

Story 1188 1990 Tape 6)

Narrator: Unidentified man

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Yalvaç

3 Bros

Raven-Haired Beauty¹ and the Padişah's Youngest Son

tel/ Once there was and once there was not, at a time when God had many creatures and it was a sin to talk too much. Back in that time there was a padişah who had three sons. When the padişah was very old, he realized that he would soon die. Accordingly, he called his sons to him to give them his final advice. Among the things he said to them was this: "You can see from this palace a crossroad a short distance away. If you ever travel beyond that crossroad, do not ever take the road leading to the right."

When their father died, the oldest son became the new padişah. After he had been ruling the land for a short time, he began to think of his dying father's advice. The more he thought about it, the more curious he became about what lay beyond the intersection along the right-hand road. When he could no longer resist the temptation, he took a group of soldiers and started down the forbidden road.

Near the end of the day they came upon a beautiful garden

¹The Turkish term used in this text for this girl is Zülfüsiyah, literally Beautiful Girl with Black Side-Locks.

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filled with roses and other flowers. The oldest brother was fascinated by the loveliness of this garden, and he ordered his men to make camp there for the night

That evening a tall black man walked past the garden without saying a word to anyone. The young padişah asked, "Why didn't he greet me as he passed?"

"He is one of the black natives of this desert. How could he know that he should greet you?" answered one of his men.

At midnight, when the padişah and all his men lay in deep sleep, the black man returned. Silently and swiftly, he slaughtered every living creature in the garden. He killed not only all of the men but also all of their horses.

At home, the younger brothers of the padişah waited and waited for the return of their brother, but he neither returned nor sent any message to them. The middle brother then became padişah and ruled the land. But he could not forget his older brother, and he could not help wondering what had happened to him. After a while, therefore, he too took a number of soldiers and started down the right-hand road

When they reached the beautiful garden, the middle brother was also fascinated with its beauty. "Let us spend the night here," he said to his soldiers. Toward evening the black man came again, saying nothing to anyone, and lay down beneath a tree. But at midnight, when everyone else was asleep, this black man arose and slaughtered the padişah, his men, and all of their animals.

When the middle brother had not returned after several months, the youngest brother became padişah. He was most curious about the mystery concerning the right-hand road, for he had lost two brothers who had traveled upon it. After only a short time, he decided to discover what had happened to those two older brothers, and like them, he too started down that road accompanied by a number of soldiers.

When they came to the beautiful garden, the youngest son was also fascinated by it. "Let us spend the night here and continue our journey in the morning," he said. As before, the black man came and quietly lay under a tree. At midnight the black man reappeared, and this time he slaughtered every living thing there except the young padişah himself. That young man slept until the sun shone in his face and awakened him. He put his hand to the ground and drew it back covered with blood. Then he discovered the slaughtered bodies lying all around him.

Determining to avenge the deaths of his two older brothers, the youngest son continued down that same road in search of the killer. He asked people he met along the road if they had seen a certain black man pass that way, but no one could tell him anything about that slaughterer.

once to that padişah,

happened. "That black man killed both of my older brothers," he said. "Can you tell me where I can find him in order to

punish him?"

"Birds fly everywhere," said the Padişah of Birds. "Let me call them all together and ask if any of them knows where this black man can be found." The birds were assembled, and their padişah questioned them about the black man described by the youngest son. Bird after bird said it knew nothing about this black man, but finally a phoenix² said that it knew where he lived. "Then you must carry this young man to that place," said the Padişah of Birds

dukk

The youngest son was placed on the back of this great bird. On one of the phoenix's wings was placed a stack of meat, and on the other wing were placed several jars of water. "Whenever the phoenix is hungry during the long flight, you must give it meat," said the Padişah of Birds, "and whenever it is thirsty, you must give it water to drink."

The phoenix flew and flew for several days. It then landed near a house which it said was the home of the black man. "Before you go to that house," said the phoenix, "quietly enter the nearby stable in order to win the friendship of a magic horse kept there. You will need that horse for your journey home."

supernatural horse

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Advised

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Go to the stable and find a hiding place in it. At night

²Middle Eastern and Asiatic lore is filled with accounts of giant birds: the phoenix, the roc (rukh), the simurgh, and the anka. In Turkish tales it is usually the Emerald-Green Anka which carries the protagonist to a remote place--sometimes in this world but sometimes to another world.

