

Story #651 (1976, Tape #16)

Narrator: Behzat Bengül, 86Location: Üsküdar, mahalle of
İstanbul, Province of
İstanbulDate: July 11, 1976

#65

Dervishes -- twoTwo Dervishes Catch a Thief

#651

treasury -- royal

gold -- 1,000 pieces -- stolen from
royal treasury

Once upon a time, there was a ruler of a land who had 1000 pieces of gold stolen from his treasury. The ruler was so annoyed by this theft of 1,000 pieces of gold -- from royal treasury that he called all his subjects, both servants and land owners, and told them that he would have all their throats cut if they did not search for and find the thief. All the subjects bowed in submission to their ruler's edict and left. They poured onto the street, with their heads hung down, and thoroughly searched the city, but they were unable to find the thief, or thieves. Therefore, they returned with their heads hung down in sorrow, because they knew they were about to be beheaded.

As they were walking along, they passed two dervishes. The dervish looked at the odd crowd, with everyone looking sad and discouraged, and they wondered what had happened to all of them. They caught up with the crowd and inquired about their state of sadness. A spokesman from the crowd explained, "One thousand pieces of gold were stolen from our ruler's treasury. He asked us to find the thief, or else we would be executed. We searched for the thief everywhere but have not found him."

The dervishes told the crowd not to worry, for they would find the thief. The crowd gratefully blessed the dervishes and took them

servants -- at ruler -- to be decapitated -- if they do not catch thief, who looted royal treasury
decapitating -- at ruler's servants threatened -- if they do not catch thief who looted royal treasury

Story #651

to their ruler's presence. The dervishes asked the ruler permission to search for the thief or thieves, assuring him that they could find him or them. "If we do not," they said, "then you may have our heads cut off along with those of your subjects." The ruler of the land consented to the dervishes' proposal and bade them to go in search of the culprit.

The subjects were very grateful for the dervishes' assistance and thanked them. The dervishes went out of the palace and into the city. One of the dervishes was named Katlı Kûlâh, the other one, Çeşmi Silâh. The two dervishes started talking. They cast remil¹ and continued talking. They said, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, the thief is in the Gıcırık Square."

They went to the Gıcırık Square and searched and searched, but found no thief. They cast another remil and said, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, the thief at Gıcırık Square, whoever finds water will be fated in Uman."²

They rubbed their hands together and ran to the Uman Sea at the stated Square. They went to the Uman Sea and look everywhere, but again could not find the thief. They cast yet another remil. This time they said, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, the Gıcırık Square, the fated

¹ Remil is a form of geomancy in which dice or other objects with numbered, lettered, or figured sides are thrown on the ground to divine or reveal desired information. Each number, letter, or figure has a pre-established meaning or direction, and the combination of meanings on the several dice or other objects used constitute the revelation.

² In Turkish the revelation is rimed in each instance.

waters of Uman, at the village of Isfahan,³

So the two dervishes departed for the village of Isfahan. The boat was ready at the dock. They quickly got into the boat and headed for the village of Isfahan. The boat landed on the Isfahan docks, where they searched and searched, but once again found nothing. They cast remil once again, and said, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, Gıcırık Square, waters of Uman, the village of Isfahan, neighborhood of Takaraturkurutandan⁴." The two dervishes tried to find the Takaraturkurutandan neighborhood. They asked passersby and then started knocking on doors in the vicinity, but again to no avail.

They decided to cast another remil and they did. They started saying, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, the thief is at the Gıcırık Square, by the waters of Uman, at the village Isfahan, the neighborhood Takataturkurutandan, name of mother is Handan." So the two dervishes went back to the neighborhood they had already searched at and asked for the house of Handan Hanım. After asking several people they were finally shown the house. The houses then, of course, had cagelike screens on the windows to protect those inside.

The dervishes knocked on the door, and a lady came to the cage, enquiring what they wanted. The dervishes asked the lady to come down a minute. She went down and, opening the door just a crack,

³Whatever Isfahan is referred to here, it cannot be the famous city of that name in Iran, for that old city, right at the center of the country is not an any navigable body of water.

⁴This is a nonsensical name.

asked again what they wanted. The dervishes told her that 1000 gold pieces had been stolen from the treasury of the ruler of a distant land, and added that they knew the thief was in her house. The lady quickly denied the allegation and exclaimed, "Oh, no! There is no thief in my house." As she tried to close the door, one of the dervishes slipped his foot inside, and both dervishes forced their way into the house. The lady started screaming at the intruders. The dervishes told her to keep still and assured her that they had no intention of harming her. They told her they would just search the house and leave. So the lady had no choice but to let them search the house.

They looked and looked everywhere. Finally, they went to the attic and started searching there. There, in a dark corner, the thief was crouched down low. One of the dervishes caught him by the ear and told him to come out in the open. He brought him out and told him to return the gold pieces which he had stolen, but the thief denied that fact and declared he had none. The dervishes at once told him to give up the gold pieces or he would be severely punished. Again the thief denied having them.

They decided to cast remil again. Before they did, however, they accidentally knocked off the thief's turban and the gold pieces came clattering down. They counted the pieces and discovered that there were only 999. They asked the thief to return the missing gold piece, but he denied having it. He swore he had used it for transportation.

They cast the remil and said, "Katlı Kûlâh, Çeşmi Silâh, the thief is in Gıdırık Square, by the waters of Uman, the village of Isfahan, in the neighborhood of Takaratukurutandan, mother's name Handan; if you strike his turban, 999 gold pieces will tumble down; if you slap him hard, the missing one will come out from beneath his tongue." And so they did this, and indeed the missing gold piece did fall out from beneath his tongue.

They took him back to the ruler. The ruler was so pleased to see justice done, that he gave the 1000 gold pieces to the dervishes, and had the thief hanged. All but the thief lived happily ever after. We hope the listeners to this tale will also live happily