

Story 1691 (Dictated)

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Location: Konya, capital city  
of Konya Province

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### Fish Heads

They say that the men who come from Kayseri<sup>1</sup> are clever. Even boys from Kayseri have been able to outwit the Devil! Naturally, everyone wants to know what makes Kayseri men so clever.

Well, a country fellow taking his first train ride to İstanbul was excited to discover that his seatmate on train was from Kayseri. He saved the most important one of his questions until he and the Kayseri man had talked of such and such and so and so. Then he said, "Sir, you come from Kayseri. You can probably tell me what makes Kayseri men so clever."

"Of course!" said the Kayseri man. "We eat fish heads."

"Fish heads?" The countryman thought about that answer for awhile. He was still wondering about it when the man from Kayseri opened his lunch sack. Inside, there were ten

<sup>1</sup>People from the city of Kayseri (and to an extent all residents of Kayseri Province) are stereotyped as being clever, shrewd, and superior in intelligence to the people they encounter.

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small fish, hamsis,<sup>2</sup> and a loaf of bread. One by one, the Kayseri man cut off the heads of the fish with his pocket knife and pushed them to one side.

"Aren't you going to eat the heads?" the fellow asked.

"No," said the Kayseri man. "I already come from Kayseri.

"Sir," asked the countryman, "how much would you charge me for just one fish head?"

After a little thought, the Kayseri man answered, "One lira."

"And what if I bought all ten fish heads?"

"That would be ten liras."

Immediately, the country fellow counted out ten liras into the hand of the Kayseri man. Then he began to eat the fish heads, one by one, with the bones crunching, and no bread to help them down.

After he had finished the tenth hamsi, the country fellow asked, "Sir, how much did you pay for each fish?"

"One lira."

<sup>2</sup>A type of anchovy found in the Black and Mediterranean seas. For residents of the Black Sea coast it is a staple of diet, and there are reputedly dozens of recipes for the preparation of this small (5-9 inches) fish.

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"What? You charged me one            for each fish head  
when you paid only            ira for each    sh?"

"Aha    said the Kayseri man    "You see? It    working  
already