

Story 1337 1988 Tape 14) Narrator: Yusuf Özdiril, 76

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How Little Çivi<sup>1</sup> Bested Big Çivi

In a certain village there once lived two farmers whose fields were next to each other, and these two men often plowed their fields at the same time. Both of these men had the same name, Çivi. Big Çivi was tall, slender, and wealthy, and he plowed his field with two well-fed horses. Little Çivi was poor and looked like the ordinary villager, and he plowed his field with one weak and underfed horse

The fields of the two Çivis lay along a road that ran from their village to the market town of Kasaba,<sup>2</sup> and on market day many people passed their fields both going to and returning from Kasaba. Some of these people were going to Kasaba to buy things, and others were going there to sell vegetables or products which they had made. Many of these people were friends of Little Çivi, for although he was a poor man he was also a cheerful and very likable person. When these friends saw him in the field, they always asked him, "How are

<sup>1</sup>Çivi means nail or peg, but the name seems to have no thematic significance in this tale.

<sup>2</sup>A village attached to the ilçe (administrative district) of Turgutlu in Manisa Province.

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you, Little Çivi? How are you getting along? Has there been enough rain this year to satisfy you?"

FF Little Çivi always stopped plowing while these polite questions were asked. He would answer, "I am well, and everything is satisfactory, thanks to Allah." Then he would crack his whip to start his horse moving again. Big Çivi, on the other hand, was a sullen man, often obstinate and harsh in his dealings with other people. As a result, none of villagers who passed greeted him or asked how he was doing. This annoyed him, and he grew more and more <sup>jealous</sup> jealous of the attention that Little Çivi received. One day when some of Little Çivi's visitors moved on toward Kasaba, Little Çivi cracked his whip to renew his plowing. This infuriated Big Çivi, and going over to his neighbor's field, he said to Little Çivi, "Look here! I want you to stop cracking your whip so much. It annoys me very much. If you don't stop cracking it, I shall come over here and do some harm to you!"

Surprised at this outburst, Little Çivi answered, "I don't crack my whip to bother you. I crack it to manage my horse

It was not long after that that another group of Little Çivi's friends came along and spent a few minutes talking with him. After they had left, Little Çivi cracked his whip as

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usual, regardless of whether or not it would annoy his neighbor. As soon as Big Çivi heard this, he rushed over to Little Çivi's field, picked up a rock, and used it to strike the head of Little Çivi's horse several times. The horse collapsed, and within a few minutes it died. "Why did you do such a thing? Why did you kill my horse?" asked Little Çivi.

"I warned you not to crack your whip!" Big Çivi retorted angrily.

Crying now, Little Çivi said, "What a terrible thing to do! What will I now use to plow my field? You have destroyed me as well as my horse!" He then went home, got a knife there, and returned to skin the dead horse. When he had skinned the horse, he put the skin in a large bag and headed for Kasaba to sell it. As he left, both he and his wife were crying about their great loss.

It was already late in the day when he set out for Kasaba, and darkness overtook him before he reached that town. As he stood in the dark wondering what to do, he saw a light in the distance. Walking toward that light, he soon got close enough to see that it was coming from the window of a farmhouse. Going to the front of that house, Little Çivi knocked on the door--tak, tak, tak! After a while a woman opened the door just a crack and asked, "What do you want?"

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He answered, "Dear lady, I was on my way to Kasaba, but I overtaken by darkness. I can go no farther tonight. Please allow me to sleep in some corner of your house. In the morning I shall leave without disturbing you."

The woman answered, "No! My husband is not here, and so I cannot let you stay here."

As the woman was closing the door, Little Çivi said, "Very well. I understand." Then, seeing a barn attached to the house, he decided to stay in that building during the night. Entering

barn, he settled down in some soft straw to sleep, but then he noticed a faint ray of light gleaming through the straw. He pushed back some of the straw and discovered that the light was coming from another window of the house. Looking through the lighted window, he saw a room in which there was a dining table. Seated at the table were the lady of the house and, opposite her, the local priest. There were also three or four other men in the room. This seemed very strange to Little Çivi, for the woman herself had said that her husband was not at home. The people at the table were eating from a large tray filled with fried chicken and were drinking wine. Little Çivi watched for a while, and when he heard the sound of approaching hoofbeats, he observed that the sound had dismayed the diners.

