

Story 1706 (1994 Tape 1

Narrator: Cevdet Uğuz,
veterinarian

Location: Taşkale village,
Karaman (formerly
kaza town but now
vilayet merkezi),
Karaman Province

Date: May 1994

Şükrü Saracoğlu¹ Outwits His Fellow-Villagers

Şükrü Saracoğlu was a man who was loved and respected throughout the entire country. The people of his village² were very proud of him, but they also enjoyed playing tricks on him. The first few times he returned there after becoming famous, they slaughtered a sheep and gave a lavish banquet in his honor. Each time they selected an old sheep, however--one whose meat was certain

¹Mehmet Şükrü Saracoğlu--he never used his first name in public life--was one of Turkey's most distinguished statesmen during the first half of the 20th century. He was born in 1887 and died in 1953. He was Prime Minister, President of the Grand National Assembly, and the holder of several Cabinet positions.

²He is always described as having been born in Ödemiş, a large kaza town in the eastern part of İzmir Province. It is possible that he came from a village within the jurisdiction of Ödemiş, for Turks born in villages often identify themselves as natives of the kaza in which their village is located. It is even more likely that the village origin is the product of the folk imagination.

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to be tough. They did this in order to make fun of him. They knew that he had bad teeth, and they knew that he would suffer discomfort while eating that meat. When Şükrü Saracoğlu tried to eat the meat, he had a very difficult time, and the villagers would laugh at him secretly.

This happened only a few times before Şükrü Saracoğlu realized what they were doing. After that, he always took with him to his village a large pair of scissors. Every time he picked up a piece of the tough meat, he would cut it into fine pieces before eating it.