

תקצירי סיפורים | עיבוד: שמעון אדף
Story Synopses | Adapted by Shimon Adaf

רוני פחימה ובתיה קולטון
הקוף למד לארוג
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Monkey at the Loom

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Monkey at the Loom

A Syrian folktale tells of a monkey, whose master wanted to teach how to weave. But the monkey refused to get to work, even when beaten vigorously. Finally, the master brought in a sheep, and pretended to teach it the craft of weaving. When it failed to do so, he slaughtered it. And the frightened monkey immediately sat down at the loom and started weaving assiduously.

The Three Sisters

Three old sisters lived in a house together, and although they worked from morning to night sewing, they remained extremely poor. One day, a wealthy man came by and ordered a wedding dress for his daughter, and they created an exquisitely beautiful dress. When they finished their work, however, they started talking about their plight. The first one complained, the second one cried, and the third had only just opened her mouth when a stream of blood burst out of it and stained the dress. When the wealthy man came to collect the dress and saw the blood stain, he yelled at the sisters and refused to pay them their fee. The sisters sighed and said, "If only the third sister had spewed blood before the second sister had cried, we would have been able to wash the dress with the second sister's tears."

Based on S.Y. Agnon's "Three Sisters," in *Forevermore & Other Stories* trans. Evelyn Abel (Jerusalem: The Toby Press, 2017)

The Three Spinners

Many years ago, a queen passed by the house where a mother and her lazy daughter lived. To hide her child's laziness, the mother lied and told the queen that her daughter was an accomplished spinner. The queen took the girl, and put her in three rooms filled with flax. "Spin it," she told her, "and if you do it well, I will marry you off to my son." The girl sat and wept. As she sat bewailing her fate, three spinners approached her, each with a glaring physical defect. The girl told them her predicament, and they replied that they were willing to spin the flax for her, on condition that they were invited to her wedding. The girl agreed. The three women then spun the piles of flax into beautiful fabric. The queen, amazed by the girl's talent, kept her promise – and the girl kept her own, by inviting the three spinners to her wedding. At the end of the wedding, the prince wondered who were his bride's strange guests, and when she introduced them, he asked about their physical defects. And they explained: one woman's foot had become puffy from repeated pressing on the loom pedal; another's lower lip drooped from repeated licking of the thread; and the third woman's thumb had swollen from repeated rolling of the thread. Alarmed, the groom relieved his new wife of having to spin flax ever again.

From Brothers Grimm's Fairy Tales

The Three Fates

The story about the three sister Fates is known among many nations. The ancient Greeks knew them as Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. The fate of all life lies in their hands, in the form of a thread that represents the lifespan of every creature: Clotho spins it, Lachesis measures its length, and Atropos, the eldest, cuts the thread, determining when the spinning of life ends.

The Spellcoats

Tanaqui and her four brothers were forced to flee their homes and embark on a journey along the river. They encountered many obstacles, perils, and natural disasters along the way. Tanaqui wove all the trials and tribulations of their journey into wondrous woolen spellcoats.

Based on Diana Wynne Jones, *The Spellcoats* (London: Macmillan, 1979)

Khavroshechka

A while ago, in some place away from here, there lived an orphan girl by name of Khavroshechka. A woman took her in, and in short order made her a slave to her and her three daughters. Every morning she charged her with all the household chores, and once even went as far as to demand that she spin an enormous amount of flax. Khavroshechka went to her only friend, the spotted cow in the meadow, and laid out her troubles before her. "Go into one ear of mine, and crawl out the other," the cow said to her. So Khavroshechka did so, and as she emerged from the other ear, behold, the flax was spun, its threads woven into cloth. But the wicked woman was sorely vexed by Khavroshechka's success, so one by one she sent her three daughters – the one-eyed one, the two-eyed one, and the three-eyed one – to spy on her. With the first two, Khavroshechka was able to foil the wicked mother's plans by singing the girls to sleep. But when she sang for the third, only two of her three eyes closed, and Khavroshechka's secret was revealed. The wicked mother ordered her husband to slaughter the cow. When Khavroshechka heard this, she burst into tears. The cow, however, reassured her, and told her to bury its bones in a field and water them regularly. Over time, an apple tree grew from the bones. One morning, a horseman passed by and, craving an apple, asked the women to pick and serve him one. But the tree kept pulling its branches away from the three sisters whenever they tried to reach the apples, and only extended its branches toward Khavroshechka. In exchange for the apple she gave him, the horseman married her.

Based on a Russian folk tale

The Weaver

In a faraway land there once lived a diligent and poor weaver woman. From morning to night she toiled over her craft, providing for her three sons. One day, when she came to the market to sell her wares, her eye caught a picture of a landscape of a lake and trees. She was so taken with the sight that she became obsessed with it and ceased to work. Her youngest son, concerned by her distress, suggested that she weave the wonderful scene, and she heeded his advice. But when the work was complete and she held up the cloth to display it, a gust of wind suddenly blew up and snatched it away from her. However, the weaver did not lose hope. She sent her three sons, one by one, to look for the cloth. Each in turn met an old woman on his way, who told him that it was the fairies who had stolen the cloth, and instructed him how to find them. "A magical stone horse is waiting to carry you there, above the perils and mortal hazards, but it will only come to life when you pull out your own teeth and place them in its mouth." The two older sons balked at the task, but not the youngest: his love for his mother filled him with determination, and he followed the old woman's instructions to the letter, and flew on the stone horse to the fairies' abode. The fairies hurried out to greet him, and explained that the sight of the landscape in the wonderful cloth had made them covet it, so they were busy copying it, and that while he waited for that work to be finished, he had to perform several tasks. The youngest son refused to wait that long, and in the middle of the night he snatched the cloth from their possession and fled. Returning to the old woman, he took his teeth back, and hurried to his mother's home. There, the mother and her loyal son spread out the cloth, and the landscape, which still had a hint of fairy charm attached it, turned into reality—a peaceful cabin and a lake. The mother and son entered it, and found that one of the fairies, who had managed to weave herself into the margins of the cloth, was waiting for them in it. The fairy then married the youngest son, and if they have not yet died, they are living happily ever after in the enchanted landscape.

Based on a Chinese fairy tale
