

## THE KNIFE OF DEATH AND THE STONE OF PATIENCE

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A certain maiden, an unfortunate princess reduced to herding geese, is asked by the king, who is about to leave on a journey, what gifts she would like him to bring her. She requests the knife of death, the whetstone of patience, and the candle that will never burn down. When the king is ready to return home, his horse refuses to move until he remembers to buy these things. The man who sells them to him asks why he wants them, and advises him to pay attention to what the maiden does with them. So the king, hiding, watches her as she speaks to the knife, retelling the entire tale:

I was a girl in a nice house, and when I sewed by the window, a bird came to me and said, 'Why do you sew with gold and silver, you will only marry a dead man.' But I didn't believe it—Knife of death, why do you lie so still? Why don't you stand up and cut my throat?"—Then the knife raised itself up against her throat, and the stone pulled it back. "One day I went out with my friends. Rain came upon us and I went under the door of this castle to get out of the rain.—Knife of death, why do you lie so still? Why don't you stand up and cut my throat?"—Then the knife raised itself up against her throat, and the stone pulled it back. "Then I opened the door and went in. I went through many rooms until I came to the prince and saw the letter [telling her to keep watch], which I held in my hand and read.—Knife of death, why do you lie so still? Why don't you stand up and cut my throat?"—Then the knife raised itself up against her throat, and the stone pulled it back. "And I watched over him for three weeks and three days; then the Gypsy whom he married passed by under the window, and I called to her and asked her to watch for two hours. But she watched for three hours and didn't wake me up. And so the prince married her and made me become a goose girl—Knife of death, can you understand how I watched for three weeks and became a goose girl, and the Gypsy watched only three hours and became a princess?—and still you hesitate, O knife?"

Then the knife rose up against her throat and the whetstone could not hold it back, and the candle burned completely down. But the prince, who had heard everything, cried out, knocked the door in, and grabbed the knife just as it was about to stab the maiden. He took the goose girl into his castle and made her his wife, and he sent the Gypsy to be the goose girl in her place (Hahn, no. 12).

This recitation, in which the heroine's addresses to the self-propelled knife interrupt the recapitulation of the preceding story, occupies almost half of its tale. In *The Types of the Folktale*, this story is first called AT 437, The Needle Prince (The Supplanted Bride) and second, "The Sleeping Prince" parts II and III of AT 894, The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity. A better title is Cosquin's, The Prince in Lethargy;<sup>1</sup> Dawkins calls it, more idiomatically, the Prince in a Swoon. This tale features a woman who has nearly awakened an enchanted prince, when another woman (a passer-by or a slave bought to be a companion) finishes the vigil and, taking all the credit, marries the prince (mot. K1911.1.4 False bride finishes true bride's task and supplants her). The heroine, forced to become a servant in the prince's household, is later recognized when she tells her life story, and she marries the prince.

### SOURCES

*Afghanistan* Dorson 238-242: Spinning, bird prophecy (mot. M353). Door shuts. Remove needles. Patience stone and black-handled knife.

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<sup>1</sup>Emmanuel Cosquin, *Les Contes indiens et l'occident*, Paris, E. Champion, 1922: 98-160.

