

Story 1557 (1992 Tape 2)

Narrator: Mustafa Aytakin, 30

Location: Derinkuyu, kaza town
of Nevşehir Province

Date:

How Far Can a Tall Tale be Reduced in Height?

There were once two friends who had a practice of creating many unusual stories and telling them to groups of people. After a while they began to fear that their reputation for being storytellers might make their stories seem less credible to their listeners. They said to each other, "Now that everybody knows that we tell unusual stories, we should help each other to guard against exaggerating too much or making unbelievable claims. If one of us coughs while the other is telling a story, that will mean that the story is becoming incredible. So, whenever the storyteller hears the other cough, he should tone down what he is saying in order to make it more acceptable to the audience." They agreed on this plan and on the signal they would give to each other when necessary.

One day soon after that, the first of these men began to tell a story in a coffeehouse. He said, "One day while I was hunting, I saw a rabbit that had a tail fifteen meters long. His friend coughed immediately to warn him about this extreme statement. The storyteller said to his listeners, "If I said fifteen meters, make that ten meters long." But when his friend coughed again, the storyteller lowered the length to

Story 1557

five or six meters. But his friend continued to cough, and so the storyteller said, "Well, maybe that tail was only four meters long." But his friend's coughing continued until the storyteller became quite annoyed. Turning to his friend, he said, "Stop coughing, for I shall not drop even one millimeter below three meters!"