

Story #152 (Tape #7, Summer 1966)

Narrator: Melek Uysal

Location: Ankara, though informant grew up in Iskenderun area

Date: Summer 1966

"His Répété and Mine"

A peasant who had become a very successful farmer once went to Istanbul to enjoy himself there for a week. This was during the time when that city was under the cultural influence of the French. He went to the Tokatlı Restaurant and tied his donkey to a post outside, and then he went into the restaurant and sat down at a table.

Almost all the waiters and cooks in this restaurant were French, and all the menus were written in French. When the waiter placed a menu before him, the peasant studied it for a long while but he couldn't understand any of it. He noticed, however, that a man at a nearby table was eating chicken, and so the peasant thought he would like chicken

He couldn't find any way to make the waiter understand what he wanted, and so, finally, in desperation, he decided simply to run his finger down the menu and order that dish where his finger stopped. His finger stopped at "Salade," and so he beckoned to the waiter and ordered his food by pointing at "Salade." The waiter then brought him a plate of

but he ate it quickly, and of course this was not enough for a meal. Looking around and wondering how to order something else, the peasant noticed the waiter go to the table where chicken had been served. The diner

said, "Répété!" and soon the waiter brought him another plate of chicken.

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The peasant was delighted to have discovered at last the word for chicken. When the waiter came to his table to take his second order, he said, "Répété!" The waiter brought him another plate of salad. Although the peasant was surprised at this, he said nothing, thinking that perhaps it was a custom in Istanbul to eat two or three plates of salad at the beginning of a meal. But after he had said "Répété!" for the third time and had had his fourth plate of salad brought to the table, he was quite beside himself with annoyance. He caught the waiter by the lapel of his coat and shouted, "Look here, fellow! Why on earth is his 'Répété!' chicken and my 'Répété' always salad?"