

story #27 (Faculty Tape 1, Track 1)

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Location: Aşağ Çavundur

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#27 face removal

#27 Ağa -- daughter of

The Immoral Hoca and the Daughter of the Ağa

FALSE ACCUSATION

There was once a rich man in a village, an ağa,* who had one son and one daughter. One day the ağa said to his son, "What are we going to do with all this money that we have? Let us spend some of it by making a pilgrimage to Mecca."

"Yes," said the son, "but who will look after my sister while we are gone?"

The village hoca was a very good friend of the ağa, and so the ağa suggested that they leave his daughter with him. "Surely, the hoca would not mind looking after her for a couple of months," he said. And so they left the girl with that hoca and they started on their journey to Mecca.

The very first day that they were gone, the hoca winked at the girl, and he tried to win her affection. The next day he said to her, "Fatma, you and I will go to the market and buy some nice things." After they had made several purchases in the market, the hoca said, "Fatma, while we are here, we might as well go and have a Turkish bath together."

They went to the hamam together, and the hoca said to the owner, "Whatever the daily income from this bath is, I shall pay it to you, but we must have the bath to ourselves. You will not admit any other customers while we are here."

After they had entered, the doors of the hamam were locked, and the hoca and the girl began to have their baths. The hoca said to the girl, "Fatma, let us be united."

* Ağa is the title given to wealthy landlords in Turkey. Comparable to an English squire or a Scottish laird, he is the chief personage in a village, often ruling it in an arbitrary and feudal manner.

Quite surprised at this improper suggestion, the girl said, "But Hoca Effendi, you are not only a close friend of my father, but you are also the hoca of the village. How dare you suggest such a thing to me?"

"Well," said the hoca, "such things do happen from time to time. There ~~is~~ nothing wrong with it."

"Before we do such a thing, let me wash you properly," said the girl to the hoca.

The hoca gladly accepted this suggestion, so the girl took a cake of soap and began to wash the hoca. She produced a great pile of lather on the hoca's head,¹ and when his head and face were covered with this lather, she took off a nalın² and started beating the hoca on the head with it, disregarding where or how she struck him. Within a few minutes, the hoca was covered with blood. When the owner of the hamam heard the noise, he wondered what was going on within, and so he went and knocked on the door. The hoca shouted, "Open! Open!" and when the door was unlocked and opened, the girl just slipped out.

The owner of the hamam washed the blood off the hoca, and while he was doing this, he asked him, "What happened, hoca?" Upon this, the hoca gave him a full account of what had happened.

That night the girl returned to the hoca's house as if nothing had happened. He was very angry with her, and so he decided to write a letter to the girl's father telling him that very soon after he had left, she had become a prostitute. He did this right away. *Accusation -- false -- made against daughter of ağa*

¹Attendants in a hamam have a practice of soaping a customer's head excessively and then using the excess lather to wash his body.

²The nalın is a very thick (about 3 inches) clog or patten worn in Turkish baths. It is much heavier than the average clog worn in shower stalls by American bathers.

Ağa -- orders execution of daughter -- after ~~the~~ receiving letter falsely accusing her of prostitution

Shirt -- dipped in victim's blood -- as evidence of his/her execution

When the ağa received this letter, he became furious. He read the letter to his son, ordering him to go to their village, find his sister, cut her throat, and bring her blood-dipped shirt to him. The ağa's son proceeded to his village with this purpose in mind, but he could not help pitying his sister, for she was a beautiful girl. He explained why he had been sent by their father, but then he said, "I shall not kill you. I shall take you to a mountain, and instead of killing you, I shall kill a puppy and dip your shirt into its blood." He took his sister to a mountain in a cart, and there he killed a puppy and dipped her shirt into its blood

Leaving his sister in the mountains, he went to his father and told him that he had carried out his orders. He showed him the bloody shirt, "Well done," said the ağa to his son.

Some weeks later, the ağa and his son returned from Mecca. Many of the villagers went to his house to welcome him home, and among them was the hoca. After all the other guests had gone away, the hoca remained. After the customary greetings, the hoca told him why he had been forced to write the letter about the behavior of his daughter. "She was going with Ahmet and Mehmet,"¹ he said to the ağa. Ahmet and Mehmet -- formulaic expression equivalent to "Every Tom, Dick, and Harry"

The ağa thanked the hoca, saying, "I am very grateful to you for keeping watch over my daughter."

