

Story 2067 (Transcribed from his field tape by Ahmet Ali Arslan and used later in his unpublished dissertation.)

Narrator: Gülbahar Larakaş, 70, housewife

Location: Kars, capital of Kars Province

Date: April 18, 1978

Returning Husband Kills Wife's Lover

There was once a married woman who had a lover, she wanted to have more time to spend with that man. finally thought of a way to do this. She said to her husband, "I have just learned that dogs are selling for very high prices at Şerbeşer [a part of İsfahan, İnan]."
Her husband caught two stray dogs and set out with them for İsfahan.

As he was going along, he met another traveler, who asked him, "Where are you going?"

"I am taking these two dogs to sell at a good price," said the husband.

"Where is that?"

"I am taking them to Şerbeşer."

The other man asked, "Why is that? Don't you suppose that Şerbeşer has dogs of its own?"

"Yes, but they are very expensive there."

"Hm-m-m! Who told you that?"

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"My wife did."

"Brother, return home. Your wife is making a fool of you. She is probably seeing some other man and wishes to get you out of the way."

"How can I find out if she is doing such a thing?"

"I shall go with you to your home and prove this to you." That other traveler disguised the husband completely in felt. Felt covered every bit of his body except his eyes. The second traveler took the husband home, knocked on the husband's door, and then left.

When the wife came to the door, her husband asked her, "Sister, will you accept me as a guest for tonight?"

"Brother, how can I find space for you?"

"I do not need any special place," answered her husband. "I can sleep in the stable." So she let him in.¹ As soon as he entered his own home, he saw that there was another man in the house.

When dinner was ready and rice was served, the wife said to her two guests, "Brothers!"

¹It may seem confusing that the woman admitted him into the house after the disguised traveler said that he would be willing to sleep in the stable. It should be noted, however, that in some rural areas of Turkey the livestock are often kept on the first floor of the family home.

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"What is it?" they asked.

"Let us all eat together and sing together as well."

"Fine! Let us do that," they agreed, and the lover sang first.

The husband goes to Şerbeşer

The wife enjoys herself at home.

Let a song bring tears into her eyes

Bambılım,² pilav!³

After singing that quatrain, he took a spoonful of pilav.

The guest in the felt clothes then sang a similar quatrain.

When a husband goes to Şerbeşer,

What pleasure for a wife at home?

Here is the wife, and here her lover.

Bambılım, pilav!

Then the woman said to her disguised husband, "Brother, I understood the first song, but what are you talking about? What is the matter with you? Why did you say

²In view of the fact that no meaningful explanation of this expression has been found, it may possibly be a nonsense sound, like whoop-ee!

³A staple in the Turkish diet, pilav (pilaf) is a rice dish containing butter, seasonings, flecks of meat, and sometimes pine nuts.

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what you did?"

"Sister, you suggested that we not only eat but that we also entertain each other with song. I was simply following the pattern of the first singer."

The wife then sang a stanza.

Dogs cost much in İsfahan;
Husbands here are very cheap.
I sent to İsfahan some dogs.
Bambılım, pilav!

The husband then responded.

From underneath my clothes of felt
I am not blind to what goes on.
I traveled some but circled back.
Bambılım, pilav!

"What is all that about?" asked the woman.

"It is all about what we agreed to do: to eat and sing during our meal," answered the husband. But having said that, he pulled off his felt disguise and killed his wife's lover.

Where could they take the dead body? They decided not to take it anywhere but to move themselves to another place. They quickly packed up their most valuable things and left