

Story 674 1973, Tape 3)

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The Abused Youngest Sister

Tekerleme
Once there was and once there was not, at a time when the sieve was in the hay, when the camel was a town crier and the rooster was a barber, when my father was rocking my mother's cradle, tingir-mingir,¹ there was a woman who had daughters -- three three daughters. *onomatopoeic -- for rocking of cradle*

three sisters
One evening while these three girls were sitting in their home talking among themselves, *sister - three*
to pass by.

"Let me walk

through the city tonight and see what the people are saying and what they are doing." When he came to the home of the three sisters, he was curious to know what they were talking about, and so he climbed up onto the roof so that he could listen *eavesdropping -- through chimney*
through the chimney. *padişah -- son of -- inspects city -- after darkness has arrived*

him say -- as means of eavesdropping
He heard the eldest sister say, "If the son of the padişah were to marry me, I would weave him a rug so large that he could gather all his soldiers--his whole army--upon it and still occupy only half the rug." The middle daughter then said, "If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would

¹This is onomatopoeia for the sound of the rocking of the cradle. It is a standard feature of this tekerleme of introductory nonsense formula.

Sister -- oldest -- promises to weave rug so large that whole army would occupy only half of it -- if son of padişah marries her
rug -- so large that whole army will occupy only half of it -- to be woven by oldest sister -- if son of padişah marries her
Sister -- middle -- promises to cook cauldron of food so large that whole army cannot consume contents -- if son of padişah marries her
cauldron -- of food -- so large that whole army cannot consume contents -- if son of padişah marries her

Sister -- youngest -- promises to bear son with golden locks and daughter with teeth like pearls -- if son of padişah marries her.
Story 674 Son -- with golden locks -- and daughter with teeth like pearls -- to be borne by youngest sister -- if son of padişah marries her.
daughter -- with teeth like pearls -- and son with golden locks -- to be borne by youngest sister -- if son of padişah marries her.
him such a huge cauldron of food that all his soldiers--

his whole army--could feed from it and yet have food left over." The youngest sister then said, "If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would bear him a son with hair of golden locks and a daughter with teeth like pearls."

When the son of the padişah heard these three statements, he said to himself, "Aha! All three of these girls have unusual skills!" In the morning he asked his mother to go to the home of the three girls and ask, by the will of Allah, ^{will of} for the hand of the eldest daughter for him. After all of the proper formalities had been completed, the young man's mother arranged to have the girl marry her son. ^{Formulaic request -- for marriage contract -- made by matchmaker}

After they had been married for a short time, the son of the padişah one day said to his wife, "I overheard you say,

the son of the padişah should marry me, I would weave him a rug so large that all his soldiers--his whole army--could sit upon it and still not cover more than half the rug."

Will you do that now?"

^{Marriage contract -- requested by matchmaker -- in formulaic language}

"Oh, I said that just in order to encourage you to marry me. What should I know about weaving rugs?"

"Is that the way it is? Very well," he said, and he gave orders that she should be removed from the palace. A short while after this, he had his mother make arrangements for him to marry the middle sister. So the son of the padişah then married the middle sister.

Sister -- eldest -- removed from palace after marrying son of padişah because she does not fulfil promise to weave rug so large that it will occupy only half of

Sister -- middle

" " --
at food so large

After they had been married for a while, the son of the padişah asked her about her boast. "I once overheard you say, 'If the son of the padişah should marry me, I should cook for him a cauldron of food so huge that all his soldiers--his whole army--could feed from it and still have food left over.' Will you do that now?"

"Well, I really deceived you about that," said the middle sister, "in order to make you wish to marry me."

When morning arrived, this middle sister was also moved out of the palace. She had hardly left when the son of the padişah asked his mother to arrange for his marriage now to the youngest sister. This was accomplished as quickly as possible, and the son of the padişah married this girl, too. When she moved into the palace, the son of the padişah said, "I once overheard you say, 'If the son of the padişah should marry me, I would bear him a son with hair of golden locks and a daughter with teeth like pearls.' Will you do that?"

"With the aid of Allah, ^{aid of} I shall bear such children," said the youngest sister.

She soon became pregnant, and after nine months, nine days and nine hours,² she began to have labor pains. Her formulaic description -- for period of gestation: nine months, nine days, and nine hours
gestation -- formulaic description: nine months, nine days, and nine hours
²This is a folk formula for the period of human gestation. Often nine minutes are added to this time.

