

Story 2193 (2000 Tape 1

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To Each Rider His Own Horse

There were once two friends who decided to go on a journey together. They arose early, saddled their horses, and rode throughout most of the day. As darkness was approaching, they stopped at an inn. They fed and watered their horses and then tied them in the inn stable. The first traveler said, "We shall be leaving very early in the morning. We had better mark our horses in some way so that we can tell which one is yours and which one is mine

"All right," said the second traveler. "I shall cut the tail off my horse and thus make it easy to recognize.

The owner of that inn had a strange sense of humor. After his guests had been in bed for some time, he went back to the stable and cut the tail off the second horse. In the morning when the travelers were ready to depart, neither could recognize his own horse, for they were now both tailless. They argued briefly about the matter. "This one is mine, and that one is yours." Unable to settle the matter for sure, they then mounted the two horses and rode

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After a second day's travel, they stopped at another inn. There they again became anxious about identifying their respective horses when they were ready to leave in the morning. "That should not present any problem," said the first traveler. "I shall cut the left ear off my horse, making it easy to identify." But the innkeeper at this second stopover also enjoyed playing tricks on his guests. During the night he went to the stable and cut the left ear off the other horse. On the following morning, therefore, there was again some confusion about which horse each traveler would ride.

After a third day of travel, they stopped at a third inn and prepared to spend the night there. But as on their two previous stops, each worried about recognizing his horse in the morning. "What means shall we use this time to distinguish between our horses?" asked the first traveler.

"Look here!" said the second. "Why should we continue to torture these animals? From now on let me ride the white horse, and you ride the black one. We can tell them apart by their colors."