

Story 1684 (1994 Tape 1

Narrator: Selvinaz Uğuz,  
primary-school  
teacher, 28

Location: Taşkale village,  
Karaman (vilayet  
capital, formerly  
kaza merkezi),  
Karaman Province

Date: April 18, 1994

The Stammering Sisters

There were once three sisters who lived with their mother in a certain village. As time passed and the three girls remained single, their mother became quite concerned about their situation. She feared that if they did not soon find husbands, they might become too old to be marriageable. There had been suitors interested in these sisters, but when the matchmakers<sup>1</sup> visited the girls' home and discovered that all three were stammerers, the negotiations for marriage ended.

One day the parents of a potential groom informed the family that they were coming to take a look at the three sisters. When the girls' mother heard this, she said to

<sup>1</sup>Traditionally Turkish marriages were arranged by the parents of the bride and groom, often through a professional matchmaker. The principals had not previously fallen in love; in fact, they had often not even seen each other. This kind of arranged marriage still exists in some areas of Turkey, especially in rural areas.

Story 1684

her daughters, "When these visitors call upon us, remain completely silent. No matter what happens, don't try to speak. Then they will not discover that you are stammerers.

When the parents of the boy arrived at their house, the three sisters remained perfectly quiet. For some time they did not utter a single word. As the marriage negotiations grew quite serious, however, a disturbance occurred. A rat suddenly ran across the room where they were all sitting.

The oldest sister shouted, "R-r-r-rat!"

The middle sister screamed, "I-i-i-it h-h-h-has a t-t-t-tail!"

Finally the youngest daughter said, "M-m-m-my m-m-m-mother t-t-t-told m-m-m-me n-n-n-not t-t-t-to s-s-s-speak, s-s-s-so I d-d-d-didn't s-s-s-say a th-th-th-thing!"