

Story 2153 (Miscellaneous
Tape 8--1972)

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city of Hatay
Province

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A Köse¹ Dupes a Köse Village

There was once a village named Soğanlar [onions] in which all of the male members were köses. Those residents were known for the excellent onions they raised. One day a köse from another village--his name was Hacer Köse--went to Soğanlar to buy some onions. When he discovered that all of the men there were köses, he decided to move to Soğanlar himself

Hacer Köse was a naive man, and other people sometimes took advantage of him. His new neighbors warned him that a deadly disease of some sort was attacking cows in that area. They said that they were all slaughtering their cows while they were still healthy so that they would be able to eat the beef safely. They suggested Hacer Köse slaughter his cow too. Doing so, they said,

¹A köse is a special folk type. He is beardless, and he is often said to have a heart-shaped face and bandy legs. He is usually considered to be extremely shrewd and cunning in his dealings with others. Usually he is a very unsympathetic figure, so much so that in many tales he seems to replace the ogre or monster, and hence any stratagem against him is considered fair. The köses in this tale are at times atypical.

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would not only supply him with beef but it would also help to limit the spread of the cow disease. Hacer Köse followed their advice

But on the following day he observed that the cows of his neighbors were still grazing in the community pasture as usual. He felt that he had been deceived. He therefore went to the muhtar² and complained that other residents had not slaughtered their cattle to help control the local cow-disease epidemic.

The muhtar asked, "Are you crazy? What disease? There is no cattle disease here. How could you be so foolish as to listen to such rumors and kill your own cow?"

Hacer Köse became very angry at having been so deceived, and he determined to avenge himself against his neighbors. But he decided that first he would take the hide of his dead cow to market in order to recover some small part of his loss. He rolled up the cowhide, put it on his shoulder, and started to walk to the marketplace in the nearest town. After walking for awhile with his heavy load, he sat down to rest for three or five minutes

²A muhtar is the headman of a village or other small settlement. Until the arrival of TV in the 1960s, he may well have been the only elected official that some villagers saw. All other officials were appointees of federal ministries.

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A few meters from where Hacer Köse was sitting stood a large and well-built house. He noticed that sitting on the balcony of that house was a woman who had her hair ranged in attractive fashion and her face made up brightly. He called up to this woman and said, "Could you give me lodging for the coming night? I need protection from evil people and wild animals that might harm me."

The woman answered, "Go away, dirty köse! I am suffering great sorrow because of the absence of my husband, who has been on military duty for seven years."

Hacer Köse thought, "How much sorrow can she when she is dressed and made up in such a noticeable way?" But he called back to the woman, "I can find a place to stay on the ground floor with your livestock."³ He placed his cowhide just inside the stable door, but he kept that door open just a crack so that he could hear whatever might occur outside. He thought, "This woman must be up to something."

³In parts of Europe and the Middle East, livestock are not housed in a barn or other building apart from the owner's house. They are kept on the ground floor of the house, and so the living space for the family begins on the second floor of the building.

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As darkness was approaching, a young servant knocked on the woman's door. When she opened the door, he handed her a parcel of food and said, "This is a gift from my master, Ahmet. He wants to know when he should come here this evening."

"Tell him to come at seven o'clock," she said.

Hacer Köse said to himself, "Oho! I had a feeling that something was going on here!" He did not move but remained close to the stable door so that he could continue to hear whatever might happen.

A short while later a second servant came carrying a basket of fruit. When the door was opened to his knock, he said, "Hasan, my master, sent you this gift. He wants to know what time he should arrive here this evening."

"Tell him to come at nine o'clock."

A third servant soon arrived carrying a covered plateful of food. He said to the woman, "My master, İbrahim, sent this gift to you. He wants to know what time he should come

"Tell him to come at eleven o'clock," the woman responded.

At seven o'clock Ahmet arrived and was quietly

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admitted into the house. Taking her time, the woman slowly set the table and spread it with food. After they had been eating and talking for awhile, however, they were interrupted by a knock on the door. The woman said, "That must be my husband returning! Go down these stairs and hide yourself!"

Hacer Köse intercepted Ahmet and said, "Give me some gold, and I shall show you how to escape from here. When Ahmet handed over what gold he had with him, Hacer Köse led him to the basement door.

