

Story #308 Tape #22, 1970)

Narrator: Ahmet Sarıbaş, in early 20's

Location: Informant from Giresun, Province of Giresun; but tale was taped at Iskenderun, Hatay Province

Date: February 1970

How the Old ^{Trickery} Cat Tricked the Rats

Once upon a time an old cat ~~was~~ announced to all the rats in the neighborhood, "I am going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Come to my home in the old barn tonight so that I may bid farewell to all of you."

There was among the rats one who was crippled. When the rats congregated at their meeting place in the village, crippled rat said, "Since I am crippled, it takes me longer to walk. Therefore, I want to go to the barn ahead of you so that I may be on time for the cat's invitation." The rest of the rats agreed.

When the crippled rat reached the barn, he saw ~~that~~ the cat, with his whiskers standing straight out and his eyes burning like torches, waiting impatiently. Terrified, the crippled rat limped back to his friends and said, "Do not go to the cat's home in the barn. He is not at all the type to go on a pilgrimage!"

But the rats said, "You mind your own business. We are going anyway. You don't have to come if you don't want to." So the

lame rat stayed behind.

When the rats reached the cat's place, he first welcomed them civilly. As soon as the last rat entered, however, he jumped and shut the door. Then he inquired, "Is anybody else coming?"

"No," replied the rats.

In the meantime the lame rat had cautiously returned. He was watching them through a hole in the door

Then the cat said, "Before I go on a pilgrimage, I want to confer with you about something."

"Go ahead and ask," replied the rats.

"All the farmers are complaining about you

"Why is that?" the rats asked.

"Because," the cat explained, "they say that you gnaw holes in the bottoms of the sacks of grain instead of opening them at the top."

Then the cat leaped upon the rats, strangled some, killed others with the blow of his paws. All the rats--all except one--died. Only one rat survived by escaping through the hole in the door.

"What happened?" the lame rat asked.

"He killed them all," the other rat answered.