

Story 1275 (1987 Tape 1

Narrator: Necati Canpolat

Location: Unidentified village,
Mecitözü kaza,
Çorum Province

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ALL
Fatih Mehmet¹ Punishes an Abusive Blacksmith ALL

Fatih Mehmet had a very fine horse which he took frequently to a blacksmith shop for new shoes. Unable to understand how the horse could wear out its shoes so fast, the blacksmith was annoyed by it. He was tired of nailing new shoes on this horse time after time. One day while he was shoeing this horse, the blacksmith struck the horse on back with his hammer. Fatih Mehmet observed this, and after the horse had been shod, the sultan asked the blacksmith, "Why were you so angry at my horse? Why did you strike it with your hammer?" The blacksmith said nothing

After having his horse saddled, Fatih Mehmet mounted it. Then he ordered the blacksmith to mount behind him and on the horse's croup. After the blacksmith was in place behind him, the sultan said, "Now close your eyes and do not open them until I tell you to do so."² After they had been riding

¹Fatih means conqueror. It became the title preceding the name of Sultan Mehmet II after his forces captured Constantinople in 1453.

²These are the instructions given to one about to be carried great distances at a very high speed on the back of a flying horse. Folktale heroes and religious leaders, such as Caliph Ali, are often credited with owning such magical mounts, but we are not aware of any legends about Fatih Mehmet's

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for a while, Fatih Mehmet told the blacksmith to open his eyes and dismount. Then the sultan galloped away and returned to Istanbul.

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The blacksmith found himself in a strange land. After seeing some of the people who lived there, and after seeing some of the people passing along the road he was on, the blacksmith concluded that he must be in Saudi Arabia, somewhere along the pilgrimage trail to Mecca. At that time there were no Turks in Saudi Arabia inasmuch as the Ottoman Empire did not include that land.³ The blacksmith therefore had great difficulty in finding anyone who could speak Turkish and him directions about how to return to Istanbul. Finally he find a man who could speak some Turkish. This man said to him, "There is a Turk who comes here every Friday."⁴ He is the only one from whom you might be able to get a ride back to Turkey."

possession of such a horse.--Religious leaders are also credited in numerous tales with having made overnight trips between some Turkish site and Mecca, sometimes on such a magic horse, sometimes by Divine means. But Fatih Mehmet is not featured by the folk imagination as a mystic or saint, the kinds of men usually said to have made such miraculous trips.--All of this suggests that the narrator or his informant simply inserted the name of Mehmet into a religious legend. Most of the folk legends about Fatih Mehmet focus on his ability as a ruler or on his concept of justice.

³There were, of course, many Turks in Arabia by that time, and if the Ottomans did not possess the whole country, they did control the part of it that led to Mecca.

⁴Friday has always been the Moslem sabbath day, even though

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The blacksmith kept careful watch by the road on Friday. Unbeknown to him, the man for whom he was waiting was from Çorum Province, about twenty-five or thirty kilometers from the city of Çorum. He was named Şeyhim Sultan, and he was a very wise and saintly man, but the blacksmith had never before heard of this person. Every Friday, after enclosing his flock in a sheepfold, Şeyhim Sultan mounted his horse and made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

When the blacksmith first saw Şeyhim Sultan, that pilgrim was saying his prayers at a place just off the road.⁵ Waiting until the pilgrim had completed his prayer service, the blacksmith asked him if he would take him back to Turkey when he returned. "Yes, I shall do that, but only on the condition that you will take an oath never to tell anyone how you returned."⁶ After the blacksmith had taken such an oath, Şeyhim Sultan said, "Mount my horse behind me." And when that had been done, he said, "Now close your eyes and do not open them until I tell you to do that." After riding for a short while,

in modern Turkey Sunday is an official day of rest.

⁵Regardless of where they may be, faithful Moslems observe five daily prayer services at precisely prescribed points of time.

⁶Saints given the power or means of making such unbelievably rapid trips usually try to maintain secrecy about them.

Oath

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pilgrim said, "Now you may open your eyes."

After the blacksmith had dismounted and the pilgrim had gone his own way, the blacksmith was dismayed to find that he was not back in İstanbul but in some smaller city. When he asked where he was, a bystander answered, "In Çorum."

The blacksmith was amazed that they had come all of the way to Çorum in such a short time, but he could not say anything about it to anyone, for he had taken an oath to remain silent about their trip. As he was making plans to get back to İstanbul, however, he could not resist speaking about how he had become stranded in Çorum. He had no more than started to speak about this when he dropped dead for having violated his oath

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