

Story 697 (1981 Tape 4)

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Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
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The Law of the Land

There was once a country where everyone was required to attend every prayer service in the mosque. Anyone who missed even one prayer service was automatically condemned to death. Such a person was given three wishes on three successive days, and then he was hanged.

A strong young man arrived in that country, and he was successful there and well liked. But one day he missed afternoon prayer service, a fact which was at once reported to the authorities. The public prosecutor ordered him to appear in court, where the judge said to him, "Son, we have been advised that you did not attend the afternoon prayer service yesterday. It is the custom of this country that whoever misses a prayer service will be given three wishes, and then three days later he will be hanged. You should know this so that you may act accordingly. Tomorrow is your first day.

The young man left the court and began walking the streets deep in thought. He met a girl on the street who happened to be the judge's daughter. She said, "Brother, you look very strange. What are you thinking about?"

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"What is that to you? It is my problem."

just let me know what your problem is.

"Well, here in your country there is a custom to give to the person who misses a prayer service three wishes, and then on the third day they hang him. I missed the afternoon prayer service yesterday, and as a result, I have been tried and condemned to die in three days."

The girl said, "If you will marry me, I shall save you from death.

"How could you save me?"

That part of it is none of your business. Just marry me and leave that to me. I shall save you."

right, I promise to marry you."

Sha said to him, "Now, this is what you should do. Listen carefully. Tomorrow when you go to court let your wish be that you be permitted to marry the judge's daughter. The judge may try to deny you this wish, but the prosecutor will uphold it. The law is the law, and the law applies to this. The prosecutor will probably say, 'If a condemned man wishes to marry a girl--even if he is to live with her for only two days--he has the right, by law, to do so. They will then give me to you.

"On the second day you will enter the courtroom with a

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peddler's küp.¹ When they ask what you want for your second wish, say, 'I want three küps of gold.' They may say, 'But, son, you will die tomorrow. What could you do with three küps of gold?' Then you say, 'Is your law really law? If it is, then that is what I want.'

"On the third day you will enter the courtroom with a large iron club on your shoulder. When they say, 'Son, now make your third wish,' you will say, 'I wish to hit the prosecutor and the judge on the head with this club.' Then you will be acquitted."

On the first day of reporting to the court to make his wish, the young man said, "I wish to marry the judge's daughter."

The judge said, "Son, you will die two days from now. What will you do with my daughter?"

"Father, is your law really law? If so, I demand your daughter, and you must accept my wish."

The prosecutor then said, "Sir, the young man is correct."

On the second day the young man entered the courtroom with a large peddler's küp on his back. "Make your wish, young man," said the judge.

"I wish three küps of gold."

"But, son, you will die tomorrow. What good will gold be

¹A küp is a large earthenware vase, sometimes as much as five or six feet in height.

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to you?"

"Your law is law. I will do what I wish with the gold."

And just as he wished, he was given the three küps of gold

On the third day he entered the courtroom with a large iron club on his shoulder. "Make your wish, young man," they said.

"I wish to hit the heads of the prosecutor and the judge with this club

Ac Ahmet

When the young man said this, the judge said, "You know, it seems to me--uh, uh, uh--as if this young man must already have performed his afternoon prayers."

The prosecutor answered quickly, "It is definitely true that he performed his prayers."

[Ali Çiftçi: This kind of tale is known as a kıssa parable or moral fable].

Ahmet Uysal: What is the moral of this tale?

Ali Çiftçi: The moral is that people should not make laws that against common sense. They may circle back and hit you.