

Story #333 (Tape #1, 1972)

Narrator: Fatma Uysal, 36

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How a Poor Garbage Collector Became Padishah

Once upon a time there was a garbage collector. He was very poor and tired of collecting garbage. He used to pray every day: "How I wish I had some money that would free me from the miserable life of a garbage collector."

He was in the habit of looking the garbage over, sorting it with his shovel. One day his shovel hit against a bundle. He thought, "I guess there must be gold in this bundle." He left his shovel and cart and went to the public bath. "What I need is a good bath," he said to himself. He told the proprietor of the bath to bring him towels and clogs nobody had used before.

The proprietor asked, "How can you afford new towels and <sup>malon</sup> clogs? Look at your shabby clothes

"Never mind the way I look," the garbage collector answered. "I have been doing military service for eight years. I am the son of the padishah of Iran

Next he stopped at a tailor shop. He said, "I am the son of the padishah of Iran. Make me some clothes that nobody has seen before.

Later he went to a nearby restaurant and ordered food on plates nobody had used before to be delivered to the public

He took his bath and dried himself with the towels nobody used before. Next his dinner was brought in plates nobody had used before.

Next the tailor came in with the clothes he had ordered. As he was getting dressed he overheard the bath proprietor talking with the tailor and the waiter: "This man says he is the son of the padishah of Iran. How can we know that is not a letter to the padishah self and ask him whether he has a son."

The garbage collector started thinking seriously, "I had better write the padishah of Iran myself before they do and ask him to tell the his son had been doing military service for eight years and had just returned. I shall beg him not to reveal to them that I have lied." So he wrote the letter immediately and mailed it. After he finished eating his sumptuous meal, he decided to open the bundle. "I have not even opened the bundle yet," he thought. "Let us see what there is inside." There were three gold coins in the bundle. He decided to give a coin each to the bath proprietor, the tailor, and the restaurateur.

Some time later the bath proprietor received a letter from the padishah of Iran stating that he had been away from military service for eight years. Upon this news, the proprietor decided to give his daughter to the garbage collector in marriage. The wedding lasted forty nights and forty days. After the wedding the couple went away to the padishah.

When people heard of this intended visit, they began asking the padishah of Iran how he had a son. He answered as he does.

It happened that the padishah was seriously ill and died shortly after the garbage collector and his wife arrived. Thinking that the padishah of Iran had a son,

their new padishah. The garbage collector-padishah and his wife lived happily ever after.