

Story 861 (Tape erased on
field trip
after contents
transcribed)

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Location: Aşağ Emerce village,
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A Poor Man Teaches Two Donkeys the Edibility of Hay

There were once two friends, one poor and one rich, who lived in different villages. The two friends used to visit each other from time to time. One day the rich man, who owned a donkey, went to visit the poor man. When he arrived, he said to his friend, "Before you do anything to make me comfortable in your house, I wish that you would make my donkey comfortable." His friend agreed to do this, and as soon as he had shown the guest his room, he went downstairs¹ to attend to his donkey. He spread some hay before the donkey and found some fodder, which he poured on top of the hay. He then went upstairs again.

"Have you taken care of my donkey?" his friend asked.

"Yes, and I have also fed it."

"But this new donkey of mine is not accustomed to eating hay, even in winter. He must have green grass. So, will you please see to it that he gets some green grass to eat?"

¹ On many Turkish farms the family residence is on the second floor of a building that has a stable on the ground level.

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"I'm sorry. I didn't know! I thought that you still had your old donkey." Saying this, the poor man went back downstairs again to the barn. Inasmuch as it was winter, it would have been extremely difficult to find any green grass for the guest's donkey, and the poor man wondered what he was going to be able to do in order to handle this situation. He finally decided what to do. Taking a pair of green sunglasses, he broke these in half at the nosepiece. Tying the lenses to a short piece of rope, he placed the rope over the donkey's nose so that one green lens rested before each of the donkey's eyes.

When the donkey looked through these green glasses, he saw the hay as green grass. The poor creature began to crunch the hay, ku-tu, ku-tu, ku-tu.² When the poor friend saw the donkey eating hay, he was greatly relieved. He went back upstairs again and said, "We have at last found green grass for your donkey

After they had talked for a while, they retired. After breakfast the following morning, the guest said, "If you will excuse me, I should like to go now." The two went down to the stable, where the donkey was tied, still wearing the green sunglasses. The owner looked at his donkey and was

² Onomatopoeia for the sound of the donkey's chewing the dry and rather hard hay.

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surprised to see how happily he was eating hay. "Blessed creature, he said to his donkey, "didn't you ever know before how good hay tastes?" In this way the poor man fooled both the rich man and his donkey.