

Story 1137 (1974 Tape 11

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kaza, Yozgat Province

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The Silly Women and the Trickster

At one time there lived near here a man who had a wife and a daughter. They had only one ox, and the man was unable to plow and cultivate very much land with that single ox. When he had saved up enough money, he went one day to the market in a nearby town to buy another ox

While he was gone, his daughter went to the village fountain to get some water. There she saw a young man who sat crying and crying. "What is the matter with you?" she asked this young man.

"I am a very unfortunate person. I have been looking everywhere for a job, but I have been unable to find work." As he went on talking about his troubles, the girl felt very sorry for him

The girl went home and told her mother about the condition of the young man. "And besides his other trouble, he is very hungry," she said

They had no bread to give to this stranger. The mother and daughter did not know how to feed him, but they finally decided to slaughter their ox and cook some meat for him. They

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slaughtered the ox and fixed him a large quantity of meat.

Some time after this stranger had left, the man of the house returned from town with a new ox. When he took it to the stable, he found the building empty. "Where is our old ox?" he asked

"We slaughtered it."

"Why?"

His wife answered, "Well, our daughter liked a young man who came along, and because that young man was very hungry, we slaughtered the ox for him."

When he heard this, the man grew furious. He said, "If I can find anywhere any other woman as crazy as you are, then I shall forgive you. If I do not find one as crazy as you are, then I shall come back and cut you up into pieces." Having said that, he left at once and began wandering aimlessly.

After a while he came to a village where they had a custom that no longer exists but was once very common. In the public square of that village were two special stones. If a person sat on one of those stones, it meant that he was looking for a bride. If a person came and sat on the other stone, which was called a "death stone," it meant that he was mourning the death of someone. The man whose ox had been slaughtered by his crazy wife did not know about this custom, but just by chance he sat down to rest on the death stone.

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After he had sat there for a short while, a woman called to him from a nearby window. Her brother had recently died, and she was still so upset by this loss that she thought that the man sitting on the death stone had come from the other world. She said, "My brother also died recently. Do you know how my brother, Mustafa,

"Well, I saw him

"But what condition is he

"He is not in very good condition. He was hungry when I saw him. You really ought to give him something."

The woman was greatly disturbed to hear this news. She gave the man all of her gold and a fine horse from their stable, saying, "Take these things to my brother, Mustafa."

Some time later this woman's husband came home. He at once noticed that there was a horse missing from their stable. "Where is the gray horse?" he asked

"Oh, a man came here who had just come from the other world. There he had seen my brother, and he said that Mustafa was hungry and in want. I gave him the gold and the gray horse to take to Mustafa."

The husband started in pursuit of the stranger at once. In order not to be caught by the woman's husband, the refugee stopped at a flour mill and pretended that he was the mill

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owner.¹ After the woman's husband had come and gone, the refugee again mounted the gray horse and rode towards home. As he did so, he shouted, "Say hello to Mustafa for me too!"

¹ The narrator has omitted the final and most comic scene in this tale: the means by which the refugee dupes the miller into letting him don the miller's clothes and pretend that he (the refugee) is the mill owner. See ATON 574 (one of several variants of this well-known tale) for the comic terminal scene at the mill.