- Persia* Marzolph Typ 894 (22 variants): Prophecy uttered by teacher, priest, bird, or frog. Door closes. Prince covered with needles (no. 16, must be fanned). Stone of patience (three have dolls).
- Persia* Boulvin 2: 51-55 no. 16: Teacher says she is an unfortunate girl. Must read prayers beside corpse stuck with needles. Patient stone (swells).
- Persia* Lorimer no. 5: Unhappy princess. Door shuts. Watch beside prince covered with needles. Marten-stone and china doll.
- Egypt* Artin Pacha no. 3: Sewing, bird's prophecy. Door shuts. Fan for three years, hours, minutes. Heroine imprisoned. Box of patience, box of sorrows, sword of blood.
- Israel* Noy no. 48: Old man in dream predicts seven years each of hunger, thirst, tending a dead man. Must bathe him. Stone of suffering.
- Turkey* Eberhard-Boratav no. 185 (38 variants): Bird prophecy. Tend for forty days. Stone of patience (swells).
- Turkey* Kúnos Fairy 188-195 = Volksmärchen no. 28: Sewing; bird prophecy. Fan for forty days. Yellow stone of patience, brown-handled knife of patience. The bird returns at the end.
- Turkey* Wagner no. 14 = Haboucha AT 894: Bird prophecy. Door closes. Watch 41 nights. Knife and rope.
- Armenia* Hoogasian-Villa no. 2: Jealous mother as in AT 709; father abandons girl in forest. Must feed prince for seven years. Stone of patience (swells). Mother gives her a ring that renders her unconscious. Husband guards her; healer cures her. Mother dies of rage.
- Greece* Dawkins Modern no. 32, 175-177 (7 variants); 177-179: Gathering herbs with old woman. Burn incense for forty days and nights; same old woman returns at the end of the vigil. Knife of slaughter, rope of hanging, stone of patience.
- Greece* Dawkins More no. 5: Bird prophecy; children gathering herbs. Lament 40 nights and days. Rope of hanging, stone of patience.
- Greece* Garnett 40-45 = Megas no. 29: Sewing; bird prophecy; rides eagle. Must watch for three months, days, weeks, hours, and half-hours. Stone of patience, cord of hanging, knife of slaughter.
- Italy* Calvino no. 32: Old woman says, you will marry a dead man. Watch for a year, three months, a week. Tinderbox, black candle, knife. Life story told again at banquet.
- Spain* Sébillot 7-17 = Boggs \*445B: Red on white (mot. Z65.1); shepherd explains. Wears out iron shoes, directions from cosmic beings, must feed lions. Prince wakes on St. John's Day. Hard stone and branch of bitterness.
- Spain* Espinosa hijo no. 114: the same, but no food for lions.
- Angola* Chatelain no. 1 A: AT 709 I. Red blood on white sugar cane. Old woman directs: take keys from lion's mouth. Fill twelve jugs with tears. Razor sharpen-thyself, stone speaker-of-truth, chain, two dolls (who stop the self-working implements), lamp light-thyself, mirror look-thyself.
- Angola* Chatelain no. 1 B: Blood on sugar cane. Twelve jugs of tears. Lamp light-thyself, razor whet-thyself, scissors cut-yourselves, stone speaker-of-truth, all kept in a magic box. At this point in both these Angolan texts, both the hero and the heroine fall into a swoon, and an old woman revives them.

Many of the objects that the heroine requests are potential suicide weapons. They often speak, urging the heroine to slay herself, hang herself, or, in the case of

the stone, to be patient. In spite of how well a whetstone accords with the sharp knife, the stone is more often one with strange magical properties, a stone that is softened or shattered by the pathetic story of the wronged woman. In Persia (Lorimer), the heroine asks for a marten-stone and says to it, "Either you must break or I must break," until it bursts and oozes blood. Often, the stone of patience swells as the heroine recounts her experiences (Eberhard-Boratav Typ 185); a yellow one hisses and bubbles, foams and finally bursts, leaving only ashes (Kunos), in its anger and indignation at hearing about such injustice. The stone is sometimes dangerous: the man who sells the Armenian stone warns that it distinguishes real from petty grievances: if someone in its presence complains too much about something trivial, the *speaker* will swell up. In a Persian example (Boulvin), if the speaker claims that her patience exceeds that of the stone, she will die: so the prince, who has been told this, rushes in and says to the stone, "No, *you* are patient."

The task required of the heroine varies. In the east, from India to Persia, the enchanted prince is stuck with needles. Sometimes the needles have to be removed, but just as often the heroine has only to watch or pray, and the prince is restored with no particular attention to the needles. In the west where there are no needles, he has to be watched, fanned, or wept over. Any attempt to differentiate between AT 437 and AT 894 II-III is confounded by the many Persian texts that have both the motif of the needle prince and the episode of the Stone of Patience. This tale should not have been listed twice in *The Types of the Folktale*.

