

Story 1041 1973 Tape 1 Narrator: Ali İpekçi

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Province

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The Innocent Slandered Wife of Derbulak

Once there were and once there weren't two brothers. One was named Derbulak and the other was named Necusi. Derbulak was married and Necusi was single.

One day Derbulak returned home from work looking sad and saying nothing. His wife asked, "What is wrong with you? Why are you so sad and quiet? What is in your mind?"

"If I were not sad, then who would ever be sad? All of my friends are starting out on a <sup>65-80</sup> pilgrimage to Mecca today. I should like to be able to go with them, but I can't."

His wife answered, "We have everything that we need, thank God! There is not a thing that we really need, and we have plenty of money. Go with them!"

"I'd like to go, but what will you do here? This journey will take a long time, for the entire trip will be made on camelback and on foot."

"Entrust me to God and go without any further thought about it," said his wife. "What could happen to me? If I had a bad character, I would do evil things even when we

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were together, but I do not have a bad character. Furthermore, my father, who was a hoca<sup>16678-</sup> was a virtuous man who frequently gave me good advice. He told me many moralistic stories." She then told such a story to her husband in order to persuade him to go.

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"Once in the past a man went to Yemen to buy some jewelry which he could resell in his own country at a good profit. While he was in Yemen he boarded in the home of a widow who had a beautiful daughter. The man fell in love with this girl and wished to marry her. The girl's widowed mother was very poor, and she was a harlot, a situation which the daughter knew about. It was not very difficult for the man to persuade the woman to give him her daughter in marriage. A wedding was held, and the two became man and wife.

"Some time passed after their wedding, and then the man said to his mother-in-law, 'Please permit us to leave now and go to my country. After I have bought some jewelry, allow my wife and me to go to my country. I have a house back there, and I do not know what condition it may have fallen into during my absence.

"She said, 'All right. Have a good trip,' and she saw

<sup>1</sup>A Moslem preacher, somewhat like a priest.

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them off.

"Mounting two camels, they set out on the long journey that lay ahead of them. After they had gone some distance they came to a narrow bridge over a river on their route.

man's camel, which was leading, refused to cross the bridge. His wife said to him, 'If my camel crosses first, yours will follow it.

"So they changed places, and the woman said to her camel 'Deh!'<sup>2</sup> In that way they crossed the river easily, and the man was relieved that they had solved their difficulty. After thinking about it for a few minutes, however, he asked his wife, 'How did you know that my camel would follow yours across the bridge?'

"'That is something you could not have known. My camel is your camel's mother.'

"After she said that, he thought about her remark, and then he asked her a question. 'Will you follow your mother? I know what she is doing.'

"His wife said, 'If I sucked my mother's bad milk, that bad milk will surely affect me, of course, and so I shall follow my mother even if I don't want to do so.'

<sup>2</sup>In giving directions to beasts of burden, Turks say deh for the English giddap and choosh for the English whoa.

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"Hearing that, the man changed his mind about his wife and decided to send her back to her mother. As they parted, she said, 'If my inheritance is bad, I shall pursue the wrong way. On the other hand, if I sucked my mother's good milk, don't worry about me. Entrust me to God and go your way without thinking any further about me

Derbulak said, "All right, my wife." He bought a sheep, slaughtered it as a sacrifice, and distributed all of the meat to their neighbors. Then, leaving his wife in the care of his brother, he said goodbye and joined the group of pilgrims starting for Mecca.

One day Necusi's friends said to him, "Why are you still single? Your older brother has gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca. You could make love to his wife until he returns."

"What kind of a suggestion is that?" asked Necusi. "Is such a thing possible?"

They said, "There is nothing wrong with this suggestion. Your brother went on a very long journey, and it is not even certain that he will ever return from it. Your sister-in-law is alone, and you are single. There is no reason why you shouldn't make love to her."

When Necusi went home, he said to his sister-in-law, "My older brother has gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca

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are alone now, and I am single. Let us make love until he returns."

"You are an immoral person. A woman cannot get married to two men. There is nothing in our religion that would permit such a thing. How can you say such a thing to me without being ashamed of yourself? I am your sister-in-law, and you should think of me as your sister, or possibly even your mother."

Necusi tried again to persuade her. He said, "Let us just pretend that we are married."

At that she said, "Get along home and don't come here again. Don't look for me elsewhere either

Necusi returned to his friends and said to them, "You are not very good friends to me. My sister-in-law quarreled with me, and she ordered me to leave her house and go home. She did not accept my offer."

