

Story #68 (Tape 19)
1961-1962

Narrator: Hacı Kahya, 75-year-old shopkeeper

Location: Taşucu, Silifke

Date: February 1962

A Hunting Tale

7 bibik (bird)
Tenerleme

When man was man and the camel was a barber; when the ibibik¹ was a grocer and the owl was a kadi-back when Akaroğlu (son of the runner), Bakaroğlu² (son of the gazer), and I went hunting. There is a rock called Bogsak ^{fruit} or Karabucak ^(rock) not very far from here, and the three of us, Akaroğlu, Bakaroğlu, and I, went there hunting.

Oh, let's not make this tale too long now
Or the chestnuts will explode with a Pow!

So, to be brief, we shot a rabbit. We took this rabbit to the nearest cottage, and there we asked the old woman who came to the door, Grandmother have you a pan that we can borrow?"

She looked at us for a long time, and then she said, "Why, of course. I have just had three pans delivered by the tinsmith. Take whichever one you wish."

We looked at her three pans. One of them had a side dented in. One of them had a hole in the bottom. And the third had no bottom at all, and this is the one that we chose.

We put the rabbit in this pan without a bottom. Akaroğlu carried the wood. Bakaroğlu kindled the fire, and I held the rabbit. We boiled and boiled the rabbit in that pan, but all the time he kept looking out at us. Finally we took the rabbit and started walking with it. We crossed the İşikgediği Pass, and at last reached the village of Yassıdam (village)

¹ Ibibik a bird identified with the hoopoe.

² The patronymic quality here is less important than the euphony. In this kind of nonsense story, sound effects are enjoyed.

There at Yassidam, we heard the beautiful crowing of a cock, and we exchanged the rabbit for that cock. That year bread was scarce, and so we bought some barley to make some bread ourselves. We loaded the barley on the back of the cock to take it to the mill to have it ground. When we reached the village of Akdere (white stream), we were directed to the mill of Ömer Ağa. When we took the barley off the back of the cock, we were amazed to see that there wasn't a single feather left on the bird's back. The ^{barley -- kernels of} kernels of barley were sharp edged, and they had rubbed off the feathers and made the cock's back sore. When we asked what to do in order to heal the cock's back, we were told to sprinkle his back with the ashes of walnuts. Unfortunately, we forgot to burn the walnuts before we sprinkled them on the bird's back, and as a result they sprouted. Walnuts -- after of

The cock grew as large as a horse, and from its back grew an immense walnut tree; it was half as large as a village. All the local children threw stones and clods of dirt at the tree to get the walnuts down. They threw so much that there was soon a whole field of earth at the foot of the tree. We asked the people there, "What shall we do with this field?"

They answered, "Get a pair of oxen, cut off their ears, pull out their horns, cut off their legs at the knees, and have them plow that field seven times. Then plant watermelons." That was exactly what they said. ^{3 Seven plowings of field}

We did as we were advised to do and planted watermelons. When the melons were getting ripe, we went to the field and picked out a large one to ^{plowings -- seven of field} sample.

I made a cut into it with my knife, but unfortunately, I let the knife slip

³ By this point in the narrative, a large crowd had gathered to listen. The narrator became quite self-conscious and probably telescoped some of the rest of his tale. Being a haci (pilgrim), he was supposed to be a holy man and one who would not indulge in profane stories.

Walnuts used to heal wound on cock back -- sprout and produce tree

Onomatopoeia

out of my hand, and it fell down inside the melon, "Plunk!" I took off my hat, put it under my arm, and dived into the melon to try to find my knife. I searched for my knife for a long time, but I couldn't find it.

After a while, I met the old woman from whom we had borrowed the pan to cook the rabbit, and I asked her for a drink of water. Water -- down of

She asked me, "What are you looking for, my son?"

"I am looking for my knife," I said. "I have lost it somewhere in this watermelon."

Camels -- seven -- lost
"How do you expect to find something as small as a knife? We lost seven camels in this very melon over a week ago, and we are still searching for them. Here is some water."

Cup-
She poured me a cup of water from a jug that she carried with her, and I lifted it to my lips. As I was about to take a swallow, I noticed a hair on the brim. of cup I took hold of this hair, and I began pulling on it. I pulled and I pulled, and the seven camels that the woman had lost came out, all of them tied in ^a row along that hair. And with them was still one more camel, a camel-creature with one blind eye. I gave that extra camel to my son, and it is now about five years old. But it was quite a long while ago when all these things happened to me.