

Story 2052 (Transcribed by Ahmet Ali Arslan from his tape and later used in his unpublished dissertation.)

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Location: Güvenocak village, Çıldır kaza, Ardahan Province

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Fox Blames Bear for Eating Food He Himself Has Taken

There were once a fox, a bear, and a monster who decided to work together to provide food for themselves. They said to each other, "Let us go forth every morning and let each of us use his own method of bringing back food."

On the following morning the fox went to a nearby farm and stole a chicken. The bear went to a beehive and took some honey. The monster broke into a bakery and stole some çöreks.<sup>1</sup> That evening the three thieves ate a good meal together. The fox said to his companions, "Let us set aside some of this food so that we shall have something to eat for breakfast." The monster and the bear agreed with this suggestion, and then they all went to bed.

In the middle of the night the fox arose and ate all of the remaining food. Realizing that his companions would be suspicious about the disappearance of the food, he thought of a way to avoid any blame. He took the few

<sup>1</sup>A type of shortbread in the shape of a ring. The narrator uses a dialect word, kete, for çörek.

Story 2052

remaining drops of honey and spread it on the mouth of the sleeping bear. Then he stuck to that honey a couple of small chicken feathers and a few crumbs from the çörek.

In the morning the companions discovered that the leftover chicken, honey, and çörek had disappeared during the night. "Who ate the food that we were saving for breakfast?" they asked each other.

Then the fox turned to the monster and said, "My friend, the bear has eaten all of our food. Look at his lips! There are still honey, some feathers, and some crumbs from the çörek on them!"

After the monster saw this evidence, he began to beat the bear fiercely. He then shouted, "This is the end of our friendship!"

As they were separating, the fox shouted back, "I got the food. The bear got only blows!"