BAKHTIYARI FOLKTALES:
SELECTIONS FROM
AFSANAH'HA-YI CHAHR MAHAL VA BAKHTIYARI

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, at least on first glance, is a partial translation of *Afsanah 'ha-yi Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiyari*, originally compiled by Ali Asmand and Hussein Khosravi, from the original Persian to English. The text is a compilation of folktales and fairytales found among the Bakhtiyari tribe of Western Iran and in the province of *Chahar Mahal*. While a simple translation of folktales may seem, at least on the surface, as fairly straightforward it, it is a far more complicated process than is readily apparent.

While the end results are translations of Bakhtiyari folktales, the process and exercise of translation is hidden within the stories themselves. It is insufficient to merely read the stories in Persian and directly translate them into English. Aside from the fact that many terms used in Persian, not to mention idiomatic phrases and dialectic use of vocabulary, do not translate directly into English and, even if this were possible, a translation of this sort would be awkward and unpleasant to read. Producing these translations required an understanding of these issues and an attempt to render them into English prose in a fashion that is pleasant to read and which brings the reader closer original text and to the original storytellers’ intents. Care was taken so that the innate exotic flavor of the stories, and the style of their telling, would be preserved whenever possible and presented in such a fashion as to be palatable and readily comprehensible to the reader of the English. These were the methods and processes used to produce these
few translations, and if the work of the translator is performed well, then more of the 
original text will be readily apparent to the reader than the writing style of the translator.
Dedicated to my wife and children who suffered as much as I did to finish this thesis.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

About four years ago I came to Ohio State with a year of Persian and an interest in Iran and the Bakhtiyari. During the past year, while compiling a bibliography on the Bakhtiyari, I came across the book, Afsanah 'ha-yi Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiyari. After looking at the text I decided to try my hand at translating portions of it. At the time I felt that, given the limited vocabulary used in folktales and my level of Persian, the text would be a suitable challenge. However, I quickly found that no text is easy to translate into another language, at least not if the translator wishes to create a good translation. I soon ran into many dilemmas and issues that I had to consider and work through. These issues and how I dealt with them, in relation to the six articles on the art of translation that were assigned to me, are the general topic of this paper.

When I first began to study Persian there I made a conscious effort to translate everything into an English equivalent. I think it is probably thus with any beginning student of another language. I sought to find, and I was taught to do so in class, a direct translation for each word and phrase into English, or from English into Persian. It is perhaps a bad habit, or at least a bad way to learn a language, but it is probably a necessity during those initial stages. Eventually my ability in Persian became such that I
did not consciously make this shift from Persian into English, at least not in texts where unknown vocabulary was not an issue. To some extent, this was the case with the folktales that I chose to translate. However, I soon found that there were many more issues that proved nettlesome.

The first problem that I faced came during my initial reading of the text. I quickly found that simple words did not have the same meaning or grammatical context. I am not certain whether these particular instances are common to colloquial Persian in general or are specific traits of the dialect of Persian used where these tales were collected. One such instance is the use of نه. This particular word was used heavily throughout the text and the word seemed to be employed to add emphasis as Thackston says که is used (212). Therefore, the word could not be translated as “also” and to do so would alter the meaning of the sentence and consequently the translation.

As I translated it became readily apparent that I simply could not always apply an English meaning to a Persian word that could be applied consistently. Some words would be used in different locations and carried different meaning. Schleiermacher sums this up very well, “only a few word in one language to which a word in another language corresponds completely, so that the word could be used in all instances in which the other is used and always produce in the same context the same effect” (50). An example of this is ناراحت شدن. My dictionary would gave the meaning “to become worried” or “to become uneasy” it gradually became clear to me that the meaning must be gained from context. In one instance, in the story “The Red Apple,” the young girl was told to trick her mother and says this in reply. In this instance I translated the phrase
that the girl was afraid her mother would become angry because of the trick rather than the meaning given by the dictionary. In other instances a more typical or standard meaning of this particular verb.

In addition, I found a number of terms that had no equivalent in English, at least not that carried the same meaning. "Since languages are formed in different landscape, through different experiences, their incongruity is natural" (Gassett 96). The word for some occupations, that are indigenous to the region in which the folktales occur, simply do not exist in English. Therefore, I had to make a choice how to translate these on a case-by-case basis. For instance, the occupation of "thorn picker", or خارکن, does not exist in English. In the story, "Sharp Tongue," I translated this to mean a woodsman since the following sentence went on to describe what he did for a living. In the story, "The Two Sisters," their father is said to be a man, who gathers thornwood kindling for a living, which is called باباخارکن. I have translated this a "poppa thorn picker" rather than use the Persian word or the unsuitable term "woodsman." I felt it preserved the feel of the original without requiring extensive footnotes for explanation. It is for this reason that I left other words, such as دیو or کیسه untranslated and gave them a footnote to explain their meaning. I must admit that, because Persian is gender neutral, I erroneously gave the div in one story, "The Red Apple," a male gender.

In another instance, in "Hump upon Hump," I was unaware of the exact nature of the creatures that helped the humpbacked man. Because I did not share the same cultural context I did not understand why these creatures were not named, because the storyteller believed in them. Furthermore, I did not really know what they were and only knew that they were magical in some fashion. As Nabokov discussed, I was ignorant and
unacquainted with intricacies of the culture I was attempting to translate into English (137). Though in his case he was discussing Russian life in the context of translating poetry. Thankfully, Dr. Margaret Mills was able to explain the peculiarities of the story. Consequently I called referred to them as “them” or “our betters” within the story and explained the peculiarities in a footnote.

As I began to translate I found that it was no longer as easy to make the switch into English as it once had been. As I read a text, and more specifically one that I did not need to concentrate on looking up a great deal of unfamiliar words or phrases, I tended to read and understand the text in Persian. That is to say I knew and felt the meaning of the text without thinking of the text or transferring it first into English. Therefore, when I tried to make the switch again and transfer the stories back into English I found it difficult. However, as I began to write down my translations I soon fell into old habits and ran into difficulties. I began to translate these stories and I tried to stay as true to the text as I felt possible but my translations were too literal, or they were what Schleiermacher called a “paraphrase” (40). My idea of remaining true to the text meant that, while I translated the literal meaning of each word and phrase, and even tried to duplicate sentence structure, it was awful to read and in some cases made little sense. “A literal rendering of the syntax completely demolishes the theory of reproduction of meaning and is a direct threat to comprehensibility” (Benjamin 79). I had to unlearn what I knew about translating and start over.

After I had written out a few of my initial translations I had to re-examine how I wanted to translate these stories. I had to ask myself what was the nature of the stories, were they meant to be highly literary or more colloquial? My answer was that the stories
were written down as they had been told orally, or at least they were trying to appear to be. Therefore, I had to attempt to reproduce them in like fashion. "The task of the translator consists in finding the intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original" (77). With this concept in mind I began to shift my translations away from the literal. However, I soon found that I began to overcompensate in areas such as vocabulary, conversation and idiomatic phrases.

As I tried to translate the stories in such a way as to capture the feel of a story being related orally I began to use increasingly colloquial patterns of speech. In fact I overcompensated in many instances and lost, at least initially, much of the sense of polite speech inherent in the Persian language. My problem was how to remain close to the original without being too literal. "The more closely the translation follows the phrases of the original, the more foreign it will strike the reader" (Schleiermacher 46). This is precisely what I wanted to do and, as Schleiermacher says, "it is one of the greatest difficulties a translator has to overcome" (46).

As I continued to translate, and re-edit earlier translations, I found that while I tried to move away from doing a paraphrase or literal translation I went the other direction. As I ran into difficult passages and idioms I tried to approximate their meaning in English. As a result my translations gradually became imitations. However, it changed the nature of the material I was working on. I sought to convey the impression the original text made on me and, while I conveyed this into English, I lost all sense of originality the text might have had. Schleiermacher sums up exactly what I did wrong.
"Such a recreation is no longer the work itself. It is also by no means intended to represent and render effectively the spirit of the original language; rather the foreignness created in the original undergoes a substantial transformation. A work of this kind, taking into account the differences of language, morals, and education, is supposed to be, as much as possible, the same thing for its readers as the original was for its own readers; by trying to maintain this sameness of reaction, one sacrifices the identity of the work” (Schleiermacher 41).

This was especially true in the case of idiomatic phrases for which I had difficulty translating into English or finding an equivalent idiom that was not hackneyed and overused. Many folktales begin with a very common phrase, يکی بود یکی نبود or the more complete version یکی بود یکی نبود غیر از خدا هیچ کسی نبود. Initially I translated these phrases as simply “once upon a time.” At the time I thought this was a clever usage of a common phrase in western fairytales. However, I finally realized that this phrase was influencing the tenor of the story that followed and, instead of sounding like a folktale of the Bakhtiyari, it sounded more like a Disney cartoon or something from Hans Christian Anderson. I had effectively watered down any sense of the foreign to English readers.

In another idiomatic phrase, one that I gave considerable thought to, and that is very common, یک دل نه، صد دل عاشق او شد, I sought to render simply into English. Again I thought to transfer the sense of what it said to me in the original Persian into English simply by saying that the prince in the story fell head over heels in love with her at first sight. However, this I realized was also a disservice to the original text and was overused even in English. By this time I had realized, with Dr. Mills’ help, that I had again chosen the wrong way method of translation. In my current opinion my translations sought to
force the storyteller out of the realm of the Persian and force him to express himself as if he were originally writing in English. But again this led me to create a poor imitation and an bad translation overall, or as Schleiermacher says,

“Now if the translation wants to let the author of a play speak as if he had originally written in the language of the translation, then there are many things that it cannot make him say, because they are not native to its people and therefore have no symbol in their language. In this case, the translator must either cut some parts out completely and thereby destroy the form and the power of the whole, or he must put something else in their place. In this field, the formula that is faithfully followed evidently leads to mere imitation, or to a still more repulsively conspicuous and confusing mixture of translation and imitation that throws the reader mercilessly back and forth like a ball between his world and the foreign one, between the author’s and the translator’s invention and wit, from which he can draw no pleasure, but will in the end certainly suffer dizziness and frustration enough” (51-52).

This is a rather lengthy quote but I believe it demonstrates exactly how my translation had gone wrong and pointed me in the direction I should go.

In the articles that I read there were discussions on the very nature of translations in relation to the original text, or to what extent it is even possible to translate a text. I won’t plunge into these debates since my basic assumption is that it is indeed possible and in fact desirable to translate across languages. Of all the articles that I read, I found the article by Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On the Different Methods of Translating*, to be the most useful. It is from his article that I have sought the most guidance as to the course my translation should follow. The basic idea of what Schleiermacher says a good
translation should attempt to do, and which is mirrored in most of the other articles in one form or another, is to remain as true as possible to the original text and move the reader toward the author.

"The translator takes pains, by means of his work, to compensate for the readers' lack of understanding of the original language. He seeks to communicate to his readers the same image, the same impression the he himself has gained - through his knowledge of the original language - of the work as it stands, and therefore to move the readers to his viewpoint, which is actually foreign to them" (42).

Walter Benjamin compliments this when he says, "A real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully" (80). Furthermore, Octavio Paz quotes a French scholar who elaborates both on what a good translation should be and what a good translator should do, "They should make themselves invisible behind the texts and, if fully understood, the texts will speak for themselves" (158). With these quotes from different authors I again tried to edit my translation and, more specifically, idiomatic phrases.

In each case I tried to allow the original language, and the flair of the storyteller or author, come through into the English. Where exact idioms did not exist I tried to allow the English to swell, so to speak, to accommodate the Persian. I have sought to leave the translation, in the English, dangerously close to a literal translation, in some ways coming full circle, for a close translation to the original so that the foreign nature of the idioms will strike the reader of English (Schleiermacher 46). In the case of the idiom, "یکی بود یکی نبود غیر از خدا هیچ کسی نبود", I have avoided the translation "once upon a
time” in favor of “One there was, once there wasn’t anyone other than God.” In the case of, I have avoided the simplistic translation of “He fell head over heels in love with her at first sight” in favor of the more colorful “he fell in love with her, not with one heart, but with that of a hundred lovers.” In both instances the English sounds unusual but it preserves the original, at least as closely as I have been able to render it. Furthermore, it is completely understandable in English, stretches the English language to accommodate the Persian and moves the reader closer to the writer. In addition, I have tried, through the judicious use of footnotes, to illiterate the setting and unique portions of my translations in such a way to further compliment this type of translation, much as Vladimir Nabokov would do while translating Russian poetry (143).

If I have learned anything from this entire exercise it is a newfound respect for translators and especially those who can do so well and thereby preserve and reproduce a text, as well as its meaning and spirit, from one language to another. I have also learned that no text, no matter how simplistic, it easy to translate in all its implications, inferences and with all the baggage that accompanied the writer, as he composed the text, and the contextual knowledge that the target audience possessed as they read it. It is one matter to understand the context while one is reading a text, which is an act of translation in itself, but it is another more difficult task to transmit these details to readers in another language. I have endeavored to do this to the extent that I am able and it is possible that there are perhaps two categories of people who can best judge if I was successful: another translator and a child, such as my daughter who has enjoyed hearing these stories, who would read my translations in English.
CHAPTER 2

THE ANIMALS’ EVENING PARTY

Once upon a time, there were two brothers, one clever and one simple-minded. Their father became ill and died. The clever brother, who wanted to get rid of his younger brother, said, “Come, let’s divide our father’s possessions.” The simple brother agreed. The clever brother said, “Blessed be the memory of our father. The only worldly possession that he left us is this very house. Now, do you want from the ground to the rooftop or from the rooftop to the sky?” The simple brother, who saw that from the rooftop to the sky was more said, “From the ground to the rooftop belongs to you and the rest is mine.” The clever brother also gave him a set of bedclothes and said, “Go up on the roof, your home.”

After awhile, the younger brother became tired of living on the rooftop and said to his brother, “From the ground to the sky, all of it belongs to you. Give me provisions for a journey, I want to leave here.” The clever brother gave him some dry bread and equipped him to travel.

\[1\] Homes of this type have flat rooftops. It is not uncommon for people to sleep upon the rooftops of homes of this sort, especially during hot summer nights.
The simple brother walked and walked until nearly dusk when he reached a ruined water mill. He climbed atop a small building, where grain was stored, and ate his supper and he fell asleep on the spot from sheer exhaustion.

