

The Three Orange Peris

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Turkish

Intermediate

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In olden time, when there was abundance of all things, we ate and drank the whole day long, yet went hungry to bed. At this time there lived a Padishah whose days were joyless, for he had no son. Sorrowfully he set out with his lala, and as they wandered, drinking coffee and smoking tobacco, they came to a wide valley. They sat down to rest, and suddenly the valley resounded with the cracking of whips, and a white, bearded dervish, clad in green, with yellow shoes, appeared before them. The Padishah and his companion trembled with fright, but when the dervish approached and saluted them with “Selâmin alejküm!” they took courage and returned the greeting: “Ve alejküm selâm!”

“Whither bound, Padishah?” inquired the dervish.

“If thou knowest that I am the Padishah thou canst also tell me the remedy for my grief,” answered he.

Taking an apple from his breast and presenting it to the Padishah, the dervish said: “Give one half to the Sultana and eat the other yourself,” and immediately disappeared.

The Padishah accordingly went home, gave half of the apple to his consort and ate the other half himself, and before long a Shahzada, or Crown Prince, was born in the palace. The Padishah was beside himself with joy. He gave money to the poor, set slaves free, and prepared a feast for everybody.

The Prince grew and attained his fourteenth year. One day he accosted his father with the request: "My Padishah and father, have built for me a small marble palace, with two fountains, from one of which shall flow oil and from the other honey."



“The Prince took up a stone and cast it at the old woman’s jug and broke it to pieces. ” Illustration by Willy Pogany. Published in *Forty-Four Turkish Fairy Tales* (1913), George G. Harrap & Co.

The Padishah loved his only son so much that he ordered the palace to be built with the two fountains, in accordance with the boy’s desire. Now as the Prince sat in his palace looking on the two fountains which yielded oil and honey, an old woman appeared with a jug in her hand, intending to fill it at the fountain. The Prince took up a stone and cast it at the old woman’s jug and broke it to pieces. Without a word the woman withdrew. Next day she came again, and just as she was about to fill her jug the Prince once more threw a stone and broke the vessel. Without a word the old woman went away. On the third day she reappeared, and for the third time her jug was shattered by the Prince. Said the old woman: “I pray Allah thou mayst be smitten with love for the three Orange Peris.” She then went away, and was seen no more.

From that moment the Prince was seized as with a devouring fire. He pined and faded, and the Padishah, observing his son’s condition, called in physicians and hodjas, but no one could cure the Prince’s malady. “Oh, Shah,” said the son to his father one day, “my dear father, these people can do me no good; their efforts are in vain. I love the three Orange Fairies, and shall have no peace till I find them.”

“Oh, my child,” lamented the Padishah, “thou art my only one. If thou forsake me, then can I have no joy.”

But as the Prince continued to get worse, the Padishah thought it better to withhold no longer his permission for the boy’s setting out; he might perhaps find the three fairies and return home.

Laden with costly treasures the Prince set forth. Over hill and down dale, ever onward he pursued his way. On a boundless plain he found himself suddenly confronted with the gigantic Dew-mother. Standing astride upon two hills, one foot on each, she crunched resin in her jaws, and the sound could be heard two miles away. Her breathing raised storms, and her arms were nine yards long.

“How do you do, mother?” the youth said to her, putting his arm round her waist.

“Hadst thou not called me ‘mother’ I would have swallowed thee,” returned the woman. Then she asked him whence he came and whither he would go.

“Oh, dear mother,” sighed the boy, “such misfortune is mine that it were better you did not ask and I did not answer.”

“But tell me,” demanded the woman.

“Oh, dear mother,” he sighed again, “I am in love with the three Orange Fairies. Can you not show me the way to them?”

“Silence!” commanded the woman; “it is forbidden to utter that word. I and my sons guard ourselves against them but I know not where they dwell. I have forty sons, who go up and down in the earth; perhaps they may know.”

When evening came, before the return of the Dew-sons, the woman picked up the Prince and struck him gently, whereupon he was transformed into a water-jug.

She was only just in time, for suddenly the forty Dew-fellows appeared and cried: “We smell the flesh of man, mother!”

“But,” returned the mother, “what should a man be doing here? You had better sit down to your supper.”

So the Dew-fellows sat down to their meal, during the course of which the mother inquired: “If you had a mortal brother, what would you do with him?”

“What should we do with him?” they all answered in chorus. “We should love him as a brother.”

On receiving this assurance the Dew-mother struck the water-jug and the Prince appeared. “Here is your brother,” she said, presenting him to her forty sons. The Dews welcomed the youth with joy, called him their brother, gave him a place beside them, and demanded of their mother why she had not produced him before the meal. “My children,” she replied, “he could not have eaten the food you are accustomed to; mortals eat fowl, beef, mutton and such.”

Immediately one of the Dews got up, fetched a sheep, and set it before the youth.

“You simpleton!” scolded the woman; “it must first be cooked.”

