

Story 1432 (1976 Tape 33) Narrator: Unidentified

Location: Sarıyar Dam on
Sakarya River,
Beypazarı kaza,
Ankara Province

Date: June

The Clever Farm Girl and the Carpet-Weaving Padishah

One day a padishah said to his grand vizier, "Oh lâla,¹ here is something that I want you to do. I want you to bring me a live ram, and I want you to give me at the same time a carpet made from its wool and a meat dish made from its flesh.

The vizier did not know how to accomplish this task. He began wandering about the country in search of someone who might be able to tell him how to do it. One day, near evening, he overtook an old man walking along the road he was following. "Selamünaleyküm," he said.

"Aleykümselam,"² answered the old man.

¹In the past, a royal, aristocratic, or wealthy family would hire a man to serve as tutor, counselor, and valet to its son. He was known as a lâla. The lâla would retain this position throughout the son's boyhood and young manhood. Sometimes he remained with the son for the rest of his career. In folktales, some powerful rulers still have their lâlas with them as advisers. That is clearly the case here.

²Selamünaleyküm/Aleykümselam--traditional exchange of greetings between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/And may peace be unto you, too. If Selamünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

Story 1432

"Father, darkness is approaching, and I have no place to spend the night. May I be a guest at your home?"

"Very well, you may be my guest, and we can walk along together to my village. I am a farmer, but I live in a village."

After they had walked a short distance, they came to a hill. The vizier said, "Father, let me carry you for a while on my back, and then you can carry me for a while. That will make climbing this long hill ahead easier for both of us."

The farmer did not understand what the vizier meant by that remark. He just ignored the comment and kept walking.

A short time later, they came to a forest. The vizier said, "Father, let us each enter this forest as one and go out of it as two." But again the farmer remained silent, for he did not understand what the vizier meant by this remark. When they reached the farmer's house, the vizier noticed in the garden a girl who was very beautiful but who was cross-eyed. The farmer's daughter had been that way since her birth. The vizier said, "Father, you have produced a good smoke, but you made it a little crooked."

Story 1432

Although this remark meant nothing to the farmer, it was overheard by the girl, who understood it at once. When she was alone with her father, she asked, "Father, did that stranger make any other remarks to you?"

"Yes, he said this and he said that, but I could not understand any of it." After the daughter had explained to her father the comments made by the vizier, the farmer went to the room where his guest was sitting and said, "I have now had time to think about some of the things you said as we were walking here, and now I understand them. When we came to a hill, you said, 'I shall carry you for a while, and then you can carry me for a while. In that way we shall climb this hill more easily.' I was tired by then, and so I did not understand that, but now I realize that you meant that we should take turns talking in order to entertain each other and take our minds off the difficulty of climbing the hill. When we approached a forest, you said, 'Let us each enter this forest as one and go out of it as two. You meant, 'Let us each pick up a stick or stone and in that way double our ability to defend ourselves against wild animals. And now, don't look at the crookedness of the smoke

Story 1432

Just look at its source."

When the vizier heard these interpretations of his earlier remarks, he said, "Father, these are not your words. Please permit me to talk with the owner of these words." After talking with the farmer's daughter for a few minutes, the vizier realized how very intelligent she was, and so he explained his problem to her. "My girl, I need a live ram from whose wool a rug has been made and from whose flesh a meat dish has been cooked. How can I manage to do that?"

"That is an easy thing to do, and I shall do it for you if you will give me the money needed to buy a ram. Taking the money which the vizier at once handed to her, the girl went to the marketplace and bought a ram. After shearing off its wool, she used it to make a rug containing many colorful designs. She then castrated the ram and roasted its testicles. On the following day she delivered to the vizier the live ram, the rug, and the dish of roasted meat. "Take these to whomever you wish," she said

When the padishah received these three things which he had demanded and heard the vizier's account of how he had gotten them, he asked, "Lâla, can there really be a

Story 1432

girl so clever? Go back and ask, with the will of Allah,³ for the hand of this girl in marriage to me

The vizier went to the farmer and said, "I have come with the will of Allah to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage to the padishah. Will you give her to the padishah?"

