

Story 2192 (2000 Tape 1

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Location: Malatya, capital of
Malatya Province

Date: February 25, 2000

Nasreddin Hoca¹ Counters the Behavior
of a Trickster

One wintry evening Nasreddin Hoca and his wife went to visit a neighborhood family. After the hosts had welcomed the guests cordially, Hoca put his donkey in the hosts' stable.

The hosts had an overactive and spoiled little boy. While everyone else was chatting comfortably, the boy left the house briefly and then returned. Understanding the nature of that child, Hoca also excused himself from the group and went to the stable to examine his donkey. He discovered that the boy had cut off part of the lip of his donkey. Looking about, Hoca found that his hosts also had a donkey in that stable. He quickly cut off the

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a Muslim community. In pre-Republican times he was also a teacher, for education was then the responsibility of the clergy. In the Republic, schoolteachers are required to have secular rather than religious training--though occasionally a teacher or professor may still, for sentimental reasons, be called hoca. Nasreddin Hoca has for centuries been the most beloved comic folk character of the Turks.

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tail of that second donkey and returned to the house, where the conversation continued. He gave no indication whatsoever that anything was amiss

When the time came for the guests to depart, the whole group went to the stable to get Hoca's donkey. The boy expected that Hoca would be angry when he saw the condition of his donkey, but the guest showed no emotion of any kind. The boy, unable to remain silent any longer, asked, "Hoca, why does your donkey continue to grin that way? What could cause it to do that?"

Nasreddin Hoca replied, "He is smiling at the fact that your family's donkey has no tail