They said, "You can complain about her to the kadı.<sup>3</sup> Tell him, 'My older brother went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He entrusted his wife to my care, but my sister-in-law forced me to make love to her, and my friends will testify to this. She did some very immoral things.' We can go with you to the kadı in about three hours' time."

<sup>3</sup>A kadı was a pre-Republican judge of Moslem canon law

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But now that Necusi had accepted this idea, he wanted to go to the kad1 at once. His friends therefore stopped their other activities and went with him right away.

Necusi said to the kad1, "My older brother went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and he entrusted his wife to my care. But my sister-in-law has become a harlot. She made love to me even while my two friends were in the house."

The kad1 called the woman immediately and asked her, "Didn't you feel any shame? Weren't you afraid of God? You have a husband who went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. How could you do this? Why didn't you think about your husband?"

She answered, "I didn't do anything. My brother-in-law is lying."

After that the kad1 called Necusi's two friends to testify. He asked them, "What do you think about this woman?"

They said, "We do not want to see her face. She is a very immoral person. Even while we were present in her home she made love to her brother-in-law. We saw this."

The kad1 said to his executioners, "Take this woman to a desolate place. There dig a pit as deep as she is tall and place her in it. Fill the rest of the pit with stones that you throw at her and hit her with."

took the woman outside the city limits. There

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dug a hole and put the woman in it. To fill the rest of the pit, they made everybody present throw stones into the pit at her

But the woman never ceased praying to God. She said, "My God, you are very great. I think that this is my (des-tiny). I have been abused by many slanders. Protect me from those slanders."

Accepting her prayers, God said to Gabriel<sup>4</sup> "Protect that woman. Keep her safe from the stones being thrown at her." Acting on this order, Gabriel kept her safe from all harm, and none of the stones thrown struck her. By sunset there was a small mound of stones around her, but none of them had injured her. Those friends of Necusi who were present decided that the woman must be dead by then, and they returned to the city.

Shortly after that a man on the way home to his village heard a woman's voice. He stopped and listened to sound for a few minutes, and then he concluded that sound was coming from the small mound of stones. Removing the outer stones, he discovered inside a woman, a beautiful woman. By pulling and pulling her outstretched hands, he managed to remove her from the mound. Then he

<sup>4</sup>An archangel who served as God's messenger and/or agent.

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asked her, "What did you do so dreadful that they gave you this kind of punishment? Did you do something immoral?"

She answered, "No, I didn't do anything. I received this treatment because of unjust slander spoken against me."

The man said, "You are a very beautiful woman. Would you be willing to become my second wife?"

She said, "I am a married woman, and I have a husband who is in Mecca now. According to my religion a woman cannot be married to two men. If you will accept me as a sister, I shall go with you. Otherwise, don't touch me

"All right," he said. "Come along with me, please. From now on you are a sister to me. I shall provide a good safe life for you, and if your husband returns from Mecca, I shall deliver you to your husband."

They walked to the man's house where his family received Derbulak's wife well. His own wife liked this woman, and so did his one-year-old son. She began to work in that household as a servant, and her life went along smoothly there for a short time.

In that same household, however, there was a male servant, and very soon that male servant was attracted to the woman. One day when the family members had gone to the city, this male servant said to the woman, "You are eating



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this ağa's bread, and so am I. You are alone, and I am single. Why don't we get married? Let us do so, and let us have a very happy family here."

She said, "I am already a married woman. We have a very good and very comfortable life here. Don't upset our good fortune."

The male servant said to her, "If you do not accept my proposal, and if you do not marry me, I shall have you sent away from this house."

When the ağa and his family had returned from the city, they had their dinner. Then after a short while they went to bed for the night. A few minutes after had gone to sleep, the male servant went to the ağa's son's room and cut off the child's head. He then took some of the child's blood and smeared it on the hands of Derbulak's wife, and he put the bloody knife beneath her pillow.

In the morning when the ağa's wife arose, she went to look at her son. As she pulled back the blankets, she discovered that her son had been decapitated. His head at one end of the bed and his body was at the other end. The mother screamed and shouted, "Who killed my only son? What cruel person did this?"

<sup>5</sup>An ağa is a rural landowner, usually wealthy, often powerful.

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By that time the ağa had awakened and rushed to her. The male servant also went to the child's room. But the female servant was still sleeping without any knowledge of what had happened

The male servant then said, "It was probably the female servant who killed him. There is no one else here who could have done it."