But before the father could answer, the girl said, "No! I shall not marry him!"

"Why not?"

"What is his occupation?"

"He is the padishah. What else could his occupation be?"

The clever girl answered, "He is the padishah because the people are willing to have him be padishah. If someday the people no longer wish him to be padishah, how would he be able to feed me?"

³An appreciable percentage of Turkish marriages are not brought about by love, but by parental arrangement. A matchmaker is sent to the family of the girl, and much of the dialogue between the two parties is carried on through formulaic expressions. The opening remark of the matchmaker is this: "I have come with the will of Allah and the approval of the Prophet to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage to X, the son of Y." The claim of being backed by Allah's will is a condition devoutly to be wished, and it is apparently uttered in the optative subjunctive mode.

Story 1432

When this was reported to the padishah, he thought about it for a while. Then he called together his council of viziers and wise men and asked them, "What is the occupation in the world?"

After some discussion the council reported, "Our padishah, carpet making is the best occupation."

Upon hearing this, the padishah went to a master carpet maker and said, "I wish to learn the skill of carpet making. You will not consider me as padishah but as your apprentice. How long will it take you to teach me this trade?"

"My padishah, I can teach it to you in three months."

Beginning that day, the padishah became an apprentice of the master carpet maker. He reported to the carpet shop every day, just as the other apprentices did. By the end of three months he had indeed become a good carpet maker. On the day after his apprenticeship was completed, the padishah decided to relax by wandering around the for a while. Disguised in his apprentice clothes, the padishah walked from street to street. After a while, he came to a famous kebab shop. Having grown hungry by that time, he decided to eat some kebab there. He did not know that the owner of that shop made all of his kebab dishes

Story 1432

out of human flesh. He captured human beings for this purpose by causing them to fall through a trapdoor into the cellar beneath his shop.

When the kebab maker saw the disguised padishah looking into his shop, he called out, "Come in! Come in!" When the padishah entered the shop, he stepped upon a beautiful carpet which was spread over the open trapdoor in the floor. He immediately plunged into the cellar below, where he found two other men.

One of these men said, "Oh, here is another person to be slaughtered

"What do you mean? What slaughter are you talking about?" asked the padishah.

"The owner of this shop slaughters human beings and makes all of his kebabs from their flesh," the man answered.

Amazed at this information, the padishah said nothing for a while. Then he called up to the kebab maker and asked, "How much money do you expect to make from my flesh?"

"Between fifty and one hundred liras."

"Let me make a bargain with you," said the padishah.

"I am a carpet maker, and if you will spare my life, I shall

Story 1432

make you a carpet that you can sell for far more than that amount of money.

The kebab maker agreed to this and brought a loom and necessary amount of wool yarn. The padishah worked steadily on the carpet for a whole month. While he was doing this, his grand vizier was searching everywhere he could think of the padishah.

When the rug was finished, the padishah said to the kebab maker, "This is such an expensive rug that the only place will be able to sell it is at the palace." Following this advice, the kebab maker took the carpet to the padishah's palace offered it for sale.

While the grand vizier, who was an educated man, was examining the carpet, he discovered a message woven into its design. The message said, "I have been captured by such and such a kebab maker, and I am confined in the cellar of his shop. Come and rescue me."

As soon as the vizier read this, he said to the kebab maker, "Sit down and drink a cup of coffee while I have a servant go to the treasury to get your money for this carpet." Then he sent a number of soldiers to rescue the padishah

After the padishah had returned to the palace and had dressed in his royal robe, he went to the room where the kebab

Story 1432

maker was drinking coffee and waiting for his money for the carpet. There he said to the kebab maker, "You kept your word and did not slaughter me, therefore I shall not have you executed, but you must never again use human flesh in your kebabs." Later he said to the grand vizier, "Lâla, if I had not learned the carpet making trade, I would now be dead." Shortly after that, he was married to the clever daughter of the farmer.