

Story #25 (Faculty Tape #1)

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#25
Lord -- young

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The Young Lord* and the Cucumber Girl

Once upon a time, there was a young lord who had a horse. One day when he took this horse to the fountain to water it, the animal accidentally stepped on the foot of a witch who had come to the fountain to fill her pitcher. Becoming angry with the young lord, the witch put a curse upon him: "May you become pale and thin," she said, "and may you fall in love with a cucumber girl."
Curse -- placed on young lord -- by witch: Young lord to fall in love with a Cucumber Girl

After a time it happened just as the witch had said: the young man grew pale and thin, he looked quite yellow, and he began to yearn for a cucumber girl. This young lord was the only son of his father, a bey, and the father, greatly worried, kept asking him, "Son, what is the matter with you?"

The young lord kept quiet each time he was asked such a question, and finally the Bey called the young friends of his son to ask them to discover what it was that was ailing his son. These friends went to the young lord and asked him, "What is the matter with you, anyway?"

The young man tried to answer his friends. "My problem is of a kind that no one else can really understand. I don't know what happened to me, but one day when I was at the fountain my horse accidentally stepped on the foot of an old woman there. She said to me, 'May you become pale and thin, and may you fall in love with a cucumber girl.' Maybe she was a witch, for right after that I did start to become pale and thin, as you see me now, and I do yearn for a girl somehow associated with cucumbers."

* The title given to the young man by the narrator was Beyoğlu, son of the bey. A bey was a landed person, not necessarily a member of the aristocracy, and not having any political function beyond the local scene. Perhaps the Scottish laird of the eighteenth century would be the best comparable figure; I have used the word lord here in the freer sense of the word.

*Forty mules -- loaded with forty saddlebags⁸⁵
of gold*

Forty saddlebags of gold

The young friends reported this conversation exactly to the Bey, and after hearing their account, the Bey called his son to him. "Son," he said, "I know ^{Gold} now what your problem is. Here are forty mules and here are forty saddlebags of gold for you. Take these and go in search of your cucumber girl, and when you find her, bring her here."

The young lord took the forty mules and the forty saddlebags of gold and he went in search of the cucumber girl. *Journey -- long -- formulaic expression to* He went little and he went far, and yet he had gone only the length of a grain of barley.* In the evening he stopped at a house owned by an old man with a long beard, and his daughter. After they had eaten their supper, they all went to bed, but the daughter did not fall asleep right away, and so she asked her father, "Father, what is this young man doing here?"

The old man, thinking that the young lord was asleep, said to his daughter, "He is in great trouble because he fell in love with a cucumber girl, and unless he finds her, he will never be happy again." The young lord was awake and listening to this conversation.

"Well, father, how can the young man go about finding this cucumber girl?"

"It is rather difficult, my girl, but may God help him!"

"Yes, but how is he going to find her?" asked his daughter.

"Well, on his travels he is going to meet a lion for whom he must buy milk; he is going to meet a tiger for whom he must buy meat; and finally, he will meet a witch for whom he must buy six kilos of chewing gum. Then he will go on and reach a fountain which has two pipes flowing from it, one pouring out blood and the other, pus. He must say to the fountain, 'What nice water you have,' and as he says this, he must scoop up three handfuls and drink it

* This is a stock tekerleme dealing with travel distances. It occurs in a wide variety of Turkish folk tales.

After this he will go on, and then he will come to a large pine tree from which he will knock a chip with his axe. This chip he must take to the giants he will meet next. When he comes to the giants he must wait until they are asleep. If their eyes are closed, that will mean that they are awake; but if their eyes are open, then they will be asleep. When he is sure that they are asleep, he must go past the giants to a giantess who guards three cucumbers. To her he must give the pine chip and all the gold that he has in his saddlebags, and for this, he will receive the three cucumbers. If he cuts open these cucumbers in a waterless place, three girls will jump from them but they will soon die of thirst. If he cuts them in a place where water is available, the three young girls will live, and then this young man will be saved from his trouble."

