

Story 1066 (1972 Tape 7) Narrator: Esma Koca

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Karacabey kaza,
Bursa Province

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The Köse¹ and the Zeybeks²

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Once there was and once there was not an Uncle Köse who had a son. One day he said to his son, "Take our donkey to the village fountain and give it some water to drink." The boy took the donkey to the fountain, and there he met three Zeybeks.

93-95 These Zeybeks said to him, "We would like to buy this donkey if its ears and tail were cut off." The boy left and had the donkey's ears and tail cut off. Then he took it back to the fountain. Then the Zeybeks said, "We would have bought this donkey if it had had a tail and ears."

The boy returned home to his father. He was still crying when he got there. When he told his father everything that had happened, Uncle Köse said, "Don't worry

¹A köse is a special folk type. He is beardless, and he is often said to have a heart-shaped face and bandy legs. He is always considered to be extremely shrewd and cunning in his dealings with others. Usually he is a very unsympathetic figure, so much so that in many tales he seems to replace the ogre or monster, and hence any strategem against him is considered fair. In this tale he is a sympathetic trickster.

²The term once referred to a type of light infantry. It also referred to a class of aggressive people located primarily in İzmir and Aydın Provinces.

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about that, son. I shall now sell the donkey

The köse shoved three gold coins into the donkey's anus and took the animal to the place where the Zeybeks were. They asked him, "Is that donkey to be sold?"

Uncle Köse said, "No, I don't want to sell this donkey. It is too valuable. It defecates gold." He then gave the donkey a kick, and a gold piece fell to the ground. He kicked it a second time, and another gold piece dropped. Once more he gave the donkey a kick, and the third gold coin fell.

"Come now, Uncle Köse, sell that donkey to us. Sell it!" After some bargaining, the köse sold it to them for a very high price. They then asked him, "What kind of food does this donkey eat? What should we give it to drink?"

The köse said, "Give it a cauldron of beans to eat and all the water it wants to drink. Lock it in a stable while it eats.

The Zeybeks took the donkey home and put it in a stable. After placing before the donkey a cauldron of beans and a cauldron of water, they locked the stable door. They took a look through a hole in the door to be sure that the donkey was eating, and then they left.

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The donkey began eating the beans and drinking water. There was no one there to prevent it from over-eating, and so it continued to devour the beans until it swelled up and died. When it fell to the floor on its back, one of its feet covered the hole in the door

When the Zeybeks later returned, they saw one of the donkey's shoes in the hole in the door. One of them said, "If the donkey's feet are up that high, it must be because the stable is full of gold!" But when they opened the door, they saw no gold but found that the donkey dead.

They said, "Let us go to that köse and ask him about this."

Uncle Köse knew that they would be coming, and so he was prepared for them. He got two rabbits ⁹⁵⁻⁹⁶ and left one of them at home and took the other to the mountain pasture with him. Before he left home, he ordered his wife to prepare some special food for guests that night.

When the Zeybeks did not find him at home, they walked up to his mountain pasture to talk with him. After they had exchanged greetings, the köse said to them, "You will be most welcome to come to my house tonight so that we can eat dinner together." He then said to the rabbit

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he had taken along with him, "Go home at once and cook some food for our dinner." He then released the rabbit, and it ran off.

When the Zeybeks and the köse reached the köse's house that evening, they found the food all cooked and the dinner prepared. The Zeybeks were amazed at this. They said, "Come, now, Uncle Köse, sell us this rabbit. Sell it!"

The köse said, "No, I cannot sell it. That rabbit is my only helper. You are my guests now, but if I hadn't had that rabbit, I'd have been ashamed, for I'd have been unable to have this dinner prepared.

But they kept urging him, "Oh, please sell it to us!"

After they had talked back and forth about it for a while, the köse sold the rabbit for a high price. Saying farewell, the Zeybeks took the rabbit and returned home where they showed the rabbit through all the parts of their house. On the following day they left the rabbit in the house and went elsewhere themselves to carry on some work. When they returned in the evening, they expected to find dinner awaiting them, but there was no food of any kind prepared. They decided to go again to the köse to ask him to explain this.