After a few hours passed, the squeaking of the door of the ruined water mill woke him up. At first, he thought thieves had entered the water mill to split up stolen goods. But, when he took a good look, he saw that a fox had come inside, swept the floor of the water-mill with its tail and had sat down in a corner.

Later, a lion, a leopard, a bear, a wolf, and a tiger came. The tiger and the leopard left again, hunted down an immense cow and brought it back for the animals to eat. When they were all very full, the lion spoke, “Okay, who will tell the first story tonight?” They all said, “Be our guest, you first Mr. Lion."

So the lion said, “On the roof of this water-mill is a mouse who has many bags of gold. Every morning, when he leaves his den, he spreads the sacks of gold out in the sun on the water-mill roof, rolls around on it and rejoices. If humans knew this, one would come and plug the mouth of the mouse’s den with mud first and then he would go and kill the mouse with a shoe, pick up all the bags for himself and go away.”

The wolf’s turn came after the lion and he said, “The king of this region has a daughter who has become insane and nobody has been able to cure her. Among the king’s cattle is a dog the brains of which are a remedy for the princess’s malady. If a human knew this he would go and take this dog from the shepherd and apply its brains to the head of the King’s daughter so that she would be cured. Then he would marry the King’s daughter.”
After the wolf’s story was finished, the bear cleared his throat and said, “In such and such place is a house that has seven barrels full of sacks of gold and silver resting under it. If a human knew this, he would go and buy the house, recover the barrels, and the owner of it all would become very wealthy.”

When the bear finished its story, the lion said, “We are all exhausted, that’s enough for tonight.” Then they said goodnight to the lion and went to sleep. When morning came, the animals left the water mill.

The simple youth, who had overheard all of the stories, climbed atop the roof and saw that the mouse had spread out the sacks of gold and had fallen asleep on it. The bags of gold shone under the light of the sun. The youth became so happy from seeing all the sacks of gold that he was speechless. He immediately went and blocked the door of the mouse’s den and dropped his shoe behind the mouse. The mouse leapt down from the rooftop from fear and killed himself. The youth picked up the sacks with peace of mind and traveled until he reached the King’s herds. He insisted on buying the shepherd’s dog, removed its brains, placed them inside a jar and traveled until he reached the city. At the gate of the city he saw many heads impaled upon the tips of spears. He asked those around him, “What crime did they commit?” They told him, “These are the heads of those who wanted to cure the King’s daughter but were unable to do it.”

When the youth entered the city, the first place he went was to buy a set of new clothes. Then he went to the King’s castle and said, “I have come to cure the King’s daughter.” They took him before the king. The king said, “If you are successful, I will give you my daughter and half of my wealth. But if you are unable to cure her then I will separate your head from your body.” The youth agreed to these terms and said, “Bring
forth your daughter.” When they brought the girl, he opened the lid of the jar and applied the brains to the girl’s head. After a few days, the girl became completely cured. The king, according to his promise, gave the girl to him in marriage and arranged a wedding feast that lasted seven days and nights. Then he commanded that a castle be constructed for them and gave half of his wealth to the boy.

After awhile, the simple-hearted brother said to his wife, “I want to go on a journey.” His wife prepared provisions for the journey for him. He traveled until he reached the place of which the bear had spoken. He bought the house from its owner, tore it down and brought the seven barrels, which were full of gold and jewelry, back to the castle.

One day, some years later, as he walked in a garden with his wife, they saw that a beggar had come to the garden and was begging. The simple brother recognized him and said, “Oh Dervish, don’t you recognized me?” The beggar said, “No!” The simple brother said, “Look carefully and see if you remember me or not.” When the beggar took a good look he recognized him. The beggar said, “Dear brother! Is it you? You didn’t have this much wealth, where did you get all of this stuff?” The younger brother told him the whole story and wanted him to stay right there with them and live in ease. The clever brother was covetous and said, “No, I must go, the only thing you can do is to give me the location of that water-mill.” The simple brother said, “Whatever wealth you desire I will give to you if you don’t go to that water-mill, just stay here.” But he would not listen and departed. He traveled and traveled until he reached the very same ruined water mill. He went into a corner and hid. He saw that a fox came and swept the floor of the water mill with his tail. Then the lion, the tiger, the leopard, the bear, and the wolf
entered one by one. When they had eaten dinner the lion said, “Friends! The last time we gathered around perhaps a human was here and heard our conversation and then went and became the owner of all of the mouse’s sacks and the barrels and married the King’s daughter.” They all said, “If you give us permission we will look around, just in case someone is hiding here again.” The lion gave them permission. After a little searching, the animals found the clever brother behind the millstone of the water mill; they ripped him to shreds and devoured him.
CHAPTER 3

THE RED APPLE

In ancient times, there lived a poor family that had only one daughter and they loved this daughter very much. A lady lived in their neighborhood whose occupation was tattooing. This daughter really wanted a star to be tattooed on her hand, so she went to the tattooist’s home and asked her to make it for her. However, the tattooer, who was an evil natured woman, made an excuse each day not to do it and said, “Maybe later.” This went on until one day, when the girl begged her, the tattooer said, “I won’t make a tattoo for you this way. First you must do something for me.” The girl said, “Whatever you ask me to do, I’ll do.” At that moment, her mother yelled for her and she had to go home. When she got home, her mother scolded her and said, “By Everlasting God, don’t you have anything better to do than go to visit this woman?” The girl said, “Oh mother dear! You know that I want a tattoo like the other girls.” “Put the thought of getting a tattoo out of your mind,” said the mother. “From now on you’re not allowed to go to this woman’s home. She’s not an honest person.” The girl said nothing, but when her mother had gone to the bathhouse one day, she went to the tattooist’s home and, with tears and sobbing, begged the woman to make a tattoo for her. The tattooer said, “If you complete
the task that I give you, then I'll do it for you." The girl promised to do whatever the
tattooer might want. The tattooer said, "Tomorrow, when your father has left the house
for work, you must ask your mother to pick you a red apple from the top of the tree, and
when she has climbed to the top of the tree, for a joke, you must say to her, "Mother!
Mother! Your brother has died!" "I can't do that, ask for something different," said the
girl. "I'm afraid she'll get mad at me." "No, I told you what you have to do," said the
woman. "Didn't you give me your promise? Don't you want a tattoo?" When the girl
saw that there was no other way, she agreed and left.

The next day, when the girl's father had left home for work, the girl said to her
mother, "Oh mother dear! I want a red apple." The mother went to pick her an apple and
the girl said to her, "Not from the bottom. I want an apple from the top of the tree." So
the mother, who loved the girl dearly, climbed up the tree with great difficulty but as
soon as she reached the highest branch, her daughter shouted from below, "Mother!
Mother! Your brother, has died!" The mother let out a loud shriek and fell down from
the tree and died on the spot.

After a few days, when the mother's funeral was over, the girl went, crying, to the
tattooer and said, "Now that you have killed my good mother at least put a tattoo on my
hand." "I haven't finished with you yet," said the woman. "Now you must do something
so that I can marry your father." The girl, who had become very lonely since the death of
her mother, consented. When the girl returned home she said to her father, "Dearest
father! Every day I'm alone and I'm afraid that I'll die from loneliness. If you were to
get married, then I would have a mother and a companion as well." Her father thought
for a while and then said, "My daughter! What person would agree to marry me in this
chaotic state?” “I have a prospect for you,” said the girl. “In this very neighborhood is a nice lady who makes tattoos. She also has a daughter who would be able to be my playmate.” The father again thought for a while and finally agreed to his daughter’s suggestion.

A short while later, they went to arrange the marriage and to organize a wedding celebration. A few days after the honeymoon, the daughter said to the tattooer, who had now become her father’s wife, “Can you make a tattoo for me now?” The woman replied, “Go do your work! Am I finished working so that I’m able to sit down and do a tattoo for you?” The daughter became very upset and said nothing else that day. A few days later she asked her for a tattoo again. This time the stepmother repaid her with a beating and said, “If you mention a tattoo one more time I’ll kill you.” The daughter was very frightened and from then on she didn’t speak to the tattooer, but whenever she remembered her mother, she cried and cursed herself at the thought of the evil that she had done. Her stepmother began to abuse her; she made her work from dawn to dusk and gave her only a single piece of dry bread to eat.

One day, because of her great sorrow, she went to her mother’s grave. Like a spring rain cloud, tears poured from her eyes and she sobbed, “Oh dearest mother! Please forgive me! This evil tattooer deceived me and took you from me. Now, she beats me and also forces me to work every day, and only sees to her own daughter’s needs.” She cried so much that she fell asleep and she dreamt that her mother was telling her, “My daughter, don’t fret, go this very day to your youngest uncle, my youngest brother. Get his yellow calf and take it to the desert, there it will give you whatever you desire.”
When the girl awoke, she went straight to her uncle’s house. She managed to get the calf from him somehow and took it to the desert. Whatever she wanted, the calf magically made appear for her. From that point on, the girl became very fond of the calf and, whenever she needed anything, the calf made it for her. Her health improved daily and she even got new clothes. This went on until the stepmother finally became suspicious of her. The stepmother watched her carefully for a few days until she understood the entire situation. Then she sat down with her daughter and they drew up a plan together to get rid of the calf.

The tattooer went to a doctor and said, “I’ll give you half of my wealth, if only, when I’ve made myself look sick, you must come and say, “Only the flesh of the yellow calf will help you.” The doctor agreed. The woman returned home and pretended to be sick. Her husband left and brought back the doctor. The doctor told him, “Her illness is incurable, and she’ll only get better if she eats the flesh of a yellow calf.” “Where can I find a yellow calf?” asked her husband. His wife said with a moan, “Your daughter. Your daughter has a yellow calf.” So, they went and took the calf and cut off its head, and no matter how much the girl cried and begged, it was no use.

The next day, with eyes full of tears, the daughter went to her mother’s grave again and said, “Oh mother dear! They killed my calf.” “Gather the bones of the calf together,” said her mother. “Grind them, and when they become cotton, make string with it.” The daughter immediately went and gathered up the bones, carried them into the desert and ground them up, and they became cotton, but the moment she started to make string with it, a sudden wind blew and carried the cotton away. The miserable daughter chased after the cotton until the wind died down and dropped the cotton in front of a tent.
The girl went to pick up the cotton, but she spotted a female div sitting inside the tent. She crept forward and, when she started to pick up the cotton, the div spotted her and said, “Bring me water from that leather flask.” The girl immediately brought it some water. “Is my flask better or is your mother’s,” asked the div. “Your flask,” said the girl. “Come and comb my hair,” said the div. The girl went and combed her hair. “Is my hair more beautiful or is your mother’s?” asked the div. “Your hair is more beautiful,” replied the girl. “When a black cloud comes, go to sleep,” said the div, “And, when a white cloud comes, get up.” Suddenly, a black cloud appeared and the girl immediately went to sleep. When a white cloud came, she woke up. “Now look at yourself in the mirror,” said the div. She went and looked and saw that she had become very beautiful. Then she said farewell to the div and returned home.

When the stepmother and her daughter saw her they were astonished, but no matter how often they asked her how she had become so beautiful, she would not tell them. This went on until the tattooist’s daughter started talking to her one day and pried the secret out of her. As soon as the daughter of the tattooer understood her secret, she went where the div was and, without even saying hello, sat down. “Go get water from that leather flask,” said the div. The girl went and brought her a little water. “Is my flask better or is your mother’s?” asked the div. “My mother’s flask is better,” replied the girl. “Brush my hair for awhile,” said the div. So the girl brushed the div’s hair. “Is my hair more beautiful or your mother’s?” asked the div. “My mother’s hair is more beautiful,” relied the girl. “When a white cloud comes, go to sleep,” said the div, “And, when a black cloud comes, get up.” Suddenly, a white cloud appeared and the girl went to sleep. When the black cloud came, she awoke. “Now go look at yourself in the
mirror,” said the div. She went and looked at herself in the mirror and saw that she had
become very ugly. She went to her mother crying but her mother could do nothing to
help her. From then on they abused and persecuted the beautiful daughter even more.

One day, the son of the king saw that daughter, whose beauty was radiant as the
sun, along the roadside. As soon as he saw her, he fell in love with her, not with one
heart, but with that of a hundred lovers. He immediately went back to the castle and sent
his mother to arrange a marriage between them. The girl’s father consented, but her
stepmother was very upset. She sat down with her own daughter and drew up another
plan. Her daughter went to the beautiful girl and said, “Dear sister! Now that it is certain
that we’ll be separated, come on and let’s go for a walk”, and she convinced her
somehow to go to the desert, where they were soon busy playing together. While they
were playing the ugly stepsister said, “Come on and let’s bind each other’s hands
together- first you tie my hands.” The beautiful daughter tied her stepsister’s hands
together and, after playing for a while, she untied them. Now it was the stepsister’s turn,
so she bound the beautiful daughter’s hands and abandoned her there, and returned home
by herself.

The beautiful daughter stayed there alone and confused until sunset when a lion
came and was about to devour her. The girl begged, weeping, “Oh lion! In a few days I
am to be married, for God’s sake don’t eat me.” The lion wouldn’t relent. So the girl
said, “Since you’re going to eat me, at least be careful not to spill even a single drop of
my blood upon the ground.” When the lion ate her, a single drop of blood fell to the
ground and a reed sprouted from it.
After a while, the king’s son went crazy from the loss of the beautiful girl and he wandered into the desert. One day he happened to wander by the spot where the reed had sprouted up. He picked the reed and made a flute with it. From then on, wherever he went, he recited poetry and played the flute.

When the tattooist’s daughter saw that the king’s son had not gotten over loving her step-sister, she went and stole the flute, brought it home, burned it and scattered its ashes in a small garden. A pomegranate tree grew from the ashes. When the pomegranates were harvested, one of the seeds fell into a clay jar full of flour. When the lady tattooer went to the jar and reached inside it to get flour, she felt someone pinch her hand. She was astonished. She climbed up and peeked over the rim of the jar and saw the beautiful girl sitting inside it. She passed out from fright and fell to the ground. When her husband and daughter came they learned of what had happened and, little by little, the people of the neighborhood also found out and eventually the news even reached the prince’s ear.

