

Story 846 (1969 Tape 10)

Narrator: Abdi Tumak

Location: Ötençay village
[originally Bakras],
Iskenderun kaza,
Hatay Province

Date: 1969

Ahmet the Handsome, Ward of Hızır *through hand*

23-36 Once there was and once there was not a padişah who was childless. One day, in deep thought, he said to himself, "How could a ruler with so much wealth of state¹ at his command be in a position where he has no heirs to inherit that wealth? What could be worse than that?"

The padişah's right-hand vizier heard him speaking to himself in this way, but he pretended that he had heard nothing. "What is my padişah thinking about so deeply?" he asked.

"By God,² my thought are indeed very deep today. I have a problem for which I can find no solution."

"What is that problem?"

"Well, it would be wonderful if I had a child to inherit all my wealth after I die. Tomorrow when I pass away there will be no one to inherit my estate, neither a son nor a

¹ The old expression used here is mülk-i Süleyman.

² The expression used by the narrator here is Vallahi.

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daughter

well, my padişah, there is not much that we can do about that. Since God did not grant you any children, there is not much that we human beings can do about it.

As the padişah and his vizier were talking in this fashion, a man was passing by. Overhearing their conversation, this man stopped and said, "Your Majesty, and you, O vizier, what is it that you are pondering? If you will permit me to speak, I have something to say to you.

what you wish," said the padişah.

"I saw both of you looking thoughtful and worried. Having nothing to do, I came over here to ask what problem you are contemplating so seriously."

The padişah said in a kind way, "My son, you cannot solve our problem. It is too complicated."

"Well, Your Majesty, you could at least tell me what it is."

"Very well. It is this. I have no children. When I die, all of my wealth will be given away to religious foundations. That is what I was discussing with my vizier."

"Your Majesty," said the stranger, "there is probably a solution to that problem."

"What is it?"

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"Just wear a woolen dervish-jacket,³ and require your vizier to do the same. Take a stick in your hand and sling a large leather saddlebag⁴ over your shoulder. Pretend to be beggars. Walk through the streets greeting everyone you meet by saying, 'Hello, Hızır!'⁵ If you encounter Hızır, he will ask you, 'How did you know that I was Hızır?' Then you can say, 'If you were not Hızır, then you wouldn't have asked us that question.' Then you can cling to him and tell him your wish. He will give you whatever solution there is to your problem. Otherwise, you may never solve it

"All right, then," said the padişah, "let us try it.

³ The term used here is hırka, which can mean simply woolen jacket, but it also can mean dervish jacket, since it was the usual outer apparel of dervishes. Given the roles the padişah and vizier are to play--begging in the streets as dervishes do--hırka seems clearly to mean dervish jacket.

⁴ The Turkish word used here for an oversize leather saddlebag is hurc.

⁵ For millenia a water deity and fertility god in the Middle East, Hızır still functions as such to many rural Turks. Urban Turks usually know him only as (1) a last-minute rescuer from disaster, and (2) a granter of wishes. Both his rural and urban guises are discernible in this tale. He is not mentioned by name in the Koran, though an unnamed "servant of God" in the Koran is interpreted to be Hızır. Actually, Hızır is by no means accepted fully by the Moslem establishment, and the very extensive cult of Hızır in rural Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon is often forced to go underground to practice its rituals.

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let us do so," said the vizier, but, in fact, the vizier was very upset about the whole proposal. He would have to give up all the luxuries of the palace and walk along city streets and country roads clad in a hırka [dervish jacket], with a hurc [leather saddlebag] on his back. Not liking at all the idea of wandering about like a beggar, he said to himself, "What an additional problem this ill-mannered fellow has put upon us!" He was really very unhappy at this prospect, but he did not reveal his annoyance to the padişah. It was an order, and he had to carry it out.

The padişah said to him, "You get ready to go, and I shall do the same." The padişah then went to his wife and said, "Lady, we are going on a journey by foot. Bring me a hırka and a hurc

"That won't last long! You haven't walked more than seven steps in your whole life. You will fall on your rump before you get anywhere. I shall have to beat you with a stick to make you go any farther. The best thing for you to do is not to go anywhere. I don't want any children. We have everything we need now. Isn't all this enough for you?"

"No, I am definitely going. Furthermore, who is it who gives orders here?"

"Very well, then," said his wife. "Do as you please
When they were finally ready to go, the padişah and

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vizier put on old clothes and left the palace. Some distance from here there is a place called Hortun Pasture. Well, they walked that far by noontime, when they stopped to pray. Then they continued and got as far as Karşıbağ. By evening they had reached a village named Kömürçukuru,⁶ where they intended to spend the night. After praying in the local mosque and eating some bread, they went to a nearby fountain and rested there

As they were sitting there, an old man approached them and said, "Hello, Your Majesty What kind of clothes are you wearing? You look like a beggar wandering in the mountains

The padişah answered, "You knew that I was the padişah, and so you probably also know the solution to my problem."

"There is nothing so unusual about your problem. Your problem is simply that you have no children, and because of this problem you are seeking Hızır. Do you really believe that you can ever find Hızır by looking around in this way for him? Well, anyway, I shall cut this short and try to you, and then, God willing, you will have a child."

After asking the padişah about his health, the old man opened his bag and took from it an apple. Handing it to the

⁶ The three places named here are all in the Iskenderun area.

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padişah, he said, "Take this apple and return home at once with it. Peel this apple carefully and give half of the peelings to one of your stallions and the other half to a mare. Leave them both in the stable after that. Then take the peeled apple and cut that in half. You eat half of it and give your wife half to eat before going to bed together. Then, if God is willing, you will have a child. But I have one request to make of you. Do not name the child that is born until I come to your palace for that purpose. I shall be the one to name it."

"Very well," said the padişah, and he and his vizier started home at once. They arrived back at the palace after what was for them quite a long journey, getting there after the Yatsı prayer service.⁷

The padişah knocked on the palace door, "Tak, tak, tak!"

"Who is it?" his wife asked.⁸

"It is I, the padişah."

"Didn't I tell you that you would soon fall on your

⁷ The Yatsı is the fifth and last prayer service of the day, occurring after sunset.

⁸ Neither narrator nor audience seemed aware of the absurdity of this scene. For the moment at least, the large palace, with its massive entryway, guards, and servants, was only the small dwelling of a peasant.

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rump? Come inside so that I can give you a good beating."

"By God, lady, I have already been beaten terribly by God." Saying this, the padişah entered the palace and collapsed in a chair. His wife did not beat him but instead helped him out of his hırka and comforted him. The padişah had wound a broad sash many times about his waist,⁹ and when his wife unwound that sash, the apple that had been hidden in it fell to the floor with a pat sound.