Story 674

jealousy -- of older sisters toward youngest sister -- U. Hoffe yfe
causes them to sisters had the village midwife³ brought, and the sisters
substitute two themselves remained at her bedside. The youngest sister
she has borne -- actually did bear twins, a boy and a girl. The boy's hair
to disgrace her was made up of small golden locks, and the girl had some tiny
teeth like pearls. Sisters -- older -- jealous of youngest sister's bearing of
twins -- substitutes two kittens for babies -- to disgrace
-- by older sister --
kittens -- substituted for Her sisters said to one another, "Oh, we were not youngest sister
babies borne by their able to remain in the palace wedded to the son of the padişah,
youngest sister but see how Allah has favored our sister!" The eldest sister
took the two babies, placed them in a chest, and then threw
Sisters -- older -- that chest into the sea. When she returned to the childbirth
piece turns borne by youngest sister in
chest -- and throw room, she brought with her two kittens, which she then placed
chest into sea near the girl. The girl did not notice this, but soon her
Babies -- turns -- of youngest sister --
placed in chest -- and throwing sisters said to her, "You have given birth to two kittens!"
into sea -- by older "Hush!" she said, "What kind of a remark is that?"
Sisters "Well, it is so! You have borne two kittens!"

The news of his wife's having been brought to childbed
and then later having borne two kittens reached the son of
the padişah. Very angry, he said, "Take this woman to the
garbage dump. Do not allow her to remain in bed any longer.
Take her out and throw her in the garbage dump." His attendants
carried out this order at once.

Let us now see what is happening to the two children.
Son -- of padişah -- orders wife (youngest sister) thrown out of palace to garbage dump --
after receiving news that she has borne him two kittens
³Padişah did not, of course, live in villages. This is
the peasant narrator's adaptation of the tale to her own
environment.

padişah -- son of -- Same as above

anger -- causes son of padişah to order -- Same as above

transformation - water turns to gold -- as old woman
washes foundling twins

gold coins -- water turns into -- as old woman 20^{with}
foundling twins

Story 674

Children -- abandoned -- found by (broom seller)
old man broom seller

A grandfatherly old man who every day loaded his (donkey) with
brooms and went about the countryside selling them came to the
seashore and saw a chest floating in the waves. He took

this chest from the (sea) loaded it on his donkey, and went
home with it. There he opened the chest and found two children,
a boy baby with hair of golden locks and a girl baby whose
tiny teeth were like pearls. His old wife put water on to heat
and when it was warm, she washed both of the children. As
she washed the children, the water began to turn into gold
coins, and soon the whole pan was filled with gold. Her

+ nurse -- husband said, "Hey, wife, we have found our prosperity! We
lived to are now going to be rich. There is something very unusual
Care for foundling about all of this. Wife, in the morning you must arise early
babies -- is and go about like a town crier, calling, 'I am looking for a
babies' own mother and go about like a town crier, calling, 'I am looking for a
milk mother! I am looking for a milk mother!' These children
lived for to must definitely have such a mother!"
Care for foundling

babies -- is babies The son of the padişah compelled the real mother of
own mother these two children to wash dishes and scrub pots and pans in
the garbage area where slops were thrown. Sometimes he
the dirty dishes' contents poured over her whenever he remem-
bered that she had borne him two kittens. As she was working
there, the youngest sister heard someone calling, "I need a
wet nurse! I am looking for a milk mother!" nurse -- wet

She said to herself, "Instead of staying here doing
this, I should prefer to be a milk mother," and she thereupon

Sister -- youngest -- forced to wash dishes and ^{scrub} pots and pan
garbage area of palace

Story 674
grandfather
Faste ~~father~~ -- of fundling has mansion but that is duplicate 21
At 24 -- unknowable intention of -- causes we + nurse
lived to feed found up -- be babies own mother
left. Padişah's

The old woman took her back to her own home and said to her, "My daughter, see these two children. You are going to breast-feed and rear these two infants."

The youngest daughter was happy to breast-feed these two infants, for they were her own children. It was through the unknowable intentions of Allah that they were in this way reunited. By the time that the children were four or five years old, the household was very wealthy. They had a great amount of gold stored in earthenware jars. The grandfatherly old man called to his presence some master builders and asked them, "Do you know how the home of the padişah is constructed?"

"Yes, we know it very well, for we were the ones who built it."

"Well, then, you are to construct a mansion for me exactly like that of the padişah."

"All right, we shall do that." They proceeded at once to carry out the old man's orders. They not only made the outer design of the house exactly like that of the padişah, but they also used the same kinds of materials for the interior that had been used for the royal mansion

By the time the new house was finished, the children had become five or six years old. One day they said to the grandfatherly old man, "Why don't you go to the son of the padişah and tell him that it would be a great kindness if he

Son of padişah. vited to dine at
mansion that is exact duplicate of his own

Story 674 padişah or of -- (same as above)

22

would come to dine with us?"

The old man still was not aware of the relationship between the children and the son of the padişah, and so he not hesitate to follow this suggestion. He went to the of the padişah and said, "May my padişah live long. You would do us a great kindness to come to our home for lunch tomorrow. We have had a new house constructed, and we should be honored if you were to be present at our table

"Very well, grandfather broomseller. I shall come."

