

Story 1591 (1987 Tape 3)

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The Fool and the Donkey Egg

One day a very stupid man went to a marketplace in a nearby city. As he walking around and looking at everything there, he saw a heap of watermelons. He asked the man standing by the heap of watermelons, "What are these things?"

The salesman said, "These are donkey eggs. These are the things from which donkey colts come."

The stupid man was delighted to hear this. He immediately bought one of the watermelons and started home with it. When he reached the top of a hill along his way, he had to stop to urinate. When he placed the watermelon on the ground, it began to roll down the hill.¹ It rolled all the way to the bottom, where it hit a rock and broke into two pieces. A rabbit on the opposite side of the rock was frightened by noise and ran away.

Seeing the rabbit running away, the fool thought that it must be a baby donkey that had come from the donkey egg. He chased the rabbit until it disappeared from his sight. Then

¹It should be noted that in Turkey watermelons are perfectly spherical, not elongated like most American watermelons.

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he went home, greatly disappointed.

His wife noticed that he was quite sulky, and so she asked him, "Efendi,² what is the matter? What happened today?" When he told her about the donkey egg and the donkey colt that had escaped, she too was disappointed. She said, "Oh, efendi! I wish that you could catch that donkey. I could ride it to my mother's house."

When the stupid man heard this, he became angry. He said, "Wife, he was a very young donkey. He had just been born. How could you ride on the back of a baby donkey?"

²A mild honorific, comparable to Sir, it usually follows a first name: Hasan Efendi. At one time it was used to show respect to distinguished people, but it has become so devaluated in the twentieth century that it now is used only for servants and children.