

Story #576 (Tape erased)

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Location: Village of Çetme, kaza of Taşköprü, Province of Kastamonu

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The Hashish Padişah

At one time there was a village ağa who had just one son. When the ağa was on his death bed, he said to his son, "After I die, I want you to work hard, to live well, and to enjoy yourself." But after the ağa died, the son spent everything which he had inherited on gambling, drinking, and drug addiction.
Addiction -- to drugs Finally, he had little left in his hand, and he did not know what to do or to whom to turn for subsistence. He decided that with what little money he had left, he would buy just enough hashish for that evening's use.

He went to a bath, sat on the center stone¹ and smoked some hashish in a cigarette until he became greatly influenced by it. Then he began to think as follows: "Suppose the padişah of the land should come here, slip, fall, and strike his head on the marble floor,
floor -- of marble Suppose, then, that I should carry him out, throw him into the sewer. Then suppose I should put on his clothes and declare myself padişah. Suppose, after that, that I go to the palace and sit on the throne."

It so happened that the padişah did actually enter the bath at moment. While he was looking around, his wooden bath clog slipped on the wet marble floor, and he fell, fainting on the spot. The young man arose, picked up the padişah, and placed him on his shoulder. He

¹ The center stone is a raised marble platform under the dome of the building.

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carried him to the sewer and threw him into it. Then the young man returned to the center stone and sat there again for a while

Finally the bath attendant came to him and said, "It is time to close the bath now. Will you please leave now?"

He went to the dressing room and dressed. He searched his pockets and found that they were filled with gold. He gave each of the attendants a gold coin, and they saw him off very respectfully. He got into a horse carriage and left. Along the way the carriage driver asked him, "Your majesty, do you wish to go home or to the palace?"

He hesitated to answer, thinking, "If I should go home, I should not know the name of the queen." He therefore decided to go to the palace and commence his duties right away.

When he was seated at his desk, citizens entered the room with papers in their hands for his signature. The padişah was an ignorant man like me. He dipped his pen into the ink and was about to sign his name, but he could not make up his mind whether to sign it like this or like that. At that moment, the bath attendant came and gave him a push, saying, "Hey, you fellow! I told you before that it was time to leave! What are you doing here?"