

Story 822 (1974 Tape 18)

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Erzincan Province

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Osman Kalkan and the Twice-Shared Lemons

One day we were in Erzurum and we were getting ready to come back here to Tercan. In those days transportation was as good as it is today with all those buses going back and forth. We traveled by train then. All the people from Tercan got together, and there were seven or eight of us at least. As we were waiting on the platform at the train station, Osman Efendi¹ said, "Two of you get into the train get a compartment for us. We are eight or ten, and one compartment should be big enough to hold us.

Zeynel Efendi and I went aboard the train and got a compartment. We took the baggage which our friends handed us through the window. By the time they all joined us there, it was pretty crowded. Osman Efendi had brought a crate of lemons, and we put that in the compartment, too.

A little later the conductor came along. When he

¹ Efendi is a tag of respect added to a person's name. At one time it was used after the names of notable people, but today it has less prestige and follows only the names of children and servants.

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started to check our tickets, he asked, "Whose lemons are those?"

"They are mine," said Osman Efendi.

conductor said, "Uncle, that will also require a ticket. Give me ten liras, and I shall give you a receipt for that amount. When you get into Tercan, you can go and get your change with that receipt.² Lemons are a kind of fruit, and so you will have to pay the delivery charge for fruit."

"All right," said Osman Efendi to the conductor. To me he said, "Hand me down that crate of lemons." As soon as I gave him the crate, he began to share the lemons with all of us in the compartment, giving several to each person until the crate was empty. When the conductor returned, Osman Efendi said, "The lemons are all gone. You may have the crate, if you want it."

conductor laughed and said, "How did you do it?"

When he had gone, Osman Efendi told us to put the lemons back in the crate. "We shall share them again in Tercan," he said

² In Turkey, one cannot ordinarily buy train tickets on the train itself. Tickets are usually purchased at the Ray Bankası (Railroad Bank).