

Story 1892 (1996 Tape 3)

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The Girl Fated to Run Away

Once there was and once there wasn't a sultan who had no children. As time passed, he grew more and more disturbed about his lack of an heir. Then one day an old dervish came to visit him and his wife. This dervish understood their problem. He gave them an apple and said, "If the two of you will split this apple and eat it, you will have a daughter, but that girl's eyes will always gaze beyond her home.

The sultan and his wife ate the apple and, as the dervish had said, they had a daughter nine months later. The mother and father kept their daughter inside the palace at all times so that her gaze would not fall upon anything outside. They kept her in a room which had mirrors on all its walls and mirrors over its windows. One day while the girl was eating her dinner, she found a bone in her food. Since she had never been allowed to go outside the palace, she knew nothing about

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the outside world. She did not know, therefore, what bone was or what she should do with it. Her whole life had been spent in a mirror-filled room. When she cast bone away from her, it struck and broke one of the mirrors covering a window. As she stared through that window, exclaimed, "O my Allah, there are many more things in this world than I have here in my room!"

That evening when the girl was about to go to bed, through the window she saw a camel caravan loaded with all sorts of goods passing by. She managed to open her window, through which she fell to the ground below. When one of the caravan leaders found her there, she pleaded with him to take her along in the caravan. The man refused, saying, "No! No! Your father and mother would have me killed if I did that. There is another reason why I cannot take you along with me and that is the fact that you must be very precious to your parents."

Because the leader had refused to take her along with him, she stood aside until the caravan started to move again, and then she followed along behind it. When darkness arrived, the caravan owners stopped and set up a camp for the night. As they were doing this, they

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discovered the girl. They pitched a separate tent her, and they lined it with much cotton so that she would sleep well and be undisturbed.

In the morning the caravan departed quietly from that campsite and left the girl behind. When she wakened some time later, she looked around and saw nobody and nothing but some rosebushes. She sang,

O my roses! O my soul!

Who were they who tricked me so?

They took their goods, they went their

And left me sleeping all alone

While she was wandering around, she met a poor dervish in tattered clothes. She said to that old man, "Dervish father, will you trade clothes with me?" When the dervish agreed to this exchange, she put on his ragged clothes and discovered that (by the will of Allah) they fitted her. She next used some cosmetics to make her face resemble that of an old man. She then set out in pursuit of the caravan, following the tracks it left in the road. By moving faster than the slow camels, she soon overtook the caravan. The dervish then said to the caravan leader, "Along the way you passed, I saw a

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girl singing a sad song and walking around in circles

The people in the caravan asked, "What was it the girl was singing?"

The dervish answered, "This is what she sang.

O my roses! O my soul!

Who were they who tricked me so?

They took their goods, they went away

And left me sleeping all alone."

Then the caravan leader, whom the girl had met before, also asked, "What was it that that girl sang?"

The dervish repeated the song of the girl. As the caravan moved along, its leader asked the dervish, "What was it the girl sang?" And each time that question was asked, the dervish repeated the girl's song.

When the caravan had reached its destination, each merchant took his own goods and went home. The leader took the dervish to stay at his own home, for he wished to hear more about the girl who had been left behind. After the leader had been living there for awhile, the time arrived when he had agreed to be married. When the girl dressed as a dervish heard this news, she decided to hang herself. Just after the girl had placed

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a rope around her neck and was swinging from a beam, the caravan leader entered the room. Seeing what the girl had done, he untied the rope from her neck and lowered her to the floor. He then said, "Aha! You are not a dervish but the girl I love. Why did you hide from me and allow me to make all these expensive wedding arrangements to marry someone else?"

He then gave back the dowry to the girl he had planned to marry. After that, he and the sultan's daughter were married, and they lived happily together all the rest of their lives