

Story #584 (1963 Tape #4)

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Pınarbaşı kaza
Kayseri Province

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The Dusty Death of Deceit

One day before dawn a man was taking some chickens to market to sell them. On the way a cock escaped from his flock. This cock climbed a tree, perched on a high branch, and there, at the break of dawn, he started crowing.

A fox heard this crowing and said to himself, "Ah, my kismet has come to my very door." He looked up at the cock but decided that he could not climb that high. "Hey, rooster brother!" he shouted.

"What is the matter?" the cock asked.

"Come down! Here is a letter from Sophia¹ saying that wolves are to graze with the sheep, and that henceforth no one should hurt anyone else. Come down, and let us be brothers."

When the rooster heard this, he jumped up one branch higher. He said to the fox, "Wait a bit. There are some people coming. Let us wait until they arrive and have them read the letter for us."

When the fox smelled the approach of a hound with the peasants, he turned towards the woods. The cock asked, "Where are you going, brother?"

¹ One cannot be certain of the reference here. One of the most impressive structures in Turkey is Hagia Sofiye mosque in Istanbul, formerly the Church of Saint Sophia [Holy Wisdom]. The use of the word Sophia here may be synecdochic, the building standing for the city--the capital city from which imperial orders were issued. This figure of speech would suggest Byzantine origin for this tale, for it was then that the building could have most readily represented the

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The fox answered, "Oh, my insides are too pressed for comfort. I must go into the woods and defecate."

When the hound caught the fox, he grabbed him by the throat and started to strangle him. Seeing this, the cock called down, "What about the letter from Sophia?"

The fox gasped out, "I cannot read it because there is so much dust being stirred up down here!"

city and its authority. It dominated ancient Constantinople. During the Ottoman period, there were several great mosques built, and any one of these might more readily have represented Moslem Turkish power than the formerly Christian cathedral.