

Story 1510 1970 Tape 19)

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Erzurum Province

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Rescue Rewarded

There was once a bey¹ who had a beautiful wife. One day two women went to this bey and asked for permission to take his wife to a wedding celebration that was being held in their town. The bey approved of this and gave his wife permission to go.

Those two women who took his wife to the wedding party were not good women. On their way home from the wedding celebration, they persuaded the bey's wife to enter a barn alongside the road. Once she was inside the barn, they locked the door and left her there. Confused and frightened by this, the wife began to cry.

After a short while a very ugly man came to the barn, unlocked the door, and entered the building. When he made advances to the woman, she began to shout, "Don't come any closer to me! I am a chaste woman Keep your hands off my body!"

While this was going on, a peasant came along with his ox. He had run out of food for his ox sometime earlier, and by this time the ox was very hungry. He said to himself, "I

¹In pre-Republican Turkey a bey was an aristocrat, usually a landholder and often wealthy. Beys were sometimes appointed to administrative posts throughout the Ottoman Empire. There are no longer beys of this type, but the word bey is sometimes placed after a man's first name as a deferential term or a mild honorific.

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have never stolen anything up to this time, but now I am going to have to steal some food for my ox. It is very hungry. I shall see if there is some food for him in this barn, and if there is, I shall take some and then later return it to the barn."

Because the door was locked, the owner of the ox climbed up near the roof and entered the barn in the open space beneath one of the eaves. Looking down inside the barn, he saw a pile of oats and decided to steal some of that grain for his ox. But then he also saw the ugly man about to attack the woman in the barn. He said to himself, "If I do not rescue that woman I shall not be a good Moslem. I shall feel like an evil person myself." He then shouted very loudly, "Don't you dare rape that woman!" Hearing this loud command from above, the ugly man was so frightened that he unlocked the door and fled.

When the peasant climbed down and went near the woman, clasped him, and said, "Brother, you saved my life!"

"Sister, where do you live?"

"I live in Gavurbaği district."

The peasant took the wife of the bey to her home and then said, "I have brought you to your house safely. Now please give me permission to leave."

"No, you must wait here until my husband returns. I want

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you to tell him what has happened, and then after that you may go. I want my husband to hear the account from you. Come inside." When the peasant began to take off his çarıks,² she said, "No, come right in even if your çarıks are muddy and sit down on the good carpet. Make yourself feel comfortable and at home here."

When the bey returned after a short while, his wife met him at the door and said, "Husband, we have a guest here. Please be nice to him, for he is my brother.

"Wife, you do not have any brothers."

"Let me introduce you to him now, and I shall tell you more about this later."

They went on into the house, where the bey said, "Hello!" the peasant, but when he saw the man's muddy çarıks and dusty clothes, he became annoyed. "What do you mean by sitting on my good carpet while wearing muddy çarıks?"

But before the bey could say anything more, his wife interrupted by saying to the peasant, "Brother, why don't you tell my husband what happened?"

²Until the middle of the twentieth century, many rural people wore çarıks, a type of hide sandal with pointy, turned-up toes. These were usually made of camel skin or donkey skin. Since the middle of the century the hide çarık has been replaced by an equally inexpensive rubber shoe made from recycled rubber or from discarded automobile tires.

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The peasant said, "Sister, I do not know what happened before I came along. I shall tell him what I know. As I was returning home, my ox grew very hungry, but I had nothing left to feed it and no money to buy any food for it. I entered a barn where I saw a pile of oats and I intended to steal a small amount of oats for my ox. Then I saw a very ugly man approaching this woman with the intention of raping her. She was helpless. When I shouted loudly at that man, he ran away. Then I brought your wife here, but she would not let me go because she wanted me to tell you what had happened."

"Husband, that was why I called him 'brother,'" said the woman

"Wife, he is now my brother as well as your brother." Giving the peasant some good clothes and a sum of money, he said to him, "You are to come here every year at this same time, and I shall give you or buy for you whatever you may need. The bey continued to do this for the rest of his life.