

Story 1909 (1995 Tape 4)

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Whistle Blowing Has Its Price

One day Nasreddin Hoca<sup>1</sup> mounted his donkey to go to the marketplace in another village. Five neighborhood children saw him and asked, "Where are you going, Hoca?"

I am going to such and such a village where today is market day. I am going to the marketplace there."

Hoca, please bring us some whistles from that marketplace

Nasreddin Hoca said nothing. He just shook the reins and started his donkey toward the next village. The donkey had taken only a few steps, however, when a sixth boy ran up and said, "Hoca, please buy a whistle for me too." As he said this, the boy handed some money

<sup>1</sup>A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In the pre-Republican era, he was also the community's teacher, for education was then the responsibility of the clergy. Separation of "church" and state in the republic required that teachers be people with secular rather than religious training. Nasreddin Hoca belonged to the earlier period. For centuries he has been Turkey's most beloved comic folk character.

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to the Hoca

Toward the end of the day Nasreddin Hoca returned to his own village. Filled with expectation, the boys clustered around him. But the Hoca took from his pocket just one whistle, which he handed to the sixth child. Looking at the other children, Nasreddin Hoca said "Whistle blowing has its price."