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expose only your two hands, for that will be enough to frighten the horse, causing it to neigh loudly. Then hide yourself again. The black man will come to the stable to see what is wrong with the horse. When he sees nothing wrong, he will caress the horse and feed it [?]hazelnuts, peanuts, and almonds. After the black man has gone, expose your arm, and the horse will neigh loudly again. When the black man comes this time, he will curry and rub down the horse's hide. After a short time, expose yourself again to the horse, and it will again start neighing. When the black man comes for a third time and finds nothing amiss in the stable, he will become angry and beat the horse. After that, you will be able to approach the horse without alarming it. Stroke the horse and caress it, and it will become calm."

The phoenix then departed, and the youngest son went to the stable and did what he had been instructed to do. That night he exposed his two hands, frightening the horse and causing it to neigh. The black man came, caressed the horse, and fed it hazelnuts, peanuts, and almonds. The youngest son then exposed his arm, causing the horse to neigh again. The black man came again, and this time he curried and rubbed down the horse's hide. After he had come a third time to the stable in response to the horse's alarm, the black man lost his patience and beat the horse severely. A few minutes later the youngest son came out of hiding, approached the horse, and

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caressed it without alarming it.

The youngest son then went to the house, which he found to be a very attractive building both inside and outside, but he could not find the black man anywhere in it. As he examined room after room, he finally came to one in which a beautiful girl with coils of glossy black hair lay sleeping in a bed. Near the bed a brazier was burning in order to keep the room warm. Noticing a skin³ at the foot of the bed, the young man picked it up and threw it into the flames of the brazier. The bad-smelling smoke from the burning skin awakened the girl⁴ who exclaimed, "What have you done? Why did you throw it into the fire? I was the one who killed your brothers, and I did so in order to draw you here to me."

Because she was so extremely beautiful, and because she loved him, the youngest son soon fell in love with this girl

³The word skin (Turkish deri) here is somewhat ambiguous. Is it simply a pelt--perhaps a sheep skin--used for warmth? If so, why should the young man burn it? Or does the tale involve (though not explain) a transformation motif of the Swan-Maiden type, and is the destruction of the skin necessary in order to keep the girl from reentering it and departing into some other dimension or some other world? Inasmuch as the "black man" that the protagonist seeks is never seen again, and inasmuch as Raven-Haired Beauty says (in the next paragraph), "I killed your brothers . . .," may not the skin be the means by which the girl becomes the black man and then reverts to her feminine alter-self?

⁴This may possibly be a further clue to the metamorphosis motif. When the means of returning to his or her alter-state are destroyed, the transformed creature often senses this intuitively.

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Many padişahs had sought her hand in marriage, but she had refused all of them. As a result she had made many enemies, she lived in this remote house so that her whereabouts would not be known to any of these enemies. The youngest son and Raven-Haired Beauty were married, and they lived happily for some time.

One day several months later they were walking about in the garden attached to her home. After a while she grew tired and lay down to sleep for a while. As she slept, her husband noticed a thin chain around her neck from which a key was suspended. Taking the key quietly from her neck, he tried to insert it into the locks of several doors, but it would not fit any of them. After a few minutes he discovered that it was the key to a gate in the garden wall. Opening that gate and passing into another section of the garden, the youngest son saw a gorgeous shirt spread across the top of a small poplar tree. To himself he said, "That shirt is too beautiful to be worn by anyone but Raven-Haired Beauty.

give it to her."

and that it already belonged to the girl. Just as he was about to grasp the shirt, however, a sudden gust of wind blew it away.

The young man returned to where the girl was lying and replaced the chain around her neck. As he did so, he woke her up. "What have you been doing?" she asked.

"I went into another part of the garden where I saw a

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gorgeous shirt on the top of a small poplar tree. I tried to get that shirt for you, but before I could do that, a gust of wind blew it away

"Alas! I shall no longer be secure here, for that shirt is known to be mine, and my enemies will use it to track me here!"

