

"The Bald Miller" - A Folktale

Once upon a time, in the old days, somewhere here in the village, there lived an old man who had a single, precious son. When he realized he was at the end of his days, he said: "My child, before I close my eyes forever, I want to give you some advice. Never grind wheat at a bald miller's!"

The old man passed away soon after, and the son, at some point, needed to grind wheat. He loads the sacks on his donkey and heads to Mallionta, where the watermills stood and ground grain. He goes to the nearest mill, and oh! He sees that the miller is bald! He remembers his late father's words. What to do? He finds an excuse and heads to the next mill. However, at that time, there were millers who owned more than one mill! Before he reaches the second mill with his donkey, there he sees the same bald miller, who had gone ahead of him on the path! He finds another excuse, saying: "I'll go to the mill below!"

When he reaches the third mill, there he is again face to face with the bald miller!

He says to himself: "I won't be able to avoid going around all day in this Mallionta!" He unloads the donkey, and soon the wheat from the sacks falls with a steady pace between the millstones!

As the mill grinds and the flour falls, the cunning miller says: "Shall we take some of your flour to make some fried doughnuts?" The young man agrees with joy. The miller says: "I'll add water, you add flour, and we'll make dough!" The cunning miller adds a lot of water, saying: "Add flour so that the dough comes together!"

The young man adds flour, but soon the dough becomes too thick with flour! The miller says: "Now that it's become like this, we can't make doughnuts... Let's make bread instead!" The young man agrees.

They put the dough in the oven, and as the bread rises and bakes, the miller says: "Now, regarding the payment for the grinding... How about we make a bet?" "What kind of bet?" the young man asks. "Well, whoever tells the biggest lie will take all the bread!" The young man agrees, and the miller starts telling his story:

"When my grandfather was alive, we had a garden, and we planted a quince tree. I was small then. The tree grew, and it produced a quince, oh boys, as big as Mount Agios Ilias!" (Agios Ilias is one of the highest mountains in the area). And he continues: "And believe me, the branches of the quince tree reached and touched Chios across the sea!!!" "Okay, let me tell you this one!" The young man starts telling his story:

"Well, back in the days of my grandfather, I can hardly remember, we had 40 beehives - 40 beehives full of bees! Each hive had 40,000 bees inside. Every evening,

my grandfather would measure them as they returned from grazing, and he'd measure them again. One evening, while measuring them, one bee was missing! 'Oh my!' He says. 'Tomorrow morning, we'll go find that bee!' And that's what happened...

We climbed up, I don't know how high, to my grandfather's quince tree and opened it up! From there, we saw our bee on the island of Chios! It had gone to help a man from Chios who was threshing wheat on the threshing floor!

"Oh, what are we going to do now?" I ask my grandfather, 'We'll go to Chios and get it!' he said. We stepped on the branches of my grandfather's quince tree, and before we knew it, we reached Chios! Our bee was threshing... We found the man from Chios, and we said, 'Hey, friend, that bee belongs to us!' The man didn't object; He was kind. 'Boys,' he said, 'yesterday our beloved mule died... Who will pull the plow now? What can we do? We need that bee to help us finish threshing and then you can take it!'

"And that's what happened! We finished threshing, and they paid us 40 sacks of wheat as payment! My grandfather was overjoyed! Now, we had to head back... Meanwhile, your quince tree had dried so much, and we couldn't step on the branches anymore; they wouldn't hold us! My grandfather took off one of his shoes and made it into a boat! We loaded the wheat, got in with the bee, and started our journey back. The bee made oars with its wings and sails with its antennae! As we sailed, we saw Lesbos and landed at Chrousos. My grandfather put his shoe back on, we loaded the wheat and rode the bee without realizing that, we arrived at Mallionta!

"My grandfather caught the bee to put it in the hive, but it got stuck, and its neck got hurt! The Chian's collar on the bee had a scratch, a flaw, and it hurt our bee's neck! 'What are we going to do now, Grandma?' I asked.

He said, 'We'll go to an old man who knows about these things! He lives in Lifkou Rachaki, and he'll advise us'.

So we went. He told us "you will find an empty walnut and you will smash it until it becomes cream, then you will apply it on the injury so that the bee will be healed. "

We wandered a lot but all the trees had good nuts. Fortunately, we found one at the top of one tree. But it was not enough. "what are we going to do grandad?"

He things and says "Can you see this field? it is recently dug. We will take soil and make balls as big as we can and we will aim at the nut so that it falls down".

We tried so many times with no result. We threw again , and with a bit of luck... we hit the green walnut! We made an ointment, and the bee healed, returning to its hive.

But with all the clods of earth we threw from the other side, a 40-acre field was created! My grandfather said: "We'll plant watermelons here!" We plowed, planted, and in two months, the watermelons grew bigger than the bread we baked! We waited for them to ripen so we could eat them.

But one evening, a rabbit came and ate the ripe ones!

My grandmother said: "We'll lay an ambush tonight and catch it!"

One evening, we hid behind a bush and saw the rabbit approaching. It spotted the ripe watermelon, and it opened a hole, went inside, and ate it!

We ran, and my grandfather stuck one hand in the hole and grabbed the rabbit's neck!!! I was overjoyed! He said: "We'll make meatballs of it and feed all the people of Mallionta!"

Oh boys, as my grandmother was slaughtering the rabbit, she found a piece of paper inside its belly! He took it, opened it, and read it out loud: "Alpha-beta, alpha-beta-alpha-beta... And at the end, it said: 'And the cunning miller shouldn't eat even a piece of pie!!'" And he took all the bread from the young man, loaded it on the donkey, and with great joy, they returned to the village!

The bald miller became a laughingstock, and people would point at him with their mouths open, still amazed! And the years passed and they lived happily ever after....