

Story #408 (Tape #4, 1972)

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Location: Taped at Narlı Kuyu, Silifke, İçel; narrator from Ark Arası

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The Salt Crop That Failed at Karakaya

As the people of Karakaya were all very poor, they could hardly afford to buy salt. They decided finally to sow salt in their fields. Taking all the money they had, they went into Silifke and bought about 100 kilos of salt, which they then sowed in their fields. They watched and watched, but the salt showed no signs of sprouting.

One day they were all puzzling over the reason that the salt did not sprout. One of the two brothers who were very concerned about the failure of the salt crop went to their salt field, and there he saw a fly. Returning to the village, he reported to his brother that he had seen the fly. They concluded that flies had prevented their salt from growing.

Taking their rifles, the two brothers went to the field to shoot flies. A fly happened to land on the forehead of one of the brothers. He attracted the attention of his brother to the fly on his forehead by whistling. His brother aimed at the fly and pulled the trigger. Shooting his brother down in this way, he said, "One from viz¹ and one from biz²,"

¹viz means buzz, and by extension flies; the noun thus derives from the onomatopoeia.

²biz is the first-person plural of the personal pronoun. "One from them and one from us."

but we also lost a bushel of tuz." ³

³tuz, the most common Turkish word for salt, has a near rhyme with viz and biz. This anecdote is thus a nükte, a joke tale ending on a play of words. The Turkish lines were these:

Bir vizden, bir bizden--
Biz olduk bir kile tuzdan.