

Story 2117 (Miscellaneous
Tape 16, Item 8--1971)

Narrator: Mevlüt Alan

Location: Narman, kaza
town of Erzu-
rum Province

Date: August 23, 1971

Good Advice and Other Gold

Three young men could find no employment in their small village. They decided to spend some time working in a large city. After they had accumulated good sums of money, they would return to their village.

Soon after they arrived in Istanbul, they found jobs in that city. One of them was given a contract for 1,300 liras for a year's work. A second of these villagers received a contract for 1,000 liras. The third man was not so fortunate. At first he could find no work at all. He finally took a job with a wise old man, who did not offer a contract but promised to give his new employee something valuable at the end of the year.

At the end of the year the first two villagers collected their pay and wished to return home. They went to the third man and invited him to return with them. When the third friend went to his master and asked for his pay, that old man said, "Here is a very valuable piece of advice that I shall give you for your year's work.

Story 2117

Whenever you are on a journey, do not leave the main-traveled road." He then added, "If you will work for me for another year, you will earn an even larger reward."

Disappointed by this return for all of his work, third villager nevertheless agreed to stay for another year. His friends changed their minds about going home and also agreed to work in Istanbul for another year and accumulate 1,000 or more liras apiece. At the end of second year, the third villager asked his master, "May I now receive my pay and leave?"

"Yes, you may. When you are ready to start home, return to me, and I shall give you what you deserve."

By the end of that second year, the first two villagers had each earned a considerable amount of money. When the third returned to his master for his pay, he was given three things. "First of all," said the wise old man, "here is another piece of advice for you. Whenever you encounter people who behave oddly, remain calm and mind your own business." He then gave his former employee an old horse and a saddlebag full of food.

The three friends then set out for home. The first two young men were eager to get home and show their new wealth. They decided to take a shortcut in order to get

Story 2117

there faster. But the third villager remembered the first piece of advice which his master had given him: "Whenever you are on a journey, do not leave the main-traveled road." With this advice in mind, he decided not to take the shortcut with his friends.

After he had traveled some distance farther, he came upon his friends sitting beneath a tree and clad only in their underwear. He asked what had brought them to such lowly condition. They said, "We made a mistake in taking the shortcut. A band of thieves ambushed us and stole everything we had. We were lucky to escape with our lives. We shall go back to the city to earn more money before we return to our village."

The third young man continued traveling until the sun began to set. He then stopped at a small village to find a place to spend the night. He was fortunate in being accepted as a guest in the home of a wealthy man. After eating dinner, he was shown to his bedroom. When he opened the door of a closet in that room to hang up his clothes, he was confronted by a beautiful woman. Wondering who this beauty was and why she was there in the closet, he was almost ready to ask the woman for

Story 2117

answers to these questions. But then he remembered the second piece of advice given by his master in Istanbul: "Whenever you encounter people who behave oddly, remain calm and mind your own business." Following that advice, he said nothing and shut the closet door again.

After a good night's sleep, the third villager washed himself, ate breakfast, and then went to the barn to get his horse. The owner of the house then said to him, "You seem to be a very upright and honest man. If you have a few minutes to spare, I want to tell you about the great crisis of my life

The two men went back into the house and sat down. The owner said, "I have killed more than 40 men because of the woman you saw last evening. You are a virtuous young man who did not touch that beautiful woman or even ask her what she was doing in a clothes closet. But let me now satisfy whatever curiosity you may have felt about her. She was my wife. A long while ago when we and our dog were returning home from visiting distant relatives, we were benighted along the way and were unable to reach a village before dark.

"In the waning light we found an empty sheepfold on

Story 2117

a hillside, and we decided to spend the night there. We turned loose our dog to fend for itself. It was very cold there, however, for by then the wind was blowing and snow was falling. In order to protect ourselves from the weather, we burrowed into the deep layer of manure that covered the floor of the sheepfold. Although it was uncomfortable there, we might have survived the night without unusual suffering if that sheepfold had not been a meeting place of the band of forty thieves.

"When those outlaws arrived there that night, they did not at first detect our presence. But after a short while, my wife whispered to me, 'I have to cough!'

"'You must not cough!' I whispered back. 'If you do, the thieves will discover us and kill us.' But my wife paid no attention to what I said, and a minute or two later, she coughed. Hearing that cough, the thieves dug here and there in the manure until they found us. They tied my hands and my feet, and then all forty of the thieves took turns raping my wife. They afterwards fell asleep.

"After awhile our dog returned and gnawed off the ropes that were binding me. Pulling out my knife, I killed

Story 2117

all forty of the sleeping thieves. My wife was unconscious, but I did not kill her, even though she was responsible for our mistreatment. With great difficulty I managed to bring her back here, sometimes carrying her, sometimes dragging her. Since then I have kept her in that closet you saw. If anyone sleeping in that bedroom touches her or even questions her, I immediately kill him. You acted virtuously and had nothing to do with that woman. That saved your life.

Having heard that unusual story, the third villager continued his journey homeward. When he finally reached his house, he looked through the front window, and he was shocked by what he saw. He observed his wife sitting upon a sofa with a young man. His first impulse was to kill both of them, but then he remembered again the second piece of advice given to him by his wise master in Istanbul: "Whenever you encounter people who behave oddly, remain calm and mind your own business." Although he felt that what he saw through the window was really his own business, he did remain calm. He changed his mind about what he had first intended to do, and instead of that, he simply knocked on the door.

Opening the door, his wife exclaimed, "My husband has

Story 2117

returned! My husband has returned! Come in and greet your son!" He was happy to be reunited with his family, and he was also happy that he had remained calm upon his arrival. He had not realized that during his absence, his son would have grown taller. The boy asked, "Father, Father, what did you bring me? Didn't you bring any presents for me?"

"My son, go out and get the saddlebag from my horse, and then you can see what my master in Istanbul put in it for us." When the boy brought back the saddlebag, they were all surprised at what they found inside of it. They found loaves of bread and food packets, but each loaf and each packet was stuffed with gold coins. The wealth which they found in that saddlebag was so great that it enabled them to live comfortably for the rest of their lives.