Hero -- learns of obstacles to be overcome on quest before departure

The young man listened to this carefully, and the next morning he rose early. He went to the market and bought milk for the lion, meat for the tiger, and six kilos of chewing gum for the witch. Then he set out on his journey.

Hero -- gives lion milk desired

Hero -- gives tiger meat desired

Hero -- gives witch six kilos of chewing gum

When he came to the lion, he gave it milk; when he came to the tiger, he gave it meat; and when he came to the old witch, he gave her the six kilos of chewing gum. Soon after that he came to the fountain with two pipes, one pouring out blood and the other pus. Saying, "What nice water you have!" he stooped down and drank three handfuls. When he came to the large pine tree, he took his axe and knocked off a chip, as the old man with the beard had said to do. When he came to the giants, he saw that their eyes were open, and he knew that they were asleep, and so he entered their cave where he found a giantess guarding three cucumbers. Giving her the pine chip and the forty saddlebags of gold, he took the three cucumbers and prepared to leave the place, but as he was mounting his horse, the giants closed their eyes and woke up.

"Stop him, you witch!" they called to the witch.

Anachronism -- witch demands six kilos of chewing gum

giant -- awake when eyes are shut, but asleep when eyes open

giantess -- gives hero three magic cucumbers in exchange for pine chip and forty saddlebags of gold

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Witch - refuses to stop escaping hero -- because he gave her six
kiss of chewing gum 87
Tiger -- " " " " " " it

Tiger - Kilas of chewing gum " " " " " " IT

"No, I won't stop him, for he brought me six kilos of chewing gum," she
said. Lion -- " " " " " " " " " it will

"No, I won't stop him, for he brought me six kilos of chewing gum," she.

said.

"Stop him, you tiger!" they called to the tiger.

"No, I won't stop him, for he brought me meat," said the tiger.

"Then you stop him, you lion!" they called.

"No, I won't stop him either, for he brought me fresh milk," said the

lion. Cucumber - containing juice - not to be cut open until water is available for her to drink

Cucumber girl -- dies when removed from cucumber net because there is no water available
And so the young lord escaped from the giants, and he proceeded on his

journey toward home. After a while he came to a plain where the young man ^{for her to} decided to cut open one of the cucumbers to see if it really contained a ^{drug}

decided to cut open one of the cucumbers to see if it really contained a girl. He cut open one cucumber, and a very beautiful girl jumped out crying,

"Oh, young lord, give me water, give me water!" He looked everywhere for

water, but there was no water to give her, and she soon died. The young

lord went a little farther and then he cut open the second cucumber, and

from this came another beautiful girl who soon died begging for water. The

young man then decided not to cut open the third cucumber until he reached

the fountain that stood at the edge of his own town

When he finally arrived at the fountain at the edge of his own town,

he cut open the third cucumber. A girl came from it who was as beautiful

as the fourteenth day of the moon,* and when she cried, "Water Water!

Water!" the young man dipped her head into the trough.

* The beauty of the moon is proverbial in Turkey. Beautiful children are described affectionately as "moon-faced." The moon is full on the fifteenth day of the lunar month, but it is thought to be most beautiful just before it reaches fulness, on the fourteenth day.

Beauty -- female -- formulaic expression for: As beautiful as the
fourteenth at the moon

The girl said to the young lord, "You go to your village and hold a wedding ceremony for forty days and forty nights, and then come back for me. I shall stay in the top of that poplar tree until you come." The girl then said, "Bend down, poplar tree!" and the poplar bent down. The girl sat on its top branches and then commanded, "Now straighten up, poplar tree!" and the poplar immediately straightened up again.

The young lord then proceeded to his own village, but while he was gone, an ugly woman came to the fountain, so ugly that she looked like a witch. While this ugly woman was filling her pitchers at the fountain, she saw reflected in the trough the face of the Cucumber Girl who was sitting above in the poplar tree. She was greatly taken by what she thought was her own beauty, and she said to herself, "I am more beautiful than my sisters, and my sisters are more beautiful than the people I work for, and so why should I work for these people any longer?"