Many versions of the Prince in a Swoon do not contain the Stone of Patience episode. Instead, the enslaved heroine has other magic objects that bring her to the attention of the hero. In one from India, the heroine requests a "sun-jewel box," out of which come seven dolls to whom she tells her sad history (Cosquin: 154). In another, she trades a golden spinning wheel (obtained on her journey earlier in the tale) for the right to spend a night with the king, and a gold hen and chickens for a second, during which time she tells him what happened.<sup>2</sup> In the frame tale of Basile's *Pentamerone* (1636), the supplanted bride gives wonderful objects to the queen, one of which causes her to long to hear stories. The heroine, the last of the storytellers invited to entertain the queen, is recognized by the king when he hears her life story. Magic objects are common but not absolutely necessary: in an Albanian tale, the king learns about the substitution from a neighbor who has taken in the princess as her servant (Cosquin: 130). Thus, the Stone of Patience episode, while commonly a part of the Prince in a Swoon, is not essential to that tale.

Cosquin identified eight introductions to The Prince in a Swoon. Several are distinctive episodes, identifiable by their peculiar details. In Egypt, Greece and Turkey, the girl is often sewing at a window when a bird comes and says, "You will marry a dead man" (mot. M353). The bird with this message is, as far as I know, unique to this tale. As in Calvino no. 32, essentially the same prophecy can be uttered also by others. More generally, people—old women, teachers, priests—arouse the interest of both male and female characters in a particular spouse, in a variety of different tales; such an episode is easily fitted into this tale.

Another introduction comes from AT 425, The Search for the Lost Husband (Cosquin: 149-152). Here the heroine is married to the prince earlier in

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<sup>2</sup>Davidson, Sarah, and Phelps, Eleanor, "Folk Tales from New Goa, India", *Journal of American Folklore*, 50 (1937): 1-51, here no. 7, 29-30.

the tale; then, usually because she has broken a prohibition, he leaves her or is taken away from her. She follows him, and, when she has nearly finished a difficult task (such as weeping copiously), a slave woman takes her place. Swahn listed sixteen variants of this subtype, his AT 425G.<sup>3</sup> Of these, however, six have no traces of either the animal bridegroom typical of AT 425, or of a marriage early in the tale: these six are examples of the Prince in a Swoon only, not of AT 425.<sup>4</sup> In the remaining ten, according to Swahn's coding, the wife breaks a prohibition causing the husband to go away; these are certainly examples of the Search for the Lost Husband and deserve to be called AT 425G.

Because of the prevalence of the episode (mot. D2006.1.4) in which the heroine sells interesting, often golden objects to the king's wife in exchange for the privilege of spending several nights with him, Swahn concluded that his subtype B (AT 425A), with that motif, was the source of subtype G. We saw this episode in the tale from Goa and in the *Pentamerone* frame; it appears in four of Swahn's examples of subtype G with the lost husband, from Turkey, Greece, and Portugal. In two variants (both Berber), the heroine tells her life story to servants or children; in two others (Lithuanian and Portuguese), to dolls. The two in which she tells her story to a rope or a stone, Swahn's Gre 7 and RS 4, are our Garnett and Sébillot-Boggs. So the Stone of Patience episode is, based on this material, not a part of AT 425G. Rather, only the central episode of the Prince in a Swoon, in which the heroine finds the prince and loses him to a slave or Gypsy woman, has been incorporated into AT 425.

Swahn believed that subtype G of AT 425 spread from Italy to Greece and Turkey. This assumes that it was created only once. However, the introductory parts vary, following, as Swahn himself noticed, the regional and occasional variations of AT 425. Thus, there are two tales with snake husbands, and one each with an ass, a horse, a dragon, a toad, and a dog. The broken taboos are typical of AT 425: not looking at the husband, not destroying his animal skin. So the combination of AT 425B plus the Prince in a Swoon could easily have been made several times. The woman who loses her rightful husband is a character in both these tales, and in both, there is a place for a vigil which often includes copious weeping. So the combination tale need not have "traveled" much at all. In contrast, two of the husbands (one Greek and one Berber) are monsters that have heads only (no bodies); this is so unusual a detail that a genetic connection between them is more probable.

The Ghoulish Schoolmaster, designated by Thompson as the introduction to AT 894, more often introduces a different tale (Cosquin: 113-119).<sup>5</sup> A girl witnesses her teacher doing something unspeakable—eating a corpse, a dead horse, or another child—and he torments her repeatedly by asking her what she saw (mot. G11.9). She denies that she saw anything (but, often, a shoe she lost proves she was there). Several texts contain an episode in which the heroine finds a place in a merchant's household, but the ghoul breaks the pots, shreds the cloth,

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<sup>3</sup>Jan-Öjvind Swahn, *Cupid and Psyche*, Lund, C. W. K. Gleerup, 1955: 321-324.

