

Story #667 (1976, Tape #18)

Narrator: Mustafa Durmaz, 63

Location: Village: Dağkadi;
kaza of Karacabey;
Province of Bursa

Date: February 1976

How Tall May a Tall Tale Be?

men -- three

Once three men went to find work in the vicinity of Balıkeşir.
One was a skilled laborer, and his two friends went along to find
work together. One of them returned to the village in a short time.
When the villagers asked him why he had returned so soon, he said,
"I was working on a very tall building where I became dizzy. I could
not stand it any longer."

Someone asked, "How tall was that building?"

He said, "Well, it took the skilled worker three months to climb
down from it."

A villager then said, "I remember going to Rumeli [Castle]¹ once
to start a garden. The land there was very fertile, and the crop grew
extremely fast. A vine grew so big that it reached the Danube River.
The cucumbers on it grew so large that they made three highways to the
market place." Highways -- three

Another villager replied, "No vine grew big enough to make a
bridge, and no cucumber could be large enough to support a highway.
Don't say such things!"

¹ Rumeli Castle was built by the forces of Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452 on the European side of the Bosphorus; it was most important in the conquest of Istanbul (Constantinople) the following year. It is a well preserved and picturesque ruin surrounded by a lush park.

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Another person then said, "I was once stranded on a great plain, and when lightning struck, I saw 300 ³⁰⁰ eagles flying out."

Someone else said, "I too became stranded and I saw a camel reach to Lake Van and take a drink of water."

But now someone in the crowd objected and said, "Now that is too long a tale. How can you expect us to believe that the camel's neck could reach that far?"

Senyir
chun "May your mother be raped!"² How did you swallow the tale of the eagles?"

²Of the many insults in Turkish, this is perhaps the most offensive.