

Story 2055 (Transcribed by
Ahmet Ali Arslan from his
tape and later used in his
unpublished dissertation.)

Narrator: Hanım Büyükdağ, 33,
housewife

Location: Hakveyis village,
Iğdır, capital city
of Iğdır Province

Date: March 26, 1978

How a Çömlek¹ Stole Some Hazelnuts²

Once there was and once there was not a çömlek. One day while it was rolling along, it met a packing needle³ which asked, "Where are you going, Brother Çömlek?"

The çömlek answered, "I am going to steal some hazelnuts."

The packing needle asked, "Can you take me along with you?"

The çömlek answered, "Yes, of course. Come along!"

They traveled and traveled until they came upon an egg. The egg asked, "Where are you going, Brother Çömlek?"

The çömlek answered, "I am going to steal some hazelnuts. Come along with us."

¹A çömlek is an earthenware pot. The English translation would be rather awkward to use repeatedly, and so we have retained the Turkish.

²Hazelnuts were not just a happenstance commodity here. Hazelnuts constitute one of Turkey's most important exportable crops.

³A packing needle is very large. It is used to sew shut burlap bags and other cloth containers, and to stitch tent walls. It is sometimes referred to as a canvas needle

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The çömlek, the packing needle, and the egg proceeded together toward the place where the hazelnuts were stored. After awhile they encountered a beetle, which asked, "Where are you going, Brother Çömlek?"

"I am going to steal some hazelnuts. Why don't you join us?"

The four of them moved along closer to the house where the hazelnuts were stored. Soon they saw along their route a newly weaned calf. "Where are you going, Brother Çömlek?" asked the calf.

"I am going to steal some hazelnuts. You may join us if you wish."

When they had all completed their journey to the house that contained the hazelnuts, the çömlek questioned his followers about what each would do to assist the theft.

The calf said, "I can stand by the chimney and do there whatever I can to protect you."

The beetle said, "I can guard the door."

The packing needle said, "I shall embed myself in a wall and pierce any enemy that passes by that place."

The egg said, "I shall stay in the oven⁴ and attack

⁴The narrator incorrectly uses the word tandır, which refers to an outdoor oven that is little more than a hole in the earth. An indoor oven, usually an extension of the fireplace, is a fırın.

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anyone who comes in that direction."

"That will be fine!" said the çömlek. "Let each of you do your duty, and we shall be successful in this raid." They all entered the house, and the çömlek began to load hazelnuts into its large open belly

But the sound of the hazelnuts striking the çömlek awakened the owners of that house. The husband said to his wife, "Woman, get up! Someone is stealing our hazelnuts!" Because there was no light, she groped her way toward the hazelnut bin. When she rubbed against the wall, the packing needle stuck into her arm. When she hurried to the oven for some ashes to put on her wound, the egg exploded into her eyes and delayed her. When the woman cried out in pain the calf, who was standing right there by the chimney, farted into her mouth. In pursuit of the thief, she ran to the door, but there she was met by the beetle, who struck her up and down, up and down. With all of this help, the çömlek escaped loaded with hazelnuts.