

Story #293 (Milli Kütüphane Tape

Narrator: Saliha Arel

Location: Siivas

Date: Story was apparently collected in the 1950's by a student of P. N. Boratav. Translated from Milli Kütüphane tape in April, 1962, by Neriman Hızır and Barbara K. Walker

*Conte fable*

The Girl Disguised as a Monk and

the Padishah's Youngest Son

*original son manuscript*

*TEK* Once there was and once there wasn't, when God's creatures were many, and it was a sin to talk too much, there were three sisters, and all day long and all night long they used to spin thread out of cotton. And in the morning the youngest sister would take the spun thread to the market and exchange it for some more cotton and three candles and three pieces of bread, and would come back again. They were very poor, and they had nobody to live with them. They had no parents.

Again one day they had lots of thread spun out of cotton, and they gave it to the youngest sister and said, "Hurry to the market and exchange it for cotton and bring our candles and bread back

And she started. She was very young, and when she was on her way she saw a person selling some chickens, and she liked them very much. Without giving a thought to it, she

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gave all the spun thread and she got one chicken in exchange. When she came back, they said, "Where is our cotton? And where are our candles and our bread?"

And she said, "I couldn't bring you those; instead, I brought you a chicken."

They said, "Are you crazy? What shall we do without food without cotton? How shall we work tonight without our candles? You get out of this house!" they said, and they chased her out of the house.

She left, and she lay down with the chicken against her breast, and they slept together. When it got light in the morning, the chicken didn't stay. The chicken jumped off the girl's chest and flew away into the forest. The chicken went, and the child went after it. When it went into the heart of the forest, the child lost track of it. She looked to her right and she looked to her left, and there was no chicken anywhere. She looked around, but instead of a chicken, she found trees full of fruits. Oh, she felt so happy! She picked some apples and some pears and all kinds of other fruits and stuffed herself with food, and then she sat down and rested a little.

Then she started walking around, and she saw three tents. All these three tents were shining in the light. One was covered with diamonds, one was covered with rubies, and the other was covered with pearls. She waited to see if there was anyone there, and she saw no commotion around, so she went nearer and nearer, and got into the tents. The insides of the

*Jewels*

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tents were in great disorder. Pajamas were all around, and beds were not made, and it looked as if some hunters had a row of birds, all left on the floors. So she tidied the tents and made the beds and folded the pajamas, and she plucked the birds and roasted them,<sup>1</sup> and she fed herself. Then she went and hid herself in the forest and kept watch over the tents.

It seems there was a padishah near there who had three sons. There was a war, and the padishah sent his three sons to that war. Things didn't go well in the war, so they decided to come back and live in their three tents near the forest. They hunted in the daytime, and lived in their tents in the forest at night.

When the three brothers came back, they didn't know who done all this for them, and they were very curious to find out. The eldest brother said he would stay home from the hunt the next day and sit and wait to see who was doing it. The others went hunting the next day, but the eldest brother stayed. He put a chair outside his tent and sat there, waiting. He waited and waited, but the girl saw him there, and she didn't come near the tents. After a while, he became very sleepy, so he went into his tent and went to sleep.

As soon as he was in the tent and asleep, the girl tidied the tents and made the beds and folded the pajamas, and she plucked the birds she found on the floors and roasted them.

<sup>1</sup>The translator was interrupted during the translating of this story. When she summarized the early portion before going on, she added here the following: "She even made the coffee and set it near the fire."

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After she had fed herself, she went and hid herself in the forest and kept watch over the tents.

When the other two brothers came back in the evening, they asked who it was that came and fixed everything so nicely, and the eldest brother said he hadn't seen anyone because he had gone to sleep.

The second brother decided that he would stay the next but he would sit up and watch and wait until he found who was caring for their tents. But it happened with him just as it had with the eldest brother. After the other two had gone off to hunt, he put a chair out in front of his tent and he sat there, waiting. He waited and waited, but the girl saw him there, and she didn't come near the tents. After a while, he became very sleepy, so he went into his tent and went to sleep.

