

Story 1030 (1974 Tape 17

Narrator: Ali Yaver

Location: Olgunlar village,
kaza of Refayık
(Refahiye), Yozgat
Province

Date: August 10, 1974

Bekri Mustafa¹ and the Devil

Bekri Mustafa used to drink his way through the city, from Unkapanı to Kumkapı to Aksaray.² He would stop at various places in these districts until he arrived at Samatya, where his home was located. One night as he was in Samatya and nearing his own house, he came to a church. He said, "Well, now, let me stop in at this place and take a look at what is going on there."³

When he entered the church and looked around, he noticed that there were a number of statues there with ~~can-~~ ~~dles~~ burning before all but one of them. Calling the guards of the church, he demanded, "Come here! Why is it that you have a candle burning before each of the other

¹Bekri Mustafa represents the alcoholic in Turkish folk tradition. As with other type characters, narrators often try to establish some historical identity for him. In some other tales (though not here) he is associated with the reign of Sultan Murat IV (1623-1640).

²Districts of Istanbul, the city of almost all Bekri Mustafa's imaginary exploits.

³The narrator uses a common expression here. He says that Bekri wanted to find out what was and what was not there. The Turkish expression used is Ne var ne yok? This means What's the news? or What's going on?

Story 1030

statues but none before this one?"

They answered, "Sir, this is a statue of the Devil. He leads people into doing all kinds of evil things, and he is harmful to them

"What harm? I don't care about that. I demand that you light a candle before this statue!" Hearing that, the guards immediately lighted a candle and placed it before the Devil in the name of Bekri Mustafa

Bekri then proceeded to his own house and went to bed. As he slept, he had a dream in which the Devil appeared. The Devil said to him, "Come with me, and I shall show you where a wonderful treasure may be gotten. You did me a favor, and in return I shall make a treasure available to you. It is located in a gold trader's shop in the Mısırçarşısı.⁴ Come along, and we shall both become rich!"

"Very well," answered Bekri Mustafa.

In his dream Bekri accompanied the Devil to the gold trader's shop. When they got there, Bekri said, "But the doors are locked. How can we get inside?"

The Devil said, "Climb in through that window. Inside, near the door, you will find a heap of gold. Hand

⁴The Corn Market in the Covered Bazaar.

Story 1030

this out, for it is sufficient to make us both rich."

When Bekri was about to climb a ladder to enter through the window, the night watchmen came along blowing their whistles, Fiwiit! Fiwiit!⁵ Bekri asked the Devil, "Hey, friend, what should we do now?"

"Don't be afraid," said the Devil. "Just go before the door and defecate!"

"Defecate? Why should I defecate?"

"Because the guards will quickly move away from a place where there is such filth, and then you will be able to enter the gold trader's shop."

When Bekri awakened, he discovered that he had befouled the bed terribly. He said, "How dreadful and disgusting! That shameless Devil. Now I realize that the guard at the church was correct when he said that the Devil led men into doing all kinds of bad things!" Without saying anything to his wife about the matter, he dragged the mattress and bedclothes to the seaside at Samatya, and there he washed them until they were clean.

⁵Onomatopoeia for the sound of a police whistle. In most Turkish cities night watchmen patrol the streets in pairs, usually about a block apart. As each moves along in a given direction, he periodically blows his whistle, as much to let his partner know where he is as to threaten any culprits. This type of watchman is called a bekçi.

Story 1030

Afterwards Bekri Mustafa went out and bought a sledgehammer. Armed with this tool, he went again to the church where he had stopped the night before. He called to the guard, "Come here!" Then, pointing to the statue of the Devil, he said, "I want to have this pimp's head smashed. If you don't do it, then I will! He made me defecate in bed and embarrass myself in the presence of my wife. Let us hit him very hard!"

"My dear fellow, didn't I warn you against him? I told you that no candle should be lighted for him because the Devil is always harmful to human beings. I warned you, but you ignored my warning, and so I do not feel any responsibility for your difficulty. You failed to take my advice and then you paid the penalty for doing so."