Once upon a time, when it was a sin to talk too much, and a virtue not to, there was a boy called Mehmet the Bully, and everyone was afraid of him. They had a house by the shore, and he lived there with his mother. Every once in a while, when he heard of someone who had a beautiful daughter, he would go by force bring the girl home. And this happened more and more frequently. He was like a highwayman.

One day the padishah's daughter said, "What sort of man is he? Why can't anyone do anything about it? I'll show him how!" So she got a group of soldiers and they all rode on their horses, and she was dressed as a soldier herself. Since Mehmet the Bully's house was by the shore, they came very quietly without having their horses' footsteps heard. When they came to Mehmet the Bully's house, they found a window, and from the window came the noise of a very merry gathering. Who knows whose wife or whose daughter was entertaining Mehmet
the Bully? There were shoutings and all sorts of merrymaking. He was a man of no good.

During that time, one of Mehmet's men heard the sounds of the horses, and he stuck his head out to see who was coming. And, chup!, she cut his head off. Then the next man stuck his head out, and, chup!, she cut his head off. Each time a head stuck out, chup!, she cut the head off. Finally all the heads were gone except Mehmet the Bully's, who didn't stick his head out. They went back to the palace, sure that they had killed Mehmet the Bully.

But he wasn't dead. Mehmet the Bully came out after them, and saw that the padishah's daughter was among the soldiers. She was disguised, and the soldiers were behind her, but he recognized her anyway. "Oh, you girl!" said Mehmet the Bully. "I'll take my revenge. And I won't wait to take it on your child either! I'll make you pay for this!"

After three or five days, he went to the green grass that was right before the padishah's saray [palace] and pitched a tent embroidered with gold and silver. It just glittered in the sun like anything. When evening came, he set his golden samovar in front of the tent, and he sat out there, and he had lots of servants helping him in and out. And he himself was a handsome youth, anyway.

The padishah's daughter looked at this man--she looked and looked--and finally she set her eye on him. She said to her [valo, personal servant], "Look, lala, a man has
pitched a tent across the green, and I like him very much. Look at that tent! I have never seen a tent like that. Is it made of gold, or diamonds? It glitters so. When it's evening, he spreads his silken rug on the ground and he sits there gloriously, drinking tea out of a golden samovar, with all those people working for him."

"Well," said the _lala_, "if he pleases you so much, if you've set your eye on him for sure, then we'll send him word, and he'll come and ask for you from your father."

"And how I would love that!" she said.

_Lala_ called one of the servants and told him to go and tell the stranger that he was supposed to come and ask for this girl from her father by the will of God. So the servant went, and said, "By the will of God, you are to come and ask for the hand of the padishah's daughter."

That was just the thing Mehmet the Bully was waiting for. "All right," he said, "I'll do so tomorrow." So the next day he came to visit the padishah.

"Greetings!" said the padishah.

And "Greetings to you, too!" said the guest.

"Who are you, and where do you come from?" asked the padishah.

"I am from such-and-such place," the guest replied, "and I am traveling. I don't know whether you have a daughter or not, but if you have one, I ask for her hand in marriage. I hope you have a daughter."

"right," said the padishah. "If my daughter sees
nothing against it, it will be done

the girl said, "All right!" So they had a glorious wedding. The father gave them everything that was light to carry and heavy in value. They had trumpets and drums, music and dancing, and feasts. The girl went to the tent as a bride.

But the girl didn't know the boy. When it was night, the boy put a sword between them in the bed, and thus they slept. And this went on for nights and nights. Finally it was time for her to go back and kiss her mother's and father's hands. She went to the palace and she talked with her lala.

said, "How have you been? Are you happy?"

She answered, "Well, he's very rich and gentle, and he's very good-hearted [the storyteller here, oddly enough, uses the French term boncoeur], only we put a sword between us, and that's the way we sleep."

"Oh," said lala, "there must be something wrong. Why does he put a sword there, and sleep that way?"

Later they went back home, to their tent. And they stayed in the tent for about a month. Then the man said, "Just the way you have your father and mother, so do I. I am the son of a padishah, too. Let's go to my home."

went to ask her father's permission to take her to his home. The husband said, "I am the son of a padishah, too, and I have my family. I want to take my wife to get her acquainted with my family."

