

Story 1022 1974 Tape 17) Narrator: Hacı Şükrü Erdoğan

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Akdağmadeni kaza,
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The Youngest Brother and the Jinns

Once--sometime in the distant past--there were three brothers. The two older brothers were married, but the youngest was still single. One day the two older brothers said, "Let us go and find a wife for our younger brother and have him married

The three brothers started out to seek a wife for the youngest. After traveling for some time they came to a mountain one evening. As they prepared to spend the night there, one of the older brothers said, "There are wild animals here which could be harmful to us. Let us each take turns standing guard while the other two sleep." This they agreed upon, and the youngest brother was the first to stand guard.

After the youngest brother served as guard for a time, he awakened his older brothers, and then the youngest went ^{to} sleep. As soon as he was soundly asleep, his two older brothers plotted against him. One of them said, "What are we going to do? Finding a wife for our younger brother will involve much walking and much work. Why do we bother?"

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other one said, "Let us roll a rock down upon him and kill him. It is so lonely out here that no one will hear him in his suffering."

They agreed to do this. Climbing up to a place above where their brother was sleeping, they dislodged a large boulder and rolled it down toward him. Then they ran away, thinking that they had killed him. As the boulder bounced down the slope, it bounced right over the youngest brother without harming him.

In the morning when he awoke, the youngest brother found himself alone. Not knowing which way to go, he began wandering aimlessly.

nevertheless decided to search through the mill to see what he might find there. While he was inside the mill, some jinns entered the building and began talking among themselves. The boy quickly hid himself and listened to what they were saying

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jinn said, "In Istanbul there is a certain blacksmith shop located at such-and-such a place. Although the blacksmith does not know this, there is buried beneath his anvil a large quantity of liras."

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A second jinn said, "The padişah of this land has just recently gone ^{blindness 10,12} blind. None of his doctors can do anything to restore his eyesight. In the garden near this mill, however, can be found a cure ^{10*12} for his blindness. The leaves of a certain poplar tree can cure blindness if they are rubbed on the eyes of the blind person."

A third jinn said, "The principal city of the Province of Gaziantep¹ is being destroyed by a lengthy drought. They have no water at all there. But if anyone will dig into the top of the hill that stands just outside the city, a great amount of water will rush out--even more than the people there need."

The youngest son listened carefully to all of these remarks, and after the jinns had left the old mill, he too departed. He started at once toward İstanbul. When he arrived in that city, he found the blacksmith shop that the jinn had described. He said to the blacksmith, "I should like to become your apprentice. I shall study night and day to learn this trade. What will you pay me to be your apprentice?"

"What should I give you? You know the rate of pay

¹The narrator does not say Gaziantep, but that is unmistakably the province to which he refers. He says Hantep, a form of Antep, the older name of Gaziantep.

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for apprentices: Maybe 50 kuruş,² maybe 100 kuruş, maybe 200 kuruş. It depends upon how much you work.

"I shall work for one red lira³ a day. By working night and day, I shall bring in three red liras a day. I shall keep one lira and give you two

"I shall agree to that. You will work night and day and earn three red liras. You will keep one lira and give me two."

first night that the young man spent in the blacksmith shop he dug up the treasure from beneath the place where the anvil stood. The next day he handed the blacksmith the two liras that he had agreed to earn for him each day. As the young man was about to leave the shop, the blacksmith said, "Oh, please don't go away! Don't leave!"

I am just going to walk around İstanbul and take a look at this large city," said the young man. Once he

²The kuruş is 1/100 of a lira. Until the mid-1960s small purchases and small services were still paid for with kuruşes. The runaway inflation that followed reduced the lira to less than 1/1000 of a dollar or 1/10 of a U.S. cent. This made the kuruş totally useless as a monetary unit.

³Peasant narrators especially, but almost all narrators of Turkish tales, refer to the most valuable gold as red gold. There is no such thing as red gold. If what is said to be gold has a reddish tinge, it is probably an alloy of gold and copper, worth less, not more, than regular yellow gold.

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had left the blacksmith shop, however, he never returned. Instead, he went back and got some of those poplar leaves. Then he went to the palace of the blind padişah and knocked on the palace door. There he called out, "Open the door! I am a surgeon."

palace people said to each other, "Who is this man? What can he do? So many doctors have come here and been completely unable to restore the padişah's vision. Who is this fellow to open the padişah's eyes?" They informed the padişah of the arrival of a new surgeon.

"Let him come in. One may fail, but another may succeed. Who knows? Let him come in," said the padişah.

youngest son was brought into the presence of the padişah. He immediately rubbed one of the curative leaves on the padişah's eyes. After he had done this a second time, the padişah's eyes flashed, and the ruler discovered that he could again see perfectly well.

