

Story 1069 1972 Tape 7

Narrator: Unidentified

Location: Doğla village,
Karacabey kaza
Bursa Province

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The River of Evil

There is a river not far from here called Çınarlıdere River. It lies between the village of Doğla and the village of Keşlik. People in this area believe that it is a river possessed by evil and likely to bring bad luck to those who spend much time near it.

Fifteen years ago there lived in this village a man named Hüseyin ~~Ağa~~. He was a ~~barber~~, not really an ağa,¹ but his name was Hüseyin Ağa. One day when he was crossing the Çınarlıdere River, he had a bad experience. As he was crossing the river, he saw two female demons. These two female demons blew their breath toward him, and this had a very damaging effect upon him. It bothered him so much that it disturbed his mind, and after a while he went completely mad.²

¹An ağa is a rural landowner, often rich and sometimes quite powerful.

²Throughout the Middle East the power of breath is a common folk motif. Usually people or objects are breathed upon by specially endowed religious or medical practitioners to give life or to heal. In pre-Republic Turkey there were healers who were called "blowers" (üfürükçüler). Whether considered as sorcerer or medical quack, the "blower" was outlawed during the Kemalist reform movement of the 1920s. Here the alleged effect of "blowing" is not beneficial but destructive.