

Story #311 Tape #22, 1970)

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Trabzon, was  
narrator's village;  
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How Nasreddin Hoca Acquired a Whole Village ~

One day Nasreddin Hoca summoned the villagers to his house with his cries, "Help, help! My house is on fire." Finding that his house was not on fire, the villagers were displeased with Hoca's practical joke. However, they were fooled by the same trick several days later when Hoca's cries, "Help, help! My house is on fire," summoned them to the house once again. As before, there was no fire. Pleased with the success of his previous tricks, Hoca decided to test the credulity of his villagers for the third time. He said to himself, "I'll try my villagers once more. They like me. Let's see whether they'll come to help me this time." This time, Hoca actually set his house on fire and cried, "Help, help! My house is on fire." However, the villagers did not come, for they did not want to be fooled by Hoca again.

Hoca put some ashes in a sack and blew up the sack to make it look like a sack full of grain. He also hid two gold coins at the bottom of the sack. Then he took the sack to the miller

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and asked him to grind the wheat in the sack. Before he left, he said, "I'll come to get the flour the day after tomorrow." He returned to claim the flour: "Did you grind my wheat?"

"What wheat?" the miller asked. "The sack was empty. I even shook it out."

"No, it wasn't. There was gold in it. What did you do with the gold?" asked Hoca

"There was no gold either," answered the miller. The miller and Hoca started to argue

Finally, they took the case to the muhtar. The muhtar said, "If there was gold in the sack, as Hoca claims there was, I'm sure we can find a few pieces of it at the bottom of the sack." When the muhtar shook out the sack, the gold pieces that Hoca had hidden there fell on the floor. The muhtar was convinced that Hoca was telling the truth. Therefore, he turned to the miller and said, "You owe Hoca a sackful of gold."

When the poor miller gave Hoca the gold, the latter returned to his village with the good news. He announced to the villagers, "I traded the ashes of my house for this gold." Then the credulous villagers burned their houses and took their ashes to other villages to trade for gold. Of course, they could not get any gold in return. Therefore, the whole village was left to Hoca.