

Story 976 (1961, Dictated)

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Location: Ankara

Date: November 1961

Slim Bey the Mouse and His Snail Bride

One day the snail got all dressed up and sat before the front door of her house. When the water carrier passed by, she called to him, "Oh, Water Carrier, Water Carrier, will you marry me?"

"Yes, I will," he answered.

"But when you become angry with me, what will you use to beat me with?"

"With my stick.

no! Then I do not want to marry you, for you would break all of my bones!"

A short while later Slim Bey the Mouse came along. The snail called out to him, "Oh, Slim Bey, Slim Bey, will you marry me?"

"Yes, I will," he said

if you should become angry with me, what would you use to beat me with?"

"Why, I would beat you with my tail," said Slim Bey.

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"Well, that would not hurt very much," said the snail, and so they were married.

One day shortly after they were married, there was a wedding in the village to which Slim Bey was invited. He said, "Wife, I am going to a wedding celebration for a while, but I shall be back before very long."

right," she said.

But when he got to the wedding celebration, there was so much activity there and so much to eat there that he forgot all about his wife. When night came and Slim Bey the Mouse had not yet arrived home, his wife became worried about him. She grew so worried that she finally went out into the streets and began to search for him. Running about in the dark, she soon fell into a hole. She struggled and tried hard in every way to get out of the hole, but she was unable to get out. She called out to passersby, "Lords! Masters! Go to Slim Bey the Mouse and tell him that his bride with red veil and golden sequins has fallen into a hole! Tell him that she goes 'Pr-r-r-t! Pr-r-r-t!'<sup>1</sup> but still cannot fly out. Let him come and save me!"

Those passersby who heard this were still talking about

<sup>1</sup>This is Turkish onomatopoeia for the sound of a bird's flying. Applied to a snail, it is, of course, ridiculous.

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it when they reached the wedding. That was how Slim Bey the Mouse heard about it and remembered his wife. Filling one ear with pilav<sup>2</sup> and the other with zerde,<sup>3</sup> he left the wedding and went to the side of the hole. He called down to his wife, "Give me your hand so that I can pull you out!"

The snail answered, "And I being very cross at you!"

Slim Bey the Mouse repeated his instruction: "Well, give me your hand so that I can pull you out!"

But to his great annoyance, his wife said again, "And I being so very cross with you!"

Hearing this, the mouse himself became very angry "Being cross Being cross! Being cross!" And he beat her with his tail, all the while saying, "Being cross! Being cross Being cross!" until he had finally crushed her to death.

<sup>2</sup>Pilav (pilaf) is a rice dish containing small pieces of meat and sometimes pine nuts and/or currants. It is a staple of Turkish cuisine.

<sup>3</sup>Zerde is a sweet, gelatinous dessert colored yellow with saffron flavoring.