

Story 1991 (1992 Tape 9)

Narrator: Ersoy Tekniker

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Losing and Regaining the Status Quo Distastefully

There was once a man who owned and operated a fayton.¹ When his taxi business was not going very well, he sometimes had fits of moodiness during which his behavior was sometimes unaccountable. One day while he was in such a condition, he said to his servant, “Mehmet, come here!” When the servant came closer, the fayton owner said, “Mehmet, I have a proposal to make to you. If you will eat the next bowel movement of the horse that pulls this fayton, I shall give you that carriage.”

Mehmet was shocked by this suggestion, but he said nothing at first. He thought, “Someone in my lowly condition would never in his whole life be able to buy a fayton. No matter how unpleasant it would be to eat horse dung, that bad experience would be over quickly, and

¹Fayton or payton (pronounced fytōn or pytōn) is a loan word derived from phaeton. A phaeton is a light, four-wheeled carriage drawn by a single horse. In Turkey almost all horse-drawn taxis are called phaetons. After horse-drawn vehicles were replaced by automobiles, some few Turkish towns and cities retained the fayton as a tourist attraction.

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after that I would become a businessman.” He therefore accepted the offer made by his master.²

After the transfer of the fayton to Mehmet, both the former servant and the former master thought that the arrangement was closed, but in fact it was not entirely closed. Neither man could escape completely from the agreement. Although Mehmet was happy to be a fayton owner, he was worried about the attitude of people toward him after they had discovered how he had acquired his business. He mused, “Perhaps others will avoid me because they will consider me a dirty, stinking person.”

The former owner of the taxi business also had some disturbing second thoughts about the exchange. He wondered, “How can I ever explain my giving my fayton to Mehmet for eating horse dung? My wife will consider me the stupidest person on earth!”

The next day he and Mehmet talked to each other about this problem. Mehmet said, “I shall return the fayton to you and become your servant again if you will eat the next bowel movement of the horse.”

The former owner accepted that bargain and recovered both his fayton and his servant. But for some time he remained confused by what had happened. He kept thinking, “We are right back where we

²See motif K1044 Dupe induced to eat dung.

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started, I owner of the taxi business and Mehmet my servant.

Why did both eat horse dung anyway?"