When his wife saw the apple, she grew furious and said "So you have a mistress! You went to see her, didn't you? Why would you have gone through all this act merely to get an apple?" She took her walking stick and beat him with it several times. "You left such a sweet lady as I am and went off among coal dealers and woodcutters!"¹⁰ Oh, you deceitful man!"

"Lady, for God's sake, stop hitting me. That apple is going to put an end to our problem. This is the miraculous object that will give us a child." Speaking in this way,

⁹ Cummerbunds were worn by Turks not merely for fashionable or decorative purposes but for reasons of health. Binding the abdomen in a sash about 12 inches wide by 25-30 feet long is still practiced by men in parts of Turkey--in Bolu Province, for example. The salvar (low-crotched trousers) worn by men had no pockets in most cases, and the folds of a cummerbund provided places to cache money and small objects.

¹⁰ This is not to be taken literally. She uses coal dealers and woodcutters to indicate lower-class people.

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padişah convinced his wife of this fact. Then, after he had peeled the apple, he measured it very carefully and cut it exactly in half. Each ate half the apple. Then, taking the peelings, the padişah went to his stable and fed half of these peelings to his favorite stallion and gave the other half to his mare. After that, he and his wife went to bed together the night

A month or two later the padişah's wife said, "I swear I can feel strange burning sensations in my groin. I think that something has happened to me and that something else is going to happen. Bring me a midwife."

They found a midwife from Iskenderun for her, a woman named Çangat Ebe.¹¹ She came to the palace and examined the padişah's wife, after which she reported to the padişah, "Your Majesty, your wife is pregnant. I think that she will probably have a boy."

After several more months, the sultana had a boy child, just as the midwife had said. This boy was attended with the greatest of care throughout his infancy. When he was old enough, he was sent to school.¹² There something happened

¹¹ Çangat is the woman's name, Ebe her title. Ebe means midwife.

¹² Again, this is the peasant perception. Children of sultans and other rulers were not sent to ordinary schools but were trained at home by tutors.

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that his parents had not foreseen. The boy had not yet been given a name, and so all of the other children called him Nameless Prince.

One day Nameless Prince was in the street practicing with his bow and arrows. When an old woman went by on the from the fountain, one of his arrows hit her earthenware water jug¹³ and broke it with a çat sound

The old woman said, "No wonder they haven't given you a name! If you were anything but a good-for-nothing boy, they would have given you a name. Damn you, you nameless thing What was there about my water jug that you did not like? If you were worth anything, they would have called you Prince Ahmet or Prince Mehmet, but instead, you are nameless. What did you have against my testi that caused you to break it and get me all wet?" The woman left grumbling to herself uttering curses against the boy.

After this unpleasant event the boy went to his mother said, "Oh, God, everyone is picking on me! Can't you find a name for me anywhere in this world? Mother, I want a name! If one is not found for me, I shall never leave this palace again for the rest of my life! I shall imprison myself here!"

¹³ The Turkish word used here for such a water jug is testi.

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boy's mother informed the padişah about their son's wish. When he heard this, the padişah said, "We shall hold a meeting at once in the rose garden in order to decide upon a name for this boy."

At that meeting the viziers were talking among themselves. One of them said, "Let us not name the boy today."

"Why not?" said a second vizier.

padişah has nothing to lose by a delay, and we have so much to gain. We shall be given a big banquet today. During that banquet we can discuss the matter of naming and decide that it is not appropriate to name the boy so hastily. We can postpone the decision until next week. In that way we shall again be invited to a sumptuous banquet. We can postpone and delay in this manner for three weeks, enjoying several fine banquets. Then we can name him in the fourth week."

viziers did just as they had planned, holding a meeting every Sunday for three weeks. At the end of three weeks they were no closer to naming the boy than they were when they started. At the beginning of the fourth week the padişah announced, "At this meeting you must give a name to my son!"

"All right, Your Majesty, we shall decide today upon an appropriate name."

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While they were deliberating, the old man who had given the apple to the padişah appeared¹⁴ and said, "Selâmünaley-küm."

"Aleykümselâm,"¹⁵ answered the padişah. "Where have you been since last we saw you? It has been fifteen years since that time, and we thought that you must be dead. Give this boy a name so that we shall no longer have to worry about this matter.

"All right. Bring the child over here," said the dervish.¹⁶ He laid the boy face down on his lap. He patted and rubbed the boy's back, and then he leaned over and whispered in the boy's ear, "Son, from now on, no rope will be able to tie you down, no sword will be able to cut you and no arrow pierce you. I have prayed that you will have

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for Hızır*

¹⁴ The narrator has not at any time referred to the old man as Hızır, though both the old man's appearance and his miraculous ability are those of Hızır. Considerably later in this tale he is referred to as Hızır.

¹⁵ These two Arabic expressions are the greetings exchanged by strangers in the Moslem tradition: Peace be unto you/And peace be unto you too.

¹⁶ In the countless variants and analogues of this tale the old man who delivers the magic apple is a dervish, and Hızır, both in this situation and in others, appears in the guise of a dervish. This is the first time in this tale that the old man is referred to as a dervish.

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that protection. But know that if your fingers are ever tied with the string of your bow, you will die immediately ¹⁷ That is the only way by which you can be harmed."

"I understand," said the boy.

"Keep this a secret and never reveal this secret to anyone." Turning to the padişah, the old man then said, "Your Majesty

"Go ahead and say what you started to say, Dervish Father," said the padişah

"Your son's name will be Handsome Ahmet,¹⁸ and the colt that your mare bore will be named Kamertay."¹⁹ After a few minutes the dervish asked, "Who is that woman?"

Everyone looked in the direction that he pointed, but no one could see any woman there. When they looked back toward the dervish to see what he meant, he was no longer there. He had vanished! Several asked, "Hey, where did that old man go?" Many more began asking each other the same

¹⁷ Characters in folktales often have their respective life forces integrally tied up with some external object. This external control over one's life is sometimes referred to in terms of an "external soul."

¹⁸ The narrator says Güzel Ahmet, literally, Beautiful Ahmet.

¹⁹ This is a very common Turkish name for a special (often magical) horse, especially in this tale and its variants. The spelling, however, is usually Kambertay.

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question, but no one had an answer. The old man had simply vanished.

Time passed, and the boy grew older. When he reached the age of twenty, he went to the padişah and asked, "O padişah, am I your son?"

"Yes, of course you are."

"Well, I have finished school, and it is time for me to engage in some kind of work. Why don't you give me a job so that I can keep myself busy? There is no longer anything for me to do in the streets."

"All right, Son. Take these keys and visit the Royal Treasury."

The boy took the keys and went to examine the Royal Treasury. He opened the door to one of its rooms. He opened a second door and then a third door. Before long he had opened thirty-nine of the doors, but the fortieth door he could not open. Try as he would, he could not unlock that last door, for none of the keys would fit it. He wondered, "Why didn't Father give me a key to this room?"

