

Story 687 (1979, Tape 1

Narrator: Rifat Önen, 44
Location: Kayapa village,
 kaza of Ilica,
 Province of Erzurum
Date: February 3, 1979

Rifat
A Goose Tale

Once there was and once there was not, and in that time there was a certain man about whom this story was told. This fellow used to go to work every day soon after he had arisen, and then later in the day, he would go shopping to a few things, and then return home in the evening.

One day he met on the street a man who sold geese.

"How much do you charge for a goose?" he asked this man.

"Their prices vary, according to their weight, between and 250 kuruş."¹

"Very well, give me one of them," said the man. He paid the goose seller his price, took his goose, and proceeded on home. Upon his arrival there, he called out, "Wife!"

"Yes, what is it?" she asked

"Look at this thing, with its two feet and its two wings! Bismillah!² Allahu ekber!³ I am going to slaughter

¹The kuruş is worth 1/100 of a lira. As late as 1962, the kuruş was still usable currency--small copper coins. By late 1984, however, when the lira had been devalued to 420 to the American dollar, the lira was worth less than 1/4 cent, and so the kuruş was of so little value as to be, for all practical purposes, worthless.

²I begin with the name of Allah--a propitious remark with which to begin any venture or action.

³"Allah is great!"

Story 687

this creature, and you are going to cook it tomorrow for supper.

The man arose as usual and went to work early in the day. When he returned that day he again called out, "Wife!"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Wife, did you cook the goose I brought to you yesterday?"

"No, I have not. You must be mad. You brought me no goose yesterday!"

"Please do not talk that way, wife! Be sensible!" he implored.

The next day he arose at his usual early hour and went to his business to work. Later in the day, he started home again, and, as was his practice, he would shop along the way. Again he met a man selling geese. "How much do you charge for your geese?" he asked

"Their price varies, according to their weight--from 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 liras."⁴

"Well, sell me one that costs 2 1/2 liras." After he had paid the goose seller, the man took his goose and continued on home. When he arrived there, he called out, "Wife!"

"Yes, what is it?"

⁴This would be 250 to 350 kuruş.

Story 687

"Wife, I want you to take a good look at this goose. see that it has two legs and two wings. I shall slaughter it now, and tomorrow you will cook it so that we eat it for supper."

It came morning again--and may you all have many good mornings! --and the man went to his shop and started his day's business. Let us see what his wife is doing in the mean time.

During the day the woman's ^{secret lover} lover called upon her "What do you have here to eat?" he asked. "I am starving Cook some soup or something that we can eat."

"We have a goose!" the woman said, setting out before them the cooked goose. The two of them kept eating the meat of that goose until it had all been consumed. It was long after her lover had left when her husband arrived home.

"What do we have to eat?" he asked.

"We have nothing whatever to eat in this house," she said.

"Did I not bring home a goose to you yesterday?"

"No, you did not." She denied all knowledge of any goose.

"Please, wife, do not talk that way! I am hungry! Give me some food!"

The following morning the man arose early and went to

Story 687

his shop. After working there all day, he started out for home. On the way he met another goose seller, and he asked, "How much do your geese cost?"

"These geese vary in price from 3 1/2 to 5 liras

Buying a five-lira goose, the man started home. On the way he met some gendarmes⁵ accompanied by a large group of people--some 360. He asked all these people to go along with him as witnesses, and as they walked along, some of the people asked the gendarmes to fire their guns into the

When the man arrived home with the goose, he called his wife to him and said, "Wife, look at this goose! It has two legs and two wings. I'll kill it tonight, and you will cook it tomorrow for our supper." And this time he had 360 witnesses.

Again the morning arrived--and may we all have many good mornings ahead of us--and again the man arose and went to his shop. In the evening he closed his shop and started home. On the way, he saw a man standing meekly and helplessly.⁶ This stranger said to him, "I am a poor man without money to

⁵In modern Turkey the word gendarme refers to a soldier assigned to the Ministry of Interior, the cabinet unit responsible for maintaining law and order in rural areas which have no police departments.

⁶A person in a posture of meekness and submission often tilts his head to one side as if baring his neck for execution. The poor man here is described as standing with bent neck.

Story 687

buy even bread. Will you accept me in your home as a guest for the night?"

"Of course, I will! Come along. Let us go!"

Before the man and his guest reached home, the woman's lover had again visited her. Again the woman gave the cooked goose to her lover, and shortly after her lover had departed, her husband and his guest arrived. "Wife," he said, "I have brought home a guest. Let us show him his sleeping place, and after that we can have our evening meal."

His wife said, "Let the man sit here in the room while you go and buy some bread. Then we can have our meal. While her husband went to the market for bread, his wife placed a vise in the fire.

"What is that for?" the guest asked her.

"When my husband returns, he will put you in this vise

"Is that so?" asked the guest, who had already started to leave.

When the husband returned, he asked, "Wife, where is guest?"

"The guest took our goose and walked away with it.

They all had their wishes fulfilled, and I hope that we all have the same.⁷

⁷Although this is a traditional ending for folktales, it is obviously not an appropriate one for this particular tale!