

Story 1010 1984 Tape 1 Narrator: Hasan Tekiř, 35,
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Coffee Shop Credit

One day a ragged man (like me) entered a coffeehouse and sat down. He said to the owner of the shop, "Mehmet, make me a cup of coffee. Make it so strong that even a six-year-old cat could walk on its foamy surface without sinking. I'll be glad to pay you whatever price you ask, for I am a coffee addict."

The owner of the shop prepared the coffee and served it to this customer in one of those Bektaři cups that have no handles.¹ The customer drank this coffee, but he made no move to pay for it. After a while the owner went to his table, picked up the empty cup, and waited for his payment. When the man still did not pay, the owner asked him, "Where is the money for your coffee?"

The customer answered, "My son, this purchase I made on credit. I'll not ask for another, but write this one down on my account and I'll pay you for it the next time

¹A Bektaři is a member of a dervish order of that name. Is there a Bektaři cup without handles?

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I come in."

The coffee-maker was a nervous fellow. He went back to his kitchen but he called out from there,

coffee comes from the world's end;

road from Yemen is long, my friend.

Enjoy your coffee; pay cash at the end.

Credit is not the way to spend.

To this the customer replied,

coffee may come from the world's end.

It may take the long road from Yemen, friend.

If you cannot serve coffee on credit, then,

cannot afford any business to tend.²

²This is a nükte, a short anecdote clinched at the end by a neat turn of phrase or verbal effect. It is this kind of tale, perhaps more than any other, that suffers from translation. It is doubtful that anyone would laugh at this English-language termination, but in Turkish it tickled its Turkish audience.