They boy was actually a grown-up man by now. He was well built, like a wrestler, and he had Hızır's prayers to protect him from harm. He struck the door with his shoulder, and the door burst open with a trank sound. He found the fortieth room different from all the others in that there were

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no carpets on the floor and no furniture there. As he was walking around in that room, he noticed a picture so large it almost covered one of the walls. It was the picture of a beautiful woman, and beneath the picture were the words Beautiful Hırızmalı.²⁰ When the young man looked at this picture and read these words, he fell to the floor in a dead faint. When he regained consciousness, he left the room immediately without even picking up his keys or locking the

Some of the padişah's men noticed that there was something wrong with him and reported to the padişah, "Your Majesty, your son is not feeling well."

"Get a doctor for him at once," said the padişah.

Physicians
36-37 A doctor came to the palace and examined the young man. He reported to the padişah, "Your Majesty, there is nothing wrong with your son physically. He seems to have an emotional problem of some kind

"Who can understand this emotional problem?" the padişah asked.

"I shall consult several other doctors to find someone who can do so." This doctor then called a meeting of several

²⁰ Hırızma means nose ring of the kind worn by Arab women. Literally, Hırızmalı Güzeli means The Beauty with the Nose Ring.

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other doctors. After some discussion, they elected a member of their group to question the prince about his state of mind

The doctor chosen went to the prince and said, "Ahmet²¹ your father's wealth and power are so great that he afford to have any problem resolved. He can acquire anything he wishes to acquire. Tell us what it is that you need. Inasmuch as you apparently cannot tell him what it is that you want, let us tell him that and have him get it for

The boy said, "In the fortieth room of the Royal Treasury there is a picture of a beauty, and beneath that picture are written the words Beautiful Hırızmalı. If that beauty is still alive, I want my father to get her for me. If she is not alive, then there is no hope left for me."

The doctors then went to the padişah and said, "Your son has read the words Beautiful Hırızmalı beneath the picture of a woman, and he wants that woman."

When the padişah heard this, he exclaimed, "Alas, gentlemen, I have invaded the entire country of that girl in an effort to secure her. Seven times I tried to secure her, and seven times I failed. That boy of mine is interested in

²¹ Bey means lord, literally, but placed after a proper name it is a term of respect.

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22 the woman I loved more than anything else in the world. He must be punished. Let his head be cut off! I would rather live without a son than tolerate this! I shall have that boy killed!"

When the viziers heard this, they hastily held a meeting and afterwards went to the padişah. "Your Majesty," they said, "if you should have this boy executed in front of everyone, it would not be a good act.²² Would you be willing to consider an alternate solution to the problem?"

"What could be an alternate solution?"

It must be a child "Your Majesty, there is a mountain range known as the 'Mountains of the Lions.' In those mountains no living creatures can survive except lions. We can have a couple of our hunters take the boy to those mountains, put him to sleep, and leave him there. During the night the lions will find him and tear him to pieces. We think that this would be a better way to dispose of him. Then our eyes would not have to witness his death. What do you think of this proposal?"

The padişah thought about this for a few minutes and then he said, "Very well, let us do it that way. Assemble

²² It should be noted that the impropriety here is not the murder of the boy but the manner in which it is performed. In early Moslem societies parents could kill their children for any of a number of reasons, and so there seems to be no moral problem here but rather one in public relations.

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two hundred men on horseback to take him there."

39,43 44 told Handsome Ahmet that they were taking him on a (hunting) expedition. They all mounted their horses and rode away from the palace. On the third day of traveling they reached the Mountains of Lions, and by then Handsome Ahmet was so tired that he felt as if his body had turned into a pickle.²³ They arrived on the slopes of the mountains in the late afternoon and stopped to eat.

Handsome Ahmet said, "Just let me lie down here and rest." Then he said to one of the hunters, "Sit down over here so that I can lie down and put my head in your lap." When the hunter did as he had been directed, Handsome Ahmet lay down and fell asleep immediately.

As soon as he was sound asleep, they wrapped some cloth around a stone. The hunter on whose knees the boy's head rested slowly withdrew his knees, and the padded stone was inserted in their place. Leaving Handsome Ahmet's horse with him, all of the rest mounted their own horses and quietly left that place. "Move forward!" their leader ordered.

After a while, the (lions) picked up the scent of Ahmet and at night came to the place where he was sleeping. They

²³ This is a colloquial expression for becoming limp. Turşu means pickle, and turşuya dönmek means to turn into a pickle.

*Language
Signature*

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pounced upon him immediately, but Ahmet's horse would not desert him. The biting and kicking of the horse kept lions from eating Ahmet, but as the battle went on, the horse began to tire in its struggle with so many lions. Because Ahmet was sleeping while all of this struggle going on, the horse finally bit his arm to awaken him. When Ahmet opened his eyes, he realized at once how greatly changed was his situation. Trying to think of a way out of his trouble, he took some matches from his pocket and struck one of them. When the lions saw the glare of fire coming from the match, they were frightened and ran away.

Handsome Ahmet then prayed, "O my God, turn me not from the direction of my Beautiful Hirizmalı's palace! I am even willing to die for the great love I have for her." He then mounted his horse and though it was still dark, he set out in the direction of Hirizmalı's palace. Just before sunrise he entered a long valley. After riding along for some time in this valley, he saw a light in the distance. He asked himself, "Can that be coming from the palace of Beautiful Hirizmalı?"

As he approached that palace, he at first saw no one around the grounds of the building. Coming closer, he saw moving about some creatures even uglier than water buffaloes. They were giants, and the forty giant brothers who occupied

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that palace had long held Beautiful Hırızmalı captive there.

Among these giants was one who was crippled. As he Handsome Ahmet approaching, this crippled giant said, "Hey there is prey coming! The rest of you have eaten everything in this valley. You have captured and consumed woodcutters and even salt dealers, while I have not even been able to put a nightingale into my mouth. This time, why don't you let me have this prey for myself? Because I am crippled, you have taken advantage of me, leaving me nothing to eat."

The other giants listened to the complaint of their crippled companion, and some of them agreed with it: "All right, Crippled One, this time you may have the prey that is coming."

One of the other giants, however, was displeased at idea that the crippled one should have the prey all to himself, and he said, "Brothers are created brothers, but their ^{Hismet} destinies are created separately. O Brothers, whoever reaches that prey first should be the one to eat it! Crippled One can go to the bottom of hell or even starve to death if he wishes. That is his problem. I cannot give away any prey that comes to me!"

These remarks made all of the giants jealous of their prey, and so all forty, with the exception of Crippled One

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 attacked Handsome Ahmet. Ahmet counted almost twenty coming from one direction and the same number from another direction. Dismounting, he stood calmly watching the giants charge at him. Taking out his bow, which had been blessed by Hızır, he aimed an arrow at the foremost giant, and that giant went down. As giant after giant came on, he hit each one with an arrow until all thirty-nine that were attacking him lay dead. Only the crippled giant was still alive.