And the padishah said, "Certainly you may. She's yours. She's your family now. You may take her wherever you want to.
They folded the tent and loaded it on a cart. Then they mounted their horses and started on their way. Finally they arrived at the house where she knew Mehmet the Bully lived. So her head touched the trouble tree. She said, "what have I done?" But she was too late, because the arrow was out of the bow.

At home, there was only his mother, and when she saw the bride, she said, "Oh, daughter! Why did you come to this fool of a man?"

"Well," said the girl, "I didn't know. I didn't know. It's my fate, so I came."

And Mehmet the Bully said, "So it was you, padisah's daughter, who killed all my men and my friends? I'll take my revenge on you now. I'll burn you alive."

She was frightened, but what could she do? She cried all night long, until the next morning. In the morning, he put the girl on a horse, and he took with him many pine knots and a long, strong rope. They rode together to a big mountain, where there was a great big tree. He tied the girl to the tree very strongly, and then he tucked the pine knots at various places around the girl's body. But when he looked for a match, he had none.

"Well, she's tied tightly, anyway. I'll leave her here and I'll go down into the town and get some matches and

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1 A colloquial expression in Turkish indicating the realization that one has come up against a problem too big to handle.

2 A colloquial expression in Turkish.
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come back," said Mehmet the Bully.

Let him be going. Let's come back to the girl. She began to scream, "Help! Help! Isn't there anybody who help me? Help! Help!" she shouted.

And there was an old, old ironmonger passing by man, he had a donkey, and he had only his pants and his shirt on. He was accustomed to collecting pieces of iron and loading them on his donkey and taking them to the city to sell them. When he heard the girl screaming, he turned around and went to her and said, "What are you doing here? Why are you tied down?"

The girl said, "Oh, don't ask me! I have fallen into the trap of Mehmet the Bully, and he brought me here. He tied me here and he stuck pine knots here and there in the ropes. He couldn't find any matches, so he has gone down into the town to get some matches. When he comes back, he's going to burn me alive. Please help me!"

"But," said the old man, "don't you know Mehmet the Bully? If I help you, then he'll take revenge on both of us. Everybody knows that."

When she continued to beg him to help her, well, he was a kind man, anyway. He had a knife in his pocket, and he got his knife out and cut the ropes. He took the girl and bent some of the iron bars in his bags. Then he put the girl in the bag and took her away. He stacked all the other pieces of iron on her, on her side, on her head, by the side of her head. He just crated her, really, in iron.
And he himself drove the donkey away, dressed only in his pants and shirt.

When Mehmet the Bully came back from the town, he saw that the girl was gone. "Oh, wa!" he said. "She is gone!" He looked on his right; he looked on his left. There was nothing—no birds flying, no caravans passing. He climbed the mountain and looked down, and he saw an old man, in his pants and shirt, prodding an old donkey and going on his way. He went to the old man and said, "What are you doing, old man?"

The old man answered, "I'm taking some old pieces of iron to the city."

"Have you seen a girl who was tied on a tree here?"

"No," said the old man. "How can I see? I can't see anything, and I can't hear anything. I'm almost blind and deaf."

Mehmet the Bully touched the bags, and all he could feel was pieces of iron. Really, the girl was inside, but he could not feel the girl. He became very, very angry. "Oh, girl!" he said. "I'll have my revenge yet. And I won't wait to take it on your child." He was so angry that he manhandled the old man and mistreated the donkey and pulled the bags around, in a regular temper tantrum. Then he went on his way.

The old man opened the bags and said, "Breathe a little," because the girl was almost at the point of dying. Finally they came to the old man's village. When he came
home, he knocked at the door, and his wife opened it. "Hurry up! Hurry up, woman! Hurry up!" he said. "Take the donkey in and empty this bag."

And the woman said, "What's your hurry, man?"

"I am in a hurry. Take that down and empty it!"

When she emptied the bag she found a girl, almost flattened like *pestille*. ³ They took her out of the bag. They fed her and put her to bed, and took good care of her, and finally she became herself again. She became the old man's daughter. He was a poor man, but he worked hard, and whatever he got, he sold. He earned a little, and he took good care of her, and she was happy. And all the time, she said, "I've saved my life from the hands of that man. I'm content to live on dry bread."

