

Story #575 ( 1964 Tape 3)

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Location: Kadıncık village,  
Kumru kaza, Province of Ordu

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Inhospitality Repaid

The region in Turkey from which I come is called Cenik.<sup>1</sup> It is high up in the mountains. People there speak a crude kind of Turkish, but still higher up, people speak an even coarser dialect. The region extending toward Niksar is called Ova [literally, plain].

One day a man from Cenik became friends with a man from Ova. A little later, the Cenik man visited the man from Ova, but the latter did not recognize his friend. So, the man from Cenik returned to his village determined to forget that he had ever befriended the Ova man.

Afterwards, however, the Ova man realized what a mistake he had made, and he decided to pay a visit to his friend in Cenik and ask his pardon for his rude behavior. Putting his saddlebag on his donkey, he rode to Cenik and found his former friend. The man from Cenik, unlike the Ova man, welcomed his friend and said, "You did well to come to me, but I am afraid that I shall have to spend the night in the fields watching for wild boars. Would you like to join me?"

"Of course I should."

They then went into the fields, where the Cenik man asked the Ova man, "Are you a good shot?"

"Yes, I am."

<sup>1</sup> Neither village nor town names, Cenik and Ova must be local labels for small areas in the mountainous section of Ordu Province, perhaps fifty miles or so inland from the Black Sea coastal plain. Niksar is a kaza town in Tokat Province, about fifteen kilometers from the border of Ordu Province.

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"Good! I should like to have a friend who can shoot well." After eating, they began to watch for boars in a watchtower.<sup>2</sup> The Cenik man said, "You may sleep now. If any boars come, I shall awaken you, and then you can shoot them."

The man from Ova tied his donkey to one of the poles supporting the watch tower, and then, climbing up into the tower again, he fell asleep. The Cenik man then climbed down and let loose the donkey of his friend. The donkey began to roam about in the corn field, breaking down corn stalks and eating ears of corn. The host nudged the Ova man, who was still fast asleep, and said, "Brother, brother, the boars have come! Get up! Look over there!" The donkey was still crunching ears of corn. What the host intended was that his friend should shoot his own donkey for a boar. The Ova man loaded his rifle, took aim, and fired. Something heavy hit the ground. "Let him lie there," said the host. "We shall look at him in the morning."

In the morning the Cenik man awakened his friend and said, "Get up. Let us go and take a look at the boar that you shot last night."

When they reached the place where his donkey lay dead, the Ova man said, "But, brother, this is my own donkey! How was it that we shot this donkey?"

They put this incident from their minds and returned to Cenik,

<sup>2</sup> Watch towers are a common sight in rural Turkey, especially in vegetable fields. Wild boars are plentiful in Turkey, and a herd of these beasts can destroy a crop quite quickly.

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where the Ova man ate some unripe walnuts, thinking that they were apples. When he bit into the very bitter walnuts, he said, "Pah! What sort of apples do you have here in Cenik?"

The Cenik man took his friend around the village, intending to teach him the customs of the place. When the Ova man went to the toilet, he wanted to clean his hands with water before he left the place. When he could find no water, he wiped his hands with nettles, thinking that they were grass. As a result, he was badly stung by the nettles, and he left the toilet crying.

The Ova man spent about a week at Cenik. One day it rained, and after it stopped raining, drops continued to fall from the branches for some time. When he observed this, the Ova man thought that Cenik was really a very strange place. He could not help saying, "What a strange place Cenik is--where one shoots his own donkey, where one eats bitter apples, where one gets stung by nettles, and where it continues to rain after the storm has gone. I shall never come back here again!"