So the imp took the sheep away, and returned with it roasted, setting it once more before the Prince. Having eaten till he was satisfied, the Prince put the rest aside. Noticing this, the imps inquired why he did not eat it all, and their mother informed them that the children of men did not eat so much as Dew-fellows.

“Let us see how mutton tastes,” said one of the imps, and in a couple of mouthfuls the whole sheep was gone.

Next morning the woman said to her sons: “your brother has great grief.” “What is it?” they asked; “we may be able to help him.” “He is in love with the three Orange Fairies,” proceeded the mother. “We know not the dwelling-place of the Orange Fairies; we never go in their neighbourhood; but perhaps our aunt knows.” “Take the youth to her,” ordered the woman; “greet her on my behalf, tell her this is my son, and that I wish her, if possible, to help him.” The Dews accordingly conducted the Prince to their aunt, and told her all.

This old witch had sixty sons, and not knowing herself where the Orange Fairies lived, she awaited the return of her progeny. As she was uncertain how her sons would receive the visitor, she struck him gently and turned him into a vessel. “We smell the flesh of man!” the Dews shouted as they ran into the room.

“No doubt you have been eating human flesh,” answered their mother. “Now come to your supper.” The sons sat down to eat eagerly. Then the woman struck the vessel, and the sixty Dews, on beholding the little mortal, received him heartily, offered him a seat, and set food before him.

“My sons,” said the imps’ mother on the following day, “this child is in love with the three Orange Fairies; can you not take him to them?” “It is certain we cannot,” they answered, “but perhaps our other aunt knows the way.” “Then take him to her,” said the woman; “greet her on my behalf, tell her the boy is my son and will be hers; she may be able to help him.”

The imps accordingly conducted the youth to their aunt and related all. “Oh, my children,” she answered, “I can do nothing, but when my eighty sons return this evening I will inquire of them.”

The sixty Dews took leave of the Prince, and toward evening the Dew-mother gave him a knock and turned him into a broom, which she put behind the door. Hardly had she done this than the eighty Dews came home, and began muttering about the smell of human flesh. During supper their mother asked them what they would

do if they had a mortal brother. As they all swore a solemn oath to do him no harm, she took the broom, struck it lightly, and the Prince appeared.

The imps received him cordially, inquired after his health, and set food before him. Then the woman asked them whether they knew where the three Orange Fairies lived, as their new brother was in love with them. With a cry of joy the youngest Dew-son sprang up and said that he knew. "Then," rejoined the mother, "take the youth there that he may accomplish his desire."

Next morning the imp and the Prince set out on their journey. As they proceeded the young Dew said: "Brother, we shall soon reach a large garden, in which there is a pond, where the three oranges will be found. When I cry, 'Shut your eyes—open your eyes!' do so, and seize whatever presents itself."

Proceeding a little farther, they came to the garden, and as the Dew caught sight of the pond he cried to the Prince: "Shut your eyes—open your eyes!" The Prince saw the three oranges on the smooth surface of the pond, seized one and put it in his pocket. Again the Dew cried: "Shut your eyes—open your eyes!" Obeying, the Prince seized the second orange, and likewise the third. "Now," said the Dew, "take care not to open the oranges at any spot where there is no water, or you will repent it." Promising to follow his advice, the Prince parted from the Dew, the one going to the right, the other to the left.

As the Prince travelled up hill and down dale he remembered the oranges and took one out of his pocket with the intention of opening it. Hardly had he inserted his knife in the peel than a lovely maiden, beautiful as the full moon, sprang out, crying: "Water! give me water!" and as there was no water near, she vanished immediately. The Prince deeply regretted what he had done, but it could not be helped now.

Some hours elapsed, he had walked many miles, and again he thought of the oranges. He took out the second, slit it, and behold! out sprang a maiden lovelier than the first. She also demanded water, and, seeing none, likewise vanished.

“I must take better care of the third,” thought the Prince as he tramped wearily onward. On reaching a spring he drank of it, and resolved to open his third orange. He did so, and a maiden more lovely than either of the others appeared. As she also asked for water, the Prince led her to the spring, gave her to drink, and she remained with him.

The Prince was anxious that the maiden should enter his father’s city with befitting state. So he persuaded her to hide in a tree near the spring, while he went to fetch a coach and gorgeous raiment. When he had gone away a black slave-woman came to the spring for water. Seeing therein the reflection of the maiden from the tree above, and thinking it was her own image, she soliloquised: “I am much more beautiful than my mistress. Why should I carry water for her? Rather should she carry it for me,” and she threw down her jug so violently that it broke in pieces.

She returned to the house, and when her mistress asked where the jug was, the negress turned upon her scornfully “I am more beautiful than you; henceforth you must fetch me water.” The mistress, holding up the mirror, answered “Are you out of your wits? Look in the glass,” and the negress, looking, saw that she was really black. Without another word she again took a jug and went to the spring to fill it. Arrived there, she saw a second time the reflection of the maiden in the tree and mistook it for her own.