<sup>4</sup>They are coded Ber 2 (in which the Prince in a Swoon is buried under many extra details), Gre 7 (Garnett here), RI 3a (Basile's frame tale), RI 32 (a sketchy summary), RI 102 (as in Basile), RS 4 (Sébillot/Boggs here).

<sup>5</sup>Designated AT 710B by Nancy Schmitz, *La Mensongère*, Québec, Les Archives de Folklore 14, Université Laval, 1972. This subtype is more widely spread than her AT 710A, in which the antagonist is female and the child looks into a forbidden room.

or spills the oil, making it look as though the heroine did this. So she is cast out.<sup>6</sup> She marries a prince, but the ogre takes away her children as soon as they are born and smears her mouth with blood, and it is assumed that she ate them. Still she denies that she saw him doing anything, and she is sent to live in a wretched hole. Her innocence is finally revealed when the husband, having concealed himself, sees the ogre in action and kills him (as in Hahn no. 66), or when the ogre turns kindly, or, in the following examples, by the Stone of Patience episode. Often the children are restored to their parents.

SOURCES

- Arabia* Jahn 62-71, no. 11: Cannibal schoolmaster; she loses her anklet. He eats her parents, takes her children. Cup, kernel (swells), knife.
- Egypt* Artin Pacha no. 4: Schoolmaster beats, kills another child. Takes her children. Box of bitterness and sprig of aloe.
- Palestine* Muhawi-Kanaana no. 35: Cannibal teacher, lost shoe. Wreaks havoc in shops. Takes her children. Box of myrrh, switches from pomegranate tree (pp. 364-366: other Palestinian variants have a knife and a box). Children return, interrupt father's wedding.
- Turkey* Eberhard-Boratav no. 154 (5 variants): Cannibal teacher. Takes her children. Stone of patience, knife.
- Turkey* Hanauer 163-167: Poor man sells his three daughters to a stranger who is a cannibal; he stabs the heroine and throws her out to sea in a chest. She marries a sultan. Cannibal takes her children. Aloe (patience), henna (tenderness), dagger. Cannibal gives children back and kills himself. Children wreak havoc, tell their father who they are.
- Greece* Dawkins Modern no. 33 (4 versions): Demonic teacher. Takes her children while her husband is away at war. Knife of slaughter, rope of hanging, stone of patience.
- Algerian coast* Desparmet 343-354: Child promised to ghoul; loses her shoe. Ghoul abducts her, but child escapes. Wreaks havoc with merchandise. Takes her children. Knife; wooden plate that swells with sympathy.
- Berber* Dermenghem 21-29: Schoolmaster eats ass; girl loses her shoe. He kidnaps her but she escapes. Wreaks havoc. Takes her seven children. Stone of patience, knife.
- Spain* Espinosa no. 104: Devil schoolmaster (using a ring) puts maiden in trance, sets her out to sea in a glass coffin.<sup>7</sup> Takes her children. Stone of sorrow and knife of love. Children are not returned.

These tales are symmetrical in several respects: first, the ogre's eating of the schoolchildren is reflected in the (imputed) cannibalism of the heroine-mother. Second, the ogre's repeatedly asking the maiden, "What did you see?" and her repeated denials ("I saw nothing but beauty and grace") parallels the interruptions in the maiden's life story when she asks the stone of patience if all she says is not true. Third, the maiden's spying on the ogre as he abuses or eats a child is repeated in her estranged husband's spying on her as she speaks to the stone.

There are tales of a persecuted heroine which are very similar to these in that they include the destruction of merchandise and/or the mother accused of eating her infants (AT 710 and 712, mot. K2116.1.1.1) but lack the episode of the

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<sup>6</sup>Desparmet, Dermenghem, Muhawi-Kanaana, cf. Hanauer here; Rivière and Braga below. I suggest this be called mot. \*K2122 Ogre destroys merchandise, innocent person blamed.

<sup>7</sup>The schoolmaster sometimes sends the heroine out to sea in a box in Irish examples of AT 710B (Schmitz code V E6, 8, 9).