The next morning arrived, and when the afternoon arrived, the son of the padişah went to the broom seller's new home accompanied by his tutor. ^{(1/2 1/2) -- of son of padişah} As they approached their host's house, they saw an Arab attendant standing outside the main door. The young man said, "Lâla, that is our Arab!"⁵

"Be silent--and may your majesty live long! Would not a prince have as presentable an Arab as a stranger⁶ here would?"

"Lâla, this is our mansion!"

⁴The Turkish term for the servant and tutor of a young man of an affluent family is Lâla.

⁵He means that the Arab attendant they see is as capable and as presentable as the kind of servant who works at the royal palace.

⁶The broomseller is not literally a stranger but rather someone who is outside the court circle.

"May your majesty live long! But be silent! Shame on you! Would not a prince have a home as good as that of a stranger?"

After they had entered the house, the young man said, "Lâla, this is my furniture!"

Again the tutor said, "My padişah, would not a prince have what a stranger has?"

At lunch the two children were helping to serve the food, and they were gracious, and they were doing so in a very proper manner. When the son of the padişah saw the children, he was quite beside himself: "The boy has hair with golden locks, and the girl has teeth like pearls!"

Bread was served, as were many different food dishes. As they were eating, the son of the padişah exclaimed, "Lâla these are our spoons!"

"Be quiet--and may your majesty live long! Would not a prince have such spoons as a stranger has?"

As they continued to eat and drink, the woman [the children's mother] put a pear in a dish and placed a spoon with it. She gave this to the children with these instructions: "Take this and place it before the padişah's son. He will ask you, 'Is a pear ever eaten with a spoon?' Then you say, 'Well, my padişah, does a human being ever give birth to a kitten?'"

The children took the dish containing the pear and placed

Son of padişah -- served by own children -- unrecognized by him
 at banquet
Padişah -- son of -- father or above

it on the table before the son of the padişah. He said to them, "Dear children, is a pear ever eaten with a spoon?"

"Well, my padişah," they said, "does a human being ever give birth to a kitten?"

"Oh, lâla, what kind of a remark is that? There is more to all of this than meets the eye!" Then, turning to the old broomseller, he said, "Grandfather, where did these children come from?"

"My padişah, shall I tell you the truth?" asked the old man. "I found these children when they were newly born infants, in a chest that was floating along the seashore. I brought them here, and it was because of them that Allah gave me great prosperity. We sought a milk mother, and so we had a town crier announce our wish to hire one. We hired such a wet nurse in your section of the town. With the protection of Allah, ~~this woman~~ reared these children. May you live long, my padişah!" *Protection -- of Allah*

Following the prince's order, the old man went to the kitchen and said to the woman, "My daughter, the son of the padişah wishes to see you."

She went to the dining room and welcomed the guests. She was well dressed and she conducted herself in a gracious manner. When he saw her, the son of the padişah said to her, "Who are you, and where have you come from?"

"I am your wife," she said, "and these are your children."

Story 674 Recognition one -- son + padişah recognized rejected
and children cast out by jealous older
sisters of wife

My older sisters cast them into the sea as soon as they were born, and they placed beside me in bed two kittens. You threw me into the garbage area to wash dirty dishes. This man came looking for one like me, and by the will of Allah ^{--will of} I came here as a milk mother. I nursed and reared these children, who are our children. And this old man is their broom-seller grandfather."

When the son of the padişah heard this, he left immediately and returned to the palace. There he said to the older sisters of his young wife, "Which do you prefer--a knife with a black handle or a mule which has not been ridden in forty years?"⁷ Execution -- method of -- selected by condemned older sisters
(dragging by wild mule chosen and sword)

"Let the knife with the black handle be plunged into the heart of the one you love! We prefer the mule. Perhaps we can ride it and thus return to our home."

He had each of these sisters tied to the legs of a mule. Then the mules were whipped and driven into the mountains.

Then he returned and held wedding festivities that lasted

⁷This is the traditional choice of execution given to criminals and villains in Turkish folktales: "Do you wish to be beheaded or dragged to death by mules [or horses]?" --Mules do not live to forty years old. This is a hyperbolic expression for mules that have not been ridden recently and so will be very frisky and ungovernable.

Sword (knife) or horse(s) (or mule)? -- Option given condemned person for method of execution

Story 674

wedding celebration - lasting many days and nights

many days and nights. He kissed the eyes of the two children and took them and their mother with him back to the royal palace.

They went to that side and saw this side.⁸

kissing = - of eyes - of children as sign
of affection

⁸This is a closing formula for the tale. Like opening formula, the tekerleme, the terminal formula need not be logical. Often it is sheer nonsense, but it is a signal folk audiences recognize for "The End."