When the prince realized that the girl whose beauty was radiant as the sun was alive, he immediately went to her and asked her what had happened. So the girl told him everything from start to finish. So then, the prince cast the tattooer and her ugly daughter into a giant pot of boiling water and he married the beautiful girl.
CHAPTER 4

THE LION AND THE FOX

One day there was a hungry fox who, no matter where he turned, couldn’t find anything to fill his stomach. In this condition he traveled, tired and exhausted, until he passed by the den of a lion. He said to himself, “Whatever bad luck we’ve been dealt is because of this damned lion! He has devoured all of the prey himself and we can’t find anything for ourselves. Today, I must snare him in some way or other.”

With this intention, the fox knocked on the door of the lion’s house. The lion, who had just awakened from slumber, said, “Who are you? What do you want at this time of day?” The smooth talking fox said, “A person whose heart has longed to see you, a person who desires to gaze at you, a person who is your faithful servant.” With amazement, the lion opened the door. When his eyes fell upon the fox he was even more surprised. However, the fox didn’t give the lion a moment’s respite to utter even a single word before he jumped forward and started kissing the lion. He drowned the lion’s face, hands and feet in kisses. The lion remained dumbfounded and was about to say something when the fox spoke, “Dear cousin²! Oh, Lord, may I become your sacrifice.

² حمص هم، He is saying that the lion is a maternal cousin, or his mother’s brother’s son.
How wonderful it is that I spotted you, where’ve you been all this time? Why don’t you recognize your wretched cousin? How great were the hardships I endured to see you! What beautiful eyes you have! My uncle’s eyes were the same as your eyes, blessed be his memory! What a kindly uncle he was! Let me be of service, dear cousin! You must believe me; I have searched the entire jungle, high and low, in order to find you. Speak, dear cousin, say something, my heart desires to hear your warm voice.” To make a long story short, the fox beguiled the lion in this same fashion for a while.

The lion, of two minds, doubtfully listened to the fox’s words. But when he saw the fox’s tears, he said to himself, “How foolish I am! My cousin is ready to accept all of the hardship of coming to see me and yet I doubt his words. Is this anything other than hardheartedness and unkindness?” The lion was absorbed in his thoughts this way when he caught another glimpse of the fox’s eyes and blurted out uncontrollably, “Cousin! My heart has also longed to see you. Welcome! You’re exhausted, come on in.” The fox replied, “No, cousin, I’m not tired. All the weariness has left my body from seeing you. Come, let’s chat a bit. Tell me about yourself. What’ve you been up to?” The lion started talking, he spoke of his memories, of the prey he had hunted and he praised his own bravery. “You speak truly!” said the fox. “Uncle was brave and fearless like you are. Truly he was a lion. He did many feats that amazed everyone. He was really brave. Oh, that you would be like uncle. I’m proud of you. Finally, whatever happens, you are the son of that brave lion.” In short, the fox flattered the lion so much he became vain and believed the fox’s words and said, “Certainly! In bravery, I’m nothing less than my father. You can ask all of the animals of the forest.” The fox exclaimed, “No, what

\(^3\) Here the fox claims that he is the son of an aunt on the father’s side of the lion’s family.

\(^4\) His maternal uncle.
need is there to ask when you yourself are able with one simple task, like leaping from that mountain for example, you can prove your bravery? Why track down the animals of the forest to ask? Is it possible that you doubt your own bravery just now? Come on, let’s go up the mountain together without anyone knowing so that I can see how brave and fearless the son of my uncle is.” In short, however he did it, the fox convinced the lion and he took him up the mountain. When they reached to the very top of the mountain the lion said, “What’s the point of jumping from the mountain now? A thousand other ways also exist to prove my bravery.” The fox replied, “Yes! There are other ways, but only my uncle knew how to do this feat. He performed this feat with dexterity and skillfulness. First, he took a few steps back and then he took a high jump and leapt from the mountain. I can’t believe! It can’t be that you don’t know how to do it? It can’t be that you’re afraid?” The lion replied, “You completely underestimate me. Now, I’ll prove my bravery to you. Watch carefully, see if I’m a better jumper than my father.” The lion said this and, with deliberate steps, he slowly and carefully backed up. He drew far back and with a sudden leap he flung himself from the mountain. He jumped so far that he fell straight down to the bottom of the valley and his bones were broken to bits.

The fox cautiously descended the mountain, when he came upon the lion, first he glanced about and then, with an easy mind, and he began to tear the lion apart and to eat.
CHAPTER 5

IN PURSUIT OF FATE

In very very distant times lived a man who was poor and very unlucky. Whatever he did was of no avail and day-by-day his situation became worse. Finally, one day he said to himself, “I can’t just sit here this way and idly wring my hands. I must go find fate and persuade it to change my destiny.”

So, with this thought, the man arose and set out on his journey. He walked and walked until he came upon a wolf. The wolf asked him, “Hey human! Where are you going?” The man replied, “I’m going to find fate and ask it to deliver me from this bad luck.” The wolf said, “While you’re making this journey, if you find fate, deliver my greetings and tell it that I said, "My head always hurts, what should I do?’” The man agreed and he traveled until he reached a city, the monarch of which had been defeated in battle and had ordered that strangers be captured and brought to him, in case they had information about his Chinese enemies. The monarch’s officials captured the man and took him to the castle. The monarch asked him, “Where are you traveling in such an impoverished condition and barefoot?” The man replied, “I’m tracking down fate so that I might be delivered from this poverty and bad luck.” The monarch replied, “By God!
When you arrive, greet fate for me and ask, “Why am I always defeated in battle?” The man agreed and set out. He traveled until he reached the seashore. But there were no people to be seen nor was there a ship or even a small boat to cross the sea by.

He sat down beside the sea, tired and exhausted, when he saw a large fish stick its head out of the water and say, “What’s happened? Why are you so upset?” The man said, “I’m an unlucky person. I want to go find fate, but now it seems I can’t go any further. You can see I don’t have any way to cross the sea.” The fish replied, “I’ll carry you over, provided that when you arrive you ask fate why my nose always stings.” The man agreed. The large fish took him on its back and carried him to the other side of the sea.

When they arrived, the man bade farewell to the fish and traveled and traveled until he came to a large plain. There was a garden there with thousands of irrigated plant beds, both large and small. In some of these irrigated sections were trees full of blossoms, but there were also many sections that, from lack of water, had been abandoned and had neither plants nor flowers. In some of the sections were only a few camel thorn bushes.

After the fellow made a thorough search about he noticed an old gardener who was resting a shovel on his shoulder and was irrigating the individual plant beds. When the gardener set his eyes upon the man he said, “Who are you? What are you doing here?” “I’m going to find fate,” said the man. The gardener said, “I am fate. Tell me, what do you want?” The man sighed and said, “If you are fate then you must know why I’ve come.” “Yes, I know.” said fate. “You shouldn’t have come, but now that you’ve
come all this way I won’t have you return hopeless. Come on, take this shovel and go let
water flow into that small dry bed, that one is your luck.”

The man grabbed the shovel and went and irrigated his own plant bed. When he
had thoroughly watered his plant bed he returned to the gardener and said, “OK! Now, so
that I’ll understand, tell me why the nose of that particular fish always hurts?” The old
man said, “Some pearls have gotten stuck inside of its nose, if someone will hit the top of
the fish’s head with a fist the pearls will come out and the fish will be well again.” The
man said, “Why is that monarch always defeated in battle?” The old man said, “That
monarch is a girl, but she has put on the guise of a man. She must put aside men’s
clothing and marry in order to become victorious.” The man said, “What about the wolf?
The wolf whose head hurts?” The old man replied, “If he eats the brains of a foolish man
his headache will go away.”

Laughing and joyful, the man bade farewell to the gardener and returned back the
way he had come. When he reached the seashore the fish was waiting for him. As soon
as the fish saw the man he asked, “Did you find fate?” The man replied, “Yes! But first
carry me to the other side of the sea and then I’ll tell you what you should do, so the fish
carried him across the sea. When he was about to part with the fish he said, “Some pearls
have gotten stuck inside your nose, someone must strike you on the head with a fist in
order for the pearls to come out and then you’ ll be well.” The fish begged him, “Please,
you must do this thing yourself and the pearls will be yours. From now on, whenever you
want, come here and I’ll bring you big pearls from the bottom of the sea.” “Go on old
man!” said the man. “I’ve just filled my plant bed with water what do I need your pearls
for?” He said this, turned around, and left.

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When he came to the city of the monarch, officials took him before the monarch straightaway. The monarch said, “Alas I perished from waiting! What took so long?” The man said, “It couldn’t be helped, I had to go a long way.” The monarch said, “Well now, what happened? Did you ask fate my question?” The man repeated for the monarch what he had heard from fate. The monarch replied, “Now that you know my secret come and marry me and sit on the monarch’s throne instead of me.” The man replied, “No dear lady! I don’t have any time for these things. I have just watered water my own plant bed, why should I want to be king?” In short, no matter how much the monarch insisted he wouldn’t agree, so he left and traveled until he reached the wolf.

When the wolf saw him he said, “This headache is killing me. Why have you come so late? I’ve been expecting you for a good long time.” The man was obliged to repeat all of the things that occurred on his journey there and back again for the wolf and finally he said, “The cure for your headache is the brains of a foolish person.” Upon hearing this wolf leapt upon the head of the man and killed him and, when he had devoured his brains, he said, “Where would I have been able to find anyone more foolish than you?”
CHAPTER 6

THE FOX AND THE WOLF

There was once an old gardener who had a grape arbor. A fox went to the garden and ate the grapes. The farmer realized this and set a snare for the fox. He placed a bit of fat\(^5\) into the snare in order to lure the fox. But, the next night when the fox came, he saw the snare and became aware of the situation, so he didn’t go near the snare. He went out of the garden and entered a thicket where he began to walk about until he happened upon a wolf.

The fox greeted him with a slick tongue and said, “I’ve followed your trail since last night, and it’s good that I found you.” The wolf said, “What did you want of me?” The fox replied, “Last night my brother was married and you were missed. But I saved a piece of the fat for you.” The wolf, who was very hungry, said, “Where? Where is it? Be quick, get it, I can’t wait.”

The fox took the wolf and brought him to the very same grape arbor and said, “At your command, this is the delicious piece of fat.” As soon as the wolf saw the fat he jumped on it to eat it but he fell into the trap and was snared by the paw. The fox picked up the fat and climbed upon the garden wall and devoured the fat with satisfaction.

\(^{5}\) This particular piece of fat is from the tail of a variety of sheep known as “fat-tailed sheep.” The tail of this variety of sheep is a large lump of fat, which is rendered for a variety of products and for cooking. The size of the tail is an indicator of the health and quality of the each individual sheep.
Afterward, he shouted, “Oh gardener, your garden is ruined!” Upon hearing the sound of the fox he said, “The fox must have fallen into the trap.” He picked up his shovel and went to the trap. The fox jumped off the wall and escaped while the helpless wolf remained.

The gardener fell upon the wolf and beat him as hard as he could, and who wouldn’t? The gardener beat the wolf until he was almost dead, when he managed to pull his paw out of the snare and, covered in blood, he escaped from the gardener.

The wolf rested for some time until he recovered and he decided that, whatever it cost, he would find the fox and take his revenge on him. One day, while he was hunting, he saw the fox from afar. The fox fled in fear and ran to a well. From the well’s windlass two buckets were hung, that, when one of the buckets was lowered down, the second bucket came up. The fox sat down in one of the buckets and went down. When he reached the bottom he pulled a piece of white stone out of the wall of the well and waited for the wolf. When the wolf reached the well he said with a loud voice, “You trickster! Now I’ve got you good!” With fear and trembling the fox said, “Cousin! Believe me! I’m innocent! Whatever happened is the fault of that merciless gardener. You may disagree, but I put the fat down here so that it wouldn’t fall into the hands of anyone else. The fox said this and he showed the white stone to the wolf. The wolf’s mouth watered. He said, “Bring it up quick, because I haven’t eaten anything since yesterday.” The fox said, “May I be your sacrifice! You should come down. There is food and water here and the air is also cool.” The foolish wolf sat down in the upper bucket and went down. The same way that the wolf went down, the fox, who had sat

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6 Son of a paternal Uncle.
down in the other bucket, went up. When he reached the top of the well, he took off and escaped.

A few hours later, the shepherds came to the well to water their sheep. They began to work the windlass and drew up the bucket. They noticed it was very heavy and, when they took a good look, they saw a wolf seated in the bucket. They caught him and, after beating him so much that they thought he had died, they dumped him in a valley that was in the same area.

The wolf, bruised all over, was hardly able to go on, but, with the greatest effort, he got up and went back to his den. After a few days, when he was better, he set out to find the fox and he wandered about for a while until he finally found the fox. He jumped in front of the fox and said, “Oh you sly fox! This time you’re finished.” The fox said, “Oh Great Wolf! There has been a mistake! I’m not the fox that you think I am, I’m from the button-tailed clan and our tribe are not thieves and tricksters.” The fox said this and showed the wolf a button that he had tied to his tail. The wolf, who greatly admired the fox’s button, forgot all about the beatings he had suffered and said, “What a beautiful tail! How I wish my tail also had a button! What must I do so that I could have a tail like yours?” The fox said, “One night when the weather is very cold you must put your tail into the water by the water mill. By morning a beautiful button will grow on your tail.”

On a cold fall night, the wolf went down and placed his tail into the sluice of the water mill. After a few hours, the water froze and the wolf was trapped there. When morning came, the millers saw there was no sign of water and they went and saw that a wolf had blocked the sluice. They began beating the wolf. The wolf, in pain, jumped back and forth until his tail pulled off and he escaped.
Some time later, he found the fox once more. The fox was weaving a basket out of slender tree branches. The wolf shouted, "Hey trickster! I have got you good! You think you can trick me?" The fox said, "Dear Uncle! Why are you so angry? What do we have to do with these events?" We of the tribe of basket weavers are busy doing our own work. The fox that tricked you was of the button tailed tribe." The wolf said, "Yep, you're right, a button tail, he was a button tail. Tell me, where can I find him?" The fox said, "It is some time since I last saw a button tail. I think that, during the last winter, they must have all died from the cold." "Oh, I see, but why are you making wicker baskets?" asked the wolf. The fox replied, "Uncle dear, for winter so we can take shelter inside them from the snow and cold." The wolf asked, "Will you make one for me also?" The fox replied, "Certainly, Uncle dear! My house is on top of that hill. Come tomorrow morning and I'll make a sturdy basket for you."