As soon as he was in the tent and asleep, the girl tidied the tents and made the beds and folded the pajamas. Then she plucked the birds she found on the floors and roasted them. After she had fed herself, she went and hid herself in the forest and kept watch over the tents.

When the other two brothers came back in the evening, they asked who it was that came and fixed everything so nicely, and the second brother said he hadn't seen anyone because he had gone to sleep.

Then the youngest brother said, "I'll watch tomorrow. I know I can find out who it is." So the next morning while the two older brothers rode off to hunt, the youngest one stayed



behind. To make sure that he would stay awake, he cut his finger deeply and then he rubbed a great deal of salt into the cut. It hurt so much that he wouldn't be able to go to sleep even if he became sleepy. He wrapped it tightly, and then he went to bed.

The girl looked and saw that the youngest brother was in his bed. Quietly she tidied his tent, and picked up the birds that she found on the floor. Then she tidied the other tents and made up the beds and folded the pajamas. She picked up the rest of the birds and plucked them all and roasted them. After she had fed herself, she started toward the forest to hide herself. But just as she was about to pass his tent, the youngest brother jumped to his feet and caught her. "Who are you?" he said. "Are you a human being, or are you a genie?"

"I am not a genie. I am a human being," she said.

"Who are you?" asked the boy.

And she told her whole story--how she and her sisters were very poor, living alone, without parents, and how they worked all day and all night spinning thread out of cotton. Each morning, she said, she would take the spun thread to the market and exchange it for some more cotton and three candles and three pieces of bread, and would come back again. But one day, instead of buying candles and bread, she had bought a chicken and taken it home. Her sisters, she said, were very angry, and drove her away. So she and the chicken slept that night together, and then they went into the forest, where she lost the chicken. While she was looking for the

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chicken, she found a place in the forest where there were trees with fruits of all kinds, and she ate and ate until she was satisfied. After she had rested, she noticed three shining tents, one covered with diamonds, one covered with rubies, and the third covered with pearls. No one was in the tents, but the insides of the tents were in great disorder, so she had tidied them up. She found birds on the floors, she said, so she plucked and roasted the birds and ate a little of the food. Then she hid, to see who would come. That evening, three young men came to the tents, and they were all surprised to find the tents tidied and the birds plucked and roasted. The next day, the oldest young man had stayed home to watch, but he had fallen asleep. After he had fallen asleep, she had done her work and had hidden herself again, to watch. Again, they were surprised to find the tents tidied and the food cooked. The next day, the second young man had stayed home to watch, but he, too, had fallen asleep, so she had tidied the tents and roasted the birds and then had hidden to watch. The third day, the youngest one had stayed to watch, but after she had done her work he had caught her, she said, so now she had no place to go.

The boy offered her his own tent, that they might live together.

"What about your brothers?" she said

"Well, my brothers don't have to know anything about it," he answered

So they lived together in the youngest brother's tent, and

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every morning when the three hunters rode away she would tidy up the tents and make the beds and fold the pajamas. Then she would pick up the birds from the floors and pluck them and roast them, and feed herself. And at night, nobody but the youngest brother saw her.

After a while, the war came to an end, and the padishah decided to call his sons back. They were all three engaged to be married, and the father thought it was time for them to come and get married. This was good news for the older two brothers, but the youngest one was less pleased. The two older brothers decided to go back at once, but as for the youngest one, the blood was frozen in his thirty-two arteries. He scarcely knew what to do. While the other two brothers were gathering up their belongings, he said he wasn't going to take his tent back. They said, "We are going to unhitch our tents. Why aren't you doing the same?"

And he said, "No, I'm going to leave mine as a souvenir."

When the girl was asleep at night and his brothers were ready to leave, the youngest brother went to the forest and picked roses, and put the roses all around the girl's bed. He wrote a note on a slip of paper telling the girl who he was and where he was going, and why he was going. Then he left, riding away on his horse.