The person approaching was the husband of the lady of the house. She quickly hid the priest in a chest. Then she hid the

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other men in an oven, and she also placed in the oven<sup>3</sup> all of the food and wine that had been on the table. Observing all of this, and hearing the horseman getting closer, Little Çivi left the barn and stood in the light coming from the front window.

When the husband reached that point, Little Çivi greeted him:

"Selāmūnaleykūm!"

The husband responded, "Aleykümselām!"<sup>4</sup> What is the matter? What are you doing here?"

Little Çivi answered, "Kind Efendi,<sup>5</sup> I am in the difficult situation of being stranded here tonight on my way to Kasaba, and I find the cold weather almost unbearable. I knocked on the door and asked for shelter, but your chaste and honorable wife refused to accept me as a guest because you were not at home. Please accept me as a guest tonight to protect me from the cold.

The man replied, "You are a guest sent by Allah," and he

*Guest of Allah*

<sup>3</sup>Inside a rural kitchen in Turkey the chimney may spread out to a width of 15-18 feet. In the center is the fireplace, but on either side there may be large, walk-in ovens. Obviously, the oven here is of that type and not the small box-like opening in a metal stove.

<sup>4</sup>Selāmūnaleykūm/Aleykümselām--traditional exchange of greetings between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/And may peace be unto you too. If Selāmūmaleykūm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

<sup>5</sup>A mild honorific, comparable to Sir, it usually follows a first name: Hasan Efendi. At one time it was used to show respect to distinguished people, but it has become so devaluated in the twentieth century that it now is used only for servants and children.

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invited Little Çivi to stay at his home for the night. Knocking on the front door, the husband called to his wife, "My dear, I am back." After the woman, somewhat flurried, had opened the door, he said to her, "We have a guest. Bring us something to eat right away, for I am very hungry." Then, turning to Little Çivi, the man asked him, "What are you carrying in that large sack?"

"Well, I have something in it that I cannot talk about right now."

"Very well, but why don't you put it under the table, out of the way?"

"No! What I have in this sack is very valuable, and so I must keep it with me at all times."

The man then called out to his wife, "Lady, where is the food?" In response to his question, the woman brought in a bowl of soup for each man. "Don't you have anything else for us to eat?" asked her husband.

"I didn't cook anything else today," his wife answered.

While the husband and wife were talking, Little Çivi was speaking quietly to his sack. Noticing this, the husband was confused and asked, "What are you doing? To whom are you talking?"

Little Çivi said, "I didn't tell you this before, but in

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this sack I have a jinn<sup>6</sup> which is under my control. I keep it with me at all times, never having left it for even a second since I got it. It carries out every order I give it, and provides answers for all of the questions I ask

"If that is so, then what did it just tell you?"

"It told me that there is a well-fried chicken in the oven," said Little Civi

"Go to the oven and see if there is really any fried chicken there," the man said to his wife.

how could there be?" his wife asked

"Go and look there anyway," the man ordered.

Going to the oven and opening the oven door, the woman acted surprised at what she saw. "Oh-h-h! There really is some fried chicken here," she said and took the tray of chicken to her husband. It was still hot

Quite amazed at this, the man asked, "Did your jinn really tell you about this chicken?"

"Yes, it did, and this is good chicken, but it would be even more delicious if it were accompanied by some wine. Would

<sup>6</sup>The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi belief and in other mystical systems.

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you like some fine wine?"

"Of course I would! But where can we get such a thing?"

"My jinn says that there is some of that in the oven, too," answered Little Çivi.

The man sent his wife to the oven for the wine. After he had had a glass of this wine, the husband became very jovial and sang a couple of songs. Then he and Little Çivi ate chicken and drank wine, enjoying this meal very much. As they were eating and drinking, the host said, "What a wonderful thing it must be to have such a jinn! With its aid, one could never go hungry or be completely impoverished. It may even know where treasure is buried!"

"How very many wonderful things it knows!" said Little Çivi. "It can even tell you where ~~Satan~~ might lie in hiding."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the host.

"Just what I said. It knows where Satan hides himself."

"No, that is too much to know. No creature in this world knows where Satan may lie hiding."

