There was once a poor man who lived in the Hanifeli village in the kaza of Keskin. This young man was a former thief, but his mother knew nothing of this. One day she said to him, "Son, what will become of you if you continue living in poverty and idleness? You ought to go somewhere and find a job."

"Very well, mother," he said, and he went out. He walked to Polatlı, reaching that town by evening. There was in Polatlı a hoca from some other place but who had been employed to conduct the Friday services in the mosque and preach on that day. Because he was not a resident of Polatlı, this hoca lived in an oda as a guest of the section in which he worked.

1oda—the village guest house to which transients are welcomed as guests, their food being supplied by someone appointed by the muhtar. There are also privately owned odas. In some of these odas there may be semi-permanent guests, single men who are employed by the village: the hoca, the village shepherd or cowherd, and the kahya [in this case the term refers to the muhtar's assistant, though generally it means steward or major-domo]. Each day the food is brought by a different family, a custom known as qezek.

2The narrator refers to the oda as being in a village, and the hoca as being employed by a village. Since he does not specify what village, I have called the setting a section, as if it were an urban mahalle.
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The young man also was housed in that same oda as a guest.

In the evening the hoca asked the young man, "where do

"I am from Keskin," said the young man.

"Then you are a donkey thief," said the hoca.

The young man thought, "The hoca knows who I am, all
right, but he has no way of proving this to the people here."

meal, the hoca said, "No, just give him a piece of bread and
let him remain sitting right where he is."

I had, in fact, thought that I could make the hoca's
turban disappear. Anyway, they gave me some bread, and, later,
some of the food which was left from the meal.

When it was time to go to bed, the hoca moved a little,
and all of the villagers who were there stood up [i.e., they

They brought

when he was just about to get

into bed, they brought two more mattresses for the young man,
but the hoca interfered, saying, "No, no--just bring him a quilt."

So, they did not give any mattresses to the other guest but
just a quilt.

The young man wrapped himself in the quilt and prepared
to go to sleep. The hoca went to his saddle bag, took out his
clothes, and put on his pajamas. He rolled his hoca's gown
neatly and placed it in his Bohça. 3

The thief watched the hoca

3Bohça—a bundle made for carrying clothes and personal effects.

four corners of a large napkin or square of cloth. Women
carry laundry in a Bohça; people going to a bath may
carry clothes and other personal items in such a pack.
and thought of the ways in which he could use the hoca's clothes. "His gown will make me a suit," he thought. "A head square for my wife\(^4\) can be made from his turban. I can trade my \(\text{cariklari}\) for his strong shoes. I can have his horse bridle and all."

The hoca, about to fall asleep, asked the young man "Did you lock the door?"

"No, I did not."

"Well, go and lock it then," said the hoca.

I got up, closed the door with a bang, opened it again, and put a rock in front of it.

The hoca then said, "Lock the other door as well. The young man arose, slammed that door with a bang, opened it again, and put a large rock in front of it too.

"Lower the flame in the fireplace," said the hoca. The young man did this. "Lower it some more." He did this too.

"Now, you son of a donkey, go to sleep."

The young man pretended to go to sleep. After the hoca had fallen asleep, the young man got up, took the hoca's gown and clothes and tucked them into his saddle bag. He put on the hoca's shoes, leaving his own \(\text{cariklari}\) in their place. He took the bridle and went to the stable for the hoca's horse, but he found that it was a donkey instead of a horse. When he opened the stable door, the donkey started braying. He held the donkey's mouth shut so that he could make only a

\(^4\)Although he says \textit{wife}, the narrator here is referring to his mother.
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"huh! huh! huh!" sound. Then he led the donkey out and to a stream. After he had walked it in the stream, he mounted it and reached the market place around kusluk [half way through the morning--bird time].

People in the market place asked him, "Is this donkey for sale?"

"Yes, it is," he said.

"Why are you selling this donkey?" they asked.

"My grandfather went to Hejaz [Mecca], where he remained, and he asked me to sell the donkey. Now, whenever it sees me, it gets upset. I am going to sell it for five \[red\] liras."

--Five \[red\] gold liras was a lot of money then.

He sold the donkey there and went to a tailor with the money and the clothes of the hoca. "Make me a suit from this," he said. "It belonged to my grandfather who went to Hejaz and remained there. I want a suit from it so that I can remember my grandfather whenever I look at it."

The tailor said, "This will not make a good suit. Let us buy other material for your suit and sell this as it is."

"No, no, I want a suit made from this gown."

"Well, I can make only a waistcoat and a pair of trousers from this gown," said the tailor.

5 kusluk--literally, means aviary, place of birds. It also means, among peasants, forenoon, lunch time, and even, by extension, lunch.

