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Location: Ceyhan

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#10 Friends -- shness

#10 Three Friends and the Innkeeper of Kayseri

#10 Kayseri innkeeper

Three friends were digging a well when they found a chest full of treasure. They were happy at first but then they were worried, for they did not trust one another, and each feared that one of the others would try to steal the whole chest for himself. They made an agreement, therefore, that wherever the treasure went, all three of them would accompany it together.

They started toward their village stopping for the night at an inn in Kayseri. They gave the chest to the owner of the inn for safekeeping for the night, telling him that he was to give it to no one, not even one of them unless the other two were with him. The innkeeper agreed to this and at their insistence wrote out a statement to that effect and gave it to them.

The three friends went upstairs and went to bed. It grew colder in the night, and after a while they woke up shivering. "We need more blankets," one of them said. "Let's draw lots to see which of us will go down and get more blankets from the innkeeper." They did this, and the oldest of them was the one who went after the extra blankets. But when he arrived at the innkeeper's room, he said, "Give me the chest which we left with you."

"I can't," said the innkeeper, "for I have agreed to give it not to one of you alone but only to all three of you."

"But my two friends sent me down for it," said the oldest. "There are some things in it that we want."

The innkeeper shouted upstairs to the other two men, "Shall I give him what he is asking for?"

"Yes," they shouted back down, and so the innkeeper gave the man the chest and went back to bed. Instead of going back upstairs, the man took the chest and left the inn.

After waiting for a while for the blankets and their friend, the two men upstairs became suspicious, and they went downstairs to see what was keeping their companion. They awakened the innkeeper again and asked him where their friend was. "I don't know," he said. "I gave him the chest and went back to bed again."

"You gave him the chest?" they both shouted. "You agreed to give it only to the three of us, and not just to one of us."

"But," protested the innkeeper, "when I shouted up the stairs and asked you if I should give him what he asked for, you said 'Yes.'"

"He came down for extra blankets, and we thought you were talking about the blankets!" The two friends were very angry with the innkeeper, and the next morning they had the innkeeper arrested and taken before a judge. The two friends stated their case, and produced the written agreement that the innkeeper had given them.

"Did you make this agreement with these men?" the judge asked the innkeeper. "Did you agree to return the chest to these men only when all three called for it together?"

"Yes, efendim," said the innkeeper, "I did. I still have the chest, and when these two men come to me with the third man, I shall return their chest to them."

The judge, thereupon, dismissed the case against the innkeeper.

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Apparently this is a fairly well-known story in Hatay Province, for in 1961 an attendant in a bus depot, from which baggage had been stolen, used the innkeeper's argument to defend himself in an actual lawsuit similar to that brought by the two friends against the owner of the inn at Kayseri. See Notes.