

Story #31 (Tape 11)  
1961-1962

Narrator: Ahmet Uyar  
Location: Village of Zir  
Date: January 1962

#31

Nasreddin Hoca as Witness in Court

Once there were two friends who left their village and went to a town to try to find work there. When they arrived in the town they were hungry, and so they went to a restaurant and ordered two boiled eggs apiece. After eating their eggs, they waited for an opportunity to sneak out, and when the manager's back was turned, they left without paying for their meal. They did this because they had no money at all.

They found work in that town, and after ten months they went again to that restaurant where they had gotten the free meal when they arrived. They ate a meal there and paid for it, and then they told the manager that they wished to pay for the meal that they had had on their first day in town. They handed him twenty kuruş apiece.

"What did you eat on that day?" asked the manager.

"We each ate two boiled eggs," said one of the friends.

"Ah, then I can't take this money from you. It is not enough," said the manager.

The two men were surprised and asked him if that were not the correct price for boiled eggs.

"You had that meal here six months ago. Don't you realize that those four eggs would by this time have hatched into four chickens, and these four chickens, in turn, could have laid enough eggs to hatch twenty or thirty more chickens? No, you each own me twenty <sup>liras -- twenty</sup> liras apiece."

The two friends refused to pay this amount, and so the manager of the restaurant went to the kadi and entered a complaint against them. The kadi set a date for the trial.

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On their way home, the two friends met Nasreddin Hoca. He saw at once that something was troubling them. "Why do you look so sad?" the Hoca asked

"We are in great trouble, Hoca Effendi," said one of them.

"What is the trouble?" asked the Hoca.

"Ten months ago we came to town and ate a meal of two boiled eggs each at the restaurant near the mosque. We did not have any money, so we didn't pay for what we ate," said the one friend.

"And today," said the other friend, "when we went to pay the manager of the restaurant the twenty kuruş apiece that we owed him, he would not accept it."

"Why not?" asked the Hoca.

"He said that those four eggs would have become chickens and laid eggs that would also have become chickens, and by now there would be twenty or thirty chickens. These he said would be worth forty liras, and so he asked us each for twenty liras. Hoca Effendi, we do not have twenty liras apiece."

Nasreddin Hoca thought about this for a few minutes, and then he said to the two friends, "On the day of the trial, enter my name as a witness for you." The two friends agreed to do this and went home and waited for the day of the trial.

When that day arrived, they went to the court and asked the Kadı to enter the name of Nasreddin Hoca as a witness for them. The hearing progressed, <sup>when</sup> but Nasreddin Hoca's name was called, he did not appear. The judge sent two gendarmes to bring the Hoca to the court. When the gendarmes knocked at the Hoca's door, he told them that he was too busy to come to court, and that he would come when he had finished his work. The gendarmes paid no attention to his protests, and they carried him off to the court by force.

"Why didn't you come on time?" demanded the kadı.

"I was too busy," said the Hoca.

"What business was so important that you could not come to court when you were supposed to?" asked the kadı.

"Kadı Effendi," said the Hoca respectfully, "tomorrow I shall begin to sow wheat, and today I have to boil enough wheat to sow all my fields."

"Sow boiled wheat!" exclaimed the kadı. "How do you expect boiled wheat to grow?"

"As easily as boiled eggs could hatch into chickens, Kadı Effendi, answered Nasreddin Hoca.

Upon this evidence, the kadı gave a judgment in favor of the two defendants and dismissed the court.