

Story 724 (1976 Tape 8)

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Location: Yakacık village,
Söğüt kaza,
Bilecik Province

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Immortal

The Immoral Hoca¹ and the Daughter of the Pilgrims

Once there was and once there was not a family included a father, a mother, and a daughter. When the father and mother decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca one year, they wondered with whom they could leave their daughter so that she would be properly cared for during their absence. After talking about it for a while, decided that the village hoca was the person most suited to be entrusted with this responsibility.

The parents left for Mecca, and their daughter began living always inside the house waiting for their return. It was a very secure house, closed on all four sides, with no openings except the one door.

One day the hoca said to his wife, "My lady, those people who recently went to Mecca left their daughter in

¹A hoca is a Muslim religious leader. Before the birth of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the hoca was also a school-teacher, for at that time education was the province of the religious establishment.

Story 722

our care. We should, therefore, be kind to her. Why don't we buy an okka² of meat and take it to her?" This they did, and while they were delivering this to her, the hoca had a glimpse of her little finger.³ Just that glimpse of her little finger caused him to fall in love immediately. He began thinking of her all the time everywhere he went.

19-80 One day a witch observed the hoca as he was thinking about that girl. The hoca looked so sad that the witch asked him, "Hoca, what is troubling you?"

The hoca told her the whole story of his love for the girl whose parents were in Mecca. The witch said, "If you buy me forty pairs of shoes, I shall get that girl for you."

"How will you do that?"

"I'll say to her, 'Your parents' friends have come from Mecca and they are waiting to see you at the public bath.' When she comes to the bath, you can be there and see her."

When the hoca had brought the witch the forty pairs of shoes she wanted, the witch went immediately to see the girl. She said to her, "My girl, I have news for you. Friends of your parents have just arrived here from Mecca, and they are

²An okka was an older measure of weight equivalent to 1282 grams.

³This was at a time when women were veiled and their bodies covered. It is unlikely that their coverage was so complete, however, that the sight of a mere finger would excite a man into such an infatuation.

Story

waiting at the public bath to see you."

Being an inexperienced girl, she believed what the witch had told her. When she entered the bath, however, she saw, to her surprise, that the only person awaiting her was the village hoca. Realizing now what the situation was, she took action at once and gave the hoca a good lesson with her fists. Then she quickly returned to her home

Very angry, the hoca returned to his own home. There he sat thinking about what kind of bad turn he could do against this girl. He decided to write a letter to her parents, who were still at Mecca. In his letter he wrote, "Your daughter has turned to evil ways in your absence. It seems that she is sleeping with almost every man in the village who wants her."

As soon as the parents had received this letter from the hoca, they set out for home. On their journey homeward they decided to kill their daughter for the shame that she had brought upon herself and upon them. As soon as they arrived home, they took their daughter to a distant mountaintop and left her there without food or water, thinking that she would slowly die there.

When her parents had gone and left her there, the girl looked around and saw a tall poplar tree. Climbing to the top of this tree, she sat among the branches, looking down. There was a small pond at one side of the poplar tree. She

Accusation
false

Abandonment

Story 724

had not been there very long when the son of a bey⁴ came along and stopped by this pond to water his horse. As his horse drank, the son of the bey saw reflected from the surface of the water the image of a very beautiful face. It was the face of the girl in the tree.

The son of the bey took the girl to his own part of the country where, after a short time, they were married in a wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights. After her second child was born, the girl said one day to her husband, the son of the bey, "I should like to go to my home village to visit my parents. They are both haci⁵ now."

The son of the bey gave her permission to visit her home village. He assigned an Arab⁶ man to accompany her on the trip and look after both her and their two children. The next day she and her children started to walk toward her village, accompanied by the Arab. But this Arab was not a good man. As they walked along, he said to the woman, "You must make love with me today, or I shall stab to death one

⁴ A bey is a lord or person of wealth and status.

⁵ One who completes the pilgrimage (Hac, pronounced Haj) thereby acquires permanently the title of pilgrim (haci, pronounced haji). It is a real distinction to be called Haci Ahmet or Haci Hasan.

⁶ When Arab is used this way in a Turkish folktale, it is understood by the audience that the reference is to a black man. All Arabs are not dark-skinned, but the stereotype here pictures them as being so.

of your children."

"I shall not do what you demand even if you do kill one of my children."

Thereupon, the Arab cut severely one of her children threw its body aside off the road. The following day he repeated his threat. "You must make love with me today or I shall cut up your other child." But again she refused, and so he killed the second child, tossing its body aside also. On the third day he said to the woman, "You must make love with me tonight or pay the penalty."

Helpless, the woman said, "All right, but first I must have water to wash. Give me an ibrik⁷ with which to get water from that pond. You can tie a rope to the ibrik and hold the other end of the rope and thus know that I have not tried to escape."

The Arab did exactly as she had directed, but this clever woman tied the end of the rope with the ibrik to a tree and ran off into the night. After she had gone some distance, she saw a shepherd with his flock. "Shepherd, kill one of your sheep and sell me the sheepskin. I want to wear it." With her hair cut short and with much of her body covered with sheepskin, she looked very different as she continued to walk toward her home village. When she arrived there, she went

Disguise

⁷ An ibrik is a pitcher with a long curved spout.

Story 724

straight to the home of her parents, where she was hired as a gooseherd.

While she worked at her job of tending geese, the woman was sought by her husband. He looked all along her route for her and finally he also arrived at her parents' home. In that home were gathered at the very same time her husband, the Arab servant, and the village hoca. When the gooseherd came in, was immediately recognized by her husband. She sang to him:

Harrü⁸ herds the hundred geese,⁹

Her sufferings caused by all of these.

Catch the hoca and the Arab--

Let darkest dungeon be their doom.

(I forgot to tell you that the girl had taken the name of Harrü.)

When the husband and the parents heard the whole sad story, they caught the hoca and the Arab. The rest then all went

⁸The narrator is not in full command of her tale. Besides some obvious telescoping of plot, she mishandles some stock elements of the folk tradition. The name Harrü is a good example of the latter. Oppressed people often signal their mistreatment by assigning to their children or themselves tell-tale names, such as Hakvar şeriatyok (I have the right but not the support of the law) in ATON Tale 307. Harrü is part of a somewhat slangy expression ya harrü ya marrü (perhaps it will come off /work /, perhaps it won't). Harrü may also be herrü or hörrü.

⁹The narrator said 150 geese, but the translator changed this to 100 to make the number fit the rhythm in English.

Story 724

*Resurrected
from death*
immediately to the places where the two children had been
stabbed, and there they prayed devoutly. As they did so, the
children both began to show signs of life, and eventually they
all recovered. After that, the girl lived happily with her
husband, and no one else ever mistreated her.

I know only that much.