The next day, the wolf happily climbed to the top of the hill. The fox, who was there waiting, met him and said, "Here's your basket. See if it's big enough or not"

When the wolf got inside the basket, the fox fastened the lid and pushed it down from the top of the hill. The basket rolled and rolled down from the hilltop, fell into a river and the water carried away both the basket and the wolf.

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7 This time he is calling the wolf his paternal uncle.
CHAPTER 7

SEVEN BROTHERS

Long long ago, seven brothers agreed together to make a journey. Because it was clear that very soon God would give them a brother or sister, they gave an armband to their mother and said, “If the newborn is a son, then tie it on his arm so that wherever we see him we will recognize him. And, if the newborn is a girl, tie it in her hair.” Their mother agreed. The brothers said farewell to their mother and departed.

Soon after the brothers left, their mother gave birth to a beautiful daughter. Years passed and the daughter grew and she heard from various people that her brothers had gone on a journey. She wanted to see them very much, and she was always waiting for them to return until she went to a spring one day to get water and a crow came to the spring and started ‘cawing’. The girl gave the crow some dried yogurt\(^8\) and she poured out her heart’s sorrow to him. So the crow took her on his shoulders and traveled and traveled until he reached the place where the seven brothers were living. The crow sat the girl down beside the house of her brothers and departed.

\(^8\) Sour milk, or yogurt, is dried and serves as a type of snack food.
The girl secretly entered the house and washed her brothers' clothes, swept and mopped the house, and also prepared food. That evening, when the brothers returned home, the girl hid in a corner. When the brothers came they were amazed when they saw that the house was clean and fresh, and food was ready for them, but they did not know who had done these things. In short, seven days and nights passed like this until finally the brothers decided to look into this mystery. So they decided that each day and each night one of them would keep watch. The girl, who knew about her brothers' plan, would wait patiently until the guard would get tired and fall asleep. Then she went back to doing the household chores so that the first six brothers failed to find out who completed the chores.

The seventh day and night was the youngest brother's turn. So that he wouldn't fall asleep, he cut his finger and sprinkled salt on the wound. That night the girl wanted to dye her brothers' hands with henna. She waited patiently until they all went to sleep and then she set to work. However, when she reached the younger brother, who had been pretending to sleep, he grabbed her hand and began to shout and yell. Everyone woke up. The brothers gathered around her and said, "Who are you? A human? A Djinni? A fairy? What are you doing here? Speak, and beware, lest we'll kill you this very instant." The girl explained everything to her brothers. "If you are our sister then you must have something, a token," said the brothers. So the girl removed her hairband from her hair and showed the token to them. All seven of the brothers were happy to see their sister. Then the oldest brother said, "Oh sister dear. Each day, we go out hunting and you

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9 Their house has a dirt floor. In houses of this sort, water is sprinkled on the clay floor and it is swept to keep down the dust.
10 Henna is normally applied to a person's hands during celebrations such as marriages. It dyes the hands a dark color and can take several weeks to fade.
will remain in the house alone. Beware and never speak to the cat who comes to this 
house, nor eat from the honey it brings. A devilish creature sends it here.”

The girl agreed but, after a few days, because of loneliness, her resolve waned and 
she became friends with the cat. One day at sunset, because of the cat’s continued 
insistence, she dipped her finger in the honey and put it to her mouth. The very moment 
that she tasted the honey, the oil lamp that lit her brothers’ house went out. At once, the 
girl remembered her brothers’ words and realized what a bad thing she had done. She 
began to cry and weep. “This is nothing to cry about, go get fire to re-light the lamp by 
the foot of that mountain,” said the cat. The girl went out of the house, saw that a distant 
fire was visible, and she walked and walked until she reached a lone hut. When she 
opened the door of the hut she saw a div seated next to a fire. The div said, “Hey girl! 
Where did you come from and how did you get here?” “The oil lamp in my brothers’ 
house went out,” said the girl. “So I have come to get fire.” The div came and gave her 
some fire and then carried her back to her home, but he remained outside the house by 
himself.

The girl went home and prepared dinner but she was afraid of the div. She firmly 
locked the doors and windows and waited anxiously for her brothers to return. When it 
became dark, the evil creature took on the form of a handsome youth and knocked on the 
door of the house. The girl came to the door with fear and trembling. From the other 
side of the door the youth said, “I have come from your brothers and have brought you a 
ring. Stick your finger out of the door so that I can put it on your finger.” The girl stuck 
h her finger out of door. The evil creature bit her finger and sucked out so much of her 
blood that she passed out and fell to the ground.
When the brothers returned they saw that their sister had fallen to the ground unconscious behind the door. They immediately gave her some gold water\textsuperscript{11} so that, little by little, she became conscious and explained what had happened to them. The brothers realized that this deed was the work of the devilish creature, the div. They followed the div's trail and killed him that very night.

Time passed until one day, when the brothers had gone hunting, seven doves sat upon the roof of the house. "Oh, I wish that these seven doves would become seven beautiful girls and marry my brothers," said the girl. One of the doves spoke and said, "If you pluck a feather from each one of us and burn it then our spell will be broken." The girl did exactly as the dove had said and the doves became seven beautiful girls. When the brothers returned, they prepared a wedding feast and all of them married and settled down.

After a while, the wives became jealous when they saw how fond the seven brothers were of their sister, but they did nothing about it until one day when the girl became sick. The wife of the youngest brother purposefully gave the wrong medicine to her and the girl's health became worse day by day, and her stomach also became swollen. After awhile, the wives accused her of lewd behavior. The wife of the youngest brother argued with her husband, "You must get rid of your sister in order to cleanse this stain of shame from your family." The youngest brother was forced to take his sister into the desert, planning to kill her, but his sister bitterly wept and swore an oath that she was innocent. The youngest brother abandoned the idea of killing her and made her swear an

\textsuperscript{11} Gold water is a traditional type of medicine in which bits of gold dust or gold leaf are mixed in water and then consumed.
oath to never return home again. Then he made his hands and clothing red with the blood and returned home.

The girl wandered in the desert until the day when the king’s shepherd, who brought his herd there to graze, found her and took her to his home. The shepherd’s mother took care of her and gave the girl milk from her white goat until she became completely well. From then on the girl lived in the shepherd’s home.

A year passed after this until one day when the son of the king, who had come to the area to hunt, became the shepherd’s guest and, when his eyes fell upon the beautiful girl, he fell in love with her, not with a single heart but with the heart of a hundred lovers. The prince said to the king, “I want to marry this girl.” No matter how often they told him, “You are a prince while she is the shepherd’s servant,” it didn’t carry any weight with him. In the end, they arranged the marriage of the girl to the king’s son and they held a wedding feast that lasted seven days and nights. After a few years, after they had been given two children, the girl told all of her adventures to her husband, from start to finish. The prince said, “Well, if that is how it was, we must become your brothers’ guests one evening.” The girl replied, “I gave my promise that I would not go to their home again.” “Don’t be uneasy,” said the prince. “I will make it so that your brothers understand that you are an innocent person and are sorry for the things they have done.”

In short, the prince and his household headed straightaway to the region where the seven brothers lived and, one evening, went to her brothers’ house. Then, after eating dinner, the prince related the girl’s adventures to everyone. The wives became ashamed of all the things they had done and the wife of the youngest brother was disgraced. The youngest brother bound his wife’s hair to the tail of a vicious mule and drove it into the
desert in order to punish her. Then the prince married his sister to his wife’s youngest brother and took them all back to the king’s palace and everyone lived together happily ever after.
CHAPTER 8

PARIGOL

Once upon a time, there was a poor man and who had only one daughter, named Parigol. Every day, Parigol walked a long way so that she could go to school with other girls her own age. One day, while Parigol was returning home from school by herself, a div, who wanted her for his wife, blocked her way and carried her back to his home. Parigol didn’t want to marry the div and she was determined to escape from its clutches, no matter what it took. In order to do it, she talked to the div so much that he grew tired and, as soon as the div fell asleep, she ran away. When she reached home, she told her parents about everything that had happened. They did not want their daughter to marry the div so they sold their livestock and everything they owned and moved away from the region so that the div couldn’t harm them. They traveled and traveled until they came upon a castle. Parigol wanted to enter the castle but her parents thought it was a bad idea. Parigol ignored what they said and went into the castle anyway. Suddenly, the castle gates slammed shut behind her.

Her parents were filled with anxiety and were trying to think of a way to rescue her when they saw that Parigol had climbed to the top of the castle. From the top of a tower she shouted down to them, “Get away from here fast and forget about me! This is
a div’s castle and he might return at any moment and capture you too.” Her parents were unable to help her, so they sorrowfully abandoned their beloved daughter.

After Parigol sent her parents away, she began to explore the castle. While she was doing this she entered a large room within which rested the corpse of a young man. At first, Parigol was very frightened of the corpse, but little by little her fear diminished and she found enough courage to creep closer. Lying above the corpse’s head was a book with writing on the cover. She picked up the book and read the writing. It said that, if someone were to read the book seven times and then pile up seven stones one on top of another, then the young man would come to life.

In her heart, Parigol grieved for the young man, so she started reading the book. She had read the book six times when the sound of caravan bells, reached her ears. She went to see where the sound was coming from and saw a long string of camels in a caravan with a solitary gypsy girl following after them. Parigol brought this girl into the castle and told her about all of her adventures. Finally Parigol said, “I don’t want this young man to see me looking like such a mess. I am going to go clean myself up. Until I come back, go ahead and read the book for the seventh time.”

While Parigol was gone, the gypsy girl quickly read the book. When she finished it she laid it down and piled up seven stones on top of each other. Suddenly, the young man opened his eyes and saw a gypsy girl looking down at him. The young man said to her, “I am a prince of a certain region and the Div cast a spell on me. Now that you have broken the spell, I choose you for my wife.” The gypsy girl yelled for Parigol. When Parigol entered the room, the gypsy girl said to the prince, “My lord! This is my servant,
Parigol.” Parigol knew what a mistake she had made but she didn’t say anything, and only stared at them.

A few days after this, the prince said, “I want to go to the bazaar, if you want anything tell me.” The gypsy girl, who was now married to the prince, told him everything her heart desired. The prince said to Parigol, “If you want anything tell me as well.” Before Parigol could say anything, the gypsy girl said, “No! She doesn’t need anything. She can wear my old worn-out clothing, this is enough for her.” The prince said, “Let her tell me herself.” Parigol said, “I don’t want anything except for a “patience stone,” if you can get one.” The prince agreed and joined a passing caravan that was on its the way to the city. The caravan had not gone far when Parigol shouted to the prince and said, “Oh prince! Don’t forget what I want.”

After a few days, the prince reached the city. He finished his business there as quickly as possible and started to return home. He had traveled half way home when he remembered that he had not purchased a “patience stone” for Parigol. He went back to the city again and went straight to the bazaar. When he found a “patience stone” he asked the merchant, “What pain is this stone good for?” The merchant replied, “The person who wants this stone from you, most certainly has a secret that they are unable to tell to others, and wants to tell their troubles to the stone. You must watch this person in secret and, when this person completely pours out their heart to this stone and says ‘Patience stone! Will I burst or you?’ At that exact moment you must immediately say, ‘Break, patience stone!’” The prince picked up the stone, said farewell to the merchant and returned home to the castle with a caravan.
When the prince reached the castle, the first thing he did was to give the things he had purchased for the gypsy girl, to her. Then he went to where Parigol was and gave her the patience stone. Parigol happily picked up the stone and went to a quiet corner of the castle in order to remove her heart’s sorrow with it. The prince followed her in such a way that Parigol would not be aware of him and watched her.

Parigol recounted all of the bad luck and suffering that she had endured to the stone and in the end she said, “Oh patience stone! Now will I break or will you?” Then the prince immediately leapt forward and said, “Patience stone, break patience stone!” At that moment, the patience stone suddenly splintered into two halves. Parigol was amazed to see the prince and said to him, “I didn’t think anyone was here.” The prince replied, “Now tell me more about yourself, so that I will know all about your past.” Parigol told him about all of her adventures up until when she came to the castle, gave shelter to the gypsy girl and everything else.

After the prince listened to Parigol’s story, he went and tied the gypsy girl to a horse’s tail and said to the horse, “Go! But when you return, you must not bring back even a single drop of this girl’s blood with you, or I will kill you as well.”

In short, the horse left, but when it came back, a single drop of blood had splattered onto its hoof. The prince killed the horse and cremated it. Then he sent some people to bring back Parigol’s parents to the castle and they all began a happy life together.
CHAPTER 9

HARDSHIP UPON HARDSHIP

OR

HUMP UPON HUMP

In ancient times, there was a man in a remote village who had a hump on his back that always made him unhappy. One time, when he wanted to go to the bathhouse, he accidentally went in the middle of the night instead of going early in the morning. When he entered the bathhouse he took off his clothes and went into the public bathing area. When he entered the bath in order to scrub himself with a kise, he noticed a few of “them” were seated around the bath. He was seized by fear and wanted to run away, when they grabbed him and said, “What are you doing here so early? Stay here, we want you for something.” The humpbacked man was scared speechless and was unable to say anything. One of “them” said to him, “We are having a wedding tonight so you must dance for us.” Out of fear, the pitiful fellow agreed. In short, the evening passed pleasantly for “our betters”.

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12 This is a pun in this case. The phrase means literally trouble upon trouble or hardship upon hardship. However, the word گورز also means hump or humpbacked.
13 A sack like glove used as a washcloth in Turkish style bathhouses.
14 The creatures in question here are most likely Jinn. The storyteller avoids mentioning them by name because he believes and they might be inadvertently attracted if they are mentioned by name.
Near dawn, "they" said to the man, "Now, people will little by little begin showing up here and we must leave. Now that you have danced for us, tell us whatever you would wish for so that we can fulfill it for you." The man thought for a while and then said, "I

if you are able to remove my hump you will do me a great favor." So they removed his hump, but they told him not to share their secret with others.

The man returned home happy and laughing. When his friends and acquaintances heard about what happened, they came to see him and wanted to know how his hump had been cured. He gave each one a different answer. For example, he told one person that, "I massaged my hump with warm water." To another he said, "I stayed in the bath for several hours." This went on and on until one day, when a humpbacked man came to see him and sought for a way to cure himself, the formerly humpbacked man gave him the same answers.