They went then to the room of the female servant and pushed open the door. Inside they saw the woman still deep in sleep, and all around her were bloodstains. Besides the bloodstains, they found the bloody knife under her pillow.

After the woman had been aroused, the ağa's wife said to her, "Why did you do this? What did you not like about my little child? You are an immoral woman. If that were not the case, the kadı would not have given you such harsh punishment."

The wife of Derbulak was then struck by the ağa, and she suffered great pain from the blow. She said to the ağa, "I have done nothing wrong. I shall be a plaintiff testifying against you on Judgment Day<sup>75-76</sup> because you have struck me without reason and given me severe pain."

All of a sudden the ağa understood everything. He said to the woman, "Even though I might realize the truth

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of what really happened, my wife would never believe it accept you in the house again. Please accept 300 gold coins from me instead of becoming a plaintiff against me on Judgment Day." Giving the woman 300 gold coins, he added, "Manage your life with this money until your husband comes home."

Taking the money, the woman left the house and began traveling on foot. After a while she arrived at a city. As she was walking along a street in that city she came upon a crowd of people. She asked, "What is going on here? something happened?"

People standing near her said, "Two people borrowed 300 gold coins from the padişah, but they were unable to pay him back. Not receiving his money back, the padişah has now demanded their heads in payment. They are now about to be killed."

When the executioners were about to kill the two debtors, the woman shouted, "Stop! Stop! I have 300 gold coins, and I shall use them to pay the debt of these two condemned debtors." She immediately paid the money and thus had the two debtors released

One of the young men who had been saved asked, "Who was it that caused me to be rescued? Let me say 'Thank

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you!' to that person."

Someone pointed at Derbulak's wife and said, "It was that woman who is now leaving this place."

Running after her, he said to the woman, "You rescued me from death. Thank you very much." When he saw the woman's face, however, he fell in love with her at once. He said, "I have fallen in love with you at first sight.

*love at first sight*

Will you marry me?"

Derbulak's wife said, "I am a married woman. I have a husband who has gone to Mecca on a pilgrimage. I rescued you from death. Do not now detain me. I have to seeing a ship all ready to embark, she rushed aboard that ship, hoping to escape in that way.

The young man whom she had rescued shouted after her, "That woman is my slave! I bought her for 500 gold coins. Give me back my slave!"

The ship captain looked at the woman and saw how beautiful she was. After he had taken her to his cabin, he paid the man 500 gold coins for the woman, and the man accepted this money and departed.

After the ship had left the port and was sailing away from the land, the captain said to the woman, "I fell in love with you the moment I saw you. Let us get married

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and raise a happy family together

She responded, "I have a husband who has gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca. According to my religion, a woman cannot be married to two men.

Her situation became even more difficult, for other men on the ship had also fallen in love with her. A second man said, "I shall marry this woman."

Then a third man said, "No! I shall marry her myself!"

Greatly disturbed by all that she heard, the woman began to pray, "O my God, protect me from all of these men! I am an honest woman, and I have suffered much hardship. Please protect me."

Accepting her prayer, God directed Gabriel, "Burn that ship! All of the men on board should die, but the woman should be protected and saved."

Gabriel took some fire from hell and dropped it on the ship. Everyone on board except the woman died as a result of the fire that burned the ship. She was later picked up from the sea by a ship sent to the place of the fire by the padişah of that area. When that official ship landed, the woman said, "Take me to your padişah." After she had been taken to the palace, she told the padişah everything that had happened to bring her there.

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Saddened by her account, the padişah said, "From this time onward you will be my daughter. You will be given a room in the palace, and you may live there until you die."

After the woman had lived there in the palace for a short time, the wife of the padişah fell ill. The padişah had doctors come to the palace to cure his wife, but all of them failed to help her. The padişah then took her to doctors in many different countries, but they too failed to cure her illness. The sultana thought to herself, "I cannot be cured, and so I shall probably die. Let me go and speak to the woman who recently came to live at the palace. She then did this at once

Derbulak's wife greeted the sultana and then said mother, what has happened to you? Is something wrong?"

The sultana said, "What will become of me? Inasmuch as I have an incurable illness, I shall die. The doctors have been unable to find any remedy for my illness, and so I am simply waiting for my death.

Derbulak's wife said, "My father was a distinguished hoca. He used to recite a prayer to sick people, and that prayer healed them immediately of whatever illness they had. Let me recite that prayer now for you." She took the ablutions required before prayers, and she had the sultana

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take these same ablutions.<sup>6</sup> She then performed two rekats<sup>7</sup> and when these had been completed, she recited the special prayer that she had learned from her father. As a result of this use of prayer, the sultana's condition improved at once, and in a short time she had recovered completely.