After saying this, the ugly woman knocked the two pitchers together and broke them. When she reached home, they asked her what had happened. She said, "I am more beautiful than you. Why should I work as your servant?" Her employers laughed at her, and the next day they sent her to draw water again. This time when she approached the fountain she saw the beautiful girl sitting in the top of the poplar tree. The ugly woman said to her, "Please, beautiful girl, let me be your mother, and you be my daughter. Take me up there where you are, or tell me how you climbed there."

"By putting one egg on top of another I made an egg ladder for myself, and that is how I climbed up here."

The ugly woman piled egg on egg, but when she tried to climb up on this egg ladder, the eggs collapsed and she fell back down. The woman started

Beautiful girl -- pretends she climbed to top of poplar tree on ladder of eggs piled on top of each other
Girl -- beautiful -- same as above
Ugly woman -- fails in attempt to reach top of poplar tree on ladder of eggs piled one on top of each other
Woman -- ugly -- same as above

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Poplar tree -- obeys command of Supernatural wife to bend to earth to receive her or orders
Supernatural wife -- commands poplar tree to bend to earth to receive her or orders

begging the girl to help her climb to the top of the tree, and finally the girl asked the poplar to bend down for her. The tree obeyed, the woman sat on the top of the tree, and when the girl ordered the tree to straighten up, it stood erect with the woman sitting beside the girl. The woman said, "Now I am your mother and you are my daughter." Ugly woman -- delouses head of beautiful supernatural girl

After sitting there for some time with nothing to do, the woman said to the girl, "Will you please search in my hair for lice?" The girl complied with this request and she killed the lice that she found in the woman's hair. A few days later, the woman suggested that this time she delouse the girl's hair, and the girl agreed to this. As the woman was examining the young girl's hair for lice, she said to her, "My daughter, where is your vital spot?"*

"My vital spot is one white hair in my head. If it should be pulled out, I would die." External soul -- in one white hair in girl's head
Soul -- external -- Same as above

The ugly woman kept searching for this hair until she had found it, and then she immediately pulled it out. Upon this, the girl fell, senseless, to the foot of the trees, and where she fell a sesame plant sprang up. The ugly woman observed this plant and was suspicious about it. Life force -- white hair -- removed -- causes beautiful girl to fall from tree and become sesame plant

When the forty days and forty nights had elapsed, the young lordful girl returned to the poplar tree, and he was very surprised to see that the beautiful girl he had left on the top of the tree had become so ugly. He asked the woman, "How did you become like this?" External soul -- Same as above
Soul -- external -- Same as above

"Well, I was burnt by the sun on the right side and bitten by the frost on the left, and finally I became what you see me now," she said.

* All creatures, but especially those who are in some way supernatural, have their life forces hidden in some inconspicuous place. This place may be somewhere on their persons, or they may be completely apart from their bodies--in a box, in an animal, in a plant. Such creatures are invulnerable unless attacked through their "vital spots," in much the same way that Achilles' life could be assailed only through his heel.

Substitute bride -- ugly woman usurps place of beautiful girl
Bride -- substitute -- Same as above

Transformation -- beautiful girl -- stripped of life force (external soul) -- turns into sesame plant

Here -- wears -- as cockade -- stalk of sesame plant into which his fiancée had been transformed

"Well, why don't you come down, anyway?" asked the young man.

"I got up here all right, but I can't get down," said the ugly woman.

The young lord sent several of his men up the tree, and they tied her with a rope and lowered her in that way from the tree top. Just as they were about to ride away, the young lord saw the sesame plant growing at the foot of the poplar, and he bent down and broke off the stalk and stuck it in his hat. Then they rode away toward his home, and when they arrived there they were married.

One day the wife, who was now pregnant, said to the young lord, "I don't like that sesame plant sticking on your hat. Throw it away!"

He threw the stalk into the fire, but when it burned, two pigeons sprang from the flames and flew away. These pigeons began to frequent the garden in front of the young man's home each morning at dawn. They would sing,

"Sleep, sleep, oh young lord, and when you get up, may you not attain your wish." Transformation -- sesame plant -- into which beautiful girl had been transformed -- is burned -- but two pigeons rise from flames

Hearing them sing this song every day, the ugly wife became suspicious, and she thought that they might have something to do with the sesame plant and with the beautiful girl. She said to her husband, "If you will catch those two pigeons and let me eat them, I shall stay with you. Otherwise, I shall leave you." Pigeon -- twice-transformed beautiful bride -- sing in garden to bridegroom

"What harm do those innocent pigeons do to you, oh my wife? They come here every day and sing, and then they fly away

"No, no," she said, "you must kill them."

