

Story 808 (1970 Tape 18)

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Province

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*Trickster* <sup>100</sup>  
The Köse<sup>1</sup> and the Sheep in the Sea

There was a köse who had become a farmer. He was working in his fields one day when three travelers were passing his property. One of them called, "O Köse, may it go easily!"<sup>2</sup>

"May God bless you good fellows!" responded the köse. "What direction are you going? Why don't you stop here and be my guests for the night?" After some brief discussion, it was agreed that they would spend the night at the köse's home.

<sup>1</sup> The narrator alternates between calling the protagonist a keloğlan (bald boy) and a köse, both trickster types in Turkey. Inasmuch as this is almost always a köse tale, we have chosen to keep it so here. --A köse is a beardless man, sometimes thought to be effeminate, though not in a majority of cases. Some claim that he has short, bandy legs and a heart-shaped face. But all agree that he is a scheming and vicious trickster, always ready to fleece fools and exploit the unwary. He may be a relatively latter-day replacement for the supernatural adversaries of ancient times. Ordinary rules do not apply to him. People are as ruthless in driving away or killing him as they would be in ridding themselves of witches or monsters.

<sup>2</sup> The Turkish expression is Kolay gelsin!--May it (one's work) go easily! It is a courteous and sympathetic encouragement to anyone engaged in physical work. To say this to someone is to wish him/her well.

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The köse had a rabbit in a bag. He now took this rabbit out of the bag and said to it, "Go home and tell my wife to cook such-and-such dishes for dinner. We have three guests, we shall all come home at dusk." He then released the rabbit, which ran off and disappeared over a hill.

The köse had instructed his wife to cook those dishes before he had left in the morning, but the strangers did not, of course, know that. When they reached the köse's house that evening and found those very dishes all prepared dinner, they were amazed. The köse had another rabbit in a pen, but when the guests saw it, they supposed it was the same one they had seen released in the field.

"Oh, Köse, sell this rabbit to us!"

"No, I could not do that. It is like a hand and foot to me! You saw how I freed it in the field to come home and tell my wife the dishes I wanted cooked."

"You just name your price, and we shall give you whatever money you ask for it."

After lengthy bargaining, they bought the rabbit from the köse, paying him a very large sum of money for it. They took the rabbit with them to their home area, and they were eager to show off its abilities to their friends. While were talking to a group of men, one of these travelers took their rabbit from a bag and said to it, "Go to such-

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and-such a house and tell my wife to cook such-and-such dishes for dinner." When he then released the rabbit, it off and disappeared.

When they arrived home, this man said to his wife, "My wife, didn't our rabbit arrive yet with my instructions to you for dinner?"

"No

*Vengeance* "Alas, that köse has cheated us badly! Let us go and avenge ourselves on him by throwing him into the sea! Such a trick he played on us!"<sup>3</sup>

Going to the köse's house, they caught him and put him into a sack. The three of them then began to carry him to the sea to drown him. It was several kilometers to the seashore, however, and they grew very tired along the way. When they finally reached the sea, one of them said, "Now let us throw him in and be rid of him."

But another said, "We are too tired for that right now. us rest a while and then throw him in." Leaving the köse tied securely in the sack, they lay down beneath a tree

<sup>3</sup> This is a severely truncated variant of the tale type. In this type (and its variants in ATON) the köse plays three tricks on his opponents, each more damaging and the third resulting in the death(s) of one or more of the opponents' wives. To cut out two of three tricks in what is clearly a trickster tale is to damage the tale seriously.

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and fell asleep.

When a Jew<sup>4</sup> came along a few minutes later, the köse said from within the sack, "I don't want to! No! I don't want to!"

After listening for a couple of minutes, the Jew went to the bag and said, "Hey, you in there! What is it that you do not want?"

"They are going to give me to the padişah's daughter, but I don't want to marry her!"

"Unbelievable! Come out of that sack and let me get into it." Saying that, he untied the neck of the sack and released the köse. He had the köse tie the bag again when he himself had gotten into it.

The köse now discovered that this Jew was a shepherd. He had been guiding along a flock of forty sheep, which the köse now took with him as he departed.

After sleeping for a while and resting, the three men who had carried the köse there to drown him woke up. One of them said, "Now let us throw that köse into the sea!"

<sup>4</sup> This is the only instance to this point in the ATON tales that the innocent fool killed in place of the köse is a Jew. Why is he here? This is not an anti-semitic tale, and we have fewer than ten anti-semitic tales in the entire Archive. Furthermore, this Jew is not a bit Jewish in terms of ethnic stereotyping. It would seem to be more a whim of the narrator than anything else.

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Picking up the sack, they started swinging it back and forth in order to heave it as far out into the water as possible

Just then a voice inside the sack said, "Yes, yes, I want, I want."

"Do you want even more?" one of them asked as they threw the sack into the sea. They supposed, of course that the person inside the sack was still the köse.

As the sack was sinking, they heard the Jew's voice saying, "Kırk, kırk" as he was drowning.

The three now started home. They had not gone very far, however, before they met the köse coming along with a flock of forty sheep. Very confused, one of them asked, "What is this, Köse? How did you get out?"

"You threw me into the shallow water. What a pity If you had only thrown me into deeper water, I should have been able to get out with more than just forty sheep!"

"Astonishing! Look here, Köse, you throw us so that we may also get a flock of sheep from the sea."

When the köse threw the first one in, the man started to drown and made a gagging noise in his throat, "Kırk, kırk!"

The köse said, "You hear him! He is saying 'Forty!

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Forty!"<sup>5</sup>

The second man said, "Throw me farther than that! Throw me farther so that I can get more than forty sheep!"

The third one said, "Throw me even farther than that! Farther! Farther!

The kose threw all three of them just as far out into the sea as he could. Then he returned home with his new flock of sheep.

<sup>5</sup> All variants, seemingly, of this tale include this play on words. The gurgling, strangling noise sounds like Kirk. In Turkish Kirk is the word for forty.