

Story 1195 (1990 Tape 9)

Narrator: İsmail Doğan, 73

Location: Salihi, town in Manisa Province

Date: July 12, 1990

fate - all

The Inevitable Bride

Once there was and once there was not a horse ⁸⁴⁻⁸⁶ thief. This thief decided to steal a very famous horse owned by a wealthy bey.¹ It was a horse that was on everybody's tongue. In order to protect the horse, the bey kept a lamp lighted in a window of his house that faced the stable in which the horse was kept.

On the night that the thief went to steal the famous horse, he noticed much activity in the room of the house from which the lamp was shining. Creeping quietly up to the window, he looked inside to see what was going on there. He saw that the wife of the bey was giving birth to a child. Midwives were working over the woman. In the room also were three dervishes² who seemed to be totally ^{invisible} invisible to the midwives and the pregnant woman.

After a few minutes a daughter was born, and immediately

¹A bey is the equivalent of a British lord. At one time they were aristocrats who dominated Turkish society. Today the term bey is an honorific title or term of respect.

²A dervish is the Moslem equivalent of a Christian monk or friar. They are ordinarily mortal men, but the dervish figures in this tale seem to be supernatural beings.

Story 119:

After the delivery of the child the dervishes uttered predictions about her. The first said "This child will live such such number of years." The second said "This daughter will not only have a long life but she will also have a peaceful life." And the third dervish said "This girl will marry the thief who tonight will steal the famous horse owned by this household."

When the thief heard the last of the predictions he was upset by it. He said to himself "I am a very rich and competent person capable of stealing their famous horse. Why should my baby be born to my wife?" The more he thought about this the more disturbed he became. After the midwife had left the thief entered the house and took the baby from its mother. Going outside into the yard, he threw the baby upon a table which had sharpened stakes. Several of the pointed stakes stuck into the abdomen of the child. While the baby lay quivering on the points the thief took the famous horse and fled. The thief went to the stable and took the famous horse.

Time came and time went and one day many years later the country in which the thief lived was invaded by a foreign army. After the war had gone on for some time many of the people of that land were forced to flee in order to save their lives. (This was similar to the way that many Kurds were recently

Story 1195

forced to flee from Iraq into Turkey.³⁾ The thief fled into a neighboring country, where he changed his way of life and ceased being a thief. He soon struck up friendships with a number of people in the place where he settled in the neighboring state.

After a while several of his new friends said to him, "You seem to be a good man, and it is unfortunate that you are still single. An immigrant family from your former country lives near us, and they have a very attractive daughter who has reached a marriageable age. She is a good-natured and respectable lady--a person much like you. Why don't you allow us to make arrangements to have you marry this girl?"

He thought about that and then said, "If Destiny wills

I should marry that girl, then I shall accept my Destiny."

A dünür⁴ was sent to the home of the girl to ask for her hand in marriage to the former horse thief. After all of the

³This is a reference to an event that occurred about a year before the taping of this tale. Under the direction of the dictator Saddam Hussein, Iraqi troops attacked defenseless Kurdish nomads with poison gas. Some 90,000 Kurds fled to Turkey for refuge; later, many returned to Iraq, but some remained in Turkey.

⁴A dünür or dünürcü is a matchmaker who negotiates the terms of an arranged marriage. Many marriages in rural Turkey are still not the results of romance and courtship but are arranged by the families of the young people.

212/10/1980 ✓

Story 1195

usual arrangements had been made, a wedding celebration was held, and the former horse thief and the girl were married.

After the newlyweds had gone to the nuptial chamber for the night, the bridegroom noticed some scars on the abdomen of his wife. He asked her, "What terrible wounds caused you to have such large scars on your abdomen?"

The bride answered, "According to what my mother told me, I received those wounds on the night I was born. A thief came to our house and stole a famous horse owned by my father, but before he took the horse, he tried to kill me. He took me from my mother and threw me on the points of a stack of sharpened stakes in our yard. He thought that he had killed me, but Allah saved my life. I did not die, as you can see, for here I am alive

When the bridegroom heard this, he was stunned with bewilderment. He thought, "So what the dervishes said was entirely accurate. No matter what I did, there was no way in which I could escape my fate!"

He then confessed the whole matter to his new wife. "I was the man who stole your father's horse and tried to kill you. There were three dervishes present at your birth, and all three made predictions about your life. One of them said that you would one day marry the man who was on that very night going to steal the horse. I was angered by this prediction, and I tried

Story 1195

to kill you in order to prevent its coming to pass. But there was no way in which I could escape the fate allotted to me, and therefore you did not die. What the dervish predicted was true. You were destined to be my wife, no matter what else happened.

In this way the two were married, and they stayed married