"How are we going to kill them?" he asked.

"Just spray some tar on the branches of that tree where they alight. When they come there they will get their wings stuck with tar and will fall to the ground unable to fly."

Transformation -- pigeon -- thrice-transformed beautiful bride -- *tyffod* --
Story #25 and from her blood a poplar tree sprang up
Poplar tree -- fourth transformation of beautiful bride -- leans over *house of*
bridegroom and naps on roof.

The young lord did as his ugly wife suggested. When the pigeons came the following morning, they alighted on the tarred branch and sang, "Sleep, sleep, oh young lord, and when you get up, may you not attain your wish." Then they tried to fly away, but their wings were stuck up with tar, and they were caught and their throats were cut near the threshold of the house, and where their blood trickled to the ground a poplar tree grew.

When the poplar tree had grown tall, it began each night to lean down and rap on the top of the house. Fearing that it would knock down the roof upon them, the ugly wife asked her husband to cut it down. She suspected that it had something to do with the pigeons, with the sesame plant, and with the beautiful girl.

crib from its wood. One of the chips, however, was picked up by an old woman who came each day to the young lord's house to work and returned to her own house at night. She put the pretty chip on her mantelpiece in the kitchen. Now, this chip held the spirit of the beautiful girl, and when the old woman had left the house each morning, the chip quivered, and the girl came to life again. She would clean the old woman's house, bring in wood for the fireplace, and cook a meal for the old woman. Then she would climb up to the mantelpiece and change back into a chip before the old woman returned from her daily work. The old woman was amazed at this, and could not understand who could be doing her housework. One day as she was about to leave for the house of the young lord, she opened the door and shut it several times and then stood perfectly still behind a curtain. The chip quivered and became a beautiful girl. The old woman rushed to her, grabbed

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her by the arm, and said, "Oh, beautiful girl, let me become your mother and you be my daughter." The girl accepted this suggestion and they lived there together.

One day the girl said to the old woman, "Don't go to work any more in the house of the young lord. Just tell him that you are tired of working in his house and that you no longer wish to work for him." The old woman agreed to this and told the young lord that she would not work for him any longer.

"All right," he said, "please yourself."

After a while it happened that there was a famine in the land. It was so great that people ate the food of the horses and so there was no food even for the horses. The young lord wanted to distribute his many horses among the people to have them fed until the famine passed away. A crier was sent around the streets announcing this: "The young lord wants to farm out his

horses among his neighbors. Anyone who wants a horse may go and choose one from his stable." *Famine -- so extensive that both human beings and live stock suffer*
Horses -- at prince distributed among people -- to be fed until famine ends
The girl said, "Mother, you go and choose a horse for us."

The old woman went to the young lord and asked, "Will you give me a horse?" *Supernatural info -- beautiful birds -- provide grass for weak horse placed in her camp -- by walking back and forth before reclining horse*
"Go away, old woman," said the young man, "How are you going to look after a horse at your age?"

"Well, I have a daughter who wants to have a horse," said the old woman. So the young lord sent four men to pick up a horse so weak from hunger that it could not walk or even stand. They carried this horse to the stable of the old woman and left it there. When the girl saw the horse, she walked before it forwards and she walked before it backwards, and green grass grew up where she walked. The horse was able to eat this grass without even moving, and after it had eaten grass for many days, it became a fine fat horse.

*Young horse -- fed by supernatural wife (beautiful girl) -- is only one of 93
 healthy horses found out during famine -- to survive.*

After forty days the famine was over and the young lord sent a crier around announcing that he wanted his horses back again. But it was found that all of the horses had died of starvation except the one that was fed by the old woman and the beautiful girl. The girl said to her mother, "Go and tell the young lord to come and get his horse."