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Again the köse made preparations for their visit. He said to his wife, "Leave the house looking dirty and untidy today. Kill a rooster and soak up its blood in a sponge. Then tie the sponge around your neck. When the Zeybeks are here this evening, I shall pretend to cut your throat. Fall down as if you are dead, but when I blow upon my flute,⁹⁷⁻⁹⁸ get up and act perfectly well again. Then he left for his mountain pasture.

The Zeybeks found him there and said, "Uncle Köse, we want to talk with you."

THE köse said, "This is no place to talk. Let us go to my home and talk there." When they reached his house, the köse pretended to be angry at his wife. He shouted, "Wife, this house is dirty. It is a mess!" He then grabbed her, pulled out his knife, and pretended to cut her throat. She fell to the floor with the rooster's blood running from the sponge on her throat. The Zeybeks were astonished, thinking that the woman was dead. The köse then took down his flute and blew upon it, Düldülü, dül-dülü, düldülü. Hearing that, his wife at once stretched herself and arose.

The Zeybeks said, "Come, now, Uncle Köse, sell us that flute. Sell it!"

acts
pretended

Death, her
fear, she

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"I cannot sell it," he said. "As you have seen, I am often a very irritable man, and this flute is very useful to me. You saw what happened! I cut my wife's throat when I became angry at her, but with this flute was able to restore her to life."

The Zeybeks kept urging him to sell them the flute. "Please sell it to us. Sell it to us," they said several times. In the end the köse did sell them the flute for a great amount of money.

The Zeybeks took the flute and went home. There each of them proceeded to cut his wife's throat. As the three women lay bleeding on the floor, one of the Zeybeks played upon the flute, Düldülü, düldülü, düldülü. The women did not move. The second Zeybek said, "Let me play it!" He also played, Düldülü, düldülü, düldülü. Still the women did not move. Then the third played, Düldülü, düldülü, düldülü. But the women did not move.

Then the Zeybeks all said, "Our wives are dead and they cannot be revived. Let us go and take our vengeance against that köse!"

The köse knew that the Zeybeks would return and wish to kill him. He therefore made a plan to protect himself. He decided to pretend that he had died. He dug a grave

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and placed in it a brazier³ full of hot coals and a pair of tongs. He then climbed into the grave and had it covered up except for a small window on

The three Zeybeks went to the köse's house and knocked on the door. When the door was opened, they said, "Where is Uncle Köse?"

The köse's wife was crying loudly. She said, "Your Uncle Köse has died."

"Where is his grave?" they asked. "We shall go there and pray for him, reciting the Fatiha."⁴

"His grave is in the village cemetery," said köse's wife.

On the way to the cemetery, the Zeybeks said to each other, "We could never take revenge against him while he was alive, but we can anything we wish to him now that he is dead. Let us go and defile his grave." When they reached the grave, one of the Zeybeks tried to defecate through the small window on the top of the grave, but before he could do so, the köse burned him on the buttock with the red-hot pair of tongs. The Zeybek cried out and jumped away. When the second and third Zeybeks also tried to defe-

³The Turkish word used here is mangal

⁴A special prayer for the soul of the dead.

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came into his grave, the köse burned them in the same way.

first Zeybek said, "I was burned!"

second Zeybek said, "I too was burned!"

third Zeybek said, "He burned all three of us!

That cursed köse damaged us while he was alive, and he has damaged us now that he is dead! Let us leave this place before we are injured any further!"

After the Zeybeks had gone, the köse climbed out of the grave and went home. There he got his narghile and took it to the coffeehouse. Sitting in front of the coffeehouse where everyone could see him, he began smoking his pipe. When the Zeybeks went to the coffeehouse and saw him there, they were furious. They said, "Let us go to the kadı⁵ and complain about him!" Going to the kadı, they said, "He did this and he did that to us."

The kadı called the köse to his office and said, "Uncle Köse, there are complaints about you made by these three Zeybeks. What do you have to say about these charges?"

The köse said, "These men have no reason to complain. They are my slaves. If there is any doubt about this, you can examine their buttocks and see my brand marks upon them."

After the buttocks of the three Zeybeks had been exam-

⁵The kadı was the pre-Republican judge of Moslem canonical law.

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ined, the kadı dismissed the charges against the köse.
He then said to the Zeybeks, "Get out of here, and
from now on serve your ağa⁶ better than you have in the
past!"

⁶An ağa is a rural landowner, usually wealthy, often powerful.