After a few days, the humpbacked man came to see him again and said, "I did everything that you said to do. You can see for yourself that it was no use. I beg you, by all that is holy to you, tell me the truth, what did you do so that your hump was cured?"

Eventually the man was compelled to tell the humpback all of what happened that night.

The humpback man hurried to the bathhouse that very night. When he got there he saw "they" were sitting around the bath, he took off his clothes and started dancing. It so happened that on this night one of "them" had died and they were all mourning for him. When they saw the humpback, they grabbed him and took the hump that they had removed from the other fellow, and placed it atop his own hump, so that he became a "hump upon humpbacked" man, or had "trouble upon trouble."
CHAPTER 10

THE CAMEL AND THE FOX

Once upon a time, there were a camel and a fox. The camel was grazing for food in the wilderness when the fox jumped out in front of him and began to taunt him.

Finally, the fox said, “Hey long necked camel! I will eat you eventually! But for now, gorge yourself on grass so that you will have more meat!”

The camel, who was full of patience, said nothing and only laughed and went his own way. But there was always the thought stuck in the back of his mind, “Does the fox really intend to eat me or was he joking?” He said to himself one day, “I better go over by the fox’s den and pretend to be dead and see what the fox will do.” With this in mind, he went and stretched out on the ground near the fox’s den and pretended to be dead.

When the fox came out of his den, he saw the camel and said to himself, “How could I have missed it! The camel collapsed here and I was unaware?” He went nearer and saw that the camel seemed dead and was not moving at all. He nipped the camel’s feet and legs with his teeth to see if the camel was really dead or not. The camel didn’t move. The fox said to himself, “Food to last me through the winter is right here but it is best if I hide him in a corner somewhere. Because, if the wolf, bear and the lion were to find out
then they would leave nothing for me.” He grasped the camel’s leg with his teeth and tried to drag him towards his den but he was not strong enough to do it. Whatever he did it was no use. Finally, the thought occurred to him to tie his tail to the camel’s tail so that he could drag him to his den. After he tied their tails together he tugged on it a few times to firmly tighten the knot. At that moment, the camel, who had not moved even once, stood up and the fox dangled upside down from the camel’s tail.

When the camel realized that a great opportunity had presented itself, he started to run. The fox shouted and begged for mercy but the camel turned a deaf ear and ran. A little later they came upon a wolf. When the wolf saw the fox’s predicament, he laughed and said, “Best wishes Mr. Fox! Where are you off to with this champion?” The fox replied, “Truly, I don’t know, we must wait and see where this magnanimous one intends to go.”
CHAPTER 11

SHARP TONGUE

In ancient times, lived a woodsman who had a difficult life. Every day, before sunrise, he set out for the wilderness where he gathered bundles of kindling from thorny bushes. He carried these bundles on his back to a nearby city and sold them to provide a living for his family.

One day, after the woodsman had finished his work, he spread his dinner of bread and cheese out on the ground upon a cloth and started eating. Suddenly, he heard a lion’s roar behind him. His body started trembling and his mouth became dry but, because he knew that it was impossible to escape and no use to struggle against the lion, he merely sat there. The man thought to himself, “I have been kind to others all my life, so this last time I will also be kind to the lion. If it doesn’t help matters then at least it won’t make matters worse.” So he was thinking when the lion came up to him. The woodsman, trembling in fear, patted the lion’s head and face with one hand, and instinctively, he put a piece of bread into the lion’s mouth with the other hand. The lion quieted down. The woodsman, whose fear had not lessened, picked up another morsel of food from behind him and put it into the lion’s mouth as well. When all of his food was gone, the
lion began to speak and said, "What delicious bread and cheese! May God bless you! You are truly kind! Since you have been kind to me this way, I am going to repay your kindness. Come on and let's go to my house. You won't get tired, it's not very far away." So the woodsman started walking along with the lion. When they reached the lion's den, the lion gave a bag full of gems and small sacks of gold to the woodsman and said, "All of this is yours. If you should ever need me again, come here and strike the ground with your axe and I will come here right away, no matter where I might be."

The ecstatically happy woodsman returned home and told his wife about everything that had happened. After he sold the gems, where his life had once been dark and dreary, it now became bright and fresh. He tore down his old worn out cottage and built a beautiful castle in its place. In short, he quit having anything to do with everything that was round about him that represented his old life, including the wilderness and being a woodsman. However, he took a sheep to the lion every day.

One day, the woodsman invited the lion to come to his house and be his guest for dinner. Initially, the lion would not agree to come, but when the woodsman insisted, he finally agreed to come for only one evening, but only if he could return to his own home before dawn. The woodsman prepared a multi-course meal and had various types of food and cool drinks prepared. When it grew dark, the lion entered the woodsman's house and sat down in a comfortable place that the woodsman had prepared for him. After they talked together for a while, dinner was served. The woodsman's wife set before them a huge platter full of cooked rice, which had an entire roasted lamb in the middle of it. The lion proceeded to eat dinner, but drool dripped from his mouth onto the tablecloth. The woodsman's wife called her husband to the kitchen and said to him very quietly, "You
have a wonderful guest but it is such a pity that his drool is dirtying the tablecloth. I don’t know how to clean such a big tablecloth. The lion overhead their conversation, but he didn’t let it show on his face. After dinner, he said goodbye to the woodsman and departed.

A few days later, the woodsman went to see the lion and noticed that the lion was depressed and unhappy. The woodsman was unable to figure out the reason for the lion’s distress until the lion lifted his head and said, “Friend! I have a favor to ask you. If you want us to be friends together again like before then you must strike my head hard with your axe.” The woodsman was shocked and said, “How can I do that? You are my best friend.” The lion eventually convinced the woodsman, with a combination of begging and threats, to do it. Then the lion said, “Take that piece of stick and put it in my mouth so I can soothe my pain and to soothe my anger by biting down on it. Pick some of that grass and, after you strike me with your axe, put it on the wound on my head. After you hit me, fast, go far away from here and come back here a year from now.”

After he hit the lion’s head with his axe, the woodcutter left. He returned to the same spot exactly a year later and tapped his axe on the ground three times. The lion immediately appeared and, after the lion asked how the woodcutter was, he said, “Do you remember how last year you split the crown of my head with an axe?” “Yes, I remember,” said the woodsman. “Now come and see if any trace of the wound remains,” said the lion. However, no matter which way the woodsman turned the lion’s head, he could find no sign of a scar. The lion said, “As you can see the wound from your axe has completely healed, but the wound caused by the words that your wife said that night, will

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15 It is customary to clean the tablecloth between courses.
never heal and I will never forget them until the day I die.” The he said, “Come and take this bag of gold and go away and never come back here again.”
CHAPTER 12

THE GAZELLE FAWN

In ancient times, in a faraway city, there lived a brother and sister who didn’t have a mother and their father had married a different woman. Their father’s wife was an evil natured woman who beat them every day. One day the girl said to her brother, “Brother dearest! Come on, let’s run away from here.” Her brother, who was younger than her, replied, “Alas, we have no place to go, where will we go?” “In the long run, wherever we might go is better than here,” said his sister. So, early one morning, they fled from their father’s house and ran away.

Along the way, they became tired and very thirsty from the heat. The sister pulled her brother along by the hand, but her brother grew impatient and wanted water. They continued traveling until they reached a pool full of water. The little boy wanted to drink the water, but his sister wouldn’t let him, “This water is only for fishes. If you drink it you will turn into a fish.” They set out from there and walked until they reached a small stream. The little boy started to drink the water when his sister stopped him, “This is water for birds, and if you drink it you will turn into a bird.” They traveled again until they reached a spring. Again, the little boy wanted to drink the water and couldn’t wait any longer, and no matter how much his sister said, “This water is for gazelle. If you
drink it you will turn into a gazelle,” he wouldn’t listen to her and drank from the spring and became a gazelle. He immediately turned into a beautiful, loveable fawn.

The girl became very upset when she saw that her brother had changed into a gazelle and sobbed bitterly. After awhile she realized that crying was useless. She started along the road again with her brother, the fawn, and walked until nightfall. They sat down next to a tree because they had nowhere else to rest. Little by little, they fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. The girl climbed into the treetop and slept while the fawn remained below on the ground, and licked the tree from time to time. Each time he licked the tree, it grew a little larger. After a few days, the tree became so large that she was unable to climb down again and she stayed up in the tree. Each day, the fawn went into the wilderness to graze for food and brought back food for his sister.

One day, a man passed by and saw a beautiful girl sitting in the top of a tree. No matter how he insisted that she come down from the tree, she wouldn’t come down. When the girl would not come down with his pleasant pleading, the young man decided to cut down the tree. He went and brought back a saw and started cutting. He sawed from dawn to sunset but he was only able to saw halfway through the tree. When the fawn returned that evening, he licked the tree and the tree was restored to its previous state. The next day, when the young man returned, he saw that the tree was healthy, whole and had also grown bigger. He was amazed and started sawing again. This time he was only able to saw part way through the tree. However, when night came, the fawn again returned and licked the tree, and the tree became bigger and stronger than before.

When the man returned the following day, he said to himself, “There is a secret to this.” So he went and hid in a corner and watched carefully to see how this tree became
bigger. As soon as the sun went down, he saw that a fawn came, licked the tree and it grew bigger. The young man crept up quietly and seized the fawn. The girl started weeping and crying from above and said, “What are you doing to my brother? Leave him alone!” “This fawn is your brother?!” exclaimed the young man with surprise. With tears running down her cheeks, the girl explained everything to the young man that had happened to them. “Come down so that the three of us can go to my home,” said the young man, who had become very upset. “I swear that I will protect and take care of you both.”

The girl, with the young man’s guidance, slowly climbed down from the tree. Then she went to his house and stayed there. Little by little, the young man and the girl grew to care for one another and were married. The fawn remained right there with them, and wherever his sister went, he accompanied her.

One day when the girl wanted to go to the bathhouse, the fawn followed her and sat down by the front door until his sister would return. No matter how patiently the fawn waited, his sister didn’t come.

Now listen to what happened to the fawn’s sister, who was by now pregnant. When the girl entered the bathhouse, a jealous, bad natured gypsy girl came and sat down beside her. The gypsy girl gradually started a conversation with the girl and began to ask her things. The girl told the gypsy girl in detail about her life story. The evil natured gypsy girl threw the girl into the bathing pool because she was jealous, put on the girl’s clothes, left the bathhouse and went back to the young man’s home along with the fawn.

The young man was waiting anxiously for his wife to return when he saw the fawn coming home with an extremely ugly woman. “Who are you?” he asked. “How
can you ask that?” said the gypsy girl. “I am your wife. The bathhouse water was contaminated and it made my face ugly and my hair fall out.” The young man didn’t know what was happening, and because he was afraid of ruining his reputation if the neighbors should overhear an argument, he pretended to accept her story, but in the bottom of his heart, he doubted her and was always looking for his wife. He was especially suspicious when he saw that the fawn was not happy and carried its food outside the house to eat.

The gypsy girl was afraid that her husband would figure out what had happened because of the fawn’s behavior, so she decided to get rid of it. She went and gave some of her jewels to a doctor and said, “I am going to make myself look sick, and when my husband summons you, tell him that, “She must eat the fawn’s flesh to be cured.”

When the doctor came he said to the woman’s husband, “The only medicine that can keep your wife from dying is the fresh meat of the fawn.” So the woman asked her husband to kill the fawn and give it’s meat to her. When the fawn realized what was going on, he ran to the bathhouse and told his sister. “I have given birth right here,” his sister replied. “I have two babies and I can’t come out because someone has stolen my clothes.” The fawn left and came back again and begged her to save his life. “Go, and let the babies’ father know what is going on, if you can, so he will bring me clothes.” So the fawn impatiently ran back and forth between the bathhouse and home trying to get the husband’s attention. When the young man saw how nervous the fawn was, and how much it was running back and forth, he said to himself, “This mute beast is certainly trying to tell me something.” The young man followed the fawn as it entered the bathhouse. The young man followed him back to the bathhouse and was shocked to see
his wife sitting there naked, and with two small babies. He asked her about what had happened. She told him about everything that had happened, from start to finish. The husband immediately went home and threw the gypsy girl into a cauldron of boiling water. Then he took clothes back for his wife and the twins and brought them back home.

Some time passed, but the wife was always unhappy for her brother and prayed to God that he would return her brother to his original form. This went on for a while until one night she dreamt that her brother, in his original form, was saying to her, “Dear Sister! Don’t be unhappy for me! I will be happy as long as I am living with you; it is good enough for me. The only thing I want is for you to always be good to me.” When she woke up she saw that the fawn was asleep next to her, that it was crying and mumbling something incomprehensible in its sleep. She kissed the fawn and promised that her brother that he could remain a fawn and stay there with her always.
CHAPTER 13

THE SHEPHERD'S SMALL DAUGHTER

The story went like this, a small girl, whose job was taking the sheep to pasture, lived with her parents in a tent. She took the flock of sheep into the plains early each morning to pasture. She wrapped some bread and cheese in a handkerchief and took it with her. She brought the sheep home in the evening from wherever they happened to be.

During one of these days, the girl brought the flock to a spring at the foot of a mountain to drink water and to rest. She spread out her small meal on the handkerchief and began eating. A bear, whose den was in that very mountain, was at that moment hunting for food. When the bear set eyes upon the small girl, he slowly crept up on her so that she would not notice him. Suddenly, he jumped out in front of her, threw her onto his back and carried her toward his den. No matter how much the girl shouted nobody came to help her. The bear carried her into his den and rolled a stone in from of it so that the girl could not escape.

So the girl did not return home that day or that night. No matter how much her parents and family searched for her they couldn’t find her. The next day, when the flock of sheep went back to the same mountain to graze, one of the sheep wandered near the
den. When the girl saw the sheep, it occurred to her to toss her necklace around the sheep's neck.

When the flock of sheep returned home that afternoon, her mother started milking the sheep. While she was milking the sheep, she noticed a necklace around the neck of one of the sheep. She recognized it as her daughter's and told everyone. They asked the person who had taken the flock to pasture that day, "Where did you take the flock today?" So he told them, "I took the flock to the foot of the mountain."

