

Story #451 (Tape #10, 1970)

Narrator: Hasan Kocagöz

Location: Gölcuk Forestry Station
on Köroğlu Mountain, Bolu
Province

Date: July 970

All
I do

3 daughters

The Three Dancing Daughters-in-Law and Their Böreks

Once there was a woman who had three daughters-in-law whose names were Hatice, Fatma, and Emine. There was to be a wedding in their village and the woman planned to take her daughters-in-law to the wedding festivities. The woman herself was rather witch-like [which here means that she was quarrelsome and ill-tempered]. The daughters-in-law decided that they would each bake a börek to take to the wedding, but they did not want their mother-in-law to see these böreks, for they feared her. When the mother-in-law entered the room where they were talking, the youngest, a very shrewd young bride, said, "Don't worry about this, I shall arrange it all."

When the time came, they put on their good clothes and went to the wedding. Each concealed the börek she had baked beneath her clothing in some way. At the wedding, the mother-in-law wanted each one of them to dance. She said to the eldest daughter-in-law, "Hatice, get up and dance!"

The eldest arose and started dancing rather awkwardly, trying to conceal the börek, and as she danced, she kept the rhythm by singing over and over, "It is large. It is large."

The mother-in-law said, "No! Not like that. Is that the way I taught you to dance? Fatma, you get up and dance!"

¹ Börek is a pastry made with many thin layers of dough, deep-fried, but filled with meat or cheese. There are many different shapes and sizes of böreks, the sizes ranging from that of hors d'oeuvres to that of large rolls. Apparently those referred to in this tale were of the larger variety.

She arose and started to dance, also trying to conceal the börel. As she danced, she kept the rhythm with a tune to which she sang "Hell will break loose now. Hell will break loose now."

"Oh, daughter! Is that how I taught you to dance?" asked the mother-in-law. "Emine, you get up and dance."

Then the youngest girl arose and started to dance. She was the cleverest of the three daughters-in-law. Her eyes glittered, "cav! cav! cav!"² She started dancing to a very fast rhythm, and as she danced, she sang, "Don't worry, it's tied fast! Don't worry, it's tied fast!"

Daughter, youngest wonderful

When she had completed her dancing, her mother-in-law said to her, "Well done, daughter-in-law!"

²This is onomatopoeia for something that sounds sharp; by association it also is a sound that to Turks suggests brightness, sharpness and brightness of glances being similar.

This tale depends for its effect upon body language. The narrator acted out the motions of each of the daughters, snapping his fingers as he imitated their dances. Without the rhythm, the tunes, and the body language, it is a flat, two-dimensional performance.