Crippled One said, "Ahmet the Handsome, please do not kill me. I promise to give you Beautiful Hırızmalı "

Ahmet was annoyed at this and said, "O you traitor How can you say that after I have just killed all thirty-nine of your companions?"

"They were my brothers."

"Yes, and I killed all of your brothers, and so now you will not leave me alone

"I swear that I shall leave you alone! I shall even help you, if you will forgive me."

"All right, then, I forgive you," said Ahmet. He was thinking to himself, "If thirty-nine of them could not harm me, what could this crippled one do to me? I can easily afford to spare him

Having been spared by Ahmet the Handsome, the crippled giant went to the Beautiful Hırızmalı and said, "Lady, I have

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good news for you!"

"What is it?"

"I am bringing you a brave fellow."

"Well, he is welcome," said Hırızmalı

Ahmet the Handsome went to the palace where his beloved was kept. He went upstairs, tak, tak, tak, and the two met each other. After talking together for a while, they decided to become married. After they were married, Ahmet used to go hunting every day, returning in the late afternoon. One day as he returned from a long hunting trip, Ahmet called to his beloved (now his wife). When Hırızmalı appeared on the balcony, Ahmet shouted, "Hold out your nose ring!" When she held out her nose ring, Ahmet aimed carefully and shot an arrow right through the ring without touching the girl.

On another day, when the weather had become fair Hırızmalı said, "Today I am going to do my laundry. Ahmet, there is no one else living in this valley. Why don't come over there so that I can give you a bath and wash hair while I am laundering my clothes?"

Ahmet replied, "Why don't you heat a kettle of water for scrubbing your clothes? You may wash my hair when you are finished doing your clothes. In the meantime, I shall go hunting."

"All right."

Ahmet entered the forest to hunt. Now, hunting is a good sport, but it is unpredictable. Ahmet started after one quarry and then another until he was soon led away from the place where Hırızmalı was working. She washed her clothes, and then she washed her hair. As she sat combing her hair, she watched Ahmet as he went out of sight in the forest began to make a ball of hair from the shining golden that was pulled out by the comb. Suddenly a sharp breeze arose and carried this ball of hair out of her hand. Hırızmalı chased after this ball of hair but was unable to catch it. When it finally disappeared from sight, she realized that there was no use in pursuing it any longer. There used to be a sea before the palace of the Padişah of China, and the hair ball was blown to the center of that sea.

When Ahmet the Handsome returned that day from hunting, he was disturbed at the news that Hırızmalı had lost her ball of hair. He said, "Today there will be a disaster!"

Ahmet had killed two animals while hunting that day. It was unusual for him to bring home two animals. Therefore when they cooked their food that day, they had a bigger meal than they usually had

That night at about the time of the Yatsı prayer service, the Padişah of China went to his palace to sleep. When he

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arrived there he saw what he thought was the light of a ship at sea. Pressing a button to call one of his aides, he said, "Hey, I can almost hear their signals! There is someone in a ship far out from our shore. I can see clearly the light of that ship. I want that ship captured at once."

The padişah's boatmen went out to see what it was that he was talking about. They could see a light way out in water. When they got closer, they realized that there was no ship there but only a bright light in the water. It seemed to be an object of some kind that gave off light. When they came within an oar's length of this object, they pulled it closer so that they could take a better look at it. They then realized that it was a ball of hair that glowed. Taking it ashore, they carried it to the palace and placed it on a table. When they turned out all of the other lights in that room, the ball of hair lighted up the whole room all by itself.

They said to each other, "In the name of God, where this come from? What is this thing?"

There was a rural police constable ²⁴ in the room at

²⁴ The narrator does not say constable but gendarme. In Turkey there are no police forces throughout most rural areas. Law and order are preserved by the Ministry of Interior. A large number of troops are delegated to the Ministry of Interior for this purpose, and these army troops serve as policemen. The turn-of-the-century French influence on

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time. He was a man who knew many of the people and places in that area. He said, "There is a very wise woman in such-and-such a village. If there is anyone who could us anything about this ball of hair, it would be she."

"Someone must go and find her, then," said the Padişah of China.

"Who can find her?" someone asked.

"The constable knows where she lives. He can not only find her but he can also bring her here," someone else said

They sent the constable to fetch this wise old woman to the palace. One day shortly after that, the constable returned with the woman. As soon as she arrived at the palace, the Padişah of China asked, "Woman, can you tell us what this ball of hair is?"

"I swear in the name of God that I would be able to tell you what this is if I had my tespih²⁵ with me, but in the excitement of coming here, I forgot it

"Who is there who could get these prayer beads for you?"

Turkey is revealed in the name given these troops: gendarmes. Since this situation is peculiar to Turkey and does not prevail in China, we thought that a more widely accepted title, constable, was a better translation.

²⁵ A tespih (or tesbih) is a Moslem rosary or set of prayer beads. There are ninety-nine beads in the tespih.

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"The constable could bring them, for he knows where I live. Here, son, you go for them, but before you leave, find a large sack to carry them in."

"A large sack?" asked the constable. "Just how large are your prayer beads?"

"Never mind that now. Just take a large sack with you. You will find the beads in one of the corners of my house. When you find them, bring them to me."

The constable departed from the palace, went to the old woman's village, and located her house again. When he found her prayer beads, he was amazed, for each bead was the size of a coconut.²⁶ He loaded them into the sack he had brought and with great difficulty carried them back to the palace.

When the old woman had received her tespih, she pulled on two of the beads and then said immediately, "Your Majesty, the girl from whose head this hair came has long been a captive of forty giants, but thirty-nine of these giants have recently been killed. Everything there is now under the control of one man. I could bring this man to you, if you wish, but there is no way in which I could bring the girl.

"How could you bring him?"

²⁶ Prayer beads are usually the size of peas.

It's - heavily collected

"I have a magic vase²⁷ and a magic whip. If you could have my vase and whip brought here, I could mount the vase, fly to the palace where he and the girl live, and bring back inside the vase. Later you could send some soldiers to bring back the girl

"How can we get your vase and whip for you?"

"The constable could get them," she said. And so the constable was again dispatched to her home in the village, this time to fetch her magic vase and her magic whip. When he returned with them, the old woman climbed up on the vase, struck its sides with her whip, and flew away.

