

Story 1569 (1992 Tape 2)

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Location: Derinkuyu, kaza town  
in Nevşehir Province

Date: 1992

The Hoca's<sup>1</sup> Blank Envelope and His Blank Letter

One day there was to be a feast in the village where Nasreddin Hoca lived, but the Hoca had not received an invitation to attend that feast. The Hoca thought and thought about some means through which he would be able to get to the feast. Just as the feast was about to start, he finally said, "Now I know! I shall pretend that I have a letter which should be delivered to the host of that feast. I'll take the letter to his house right away, and then they will have to invite me to eat with them." He grabbed a piece of paper and an envelope and went to the home where the feast was being held.

When the host family saw Nasreddin Hoca, they took the letter from his hand and (just as he had planned) invited to eat with them. When the host himself received the letter, however, he was quite puzzled by it. He was unable to find any name or address on the envelope. "Oh, Hoca," he said, "what is this? I cannot see any name or address on this envelope.

<sup>1</sup>A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training. Nasreddin Hoca is Turkey's most popular comic folk character.

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did you know that the letter was intended for me?"

Nasreddin Hoca answered, "Don't be overly surprised by the blankness of the envelope. Wait until you see the letter inside! Because of my great hurry to get here, the letter is blank, too!"