

Story #276 (Tape #14, 1961-62)

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Nasreddin Hoca and Tamerlane

When Tamerlane invaded the town where Nasreddin Hoca was, he (Tamerlane) as a treat for the town gave an elephant to amuse people. Well, it was a present from Tamerlane, and they had to take good care of the elephant. Meanwhile, the elephant roamed around and ate the vegetables off the places and broke the trees and did every harm that a big elephant could do in a small village.

Well, the villagers were very much troubled about it, and they wanted to complain. But who would dare to go to Tamerlane and say that they didn't want that elephant? They thought, and they finally decided that only Hoca could find his way about the problem, so they told Hoca to go to Tamerlane and tell him that they were very happy with the elephant, but he was too much for them, so please take him away.

Hoca said, "All right. I'll do so, if you come along with me."

So the whole village started on their way, and as they neared where Tamerlane was, the crowd dropped off, one by one. Nasreddin Hoca didn't know it, and when he was right before Tamerlane, he started his long-meditated speech about not wanting the elephant. He started, "Your Honor, I and all my village friends . . ." He turned round, swinging his arm to show all his village friends. He saw that none of the villagers were behind him, and that he was all alone.

He went on with his talk, and said, "I and all my village friends

are so greatly honored with the elephant you made a present to us. We love him so, but the only thing that makes us unhappy about him is that he is a very lonely elephant. Won't you please give another one to be his mate, so that he won't be so unhappy?"

And Tamerlane granted his wish, and another elephant was sent to be the mate of the first elephant. When the villagers saw the second elephant come, they said, "What did you do?"

And Nasreddin Hoca said, "Well, where were you when I was there to talk?"