

Story #274 Tape #8, 1961-62

Narrator: Neriman Hızır (Ayşe Abla narrates and translates it on the UW Archive tape. It was apparently one of the items B. K. Walker copied from a tape in Milli Kütüphane.

Location: Ankara

Date: April 1962

Tekerleme

*Doğat*

In olden days, when the sieve was in the hay, when jinns played cirit on the old threshing ground . . . I see from this tree, you see from that slope . . . . Flew, flew--a bird flew. No the bird did not, no the silver did not. It was Mehmiş who flew. Can he fly or can he not fly?

Before I could say that, my mother fell off the door[sill my father fell out of his cradle. The one caught hold of fire tongs, and the other, the back-scratcher.

I roamed around in four corners. Oh, what a corner that corner! Before your tongue is twisted, you cannot get into it i.e., it is a tongue-twister sort of thing]. This corner is the summer corner; that corner is the winter corner; and this other one is the fall corner. Saying all this while I was rolling--and who, do you think, was coming from down below? It was the Pasha from Maraş.

Right away I found a hole for a thousand gold pieces, a mouse's corner for one thousand gold pieces, and I threw myself

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But then the children of the neighborhood, as naughty as you can imagine, flicked their fingers on the back of my neck, and my eyes popped out. Angered by this, I stuck one of the minarets in my belt, and I said, "This is a smoke stack [which lets out the heat and smoke], and I caught the domes [of the mosque], saying, "They are bird seeds," and stuck them in my pocket. And the old goat kicked me, saying, "Stay behind!" Then I pushed his tail, saying, "No, forward!" He went, and I went--went a little, went far, over the river, over the hills. The sieve was passing over the fields of grass, cutting down tulips and hyacinths.

Drinking cold water, I went six months and a summer, but as I turned back and looked behind, what do you think I saw? I saw that I had gone only as far as the length of a grain of barley. Well, never mind. Go, as you go, over the owls abandoned in the river. And so, sir, I lifted my one foot, placing it on the grass, saying, "It is dry," and stepped with the other one into the sea, saying, "It is the beach." I was dry and I got wet. What can the winds do to me?

*on his  
Ephem*

I had no money, no small change. What can the gate do to me? I distinguished friend from enemy, and I hired a boat without pay.

Kıs, kıs, Osman!

Bake bread for

no matter how much I eat.

\*zemzem is holy water from a sacred spring at Mecca.

No, no, Osman. Please, quick, Osman! I have a dog at home and I have a mischievous cat at home. If my cat eats the meat, and if my mother beats me for it--oh, my head, oh, my head! "If the bird of great honor perches on my bald head Before I could say this, I saw that. What do you think I did? With its name, with its two names, with all its greens, and with all its ceremony, it is the blue bird. It is flying over the Arafat Mountain\*\*\*, soaring.

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Went a little, went far, and went straight over rivers and hills, went six months and a summer, smoking tobacco and drinking coffee, cutting down tulips and hyacinths, went and went, but went only the length of a grain of barley.

[Well, in those old times, there was once . . .]\*\*\*\*

\*\*The reference here is to the Talih Kushu, the Bird of Fortune, which brings good luck, often by landing on one's head. In folktales, rulers are often chosen by this event, usually landing three times in a row on the head of the "elected."

\*\*\*The Arafat Mountain is at Mecca. Pilgrims climb the mountain and stone the devil as one of the parts of the whole pilgrimage ceremony.

\*\*\*\*The tekerleme is an attention-getting device to alert the listeners that an unrealistic folk tale is to follow, a "fairy tale," a fantasy of some sort. It is always ridiculous, humorous, and illogical. It "softens up" the prospective audience with laughter, and thus it has a psychological function as well as a structural function in the folktale. Usually the tekerleme is much shorter than this. As of this writing (May, 1972), we have never taped a tekerleme ourselves of this length.