

Story #664 (1976, Tape #18)

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Three Simpleminded Hunters Lose Their Identities

Simpletons -- three

There were once three simpletons who went hunting. They carried rifles ^{wooden} made of wood, and wore shoes made of cardboard. All three of them had long ^{long} beards. They went to the forest and walked about and hunted. Finally, they grew weary and found a spot to lie down to rest. There they fell asleep. Some travelers came upon them while they were sleeping and shaved off their beards as a practical ^{practical} joke. When the three men woke up, they looked at each other and wondered who they were. They asked each other what had happened to their beards, but none could provide an answer, since they knew nothing about shaving. They wondered if they were themselves and decided to go home immediately to find out, for surely their wives would know if they were indeed the same people. They walked and walked and finally reached home. They called out to their wives and asked, "Where are you husbands?"

The women replied, "They have gone hunting."

The men asked, "Did your husbands wear shoes made of cardboard?"

The wives replied, "Yes, they did."

The men then felt reassured, and said to each other, "That is we!"

Then they asked the wives, "Did your husbands carry rifles made of wood?"

And the wives replied, "Yes, they did."

The men were happy now because their rifles were made of wood, so they must be the husbands. But when they asked the women whether their

husbands wore beards, they assured the three men that they did. The men persisted and asked the women to think back, so there would be no mistake. But the wives swore that their men wore beards. So, the simpletons despaired, thinking they must not be these men, and went away.

They roamed the country to find themselves. They travelled to Urfa and then to Konya. As time went by, their beards grew back. One day they decided to return home again and ask their wives once more if they were their husbands. They traveled back of foot and it was a long journey. They finally arrived at their own homes and knocked on the doors. These were their own homes, but, as I said at the beginning, they were simpleminded.

The wives came out, and they asked them, "Where are you husbands?"

The women answered them, "Our men went hunting quite a long time ago."

This time they first asked their wives, "Did your husbands wear beards?"

The women replied, "Oh, yes, our husbands had beards."

They all quickly felt their beards and proceeded to ask the next question: "Did your husbands carry guns made of wood?"

"Yes," answered their wives, "They certainly did."

But when the men asked them about their shoes, the wives said, "Our men wore shoes made of cardboard."

The men looked down at their feet and saw that they were barefooted. As they had walked so much, they had worn the thin shoes right off

Story #66*

their feet. They decided they could not be the women's husbands,
and again they went away.