Little Çivi answered, "You yourself saw that it answered everything I asked it. Now I shall ask it where Satan is." He then pretended to be talking with the contents of the sack. After a few minutes, Little Çivi said slowly to the host, "The jinn said that Satan is in the chest under this table. He has



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disguised himself to look exactly like the local priest."

Saying to his wife, "Stay where you are, and I shall investigate this matter myself," the husband opened the chest. Pulling the priest out of the chest, he began to beat him furiously. He beat him so badly that the priest barely saved his life by running away.

After the priest had left, the host said to Little Çivi, "I realize now that you possess something that is unique in this world. Will you sell it to me?"

"No, I won't!"

You should sell it to me. I accepted you as a guest in my home. Does that not mean anything to you?"

"You are right," said Little Çivi. "I ate your bread and drank your wine, and so I should sell it to you, but you do not have enough money to buy it."

"Yes, I do! I shall give you four bags of gold for jinn.

"Very well, but I cannot carry that much by myself. Do you have a wheelbarrow which I can borrow?"

"I have a wheelbarrow and I shall give it to you as a gift

"Good," said Little Çivi. "Now let me tell you about something else. I have had this jinn for a long while, and it carries out all of my orders, but I don't know whether it will

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obey your commands. It may take a while before it gets used to you. I just want you to be aware of this."

"That doesn't matter," answered his host. "You just sell it to me and I shall be satisfied."

Little Çivi left his bag there, loaded the gold on the wheelbarrow, and set out for home. It took him until the next morning to get there. After his wife had admitted him into the house, he placed the four bags on the table, opened one, and poured out some of the gold pieces. Astonished at the sight of so much money, his wife asked, "Where did you this gold? Did you get it illegally?"

"No! Are you crazy? I simply sold the skin of the horse."

"Get out of here! Do you think I believe that? Nobody would pay so much for a horsehide."

"Well, all that you have to know about it is that I did nothing illegal to get this money. Now I want you to go to Big Çivi's house and borrow his scale so that we can weigh all of this gold."

She went to Big Çivi's house and knocked on the door. Big Çivi's wife opened the door and asked, "What do you want, neighbor?"

"We want to borrow your scale."

"Wait here for a minute while I go and ask my husband

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about this." Going to the room where Big Çivi was sitting she said, "Little Çivi's wife wants to borrow our scale."

"Aha! There may be something behind this. What would they have that would only now have to be weighed?" He put some honey on the pan of the scale and then let Little Çivi's wife borrow it.

Little Çivi's wife took the scale home, where she and Little Çivi weighed all of the gold in the four bags. Then, not noticing that one piece of gold had stuck to the pan took the scale back to its owners. When Big Çivi saw the piece of gold in the pan of the scale, he went immediately to his neighbor's house and shouted, "Come out here, Little Çivi I want to speak with you." When Little Çivi went out, Big Çivi asked, "Where did you find all the gold?"

"What gold? I have no gold at all.

"But I found a piece of gold on the pan of the scale which you had borrowed from us. Don't deny it! Tell me where you got it!"

"All right, but don't tell anyone else. After you killed my horse, I skinned it and took the hide to Kasaba to sell. There is a great demand for horsehide there nowadays, for there is a shortage of that material in Kasaba. When I went to th marketplace and announced that I wished to sell a horsehide,

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several people gathered around me and began bidding for it. Each person offered a higher price than the one just before him had offered until, in the end, I sold that hide for a whole bag of gold."

"How could such a thing happen? With two bags of gold you could buy the finest horse in the world."

"I could not understand why the buyer paid me so much for the hide, except that there is great demand for such hides there."

Big Çivi went home and slaughtered two of his horses with an axe. Then he skinned both of them, put the skins in a sack, and took them to Kasaba. In the marketplace there he began crying, "I am selling skins! I am selling skins!"

After a while two or three people went to him and asked, "What kind of skins are you selling?"

"I am selling horse skins, first quality."

"How much do you want for your skins?"

"I want the usual price nowadays--one bag of gold per skin," answered Big Çivi.

"Have you lost your mind? Who ever told you that a horsehide was worth a bag of gold?"

"A friend of mine told me so yesterday."

When the other men started to laugh, Big Civi realized

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that his neighbor had played a trick on him. All the way back home he could think of nothing but the way in which Little Çivi had deceived him. He became determined to retaliate and to do something very harmful to Little Çivi.

