

Story 982 (1962 Tape 71

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Konya Province

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The ⁶⁴⁻⁶⁶Woodcutter, the Magic Gifts, and the Apples of Transformation

Once there was and once there was not a poor widow who lived in a village. She had a son who was old enough to work, but there was no job for him in that village. Besides the small house in which they lived, the only property that the mother and son owned were a donkey, an axe, and a rope. The son used these three pieces of property to become a woodcutter. Every day he would go to the forest to cut firewood. At the end of the day he would load on the donkey the wood he had cut, take it to the market, and sell it. In this way he was able to earn a livelihood for himself and his mother.

One day while cutting wood in the forest, the woodcutter saw a young snake. He caught the snake, put it in his bag, and took it along with him. When he sold his wood in the market, he bought one kuruş¹ worth of milk and one kuruş worth

¹A kuruş is 1/100 of a lira. A common, small copper coin, it was used into the 1960s, but it is obsolete today. In the 1970s the lira was depreciated repeatedly until in the 1980s it fell in value to 1/700 and at times even 1/800 of a U.S. dollar. In that situation the kuruş became quite meaningless and thus functionless.

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of food, and he carried these home along with the small snake.

When his mother saw the snake, she objected to his having brought it home. She said, "We have difficulty in feeding just ourselves without trying to feed a snake also." But the young man paid no attention to what his mother said, and he continued to keep the snake in his home.

At the end of a year the snake had grown very large. One day it said to the young woodcutter, "Follow me, young man. Let us go for a little walk."

"Where shall we go?"

"Don't ask any questions. Just follow me. We shall go to visit my father, who is the Padisah of Snakes. My father will be very pleased to see me after my long absence from home, and he will wish to reward you. He will say to you, 'Young man, ask of me anything that you wish.' You will answer this question by saying, 'Your majesty, I wish only your good health. He will continue to ask his question, and twice more you will give the same response. But after you have given that answer three times, do not repeat it again or he may bite you to death. After you have said it three times, you should then answer, 'Your majesty, I wish from you your magic flute, your pair of magic slippers, and the magic carpet on which you are now resting.' My father will then say, 'You may wish for anything you want except for those three things.' You will then just

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turn back, as if to leave. When you do this, I shall turn back with you. When my father sees that I am about to leave again, he will quickly give you the three magic objects for which you asked."

To make a long story shorter,² they went to the palace of the Padişah of Snakes, where the young man received as gifts the magic flute, the magic slippers, and the magic carpet. He took these objects home with him, but he did not know how to use them. He just stored them in a chest.

One day the young man got a job as a shepherd, and he ceased being a woodcutter. As he was tending his sheep, alone in the village pasture, he remembered the gifts he had received from the Padişah of Snakes, and he decided to bring the flute with him to the pasture and play it as his sheep grazed

²This shortening of the story (i.e., omitting the actual dialogue between the woodcutter and the Padişah of Snakes) was a recent alteration in the narration. Otherwise the raconteur would not have commented that he was making a long story shorter. It may have been done in response to the quicker pace of modern life, or it may have been done only in this specific rendition. The raconteur may have thought that the repetition would bore the educated urbanite collector. Traditional audiences enjoy such repetitions, for (1) it allows them to mouth or say mentally part of the tale themselves, and (2) it protracts the tale for people who have no other means of entertainment available.

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turning home, he took the flute from the chest and blew a few notes on it. As soon as he started playing the flute, money began to flow out of it.

His mother, who was making coffee when he arrived home, was alarmed to see him. She said, "Son, where did you leave your flock? We are poor and cannot afford to have any of the sheep lost!"

"Don't worry, Mother," he said. "I shall get you plenty of money!" He played upon the flute and produced a small pile of money, and when his mother saw this, she believed him

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Each day he played upon his flute, and he and his mother grew richer and richer. After a while he heard about the forty most beautiful girls in the world who lived in a palace of their own. When he went to visit them, they asked him how he was able to accumulate so much wealth. Taking from his pocket his magic flute, he played a tune upon it, and money poured from it as he did so. When the forty most beautiful girls in the world saw this, they beat him soundly, took the flute away from him, and threw him out of their palace.

Now that he had lost his flute, the young man and his mother became poor again. They grew poorer and poorer, and they had to sell most of their possessions in order to buy their daily food

The young man then decided to see if he could discover the

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use of the magic slippers. Removing them from the chest, he tried them on. He was amazed to discover himself take on appearance of a pea. Almost invisible now, he astounded people by bringing them glasses of water and other things.

Thinking that he might use his new pea form against the forty most beautiful girls in the world, he went again to their palace, but this time they could not see him. To ^{Revenge} ~~avenge~~ himself against them, he knocked their heads together when they sat down to dinner. He tormented them so much in this way that they could not eat their meal and had to go to bed hungry. When he tried to squeeze the hand of one of the girls, however, she grabbed him and pulled him. When the pea was separated from the slippers, the young man returned to his normal form and was thus revealed. The girls took the slippers away from him, beat him again, and threw him out of their palace

Going home, he took from the chest the magic carpet and sat upon it. It was a carpet that would grant anything wished for by a person standing or sitting upon it, but he did not know that at first. As he sat there, he thought of the forty most beautiful girls in the world, and he wished that one of them would come to him. A few minutes later one of the girls arrived. Then he said, "Oh, Allah, I wish we were somewhere on a mountain top where there was a fountain and a

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smooth lawn." As soon as he said that, the window opened, the carpet, carrying both the young man and the beautiful girl, flew out of the room. It landed near a fountain on a mountain top.

After they had played there for a while, the young man fell asleep. As he slept, the girl wanted to return to her friends. Pushing the young man off the carpet but remaining on it herself, she said, "Oh, Allah, take me back to my friends." The carpet immediately carried her back to the palace of the forty most beautiful girls in the world

When the young man awakened, he was hungry. Seeing some fruit trees nearby, he went to them in order to get some food. When he ate some apples from the first tree, horns at once grew on his head. Taking forty apples from this tree, he went to the second tree and ate one of its apples. This turned him into a donkey. Taking forty apples from that tree, he moved along to a third tree. An apple from this tree restored him to human form again. He took forty pieces of its fruit too and began the journey back to his village.

Shortly after he reached home, he went to the palace of the forty most beautiful girls in the world and pretended to be a fruit seller. Walking back and forth before the palace, he shouted, "Apples! Apples! Delicious apples!"

When the girls inside heard this, they came to a window

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and called to him, "Fruit-seller, we want to buy forty of apples!" They were sold forty apples from the first tree, when they ate these apples, each girl had a pair of horns sprout from her forehead. These horns quickly grew to a length of five meters. Grown to such a length, the horns prevented the girls from leaving the palace

Two days later the fruit-seller returned to the palace, shouting "Horn-removers for sale! Horn-removers for sale! I sell fruit that will remove all horns!"

Calling to him again from a window, the girls called, "Sell us forty pieces of the fruit that will remove our horns! We cannot even go out of the palace with such horns on our heads!"

"I shall trade you forty pieces of this fruit for the flute, the slippers, and the carpet which you have stolen. After receiving these three magic objects, the young man gave the forty girls forty pieces of fruit from the second tree. As soon as the girls ate the apples from the second tree, they were all turned into donkeys.

The young man then gave two of the girls pieces of fruit from the third tree, turning them back into human beings again. Taking these two girls to be his future wives, he grabbed a stick and drove the remaining thirty-eight donkeys to his home