Back at the palace of Ahmet the Handsome and Beautiful Hırızmalı, everyone was asleep, Ahmet and his wife inside, and the crippled giant outside in the yard. The wise old woman from China came down from the sky riding on her vase and landed near the staircase leading up to the main door of the palace. She shouted loudly, "Is there no one here

²⁷ The vase is a küp, a very tall (five to eight feet) earthenware vase, much like the amphora of classical times. It is used in the Middle East for the storage of either liquids (water, oil, or wine) or solids (grain or nuts). It is the type of huge jar hidden in by the forty thieves who attempt to assassinate Ali Baba in the Arabian Nights. Turkish witches use the küp for flying rather than the broomstick of Western witches. The küp is really much more practical, for it has ample storage space for whatever loot or captive the witch may have taken.

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would accept a stranger as a guest sent by God?²⁸ I have been stranded here, and I need a place in which to spend the night."

Hirizmalı heard the old woman shouting and screaming outside the palace. Wishing not to have Ahmet awakened by this noise, she placed another blanket over him to shut out old woman's cries. But he soon became overheated and threw off all his blankets, and then he heard clearly the shouting of the old woman. He said to his wife, "O Beautiful Hirizmalı, here in this stange, out-of-the-way place we have a guest sent by God. Why don't you go down and invite her in?"

λ

"I shall let her in in the morning."

Alle

"What do you mean by saying that you will let her in in the morning? If you do not go, then I shall get up and go to her in myself."

"Don't do that, Ahmet Bey. I am afraid that something may happen."

"If forty giants could not harm me, how could an old woman do so?" Saying this, Ahmet went downstairs and opened

²⁸ If one needs housing in a strange area, one goes to a house, knocks on the door, and asks, "Will you accept me as the guest of Allah?" This is the most compelling plea that one can make for hospitality, a quality always motivated by religious considerations in a Moslem land.

the door. No one was there. "Where are you?" he called.

"Right here," said the old woman, standing at the foot of the outside staircase.

Ahmet went down to speak with her, ^{End Ahmet} but as soon as they came face to face, the old woman cast a spell on him. She hit him on the side of his neck with her fist and then pushed him into the vase. Climbing onto the outside of the vase she beat it with her magic stick, making it rise into the air and fly to the palace of the Padişah of China. Turning Ahmet over to the padişah, she said, "You will have to send some soldiers to get the girl."

The padişah looked at Ahmet and said to his men, "Take him to the gallows."

But these men felt sorry for Ahmet because of his youth. After talking aside for a few minutes, they appealed to the padişah: "Your Majesty, we have a storage building where we keep the drinking water. We could throw him in there where, all alone and without help, he would die in a few days without being executed. We can station a couple of guards at the door of the building to be sure that he does not escape."

The padişah agreed, saying, "All right. Let us do it that way."

The servants carried Ahmet the Handsome to the storage building and locked him inside. There he might well have

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died if it had not been for the intervention of the padişah's daughter. This girl was named Akçakız.²⁹ Her maids came to her on that day and said, "Oh, my lady Today they brought a handsome young man to your father. He is a captive. He would be a most suitable young man for you

"What did they do with him?"

"They threw him into the water-storage building, where he may perish by tomorrow morning."

Dressing carefully, Akçakız went to the storehouse and said to the guards on duty there, "I want each of you to obey my commands. Here is a bag of gold for each of you. If you do not accept this gold and open the door, I shall have you both killed. Or, if you talk about this to anyone else, again, I shall have you killed."

"Yes, my lady. We shall obey your orders," they said. Opening the door, they carried into the storehouse two beds and some food which her servants had brought

Left alone, Akçakız and Ahmet the Handsome were soon involved in a friendly discussion. While the two of them were there in the storage building, the Padişah of China sent troops to capture Hırızmalı.

²⁹ Akça means whitish, and kız means girl. Thus her name is descriptive: Whitish Girl.

Story

Five hundred mounted troops were approaching the palace of Beautiful Hırızmalı. She was aware of this before she could actually see the troops, for the cloud of dust their horses' hooves raised was visible from a great distance.

When they finally came into view, she called the crippled giant: "Perisi,³⁰ there are five hundred soldiers coming this way. Don't let them take me away."

Perisi replied, "Ahmet killed all thirty-nine of my brothers because of you. I shall give you away and thus be free from both you and Ahmet

"Perisi, you have eaten both salt and bread from my hand. If you give me to these soldiers, I pray that you will be blinded some day."³¹

right, all right! Bring me some tobacco for my pipe and I shall protect you."

The crippled giant's pipe bowl was the size of three

³⁰ Peri means fairy, which hardly seems applicable here. Perisi, the objective case of peri, would have to be used in combination with another word in order to mean anything.

³¹ Anyone who has eaten the food of a second person or slept in his/her house is deeply indebted to that second person. If he fails to repay that debt when the opportunity presents itself, he has committed one of the worst sins known to the Moslem religion. Thus, Hırızmalı's prayer to have Perisi blinded would almost certainly be accepted and fulfilled by God. Perisi knows this and therefore capitulates to Hırızmalı's request for assistance.

Pfe smoking
52-5
54

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large rooms. Beautiful Hırızmalı brought tobacco and a shovelful of embers to light that tobacco. She used the branch of a tree as a lever to lift the pipe to the giant's lips. That's how big that pipe was!

The giant said, "When you see them coming close to us let me know!" Then, lighting his pipe, he inhaled smoke several times. "Where are they now?" he asked

"They appear to be close to the first house in the next village," she answered.

The giant sucked on the pipe some more, inhaling all of the smoke. The burning tobacco made a gürp sound as he sucked on the pipe. The giant was inhaling and swallowing not only the smoke but the ashes as well. Everything went into his stomach as he smoked and waited for the troops to arrive. Then he suddenly exhaled all the smoke in his lungs and stomach, covering the entire valley with a dense fog. Under the cover of this fog, he lay in wait for the troops. As they came along, he swallowed every horse and rider that passed. When the whole force had been consumed, he called, "Hırızmalı, have I performed satisfactorily?"

"What have you done?"

"By God, I swear that my stomach is full of horseshoes and horseshoe nails. Since there are neither surgeons nor doctors around here, there is no one to attend to my stomach.

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If more troops should come, I could do nothing to those soldiers."

But more troops were coming, for the Padişah of China had sent additional forces. By the time they arrived however, the crippled giant was able to consume them also

While Perisi was eating the troops of the Padişah of China, Ahmet the Handsome was still in the water-storage building with Akçakız. He said to her, "My lady, how long do you suppose we can remain in this place before your father will discover us? If he should find us here, he would probably have both of us killed. Let us escape from here tonight.

They arranged to have two horses brought, and as soon as darkness arrived, they rode away. They traveled without stopping even once until they reached the valley in which Hırızmalı lived. When Hırızmalı saw two figures on horseback approaching, she said, "Thank God all the padişah's soldiers are dead, but here come two more people in this direction Oh, Perisi, eat them quickly!"

"All right," said Perisi, "but why don't you put some more tobacco in my pipe?"

