

Story 1680 (Dictated)

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in 90s; grandmother  
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Location: Aliçerçi village,  
Bozkır kaza,  
Konya Province--  
collected in İstanbul

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The Unfaithful Wife Detected

Once there was and twice there wasn't, when camels were barbers and fleas were porters--well, in those times, there was a woman who had a fine husband. She also had three lovers. Her husband did not know about these lovers, all of his neighbors had said to him, "Your wife has lovers while you are away from home."

"Don't say such things about my wife," the man would always say when this sort of thing came to his ears. "She is my wife, and I cannot believe such nonsense about her."

After many such reports, the husband decided to test this matter for himself. One day he harnessed his animals said to his wife, "Woman, I am going to the mill and I not return before morning. Will you be afraid to stay alone?"

"Why should I be afraid?" she asked. "This is our home, and my neighbors will look after me."

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In that village there was a hoca,<sup>1</sup> a thin old man, whose eyes were blind but whose ears were very keen. Before leaving for the mill, the husband took this hoca home to find out if indeed his wife was doing as the neighbors had said. His wife was surprised to see him back so quickly, and she was even more surprised and upset to see that he had brought a guest. "Why did you bring this old hoca here?" she asked. "Our house is so small, and he will make it crowded.

Her husband said, "He is so old and thin that he will take little space. Besides, he is both blind and deaf. What harm can it do to let him sit here as a guest of Allah?" So the woman had the hoca sit beside the chimney, well out of the way. Then the husband set off for the mill.

Just after dark, one of the woman's lovers came and knocked on the door. "Who is it?" asked the woman softly. She heard no answer.

"What is it?" the woman asked, more loudly.

"Here. I brought you a melon," said the lover.

<sup>1</sup>A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training.

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"I'll put it right here in the corner," the woman said. Then she and the lover went into another room and enjoyed themselves. At last, the lover left.

Soon afterwards, there was another knocking at the door. "What is it?" asked the woman.

The second lover answered, "Here. I have brought you a fine sausage."

"I'll put it in the cupboard," said the woman. Then she and the second lover went into another room and enjoyed themselves. When they had finished, the man left.

Soon after he had gone, there was another knocking at the door. "What is it?" the woman asked.

"I have brought some yoghurt for you," said her third lover.

Just put it in the closet," she said. Then she and the third lover went into another room to enjoy themselves, but before they had finished, there was a loud knocking at the door--TAK! TAK! TAK! The woman recognized that knock. "Aman!" she cried. "My husband has returned!"

"Where can I hide?" asked the lover

"Crawl into the oven," she said. After the lover was safely inside the oven, she hurried to open the door for her husband

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He said, "Come, woman, and sit on my lap for a minute or two. I am cold.

She went and sat on his lap and asked, "Where are your animals, and where is the flour from the mill?"

"I tied the animals in the stable. I brought no flour home because there were three or five people ahead of me when I got to the mill, so I decided to come along home and go another time. Now, my dear, I am warm enough. Get me something good and hot for my dinner."

While the woman was preparing food for her husband, the husband spoke quietly to the hoca. "Brother hoca, are you well?"

"I am fine. And you have returned from the mill?"

"Yes, I have returned, and I am curious to know what has been going on since I left."

"Since you left, different things have arrived. There were hands and feet, and something heavy came--like a melon--and it was put in a corner. Then there were other hands and feet, and there came a sausage, which was put into a cupboard. More hands and feet came, and something that splashed and flowed, like yoghurt, went into a closet. Now I can hear my heart beating hard, like the heart of the man in the oven."

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The husband understood the situation at once. Taking a heavy rope, he tied his wife and the man from the oven to the door frame for the rest of the night. At daylight, he loaded them both onto the back of his donkey and took them to the top of the nearest mountain and tied them to a large tree. "There, now," he said, "you are together. There is no room in my house for you any more."

Then, going back to his house, he loaded his animals with the bags of wheat and set out for the mill. The hoca ate the food the wife had prepared, and then he went along to his own house. May we have wives more faithful than that one!