

Story 734 (1976 Tape 11)

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Söğüt kaza,
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Secret

The Two Illicit Lovers Foiled by Elmadar

Childless
Once there was and once there was not a man and a wife who had no children. They had living with them, however, a beautiful girl named Elmadar.

The wife in this family had a lover whom she used to have come to her home when her husband was away. Elmadar would always report to the husband everything that the lovers did and everything that they talked about. One day the wife overheard Elmadar telling her uncle also about the behavior of foster mother and her lover. The woman discovered, furthermore, that the girl was telling everybody about her lover

One day back in those days, the woman said to Elmadar, "I am going to make some yufka¹ and some helva,² but do not

¹Yufka is a flat bread that looks like an immense pancake about two feet in diameter. It is cooked not in an oven but on a round, slightly convex piece of sheet metal. When dried, the loaf will last for a great length of time without molding or otherwise spoiling. When it is to be used, it is lightly sprinkled with water and wrapped briefly in a damp towel. It is then soft enough to be cut and either folded or rolled into individual portions. Rural kitchens often have a stack of yufka two meters high.

²A candy-like confection made with sesame oil, flour, and honey.

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tell anyone of this."

You come there too."

The following day Elmadar put on her back a bag containing apples and went to the threshing floor. Her uncle and her foster father were there, too. When her foster father saw his wife coming with delicious food for him, he was surprised. He said to her, "You have never done anything like this before. What a great change this is!"

The woman looked around for her lover, but at first she could not see him anywhere. He had by mistake gone to some other spot in the field. When she later noticed him some distance away, she said to her husband, "Let us invite that man over there to share this food with us."

Since the husband had never seen his wife's lover, he did not know who the man was. He therefore said, "Yes, it is a good idea to share one's lunch with somebody else." Saying this, he sent Elmadar to invite the man to join them in lunch.

Before she went, Elmadar spoke to her uncle privately, saying, "I am supposed to go to that man out yonder and tell him that my mother and father have invited him here to lunch with them. Perhaps he will not accept this invitation.

³A threshing floor is made by pounding down clay in a circle whose radius is 15-20 meters.

Please come with me, for I am certain that you could persuade him. Besides, you could help me to pick up the apples which I keep dropping from my overloaded bag.

The two of them walked toward the man, Elmadar in front and her uncle following. As she walked, Elmadar kept dropping apples, and her uncle kept picking them up. When she reached the man who was her foster mother's lover, she said, "Look! My uncle is coming after you. He is going to beat you-- perhaps even kill you. As you can see, he is picking up stones as he comes. You had better do something if you expect to live out the rest of your life safely."

When the man saw that the uncle was indeed coming, and that he was picking up something from the ground, he was frightened and ran away at once. Returning then to her foster parents, Elmadar said, "We invited that man to come to lunch, but he wouldn't come

The woman suspected that Elmadar had played another trick on her. She was tired of trying to deal with Elmadar and wanted to put a stop to her continual interference. She thought that she might do this by threatening the girl. She said, "Elmadar, there is a dede⁴ in such-and-such a place.

⁴Literally, dede means grandfather. But the word has overtones that may suggest much more than that. It may refer to any very old man, especially a religious man, and often a senior dervish. Such men were thought to have contact with the world beyond and thus have the ability to do things via supernatural means.

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If you do not stop interfering in my private affairs telling everybody about them, I shall ask that dede to cast upon you a spell that will both blind and deafen you." But this threat did not frighten Elmadar at all, and she continued doing as she had always done. The woman decided then to carry out her threat, and she therefore went to see the dede. She said to him, "O dede, cause Elmadar to go blind!"

He answered, "Yes, so let it be."

"And cause her also to become deaf."

"Yes, so let it be," the dede said again.

The woman then returned to her home. The next day she called Elmadar to have her do something, but Elmadar did not come. She had not heard the woman, for she was now deaf and blind. The woman knew that as long as Elmadar remained that way, she would have a good opportunity to spend time her lover.

One day, however, the woman quarreled with her lover. This quarrel led to a fight in which she killed the man. By now, most of the dede's curse was leaving Elmadar, and she was able to understand what had happened. She said to her foster mother, "Look! You have killed the man. What are you going to do now?"

"I shall put his body on my back and take it someplace where I can leave it." After she had done this,

~~Enchanted~~
Curse

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returned

Elmadar said to her, "Now you are going to that man's house and inform his two wives that he has died. Then you will remain there with them and mourn for his death. If you do not do this, I shall report that it was you who killed that man. You will not only mourn for that man, but you will lament even more loudly than the others do."

"But what shall I say as I am crying?"

"You will say, 'Let us weep! Let us mourn! And after that, let us examine our heads!'"

The woman now had no choice but to do everything that Elmadar ordered. If she did not, then Elmadar would tell everything. She wrapped her head in the scarf which Elmadar gave her for the occasion and went to the dead man's house.

There the women were mourning the man's death. His paramour kept saying, "Let us weep! Let us mourn! And after that, let us go and examine our heads!"

Elmadar said to the two widows, "This woman keeps saying, 'Let us examine our heads!' I wonder what there is about her head that should be examined? Let us see."

When they took off that woman's head scarf, the two widows discovered that it was the sash of their dead husband.