“I am after all more beautiful than my mistress,” she cried aloud. Throwing down her jug, she once more went to the house. Again the mistress asked why she had brought no water. “I am more beautiful than you; you must fetch me water,” was the retort. “You are mad, girl,” returned the mistress, again holding the mirror up before the swarthy face of the slave, who, realising that she was indeed a negress, took a third jug and went yet a third time to the spring. The reflection of the maiden again appeared in the water, and the negress was just about to dash her jug to pieces when the maid called to her from the tree: “Break not your jug; what you behold in the water is my reflection, not your own.”

The negress looked up, and seeing in the tree a being so wondrously beautiful lovelier than anyone she had ever seen before—she addressed her in words of honeyed flattery:

“Oh, most charming of all maidens, surely you must be tired from sitting up there so long. Come down and lay your weary head in my lap.”

The bait was taken, and as the maiden’s head lay in her lap, the negress took a hair pin and thrust it into her skull. But at the very moment the murderous intention was accomplished the maiden was transformed into an orange coloured bird and flew away, leaving the negress by the tree.

Shortly afterwards the Prince returned in a magnificent coach, and clad in gold brocade. Glancing at the tree and seeing the swarthy features of the negress, he asked what had happened. “Leave me here and go away,” answered the negress. “The sun has quite spoilt my complexion.” What could the poor Prince do? He put the supposed maiden in the coach and took her to his father’s palace.

The courtiers awaited the arrival of the fairy bride with eager curiosity; when they saw the negress they were at a loss to imagine what the Prince could find attractive about her. “She is not a negress,” explained the Prince; “only she was in the sun so long she has become somewhat sunburnt; she will soon become white again.” With these words he led her to her apartments.

Near the Prince’s palace was a large garden. Here one day the Orange Bird flew in, and, alighting on a tree, called to the gardener.

“What wilt thou of me?” asked the gardener.

“How is the Prince?” inquired the bird.

“Quite well,” was the answer.

“And how is his black wife?” was the next inquiry.

“Oh, she is quite well, but keeps to her apartments,” replied the gardener.

At this the bird flew off. Next day it came again, and repeated the questions of the previous day. On the third day also it did the same; and it came to pass that every tree on which the bird had sat withered away. Shortly afterward, as the Prince was walking in the garden, seeing so many withered trees he spoke to the gardener. "Why do you not take proper care of these trees?" he asked; "they are all withered!"

Hereupon the gardener related the incident of the bird and its questions, and observed that though he had done his utmost for the trees it was all in vain. The Prince commanded him to smear the trees with birdlime, and when the bird was caught to bring it himself to the palace. So the bird was caught and taken to the Prince, who put it in a cage.

As soon as the negress saw the bird she knew it was really the beautiful maiden. She now pretended to be dangerously ill, sent for the chief physicians, and, bribing them, got them to report to the Prince that only by eating a certain kind of bird could she possibly recover.

When the Prince heard that his wife was very ill he called the physicians before him and asked what was to be done. They told him that the Princess could only be cured if a certain kind of bird were given her to eat. "I have lately caught such a bird," said the Prince, and he commanded that the captive should be killed and served up to his wife. But by chance one of the bird's beautiful feathers fell to the floor, and lodged, without anyone observing it, between two planks.

Time passed, and the Prince was still waiting for his wife to turn white. In the palace was an old woman who taught reading and writing to the inmates. One day, being about to ascend the stairs, she espied a bright object. She picked it up, and saw that it was a bird's feather with spots on it that sparkled like diamonds. She took the feather to her own room and stuck it in a crevice in the wall.

One day while she was in attendance at the palace the feather fell from its position, and ere it could reach the floor, behold! it was transformed into a lovely maiden, of dazzling beauty. The maiden swept the floor, cooked the dinner, and put everything in order, after which she resumed the form of a feather and went back to her place on the wall. When the old governess arrived home she was astonished. She looked everywhere, but could find no clue to the riddle.

Next morning while she was in the palace the feather again assumed human form and acted as on the day

before. On the third day the old woman, determined to solve the mystery, instead of leaving her apartments locked the door as though she intended to go to the palace as usual, but hid herself. Soon she saw a maiden in the room, who, after putting everything in proper order, set about the cooking. When all was ready the dame ran in and caught the mysterious maiden and demanded an explanation. The latter related her adventures, telling how the negress had twice taken her life, and how she had come there in the form of a feather.

“Grieve not, my daughter,” said the old dame, consoling her, “I will soon put the matter right.’ She lost no time in going to the Prince, whom she invited to supper the same evening.

After supper coffee was brought in, and as the maiden set down the cups the Prince chanced to look into her face, and immediately swooned away.

When he had been brought to consciousness again he asked who the maiden was. “My servant,” answered the old woman. “Whence have you obtained her?” demanded the Prince. “Will you not sell her to me?” “How can I sell you what already belongs to you?” returned the dame. Taking the maiden by the hand, she led her to the Prince, exhorting him thenceforth to guard his Orange Fairy with more care.

The Prince took his true bride home in triumph to his palace, ordered the negress to instant execution, and celebrated his new wedding feast for forty days and forty nights. This happy end attained, we will once more stretch ourselves on our divan.

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