Ghoulish Schoolmaster. They often begin with the heroine's having to choose whether she will have her sorrows in youth or old age (mot. J214, AT 938A): she chooses to get them over with, and is immediately orphaned or cast out. A few of these include the Stone of Patience.

SOURCES

*Turkey* Eberhard-Boratav no. 154: Incestuous father (2 variants); child promised to ogre (1 variant). Takes her children. Stone of patience, knife.

*Berber* Rivière 201-206: Choice: become an orphan [!] now or later. Angel kills (another's) child; wreaks havoc. Heroine set to marry prince. Pearl of hope, which she puts in her mouth (evidently poisonous).

*Portugal* Oliveira no. 103, 1: 246-248: Sorrows in youth or old age. Marries prince, children taken. Bat and three golden balls (her toys).<sup>8</sup>

*Portugal* Pedroso no. 29: Disappointed beggar prophesies that bird will carry off girl at age 15. This happens; she marries a prince. Her mother-in-law takes her children. Knife and three blue stones (her toys); she tells each stone about one of her three children.

*Portugal* Cardigos & Marques: Princess tends jar of cares. Bird asks, sorrows in youth or old age. Marries prince, children taken. Her jar of cares, brick from her kitchen, knife that cuts to the heart.

*Azores* Braga no. 35, 1: 79-81: Eagle asks, sorrows in youth or old age. Wreaks havoc in bakery. Servant in prince's house; prince goes to get his bride, which is this girl. Stone from (her former) palace.

In addition to the bird above who prophesied that the princess would marry a dead man in the Prince in a Swoon, birds offer the choice between sorrows in youth or old age, and others (Garnett, Pedroso no. 29) kidnap the heroine. Several of the variants (Eberhard-Boratav, Desparmet, Pedroso) begin with one or another manifestation of mot. S211 Child sold (promised) to devil (ogre). This combination results in symmetry: first one mother, then another who is the daughter of the first, is deprived of her child by the same ogre.

The basis of Thompson's AT 894 is a *single* Sicilian text which begins with the Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the girl whose lost shoe proves that she spied on him. He causes her to become ill for seven years, and then to be transported by a cloud to the top of a mountain. She finds the sleeping prince and a letter of instructions, and goes back to get the herb with which she must rub him. She buys a slave who takes her place, and the princess becomes a kitchen maid. The king's marshal (not the king himself) goes on a journey and brings back for her a knife and a stone of patience, which is about to burst when the king interrupts (Gonzenbach no. 11).<sup>9</sup> Another Italian text combines the beginning of AT 938A, the choice between sorrows now or later and the destruction of the merchants' shops, with a seven-year watch over the sleeping prince, the substituted bride, and a stone of passion (which speaks) and a sharp knife (Forster 311-313 no. 12). Because it has misled scholars to believe that the combination of the Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Prince in a Swoon is a common one, the designation AT 894 should either be redefined or discarded.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>In several Irish texts of AT 710B, the children are discovered when they are playing hurley, a bat-and-ball game (Schmitz 77).

<sup>9</sup>Sebastiano Lo Nigro, *Racconti popolari siciliani*, Firenze, L. S. Olschki, 1957, no. 894\*, text a (text b is fragmentary).

<sup>10</sup>Cosquin (113) believed that the separate themes of the Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Prince in a Swoon were joined together because of they shared the final episode of the Stone of Patience.

The ghoulish schoolmaster is terrifying, especially in this time of heightened awareness of child abuse, because we sympathize with the vulnerable child sent to school, out into the world without her family to protect her. Other episodes in this complex of tales also deal with separation and exile: the child abducted by the ogre, the girl cast out because she apparently broke all the merchandise, and the disgraced mother sent to live in the stable or chicken-house. In the near-suicide at the end of the tale, another separation—this one from life—is proposed but is averted. Although the ogre's accusation that the girl indeed saw something significant is a true one, false accusation becomes another repeated theme: the heroine is accused first of breaking all the merchandise, then of eating her children.