The next day, the girl's father thoroughly searched the mountain with some other people. Finally, they found the bear's den and got the girl out of it. Then they killed the bear so that it would not kidnap anyone after that.
CHAPTER 14

THE FOX AND THE OLD WOMAN

There was an old nomad lady whose only worldly possession was a goat, and she survived on its milk. She milked the goat every afternoon, poured the milk into a bowl and covered it with a frying pan. However, late at night, a fox would come and drink the milk. After a few days, the old lady became desperate because she didn’t have anything to eat. So she went and set a trap. One evening, she milked the goat and poured the milk into a dish. Then she heated the frying pan red hot and placed it on the bowl. When the fox came to drink the milk, his tail stuck to the heavy frying pan and, when he tried to escape, his tail tore off.

When morning came, the other foxes laughed at him and wouldn’t let him be in their group. He waited patiently somehow until the afternoon but the pain of being without a tail was intolerable. So he went to the old woman and said, “Old Woman! Give me my tail so that I can go play with the other foxes.” The old woman replied, “Give me my milk and I’ll give you back your tail.” So the fox went to a goat and said, “Hey Goat! Give me some milk to give to the old woman, so that the old woman will give me back my tail and I can go play with the other foxes.” The goat replied, “Go bring me some
green grass to eat then I will give you some milk.” So the fox said to the earth, “Hey earth! Give me some green grass, so I can give it to the goat, so she will give me milk, so I can give the milk to the old woman, so the old woman will give me back my tail, so I can go play with the other foxes.” “You must get me water,” said the earth. “Then I will give you green grass.” So the fox went to a spring and said, “Hey Spring! Give me water to take to the earth, so the earth will give me green grass to give to the goat, so the goat will give me milk, so I can give the milk to the old woman, so that the old woman will give me back my tail, so I can go play with the other foxes.” “Go get a beautiful girl with a pleasant voice and bring her back here to sing for me,” said the spring. “Then I’ll give you some water.” So the fox went to a beautiful girl and said, “Come and sing for the spring so that it will give me water to give to the earth, so the earth will give me green grass, so I can give the green grass to the goat, so that the goat will give me some milk to give to the old woman, so that I can get my tail and go play with the other foxes.” “I don’t have any galoshes,” said the beautiful girl. “Go get me a pair of galoshes and then I’ll go sing for the spring.”

The fox went to the cobbler and said, “Hey Cobbler! Give me a pair of galoshes to take to the girl, so the girl will sing for the spring, so the spring will give water, so I can take water for the earth, so the earth will give green grass for me to give to the goat, so the goat will give milk, so I can give the milk to the old woman, so the old woman will give me back my tail, so I can go play with the other foxes.” “Bring me some eggs,” said the cobbler. “Then I’ll give you a pair of galoshes.” So the fox went to the chicken and said, “Hey chicken! Lay me some eggs for the cobbler, so I can get some galoshes from the cobbler to take to the girl, so the girl will come sing for the spring, so the spring will
give water, so I can give water to the earth, so the earth will give green grass, so I can
give green grass to the goat, so the goat will give milk, so I can give milk to the old
woman, so the old woman will give me back my tail, so I can go play with the other
foxes.” “Go bring me some wheat,” said the chicken. “Then I will give you some eggs.”
So the fox went to a wheat storage jar and said, “Hey Jar! Give me some wheat to give to
the chicken, so the chicken will give me some eggs to give to the cobbler, so I can get
some galoshes from the cobbler for the girl, so the girl will come and sing for the spring,
so the spring will give water, so I can take water for the earth, so the earth will give grass,
so I can give grass to the goat, so that the goat will give me milk, so I can give the milk to
the old woman, so the old woman will give me back my tail, so I can pick it up and leave
here.”

The clay jar gave the fox some wheat. The fox gave wheat to the chicken. He got
a few eggs from the chicken and took them to the cobbler. He got a pair of galoshes from
the cobbler and took them to the girl. The girl came and sang for the well and it gave
some water to the fox. The fox gave the water to the earth. The earth gave green grass to
the fox. The fox took the grass and gave it to the goat. The goat gave him some milk.
He gave the milk to the old lady. The fox took his tail from the old woman, stuck it back
on his rear and left there forever.
CHAPTER 15

THE BLACK COLT

There was a poor couple that had one son named Morad. The boy was still nursing when his mother died. After awhile, his father married another woman who gave him two more sons. Morad gradually grew up and went to school with his two half-brothers. His brothers were very jealous of him because he was very intelligent and clever and his stepmother used any excuse to torment him.

One day, the stepmother sent Morad and her sons fishing. When the two stepbrothers cast their net into the water they caught a few small fish in their net. But when Morad cast his net it became so heavy that he was unable to pull it out. With great difficulty he finally pulled the net out of the water and was surprised to see a black colt was caught in his net instead of fish.

From then on, Morad had a close companion and spent all of his time with the black colt. He took great care of the black colt. Whenever he came home from school he went straight to his black colt. So, they became very fond of one another and even talked to each other.

The arrival of the black colt made Morad’s brothers even more jealous. The two brothers went to their mother one day and said, “We want a black colt as well.” “I will
tell your father to buy you one,” she told them. “No,” said the boys. “We want Morad’s black colt.” Their mother thought for a while. “Then be patient until we can get rid of Morad somehow. Then the black colt will automatically belong to both of you.” The brothers joyfully agreed.

After the boys had gone to school one day, Morad’s stepmother made rice bread and put poison in it to kill Morad. When Morad returned home, the black colt neighed loudly. Morad immediately went to the black colt and asked, “What happened?” “Your step-mother put poison into some rice bread to kill you,” said the black colt. “Don’t eat it!” Morad kissed his horse and left. During dinner, no matter how much they insisted that he eat the rice bread, he wouldn’t eat and went to bed hungry that evening.

When the stepmother realized that her plan failed, she told her sons, “We must think of something else. We will throw a party for guests and we will dig a pit under the spot where Morad is supposed to sit. In the bottom of the pit we will put spears and daggers so that, when Morad falls into the pit, he will die.”

Once again, when Morad returned from school, his horse neighed loudly and he told Morad what was going to happen. Morad went to the party and sat in the wrong place, and no matter how much his stepmother told him to sit in his own place, he wouldn’t. The stepbrothers’ uncle, their mother’s brother, who didn’t know what was going on, sat in Morad’s place and fell into the pit. Then the stepmother mourned for her brother.

Eventually, Morad’s stepmother suspected that the black colt was revealing her plans to Morad. So she decided to first kill the colt and then Morad to be rid of the irritation of both of them. She made up a new plan: she went to a doctor and gave him a
few sacks of gold and said, "I am going to pretend to be sick, when they come to you, say
'This woman is dying and the only cure for her is to eat the flesh of a black colt.'" Then
she came home and tied some dry bread to her sides, dyed her checks yellow with
turmeric, and started to moan. "I am sick, I'm about to die, take me to the doctor." Her
husband started to carry her to the doctor, but the dried bread made loud cracking noises,
and the woman cried out, "Oh! My ribs are breaking!"" Her husband was forced to go get
the doctor and bring him back home. "This patient is about to die," said the doctor. "The
only way to cure her is by eating the flesh of a black colt." "Where will I find this cure?"
the husband asked. "Your son has a black colt," said the woman, "If you love me then
give me the flesh of that colt so I won't die." When Morad's father realized that his
wife's illness was fatal, he agreed that they would slaughter the colt the following day.

When Morad returned from school, he heard the colt neighing and went straight to
it. "Your stepmother has made herself look sick and they want to kill me for a cure," said
the black colt. "They also told your teacher not to let you come home tomorrow
afternoon." "Tell me what I should do," said the boy. "Tomorrow, when they open the
stable door, I will neigh once. When they lead me out, I will neigh again. When they put
the knife to my throat I will neigh the third time. If you come nothing will happen to me,
otherwise, they will kill me." "If I come what should I do? I don't have any influence
over them," said Morad. "If you come, try to mount me," said the colt. "And leave the
rest to me."

The next day, when school let out, the teacher wouldn't let Morad go home.
When Morad heard his colt's first neigh, he asked his teacher for permission to leave.
But, the teacher slapped his head and said, "Today, you have to stay here until evening."
Morad waited patiently for a few moments until he heard his colt neigh the second time then he couldn’t take it any longer. He threw down his slate and ran away. In a moment he ran all the way home. As soon as he entered the house, his colt neighed for the third time. Everyone was shocked to see Morad and they grabbed him. Morad cried, “Father dear! Since you are going to kill my horse, at least let me ride it for the last time and circle around the inside of the courtyard.” His father thought there was no harm in letting him and agreed.

Morad saddled and mounted his horse and took one turn around the courtyard. At that moment the black colt said, “Tuck your head in close to my ears, close your eyes and hold on tight.” Morad whispered a prayer and did what the horse told him. The black colt galloped around the courtyard and jumped over the wall with a great leap. He ran and ran and ran, until, after seven days and nights, he stood before the door of a great garden.

In the garden, whoever used to go visit the king was seated on a beautiful carpet and a few people would take care of him. Other people were employed in the garden.

The black colt told Morad, “You should go become a gardener in this garden. I’m going to go back to the river again. Just take three strands of my hair and keep them with you. Whenever you are in trouble, burn a single strand of my hair and I will come to you.” Then he said farewell to Morad and went away.

After the black colt left, Morad went and bought a cured sheep’s stomach. He stretched the skin over his head so that he would look bald, entered the garden and asked for a job. Because of Morad’s head and his general appearance, the king and those

16 The type of home that Morad lives in has a central courtyard with a surrounding wall of sorts. The stable is inside this wall.
around him were inclined to refuse. But the king’s youngest daughter, who was walking in the garden picking flowers and had seen Morad mounted on the black colt, recognized him and realized that he was not really bald. She begged her father to allow this unlucky bald fellow to work in the garden and to have a little bread to eat. The king agreed and Morad was soon busy gardening. At night Morad slept either in the stable or in the furnace room of the bathhouse.

Days and months passed, until it was declared in the city one day that the king’s three daughters were to be married. All of the princes and sons of noble birth, who wanted to be the king’s son-in-law, could go to the castle so that the princesses could choose their future husbands from among them.

All of the young men who were from noble families, lined up in ranks inside the castle. Each of the king’s daughters also stood with an orange in their hands. It was arranged that each of the princesses would place their orange in the hands of the young man that they chose.

The king’s two oldest daughters placed their oranges into the hands of the first and second vizier’s sons, but the youngest princess held onto her orange and said, “I don’t like any of the young men here. Go bring some other young men here.” “All of the young men of the city are here,” they told her. “There is no one else.” “Oh, yes there is,” she replied. “Go look.” All of the courtiers looked at each other with surprise. Just then the old gardener spoke up. “Princess, your highness! The only young man who is not present here is the bald boy who works in the garden.” “Go get him,” said the princess. When they brought the bald fellow into the court, they all stared in utter amazement when the princess placed her orange into his hand. An audible sigh escaped from the breast of
the king and all of the young men present. The king was so upset and angry that he threw his daughter out of the castle. "Get out of here! You are no longer my daughter. You deserve this ugly bald man." The daughter tried to explain the situation to her father, but he wouldn't let her and slammed the door in her face.

When the young girl realized that it was useless to stay there, she took her husband's hand and together they went to the stable where Morad had been sleeping. So they began living their life there. The king staged a huge celebration for his other two daughters and he established them within a luxurious household.

After all these things came to pass the king became sick. A specialist doctor, who knew that the cure for the king's illness was the flesh of a rare type of wild animal, said, "To cure the king, someone absolutely must prepare the flesh of this animal." All of the city's hunters were seeking it but no one was able to catch the animal. Finally, it was determined that the king's sons-in-law would also go hunting. The viziers' two sons were mounted on fast horses, given the necessary supplies for a hunt and sent out. Morad also followed after them mounted on a lame donkey and with a broken bow. When they had completely left the city behind, he burned a single strand of the black colt's hair and the colt immediately appeared. "I want all of the animals of prey to be gathered together here," said Morad. "And I want a huge tent to be erected for me." Instantly, Morad saw that he was sitting upon a throne in the middle of a great tent and that animals were gathered all about him.

On the other hand, wherever the viziers' sons went, they found no prey. They were hopelessly journeying back towards the castle when they saw that a huge tent had been set up in the middle of the plains and that round about it, and even on top of it, were
prey of all sorts. They happily approached the tent and did not recognize Morad, who had taken the sheep’s stomach off his head. They greeted him and said, “We are the king’s sons-in-laws. We searched everywhere today for prey, but we couldn’t find anything. We’ll give you however much gold and jewelry you want if you’ll give us one of these animals in exchange.” “I’ll give you the animal on one condition,” said Morad. Whatever the condition is, we agree,” they replied. “The condition is that you let me brand you on your backs,” said Morad. The two stared for a moment and one of them said, “There’s no one else here, let’s agree, so at least we’ll be honored by the king.” The second man nodded his head. “There’s no other way.” So Morad branded them and while he butchered one of the animals for them, he spoke to it, “Whatever delicious flavor is in you, let it go to your head, and whatever tastes bad, let it go to your body,” Then he gave them the animal’s carcass, and they rode away.

After they left, Morad said to the black colt, “Scatter the animals.” So the black colt neighed and the animals went every direction. Morad picked up the head and feet of the animal\(^\text{17}\) and went home.

When the king’s sons-in-law reached the castle, they cooked various dishes from the animal’s meat and invited the king to dinner. When the king tasted their food, he found that it tasted so bad that it was inedible. The few morsels that he did manage to eat made him sicker.

The following day, the bald Morad invited the king to dinner. The king at first refused to go to the stable and become his youngest daughter’s guest, but his daughter begged so much that he eventually gave in. The daughter prepared food and intentionally

\(^{17}\) This portion of the carcass is often the food of poor people.
sprinkled straw on it. The king ate some of it even though he didn’t want to and saw that it was very delicious. “You made delicious food, but it’s a pity straw spilled on it.” His daughter replied, “Someone who lives in a place like this will certainly find straw in their food.” The king felt sorry and said, “You speak truly; from tomorrow on you’ll live in the kitchen.”

