

Story 1146 (1974 Tape 11) Narrator: Necip Görpele

Location: Sekeli village, Yerköy
kaza, Yozgat Province

Date: August 11, 1974

The Hyena¹ Slayer

In one of the forests of this country there was once a great hyena. This beast used to eat dead bodies, but it also killed and ate sheep and lambs. So many accounts of his attacks were told that people began to avoid passing through that forest. When the padişah heard about this, he had criers announce everywhere that he would make wealthy any man who would kill this animal and thus remove fear from the minds of people in that area.

There was a shepherd^{ad} who lived in that area, a man who had formerly been a nomad. He was an old man, but he remained healthy and very strong, for he always ate meat at his meals. One day while herding his sheep, he came across this hyena. The shepherd had not, of course, heard about the padişah's reward for anyone who killed the hyena. He wasn't even sure what the animal was; it looked to him like a large dog with strange fur. Not knowing the animal, he had no fear of it,

¹ There are indeed hyenas in Turkey. Inasmuch as they are such unusual and such unsavory creatures, the wonder is that they do not appear more frequently in folktales. In the more than 1,000 folktales in ATON so far translated, there are hyenas in no more than four or five tales.

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and so he killed the animal with his staff and left its body there.

After a short while, a party of people who had gone out to hunt the hyena came across the body of the dead beast. They took it at once to the padişah and claimed the reward. But the padişah delayed giving any reward. He was a very clever man who realized that these were not the kind of men who would have killed such an animal. He had the matter investigated by several of his most competent men. They asked here and there about the matter, and they discovered that a shepherd from such-and-such a place had actually killed the hyena. These agents of the padişah brought the shepherd to the palace

padişah said, "Shepherd, I have been told that you killed a great dog."

"Well, I don't know whether it was a dog, a hyena, or some other animal, but whatever it was, I killed it."

"How did you kill it?"

"I knocked it down near the sheep and then beat it with my staff until it was dead."

"What did you do with its skin?"

"I just left the whole body of the animal there."

the padişah had questioned people previously, he would listen to their answers and then say, "Lie!" This would usually

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startle the people so much that they would forget what they were talking about. The padişah tried the same thing with the shepherd, shouting, "Lie!" as the shepherd answered his question

The shepherd responded, "Well, I don't understand whether it's a lie or not, but I'll put you in worse condition than that dog was if I strike you with my staff!"

The padişah was then convinced that this must have been the man who killed the hyena