

Story 1996 (1992 Tape 9)

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of Lefkoşa, North
Cyprus Turkish
Republic

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A Shoemaker¹ Rewarded, an Evil Jinn² Destroyed

Once there was a shoemaker who lived in a small village. One day a friend said to him, “You work here for almost nothing. Because you are a talented shoemaker, you could earn much more money in a large city like Istanbul. You are wasting your life here where nobody will pay you for the quality of your work.”

The shoemaker said, “You are probably right, and I shall move at once to Istanbul.”

In those days people used animals for transportation. The next morning, therefore, the shoemaker rented six mules and began loading his household equipment and his tools onto their backs. After traveling for several hours, he came to a deserted house, where he decided to rest

¹The standard Turkish word for shoemaker is kunduracı. The narrator here renders it in a Cypriotic dialect, çangarcı.

²The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes forth from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi beliefs and in other mystical systems.

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for awhile. He tethered the mules and went into the old house. There he took out a book and began to read. After he had read several pages of that book, he heard a noise outside going tuk, tuk, tuk. Looking out the window, he saw a man digging up soil in the yard. He thought, "Perhaps that man is digging a hole in which to bury gold." After the man in the yard had filled the hole with dirt again, he left. The shoemaker then went out and reopened that hole. He did not find any gold in it, but at the bottom of the hole he found the body of a girl lying face downward. At first he supposed that she was dead, but then he saw her feet move slightly and he heard her breathing. The shoemaker pulled the girl from the hole and covered her with a warm blanket. When he continued his journey toward Istanbul, he took her along with him.

When they arrived in that city they went to a small hotel. There he asked the desk clerk, "Can you tell me where I can get a good doctor?"

The clerk answered, "A good doctor charges any patient a high

But the shoemaker said, "This girl's life is more important than money. If a doctor can heal her, I am willing to pay whatever he charges."

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When they found a doctor, the shoemaker asked him to heal the girl. Before he agreed to do this, however, the doctor asked, “How are you going to pay me?”

Before the shoemaker could answer that question, the girl spoke up and said, “You will be well paid when you take this letter to the palace that you can see ahead of us.”

When the doctor took the letter to the palace, it was delivered by an attendant to someone whom he did not see. Soon a servant appeared with a bag full of golden coins and gestured to the doctor to take some of them. The doctor had no bag with him, and so he just filled his pockets with money. Neither the shoemaker nor the doctor had known before this that the girl was the daughter of the padishah.

The girl and the shoemaker were each given a room in a mansion near the palace. Every day the doctor visited his patient until she had regained most of her strength. Then one day she handed a gold coin to the shoemaker and said, “Take this gold piece to a merchant located at such and such a street and buy whatever you would like for yourself.” When he found that merchant’s shop, the shoemaker bought there a fancy cigar case. The two men talked cordially for awhile, and then the merchant asked his customer to have dinner with him and then spend the night at his home.

“I must first ask my wife about this,” said the shoemaker.

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When he returned and asked his “wife” (the girl he had dug from her grave), she said, “It is very nice of him to ask us to visit his home. He has five concubines. Let us accept his invitation and take with us 5,000 liras for each of his concubines.” The shoemaker and his “wife” went to the merchant’s home and enjoyed a pleasant evening there. As they were leaving, the “wife” of the shoemaker invited the merchant to their home for dinner.

On the evening that the merchant appeared at their home, the shoemaker began to wonder about his “wife’s” reason for inviting this man. “Why did she want him to come here?” he asked himself. When dinner was finished and everyone had retired for the night, the princess left her room and went to the merchant’s room. The shoemaker was aware of this and followed her secretly. When she entered the merchant’s room, she removed a large knife from his belongings and killed him with it. Seeing this, the shoemaker said to himself, “Alas, Allah! She must be mad, and she may kill me, too!”

Seeing that the shoemaker had followed her and now knew what she had done, the princess explained her action. She said, “That merchant was not a human being but an evil jinn. He put a spell on me from which I suffered for years.”

The padishah was very pleased that his lost daughter had finally been found and that she had recovered. He arranged a wedding

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celebration for his daughter and the shoemaker, and at the end of all the festivity the two were married.