In the morning when she woke up, the girl saw that he wasn't there and that the other tents weren't there. She was left all alone, and she felt very bad about it. Then she saw the slip of paper and read it. Now that she knew what had

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happened, she decided to set out to find the prince.

Early that morning, on her way, she found a keshish<sup>2</sup> on his way to the church. The girl stopped him and she said, "Please, Father Keshish, could you give me your robes in exchange for a pearl-covered tent and all that goes with it?"

The keshish agreed to exchange his robes for the tent, and the girl dressed herself in his robes and gathered all her hair into the priest's sic pointed cap. After she had finished dressing herself, she asked the keshish if he had seen three young men traveling together, and the keshish said yes, that he had seen three horsemen going in a certain direction, with two headed forward eagerly and the third always stopping to look behind him.

She started on her way in the direction the horsemen had gone. She went and went, and finally saw the three riders, with the first two riding joyfully and the third one turning and looking back at every other step, very unhappy.

As the keshish approached, the third young man started talking with him. "What have you seen, Father Keshish?" he asked.

And the keshish really the girl answered,

"I saw the sweetheart lying

And the roses dying,

Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.

I saw myself sinking in grief

<sup>2</sup>A hermit monk. Turkish peasants have very vague notions about faiths other than the Moslem one.

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"Oh!" said the boy. And he thought the monk had met the girl he had left behind, and he was talking about her. They walked along together, and every other minute he would ask, "What have you seen, Father Keshish?"

And the keshish (really the girl) would answer,

"I saw the sweetheart lying,  
And the roses dying,  
Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.  
I saw myself sinking in grief."

It got so that the repeated conversation got on his brothers' nerves. They said, "Stop talking with this monk. Why do you have to be busy with him?"

But when they stopped to have lunch under a tree, he invited the monk to sit with them, and there again he asked the same question, "What have you seen, Father Keshish?"

And the keshish (really the girl) answered,

"I saw the sweetheart lying,  
And the roses dying,  
Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.  
I saw myself sinking in grief."

He asked what the monk would do when they came to the city,



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and the monk said he did not have anybody except his mother and a sister. He asked where the monk came from, and the girl gave the name of the place where she had lived with her sisters. The prince said, "What about my starting a shop for you, to sell rugs and carpets, so that I could come and see you very often?" And thus it was decided.

The very next day the shop was prepared, and it was filled with goods to be sold, and the monk was to sell these things. And the prince started coming to him very often. Every time he came, he would ask, "Father Keshish, what have you seen?"

And the keshish (really the girl) would answer,

"I saw the sweetheart lying,

And the roses dying,

Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.

I saw myself sinking in grief."

Finally it was time for the brothers to get married, and the two older ones were married. When it was time for the youngest one to be married, he came to the monk and said, "Tomorrow I go to the hamam (bath), and I want you to come along with me

The keshish said no, no, that he could not go. He was not in the habit of going into a very hot hamam.

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But the prince insisted very much on his going along with him, so he said, "All right. I'll come along with you as far as the hamam."

The next morning, the musicians and the whole procession <sup>Weddi celebration</sup> came to take the bridegroom and his friend the monk to the hamam. The keshish went along with them willingly enough. But when they insisted that he should go in together with the bridegroom, he said, no, he wouldn't go, but he finally agreed to go in with his robes on. "I can't take my robes off," he said. So he did go inside.

And as the soap was being washed from his eyes, the prince would open his eyes and say, "Oh, Father Keshish, what have you seen?"

And the keshish (really the girl) would answer,

"I saw the sweetheart lying,

And the roses dying,

Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.

I saw myself sinking in grief."

And while he was being bathed, the prince asked, "What have you seen, Father Keshish?"

And the keshish (really the girl) would answer,

"I saw the sweetheart lying,

And the roses dying,

Fallen apart from a gracious beloved.

