

Story 725 1976 Tape 8)

Narrator: Unidentified

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The Son of the Bey and the Cucumber Girl (Substitute Bride) *thought*

Transcription
Once there was and once there was not the son of a bey¹.
One day when he was going hunting, he saw a man selling cucumbers, and he bought three of his cucumbers. After riding on for some distance, he grew hungry and decided to eat one of these cucumbers. When he cut into it with his knife, however, he was amazed to see spring from the cucumber a very beautiful girl. She asked repeatedly for a cup of water, but there along the road there was nowhere for him to get any water for her, and as a result she soon died.

After a time, the son of the bey cut into another cucumber. Again a beautiful girl sprang forth, and again she began asking for water: "Give me water--oh, just one cup of water!" But again he could not find any water, and this girl died as the first had.

The son of the bey decided not to cut open the third cucumber until he had reached a stream of water. When he reached one, he cut open that last cucumber. A girl leapt

¹A bey is the equivalent of an English lord or of a wealthy person of considerable status.

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out saying, "I must have a cup of water. Oh, please give me water!" The bey's son continued to give her water as long as she asked for it, and the more water she drank, the more beautiful she became. She also seemed very intelligent, and the young man decided to marry her.

As they approached his village, the son of the bey thought to himself, "If I take her into the village now, everyone will say, 'Look at the girl that the son of the bey found in the mountains!' I had better go home and tell my mother about this so that later she and I can return here and take the girl into the village in a respectable way." He therefore said to the Cucumber Girl, "Please wait right here for a little while for me. I shall return for you as soon as possible."

To him the Cucumber Girl said, "All right." To a poplar tree growing there she said, "Bend down, my poplar tree; bend down!" When the tree bent down, the girl sat in the topmost branches and ordered the tree to straighten up. ting in the treetop, the girl began to await the return of the son of the bey, but unfortunately he did not return very quickly.

Not far from that stream lived a potter and his family. The mother of that family sent her daughter to the stream to wash some vegetables. As the potter's daughter was cleaning

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*Reflected in water of
beautiful girl 87-88*

the vegetables, she saw reflected in the water a beautiful face, and she imagined it to be her own. She said to herself, "Why should my mother send me to scrub vegetables if I am as beautiful as that?" The more she thought about this, the more angry the potter's daughter became at her mother. Breaking the pots containing the vegetables, she left everything by the side of the stream and returned home.

Her mother asked, "Daughter, where are the vegetables? And where are the pots in which you carried them?"

The girl said, "On, Mother, why do you make me do this kind of work? Can't you see how beautiful I am? You should come and see my reflection on the surface of the stream!"

Paying little attention to what the girl said, her mother answered, "My dear daughter, you are wrong in having such thoughts. Don't ever forget that you are only a potter's girl."

But the potter's girl continued to insist that she was very beautiful. She said, "Mother, you must go with me to the stream to see for yourself how beautiful I am!" After a while she persuaded her mother to do this, and the two went to the edge of the stream together.

When the mother looked into the water, she saw reflected there a beautiful face--the face of the girl in the poplar tree. At first she did not understand this. After a

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minutes, however, she happened to look up at the poplar tree and saw the Cucumber Girl sitting in its topmost branches. The potter's wife asked, "How did you ever manage to get up into the very top of that tree, my dear girl?"

The beautiful girl said, "Oh, that is a very easy thing to do."

"Can you find a way to get us up there with you?" asked the woman. "We could talk together and enjoy each other's company."

The Cucumber Girl then ordered the tree, "Bend down, my poplar tree; bend down!" When the tree bent down, the woman and her daughter sat with the girl in its very top branches and were carried upward when the tree straightened again

"Who are you?" the woman asked her. "And what are you doing here in this tree all alone?"

The beautiful girl told the potter's wife her whole life story. "I lived in a cucumber until the son of a bey released me and gave me water to drink. He left me here saying he would return soon, but he seems to be late in getting back. When he comes to get me, he will say to the people who accompany him, 'If what this tree holds is material wealth, that wealth is yours. But if what it holds is a living creature, that living being is mine.' Then I shall

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descend from the tree, and the son of the bey will take me into his village."

The potter's wife thought quickly of some way to trick the Cucumber Girl. She said, "Just to pass the time, why don't we examine each other's hair for lice?" The Cucumber Girl agreed to this and began searching in the woman's hair. When she had not found any lice after a short while, the woman said, "Now it is my turn to search your hair." As she held the girl's head, searching in her hair, the potter's wife started squeezing it. She squeezed harder and harder, and she was a very strong woman. When the Cucumber Girl could not stand the pressure any longer, she turned into a bird and flew away. She flew straight into the village of the son of the bey. The potter's wife came down and left her daughter in the tree.

When the son of the bey returned to the poplar tree to get the girl he had left there, he could not even recognize her. He asked her, "What has happened to you? Where has all your beauty gone? Where did it go?"

