

Story 1036 (1979 Transcript
of tape made by
Dr. Mehmet Yalvaç)

Narrator: Mehmet Balcı, 62
Location: Vezirhan village,
attached to city
of Bilecik,
Bilecik Province

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Collected by Dr. Mehmet
Yalvaç

¹²¹¹
Köroğlu¹ and the Birth of Hasan Bey

One evening Köroğlu was accepted as a guest in the
home of a bey² in a village. This bey had a beautiful
daughter who fell in love with Köroğlu the very moment
that she saw him. The girl said to her father, "Ask our
guest whether or not he is married. If he is not married,
I should be willing to marry him, for I have fallen in
love with him."

bey went to Köroğlu and asked, "Are you married
or single? If you are single, I shall give my daughter
to you in marriage, for she is in love with you."

Köroğlu said, "I am single, but I am a one-nighter."³

¹Köroğlu (his name means Son of the Blind Man) was
an outlaw who supposedly robbed the rich and gave to
the poor. He is sometimes associated with the Celali
revolts of the 16th and 17th centuries. This folk hero is
the subject of a whole cycle of minstrel tales.

²In earlier times a bey was an aristocrat, roughly
equivalent to a British lord.

³The Turkish word used here is gececi.

Love at 1st
sight

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I cannot remain here with you. I could marry her if it is clear that the relationship will last for only one night."

When the girl was told this, she said to her father, night is enough for me. I would be glad to marry if he stayed with me for only one hour."

They then summoned the ⁴(hoca) of the village to perform the wedding ceremony. In that way the marriage was properly completed, and Köroğlu and the girl spent the night together.

They had put Köroğlu's horse in the stable and tied it there when Köroğlu had arrived. The next morning when he went to the stable to attend his horse, he found that it had gotten loose during the night and that it was mating with the bey's mare. When Köroğlu observed this, he went to the girl again and spoke with her at length. "O my beauty, I have now stayed with you for twenty-four hours,

it is time for me to go. Before I leave, however, I wish to speak to you about something. We have been legally married, and I have just discovered that my horse has mated with your mare. If God in His Majesty gives a legitimate child to us, this is what you should do. If it is a

⁴The hoca is the Moslem preacher, roughly equivalent to a priest.

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boy, do not give him a name. If it is a girl, you may name her when and what you wish. If the mare should deliver a male colt, take care of that colt as thoroughly as you care for the child.

"When the proper time arrives, the boy will search for me and find me." Then he drew from his saddlebag a sword and an engraved metal armband and gave them to the girl.

"When he goes out in search of me, give him these two objects." He reached into his saddlebag again and drew forth a handful of golden liras and gave these to the girl.

As Koroğlu had predicted, his wife gave birth to a boy and the mare gave birth to a colt. The woman took good care of both the boy and the colt. When the boy had reached the age of five or six, his mother started him in school. The other children taunted him, however, saying, "What is your name? What are you?"

The boy went home and demanded of his mother, "Tell me my name. What is my name?"

His mother said to the child, "There will certainly come a time when someone will come and give you a name." By the time he was thirteen or fourteen, he began riding the colt, and he rode it to many of the surrounding villages

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and towns. His mother could no longer restrain him, and so one day she placed on his right arm the metal armband and gave him the sword which Koroğlu had left for him. She also gave him some of the yellow liras and said, "I cannot stand your cruel treatment any longer. You beat me and abuse me! Go and search for your father! The man who calls you 'My son!' will be your father!"

After wandering for two days without locating any father, the boy went down a road which, unknown to him, led to ^MÇamlıbel. When he approached his father's headquarters, he saw from a distance someone sitting there with forty companions around him. The road the boy was on was one closely guarded by Koroğlu and his followers. It was said that not even a bird was allowed to land on that road. When Koroğlu saw someone coming along that road this time, however, he was not greatly disturbed, for he realized that it was only a boy. His forty companions also saw the boy coming along. Koroğlu said, "Five of you go down to the road and either chase away or kill that boy."

Five of them went down and said to the boy, "It is prohibited for anyone to be here!" But the boy beat these five persons with his sword and sent them running back to

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headquarters. When Kōroğlu saw what had happened, he was annoyed, and so he sent down the remaining thirty-five of his followers. But the boy scattered the thirty-five men, who kept trying to pull themselves together again to capture him.

Now Kōroğlu really became angry and walked toward the boy himself. When Kōroğlu swung his mighty sword at the intruder, the boy saved himself by passing beneath the belly of the horse. The boy then called out to Kōroğlu, "You and your men are forty and I am only one, but I am not a bit afraid of you. Here is the arena! Go ahead and try three times to hit me. You are old, as old as my father would be!" When Kōroğlu struck a second time, the boy again passed from the horse's back beneath his belly. At the third blow he did the same thing. After Kōroğlu had struck three times unsuccessfully, the boy said, "Until now the arena was yours. You had the opportunity to strike at me. Now the arena is mine. Be prepared to have me hit you!"⁵

Holding Kōroğlu by the back of the neck, the boy threw him to the ground to slaughter him. When the boy

⁵The procedure here seems to be similar to that of the traditional Turkish game of cirit in which horsemen took turns throwing javelins at each other. One could throw at an opponent only when it was one's turn to go on the offensive.

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swung the sword in his right hand to slay his opponent, the armband on his right arm was exposed. When Koroğlu saw this, he recognized it at once, and he implored the boy, "Don't slay me! You are my son, and from now on you will be known as Hasan Bey.

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They both now arose from the ground, and the boy kissed his father's hand. Then the two embraced. Hasan Bey said, "Forgive my guilt! Please forgive me!"

"The fault was mine!" said Koroğlu, "but I am now very happy. In battle the one who succeeds in striking is the one who wins. You are even braver than I am!" Saying this, Koroğlu took his son with him to his headquarters and gave him a place in his palace.