

Story 1385 (1989 Tape 5)

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The Shepherd Turned Tailor

There was once a shepherd who grew more and more tired of his job. He said to himself one day, "At the end of the season when I receive my year's pay, I shall give up sheep-herding and find some other kind of work." When he had received the money that was due to him, the shepherd left that village and went to a large town to look for a different trade. There, after he had observed many different kinds of businesses, he decided to become a tailor. He bought the few pieces of equipment needed for that trade, rented a shop, and began his new kind of work.

The new tailor's first customer arrived the day after he had opened his shop. The customer was a townsman who was making arrangements for the marriage of his son. Wanting to provide his son with a new suit of clothes for his wedding ceremony, this man bought some expensive fabric and took it to the new tailor. The shepherd took some measurements of the bridegroom and said that he would set to work

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at once on the new clothes. The customer was somewhat confused by the unusual way in which the tailor had measured his son, but thinking that this might be some new method used by modern tailors, he departed without comment

The father of the bridegroom returned to the tailor shop on the day that the new clothes were to be ready. To his astonishment, he was handed a kepenek¹ and a cloth lunch pouch. The confused customer asked, "What are these things? What are they for?"

"These are what I have sewn for your son's wedding. Is there anything else that I should have sewn?"

Realizing by then that the tailor must have been a shepherd before he had come to town, the man answered, "Yes you should also have made a wolf."²

"A wolf? Of what use would that be?" asked the former shepherd.

¹A very heavy felt cloak worn in cold weather by Turkish shepherds. The felt is repeatedly fulled until it is 3/8 to 1/2 inch thick. It is so very heavy that it serves both as coat and tent in which the shepherd can sleep in cold weather. A kepenek has an unmistakable shape, with broad shoulders and rather squarish cut.

²In Turkey wolves are the predators against which shepherds and sheepdogs have to keep constant and vigilant guard.

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"It would be very useful, for it could eat a customer like me and a tailor like you!"