

Story 2121 (1988 Tape 16)

Narrator: Ragıb Güngör, 75

Location: Aydın, capital of
Aydın Province

Date: January 21, 1988

Why Albanians Were Considered More
Courageous Than Circassians

One day a fight broke out between two groups of men before the palace of the padishah. When the angry shouts became very loud, they were heard inside the palace. padishah wondered what the fight was all about, and so he sent a guard outside to discover its cause.

The conflict was between some fifteen Albanians the same number of Circassians. Each group claimed that its people were more courageous than the people of the opposing group. The Albanians claimed, "We are the most courageous people among the ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire."

The Circassians rejected this claim, saying, "There are no men braver than Circassians. Circassians could not be second to Albanians in this matter

The guard quickly understood the childish nature of the quarrel. Returning into the presence of the padishah, he explained to that ruler what was going on. The padishah responded to that report with this statement: "Call the

Story 2121

leaders of both groups into my court." After the guard had relayed this order to the men outside, two from each group went inside and entered into the presence of the ruler. The padishah said to them, "I have been informed about the reason for the disagreement between your groups. I want each of you to bring here this afternoon all thirteen of your supporters to be tested for the claims they make about themselves."

While the Albanian and Circassian leaders were passing this message on to their respective followers, the padishah sent for the commander of his guards. He gave orders for that officer to have carried out that afternoon. "There will be a group of Albanians and a group of Circassians here in my court this afternoon. Each group claims to be braver than the other. In order to find out which group is really superior to the other, I have ordered them to come here this afternoon to be tested for bravery. I am going to let you give them that test. I want you to place on the floor right below this one a number of troops armed with loaded rifles. I shall knock on the floor loudly three times in a row. After the third knock, have your troops all discharge their rifles at the

Story 2121

same time. After that volley of shots, I shall be able to determine which group is really the braver, Albanians or the Circassians."

That afternoon the Albanians and Circassians assembled in the throne room, where the padishah addressed them. He began by asking them the reason for their fighting. Each group indicated that it wanted to be recognized as being more courageous than its opponents. The ruler then said, "Quarreling for such a reason is unworthy of you and unacceptable to me. You are all Turkish citizens, and you should understand and help each other rather than fighting with each other. You must all serve your country in the same way, and you are all important to the country."

While some of the men present agreed with the ruler's ideas, there were others who would not change their position in even the slightest degree. This behavior prompted the padishah to knock on the floor three times, the signal for the troops beneath the throne room to discharge their rifles in unison. The explosions shocked the guests in the throne room, and they made a rush to escape from the palace.

The padishah looked around to see if any of the guests

Story 2121

had remained. He was surprised to find one guest still in the throne room. Walking over to that man, he said, "You are the only guest who did not flee. Are you an Albanian or a Circassian?"

The man replied, "I am an Albanian."

The padishah said, "You have proven that Albanians are more courageous than Circassians. I wish to reward you. Tell me what you wish to have

The Albanian replied, "My padishah, I wish only your good health, but I could use a clean pair of baggy trousers."