

Story #378 (Tape 2, 1972)

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The Handsome Boy and His Chainbreaking Brothers *Çiftlik or İnkıfapçı*

Once there lived a very handsome boy. He was so good looking that all the people in his village were jealous of him. The boy grew tired of being envied and decided to go away. He started out toward the mountains. On his way he saw a cottage. Inside a woman ^{sat} by a burning fire. When she saw the intruder she attempted to kill him, but before she had a chance to do this the boy jumped on her and sucked her breast. Upon this the woman said, "I would have killed you, but you have become my son now. I have two other sons."

That evening before her two sons returned home, the woman hid the handsome boy in the closet. When they came home they said, "There's a stranger in the house. We're going to kill him."

"You can't kill him," the woman protested. "He sucked the milk of my breast and became your brother."

¹This is a greatly truncated tale containing motifs that here make less sense than they do in the full versions. The narrator is a poor raconteur who jams together episodes and characters without much pattern of causation. "Milk brothers" and "milk sisters" are common in rural Turkey, a relationship established when a child is nursed, perhaps just once, by the mother of another child. In tales about giants, the hero often secures his safety by sneaking up behind a mother giant who is working, with her breasts thrown back over her shoulders, and sucking one of her breasts. Symbolically, then, she is his "mother," and her fierce giant sons are the hero's "brothers" and thus cannot harm him. It is obvious later in this tale that this is about giant "milk brothers," but they are not called that; they are shown as powerful aids to the hero.

Then the boy came out of the closet. His new brothers asked, "What are you doing out in the mountains?"

The boy answered, "Everybody in my village was jealous of my good looks and so I decided to go away.

"Go seek your fortune," the brothers said. "We shall come to your aid whenever you need us. Every day we shall suck a piece of straw. If juice comes out, we shall know you are in no danger. If blood comes out, we shall know you are in danger."

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The next morning the boy left the cottage in search of new adventures. He saw a palace by the sea. The palace belonged to a padishah, and his daughter, just at that time, happened to be looking out the window. When she saw the handsome boy the sultana called him to the palace. The young man stayed at the palace that night. The next morning he went hunting, for he was fond of the sport.

In the neighborhood of the palace lived an old witch who had a young daughter. A certain young man wanted to marry the witch's daughter. After the handsome boy had gone hunting, the witch went to the palace and asked the sultana, "What is your boy friend's good luck charm?" The sultana lied by saying it was a broom. The witch returned home and burned a broom, hoping to destroy the young man. But nothing happened to him, and he returned to the palace that night. The following morning the witch went to the palace again and asked the sultana, "What is your boy friend's real good luck charm?"

This time the sultana said, "It is a knife."

The witch went home, unsheathed a knife and put a piece of wire in the sheath. Since the young man's life depended on the knife, he became listless and immobile and could not move from bed.

That night when his milk brothers sucked a straw, blood came out of it. They knew their brother was in trouble. They found him sick in bed. also found the knife, and when they removed the wire from its sheath, boy recovered from his sickness.

In the meantime the young man who wanted to marry the witch's daughter came to see the girl. She suggested a walk in the garden. The young man noticed a pretty cistern in the garden. When he was admiring it, the girl pushed him into it and left him there. Then she and her witch mother went to the palace. The handsome young man who had recovered from his sickness was paying a visit to the sultana. When they saw the witch and her daughter, the lovers were panicked. They escaped from the window and got on the young man's mule. her chain at them.

It caught the mule by the legs, making him unable to move. But the boy's brothers broke the chain, and the lovers eloped to the handsome young man's village. They were married, and the wedding lasted for forty days and forty nights.

We were invited to their wedding. We stayed at the palace. On our way back, our donkey tripped over a stone and sprained its ankle. Now it is lame.

*Emmal
Lomula*