

Story 1118 (1966 Tape 5) Narrator: Hacer Ertemli

Location: Bursa

Date: Summer 1966

The Köse ^{fish} Changeling

There was once a köse who brought home ten trout. He said to his wife, "Cook these trout."

As the wife was cooking the trout, a neighbor woman came by and said, "How delicious those trout smell!" The köse's wife gave the woman one of the trout to eat

When the köse returned home, he asked his wife, "Are the trout cooked?"

"Yes, they are."

Opening the lid of the pan and looking inside, the köse counted only nine trout. "Where is the tenth trout?" he asked his wife

"A neighbor came by and noticed how good the trout smelled as they cooked. I gave her one of them to eat."

"Oh, no!" said the köse. "Either that trout must be recovered or I shall die."

The woman tried to convince her husband that she would eat

¹ A 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 stratagem against him is considered fair.

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fewer trout than would be her share, but the husband would not hear of this, and in the end he pretended to have died.

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The woman notified the family of the köse's death so that they would come and bury him. She gave them this instruction, "When you bury him in the earth, leave a small opening in one corner of the grave so that I may look in and see him every day."

After he had been buried, his wife went to visit the köse every day. She would always say to him, "Have you calmed down yet?"

"No! Either that tenth trout will be recovered or I shall really die!"

This continued for some time. Finally, one day when the woman asked the köse, "Are you still being stubborn about it?" there was no response from the grave. After a moment, however, woman heard coming from the grave the sound of a baby crying. She dug open the grave and found a newly born baby.

Just before this, a new judge^{11-B} had been assigned to that kaza. He and his family arrived there at night after the gates in the city wall had been closed. Unable to enter the city, the judge ordered his servants to set up a tent¹¹⁻¹² for them for that night. The tent was erected close to the edge of the cemetery, and the köse was able to see all that was going on. He also saw that there was a newly born baby among the people in the tent.

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When the people in the tent were asleep, the köse dug way out of the grave, went to the tent, stole the baby, and placed it in the grave. Then he returned to the tent and climbed into the baby's cradle.²⁻¹³ When the judge and his wife awoke in the morning, they found that they had a fully grown baby in the cradle

The following day the judge's family located a suitable house for themselves in the city and they moved into it. judge and his wife brought up this man as their child, and the köse's wife brought up their real baby. Seven or eight months later the köse's wife wished to go to the public bath. She said to the wife of a neighbor, "Could you look after my baby for a short time? I want to go to the public bath. I'll be back within an hour."

The neighbor agreed to do this, and the köse's wife went to the bath. When she arrived there, she was amazed at what she saw. There was the köse sitting in the bath and playing in the water. When he saw his wife enter, he began to shout and cry. "Oh, he is afraid of you!" the bath attendants said. "He is the judge's son. Don't go near him! Don't scare him!"

When the köse's wife left the bath, she found out who the new judge was and where his home was located. On the following day, she prepared the baby and took it to the judge's house.

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They took the woman and the child into the guest room. There she saw the köse lying in a cradle and playing with the beads that hung on it. The woman said to her husband, "May God curse a köse like you!" As she said this, she threw the cradle out the window of the top level (the third story) of the house, killing the köse.

The judge and his wife were shocked by this violence. She asked her, "What right do you have to kill a judge's son?"

The woman answered, "He was not your son but my husband's. Your son is here with me." Saying this, she took their baby to them. Both the judge and his wife were grateful to her and they looked after her for the rest of her life.