But I have burned my feet and I cannot go any farther. Please, if you are human, take me to my home before the weddings have been finished."

(Pitying the ant, the prince took the ant gently in his hand and climbed one mountain after another until at last he came to a valley. There he found a nest for the ant.

But the ant said, "This is my valley, but this is not my nest--this is not my home. In the middle of this valley there is a city; in the middle of the city there is a palace; in the middle of the palace there is a garden; in the middle of the garden there is a small nest. That nest is my home. And--don't you know?--the valley is called Pomegranate Valley; the city is called Pomegranate City; the palace is called Pomegranate Palace; the

garden is called Pomegranate Garden. And who walks in this garden? Pomegranate Seed, the most beautiful girl in the world, walks in this garden. Her lips are redder than the pomegranate, and her skin is whiter than snow. But who can enjoy her beauty? Her two executioners stand at the door to kill whoever speaks of her beauty if she says "Kill, my men; kill." If you value your life, do not pass the door of that palace! Come. Follow me, and I will show you the way through the side door of the palace."

more of pete
The prince eagerly followed the ant to the side door. There the ant said, "You helped me when I could not help myself, and now I have helped you. But someday you may have trouble. If you will, take three hairs from my foreleg and save them. When you are in trouble, burn one of those hairs, and I will come at once." The prince took three hairs from the ant's foreleg and put them carefully into his sash. Then he carried the ant through the door into the garden.

In the garden, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of ants were milling about on the ground, seeking the lost parent of the two who were to celebrate their weddings. With great rejoicing at the return of their lost one, went back to their nests.

That day, Pomegranate Seed had come to the garden as the ants were gathering. Just as she was wondering what this strange invasion of ants might mean, the ants scattered again. Then she noticed a stranger beside the door. "Get him," she said to her slaves, "Blindfold him and bring him to me." And immediately they did as she had commanded

As the prince was led forward blindfolded, he heard a beautiful voice asking, "Who are you? Tell us, so that we may help you." Yes, it was the voice of Pomegranate Seed.

"My lady, I am the prince of Kemlik country," the prince answered.

"Because of what I did to the fairy mother, I began to burn with desire for Pomegranate Seed. To find that Pomegranate Seed I have walked for seven years and seven months. Along the way, I saw none but a fish and a bird and an ant; I helped them, and they helped me, and now I have come to your garden. I want Pomegranate Seed--nothing more."

Pomegranate Seed said to her forty serving girls, "Pick a pomegranate, each of you, and give it to this young man."

But when the pomegranates were offered to him, the prince said, "Girls, keep those pomegranates for yourselves. I want Pomegranate Seed, the untouched beauty."

Pomegranate Seed smiled and said, "If he wants an untouched Pomegranate, he must do something to win it. My bird sister gave me a ruby, but I lost it in the desert. If he finds it, he will have Pomegranate Seed; if not, he will have as many troubles as there are seeds in a pomegranate."

Ask - 25

S. 1100 T. 25

129-132

The forty girls with one voice repeated to the prince what Pomegranate Seed had said. Then, with one voice, they added, "Many have tried to win Pomegranate Seed, and all have failed. If you are sure you can succeed, then try; if not, leave while you are still alive."

"Have I come so far without risk?" asked the prince. "I'll not go back. Wherever the ruby is, ^{Impossibly} God willing, I shall find it." And he left the garden.

He wandered here and there in the desert beyond the valley. How could he find a ruby in such a place, and with his eyes blindfolded? "If only I had my eyes!" he cried. "I am burning!" Suddenly he remembered the bird, and the bird's feathers . . . He felt carefully in his sash and pulled out a feather and burned it. Then, ^{Whom} PRRRT!, there came the bird. "O bird," the prince cried, "I am truly in trouble. I have found Pomegranate Seed, but

now I must find a ruby that she dropped in the desert. How can I find a ruby in such a place, and without eyes to see? Please help me."

Without answering, the bird flew away and away and away. Then, PRRRRT! Back came the bird with the ruby.

The prince tucked the ruby safely in his sash and at last found his way back to the palace. "Girls, girls!" he called. "I have found the ruby, and here it is. Please tell Pomegranate Seed that I have come to claim the reward she promised." He handed the ruby to the servants.

Pomegranate Seed looked at the ruby. "Yes, it is my ruby, girls," she said. "But what is a ruby to me? I have lost in a lake the pearl ring my *Iskias* fish sister gave me. Tell him to find it and bring it back." *test*

With one voice, the girls repeated to the prince what Pomegranate Seed had said. The prince answered, "If I was able to find a ruby in a desert, God willing, I will find the pearl ring, too." And he left.

But as he walked along and walked along, blindfolded, slowly, slowly, toward the lake, he said, "How can this be? Can one without eyes find a pearl ring in what is surely a bottomless lake? Oh, I am burning! I am burning!" Suddenly he remembered the fish, and the fish's scales . . . He felt carefully in his sash and pulled out a scale and burned it. At once, he heard a splash in the water at his feet. "O fish, fish," said the prince, "I am truly in trouble. I have found Pomegranate Seed, and with the help of a bird I have found the ruby Pomegranate Seed asked of me. But now she wants her pearl ring from this lake. Please help me."

Without answering, the fish dived deep into the lake and swam and swam. Then, with a splash, the fish came up to the shore and laid the ring at the prince's feet.

The prince tucked the pearl ring safely in his sash and at last

found his way back to the palace. "Girls, girls!" he called. "I have found the pearl ring, and here it is. Please tell Pomegranate Seed."

Pomegranate Seed looked at the ring. "Yes, this is my pearl ring, girls," she said. "But what is a pearl ring to me? I have dropped into the ashes the diamond earring my ant mother gave to me. If he can find it ^{task -} and bring it back, he can have his Pomegranate Seed." _{S. test}

With one voice, the girls repeated to the prince what Pomegranate Seed had said. The prince answered, "Without eyes I found a ruby in a desert and a pearl ring in a bottomless lake. God willing, I shall find the diamond earring, too." And he left.

But as the prince walked along and walked along, not able to see, not even knowing where the ashes were, he thought, "How can I ever find a diamond earring in the ashes? I cannot even find the ashes with my eyes all blind! I am burning! I am burning!"

Suddenly he remembered the ant, and the hairs on the ant's foreleg

He felt carefully in his sash and pulled out one of the hairs and burned it. At once, the ant was at his feet. "Ant, ant!" he cried. "I am now truly in trouble. I have found Pomegranate Seed, and with the help of a bird I found the ruby she asked of me. With the help of a fish, I found the pearl ring that Pomegranate Seed asked of me. But now she has asked for the diamond earring she dropped in the ashes. Please help me."

Without answering, the ant searched the ashes here and there, and brought the earring to the prince. The prince tucked the earring safely into his sash and at last found his way back to the palace. "Girls, girls!" he called. "I have found the diamond earring, and here it is. Please tell Pomegranate Seed that I have come to claim my Pomegranate Seed!"

When Pomegranate Seed saw the earring, she said, "Oh, girls, this

prince must truly be my kismet [destiny]. Prepare now for our wedding."

In time, there was a wedding at Pomegranate Palace that lasted for forty days and forty nights. Then the prince and Pomegranate Seed went

home to Kemlik country. They had their wish fulfilled; let's go up and *Take — several*
sit in their seats. *days*