

Story #667 (1976, Tape #18)

Narrator: Mustafa Durmaz, 63

Location: Village: Dağkadı;  
kaza of Karacabey;  
Province of Bursa

Date: February 1976

How Tall May a Tall Tale Be?

Once three men went to find work in the vicinity of Balıkeşir.  
One was a skilled laborer, and his two friends went along to find  
work together. One of them returned to the village in a short time.  
When the villagers asked him why he had returned so soon, he said,  
"I was working on a very tall building where I became dizzy. I could  
not stand it any longer."

Someone asked, "How tall was that building?"

He said, "Well, it took the skilled worker three months to climb  
down from it."

A villager then said, "I remember going to Rumeli [Castle]<sup>1</sup> once  
to start a garden. The land there was very fertile, and the crop grew  
extremely fast. A vine grew so big that it reached the Danube River.  
The cucumbers on it grew so large that they made three highways to the  
market place."

Another villager replied, "No vine grew big enough to make a  
bridge, and no cucumber could be large enough to support a highway.  
Don't say such things!"

<sup>1</sup>Rumeli Castle was built by the forces of Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452 on the European side of the Bosphorus; it was most important in the conquest of Istanbul (Constantinople) the following year. It is a well preserved and picturesque ruin surrounded by a lush park.

## Story #667

Another person then said, "I was once stranded on a great plain, and when lightning struck, I saw 300 <sup>200</sup> eagles flying out."

Someone else said, "I too became stranded and I saw a camel reach to Lake Van and take a drink of water."

But now someone in the crowd objected and said, "Now that is too long a tale. How can you expect us to believe that the camel's neck could reach that far?"

*Senyir*  
*Whinn* "May your mother be raped!<sup>2</sup> How did you swallow the tale of the eagles?"

<sup>2</sup>Of the many insults in Turkish, this is perhaps the most offensive.