Rejoicing in his ability to see once more, the padişah said, "You may wish from me anything I am capable of giving you. What do you want?"

"What should I wish for?" asked the young man. "I wish to be made governor of Gaziantep Province. Appoint me to that position." (As you already know, he had heard about the water problem there.

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"Very well, then," said the padişah, "I hereby assign to the governorship of Gaziantep," and he had an order written to that effect.

Traveling at once to Gaziantep, he went to the governor's office and said to the governor, "Arise from that and give it to me, for I have just been appointed governor to replace you." After showing the padişah's or the youngest son was accepted as the new governor.

The first act of the new governor was to make an announcement to the people. Summoning town criers, he had them make the following announcement in all the streets of the city: "Tomorrow morning everyone is to bring a pickaxe a shovel and report at the top of such-and-such a hill prepared to dig." The people gathered on the hilltop the next day with their tools. It was not long after they started digging that water began to gush forth. "Now you enjoy life again," the governor said to all of his people.

Several prominent men in the city came to the governor and said, "Let us get you married." A number of beys⁴ 73-74 offered the hands of their daughters to him. But as you

⁴A bey in older times was a member of the aristocracy

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know, he was already engaged.⁵

governor answered, "There is a girl in such-and-such a village to whom I am engaged. I am going to marry her."

"Oh, come! Why do that? Let us get a bride for you here from among the families of the beys and ağas."⁶

"No, I shall marry the girl to whom I am already engaged."

When the youngest brother reached the village where the girl lived, the two recognized each other at once.⁷ After a long wedding festival they were married, and the bride was delivered to the youngest brother in the bridal chamber.

After the couple had returned to Gaziantep, the young man continued to be the governor of that province. His fame was so great that everyone in the land heard about

⁵We certainly do not know this. The narrator has mentioned absolutely nothing about such an engagement.

⁶An ağa is not an aristocrat. He is a wealthy landowner in the country.

⁷The fact that the narrator calls attention to their recognizing each other suggests that their relationship commenced in a dream. Minstrel songs and tales often have spiritual engagements between young people. Each then knows exactly what the other looks like even though they have never seen each other in the real world. If this kind of relationship is indeed suggested here, then there has been much omitted earlier in the tale.

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him. Eventually his brothers became aware that he was still alive and that he had become very successful. The wives of these two older brothers said to their husbands, "How did your brother manage to become governor? You must go and find this out so that you too can become governors."

The two older brothers traveled to Gaziantep, and shortly after their arrival in that province, they called upon the governor. They asked him, "Brother, how did you ever become governor? Tell us how you did it so that we may go and do the same."

Their younger brother answered, "Do you remember where you left me in the forest on the mountainside? Well, I walked from there until I reached a stream. Following the course of this stream, I came upon an old abandoned mill. It was in that mill that I learned how to become a governor. Go and enter that mill, and you too may learn how to become governors."

The two older brothers traveled to the place in the forest on the mountainside where they had left their younger brother, thinking they had killed him. Finding the stream that he had told them about, they soon located the abandoned mill and entered it. When evening came, the jinn⁷⁵⁻⁷s arrived again, all of them in good spirits. Some of them

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talking and laughing; others were dancing. After a while they all sat down to talk seriously, but before their conversation started, three of them gave the group a warning. "Remember how we talked here the last time we met in this mill? Well, there must have been some human being

in the mill who overheard us, for soon after that the gold disappeared from beneath the anvil of the İstanbul blacksmith we discussed; the sight was restored to the blind padişah we said could be cured with tree leaves from the garden here; and on the hilltop we described, wa-

was found that saved from destruction the people of the main city of Gaziantep. There may well be human beings here again to hear our secrets, and so we should examine carefully every part of this old mill before we begin our conversation tonight."

This advice was followed, and a few minutes later the two older brothers were discovered hiding in large baskets in a storeroom of the mill. As the jinns prepared to beat the two brothers, they asked them, "Do you wish to eat or not?"⁸

"Oh, I do not want a governorship or anything else.

⁸Although not stated, it is implied that the jinns plan to kill the brothers. Prisoners about to be executed were often asked if they wished a final meal.

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I'd be better off if I could just preserve my life!"⁹

⁹It is not clear whether this is said by one of the brothers or whether it is a commentary on the tale made by the narrator. From the great amount of laughter that followed the remark, it could well be the narrator's comment. If that is what it is, then the remark could also be considered structurally as a good exit line for the narrator, a gimmick with which to end the tale.