The potter's daughter answered, "O my bey, you were so long in coming for me! The sun burned me by day and the cold air froze me at night. The weather had a very damaging effect upon me, and that is why I am now so ugly.

The bey's son was very confused by this, but he decided

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to take the girl home with him anyway. Shortly after they had arrived in the village, a wedding was held which lasted forty days and forty nights.

Meanwhile, the bird which had originally been the beautiful Cucumber Girl flew in through the window of the mansion of the son of the bey. When the potter's daughter saw the bird, she recognized at once what it was. She said to her husband, the son of the bey, "My dear husband, I am pregnant now, and I cannot stand to have that bird around here. If you do not kill that bird, I may not be able to give birth to your child.

The son of the bey killed the bird without knowing that it was really the Cucumber Girl transformed into that shape. When the bird's head was cut off, its blood fell to the ground, and its soul penetrated the soil, and from that soil *and from this* there sprang up a lovely poplar tree. Since poplar trees have a unique and very pleasant scent, the bey's son placed a hammock beneath that tree and lay much of the day there without going near his wife. When the potter's daughter realized what was going on, she said to her husband, "I don't whether I can bear a child for you unless that poplar tree is cut down."

As the bey's son was cutting down the poplar tree, a tiny chip of its wood lodged under a small stone in the garden.

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chip contained the soul of the beautiful girl, and its scent was very strong and especially pleasant. After the rest of the tree and its branches had all been removed, the chip remained there beneath the stone. When an old woman passed by the stone covering the chip, she detected its aroma and after some searching, located the chip itself.

took the chip and put it in her spoon holder to give a pleasant scent to her spoons.

transform When the old woman went out to the public fountain to get water, the chip turned into the beautiful girl it had once before been. She cleaned the house, washed the dirty dishes,

cooked several kinds of food for the old woman. She then turned back into a chip and went back to the spoon holder before the old woman returned. This went on much the same

for several days, and the old woman grew very curious about who was doing all of these services for her. One day she decided to pretend to leave the house but instead to hide somewhere inside it. She hid in a secure place and there waited to see what would happen. The girl in the chip supposed that the old woman had left the house, and so after a short while she turned once again into the beautiful girl and started doing the housework. When the old woman saw this, she sprang out before the girl and asked, "Are you a

*in the
elfen*

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"fairy or a jinn?"²

"I am neither fairy nor jinn. I am a girl." She then told the old woman her life story.

One day the son of the bey decided to distribute a number of horses temporarily to the people of his area. Anyone who could maintain a horse well might have one for a certain period of time. When news of this reached the Cucumber Girl, she said to the old woman with whom she lived, "Mother, why don't you go and get one of those horses for us, too?"

The old woman said, "But my dear daughter, we are very poor and cannot afford to feed a horse.

"Don't worry about that part of it, mother. That will be taken care of. Just go and get a horse for us

The old woman went to the home of the son of the bey to get a horse, but by the time that she got there, all of the good horses had been taken by other people. All that was left was a weak, lame horse. The horse was in such poor condition that it took the old woman three days to get it home.

When the horse arrived at the old woman's house, the beautiful girl started walking back and forth across the yard.

²When one is startled by a stranger whom he cannot identify, he says, Inmisiin cinmisiin? (Are you a supernatural being or a jinn?).

Grass - spring
beneath feet of lame girl
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Wherever she walked, grass sprang up beneath her feet, and the lame horse began at once to eat this grass.

After the horses had been living at their foster homes for a while, the son of the bey one day decided to visit each of them one by one, but when it was time for him to observe the horse at the old woman's house, he said, "That lame horse that she took may very well be dead by now, but just in case it is still alive, I shall make my planned visit there, too."

Knowing that the son of the bey would soon be visiting them, the girl gave instructions to their horse. She said to it, "When the son of the bey comes here, I want you to do this: bite him when he comes in front of you and kick him when he passes behind you." The lame horse did exactly as the girl had directed him to do

The son of the bey could not even get near this horse. He said to the old woman, "Untie that horse!"

"I cannot do that, Bey Efendi.³ Only she who tied it can untie it." She then called the beautiful girl to come and untie the horse. She came and released the horse and gave it back to the son of the bey.

³Although he is not a bey but a bey's son, the old woman shows him respect by calling him Bey. Efendi (sir) was once an honorific applicable to anyone of rank or wealth. In recent years, however, it has suffered considerable erosion of status until now it is very often applied only to children and servants.

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When the son of the bey returned to his mansion, he learned that his wife had given birth to a girl child. The new father bought for his first child an okka⁴ of pearls.

these pearls had to be strung in the order [of their age?], and no one in the whole village pretended to be able to do that. Finally the son of the bey asked the beautiful daughter of the old woman to arrange the pearls

The girl said, "Yes, I can do that, but you will have to leave me completely alone with the pearls."

They placed the girl by herself in a room of the mansion the pearls

[This tale is incomplete.]

⁴An okka is a unit of weight equivalent to 1282 grams.