

Aldar-Kose's Cloak

Retold by Helen East



Ah Aldar-Kose! What a lad! Empty belly, but always merry. Nothing in his pocket, but a head full of tricks. And always a story to share.

Only one day it was cold, and the wind it did blow so, and his horse was old, and it did go so slow, and his cloak was nothing but holes, and even Aldar-Kose was beginning to feel cross. Until all of a sudden, he saw a rich man in a fox-fur coat on a fine young horse.

Aldar-Kose sat up with a smile, loosened his cloak and raised his voice.

*“Vo-ri-ra, ri-ra
Vo-ri-ra-ra,
Vo-ri-ra-ra-ra.”*

The rich man stopped and stared at him.

“Why on earth,” he said, “do you sing? Your horse hardly goes, and your cloak is full of holes – surely you must be terribly cold?”

Aldar-Kose looked up in surprise. Then he licked his finger and held it up high.

“Yes,” he said, “I believe you’re right. There is a cold wind blowing and quite soon it will be snowing. But I don’t notice it like you do, because I’ve got holes to let the wind go through. Seventy holes all specially cut, to let it in and let it out. You see, it blows so fast, it goes straight by – so even if it snows, I’m snug and dry.”

He tapped his horse and ambled on.

*“Vo-ri-ra, ri-ra
Vo...”*

“Wait!” said the rich man. “Please. I’ve a long way to go, and I wasn’t expecting snow. Will you sell your cloak to me?”





“But then I’ll get cold,” said Aldar-Kose.

“I’ll give you my fox fur too.”

“Mmm,” said Aldar-Kose. “I don’t know. Your coat lets cold in up the sleeves ... and I can’t hurry home because my horse is slow.”

“Then I’ll give you my horse.”

Aldar-Kose stopped and thought for a while.

“Well...” he said, “since you’ve asked me three times, I don’t want to say no. But I’m not

a businessman, so ... hey, horse for horse, cloak for coat – that's a fair sort of swap. But your money, for my no money – that's not. So we'll leave it at the two, if that will do for you?"

"Done!" said the rich man quick as you can, before the other could change his mind.

He made the exchange, and went on his way, thinking, "My lucky day! The man's a fool. I got what I want and kept my money too!"

And Aldar-Kose, with his warm fur coat, and his fine, fast horse? He was singing of course! And he'd got a new story, too!

*"Vō-ri-ra, ri-ra
Vō-ri-ra-ra."*

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