

Story 1382 (1989 Tape 5)

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Esref Hoca Grades a Student Generously

When Esref Hoca was teaching music, he always began by having the students learn the scale: do, re, mi, fa, and so on. He first wrote the names of these notes on the blackboard. Then as he pointed to each note with a stick, the student was supposed not only to pronounce the name of the note but also to sing it at the proper pitch.

One day Esref Hoca was teaching two students, one of whom had some musical ability while the second did not. As Esref pointed to notes on the blackboard, the first student sang the notes at the correct level of sound. When it was the turn of the second student, however, that student merely said the words, without raising or lowering his voice at any time. For their performances the first student received a grade of 10, but the second student received 0.¹

Confused by this great difference in grades, the

¹The Turkish education system usually grades students on a scale of 0 to 10. Sometimes the minimal passing grade is set at 5, sometimes at 6.

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second student objected: "I read the notes just as clearly and loudly as the other student. Why should I receive a grade of 0 while he received 10?"

The hoca explained how different the performances of the two students had been. He then agreed to give the second student a make-up examination so that he might raise his grade. When the time for this make-up examination arrived, the second student appeared with a long screwdriver in his hand. As he tried to sing each note, he struck the word for it on the blackboard with his screwdriver.

Amused by this, Eşref Hoca gave the student a grade of 5, thus allowing him to pass the course