

Story 1299 (1989 Tape 1

Narrator: Hatice Gölcük, 13

Location: Konya, capital city  
of Konya Province

Date: May 1989

Aged Animals Win a Home Together

Once there was and twice there was not, when Allah had many creatures /but it was a sin to talk too much/.<sup>1</sup> Well, back in that time there was a woodcutter who brought wood from the forest to the city every day on the back of his donkey. After they had worked together this way for several years, the donkey grew too old to carry such burdens. The woodcutter turned the donkey out of his barn and no longer provided any food for it. As a result, the donkey wandered about the countryside in search of fodder.

One day this donkey met a dog along the road. "How are you, Brother Dog?" he asked.

"I'm not doing as well as I once did. I used to work for a shepherd, guarding his sheep from wolves. But when I began to grow old, he got a younger dog and drove me away," said

<sup>1</sup>Formulaic opening for many Turkish folktales, this is 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

Story 1299

the dog.

"Your situation sounds like my own," said the donkey  
"Let us travel along together."

After they had gone a short distance together, they  
encountered a cat. "How are you doing, Sister Cat?" they asked.

"Not very well any more," said the cat. "I once worked  
for a man who raised chickens. I guarded his chickens from  
foxes and other wild animals. When I grew old, however, he  
dismissed me from that job, and so I no longer have a home."

"Come along with us," said the donkey and the dog. "We  
may find some place to live."

After they had traveled on farther, they were surprised  
to discover a cock along the road. "What are you doing here  
Brother Cock?" they asked.

"I am here because I have nowhere else to go. My owner  
used to have me protect his hens and baby chicks from hawks  
and from his neighbors' cocks. Then I grew old, and he  
released me."

"Well, join us! Perhaps we may be able to find a safe  
place where we can all live."

Some time after darkness had fallen that night, they saw

scheme. --Actually this is just a fragment of a tekerleme.  
second paradox is completed in brackets by us.

## Story

a light in the distance. "Let us go and see who lives in the house from which that light is shining," one of them said. They proceeded to that house, but none of them was tall enough to see inside. The dog climbed onto the back of the donkey; the cat climbed on top of the dog; and the cock perched on the back of the cat. Inside they could see food on the table, but they also saw thieves<sup>17-18</sup> with large bags of money. At a signal given by the cock, they all shouted in unison. The donkey brayed. The dog barked. The cat meowed. And the cock crowed. The noise was so loud and so unusual that it terrified the thieves, who fled empty-handed from the house. As soon as the thieves had gone, the animals entered the house, ate the food on the table, and then fell asleep on the floor.

The thieves had escaped into a nearby forest. After they had recovered their senses, they concluded that the noise that had frightened them away must have been made by police who were pursuing them. After talking about this for a while, they decided to send one of their members back to see if the police had left the house yet. Immediately the bravest of the thieves said, "Let me go and investigate. I am not afraid."

brave thief went to the house and entered it very quietly. He lighted a cigarette but accidentally stuck it into the cat's eye. The cat screamed, "Meow! Meow!" and scratched

Story 1299

the thief's face.

This wakened the dog, which barked, "Hav! Hav!"<sup>2</sup> and then shouted, "Thieves! Thieves!" Hearing this, the donkey arose and gave the thief a savage kick in the hip.

From the other side of the room, the cock crowed, "Ooh-ah, ooh-ah, ooh!"<sup>3</sup> He then flew at the thief and pecked viciously at his eyes.

After suffering such fierce attacks, the brave man fled to the forest again, where he told the other thieves what a dangerous place the house had become. The thieves decided not to try to return to the house again.

The donkey, the dog, the cat, and the cock went to the police office and made a report about the thieves and great amount of money they had left at the house. The police went to the house and took away the money and some stolen goods which they also found there. Before long they were able to capture the thieves themselves. Afterwards the police praised the animals for their help and rewarded them with a small

<sup>2</sup>While many others perceive a dog's bark as sounding, "Bow! Wow! Wow!" Turkish people perceive the sound as being "Hav! Hav!"

<sup>3</sup>This is the way Turkish cocks are thought to crow, not "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

Story 1299

amount of money

After that the animals continued to live in the thieves' house. They had finally found a home.