

Story 792 (1970 Tape 15)

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Confession by Thieves Supposing Selves Detected

Once in the past there lived a couple. The man of this couple was very <sup>lazıman</sup> lazy, so lazy that he never did any work. One day his wife said to him, "The least you could do would be to pretend that you are a witch. Go out and shout in the streets that you are a witch.<sup>1</sup> This might bring you some money."

The man accepted this suggestion of his wife. Taking a donkey to ride upon, he went from street to street shouting, "I am a witch! I can provide witch services!"

It happened that shortly after this, the treasury of the padişah was robbed. When no one was able to determine who had committed the robbery, the padişah said, "Hire such-and-such a witch and have him find my gold by means of witchcraft."<sup>2</sup> The self-proclaimed witch was called to the

<sup>1</sup> The word witch can suggest different things in Turkish culture and Anglo-American culture. A witch in Turkey may not always be involved in evil or destructive practices. A witch is one of several different types who have some sort of extraordinary or supernatural power.

<sup>2</sup> Lost objects may be found by such supernatural agencies as witchcraft, numerology, or animal assistance.

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presence of the padişah, who asked him, "Do you understand the ways of witchcraft?"

"Yes, I do.

"I want you to recover the gold stolen from my treasury

"Well, my padişah, you must give me forty days in which to do this

"Very well, you may have forty days to do this. During that time your meals will be delivered to you every day. If you can recover the gold, I shall reward you. If you cannot, I shall punish you."

The man sat in the corner of his house and did nothing while the servants of the padişah brought him food every day and fed him very well. He enjoyed this unusual treatment, but he kept thinking also of the number of days that had passed in the forty he had for this task.

The first day a servant brought the food, and the witch man said, "That's the first one." The next day a servant brought the food, and he said, "That's the second one." On the third day he said, "That's the third one," and on the fourth day, "That's the fourth one." Those servants were the robbers who had stolen the gold from the padişah's treasury, though the witch man did not know that. When he was just counting the days, "That's the first one,"

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so on, they thought he knew of their theft and were counting them.

After the fourth day the four robbers met and talked of their situation. "Oh, he recognized us as the thieves!" said, and the others agreed.

Another of them said, "Let us go and bargain with him." When they approached the witch man, this same thief said, "are the ones who robbed the padişah's treasury, as you already know. But if you will not report us, we shall share the gold with you."

When the thieves had gone, the wife said, "Oh, this is wonderful!"

The witch man went straight to the padişah and said, "Your Majesty, I have discovered the thieves. They are your servants named such and such and such and such. They have hidden the gold in the palace garden at a certain spot which I shall show you."

When the gold was recovered, the padişah rewarded the witch man generously.