Behlül Dane and the Grape-Seller

One day when Behlül Bir Dane was walking along the road, he saw a grapeseller going along ahead of him. He hurried along and caught up with the man. "Good journey to you!" he said.

"Tell me something that is worth hearing," said the grapeseller.

"I shall do this, but first I require a bunch of grapes for anything I say."

"Very well," said the grapeseller, and he handed him a bunch.

Behlül Bir Dane then said, "Always ask the name of person you happen to meet, and then he lapsed into silence."

After a while the grapeseller said, "Will you tell me something else that is worth hearing?"

Yes, but I require a bunch of grapes for anything I say."

After he had been given another bunch of grapes, Behlül Dane said, "When you are at a social gathering, know where
After another long silence, the grapeseller again asked, "Will you tell me something more that is worth hearing?"
"Yes, but I require a bunch of grapes."
"All right. Here they are.

Then Behlül Bir Dane said, "Always mind your own business among people you do not know."

One day shortly after this the padishah was having a banquet, to which the grapeseller was invited. When he arrived he sat down in the most prominent place in the room, but as the pashas started arriving, he had to keep changing his position, farther and farther from the place of honor, until at last he ended up right against the door. At the dining table they were searching for a knife to cut up some of the food. The grapeseller took out his own knife and offered it to them, saying, "Here, use my knife."

When the vezir saw this knife, he said, "This knife was among the things taken from the treasury on the day it was...

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1 The advice here seems rather cryptic. From the context, however, it is apparent that he means that one should not presume to take a position above that which his social status permits. The Turkish peasant audience understands the reference.

2 Although the narrator says padishah, he probably means caliph. Although Harun Reşid is not mentioned, it seems clear that he is the "padishah" referred to, for it was only at his court or diven that Behlül Dane was supposed to have had influence.

3 This is an anachronism, for food was not served at dining tables but from large trays on the floor.
robbled. Have this grapeseller arrested."

The grapeseller was astonished. His hands were mixed with his feet [Turkish expression indicating utter confusion], and he did not know what to do.

Behlül Bir Dane went to visit the grapeseller in jail, even though he had determined not to give him any more advice. He placed a donkey saddle on the floor of the prison and started beating it with a stick. He said, "I told you to know your place in society, but you didn't. I told you always to ask the name of a person you met, but you didn't. I told you always to mind your own business among strangers, but you didn't." 4 O you donkey! When you are called to the presence of the judge, tell them that your father was a merchant that once while he was going through the mountains he was robbed by bandits who stabbed him with this knife. Say, 'As a matter of fact, I am looking for the owner of this knife myself.' Don't say anything else, you donkey!" Then Behlül Bir Dane left, saying nothing more.

The grapeseller thought to himself, "He is right. I never followed any of his advice. I neither knew my place in society nor did I mind my own business. I interfered in the business of others, and as a result, this is what has befallen me."

when he was called to trial in the morning, the grapeseller said to the vezir, "Fendî, I am looking for the owner

4At this point the narrator apparently did not repeat this third piece of advice that Behlül Dane had given the grapeseller.
of this knife myself, and in order to try to find him, I

it out at every gathering I attend. Now I have at last

overed who the murderer of my father was. You are my

father's murderer."

They paid the grapeseller some red liras (I don't know many) and then dismissed him.

[There follows on the tape some discussion between Ahmet Uysal and Hasan Yazar about the donkey saddle and why Behlül Dane beat the saddle. Instead of beating the grapeseller, and thus doing an injustice to him, Behlül Dane took the man's saddle from his donkey and beat it as he listed the man's stupidities. It was a symbolic way of describing the nature of the grapeseller's stupidity and indicating Behlül Dane's feeling toward him.]