

Story 1191 (1990 Tape 9)

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A Turkish Cinderella

Once there was and once there was not a woman who had three daughters. Actually, only two of the girls were daughters, for the third girl was her stepdaughter.

Stepmother
In the same country there was a padişah who had one son. This son began having a dream that occurred over and over again every night. In this dream he always saw the same very beautiful girl. He searched for this girl for several days in his city, but he was unable to find her. He then decided to gather together all of the girls in the city and see if the dream girl was among them. One morning he had town criers make this announcement throughout the city: "Tonight the son of the padişah will give a party at the palace. Every mother who has a marriageable daughter should come to the party and bring her daughter with her."

The woman with two daughters and a stepdaughter heard this announcement and decided to take her own daughters to the party but not the stepdaughter. As they were about to leave for the palace, the woman mixed in a tray some wheat, some rice, and some lentils. She then said to the stepdaughter, "While we are

Story 1191

gone, you are to separate the grains on this tray and then clean the house."

After the others had gone, the stepdaughter cleaned the house and then sat down before the tray to separate the grains. She began to cry as she was doing this. A few minutes later a dede¹ appeared and asked the girl, "Why are you crying?"

"My stepmother took her daughters to the party at the ace, but she left me here to clean the house and separate all of this grain."

magic gift
Giving her three feathers, the dede said, "My girl, put one of these feathers in the fireplace and burn it." He then disappeared

Following his instruction, the stepdaughter threw one of the feathers into the flames of the fireplace. As soon as it was burned, a great flock of birds flew into the room. They immediately set to work separating the grains on the tray, they completed this work in just a couple of minutes.

When the birds had flown away, the dede reappeared and said, "My daughter, there is a carriage standing before your door waiting to take you to the party at the palace. Here is a set of fine clothes for you to wear at the party. I must warn

¹Dede means grandfather. But in Turkish folklore supernatural benefactors do not always appear in the form of genies or fairy godmothers. They often turn up as elderly, white-bearded men--quite often dervishes. The supernatural agent is not here called a dervish but simply grandfather.

Story 1191

you, however, about one thing. Before the morning call to pray-- you must be sure to leave the party and come home."

Putting on the fine clothes which the dede had brought her, the girl climbed into the carriage and was driven to the palace. Just as soon as the prince saw her enter, he recognized her at once as the girl he had been seeing in his dreams. Saying, "You are welcome," the prince took her by the hand and walked about the rose garden with her. He gave all of his attention to her as the party continued.

When the girl realized that dawn was not far off, she exclaimed, "It is very late, and I must not overstay my time here." Even though the son of the padişah asked her where she was going, she said nothing further but rushed from the palace to the carriage and went home immediately. There she took off her fine clothes and put on her old clothes again. Then she sat down to await the return of her stepmother and stepsisters.

When they arrived, the stepmother said, "Oh, such a remarkable thing happened at the party! A very beautiful girl arrived --so beautiful that no one looked at anyone but her. The padişah's son was fascinated by her, but to his great disappointment, she suddenly disappeared."

On the following night a similar party was held at the

²The earliest of the five daily prayers for Moslems is the sabah namazı, which occurs just before sunrise.

Story 1191

palace. Again the stepdaughter waited until her stepmother stepsisters had gone to the party before she dressed in her fine clothes and went herself. When she entered the palace, the prince said, "I have found the girl of my dreams!" Again they walked together in the garden, but again she fled as morning was approaching.

On the third night everything happened in much the same way it had during the previous two occasions. But there was one difference. This time the girl fled in such haste to get home before the call to morning prayer service that she lost one of her shoes on the way.

The next day the prince gave this order to a group of his servants: "You will take this shoe from door to door, from house to house, to find the girl whose foot fits it exactly. When you find the girl, you will bring her here to the palace.

The servants searched everywhere in the city, going to left, going to the right, going in every direction, but they could not find the girl. Among the houses they visited was home of the girl the prince sought, but her stepmother kept girl in the attic, and so the servants did not see her. The woman's own daughters tried on the shoe, but it did not fit their feet

Disappointed that they had not found the girl of his dreams, the prince ordered the servants to make an even more careful search on the following day. When the servants came to the

Story 1191

house where the dream girl lived, they were suddenly confronted by a very old woman who said to them, "The woman who owns this house also has a stepdaughter as well as her own two daughters. Did she show that third girl to you?"

"No, she showed us only two girls," they said. They then knocked on the door of that house again, and when the woman came, they asked her, "Lady, we have learned that you also have a stepdaughter."

"Yes, but how could my stepdaughter own such a shoe? She has no shoes, but goes barefoot."

Nevertheless, the servants insisted on seeing the stepdaughter. When they tried the shoe on her foot, it fitted perfectly. When they took her to the palace, the son of the padişah said, "Yes, this is the girl of my dreams."

A large wedding celebration was held for the prince and stepdaughter. It lasted for forty days and forty nights.