

Story 1209 (1990 Tape 12)

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A Dog's Intuitive Sense of Danger

A number of years ago there was a high-ranking military officer who traveled about from base to base inspecting their equipment and facilities. Wherever he went, he took his old dog with him, a dog which had reached the very advanced age of fifteen or sixteen years

One evening this officer arrived in Erzincan, a city which at that time had very few hotels, all of which were poorly furnished and badly run. Selecting what seemed to be the best of these hotels, the officer thought, "I'll not get much rest here. The place is probably filled with bedbugs." After selecting a room at this hotel, the officer went out to a bar and drank some rakı<sup>1</sup> thinking that this would drug him enough so that he might sleep some even if the bedbugs did bite him. Returning to the hotel then, he retired for the night

But the man had hardly closed his eyes when his old dog began pulling on his leg, trying to drag him to the door. The

<sup>1</sup>The favorite Turkish liquor, rakı is anise flavored. When water is added to it, it turns white, and it is often referred to as lion's milk. It is distilled by a government monopoly. In Arab countries it is often called arak, and in Greece it is known as ouzo.

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dog seemed frantic, and it was pulling so hard that it was leaving tooth marks on his leg. The officer beat the dog off, saying to himself, "I hope it is not rabid. I should have had vaccinated." The dog kept coming back to its master and pulling him toward the door. Noticing how excited the dog was the officer finally allowed himself to be pulled from the room led downstairs and out to the public square.

They had no sooner reached the public square than they began to hear very loud noises--güm, güm, güm! These were the sounds of a terrible earthquake that struck the area. The hotel and most of the other houses in that city were destroyed, but the officer and his dog, out in the open square, were unharmed.<sup>2</sup> "My friendship with this dog will never cease. He saved my life!"

<sup>2</sup>This is undoubtedly a tale that came out of the devastating earthquake that almost totally destroyed Erzincan and dozens of nearby towns and villages in 1939. More than 160,000 people were killed in this disaster, and half a million people were left homeless. Erzincan is on one of the major fault lines in Turkey; even late in the 1970s, residents were still being terrified by loud, explosive sounds heard in the mountains that surround the city.