In the Ghoulish Schoolmaster tale Espinosa no. 104, the heroine is rendered unconscious and left in a glass coffin (cf. AT 709, Snow White); a Turkish tale (Hanauer) has a similar motif. Likewise, in AT 410, Sleeping Beauty, the heroine is sent into a trance when she is pierced with a pin. In some variants of AT 403 and AT 408, a jealous woman sticks the heroine in the head with a pin and she becomes a bird that speaks.<sup>11</sup> Another member of this loosely-defined complex of tales with magic pins concludes with the episode of the Stone of Patience. An unmarried girl, playing at jumping over a pile of roses, eats a leaf and becomes pregnant. She gives birth to a daughter whom she raises in secret, until a comb or pin stuck into the daughter's head sends her into a deathlike trance. The mother dies, leaving the body in a chest in her brother's care. When the daughter awakes, she is disfigured and forced to be a servant (in the Catalan variants, the pin turns her into a dove). Asked by her uncle what gift she would like, she requests a stone of patience, and the story ends with that episode.

#### SOURCES

*Italy* Basile Day II tale 8: Eats leaf. Fairies bless, one curses: child will die from comb in hair. Seven crystal caskets. Uncle's wife discovers, abuses her. Knife and pumice stone.

*Sardinia* Mango no. 10: Old woman foretells rose pregnancy. Uncle sees girl going to school; mother stabs her with pin and puts her in a box. Uncle's wife opens box, revives girl. Whetstone and sharp knife.

*Mallorca* Salvator 73-81: Eats leaf. Daughter sings, My mother was a rose. Uncle spills needles onto her head. Mother removes all but one. Uncle revives her. Blooming myrtle-branch, knife, heart of stone.

*Catalonia* Amades Rondallistica no. 173 = Contes 13-26: Bride test of jumping over king's rose-covered bed; young widow eats petal. Daughter goes to school, sings, My parents are roses. King brings needles to girls, throws them at this girl. Witch takes one, turns her into a dove. Dove requests breaking-heart stone that laughs and cries, flowering fern that gives life and death. King removes pin, dove becomes maiden.

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Espinosa (no. 104) and Dawkins (Modern nos. 32-33) also identify two separate tales. To me, they seem to have been stuck together rather clumsily: the ghoulish, in other cases so tenacious, here loses interest in his victim once he has sent her away.

<sup>11</sup>Unfortunately this episode has no place in either the tale type or the motif index. Mot. D723.3\* Disenchantment by removing pins from head. Prince removes pins from dove and dove regains her human form, has been suggested by Quino E. Martinez, *Motif-Index of Portuguese Tales*, Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1955. In addition to Cosquin's numerous examples of magic pins (58-218), see Schmitz 81.

*Catalonia* Amades Contes 257-259: Same bride-test. King offers gifts, throws needles at daughter, who becomes a bird. Bird demands feathers of bird of yes and no, leaves of tree of no more and also, dust of stone of maybe and who knows.

*Portugal* Pedroso no. 15: Girl sleeps in rose garden. Sends daughter to school but forbids her to make herself known; when this happens, mother stabs her. Aunt discovers, abuses her. She requests a talisman.

Pregnancy caused by magical means, particularly eating fruit, is quite common in folktales, but the mother is usually a married woman who longs for a child. The fact that this tale is rare (Cosquin knew of no parallels for Basile's version) is surely due at least in part to the discomfort of audiences and narrators over the character of the unmarried mother. The illegitimate daughter must be raised in secret, and several texts make it clear that the mother does away with her daughter because the daughter has attracted her uncle. As far as I know, it was the eminent folklorist Walter Anderson who first noticed that this tale is a traditional type (Amades Contes 257).<sup>12</sup> Ralston (commenting on Pedroso no. 15) said that it "seems to be a mixture of several story-scrap," and Penzer (commenting on Basile II 8) noticed only separate motifs familiar from other tales. However, the virgin pregnancy, especially in connection with the bit of rose, is quite distinctive. In spite of such fantastic physiology, the tale's depiction of the shame of the unmarried mother constitutes a powerful warning for girls to avoid accidental pregnancy.

When the Stone of Patience episode is at its best, it provides a dramatic opportunity for the pathetic heroine to recount her woes slowly, in a formulaic monologue or dialogue with the stone, as we saw at the beginning of this article. But it can also be abridged. In the Mallorcan Rose Maiden tale, the heroine says only (but she says it twice, witnessed first by a servant, then by the king),

"Oh heart of stone, why do you not kill me?"

Oh blooming sprig of myrtle, why do you not take my life?

