

Story 1884 1995 Tape 2)

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Location: Kırşehir, capital
of Kırşehir Province

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Moving Downward in Seating Order

There was a large wedding party in progress in Mucur, a kaza town in Kırşehir Province. Many guests had been invited to that party, including the mayor of Kırşehir, the capital of Kırşehir Province. When the mayor of Kırşehir arrived at the party, the host gave him the seat of highest honor in the room.¹

As other guests arrived, the host asked each of them "Are you from Mucur or elsewhere?" If the guest was a resident of Mucur, he was placed in the seat of greatest honor, and the mayor of Kırşehir was required to move down one seat. Because almost all of the guests were local

¹In Turkey, especially in rural areas, the seat that one occupies at a social gathering is a matter of considerable punctilio. The seat of greatest honor is directly across the room from the main door. The chairs that fan out along the walls to right and to left of that center seat are for people of successively less and less distinction. The seats that wind along the walls of the room come to the two seats of least status, those on either side of the door. The humor in this tale is ironic, for the mayor of the provincial capital is the most distinguished guest. Normal protocol is abrogated by local social politics.

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people, the mayor of Kırşehir was repeatedly asked to move down one seat, until he was finally sitting in the lowest seat in the room--right by the door.

When a dog wandered into the room, the mayor arose hastily and said to the dog, "Are you from Mucur? If you are, please take my seat." And to the others in the room, he said, "Farewell!"