

Story 1756 (1994 Tape 4) Narrator: Gülsüm Söylemez, 56

Location: Olucak village,
Suşehri kaza,
Sivas Province

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The Chastity Wager on an Unfaithful Wife

One day a woman said to her husband, "Man, take this sack of döğen stones¹ to Gemerek² and sell them."

"All right," her husband answered. Lifting the heavy sack of döğen stones to his back, the husband set out for Gemerek.

After he had been traveling for some time, he met a stranger on the road. "What are you doing, brother?" asked the stranger

"I am going to sell these döğen stones."

¹Before modern mechanization reached Turkish farms, grain was threshed with a döğen, a rectangle of planks about 2 x 3 meters. Driven into the bottom of this plank structure were many pieces of flint, with their sharp ends protruding 2 or 3 centimeters below the plank bottom. Wheat stalks were spread on a dried-clay threshing floor, and the döğen, pulled by a horse or donkey, was dragged over these stalks. The flint stones chopped up the stalks, and in doing so, stripped most of the grain from them. All was then passed through a large-mesh metal sieve, except for unchopped stalks; these were given the döğen treatment a second time. All was then winnowed to separate the straw from the grain. A few döğens are still used.

²Gemerek is a kaza town in extreme southwest Sivas Province, about 200 kilometers from the narrator's village, which is in extreme northeast Sivas Province.

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"Where?"

"At Gemerek."

"Who sent you to do this?" asked the stranger.

"My wife."

"Then your wife must be enjoying affairs with other
She has sent you on this journey to keep you away
from home. Döğen stones are not sold at Gemerek."

"No, my wife does not do any such thing!"

"That is what you may think, but let us go to your
home, and I shall show you what she is doing." The two
set out for the husband's home, and they kept walking,
walking, walking. When they finally reached the husband's
home, they knocked on the door. No one opened it. They
knocked again, but still no one opened it. After they had
been knocking for several minutes, they forced open the
door. Inside they could see the wife entertaining other
men in her home.

"Didn't I tell you that this was happening,
brother?" asked the stranger.

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One man set out to Gemerek

With döğen stones upon his back

It was your wife who sent you there

So she could have her love affair.

"You really did not believe my words of warning, but now
you know that they were true