

Story #1 (Tape 23)  
1961-1962

Narrator: Abdurrahman Boyacı  
Location: Village of Kâzım Karabekir, Karaman  
kaza, Konya Province  
(named after World War I  
general named Kâzım Karabekir).  
Date: February 1962

*Ind.*  
division of

The Guessing Children

*children -- guessing*

*sons -- three -- one of whom is illegitimate*

Once there was a man who had three sons. He called them to him one day and told them that he would soon die. "I want to distribute my property among you," he said, "but I fear that I shall not be able to do it justly. Before your mother died, she said that one of you was not my son and should not inherit any of my lands but only some money. But she would not tell me which of you it was, and I cannot decide. When I die, you are to go to the kadı of the next village and have him divide the property fairly. He is a wise man and will know which of you to dispossess from my lands." A short while after talking thus with his sons, the man died and was buried.

*brothers -- three -- one of whom is illegitimate*

The three brothers packed some food and set out for the neighboring village where the kadı lived. On the way they came across the footprints of a camel. The eldest brother said, "But the camel had only one eye."

*#1 brother -- eldest*  
*#1 brother -- youngest*  
The youngest brother then added, "And besides, this camel had one tooth missing.

The eldest brother said, "This camel was probably stolen from its owner." They walked on a little farther, and when they came to a place where the camel had lain on the ground, the eldest brother spoke again, "The camel's load consisted of butter on one side and honey on the other."

*#1 brother -- middle*  
The second brother said, "The camel's tail was cut off; it had only a stump for a tail."

The youngest brother looked about the spot carefully and then said this: "There was a pregnant woman riding on the camel's back.

Then, having rested for a while, they continued on their journey. A little farther along the way they met a Yürük carrying his heavy felt

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overcoat over his shoulder. This Yürük asked the three brothers whether they had seen a camel

"Was the camel blind in one eye?" they asked.

"Yes," said the Yürük, "he was."

"Is the camel you are looking for missing one tooth?"

"Was it stolen from its owner?"

"Yes."

"Was it loaded with butter and honey?"

"Yes."

there a pregnant woman riding on the camel?"

"Yes, yes. Now tell me where I can find my camel, good men."

"We don't know where it is," they all answered at once.

The Yürük could not believe this, and he said to the brothers, "You know all about my camel, and yet you say that you do not know where it is. Tell me, at least, where you saw it."

"We have not seen it, efendim," answered the eldest brother.

The Yürük then became very angry with the three brothers, and he got up and left them where they were sitting beside the road. He went to the nearby village and went to the very judge the three brothers were seeking, and he complained to the judge about their suspicious behavior.

While he was still talking to the judge, the three brothers arrived, and when all four were present before him, the judge addressed the brothers:

"This man has made a complaint against you. You described his camel accurately for him, but then you told him that you had never seen this camel. How can this be?"

"Efendim, we didn't see the camel, but we knew what it looked like from various signs," said the eldest brother.

"How did you know that it was blind in one eye?" asked the judge.

The second brother said to the judge, "Efendim, there was corn growing on both sides of the road, but the camel ate from only one side. I concluded that it must have been blind and didn't see the corn on the other side."

"That was a reasonable guess," said the judge, "but how did you know that it had a tooth missing?"

"When the camel cropped grass," said the youngest, "there was always a small tuft of grass left where it had bitten. That is how I knew it must have had a tooth missing."

"Very well," said the judge, "but how did you know that the camel had a bobbed tail?"

"Efendim," said the second brother, "wherever the camel left droppings along the trail they were always in a single heap. If the camel had a long tail, it would be swishing off flies in this hot weather. If it were swishing off flies, it would scatter the droppings, and they would not then fall in one heap."

"How did you know that one saddle bag was loaded with honey and the other with butter?"

"I saw," said the eldest brother, "that all along the road there were bees on one side where some drops of honey had oozed down, and on the other side were ants where melted butter had dripped."

"How did you know that the woman who was riding on the camel's back was pregnant?" asked the judge.

"Because she dismounted often to urinate," said the youngest, "and

in order to get up each time, she pressed her hands heavily upon the earth."

"That may be," interrupted the judge, but he was still not satisfied with the innocence of the brothers, and he decided upon one more test. He had a chest with a locked drawer, and when the brothers went to drink water, he opened this drawer, put an orange in it, and then he locked the drawer again. When the brothers returned, he placed the chest in front of them and said, "If you can tell me what is in that locked drawer, I shall acquit you at once."

The eldest brother shook the chest and said, "The object in this box is a round one"

The second brother said, "If it is round, then it is yellow."

And the youngest brother said, "If it is yellow, then it is probably an orange."

The judge then opened the locked drawer, and to the surprise of all those standing about the place, they saw that it was an orange inside. Then the judge said to the Yürük, "Go and search for your own camel. These man have not seen it."

The judge then went to his wife and said to her, "Cook a good meal for three men who are visiting me. Buy a lamb and make kebab, and have fresh bread baked, and buy some pekmez." And later, when all this food was prepared, he had it placed before the three brothers. But he did not sit down to eat with them. Instead, he hid behind the door to overhear their conversation.

The eldest of the brothers took a piece of meat, and immediately after biting it said, "What a pity! This was a good lamb, but it was fed with dog's milk."

