

Story #364 (Tape #1, 1972)

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The (Ramazan Dede)<sup>1</sup>

Once there lived an old couple. Since the month of Ramazan was approaching, the old man bought the month's supply of <sup>2</sup> bulama, butter, and honey. A few days later there was a knock on the door. The old woman thought, "It must be the Ramazan Dede. My husband said he would come one of these days." The person knocking at the door was an old beggar. He asked for some food. The wife said, "My husband bought some butter and honey for you." She put the large cans of butter and honey in the beggar's bag.

The old man was so pleased that he said, "May you have a long life, my lady." When the month of Ramazan arrived, the husband asked his wife to bring some of the butter and honey. "What butter, what honey?" she asked. "The Ramazan dede came the other day, and I gave him the butter and the honey."

"You stupid woman, what have you done?" the husband exclaimed. Several days later a caravan of camels happened to be passing by the house of the old couple. The door was open, and one of the camels, laden with gold, went astray and walked in the house. The old man got the gold and slew the camel to destroy the evidence of the theft. He told his wife not to tell anybody about the incident.

<sup>1</sup>A Ramazan Dede is a saint disguised as a beggar who appeals to the generosity of people during the holy month of Ramazan.

<sup>2</sup>Bulama--grape juice boiled down to the consistency of honey.

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She said, "All right; I won't."

The camel actually belonged to the padishah of the country. The town criers announced that the padishah would reward the person who would return the gold-laden camel. One day the old woman went to the village fountain to get some water. When she heard the news of the camel, she said, "My husband found the camel and killed it."

Padishah's men came to the old couple's house. The old man said, "My wife is lying. I didn't see the padishah's camel. Didn't you notice that she is not in her right mind? I can prove that she is crazy." To demonstrate his wife's insanity, the old man took a large caldron, filled it with corn, told his wife to lie on the ground, and then put the caldron on the old woman. Then the chickens came to eat the corn. The dogs also came. The bills of the chickens made a "tick, tick" sound as they ate the corn. Then the dogs began to bark. The old woman became frightened and began complaining about being attacked by monsters. "Have you found me again, you monsters?" she said to the animals. The padishah's men were convinced of the old woman's insanity and left the house.

Some time later, the old man put an egg in his bed and said to his wife, "I have just laid this egg. I'll kill you if you tell anybody about it."

But the old woman could hardly wait to break the news, "My husband laid an egg," she said to the neighbors. At first they did not believe her, but when she insisted on the truth of the news, a few came to see the egg-laying husband.

The husband said, "She is lying. Don't you know that she is crazy?" To prove his wife's insanity he put her in the oven.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The narrator uses the word firin here, which may mean either furnace or oven. Here it would seem to mean oven.

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At night when the old woman heard the cats meow and the dogs bark, she thought she was being haunted by spirits. She complained, "You meowing and howling monsters, have you found me again?"

This time the old man was able to convince everybody of his wife's insanity.