The knock on the door had been made by Hasan, for by then it was nine o'clock. Again the woman took time laying out a meal for her second visitor. They were enjoying the food and talking at some length when someone else knocked on the door. The woman said, "That must be my husband. Go down the back stairs and remain hidden there for awhile."

Hacer Köse met Hasan and said, "For some gold I can hide you in a cowhide, where no one could find you." This deal was quickly made, and the köse renewed his listening through the slightly opened stable door.

The new arrival was not the woman's husband but

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İbrahim, who came at the time he had been assigned, eleven o'clock. She treated him even more lavishly, for he was the one with whom she had planned to spend the night. When there was a knock on the door, the woman was genuinely alarmed, and when she said, "That's my husband," she really meant it. She quickly directed İbrahim down to the stable. There he was met by Hacer Köse, who made the same arrangement with İbrahim that he had made with Hasan. After demanding some gold from İbrahim, he shoved that third guest into the cowhide with Hasan.

As soon as the husband entered the house, he said to his wife, "I am hungry. Do you have anything good to eat?"

"I am afraid not. All we have to eat is a loaf of bread."

"That will be all right. Bring it out," the man said

By then Hacer Köse had come up to the second floor, and he said quickly, "I thought I heard you prepare a plate of köfte."⁴

Startled by hearing Hacer Köse's voice, the husband

⁴Köfte is a very popular Turkish meat dish made of ground lamb and finely chopped onion. It is usually broiled over an open fire.

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demanded, "Who is this man in our house?"

"Oh, my dear husband, he is only an unfortunate köse who was on his way to town when night overtook him, and so I allowed him to stay in the stable."

While the three of them were eating the köfte, the köse said, "Oh, you must see the watermelon that was brought here. Its color indicates that it must be very sweet."

"Oh, watermelon too! How fine!" said the husband

They cut the watermelon and began to eat it. When they had devoured most of it, Hacer Köse, who was still hungry, said, "The grapes in that basket over there have ripened fully. How tasty they must be!" While the woman was bringing the basket of grapes, her husband unwrapped some gifts that he had brought her: a golden bracelet, two golden rings, and a golden necklace. The köse guest wanted to distract the husband in order to steal those valuable pieces of jewelry. He said to the husband, "Do you realize that there are two large and dangerous snakes hiding in a cowhide in your stable?"

"What?" exclaimed the husband. He rushed to the basement and shot the cowhide full of holes. While the husband was doing this, Hacer Köse took the jewelry and

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quickly departed. Continuing on to the marketplace, he purchased some fine fabrics with part of the gold he had acquired.

The other köses in Soğanlar were amazed to see Hacer Köse with a large quantity of expensive fabric. "How could you afford to buy such gorgeous cloth?"

"There is a great shortage of leather in such and such a town. My cowhide sold for such a high price that I received for it much more than these fabrics cost."

Hearing this, each of the other köses rushed to their herds, killed a cow, and took it to the marketplace. There no one had any interest in buying cowhides, and several of the köses returned very angry at Hacer Köse. To punish him, they all defecated down his chimney.

[Hacer Köse said nothing about this filthy trick. He simply bagged all of the manure, loaded it on a donkey, and pretended to take it to market, though in fact he dumped it along the roadside. He then went on to the marketplace in the same town and there he bought some fine clothes for himself. The other köses were even more surprised to see Hacer Köse wearing such expensive garments. They asked him, "Where did you get enough money to buy

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such a very expensive wardrobe?"]⁵

"I sold your manure to builders in so and so town, where they are now using manure instead of cement to fasten bricks in place.

The other köses went home and defecated down their own chimneys until they had accumulated enough manure to take to market. They then bagged their manure, loaded the bags on donkeys, and proceeded in a small caravan to the marketplace in so and so town. It was a hot day, and the stench of all that manure was almost unbearable. Local authorities came to the marketplace, arrested the donkey drivers, and fined them all very heavily.⁶

⁵There are several narrative gaps in this part of the tale. We have inserted the needed material in this paragraph both for itself and also to make understandable what follows.

⁶Although an adept narrator of ATON tale 2152, the teller of this story is confused and/or incompetent. He interpolates a variant of Aarne-Thompson type 1358C Trickster Discovers Adultery; Food Goes to Husband into a mishmash of a number of elements from Aarne-Thompson 1535/ Eberhard-Boratav 351, both of which end with the trickster's enemies drowning themselves in their foolish effort to capture sheep (or cows) supposedly grazing on the bottom of the sea.