

124
Story #212 (Tape #6, Summer 1970)

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farmer

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The Peasant and the Bitter Pekmez

A peasant once wanted to go into a restaurant, as he was hungry. He entered and asked the chef, "What have you got?"

"What I have is here. I have dolma."

The man said, "Oh, that is just what I have been looking for." The waiter gave him three pieces of dolma, which he enjoyed eating

"Can you give me a little more of this?"

The waiter gave him a few more. In all, he ate nine dolmas. He arose to go, and asked, "What do I owe you?"

The waiter answered, "One pāra."

The peasant said, "Good," and paid one para and went out.

The same peasant went to the same restaurant again one day, for he liked this place where one could have nine dolmas for one para. He thought he would take a friend there, but as he could not find one just then, he went alone.

"What do you have?" he asked the waiter.

The waiter said, "We have dolma."

"Well, give me some dolma." After eating three portions of dolma he arose to go, and asked, "What do I owe you?"

"Ten liras," the waiter answered.

"What is this?" asked the peasant.

The waiter said, "This is the price

Story #212

the other day I had nine dolmas for one para. Why is it so expensive now? Are you trying to cheat me?"

The waiter said, "How can I explain it to you? The strange part of the matter is this: Since a donkey does not die just every day,

Don't always, for nine dolmas, think the same to pay."

"What do you mean by that?" the peasant asked

"You should understand. Donkeys do not die every day, and nine dolmas cannot always be served for one para." Actually, the first nine dolmas he had were stuffed with donkey meat.

After that experience, this man thought he could do without going to the restaurant one day, and so he bought a loaf of bread from a baker, stuck it under his arm, and on the way he came to a bootmaker's shop. You know, bootmakers have a can of water in which they soak leather before their shop. The top of that can was covered with a pekmez-like stuff. He entered the shop after greeting the bootmaker. "Waiter, give me some pekmez from out there."

The bootmaker was surprised and looked at him with amazement. "What do you mean?"

"I am in a hurry. Give me some pekmez from out there."

"I have not anything to put it in," said the bootmaker, and smiled.

"Why do you smile? Hurry up and give me some pekmez!"

He found a paint can, dipped it into his soaking vat, and gave it to him and started watching the man as he ate his bread by dipping it into this foamy stuff. The man finished and said, "Give me some more." He finished eating all his bread in this manner, as the bootmaker watched and laughed.

"How much do I owe you?"

"Pay whatever you like."

The peasant was pleased that he had found a man like the waiter he had met the other day. He paid him some money, but the bootmaker laughed at him.

"Waiter," the peasant said, "do not take me for a fool. I realized that your pekmez was a bit bitter."