The next day, the viziers’ sons invited the king to dinner again and cooked dishes from the same meat for him. The king couldn’t eat more than a couple of bites because the food was bitter and tasted horrible. When night came, the king went to Morad’s house by invitation. This time his daughter sprinkled a little soot on the food. The king ate with great appetite. “It was very good, but it was a pity that it tasted like smoke.” “Certainly, the food of a person, who lives in a kitchen, will smell of smoke,” the daughter said. “You speak truly,” her father said, “From tomorrow on you’ll live in a hut in a corner of the garden.”

When the viziers’ sons invited the king to dinner for the third time, he couldn’t eat more than a single morsel of their food and then he stormed out of their house. When night came again, after his youngest daughter invited him to dinner, she spilled some leaves and wood chips onto the food. The king said, “The food is very delicious, but it’s a pity that wood chips fell on it.” “Certainly, things will fall in the food of a person who lives in a cottage in the corner of the garden this way,” she replied. “You speak truly,” said her father. “From tomorrow on come live in the castle.”

After the king returned to the castle, Morad burned one of the black colt’s hairs. Immediately, the black colt appeared. “I want you to make a beautiful palace across from the king’s castle for me that is, in all respects, better than the king’s,” said Morad.
In the first light of dawn, the castle guards were surprised to see a huge beautiful building right in from them. Immediately, they went and told the king. Nobody was brave enough to go inside the beautiful palace. Finally, the king cast caution to the winds and went into the palace himself. He saw that a handsome young man was sitting on a throne in the middle of the palace. The king didn’t recognize him. “Who are you?” the king asked. Morad said with a grin, “I am your son-in-law.” “What are you saying?” the king replied. “I don’t have such a son-in-law as you.” “I am the same bald headed son-in-law who received you in the stable, the kitchen, and in a cottage in the corner of the garden. I also gave the prey to the viziers’ two sons, which they then brought to you.” The king didn’t believe him, “What proof do you have of what you are saying?” “Bring them here so I can prove it,” said Morad.

When they brought the two son-in-laws, Morad showed the king the scars where they were branded. “I branded them in exchange for the meat of that animal.” The two son-in-laws hung their heads in shame and said nothing.

The king was sorry for the way he had treated Morad; he removed his crown and tried to put it on Morad’s head, but Morad wouldn’t let him. “I have everything necessary for a king, I don’t need your crown.” When the king saw what was going on, he asked Morad to agree to be his vizier and Morad accepted.
CHAPTER 16

TAT MOHAMMAD LUR

Once there was, once there wasn’t, anyone other than God; in ancient times there was a man named Tat Mohammad Luri, who of worldly possessions, lacked nothing; sacks of gold, flocks of sheep, household furnishings and everything else. But he had some bad neighbors. These neighbors stole all of his possessions till the only thing he had left was a single calf.

Tat Mohammad was a godly man who never abused the rights of others and he always helped others as much as he could. But his evil neighbors did him a bad turn whenever they were able.

One day, Tat Mohammad decided to do his neighbors a good turn one last time. If they would be good then that would be that. But if they didn’t change their bad behavior then Tat Mohammad would treat them the same way they treated him. He spoke to his wife with this in mind, “My darling wife! Come on, we, who have no worldly possessions left, let’s butcher this calf too, and treat all our neighbors. And after that we will be the guest of one of our neighbors each night.” So Tat Mohammad’s wife agreed. They slaughtered the calf and made delicious beef stew and invited all their neighbors to dinner.
The next day they went and knocked on the door of one of their neighbors. But when the neighbor realized that Tat Mohammad and his wife were outside the door, he wouldn’t open the door. One by one, they knocked at the doors of all their homes, but no one would let them in.

Tat Mohammad, who had become very upset, returned home with a sense of hopelessness and they were forced to pass the night hungry. The next morning, he picked up the calf’s skin to take it and sell it. He saw three men who were traveling along and each of them carried a pack on his shoulders. Tat Mohammad followed them in such a way that they wouldn’t spot him. Finally, the three men sat down next to a spring under the shade of a tree to rest. Tat Mohammad filled the calf’s skin full of rocks and climbed up the tree to see what they were doing. The three men woke up an hour later and, after drinking their afternoon tea, opened up their packs and dumped out little bags of coins between them so they could split them up. They began to argue about dividing the stolen goods and then to fight. While, two of them began to wrestle and the third, who was weaker, raised his hands toward heaven and said, “Oh, I wish that God would stone you so-called friends.” At that moment, from up in the tree, Tat Mohammad dropped rocks on their heads and all three of them were knocked unconscious. Tat Mohammad came down from the tree, picked up the bags of gold and left. When he reached home he realized that these bags, and the coins inside them, were all his possessions that had been stolen heretofore. Tat Mohammad, who had seen great evil from his neighbors, decided to punish them. So he invited all of them to his house and poured out all of the coins in the middle of the room in front of their eyes and said, “See what wealth God, the nourisher of the world, has bestowed on me!” His neighbors, whose eyes were bulging
out with greed, said “Oh Tat! What did you do to become so wealthy?” Tat Mohammad replied, “Why should I conceal this from you? When you wouldn’t allow me into your homes, I picked up the calf’s skin and took it to the city to sell it. I received a bag of coins in return for each and every scrap of it.” All of his greedy neighbors went and slaughtered their own cows and took the hides to the city to sell them, but nobody even asked them, “How much is your donkey.” The neighbors, who were really furious with Tat Mohammad, decided to burn his house. Tat Mohammad, who knew beforehand that his neighbors would come after him, had spent the night with his wife in a small hut in the mountains. As soon as they got there, the angry neighbors set fire to Tat Mohammad’s house and reduced it to a heap of ashes.

The following evening, Tat Mohammad stealthily came and gathered up the ashes of his house and set out for the city. Along the way he entered a caravanserai where there were also a few wealthy merchants. One of the merchants said to him, “What are you carrying?” “Please, first tell me who all of you are and where you people are from,” said Tat Mohammad. “So that I can then introduce myself to you.” So they told him, “We are people of such and such a city and our goods we bought from such and such a village.” Tat Mohammad, who realized that they were carrying his own property which they had bought from the thieves for a cheap price, said, “My load is the tax revenue of such and such city that I’m transporting for the king.”

In the middle of the night, Tat Mohammad carried the ashes outside the caravanserai and dumped it out and started to shout and cry, “People! Come to my rescue, someone has stolen the king’s tax revenue!” The merchants, who knew that the cargo they were carrying was stolen goods and were afraid of being arrested, gave all
their possessions to Tat Mohammad and they ran away. So Tat Mohammad picked up all of cloth piece goods, carpets and the rest of their possessions located there, that had all belonged to him, and returned home. When Tat Mohammad brought all of the goods home, his neighbors gathered together and said, “Where did you get all of this stuff?” “When you burnt down my house,” Tat Mohammad said, “I took the ashes to the city and bought these goods with profit from the ashes.” Out of greed and avarice, the neighbors went and set fire to their own houses and took the ashes to the city to sell, but they returned wretched and disgraced. This time they decided to kill Tat Mohammad. They chased after him with picks and shovels. Tat Mohammad ran away but they wouldn’t give up. Tat Mohammad ran until he reached a river beside which a shepherd was grazing sheep. Tat Mohammad looked at him carefully and realized that this shepherd was the very same person who had stolen his sheep. When Tat Mohammad drew near, the shepherd, who had not recognized him, said, “Where are you going in such a hurry?” “They are going to give me the king’s daughter to marry, but I don’t want her,” said Tat Mohammad. “I want to be a simple shepherd but they keep insisting that, “You must become the king’s son-in-law.” “That’s easy,” said the greedy shepherd, “You put on my clothes and I’ll put on your clothes as well.” Tat Mohammad immediately agreed and they exchanged clothes. When the men arrived, they grabbed the shepherd instead of Tat Mohammad and tossed him into the river and went away.

When the neighbor left, he gathered his sheep and set out for the village. When he reached home, the neighbors were all shocked and said, “Oh Tat! After you were drowned, where did you get these sheep?” “Under the water, there were sheep
everywhere,” said Tat Mohammad. “I was only able to gather this many sheep. You’re younger, you should be able to get more.”

The neighbors hastily went to the riverbank and, in their greed to catch sheep, they leapt into the water and they all drowned.

Tat Mohammad, the Lur, after all of his enemies were no more, went home with a mind at peace and began to live a quiet life along with his wife.
CHAPTER 17

THE SEVEN SISTERS

Once there was, once there wasn’t, anyone other than God; a merchant with seven daughters lived in a great castle. One day this merchant became sick and died and the daughters were left alone without relatives. So that no one would be able to find a way into their castle, they decided that one of the sisters would remain awake each night until dawn and keep watch. One night, it was Namaky’s, the youngest sister’s turn, to keep watch when, by a stroke of bad luck, she fell asleep, and because one of the seven doors of the castle had not been locked, a div entered the castle.

When the div entered the castle, he let out several great shouts and the div’s shouting woke up the sisters. “I’m very hungry!” said the div. “Bring me some food quick!” The sisters said to one another, “Whoever let the div in must entertain the div herself.” So Namaky went and brought the div a plump ewe from among the sheep. When the div had eaten his food and was very full, he picked up the sisters and took them with him to his home.

In the middle of the night the div became hungry again and, because he had nothing else to eat, he decided to eat one of the sisters. In order to be certain they had all gone to sleep he said, “Who is asleep, who is awake?” “Everyone is asleep,” said
Namaky, "Namaky is awake." "Namaky, why can’t you asleep?" asked the div. "If my father were alive now," said Namaky, "he would give me whatever I wished for." "What do you desire?" asked the white div. "My heart desires is to have seven white stallions, with saddles and accoutrements, and seven sets of men’s clothing." "That’s easy," said the div, "I’ll get all of this for you." Then he went and killed seven hunters and brought their horses, clothes and rifles back to Namaky.

The second night, the div decided to eat two of the sisters and said, "Who is asleep, who is awake?" "Everyone is asleep," said Namaky, "Namaky is awake." "Why are you awake tonight?" asked the div. "When my father was alive," said Namaky, "If I asked him for seven goat skins full of Ghee\(^{18}\) and seven goat skins full of milk, he would get them." "This is nothing," said the div, "I’ll get it for you myself." So the div went and brought back seven skins of ghee and seven skins of milk from the tents of the shepherds.

On the third night, when the div had become very hungry, he decided to eat three of the girls. He said, "Who is asleep? Who is awake?" "Everyone is asleep, but Namaky is awake," said Namaky. The div asked, "Namaky, what’s you big problem that keeps you awake?" "Every night, my father brought me a basket of water from the sea," said Namaky. "And if he were still alive now he would still do it." "This is nothing to worry about," said the div. "I’ll get it for you." Then the div picked up a broken basket and went to get water from the sea.

Once the div left, Namaky woke up her sisters and told them about everything she had done. Then they rolled the seven skins of ghee and the seven skins of milk in their

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\(^{18}\) Ghee is a type of clarified thick butter.
bedclothes, put on the men’s clothing, and mounted on the horses, they galloped away, far from there.

On the other hand, once the div reached the sea, he filled the basket full of water, but it all leaked out on the way back. He went back a second time and filled the basket, but it leaked out again. He went back and forth so much that he became exhausted. He decided to return home and eat all of the girls. When he reached home, he asked, “Who is asleep? Who is awake?” He didn’t hear an answer. He asked a second time, but again no one answered him. He thought that all of the girls were asleep so he happily crept alongside Namaky’s bedclothes and took the entire skin of ghee into his mouth. When he swallowed it whole he realized that he had devoured a goatskin full of ghee instead of a human being. Annoyed, the div searched the entire house but saw no trace of the girls. He set out into the wilderness and traveled and traveled until he came to a huge lake. He saw that Namaky and her sisters are moving far from shore on a boat. “Wait Namaky,” he shouted. “I’m coming too.” Namaky shouted back, “The water’s not deep, come on, run!” The div, who was thinking of nothing else except eating the seven sisters, hastily ran toward them, but he had not yet reached them when he drowned and sank under the water.

Namaky and her sisters, once they had crossed the water, saw a cat along the road. “Take me with you Namaky,” said the cat. “Maybe I can ease your troubles each day.” Namaky’s sisters were against taking the cat, but Namaky took the cat with her. Along the way, they heard from someone that the king of the region had seven sons and wanted to find seven beautiful girls for them. Namaky made up a plan and wrote a letter to the king stating that “seven young princes are about to arrive at your capitol.” In her letter
she asked the king to entertain them in a suitable way. The king welcomed them in a suitable manner. The king welcomed them properly and prepared suitable accommodations for them.

Namaky and her sisters left the castle every day wearing men’s clothing, went hunting and amused themselves before returning late in the afternoon. No one suspected anything for a while. However, one day the king’s eldest son, who was no less intelligent or sharp witted than Namaky, began to be suspicious of them because of the way they talked and the way they walked and he talked it over with his mother. “I think they are girls too,” his mother said. “Take them to bazaar of the jewelers as a test. If they are interested in looking at earrings and necklaces, it will be evident that they are girls. But if they only look at men’s rings then there is no reason to be suspicious of them.”

One day, the king’s son took Namaky and her six sisters to the jewelers’ bazaar, but Namaky found out about the plan of the king’s son and his mother from the cat beforehand, and on the way, she told her sisters what to do. Because of this the king’s son failed to carry out his plan and he returned to his mother frustrated. This time his mother suggested that he take them to the hunting outfitters’ quarter. The king’s son did this very thing, but the cat again informed the girls of their plans.

On the third day, the queen told her son to take the guests to an archery competition. So the prince, by his mother’s suggestion, invited his guests to go hunting and to an archery competition. During this martial competition, Namaky and her sisters were revealed and they were unable to play the role of men again.

The prince took the seven sisters to the king. The king asked them about their ancestry and inquired about the reason for their actions. Namaky related all of her and
her sisters’ adventures from start to finish for the king and the queen, and the princes and finally she said that they had put on men’s clothing to be safe from harm from others.

The king was pleased by their chastity and bravery and he married Namaky and her six sisters to his sons and he caused there to be feasting and dancing throughout his entire county for seven days and nights.
CHAPTER 18

TWO SISTERS

Long long ago, two sisters lived in the same neighborhood. One of the sisters was well off and had whatever she needed, but the other sister was very poor. Her husband went into the desert and cut brush from morning until night and sold it, so they would have something to live on. People called him Papa Thorn Picker.