Hırızmalı shoved more tobacco into his pipe. Again the crippled giant sucked on his pipe and swallowed the smoke. He then exhaled and produced another fog.

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When Ahmet saw this fog rolling toward them, he shouted, "Akçakız, slip your feet out of your stirrups and put them into mine! There is a wave of smoke coming this way. If you get into that smoke wave, you will go straight down into that giant's stomach and later come out of his other end."

But just as Akçakız was about to follow his directions her horse stopped and would not move. She called out "Ahmet, what is happening? Your horse is moving but mine will not!"

"That will pass. Don't worry, for that will soon change."

In a few minutes the fog cleared, and the crippled giant appeared before them. "Hey, you good old giant!" said Ahmet.

"O Ağa,³² is that you?" Saying this, the crippled giant left them and went to Beautiful Hırızmalı. "My lady...

"What is it?"

"I have a surprise for you. But you'd better wear some dark clothes, for the news is not good.

"Why? What has happened?"

"Well, Ahmet the Handsome has returned, but he has

³² An ağa (English agha) is a rural landowner, often wealthy, traditionally powerful. But the term ağa has become an honorific added to proper names: Ahmet Ağa, Mehmet Ağa. It may also be used without the proper name as an honorific.

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brought a woman with him."

Perisi, is that all that is worrying you? Are two roses too many for a hero? He can smell her and then he can smell me. The fact that Ahmet has returned is what is important."

Hırızmalı, Ahmet, and Akçakız lived happily together. After three or five days³³ had passed, Ahmet said, "Let us now go."

"Go where?" they asked him.

"To my father's land," he said.

Now it so happened that Akçakız was one of those people who could predict the future by means of geomancy.³⁴ She decided to do so now in order to determine how they could expect to fare in the land of Ahmet's father. After she had done so, she was filled with foreboding, and she said,

³³ This expression is not to be taken literally. Turks use three or five to mean a few, a small but indefinite number

³⁴ Turks use a type of geomancy they call remil or remli. Multi-faceted objects, like dice or sheep knuckles, have numbers and/or letters assigned to each side. When several of these objects are cast on the ground or floor, the numbers and/or letters on the upturned sides (each of which is coded to some meaning) supposedly provide information about both present and future. They may also provide information about the whereabouts of lost or stolen objects. To engage in this predictive practice is remili atmak--to cast remil.

Remil
56 58 60 69

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"Ahmet, you are making a serious mistake. Let us remain here in this valley among the mountains. It is much safer living here than it would be in your father's land."

"No, no, we cannot remain here. My father is a padişah. Some day I shall become the padişah there. We must return."

They packed up things that were light in weight but heavy in value.³⁵ They said to the crippled giant, "Come on--pack up your things. We are moving."

But the giant said, "I swear I have a dirty mouth, and, furthermore, I am immoral. In your father's country there are farmers and pipe sellers, some of whom would probably be late at night. It would be very easy for me to eat such men, and I probably would do so. You would not want to live with the kind of trouble I might cause. Leave me here among these mountains, and here let me live

"You are innocent and honorable even if you do sometimes people," they said. "You are welcome to come along with us wherever we go

"If that is the case, very well. But I cannot come with you right now. Why don't you start out now, and I shall

³⁵ Light in weight but heavy in value is a common expression in Turkey. It is a play on words to indicate things highly portable and well worth taking along with one

catch up with you later."

"All right."

Ahmet, Akçakız, and Hırızmalı left their palace in the valley. In a few days the crippled giant also packed up his things, and, like the others, he took only things that were light in weight but heavy in value. Among the things he packed were several objects that would remind him of home. Before leaving, he went to a spring amid some willow trees and drank some water. Then, taking two long steps, he caught up with Ahmet and his loved ones.

"Hey, Perisi," they called, "how did you get here so quickly?"

"By God, I just drank some water from the spring amid the willow trees. My beard is still wet with spring water."

"We have been traveling for eight days on healthy horses. How could you travel so fast? Did you fly?"

"Is your stride as long as mine?"

After traveling a way farther, they came to a village. Akçakız again employed geomancy to determine what they might expect at that village. Again she warned Ahmet the Handsome: "Things do not look very promising. Let us erect our tents over here and send a message to your father, saying that we have arrived at this place. If he wishes to see us, then he will invite us to go on to his palace. We had better see how

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he reacts to our message. Otherwise, we may end up in prison."

"All right. Let us send him a message from here

As they were sitting around talking, an old friend of Ahmet came along and introduced himself. It was to this friend that Ahmet gave the message he had written to his father.

This messenger carried Ahmet's letter to the palace of his padişah father. When he was admitted into the presence of the ruler, he said, "Your Majesty--surprise surprise!"

"What is it?" asked the padişah.

"Your son, Ahmet the Handsome, has returned, and he wishes to see you. He has brought the Beautiful Hırızmalı with him."

"You cuckold Is this what you call a surprise?" padişah was furious. Pulling out his sword, he cut off the head of the messenger.

A few minutes later a second messenger arrived, saying, "Good news, Your Majesty! Your son has returned."

"YOU rascal, is that the good news you bring me? It burns me like fire!" He then cut off the head of this second messenger.

His wife heard all the noise he was making, even though her room was in a different part of the palace. She came down

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and asked, "Your Majesty, what are you doing?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do you think our son will come back here when you behave like this?"

"Well, then, what should I do?"

"We should go to where he is now and invite him here. Then after he and the others are here, we can feed them food so strongly poisonous that one bite of it will kill them immediately. You can keep the two women, if you like. That would be the easiest way to get rid of him. The way you are acting now can only complicate your problem. He is your and will do as you direct him to do. Let us either go ourselves or send a delegation to invite him here."

"Very well, let us do as you say and send a delegation at once."

The viziers, who had heard all of this conversation, held a brief meeting of their own. After it ended, they gave orders to their men: "Spread rugs all along the route that Ahmet will be taking on his way here, and after those rugs are laid, pour strong ^{64, 64} poison over them."

As these orders were being carried out, the padişah's men presented the invitation to Ahmet.

attempt to predict what might happen. Not liking what she

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Draw
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saw ahead, she said to Ahmet, "Take my dog with you when you go to see your father. Always walk behind that dog. When you are about to eat any food, let him eat some of it first. When you wish to lie down, lie only on the spot where he is lying.

"All right.

As Ahmet was about to start toward the palace, the approached the rugs laid along the way. When the dog growled and turned aside from the rugs, Ahmet also turned aside. The padişah, who had reached the scene by now, said, "Son, those rugs were spread out to make your walking easier."

"No, Your Majesty, I should be very ill-bred and foolish if I were to walk anywhere ahead of my father. You lead the way, and I shall follow you."

But the padişah also refused to step on the rugs, knowing full well that to do so would mean instant death. He said, "Come on, son, don't worry about that. I shall be glad to follow you wherever you go.

