

Story 1800 (1989 Tape 7)

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of Konya Province

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The Broth of the Broth of the Broth of the Ducks

One day some hunters came to the home of Nasreddin Hoca¹ with two ducks they had killed. They said, "Hoca, have these ducks cooked, and we shall all sit down and eat together." Hoca told his wife to cook those ducks and when they were ready, they all joined together for a duck dinner.

Late the following day there was a knock on Hoca's door. When he answered that knock, he found several people standing outside. They said, "Hoca, we are relatives of the hunters who were here yesterday. We have also come to eat some duck."²

¹Nasreddin Hoca is the most popular comic folk figure in the Turkish oral tradition. Sometimes wise, sometimes clever, sometimes foolish, he is always very human. In modern Turkey a hoca is a preacher and religious leader; in earlier times he was also a teacher, for then education was the responsibility of the clergy.

²Reciprocity of hospitality is a basic requirement of Turkish society. If one has received food or lodging from X, then one is committed to provide similar hospitality not only to X but to any of his/her friends who comes in the name of X. This is not an optional matter or a debatable issue but an absolute mandate.

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After he had invited these people inside, Nasreddin Hoca went to his wife and said, "Set the table with some of the leftover foods from yesterday's duck dinner. These people are relatives of the duck hunters." His wife used the duck scraps that were left to make a large pot of duck broth, and she served this along with some other foods.

On the following day another group of people arrived who said, "We are friends of the hunters who brought you the ducks. We should also like to taste those ducks."

After the guests had been welcomed, Hoca went to his wife and said, "Put more water in the duck broth you made yesterday." She did as he had directed, and again she served it with some other food

Still once again there was a knock on the door the following day. The Hoca found outside still more people who claimed to be friends of the duck hunters. Of course he invited them inside and made them welcome. He then went to his wife and said, "Woman, add some more water to that duck broth."

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"But, Hoca, the duck broth is finished!"

"In that case," said Nasreddin Hoca, "just boil a pot of clear water and serve that in soup bowls."

When dinner was served, the guests took a sip from their soup bowls and asked, "Hoca, what is this?"

"That," answered Nasreddin Hoca, "Is the broth of the broth of the broth of the ducks which were brought to us!"