

Story #670 (1976, Tape #19)

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The Donkey Defeats the Lion

The women of a village had the habit of going to the mountains in the springtime to gather herbs and edible wild greens. They also enjoyed themselves outdoors when the weather started to warm up after a long winter. They would borrow the shepherd's donkey and load all kinds of homemade foods into his saddle bag. The donkey would enjoy these outings which were quite merry, for the women would run and play games. Often they would feed him from their own delicacies.

One day the women borrowed the donkey and went to the mountains. When they arrived at their favorite spot, they all scattered in different directions to gather herbs and greens. The donkey was grazing lazily when a lion strutted up to him. He asked, "Why are you grazing so freely in the wilderness?"

The donkey looked at the lion and said, "Who are you? Why do you think that I should not graze freely and fearlessly in the wilderness?"

The lion told him he was king of the animal world, the strongest and most feared of all. The donkey then proclaimed that he was the donkey of all lions and that they should test each other's wits to see who was the mightier of the two. When the lion readily consented to this test, the donkey asked him if he could find a spring of thermal

<sup>1</sup> Öğretmen is the narrator's last name. He is not a teacher.

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water-thermal

water under the ground. When the lion asked the donkey if he himself could, the donkey stamped the ground three times with his forelegs and told the lion to start digging at that spot. The lion soon had dug a hole in the ground with his strong front paws. Then the donkey told him to stop digging, and the donkey placed his front legs in the hole and started pounding three times. While he was at his chore, he told the lion to be sure not to run off when the hot spring gushed up. "Do not try to escape, for there will be many who will pursue you and bring you back."

At the third pounding of his hoofs, a gush of steam sprang high to the air, and it was quickly followed by spurts of steaming water. The lion, not understanding how the donkey could perform such a feat, took to his heels, convinced that the donkey was powerful enough to destroy him. He ran and ran without turning around to see if he was being followed.

Soon he came across a wolf who asked him why he was running so fast without even looking back. The lion told him that a donkey who claimed to be the donkey of lions had frightened him by finding or producing a hot spring. If the donkey had such extraordinary power, he surely could get the better of him.

The wolf became very interested in the lion's story. He said to him, "Show me the place where the donkey is, for it will make an excellent lunch for me."

The lion replied, "I have no intention of going back there."

The wolf, however, convinced him that there could be no danger from

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a mere donkey. He would go ahead he said, and the lion could tie a rope around the wolf's neck and attach the other end to its waist. This would make the lion feel secure, and it would, at the same time enable him to lead the way. At last the lion was persuaded to take the wolf to the donkey, and he led their way back to that spot tied by a rope to the wolf's neck.

When they arrived, the donkey said, "Now, brother lion, did I not tell you not to run off? And if you did, did I not say that there would be many to bring you back to me? See, here you are, delivered to me tied."

The lion saw that their scheme had not worked out at all, and that the donkey still held the upper hand. He bounded away, running as fast as he could, forgetting all about the wolf that was tied to him. He ran for a long time before he decided to slow down and look behind. When he did, he saw that at the end of the rope hung the head of the wolf, and his body was no longer attached to it. As the lion had bounded away, the wolf's neck had snapped, and the force of the lion's dragging him had detached its body from its neck. Nevertheless, the lion in his great fear thought that the donkey had gotten to the wolf and devoured him just before he himself had sprung away, but that the donkey had not had the time to get the head as well as the body. He was convinced that he had saved himself just in the nick of time. He decided to leave the land for some faraway place where there would be no one mightier than himself.

decapitation