During her life in the mountains, the girl one day met a shepherd. She begged the shepherd to give her a sheep. She took this sheep, killed it, took out its stomach, cleaned it carefully, and then put the stomach casing on her head to make it look as if she were a keloğlan. One day she went to

¹ Ahmet and Mehmet is the Turkish equivalent of Every Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Lamb -- stomach et -- worn on head -- to disguise person as a keloğlan

a town and there took up employment as a waiter in a coffee house.² The manager of the coffee house was very pleased with the new waiter's work. He worked hard, and he was a very handsome young man, and so his reputation spread beyond that town. He became known as The Coffee House Beauty.

Everyone was talking about this Coffee House Beauty, and the ağa heard this talk. One day he suggested to the hoca that they travel to the town where he worked and see this famous beauty for themselves. When the ağa, his son, and the hoca arrived at the coffee house, they all agreed that the waiter was very good looking. The girl recognized them at once, and she asked them to stay as her guests. After supper, the ağa asked the keloğlan to tell them about his adventures in life. But the keloğlan turned to the hoca politely and said, "Hocas are men of great experience, and they have much more to tell than I. Hoca, why don't you tell us about your most exciting adventure?"

The hoca told this story: "I once had a girl living in my house. She was a very beautiful girl, and I wanted her. She was a very good girl, and she refused me every time that I tried to make love to her. Finally, I hired a hamam and I planned to make love to her there before we left, for we were to be the only ones in the hamam. But she was smarter than I thought, for when she had my head and face covered with soap, and I could not see her, she beat me with a nalın until I was covered with blood from the cuts she made. When the hamam keeper came, she escaped out the door which he unlocked, and I never was able to make love to that girl."

²The Turkish coffee house is not like a European or American cafe or restaurant. Only coffee and tea are served, no food. Customers are all male. In order to work in a coffee house, the ağa's daughter had to pass as a man, hence the skin over her hair to make her look like a bald boy, a keloğlan. This is a regular motif in Turkish folk tales.

They all laughed at this story, and now the ağa again asked the keloğlan to tell a story. "I shall also tell you a story about a girl," he said.

"Once there was a girl who was the daughter of an ağa. Her father and her brother decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and while they were gone, they left the girl in the care of a hoca whom they trusted. He was their friend, but as it turned out, he was an immoral man. He tried to seduce this girl on the very first day that her father and son had left for Mecca. When he could not succeed at this, he took her to a hamam, which he had rented for his private use, and when they were^llocked inside together, he suggested that they be united. The girl was quite amazed at this suggestion, and she asked him how he dared do this. 'You are a close friend of my father,' she said, 'and besides you are the hoca of this village.' The hoca said to her, 'Well, such things do happen from time to time. There is nothing wrong with it.' The girl then said, 'Before we do such a thing, let me wash you properly.' The hoca agreed to this, and the girl proceeded to wash him. She made a great pile of lather on his head, and when his head and face were covered with the lather^h, so that he could not see, she took off a nalın and beat him with it. He was soon covered with blood, and called to the hamam keeper, 'Open! Open!' When the hamam keeper unlocked the door and went to help the hoca, the girl slipped out and escaped. She stayed away from the hoca's house that day, but at night she returned to it, for her father had ordered her to remain there while he was away. The hoca was so annoyed and angry with her that he wrote a letter to her father saying that she had become a prostitute in his absence. The father believed the hoca and so ordered his son to kill the girl and bring back her blood-dipped shirt. But the son was sorry for his sister and killed a puppy instead, dipping the girl's shirt

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in the puppy's blood and taking the shirt to the ağa. The girl was left in the mountains where she begged a sheep from a shepherd. She killed the sheep, took out its stomach, cleaned it carefully, and then put the stomach casing on her head to make it look as if she were a keloğlan. Then she came to this town and worked in a coffee house."

The keloğlan turned to the ağa and said, "This is the coffee house where she worked. I am she. You are my father. This is my brother. And that is the immoral hoca." Saying this, she pulled the casing of the sheep's stomach from her head, and her long, beautiful hair fell down on her shoulders.

All who heard this story of the Coffee House Beauty were amazed. Her father and her brother killed the hoca on the spot. The ağa and his daughter were reunited and he took her back to live in his home again.