What the girl had said about her safety turned out to be true. Her shirt was found in a pasture by a shepherd.^{36, 37-38} Realizing that it was much too elegant for any ordinary person to wear, the shepherd took it to his padişah. As soon as the ruler saw it, he said, "That is the shirt of Raven-Haired Beauty! Where do you live and where did you find this shirt?" After he was given this information by the shepherd, the padişah called into his presence a witch woman.³⁶⁻³⁷ He said to her, "In such and such a part of my land lives Raven-Haired Beauty, a girl who refused to marry me. I want you to go to that area and discover where she lives. Then I want you to bring her here to me."

This witch woman mounted a küp⁵ and flew to the place that the padişah had indicated. After looking about for some time,

⁵ A küp is a large earthenware jar or vase in which water, wine, olive oil, or butter may be stored. Like the amphora of classical times, this type of urn may be very large--as much as two meters high. In the Middle East witches do not ride on broomsticks but on küps--really much more practical in that they have storage space for whatever load the witch may wish to carry.

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she located the home of Raven-Haired Beauty, and one evening she knocked on her door. When the door was opened, the witch said, "Will you accept me as a guest for the night?"

"I cannot accept into my house anyone whom I do not know," answered Raven-Haired Beauty.

But her husband interfered, saying, "This old woman is a lady. Let her stay for the night and then depart early in the morning." So they let the witch come in.

In the morning when she was about to leave, the witch to Raven-Haired Beauty, "Come and walk with me in the garden for just a few minutes before I go." As they walked along, they came to the witch's küp, and the witch said, "Look at the beautiful pictures painted on the inside of this vase!" When Raven-Haired Beauty bent down to examine the inside of the the witch tumbled her head over heels into the küp, mounted herself on top of it, and flew away to the padişah's palace.

The padişah said to Raven-Haired Beauty, "You refused me before, but now I shall keep you here until you agree to marry me!"

shall marry you only if you will first allow me to live alone in one of the rooms of your palace for forty days."

In the meantime, her husband, the youngest son, began to search for her. Along his way he met the shepherd who had found Raven-Haired Beauty's magic shirt, and the shepherd told him that he had taken it to the padişah. "Then Raven-Haired Beauty

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was also taken to his palace, and the whole town is now decorated in black as her marriage to the padişah approaches

Following the directions of the shepherd, the youngest son went to that town and was accepted as a guest in the home of an old woman who lived alone. He asked this old woman, "Grandmother, do you know anyone who goes to the padişah's palace?"

? "Son, I go there every day myself, for I am the palace baker." After he had explained his reason for coming to that town, he asked, "Do you ever see that girl in the palace?"

"Yes, I see her often."

"Could you deliver this ring to her?" he asked. "You could make a soup for her to eat and put the ring in the bowl of soup."

On the following day, the baker went to Raven-Haired Beauty's room and said, "My girl, here is some soup for you to eat."

"I do not eat soup or anything else here," said Raven-Haired Beauty.

"Ah, but for the sake of your former husband, do take this bowl of soup and eat it."

Because it was presented to her in that way, the girl took the soup and began to eat it. As she did so, she heard a clinking noise coming from the bowl. When she picked the ring from

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the soup with her spoon, the girl exclaimed, "Aman!"⁶ Where did you get this ring?"

"Be quiet, my girl! Your husband is at my house in this town.

"How can you manage to bring him here?" asked the girl

After they had both thought for a few minutes about ways of doing that, the baker woman said, "I have a married daughter who sometimes comes with me to the palace. I shall have your husband dress in her clothes, and I shall bring him here as if he were my daughter."

In those days women wore dresses that covered them from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. Disguised completely in that kind of dress the youngest son came to the palace the next day with the baker woman. Raven-Haired Beauty was watching for their arrival, and she opened the door to let them come in. The youngest son hid in her room until night arrived. Then two hours after darkness fell, he broke a window and lowered his wife to the ground below. He followed her at once, and the two fled to a nearby village. There they bought horses and rode at once to her home, but they did not remain there. Taking the magic horse from the stable, they both mounted

⁶Aman is a common exclamation in Turkish. It may (negatively) mean alas or oh, dear! More positively, it may suggest, oh, my goodness or the equivalent of wow! or golly!

on its back and were carried to the youngest son's country, where he again became padişah. He and Raven-Haired Beauty again lived happily together. They ate and drank and had all their wishes fulfilled, and may all of us do the same.