

Story 1233 (Dictated)

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Konya Province

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Mistaken Identity of a Karatepe¹ Man

There was once a Karatepe carpenter who built ten houses for ten customers. He was very proud of his achievement, and when the houses were almost finished, he would go at evening, climb up on the roof of one of them, and count the roofs of his new buildings. Standing up there, he could count only nine roofs, but when he descended to the ground again, he could count ten roofs. After this had happened several evenings in a row he came to the conclusion that each time he climbed up to count his houses a clever thief stole the roof of one of them; then by the time he had descended to the ground, the thief replaced the roof, so that he could then count ten roofs.

Angered by this trick that the thief was playing on him, the carpenter decided to catch the man. As soon as he came down from the roof the next evening, the carpenter searched in every direction to find the thief before he could return the roof. He encountered an old man whom he asked, "Have you seen anyone carrying a roof?"

¹Karatepe is a remote village in the northeast corner of Adana Province. Its people are alleged to be stupid, and their misadventures are the subjects of a great number of Karatepe anecdotes.

Surprised, the old man looked at him for a moment and then answered, "Yes, he just passed here, going down that road to the right.

The carpenter rushed down the road to the right looking the thief, but he saw no one going that way. When he came to a mill, he said to the miller, "I am chasing a man who stole a roof from one of my new houses. Have you seen him?"

"You just come inside and rest yourself," the miller replied. "I know the fellow you are looking for, and I know what time he usually comes along this way. I'll let you know when he comes."

In the room inside the mill to which the miller took the carpenter, there was also another man sitting and resting. This second man was a priest, dressed in a black gown and wearing a cowl over his head. After his two guests had fallen asleep, the miller exchanged their headgear, placing the carpenter's fez on the priest and the priest's cowl on the carpenter.

After a while the miller returned to the room and quietly awakened the carpenter. He said to the carpenter, "The man who stole your roof has just walked past the mill. Go after him!"

The carpenter from Karatepe arose, rushed outside, and started looking for the thief. The moon was shining very brightly behind the carpenter, casting his shadow on the ground before him. When he saw the cowl on the head of the shadow, the carpenter said, "That silly miller! He awakened the priest instead of me!"