Time came; time went. She lived there for some years. Finally a padishah's son heard about her—heard that another padishah's daughter had become the daughter of a very poor man. (Nobody said anything about it, but it was heard things like that are heard, you know. He came and wanted to marry her, but she said, "I can't marry anyone. I'm involved with a man called Mehmet the Bully. I'm married to him, and cannot marry anyone. Even if I did, he wouldn't leave me alone. He would make my life a *hell*. I don't want any husband. Leave me alone, please. I'm content with this old man's earnings. I'm happy living here."

³The juice of fruits poured on cloth; it becomes very flat, and is eaten by being licked.
The man said, "I'll have a castle built for you in the
middle of the sea, a castle made of iron except for the glass
roof. No one can reach or touch you there. Don't worry."

So they got married. But for fear of being heard about,
they didn't have a wedding. He took the girl to his home,
and soon afterward he had a castle built in the middle of
the sea, so built that no guns, no knives, nothing could
pierce it. And finally they had three children. They lived
happily, but the girl had that pain deep down in her. She
never forgot it. All the time, she kept on saying, "I know
Mehmet the Bully. He'll find me sooner or later."

Her husband said, "Don't worry. He can never lay hands
on you." He brought a lion and a tiger and put them in front
of the door, and fed them there, to protect her.

Let's go back to Mehmet the Bully. He went from one
village to the other, from one city to the other, and every-
where he went, he asked, "What's been happening around here?
Any new weddings? Any newborn babies? What's the news?"

Finally he came to the village of the old ironmonger.
He asked the children playing in the streets if there was
anyone who had married recently.

They said, "Oh, we don't know of any weddings. But the
old ironmonger had a beautiful daughter, and she got married
and went away. They say she was afraid of a certain person,
and she got married without a wedding. She's been taken to a
new home. It's made of iron, and only the top of it is glass.
And it seems she has three children already."
So Mehmet the Bully began planning on getting to her house. He said, "Well, I'll row a boat there, and I'll take a long ladder and put it against the iron walls and climb to the top of the house. I'll take along a sleeping potion, too."

One night, when the husband and wife and three children were sleeping in their rooms, Mehmet the Bully came and climbed up to the top of the house. He cut the glass with a glass-cutter's diamond very softly and made a hole big enough to climb through. Then he hung the ladder down inside and climbed down. He found them all sleeping. He made the husband smell the sleeping potion, and then he made the children smell some of it, too, but he didn't make the girl smell it. He shook her, saying, "Wake up!"

She began to cry, "Oh, have you come again? Oh, what shall I do? Wake up! Wake up!" She shook her husband, and she pinched him. But who could wake him? Then she shook the babies and tried to make them cry so that her husband would hear them and wake up. But he didn't wake up, and the children didn't wake up.

"All right," she said. She got up, and she put her clothing on. "Let me put my shoes on, and cover my head, and put my coat on, and then we'll go, if that's what you want." When she had finished, she said, "I'm ready. Open the door."

Mehmet the Bully opened the door and stepped out. As soon as he stepped out, the lion and the tiger jumped at him and they tore him to pieces. When the girl saw that, she shut the door. It was too much for her. She fell in a faint.
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when the effect of the sleeping potion had worn away
her husband woke up. When he saw that his wife was not by
his side, he jumped up and said, "Oh, I hope what she was afraid
of hasn't happened to her!" Then he saw her lying down on the
floor, all fainted and passed out.

When she awoke, she said, "Didn't I tell you Mehmet the
Bully would find me wherever I went? Even if I were up on the
second floor of the sky, he would come and find me. You see,
he came and found me. He came at night, and cut through the
roof and came down. He put you to sleep, and he was running
away with me."

"Where is he now?" her husband asked.

"Well, he was leading the way," she said, "and as soon as
he opened the door, the lion and the tiger pulled him to
pieces."

When they opened the window, they saw that blood was
flowing everywhere, and that Mehmet the Bully was truly dead.

So they had a grand wedding for forty days and forty nights,
to make up for the one they had missed before, and they ate
and drank and had their wish fulfilled.