

Story #385 (Tape #3, 1972)

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Location: Söke, Aydın Province

Date: Spring 1972

Behlül Dane Sells Heavenly Palaces

to Zübeyde¹ and Harun Reshid

Zübeyde, Behlül's sister-in-law, asked Behlül one day, "What are you doing?"

"I'm building ^a palace in paradise," Behlül answered.

"Will you sell me the palace?" Zübeyde asked.

"Yes, I will," Behlül answered.

"How much do you want for it?" she asked.

Behlül said, "One akche²."

That evening Harun Reshid saw Zübeyde in his dreams. She was the owner of a handsome palace. "From whom did you get the palace?" Harun Reshid asked.

"I bought ^{it} from my uncle,³ Behlül Dane, who sold it to me for one akche," Zübeyde answered.

The next morning Harun Reshid went to see Behlül and said,

¹Zübeyde was one of the wives of the Caliph Harun Reshid. She figures prominently in several tales in The Arabian Nights.

²An akche was one third of a para, which, in turn, was a fortieth part of a kurush. There are 100 kurushes in today's lira, which is worth 7-8 cents. The akche was, then, an extremely small coin.

³The word uncle here is not meant literally, of course. It is a term of respect for a benefactor.

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"Erother, I didn't know you sell such beautiful palaces. Will you sell me a palace?"

"All right," Behlül answered.

"How much do you want for it?" Harun Reshid asked.

"One thousand gold liras," Behlül said.

Harun Reshid protested, "It's not fair. You've sold a palace to Zübeyde for one akche."

"Yes, it is fair," Behlül answered. "She bought the palace without seeing it first, but you want to buy it after you have seen it."⁴

⁴This is among the tales that include suggestions of Behlül Dane's mysticism and his ability to transport himself and others into another world, a spiritual world beyond time.