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The Auspicious Dream

When we were little children, we had a hoca named Ali Hoca. We were about seven years old at that time. We used to go to him for our lessons. One day while he was instructing us, he gave us this piece of advice: "If you should have a dream, do not tell it to anyone unless he has said, 'May it be auspicious.'"

One night after this I had a dream. When I told my father about this, he asked that I tell him what happened in my dream. But he had not first said, "May it be auspicious." When I refused to tell him the dream, my father slapped me several times. This also happened when I refused to tell our neighbors what had happened in my dream.

I walked out of the house and left. I walked little, I walked far, and I went a considerable distance and reached a place like Istanbul. While walking about in that city, I met a man who turned out to be the Padishah of Istanbul. At the time, of course, I did not know who he was. He asked me, "What are you doing around here?"

"Well, I had such-and-such a dream. They would not say 'May it be auspicious,' and so I refused to tell them the dream. For this I was beaten. I decided to run away, and after that I came here."

He too refused to say, "May it be auspicious," and so I refused to tell him my dream too. How was I to know that he was the padishah of
that place? When I refused to tell him my dream, he called three men who, I soon learned, were his executioners. He said to them, "Take this fellow away at once. Execute him at once and bring his bloody shirt to me as proof."

The executioners took me with them. One of them said, "Let us spare this boy."

Another of them said, "Let us kill him."

In the end, they shut me in a small room and sent my shirt, dipped in blood, to the padishah. I stayed there a short time; I stayed there a long time. They provided me with bread to eat, but nothing else. After I had been there for some time, I gave up all hope of getting out of that place.

Then one day, while searching my room, I found a piece of wood. With I tried to make a hole in one of the brick walls. Apparently this wall faced against another building, for when I had cut a hole in the I discovered that the bricks fell into the other building. It was nighttime and I planned to escape. When I looked through the hole, however, I saw a room with a light in it. The daughter of the padishah lived there, but I had not known this before. I entered the room I saw through the hole. As I had had only bread to eat, I was quite hungry, and so I ate several plates of food that I found there. After this, realizing that there was no way out, I returned to my cell, closing up the hole with the material I had dug out.

The daughter of the padishah did not see me at all. When she discovered that her food had been eaten, however, she reprimanded her guard. I was listening, on the other side of the wall, to what was happening.
They did not know that their house had been entered by anyone. Finally they settled their argument about the food, and the girl changed her mind about reporting the matter to her father.

The next evening I entered the next house again through the hole. While I was eating two or three plates of food, the girl entered and grabbed me by the arm. "How did you get in here?" she asked.

"Through there," I said, pointing to the hole.

She had a large closet in that room. She shut me in that closet and sent to me seven plates of food every day. I remained there for two months.

One day the Padishah of Greece sent to the Padishah of Turkey a stick with this message: "If you can distinguish which end of this stick came from the thicker part of the tree and which came from the thinner, I shall not make war upon you. After determining the thick and the thin ends, you will mark the one Thick and the other Thin and then send the stick back to me. If you do that, there will be no war."

The girl used to go out of that house twice a day, with permission, and on those trips she would usually go to the market and return. Apart from that, she was allowed to go nowhere. On the day that the stick arrived, the girl began to cry, saying, "My father received a stick from the Padishah of Greece, who requires that we tell him which end of the stick came from the thicker end of the tree and which end came from the thinner. If we cannot answer this question, we shall have war. That is why I am crying."

"It is very easy to answer that question," I said.
"How can you do it?" asked the girl.

"A string should be tied at exactly the center of that stick. When the string is lifted, the heavier end will fall, and that will be the end which came from the thicker end of the tree."

They wrote out directions about how to do this and sent them to the padishah. The answer turned out to be correct.

After a year or two had passed, the girl came to the room crying again. The Padishah of Greece had sent two camels with instructions to determine which was the mother and which was the offspring. "If they to determine this," he said, "I shall make war against them."

I said to the girl, "Why in the world are you crying? It is the easiest thing on earth to solve. Have the camels placed in the same room. Mix bran and salt together, and place there also a cauldron of water. The camels will eat the bran and salt and drink the water. Open the door then. The one which runs out first will be the mother; the one which follows will be the offspring."¹

This was the way it was determined. After the answer was given, there was no war, but peace was made between Turkey and Greece.

