

Story 773 1970 Tape 14)

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Why the Crab Is a Friend of the Fish

people tell stories like this to children to show them that in the end lying and cheating are never victorious.

There was once a (seagull) that had grown so old that he was no longer able to catch fish to eat. He was old and tired and incapable. One day he sat on a rock that rose above the water, thinking and thinking about what he might do to help himself.

Two fishes showed their heads above the water and said "Brother seagull, what are you thinking about so long?"

"Don't ask me such a question. If you had heard what I have heard, you would be shocked. I flew over some fishermen a short while ago and heard them talking about plans to drain the water of this lake. They were talking at length about this matter. This means that bells of disaster have started tolling for you and me."

When news of this future calamity spread, the fishes

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all began to assemble to discuss their problem and try to find some solution to it. They asked the seagull what he thought could be done to solve the difficulty.

"There is another lake beyond that mountain. I could carry fifteen to twenty fishes per day from this lake to lake. That is all that I could do for you."

"All right, we accept that idea," they said, and immediately hundreds of fishes rushed forward saying, "Take me, take me, take me!"

In this way the old seagull took fifteen or twenty fish per day from the lake, carried them to a nearby hill, ate them

One day a crab said to the seagull, "Brother seagull, I must go to the other lake, too. Will you carry me there today?"

"All right," said the seagull to the crab. And to himself he said, "I might as well eat some crab meat, too."

The seagull lifted the crab by his legs and carried to the nearby hill. When they landed on the hill, the crab looked around and saw a heap of fish bones as high as a house. When he saw this, the crab said to the gull, "You big fraud!" and clamped one of his claws around the

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gull's neck. No matter how much the seagull tried to shake him off, the crab kept squeezing the gull's neck harder and harder until--çit'¹--it broke.

The crab then walked clumsily back to the lake, takır, takur.² When he arrived there, he told this story to the fishes. "Oh, what a dishonest fellow that seagull was!" they said. They all kissed the crab's eyes and cheeks, and from that day on, crabs and fishes have always been friends

¹Onomatopoeia for the snapping of the gull's neckbone.

²Onomatopoeia for the sound of walking or trotting--usually of horses' or donkeys' hooves.

³Kissing of the eyelids is common in Turkey. This is the way in which adults usually kiss children.