

Story 905 (1961-62 Tape 71) Narrator: Yusuf Karataç

Location: Beyşehir, kaza town in  
Konya Province; taped  
at Izmir

Date: May 1962

Tekerleme<sup>1</sup>

Once there was and once there was not, when the camel was a town crier, and I used to rock my mother's cradle, tingır mıngır.<sup>2</sup> This camel fell into the sea, where it was captured by the fishes, which made a huge tent of its hide, a tent so large that the valis<sup>3</sup> of seven regions sat beneath it but still left one quarter of it empty. There they found some money with which they knew not what to buy. There also they found three houses. The first of these had no ceiling, the second had no floor, and the third had neither ceiling nor floor, but right in the middle of it sat an old woman chewing an okka<sup>4</sup> of gum.

<sup>1</sup> A tekerleme is a nonsense jingle used at the beginning of a Turkish folktale to alert the audience to the fact that a narrative is about to be related and to sharpen their wits sufficiently to grasp the forthcoming story. The nonsense is made up of contradictions and absurdities so extreme that they amuse listeners. Sometimes the ingenuity of the rimes also tickles the humor of the listener.

<sup>2</sup> This is onomatopoeia for the sound of something rocking back and forth on a floor or other hard surface.

<sup>3</sup> A vali is now the governor of a Turkish province.

<sup>4</sup> A unit of weight equivalent to 1282 grams.