

# A Tale of a Brave Daughter

*by Zebuniso Rasulzade*

**D**ear daughter, I'll tell you a tale from the past  
That our ancestors have passed down to us.  
In olden times, a Shah grew old and took to bed,  
His eyesight failed, just like his legs.  
He knew a healer, a renowned doctor,  
But he lived far away, Shah had only a daughter.  
"Why would God not give me a son?  
I could be cured if I had just one."  
Brave daughter said: "Father, do not fret.  
I know, with a son, your needs could be met.  
I'll get the potion, Father dear,  
I'll be back in time, never fear."  
The Shah agreed, sent her off with great fanfare.  
He gave her dua and she saddled her mare.  
By dusk she arrived at an old cottage on the way,



Now feeling tired, she decided to stay.  
The old woman in the house was lying in bed,  
She was emaciated, a scarf wrapped round her head.  
She told the girl, "I am sick, please bring me water.  
I see you're a kind and careful daughter."  
The girl brought water and a loaf of bread,  
And helped her to drink by lifting her head.  
"How can I help or advise, my dear?  
Don't keep secrets from me, let me lend an ear..."  
The girl told her about her journey's aim,  
And the old woman felt the young girl's pain.  
She said, "I support your mission, my dear,  
You should know this is a dangerous idea.  
A doctor will only give the potion, you see,  
To the one who brings seeds from the magical tree.  
These seeds are hidden by Monster Div,  
Tight inside his sleeve they do live.  
Many men have fought this monster for the seeds,  
Many have died, it is impossible to succeed..."  
"Oh, Grandma, I'm grateful for your guidance, to hear,  
To take on Div I have no fear,  
For I am braver than many a man,  
And for my Father, I will do all that I can."  
The old woman replied, "Such bravery succeeds!  
Let me tell you how to get the seeds.  
When you come to Div's castle,  
You'll see his servants and many a vassal.  
Monster Div treats them badly, that is true,

But if you are kind instead, they will help you.  
Quickly run, my girl, when you get the seeds.  
When Monster Div chases, don't lose your speed.  
Take this magic mirror and throw it behind your back,  
And it will stop him cold in his track."

\* \* \*

The brave daughter thanked her, riding off in the night,  
And in the distance she saw a dark looming sight.  
In front of her stood Monster Div's castle,  
Everywhere she looked was a servant and vassal.  
They were exhausted, miserable and terribly weak;  
They were so hungry, they could hardly speak.  
The girl brought them cheese, water and bread.  
They drank and they ate. "Thank you," they said.

\* \* \*

She lit a great fire with sparks of orange and red.  
While they warmed she listened, to all they said:  
"Is it magic tree seeds that bring you to this terrible place?"  
"Yes, to save my Father, it's a life-or-death race."  
"If you hide in Div's bedroom, once he falls asleep,  
You can take the seeds, when his snoring is deep."

\* \* \*

Monster Div arrived, more frightening than she had feared.  
He came in, demanded dinner and guzzled tankards of beer.  
Then Div stormed to his bedroom to take his rest.  
The girl controlled her fear, watching his heaving chest.  
A quarter of an hour passed, she crept over to look,

With both his eyes closed, the seeds swiftly she took.  
Not a moment longer in the room did she stay,  
Out the door to her horse and galloped away.

\* \* \*

Monster Div awoke and shouted aloud.  
He was angry and brooding like a heavy storm cloud.  
He ordered to his servants, “Stop her, catch that thief!  
She has stolen the seeds! That’s an order from your chief!”  
The servants said, “No, we will not obey!  
She’s saving her father; we won’t block her way!”  
All alone Monster Div chased fast at her heels,  
Just one inch closer, the horse’s tail he could feel.  
In that moment, the mirror, behind her she threw,  
And a river appeared—deep, dark and blue.  
With a splash Div fell in, the girl turned around,  
She reached out her arm too late, Div had drowned.

\* \* \*

With the seeds in her pocket, she rode three days and nights,  
Arriving to the very Doctor she’d had in her sights.  
“I could make your potion, but I need you to bring  
The magic seeds—which for a girl, I expect, is an impossible thing.”  
“I’ve brought them!” she proudly replied.  
“The monster, I’m afraid, fell in the river and died.”  
The Doctor was shocked, he leaned back to crow!  
“Let’s plant them, and into healing herbs they will grow.  
While we wait, stay here, I will teach you all that I know,  
About cures and healing before you must go.”

\* \* \*

With the potion ready, it was time to head home,  
The Doctor bid her farewell at the crack of dawn.  
The girl she came back, her Father's greatest treasure,  
The Shah smiled with joy, relieved beyond measure.  
She gave him the potion, he recovered remarkably soon,  
She told of her adventures, how she rode under the moon.  
The Brave Daughter had saved the Shah just as she had planned,  
She had cured her Father and learned much from travelling the lands.  
She ruled for a long time, she was wise and just,  
And now her wisdom is passed on to us.