

Story 1208 (1990 Tape 12)

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Betrayal of Man's Best Friend

There was once a forest ranger who guarded a wooded area on the top of a mountain. The mountain was not one of the tallest mountains in Turkey, but it was tall enough so that the top was covered with snow six months of every year. The ranger lived near the top of this mountain in a small cottage with his wife and their six-month-old son.

In the middle of one winter, when the roads to and from the mountain were all blocked with snow, the ranger's wife became ill. It became a desperate situation for the family because a blizzard was making the snow on the ground deeper and deeper.

The woman's condition continued to grow worse and worse, and she was in great pain. The ranger tried to telephone for help, but the telephone line had been damaged by the storm. He became frantic in his efforts to find some way of getting medical help for his wife. He thought, "Even if I try to lead the horse through the deep snow, she would be too ill to ride on its back." He was in agony with feelings of helplessness. "What should I do? What should I do?" he kept asking himself.

Finally he decided to construct a stretcher with runners

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on the bottom, a stretcher that could be dragged along behind the horse. He thought, "She may die or we both may die during attempt to reach the city, but unless I get help for her, will die anyway. If we can reach the city, however, we be able to save her life."

But there was also the problem of caring for the baby. "Should I carry the baby or should I give all my attention to safeguarding my wife as she is being dragged along behind the horse?" he asked himself. What should he do? He decided to leave the child at the cottage, saying to himself, "I shall get my wife to the hospital and return immediately, arriving here before nightfall." He called the family ¹²⁰⁻¹²² dog ¹²⁵⁻¹²² and said to it, "Listen! I am entrusting this child to you. I shall somehow get my sick wife to the city, and while I am gone, you will take care of this child."

He then set out through the blizzard with his wife and the horse. The trip which usually took two hours this time took six hours, for they had many difficulties to overcome along the

Although he managed to get his wife to the hospital, he was not sure that he would be able to return to his home, for the snow continued to become deeper and deeper. The horse was unable to walk through the deep snow. Going to the kaymakam¹

¹The federally appointed administrator of a district. A city may have a mayor, who is locally elected and responsible for local governmental operations, but it will also have a

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of the city, he asked for help. "My six-month-old child is alone with our dog, and I must find a way to get back through the snow to care for my child. Can you have some of your workers open a road for me so that I can get home?"

The kaymakam replied, "Opening a road is not as easy as opening a knife. There is nothing that we can do to help you in such weather."

Knowing that his wife would recover, the ranger now thought only of the safety of his son. He therefore set out on foot to return to his cottage. He walked and walked very slowly through the deep snow, and it was two days later before he finally reached home. Although he was completely exhausted, he began calling, "Ali! Ali!" but he heard no crying or other sound from the baby. The child's cradle was empty, and neither the child nor the dog was anywhere to be seen. The ranger was in a state of shock. He then noticed that the back door was open and a window was broken.

Going into the backyard, he found the dog just outside the back door, its head and shoulders and forepaws all covered with blood. "Where is Ali?" the man asked. The dog was unable to answer him, and so the man continued. "You were left without food, and so you ate the child! You evil beast! How could you

kaymakam, who represents the central government in both the city and its surrounding area.

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eat my son?" He went and got the rifle that had been issued to him when he had become a forest ranger, and with this rifle he shot and killed the dog.

loud explosion of the rifle awakened the child, inside the house, and it began to cry. Rushing inside, he was amazed at what he saw there. The dog had dragged a large sofa cushion over the child to keep it warm, and then the dog had fought and killed a wolf which had broken in to eat the child. The body of the wolf he now discovered lying nearby.

This forest ranger had often repeated the old proverb which says, "The dog is man's best friend." When he told me this story, he repeated the proverb again. Then he said, "Tell me something! Tell me how I can endure the pains of guilt I feel for killing my faithful dog."