

Story #428 (Tape #1, 1968)

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The Gypsy and the Padishah Who Bought Sleep

The son of a padishah once fell in love with a Gypsy girl who was quite beautiful. As is well known, when the heart falls in love, it has really no respect for either ugliness or beauty in the object it desires. Soon after this, it became apparent to the padishah that his son was ill. *Love sickness* He took the boy to the best *physicians* doctors and surgeons of the time, but they could find no remedy for his condition. He grew weaker every day, but he seemed unable to reveal his problem to anyone. Finally, his mother asked him, "Son, what is it that troubles you?"

At last he revealed what was within him: "Mother, I have fallen in love with a Gypsy girl who lives in such-and-such a tent. You must get this girl as my wife, or I shall commit suicide."

"Oh, my son," she said, "I hope that your father does not hear this. He is a padishah, and only the daughter of another padishah or of a vezir would be suitable for you as a wife. Do not even mention this to your father."

"No, no, mother. I shall just take my own life."

"Oh, please do not do that," she answered. Since the boy was their only son, they would be childless if he should really kill himself. She decided, therefore, to tell her husband about this problem.

The padishah was very angry about this situation. He called his son to his presence and said, "My son, let me arrange to get as wife for you the daughter of a neighboring emperor or padishah or vezir. Come listen to my advice. Do not give your heart to ^aGypsy girl."

"I know that you are my father, and I have great respect for you, I want you to have me married to that Gypsy girl or I shall commit suicide."

"Oh, please do not do such a thing," said the padishah. He then sent several of his vezirs to talk with his son, hoping that they would change his mind, but their efforts were of no use

Finally, he sent some of his vezirs to the tents of the Gypsies. They said, "Selâmünaleyküm," and the Gypsy leader responded, "Aleykümselâm." The vezirs acted as dünürs matchmakers¹, mentioning the name of Allah¹ and demanding his daughter as wife for the son of their padishah.

"I am willing to give my daughter in marriage," said the Gypsy, "but I shall never give her to the son of a padishah who buys sleep."

"What does this mean?" they asked him. "Although we speak Turkish [as you do], we cannot understand that."

"I said that I will not give my daughter to the son of a padishah who buys sleep," the Gypsy repeated

They then went to the padishah and told him what the Gypsy had said. When he heard this, the padishah was ^{duped} furious. He took two of his executioners and went with them to the tent of the Gypsy. "Cut off his head," he said to them.

¹The standard opening remark of the dünür is this: "I come by the order of Allah and the consent of the Prophet to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage to X." Here this formulaic statement is merely referred to.

"Your majesty, let us first find out what he meant by 'buying sleep,'" one of his vezirs said.

"Very well, then," said the padishah. "Let us go to my office."² They took him to the padishah's office. "What do you mean by saying that you will not give your daughter to the son of a padishah who purchases sleep? What do you mean by saying 'purchasing sleep'? You are, after all, a Gypsy. Would you not give your daughter to the son of a padishah?"

The Gypsy said to the padishah, "Sir, I made no mistake. Sleep is oblivion. It is not only you who are in a state of oblivion, but so are your vezirs. You consult with them and take their advice. Can fools give wise men wisdom? He is not really a wise man who thinks so."³

When he heard the Gypsy speak in this way, the padishah concluded that he must be a very profound man. The padishah accepted the Gypsy's daughter and arranged to have her married to his son.⁴

²This is an anachronism. The narrator is apparently thinking of modern political figures, who do have offices.

³There is apparently something missing from this dialogue. If the nub of the tale comes in this discussion, then part of the discussion must be lost.

⁴There is apparently considerable truncation here, for the Gypsy has now no more reason than he ever did for giving his daughter to the son of the padishah. What arrangement does the padishah make? Does he make the Gypsy one of his counselors? Whatever resolution the tale is supposed to have (seemingly unknown to this narrator) is probably something between the padishah and the Gypsy, for the young lovers are given no names, no special characteristics.