I saw myself sinking in grief."

But by the time the wedding preparations were on, the monk started answering the prince by saying, "Well, please try to

forget about this girl. It's a shame you should mention it when your wedding is so close."

But, "No," answered the prince all the time. "She burns my heart with the fires of Hell, and I shall never forget her until I am dead."

One day, as the wedding was very soon, the prince said to the monk, "You have a mother and a sister. I'm inviting them to my wedding."

The monk really the girl knew an old woman, and said to that woman, "Old woman, you are going to act as my mother, and I am going to pretend I am the monk's sister." So the next day, she prepared herself to go to the wedding. She looked really very, very beautiful, and she was dressed nicely. And she went to the wedding.

On the other hand, the prince let the people know that his best friend the monk's mother and sister were coming and that they should be treated with honor. Sure enough, they were welcomed to the wedding and offered the best seats. The girl was so beautiful, and so prettily dressed, that everyone turned around and looked at her.

And the mother of the bridegroom and the mother of the bride, too, thought that she was very beautiful. Now, the bride was not beautiful at all. They thought if they could only see to it that the bridegroom had this beautiful girl for the first night, he would see his own bride with the same eye after that. So they said, "If we are able to keep this girl here for the first night, then we'll give her to the

prince as his bride, and then we can send her back tomorrow."

When it was time for everyone to go home, they said to the monk's mother, "The young folks are going to have fun now. Why should she go? Couldn't you go home, and let your daughter stay overnight for the wedding entertainment?"

So the old woman went on home, and the girl stayed.<sup>3</sup> They took her to a room and took the wedding gown off the bride and dressed the girl in it. Then they gave her to the bridegroom instead of the bride.

When he had returned from the mosque, the bridegroom knelt to pray in the wedding room and then he went to open the veil of the bride. And what he saw was something like the second half of the same apple as the girl in the tent.<sup>4</sup>

He gave her an apple to peel, and while she was peeling the apple, she cut her finger. To stop the blood, the prince gave her a handkerchief embroidered with pearls, and wrapped it around her finger. And also he gave her a royal ring that only the padishahs and their kin could wear, and he slipped it on her finger.

The next morning, the mothers-in-law sent the girl away, and the real bride took her place. The girl went home and put her monk's clothes on and went to the shop. The prince

<sup>3</sup>Strangely, the storyteller makes no mention of the monk's absence during the wedding festivities, a fact that would most certainly have been noted by the prince.

<sup>4</sup>A colloquial expression in Turkish denoting an exact resemblance of one person to another.

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came to the shop to talk with him, and told him that his bride was an exact copy of the girl he loved. "Oh, tell me, Father Keshish, what have you seen?"

And this time, the monk just revolted. "Not any more, not any more!" he said. "You should be ashamed of remembering the other girl."

But the prince said, "She is just like that girl, almost a second half of the same apple."

When the prince said that, the monk felt very unhappy, and tears began to drop from his eyes. To wipe his eyes, he raised his hand, one finger of which was wrapped in the handkerchief the prince had given his bride the night before. When the prince saw that, he said, "What is that? That is my handkerchief, the handkerchief I have given to my wife. Was it stolen and given to you?"

"No," the monk said, "there is no theft about it. I am not a thief."

As the tears continued to fall, the monk used the other hand to wipe his eyes, and on one finger of that hand was the royal ring. And the prince said, "How can this ring I gave my wife last night be on your finger? Was it stolen?"

"No," the monk said, "it wasn't stolen. I have nothing to do with theft."

But the prince wasn't listening to the monk any more. "Please take your cap off your head," he said.

"Oh," replied the monk, "if I took off this cap, all the secrets of the world would be out."



At that, the prince jumped up and took off the monk's hat. Immediately the girl's beautiful hair fell down around her shoulders, and she looked as lovely as she really was. So he took her back to the palace with him, and sent the other bride away. They had another wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights, and then they lived happily ever after.