Once there was and twice there was not, when God's creatures were many

tute, with very little to eat and to live on. After a while the child was
about twelve years old, and the child asked what his father used to do when he
was alive. The mother said,

"Why do I not do the same?" he asked

"Oh, you cannot do that. You are not used to it," said the mother.

My father used to do it. So could I," said the boy.

"All right. I shall get a tray full of fish ready for you to sell." It seems there were some left-over fish in the barrel, and she
took them out and she washed them and made them clean, and she spread them on
the wooden tray and she spread a white cloth on it

The boy asked, "How am I to sell them?"

"Well, it is easy," said the mother. "You go around and say, 'Fish! Fish! Fishman!'"

So he took the tray on his head and he went. He went to one corner and
said, "Fish! Fish! Fish! Fishman!" Then he went to another corner and said, "Fish! Fish! Fishman!" Then he went to a third corner and said,
man!" He went round and round the four corners and he just stood there, but no
one came and bought his fish. And he went back home and said, "Mother, nobody bought anything from me."

"But what did you do?"

"I just stood at the corners and called, 'Fish! Fish! Fishman!'" said the boy.

"Oh, that!" said the mother. "This is no way. You do not stay in one place. You have to go round and round to sell your fish."

"All right, Mother. I shall do so," he said. Next day he went again to the same place and he started going from one corner to the other, and he kept on saying, "Fish! Fish! Fishman!"

He was a very good-looking boy, a clean-looking boy. Each time before he started, he would comb his hair and wash his face, so he looked very fine. But he could not sell anything. Nobody came to buy anything from him, so he went home again. The next day he started again. He went to the same corners and called, "Fish! Fish! Fishman!"

It seems there was a padishah's palace overlooking that cross section of roads, and the padishah's daughter saw him standing at the corners and not being able to sell any fish the whole day. On the third day when the boy went there again, she sent her servants to bring him, tray and all, into the palace, because she liked him very much. She had him brought into the palace and she kept him in hiding in a cupboard. "I shall have him fed there," she said. Her intention was to have him raised and then to marry him.

But the boy said, "This will not do this way. I am the only son of my mother. She must be very much worried about my not coming back. I must go and talk with my mother."

"All right," she said, "we shall do so tonight." So she got a bag full of gold ready, and at night without saying anything to anyone they rode in a
Carriage and they went to the mother's house. When the woman saw her son coming, she began to cry.

"Where have you been? Where have you been?" she asked.

And the padishah's daughter would not let Osman talk. She did the talking. She said, "Here is a bag of gold for you. This is what you are going to do. You are going to have a palace built right across the street from my father's palace. It will be just as grand as his. And you will furnish it just as gorgeously as his. And then you will come and ask my hand in marriage for your son." And of course she wanted to marry the son.

The woman accepted this, and in a hurry they went and had a palace built right across the street from the padishah's palace. And they had just as gorgeous dresses for themselves. And when everything was all ready, she went to ask for the padishah's daughter for her son. And the padishah said, "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

She said, "We used to live in the country, and lately we came and got settled here, and I want your daughter."

And the padishah said, "All right, but I must ask my daughter."

But the daughter was ready from yesterday on! And so was accepted, and they got the wedding ready. After the wedding ceremony, the girl was taken to the man's house, fit for kings. He went to the mosque and came back, and after he had knelt to pray, he came to open the bride's veil. When he was ready to open her veil, the bride said, "Slowly, slowly! This is not the fishman's tray. This is the princess's veil."

When she said that, he felt as if he had been struck a heavy blow. He just turned around and never looked at her and never talked to her any more. She was sorry for what she had said, but from that minute on, she could never make him talk. He just sat by the window, and no matter how she begged and how she implored, he did not talk to her.
After she had gone to bed, he watched from the window and saw a ship. He knew that there was a ship ready to take forty man slaves to the padişah of Yemen. He very quickly stood up and opened the door and went down the stairs and out of the house and went to the boat and mixed with the crowd. When the boat left, they counted the slaves, and instead of forty they found forty-one. They let the padişah of Yemen know that instead of forty, forty-one had come, and the padişah said, "It is all right." And in addition to this, he became very fond of Osman because he was a very good-looking and refined sort of person. He said, "I shall take him to help me with my personal work." Osman did everything to please the padişah, but he could not talk. He was not deaf, but he could not say a word.

Let us come back to his wife. She woke up in the morning, and there was no Osman. She cried, and she asked the mother. Nobody knew where Osman was. She went back and inquired at her father's palace, and nobody knew where Osman was. She cried and cried and cried.

And on the other hand, Osman was very much liked in his new place. He was taken to the doctors, and the doctors said, "There is nothing wrong with him except that he does not talk." The padişah was so fond of this boy that he said there was nothing he would not give to the person who made this boy talk. They said, "Well, there is nothing wrong. He should not be mute, because he can hear. If he hears, he should not be dumb. There is nothing wrong with the boy." But the padişah felt very unhappy about it.

On the other hand, the girl heard about forty girl slaves to be taken to the padişah of Yemen. And she knew that on the day Osman had disappeared, a ship had left with forty man slaves. She thought that Osman might have left on the ship, so, "I shall go on the ship to see if I can find him," she decided. So she went and mingled with the crowd, and left with the forty girl slaves.
When the girl slaves were counted, instead of forty, forty-one were found. So when they told this to the padişah of Yemen, he said, "It is all right." And the forty-first one was a very beautiful one, because she was the daughter of a padişah. How could she be like the rest? The padişah of Yemen said, "I shall have her for my personal work." And they put Osman and the girl on the same padisah.

She could not ask him why he had left her, and he could not say anything because he had determined to be mute.

Things went on like this for some years. One day the padişah said to the padisah:

"This is such a good boy. It is a pity he cannot talk. There is nothing that I have not done for this boy. I have taken him to all the doctors, and nobody could have done anything. If anybody could make him talk, I would have him sunk in worldly wealth. And I would do the same for you." Of course, he did not know that she was the daughter of another padişah.

And she said, "My padişah, if I can make him talk, what will you do for me?"

"Well," he said, "I shall make you swim in worldly wealth. But what if you cannot? Then you will die. I shall have you hanged for it, on the fortieth day. I shall give you forty days."

The girl accepted this. So they worked together in the daytime, and they were put into the same room at night. And at night she begged him and implored him to talk—oh, she did whatever she could think of to make him talk, but he would not talk. On the thirty-ninth day—just one day before the girl was to be hanged—she begged him, "Why do you not talk? You know if you do not talk, I shall be hanged. I shall die tomorrow." Still, Osman did not seem as if he cared.

On the next day, the fortieth day, the girl was to be hanged. She was taken down, and he looked through the window and refused to talk. The gallows
were prepared, and the people gathered around, and the padişah came down, too.

His heart bled for her—he pitied her very much, she being beautiful as angels—but she had to die. She was brought to the gallows and put on a chair, and when everything was ready to have the noose put around her neck, Osman could not bear it any longer, and he shouted, "Slowly, slowly! This is not the princess's veil; this is the hangman's noose."

And when he said that, everybody forgot about the girl, and they rushed to the padişah and, "Osman spoke! Osman spoke!" they said.

And the good news pleased the padişah so much that he gave her to Osman, and they had a wedding for forty days and forty nights. They ate and drank and had their wish fulfilled.