But Little Çivi had another problem, too. On the following day his mother-in-law died. In accordance with Christian tradition, they dressed the corpse in fine clothes and put her in a coffin. Then they placed the topless coffin by an open window where there was plenty of fresh air, for the corpse had begun to smell very bad. It was Little Çivi's duty to sit up all that night in that room to keep watch by the corpse. All lights were turned out except for four candles which burned at the four corners of the coffin.

Big Çivi had walked past Little Çivi's house several times and he had observed what was going on inside. Late night--around midnight--he went very quietly to the window where the coffin stood. After striking the corpse on the head several times with an axe, he ran away. Little Çivi, who was sitting in a corner of that room, saw everything that had happened.

On the following morning Little Çivi placed his mother-in-law in a sitting position in a coach he had rented. he started driving her to the church for a funeral service.

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Right alongside of that church there was a tavern,<sup>7</sup> and, stopping the coach in front of that tavern, Little Çivi entered that place and ordered a cold drink. As he was sipping his drink, Little Çivi said to the bartender, "There is a coach outside in which my mother is sitting. Take some cold drink to her, for she must also be thirsty. She does not hear very well, and so you may have to shout at her in order to make yourself understood."

"All right," said the bartender and took a drink out for Little Çivi's mother. Opening the door of the coach, he shouted, "Grandmother, your son has sent you something cold to drink!" When there was no response, he shouted even more loudly, "Grandmother, your son has sent you something cold to drink!!!" Concluding that she must be nearly deaf, the bartender repeated again what he had said, but this time he also rocked the coach in order to get her attention. This caused the body to fall out of the coach and strike its head on the ground, where it began to bleed. Not knowing what to do, the excited bartender ran back into the tavern.

Noticing how agitated the bartender was, Little Çivi asked, "What is the matter? Why are you trembling so?"

All that the bartender could say was, "She died! She

<sup>7</sup>The Turkish word used here was meyhane.

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died! Her head struck the ground, and she died!"

Little Çivi rushed outside, and when he saw his mother-in-law on the ground bleeding, he began to cry. "I had no one else in this mortal world but my mother, and you killed her!" Then, gripping the bartender by the throat, he exclaimed, "I am going to the police station and report what you have done. I shall later sue you, too!"

"I shouted to her twice that you had sent her a cold drink, but she made no response either time. Then I rocked the coach gently to get her attention, and when I did that, she fell out. I didn't mean to cause her death!"

"No! No! I don't believe you," said Little Çivi. "You rocked the coach in order to kill my mother! I am going to the police station immediately!"

"Please do not go! She died, and there is nothing that we can do about it now. I shall give you all of the money I have if you do not go to the police about this. Furthermore, I myself shall have her buried."

After some further argument, Little Çivi accepted this settlement from the bartender. Taking home the large bag of gold which he had received, he then went to Big Çivi's house to borrow his scale. When Big Çivi saw him approaching, he was amazed, for it had been only the night before that he had

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hacked the head of Little Çivi's mother-in-law with an

"What do you want?" Big Çivi demanded

"I need your scale again. May I borrow it?"

"For what?"

"I want to weigh some gold that I got today."

"Where did you get it?"

"You did me a great favor by smashing my mother-in-law's head with an axe, and therefore I shall tell you where I got the gold. Medical doctors pay high prices for corpses. They study them in order to learn more about the human body, they also use certain parts of the corpse to make special medicines. I took my mother-in-law's corpse to a pharmacist, and he gave me a bag of gold for it."

"Are you telling the truth about this?" asked Big Çivi

"Of course I am! Why should I lie about such a thing?"

Big Çivi also had a mother-in-law, and he did not like that woman at all, for she always talked too much. After talking with Little Çivi, he decided to kill his mother-in-law and take her to the marketplace to sell her corpse. When he found the right opportunity, he struck his mother-in-law on the head with his axe and put her body in a large bag. On the following day he carried the bag to the marketplace in Kasaba and began announcing, "A dead body! A dead body! I have a dead body for sale!"



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Several people standing close to him could not believe what they had heard. Going to Big Civi, they asked him, "What is it that you are selling?"