The second brother took a piece of bread, dipped it into the gravy, and said, "This was good bread, but unfortunately the woman who baked it was menstruating."

The youngest said, "This judge is a good judge, but unfortunately he was a bastard."

When the meal was finished, the pekmez was served, and the eldest brother tasted it and then said, "This is good pekmez, but, unfortunately, the root of the vine which produced the grapes for it grew in a grave."

The judge had been behind the door all during the meal, and after the plates were taken away by his servants, the judge left the house quietly and went immediately to the house of his mother. He said to her, "Mother, tell me the truth. Whose son am I?" And he drew his dagger and held it against her breast.

"The man you have always called your father was very rich," said his mother, "but he had a partner who was an infidel. When we did not have any inherit all his wealth for himself and his son. To prevent this, I bought you from the infidel at a very high price."

When his mother had finished her story, and when he was satisfied with her explanation, he took his dagger from her breast and sheathed it. Then he went to the shepherd from whom his wife had bought the lamb, and he asked the shepherd, "On what did you feed the lamb which you sold to my wife?"

"Efendim" replied the shepherd, "I had a female dog with pups. I used to carry the lamb and the pups together. The lamb's mother had died, and therefore it sucked milk from the pup's mother."

Then the judge returned to his own house and asked his wife, "Was the

"Yes," his wife said, "she was."

Having heard this, the judge went back to the three brothers. He told them that he had overheard what they had said while they ate their meal, and he said that he had verified most of their comments.

"How did you know that the lamb was fed with dog's milk?" he asked.

The eldest brother replied, "When we chewed bread with the meat, it turned into little lumps. That's how I knew."

"How did you know that the woman who baked the bread was menstruating?"

"When fresh and pure bread is dipped into gravy, it absorbs the gravy. But this bread hardly soaked up the gravy at all. That's how I knew that the woman who baked it was unclean," said the second brother.

"How did you know that the grapes for the pekmez came from a vine that had roots in a grave?"

"It was good pekmez, efendim," said the eldest brother, "but when we ate it, we had the taste of human flesh on our palates

Finally, the judge turned to the youngest brother and said to him, "How could you tell that I was an illegitimate son?"

"Efendim, forgive my words. If you had been a legitimate son, you would have sat beside strangers while they ate and talked with them, even if you did not wish food for yourself."

The judge was surprised but satisfied with these answers. After a few minutes he said, "Young men, now tell me what it is that brings you here to

The eldest brother said to the judge, "Efendim, my father, who is now dead, sent you his greetings before he died and asked that you divide his property among us, for you would be able to decide which of us is not a true heir and should therefore be dispossessed of lands."

The judge looked from one son to another and thought about this problem. He said nothing for some time, and being unable to offer any solution, he said, "Let me go home and think about this and look in my books."

At home the judge had a very difficult time. He found nothing at all in his books that would help in the solving of such a problem. He was <sup>bath--Turkish</sup> sweating as if he were in a Turkish bath. This judge had a beautiful daughter who noticed that her father looked perplexed. "What is the matter with you, father? You seem to be upset by something."

"I am trying to divide the property of a friend of mine, now dead, among his children. He has three sons and one of them is to be excluded from the inheritance of lands for he is not a legitimate heir, but which it is I can not discover."

"Father, will you let me go near these young men? If they are sons of your friend, they will not harm me."

The judge hesitated, but then he said, "All right. After all, you are not a pear that they can eat. You go and try to solve the problem."

*opposite  
to leave - for  
ending story*  
The girl put on her finest dress, and she put on her jewelry, and she decorated herself the best she could. She went to where the young men were and said, "Welcome, friends," and they accepted her greeting.

"Since you are my father's guests," she said, "I am going to tell you a story to make the time pass. Once my father gave my hand to the son of a rich man. I was engaged to him for over a year, and we were together all of the time. One day our fathers quarreled. My father broke off the engagement, and I was separated from my fiancé."

"My father then engaged me to the son of another rich man. Just as I was being taken to the house of my husband, after we were married, my old

lover turned up and said to me, "You have given me your word. What are you doing now?"

"'Well, what can I do?' I said. 'My father has given me to another man in marriage, but I shall keep my word to you. I shall meet you at the corner of the coppersmith's house at midnight tonight before I go to bed with my husband.

"When I got to my husband's house, I told him that I had had a former fiancé whom I had agreed to meet and that I had given my word to do this. 'I want to go and see him at midnight. Will you let me go? I shall be back as soon as possible.'

"My husband was an honest man and very religious, and when he heard that I had given my word to see my former fiancé, he permitted me to speak with this man."

The judge's daughter now turned to the eldest of the three brothers and said, "Suppose that you were my former fiancé. What would you have done when I met you at midnight by the coppersmith's house?"

"I should have talked with you for a while," said the eldest brother, "and then I should have let you go.

Then she turned to the second brother and asked him the same question. "I should have done the same as my elder brother," he said.

Finally, she asked the youngest brother, "What would you have done?"

This youngest brother glared at her and said, "I should have stripped you of all your clothes and jewelry and done every conceivable offense to you. I should have robbed you and raped you and then sent you back to your husband

"Very well," said the judge's daughter, "your problem is solved. two elder brothers should inherit your father's lands, and the youngest

Tale within tale

should be dispossessed."

Upon hearing this, the youngest brother said, "Your father may have been a bastard, but you are certainly your father's daughter!"