

The Wife's One Wish

Adapted by Mistress Dervila ni Leanon

Based on A Harvest of World Folktales, page 554

Jewish

Time: About 2:58

Once there was a man who wanted a divorce. He loved his wife dearly, but they had been married for ten years and had no children. Jewish law allows divorce in those conditions, and the man's desire for an heir was greater than his love for his wife, so he went to Rabbi Simon. But Rabbi Simon did not like divorce. So the Rabbi tried to persuade the man to stay married, and when that failed, he said,

"When you were married, you had a feast and a celebration. You should do the same for your divorce. So go home, have a feast and a celebration, and come back to me tomorrow. Then I will grant you the divorce."

[scratch head] The man thought this was odd, but he said

"If that is what I must do, I will do it."

So he went home and did as Rabbi Simon said. During the feast he drank some wine. *[pause]* Then he drank some more. *[pause]* And then he drank even more. Finally he turned to his wife and said

[somewhat drunkenly] "My dear beloved, I am only divorcing you because I want an heir. So to show my love for you, I will allow you to take your favorite item from our house to your father's house."

[upset] "Why, thank - *[suddenly cheerful, face lights up with idea]* Ah! Thank you, husband, I will do just as you say."

The wine continued to flow freely, and soon many guests were asleep - as well as the host. When the wife saw this, *[big smile]* she was very pleased indeed.

The husband woke up the next morning, *[look around]* looked around, and said

"Where on earth am I?"

"You are in my father's house."

"Wife! What am I doing here?"

"You said I could take my favorite item from our house to my father's house. And so I did. *[a little shyly]* That item is you."

[sappy smile] At this the husband's heart melted, and he decided he did not want a divorce. And so they remained happily married to the end of their days.

Full bibliography of source:

*Rugoff, Milton, editor. A Harvest of World Folk Tales. New York: Viking Press, 1949. SBN:
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