

Story 1395 (1989 Tape 6)

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Nasreddin Hoca and the Dessert

One day Nasreddin Hoca was invited to attend a large dinner party here in Konya. From the time that Konya had been the capital of the Seljuk Empire,¹ it had been known for its rich cuisine. (I have never seen anywhere in my time the great variety of dishes that were said to have come out of the Seljuk kitchens. Wanting to tease and confuse the Hoca, they did not serve the dessert at the usual time but waited to do so until after the prayer had been said at the conclusion of the meal.

The Hoca enjoyed the dessert, and he ate several portions of it. When he felt that he had had his share of the dessert, Hoca pushed the large serving tray away from him with a twisting motion. As he did so, he said, "Ah, if I had here before me the woman who forgot to serve us

¹The Seljuk Empire flourished from roughly the middle of the 11th century until the middle of the 13th century, when it was destroyed by the Mongol invasion.

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dessert at the proper time, I should twist her ear like this!"

Woman in the audience: "But there is a different beginning to this tale. Don't you remember it?"

Narrator: "Oh, yes! I remember it now."7

The Hoca was not actually invited to that dinner party, which I believe was a wedding feast. He and his wife were disappointed at this, but they decided upon a plan by which they could attend the feast without any invitation. They pretended that they had been having a fight and that the wife was fleeing the Hoca. The Hoca pretended that he could not quite catch her, but he kept pursuing her, shouting angrily and shaking his fists. In her flight, his wife ran to the house where the wedding feast was being held.

When the Hoca caught up with her there, he made an effort to strike his wife, but the two of them were pulled away from each other by the guests. They put the two of them into separate rooms and brought each of them some dessert. After the Hoca had taken a large portion of the dessert from the serving dish, he pushed the dish away from him with a twisting motion. As he did this, he said, still

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pretending to be angry at his wife, "If I had that woman of mine here, I should twist her ear just like that!"