Ahmet still did not step on the rugs but followed a path some distance from them. When the procession arrived at the palace, Ahmet was taken to a room. But when the dog, which was still walking ahead of him, refused to enter that room, Ahmet turned aside and took another room.

In the evening when dinner was served, Ahmet did not

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touch the food, thinking that it was probably poisoned. He gave it instead to the dog, which, after merely smelling it dropped dead. Ahmet then asked for some different food. When this was brought, he was certain that it was not poisoned, and so he ate his fill of it.

"The padişah then said, "Son, let us play some chess. If you win, you may tie my arms, but if I win, I shall tie your arms."

"All right."

When they started playing chess, Ahmet began to win the game. One of the padişah's viziers who was watching the game said to Ahmet, "Why don't you just lose to your father once?" Ahmet followed the vizier's advice and let himself be beaten.

"Tie him up!" said the padişah. Then he said to his servants, "Bring me a pencil-sharpener³⁶ with which I can carve into his eyes."

When they approached Ahmet with the pencil-sharpener, he burst loose from the ropes with which they had tied him. He broke the ropes, çatır, çatır.³⁷

³⁶ Considering the obvious antiquity of this tale, with its various supernatural elements, one can say definitely that this is an anachronism.

³⁷ Meant to serve as onomatopoeia for the sound of breaking ropes.

Story

The padişah asked, "Son, is there anything that can overcome you?"

"Really nothing can overcome me."

rascal, there must be something that could overcome or defeat you."

"Anyone, even a child, could kill me if he squeezed my finger with the string of my bow."

Immediately the padişah shouted to his servants, "Untie his bowstring and tie him up with it!"

Following the padişah's directions, they tied up Ahmet with his own bowstring. He tried once and he tried twice to break the bowstring, but he could not do so. He said, "It will not break, Father."

When he heard this, the padişah ordered, "Cut off his head!"

But his viziers objected, saying, "How can we cut off his head?"

"I order you to cut off his head. I want the Beautiful Hirizmalı for myself!"

"Your Majesty, you cannot act in such a cruel way!"

"Well, what else can I do?"

"You could gouge out his eyes and then have him taken to some deserted valley. Ants and other insects would find him there and devour him. We are willing to have his eyes gouged

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Blind - 69

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out, but we are unwilling to kill him."

"All right, then, you can gouge out his eyes

They gouged out the eyes of Ahmet the Handsome, and he was now totally blind. He felt on the ground to find his gouged-out eyes, and when he found them, he put the left eye in his right pocket and the right eye in his left pocket.³⁸

After that had been done and Ahmet had been taken away, the padişah had forty of the palace ladies assembled. He said to them, "Ladies, go and get those girls who had once been the wives of Ahmet the Handsome."

When Ahmet did not return to his tent, Akçakız again cast remil to discover what would happen next. When she had gotten this information, she said to Hırızmalı, "For God's sake, Hırızmalı, put some poison into the little poison container you carry with you. We may need it. When there is no hope left for us, we shall take this poison together. Our ağa has gone, and he is in great danger."

The palace ladies arrived to take the Beautiful Hırızmalı and Akçakız to the padişah. They called, "O brides, you must come with us to live at the palace."

³⁸ In the context of such brutal and bestial mutilation such a detail may seem inconsequential, but it should be pointed out that in Turkish stories that include gouged-out eyes, it is commonly the case that the left eye is placed in a righthand pocket and the right eye in a lefthand pocket.

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"Oh, you cannot mean that we are to go right at this moment. We have so many personal possessions to take with us! We shall need forty large sacks to pack them in and forty porters to carry those sacks. We shall also need forty spools of thread and forty sacking needles for sewing shut the loaded bags."

While the palace ladies went to get these things, Beautiful Hırızmalı said, "Hey, Perisi!"

"What do you want?"

"I want you to hide behind the entrance of our tent. We shall invite forty court ladies, one by one, into the You may swallow up anyone that passes through that entrance."

When the ladies returned with the things they had gone to fetch, they were greeted by Hırızmalı and Akçakız. Hırızmalı said, "Come in, ladies!"

And to the first of these ladies Akçakız said "Buyurunuz!"³⁹

As each woman entered the tent, the crippled giant closed his mouth over her, hap,⁴⁰ and swallowed her. After swallowing these ladies, he then defecated them into the

³⁹ A mild and courteous command: You first! or You lead the way! or After you!

⁴⁰ Onomatopoeia to represent the sound of snapping up something with the mouth.

forty sacks

When Hırızmalı and Akçakız had sewn shut the mouths of the forty sacks, they called the porters and said, "Turn your backs!"⁴¹ They then loaded the forty sacks into the huge wickerware baskets on the porters' backs.

Some of the court ladies were very large women who weighed a great deal. Some of them weighed as much as 100 kilos apiece. They were big women who were suitable partners for big men. As they lugged these bodies along, the porters grew exhausted. One of the porters said, "I swear that I have gotten a hernia carrying this sack!"⁴² I repent having carried it!⁴³ I shall no longer be a porter after this!"

The padişah was watching the porters struggling with these heavy sacks. He said, "I swear these two women have brought me a great amount of goods!" When the sacks were

⁴¹ Turkish porters often have huge wickerware baskets mounted on their backs. The word used here by the narrator is küfe. The küfe is a coracle or small boat made of covered wickerware and used on the Tigris River in extreme eastern Turkey. The two words are related, perhaps only dialectical variants.

⁴² There is an "in-group" bit of humor here. Turkish hamals (porters) are legendary for the unbelievably heavy loads they can each carry--large refrigerators, grand pianos, carcasses of oxen, etc. If the bagged remains of ladies exhausted--even ruptured--Turkish porters, they must have been monstrous women indeed!

⁴³ Tövbe, the word uttered by the porter here, means Enough! I repent!

Story

unloaded from the porters' baskets, he ordered, "Now open these sacks!"

Opening one of the sacks, they found inside it the dying body of a woman. When she was dumped out of the sack, she proved to be the wife of the padişah. They opened the second sack and found inside the vizier's wife. In the third sack they found someone else's wife. They looked lifeless but bore no marks of violence, and so no one could understand what had happened to them

The padişah ordered that troops be called out. "Send five hundred men to the residence of those girls. Destroy their dwelling, but bring back the girls alive.

As the troops were leaving the palace and starting on their way, Hırızmalı spoke to the crippled giant, "Perisi

"What is it?"

"They are coming."

"I have been praying God that they would come. Let them come! Since they are coming from up there at the palace they will be coming down yonder slopes toward the dry creek bed. I shall pull them over into that creek bed and account for all of them. At least I shall have a supply of food to live on comfortably for a few days."

Just as he said he would, the crippled giant swallowed up all of the troops that came down the slopes toward them.

