

Story 1394 (1989 Tape 6)

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woman of 39

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Province

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The Persistently Saucy Rooster

Time within time, when the sieve was in the straw,¹
there was a very loud and saucy rooster. One day he
happened to find a gold piece on the ground, and in order
to let everyone know about this, he began to shout, "Cock-
a-doodle-doo!"² I found a gold piece!" He repeated this so

¹These are just two scraps of a much longer formulaic opening known as a tekerleme. A full tekerleme may run to several lines, though most narrators nowadays use only one or two parts of a tekerleme. The tekerleme is a nonsense jingle filled with paradoxes and other comic incongruities. It is meant both to amuse and to alert the audience to the fact that a tale is to follow. Some of the humor is lost in translation because it is difficult to reproduce in English the rhyme scheme.

"Time within time" refers to the fantasy of "moments of eternity," during which in a few minutes or even a few seconds, one seems to experience activities stretching over long periods of time--sometimes whole decades.

The sieve is never in the straw. While threshing grain, workers pass the detached grain and finely ground straw through a large-mesh sieve. Longer pieces of straw which may still have grains attached to them do not pass through and will need further threshing. So the straw is in the sieve, not the sieve in the straw.

²The sound of the rooster's crowing is represented as "Ü-ü-ü-r-ü-ü!" The translator gave "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" as being more recognizable to an English-speaking readership.

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many times that it annoyed the hens in the flock and made them jealous of him. To get even with him, they reported the news of his finding a gold piece to the son of the bey.³

For some reason this piece of news angered the son of the bey, and as a result, he ordered his servants, "Go and kill that rooster and cook its meat for my dinner." The servants went outside, found the rooster, and killed it. Then they cooked the rooster, and when dinnertime arrived, they placed it on the table for the son of the bey's dinner.

As soon as the son of the bey began to eat, the rooster began to talk again. It said, "Oh, what sharp teeth you have! Cock-a-doodle-doo! What sharp teeth you have!" As the son of the bey was swallowing his first bite, the rooster exclaimed, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" What a narrow passageway this is. What a narrow passageway this is!"

The son of the bey asked, "Will this impudent rooster never be silent?"

When the first bite of the rooster had passed through the young man's throat and entered his stomach, the rooster

³A former title roughly equivalent to the British lord or baron. A bey was an aristocratic leader, usually landed and usually wealthy. The term is used now only as an honorific following a man's given name: Ahmet Bey.

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shouted, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! What a dirty, smelly place this is! What a dirty, smelly place this is!"

That was all of the taunting the son of the bey heard from the rooster for a while. Later, however, the son of the bey went to the toilet. After he had defecated, he heard the rooster taunting him again: "Cock-a-doodle-doo! My head was saved, but it tore the anus of the son of the bey! My head was saved, but it tore the anus of the son of the bey!"