6 Peasants speak of the most valuable gold as being \[red\] gold. Any \[red\] coin is known to be gold and the best gold, too. Actually, there may be more copper in the alloy if it is reddish.
"All right," said the young man, "but I am in a great hurry. Make the suit quickly." --He knew that the tailor would steal some of the cloth, and that two waistcoats would come out of it, though he had said that he could make but one.

The young man started toward Suluhan, but he saw a number of Kayseri people coming into town with their loads of pastirma to sell. He got in among the mules, whose owners were shouting "Deh!" [go] and "Chush!" [stop], "Deh! Chush!" When they reached the inn, the Kayseri men thought that he was the inn keeper. They gathered up their ropes, put their mules in the inn stable, and then each Kayseri man drew from his load a strip of pastirma which he set out to sell.

When the young man saw that they had all gone, he too drew forth a strip of pastirma and went forth to sell it. In the horse market he bargained to sell it for 20 paras. He called four porters and returned with them to the inn, where he loaded them with four packs. When the pastirma sellers still had not returned, he went to the stable and took a strong mule for himself. He went to the tailor's shop and got the suit, but when he returned to the inn, the pastirma sellers had still not returned. Going to the inn keeper, he said, "Friend, when

7 If Suluhan is a town, it is unknown to us.

8 Pastirma--meat preserved by drying and salting process.

9 The narrator apparently forgets about these four loaded porters, for nothing is said of them again.
my partners return, tell them that I have got a load of clay.10
Tell them they should finish their business here quickly and
join me."

when he reached Keskin, he had five head scarves made for
his mother from the hoca's turban. He sold the mule there at
Keskin, and so when he reached home, he had about ten golden
liras.

when he reached his own home, his mother said to him, "Son,
why did you return so soon?"

"Why should I not return so soon, mother? Allah sent me
to an ada who hired me. I told him that my brother was getting
married. He said, 'Here, take these ten red liras and go home
for a month, for I like you. Come back again after a month.
And he even bought four or five head squares for you."

His mother was very grateful for all this. She prayed
often for the welfare of the ada.

well, this is the story of how the hoca was stripped
naked by this young man. His name was Sürüllah. He once even
managed to steal seventy oxen and bring them here all the way
from Kars. One of the owners traced him all the way to Keskin
and found his own ox among the herd there. He could identify

10Clay of a certain type is used by Turkish peasant women as
a shampoo. It is sold by the kilo, in big chunks, in villages.
Soaked, it becomes creamy and actually is a kind of shampoo.
This same clay is also used, along with caustic soda and other
materials, as an ingredient in hamam otu—literally, bath
grass but actually a depilatory. Spread on the skin for two
minutes and then rubbed off, it removes all body hair. Body
hair on Turkish women is thought to be disgraceful, and so
this depilatory is always used in the bath.
his own ox, for the animal knew its own name and went to the
owner when he called it

"This is my ox," the owner said to the people [at Keskin].
"How are we to know it is yours?" they asked.
"Because my ox had a name and answered to it," he said.
"Let us hear you call it," they said.

When he called the ox's name, the animal went toward him
lowing. The owner then proceeded to sue Süüllah.

Süüllah said to the judge, "I know nothing about all this."
"Let the ox be brought to the court," said the judge.

They brought the ox and put it in a stable nearby. The
owner called its name from outside, and the ox within began
lowing. "Release the ox, now," the judge ordered. He had
had the owner hide somewhere, but when the ox was released it
searched the area until it found him. The owner was then
hidden in a different place, but when the animal was again
released, it again found him.

"Arrest this fellow," the judge said, pointing to Süüllah.

The trial was set for the next day. Süüllah, called
before the judge, said, "This is unjust. I have nine children
at home, and I have had to take quinine tablets and three okkas\(^{11}\) of
vinegar [he is ill, that is]. I cannot give evidence today."

"Very well. I adjourn the court until tomorrow," said the
judge.

During that night, Süüllah went to the home of the judge.

\(^{11}\text{okka}--\text{an old measure of weight, 2.8 pounds.}\)
The judge was a wise man who drank a bit. He drank several whiskey drinks and then said to his servant, "All right, bring him in!"

"Sit down and have a drink," he said to Sürüllah.
"No, I cannot. What I came to talk about is my case in court."
"You will have to pay 200 liras," said the judge.
"Where can I possibly find 200 liras?"

Finally they compromised on 100 liras, and then the judge and Sürüllah drank together, and in the morning they went to the trial together. The judge said, "The man can have his ox back wherever he finds it. It is obvious that the ox is his, for it goes to him whenever he calls. And I sentence this fellow [Sürüllah] to twenty-four hours in jail for bringing it here and selling it."

In later times Sürüllah used to talk about this. "I got off with only twenty-four hours in jail," he would say. He was such a great thief!

Ahmet Uysal: "Where did he live?"

Abdurrahman Bey: "In the Hanifeli village of Keskin. I lived for a long time in [nearby] Kirikkale myself."