After some time had passed, the padishah one day said to his daughter, "In the advice you sent to us, the words were yours, but the mouth they came out of was not yours. I shall give you three days to let me know how you solved these problems."

¹It is not at all clear how this test reveals the mother and her offspring. In some versions, the feed is mixed with gravel, the camel or horse with the better teeth (the younger animal) being able to separate the feed from the gravel faster.
The girl wandered about the palace for three days, and on the third day she came to me and said, "Today is my last day."

"Instead of you, let it be I who dies. Tell him it was I who told you the answers. You just tell him about me, and let him have his men take me and execute me."

The girl did as I instructed her. By this time, I had a long beard and long hair that covered my whole face. The padishah called me to his presence. "My Padishah," I said, "the matter is such-and-such. As you know, you gave me to three executioners to be killed. Two of them wanted to kill me, but the third did not. They finally compromised and imprisoned me in a cell. After that, I helped your daughter."

He ordered that I be released. "He is free to go wherever he wishes, armed, and he may eat in the palace."

As I was wandering about, another messenger came from the Padishah of Greece. This time he demanded one of the daughters of the Padishah of Turkey. A little later, the Padishah of Turkey had me called to his presence. I went to his quarters.

"What is your wish, my son?" he asked.

"Your health, my Padishah," I said.

"What good is my health to you? Tell me your wish."

"Your health, my Padishah," I said again.

"I am going to give one of my daughters to you, too," he said.

He did this, and we had a wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights.

Now we were on good terms with the Padishah of Greece. I had a brother-
in-law there who had been married before I had. When the Padishah of Greece was having another wedding given, I was invited as a guest. My father-in-law had a ship prepared for me to make the trip. On the way we passed an island where two birds were fighting and hurting each other badly. I felt very sorry for them and said to the captain of the ship, "Captain, put us ashore. I want to stop those birds from fighting."

He had to follow my orders, and so I was put ashore and I proceeded to save the two birds. One of them flew away, but the other remained on the ground. It said to me, "Since you saved my life, take these two feathers. When you are in trouble, they will save you."

I did not pay much attention to this, but just put the feathers in my pocket. We continued to sail to Greece and the wedding there. When we finally arrived there we were just landing near a magnificent palace when a very beautiful woman came forth from it. I could do nothing but gaze and gaze at this magnificent palace and this beautiful woman. Finally, I noticed a widow passing by. I said to her, "Take these gold coins and tell me whose palace this is."

"A daughter of the Padishah of Greece lives there, and she leaves it only with his permission," the woman said.

Well, we attended the wedding, and after it was over, I returned to Turkey. But I had fallen in love with that girl I had seen. After being back here for five or ten days, I said to my padishah, "A letter has come from the Padishah of Greece in which he requests that we send him forty girls. We shall take a short trip to Greece and return."

My wife and I got on a ship [with the forty girls] and went to Greece.
After we arrived, we waited on the shore until that widow passed again. I gave her a handful of gold, and I said to the forty girls, "None of us leave the ship." We then docked by the palace of the Padishah of Greece.

Many, many people entered the palace, and many left. After only a few remained, I saw the widow coming along again. I gave her another handful of gold and said to her, "Go and tell her to get permission to come. Let her take a walk, too."

After all the visitors to the palace had gone, the widow went to the girl's father and got his permission for the girl to go outside. When she and the padishah's daughter came aboard our ship, I said to the captain, "Now we can sail."

When I looked back, I saw that from 50 to 100 ships were pursuing us. As we fled with the girl, they were trying to catch us. I was in a difficult spot, but somehow, unknown to me, the two feathers that the bird had given me had become crossed in my pocket, and suddenly, as a result, the gap began to widen between our ship and those in pursuit. We arrived home and held a wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights. This concludes our account.²

²Sadly told and very illogical, this is a scrambling together of unassimilated parts of two tales, types common in Turkey and elsewhere. See Notes for commentary on this problem.