

Story 811 1974 Tape 18)

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Location: Olgunlar village, kaza
of Rafayık (Refahiye?)
Erzincan Province

Date: August 1974

The Sultan and the ~~Hashish~~ Smoking Boatman

One of the sultans passed an edict prohibiting the smoking of hashish. One day he dressed as an ordinary person began walking about Istanbul to see how well his edict being obeyed. After a while his walking took him to docks along the Bosphorus. When he came upon a boatman he bargained with him for a boat ride along the waterfront.¹

Of course the boatman did not know that his passenger the sultan. After he had rowed for a while, the boatman rested his oars on the side of the boat and rolled some hashish inside a piece of paper. Lighting this cigarette, boatman renewed his rowing, smoking as he rowed.

After a minute or so, the sultan asked him, "What are smoking?"

The boatman did not answer.

Then the sultan said, "Let me have a puff or two of

¹Until the first bridge was built across the Bosphorus in the 1970s, the Istanbul waterfront swarmed with ferries and smaller boats that served as water taxis. A sizable portion of the city of Istanbul lay on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and there were thousands of transits made daily.

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your cigarette."

Although the boatman did not want to do this, he finally handed over the cigarette when his passenger kept insisting. After the sultan had taken a puff or two, he realized that it was hashish that he was smoking. He said right away to the boatman, "This is hashish you are smoking! I am the sultan and I have passed an edict against smoking this material!"

The boatman answered, "I have been a hashish addict for years, and I have never once imagined that I was even a vizier. Here you have had only a puff or two and you think that you are the sultan!" He then beat the sultan soundly, rowed him back to shore, and threw him out upon a dock