Oh knife with two parts, why do you not take away my sorrow?"

Where the image of a stone bursting from sympathy is weak, the motif is subject to alteration in two directions. It can be amplified, as in the Angolan and Catalan tales, or reduced, as it is in Portugal. Except that the heroine's account reflects the tale up to that point, the episode has not developed peculiarities suited to the different tales that it concludes.<sup>13</sup> In virtually all its occurrences, the king, leaving on a journey, asks the heroine what he should bring her (he often intends to bring gifts to all the women in his household). The episode has a couple of interesting but optional details. Sometimes his ship will not sail home until the king obtains the objects.<sup>14</sup> In several cases, the man who sells them to him,

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<sup>12</sup>Additional variants are listed in Karl Reichl, "Geduldstein," in Kurt Ranke *et. al.* (eds.), *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, 5, Berlin, Walther de Gruyter, 1977ff.,: 821-824.

<sup>13</sup>The Catalan Rose Maiden tales retain the pun of *falzia* 'fern' on *falsia* 'imposter', even though they have no imposter.

<sup>14</sup>Mot. D1654.6: Kunos; Eberhard-Boratav no. 185; Artin Pacha nos. 3, 4; Dawkins Modern no. 33, More no. 5; Jahn; Calvino; Basile II 8; Mango; Amades no. 173. Cf. Hahn no. 12 (horse will not move); Chatelain A (returns to buy objects); Muhawi-Kanaana (camels become ill).



knowing that they are potentially deadly, warns him to watch what the recipient will do with them.<sup>15</sup>

Stones, inert and unyielding, do seem to be eternally patient. They are often contrasted with soft, good things, as in the phrase “a heart of stone” (Zechariah 7.12) and in the idea of giving a hungry beggar a stone instead of bread (Matthew 7.9; Luke 11.11). In traditional medicine, several things are called stones that are not, or are not what they are purported to be, for example, swallow stones, snake stones, toad stones, and eagle stones, all of which are accorded magical-medical properties. In America, madstones (obtained from the stomachs of cattle) are used especially for dog bites; I have seen small succulent plants (more rounded than aloe) offered for sale as “living stones,” as well as chemical “magic rocks” that grow in water, and gelatinous candy shaped and colored to look like rocks. All of these things play with the concept of a stone.

The idea of telling one’s troubles to a stone that would burst was known in ancient Iran, mentioned in a poem by the tenth-century poet Rudaki. The motif was made into a popular song there as recently as the 1960’s (Boulvin 1: 53f.). Eberhard and Boratav (no. 185) connect the stone of patience with the healing plant aloe, which is called *sari habr*, yellow patience; its flowers burst open with a sharp crack. Very likely, an analogy or expression like this first suggested the idea of a stone of patience; certainly it helps to maintain the episode. In Arabic, *habr* means not only aloe and patience, but also myrrh, a substance exuded, like tears, from slits in the bark of a certain shrub, and which is known for its bitter taste and valued for its fragrance and medicinal properties. The English words myrrh and myrtle both come from the Arabic *murr* ‘bitter’. It appears that some of the variation in this episode has been introduced by translations that have to be more precise than the texts were in their original languages. In contrast to the stability of the image of the stone of patience in the Middle East, Portuguese tradition does not preserve any such phrase: the lonely heroine wants her childhood possessions or a stone from her parents’ house—either way, a remembrance of her youth—or she asks simply for a talisman.

Regardless of whether the Stone of Patience episode is well-developed, reduced, or absent, in all these tales the true bride (or the fact of her innocence) has to come to the attention of her rightful husband or protector. (In the Prince in a Swoon, even though the deceitful slave helped to disenchant him, there is never any doubt that the heroine is entitled to marry him.) This is the case in several other tale types, including AT 313C, AT 425, and AT 408; AT 403, 450, and 533; and AT 870. Many different motifs are employed to bring about this recognition. One of the simplest is mot. H11.1 Recognition by telling life history. In the Stone of Patience, the heroine is indeed recognized (in most cases) when she tells her life history. More particularly, there is mot. H13 Recognition by overheard conversation (usually with animals or objects), and its subdivision H13.2.2, Recognition by overheard conversation with stone. Although “life history” is often a more accurate description than “conversation,” the last is the best designation for the Stone of Patience episode.