The wealthy sister, instead of helping her poor sister, she taunted and tormented her. The poor sister had no way to light her house except for a tiny window that was between her house and her sister’s.¹⁹ The poor sister would sit in this ray of dim light and spin wool but one day the wealthy sister plastered over this small window so that her sister wouldn’t be able to use the light from their lamp.

The poor sister was so upset by what her sister had done that she cried until evening. When her husband returned from the desert that evening she told him what had happened. “I’m tired of my sister and the things she does. Come and let’s leave here so that I don’t have to set eyes on her again.” So her husband agreed. They prepared provisions for the journey and set out. They walked and walked until night came. Labor pains seized the wife that very evening. Her husband looked about and saw a distant

¹⁹ Their houses shared the same inner wall and the window opened up into each of their houses.
light. “I think there might be a cottage over there. I’m going to go see if anything is
available or to get help.”

So the husband left but no matter how much closer her went, the lights became
more distant and the wife was alone in the desert. When her pain became severe, three
doves flew down around her head and helped her to bring her child, who was a girl, into
the world. The wife felt thirsty. One of the doves pecked the ground one time and a
spring bubbled up from the heart of the earth and satisfied the wife’s thirst. The three
doves wheeled around and wished for a large palace on the very spot. When the palace
appeared, the doves wheeled around again. This time they made a wish that, whenever
the little girl would cry, pearls would come out of her eyes, and when she would laugh,
flowers would spill from her mouth, and when she would walk, an ingot of gold and an
ingot of silver would be left in her footsteps. Then the doves said farewell and went
away.

When the husband returned, he saw that a beautiful palace had been built on the
spot and that there was no sign of his wife. As he miserably circled the palace, his wife
opened the castle gate and said, “Come in, this palace is our home.” The man said in
surprise, “We were in the desert, where did this palace come from?” The wife told him
what happened. The man was very happy that he had become the master of such a
palace.

That night passed, the next day the mother and father noticed that when their
daughter cried, pearls came out of her eyes and when she laughed, flowers spilled from
her mouth. Also, when she walked, they noticed that an ingot of gold and an ingot of
silver were left behind in her footsteps. So they became very wealthy, but they were
always worried that someone would see their daughter and take her away from them. So they never took her out of the palace. Eventually, one day, the son of the king, who had gone hunting, saw that, when she laughed, flowers spilled from her mouth and also that a gold ingot and a silver ingot were left behind as she walked.

The boy loved her, not with one heart, but with the heart of a hundred lovers and he decided that he would marry her, by any means necessary. He came up with a plan to find a way into their palace; he told a town crier to proclaim that men be gathered and that each of them would receive one of the king’s horses to take care of. Each person who did a good job training the horse would receive a reward from the king. The girl’s father also went and took a horse.

After a period of time, the son of the king went to the girl’s house, under the pretext of inspecting the horses, and saw that their horse had fattened up and become very beautiful. He invited them all to the king’s palace and there told the entire matter to his father. So the king asked for her hand in marriage for his son and the terms for marriage were arranged that same night.

The next day, the wife asked her husband for permission to invite her sister to the wedding, despite the fact that she had hurt them in their time of poverty. The husband consented. The wife went and brought her sister back with her to her house.

When she saw her sister’s situation, the older sister was surprised and didn’t believe at all that they had become so wealthy, and when she realized that it was arranged for their daughter to marry the prince, she became even more surprised and, out of jealousy, she drew up a plan to rob them of this good fortune.
The wedding night, after much celebrating and merry making, they put the bride on a horse and set out towards the king's palace. The bride's aunt, who was accompanying her, said to the bride's companions, "Go on ahead, I have business with my niece, we'll follow you." When they had all gone, the bride's aunt threw her off the horse and put her clothes on her own daughter. Then she plucked out the bride's eyes and threw them away. The prince's dog, which had accompanied the bride, picked up the bride's eyes, tucked them under its tongue and went away.

The bride's aunt put her daughter on the horse and she abandoned the niece in the dark desert and left. When they arrived, the son-in-law's family realized that the bride had been changed and that she was not the beautiful girl that they had seen before. Therefore they became suspicious of the bride's father.

The daughter spent the whole night until morning in the darkness of the desert moaning from the pain of her eyes and her misfortune. When morning came, an old man came to gather brush; he saw that a girl had fallen there, moaning. He came near and spoke, "Who are you? A human, a jinni or a fairy?" "I am neither a jinn nor a fairy," said the young girl. "I am an unlucky human being that has fallen to adversity, help me and take me to your house." In spite of the fact that he was very poor and already had seven daughters, the old man felt sorry for her and took her to his house.

The day after the wedding, the prince went to the house of the girl's mother and asked why they had sent the other girl to his house instead of the beautiful girl. "We have only this daughter," said the mother with surprise. "Perhaps one of your associates caused some calamity to befall my daughter."
In order to prove what he said, the prince took her to the palace of the king. As soon as the woman saw her sister’s daughter there she understood everything and she was so upset she fainted. When they brought her around, she told the prince what had happened. The prince asked the girl to tell him the truth and she explained everything to him. The prince immediately mounted a horse and went toward the desert but he couldn’t find any trace of the young girl.

The king’s messengers went every direction and proclaimed that whoever found such a girl, and brought her to the king’s palace, would receive a goodly reward. The old man heard the news but he didn’t want to give up the girl.

The prince searched all around the area until his dog found the girl’s trail and found her. Then they took the girl’s eyes out of the dog’s mouth and put them back in their sockets so that she could see again. Then the prince gave the old man a goodly reward and took his wife’s hand and returned home.

When they reached the palace, the prince wanted to punish his wife’s aunt and her daughter, but the girl interceded and the prince forgave them. After that, they spent a happy life together.
CHAPTER 19

THE CASTLE OF SEVEN GATES

Long long ago, seven beautiful girls, who were sisters, lived in a great castle. Their castle had been built on the skirts of a mountain that reached up to the heavens, and it had seven gates.

No one knew who had built this castle on the skirts of the mountain beside a river, the roar of which could always be heard. We don’t know why, or from where, the girls had come to the castle. Did they live with their father and mother or were they by themselves? Who knows, maybe they were fairies from the sea that had become trapped within the labyrinthine castle.

Within the castle, one of the girls had the duty to lock the gates each night and the last night of the week was always Namaky’s turn, who was the youngest of all.

On one moonlit night, when the weather was neither cold nor hot, Namaky closed all of the gates but she forgot to lock the seventh gate. By the hand of fate, that very night an ugly malformed div entered the castle and explored it all. When he found the girls he said with a loud voice, “You locked six doors Namaky, you didn’t lock one door Namaky, come on, I am very hungry.”
When she realized that the div was going to eat her, Namaky began to cry and wail. But the div turned a deaf ear to her words. He put Namaky into a sack and took her with him. On the way Namaky said, "I want water." Now was her chance! Namaky took advantage of the opportunity and dumped some sticks and grass into the sack and hid behind a tree. The div picked up the sack and left. On the way, the sticks jabbed him. "Namaky don't hurt me or I'll eat you," he said this a few times but he didn't hear an answer. He set the sack on the ground to eat Namaky when he realized he had been tricked. Immediately he went back and grabbed Namaky, who was sitting by the spring, and tossed her back into the sack again and left.

After he traveled for a ways, Namaky said, "With your permission, can I come out for a little while?" "What are you going to do this time?" asked the div. "I can't tell you," said Namaky. The div realized what she meant. The div set the sack down next to a slab of stone and rested himself. So the girl tossed some stones into the sack and ran away. When the div awoke, he shouldered the sack and departed. After he'd gone some distance from there he said, "Namaky don't be so heavy or I'll eat you," but once again he heard no reply. He put the sack on the ground and searched it. He saw that the sack was now full of stones. He hurried back and grabbed Namaky, put her into the sack again and traveled and traveled until he reached a stream. He sat down under a tree and took Namaky out of the sack. "You must dance and sing for me," said the div. Instead of answering, Namaky put her hands on her cheeks and started crying. "If you don't dance I'll eat you," said the div. Once again Namaky didn't say anything. The div cut off her head and hung her lifeless body up in a tree and went hunting.
When he returned, he dug a magic stone talisman out from under the ground and attached the girl’s head to her body with it and demanded that she dance and sing for him again. Namaky wouldn’t do it. The div cut off her head again and hung it up in a tree and departed.

While the div had gone hunting and the girl’s body was on the tree, each hour a single drop of blood dripped from her neck into the water and turned into a single fragrant flower and floated along with the flowing water. Much farther downstream a young man was busy distributing water for irrigation when he saw that a beautiful red flower was in the water. He caught it and smelled it and realized it was very fragrant. Later he saw another flower floating in the water. So up until sunset, he retrieved several more flowers from the water and he wondered where these flowers were coming from.

He set out upstream toward the spring and he traveled and traveled until he reached the tree where the body of the girl was hanging. The exact same moment that he stopped and stared with surprise at the girl’s body, he suddenly heard a dreadful cry. Immediately he hid in a cranny. After a few moments he saw an extremely huge div arrive. He dug up a piece of stone from under the earth and rubbed the girl’s neck with it and the girl came alive. After awhile the div cut off her head again, hung it up in the tree again and left.

When the div had absolutely gone away, the young man picked up the stone and touched it to her throat. Immediately the girl came to life. The youth asked her about her experiences, so the girl said, “We were seven sisters who lived in a castle with seven gates. It was arranged that every night one of us would lock the gates. One night, when it was my turn, I didn’t lock the seventh gate, the div entered the castle and brought me here and wanted me to sing and dance for him, and because I wouldn’t, he cut off my
head as you see.” The youth thought for a while and said, “I’m going to cut off your head and hang your body in the tree again. When the div returns and asks you to dance for him tell him that you’ll do it on the condition that, When you go hunting, give me your ‘glass of life.’” The girl agreed. So the youth cut off her head and hung it up in the tree and hid.

When the div returned and brought Namaky back to life, Namaky said to him, “If you give me a bottle holding your soul then I’ll play with it and sing for you.” The div agreed but said, “You must be very careful with it, because if you break it, I’m done for.” The girl agreed. So the div went and got his “glass of life” out of a well that was nearby and gave it to the girl and admonished her again to guard it well. Then he went hunting.

After the div left, the young man approached girl and took the bottle from her and started to break it when the screeching div arrived and said to the young man, “Who are you? What gave you the courage to come here?” The young man shouted, “Don’t come any closer, beware or I’ll shatter the bottle on this stone.” The div trembled from fear and said, “If you don’t break the bottle holding my soul I’ll do whatever you ask me to.” The young man said, “You must carry us on your back.” When the div put them on his shoulders the young man said, “Return this girl to wherever you got her from.” So the div set out and in a short while he brought them to their destination. Namaky went to the castle and told her sisters about what happened. They all came out to see the div and the young man when they saw the div bowing to the young man. The young man backed away from the div and finally smashed the bottle to the ground, shattering it. At that very moment, the div let out a great cry, turned to smoke and blew away on the wind.

20 The “glass of life” is the div’s external soul.
Then they all went home happy and laughing and, with a lengthy celebration, they married Namaky to the young man. They both lived happily together over the years and the evil div was destroyed forever.
CHAPTER 20

OUR ASS NEVER HAD A TAIL

In times past, there lived a simple-hearted old man who owned nothing worth having. A Jew lived in the same neighborhood who had gotten wealthy through various means. One time, the old man decided to marry and settle down. So he decided to go to his neighbor and ask him to give him a few coins to invest. The Jew wouldn’t agree, but the old man begged so much that he finally agreed provided that, if the old man were unable to pay him back at the appointed time, then he would cut five grams\(^{21}\) of flesh from his body for each and every coin.

The old man took the coins and bought some trade goods with them and took them to other places to sell. Out of bad luck, bandits attacked him and took everything he had. The old man returned home disappointed and sorrowful and hid from his neighbor for a few days. But after a few days the Jew found out and went to the old man’s house to collect his due. When he realized that the coins had been stolen he said to the old man, “Now I have to cut the flesh from your body according to stipulation.” The helpless old man, who had become trapped in a bad way, begged for mercy but the Jew absolutely refused to relent. Finally, the old man said that they must go to

\(^{21}\) \text{This is a measure weighing about 5 grams.}
the city judge so that he could arbitrate between them. When the Jew realized that there was no other solution, he agreed.

On the way they meet a man whose ass had sank into the mud and no matter what he did he couldn’t get it out and, when he saw the two men, he shouted for them to help him. The old man said to the Jew, “Come on, let’s help this servant of God.” “If you feel sorry for him, go help him yourself,” said the Jew. So the old man went and grabbed the donkey’s tail and started pulling. Out of bad luck, the donkey’s tail tore off and the donkey’s master blamed the old man. After much arguing it was settled that the three men would go to the judge.

Along the way they came to a mosque. The wretched old man decided that he would throw himself down from the minaret of the mosque and be free from all of this bad luck. With this wish, he ran and climbed the minaret of the temple and threw himself down from there. Out of bad luck, or his good luck, a beggar was passing by the temple with his son; the old man landed on the beggar and the beggar was killed on the spot. The beggar’s son started crying and cursing the old man.

So then there were three plaintiffs; the Jew, the donkey’s owner and the beggar’s son. They dragged the old man to the court of the judge.

When they approached the judge, the old man realized that the very same bandits who had stolen his possessions were sitting around the judge and they had divided their stolen goods with the judge.

The judge realized the situation from the way the old man looked at him, “If you don’t tell anyone then I will acquit you.” Then he asked those around the old man to present their grievances against the old man.
First of all, the Jew presented his complaint for consideration. The judge said to him, “You have the right to cut five grams of flesh from his body for each coin, but also know that, if any piece of flesh is more than five grams, then the old man can cut the same amount of flesh from your body.” The Jew thought for a moment and said to himself, “It’s possible that I’ll make a mistake and cut a little more or less and then, for the sake of a few coins, my flesh will be cut off in bits.” He faced the judge and said, “I don’t have any complaint against the old man.”

Then came the turn of the beggar’s son. The judge said to him, “You must climb to the top of the minaret of the temple and throw yourself down on the old man to avenge the blood of your father.” When the boy realized that it was possible to fall from that height and be killed, he said, “I have no complaint as well.” The donkey’s owner, when he heard the judge’s ruling concerning the other two people, while rising to leave the court, said “Your honor! Our ass never had a tail!”
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