The old woman went to the young lord and said, "Come and get your horse."

"What are you saying, old woman?" he asked. "All of the good and healthy horses have died. How could the horse that had to be carried to your stable by four men survive? It must be dead too."

"No, no, it is living," she said.

When the young man heard this, he sent a man to find out whether that horse was really alive yet. When the man who was sent for this purpose saw the horse he was greatly surprised, for this horse had grown into a very fine animal. When he left the old woman's stable to report to the young lord what he had seen, the beautiful girl came to the horse and said, "Kick anyone who comes behind you and bite anyone who comes in front of you, and don't let anybody untie you except me."*

Horse -- speaks human language

Human language -- spoken by horse

When the young lord came to the stable to take away the horse, the horse jumped at him and started to bite him. In fear of his life, he asked the old woman to come and untie the horse for him. When the old woman came to him at his command, she suggested that he join them in a meal first. "Let us first eat and have a cup of coffee in our humble dwelling, and then we shall see about the horse."

* The horse who eats grass that springs up from a girl's feet, grows healthy from it, and then becomes unmanageable by anyone but the girl is a common motif. See "Pearls and Corals" in Milli Kütüphane Collection.

The girl had cleaned the house carefully and she had also cooked many dishes. They had a good meal, and then they drank coffee. When the young man asked them, after this, to untie his horse, the young girl said to him, "If you will unroll your sarık* and stretch it from the kitchen to the stable I shall untie your horse. Otherwise I won't."

He did as he was directed, and the girl walked over the sarık as it lay stretched out on the floor. The girl untied the horse and delivered it to the young lord. As he mounted the horse, the girl slapped it on the rump, saying, "We have derived much benefit from your master, and let us hope that we do the same from you."

This remark by the girl puzzled the young lord, and after he reached home, he kept thinking about what she had said. What did she mean, he asked himself, by saying such a thing: "We have derived much benefit from your master and let us hope that we do the same from you"? He made up his mind to go back and ask the girl what she meant by such a remark. He went back to her house and said to her, "What did you mean by the remark that you made as I was leaving your house with the horse?"

"You did not marry the cucumber girl, for I am that girl. You married a woman ugly enough to be a witch. I became a sesame plant and you burned me; I became a pair of birds and you killed me; I became a poplar tree and you cut me down to make a crib out of me for your child. But I was the girl who was your betrothed."

* Sarık - Small turban made with strip of thule wound round a fez, worn by most intellectuals in Turkey before the republican era; it should not be confused with the voluminous turbans worn by the sultans.

Without saying a word, the young lord left the girl and returned to his own home. He went to his wife and said to her, "Would you rather have a horse to return home with or a sword?"*

"What would I do with a sword?" she asked. "A sword is for cutting the throat of enemies. I should rather have a horse."

The young lord then had the ugly woman and her children mounted on the back of the powerful horse that had been fed by the cucumber girl. The horse took her and her children to the mountains where he dashed them to pieces on the rocks. Then he returned to the stable of the young lord.

In the meantime, the young lord had arranged a wedding celebration for himself and the cucumber girl. It lasted for forty days and forty nights, and then they were married, and they lived happily ever after.

* The choice of one's own execution is common in Turkish folk tales. The unlucky person is almost always given the choice between forty swords and forty horses. Knowing that the swords mean execution but thinking that the horses may mean escape, the victim invariably chooses the horses. He chooses the worse death, however, for he then has forty ropes attached to his body, each rope tied to one horse. When the horses are whipped, the victim is torn into small parts. The query made to the victim is a tekerleme: Kirk satırım, kirk katırım? In this tale the tekerleme is not used, and the execution is somewhat different, but the basic pattern is the same.

Magic horse -- destroys
enemies of Supernatural
wife

Horse -- magic -- (Same as above)

Execution -- form expression -- question --
Concerning: Horse (forty horses) or sword (forty
swords)?

Formal expression -- to condemned for
Choice at execution: Horse (forty horses)
or sword (forty swords)?

Horse -- or sword -- as means of execution

Sword -- or horse --

Wedding -- lasting forty days and forty nights

Forty days

Forty nights