

Story 1657 (1993 Tape 2)

Narrator: Unidentified

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The Fig Men

There was a mental institution which contained a large number of people who were crazy in one way or another. After a while a very strange problem developed at this insane asylum. Every morning two or three of the patients were found badly injured. Their bodies were always found at the foot of a large fig tree that grew in the garden of asylum.

The doctors at the asylum were greatly puzzled by these repeated injuries. They could find no reason for these injuries. At first they thought that the injuries were just accidental, but when they continued night after night, they concluded that there must be some reason for their occurrence. The doctors decided to stay up all night and watch the behavior of the patients. They hid themselves at various places where they could not be seen.

A short while after the patients had all gone to sleep one of them awakened and spoke to two of his friends. "Wake

Ahmet; wake up! Let us go!" Then, turning toward his other friend, he said, "Come on, Ali! It is time to go!"

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All three of these patients went outside and went directly to the foot of the fig tree in the garden. Two of them climbed up into the tree, but the third remained on the ground beneath the tree. Then all three of the patients fell asleep again.

The doctors were observing all of this very closely. They were deeply puzzled about what they saw. They could see no meaning in the patients' behavior, and they saw nothing that would lead to any injuries

About thirty minutes later, the patient lying on the ground beneath the tree woke up. He called up into the tree, saying, "Wake up, Ahmet! You are ripe. It is now time to fall down." As soon as Ahmet heard that, he threw himself down out of the tree and landed on the ground with a crash. Then the one who had been sleeping beneath the tree called up again, saying, "Wake up, Ali! You are now ripe! It is time for you to fall from the tree." When Ali heard that, he, too, threw himself out of the tree and crashed upon the ground.

Based upon what they had just witnessed, the doctors decided that the patients thought themselves figs.