

Story 894 1961-62 Tape 18) Narrator: Abdul Aziz, 12

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Kazım Ağa<sup>1</sup> and the King's Daughter

There was a young man named Kazım Ağa who lived in a small village. Near that village there lived a band of forty thieves. Each day one of these thieves would come to the village coffee-house and order a glass of tea for Kazım Ağa. This continued for forty days. On the forty-first day, all forty of the thieves came to the coffeehouse and said to Kazım Ağa, "Now it is your turn to buy tea for us!" He did this, and afterwards he took them to his home as his guests.

While they were eating dinner that evening, the forty thieves were drinking rakı.<sup>2</sup> Kazım Ağa did not know what rakı was. "What is that?" he asked.

"It is rakı--something good for the appetite," one of them said.

<sup>1</sup>An ağa is a rural landowner, usually rich, often powerful. The word ağa may also be added, as an honorific, to the name of a distinguished man, whether or not he has any land or wealth. Since Kazım had a farm but no other distinction, it was the first of these uses of ağa that applied to him.

<sup>2</sup>Rakı is a powerful liquor with anise flavor. It is the national liquor of Turkey, and it is manufactured by a government monopoly. It is perfectly clear, like water, but turns white when water is added to it--hence its nickname, "Lion's Milk."

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"Give me some of it," he said. It tasted so good that he drank the whole bottle of rakı and became so drunk that he was unconscious. The thieves threw him on the dung heap of his own farm, where he lay for two or three days before he woke up. When he went into his house, he found that the thieves had carried away all of his furniture and other belongings

*He was found*

Kazım Ağa began to follow the forty thieves. Along the way he saw a rabbit with a bead on its neck. He decided to follow the rabbit now instead of the thieves. When the rabbit reached its burrow, Kazım Ağa caught it, but as he did so, he saw that there was a great amount of gold lying about the ground at the entrance to the burrow. He let the rabbit go and took as much gold as he could carry.

Kazım Ağa was rich now, and after he returned home, he became engaged to the daughter of the king of that land. The king instructed his daughter that she must discover and report to him where Kazım Ağa had suddenly gotten so much gold. After they were married, the bride insisted on seeing the place where her husband had found his wealth. He finally agreed to take her there but only if she were blindfolded both going and coming back. Although she saw gold on the ground outside the rabbit burrow, she was still unable to tell her father where the burrow was. Soon she wanted to visit that burrow

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a second time, and again Kazım Ağa blindfolded her both going there and returning. On the third trip to the burrow, however she persuaded Kazım to allow her to go without any bandage over her eyes

Immediately after their return from this third trip, the girl told her father where it was located. He at once sent men there to dig out all of the remaining gold. Once the king had gotten all of the gold from the burrow, he dismissed Kazım from the palace and ended the marriage between Kazım and his daughter.

day after that, Kazım Ağa stopped at a köfte<sup>3</sup> shop owned by an old man known as Köfte Baba. This Köfte Baba had his shop built over a pit. He sometimes had his customers sit on a trap-door in the floor. By opening this trap-door, he was able to cast them into the pit below. Whenever he did this, he would kill the customers later and use their flesh to make more köfte. Kazım Ağa ate one köfte. Then he ate a second köfte. As he started to eat a third, he was dumped into the pit.

it was his turn to be slaughtered, Kazım Ağa said, "Don't kill me, Köfte Baba, and I shall weave you a fine rug worth far more than my flesh is worth."

Köfte Baba went out and bought some yarn for the rug.

<sup>3</sup>A köfte is a fried or broiled meatball containing finely chopped onions.

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Kazım started weaving, using several different colors as he worked. Into the design of the rug he wove the following message: "I am imprisoned at the bottom of a pit at such-and-such a place. Let the buyer of this rug please come and save me."

When the rug was finished, Köfte Baba took it to market to sell it, but it was such an elegant rug that it was too expensive for the people at the market. The king's daughter saw him as he was returning home with the rug and she decided to buy it. After some bargaining, she bought it for 150 liras. As soon as she had read the message woven into it, she sent soldiers to rescue Kazım Ağa. After that they were married for a second time, and they lived together happily for the rest of their lives.