

Story #307 Tape #22, 1970)

Narrator: Unidentified army recruit, 26 years old.

Location: Narrator was from Trabzon, but the taping was done at Iskenderun.

Date: February 1970

The Strange Case of Hakvar Şeriatyok *note* *myths*

Two friends once went abroad together to earn some money. One of them got a job and worked for ten paras a day. The other did nothing.

After a while, the one who had been working said to his friend, "My friend, now that I have earned some money, I am going home. Is there any message that you wish me to deliver to your people?"

The man who had not worked replied, "First you must divide your money with me. If you do not I shall kill you, and in that way I shall get all the money."

The worker refused to share his money, and he was stabbed by his false friend. As he lay dying, he requested of the other, "Come closer. I wish to declare my will to you to take back."

"Very well. What is it?"

"When I left home," said the dying man, "my wife was expecting a child. If the child is a boy, tell her I wish to have it named Hakvar Şeriatyok" [meaning "I have the right but not a witness"].

The murderer went home to his village with all the money of

Story #307

his friend. When the friend's wife gave birth to a son, the family asked, "Where is Mehmet? Why does he not come?" When informed that Mehmet had died abroad, they then asked, "Did he leave any will?"

"Yes," answered the murderer. "He said that if the child that was conceived before he left was a boy, it should be named Hakvar Şeriatyok."

About fifteen years after that there was a court case for which Mehmet's son was called as witness. On the day of the trial, the judge looked at the list of names of those chosen as witnesses. He was very much surprised when he came upon the unusual name Hakvar Şeriatyok. "Who gave you this name, son?" the judge asked.

"My father willed it to me," said Hakvar Şeriatyok. "A man who went abroad with my father to work said that that was my father's last request when he died."

"Is the man who worked abroad with your father still alive?"

"Yes, he is," said the boy.

Then the murderer, who was now eighty-five years old, was summoned to the court. The judge asked him, "What happened to this boy's father?"

"He died abroad, Efendi," said the murderer.

The judge pondered for a few moments and then said, "Hakvar, Şeriatyok--in other words, I have the right but no witness. There is no doubt in my mind that you killed this boy's father."

The murderer was convicted of the crime right there in that court.