TURKEY

This story has several classic elements found in many tales. First, there’s the powerful ruler who’s in search of a suitable husband for his daughter. Then there’s the young man who triumphs despite what others think of him. Last but not least, there’s a happy-ever-after ending.

The Most Wonderful Gift

Long, long ago there lived a mighty sultan who loved his only daughter dearly. When the time came for her to marry, the sultan began to search for a suitable husband. How would he choose just one from among the many eligible princes of neighboring kingdoms? The sultan thought this over, then decided to send out a proclamation that read, “The prince who brings me the most wonderful gift in the world shall have my daughter’s hand in marriage.”

You can just imagine the rare and precious gifts the anxious young princes brought before the mighty sultan. There were rainbow-colored pearls from the deepest ocean beds that brought rain when tossed into the air. There were trees that bore pomegranates with seeds of purest gold, and birds in cages whose songs were guaranteed to banish sadness. The sultan thanked the princes for their gifts, but none of the gifts stood out above the rest.

It so happened that in a land far away there lived three princes—
The two older brothers scorned the youngest prince when they saw he had purchased a mere lemon—and for a whole sack of gold!

"Ah, the juice from one of these lemons will cure any illness there is," the merchant replied. "The prince considered this for a moment, and then bought one of the lemons.

"What makes these lemons so wonderful?" he asked the merchant.

He had never been for the lemon seller before. "Wonderful lemons!"

"Yes, sir," the prince replied, having left the bazaar empty-handed.

The youngest brother had a more difficult time making up his mind.

"Prince, pay for the carper with half my gold," theMIEd to the second

"Surely there is no other girl," declared the second

"This is truly a special girl!"

where in the world could see what was happening any-

a small mirror in which a person choosing a girl. He was intrigued by

The eldest brother wasted no time

bazaar, or marketplace, each carrying a sack filled with gold.

They walked from their home to the

brothers, in fact—who were all of marrying age. When they learned
They had always suspected their kindhearted brother wasn’t that smart. But there wasn’t much time to tease him, for at that moment the eldest brother was showing off his mirror, and what should they see in its glass but the sultan’s daughter, lying deathly pale in her bed.

“Quickly!” commanded the second brother. “Let us travel there at once!” The three brothers climbed onto the flying carpet, and before they knew it they found themselves at the sultan’s palace. They were met by the sultan, who had tears in his eyes. “Please go away,” he begged. “My daughter, the princess, is gravely ill.”

The youngest brother stepped forward and spoke. “Sire,” he said, bowing low, “please accept this lemon. Its juice will cure your daughter of whatever ails her.”

Well, by now you’ve probably guessed that indeed the princess was cured by this magical lemon. The sultan was delighted and thanked the brothers. Only then did he ask, “But what brings you three here today?”

The eldest brother spoke first. “We have come to ask for your daughter’s hand in marriage. Each of us has brought a gift. May I show you mine?” He handed the mirror to the sultan, explaining, “This is the mirror in which we saw that the princess was ill, your Majesty. Not only that, with this mirror you will be able to keep an eye on your entire kingdom. I think you will agree it is a most worthy gift.”

“Ah, yes,” admitted the sultan, “your mirror played a most important role in saving my beloved daughter. And it would make my job as ruler a good deal simpler.”

“But,” interrupted the second brother, “were it not for my gift, the flying carpet, we would not have been able to travel here so swiftly. This same carpet will take you anywhere you choose to go, in less time
Once, a magnificent wedding followed by a long and happy marriage.

And so the youngest prince and the princess were married. Then, blessings upon you and your daughters, hand in marriage, with my heart and soul.

"Quite right you are," exclaimed the sultan. "Hoping that this daughter restored my life, and surely life is the most wonderful gift of all.

The other brothers began to laugh, and the sultan himself could not help but smile. It was at that moment that the princess spoke.

"The youngest prince held up what was left of the lemon. "This asked, "And what else have you brought?"

"Traveling about my vast domain," Turning to the youngest prince, he saved her, "said the sultan. "This carpet would prove very useful for than my own."

"True, my daughter was very close to death, and your speedy arrival than if takes you to snap your fingers. I believe there is not a better gift.