When this good news was taken to the padişah, he was so overjoyed that he ordered a great celebration in thankfulness. He also had criers<sup>18,82</sup> everywhere in the land announce to everyone, "There is a woman in my palace who can cure any illness by means of religious incantation. If you have patients who have not yet been cured, bring them to this woman."

One of the criers making this announcement was overheard by a group of pilgrims just returning from Mecca. Among those pilgrims was Derbulak, who listened carefully to what the crier was saying.

<sup>6</sup> Before praying, Moslems take ritual ablutions, washing each of several parts of their body three times in a prescribed manner and in a prescribed order. All mosques have outdoor washing facilities with constantly running water. Usually called fountains, these facilities consist of faucets or spigots that flow into a very large marble basin, from which the water is steadily drained. Water alone is used for this ritual cleaning, not soap or detergent.

<sup>7</sup> At the five prescribed daily prayer services worshippers perform a series of physical movements and gestures. A complete series of these motions is known as a rekat. There is a prescribed number of rekats required for each service.

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By this time all of the people who had abused Derbulak's wife had been afflicted with serious physical ailments. Derbulak's brother, Necusi, had become blind and he now lived alone in his house. The male servant of the aga had grown so lame that he could no longer walk. The young debtor saved from execution by the payment of 300 gold coins had become a leper.

When Derbulak got home, he found his wife missing and his brother alone and blind. Derbulak was dismayed and confused at this. He asked his brother, "What has been going on here? What happened to you? Where is your sister-in-law?"

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Necusi answered, "Don't ask me, my older brother! A month after you left, my sister-in-law became a harlot. The kadi heard about this situation and ordered that she be executed. The executioners took her beyond the city limits and killed her. There they dug a pit as deep as she was tall. They put her in this pit and filled up the rest with stones. The stones that filled the pit were aimed at her. Everyone who was present was forced to throw stones at her, and that was the way in which she was killed. I was deeply grieved by what had happened. I kept asking myself, 'What shall I tell my older brother when he returns?'



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I cried so much over this that my tears made me blind."

Derbulak said, "Don't worry about your eyes. On my way here I heard an announcement that there was a woman at the padişah's palace who could cure all sorts of illness by the use of religious incantation. When she recites a special prayer in the presence of a patient, the patient recovers immediately from his malady. I shall take you to the padişah's palace to consult her.

Deciding to go to the palace, they started walking in that direction. It was a considerable distance from where they lived. After a while they entered the town where lived the debtor that Derbulak's wife had rescued from execution. This young leper joined them as they walked along, although the two brothers did not know who he was. A little farther along they were joined by the ağa and his male servant, now a cripple

As all of these men were walking along together in the same direction, they began asking each other, "Where are you going?"

person who was asked this question made the same response as the others did. "I am going to the padişah's palace. There is a woman at that palace who can cure every kind of illness immediately. I am going there to be cured."

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When they discovered that they were all going to the same place for the same purpose, they decided to continue on together.

When they arrived in the capital city, they found their way to the padişah's palace. When they arrived there, they found a long line of people waiting to see the woman healer. After waiting for some time, they were told that their turn to see her had come.

When the woman saw these five men, she recognized all of them immediately. She said to her doorkeeper, "Tell them that I shall not pray for more patients today. They will have to come back again tomorrow, for my prayer time is over for today."

After the sun had set, the woman went to the padişah and said to him, "My padişah, I want to ask a favor of you. Five people will come here tomorrow in a group to see me. Three of them are patients with illnesses. If it is agreeable to you, I should like to pray for these patients in your presence. You may bring anyone you wish with you."

The padişah responded, "All right, my daughter, I shall have prepared everything that you wish." He ordered town criers to go out into the streets announcing, 'Anyone who wishes to do so may come to the padişah's palace tomorrow.

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There will be a large prayer session to cure several people. If you want to see this, you are welcome to come."

On the following day many people came to see this event. The woman said, "I shall pray behind a curtain. I do not want to see the patients." They hung a curtain up in the room, and the woman sat down behind it. Then she said, "First the man who has brought a blind patient. Come and stand right before the padişah." Derbulak took his brother right up before the padişah.

The woman then said, "You must tell about your life before you became ill. My prayers are for people who tell the truth. If you lie, then you make it impossible for you to be cured of your illness. Please tell the truth."

