

Story 688 (1979, Tape 1

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The Padişah's Mute Daughter Speaks to Solve a Dilemma

Once there was and once there was not a padişah who had a mute daughter. The padişah announced that he would give his daughter in marriage to any man who could make her speak. Many men came to the palace and tried to make the girl talk, all of them had failed. One day a poor man presented himself before the padişah and declared that he thought he could make her speak.

The padişah said to him, "If you can do this, I shall not only give you my daughter, but I shall also provide all of worldly needs, though I cannot assume any responsibility you in the afterlife. That is your own responsibility."

"Very well, my padişah," said this poor man. Then turning to the curtain behind which the princess sat, he said to her, "I am going to tell you a story, and I want you to pay close attention to it.

"Once there was and once there was not a time when there were three friends in a certain village: a hoca, ^{*the priest*} a tailor, ^{*Sen*} and a carpenter. ^{*Sen*} All three of them were poor men, and one day they decided to take a journey together in search of employment. The hoca took his book; the tailor took his

Story 688

sewing machine;¹ and the carpenter took his box of tools. By the end of the first day they had reached a level place on top of a mountain, and they decided to spend the night there and then continue on their journey in the morning.

"Resting there for a while, they decided to gather some wood and make a fire. After sitting by this fire for a while, they grew sleepy and prepared for bed. In order to avoid being attacked by bandits, they agreed to take turns guarding their camp. The carpenter volunteered to keep watch first.

"After sitting there on guard for a while, the carpenter grew bored, and he began to feel drowsy. He arose, took his saw, and cut down a large tree in the nearby forest. After thinking for some minutes about what to do with the tree, he finally decided to carve from its trunk the figure of a human being. After working carefully for some time, he completed carving from the log the perfect likeness of a human male. Standing this wooden statue against a tree he went and awakened the tailor: 'Get up, friend! It is your turn to stand guard.

"The carpenter went to sleep after the tailor had arisen and taken his place. After sitting before the fire for a while, the tailor looked up and saw a man standing

¹In view of the known antiquity of this tale, the sewing machine is clearly an anachronism.

Story 688

leaning against a tree. He spoke to this man, but the man made no reply, nor did he move at all. The tailor rubbed his eyes and looked again. This time he was able to see that it was a man of wood, apparently carved by the carpenter and left there standing against the tree. After thinking about it for a short while, the tailor concluded that the carpenter must have made it as a challenge to him, just to demonstrate his skill. The tailor arose, took from his chest a piece of cloth, and proceeded to sew a set of clothes for the statue. When the clothes were finished, he dressed the statue in them. Then he went and nudged the hoca.

"What is the matter?" asked the hoca.

"Get up, hoca. It is your turn to stand guard."

"The hoca arose and went to the fire. After sitting there for a while, he too grew drowsy in its heat. Looking up, he was surprised to see a man standing nearby leaning against a tree. 'Oh, fellow citizen,' shouted the hoca, 'who are you--a bandit or a thief?' But there was no sound nor any sign of life from the man. 'Amazing!' said the hoca. Coming still closer, he touch^{ed} the man, causing the statue to fall to the ground. He then realized that it was a man made of wood but dressed in human clothes. He thought, 'The carpenter has made this statue; the tailor has clothed it; and now the next step has been left to me.' The hoca took

Story 688

ablutions and prayed to Allah, 'O my Allah! Let me not be disgraced before these two men! Please accept my prayer.' The hoca then ^{blowing} breathed life into the statue, and the statue began to speak to him, carrying on a regular conversation with the hoca.

"The carpenter and tailor awakened as they heard the hoca speaking with someone, but at first they could not understand to whom he was speaking. When they finally discovered what had happened, they and the hoca began to quarrel about the ownership of the man from the tree trunk

"The carpenter claimed ownership: 'The man belongs to me! I made him!'

"'No,' said the tailor. 'Most of what you see was my work

'But the most important work was mine!' said the hoca.

"Now," said the poor man who had told this story, "to whom does the man from the tree belong--to the carpenter, to the tailor, to the hoca?"

Among those who had stood listening to this tale, some said the carved man belonged to the carpenter. Some said that it belonged to the tailor. And still others declared it was the hoca's. But none of these people was able to present a convincing argument to support his claim.

At that point, the girl behind the curtain said, "It

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belongs to the hoca, because the carpenter gets paid for what he builds, the tailor gets his fee for what he makes, but the hoca gets only what the will of Allah gives him. It was the will of Allah which created life in the statue, and Allah did this for the hoca. It is his."²

*Truncated
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²This story should, of course, conclude with a statement that the poor man who had succeeded in making the hitherto mute princess speak was married to her in a wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights; and that they lived happily ever afterwards. --But the narrator apparently takes for granted that the audience will understand these results of the poor man's feat.