But the Stone of Patience is not just a detail motif: it is not simply anyone conversing with any stone. It is a well-developed, easily-recognized episode that includes the request for the stone (knife, etc.), the journey for its purchase (with, optionally, the stopped ship and the warning from the merchant), the spying to see

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<sup>15</sup>Boulvin; Noy; Hoogasian-Villa; Hahn no. 12; Calvino; Sébillot/Boggs; Dermenghem. Cf. Chatelain A (prince’s mother tells him the slave is the mistress); Rivière (prince’s father fears she will kill him).

what happens, the dramatic recounting of the life story, and the interrupted suicide. While some scholars believe that the Stone of Patience episode belongs more to the tale of the Prince in a Swoon than to that of the Ghoulish Schoolmaster,<sup>16</sup> it looks to me like a quasi-independent entity, equally fitted for any of several tales. While it can never be a whole tale in itself, it is not necessary to either the Ghoulish Schoolmaster or the Prince in a Swoon; it does seem to be necessary to the Rose Maiden, but is unlikely to have originated there.

In the Stone of Patience, the heroine is given more or less wonderful objects that, sometimes, reply to her or animate themselves. In the Speaking Birds episode of AT 313C (mot. D2006.1.3), the heroine makes birds or dolls that not only animate themselves, but also tell her life story in a lively dialogue.<sup>17</sup> In an episode shared by AT 403 and AT 408, the heroine, pierced by a pin and turned into a bird, sings a plaintive song based on her circumstances and those of the false wife and her husband (Martinez mot. D723.3\*). In the Buying Three Nights episode of AT 425A and AT 313C, the heroine receives wonderful self-animated or golden objects; and she trades these objects for time with her husband, who is drugged so he will sleep. He is at this point unconscious, just as the prince in a swoon is when the heroine sets about to disenchant him. All of these recognition episodes share certain patterns and details, but each has been developed differently. Much as I would like for someone to discover whether they have all developed from a single source, and what that source (or sources) must have been, the tales and their variants are so changeable that I think it would be easier to weep twelve jugs full of tears.

All of these episodes are more dramatic, more interesting, and certainly more memorable than simply having a character retell what has already happened in the tale. Although in some of the printed examples the episodes are brief, they all obviously can be narrated very effectively, either as monologues interspersed with background narration, or with different voices for the different characters. Each of these episodes adds to the heroine's role in the tale. Of all these disappointed brides, the heroine in the Stone of Patience is the most pathetic. Rather than attempt, as the others do, to save herself and contact her lover, she is on the point of killing herself when the king intervenes. So this episode is especially fitting for tales, such as the Ghoulish Schoolmaster, that portray prolonged suffering. The heroine in the Prince in a Swoon had earlier showed considerable self-reliance; her near-suicide at the end shows how desperate she has become. The enslaved Rose Maiden too seeks to end her miserable life. It is often said that these tales, which are told primarily by females, encourage girls and women to suffer patiently.<sup>18</sup> However, the episode of the Stone of Patience confronts the problem of a limit to the tolerance for suffering. In spite of the fact that the heroine's chief virtue is her capacity for endurance, she improves her lot only when she runs out of patience and complains about the injustice which she has suffered. All of these tales admit the possibility that suicide may be the best

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<sup>16</sup>Dawkins Modern 181. Georgios Megas, "Die Novelle vom Menschenfressenden Lehrer," in *Demologia e Folklore: Studi in Memoria de Giuseppe Cocchiara*, Palermo, S. F. Flaccovio, 1974: 197-208.

<sup>17</sup>Christine Goldberg, "The Forgotten Bride (AaTh 313C)," *Fabul.*, 33 (1992): 39-54, esp. 43-45. The dialogue between the birds can be virtually identical to that between the heroine and the stone of patience. Espinosa no. 122 (Boggs \*706B) is an example of AT 313C that ends with the Stone of Patience instead of the Speaking Birds.

<sup>18</sup>R. M. Dawkins, "The Story of Griselda," *Folk-Lore*, 60 (1949): 363-374. Megas "Novelle" 200. Dorson 238.

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way out of an intolerable situation — and then sharply alter the heroine's circumstances so that she gets everything she had ever wanted.

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