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Every time a soldier disappeared into his mouth, he would dead from the giant's other end. The crippled giant filled a deep hole in the ground with the bodies of the soldiers he had in this way disposed of.

When the padişah observed his forces being demolished so easily by the giant, he suddenly realized that he was losing of his men. He had no more troops left to fight for him. He didn't even have anyone that he could send as envoy.

While all of this was going on, Ahmet the Handsome, blinded by his father's orders, sat a distance away under a tree. As he sat there, a couple of pigeons perched in the tree above his head and began talking to each other. One of them said, "If Ahmet the Handsome could only understand our language, we could throw him down some of our curative feathers and tell him how to use them to cure his blindness. He should take the eye that is in his left pocket and place it in his right eye socket. He should take the eye that is in his right pocket and place that one in his left eye socket. Then he should rub our magical feathers on his eyelids. The color of his eyes might change a little, but he would be able to see the world again. And if God should so will, perhaps Ahmet can understand what we are saying."

Actually, Ahmet was able to understand the language being used by the pigeons. He knew what to do when their

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feathers fell to the ground, pıtır, pıtır.⁴⁴ He placed one eye in its proper socket, saying, "Bismillâhhirrâhmanir-râhim!"⁴⁵ as he did so, and then rubbing his eyelid with pigeon feathers. His eye opened, and he could see with it. Placing his other eye in its socket, he rubbed that eyelid with feathers, and then he was able to see with both eyes.

Looking straight ahead of himself, Ahmet saw a farmer plowing a field, and so he called to him, "O Farmer Uncle!"

"Yes?"

"Oh, why don't you give me some bread to eat?"

"You rascal! You son of a dog," ^{hence ahmet} said the farmer, "get out of my sight! The son of the padişah has returned home and brought a woman with him, and because of that damned woman, there is hardly a man left alive in this country. Tomorrow I shall be required to join the padişah's forces, and today I am planting extra wheat so that my children can have food to eat while I am gone. Son, why are you asking me for food? Where is food? Where is bread? Where is water? Our throats are dry from thirst. My cousin, the son of

⁴⁴ Onomatopoeia for the soft, light sound made by feathers striking the ground.

⁴⁵ I begin with the name of Allah! This is the most propitious remark that can be made by a Moslem about to begin any undertaking. Devout Turks who still begin projects with this remark now usually shorten the expression to Bismillâh!

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my oldest uncle, is dead, and another cousin, the son of a younger uncle, is also dead. Here I am between sixty and seventy years old,⁴⁶ but the government will not permit me to retire. They are drafting every remaining man in the land to fight against that giant."

"Father, if you have any bread at all, please give me some of it to eat. If you give me some of your bread, I shall join the padişah's forces in place of you. I shall catch that giant by his ear and take him to the padişah. I have heard much about that giant, and I came to this land to find him."

The farmer gave all but a couple of crumbs of his bread to Ahmet. Ahmet ate the bread and drank a glass of water. Then he said to the farmer, "Stop plowing your field and take me to the padişah."

Going to the padişah, the farmer said, "Selâmünaleyküm!"

"Aleykümselâm!" responded the padişah. "What do you want?"

⁴⁶ The farmer may not know his age more accurately than this. Village people once deliberately avoided registering the births of sons for several years in order to keep them from military draft as long as possible. This was done to keep their sons at home as a labor force on the farm and also to guarantee that when they were finally drafted, they would be not mere boys but men old enough to take care of themselves and survive the rigors of war and military life. Thus, the exact age of rural men was often not known.

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"Father,⁴⁷ I am an old man. I have brought with me this fellow who will serve in your army in place of me. He says that he is able to catch the giant by his ear and bring him to you

"Well, son, tell me: Can you really do that job?"

"If God is willing, I can do it. What is so great about a single giant? I am a man who has killed thirty-nine giants in a single battle

"All right, son," the padişah said to Ahmet. And to his own men he said, "Give this man a sword and a horse."

When they gave Ahmet a sword and a horse, he mounted the horse and rode to the place where the giant now lived. He shouted, "Hey, Perisi!"

As soon as the crippled giant saw Ahmet, he hobbled to the tent to tell Hırızmalı and Akçakız that Ahmet had returned. When they did not seem to believe him, the giant said, "I swear that Ahmet is back!" Then he went back and fought Ahmet until noon.

By that time Ahmet had grown exhausted by the difficult job of fighting a giant. He returned, therefore, to the palace of the padişah. "Son," said the padişah to him, "why

⁴⁷ The old farmer is clearly older than the padişah, so the word father is not used in deference to the ruler's age but in respect for his position.

didn't you bring back the giant with you?"

"My horse was a weak creature, and my sword was not good. If you had given me a strong, brave horse, I'd have caught that giant by the ear and brought him to you."

"Well, if that is the case," said the padişah, "take that damned Ahmet's horse. You may ride him, and he is really a brave horse."

This horse which they wished to give to Ahmet was very nervous. It would not allow anyone to come near it. Grooms had had to feed it by lowering its food to it from the ceiling. When Ahmet looked at his horse, he saw that there were dirt and dust on its back five fingers deep.

Ahmet shouted, "Good boy, Kamertay." When the horse neighed in response, Ahmet took it out of the stable, scrubbed it, and curried it thoroughly. He also bound some of the horse's wounds and prepared it for battle with the giant. The padişah's servants then gave the young man Ahmet's (his own) sword and bow and arrows, weapons which had been blessed by Hızır. Ahmet then rode off, caught the giant by the ear, and brought him back to the padişah. "Here you are, Your Majesty! Come out and kill your enemy with your own hands."

"Oh, please do not expose me to the face of that giant! You can kill him, and that will do just as well as doing it myself."

"If you do not kill him with your own hands," said Ahmet, "I shall let him go, and he will eat you. He has ruined your entire country. He is your enemy, and you should kill him with your two hands."

The padişah drew his sword and said, "H-a-a, aren't the one who has swallowed my wife, a ninety-six-kilo lady? I lived with her for many years and never beat her, but you swallowed her, and it did not even bother your conscience."

Ahmet came directly in front of the padişah and, releasing his grip on the giant's ear, shouted, "Good fellow, Perisi!"

"What should I do?"

"Swallow him!"

With a sound like hap! the giant swallowed the padişah and then defecated him.

The padişah pleaded, "Please don't kill me! Forgive me instead!"

But Ahmet ignored the padişah's pleading and said to the giant, "Perisi, turn around and swallow him again!"

After the padişah had been eaten in this manner eight times, he did not reappear. "Where is he?" asked Ahmet.

The crippled giant said, "I swear he has dissolved. Your father was very fat, and it must have been his destiny to grease my stomach!"

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After this, Ahmet the Handsome took charge of the palace and of the country. He began ruling as the new padişah. He brought his two wives to the royal palace, where the three lived happily for a very long time.