"I am selling a dead body," he said, opening the bag so that they could see the corpse. These people took only one look at the corpse before they rushed to the police headquarters to report what they had seen. The police went to the marketplace, arrested Big Civi, and put him in jail. While he was kept there, Big Civi realized that once again he had been deceived by the cleverness of Little Civi, and during his imprisonment he spent much time planning a way in which he could take his revenge on Little Civi. The police finally decided that only a fool or a crazy person would try to sell a dead body in the marketplace, and so they released him.

As soon as he got home, Big Civi got a large sack and went with it to Little Civi's house. There he grabbed his neighbor, put him in the sack, and tied the sack shut with a rope. Then he said, "Unless I kill you, I shall never have any peace. How else could I escape all of the trouble you cause me? I am going to take you to such and such a cliff and throw you over the edge into the river below." His path to the river led him past the tavern, and when Big Civi saw that building, he decided to stop there for a drink. He thought that a drink would

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make him feel braver. Leaving the bag on the ground outside the tavern door, he went in and ordered a drink.

While Big Çivi was inside the tavern, Little Çivi struggling to get out of the bag. While Little Çivi was doing this, an old shepherd came along with his flock and observed the motion in the bag. Untying the bag, he asked Little Çivi, "What happened to you?"

"Don't ask me that, old fellow"<sup>8</sup> An evil man put me inside this bag so that he could drop me from a cliff into the river below

"What a pity it is that someone as young as you should die! If you will promise to take care of my sheep and my family, I shall get into the bag and die in place of you, for I shall soon die anyway." After Little Çivi had promised to take care of his family and his flock, the old shepherd climbed into the sack and had Little Çivi tie it shut.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The word used here was birader, which can mean either brother or old fellow.

<sup>9</sup>That Little Çivi should escape death in this way is most unlikely. In most ATON variants and variants in other collections, the bagged protagonist is crying out, "No! No! I don't want to do it!" When the shepherd asks him what it is that he does not want to do, the protagonist says, "I don't want to marry the padişah's daughter, but they are taking me to the palace where they will force me to marry her." Inasmuch as shepherds are about the lowest-paid workers in Turkey, the shepherd (quite rationally and quite understandably) is glad to exchange places with the protagonist.

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Big Çivi had more than one drink, and when he left the tavern, he was a little drunk. When he picked up the bag again, it seemed much lighter than it had been before--for the old shepherd did indeed weigh much less than Little Çivi did--but explained this to himself by saying that the alcohol had made him much stronger. He took the bag to the cliff throwing it far out into the river, he said, "Now I have saved myself from the treachery of Little Çivi!" He then returned to his village, singing as he walked along. As he was passing Little Çivi's field, however, he was utterly amazed to see Little Çivi there tending a large flock of sheep. Going over to his neighbor, Big Çivi asked, "What are you doing here? I just threw you over the cliff into the river!"

Spot in  
the sea

Little Çivi answered, "Whenever you do something to try to harm me, you always end up doing me a kindness. When you threw me into the river, the bag that held me became untied. When I opened my eyes, I found myself on the bottom of the river, and I saw right ahead of me a palace in a large grove of trees. All around the palace were large herds of cows and sheep grazing. I then discovered that I was in the territory of the Padişah of Waters. A guard seized me and took me to the presence of the sultana, who was a water nymph. This lady asked me, 'What are you doing here? How did you get here?'

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"I was thrown from a great height into the river, and I found myself here.

"You are still much too young to die, and so we shall send you back up to the earth, but when you know that you are about to die, you must return to us. Is there anything that you would like from us before you leave? We have a great many cows and sheep here if you want some of them.' They gave me all of these sheep

"Are you telling me the truth?" asked Big Çivi.

"Of course I am," answered Little Çivi. "How could I have gotten such a large flock of sheep so quickly otherwise?

"All right, then. I shall believe you," said Big Çivi. Then after a minute or two he asked, "Would you be willing to do me a favor?"

"You have given me much trouble, but because you are my neighbor, I shall try to help you. What do you want of me?"

"I want you to put me in a bag and throw me into the river from exactly the same place I was standing when I threw you in."

"Very well, but you are too heavy for me to carry. Will let me take your horse to carry you there?"

"Yes, I shall, if you will promise to give it back to me when I return.

Little Çivi put him in a bag, loaded the bag on the horse, took Big Çivi to the cliff. He then threw him into the river, and Little Çivi never saw Big Çivi again