

Story 1202 (1990 Tape 12)

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The Unseen Goat *Alp*

There was once a farmer who made his living from what grew in his large vegetable garden and his vineyards. Close to this farm lived a neighbor who had a goat. Time after time the goat got loose and got into the garden and vineyards, doing a great amount of damage to the farmer's crops

Finally, after one of these destructive visits of the goat, the farmer went to his neighbor and warned him. He said, "See here Your goat gets loose and does a great amount of damage to my crops. It walks through my garden smashing many vegetables, and it eats the leaves from my grapevines and smaller fruit trees. Unless you can keep that goat under control, I am going to have to do something about its plunder of my crops!"

The neighbor was not at all moved by this warning. He simply threw up his hands as if to say, "Well, that's the it is.

The goat continued to damage the farmer's garden and vineyards. One day the farmer reached the end of his patience and became very angry at this damage to his property. He and his family seized the goat, slaughtered it, roasted the whole carcass, and feasted upon its meat. After they had finished eating,

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the farmer instructed his children: "If anyone from our neighbor's household asks if you have seen their goat, you are to answer, 'We have not seen your goat.'"

Days passed, but no one from the neighbor's household came to the farm to inquire about the whereabouts of the goat. One morning, however, the youngest of the farmer's children went over to the neighbor's home to play. Before any of the family of the neighbor had spoken to him, this child said, quite awkwardly and self-consciously, "We have not seen anything of your goat!"