

Story 1251 (1988 Tape 1

Narrator: Mustafa Aytekin, 26

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Nasreddin Hoca and the Mortal Cauldron

One day Nasreddin Hoca planned to give a big feast for all of his friends. When the time came to cook the food, however, the Hoca realized that he did not have a pot large enough to hold all the food he needed to cook for so many people. He therefore went to a neighbor who owned a large cauldron and asked to borrow that cauldron. "All right," answered the neighbor and turned over the cauldron to the Hoca.

The day after the feast, Nasreddin Hoca returned the cauldron with a small saucepan inside it. The neighbor asked, "What is that saucepan inside my cauldron, Hoca?"

The Hoca answered, "Your cauldron was pregnant when I borrowed it. Last night it gave birth to this saucepan." Although the neighbor understood the ridiculousness of the situation, he said nothing.

A short while later, the Hoca found it necessary to borrow his neighbor's cauldron again. When he asked the neighbor for this loan, the neighbor, hoping for another birth, said, "Of course, Hoca! You may borrow my cauldron any time you need it."

After several days had passed, the Hoca had still not

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returned the cauldron. Finally the neighbor decided to ask for its return. When he did so, he discovered something different this time. The Hoca said to him, "I am sorry, neighbor, but your cauldron has died."

"What?" asked the neighbor. "How could a cauldron die?"

The Hoca answered, "You had no difficulty believing that the cauldron could give birth. Why, then, should you have difficulty believing that it could die?"