

Story 1050 (1974 Tape 51      Narrator: Hicriye Ceren, 70

Location: Limonlu village,  
Mersin kaza, İçel  
Province

Date: 1974

Community Mourning for Brother Louse

A louse and a flea became such good friends that they considered themselves brothers. One morning when they woke up, they saw that it had been snowing during the night. The louse said, "Brother Flea, you cook us some rice for breakfast and I'll go out and cut some wood to keep us warm."

The louse went out in the yard, but a snake <sup>all</sup> came along and carried him away. The flea went out to call the louse to come and eat before the rice got cold, but the louse did not answer. He called again, but still there was no answer. All he saw out there was a snake disappearing around the corner. The flea suddenly realized what had happened, and he was so grief-stricken that he sat down and began pulling his hair out.

A bird came along and asked, "What happened, Brother Flea, that causes you to pull out your hair?"

"A snake has carried away Brother Louse. That is why I am pulling out my hair.

"In that case," said the bird, "I shall pull out my

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feathers." He flew up into a tree and began pulling out his feathers.

tree asked, "What happened, Brother Bird? Why are you pulling out your feathers?"

"A snake has carried away Brother Louse. In our sadness about this, Brother Flea is pulling out his hair, and I am pulling out my feathers

"Then I shall start shedding my leaves," the tree said, and its leaves began to fall to the ground

A cow came along and saw the leaves falling. It asked, "Brother Tree, what is the matter? Why are you shedding your leaves?"

Sister Cow, a snake has carried off Brother Louse. We are so sad about this that Brother Flea is pulling out his hair, Brother Bird is pulling out his feathers, and I am shedding my leaves."

"Then I shall break off both my horns and stick them in my bottom," said the cow.

When the cow walked past the fountain, the fountain called to it, asking, "Sister Cow, what has happened to make you break off your horns and stick them in your bottom?"

"A snake has carried away Brother Louse. We are all

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grieving. Brother Flea is pulling out his hair, Brother Bird is pulling out his feathers, Brother Tree is shedding his leaves, and I am wearing my horns on the wrong end

that is so, then I shall stop pouring out water and shall flow with blood instead," said the fountain

A short while later a woman came to the fountain to draw water. When she saw blood instead of water flowing from the spout, she asked, "What has happened to you, O Fountain?"

fountain answered, "A snake has carried away Brother Louse. To show our grief, Brother Flea is pulling out his hair, Brother Bird is pulling out his feathers, Brother Tree is shedding his leaves, Sister Cow has broken off her horns and stuck them in her bottom, and I am pouring forth blood."

"Then I shall show my grief by breaking all my water jugs," said the woman, and she smashed them one by one against the stone base of the fountain.

When the woman went home empty-handed, her husband asked her, "What has happened? Where are your jugs?"

"A snake has carried away Brother Louse. We are all in mourning for him, and to show our grief, Brother Flea is pulling out his hair, Brother Bird is pulling out

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his feathers, Brother Tree is shedding his leaves, Sister Cow has broken off her horns and stuck them in her bottom, the Fountain is pouring forth blood instead of water, and I have broken all of my jugs."

Furious about all of this, her husband said, "Then you can also cut off your breasts and stick them in the oven!"