At that point Necusi was placed in a very difficult situation. If he told the truth, he would make his brother very angry at him. But if he failed to tell the truth, he might never see him again. He said to himself, "Let me tell the truth. Whatever will be will be. If they wish to kill me, then they can kill me."

He said, "My older brother went to Mecca on a pilgrimage, and he entrusted the care of his wife to me. I did not know what I was doing, for I followed the direction of the devil, who had entered my sensuality. I wanted to

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make love to my sister-in-law, but she refused to enter into such a relationship with me. I therefore complained about her to a kadı. I said to him, 'My sister-in-law has become a harlot. My older brother, her husband, is on a pilgrimage to Mecca. I don't know what I should do.' The kadı ordered that she be executed. Beyond the city limits a pit was dug as deep as she was tall. She was placed in that pit, and the rest of the space in the pit was filled up by stones thrown at her. In this way she was killed."

At that point in the proceedings Derbulak, his older brother, stood up and said to him, "What a treacherous person you are! I entrusted my wife to your care, and you did such a thing as that!" He wanted to strike Necusi.

The padişah, however, intervened and said, "Don't touch him now

The woman then said, "Let the man who has brought a lame patient bring that patient forward and place him right in front of the padişah." The ağa did as she had instructed and helped the lame man to move up before the padişah.

The woman then said, "You must tell about your life before you became ill. My prayers are only for people who tell the truth. If you lie, then you may make it impossible for you to be cured. Please tell the truth, for if you do

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not, you may die right here."

Now the male servant of the ağa was in a very difficult situation. If he told the truth, the ağa would discover the whole matter, including the fact that he had killed the ağa's son. If he did not tell the truth, he would not be cured, and he might even die. After thinking for a moment, he said to himself, "Let me tell the truth. Whatever will be will be. I cannot be concerned about the ağa now."

He spoke out loudly and said, "My ağa brought a female servant to his home one day. I wanted to make love to her, but she would not agree to have such a relationship with me. I became so angry at her that I decided to do something to cause her to be sent away from that house. I cut off the head of the ağa's son that night and I was very careful to make it look as if she had committed the deed. I told a lie, saying, 'That female servant must have been the one who killed the child.'"

At that moment the ağa arose in great anger and said, "It was you who killed my son! I understand everything now! You are a murderer and a treacherous, immoral person!"

Again the padişah intervened, saying, "Don't touch him now."

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The woman then said to the third patient, "Leper, come up here right before the padişah. What evil act did you commit that caused God to give you this illness?"

The young man said, "I had borrowed 300 gold coins from a padişah. I was unable to repay this money in the time I had agreed to do so, and as a result, I was condemned to death. As I was about to be executed, a woman came along and rescued me by paying the 300 gold coins I owed. I ran after her as she was leaving in order to thank her, but when I saw her face, I immediately fell in love with her. I wanted to marry her, but she refused my offer and boarded a ship that was just leaving the port. I shouted to those on the ship, 'She is my slave! I paid 500 gold coins for her. Give her back to me!' They did not give her back to me. Instead, the captain gave me 500 gold coins for her."

The woman then said, "My great padişah, what kind of punishment would you order for these patients?"

"I should like to tie these patients to my mule's tail. Then I should drive the mule into a stony area so that they would be killed by bouncing against the stones."

The woman then said, "Let me ask the religious men what they would do. What kind of punishment would you suggest for these men?"

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All of the religious leaders said, "They must be executed."

woman then asked the rest of the audience, "What do you think about this situation?"

Everyone answered, "They must be killed!"

The woman then said, "According to our book, the Koran, no one is permitted to kill the people that God has created. It is a sin to do so, something forbidden by our religion. If they promise to reform; if they say, 'We shall not commit this kind of act again or do any other harm to others' -- then we should forgive them. I shall pray that they be cured of their illnesses.

The padişah and the other people present said, "You are thinking better thoughts than we are. Go ahead and pray for them."

The woman called her brother-in-law first. After she had prayed for him, his eyes were opened and his illness was cured. Then she called the male servant and prayed for him. His lameness left him and he could walk. Finally, she called the young man who had been condemned to death for his debt, and she prayed for him. He too was cured of his illness. Then drawing the curtain aside, the woman went and stood alongside her husband, "Look at me, Derbulak. Can

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see anything wrong with me?"

In this way she demonstrated that she was a virtuous honest woman. Everything had been clarified. Necusi, male servant, and the young man who had been a debtor took an oath that henceforth they would commit no evil acts

The woman and her husband were now reunited after a long separation. They returned to their own country, where they lived together and had all of their wishes fulfilled