

Story 2113 (Miscellaneous  
Tape 16, Item 7--1971)

Narrator: Ishak Aksakar

Location: Hasankale (since  
then renamed  
Pasinler), kaza  
town of Erzurum  
Province

Date: August 23, 1971

Exchanges--From Favorable to Fatal

Once there was and once there was not,<sup>1</sup> time within  
time,<sup>2</sup> when the sieve was in the straw,<sup>3</sup> when the camel

<sup>1</sup>Formulaic opening for many Turkish folktales, this is known as a tekerleme. A full tekerleme may run to several lines, though most narrators nowadays use only one or two parts of a tekerleme. The tekerleme is a nonsense jingle filled with paradoxes and other comic incongruities. It is meant both to amuse and to alert the audience to the fact that a tale is to follow. Some of the humor is lost in translation because it is difficult to reproduce in English the rhyme scheme.

<sup>2</sup>"Time within Time" refers to the chronology of events in an interior world. A person may dream or fantasize at great length during only a few seconds of ordinary time. One may even seem to spend many years in that other world within; one may take a job, marry, have children, and see them grow to maturity. In Turkish this is called Zaman Zaman İçinde. It is elsewhere sometimes referred to as "Frozen Time" or "Moments of Eternity."

<sup>3</sup>The sieve is never in the straw. While threshing grain in the traditional nonmechanized fashion, workers pass the detached kernels of grain and finely ground straw through a large-mesh sieve. Longer pieces of straw which may still have kernels of grain attached to them do not pass through and will need further threshing. So, the straw is in the sieve, not the sieve in the straw.

### Story

was a porter and the rooster was a barber. Well, back in those days there was another rooster, a young and handsome rooster who was not a barber

One day this young rooster set out to seek his fortune. After awhile he entered a small village. From one of the houses in that village came the pleasant aroma of freshly baked bread. He knocked on the door of that house, and when an old woman appeared, the rooster said, "Give me a loaf of bread."

"No, I shall not give you any of my loaves. They are mine."

"Please give me a loaf of bread, or I may die of starvation." When the old lady still refused to give him a loaf, the rooster struck her, took three loaves, and continued traveling. A little farther along his way, the rooster came upon a shepherd tending a flock of sheep. He said to the shepherd, "Will you please keep here for me these loaves of bread until I return for them in a short while?"

"Yes, of course," answered the shepherd. That man had been working all day without any food, and he was very hungry. He ate one loaf, he ate two loaves, and

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finally he ate the third loaf too

When the rooster returned two hours later, he said to the shepherd, "Now give me back my bread so that I can continue on my journey.

"I cannot do that," answered the shepherd. "I was so hungry that soon after you left here I could not resist eating your bread."

The rooster started walking, but when he came to the outer edge of the large flock, he stole a ram and ran away with it. In the next village he entered, there was a wedding celebration in progress. The rooster went to the large house where most of the guests were gathered. There he too was invited to join the wedding party. But the rooster answered, "I cannot stay here right now, but while I am gone just briefly, may I leave this ram in your safekeeping?"

"Yes, of course," answered the host.

Other people at that house said, "That visitor is only a rooster. He will not dare to return here and demand the ram. Let us slaughter that animal and cook its meat." After the ram had been roasted, the wedding guests quickly devoured its flesh

When the rooster returned some time later, he asked

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for his ram. Some guests said, "While you were gone, we slaughtered the ram, roasted it well, and ate all of that meat."

"Very well! I shall then take the bride in place of my ram." Saying this, the rooster started running away, dragging the bride behind him. But as he was passing the street band that was providing music for the wedding, rooster was suddenly fascinated by the sound of a large drum.<sup>4</sup> He quickly traded the bride for that drum.

Climbing to the top of a nearby hill, the rooster began to beat the drum and sing about his adventures:

I took the woman's loaves of bread--

Tam baclı, tüm bicli!

I lost the bread but took a ram--

Tam baclı, tüm bicli!

After beating the drum steadily for a few minutes, he continued singing:

<sup>4</sup>During lengthy wedding ceremonies in towns and villages of Turkey, music sounds throughout the streets from dawn until dark. Often only two kinds of instruments are played, the drum and the zurna, a double-reed woodwind that sounds somewhat like an oboe.

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I lost the ram but took the bride--

Tam baclı, tüm bicli!

I gave the bride and took this drum--

Tam baclı, tüm bicli!

All of this noise on the hilltop attracted the attention of a passing wolf. As the wolf also climbed up the hill, the rooster was too pleased by his drumming and singing to notice this intruder. The rooster struck the drum only three or four more blows before he was overwhelmed and eaten by the wolf