One day the Hodja, desiring to buy an agreeable donkey to set a
good example for the bad-tempered one in his own stable, rode to the
village market. After carefully examining the donkeys for sale, he
chose a mild-mannered little beast with four sturdy legs and, placing
a halter around its neck, he led it behind him as he rode his old
donkey back home.

Noting that the Hodja was nodding sleepily as he rode, two scamps
slipped up to the new donkey. One removed the halter from the donkey's
neck and placed it around his own neck; the other quietly led the don-
key back to the marketplace, where he obtained a good price for it.

The Hodja awoke as his donkey stopped at the door of his own stable,
and turned to survey his new purchase. To his surprise, the agreeable
little donkey had disappeared, and in its place was a ragged boy, with
the donkey's halter snugly around his neck.

"What's this!" exclaimed the Hodja. "Where is my new donkey?"

The boy hung his head. "I was your new donkey, Hodja (offend)."
You see, I have always been a stubborn and disobedient boy, and my
mother one day became so disgusted with me that she asked Allah to
change me into the donkey I must surely be. Suddenly I had four legs
and long ears, and a donkey I would have remained it if had not been
for your kind heart in choosing me today. Thank you so much, Hodja.
whispered in his ear, "you naughty boy! will you never learn your
lesson?"

Hastily dismounting, the Hodja hurried over to the beast and

mildest mannered little donkey waiting to be sold.

to the marketplace. There, to his surprise, he found the same

then, since he needed a new donkey, the Hodja rode back

himself, the Hodja sent him home.

halter from the boy's neck and, cautioning him this time to behave

STILL shaking his head in bewilderment, the Hodja removed the

offended. Now may I return to my mother?"

Story #36